Feeling Good
About Me

1 Videocassette ............................................................. 15 minutes
Increasingly, educators and mental health professionals are recognizing the critical role self-esteem plays in a child’s ability to interact positively with others and to achieve their social and academic potential. Positive self-esteem is reflected in an optimistic, outgoing personality, while negative self-esteem is likely to be seen in underachievement and an inability to react positively with others. It is a strong sense of self-worth that ultimately will enable the growing child to reject destructive behavior and to emerge as a successful adult.

A sense of self-worth begins at birth—possibly even in an individual’s DNA structure—and is greatly influenced by the reactions and responses of the significant others in the child’s world. By the time the child reaches school, much of the essential character of that self-image is formed. However, the influence of peers and the culture and climate of the school itself has a powerful effect. Negative messages can exacerbate feelings of low self-esteem, while, words of encouragement and praise can result in a more positive self-image.

*Feeling Good About Me* is based on the conviction that children can be helped and guided toward an improved vision of themselves. It introduces the elementary school child to concepts and techniques that are positive, easy to grasp and manageable for even the very young child. The idea that you can brighten your self-image through positive risk-taking, that you do not have to tolerate negative messages from peers, that you should seek friends who make you feel good about yourself, that you are capable of change—these are presented in recognizable, dramatic situations to which every child can relate. Throughout, the value of individual uniqueness is stressed.

The concepts and techniques explored in *Feeling Good About Me* can be the beginning of a healthier, more positive self-image for your students—and that is the best armor against a difficult world, the best foundation for a constructive, successful life.

**Learning Objectives**

- introduce children to the concept of self-esteem.
- explore some ways in which self-esteem develops.
- understand the significance of the positive and negative messages we receive from both others and ourselves.
- discover and value the uniqueness of each individual.
- appreciate the fact that people have the ability to change.
- learn a step-by-step method for change.
- discover that just by “trying” you can feel good about yourself.
Mrs. Martin's class is completing a self-esteem game as the lunch bell sounds. Jennifer stays behind to discuss with Mrs. Martin some questions she had about the game.

Jennifer expresses her concern that the nice things said about her during the game, that her hair is pretty and that she is a good friend, were made up for the game and not sincere. She believes that her hair is really ugly and that nobody likes her.

Mrs. Martin explains to Jennifer that the way she feels about herself is reflected in her self-picture. Sending herself bad messages such as “I hate my hair” and “nobody likes me” influences her self-picture in a negative fashion. Jennifer tests these ideas in a “magic mirror” that reflects her self-picture.

Jennifer joins her friends Karen, Ted, and Charles in the cafeteria. Throughout lunch, Ted puts down Karen and Jennifer until the two girls decide they've had enough of Ted's put-downs and leave the table.

The next day, Karen, Ted, and Charles see an announcement of the school's upcoming talent show. When Charles says that he wants to be in the show, Ted makes fun of Charles' ability until Charles begins to doubt it himself.

With the help of the “magic mirror” Charles begins to realize that just the thought of trying out for the talent show made him feel good about himself and that step by step he could work to improve his confidence. He practices until he achieves success.

Ted can't resist one last nasty remark about Charles' ability. Charles calls him on the put-downs which causes Ted to think about the way put-downs affect his friends as well as himself. He decides to change his ways.

Charles, Karen, and Jennifer meet in the hallway outside the auditorium after the talent show. When Ted shows up, they are at first apprehensive, but Ted compliments each one of them on their performance.

The next day in class, Jennifer, Karen, Ted and Charles play another self-esteem game where they come to realize it is each person's uniqueness that makes them special.
Guidelines For Discussion

Group discussions are an invaluable way to explore ideas and issues, foster creativity, and build communication and social skills. The following guidelines can help you maintain a “discussion-friendly” classroom.

- Create a climate of openness and acceptance. Encourage students to show respect for the opinions of others and model this behavior yourself.

- Establish ground rules, allow students to participate in formulating them. Rules will vary, but should include some form of these:
  ~ No put-downs, ridicule, or sarcasm.
  ~ Everyone may speak without interruption.
  ~ Everyone has the right to pass.

- Guard against inappropriate self-disclosure. An intense discussion may lead students to reveal inappropriate information about themselves or others. Sensitivity and vigilance can head off such revelations.

- Probe beyond the neat and tidy answers. Children are good at telling adults what they think they want to hear. To find out what students really think, it is often helpful to prolong a discussion and search for greater depth. Offer a “what if”; bring out issues such as fairness, justice, intent, whether the end justifies the means, and so on. Children have a remarkable capacity to discern complexities and subtleties, and their discussions can be very rich.
Questions For Discussion


2. Jennifer put herself down after she received a compliment. What makes it difficult for us to accept nice words from others?

3. How do you feel when someone compliments you? How do you feel when you compliment somebody else?

4. Why did Karen and Jennifer move away from Ted? What else could they have done?

5. How do you feel when someone puts you down? What do you do about it? What else could you do?

6. How did Charles respond to Ted’s put-downs? What else could he have done? What would you do in the same situation?

7. Why do you think Ted put down Charles for being in the show?

8. What do you think makes people try to keep their friends from changing or doing something without them? Has it ever happened to you? How did it make you feel?

9. How do you think Charles felt when the trick didn’t work the first time? How did it affect his self-picture?

10. Have you ever tried something you didn’t think you could do? Did you finally do it? How did that make you feel?

11. One step at a time was how Charles achieved his goal of doing magic in the talent show. What have you tried doing one step at a time? What were the results? How did it make you feel?

12. Has anyone ever teased you or put you down for doing something you wanted to try? What did you do? Why?

13. Ted realized that when he put others down, he felt bad, too. How do you think he felt when he decided to change the way he treats his friends and say nice things?

14. What do you think would have happened to Ted if Karen, Jennifer and Charles were still angry with Ted, even after he tried to change?

15. How do you suppose you can tell if another person feels good about themselves?

16. Have you ever been around a person at a time when their self-picture was hurt? What caused this? How did the person respond? What did you think about what happened?
Role plays are dramatic situations that students act out, inventing the dialogue as they react to the situation and each other. Role plays can use fictional scenarios or be based on real situations. Role playing allows students to deal with complex, sensitive issues and to explore ideas and feelings in a way that is engaging and non-threatening. It fosters sharing and builds communication among students.

Role plays are open-ended. The point is not a pat solution or a happy ending, but the process itself. Even young children can be surprisingly adept at role plays.

The following role play guidelines may be helpful:

**Create a positive climate.**
Stress that there is to be no judging or criticizing of anyone’s role playing. No evaluation is allowed—not even a laugh or an “Oh yeah.” Everyone’s contribution is valued.

**Set up the role play.**
Ask students to think about the general theme. (Imagine when a friend told your secret to someone else… how did it feel?)

**Choose participants who consent.**
Role plays usually are limited to two or three “actors.” For many students, performing before a group is a major risk. A low-key role can be a good start. You could create a minor role for such a student.

**Go light on props.**
Role plays require few or no props. A chair or two might suffice.

**Keep role plays brief.**
Two or three minutes is often enough.

**Guard against inappropriate self-disclosure.**
Role playing is not psychotherapy. Stop the role play when anyone’s involvement appears to be getting out of hand.

**Try using observers.**
With older students, you might try assigning one or more students the task of observing role plays closely for nuances like body language, tone of voice, and pacing.

**Follow-up.**
Discuss each role play when finished. If desired, repeat the role play, switching actors or using new ones.
Here is a selection of role plays. You and your students may think of others.

1. You want to join a scouting club in your town. You tell your best friend. Your friend tells you that it’s a club for babies and if you join, you’re a baby too. How do you feel? What do you do?

2. Your friend has decided to join a soccer team in the local soccer league. He has to practice three times a week and has a game every Saturday. This means he won’t be able to play with you on those days. You feel like he’s leaving you behind. What do you do? What do you say?

3. Your mother always refers to you as the “baby” of the family. She still wants to help you get your clothes ready for school. This makes you feel like you are a baby. What do you do? How do you feel?

4. You go to try out for the youth baseball team in your town. When you get there you play poorly and don’t make the team. Your best friend meets you on the way home and asks how you did. How do you feel? What do you say?

5. You’ve studied very hard for a spelling test. When your teacher passes back the corrected tests you find out that you made some silly mistakes and got a “D.” How do you feel? What do you do?

6. Your parents constantly tell you to pick up your room. You know you have a bad habit of leaving clothes and things all over your bedroom floor. Their constant pressure makes you feel bad. What can you do?

7. You’re invited to a classmate’s house for the first time. He/she is excited about showing you some pictures he/she has drawn that are hanging on his wall. You think they’re awful. He/she asks you what you think of the pictures. What do you say? What do you do?

8. Your class is doing a play. The teacher gives everybody a choice to either be an actor or help backstage. You’ve always wanted to be on stage, but your friends think that it’s not “cool.” You’re afraid they may tease you. They ask you what you’re going to do. What do you say? What do you do?
Suggested Activities

Think Pages are provided for this program. You will notice that the levels of skill and maturity required for the Think Pages are varied. You can select those activities that seem most appropriate for your students. For each Activity Sheet, related subject areas are noted. The guidelines below include suggested adaptations and approaches for younger and older students.

Think Page 1: My Self-Picture

In this activity, students are asked to use pictures to describe themselves. Have students add something to each section of the mirror to create a true “self-picture.” Children can draw the pictures or cut them out from magazines.

Think Page 2: Word Picture

For this activity the students are asked to write a letter to a pretend Pen Pal describing themselves as best as possible. Students should be reminded to include descriptions of their physical characteristics, hobbies, family, and other things that are most important to them.

Think Page 3: I am Special

In this activity, students are asked to make an “I am Special” poster. Have the students draw a picture of something they think is most special about them. It can be a skill, something they like, or an accomplishment. Have them write something to go along with the picture. You can hang all of the posters together to create an “I am Special” bulletin board.
Think Page 4: Step by Step
For this activity, students are asked to write down one thing they would most like to change about themselves, and something new they would like to try. Then have the students write down what “steps” they can take to attain their goals.

Think Page 5: What Can They Do?
In this activity, students are asked to work in small groups of 4 or 5. Have each group read the stories presented on the Activity Sheet, then come up with ideas as to what the characters can do. Get together with the entire class to share and discuss the ideas.

Think Page 6: “Who's Feeling Good In The News?”
Have the students look through magazines and newspapers to find a picture of someone they think feels good about themselves. Ask the students to cut the picture out and paste it on the Activity Sheet. Have them write something about why the people they have chosen feel good about themselves.

Think Page 7: Somebody Who
This activity makes a good icebreaker, promoting communication and feelings of belonging. Students are to fill in the boxes by circulating around the room collecting names. Allow about ten minutes and then discuss the results: Which squares were easy to fill? Which were difficult? Did students learn anything new or interesting about someone else? About themselves?
Think Page 8: Positive Messages

Give each student a copy of the Positive Messages Activity Sheet. First have the student complete the sentences at the top of the activity sheet.

Next, tape the Positive Messages Activity Sheet to each students’ back (masking tape works very well). Have your students add one positive message to another student’s Activity Sheet. Your students can use the following statements as guidelines (you may wish to write these on the board for students to refer to):

• I like you because _________________.

• What makes you special is _______________.

When each student has ten positive messages, have your students review the positive messages they’ve received. You may also wish to compare the messages with the entire class to demonstrate uniqueness and individuality.
My Self Picture

Draw pictures or cut pictures from a magazine that help describe yourself. Paste the pictures to the self-picture mirror below.

- What I like to do in school.
- My favorite thing to do.
- Something I didn’t think I could do, but I did.
- A picture of me.
- What I like to do at home.
- Something I am really good at.
You have a Pen Pal that wants to know all about you. Describe yourself in a letter. Remember to include things that describe how you look, hobbies, family, favorite foods, sports, and activities and other things that are important to you.

Dear Pen Pal,


Sincerely,


What makes you special? Draw a picture about it. Write something to go with the picture.
Write down one thing you would like to change about yourself and one thing that you would like to try that you’ve never tried before. Write down the steps you could take to achieve your goal. Add more steps if necessary.

**One thing I would like to be better at is…**

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

**Something I would like to try is…**

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4
Read the following stories. What is happening? Did anything like this ever happen to you? What can the main characters do? Think about these stories on your own, or get together with a group to share your ideas.

1. Erin never seems to be able to get up in the morning. Her parents have tried just about everything and have finally told her it’s her responsibility. She’s usually late for school. The principal and her teacher have told her that if she’s late again, she will have to make up the lost time during recess or after school. She’s not happy about being late for school or the punishment she will get.

*What is the first step Erin can take to change her habit of getting up late? What are some next steps?*

2. Allen plays on a basketball team. This is his first year on the team. After the game, which they lost, the coach went to each player and said “good job” to everyone. Kyle, another kid on the team, turned to Allen and said, “You’re terrible, you can’t even shoot the ball right. Why don’t you just quit?”

*Allen likes basketball and tries hard. His coach said he did a good job. But Kyle made him feel bad. What can Allen do?*

3. Tanya has invited her classmate Carla to her house to play. Tanya loves animals and proudly shows Carla the collection of animal posters she has on her bedroom walls. Carla remarks that she would never hang pictures of animals on her walls. She has posters of rock groups. When Tanya plays some of her favorite music tapes, Carla remarks that she would never listen to that kind of music.

*Tanya wanted to be friends with Carla. However Carla made Tanya feel bad about everything she liked. What can Tanya do?*
Find a picture of someone you think is feeling good about themselves in a magazine. Cut the picture out and paste it on this page. Make up a story about the picture. Why is this person feeling good about themselves? What happened? Write your story near the picture.
Somebody Who

Can you find someone who...? (Don’t use the same name twice!)

has the same size shoe as you?  

lives the closest to you?

has the same number of brothers and sisters as you do?  

can speak a language other than English?

has a birthday closest to yours?  

has a dog?

is an only child?  

has a job?

hates pizza?  

can do a cartwheel?

has a great-grandparent?  

has stepbrothers or stepsisters?

has been anywhere in the southern hemisphere?  

is taller than you?
Name: _________________________________________________________________

One thing I really like about me is: _______________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Something I’m really good at is: _________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Something I did that I thought I couldn’t do is: ___________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Positive Messages from others:

1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________
4. ________________________________________________________________
5. ________________________________________________________________
6. ________________________________________________________________
7. ________________________________________________________________
8. ________________________________________________________________
9. ________________________________________________________________
10. ________________________________________________________________


**Fiction for Grades 2-4**


Cohen, Miriam. *So What?* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1982. (Left out and feeling incapable of achieving success, Jim is encouraged by a classmate’s “so what?” attitude– Ages 4-7)


Neigoff, Mike. *Runner-up*. Niles, IL: Albert Whitman & Co., 1975. (A boy who’s convinced he’s a born loser is persuaded by his coach to “give winning a try.” Ages 8-9)

Schick, Eleanor Grossman. *Joey On His Own*. New York: Dial Press, 1982. (Sent on an errand where he’s never been on his own before, Joey completes it with resounding success—Ages 5-8)

Simon, Norma. *Nobody’s Perfect, Not Even My Mother*. Niles, IL: Albert Whitman & Co., 1981. (Helps young readers understand that everyone is good at something—Ages 4-8)
Student: What I like about you is you always play fair.

Jennifer: You’re good in spelling.

Student 2: I like your hair.

Student 3: I like the way you always smile.

Ted: I like when you’re on my kickball team because you can kick the ball far.

Charles: I like the pictures you drew for our class.

Jennifer: You can run fast. You’re a good friend.

Karen: You’re good in school.

Charles: You get good grades.

Teacher: That was terrific. I'll see you all after lunch. Do you want to talk to me about something, Jennifer?

Jennifer: Yeah. About that game we just played.

Teacher: Did you like it?

Jennifer: Kind of. Everybody said some nice things about each other.

Teacher: And they said some pretty nice things about you too. Didn't Mary say she likes your hair, and I think it was Karen who said that you were a good friend.

Jennifer: It's only because they had too, for the game. They really don't think so.

Teacher: Why do you say that?

Jennifer: Look at my hair— I hate it. And nobody really likes me.

Teacher: Jennifer, we just found nice things to say about each other. Hearing the nice things about yourself makes you feel good, makes you more confident, but that won’t happen if you’re not telling yourself good things too.

Jennifer: What do you mean?
Teacher: You know every time you send yourself a bad message, like “I hate my hair,” you're putting yourself down. When you put yourself down, you're hurting the picture you have of yourself. But good messages make you feel good about yourself. Will you think about that?

Jennifer: I will, I promise.

* * *

Wow... my hair *is* ugly and nobody likes me.

(to Magic Mirror)

My hair is pretty. I like it. And lots of people like me! I like that picture much better.

* * *

Karen: Hey Jen, I saved you a seat.

Jennifer: Thanks Karen.

Karen: What took you so long?

Ted: I know what took her so long, she's just slow.

Jennifer: Very funny, Ted.

Karen: Ignore him. Where were you?

Jennifer: I had to talk to Mrs. Martin about something.

Karen: About what?

Jennifer: Just about the game we played.

Karen: Did you like it?

Jennifer: Oh, I liked it, did you?

Karen: It was fun.

Ted: Fun? It was more like torture trying to come up with nice things to say about you guys.

Karen: Come on Jen. Let's sit over here. Away from you know who.

Jennifer: He's so mean. Always saying things to hurt people's feelings.
Karen: He thinks he's being funny. But he's not. I used to be friends with him, but not anymore. I want friends who are nice to me.

Jennifer: Me too! Hey, have you studied for the spelling test tomorrow?

Karen: Oh, I forgot. I haven't even looked at the book.

Jennifer: I studied last night.

Karen: Do you think you could come over after school and help me?

Jennifer: Sure…

Karen: See, I was right, you are a good friend.

* * *

Karen: I waited all year for this show. I'm going to sign up to tap dance.

Charles: How about you, Ted?

Ted: I don't know. Are you?

Charles: Well, maybe. I was thinking I'd do some magic.

Ted: You? Magic? Charles, it says talent show. You only know that one dumb trick and you always mess it up anyway.

Karen: Don't listen to Ted. You know what he's like! I think you should try.

Charles: Why? So everybody can laugh at me?

Karen: Charles, if you really want to, do it, don't let Ted stop you.

* * *

Charles: I don't know what to do.


Charles: Who are you?

Magic Mirror: I'm the picture you have of yourself.

Charles: You look funny. Is something wrong?

Magic Mirror: You tell me. What's got you feelin' down?
Charles: That Ted can really make me feel stupid.

Magic Mirror: So what are you gonna do? You know when you were thinking about signing up for the talent show, I felt pretty good.

Charles: Yeah, but what if I blow it and everybody laughs at me.

Magic Mirror: All I know is, when you really try, it makes me feel good. So why don't you give it a shot. Try it one step at a time.

Charles: One step at a time? What do you mean?

Magic Mirror: Well, practice the trick by yourself first.

Charles: Okay... then what?

Magic Mirror: When you get good--try it out on your family.

Charles: Then, if that's okay, do it in the show. I get it. One step at a time.

Magic Mirror: Forget Ted and his putdowns and go for it!

Charles: Right!

* * *

Well, here goes. Hey, I did it. Now it's time for the next step. Hey mom?

Mother: What honey?

Charles: What're you doin'?

Mother: Just reading my magazine.

Charles: I've been practicing magic for the talent show. Do you want to see a trick I can do?

Mother: Sure.

Allison: I want to watch too.

Charles: Okay.

Allison: I don't get it.

Charles: It didn't work.
Mother: Well, go ahead Charles. Try it again.

Charles: Okay. I need another piece of rope. Here.

Allison: Wow! That's neat.

Mother: That's terrific. You'll be great in the talent show.

Allison: How'd you do that?

Charles: I can't tell you.

Allison: Why not?

Charles: Magicians don't tell secrets. Anyway, I've got to go practice some more.

Mother: Charles, you really did a good job.

Charles: Thanks.

Ted: You're really signing up? To do magic? What are you gonna do, your dumb tricks that never work?

Charles: Thanks. You really know how to make me feel good.

Ted: Hey, I didn't mean anything. Just trying to make a joke.

Charles: Yeah? Well, I don't like your jokes.

Karen: And no one else does either. Don't you get the message? We're tired of your put-downs.

Charles: Don't you see, that's why nobody wants to hang around with you anymore.

Ted: Nobody likes me... What's that? Is that me? Man, what's wrong with the picture?

Magic Mirror: There's nothing wrong with the picture. I'm the picture you have of yourself.

Ted: Why do you look so bad?

Magic Mirror: The way I look depends on the way you feel. So you must feel bad.
Ted: Well, it's because everybody hates me.

Magic Mirror: Maybe that's because you keep saying mean things to them. Maybe you don't feel very good about yourself because you're always putting other people down.

Ted: Well… what am I going to do?

Magic Mirror: Why don't you think of good things to say about them. Like in the game. Give it a try.

Ted: You mean now?

Magic Mirror: Sure, right now. Go on.

Ted: Ummmmm… okay, like I could say to Charles, um, Charles I bet you'll be a great magician in the talent show.

Wow, look at that! And I can tell Karen she's a really good dancer because you know that's really true.

I feel better already.

* * *

Jennifer: Next, watch the amazing magic of Charles the Magnificent.

Charles: You were great. Everybody was clapping so hard, I couldn't believe it.

Jennifer: So were you. You looked like a real magician.

Karen: Uh, oh. Here comes Ted. Let's pretend like we don't see him.

Ted: Hey, Karen, Charles. Wait up! You guys were great. I mean really super.

Charles: You mean it?

Ted: Sure. Didn't you hear me. I was clapping my hands off.

Karen: But did you notice that I almost tripped once?

Charles: Yeah, and I was shaking so much. I thought I was gonna drop everything.
Ted: Nah, nobody could tell. I'm telling ya, you guys were awesome.

* * *

Teacher: Well, I hope everyone enjoyed the talent show. I thought you were all wonderful. I know each of you have something to feel good about. What I would like to do today is to have a group of four of you go to the board to play a special game.

What I want you to do is complete the following sentences. Ready?

One thing I really like about me is…
Write your answer down.

My friends like me because…

Something I did that I thought I couldn't do is …

Okay. Now, when I read the question, I want each of you to tell us your answer and we'll go right down the line.

One thing I really like about me is …

Ted: I have good friends.

Jennifer: My hair.

Karen: I can dance.

Charles: I have a nice family.

Teacher: Next. My friends like me because…

Ted: I'm nice to them.

Jennifer: I help them.

Karen: I stick up for them.

Charles: I can keep secrets.

Teacher: Something I did that I thought I couldn't do is…

Ted: Be nice to people.
Jennifer: Talk in front of a lot of people.

Karen: Get an “A” on my spelling test.

Charles: Do magic.

Teacher: Those are very good answers. Okay, what did you notice about them?… Well, they're all the same.

Students: No, they're all different.
Everyone is different.
Nobody said the same thing.

Teacher: That's right. Because there isn't another person in the whole world exactly like you and that makes each one of you very, very special.

Song:
You gotta keep your self-picture looking as it should.
Gotta do all the things that make you feel good.
So when you look in the mirror, the person you see
Is a person who can say I'm feelin' good about me.

I'm feelin' good about me, I'm feelin' good about me.
There's no one in the world that I'd rather be.
You can't put me down, or make me feel sad.
'Cause I've got me, and I'm feelin' glad.

Everybody's different, that's easy to see.
Being different makes us special, 'cause we’re who we should be.
When you add up all the good things that make you feel great,
You'll find you're pretty special, and you're gonna say…
I'm feelin' good about me, I'm feeling good about me.
There's no one in the world that I'd rather be.
You can't put me down, or make me feel sad.
'Cause I've got me, and I’m feelin’ glad.

THE END