

PAID CONTENT

## Is Your Praise Hurting Your Child?: The Gift of Failure

Where Real Self-Esteem Comes From

Part 3/12

### No One Likes Deception

What is better: to be false or to be real? Have you ever considered whether your child's self-esteem is based on false achievements or actual real accomplishments? Practices like awarding participation trophies and inflating grades may undermine their growth and resilience.

### How It Started

In a 2011 Psychology Today article, "The Gift of Failure," Steve Baskin highlights a major issue: the self-esteem movement. Although it began with good intentions in 1969 after the publication of Nathaniel Branden's paper, "The Psychology of Self-Esteem," it backfired. Branden suggested that 'feelings of self-esteem were the keys to success in life,' which led to practices like giving every child a trophy and creating non-competitive games.

### Why It Backfired

But Baskin says that **self-esteem isn't given; it's earned**. "When children stretch themselves, they expand their sense of their capability and then feel confident to tackle the next challenge. Confidence comes from competence - we do not bestow it as a gift," he notes. Dr. Michael Litwiler, a retired Indianapolis Child Psychiatrist, echoes this sentiment, commenting, "Shielding a child from failure gives them no opportunity to practice dealing with it and become confident facing adversity." In fact, The American Psychological Association states that praising children based on personal qualities rather than their efforts may make them feel more ashamed when they fail.

### What Can Parents Do?

For children to be prepared to tackle challenges and setbacks with confidence, parents can help by:

1. **Encourage Risk-Taking:** Allow your child to engage in tasks that stretch their abilities and push their boundaries.
2. **Embrace Failure:** Let them experience failure in safe, loving environments and use it as a learning opportunity to develop problem-solving skills.
3. **Provide Honest Feedback:** Offer constructive criticism and praise their efforts and improvements, not just the results.
4. **Model Resilience:** Show how you handle setbacks and share your experiences overcoming difficulties.
5. **Support Educators:** Work with teachers and school administrators to set limits and hold your child accountable.

Don't let well-intentioned but misguided practices hinder your child's development. Start implementing these strategies today to help them build genuine self-esteem and become resilient, successful adults.

Authored & Paid For By:  
Richard W. Garrett PhD,  
[www.elevateschools.us](http://www.elevateschools.us)