

# Additional Notes and Content

## Keeping the Bad Stuff Out and the Good Stuff In: Garden of the Mind

Have you ever noticed how sometimes a garden has a fence around it? Why does it have a fence? Well, it's there to keep the bad stuff out and the good stuff in, right? This is what fences are for, this is what boundaries are for, keeping the good in and the bad out. When we want abundant produce we prepare the soil, pull the weeds and throw them out, and plant the seeds of the good things we want to see, feel, smell, and taste.

Your mind is like this garden, too. Except sometimes we get confused and keep the good thoughts out and the bad in. Tend the garden of your mind carefully, pull the weeds of negative, fearful, and unhelpful thoughts, and throw them outside the fence. Plant the seeds of your dreams and hopes, thoughts that feel good, by taking a few moments daily to reflect on your dreams and imagine them coming true in as much detail as you can.

If a drought comes give them more water. If a freeze comes don't lie in a bed of weeds and despair, pull out those weeds and plant some new seeds. Keep it up and you can't help but be successful living in the garden of your dreams.

## Faith

Have faith the seeds will grow with your care and produce fruit and flowers.

## Planting Seeds

How to plant seeds 101- Dream Book

How to make your dreams come true in ten minutes a day:

Get yourself a book you really like with blank pages in it. Start writing your dreams, one per page. Draw symbols or images to go with each dream, or paste in a photograph, or go to google images and pick and print an image sized for the dream page it goes with. Review your dreams and study the images each morning when you wake up and each night right before you go to sleep.

Your **self-esteem** is how you think about yourself and helps determine your resiliency to stress and frustration. I think we should query our children about what they are good at and what other people would like about them, and help them build up their self image in positive ways. I like to make a t-chart, listing strengths on one side and weaknesses or things to work on placed on the other side. Many children who come to see me in my office can only think of a zero to two good things about themselves, and some refuse to admit to having any shortcomings or things to work on at all.

Those that won't discuss their shortcomings are suffering from a weak sense of self-esteem, and are defending themselves with denial. Children who feel they are generally worthy and good don't exhibit such difficulties with admitting they have some weaknesses as well.

We can help them create a list of what is good about them, and each night before bed or during dinner we can ask them to tell us three things they did well or are proud of about their day and what they did, and we can review their better qualities. This can help them develop a habit of noticing the good things rather than having a negative focus. We all do much better when we are confident and think good things about ourselves rather than being plagued by self-doubt. "I got stuck on my Math homework but I am learning to handle frustration, take a break, and try again until I succeed."

We can teach them to think this way about their day and their challenges so they form healthy thinking habits and good feelings about themselves!

My video "Self-talk, Self-esteem, and Self-control" will show you more about how to do this, and give you games, techniques, and resources to help you help the children you care about.

### **Signs of Low Self-esteem:**

Self-blame, self-criticism, learned helplessness, won't try anything new, passive, withdrawn, depressed, overly clingy, anxious and frustrated over challenges, takes abuse from others, poor response to "no," needs to win every time, controlling, "I can't do anything right," "I'm no good," puts others down through guilt, blame, shame, faultfinding, won't ask for help

### **Self-defeating ways of coping with self-esteem:**

- Quitting
- Avoiding
- Clowning
- Controlling
- Aggressive bullying
- Denying
- Rushing through work

### **Mr. Rogers story:**

Its you I like,  
its not the things you wear,  
its not the way you do your hair-  
but its you I like, the way you are right now,  
the way down deep inside you-  
not the things that hide you.

### **How do we learn to put ourselves down?**

- Forbidding gestures, child gets spanked or scolded and for awhile knows they are bad
- As a child, rejection by a parent threatens your life!
- So it can be very deeply felt
- Part of you still believes you are bad every time someone gets angry with you

### **Obstacles to good self-esteem:**

- The internal critic- why do we listen?
- Reinforcing; if we don't try, we can't fail
- Parenting errors
- Thinking errors, called cognitive distortions
- Faulty and negative core beliefs
- Parents are the most powerful, let's talk about that first

### **Five factors that determine the intensity of not-ok feelings:**

1. The degree to which behavior is labeled as a moral issue- low grades are a sin rather than a sign that skills need to be taught "bad choices"
2. How much parents fail to separate behavior from identity- you're a bad girl when you hit your sister
3. Frequency of forbidding gestures- repeated phrases like "what's the matter with you" teach "I'm not okay."
4. Consistency of forbidding gestures- if you get in trouble sometimes for a behavior but other times its allowed, teaches its not the behavior but you that's bad
5. How often forbidding gestures were tied to parent anger or withdrawal- "your bad, I'm rejecting you"

Protections are how you try to deny or control a situation you perceive as threatening.

### **How do you try to control your children?**

Hitting/spanking, taking responsibility for others, Yelling, pouting, Criticism, silent treatment, Shaking head, anger, Irritation, explaining, Accusing, Lecturing/moralizing, Sarcasm, blaming, Illness, disapproving sighs/looks, Lying/withholding truth, blaming or poor me tears, Complaining, convincing, Judgment, talking child out of their feelings, Analyzing, put-downs, Interrogating, telling, feelings

### **How else do you try to control your child?**

Being indispensable, superior attitude, Self-righteous, temper tantrums, False flattery, angry withdrawal, Gifts with strings attached, arguing, Threats of: \_\_\_\_\_

Financial withdrawal, exposure to others, Emotional withdrawal, illness, Violence, You will never be successful unless you \_\_\_\_\_

### **Beliefs to Question:**

The only way to get them to do what I want is to make them  
When I know I'm right, it's loving to control my children  
My attempts to control my children will earn respect and love  
I can hide my control so they don't know they are being manipulated  
My anger just happens, I have no control over it  
Controlling children teaches responsibility  
Being angry is loving if it's for their own good  
Sometimes it's necessary to yell or hit to get them to behave  
I should never let them see me frightened or hurt  
Parents are always right  
There are no good reasons for children to be disrespectful

**Beliefs about Protections:**

Our protections will get us what we want  
They work to avoid pain  
It's possible to be protected and still be loving  
You can be protected and open to learning at the same time  
It's possible to be protected and feel happy, loved, and adequate  
Being unprotected leaves me too vulnerable  
If I'm open and loving, people will take advantage of me  
Being soft and open is being weak.  
People will think less of me.  
Being protected feels good  
Being protected is really taking care of myself

## **How do you shut down or ignore to protect yourself?**

Work  
Tv  
Gambling  
Drugs  
Alcohol  
Reading  
Hobbies  
Friends  
Sports  
Sleep  
Food  
Illness  
Meditation  
Spending  
Fantasizing  
Spacing Out  
Money  
Rumination

When self-esteem is too high: parenting may be too permissive, we can create entitlement...

### **Beliefs to Question:**

Going along with what my kids want ensures their love for me  
I can avoid problems if I give myself up  
Giving myself up doesn't lower my self-esteem  
Love requires you to do things you don't want to do  
Giving in is a good way to resolve conflicts  
If I don't comply they won't love me  
I can't be myself and be loved by them  
Good parents comply to make their children happy  
Complying is more loving than any other protection  
I can shut down my feelings and still have a loving relationship with my children

### **Signs of Healthy Self-esteem:**

Enjoys socializing, tolerates errors, smiles readily, realistic, optimistic, confident, feel they belong in their family, flexible problem-solvers, can fail and try again, can ask for help, can deal with not getting their way all the time, shares control with others, willing to try new things

### **Ways to Build Self-esteem:**

- Teach to talk back to the critic
- Guided visualization and daily practice
- Parents as mirrors and models

- Look at the whole child
- Psychoeducation
- See the behavior as an effort to meet a need, and help them learn how to meet the need
- Find what they excel at and build the ability
- Ignore some minor misbehaviors
- Listen to your child actively
- Accept their negative feelings
- How to praise and correct- don't attack
- Autonomy
- Make a list of what you are good at
- Review 3 things you were proud of
- Self-talk

### **Cognitive Distortions**

These are faulty or incorrect ways of thinking. By noticing and writing down your thoughts right before or during a time you are upset, you can begin to realize how often you bother yourself with your thoughts. Then you can either stop the thoughts, refuse to believe them, or replace them with thoughts that are more accurate, realistic, and helpful.

1. Overgeneralization- Nobody cares, everybody hates me, watch out for words like never, always, can't everybody, nobody, have to, all.
2. Global labeling- All lawyers are greedy, I'm stupid, life is a rat-race, it's hopeless.
3. Filtering- ignoring the good and focusing on the negative
4. Polarized thinking or extremism- it's all black or it's all white, if I make one mistake I'm no good, one strike and your out, if I don't win this time then I'm a failure.
5. Self-blame- makes you think that every time things go wrong it must be your fault. Characterized by excessive apologizing.
6. Personalization- you think that others are blaming you for what they don't like. When someone complains, you get defensive.
7. Mind reading- You think you know what others are thinking, it's about you, and it's bad.
8. Control fallacy- You think you are responsible for everything, you think you have to make others follow rules or do the right thing.
9. Emotional reasoning- You think your feelings are facts and they characterize you and your life- just because you feel bad at the moment, your whole life is bad.

10. Heaven's reward- you think you are supposed to be rewarded for living right, and maybe you think anybody who breaks the rules should be punished, that the universe is supposed to make life fair.

### **Incorrect or irrational core beliefs:**

- “I must do well and win approval for my performance or else I rate as a rotten person.”
- “Others must treat me considerately and kindly and precisely the way I want them to treat me if they don't society and the universe must severely blame, damn, and punish them for being inconsiderate.”

*“Conditions under which I live must be arranged so that I get practically everything I want comfortably, quickly, and easily and so I get nothing that I don't want.”*

- Albert Ellis

### **Irrational beliefs held by children:**

- It's awful if others don't like me.
- I'm bad if I make a mistake.
- Everything should go my way.
- I should always get what I want.
- Things should come easy to me.
- The world should be fair and bad people must be punished.
- I shouldn't show my feelings.
- Adults should be perfect.
- There's only one right answer.
- I must win!
- I shouldn't have to wait for anything.
- It's my parents fault if I'm not happy.
- I can't help it that's just the way I am.
- It's better to avoid challenges than to risk failure.
- I can't stand to be criticized.

### **Teaching Self-Control**

- Self-monitor
- Self-evaluate
- Self-reward

Prevents the adult from becoming the discriminating stimuli, where the adult signals the time to act right, preserves behavioral improvement after the adult/rewards are withdrawn

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## Self Talk, Self Esteem, and Emotional Control Resources

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