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As you grow up and get older, some people may tell you, "It's not good to need or depend too much on other people. It's better to stand on your own two feet." We live in a culture that values independence. Our culture says that only weak people need other people.

In fact, it takes real strength to have relationships with people. Sometimes it's hard to be a friend, sister, brother, daughter, or son. Later in life, you may find out that sometimes it's hard to be a wife, husband, partner, or parent.

If you need other people, if you have relationships with other people, then you aren't weak. *You're strong.* Needing is a source of strength.

GET PERSONAL

Write about your most important relationships. Who are the people you care about most, and who care the most about you? Ask one of them to spend some time with you. (When you do this, you're asking to have your need met.) Later, write about what you did together and how you felt.

The Need for Touching and Holding

Babies, kids, teenagers, grown-ups, and grandparents—everyone needs to be touched and held sometimes.

Touching and holding are ways we show affection for one another. When your mom hugs you good-bye when you leave for school, she's saying, "I love you a lot."

Touching and holding are ways we comfort one another. When you fall off your bike and run to your dad and he holds you, he's saying, "I'm here to help you feel better."

Scientists know that babies need to be touched and held. When babies don't get enough touching and holding, they don't develop properly. They have physical and mental problems. Our need to be touched and held doesn't go away as we get older. We never outgrow it.

GET PERSONAL

Ask someone you trust for a hug. Write about what happens and how you feel.

Unfortunately, we live in a culture that confuses touching and holding with sex. That's why, as you get older, you may get mixed messages about touching and holding. Friends who touch each other are teased. Parents decide that their kids are too grown-up to be hugged and kissed. This is a problem with our culture; it isn't a problem with you. It's still okay to need touching and holding—now and for the rest of your life.

IMPORTANT: Of course, you should never let anyone touch you in ways that feel wrong to you. There's *good touch* and there's *bad touch*. Your parents and teachers have probably told you the difference. If they haven't, here are some basic tips to learn and remember: If someone (no matter who it is) tries to touch you in ways that make you feel funny, strange, uncomfortable, or afraid, trust your feelings. Say NO. Get away as fast as you can. And *tell an adult you trust*.



STICK UP FOR YOURSELF!

WINNER!
The National
Parenting Center
SEAL OF
APPROVAL

EVERY KID'S GUIDE TO PERSONAL POWER
AND POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM

Have you ever been picked on at school, bossed around, blamed for things you didn't do, or treated unfairly?

Do you sometimes feel frustrated, angry, powerless, and scared?

Do wish you could stick up for yourself, but you don't know how?

This book can help. In simple words and real-life examples, it shows you how to stick up for yourself with other kids (including bullies and teasers), big sisters and brothers, even parents and teachers. It tells you things you can say *without* putting people down, and things you can do *without* getting into trouble. You'll feel better about yourself, stronger inside, and more in charge of your life.

You'll also learn about yourself and what's important to you. You'll find out about your feelings, needs, and dreams for the future. You'll see that you're responsible for *your own* behavior and *your own* feelings—nobody else's. You'll learn positive ways to deal with strong feelings like anger, fear, jealousy, and shame. And you'll discover simple ways to "store" happiness and pride for times when you need them the most.

First published in 1990, this book has helped countless kids build self-esteem and be more assertive. It can give you the power to stick up for yourself, be true to yourself, and feel secure and confident inside—no matter what.

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