

Four diverse children (two girls and two boys) are smiling and holding a large white sign. They are wearing colorful t-shirts (yellow, red, blue, green) and jeans. The background is a light, abstract shape.

# **How To Build Self Esteem In Your Child Through Martial Arts**

A Gift for Friends and Family of U.S. Martial Arts

[www.USMartialArts.org](http://www.USMartialArts.org)

# Table of Contents

## Part I

### How to Build Self Esteem in Your Child through Martial Arts

Respected Role Models

Giving the Child Attention

Discipline

Responsibility

Recognition

Promoting Feelings of Success

## Part II

### What does our school have to do with Self Esteem?

The Lesson of Respect

Communication and Attention

Discipline

Responsibilities

Recognition and Praise

Success

## Part III

### Self Esteem Checklist

## Part I

# How to Build Self Esteem in Your Child Through Martial Arts

Self-esteem is the way we feel and think about ourselves. Webster's dictionary defines it as "a confidence and satisfaction in oneself... belief in oneself [and] self-respect". Self-esteem affects everything we do in our lives. Healthy self-esteem promotes a positive "Yes I Can" attitude, as opposed to a defeatist attitude of "No I Can't". Nowhere is this concept more important than in the life of a young child.

Children begin life helpless and dependent on their caregivers. In order to grow up to be happy and productive, they cannot stay that way. They must learn that they have a degree of control over their environment, and eventually, that they have more and more control over their own lives. They have to learn to have an attitude conducive to successful interaction with

everything and everyone around them. They must learn to believe in

Unfortunately, too many children today worry about failure. They doubt their strengths, feel insecure, unfocused, are overly critical of themselves, and often don't believe that they can achieve the best in



life if they put themselves to the task. Poor self-esteem ends up negatively affecting everything they think, say, or do.

On the other hand, children who feel good about themselves will produce positive results. Helping your children grow up with strong character and self-esteem is arguably the most important task of parenthood. The child with good self-esteem has the best chance of becoming a successful and happy adult. Fortunately, self-esteem can be dramatically improved in a child who, with the guidance and encouragement of his parents, commits himself to the task of personal self-development.

### **Respected Role Models**

Self-esteem is the armor that helps protect kids from the demons of life: alcohol, gangs, drugs, and destructive behavior. There are several things parents can do to instill and nurture a sense of self-esteem within their child. First, the parents themselves need to feel good about themselves, for children pick up on subtle messages about their own self worth from your body language and the way you talk about yourself. If you are often openly self-critical in front of a child, he will learn to be self-critical. Because parents have preeminent importance in a child's life, and children model after their parents. By clearly demonstrating your own self worth, your child will respect you and learn to respect himself.

## **Giving the Child Attention**

An important way you can teach your child his own value is by listening to him. When you listen to someone and give him or her your full attention, you in effect are telling them that you value them and what they have to say, and that they are important to you. Allow your child to express how he feels, and let your child finish what he is saying before offering your point of view. The child will learn by example to listen to others the same way you listen to him.

## **Discipline**

Another important factor contributing to a child's self esteem is discipline. Discipline can be described as any instruction or training that corrects or molds a person's mental faculties and moral character. Children raised without discipline have lower self-esteem and tend to be more dependent, achieve less, and feel that they have less control over their world. Proper discipline can be the means of creating a safe, supportive environment where learning can take place.

Discipline begins with a good relationship between the parent and child, in which the child knows exactly what is expected of him, and knows that the consequences of misbehaving are reasonable and predictable. Children need and want to know what is expected of them. They thrive on the image of themselves achieving that expectation. They anticipate the approval they will receive. It is this expectation and approval that motivates a child to learn to read or to learn the multiplication tables. And not only does approval motivate a child, it also gives him something to take along with him: **A sense of being worthy.**

## Responsibility

Responsibility is the next key ingredient to healthy self-esteem. It is a great boost to self-esteem to feel that a person can contribute, and that the contribution is important. Added responsibility increases the confidence a child has in his ability to make it in the world. Responsibility requires

goal setting, and sets the foundation for the achievement of goals, which feels good.

## Recognition

Parents should note their child's abilities, talents, skills, and interests, and find occasion to frequently praise the child. Give your child the opportunity to show his ability. Display the work your child has done, such as paintings, stories, and trophies. Doing this will reinforce your child's positive behavior.



Make sure that the praise is honest. For example, if your child did well recently on a math test, but is usually in the middle of the grade curve, don't tell him he is the best math student in his class; do tell him how proud you are of how well he did on the test. Kids are more perceptive than we adults sometimes give them credit for. In giving your child honest praise, he will learn to value his talents and to see himself as a capable person. By seeing your child in a positive way, he also learns to see himself in a positive way.

Even when a child is struggling with one or more areas in his life, if he has confidence in himself, he can still feel OK in spite of the difficulty. He knows he has talents and that he should take pride in these and gain strength from them.

## Promoting Feelings of Success

Finally, promote feelings of confidence and success. When a child learns something new or faces a challenge and succeeds, his self-esteem grows. Provide the conditions that will encourage your child to try new experiences. Make sure the child knows what to expect out of the experience. Let him practice the skills that will help him in the endeavor. Have patience with him, and allow him to proceed at his own pace in anything new. Pressure to perform before a child is ready may make him feel intimidated. Let the child know it is OK to fail, as long as he tries his very best, and let him know that with most things, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again."



## Part II

# What does our school have to do with Self Esteem?

### The Lesson of Respect

One of the early lessons that your child will learn at our school is that of respect. The child is taught to respect the instructor as well as the other students, the school and himself. He learns that even opponents preparing to engage in combat can respect one another. Having good role models is important in the development of a child. Martial arts training starts as a relationship between the child and the instructor, a respected adult role model, who lets the child know exactly what is expected of him. Children strive to meet the expectations that people they look up to have for them. When a child accomplishes these expectations he feels capable and valuable nurturing his self esteem.

### Communication and Attention

At our school our instructor's job includes communicating with the students on their progress. The instructor spends time focusing on the individual needs of each student so that individual progress is made. In addition, our school is a wonderful place for your child to meet new friends with similar interests. It is a great environment in which children can practice communication and social skills.

### Discipline

In martial arts training, discipline is also an important ingredient. It takes discipline to consistently focus on improving one's skill. It takes discipline to consistently come to practice and to concentrate on the work. Martial arts focus on positive action and the accomplishments of mental as well as physical feats. It is the philosophy of martial arts that both the body and the mind must be disciplined in order to overcome the obstacles that hinder



one's growth. Discipline is essential to developing healthy self-esteem. Another benefit that comes from this disciplined approach is the improved ability to concentrate on achieving a goal. This increased concentration carries over into other areas of the child's life, including higher performance in school work and team sports.

## **Responsibilities**

In addition, as a child gains in rank in our school system, other students begin to look to him for guidance. He learns to feel confident in his abilities. He learns to effectively communicate what he knows to others and makes new friends. Although mastering a martial art can be fun and rewarding, it is not easy. A martial art requires much preparation and practice. This value of preparation and practice instills a sense of responsibility in a child. Although martial art training takes place in a team atmosphere, it is essentially a sport of individual accomplishments. The student strives to improve his skill for his own benefit, and this reinforces the idea that he is an important and valuable person. The martial arts student is taught to identify his unique strengths, and take pride in them. One important side effect of responsibility is the realization that ultimately the individual alone makes the difference in how well he does in an endeavor. A sense of responsibility adds to the self-esteem of a child because he realizes that he is in control of his own behavior, that he can make a difference, and that the achievement of goals is possible when he applies himself to them. At our school, students take on many responsibilities. They are responsible for their own accomplishments, for showing up for practice on time, for eating right and taking care of their bodies, for their treatment of other students, and for picking up after themselves. When the child moves up in rank and earns the honor of the next belt color, he learns the valuable lesson that responsibility feels good! The belt is a sign of how much the student has advanced and how much hard work he has committed to the goal of moving forward in the art. It is a sign respected by the other students in the dojo. It is a proven positive reinforcement.

## Recognition and Praise

The need for approval and recognition from others is very important, especially for children. The job of our school instructor is to let the child know what is expected, and encourage the child with the knowledge that, although the goal of reaching the next belt level will require work and effort, it is attainable. The martial arts instructor is trained to effectively teach the art by rewarding students with the attention and recognition they need when they have accomplished a goal. Reinforcing positive behavior is essential for the proper development of both a child's positive behavior and self-esteem. The martial arts incorporate positive reinforcements into a program of self improvement based on a system of structured goals. The student learns to have confidence in himself, to praise himself, and to value his own efforts and talents. One of the more obvious benefits that come from practicing a martial art is the development of a healthy body and mind. Children who learn a martial art gain improved agility, balance, coordination, and reflexes.

And this translates into better performance in team sports. Sometimes children who before might have been passed over when it was time to choose teammates in a baseball game are now first round draft picks. Our school students more often than not see improvements in their grades at school and in the quality of their schoolwork. This provides the child with yet another area in which he can be proud of himself.

## Success

The true armor that our school gives to a person is the strength of self-esteem. Strong values make the child a stronger person. In martial arts he learns respect for others. He learns to avoid dangerous situations, yet feels confident in his ability to defend himself. He feels proud of his successes in the studio, on the field, and in the classroom. He learns to think positively, to have belief in his abilities, and to look forward to new challenges.



Training at our school provides the focus on goals, the methods to achieve them, the patience of learning skills one step at a time, and the positive reinforcements kids need. Our school can build your child's self-esteem, step by step, by improving his physical and mental abilities, teaching him discipline and responsibility, improving his social skills, and instilling a deep rooted confidence in his own abilities.

As parents, you want the best for your children. You want them to grow up to be good people, successful and happy. You want them to make friends and feel good about themselves. You want them to recognize their strengths, use their talents, and believe in their own ability to achieve what they want. When a child can take

pride in his actions and what he can accomplish, he gains a sense of direction and purpose, increased confidence, and improved feelings of self-esteem.

Our unique personal development curriculum and training is a structured, time-proven way to achieve all of these benefits. Your child will enjoy the training that instills these, and the values he learns now will be the ones he carries with him for the rest of his life! Stop by our school today and ask the instructor to “Arm your Child with Self Esteem!”

## Part III

### Self Esteem Checklist

- Does your child have a sense of security; coming from well defined and fairly enforced limits, and a loving environment?
- Does your child have a sense of being unique, talented, and of having potential in a certain area?
- Does your child have a sense of belonging (to the family, church, school, or group)?
- Does your child have a sense of focus and purpose?
- Does your child know the power of responsibility, goal setting and achievement?
- Does your child respect others and himself?
- Does your child have the independence and confidence necessary to make achievements on his own?
- Does your child know that you are there to support him when he needs you?
- Does your child know it's OK to fail, as long as he knows he did his best?

# Arm Your Child with Self Esteem.

Self-Esteem is your child's greatest weapon against adopting an unhealthy lifestyle. With positive self-esteem, they will have the courage and discipline to say "NO" to inappropriate activities.

Self-Esteem is also the cornerstone for building and maintaining a successful career.

At our school, we are experts at teaching and nurturing self-esteem in children for a healthy and happy life!



*Visit us at [www.USMartialArts.org](http://www.USMartialArts.org) for the best kids martial arts classes in your area!*