



Youth who view themselves positively have a greater ability to succeed. This positive self-image, combined with a hopefulness for the future, is what will give youth the strength to face the challenges of life, and become successful adults. This newsletter talks about ways that parents, teachers, and other adults can help youth see their positive traits, accept those things they cannot change about themselves, and build feelings of self-worth, as they work together to help youth succeed.

Youth must believe that they have the power to make changes in their lives. Successful youth understand that they have control over many of the things in their lives and in addition, they can make a difference in the lives of others.



☑ PARENTS: Children should be given the chance to make decisions at every stage of their young lives. Youth who have been given choices as they grow, will trust their own abilities better. Parents can teach youth to recognize the things they can and can't control, and then help them problem-solve in those areas where they can make a difference.

☑ SCHOOLS: Find ways to involve students in making decisions which affect their school, such as setting goals for the year, developing an annual

SELF WORTH

"The more a child has a sense of power, purpose, worth and promise, the more likely it is that he or she will grow up healthy."
Peter L. Benson, Ph.D., What Kids Need to Succeed

school theme, determining a focus for school clubs, etc. Allow students input both in the classroom and school-wide, and implement their suggestions as often as possible.

☑ CONGREGATIONS: Teach youth about the power they have to make a positive difference in the lives of others. This can be done through service projects or through lessons about individuals who, through their convictions and personal power, made a difference in their community or in the world. Youth leaders can use personal examples to describe the impact and influence that others -- both adults and youth -- may have had on their own lives.

☑ COMMUNITY LEADERS/NEIGHBORS: Give youth meaningful opportunities to serve in the community. Ask youth representatives to serve on community advisory boards, especially for organizations that are designed to serve youth (such as parks and recreation, libraries, etc.). Ask for their input, and give them special roles or assignments as they serve.



Self-esteem is a key ingredient for a happy and successful youth. The seeds for good self-esteem are planted at a young age, and nurtured by parents, family, teachers and other caring adults.

☑ PARENTS: There are so many ways that parents can boost their children's self-esteem! Express your

love for your youth often, and let them know it is *unconditional* love -- assure them that you love them even when they make poor choices. Let your youth know how much you value their uniqueness and their individuality. Help them build upon their special talents, and develop skills and abilities that are of interest to them. Take pride in the accomplishments of your youth and regularly talk to them of their strengths and their positive contributions to your family.



☑ SCHOOLS: Be honest, yet positive with students when giving feedback on assignments or grades. Give them specific examples of the things they are doing well, and make suggestions on how to improve their school work. Treat all students with respect, and take them seriously! Reinforce their input in class discussions, and find ways to use their unique talents and skills in classroom assignments and projects.

☑ CONGREGATIONS: Sponsor seminars or workshops for parents on how to build their children's self-esteem. Use a bulletin or newsletter to regularly "spotlight" individual youth from your congregation -- include a

short biography of the youth and include positive comments about the youth contributed from family or other congregation members.

✓ COMMUNITY LEADERS/

NEIGHBORS: Encourage newspapers and other local media to spotlight outstanding youth on a regular basis. Youth can be recognized for academic or athletic achievement, musical or artistic talent, or outstanding service-oriented activities.



As youth grow to adulthood, they should develop a sense of purpose



about their lives -- cultivate dreams and aspirations, and then make daily choices which lead to those dreams. Youth who have a sense of purpose will set and achieve goals, enjoy increased self-esteem, and lead successful, happy lives.

✓ PARENTS: Demonstrate through your actions, that your own life has a purpose and a meaning. Talk to your youth about their hopes and dreams, and share your dreams with them. Spend your time in meaningful activities which are in keeping with goals you have set for yourself. Limit the time spent on television, electronic games, or other activities which steal time away from youth. Instead, encourage them to get involved in activities or programs which match their talents and interests. Help youth identify role models who seem to have a strong purpose in life, and discuss what it is that makes these people different.

✓ SCHOOLS: Teach students how to set short and long term goals, and encourage them to review their goals and make changes as necessary. Help

youth to understand the purpose for their schoolwork by relating areas of study to current events, job opportunities, or other "real world" issues.

✓ CONGREGATIONS: Teach youth the values associated with their religion or faith, and encourage them to use these values as they develop a purpose or meaning in their lives. Encourage youth to nurture their unique talents and gifts, and discuss ways these talents can bring added meaning to their lives.



Youth, like all of us, will hold a more positive outlook on life when they feel they are well prepared for the future! Optimism can be nurtured by parents and adults who help youth visualize their dreams, who teach youth to look for the good around them and who speak with enthusiasm about the future.



✓ PARENTS: Encourage your youth to dwell more on future opportunities than on past mistakes or regrets. As a family, collect articles from newspapers or magazines which talk about the good things people are doing to make the world a better place. Discuss career options with your youth and help them set and obtain goals which will lead to those paths. Enjoy life and model an optimistic attitude for your youth!

✓ SCHOOLS: Teachers can be great listeners and "cheerleaders" for youth who are looking toward the future. Make yourself available to listen to youth as they discuss their future goals and dreams. Be enthusiastic about their interests, and give positive feedback when discussing their future ambitions. Let students know that they are expected to succeed!

✓ CONGREGATIONS: Discuss hope as it relates to your religion or faith, and take every opportunity to instill that hope in the youth of your congregation. Schedule youth activities which focus on positive, creative ways of improving the congregation, the neighborhood or community.

✓ COMMUNITY LEADERS/NEIGHBORS: Publicly recognize the good things about your community. Newspapers can honor a "Good Neighbor" of the week, or report regularly on the activities of local charities or other service organizations. Special attention can be paid to the contributions made by youth who belong to these organizations or who are involved in service projects through their own initiative.



✂️CLIP AND SAVE✂️



Parents' To-Do List

1. Tell my teens why I think they're unique, and what qualities I admire in them.
2. Talk to my kids about people who have made a difference in my life.
3. Ask my youth who their role models are.
4. Arrange for my teens to spend time on the job with me - ask them about their own career goals and dreams.
5. Turn off the T.V. and work on a service project instead.
6. Make time for fun!

HELPING YOUTH SUCCEED is produced by Utah State University Extension and the Utah State Office of Education and based on research by the Search Institute. Special thanks to newsletter editor, Tami Pyfer, M.Ed., and contributing authors Dr. Thomas Lee and Dr. Glen Jenson, Utah State University.

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