

## **The Real Prize: Knowing Your Worth**

Have you ever noticed how some children believe their worth hinges on winning a game or performing perfectly? This mindset can be troubling, especially since many parents might have grown up in similar environments where praise was tied to achievements. This belief, often called "performance-based self-esteem," can create an unhealthy obsession with perfection and diminish fundamental motivation. When kids feel valued only for their victories, they risk becoming anxious about failure, struggling to bounce back from setbacks, and losing the joy of activities that don't come with a guaranteed prize. But guess what? It's vital to teach our children that this isn't true! We need to emphasize that their worth isn't tied to winning or external validation. By consistently reinforcing this message, we can help them develop a healthier sense of self-esteem and a love for learning and growing, regardless of the outcomes.

**You Are Important, No Matter What**-Sometimes, we might think that winning a game or being the best at something is what makes us special. But that's not true! Whether you win, lose, or make a mistake, it doesn't change how amazing you are. Your value doesn't depend on how many awards you win, how fast you run, or how good you are at something. Think about it like this: imagine your best friend. Do you like them because they're the best at everything? Probably not! You like them because they are fun to be with, kind, and make you feel good. The same is true for you. People love you for who you are, not for what you achieve.

**It's About Effort, Not Just Results:** It's not just about the scoreboard; it's about showing up and giving it your all, even when things get tough. Winning is great, but the real victory is in the effort, in how hard you push yourself and how much you learn along the way. Think of setbacks as life's way of saying, "Hey, here's another chance to grow." Every time you keep going after a stumble, you're building perseverance—a superpower that'll take you far beyond just one win. And hey, if things don't go as planned, laugh it off! Sometimes, a sense of humor is your best teammate. The practice, hard work, and determination you put in today shape who you'll become tomorrow. So, keep trying, keep learning, and remember: *effort* isn't just a stepping stone to success—it's success itself. Praise children for their effort, perseverance, and specific skills demonstrated, not just the final result.

**Learn and Grow from Challenges:** Losing or making mistakes is a part of life. Instead of feeling bad, think about what you can learn from the experience. Each challenge helps you become stronger, smarter, and better prepared for the next time.

**What Truly Makes You Special:** What makes you special isn't whether you win or lose—it's your kindness, how you treat others, and how you keep going even when things are tough. These things matter much more than any trophy or medal and will set you apart from others.

**Encouragement:** Remember, you are valuable just because you are YOU! You don't need to achieve something big or win a competition to prove your worth. Keep doing your best, be proud of yourself, and never forget—you are enough just as you are!