



Power of Respect Q&A: "Empowering"



The Power of Respect: Empowering

"...empowering my youngest daughter."

"In this column the reader is offered practical, respectful options leading to win-win solutions to the problems arising between adults and children in everyday life."

Q: “I’m very interested in empowering my youngest daughter. Do you have any suggestions?”

L.L., Redway

A: It can be easy for a younger child to develop low self-esteem because everyone else in the family seems to be more capable, stronger, faster, since these qualities are often valued: “Let me do that. I can do it faster and we’re in a hurry.” “You can’t play. You’re too little.” “That’s too heavy for you.”

If you have found this to be the case in your family, you can help her by noticing what she does do well.

Point this out to her and encourage her to do these things even if it takes longer or is not done quite “right”:

- “I love it when you are so kind to our kitties.”
- “Thanks for weeding the flower bed.”
- “It helps a lot when you put all your dirty clothes in the hamper. Thanks.”

She may not notice what she does well and may not give herself credit. She may value herself as the ‘baby’ in the family, being weak and letting others have power over her and her life.

Encourage her to do what she loves; help create these opportunities for her. When she wants to try new things, be as positive and supportive as possible.

If you say anything at all about it, be sure to be encouraging. Place emphasis on the attempt, the process, and not the results.

- “That was a great try.”
- “Your throwing arm seems to be stronger than it was last week. Keep up the good work.”
- “We all make mistakes, especially when we’re learning something new. Mistakes tell us what we need to change to do it better.”

Results improve with practice, with repetition, with improving our technique. When value is placed on results, too often we become discouraged and quit when our first attempts don’t give the results we want.

Be sure you practice win-win solutions faithfully with her, take the time, make the effort. This tells her that she is worth this time and effort and that you value her input and her needs.

When a decision involves her, be sure she agrees with it too. This might mean that she is involved in the decision-making process, though not necessarily.

If you do make a decision which involves her without discussing it with her first, perhaps letting her know what went into the decision will be enough to make her feel good about it.

However, if she is not content with the decision, be prepared to revise it until it is agreeable to both of you.

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