



Building your teen's character strengths

Character strengths such as self-regulation, perseverance and love of learning are not only the foundations of positive development, but are related to school success, life satisfaction and wellbeing.

You can play a key role in building your teenager's character strengths. Here are a couple of tips.

thankful
modesty
perseverance
good friend
leadership
courageous
forgiveness
fair
humour
optimistic
self-disciplined
honesty
open-minded
curious
kind
empathy
creative

Give meaningful and specific praise

When your child does something noteworthy, let them know by using comments that target the particular character strength shown.

You showed great leadership today when you encouraged your team to do their best even when they were down by 20 points.

I'm really proud of the way you supported your friend when they were being bullied by those other kids.

Telling me about your friends damaging the train seats took a lot of courage. I appreciate you being honest with me. It was a brave thing to do.

Help your teenager to recognise at least three of their character strengths

Sometimes teenagers can become focused more on what they can't do than what they can do. Tell your child the strengths that you know they have (be honest) and how these strengths make them the wonderful person they are. Ask your child if there is a strength that they would like to have and work out a plan together to help them start practising this strength more often. Encourage your child to recognise at least three strengths of their own.

Help your teenager recognise character strengths in others

Not only is it important that your child becomes aware of their own character strengths but they also need to recognise and acknowledge strengths in others. Try reading books or watching movies where strengths are used by the characters. Have conversations and ask questions to develop your child's awareness of the strengths shown by fictional and real-life characters. For example: *What strengths did the characters show? How did the characters use their strengths to overcome challenges and obstacles? How was this character like you? How was this character not like you? Would you like to be more like this character? Why?*