



365 ways to Raise Confident kids

**Activities That Build Self-esteem,
Develop Character and Encourage Imagination**

Sheila Ellison & Barbara Ann Barnett

**“The ideas,
activities and
suggestions are
invaluable.”**

—*Creative Classroom*
magazine



365
ways
to
Raise
Confident
kids[★]

365
ways
to
Raise
Confident
kids

**Activities That Build Self-Esteem,
Develop Character and Encourage Imagination**

Sheila Ellison & Barbara Ann Barnett



SOURCEBOOKS, INC.[®]
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS

Copyright © 2006 by Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett

Cover design © 2006 by Sourcebooks, Inc.

Internal design © 2006 Sourcebooks, Inc.

Sourcebooks and the colophon are registered trademarks of Sourcebooks, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems—except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews—without permission in writing from its publisher, Sourcebooks, Inc.

All activities within this book are to be conducted with appropriate adult supervision. Care must be taken by parents and guardians to select activities that are appropriate for the age of the children. The authors and the publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any mishaps or damage caused, or alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly by the information contained in this book.

Published by Sourcebooks, Inc.

P.O. Box 372, Naperville, Illinois, 60566

(630) 961-3900

FAX: (630) 961-2168

www.sourcebooks.com

The Library of Congress has cataloged the previous edition as follows:

Ellison, Sheila.

365 ways to raise great kids / Sheila Ellison and Barbara Ann Barnett.

p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-1-4022-2989-3 ISBN-10: 1-4022-2989-5

1. Parent and child—Miscellanea. 2. Child rearing—Miscellanea. 3. Creative activities and seat work.

4. Family recreation. I. Barnett, Barbara Ann. II. Title.

HQ755.85.E46 1998

649.'1—dc21

98-216

CIP

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

LB 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Dedication

To all the caretakers of the world's children
in the hope that we can raise children who know who they are,
can say what they feel, and believe in all they can become.
And, to the many sources of inspiration to us in writing this book.

Sheila and Barbara Ann

Acknowledgments

I am especially grateful to my parents Nancy and Dave Maley for raising me with the belief that all people are valuable human beings, for believing in and teaching me the importance of caring for others, and for loving and encouraging me to believe in myself.

A heartfelt thanks to my publisher Dominique Raccah for her direction, insight, and belief in this book. To Todd Stocke, Renee Calomino, and Karen Bouris at Sourcebooks for their encouragement and hard work.

To the fifth graders in Tom Draggett's class at Ormondale School in Portola Valley, California, for their creative and wonderful illustrations.

Sheila

Contents

Part One: About Yourself. 1–51

Self-Esteem
Self-Motivation
Resourcefulness
Separate Time
Imagination

Part Two: Express Yourself . . 52–95

Feelings
Communication
Touch

Part Three: About Others . . 96–156

Caring
Friendship
Respect
Cooperation
Open to Change
Manners
Community Building

Part Four: Building Character 157–217

Courage
Truthing

Patience
Tolerance
Helpfulness
Responsibility
Discipline
Forgiveness

Part Five: Challenges 218–244

Times of Trouble
About Death

Part Six: Family Matters . . 245–330

Family History
Mom
Dad
Parent to Parent
Siblings
Older to Younger
Family Meetings

Part Seven: Having Fun Together. 331–365

Fun & Games
Humor
Traditions

Introduction

Parents spend their lives growing their children, guiding decisions, giving ideas, working through problems and modeling behaviors, hoping that someday their child will have gained the skills necessary to shine brightly out in the world on their own. We walk hand in hand down life's path teaching what we know, passing on what we believe, and communicating life's challenges until our children are ready to walk alone. Our love guides and encourages our children to find their most creative spirit, a spirit that believes it can soar.

Everything you do, everything you think, everything you believe and every action you take has an effect on how your child grows. It is not possible for a child to be better than the example you are setting. So as parents we have the most wonderful job on earth, that of shaping another human being simply by living each day. It is not about doing everything right, or knowing every listening skill, or using the correct form of discipline, or having all the knowledge—it is about wanting to. Just having the desire and making the effort to do the best you can is enough for your child to grow. Your child will feel your attitude. They will know that the person they become matters to you.

365 Ways to Raise Confident Kids is designed to help you find everyday ways to share what you believe, what you value, and what you think is important for your children to learn. This book will give you the tools you need to accomplish what all parents want: to raise bright, caring, honest, happy, respectful and creative children. The 365 activities will put in your hands a concrete, day-to-day guide for building character and teaching values and life skills which will improve life for everyone in the family. Each activity experienced becomes a seed planted in your child's mind that will blossom into a field of behaviors, strengthening your child for life.

The activities contained in this book can each be done individually. There is no need to do them in order, nor is it necessary to do one before understanding another. They are simple in form so they can be easily understood and put into action. You know your family and its needs better than anyone else. The best place to start is in an area of personal interest, or where you feel your family would most benefit. If you are unsure where to start, start at the beginning. As you experience the activities, you may come up with new ideas. Allow yourselves the freedom to expand and grow in your own direction.

The book is divided into seven parts. **Part One: About Yourself**, addresses the necessity of having a positive relationship with your self, which is essential in order to achieve happiness. It includes the concepts of self-esteem, self-motivation, resourcefulness, spending time alone, and developing imagination.

Part Two: Express Yourself, teaches ways to confidently and courageously express feelings, while at the same time working on the interpersonal communication skills needed to communicate effectively with others. The importance of positive, appreciative and affectionate touching as a means of non-verbal communication is also discussed.

Part Three: About Others, introduces ways to strengthen relationships with others as we begin to understand how to nurture those connections. The topics covered are caring for others, developing friendships, learning to respect others, cooperation, being open to change in our lives, having good manners, and reaching out into the community in a caring way.

Part Four: Building Character, is about developing specific character traits like courage, honesty, patience, tolerance, helpfulness, responsibility, discipline, and forgiveness. These are the personal building blocks that create human beings who have the innate ability to make positive contributions to our world.

Part Five: Challenges, helps us understand and accept the challenges and difficulties we all experience throughout life. Exposing children to activities on death and troubled times prepares them to remain unafraid, open, balanced, and close to the family when the hard times hit.

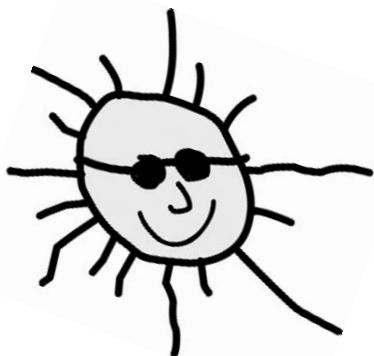
Part Six: Family Matters, is about family life. The activities will give each person the sense they are an important member of their family—a family that has a life, a history, shared experiences, meaningful connections, and a long, long future. Topics covered include family history, mom’s time, dad’s time, how parents relate to each other, sibling relationships, how older people relate to younger people, and how to have a family meeting.

Part Seven: Having Fun Together, reveals the secret to family members staying close to each other in their hearts—having fun together! If we can have fun and play games together, if we can laugh and develop a sense of humor, if we can build traditions that everyone enjoys, then we will have added the spice that makes all the effort worthwhile.

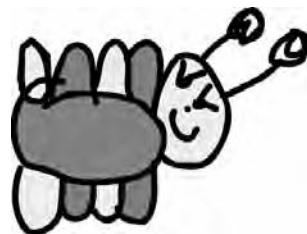
The activities are simply experiences you will share. Doing any ten activities from the book will positively change your family. Your children will see and experience you being a living example. As parents, you can tell your children how you think, you can moralize, and you can explain what you expect. But it is only when you demonstrate what you mean by how you live your life that you become an effective teacher. When they witness in your actions what you have been saying with your words, it changes them. The activities contained in this book will give you what you need to be an effective teacher.

The day a child enters our lives, our feet are placed upon the path that leads us on an enormous journey—one where there is no stopping, no turning back, and no bailing out. This journey lasts a lifetime. Every day we take a step forward in some direction. With each new adventure we learn new skills. When people begin a journey they do some planning. They usually have some sort

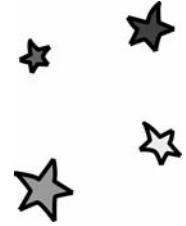
of guidebook that tells them where to go, what to look for, and how to get where they want to be. This book is intended to be used as a guidebook for parents who have courageously taken on the responsibility of shaping a child's life. Along the journey, when you least expect it, you will have moments when your heart beats with joy as you realize your child "got it." You will feel invincible in these moments, like all your dedication, love, and understanding meant something immeasurably valuable. And you'll be right.



Part One: About Yourself



Self-Esteem



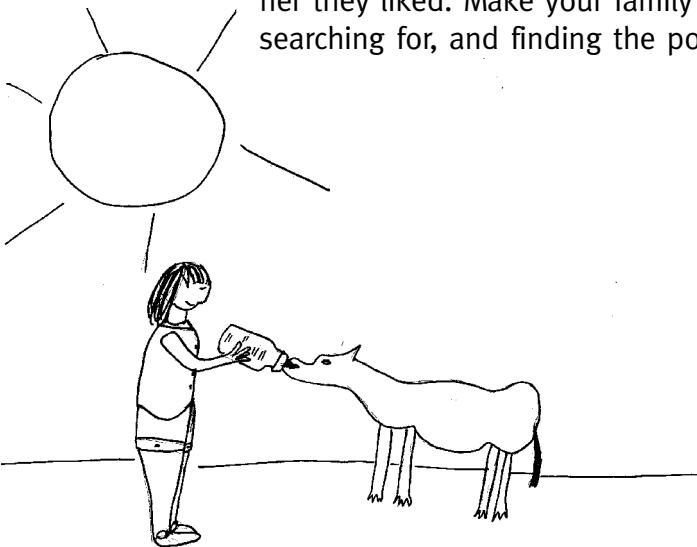
A child's self-esteem begins to be formed very early, and continues being created day by day. Self-esteem comes from learning to accept who we are by seeing the insufficiencies and still choosing to like ourselves. Every child's self-esteem grows with each experience of successful interaction, a job well done, a goal met, as well as through the positive words of the ones we love. Self-esteem doesn't depend on huge accomplishments. It depends on the small daily tasks that build a child's belief that they can handle their life and handle it well.

"We are the hero of our own story."
—Mary McCarthy



Feel Good Notebook

Buy each member of the family a small spiral-bound notebook or journal to write in. Each night after dinner or before bed, have everybody write six things in their journal that made them feel good that day. The idea is to focus on the positive experiences we all have. So often the bad or worrisome experience is remembered and the simple smile, the fun game at recess, the baby bird seen, or the laughter at a good joke, goes unnoticed. Feel free to share what has been written, or keep it private. If a child is too young to write, he could draw pictures or dictate to someone else. If nothing comes to mind, help him by bringing up the day's events: games played at pre-school, friends they walked home from school with, or a dinner they liked. Make your family one that spends each day searching for, and finding the positive.



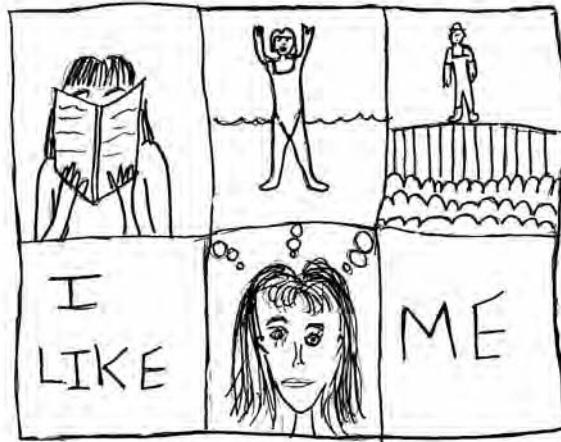
Outline the Good Qualities

Self-esteem is something that grows throughout a person's life. It is a belief in one's self, an ability to see the good qualities within, as well as a growing confidence in one's choices. Since children are so dependent on the attitude and opinion of their parents and siblings, the family is the first place where self-esteem starts to grow. Take the time to talk about each person's good qualities in a fun way. Draw an outline of each person's hand on separate pieces of paper. Take one hand at a time and talk about the person whose hand is drawn. What do they do well at? What do you like about them? How do they contribute to the family? What kind of qualities do they have? Write all these things inside and around the outlined hands. Do this with each family member, and when finished hang up each outline for everyone to see. If you think of additional qualities over time, feel free to add them to your drawings.



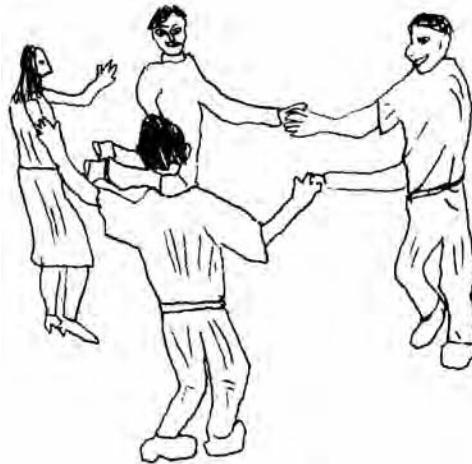
I Like Me Poster

Sometimes we focus so hard on the things we need to do, the new skills we are trying to learn, and the things that need improvement, that we lose sight of the great person we already are! Take the time to look at, and appreciate all the things you like to do, the friends you have, the person you have grown to be. Have everyone get a piece of poster board, scissors, glue stick, photographs, and old magazines. The idea is to make a poster that is all about you. Include anything you like. Feel free to write words, glue on pictures of friends, family, your hobbies and interests, or even a homework paper you were proud of. Each person can hang their poster up with pride! This project is for everyone to do together—it isn't just for the kids. Parents need to celebrate their good qualities too!



Circle Dance

Here's a way to start the day that will put everyone in a good mood! Get the family in a circle and hold hands. Start walking, running, hopping, or tiptoeing around in a circle and chant one of the following sentences at a time. The sentences should be things about your family that you all believe: we are loving, we are kind, we are smart, we have fun, we get along, we like to help, we are a team. The oldest person starts by saying one of these sentences, then everyone says it a few times together. Anyone can change the chant when they want, just make sure everyone says each chosen chant at least three times. Older kids (8 and up) may think this is stupid but younger kids think it's fun; they especially like to see their parents smiling and moving in a circle with them.



Giving Specific Complaints

So often when we tell someone they did something well we say it in general terms: you did a good job, you are a good mom, thanks for cleaning up, you are a good student. Play “Get Specific” some night after dinner. Each person will get a chance to be complimented by the family. Start by stating something very general and then become more and more specific. Here’s are some examples: you are a great dad; you cook great dinners; you make a great Mexican dinner; you cook the tortillas just right; you make all the right ingredients; you serve the best guacamole, etc. Here’s another example: you did a good job this morning; you made your bed without being asked; you got all the sheets folded under the mattress; you smoothed out the cover nicely; your stuffed animals were arranged so cute. Kids especially need to hear exactly what you liked about what they did, so they can repeat it!

