

Management Ideas



FOR STILL BETTER
RESULTS
RELATIONS
REPUTATION

a monthly newsletter to key executive-leaders
on practices, possibilities and ideas generally
for stepped up performance
edited by
N. H. ATTHREYA MA PhD
author, educator & consultant
on problem-solving and creative ideas

This issue is entirely devoted to
one key idea namely
SELF ESTEEM FOR NATION BUILDING

In September, 1987 (2091) we reported the setting up of a Task Force to Promote Self esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility by California State.

The Task Force has recently come out with the final report.

Our Readers may be interested in some of the findings of the Report. Hence the following extracts.

The findings make topical reading because of the big national "debate" that we have on how best to help the disadvantaged sections of our countrymen.

In our considered view, this topic is central to the present and future well being of our country. We can draw from and build on this significant work by our friends across the seas.

FROM THE PREFACE: Though this is the Task Force's final report, it is only a beginning, a substantial and encouraging beginning of an historic effort to discover and address the root causes of our major social concerns. We claim no panacea. We do claim success in initiating this effort. The self-esteem movement is alive and well and developing across our state and nation. It deserves our attention, commitment, and involvement.

The introductory section of the report outlines the assignment delivered to us, a synopsis of our findings and recommendations, and a statement of the vision which we see for California as a result of this project.

Succeeding sections build on each other:

- * Our definition of self-esteem (on which everything else in the report depends) with commentary
- * The key principles for murturing healthy self-esteem and personal and social responsibility, and, finally

* The recommendations and discussion in the areas of personal and social concern

The report's appendix, which appears in a separate volume, contains what we hope will be helpful lists: the world's most complete bibliography of resources on self-esteem, a listing of program resources available to the public, and a compilation of the contact persons for each of the country task forces.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: A precise understanding of what we mean when we speak of self esteem is crucial to this entire endeavor. The literature review conducted by the University of California on behalf of the Task Force was hindered by the lack of a generally accepted definition. Furthermore, the common public perception of self-esteem as a condition of highly individualistic narcissism has resulted in confusion and misunderstanding.

The Task Force adopted this as its official definition:

Appreciating my own worth and importance
and having the character to be accountable for myself
and to act responsibly toward others.

A full appreciation of the recommendations of the Task Force depends on an understanding of this definition. The basic meanings underlying the definition were expanded in a full discussion called key principles.

KEY PRINCIPLES: To fulfill the legislative mandate to compile research "regarding how healthy self-esteem is nurtured, harmed or reduced, and rehabilitated," the Task Force carefully developed a "Key Principles" document. Organized in sections which correspond to the primary elements in the definition, this document provides practical guidance to those who want a better understanding of self-esteem and how it is nurtured.

"Appreciating our Worth and Importance" involves accepting ourselves, setting realistic expectations, forgiving ourselves and others, taking risks, trusting, and expressing feelings. It also rests on appreciating our creativity, our minds, our bodies, and our spiritual beings.

"Appreciating the Worth and Importance of Others" means affirming each person's unique worth, giving personal attention, and demonstrating respect, acceptance, and support. This principle also means setting realistic expectations, providing a sensible structure, forgiving others, taking risks, appreciating the benefits of a multicultural society, accepting emotional expressions, and negotiating rather than being abusive.

"Affirming Accountability for Ourselves" requires taking responsibility for our decisions and actions, being a person of integrity, understanding and affirming our values, attending to our physical health, and taking responsibility for our actions as parents.

"Affirming our Responsibility Toward Others" means respecting the dignity of being human, encouraging independence, creating a sense of belonging, developing basic skills, providing physical support and safety, fostering a democratic environment, recognizing the balance between freedom and responsibility, balancing cooperation and competition, and serving humanity.

KEE FINDINGS:

- * Self-esteem is the likeliest candidate for a social vaccine, something that empowers us to live responsibly and that inoculates us against the lures of crime, violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse, chronic welfare dependency, and educational failure. The lack of self-esteem is central to most personal and social ills plaguing our state and nation as we approach the end of the twentieth century.
- * The family is the incubator of self-esteem and the most crucial social unit in a child's life and development. The early months and years of a child's life are the most decisive in establishing a solid base for authentic, abiding self-esteem and depth of personal character.
- * The parent's high self-esteem is vital to his or her ability to provide a healthy environment for the child. We need to extend great effort to assist parents to develop their own self-esteem and to become more knowledgeable, capable, and effective in nurturing children's positive self-esteem and personal responsibility.
- * Since children spend so much of their time in school, the environment of the school also plays a major role in the development of self-esteem. Schools that feature self-esteem as a clearly stated component of their goals, policies, and practices are more successful academically as well as in developing healthy self-esteem.
- * Experiencing our spiritual side is part of being human. Nourishing our spirit is necessary if we want healthy self-esteem.
- * Every person is potentially creative, and appreciating our creativity is crucial for healthy self-esteem.
- * Young people who are self-esteeming are less likely to become pregnant as teenagers.
- * People who esteem themselves are less likely to engage in destructive and self-destructive behavior, including child abuse, alcohol abuse, abuse of other drugs (legal and illegal), violence, crime, and so on. Without discounting the importance of those early years, people can achieve healthier self-esteem at any age. So information and opportunities for choosing to do so must be made available to citizens of all ages and circumstances. Again, it is not simply new knowledge that we need, but a new awareness of ourselves as we experience new kinds of affirmation and acceptance.
- * Regardless of age, race, creed, sex, or sexual orientation, an affirming environment in the home, school, workplace, and community is crucial for nurturing self-esteem. This is a personal and public responsibility that we need to recognize, accept, and undertake. The choice to esteem ourselves is also a decision for which each of us, ultimately, is personally responsible, no matter what our backgrounds may have been.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS: The Family, Teenage Pregnancy, and Child Abuse.

1. Develop a statewide media campaign to educate all Californians regarding the primary role of parents in the development of healthy self-esteem and of personal and social responsibility; and provide appropriate, culturally sensitive multilingual training in loving and effective ways to raise children.
2. The Legislature should recognize the profound and primary role of parents by funding and directing the State Department of Education to implement culturally sensitive and age-appropriate courses in parenting for students throughout their educational experience.

Education and Academic Failure

1. Every school district in California should adopt the promotion of self-esteem and of personal and social responsibility as a clearly stated goal, integrated into its total curriculum and informing all of its policies and operations.

School boards should establish policies and procedures that value staff members and students and serve to foster mutual respect, esteem, and cooperation.

2. Course work in self-esteem should be required for credentials and as a part of ongoing in-service training for all educators.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

1. Local officials should develop community-based substance abuse prevention councils that, in addition to overseeing local prevention efforts, simultaneously promote self-esteem and personal and social responsibility.
2. Expand and support treatment programs for substance abusers by replicating successful programs.

Crime and Violence

1. Establish a juvenile justice system that will develop personal responsibility in juvenile offenders by consistently imposing appropriate sanctions for every criminal act.
2. Support the replication of successful community-based juvenile delinquency prevention programs that foster respect, positive self-esteem, and personal and social responsibility.

Poverty and Chronic Welfare Dependency

1. Support and implement programs that assist long-term welfare recipients to grow in self-esteem and responsibility so they can move from the welfare rolls to independence.
2. Encourage and aid assistance programs, such as AFDC, to enable single parents to establish nurturing home environments by providing optional services, such as training for effective parenting, independent living skills, educational and vocational counseling, and child-care options.

The Workplace

1. Encourage the development of personnel policies and working conditions that promote self-esteem and personal and social responsibility in both the private and public sectors.
2. Public and private industry should institute policies to meet the changing needs of the American family; for example, jobsite child care, flextime work schedules, job sharing, and parental leave. Employers should be encouraged to implement programs, policies, and practices that ensure and esteeming environment for workers and their families.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF FORM

The Family, Teenage Pregnancy, and Child Abuse

1. Highlight the important role of parents through a media campaign.
2. Include child-rearing courses in the school curriculum.
3. Make courses on child rearing available to all.
4. Make self-esteem-enhancing child care available to all.
5. Provide health education for expectant mothers and fathers.
6. Provide self-esteem and responsibility training for all foster parents and institutional-care staff.
7. Reduce the number of teenage pregnancies through self-esteem training.
8. Provide family life programs for adolescents.
9. Provide programs to encourage responsibility of teenage fathers.
10. Provide support programs for parents at risk of abusing children.
11. Provide women's shelters that contain a self-esteem and responsibility component.

Education and Academic Failure

1. Self-esteem and responsibility must be woven into the total education program.
2. Educate every educator through pre-service and in-service training in self-esteem and responsibility.
3. Give students opportunities to do community service.
4. Formulate a real-life skills curriculum.
5. Promote more parent involvement.
6. Be sensitive to the needs of students at risk of failure.
7. Use the arts to help develop self-esteem and responsibility.
8. Expand counseling and peer counseling services for students.
9. Provide cooperative learning opportunities.
10. Reduce class size or student:adult ratios.
11. Implement programs to counteract bigotry and prejudice.

Drugs and Alcohol Abuse

1. Create prevention councils in every community.
2. Expand treatment programs.
3. Create culturally sensitive prevention strategies.
4. Educate parents.
5. Expand school prevention programs.
6. Encourage responsible media.

Crime and Violence

1. Hold juveniles accountable for crime.
2. Replicate programs that foster self-esteem and responsibility.
3. Combat gangs with self-esteem programs in schools.
4. Create community partnerships to develop after-school activities.
5. Establish self-esteem programs in correctional facilities.
6. Develop self-esteem programs for criminal justice agencies.
7. Provide self-management and coping skills for inmates.

8. Promote arts programs in institutional settings.
9. Establish community correctional facilities.

Poverty and Chronic Welfare Dependency

1. Support programs that assist long-terms welfare recipients towards independence.
2. Encourage programs that provide parents with the tools to be good parents.
3. Encourage programs that establish peer support groups.
4. Provide in-service self-esteem training to staff who work with welfare recipients.
5. Implement welfare reform programs that alter attitudes and enhance motivation.
6. Provide incentives for communities and business to work together to promote youth programs.

The Workplace

1. Promote affirming workplace environments.
2. Provide employer support for employee/parents and families.
3. Encourage more businesses to get involved in their communities.

Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible-the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.

Virginia Satir

No one can give self-esteem to anyone else. We can provide a supportive environment for personal growth, opportunities for successful experiences in goal-directed behavior, and productive roles for all citizens.

Mary Mallory

We sow a thought and reap an act; We sow an act and reap a habit; We sow a habit and reap a character; We sow a character and reap a destiny.

William Makepeace Thackeray

Let everything you do be done as if it makes a difference.

William James

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