Helping Your Teenage Daughter Love Who She Is

In a world where daily comparison is the default setting, girls are struggling with accepting who they are, what they look like and what is ‘normal’.

I am so grateful that social media didn’t exist when I was a teenager, because I was already comparing my hair, my body, my athletic ability and grades daily.

Having worked with thousands of young people and professional women, the same theme comes up - they don’t feel ‘enough’ in some capacity. Not ‘pretty enough’, ‘good enough’, funny enough’, ‘smart enough’, ‘sporty enough’, the list goes on.

But I say, ‘enough is enough’!

It’s time to help teenage girls realise that they have everything they need, to live a fulfilled and joyful life, where their voice matters.

One thing that holds us all back from being who we truly are and doing what we want to do, is the fear of what others think.

But when we truly like who we are, the opinions of others become far less impactful.

Here are some of my top tips for supporting your daughter in this process of liking, and dare I say, loving herself.

If you can do them together, they are even more powerful!

Create a compliment, praise and achievement log:

Find a really lovely notebook that your daughter will want to open.

Every time she achieves something or receives a compliment or praise, encourage her to make a note of it. It is too easy to focus on what we need to improve, rather than what is already going well.

But when we get into the habit of spotting the positive, it increases confidence, self worth and our ability to take in that praise, rather than dismissing and forgetting about it.

The mirror of positivity

The mirror can become a prompt for that mean girl in our heads to voice her opinions. So, turn the mirror into a place of positivity. On Post-it notes, write the things that you love about your daughter, for example, that she is funny, smart, kind, loving, generous, hard working, has a great smile or beautiful eyes. Then stick these to her mirror. This way, she will regularly be reminding herself of what makes her special.

As Taylor Swift would say, shake it off!

Moving your body literally shakes off negative feelings, and what better way is there than putting on your favourite song and dancing like no one is watching?

The Kindness Checklist

Helping others makes us feel good. Incorporating kindness into our daily life feels good and acts as a reminder that we are a good person.

Together, challenge yourself to do one of these things each day/week and discuss how you did it at dinner or at school pick up.

1. Give someone a compliment
2. Offer to help someone
3. If you see someone alone, ask if they would like to sit with you
4. Ask someone how they are
5. Open the door for someone
6. Let someone go in front of you in a queue
7. Make someone a gift or card

Social Media Clean Up

Go through your social media together and remove/block/delete any profiles that make you feel bad. Social media can be a really interesting and fun place to be, but only when it is full of the right profiles. Get into the habit of ‘unfollowing’ anything that makes you compare or feel sad.

Wear things that make you feel good

What we wear can affect the way we feel about ourselves. Encourage your daughter to go through her wardrobe and remove things she doesn’t feel suit her or fit her.

It might be that she could do a clothes swap with her friend, so that you don’t have to buy new clothes.

A smaller wardrobe that she feels good in, coupled with wearing things you’d ordinarily save for ‘best’, is a simple way to inject joy into the everyday.

For more information on workshops for teen girls, contact Emily at emily@smallstepsbigvision.com