



# Family Matters

*Making Family Life Easier*

## **Building a Teenager's Self Esteem**

When I ask parents what they want for their teenagers, many of them reply that they would like them to feel good about themselves, believe in themselves and be able to handle situations with confidence.

The teenage years can be both an exciting and stressful time, with many changes taking place. Imagine having to adjust to your body changing on an almost daily basis and at the same time trying to work out who you are as an individual and where you fit in and belong. Add to this the pressures of school and relationships with friends and parents and it's no wonder many teenagers do not always feel good about themselves.

Self Esteem is something you can't touch, you can't see or you can't hear, but it affects how you feel, what you see when you look at yourself in the mirror and what you hear when you talk about yourself or when you think about yourself. Self Esteem is about how much a person values themselves and how important they feel they are. It is also about how a person sees themselves and feels about the things they can do. Having positive self esteem is important, as it allows you to believe in yourself and respect yourself. It also gives you the courage to try new things and helps you to make healthy choices.

Here are some suggestions for building your teenagers self esteem:

Show an interest in your teenager's life. Get to know their friends, their interests, what's important to them in their life and talk to them about it. Even if you feel you have nothing in common with your teenagers, by taking the time to listen to their music or play one of their favourite computer games with them it shows how much you care about them and how important they are to you.

Although many teenagers balk at the thought of doing chores or any work around the house, giving them age appropriate responsibilities is an effective way of building self esteem. Let's say for example you encourage your teenager to cook a meal for the family at the weekend. To do this they need to organise what they need to make the meal and to go and buy it. They then need to prepare and cook the food as well as serve and clean up afterwards. Having done this, your teenager will feel a huge sense of achievement as well as having developed skills that are important for life.

Finally, give compliments to teenagers in a genuine way that get through to them and make a difference. Notice their appearance and if they are trying harder at school and thank them for doing a chore.

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