**How to Teach Your Kids to Reject Body Shaming**

**Source-** [www.the-i](http://www.the-i)nstillery.com

**By-** Michelle Brunetti

Whether we are too skinny or too fat, human beings are obsessed with their body weight. In the past couple of years, the term body shaming has been making the headlines, with women of all shapes and sizes being slammed for either being too thin or too thick. And interestingly enough, a fair share of this shaming is generated by other women.

Despite the unrealistic and impossible standards of beauty and healthy body weight set for today’s average person, according to The Renfrew Center Foundation for Eating Disorders, it’s estimated that only 5% of North Americans have body types similar to those portrayed in the media. While body shaming happens to both boys and girls, arguably, much more emphasis on body image is placed on our daughters.

As parents, we have a monumental responsibility to teach our children to reject shaming bodies, and to guide them in the direction of loving themselves and accepting others.

**The Importance of Loving Ourselves:**

 The greatest lesson that we can teach our children is how to love themselves. A lot of folks cringe when they hear this term because over the years, it has become a pretty new age cliché. But as cheesy as it may sound, we really do have to find a way to love ourselves if we want to stand a chance of finding any kind of happiness.

Teaching our little ones the importance of self-love begins with us. If we are constantly shaming our bodies or the bodies of others, then we are sending out a message to our children that it’s acceptable for them to practice shaming.

There are all kinds of shaming—whether it’s a derogatory remark made about another person’s physical characteristics, or something more subtle like criticizing their shoes or the color of their lipstick—it’s still shaming.

**Stop Shaming and Begin Claiming:**

 If we do happen to catch ourselves saying something negative or unfavorable about our bodies or someone else’s, it’s important that we correct our wrong and teach our children that

 a) it’s not okay to shame, and

 b) it’s important to take responsibility for our negative actions.

Here are some tools that I’ve found useful in the war against my own children’s struggles with body shaming:

1. **Don’t Sugarcoat-**

As parents, we have to prepare our kids for how cruel people can be. We need to help them build a strong barrier against the shaming that they might eventually face. Be brutally honest with them, and ask them questions like “How would you feel if someone did that to you?” or “What do you think the best way to handle that situation would be?”

1. **Teach Our Kids to Speak Up-**

Our children need to learn never to join in on a shame-fest with others, or idly stand by and watch someone else being shamed. We teach our kids this lesson by showing them how to empathize and place themselves in someone else’s shoes.

1. **Promote a Healthy Lifestyle-**

Rather than appearance, we need to shift the focus on having healthy bodies, which is achieved through a balanced diet with plenty of exercise. That also means we have to practice what we preach. If we want our kids to be healthy, then we have to keep healthy snacks around the house, prepare nutritious meals, and encourage everyone in the family to get active.

1. **Encourage Positive Role Models-**

One way to help our kids learn never to body shame is by encouraging them to find role models who have a positive self-image and a healthy attitude towards their body. It might be an athlete, a teacher, a coach, or even us!

**Be Aware of What They Are Posting:**

Because we live in a “selfie” world, our children’s sense of acceptance has never been more precarious. All it takes these days are a few mean kids to criticize our child’s physical appearance, and they can fall down a rabbit hole of shame. As parents, we have to find a fine line between respecting our children’s privacy and actively staying involved in what they’re doing.

**Teach Them about Compassion:**

Explaining to our children that people come in many different shapes and sizes – and teaching them to embrace that diversity – cultivates compassion and acceptance within them. Raising conscious children means we teach them that they are interconnected with every other human being on the planet, so when they judge others, they are also judging themselves.

Our ultimate goal as parents should be to teach our children not to shame, but to claim the beautiful beings that they were created to be.