Christine Emmons PhD

My Story

Because I have lived it, I understand the profound role that the home, school, and community environments can play in boosting a child's success, even in difficult circumstances. I was born on the tiny island of Grenada in the Caribbean. My mother and grandmother raised me and my siblings. We were working class. To support the family, my mother worked in a spice factory. My grandmother worked at home looking after us and the house. During kindergarten and elementary grades, I went to my neighborhood public school. We had very little money, and I only went to high school because I won a government scholarship. High school was not free. My mother could not afford the fees, the uniform, or the books.

Although I went to school with white, Asian, brown, and black children; and children whose parents had more or less money, I never saw these differences as affecting my or anyone else's ability to learn and succeed. Neither did my teachers. As a little black girl in Grenada, no-one told me that any group was smarter or better than me. Having lived and studied in different countries, including Canada and the United States, I realize how important my home and school experiences were in shaping who I am.

From my mother I learned hard work, self-reliance, and compassion for others. From my grandmother, I learned to be proud of who I am, to value myself, and not to envy others. From both I learned the value of education, unbounded dreams, and to trust in God. From my teachers I learned the joy of learning, the celebration of success, and to stand up for myself. My home life was not perfect, but I felt loved and protected. My community valued education, and congratulated the families of those who did well on exams. Character was valued above wealth.

No-one ever challenged my ability to achieve whatever I wanted. I want every child to have that same unbounded freedom to dream; and the support necessary to accomplish their dreams. I believe that I can do a little to contribute to that; by working with parents, teachers, and leaders to harness the Power of Place to inspire, empower, and support youth.

Thank you
Christine L. Emmons, PhD

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