



# SELF-BELIEF. YOUR CHILD'S PASSPORT TO A LIFETIME OF SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS

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Do you have a child or adolescent who has self-doubts when it comes to friends, schoolwork, self-image or being able to cope with stress? These self-doubts may have grown in size as they navigate new challenges.

Let's be very clear on the importance of young people having strong amounts of self-belief. In some ways, self-belief more than native talent or ability determines destiny. Without self-belief, when faced with setbacks, mistakes and failure, our children change and lower their goals. And often they lack the commitment needed to stay the course.

We see that self-belief is needed by children in three areas:

**Emotional Life** - we want our children to believe they can manage their emotions and avoid negative emotions (worry, anger, feeling down) when faced with adversity or faced with frustrating events and people.

**Social Life** - we want our children to feel confident and to expect to be able to make friends, work well with others and solve problems without conflict.

**Work Life** - we want our children to believe they have what it takes to be a successful learner especially when engaging with challenging, difficult learning tasks.

When my two kids were growing up, I noticed that from time-to-time their lack of self-belief was holding them back. For example, my son who loved playing football was not chosen for the starting team because he appeared to his coach to lack confidence. There was no question my son was doubting himself and whether he was good enough. We worked on this together. Over the next few weeks, he boosted his self-belief, secured a place on the starting team and kicked a goal.

Here are some things I have learnt as a parent and psychologist that parents can say and do to develop self-belief in their children.

Place a tick next to those actions you can take that can help strengthen your children's belief in themselves.

- The most powerful influence over your children's self-belief are their success experiences - especially in areas of difficulty and challenge. Make sure what is expected of your children is realistic and that they experience success - even if it requires sustained, maximum effort.
- For developing self-belief surrounding challenging schoolwork, help them set short-term goals and to achieve each one-by-one.
- Share with your children your own obstacles and efforts to accomplish something in your own life. Talk about how important it is for you to believe in yourself that you have what it takes to be successful.
- Do not compare your children's achievements. Let them follow their own pace.
- Continuously communicate the message to your children that they have capable brains that are always growing. Explain that the more they try hard and use their brains, the smarter they get. And teach them the way to think when they are having difficulty doing anything: "I can't do this - YET."
- Teach your children that they have a choice in the way they think about challenging learning tasks and stressful situations they have with people. They can think "I can't do this and never will" or they can think "I have done hard things in the past, I cope and be successful tomorrow."
- To help your children believe they have what it takes to manage stress about schoolwork or friends, teach them to shift from a negative to a positive mood by finding something fun to do, relaxing or talking the issue out with someone they trust.
- Provide children with positive feedback for times when they have stayed calm and managed their emotions in stressful situations.
- When you see one of your children has not performed at a level consistent with expectations, continue to insist that they persist in trying to do their best work.
- Have your children create learning diaries or construct success trees where they record and celebrate small and big successes especially when: 1. they have learnt difficult academic content and 2. they were able to stay calm and calm down when faced with challenging learning tasks and difficult people.

Helping young people believe in themselves is the basis of our education program, You Can Do It! Education.

After many years strengthening self-belief in people of all ages, it continues to help both Patricia and I get through any bad patches, it gives us the courage to be ourselves and to keep trying to do our best. You Can Do It! Education has helped our children and the many, many, many young people who have participated in YCDI! programs at their schools. Self-belief is not a guarantee that you will be successful in everything you attempt. Rather it is an energising force that helps you to have a go, to not be afraid when the going gets tough, and to believe in yourself. What can be more powerful than that - and needed more than ever before by our children!

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### **For more information on You Can Do It! Education**

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