



FRIENDSHIP

Inspire your child to feel good about themselves so they can have healthy relationships with others.

Inspire (motivate, stir, instigate, encourage enthuse, move and arouse) your child to feel good about themselves so they can have healthy (fit, well, strong, vigorous, good for you, beneficial, nourishing and wholesome) relationships (dealings, associations, interactions, contact) with others.

Your child knows about themselves and values themselves based on how you value them...or should I say based on the way they perceive you to value them. They learn a lot about friendship by the way you and they interact. This is then transferred to their other relationships.

- If you don't like yourself, it is harder to like other people.
- If you don't feel good about yourself, it will be harder to feel good towards others.
- If you don't feel kindly towards yourself, it's difficult to feel kindly towards others.
- If you don't forgive yourself, perhaps you will not forgive others.

Interacting with others provides opportunities to:

- Learn about yourself, your personality, your strong points and weak points.
- Learn that other people feel the same way you do and that sometimes others experience life in different ways than you do.
- View you as somebody that other people like and get along well with.
- Find out that other people need to have their turn and conversely, they need to allow you to have a turn.
- To tell secrets and keep secrets. You come to understand the importance of 'trust'.
- Explore who we are and to relate to others.
- Understand that friendship in a group is completely different to friendship one-on-one...and different again from group to group.
- To learn that some days things will go well and some days, things will not go well.
- To learn that friendship can be put the test and can end abruptly.

There is one thing for certain that your child will need to be able to deal with in every 'friendship situation', and that is 'themselves'. The only person they could possibly control and manage is themselves.

Friendships need to be built just like a house is built.

1. A foundation has to be laid.

There has to be a foundation for something to be built on, so it withstands upheavals and pressure from within and without. Your child needs to go into friendships with confidence in themselves.

2. A blueprint is of course consulted.

Your children need to see examples of what they are building and they need to understand that there is a set of laws of human nature that govern how the friendships will turn out. Just like the laws of physics. Parents need to learn how to provide these examples and reinforce behaviour that is consistent with positive outcomes for their child.

3. You will need to equip your child with the tools they need to have healthy relationships:

- Playing fairly
- Waiting
- Taking turns
- Being able to listen
- Being able to express feelings and ideas
- Confidence in themselves
- Space to play
- Time to play
- Guidelines about what is acceptable play (climbing on the roof might not be acceptable)
- Toys, stationery, games etc.

4. It is important that your child has the right materials for building relationships.

- Relating this to preparing your child for friendship, the materials are what you have to work with. So if waiting is a tool, then the material includes being able to occupy yourself while waiting, having appropriate thoughts and understanding about the waiting (a child needs to know for sure that when mommy is finished with the baby, she will pay attention to them).
- They need to be able to recognize that at times, they too keep people waiting and always appreciate it when others do so happily, rather than with a temper.
- Also, think about whether a builder would even start to build a building if they thought the materials that they had to work with were inferior. They can know that they make mistakes, but must equally come to realize that does not make them inferior.

5. A builder reviews, observes and reflects on the progress of the building as it gets built.

- Without the ability to look at a building project objectively and to honestly measure or hold to a standard the work that has been done, a builder would not be able to build a reputation as a builder, much less, a house.
- One of the most important things you can teach your child is how to 'reflect' on their own behaviours, thoughts and feelings.

- Start by initiating 'reflecting' conversations before bedtime. If you just tell your child that you noticed they didn't share nicely today, they will defend themselves. So keep in mind that they need to be able to reflect on their own actions safely and securely in the knowledge that even if they did not measure up in some way, it is not the end of the world, you still love them and they can fix it tomorrow.

So these are some ways that you can inspire (motivate, stir, instigate, encourage enthuse, move and arouse) your child to feel good about themselves so they can have healthy (fit, well, strong, vigorous, good for you, beneficial, nourishing and wholesome) relationships (dealings, associations, interactions, contact) with others.

So here's to your willingness, no matter the age or stage of your child, to build them up, make them confident, allow them to feel good even when making mistakes and to help them build healthy and happy relationships with other people!

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