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Focus on the Good

Young people often receive judgment and evaluation, whether from school, extracurriculars, or their peers. As a caring adult, you have the power to help young people recognize their own strengths rather than their shortcomings. Take notice of what the young people in your life do well and celebrate the good things that they do. By focusing on the good things that young people are doing, you can help them feel better about themselves and encourage positive behavior. (2,3)



Know! to Appreciate Young People's Strengths

Young people are facing pressure from all around, which can lead to self-doubt and a lack of confidence. According to the Search Institute, "Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel that they have control over the things that happen to them" to succeed (1). Caring adults can support young people in overcoming self-doubt and believing in their own self-worth by remembering to appreciate and celebrate their strengths.

Use the following tips as a guide to appreciating young people's strengths in your day-to-day life.

Praise Authentically

For praise to feel earned, it needs to be authentic. Authentic praise is based on seeing young people for who they really are and recognizing who they can become based on their true selves. Show that you appreciate the young people in your life as they are by pointing out their strengths and good qualities, even when they are insecure. You can develop authentic praise by thinking of what makes you proud of your young person and focusing on their strengths and values rather than their achievements. By showing that you recognize the strength of their authentic selves, you can empower young people to believe in their own abilities and stay grounded in their values and identities. (2,4)

Recognize Successes without Ignoring Problems

Appreciating young people's strengths doesn't mean you have to ignore their mistakes. By knowing their good qualities, you can help young people change their behaviors without feeling ashamed. Young people often feel powerless or anxious when they make a mistake. You can address problem behaviors while building upon a point of strength, which allows young people to gain confidence in their ability to solve problems and change their behavior. For example, you might say, "I know you can make up with your best friend because you have acted compassionately and honestly at home with your siblings," to show your belief in their strengths instead of focusing solely on their problems. (4)

Celebrate their Efforts

Show young people that you appreciate their efforts, even if they don't always achieve the results that you are looking for. Celebrating working hard on a project, staying positive about a tough situation, or keeping up with practicing an instrument can encourage young people to continue their efforts and work towards their goals. Recognize when their hard work or persistence pays off, too. By connecting their actions to their goals, you reinforce their confidence in their own strengths without feeling like they are failures if they don't always succeed. (2,3)

Resources

[Effective Strategies to Boost Teen Confidence](https://parentandteen.com)
(parentandteen.com)

[Building Success from Strengths](https://parentandteen.com) (parentandteen.com)

[Celebrate Your Child's Strengths | ZERO TO THREE](#)

[Numbered sources are hyperlinked at the start of this document](#)

For additional Know! Prevention Tips for Everyone, scan the QR code:



Model

Positive Self-Talk

Remember that young people look to adults to learn how to treat themselves and others. Young people listen and pick up on the way you talk about yourself. In general, try to celebrate your own strengths and avoid speaking negatively about your own intelligence or abilities. By modeling positive self-talk, you can make a beneficial impact on the young people in your life and on yourself, too! (5)

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