

# Self-Esteem Book Group

## Mini-Guide for Educators and Group Leaders

### Ages 8–12



School is a hotbed of mixed self-esteem messages. Girls have to navigate school norms, teacher expectations, and the attitudes of peers. By creating a safe space for girls to engage in conversations that strengthen self-esteem, you can help your students make powerful choices and maintain a healthy opinion of themselves. Higher self-esteem can mean higher grades and bigger life goals.

This mini-guide will help you lead a book club that supports girls' healthy emotions throughout the school year. You can start a book club with a small group of girls from your class or you can open up the activities to the whole school. Protecting the self-esteem of girls is an ongoing activity, so read on to get started.

*Dove*  
*Movement*  
for Self-Esteem

# Book Group for Girls Ages 8–12



## Meeting Introduction:

### **Mutual Compliments**

Start each meeting by having girls share three things they like about one another and three things they like about themselves. As the group leader, start off the activity by modeling for the girls what it means to compliment yourself and others. Focus on physical, personality, and character traits. As the club meetings continue, the focus may shift to complimenting each other on ways that they have been brave or demonstrated strong self-esteem. Participants can compliment themselves on achievements, big or small, that they are proud of.

**Group Discussion:** Have the group read a book together and follow up with a guided discussion. We recommend selecting books that deal with various beauty topics and self-esteem issues. You can encourage the girls to extend the conversation to friends and family members!

Get started with the following magazine and books. After reading, use the special discussion questions—crafted by the authors and Dove® Global Self-Esteem Ambassador Jess Weiner—to get the girls thinking and talking about self-esteem:

## Questions

***New Moon magazine*** by Nancy Gruver and the Girls Editorial Board

1. What kind of article or essay would you like to submit to *New Moon* magazine? What topics would you like to see covered?
2. Why do you think some girls tend to listen to their friends more when it comes to getting advice about boys, body image, or self-esteem?
3. What do you wish your parents would talk to you more about?

***All Made Up: A Girls' Guide to Seeing Through Celebrity Hype and Celebrating Real Beauty*** by Audrey Brashich

1. Even with all the information out there about airbrushing, why do you think some girls still forget that a lot of pictures are not real?
2. How can you and your friends help spread the message about confidence in your communities?
3. If you could “make up” a new definition of beautiful, what would it be?

***Liberty Porter, First Daughter*** by Julia Rozines Devillers

1. How would you feel if your dad (or mom) were the President of the United States? Excited? Nervous? Would you feel like Liberty did?
2. Even though her dad is President, it doesn't mean Liberty is without worries. What is the biggest worry or concern for Liberty in this book?
3. If you had a chance to send the President a message about girls and self-confidence, what would it be?

***113 Things To Do By 13*** by Brittany and Terri MacLeod

1. What are five things you want to do before you are 13?
2. Who helps you reach your goals? Who is your biggest cheerleader?
3. What was the most helpful tip in the book for you and why? What tip or advice would you give to a younger girl who is worrying about her looks or confidence?

## Closing Activity Ages 8–9



### Closing Activity:

End each meeting with a group activity that allows girls to express what keeps them strong and feeling confident. This hands-on activity will help them understand the unique feelings, qualities, and actions that can strengthen their sense of self. As the year progresses, so too will their thoughts and perspectives on themselves.

### Ages 8–9: Feel the Power of Your Tiny Globe!

Let the girls know that confidence can be like an imaginary little globe they can hold in their hands that will always keep them strong and feeling great about themselves. You might say something like, *Imagine that when you hold this tiny globe in your hands, it's easier to believe in yourself and your ability to do extraordinary things! Your globe is a special symbol of the wide world of girls to which you belong!*

Then ask:

- Do you ever think, “I just can’t do it” or “Maybe I shouldn’t even try”? We all think these things sometimes, but this little globe in your hand can be a reminder of all the strength and skills you have inside you!
- Let’s think about what keeps you feeling good and strong (things like your family, your friends, learning about yourself and new people and places, trying new activities, and knowing everyone is special in their own way). Now, with pictures or words, let’s each put all of the things that make us feel good and strong inside our globes.

Once the girls have filled their globes, ask them to share what keeps them feeling strong. **Ask:** *Do other girls have something in their globes that might keep you strong, too? Put it in your globe!* **You might say:** *Take this globe home and hang it in a special place. Whenever you look at it, remember all the strength and all the skills you have inside you. With these strengths and skills, you can always do extraordinary things—even without a tiny globe in your hand!*

### Extension:

You may choose to have the girls use this activity to identify what they learned about self-esteem from the book they read. Have them write down pressures referenced in the book as well as ideas girls and women in the book used to stay strong and confident.

## Feel the Power of Your Tiny Globe!

Using pictures or words, put all of the things that make you feel good and strong inside the globe.



Ordinary girls can do extraordinary things!



## Closing Activity Ages 10–12



### Closing Activity:

End each meeting with a group activity that allows girls to express what keeps them strong and feeling confident. This hands-on activity will help them understand the unique feelings, qualities, and actions that can strengthen their sense of self. As the year progresses, so too will their thoughts and perspectives on themselves.

### Ages 10–12: Don Your Cloak!

Let the girls know that confidence can be like a protective cloak that shelters them when someone says or does something that hurts them in some way. You might say something like, *With this cloak around you, it's easier to stay true to your own thoughts and feelings and not be influenced by pressures or the unkind acts or words of others.* Then say:

- *Think about some of the pressures you might be experiencing at school, with friends, at home, or elsewhere in your life (such as pressure to fit in, to not be different, or to do something you don't want to do). If you like, write your own personal pressures outside your cloak.*
- *Now think about what keeps you feeling good and strong, no matter what you might be facing (things like talking about your feelings, learning about yourself, trying new activities, and knowing everyone is different). Put all of these things on your cloak.*

Once the girls have covered their cloaks, ask them to talk about what they put on and outside the cloaks. Acknowledge that everyone feels pressure but it's how we handle the pressure that keeps us strong. **Ask:** *Do others have something on their cloaks that might keep you strong, too? Add it to your cloak!* **You might say:** *The more we remember these feelings, qualities, and actions, the easier it is for our confidence to shine! Feel free to take this cloak home and hang it where it will most inspire you.*

### Extension:

You may choose to have the girls use this activity to identify what they learned about self-esteem from the book they read. Have them write down pressures referenced in the book as well as ideas girls and women in the book used to stay strong and confident.

## Don Your Cloak!

Write pressures you experience at home, in school, or with friends outside of the cloak. (If your pressures are private, you do not have to write them on the page, just keep them in your mind.) Write the things that keep you feeling good and strong inside the cloak.

