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## ASSET #39

# Sense of Purpose

Kids believe that their life has a purpose.

**55%** *of the youth we surveyed  
have this asset in their lives.*

### At Home

- ▶ Model what it means to have a sense of purpose in life. Do things that matter to you; develop your talents; pursue your dreams. Share your sense of purpose with your children. Make it clear that you believe your life has meaning.
- ▶ Post inspiring quotations on the refrigerator and point them out to your children. Explain how those particular quotations affirm your values, motivate you, and help you remain purposeful. Invite your kids to find and post quotations of their own.
- ▶ Limit TV, computer, and telephone time. Encourage your children to use that time to develop and pursue their own interests.
- ▶ Have each family member list five things he or she is passionate about. Compare and discuss your family's "passion lists." Are there any surprises? If two family members share a passion, can they explore it together?
- ▶ Listen to your kids when they talk about their dreams. Get excited with them. Ask how you can help.

- ▶ Encourage your children to get involved in activities that build on their talents and interests. Network with other adults and young people who have similar talents and interests. See if you can participate in meaningful activities together.
- ▶ Together with your child, interview a neighbor or family member who seems to have a strong sense of purpose. How did he or she find that purpose?
- ▶ Give your children opportunities to find meaning in ways that are consistent with your family's values. This might involve religious activities, political involvement, service, or other pursuits.

## At School

- ▶ Encourage students to write down their dreams and goals, both short-term and long-term. Check in with them periodically to see how it's going. Let them know it's okay to revise their goals and set new ones.
- ▶ Help students to see a purpose in everything they're learning in school. *Example: Why read literature? Because it deepens our understanding of other people and ourselves.*
- ▶ Draw connections between classroom learning and significant opportunities, needs, and issues in the world.
- ▶ Have students read books and stories that tell about difficulties overcome and dreams achieved.
- ▶ Give students opportunities to reflect on and shape their own future.
- ▶ Include service learning as part of the regular school curriculum. Students who make a difference in the world *know* that their lives have meaning and purpose.

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# What Kids Need to Succeed

Kids who succeed have specific assets in their lives—not financial assets, but Developmental Assets including family support, a caring neighborhood, self-esteem, and resistance skills. The *more* assets young people have, the *less* likely they are to lose their way and get into trouble.

Based on groundbreaking nationwide studies, *What Kids Need to Succeed* spells out 40 Developmental Assets—good things every young person needs.

- More than 900 specific, concrete suggestions help you build assets at home, at school, in the community, and in the congregation.
- Checklists help you identify the assets your kids already have so you can focus on the ones they need.
- Special “Tips for Teens: Build Your Own Assets” sections help young people shape their own success.

*What Kids Need to Succeed* makes you an asset builder. It can get whole communities involved in working together for kids. Inspiring, practical, and easy to read, this action handbook is essential for anyone who cares about young people today.

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