

MIRACLE-GRO® FOR SELF-ESTEEM

Sandra sees value in the activity of creating scrapbooks, too. It builds self-esteem, competence and awareness, she says. "There's always lots to choose from, so people have to isolate things that matter to them to put in the book. Lots of people journal in scrapbooks—feelings, things they care about. Scrapbooks range from simple to elaborate. The whole gamut of human expression is captured in those books. They're works of art."

No matter what form your story takes, it's always the story of your life.



Creative Memories Founder Rhonda Anderson says building self-esteem also extends to the people whose photos are in the books. "I'm a child-product of a photo album," she says.

"I know how photo albums build self-esteem and give kids a sense of belonging. I know how they preserve history and help teach you where you came from and what your roots are. They help you pass on your family's values and beliefs."

When words fail, scrapbooks and photo albums can be important communication tools. "We have had families who have done an album together, and it has helped reconcile relationships between sisters," Rhonda says. "There are parents who've been able to communicate to their teenagers through photo albums when their verbal communication has broken down. They've been able to create this album, say 'I love you,' and transfer stories that don't get told in their face-to-face verbalization. Through the act of creating a photo album, parents communicate so much love and affirmation to their kids. It strengthens and bonds relationships."

DIGITAL CONNECTIONS

As the world becomes increasingly digital, scrapbooks have gone high-tech, too. "When you hold a book in your hand, you have a different sensation than when you look at a screen," Sandra says. "One isn't better than the other, just different. When I make a scrapbook through my computer, I can organize photos, add comments and art, and send them right away as e-mail or I can print it out. More and more, young people are becoming digitally focused. My teenage daughter does scrapbooks with paper, but every day she is online, creating movies or photos. She likes to send them to someone who's feeling low or just to stay in touch. It's a lovely way to stay connected."

Whether it's on paper or in a digital format, Sandra insists telling your story through scrapbooking isn't about doing more—it's about doing with more meaning. "As you're creating a scrapbook, you're growing something—awareness, relationships, memory," she says. "That's very important, because as we begin to share, we connect. At our core, we all want to connect—to love and be loved." EW