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EIGHT WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM

1. Make sure your children know that they are worthy just because they exist. Make it clear that whether they are competent or outstanding in other ways makes no difference in your love for them.
2. Be alert to evidence of low self-esteem. Remember that healthy self-esteem is not the same as pride. It is just honest acceptance of whom one is. A child who needs to revel in his accomplishments probably has low self-esteem.
3. Help your child build *an* honest self-image. Ignoring your child's weaknesses is not helpful, but don't judge them. Children must learn to accept their shortcomings, but also value their strengths.
4. Help your child discover his unique talents. No two children *are* alike. Each has something special to contribute to life. Giving your child the opportunity to explore many activities and interests can uncover abilities and gifts they *never* thought about.
5. Provide an atmosphere of trust in your home. Children who can trust their emotions to the intimacy of the family and talk about love, disappointments, accomplishments or failures, *are* rich indeed. They will have few problems with self-esteem.
6. Make sure that the image you mirror back to your child is not distorted by you' own desires or disappointments. Remember that to a large extent children see themselves through the "mirror" of how their parents see them. It is easy to give the message that your child doesn't measure up to your standards. Polish those mirrors! Make sure they *are* not distorted by your own agenda.
7. Cherish everything about your child, not just the special or outstanding things. Emphasize the positive values of every little inadequacy and lavish praise for your child's strengths.
8. Make it safe for your child to be whoever he is. You do this by showing love and forgiveness no matter what your child does. By all means discipline your child, but never use discipline as a form of revenge. Children *are* remarkably fair-minded. Don't abuse their trust.