

Helping Your Teen Discover Their God-Given Talents

Differences between middle schoolers and high schoolers were obvious. Sadly, they almost always are.

During a recent chapel at an impressive Christian school, one group eagerly raised their hands to answer my questions. The other group did not. Can you predict which was which?

Who likes to write?

Who enjoys discovering truth on your own and exploring?

Who thinks body smart is one of your strengths?

More middle schoolers than high schoolers eagerly raised their hands. It's not because high schoolers don't know themselves. Most do. Rather, it was as if these students didn't want anyone to know their strengths or that they liked anything. This should not be embarrassing.

Some high schoolers raised their hands high. Some raised them only in front of their faces and made eye contact with me and smiled. Others just made eye contact with me.

Talk with your children/students. Do they know their strengths and what they enjoy and don't enjoy? If they don't, observe them more closely and let them know what you see. Provide evidence for your opinions. Prioritize developing their self-awareness by strengthening their self-smartness.

If they do know what they enjoy and what they do well, but don't want their peers to know, ask them why. Have they been teased? Embarrassed? Proudful? Talk about this with them. It's good for peers to acknowledge friends' strengths and interests. There are ways to encourage one another without

building pride.

The night of the chapel talk, I met many of the students' parents at an event. Over and over again, I heard how middle schoolers *and* high schoolers loved learning how they are smart. I thought high schoolers were definitely listening and enjoying the presentation. I was encouraged they told their parents about it and how they're smart.

Young people who know their interests and strengths are more likely to use them and further develop them as a source of their joy. They'll acknowledge they're relevant to how they can leave the world a better place.

When they know how peers are talented, they can form groups for class projects, service projects and more. They can identify who can help them with a weak area. They can identify who they can help. It's good for the group dynamic.

Make sure your children/students know what they do well so they'll do things well. {eo}

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