Dear Parents and Friends,

I received a touching e-mail a few weeks back from a mother, regarding her teenage daughter, in which she shared a concern that many readers have indicated a desire to learn more about. How do we help our children - at any age - to see and love themselves as God does?

It has never been easy to raise godly children in a secular culture - see the stories of Noah and Lot - but it is possible. Jocabed bathed the lives of her children in prayer and the results were astounding. Mordecai prayed for Esther and in doing so, not only did he teach by example, he helped facilitate the deliverance of God's people. What will our prayers accomplish in the lives of our children, both today and tomorrow?

In this issue we will look at how we can be "God's messenger of love" to our children. Special thanks to Dr. Donna Habenicht for her sound counsel in our Ask the Expert column.

May you be blessed!

Karen Pearson Editor,
Adventist Parenting

P.S. Tell me how many people you helped subscribe to Adventist Parenting and be entered into a drawing for the chance to win your own copy of Prince of Dreams by Bradley Booth.

To subscribe: click here.
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Defining Self-respect

Self-esteem, self-worth, self-image, self-concept, self-awareness, self-this, and self-that. Frankly, the terms make me dizzy with all of their definitions and connotations. Of course, we must use words, so I have my favorites. I prefer the terms self-respect and self-worth to indicate the sense of value one obtains when he or she believes God's love.

Regardless of what we call it, a healthy; godly, positive self-worth comes from God - not from ourselves. That is the issue. But because we are sinful, corrupt, infirm, broken, and fallen, the source of our self-image must originate in something outside of ourselves.
We can see throughout Scripture God’s positive regard for us. It’s as if He’s saying, "You’re much more valuable than you think!" Read aloud the following statements of how God values you:

"I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir" (Isaiah 13:12).

"Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).

"You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Clearly, God values us and desires that we value ourselves accordingly!

Taken from 13 Weeks to Peace by Jennifer Jill Schwirzer.

One reason for the spiritual feebleness of today is the low estimate that believers in Christ are constantly inclined to form of themselves. Christ paid an infinite price for us, and He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He placed upon them. Do not disappoint Jesus by placing a low estimate upon yourselves.

From Signs of the Times, October 22, 1896 by Ellen G. White.

Ages 0 - 5

One of the first tasks of a baby is to become self-sufficient: to learn how to entertain himself, fall asleep unaided, and solve simple physical problems such as how to get from here to there. Next comes the task of learning how to take care of personal needs, such as body functions, dressing, playing, and making friends.

Some parents hover so closely that they overprotect their children from natural consequences that would be wonderful learning opportunities. In doing so, Read more...

Ages 6 - 9

Description: Daniel had heard Prophet Jeremiah speak the word of the Lord. “Behold, I will send for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring him against this land, and against its inhabitants, and will utterly destroy them.” Now it had all come true. Daniel and his friends were prisoners of war. Would they continue to follow the Lord? Could God make a way for them to be faithful to Him? Bestselling author, Bradley Booth shows that it takes more than daring to be a Daniel.

Paperback, 160 pages.

Price: $10.99

Enter to Win

Do you have a favorite Mother's Day memory?

Share it with us and your name will be entered into a drawing for Jennifer Jill Schwirzer's new book, 13 Weeks to Peace. The drawing will take place May 16, 2011 and the winner will be announced in the next newsletter.

Submit your entry

Last month’s winner is Elke Holly, from Alberta, Canada. Elke, thanks for your great suggestion of including a simple, kid-friendly recipe in each issue of Adventist Parenting. Your copy of The Connected Family, by Paul and Carolyn Rayne is on its way to you!

Ask the Expert

Question:

I have a teenage daughter and I don't think she loves herself. I need help in dealing with the issues that come up at times. —Judian

Answer:

Dear Judian,

Most teenagers don't love themselves. They compare themselves to the perfectly-made-up teen idols they see...
Self-confidence is what helps a child attempt new and innovative tasks. But the path to success is often littered with multiple attempts that haven't worked out. How your child responds to mistakes or failure will determine whether or not he gives up or goes on when faced with challenges. That is why it is important to teach your child that just because something didn't succeed, it doesn't mean that he or she is a failure. Read more...

**Ages 10 - 14**

Be sure your children hear in your words and see in your actions that they are special. Affirm them for who they are, rather than harping on what they should be. Get the message across that they are loved supremely, no matter what.

Children need lessons in coping with words and acts that destroy self-esteem...and you will need to give them tools to cope. *Attitude is the key.* Read more...

**Ages 15 - 18**

There are some important things you can do to build your teen's self-respect.

Play and work together at least once a week. Enjoy each other. Have fun together. Share jokes. Share a mutual hobby. Exercise together. Share a picnic at the beach or the park. Cook together.

Prepare your teen for maturity. Competence builds self-respect, Read more...

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**Here's an Idea**

**Seven Ways to Help Grow a Child's Sense of Self Worth**

1. Choose a wall or display cabinet and name it using your family name: "Smiths Hall of Fame," and display trophies, photos, and awards. The constant reminder of your child's achievements will reinforce their confidence.

2. Give you children age-appropriate responsibilities. Successfully carrying out assigned tasks goes a long way in building self confidence and developing a sense of responsibility. It will also help them feel needed, valued and capable.

3. Encourage your children to talk about how they are feeling. Set clear expectations regarding mutual respect and they will develop confidence in knowing they can talk to you about anything.

4. Find the balance between overprotecting and under protecting your child. Overprotection often results in children being unable to think or act by themselves. Under protection can leave them vulnerable to finding acceptance with peer groups that could be harmful.

5. Don't label your child. Labels often turn into self-fulfilling prophecies.

6. Pray with your teen every day. Pray with the whole family every day. Prayer and God's Word are love builders.

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on the media, or the most popular kid in their class, and - of course - come up wanting.

Young teens look at themselves in the mirror and don't recognize this person. They feel awkward and desperately yearn for affirmation from their peers, who also feel awkward and want affirmation so have nothing to give.

But there's hope. As a parent you can help your daughter through these difficult times. In fact, your help can be the best help. Your daughter may not say so, but affirmation by you is very important to her. Even on those times when she acts like she's rejecting what you say or do, she's hearing you. She wants to be sure you really mean what you say.

Be God's messenger of love to your daughter.

Here are seven specific things you can do EVERY DAY:

1. Say, "I love you." Say it in different ways - a quick hug with a whispered "I love you", a note on her pillow, Read more...

2. Touch her. She may give the impression she doesn't want to be touched, but in her heart she does. Even if she screws up her face and gives the impression, Read more...

3. Affirm her. Say something good about her every day. Be on the lookout for little and big things you can mention. Read more...

4. "Tune in" and listen to your teen. Are you thinking, "How can I listen when she never talks to me?" Read more...

5. Eat with your teen every day. Eating together is a great love builder, provided the TV is turned off, Read more...

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Growing up being known as “the clever one” or “the loud one” or “the moody one” can impact their self-respect adversely.

6. Invite their friends home. This will give you a chance to see who they are hanging out with at school and will help monitor behavior among their friends. As children enter their teen years, peers provide an increasingly important influence. Making your home a safe, inviting place will provide a positive influence that can offer long lasting consequences for good.

7. Keep tabs on how your child is doing at school. Academic performance is a large part of the school years, but it is only part of the whole experience. Is your child interacting well socially? What messages are they receiving from class mates and teachers? If you know what is going on at school, you will know when, and if, it becomes necessary to give your child an extra boost of love and affirmation.

New Online Poll

To be successful as a parent, you don't have to be perfect, nor do your children have to be.

Parenting success is measured by three factors:

1. How much you enjoy the job.
2. How rewarding your relationship is with your children.
3. How effective your leadership is in teaching your children to be self-disciplined and inspiring the very best in them.

Parents want the best for their children. You want them to love Jesus, to be thoughtful and kind to others, to be willing to tackle difficult tasks, to achieve, to do their best, to be cheerful givers, to feel good about themselves, and to have friends and meaningful relationships.

But just because your children may be struggling in some of these areas, it doesn't mean that you are an ineffective parent. Everyone, at times, has problems. Your children will too. Successful parents find solutions. Successful parents don't get discouraged by occasional upsets. They keep working toward the ultimate goal of growing healthy, happy children to maturity.

Beginning in the next issue of Adventist Parenting, a new column will look at ways you can incorporate successful parenting strategies in order to bring out the best in your children.

Take a moment to respond to the poll below - and we'll include the results in the next Adventist Parenting.

1. I feel optimistic and willing to learn. I enjoy the challenge of meeting my children's needs.
2. I feel kids are OK, but there's more to life than parenting.
3. I feel discouraged when I try so hard and my children don't respond as I want them to.
4. I sometimes feel like a failure and wish I'd never had children.
5. At times I've felt like all of the above.

From Parenting Boot Camp, by Dr. Kay Kuzma.
Submit your response

and books by Tom and Alane Waters, and Paul and Carolyn Rayne.

Disclaimer: We do not necessarily endorse all the content on these sites.