

Women Teaching Girls

Interactive Training Modules

Good girls syndrome

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The Village Teacher

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The female brain
Girl-friendly classrooms
A girl's need for social interaction
Risk-taking and problem solving
Girls and difficult subjects
Good girls syndrome
Girls' confidence
Empowering girls
Teaching girls who struggle
Girls and exam anxiety
Girls who try too hard
Be an empowering teacher

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The Village Teacher
94 Greenwich Road Greenwich NSW 2065
Email: Michael@michaelauden.com.au
Web: www.thefemaleteacher.com

Good girls syndrome

The Good Girl walks a treacherous line, balancing mixed messages about how far she should go and how strong she should be: she wants to be enthusiastic while being quiet; smart with no opinions, intelligent but a follower, popular but selfless. She should be something, but not too much.

" Our culture is teaching girls to embrace a version of self that sharply curtails their power and potential. The pressure to be "Good" - unerringly nice, polite, modest and selfless – diminishes girls' authenticity and personal authority."

Rachel (Simmons – The Curse of the Good Girl) states that the Good Girl is socially and academically successful, smart and driven, pretty and kind. But she is also an individual who aims to please others, has no opinions of her own, and doesn't take risks. She represses what she really thinks and crucifies herself when she makes mistakes.

Girls' friendships are often intense, confusing, frustrating, and humiliating; the joy and security of 'best friendship' can be shattered by devastating breakups and betrayals. And beyond the pain in the moment, girls can develop patterns of behaviour and expectations for future relationships that stop them from becoming competent, authentic people who are capable of having healthy relationships with others as adults.

Girls absorb the cultural messages of what a girl should wear and own, and how she should conduct herself, and then they take that information and develop strict social hierarchies based on it.

Girls are three times more likely than boys to say they feel badly about themselves and are more likely to believe that others see them in a negative light. Also, negative body image is associated with suicide risk for girls, not for boys. (Surprise!)

Browse through any magazine or watch most sitcoms and it's hard to imagine that prestige, happiness, love and success are not directly linked to how much you weigh. The overwhelming presence of unachievable, unrealistic body shapes and sizes can wreak havoc with our self-image. If we let it.

Teenage girls rate magazines as the number one source of information regarding diet and health. Unfortunately, over the last twenty years, food, weight control and fitness articles and ads have increasingly attached a moral message...lack of control, laziness and self-indulgence...to their spiel.

So the next time you turn on Friends or thumb through Seventeen magazine and sigh about why you can't look more like whoever it is you're envying at the moment, remember, you live in the real world...she doesn't. Focus on the qualities you admire in real women. It's kindness, creativity, generosity, brains and a sense of humour that will get you where you want to go, not a 21-inch waist!

What's Your Self-Esteem?

Here's a quick way to find out how well your doing with self-esteem. It's not just about how you feel about your looks. It's much bigger than that. Take out a sheet of paper and get ready for the quiz... you'll see what we mean!

Write down the following words...

Beauty, Boys, Friends, Family, School, Challenges

Now, on a scale of 1-10 rate how you are doing with Self Esteem in each of these areas.

Beauty: Do you feel confident and beautiful? Do you feel good about your body? Do you put yourself down?

Boys: Do you value yourself based on boys comments or opinions? Do you feel confident when talking to boys?

Friends: Can you stand up to your friends if you disagree? Do you feel like equals? Do your friends build you up?

Family: Do you feel confident around your siblings and parents? Do you say positive things about yourself?

School: This has 2 parts (Grades and Social Scene).

How do you feel about your academic abilities? Do you feel confident? Are you embarrassed about your bad grades or good grades? Do you ever play dumb?

Socially, do you feel like you fit in somewhere? Do you feel good about yourself at school?

Challenges: How do you deal with stress? With peer pressure? Do you have confidence in your abilities?

Next, take a look at where you scored the highest and lowest. You want to build on your strengths. Maybe you're really confident about your grades, but you feel useless around your friends. You can change that. Sometimes it means it's time to find new friends, but it could also mean you need to assert yourself more.

The Heart of A Gutsy Girl

What does it take to scale a mountain, free-fall out of an airplane, catch a killer wave? Are you ready to bungee jump, kayak the rapids, walk on a circus high wire?

Ultimately, what are you made of?

Are you a gutsy girl?

If you look into the heart and soul of a truly gutsy girl, what would you uncover?

Passion. Courage. Determination. Perseverance. Boundless Energy. An incredible sense of adventure. Gutsy girls believe anything is possible; they are that rare breed of female who knows that no obstacle is too large and no dream is too big. These young women may come from different backgrounds and have very different interests, yet they all have one thing in common -- they love what they do; and they'll do whatever it takes to reach their goals.

So where does their daring come from? How can you, too, feel the adrenaline rush that comes from taking risks and pushing the limits? How can you catch the gutsy girl fever (and maybe you already have it!) and challenge yourself! in ways you only dreamed about before?

Two Page Plan – Good girls syndrome

Describe the Good Girl syndrome characteristics of girls you teach.

What tips have you learned in this session that would you would use to help girls become more authentic

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

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