

Teenage Self Esteem

Kids always hear grownups saying that the teenage years were the "best years of their lives". But, if adults would stop to think for just a minute, they'd remember that the teenage years were actually uncertain, trying times. Being a teenager is tough. Self-esteem hangs on a thread and egos can be crushed with one sharp look or snide remark. And then, remarkably, a new day dawns and the kid emerges, completely unscathed, from the ashes.

Such is the harrowing roller coaster of the teenage years.

Teenage self-esteem is a curious thing. One day they're feeling like the world's biggest loser, and the next day they're going to be the biggest rock star that ever lived. These self-esteem highs and lows are normal behaviours for average, overly dramatic teenagers.

This negative display can signify a serious problem, however, if the teen shows signs of low self-esteem over an extended period of time. Significant negative life changes like a breakup, pressures from friends and even acne or unintentional comments by respected adults, can make a teenage spiral into a dangerous decline of self-esteem. While the occasional dip in self-esteem is not unusual, you should be on the alert if it doesn't bounce back within a reasonable period of time.

If you think that your teen is suffering from low self-esteem, give him or her as much positive feedback as possible, without overdoing it. Teens are highly suspicious of most adults and will quickly disregard any "over the top" comments. No one likes to be patronized, especially teens. Keep your comments honest and within reason. Don't try to butter your teen up with blatant lies, just continue to offer positive comments whenever possible. Your teenager will likely ignore your comment, but you can be sure that they will get the message and appreciate your opinion. Teens will listen; they just won't let you know that they're listening.

Another way to bolster your teenager's self esteem is to give him or her the opportunity to experience new activities. Everyone needs to be good at something, and teenagers need to prove their worth to themselves, and their peers. Allow your teen to take part in sports teams, music lessons, art classes, drama clubs # whatever he or she shows interest in. When teens are busy with activities, they become open to positive reinforcement. These activities can help to build their self-esteem and keep it up.

If you have tried to bolster your teen's self esteem without success, or if he or she appears to become increasingly withdrawn, consider professional help. Find a counselor or social worker specializing in youth issues, and insist that your teen attend the sessions.

Helping your teen to develop positive self-esteem today will allow him or her the opportunity to grow into a self-confident and productive adult. Instill a "can do" attitude in your teen, and you'll both be pleased with far it will go.