

## Part of Something Bigger

“You are not alone in the world, young lady.” It’s a phrase my mom used when she wanted to remind me that I had an obligation to look out for others—mostly my siblings. As I grew up, I saw it as my duty to reach out to those beyond my family. Having this knowledge can be both an opportunity and a comfort. Knowing that I was responsible for others led me to make better choices about my own behavior so that I could be a positive example. It was also a comfort. I knew that if I had the responsibility to look out for others, then I was an important part of my world. I was part of something bigger—and that made me valuable.

It’s important for our developing adolescents to recognizing that they are part of something bigger. Scientific research shows that having a connection to the world around them makes adolescents happier and healthier. It reminds them that they are *not* “alone in the world” and encourages them to get involved. It can even be the motivation for them to make the world a better place. According to [Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg](#), “Young people who work to make the world better have a sense of purpose, feel good about themselves, and handle their own problems better. It’s important to understand that you really can make a difference in other people’s lives.” Young people who have a sense of purpose are more resilient, experience less stress, anxiety and depression and make healthier choices about how they live their lives.

Parents know that the world is a better place because our children are in it. We need to make sure that *they* know it, too. This month’s Power Tips provide suggestions to help you get started:

### April Prevention Principle

“All resilience-based community change approaches have, as a bottom line, getting youth involved as partners in the change effort. Youth need to have ownership and active roles in the life of their community if the community is to serve as a protective factor.”

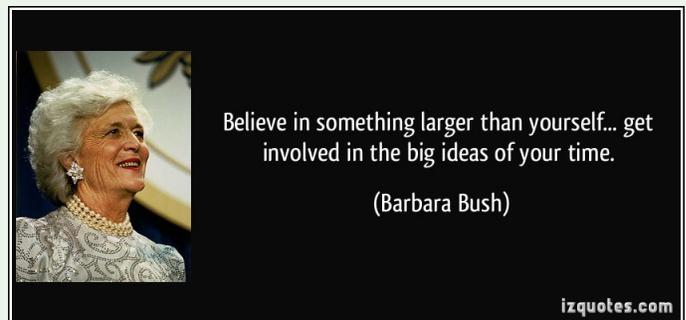
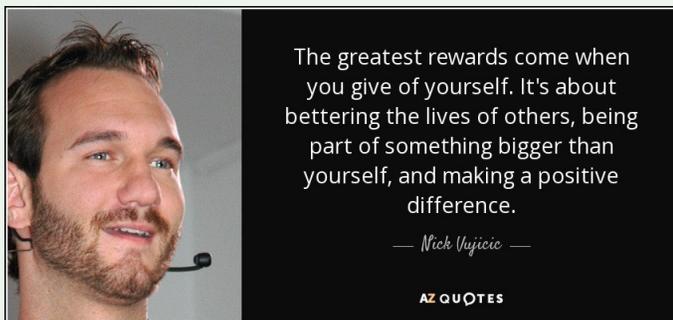
Bonnie Benard  
[Resilience: What We Have Learned](#)

### Power Tips

- ⇒ Helping our children recognize that there are people in the world that do not have as much human contact, money, freedom and security as they need can provide opportunities for us to use our resources (time, talents, finances, ideas) to make a difference for others.
- ⇒ Our children learn by watching us. Are we demonstrating the value of serving others with our time, talents, finances and ideas?
- ⇒ Adolescents are concrete thinkers. We can’t assume they know what we are thinking. We need to make sure we *tell* them that we believe they have the power to make a difference.
- ⇒ Each of our children have different talents and abilities. It’s important to find opportunities that fit the individual talents of each of our children.
- ⇒ Connecting our children with their past helps them to see how they fit into the present and the future. Be sure to share your child’s family history with him/her.

### Conversations that Count

We each have talents and strengths that make us unique. We use those skills to make a difference in our families, our schools and our community. Use this month’s PowerTalk activity- [Sharing your Talents with the World](#) to talk about ways that your family can use their talents to care for our environment.



[ThePowerofChoice.info](http://ThePowerofChoice.info)

Connect with other parents at:  
[Power of Choice-Parents Use Your Power](#)

