

A TRIBUTE

WHO ARE YOUR HEROES?

In our Introduction, we challenge you to name 50 important American heroes. If you actually try to do it, we think you will name some people we probably wouldn't even know. But you know them, and they are heroes to you. And that's VERY important.

All of us have personal heroes. They are the people in our own lives who have helped to shape our personalities and define "who we are." Often we don't even realize how important and special they are.

Most likely your mom and dad are personal heroes. Think about how much they have helped you. Sure, we guess there are times you have disagreed with their advice or actions, but most likely, they have been there for you when you needed them.

How about teachers? Religious leaders? Doctors? Coaches? Club leaders? Your friends' parents? Even your brothers and sisters—yes, they can be your personal heroes too!

Do you ever say thanks to your personal heroes? Telling someone he or she is your personal hero is different from saying, "I love you." That's important to do too, but also letting your personal heroes know they are YOUR HEROES is a powerful way of thanking them. It's the activity we talk about with Dr. Bill Cosby. So take a look at that section (page 37).

There are many other heroes in the United States. Sometimes we refer to these people as "unsung" heroes. They are the fire-fighters who rush into burning buildings to save lives. They are the police officers who risk their lives to keep us safe. They are the people who serve in our armed forces to keep this nation free.

It took the horror of September 11, 2001 (9-11), to remind us of just how special "unsung" heroes are. Many brave men and women sacrificed to help others. But that's what heroes do, whether they are personal or unsung or famous heroes. They give of themselves to make this world a better place. The 9-11 tragedy made Americans think about the importance of heroes. We want you to think about the importance of the heroes in YOUR life, and we hope you'll take some action to let them know how special they are to you.