

**A
Parent
Guide**

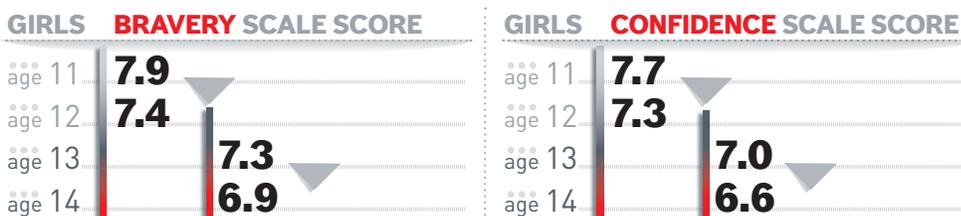
Raising Brave.

Information, language and exercises to use in everyday life that address decreasing confidence in teenage girls.

Girls are feeling less confident as they grow up. Puberty, societal expectations and smartphone usage are just some factors that contribute to this alarming trend. For girls, the rate at which confidence declines is staggering and it starts happening in middle school.

How BRAVE/CONFIDENT are you on a scale from 1 (not) to 10 (very)?

This data is collected from pre-session surveys of girls between the ages of 11 and 14.



Brave Enterprises, 2018 (n = 1,057)

2 major kinds of bravery:

GENERAL

- ▶ societally acknowledged fear

PERSONAL

- ▶ fear relevant to the individual

What Brave Enterprises Does

Brave focuses on practicing to address personal bravery, which is commonly understood to be *getting outside of your comfort zone*. We help people do hard things. What is hard – or scary – for one person may not be the same thing that is hard or scary for another. For maturing girls, it can be especially different for every girl, and even different for a single girl on different days.

Brave's programming is guided by what is *effective in helping girls increase self-confidence and bravery*. Most of our programming addresses the lack of practice that girls in this generation get to be social, interact in person with other people, and navigate new situations where they must represent themselves. Girls don't know who they are in larger part because no one asks them, and they don't yet know how to ask themselves. Our work provides the opportunity for a ton of repetition having conversations, being curious, collaborating with and confronting others.

3 Ways To Get More Brave

Honesty with SELF

1

Witness Brave Action

2

Take Brave Action

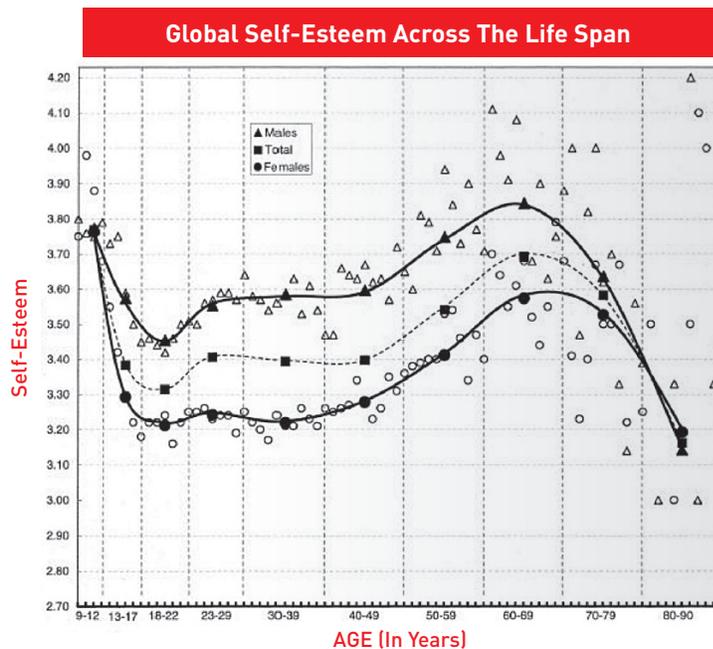
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Girls vs. Boys

Brave works with both girls and boys, and there are marked (albeit generalized) differences in how each interacts with the concept of bravery. Both girls and boys have high natural perceptions of their own bravery and self-confidence before 11 years of age. At puberty, with hormonal changes, societal changes, and changes in the types of fears they have, these numbers drop — both boys and girls report feeling **LESS brave** and **LESS confident** than they did at younger ages. For boys this fluctuates for several years, stabilizing in high school and starting to rebound towards college.

For girls, the drop is steep, much steeper than for boys. It bottoms out around age 15/16, rebounds slightly towards the end of high school and drops again in college. Even beyond college, women are reporting feeling less brave and less confident than men. This drop in self-confidence and bravery is mirrored by the drop in self-esteem as well, as shown in the *Global Self-Esteem Across The Life-Span Study*. Girls' self-esteem drops twice as much than boys' during puberty, and women never regain the pre-puberty level of self-esteem.



Self-confidence takes a nosedive for girls around age 15, dropping twice as much when compared to boys' during puberty. This is alarming given how important confidence is for taking brave action.

Source:
 'Global Self-Esteem Across The Life Span' Study,
 American Psychological Association, Inc. 2002,
 Vol 17, No. 3, 423-434

Confidence Crisis for Girls

Girls are permanently affected by these decreases and are far more likely to respond to fear with inaction. Training them out of this cycle requires the focus on skills and confidence building.

Why you need to get involved now. Building tools and skills to help girls build competence and confidence in their younger years can help moderate the drop we see in confidence. We want girls to grow up to be women who are willing to try things, take risks, gain experiences to remain competitive in the workplace and confident in their personal, everyday lives.

Parents are girls' bravery role models, so this starts at home. As they age, girls increasingly look to their parents as the bravest people they know. Boys start with their parents, but look more to public figures as they grow up.

Parents As Bravery Role Models

age 10	Girls 20%	
age 11	Girls 40%	Boys 55%
age 13	Girls 51%	Boys 39%
age 15	Girls 50%	Boys 29%
age 17	Girls 45%	Boys 20%

Public Figures As Bravery Role Models

age 10	Girls 10%	
age 11	Girls 15%	Boys 33%
age 13	Girls 15%	Boys 33%
age 15	Girls 8%	Boys 29%
age 17	Girls 9%	Boys 54%

How To Help A Brave Girl

Here are some quick tips to get started. Imagine this a lifestyle shift and look to try things that feel repeatable and sustainable over time. **Confidence rises slowly.**

Language: **Adopt BRAVE language at home.**

1. Create space for authentic expression.
2. Talk about fear so that it is expressed.
3. Focus on being more brave rather than fearing less.
4. Identify goals, imagine (*and talk about*) potential obstacles, brainstorm (*and talk about*) solutions to those obstacles now.
5. Represent a growth mindset — hard work and alternative approaches are keys to improvement.
6. Set approach goals rather than avoidance.
7. Get away from “DON’T DO x” and move towards “DO y”.

Behavior: **Model BRAVE actions.**

1. Look at your daughter during conversations. Put down your phone, stop other conversations to be fully attentive, face her and square up to her with your body. Do all of this even if she doesn’t reciprocate, *yet*.
2. Stand tall when she is near you. Place feet shoulder-width apart and be ready for conversation, life or a hug.
3. Talk her through your own risks, regardless of success or failure in taking them.
4. Explore and discuss your own fears with your daughter. Be vulnerable.
5. Celebrate the risks she takes (especially if she fails) with proactive physical exclamations: high fives, handshakes, or hugs.

Curiosity and Vulnerability: **Ask and share.**

Curiosity ▶ Encourage your daughter to wonder, to ask questions of you, of herself, of the future, of the past. You ask questions, too. Your curiosity (and hers) should be pure, seeking to learn only. Answers should never be used against the other person. This has to be a safe place.

Vulnerability ▶ Ask your daughter to share something with you that she hasn’t before. Share something with her that she doesn’t already know about you.

◀ **Reflection** ▶ Do reflection exercises, both on your own and with your daughter to encourage honesty with self. Share answers or just experience indulging in similar questions. Ask yourself hard questions and dig to provide specific answers.

Observing Brave: **Use real life.**

Using real life or fictional examples to build language and context. Make sure that you are discussing the qualities that justify this status to your daughter. There should be no judgment, just a better understanding of how she thinks.

1. Identify role models: In family, in school, in activities, in public (male, female)
2. What obstacles did that role model face? How did that role model fail, and what specific character strengths contributed to them being resilient? How did that role model respond with brave action?
3. What brave actions do you see happening in the news and around the world?

Increasing controllability: **Take the passenger seat.**

Giving your kids more control, or even more perceived control, over events in their life. This allows for hope. For big decisions, add support in THEIR decisions.

Set Goals! Do our online class with your kid and both of you share your work with each other. For parents, replace “school goal” and “non-school goal” with relevant examples.

<https://www.getmorebrave.com/courses/bravegoalprep>

Share answers and experience indulging in similar questions. Your curiosity (and hers) should be pure. Seek to learn only and provide a safe place to be open and honest.

What to ask and share:

- Who are you?
- What do you want?
- What are your hopes?
- What are your fears?
- What makes you feel alive?
- What makes you great?
- What are three words you would use to describe yourself on your
 - Best day?
 - Worst day?
 - Birthday?
 - First day of school?
 - Last day of school?
- What are you nostalgic about?
- What do you regret doing?
- What do you regret not doing?
- What do you stand for?
- What would you die for?
- What is most precious to you?
- What are you proud YOU did?
- What are you grateful for?
- What is the hardest thing you’ve ever endured?
- What is a time period/moment/day/year when you were really happy?

Mindset / Habit / Behavior

(3) Ways To Get More Brave

Honesty with Self ▶ Who are you and what do you want? Asking hard questions, acknowledging hard truths. Being able to perform honest self-evaluations. Identifying your fears and your current fear-response habits.

Witnessing Brave Action ▶ Do you recognize and acknowledge (*internally or externally*) brave actions you see in the world? Recognizing acts of general bravery (everyone agrees it's brave—someone rescues a baby from a burning building) AND personal bravery (someone faces a fear that is personal to them, or faces a fear that YOU have).

Taking Brave Action ▶ Do you recognize and acknowledge (*internally or externally*) brave actions you take yourself? Do you understand your fears to know when you could take brave action, or when you have taken brave action?

Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset

- ▶ **Fixed mindset:** The belief that intelligence, athleticism, character traits, etc. are all fixed traits—you are born with what you have.

From your kid this sounds like: “It’s too hard.” “I’m just bad at it.”
“She’s just better than me.” “I will never be good at that.” “I can’t do this.”

From you this sounds like: “You are so smart.” “You’re naturally athletic.”
“That’s ok, you’re just not good at that.”

- ▶ **Growth mindset:** The belief that intelligence, athleticism, character traits, etc. are malleable strengths that can be further developed and expanded through deliberate practice and hard work.

From your kid this sounds like: “I can’t do this yet.” “I can get better at this.”
“I can work on this more.” “Can you help me?”

From you this sounds like: “You worked really hard.” “Did you get better today?”
“What if next time you tried this?”

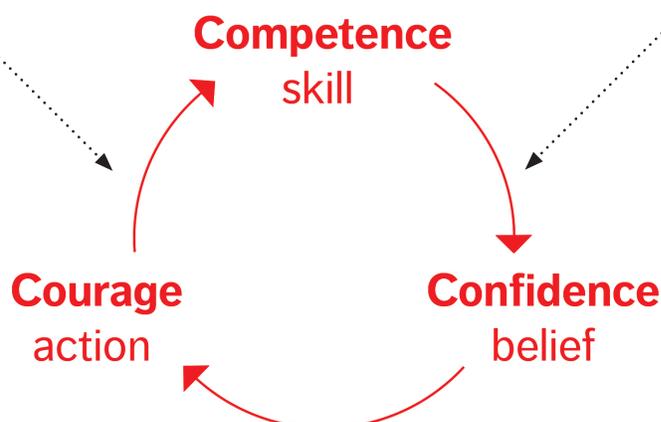
GET MORE BRAVE

@getmorebrave

If you have any questions,
OR you are a parent of a
girl who has participated
in Brave programming
and you want to provide a
testimonial, please email
info@morebrave.com.

Crush It Loop

Research indicates that confidence and courage are linked. BRAVE sees competency (development of skills) and confidence (belief in oneself/one’s skills) as the steps before courage (taking action), indicated in the **CRUSH IT Loop** diagram (below). Courage leads back to competency when that new competency lies outside of existing comfort zone.



Resources:

Grit, Angela Duckworth
Growth Mindset, Carol Dweck
Peak, Anders Ericsson
The Confidence Code for Girls,
Katty Kay & Claire Shipman