Self-Love Starts with Liking Yourself

By Michelle Barichello on **10/16/2017**

How many of us women can say that we like hanging out with ourselves?

Going for a walk alone, grabbing a coffee solo, taking yourself out to lunch - do you do these things often? Or do you try to fill the silence by inviting a friend along?

For many of us, hanging out alone can be uncomfortable. We don't like to sit with our thoughts, which sometimes sound like a storm of negative self-talk. Without company to talk to, thunder clouds of doubt and loneliness can become louder.

When we constantly try to fill the silence and fill our schedules, we lose out on precious quiet time to tune into what we really need. We miss out on opportunities to discover more about ourselves and come to like who we are.

Our girls are doing this too.

Think about it - at lunch, after school, weekend sleepovers - they're always thinking about who they'll spend their time with. While teamwork and connectedness are in our core values at Girls on the Run, there is also something to be said for restful and relaxing alone time.

As we see girls make friends and create meaningful relationships, we also strive for them to see themselves as one of their own best friends. Not only is it important that they support and cheer on their peers, but they also need to become their own cheerleaders.

Self-love begins with liking yourself, and this only gets harder as we become adults. Let's encourage girls to see the beauty of hanging out with themselves now.

Why is this so important? At their age, everyone wants to be invited to the sleepover or the birthday party. When someone isn't invited, they may immediately feel rejection, self-doubt or like something is wrong with them.

A girl who sees herself as one of her own best friends is able to say, *You know what, I'm happy to hang out with myself this weekend. I can have fun on my own.*
Rejection is something they'll face over and over again their whole lives. If girls can learn now to like themselves through that process, they'll be unstoppable.

Increased confidence is just one of the ways girls can benefit from hanging out alone. Taking time to connect with who they are can also help them in the following ways:

Self-awareness: Individual time allows girls to tune into their own needs, wants, likes, dislikes, and values. They learn not to constantly compare themselves to their friends and peers, but to appreciate who they are and the gifts they bring to the world.

Better friendships: When girls are more self-aware and confident in who they are, they aren't afraid to express their true selves to other people. They look for groups they feel they belong to rather than change who they are to *fit in* with a group that doesn't match their values.

School work: With a better sense of self, girls are more confident in raising their hand in class. They seek out questions to their answers and be unafraid to share their thoughts in class discussions.

Rest: Between school, extracurriculars and social activities, girls need a little downtime to recover. Taking time to rest is important for keeping them healthy and relieving their stress. Girls can use this downtime to connect with themselves. Encourage them to write in a journal about their progress in school, Girls on the Run or another hobby of theirs. Let them explore whatever it is that they really love to do. Maybe they just need to take time stretching their muscles after a busy week.

Make this time for self-love a regular thing in their weekly schedules so they learn the value of it. Social and connected time is important but needs to be balanced with time for themselves. As they go through life and continue to get busier, they'll be more in tune to their needs and hopefully come to crave alone time rather than see it as a bad thing.

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