

***BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR
LUTHERAN SCHOOL
PRESENTS:
PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC***

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Self-Concept

I'm not held back because of what I can't do. I'm held back because of what I'm afraid I can't do. More often, I am held back because of my fear that I might fail, and as a result, I might not like myself. That's called lack of self-esteem.

Our self-concept rules our lives. It sometimes works as a wonderful encourager and sometimes as a tyrannical dictator, controlling almost every move we make, it talks to us constantly, "You can do it. Go for it!" Or, "Not me. I could never do that."

Our self-concept lives at the subconscious level of thinking, over which we have little control. It grew there when we were little children and continues to grow and change with every new experience. The subconscious mind stores every experience just like a computer.

However, computers have no ability to decide right from wrong, fact from fiction. Everything stored in the computer later comes out as fact. In computerland this is known as "garbage in, garbage out."

Our subconscious mind does the same thing. It cannot tell the difference between things we vividly imagine and things that really happen. As a result, everything that is stored comes out as fact, even when the original source is imagination or misunderstanding.

A youngster's mind is especially receptive to what is going on in his or her world. The self-concept computer

is not firmly set. Therefore, children are easily influenced by the messages they think they hear from their parents and teachers. We can help children store positive or negative messages. We do the best job of this, not through our words, but through our actions.

Parents and teachers who constantly encourage children to decide between two alternatives teach children to think for themselves. They send powerful messages that imply, "You are so smart that I can allow you to think for yourself." This action also implies, "I can trust you to know what is good for you."

Wise parents usually suggest two choices in a manner that allow them to be happy with either choice. An example of this is: "Our car will be leaving for town in 20 minutes. Are you going to wear your coat or carry it? It's your choice."

Some parents give order, such as "You wear your coat or else!" This sends a "**you're dumb**" message. After a period of time these parents discover using too many orders has caused their child's low self-concept.

A child's self-concept is the sum total of all the "**you're smart**" messages he or she hears minus all the "**you're dumb**" messages. Hopefully, our actions send more positive messages than negative ones.

Kids Look at Our Actions to Learn Who They Are