

NO LIMITS: A DISCUSSION GUIDE TO EMPOWER YOUNG GIRLS THROUGH PLAY



ABOUT THE STORY

Ewy Rosqvist is an inspiration and role model to women throughout the world, proving there are no limits to what anyone – regardless of gender - can accomplish. She triumphed in one of the world's most difficult races, the Argentinian Touring Car Grand Prix. Her determination and historic win shattered the world record and the stereotype that women couldn't compete in the sport.

BACKGROUND: TACKLING GENDER STEREOTYPES

Research shows that gender associations are shaped at an early age. For girls, certain stereotypes may impact their self-perceptions and potentially their decisions about education, careers and contribution to society later in life. The way children play impacts the social and cognitive skills they develop. Toys typically associated with girls, like tea sets and dolls, encourage communication and social skills. Toys traditionally for boys, like building sets, sports equipment and puzzles, encourage visual and spatial skills that teach complex problem solving important to careers in science, math and technology. When asked their reasons for not majoring in science, technology, engineering or math (STEM), girls often cite lack of support and encouragement, as well as the limited number of other female role models. It is hoped that the gap in females' self-confidence in these areas can be closed if they are encouraged to play with toys usually associated with boys. Derailing one stereotype (e.g. toy cars are for boys), can call other stereotypes into question.

TRY THIS WITH YOUNG GIRLS

Create a teachable moment about female heroes through the eyes of a child.

- Review short film “No Limits” (youtu.be/Boi6E8hhb4c) without children
- Gather a grab bag* of five or more toys – perhaps a stuffed animal, a tea set, ball, puzzle and a car. Ensure two are traditionally associated with girls, two typically associated with boys and one gender neutral
- Ask the child to pick the toy they would most like to play with and discuss
- Then hold up each individual toy and discuss. Make sure the car is last so it can lead into a discussion about female heroes and set up the video

**You can also do this with pictures of toys which may work better in a group setting.*

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION

- Which toy would you like to play with? Why?
- Tell me about the others. Would you like to play with this? Why?
- Who normally plays with this toy?
- What about the car? Who drives a race car like this?
- Do you want to see a video I saw today?

If they select the car first, continue through the above questions and return back to it last.

SHARE THE FILM - EWY ROSQVIST: AN UNEXPECTED CHAMPION (youtu.be/NAMo2QHGs2E)

- What do you think of Ewy Rosqvist?
- How did Ewy's story make you feel?
- If you could be anything, what would you choose?
- Use this as a segue to discuss other paths and fields

Mercedes-Benz hopes that by changing the gender narrative starting with toys, it will help **convince young girls that there are no limits** – they can be anything – do anything. They should dream big. Dream bold. And **never** give up on that dream.

