RESPECTING YOURSELF

BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE

ED U. GATOR'S TOUGH WEEK

AN ACTOR WITH COURAGE
"YOU CAN BE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO BE!"

Take a moment to think about yourself. What kinds of things do you like to do? Do you enjoy working with numbers? Are you good at math? Maybe one day you'll be an architect or an astronaut. Do you like to read books, or write stories? You might grow up to be a news reporter, or a teacher. Do you like dressing up in fancy clothes, or putting on make-up plays? Perhaps you could be an actor or a fashion designer. You never know!

Each of us has something we do well, and some things that don’t come very easily. We all have different likes and dislikes. That’s what makes each of us special, and what makes our world so fascinating. We need the painter and the scientist, the politician and the cook, the athlete and the social worker, the garbage collector and the country singer, the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker! Each of us makes a necessary and important contribution. If we were all only good at the same thing, lots of stuff would never get done!

So, what would you like to be? Good for you! Do you know what you have to do now? You have to believe in yourself. You can be anything you want to be! Nothing is impossible. Everything is do-able, if you really want it, and if you’re willing to work hard enough to get it.

**VOCABULARY:**

*Architect:* a person who designs buildings.

*Fashion designer:* a person who creates styles of clothing.

*Necessary:* something that is absolutely needed.

*Contribution:* giving of yourself to something.

*Occupation:* the type of work a person does.

**ACTIVITY:**

Make a list of all the adults you know and write down their occupation. If one of them does something that really interests you, find out as much as you can about it from that person.
A TOUGH WEEK FOR ED

Hi, my name is Ed. Ed U. Gator! I live in Swamp City, U.S.A. with my mom and dad, my sister, El, and Gramps. It’s been a really tough week. Last Sunday, Dad announced that he was taking a new job, and that meant we had to move. The news couldn’t have come at a worse time. It’s right in the middle of baseball season!

It’s going to be hard leaving all my Swamp City buddies. But Mom says our new home in Gatorsville Park is not very far, and we can come back and visit. But I can’t help thinking about a new house, a new town, a new bunch of crocs and gators...It’s kind of scary.

My week just got worse from there. On Monday our teacher, Ms. Liz And, gave us a surprise quiz in math.

On Wednesday in art I squeezed blue paint all over my brand new Swamp City baseball jersey. That shirt meant a lot to me. I worked after school for two weeks at Goby’s Grocery to earn enough money to buy it myself.

Then on Friday I hit rock bottom. It was the fifth inning and I was pitching to Freddy Frog from Marshlands School. I threw four balls in a row. He walked to first. Then I walked the next three batters! Then Croc LaBlock, Marshland’s best batter, hit a home run!

When Mom picked me up after the game, I felt as low as a Gator can go! Back home, Mom came into my room and we had a long talk. I said, "Mom, I can’t do anything right!"

Mom said, "Ed, look around your room. See those sports trophies over there? And that banner for winning the Swamp City Spelling Bee? You do lots of things right!"

Then she explained how we’re all good at some things, and maybe not as good at others. And the things we don’t do as well, we just have to work harder at doing. It made a lot of sense, and I felt much better about myself. Mom said she was proud of me, and that she loved me, and would always love me, just the way I was.

Then she pulled a box out from under my bed. Guess what was inside! A new Swamp City baseball jersey — without blue paint!

QUESTIONS

1) What three things made Ed’s week so tough?

2) How was Ed feeling about himself?

3) What did Ed’s mom say that made him feel better about himself?

4) What things do you do well?

5) What things are harder, and take some extra effort?

VOCABULARY:

Trophy: a souvenir or token of victory or success.
MAKE YOUR VERY OWN "ME" T-SHIRT

Directions: Design and color in a T-shirt you would like to wear. Choose a word or a phrase that represents you, maybe something you're especially proud of! On the back of the shirt draw a unique symbol or object, like a football, a computer, or a pair of ballet shoes.

MAKING A LIST, CHECKING IT TWICE

Directions: Put a check in the boxes next to those things you really enjoy doing. If your favorite activity isn't on the list, add it to it!

- singing
- bowling
- playing ball
- dancing
- listening to music
- reading
- acting
- gardening
- solving puzzles
- dressing up
- going to parties
- writing stories
- hiking
- taking pictures
- roller blading
- swimming
- painting and other
drawing
- using the computer
- playing ball
- shopping
- acting
- going to parties
- solving puzzles
- dressing up
- writing stories
- hiking
- taking pictures
- painting and other
drawing
- using the computer
- shopping
- going to the movies
IN THE NEWSPAPER

Directions: Look through the paper and try to find pictures of people doing different things. Look for firemen, policemen, teachers, politicians, actresses, etc. Are any of these people doing something you'd like to do?

YOU ARE THE SOLUTION!

Directions: Take a stab at this week's PSP (Project Solution Puzzle). All of the answers are things about you!

Clues:
Across
1. one of a kind
5. a skill or talent
6. not like others, distinctive
7. special qualities
9. a person's special qualities
10. a belief in oneself

Across
2. a single being or thing
3. a natural ability
4. another word for 'me' or 'I'
8. to think highly of

Answers:

Across
1. Unique
2. Individual
5. Ability
3. Talent
6. Special
4. Myself
7. Traits
8. Respect
9. Personality
10. Confidence
"TAHITIA'S NEW OLD CLOTHES"

Tahitia stood looking into her clothes closet for a long time. It was the first day back to school after summer break, and she wanted to look especially nice. No matter which outfit she pulled down, it all looked like the same old stuff. Her mother called from downstairs for her to hurry up or they'd be late. Finally, Tahitia settled on a yellow knit top and a plaid skirt she'd worn many times before.

In the car, her mother asked her why she looked so sad. "Mom," Tahitia said, fighting back the tears, "all the other kids will have brand new beautiful clothes. I've worn the same clothes a hundred times! I'll be hopelessly out of style again!"

"Tahitia," her mother replied, "you know I can't afford to shop at the expensive clothing stores. We have to make do with hand-me-downs from your cousins and what I can find at the thrift shop."

Tahitia walked into school. All the other kids wore new dresses and new shirts and shiny new shoes. Ashamed of her second-hand garments, Tahitia kept to herself.

At the end of the day, Tahitia's mother picked her up. She was very excited. "Tahitia," she said, "I've got a great idea! Let's go shopping together!"

Tahitia was excited too, imagining herself looking through the beautiful new clothes at the mall! Then her smile disappeared when her mother parked next to the same old thrift store. Her mother had to pull Tahitia into the shop.

Inside, her mother handed her twenty-five dollars. "Go ahead," her mother said, "use your imagination!" At first Tahitia just stood there. Then she noticed a bright red skirt on a rack. Across the room she spotted a purple blouse. On a round table in the middle she discovered three dazzingly bandanas, and a black belt with sparkles. When she tried on the clothes and looked in the dressing room mirror, she saw a beautiful girl!

The next morning, Tahitia was downstairs waiting, wearing her neat, new, old clothes. "Hurry up, Mom!" she called upstairs, "we'll be late for school!"

Tahitia walked into class with a noticeable bounce. She took a seat near the front of the room. A girl sitting behind her said, "Wow! Where did you find those clothes? They must have cost a fortune!" When Tahitia told her where they were from, and how much she spent, her jaw dropped. "Do you think you could take me there sometime and help me pick out some stuff?"

The next Saturday the old thrift shop was packed with boys and girls talking and laughing and lining up to use the dressing rooms. At the mall across town it was a little quieter than usual.

— By Ned Andrew Solomon
Have you ever thought about being a superhero? Could you imagine being strong enough to move a house, powerful enough to see through concrete walls, or brave enough to rid the world of evil doers? Christopher Reeve had that opportunity, in a way. As an actor, Reeve got to play Superman on the big screen, leaping tall buildings in a single bound!

Off the movie set, Reeve still enjoyed doing daring feats. He was a mountain climber, a paraglider, and a pilot. Of course, Reeve wasn’t superhuman, but he was a terrific athlete.

In May of 1995, Reeve had a terrible accident while horseback riding. He fell off his horse and landed head first, crushing his spine. The fall left him paralyzed from the neck down, and dependent upon a life-sustaining respirator.

Reeve’s future seemed very bleak. He had to make an important choice, between giving up, and trying to do whatever he could do to improve his condition. With a superhuman amount of self-respect, Reeve has endured many difficult months of physical rehabilitation. His strong belief in his own abilities and the love and support of his family has helped him to make unbelievable progress, way beyond his doctors’ expectations.

Today, Reeve can survive for short periods of time without his respirator. He can move around in a motorized wheelchair which he “drives” by blowing air in a tube. He has attended, and spoken at, many fund raisers and events. His goal is to stand up all by himself on his 50th birthday.

Reeve has been an inspiration to people all over the world. He has given hope to individuals with disabilities, and to people seriously injured in accidents. He is a living example of why we should never give up, and never stop believing in ourselves.

**VOCABULARY:**
- **Dependent:** relying on someone or something for support.
- **Life-sustaining:** to keep alive.
- **Respirator:** a device to help someone breathe.
- **Rehabilitation:** to bring back to a good condition.
- **Expectations:** hopes and wishes.
- **Inspiration:** encouragement or motivation.
TIPS

1) Taking the time to listen to and communicate with our children is one of the most important ways of encouraging their self-esteem. Look for opportunities for discussion during “down” times, like riding in the car, during meals or right before bedtime. If possible, watch television with your kids and discuss themes or conflicts raised in the shows.

2) Encourage your child to participate in an extra-curricular activity, but make it one your child really wants to do. On the other hand, be careful not to overwhelm your child with too many activities. If your child is spread too thin he/she may not do well at anything, and all the running around will make you both exhausted.

3) Be aware that your children hear and understand most of what you say. You are your child’s most available role model. If you are constantly making negative comments about yourself (for example: your weight) your child may become overly concerned, and have a negative perception of his/her own self-image.

4) Don’t discourage or make light of your child’s dreams and goals, no matter how unrealistic they seem to you.

RESOURCES


FAMILY ACTIVITY

Self-respect and self-esteem take many forms. How many times have we told our children that their appearance, or their behavior is a reflection on the whole family? Here’s a good activity to encourage some “family” self-respect. Spend part of a weekend day cleaning up the grounds around your house or apartment, or if possible, work together in the yard or in a garden. Have a family meeting and divide up the household chores, so every family member has some responsibility and some contribution to the family’s “well-being.”

FAMILY PLEDGE CARD

Our family has completed the Family Page together.

____________________________
Child’s name

______________________    ___________________
Family members:  

______________________    ___________________

School: ___________________________________

Teacher/grade: ___________________________

For more information about Project: Solution, call 726-8918 or 1-800-351-1227, ext. 8033 or 8918.