

# Enhancing Your Child's Self-Esteem

## Habit #1- Affirmation

### Introduction:

*Let's face it: self-esteem will not be cultivated from classmates at school, or from folks in the neighborhood, or fellow employees at work. Enhancing esteem is pretty much a family matter, and if it doesn't happen there, it's doubtful it will happen anywhere.*

### So... "You get the Red Plate!!!!"

The red plate is the perfect way to acknowledge a family member's special triumphs, to celebrate a birthday or praise a job well done, reward a goal achieved, or simply to say, YOU ARE SPECIAL TODAY. When the Red Plate is used, any meal becomes a celebration honoring a special person, event, or deed. It is a visible reminder of love and esteem. The Red Plate- make it a tradition in your family, symbolizing the good and happy times. It will speak volumes of love when words just aren't enough. (From the promotional leaflet of The Original Red Plate Company)

**NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF ESTEEM. IT IS THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION WE AS PARENTS CAN MAKE IN OUR CHILDREN'S LIFE. THE MOST IMPORTANT OF COURSE IS TO INTRODUCE THEM TO CHRIST.**

**In her excellent book, *Your Child's Self-esteem*, Dorothy Briggs writes words of wisdom. Let's read this together.**

"If you are like most parents, your hopes for your children are based on more than their avoiding nervous breakdowns, alcoholism, or delinquency. You want life's positives for them: inner confidence; a sense of purpose and involvement; meaningful constructive relationships with others; success at school and in work. Most of all- happiness. What you want is clear. Your uncertainties are more often wrapped around how to help them to these goals. We parents hunger for a basic rule of thumb as a guide. - particularly during lot's of stress and confusion.

Today, enough evidence has accumulated to give you just such a formula: if your child has *high self-esteem*, he has it made. Mounting research shows that the fully functioning child (or adult) is different from the person who flounders through life.

The difference lies in his attitude toward himself, his degree of self-esteem.

What is self-esteem? It is how a person feels about himself. It is his over-all judgment of himself- how much he likes his particular person.

*High self-esteem* is not a noisy conceit. It is a quiet sense of self-respect, a feeling of self-worth. When you have it deep inside, you're glad you're you. Conceit is but whitewash to cover low self-esteem. With high self-esteem you don't waste time and energy impressing others; you already know you have value.

Your child's judgment of himself influences the kinds of friends he chooses, how he gets along with others, the kind of person he marries, and how productive he will be. It affects his creativity, integrity, stability, and even whether he will be a leader or a follower. His feelings of self-worth form the core of his personality and determine the use he makes of his aptitudes and abilities. His attitude toward himself has a direct bearing on how he lives all parts of his life. *In fact, self-esteem is the mainspring that slates every child for success or failure as a human being.*

The importance of self-esteem in your child's life can hardly be over-emphasized. "

**What does God's Word say about self-esteem? Let's reacquaint ourselves with a passage that is dedicated to the home in general and marriage in particular but does show a very important aspect of self-esteem.**

**Read Eph 5: 25-29.**

**Question: How are men to love their wives? How can we love our wives like ourselves if we don't have a deep sense of self worth?**

Show me a wife who always says, "Couldn't somebody teach my husband how to love me?" and I'll show you a man whose self-esteem is lacking.

Until you have a proper sense of self-love, a healthy and wholesome self-esteem, you are not able to freely and fully love someone. Your own insecurities cause you to constantly be preoccupied with yourself.

**Notice the latter half of verses 28-29. "For no one ever hated his own flesh."** Although there are many people today who literally hate themselves. They don't love themselves, so they have a very difficult time loving others.

### **IMPORTANT: HOW CAN SELF-ESTEEM START TO EMERGE IN OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN?**

**Look at verse 29 again. Pay close attention to the words *nourish and cherish*.**

The Greek word for *nourish* means "to bring out" or "to bring out from among". Paul shares the same idea found one paragraph later in Eph. 6:4. In other words, we are to **bring out from within** our children a respect for authority. It's our responsibility as parents to discipline our children so that we bring out from within our children a desire to follow careful instruction from those in authority.

Going back to verse 29 and the word *cherish*. This word is used only twice in the New Testament. The other verse is I Thess. 2:7 where Paul talks about "a mother who tenderly cares for her baby or child. It has the idea of a mother chicken hovering over her little chicks keeping them warm and safe. **Therefore, it's our responsibility to not only bring out what is wonderful in our children but to give that child a sense of security and comfort about what makes that child special.**

**EXAMPLE:** When our child paints a picture, do we bring out the best in our child by acknowledging what that child has accomplished or do we concentrate on the huge mess that child has made, even if he or she accidentally got some paint on the table.

**WHEN SELF ESTEEM IS LACKING-** 1) *WE ERECT DEFENSES*  
2) *WE TEND TO WEAR MASKS.* (Prov. 14:13)

### **MOST OF US KNOW WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO. WHAT WE REALLY NEED HELP IN IS HOW WE DO IT?**

**THREE PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.** 1) **A commitment to discover ( Prov. 20:5)**

Substitute "child" for man and "parent" for man and the Proverb reads, "A plan in the heart of a child is like deep water, but a parent of understanding draws it out."

**Question: What Plan do you think Solomon has in mind here?**

**Conclusion: Families who enhance each other's esteem are families committed to discovering and understanding those deep hidden things that make one another so special. FIND THOSE THINGS DEEP INSIDE YOUR MATE AND CHILD THAT MAKE THEM SPECIAL. TELL THEM WHY THEY ARE SO SPECIAL AND GIVE THEM OPPORTUNITIES TO USE THAT UNIQUENESS.**

2) **A Willingness to get involved. (Prov. 27:17)**

Apply this verse to a parent-child relationship. "As iron sharpens iron, so the parent sharpens the child."

**If you are going to sharpen your child, you are going to have to get involved in their lives. This could be costly both financially and emotionally. It definitely will take up your time.**

For those of you who have children old enough to ride a bike how involved were you in their learning to ride. Did you do it from the living room or den, the office, or the school? No way, you were out there sweating and running right along side. Holding on and encouraging and praying that no severe bumps and bruises would come out of this. When they did fall what did you do? Were you there for them?

**Question: If you were there for them when they learned how to ride a bike where will you be when they really need you as they perform against their peers?**

### **3) An Ability to Reflect. (Prov. 27:19)**

This verse meant so much more to the Hebrew than what we probably see. We see that our outside self reflects what really is inside. But the Hebrew saw something else because of the construction of the word. In Hebrew they actually say, "As in water, face-a face, so the heart of man, a man." The idea is that just as the water is an outside source that you must have in order to see your face, so when you see a man, you see the reflection of another man who has made that man who he is. *Or in other words, as water is needed to provide a mirror-reflection of our external face, another individual is needed to help us mirror our inner being.*

**Question: Do we as parents reflect positively on our children? Have you ever thought of yourself as a mirror?**

**When parents mirror life for their children, the children learn what life is all about.**

**So that we can better prepare ourselves to help build or enhance our children's self-esteem we need to start with ourselves. Attached to this lesson is a group activity that helps us discuss among ourselves how we reflect to our children in this area of esteem. Let's get into smaller groups and discuss these issues and then when you get home let's get brutally honest with ourselves and evaluate our position with ourselves and with our children and see if we really love ourselves so that we can reflect a healthy love to our children.**

**Below you will find an "Activity Sheet" that you should use to help evaluate your own understanding of your self-esteem and that of your child. Then there is a copy of the lesson we used in our session along with answers in "red".**

# Self-esteem Activity

**Yourself**

	<b>Almost Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>
<b>Feels a Strong Sense of Security</b>				
<b>Feels a Strong Sense of Worth</b>				
<b>Feels a Strong Sense of Confidence</b>				
<b>Feels a Strong Sense of Belonging</b>				

**Reasons for your level of security.**

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**Reasons for your level of worth.**

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**Reasons for your level of confidence.**

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**Reasons for your level of belonging.**

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# Self-esteem Activity

Your Child

	<b>Almost Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>
<b>Feels a Strong Sense of Security</b>				
<b>Feels a Strong Sense of Worth</b>				
<b>Feels a Strong Sense of Confidence</b>				
<b>Feels a Strong Sense of Belonging</b>				

Reasons for your child's level of security.

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Reasons for your child's level of worth.

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Reasons for your child's level of confidence.

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Reasons for your child's level of belonging.

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**Affirmation-Habit #1**  
**Eight is Enough – Part 1 of 8**

**Luke 3: 21-22**

- *“When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as He was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven; “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” Luke 3:21-22*

Do you...

Let them know \_\_\_\_\_ who they belong to and give them a sense of security?

Let them know \_\_\_\_\_ let them know they are loved regardless of what they do?

Let them know \_\_\_\_\_ let them know you are proud of them or well-pleased with them?

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM OR AFFIRMATION (How Do We Do It?)

STARTS WITH \_\_\_\_\_ Mom and Dad

- *“ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he FEEDS it and CARES for it, just as Christ does the Church—for we are all members of one body.” Eph. 5: 28-30 (NIV)*
  
- Therefore, we are to bring out what is wonderful in our children and spouses as well as give them a sense of security and comfort and help them understand what makes them special.

IT REQUIRES A COMMITMENT TO Discover

*“The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.”  
Proverbs 20:5*

*“The purposes of a child’s heart are deep waters, but a parent of understanding draws them out.”*

IT REQUIRES A WILLINGNESS TO Get Involved

*“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”  
Proverbs 27:17*

*“As iron sharpens iron, so the parent sharpens the child.”  
Proverbs 27:17*

IT REQUIRES AN ABILITY TO \_\_\_\_\_ Reflect

*“As water reflects a face, so a man’s heart reflects the man.”*  
*Proverbs 27:19*

*Literal translation- “As in water, face-to-face,  
so the heart of man, a man.”*

**As water is needed to provide a mirror-reflection of our external face, another individual is needed to help us mirror our inner being.**

**Question: Do we as parents reflect positively on our children? Have you ever thought of yourself as a mirror?**