

Chapter 8: Improve self-esteem and confidence

How does our self-esteem develop? What changes in the brain as we become more/less confident? Does anything happen at all?

How to change self-esteem?

STEP 1: You need to understand how the brain works.



This is the **neuron**. Neurons (or nerve cells) are the fundamental units of our brain.

Neurons send information to each other through **synapses**.

When we learn something new, neurons send this information through synapses. When we practise something, the same information is sent repeatedly, letting the brain know that it is important.

In the same way that you can learn a new language, for example, **you can learn positive self-esteem**.

Using **affirmations**, we can teach our brains what we think about ourselves. Based on our thoughts, the brain will look for evidence of them in the external environment. Our inner thoughts will be reinforced by this evidence.

→ To summarise: **inner thoughts** are an important part of our self-esteem, and we have the power to direct them.

PAY ATTENTION (on possible signs of lower self-esteem):

- blaming others for their own mistakes,
- frequent mood swings,
- fear of failure,
- avoiding activities or talking about them,
- low motivation for different activities,
- negative self-talk,
- feeling that everyone else is better ...



Also, think about:

- Do students have separate school and leisure time during digital learning?
- How are their digital lessons delivered? Do they get feedback?
- Do they feel that they have learned something new from digital learning?

PRACTICAL ACTIVITY FOR PARENTS:

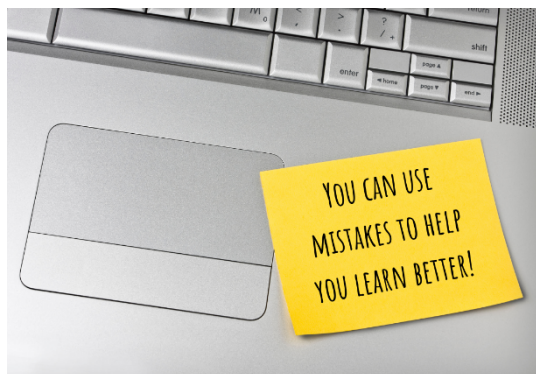
Each day, encourage your children to think about **what they are proud of that day**. Ask them if they have done a certain task well, learned something new, etc.

Even if the children felt that they had made mistakes all day, it was a learning experience for them. They can be proud of that too!

You can also make a **diary** to record your teen's proud moments and show them at the end of the month.

REMEMBER!

- Don't give them praise without justification. **Praise their effort** rather than just the fact that they are "good", "smart", etc.
- THE POWER OF "**NOT YET**": When students complain that they have not managed to do something, add "yet". That will give them greater confidence and a path into the future, that will create greater persistence.



An additional idea to foster motivation

(Which relates to student's confidence)

You can make up some motivational sentences with the students (e.g. about mistakes, effort, perseverance, etc.), write them on post-it notes, and stick them next to the computer.



P.S. Sometimes lower self-esteem or confidence can be unrelated to school. It can also be caused by social media. It is important to be aware of this and to deal with it in a growth mindset way (giving constructive feedback, learning from mistakes, searching for different strategies to cope with a situation ...).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

- 📄 Self Esteem and Your Brain: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-GTvAADkWM>
- 📄 The power of yet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-swZaKN2Ic>
- 📄 Lessons on Self Confidence from a Teenager: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZ05M1UhPrY>
- 📄 The Confidence Project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S43i0SCYw74>

Text from the infographic:

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