

# Morning Sun Story

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Story Theme: "What I focus on grows."



- Ask the children to find the hidden hearts and critters in this story.

## Reticular Activating System in the Brain:

- Have you ever purchased a vehicle and while you are driving around you see the same vehicle brand again and again?

# What You Focus on Grows and the Reticular Activating System



- **Why do you think you noticed the same vehicle?**
- **This is your reticular activating system in action.**

The reticular activating system in the brain functions whether you know about it or not. It filters your thoughts, words and imagination bringing into your life whatever you are seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking about or believing.

- **Think about a time you were learning something new. You thought about it. You researched it. You practiced it.**
- **Anytime you practice something over and over you will get better at it. Through focused practice you learn a new concept or skill.**

## **Dr. Candace Pert, Neuroscientist and Pharmacologist:**

"Think of when you go to the gym and pump your muscles, it's the same with what you focus on, what you love, what you enjoy, what you are grateful for - the pleasure hormones increase - which then feeds energy to your organs and your whole physiology improves."



- **"What I focus on grows!"**

Ask yourself:

- **What do you think about during the day?**
- **Where do you focus your attention?**
- **Do you notice more negative or positive experiences?**

As adults learn about and understand the concept of, "What I focus on grows!" they can use this concept every day.

For example:

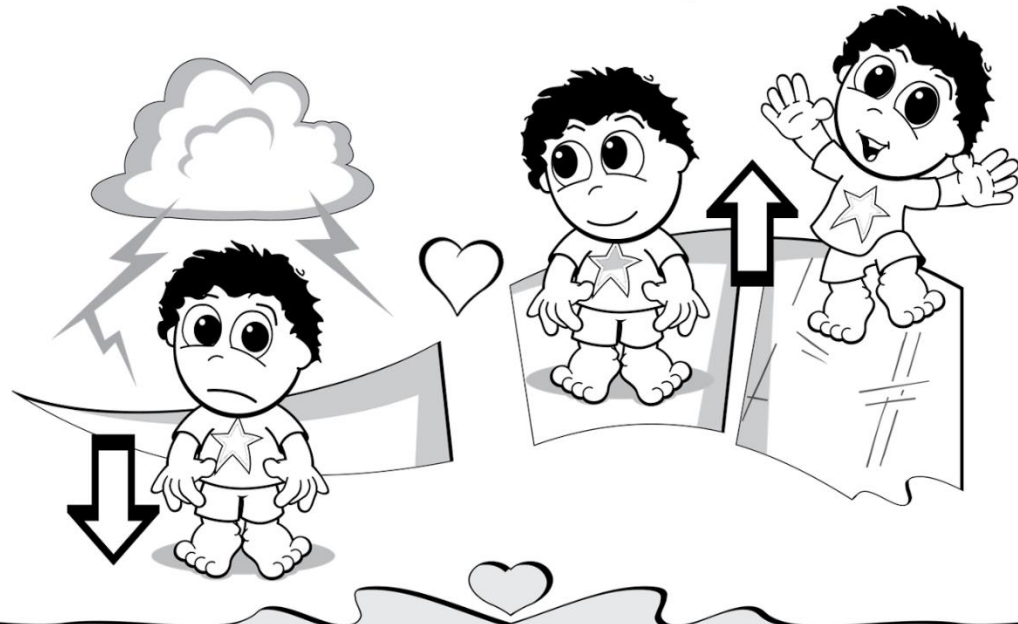
- **Think about a negative experience.**
- **How do you feel?**

It is important to breathe, feel, acknowledge, and accept all your feelings. Experiencing negative moments is totally normal. There are many ways to heal and release old painful feelings and experiences. Find a way that works best for you.

- **Think about a positive experience.**
- **How do you feel?**
- **Did you notice the difference between how you feel when you think about a negative experience versus how you feel when thinking about a positive experience?**

As you focus on moments when you feel a connection with others and everyone is kind and caring, you will feel good about that experience.

## What I focus on grows.



Encourage the children to take a slow, deep breath; feel the love in their heart and say the above statement with you.

## Babies and Young Children are like Sponges:

Babies do not have to know how to talk to learn. Children learn and grow through observing their environment.

- One thing we know about babies is that they listen. In fact, they are like sponges listening to everything that is spoken around them.



- **Babies and young children listen and learn language by hearing it.**

By the time babies are two years old, they often know their parents and caregivers better than their parents and caregivers know themselves. They have accomplished this by slowly building up their language skills.

Their parents and caregivers have been so busy running around looking after their family needs, while their baby has been observing them by watching, listening, and learning their language and absolutely everything about them. Babies and young children have learned how to put a smile on the parents' and caregivers' faces. They also know how to upset them.



## Subjective Perceptions:

What children observe, feel, and experience with their family, friends and at school during their daily experiences are based on their subjective perceptions.

Children's feelings are reflections of their inner thoughts, ideas, values, attitudes and beliefs about themselves.

- Children have built up a collection of negative and positive experiences. Each experience builds up evidence to prove they are right about whatever they think, feel and believe.
- However, it is all based on their subjective perceptions.

**Epigenetics & Environment**

Life experiences influence the way our genes express.  
Mina Park, Research Associate, & Dr. Michael Kobor, Associate Professor, Gene Research Centre, HELP, UBC

Negative stress behavior patterns imprint onto the DNA	Repetitive positive, loving, nurturing behavior patterns imprint onto the DNA
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Children's belief systems are well established by age 2.

Epigenetic patterns are reversible.

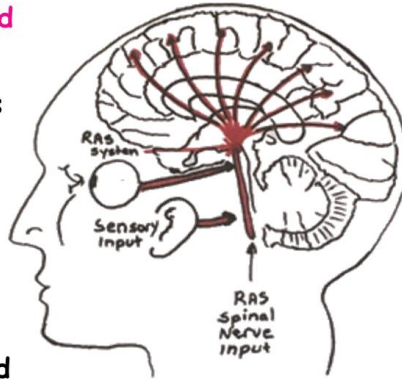
- The good news is that epigenetic patterns are reversible.

## Reticular Activating System

Whatever you think, believe, value or want, you will:

### Subconscious Mind

- ♥ Fast
- ♥ Makes no decisions
- ♥ Files and sorts information based on your subjective perception and your emotional response
- ♥ Creates beliefs and patterns from past experiences



### Conscious Mind

- ♥ Slower
- ♥ Makes decisions
- ♥ Believes it is right about what you believe
- ♥ Connects past experiences with new information.

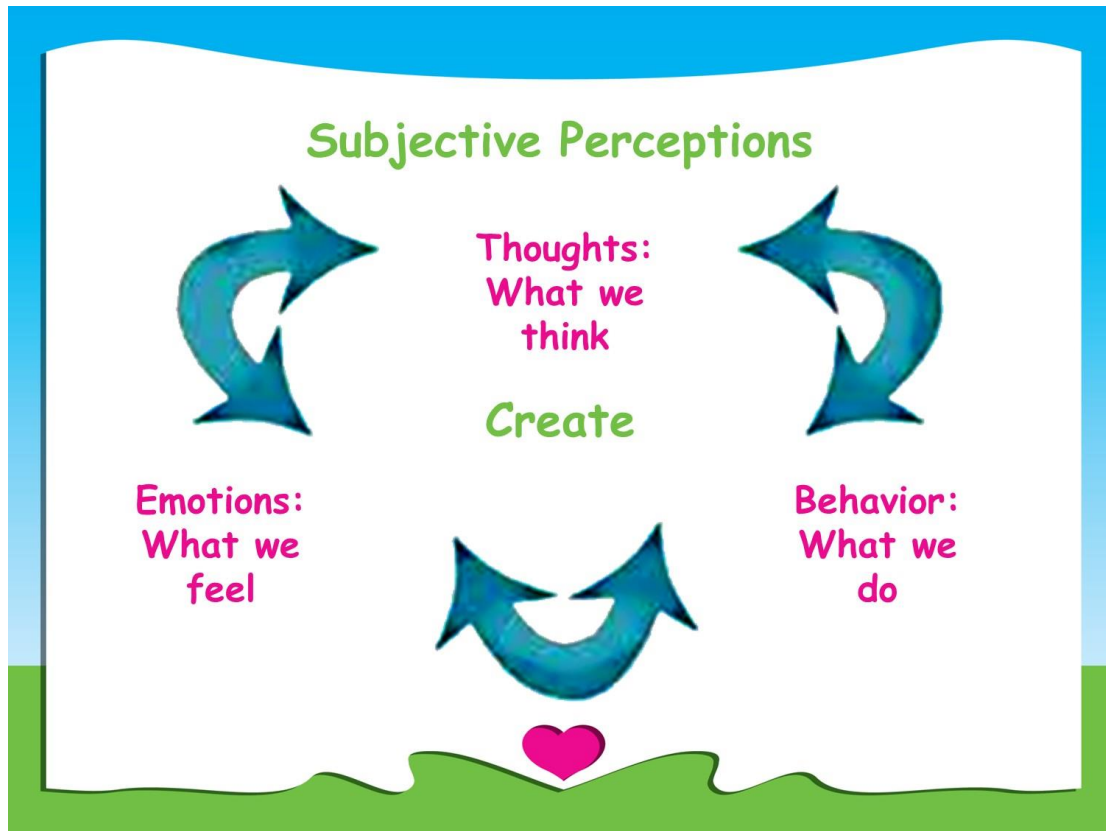
See it, hear it, and feel it.



- Whatever you think, believe, value, or want and you focus on it; you will see it, hear it and feel it!







## Question Subjective Negative Beliefs:

All behavior, even negative behavior, makes sense once we understand it.

When you are with children and negative thoughts, feelings and beliefs are uncovered, listen to understand what children are sharing with you.

- **Be patient as you encourage children to question what they are thinking and believing.**

For example, you can say:

- **"That may be how you see yourself, however, that's not what I see in you!"**
- **"That's not the you, I see."**



- **You can help children to gain a new perspective of themselves.**

## Repetitive Subjective Perceptions & Emotional Responses from Daily Experiences

### Question? Negative Beliefs

- ♥ I'm not good enough.
- ♥ No one likes me.
- ♥ No one cares.
- ♥ No one appreciates me.
- ♥ No one listens to me.
- ♥ There is something wrong with me.
- ♥ I don't belong.
- ♥ I feel disconnected.



### Create Positive Beliefs & Visions

- ♥ I accept my unique self.
- ♥ I am precious and lovable.
- ♥ I care about myself & others.
- ♥ I appreciate myself & others.
- ♥ I listen to understand myself.
- ♥ I am patient with myself.
- ♥ I have abilities & strengths.
- ♥ I belong.
- ♥ I feel connected.



This picture showing the list of negative beliefs is unfortunately, common for many children and adults.

Encourage children to turn their thoughts and beliefs around by asking the children to say:

- **"I used to believe I was not good enough."**
- **"I now believe in myself."**
- **"I accept myself."**

Ask the children:

- **“How does it feel to believe and accept yourself?”**

Ask the children to reinforce this idea:

- **Create a drawing of you believing and accepting yourself.**



If children are feeling no one likes them. Encourage the children to turn these thoughts and beliefs around with these statements.

- **“I used to believe no one liked me.”**
- **“I now believe I am likable.”**
- **“I am precious and lovable.”**

Ask the children:

- **“How does that feel to be likable, precious and lovable?”**

Ask the children to reinforce this idea:

- **Create a drawing of you being likable, precious and lovable.**



If children are feeling no one cares. Encourage the children to turn these thoughts and beliefs around.

- **“I used to feel no one cares.”**
- **“I now care about myself and others.”**

Ask the children:

- **“How does it feel to care about yourself and others?”**

Ask the children to reinforce this idea:

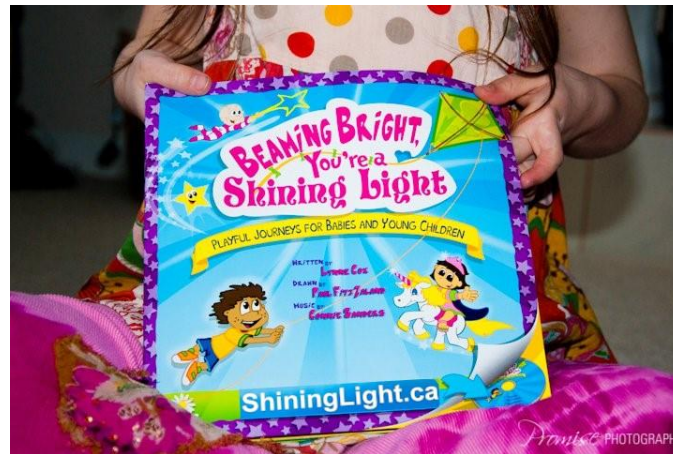
- **Create drawings of you caring about yourself and others.**



As children create new positive ideas and beliefs about themselves that are uplifting, kind and caring towards themselves, they will begin to see more and more evidence of these beliefs showing up. As this happens again and again this will help them to strengthen their new beliefs as they recognize their inner value and worthiness.

- **Children want to be loved, valued and feel significant. These are all attachment needs.**

Read stories that reinforce positive ideas and beliefs.



## Believing In Yourself:

Watching babies learn to walk is an inspiring experience. Think about a baby that has decided it is time to start walking. They have watched their parents walk and they believe they can too. They have created an "I Can Attitude." I can see and feel this baby's determination to walk.



Parents will see their baby use focused practice. They will begin by standing up and holding onto furniture. After much practice standing, they will start to walk around the furniture as they hold on.

When they have built up enough confidence, they will take the risk of letting go. Babies take steps, fall and yet have the courage to get right back up again. They will practice over and over again until they begin walking unsupported on their own.

Remind children:

- **Since you have learned how to walk, you already have determination, courage, and a strong belief in yourself.**



## **Bully Projection:**

- **Children who bully are projecting their feelings towards others.**

When a bully says something hurtful to a child.

Ask the child who has been bullied.

- **“Who is hurting you?” (the bully)**
- **“Who is saying something hurtful?” (the bully)**

Remind the child:

- **“This is not about you! It is about the child who is hurting you!” (the bully)**
- **Deep down it is about the bully's own insecurities, which are reflections of their inner thoughts, ideas, values, attitudes and beliefs about themselves.**

It is the bully that is feeling threatened, hurt, uncertain, misunderstood or alone.

Children who feel good about themselves do not need to put others down, or physically hurt those around them. Children who feel good about themselves are inspired to work together as a team.

## The First Trap:

Encourage children to ask for help if they are ever bullied.

Ask the child:

- **Can you tell me about what happened?**
- **The first trap happens when the child feels that what the bully is saying about them is true.**

This can reinforce a strong negative belief within the child.

Remind the child to:

- **Stop and breathe.**
- **Whatever the bully has said to you is hurtful and unkind.**
- **Remember this is how the bully feels about themselves. Just because they hurt you or are trying to hurt you with their words does not mean you need to accept their actions.**
- **Encourage the child to question what they are thinking and believing and turn it around.**

If the child feels embarrassed, shamed or guilty because they have been bullied, listen to understand them with compassion and empathy. Acknowledge all their feelings.

Review bully awareness strategies with the child.

- **Read inspiring stories of how young children who have been bullied and have made personal changes that have benefited them.**

Encourage children to do the activities from the Lesson Plans that help them to build confidence in themselves.

## **The Second Trap:**

- **The second trap is that as you focus on seeing negative behaviors, you will begin to see more and more of them.**

This does not mean that you ignore negative behavior. It is important to deal with negative behavior respectfully, and responsibly and then move on.

- **In life we will all experience the contrast between focusing on fun, positive things or negative things.**
- **What we focus on is a choice that only life experiences teach.**



## Principals' Workshop on Bullying:

### Bully-Proof Yourself

#### How to help defeat the bully problem without fighting

- **Avoidance**  
*Avoiding a difficult situation is the smart thing to do.*
- **Stay Safe**  
*Decide what you need to do to stay safe, then do it. Do not put yourself in harms way.*
- **Build Friendships**  
*Seek out and build friendships with people most like you. Having friends is one of the most powerful protectives against bullies.*



**Be part of the solution!!**

**Just say NO!!! to Bullying**

- **Use Authority**  
*Call someone in an authority position to help both you and the bully. Let the adult know that this is a real problem for you and you need help with it.*
- **Distraction**  
*If you see a bullying situation, try distracting either the bully or the victim. Ask him or her to get involved in some other activity with you.*
- **Don't Participate**  
*Don't give the bully an audience. If you can't do anything to help, don't watch — walk away and get help.*

The above is a bookmark from a Workshop on Bullying that I attended. A local school gave out a questionnaire at the beginning of the year to determine how the children felt and what they knew about bullying.

The school then spent several months educating children about bullying behavior. The children were then tested again.

- **What do you think happened?**
- **Did the bullying at this school increase or decrease?**
- **The bullying at this school increased significantly!**

Yes, there was more awareness and understanding about how to deal with bullying and the best actions to take. However, there was a significant increase in bullying behavior.

The school principal and teachers were undecided on what to do next. This was the opposite of the result that they were expecting. The principal and teachers then asked the question.

- **What do we want?**
- **The answer was, "Kind, caring and appreciative behavior."**
- **The principal and teachers went into action.**

They consistently acknowledged the children for kind, caring and appreciative behavior.

They gave out stickers and certificates and took pictures of the children and posted them on the walls when it was noticed that the children displayed kind, caring and appreciative behavior.



After several months they tested the children again.

- **What do you think happened?**
- **The bullying decreased significantly!**

The principal and teachers learned:

- **The importance of offering bully awareness while also focusing on the behaviors the teachers wanted to see.**
- **Focus on acknowledging the children when they display kind, caring and appreciative behavior.**
- **What they focused on grew!**

## A Positive Morning Activity:

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This fun singing activity helps children to start their day with a positive attitude.

- **I choose to be happy today,  
And I give myself a hug.  
I turn myself around,  
And all I see is love.  
In you, and you, and you ...  
And me!**

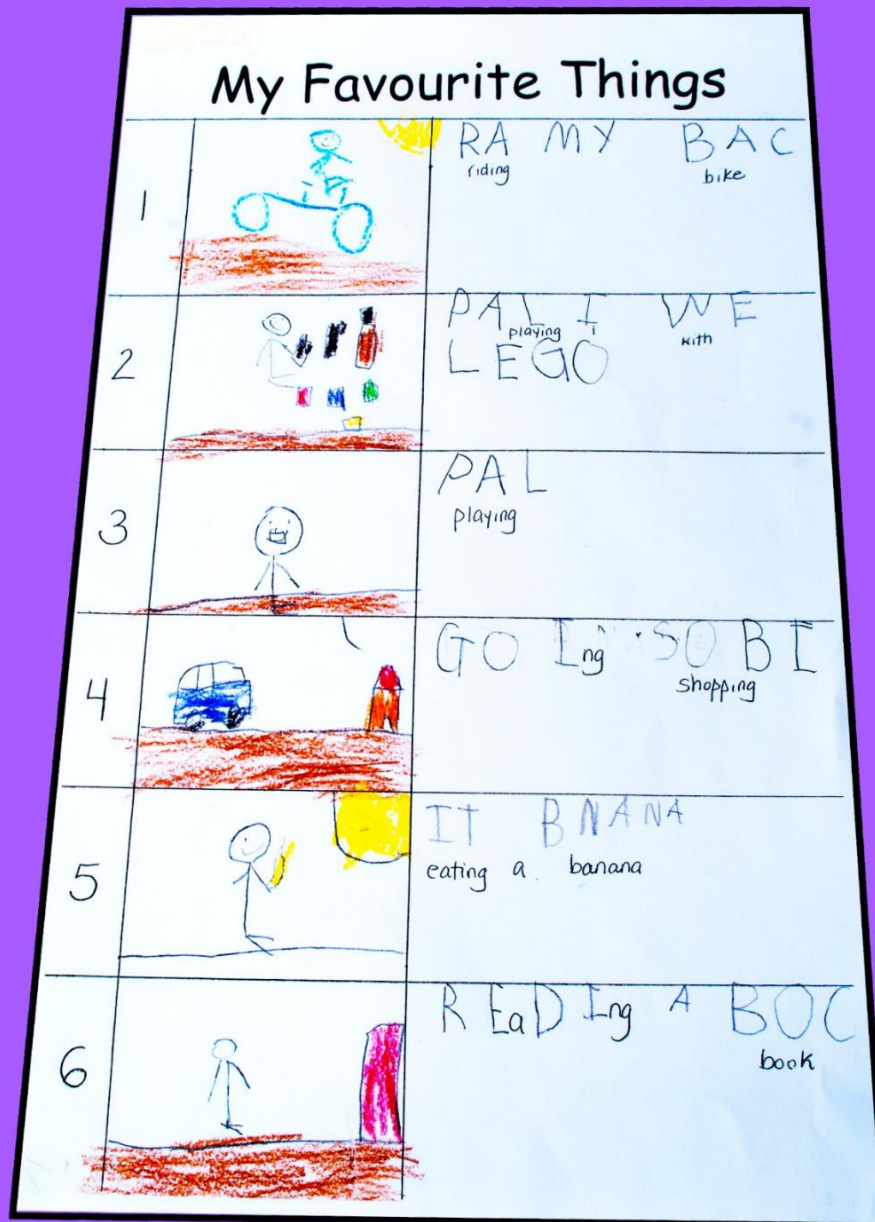


## Favorite Things You Love to Do Activity:

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The more children think about the things they love to do, the happier they feel.

- Create drawings of the favorite things you love to do.





**When I think happy thoughts,  
my happiness grows.**



Encourage the children to take a slow, deep breath; feel the love in their heart and say the above statement with you.

## **Change a Feeling Art Activity:**

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This activity offers children an opportunity to change their thinking and feelings.





When children were upset, they could sit in front of the pictures they had drawn. As they remembered going camping with their family or riding their bike, many children chose to feel better as they looked at the picture they had created. In this moment, they created a new moment for themselves.

By doing this activity children learned they can experience an upsetting moment and then by looking at their pictures the upsetting feelings at times would go away. They then chose to have happy, joyful feelings just by changing their thoughts.

Children learn and experience that their minds are powerful.

## Encouragement Activity:

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When it comes to children's behavior and the reticular activating system in the brain, as you focus on and model kind and caring attitudes you will be amazed at how quickly you will begin seeing and experiencing more of these behaviors in children.

Children who display challenging behavior need more encouragement. Take out your magnifying glass and watch for any sign of positive behavior. Share all the details of their positive behavior with the child.

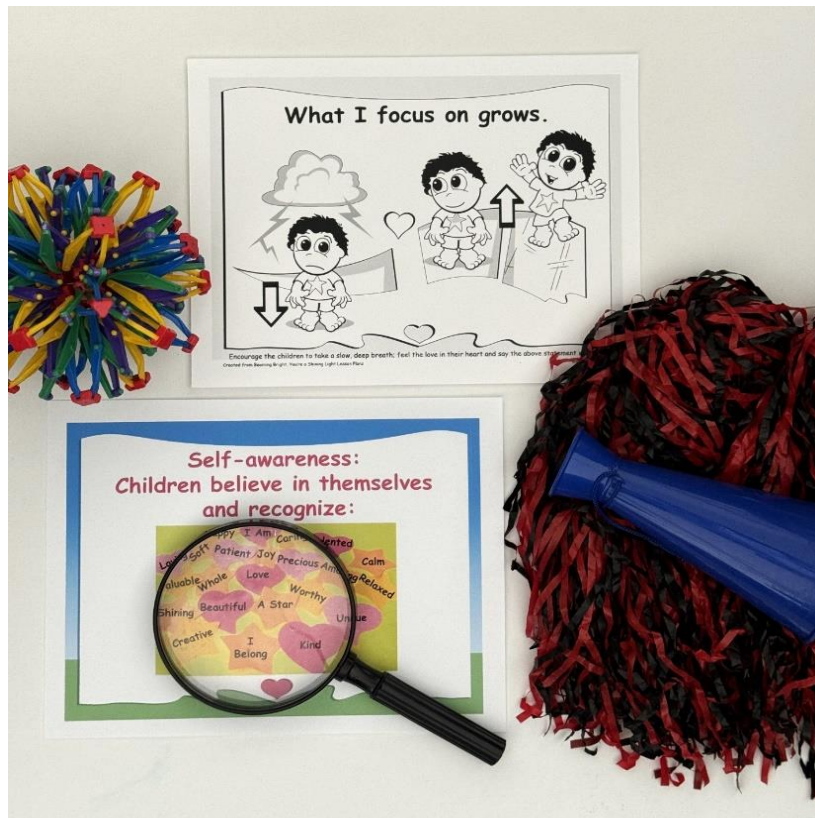
Be specific and give examples:

- **Billy, you were so helpful today. You quickly picked up all the craft paper that was scattered on the floor. I really appreciated your enthusiasm and help so much. Thank you, Billy.**
- **Sally, I noticed you throwing the ball to your partner in gym class. She caught it every time! You were smiling and laughing. It was a joy to watch you both.**

A wonderful way to help parents and children to gain new perspectives is to send positive notes or emails to the parents so they can then read them out loud to their children. Both the child and parent will feel uplifted and encouraged.



- **Encouragement helps children to believe in themselves and builds their self-esteem as they begin to recognize their worthiness and inner value.**



- **Become a child's cheerleader!**
- **Encourage what you want to see!**
- **Play and have fun together.**



## **Messages in the Garden:**

I was walking down a street past a local garden. In the garden children had painted stones with kind sayings.

- **Your footprints are filled with love!**
- **Smile, laugh and dance!**
- **You matter!**

Just a little gesture that touched my heart.

- **What you give to others is what will come back to you like a boomerang!**



- **Sometimes it comes back right away, and other times it takes a while to get back to you.**

## **A Kind, Caring & Sharing Activity:**

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Children are like sponges; they learn by observing others. As parents, teachers, and caregivers model kind and caring attitudes children experience friendly, thoughtful and accepting gestures.

Kindness may be communicated to children in several ways. Through empathy and understanding. Giving the child the benefit of the doubt in a situation or even being generous in some way.

As children experience acts of kindness as simple as a smile, or a kind word, it touches them in ways that feel good inside.

**I am kind and caring with  
myself and others.**



Encourage the children to take a slow, deep breath; feel the love in their heart and say the above statement with you.

- **Through repetition, children learn to accept kindness and share these good feelings of kindness with others. As both the giver and receiver they feel a deeper sense of belonging and are more confident.**

As children express kindness to others they are helping others to feel cherished, comforted and valued.

When children give a sincere "Thank You" to someone who has helped them, it offers a meaningful and lasting experience.

- **I appreciate and value what you did for me.**
- **Your help meant something to me.**



**Respect**  
**Means You:**

**Appreciate** **Compliment**

**Show Consideration For**

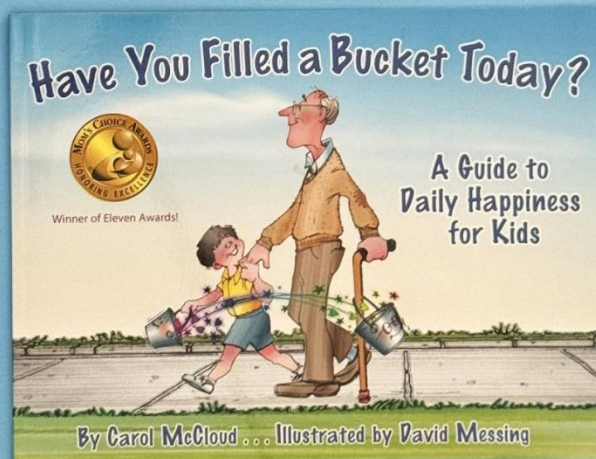
**Recognize** **Connection**

**Treasure** **Cherish** **Worthiness**

**Value** **Highly Regard** **Honor**







## A Touching School Principal Story:

The school principal wanted to connect with the kindergarten children so he came into their class at least once a day.

The children were talking with him about the Magic Sentences they were learning. They told him "When we say them, we feel good inside!"

However, one day they noticed that he was sad. After he left the classroom, they asked Shalini, "Why is he so sad today?" Shalini did not let on to the children, however she knew that he had just lost his brother. The children felt they needed to cheer him up.

- **"Let's cheer him up." they said.**

Shalini asked:

- **"How do you want to do that?"**

They decided to create cards for him using the exercises they had been having fun with. Each student drew him a picture and asked him to do the activity on the card they had created for him.

Examples of the activities included:

- **Say, "I am cool!"**
- **Blow a feather in the air.**
- **Make a silly face.**

They put the cards in a bag and then each day when the principal came in, he would take a card out of the bag, and he would do whatever was written on the card. The children loved his reaction as he opened their card and watched him as he looked at the pictures, read the message and did the activity with the class.

He created a bond with the children as he chose a new card from the bag. Each day he hung the card in his office. He said he looked forward to visiting the class as it was the most exciting part of his day. His comment to Shalini was, "This class has really helped me in many ways."

