

5-2015

Ways to Encourage and Build Your Child's Confidence

Susan E. Murray
Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs>

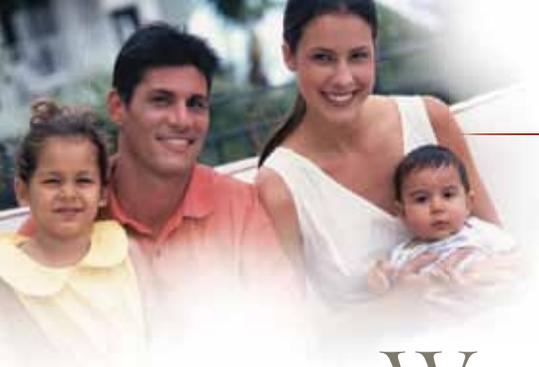


Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Murray, Susan E., "Ways to Encourage and Build Your Child's Confidence" (2015). *Lake Union Herald*. 71.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs/71>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Lake Union Herald at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Lake Union Herald by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.



Ways to Encourage and Build Your Child's Confidence

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

Children are the heritage of the Lord, and we are answerable to Him for our management of His property . . . In love, faith, and prayer let parents work for their households, until with joy they can come to God saying, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." —The Adventist Home, p. 159

Many years ago, Del Holbrook, then Family Life director for the Seventh-day Adventist world church, shared with me a most helpful way to look at myself and others. His view was that we could see ourselves as a three-legged stool. One leg he identified as our self-respect. He said it is who we see when we look in the mirror. Are we honest with ourselves and others? Are we appropriately proud of ourselves and our decisions? Or are we ashamed of how we treat others?

Another leg of the stool is our self-image. He identified that as how we think others see us. Do they see good in us, support us, and are we important in their lives?

The third leg is our self-worth. That's the gift God gives us. We can know we have great worth because his promises are in the Bible. Del told me that if our self-respect and our self-worth are intact when others hurt us and try to strip us of our worth and self-confidence, we can look in the mirror and see the other two legs of the stool standing strong, and we can still stand and be confident.

As parents, we can contribute greatly to our children's self-worth and self-image as they develop their own self-respect. There are many ways we can build self-confidence by the way we respond to them on a daily basis. For example, when your child seems overwhelmed, you might say, "You seem to have so much to do. In what ways can I help?" This response lets your child know you have confidence in him and are supportive of his challenges.

Other ways to build self-respect, self-image and self-worth are to focus on building, in loving ways, their character. Also, children love companionship. They yearn for sympathy and tenderness. They never should be neglected. That doesn't



mean parents should just give time and energy to amusing their children. Children need to build their own ingenuity and skills. One commitment that will reap rich rewards is to spend at least ten minutes alone with each child, doing what your child wants, every day. By your example, teach your child that promises are meant to be kept, and ask for their ideas to help you solve real problems.

Of course, our children can't be with us every minute of every day. That wouldn't be good for them or us. Children need to trust we will return to them and that they can be on their own. Consider using the same phrase each time you will be separated from your child. For example, "I am always with you even though we are apart. I am loving you and thinking of you, for I hold you in my heart."

Remember, children have goals and ambitions of their own. Ask them to share with you, and validate your child's many interests, recognizing that, with time and experience, those interests likely will change. Let that be okay. Even if an interest is short-lived, that does not negate its importance at that time. What a privilege to contribute to our children in these ways!

Susan E. Murray is a professor emerita of behavioral sciences at Andrews University, certified family life educator and licensed marriage and family therapist.