

## Basics of Building Your Child's Esteem

By Cheri DeMoss

**M**ost parents truly want the best for their child. They hope their child will strive to do the best they can in school, in outside activities, and in life. They hope the child will have **Motivation**.

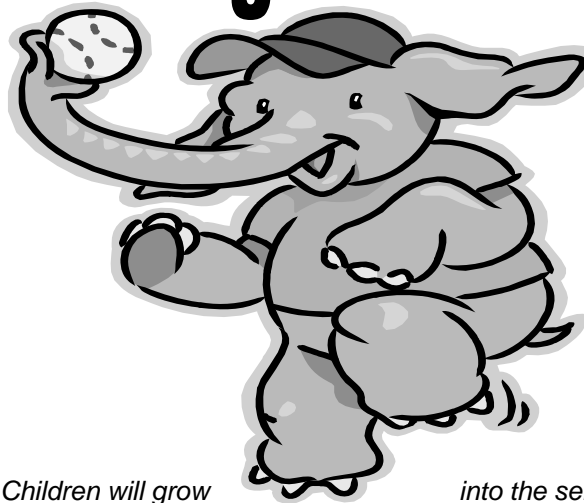
They want their child to grow up to be a good person, a responsible person who is trustworthy and respected. They hope their child will have **Decency**.

They hope their child won't get involved in drugs or alcohol, suffer from depression, join a gang or become involved in other self-destructive behaviors. They hope their child be **Self-Caring**.

They want their child to be confident, positive & successful. They hope their child will have **Self-Esteem**.

What many adults, teachers and parents need to realize is that in order to help a child become motivated, decent, self-caring and esteemed the adults in the child's life have to focus on nurturing, supporting and growing the child's self-esteem.

Children, like adults, will make responsible decisions, protect themselves from harm and work to achieve their potential



*Children will grow into the self-esteemed, responsible people we want if loving them is defined as accepting, praising and understanding their feelings and behaviors.*

**only if they have a strong sense of self-esteem and self-value.**

Children, like their parents and other adults in their lives, respond poorly to criticism of their character; of who they are.

They respond much better to objective, non-critical feedback about their behaviors.

**Achieving strong, high self-esteem for your children is completely in your control.**

## Parenting Classes

**It's Not About Being Perfect  
It's About Being Aware**

**P**arenting is a tough job because no one taught you what healthy parenting looks like. You either parent the way you were raised or you vow to do the exact opposite of how you were raised.

Healthy, effective parenting is about recognizing your child's behaviors, understanding what they mean & then knowing what to do. It's a combination of nurturing, supporting and awareness.

These skills weren't role-

modeled when you were a child. This makes it's hard to do them when you're a parent.

These classes help you learn healthy & effective parenting styles in a supportive & esteeming environment. You'll learn how to raise your child's esteem and eliminate power struggles. With new skills and information you'll become a more confident, successful parent.

**For Information Call:**

**773- 338-2889**

Children, like adults with high self-esteem, naturally choose to act in ways that will lead to positive, rather than, negative outcomes.

Helping your child achieve a strong self-image is completely within your control. It's a process of using praise, catching your child "getting it right" and giving your child the consistent feeling that you like them. You can't sincerely praise a child too much or too often.

Artificial, insincere praise teaches a child to be mistrustful. Negative comments and criticism undermines anyone's, especially a child's, esteem and sense of well-being.

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Inside...**

**Basics of Building Your Child's Esteem  
Parenting Styles  
How Children Perceive What We Say  
About Cheri DeMoss & Empowering Options**

**Pages 1 & 3  
Page 2  
Page 2  
Page 3**

# Four Basic Parenting Styles

By Cheri DeMoss

**A**s parents, we learn our default parenting styles from our own parents. We'll parent very similar to how our parents raised us or we'll do oppositional parenting and try to parent our child completely opposite from how we were raised.

Neither is usually very effective. This is one of the most common reasons dysfunctional family patterns get passed on from generation to generation.

The four most basic & prevalent parenting styles are;

**Overly Permissive** parents feel helpless & set few consistent limits. The child learns to make excessive demands on these kinds of parents. These parents usually don't know what's best for the child so the give in to the pressure of the moment.

However, when they reach their limit they will yell, scream & attack the child emotionally, sometimes physically. When they calm down they then revert back to being permissive.

Children raised with this type of parenting style don't get the sense of security & acceptance that all children *need*. They grow up to be insecure, dramatic, & anywhere from unpleasant to seriously disturbed adults.

**Authoritarian** parents usually feel certain they are right (or at least they act certain). They have strict rules for the sake of having strict rules. Their self-esteem, as parents, rests with having an obedient child. They make rules to ensure obedience even when there is no reason to expect disobedience. They rule by fear rather than love & respect.

The punishments used are much more severe than needed. They will often use physical abuse as punishment & always use emotional abuse. They believe the child must feel bad about themselves & what they have done.

Children raised with an authoritarian parenting style don't get the sense of security & acceptance that all children *need*. They grow up to be extremely self & other critical. As adults, they become either very passive or withdrawn & tremendously insecure (usually girls) or like the abusive, controlling authoritarian that raised them (usually boys).

**An Inconsistent Mix** of the overly permissive & authoritarian parenting style is the most confusing & emotionally abusive & damaging for the child. The parent is inconsistent & goes back & forth between both styles. These confusing doubles messages cause the child to live in a state of constant

fear & anxiety.

Children raised with this inconsistent mix not only, lack the sense of security & acceptance that all children *need*, but they learn that nothing they do matters. Despite their best efforts nothing they do is ever right. They grow up to be under-achievers at best. At worst they are the adults that have low or non-existent goals, unstable relationships & a deep belief in their own worthlessness.

## **A Clear Parenting Style**

creates children that grow into responsible, independent & esteemed adults. The parents don't feel helpless nor infallible. They set fair, clear guidelines that insure the child's safety, development & self-esteem. They show sensitivity & understanding for the child's feelings & are able to be reasonable yet firm. They don't create power struggles with the child.

On issues that are not crucial

they allow the child to be right & on important issues they set fair limits.

Parents that use a clear style of parenting are not interested in unnecessarily strict control over the child. They have fair, clear & firm rules that change as the child's needs change.

These parents have few power struggles with their child because they are much more interested in being rational & reasonable than they about being right.

Children raised with this style of parenting have an inherently positive outlook about themselves & their world. They easily set goals & most often attain the goals they set. Their high level of self-esteem allows them to be self-caring in all aspects of their lives. These children grow up to be successful, confident and content adults.

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## How Children Perceive What We Say

**U**nderstanding a child's perception of your words & behaviors gives you an idea of the tremendous impact your interactions have on your child.

### **Children Remember:**

- The 1st thing you tell them about themselves
- The last thing you tell them about themselves
- Things you repeat to them about themselves
- Things you say to them that are emotional
- Things you say to them that are different or unique

### **Children Believe:**

- 55% of what is verbal—  
WHAT WE SAY
- 38% of how it is vocalized -  
HOW WE SAY IT
- 7% of what is visual -  
WHAT WE DO

This means that 93% of what we say to a child and how we say it determines what the child will believe about themselves.

# Basics of Building Your Child's Esteem

(Continued from page 1)

Another essential part of building your child's self-esteem is listening. Children have a lot to say and what they say is a window into, not only their hearts, but into their thoughts and feelings.

The goal of listening is to be empathetic, objective and to understand what is being shared.

Just like you can't over praise your child. Neither can you listen, empathize and understand your child's perspective too much.

**Remember what it was like to try to tell your parents what you felt and no one listened.**

There's not a lot that gives a child the sense of personal power and esteem. Think about it from their vantage point. Children are smaller, not as smart and physically weaker than us. They have limited abilities to make decisions about their lives.

Adults tend to disregard what a child says, dismiss what they think and discount what they feel. Adults often times view a child's attempts at communicating as, well, "childish".

Think of when you were little and you tried to share something about your friends, your feelings or your side of things and your parents dismissed you. Remember when they misunderstood or twisted what you were trying to share? It's a power-

less thing, being a child. Parents who don't know how to be perceptive, empathetic, objective and listen diminish their child's self-esteem.

Giving your child unconditional praise, affection and role-modeling healthy behaviors will help nurture your child's self-esteem just like fertilizer does for plants.

Taking the time to listen and respond to what your child is sharing with you helps them feel cared for and gives them a sense of having value. It also helps you to monitor their changing needs.

As you learn to recognize your child's behaviors and what the behaviors indicate you can help your child gradually become more esteemed. The more esteem and confidence you give your

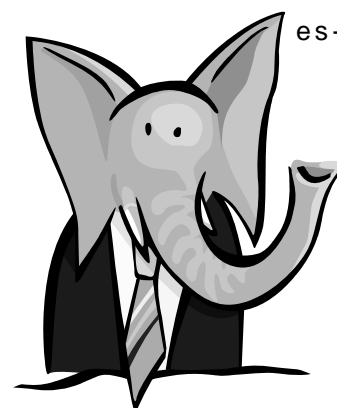
child the easier it is for them to learn to feel successful at doing age appropriate tasks and responsibilities.

Parents who give their child doubles messages or don't consistently set clear age appropriate limits make the child feel they have no value.

Parents that set too many limits or expect the child to "act like an adult" make the child feel like they are a disappointment.

Parents that "hope" their child will "grow up right" but do nothing to get more information about healthy parenting are setting themselves and the child up for failure.

It's not luck that creates successful, happy adults. A child doesn't accidentally grow up to be a motivated, decent self-



teemed and self-caring adult who makes healthy decisions. It's because the child was given the message that they were liked and likable.

When a child grows up to be confident and self-assured it's because the child's self-esteem was *consistently* nurtured by being understood, listened to and praised.

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## About Cheri DeMoss - Empowering Options

**C**heri DeMoss is Founder and Director of *EMPOWERING OPTIONS*®, an organization specializing in personal empowerment. For the past 17 years Cheri has been teaching others how to turn obstacles into options. Cheri's warm, innovative approach focuses on how learned shame and dysfunctional beliefs from childhood dictate our behaviors as adults. She creates a shame-free, completely supportive and positive environment where you can easily understand and explore the behavior patterns and ideas that no longer serve you.

In addition to working with individuals, groups and couples *EMPOWERING OPTIONS*® offers seminars, workshops, CD's, newsletters, and uniquely effective classes for couples. Cheri provides a safe, encouraging environment for clients to understand how these patterns shape our experiences in relationships, work situations, and our own self-esteem. She provides information, validation, and ideas that make it easier to create the changes you want.

Cheri maintains a private practice, as well as designs, produces and presents *EMPOWERING OPTIONS*® **Empower By Example** seminar series. Cheri also provides in-service training for school districts, and customizes workshops, classes & training seminars for mental health professionals and local communities. She provides consultation for a wide variety of businesses and presents at national and state conferences. Cheri and her associates conduct a full time private practice in Chicago.

The more information, the easier it is to see the options in our lives. Raising our esteem helps us feel safe in the world and reach our goals. For more information about relationships, parenting, new ideas, behaviors and options go to [www.EmpoweringOptions.com](http://www.EmpoweringOptions.com)

# Healthy Parenting Behaviors

By Cheri DeMoss

**H**ealthy parenting behaviors raise a child's self-esteem, create confidence and an identifiable sense of self-value.

Non-abusive, healthy parents teach children the emotional ropes (of life). When their child grows up and goes out into the world the child has a fairly clear idea of how things work. When the child makes a mistake the parents respond by providing accurate information. They don't blame the child for what they don't know.

Most parents have loving, caring intentions towards their child. However, it's not their intentions that do damage as much as their behaviors.

Aware parents strive to be healthy and functional by making their intentions and behaviors match. They make being honest, clear and congruent with their child a priority.

## Healthy Parents:

**Protect the Child.** They don't let abusive things happen to the child or let other adults do emotionally damaging things to the child. They give the child a sense of being protected - of being safe.

**Protect Themselves** from abusive situations. They role-model appropriate self caring behaviors and they don't expose themselves or the child to unsafe situa-

tions.

**Work at Knowing What They Feel.** By learning to recognize what they feel they teach the skill of recognizing and accepting feelings to their child. They talk openly about their feelings and allow the child to talk openly about theirs.

**Are Accountable for Their Behaviors** without being defensive. These parents don't deny the reality of their behaviors. They role-model non-defensive accountability because they know it will make their child feel emotionally safe in the world. It becomes a basic, daily way of being with their child.

**Validate Their Child's Perceptions.** Nurturing parents don't distort emotional, physical or intellectual reality in order to gain control of their child. They don't deny or manipulate the child's perceptions of the world.

**Let the Child Feel Esteem** at every opportunity. They look for ways to help the child feel a sense of personal power in the world. They allow the child to learn they can be separate people and that it is okay to say "no" to the parent and "yes" to themselves. This teaches the child to set healthy and effective boundaries with others. These parents let the child say their

wants and needs and work hard at meeting the child's needs the majority of the time.

**Encourage the Child** to control distance and touch with them and other adults and friends. They don't invade their child's physical, emotional or personal boundaries.

**Teach The Child** that making a mistake doesn't make the child a mistake. They role-model that mistakes are just thing that don't go as planned.

**Show the Child How to Think Thru Situations** instead of react to them. They teach the child life skills of money management, cooking, laundry and problem solving instead of problem dramatizing.

**Let the Child Know** they are responsible for their own feelings and actions but they *are not responsible* for other people's - including the parent's.

**Let the Child Get "It" Right** the majority of the time.

**Role-Model Healthy Functional Behaviors** so the child will grow up not only knowing the ropes (of life) but will have the ability to climb them.

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**D**id you know that children misbehave for specific reasons? Usually, it's in direct response to what a parent has just said or done. Often, parents are so preoccupied with their own thoughts, feelings and intentions that they're completely unaware of their emotional impact on their child.

The majority of the time there is a logic to a child behaviors. We may not recognize what the reason is but with a little objective observation and understanding we can figure out what is going on.

Children have a purpose when they interact with adults. They want understanding and guidance. They want to feel heard, accepted and liked. Children use a wide variety of behaviors to gives us the opportunity to understand what they are feeling.

When what they do makes adults uncomfortable we call it misbehaving. We can be more effective parents if we realize there is always an understandable need and reason to all children's behaviors.

**Inside . . .**

**Parenting Classes**  
**Building Your Child's Esteem**  
**Healthy Parenting**  
**If You've Got A Minute**

**Page 1**  
**Page 3**  
**Page 4**  
**Page 4**