



Empowerment

Wow—you're in high school! No matter how you feel about that, you can't deny that your life has changed a lot since middle school, and even more since grade school. Your body is changing in ways you may or may not be able to see, but, more importantly, your mind is developing at an incredible rate—literally. Some experts believe the brain grows as much during the teen years as it does when you're a toddler learning to walk and talk.

Everyone has accomplished something they are proud of, but girls sometimes hesitate to speak positively about themselves. (On the other hand, girls jump in with lots of self criticism, often about their appearance, saying things like, "I'm so fat," or "I'm so ugly.")

Ask three people who know you well to identify one or more accomplishments they think you have achieved in the last year. Were there things they brought up that you had forgotten about, or maybe not thought of as accomplishments until they framed them as such?



Creative Activity

Now that you've survived the early high school experience, reach out to other girls and help them benefit from your experience. Create some "Help For High School" kits for middle school girls who are about to enter ninth grade.

You might include a more detailed map of the high school with some landmarks and descriptions of safer places to hang out, and ideas for decorating lockers. Make a small set of "What To Do If..." Tips, such as "What To Do If You're Late for Class," "What To Do If You Don't Have Someone To Eat With," and so on.

Add other fun and inexpensive items that can help ease another girl's anxiety when she begins a phase of her life that you have already mastered! You can put everything in a simple brown bag that you decorate, or something fancier.

Suzi says: "My two friends are so competitive it gets to me. One of them is always telling us how good her grades are, how many tips she got at her job for being nice, and how she's going to be accepted at every college she applies to. My other friend is really jealous of everything, but she'll never say it outright. Instead she just raises her eyebrows and goes: 'New cell phone?' or something like that in a kind of snide way. Between the two of them, I never want to talk about anything controversial. Otherwise, we get along great."

Okay, Now Here's What You Have to Say:

Is it easier for boys to talk about their accomplishments than girls?

How do your friendships grow stronger or fall apart because one girl is more accomplished than another?

