



## Positive Identity Category of Developmental Assets

### Help young people bring out their best

The way people feel about themselves can fluctuate with circumstances. Depending on what's happening, you may feel confident or unsure, optimistic or pessimistic, in control or not in control. What's important is what a person's identity is like most of the time. People who have a strong, positive sense of self maintain these qualities even when difficulties arise. They continue to be hopeful and optimistic, and believe they can make a difference.

### Here are the facts

Research shows the more young people have a sense of power, purpose, worth, and promise, the more likely they are to grow up healthy. Search Institute has identified four assets in the Positive Identity category that are crucial for helping young people: Personal Power, Self-Esteem, Sense of Purpose, and Positive View of Personal Future.

### Tips for building these assets

Although identity is partially determined by genetics, adults can bring out the best in young people. The way you interact with young people helps them to feel loved or unloved, liked or disliked. Further, the ways you respond to successes, mistakes, actions, and words helps build a sense of either a positive or negative identity. Begin by supporting young people and showing them you care. A young person who feels loved, supported, and nurtured is more likely to feel good about herself or himself.

It's also important to help young people feel empowered by allowing them to experience self-reliance, responsibility, and opportunities to make meaningful contributions. Appreciate each person for who he or she is.

### Also try this

**In your home and family:** Have each family member answer these questions: What three things do you like about yourself? Why? Discuss the answers and different ways for each of you to help build one another's self-esteem.

**In your neighborhood and community:** Encourage local media to celebrate young people's successes in all kinds of activities—not just sports. When you see, hear, or read good things about a young person you know, write a note of congratulations to him or her.

**In your school or youth program:** Have young people create a life-planning portfolio that covers their experiences from the end of one school year to the beginning of the next school year, and include goals, dreams, and hopes. They can be an important tool for the student—and for teachers and program staff—to keep track of accomplishments and challenges.

Want to know more about Search Institute's other seven asset categories or the 40 Developmental Assets and ideas for helping young people build them? Visit [www.search-institute.org/assets](http://www.search-institute.org/assets).

Developmental Assets<sup>®</sup> are positive factors within young people, families, communities, schools, and other settings that research has found to be important in promoting the healthy development of young people.

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