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young families



Liking One's Self

*"Indeed everybody wants to be a wow,
but not everybody knows exactly how"*
—Ogden Nash

A major goal of parenthood, childcare, and education is to give children the chance to feel they are a "WOW."

A feeling of self-worth, even in a child's earliest months, is vital to happy growth. A child must have self-esteem to feel secure and be ready to meet life with courage and vigor. The child who lacks self-esteem will be fearful of new experiences and new challenges.

Self-worth or self-esteem is what children think of themselves or the way they view themselves. It takes quite a bit of growing up for children to begin to picture themselves as separate persons who are able to do and to think for themselves. The formation of the self-image begins very early and is largely the product of relationships with significant adults-parents. It starts in infancy. When we cuddle babies, coo at them, and meet their needs, we're saying to them, "You and your feelings and needs are important to me."

The toddler is at a crucial age in the development of self-esteem. The child is now able to try out some of his/her own ideas. Parental reaction will give the child a cue as to whether the ideas are worth anything.

To feel important, the children must feel that what they do and have learned are important. So cheer accomplishments! When shoes are tied right remember to show appreciation for the achievement. Don't say, "I thought you'd never learn" or "It's about time." If children are told often enough that they are dumb, they may believe it . . . and become just that. Persons with low self-worth (or little self-esteem), because they feel they have little worth, expect to be cheated and stepped on by others. To defend themselves, they hide behind a wall of distrust and in turn are more prone to step on others.

With all this information on how important self-esteem is, you're probably wondering what you as a parent can do to help your child develop high self-esteem. First, parents need to have total acceptance of the child. This is easy if the child always does what the parent wants, but total acceptance means that even when the child does something undesirable, a parent still can show acceptance for the child, but not for what was done.

Second, parents need to define clearly and enforce limits on the child's behavior. To be clearly defined, a child must understand a limit or rule, and the rule must not be changing from

day to day. If there is no running in the house today, then there is no running in the house tomorrow, or the next day. Third, parents need to respect a child's action within the defined limits. For example, if children are permitted to use a pair of children's scissors, then they should have the freedom to cut paper the way they want.

Just paying attention to children, talking to them, and showing interest in their activities and efforts will make them feel important. It's easy to forget to pay attention. A parent faces many demands for time and energy: work, housework, civic responsibilities, social activities. If the only way a child can get attention is to be rowdy, disruptive, or obnoxious, then that is the way the child will do it. Feeling unappreciated or rejected, children resort to misbehavior, which is not appreciated and for which they are further rejected.

A caution: In eagerness to have their children excel and be a credit to them, sometimes parents make the mistake of measuring one child against another. This competitiveness can cause children to feel that they must be something they are not to win parent's approval. Keep in mind that children in the same family are often very unlike each other. Respect each child for his/her individuality and praise him/her for achievements.

To sum up, the ability to feel comfortable about one's self, to feel worthwhile, is an important step in growing up. Before children can like others they must first be able to like themselves. Children who are appreciated for what they are and who are not constantly being compared unfavorably with others generally learn to like themselves.

Some items for discussion as parents:

- Do you agree that before children can like others, they must first be able to like themselves? How can you help your child to like himself/herself?
- What kinds of things do you sometimes do that could contribute to your child's lack of trust in you? How does this affect your child's feeling of self-worth?
- Think of some of the ways your children differ from each other. How might these differences affect the way they feel about themselves and each other?
- In teaching a child a simple task, like putting together a jigsaw puzzle, a father makes remarks such as these: "That's the wrong piece." "What makes you so slow?" "Here, I'll show you." "Do it this way." What would be the effect of these comments? What alternatives can you offer to say?
- What are some statements you have heard parents say that embarrass, humiliate, or put down their children? Have you ever said any yourself?

*"I like you as you are, I think you turned out nicely;
I like you as you are, exactly and precisely."*
—Misterogers

—Compiled by Ron Pitzer,
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"More for Your Food \$\$\$ -Meat and Meat Foods"

Meat is pork, beef, veal, and lamb. Meat foods are poultry, fish, eggs, dried peas and beans, and peanuts. These are called protein foods because protein is one of the main nutrients found in them. All through our life we need protein for the maintenance and repair of body tissue. Children need protein for normal growth.

Meat and meat foods are also rich in B vitamins and iron. The B vitamins (thiamine, riboflavin, and niacin) play a central role in the release of energy from food. They also help in the proper functioning of nerves, normal appetite, good digestion, and healthy skin.

Iron combines with protein to make hemoglobin in blood, the carrier of oxygen to all our body cells. Eating foods rich in iron is particularly important for young children, preteen and teenage girls, and women of childbearing years. Research has shown their diets are most likely to be short in iron.

How much meat or meat foods should you eat every day? You need two servings a day, and you can count as one serving any of the following amounts:

1 chicken leg	1 meat patty
½ chicken breast	(1 lb. ground meat
1 pork chop	makes 4 or 5)
2 weiners	

You can count as ½ serving:

2 tablespoons peanut butter	½-¾ cup cooked beans
1 egg	or peas

We also get protein from two other food groups—the Milk-Cheese Group and the Bread-Cereal Group.

Shopping Tips

- Check weekly food advertisements for meat and Meat Group specials and plan your meals around them.
- Know how many servings you can get from a pound. The more servings the less they cost. Use the following as a guide:

4 servings per lb.	2 servings per lb.
ground meats (sometimes more)	chicken
stew meats	pork chops
frozen fish fillets	roast or steak with bone
liver	1 serving per lb.
3 servings per lb.	spare ribs
round steak	short ribs
boned roast	
center cut ham slices	

- Buy meats that have the most lean. Don't pay for fat, bone, and gristle.
- Read labels on packaged meat carefully. A package of ground meat may be more than a pound.
- Buy less tender cuts of beef such as roasts or steaks from the chuck or blade and round steak. They are less expensive than the tender cuts from the sirloin or rib and the food value is the same.
- Buy chicken backs and wings for making soup rather than beef soup bones. They are usually cheaper and meatier.
- Buy dry beans and peas and cook them yourself. Canned beans and peas cost more.
- Buy fresh fish only from stores where it is kept very cold. Canned and frozen fish may be good buys.

Storage Tips

- Place meat in the coldest part of your refrigerator.
- Know how long meat will keep in your refrigerator. Use the following as a guide:

poultry, fish	1 to 2 days
ground meat, stew meat	2 days
steaks, chops	2 to 3 days
roasts	3 to 4 days
- Freeze meat immediately after purchase if you must keep it longer. It can be frozen in the store wrapper for a week or two, otherwise wrap in freezer paper or bags.
- Store peanuts, dry beans and peas in covered cans or jars.
- Store eggs in the refrigerator and use within one week, if possible.
- Store ham, weiners, and sausage in their original containers in the refrigerator. Use within a week.
- Check freezer often to be certain older foods are used first.

Time Saving Tips

- Double or triple recipes for casseroles or meat loaves. Bake one for dinner and freeze the other for a future meal. Use within a month.
- Make large batches of homemade soups, chili, beans, and stew. Freeze in meal size quantities. Use within a month.
- Freeze meat patties, chops, fish fillets, and steaks on a tray and then package in large freezer bags immediately. Take out only number of servings needed. Thawing time is reduced.

Recipes

A meat-extender recipe: *3-Bean Hot Dish*

In a large skillet brown 1 lb. ground beef. Pour off drippings and add:

- 1 lb. can pork and beans
- 1 lb. can kidney beans (drained)
- 1 lb. can lima beans (drained)
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup catsup
- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- mustard to taste

Mix together and pour into greased baking dish. Bake in 350° oven for 35 minutes. Serves 8. The amount of ground beef can be reduced, but some is needed for flavor.

This Issue

This newsletter is published by the Agricultural Extension Service of your University of Minnesota for young families in the Twin Cities area. I would appreciate your suggestions for its content. Call me at 823-5241.

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