



Self-Concept, Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy

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During early childhood, children start to develop a **self-concept**. Between 18 and 30 months of age, they can begin to describe themselves as a boy or girl, happy, sad, taller/shorter than someone else. Much has been written and discussed about how children develop **self-esteem** -- a judgment of one's worth and the attributes, abilities, attitudes and values that help define it. It is understood that self-esteem comes from several sources: the relationship with parents and other family members, school ability, athletic ability, friendships, relationships with teachers, coaches and peers as well as from the child's own temperament.

Less is known or understood about **self-efficacy** -- the belief that one's own actions lead to outcomes. Parenting experts are now saying that self-efficacy is as important as self-esteem. For our children to develop their own sense of self-efficacy, they must have the experience of doing the thinking, planning, hoping, trial and error, dreaming and experiencing for themselves as they grow

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protect them and help them become perfect, happy human beings. Sometimes this over-parenting can have the opposite effect, leaving our kids unready for the world and life as adults.

Julie Lythcott-Haims, author and TED Talk speaker, served as the Dean of Freshmen and Undergraduate Advising for more than a decade at Stanford University. She says, "We have the very best of intentions, but when we over-help our children, we deprive them of the chance to learn these really important things that it turns out they need to learn to be prepared to be out in the world of work, to get an apartment, to make their way through an unfamiliar town, to interact with adults who aren't motivated by love." Her **a-ha** moment came in 2009 after telling parents at Stanford's freshman orientation to allow their kids to spread their wings, she came home for dinner and found herself cutting her 10-year-old son's meat.

"That's when I got the connection," she says. "When do you stop cutting their meat? When do you stop looking both ways for them as they cross the street? These are all things that we're doing to be helpful, protective and so on, but if you've sheltered your 18-year-old all the way up to 18 by doing all of those things, then they end up bewildered out in the world." To listen to Ms. Lythcott-Haims' TED Talk, click here

www.ted.com/talks/julie_lythcott_haims_how_to_raise_successful_kids_without_over_parenting

So, how do we as parents help our children to develop a strong self-concept, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy? It takes awareness, practice and intention on our part as parents and some tools that help us gain the skills we need. One important thing is to ask leading questions instead of telling our child the answer or what to do. Real Love with Greg Baer introduces the Law of Choice as a function of growth and an essential ingredient in any loving relationship. Love and Logic uses the concept of sharing control through choices. Examples are:

- "Would you like to leave the park now or in five minutes?"
- "Would you like to read the book before or after brushing your teeth?"
- "Do you want to do your homework now or in 30 minutes?"

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webinar series "**Raising Resilient, Happy, Successful Individuals**" that I will be facilitating beginning Monday, August 6 at 9 pm EST. The webinar will include skill practice, modeling and homework to be practice between sessions. For more information/to register, click [here](#). To make sure that you receive these weekly articles and updates, subscribe to my newsletter here eepurl.com/dAL0sz

