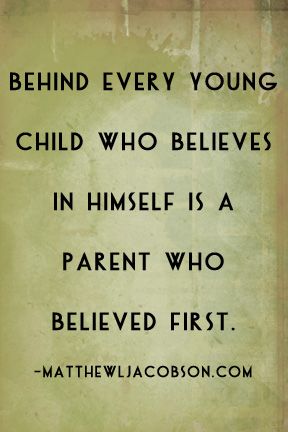
**Building confident teens**

*“She gently but firmly wraps her tiny little hands around my finger. My little angel …..Her smile so innocent means the world to me. Her eyes sparkle with a tinge of mischief. I promise her that I will always protect her and love her.”*

Such is a parent’s emotion when they hold their child not only for the first time when they are born but throughout their life. The relationship of a parent and child is one of the purest form of love and sacrifice. But it is well known that parents cannot always shield their child from problems because one has to overcome obstacles in their life to grasp the real essence of living. In this journey of self-discovery, one of the greatest strength of any person is not only one’s support system which involves their family but also how that person views his/herself. It is of utmost importance that when a child looks into a mirror, he/she respects and loves who they see in that mirror.

A person who values themselves and believes in their capabilities can achieve anything they wish to because deep inside they know who they truly are and love themselves. They are at peace with the spirit within .But this self -confidence and self-love does not come about so easily, it requires time and it is crucial in the teenage years of a child. Parents being a teen’s support system can do so much to ensure that their child learns to love and respect himself/herself because a person can only respect others if they respect themselves first.

A child with low self-esteem will always push themselves down while raise others so high that what another person says, does or believe becomes that child’s actions, words and beliefs as well. They will be hard on themselves and always think that they will never be good enough.

The first person a child looks up to is always his/her parents. Thus it is the responsibility of parents to provide emotional support to their child and help them build their self-worth. Some small but meaningful acts towards this cause are listed below.

1. **Be wise with praises:** Never laud them with fake praises because a praise feels true only when deserved. Encourage them instead. Always be the one they can count on for an honest review. Don’t always focus on the result and instead compliment them on their effort whenever they score well.
2. **Always let them help you:**

When children feel they are wanted and their contributions matter a lot to their parents, they feel good about themselves.

1. **Encourage your teenager to use positive self-talk:**

Teaching them to speak positively to themselves, allows them to think positively about their capabilities. “I can finish my work on time.”, “I will do well in my exams because I studied hard”, “I am pretty and I love myself.” or “I am a good artist and I will be better.” Such are the statements which boost self-esteem.

1. **Strengths**

Help them identify what they are good at and encourage them to pursue their strengths. Being good at something helps a teenager feel they are useful and talented.

Advise them to accept they can’t be good at everything and everyone has weaknesses but what is more important is what they do with their talents.

1. **Be a good listener**

Listen to your child. The more you listen to them, the more they will open to you about how they feel. This helps you to understand better why they feel so bad about themselves and you can reach out to them.

**Note from the counsellor**

Confidence is one of the greatest gifts a parent can give their child.

Kids who lack confidence will be reluctant to try new or challenging things

because they are scared of failing or disappointing others.

This can end up holding them back later in life and prevent them from

realizing their potential.

“The enemies of confidence are discouragement and fear.”

So, as a parent remember to encourage and support your child as they

attempt to tackle everyday challenges and major tasks while growing up.

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