

Helping Your Teen Build Self-Worth in a Social Media World

Social media can be fun, but it also puts a lot of pressure on teens—comparing, chasing likes, and feeling like they have to look perfect. You can help by showing them how to see through the tricks and reminding them their worth isn't measured online.

Key challenges teens face online

- Comparing their life to everyone else's highlight reel – what they see online isn't the full picture.
- Feeling like likes = self-worth – tying their value to how many likes or followers they get.
- Pressure to look perfect – filters and editing can make “real life” feel not good enough.
- Fear of missing out (FOMO) – seeing friends hang out without them can feel like rejection.

Signs your teen might be struggling:

- They seem grumpy, anxious, or down after scrolling.
- They check their phone over and over after posting.
- You hear them say things like “I'm ugly” or “I'm not good enough.”
- They compare themselves to others or talk about how others “have a better life.”



How to help: Actionable steps for parents

Name the game

- What to say: “These apps are designed to make people compare themselves. It's not your fault if it feels hard.”
- Why it helps: Removes guilt and shows them the system is built this way—not because something's wrong with them.

Deconstruct the feed

- What to do: Scroll together and ask questions like: “Do you think that's filtered?” or “What are they trying to sell here?”
- Why it helps: Teaches your teen to look critically at what they see online instead of taking it at face value.

Talk about true worth

- What to say: “Likes don't define you. What I love about you is how kind/funny/creative you are.”
- Why it helps: Reinforces that their value comes from who they are, not their online popularity.

Model healthy behavior

- What to do: Take breaks from your own phone or apps and share how it feels. For example: “I noticed I slept better when I didn't scroll before bed.”
- Why it helps: Shows your teen that even adults need limits and that life feels better with balance.

Create offline anchors

- What to do: Encourage hobbies, sports, or time with friends. Ask: “What's one thing offline that always makes you feel good about yourself?”
- Why it helps: Strengthens their confidence and identity outside of screens.

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9-year-old listener

“They were laughing and repeating the lines.”

A parent

What your child grows into:

- ✓ Trying even when it's hard
- ✓ Including the kid on the outside
- ✓ Being kind to their own mistakes
- ✓ Feeling brave to ask for help
- ✓ Accepting all their emotions



MEET

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