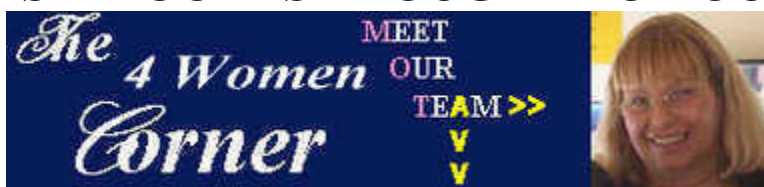


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# ***How to Build Self-Esteem***

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# How to Build Self-Esteem!

What is Self-Esteem?

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## **What is Self-Esteem?**

How does self esteem work?

Tracy has been in and out of relationships for so long that she is beginning to think that no one is out there for her. No matter how she tried, and no matter what kind of guy she goes steady with, it always ends up with a big bang, and the door is usually slammed at her end.

She has blamed herself for her failed relationships because she was so kind or nosy, or forgiving, selfless, clingy. You name it; every single bad thing that happened to the relationship was her fault. Up to now, she could not help but wonder what went wrong. She has done everything to make it work but nothing she does seems to make a difference and she still hasn't found "Mr. Right."

At first glance, there is really nothing wrong with Tracy, nor with the men in her lives. But as you probe into their day to day activities, you realize that Tracy looks okay on the outside, but has very low regard for herself on the inside. She seems like an ordinary girl next door but she is actually suffering from what we call low self esteem.

Self esteem is how you regard or value yourself in terms of your job, your accomplishments, your relationship with your peers and your family and your place in the society. It is actually the image you have of yourself. Having high self esteem means you have a high regard for yourself while low self esteem means you perceive no value of yourself.

People with high self esteem are usually people who are happy and confident. It is not about bragging about what you have or your accomplishments, but it is taking stock of what kind of person you are given all your facts in life.

Self esteem is an important trait of every individual because it influences and sometimes even determines success in your personal life and in your career. Having a high self esteem means you respect yourself, and it is most often the reason why others respect you.

A person with high self esteem will do the right thing even if exposed to the wrong set of people. A person who regards himself highly will not follow what other people are doing because he has his own discernment of what is right and wrong.

Self esteem grows on you, depending on how you were treated as a child. If you were encouraged or praised by your family while growing up, then you will probably have a high self esteem when you become an adult. However, there are people who may have high self esteem while growing up, but then later developed a low image of themselves because of certain factors.

## Factors that lower self esteem

1. Divorce or separation-A child who grew up in the right environment and with the right kind of people giving him support and encouragement will have a high self esteem. However, an incident like the divorce or separation of his parents will most likely shatter the child's high image of himself, and he could end up blaming himself for the separation. He will then go into a vicious cycle of looking down on himself and of treating others differently because of such an incident.

2. Physical attributes-A child who is on the chubby side while growing up may be considered as cute by his family and friends and so the frequent encouragement and praise will help him develop high self esteem. However, as he grows older, his environment changes and then he is exposed to the reality that society generally frowns on people who are on the heavy side. This creates confusion and identity crisis which may lead to self pity and the development of a low self image.

3. Rejection-A child who grew up with supportive parents and siblings will most likely become an adult with a high self esteem. However, constant exposure to critical people who insult him and criticize him may create a dent in his high self image. His comfort zone is now gone and there is a possibility that he will be rejected by other people who are not so kind or who may have very high standards.

A person's self esteem will serve as his defense and survival kit against the competitive nature of society. Growing up with a high self esteem will already be an advantage because such a person already knows his true value. However, he must keep close contact with the people who really matter to him to maintain his self worth, and avoid people who will try to ruin his self image.

### **Where does it come from?**

How does one get a high self esteem?

Have you ever criticized, even cursed yourself for doing something wrong?

Have you tried torturing yourself by doing a monologue of how silly and stupid you are, and how useless you are to society? If you have been doing this on a regular basis, then you may have a low self esteem.

Self esteem is the overall image or value you have of yourself, it is how you look at yourself when you look in the mirror. If you look in the mirror and you see a loser who can do nothing more than commit mistakes, then you may have a very low self image.

A person's self esteem does not come from out of the blue. It is not something you were born with, although it is partly determined by the circumstances into which you were born. It is not manna from heaven and it cannot be bought by money.



Self esteem is acquired by a person early in life, when he was just a child, starting to recognize faces. He gains a little of it whenever he practices his gait and he gets encouragement from his parents, even if he manages to fumble a couple of times or more. He gains a little more of it as he becomes a toddler and his parents would give him hugs and kisses and tells him he is the their most precious possession.

As the child becomes a teenager, he has more or less developed a certain degree of self esteem gained from childhood. This degree of self esteem can be developed if as a teenager, he is recognized for his little achievements, and given a pat in the back and a comforting shoulder whenever he fails.

When this child becomes an adult, his self worth will be determined by the totality of his experiences growing up and the way he was treated by his family and friends. A high self esteem can serve as his arsenal whenever confronted by damaging criticisms and negative feedbacks from various people.

#### Effects of low self esteem

People who grew up in a very critical environment, where achievements are rarely praised and where faults are given more emphasis will most likely have a very low self esteem. Among the effects of a low self esteem are:

1. It can cause anxiety and depression. A person with a low self esteem is always concerned about pleasing other people. The more he tries to make other people happy, the more he becomes depressed and unsure of himself. And when he becomes unsure of himself, he will take this as a negative attribute, leading to a lesser self worth. It goes on and on until he does not anymore have a clear view of himself as a person.

2. A low self esteem can result in a setback in a person's performance in school or his career goals. A person who thinks less of himself will more likely have very low grades. If already working, a person with low self esteem will experience some difficulty in his career as he could not even perform his ordinary responsibilities well.

3. Lack of self esteem can create tension in a person's relationship with other people. Because he looks down on himself too much, this person cannot maintain a healthy relationship. He thinks he is lower than anybody and he is not worth loving.

4. Low self esteem can lead to dependency problems. Many people who have very low regard for themselves get into drugs because they look at substance abuse as the only way to confirm their existence. Others become alcoholics, opting to become intoxicated rather than confront the difficulty of facing one's self.

People with low self esteem or low self worth have very little or no self confidence at all. A single mistake, no matter how small, will always be blown out of proportion. A person with low self esteem will always blame himself for anything that happens regardless of the factors involved in the incident.

A person who has low self esteem is fragile and can be easily influenced by people who take advantage of other people's frailty. While self esteem has its roots in a person's childhood there is still a chance to develop the self worth of adults who treat themselves as lesser mortals. However, it will take an extra effort and determination, as well as a good support group before one can achieve this.

### **Who gets low self-esteem?**

People who may get low self esteem

Definitely, that Piglet character in Walt Disney cartoon's Winnie the Pooh, has low self esteem. If you have watched that cartoon movie, you will see that Piglet is often shy because he thinks he is too small to even matter. He has low regard for himself and does not even acknowledge his accomplishments.

But in real life, who are the people who are vulnerable to having low self esteem? Since self esteem is primarily gained from childhood, most people who have low self esteem are those who have bad memories of their growing up years. These are people who have never really grown up.

The following are the kinds of children who will most likely get low self esteem when they become adults.

1. Children who are products of broken families have a higher risk factor. Those who grew up with a single parent or none at all, will most likely grow up to be an insecure person. A child, no matter how innocent he may be, will question the reality that he has only one parent while all the other kids have two parents to care for them. The lack of one or two parents will be seen by the child as a flaw in his personality.

Parents who are getting a divorce or separation, should try to talk things out with their children and make them understand that they will always be there for them despite the separation. Children should be made aware that the separation is not their fault, and that their parents will still help each other in raising them, though they may be living separately.

2. Children who have very critical parents. Those whose parents are criticizing their every move, will turn out to be overly critical themselves when they grow up. Behind this overly critical nature is a child who has never really gotten over the undue and sometimes painful criticisms addressed to him by the very people who should have given him support early in life.

Parents should avoid nagging their children about their imperfections. Do not magnify the small mistakes committed by children. Rather, dismiss their failures as something trivial and remind the child that there is always a next time to try and do better.

3. Children who were never shown love and affection by their parents. Children who never experienced being loved by their parents will most likely grow up with a poor sense of self. The reasoning is, if their own parents could not love them for what they are, then who will? Parents should show affection to their children by giving them hugs and kisses. These are simple things but they can make children feel loved and needed.

4. Children who are victims of physical, verbal and sexual abuse. Children who have been abused while they were growing up will see themselves as objects to be used. While physical and sexual abuse ranks high in traumatizing children, verbal abuse can also turn them into insecure people later on. Nagging your children about how badly they performed in school will do nothing good but see you as the enemy. This will not only put a strain on your relationship but will also instill in his mind how incapable he is.

A child who has been sexually abused will most likely grow up scared and scarred. Such a child may grow up and look normal on the outside. However, the years could never erase the pain and the degradation brought about by being sexually abused, either by a parent or anyone else in the family.

Children who grew up under the said circumstances will behave differently when they become adults. But deep inside, there is a common denominator among them; the feeling of not being wanted and loved. When you feel these things about yourself, then self respect will most likely be non-existent. When you grow up unloved by those around you, then you will most likely have low self-worth or self-esteem when you become an adult.

A high self esteem comes from being secure of your worth as a person. It comes from knowing that people you love and who matter, reciprocates your feelings. It comes from acknowledging that you are a unique person who has his own talent and strength. And finally it comes from knowing how to sort out credible and constructive criticisms from damaging one.

### **How do I get it?**

How Does One Get Self-Esteem?

Some people will live their entire lives having extremely low self-esteem. They will never get to feel the joy that a healthy self-esteem gives. How does one get self-esteem, or at least try to get it back?

Self-esteem is one's own view of himself. It highlights the beauty of the person in the context of the world. Self-esteem is not seeing oneself as the best person in the whole world it is a mere appreciation of the self as it is. A healthy self-esteem is not characterized by overflowing overconfidence nor is it the lack of it.

What are the signs of a healthy self-esteem? Here are some them:

-Being Happy for who you are

People with a healthy self-esteem are people who view themselves as unique yet beautiful. Having a healthy self-esteem will make a person take the notions of the world regarding what's beautiful or what's not in a good light. He takes them into consideration but the ultimate basis for his views is his own belief. A person may not be as good-looking or as talented as other people but he can be as happy as he can be.

-Unafraid to take challenges

A healthy self-esteem will lead to self-confidence. People with healthy self-esteem are comfortable in trying out new things because they are not afraid to make mistakes and make fools of themselves once in a while. They are aware that there is no perfect person and everybody makes mistakes, so there's no reason for them to hide their weaknesses.

Being unafraid of committing mistakes is a sign of self-acceptance, with an emphasis on one's weaknesses. This is an important part of self-acceptance and self-appreciation.

-Accept mistakes and learn from them

Another healthy sign of a healthy self-esteem is the acceptance of one's mistakes and learning from them. A person with a low self-esteem would blame and put himself down continuously for the mistakes that he commits. It is a very unhealthy practice indeed.

There are a lot of factors to consider when making mistakes. Most of the time, these mistakes are brought about by consequences around us. Learning to accept mistakes and learning to learn from is a first step towards loving yourself.

-No need to prove oneself to others

People with healthy self-esteem need not to prove themselves to other people just to find self-worth and to feel accepted. People with low self-esteem tend to be restless in doing things in an effort to impress others. They equate success with self-worth and finding true happiness. There is more to life than getting a perfect score, shooting every basket and beating everybody else.

Having a healthy self-esteem may not necessarily equate to being happy. It is also possible that a person with a healthy self-esteem is unsatisfied with certain circumstances in his life and this makes him unhappy with the whole picture of his life. However, having a healthy self-esteem is a pre-requisite to having true happiness. If one owns the world and lives the life of a king but he views himself as a pathetic loser, do you think he will find happiness from all the material wealth that he has? It is more possible that his material wealth will aggravate his personal insecurities.

So how does one develop a healthy self-esteem? Listed below are some helpful tips into getting self-esteem.



-See the beauty in you

Self-esteem starts from self-acceptance and self-acceptance is built through seeing one's strengths and weaknesses. Identifying one's perceived strengths and weaknesses can be a useful tool in becoming a better person and having a better feeling towards oneself.

-Learn to let go

Let go of your mistakes and move on. Leave the negative things behind and bring the lessons along the journey. If one dwells on a mistake too much, it would eventually burn every ounce of self-esteem left in him.

-Learn to stop comparing

Stop comparing yourself to others. It may be okay to compare yourself to someone else on the descriptive level. You are who you are and let others be themselves.

-Teach your inner voice

The inner voice is the small voice inside your head which usually lowers one's self-esteem by dwelling on his faults and weaknesses. Speak to yourself in a positive tone. Always use positive remarks and try to leave out the destructive criticisms.

Finding self-esteem is not an easy thing to do. It is a task which cannot be done by anybody else but you. No amount of external intervention can influence someone who doesn't want self-esteem. Having self-esteem is a conscious choice. It can be the hardest thing to do but it can also be the easiest.

### **Can I change my Self-Esteem?**

Self-Esteem and the Rise to Happiness

When the Oracle of Delphi gave man the advice to "know thyself," it was the best advice she could give. Man is an animal with the ability to think and be aware of its own predicament. With his mind, he has created works of art, solved problems, codified language, raised cities, etc. That is a great distinction.

However, because man is aware of himself, he is also endowed with the flip side of having a mind. Sometimes he can be too aware of himself. He is easily swayed by outside circumstances beyond his control. He sees things that don't exist, torture himself and his fellows, lie, steal, and kill.

It is therefore imperative that man must above all master himself in order to live a full life on this earth. The key to this good life is how he views himself or his self-esteem.

Self-esteem is the way man views himself, simply put. It is a subjective assessment of himself as he interacts with others and the environment he lives in. This is one of the major factors that determine how well a person will do in this life. Unless training is done to rein in his emotions and have a different way of viewing things, self-esteem can be exceedingly fragile.

Most people derive high self-esteem from the things they do. This is especially apparent with people who work. High self-esteem can result from work which skills and challenge are equally matched. This result in the experience of what Dr. Csikszentmihalyi describes as flow. The more flow you have in life, the more fulfilling your life can become.

Self-esteem can be derived from any activity even housework, chores, taking care of children or studying. The essential thing behind it is that man must know where he is going.

Self-esteem can be improved in the following ways:

- Know your strengths. Take stock of yourself and know what you are really good at. It is important for you to develop the talents that you are naturally gifted at. Whether the skill is the ability to write well, have photographic memory, the ability to speak Latin backwards, you must find a venue for your talents to flourish.

How do you know what your strengths are? Think of things and situations you were in that were difficult for others but was easy for you. Did you always ace that English class without even studying? That could be an area of strength. Other people have great talents under the guise of mediocrity.

- Acknowledge areas for improvement. Weaknesses must be recognized for the weaknesses they are and shouldn't be sugar-coated into something like being human. The worst thing people can do to weaknesses is to ignore them and keep them under wraps.

The more a secret is hidden, the more the secret will be found out. This goes the same with weaknesses. Everyone has an area to improve, so don't compare yourself to others. Take stock of the weakness, and try to find ways to address it or take time to turn it into strength that drives you to better places.

- Don't take it personally. Detach. Take situations as they come. Never unnecessarily let others make you feel bad just to make themselves feel better. Refuse to do so. Avoid these people like the plague enough to even change jobs. Trust, it will be worth the change. Low self-esteem can be contagious.

Cultivate a logical view of things. Passions come so easily to men that the imposition of logic and reason is an exercise in being truly human. The ancient philosophers have time and again exhorted man to master his passions and work on their ascension.

- Know what you can control. There is only one thing in the world that you have absolute control over. It is the will alone. It is only your mind that you have complete mastery over. Even the body is not under your full control else you would be able to dictate the beats of your heart or the breath you take.

The mind is the vehicle for all things possible. And the passions fuel this dream. Focus and let yourself enjoy the process.

- Set your goals. Fragmentation of concentration holds you back more than you know. Knowing what you want and when you want it cuts through all the chaff. Aim high and let your mind find ways to get it.

If you need to adjust, do so. The whole point is to make sure you get to where you chose to be in the future and not what others want you to be.

- Laugh! The world is strange and absurd. Don't take things too seriously. Have fun with other with the understanding that they all are here to help you and are taking their own journeys to better themselves as well.

Raising self-esteem is a personalized art form. Some techniques may work on others and some don't. Try to mix and match, experiment as far and wide as you can until you can get a good handle on yourself. And you'll find things will just get better for you.

### **How to accept compliments**

True Compliments Must Be Acknowledged

Human beings are social animals and because they require constant interaction with others for their survival. In short, it is important for people to get along with each other.

Arguments have raged over the centuries on how people can truly cultivate a meaningful relationship with each other. Cultures have different ways of coping with others depending also on the environment they lived in.

Take for example the Japanese. For population densities approaching 13,416 per square kilometer in Tokyo as of September 2003, it is highly important for them to maintain social ties on a level that helps them keep on an even keel with each other.

The strategy the Japanese have adopted is to be exceedingly polite. It would be difficult for a Japanese to be frank and straightforward with a stranger or somebody who is not a family member. He will use the indirect approach to try to get his message across.

Among the Americans, whose culture enshrines the value of independence and the free enterprise, being straightforward and frank is not uncommon, especially among ambitious and goal-oriented individuals.

Depending on where one lives, the point is that people find ways to keep the wheels of civility moving along. Compliments play a good role in that aspect.

Compliments are defined as statements of praise. Indeed they are. What most people look at when being given a compliment is the truth behind the comment. This is because people as social beings want to be acknowledged for the contributions they have made to society.

Compliments are a good way for people to tell them how great they are. However, since compliments are so easy to dish out, it must be absolutely truthful. People can smell a lying or an insulting compliment a mile away. You can see it in the eyes, the posture, even the smile of the one making the compliment.

As grease for the social wheel, compliments have seen abuse many times for its convenience. This has caused a double-edged phenomenon among people that makes them automatically reject compliments with a negative disparaging remark about themselves or accept it too readily.

In short, people nowadays prefer to sell themselves short than to accept a compliment.

It became apparent that people with low self-esteem tend to reject compliments and establish a false sense of modesty while people with an overweening confidence tend to accept compliments with an edge to it. The art of accepting compliments was in danger of becoming lost.

Here's how to accept compliments without coming off as cocky or as a rejecter:

- Know yourself. This cannot be emphasized enough. To get rid of the insecurity that compliments generate in a person, knowledge about oneself is the most important factor.

With self-knowledge, you know yourself more than anybody can. When a compliment is given, you can instantly detect whether it was genuine by the sheer fact that you know where you truly stand in the scheme of things. Compliments that are specific usually mean people are sincere.

Nothing feels better than to be acknowledged for a job hard fought and truly well done. When you know you have given all you had to the project, the late nights, the overtime, the concentration, you should accept it with good grace, because you know you deserve the accolades.

- Learn to say Thank You. Compliments are one of the hardest things to accept for most people. So take a breath and practice saying "Thank you" to the wonderful gift of compliments.

Acknowledge the compliment by giving a genuine and sincere appreciation of the remark. It is not necessary to give another one back to the complimenter. This is not a market where you have to do an exchange. Just don't forget when the opportunity comes for you to give one yourself.

- Trust your instincts. How can you tell the person is sincere? You can try trusting your first impressions. The first two seconds is enough for your intuition to see whether people mean what they say about you.

Nevertheless, you most probably accept the compliment anyway to keep the wheel rolling along. Except that now you will take this compliment with a grain of salt. But also take stock of your condition. You might be tired and might react differently. It all depends on whether you are able to observe yourself and your reactions. That way you won't be caught off guard.



## **Do you always speak negatively about yourself?**

### How to Catch a Negative Thought

Awareness about oneself has always been considered a human ability. With this gift, man has managed to put himself as the dominant species of the earth. With his mind, he has managed to harness the very power of nature to create machines and codify systems.

Right from the first discovery of fire, it is in man's very nature to explore and to evolve. With no natural weapons or significant protection of any kind, it may be a wonder how we managed to succeed in evolution. There was only one answer. Our natural gift was our minds.

In the realm of the mind, Greek philosophers have encouraged man to aspire for perfection. In the Far East, we have striven to master our emotions and point the way for our future generations. Each generation has brought with it great steps in technology and innovation.

Despite this, somehow, we have not done so well with our emotions. Awareness is a double-edged sword. What happens when man becomes unbalanced and therefore unable to judge correctly?

An essential part of the human being is the image he has of his self-worth. Knowing precisely what a man's self-worth is gives a good indication on how far and high he will go in life. When a man's self-worth is not well developed, he loses the will to make a difference in the world.

Have you ever examined the mental chatter you have in your head? Is it positive or negative? Do you find yourself in constant doubt? Second-guessing yourself when you should have gone for it? Were you encouraged when you were young? Did you ever know you could do that, but was afraid of failure?

All these thoughts stop us from making a lot of mistakes. Problem is mistakes are the way mankind usually learns. Surviving his mistakes makes man stronger and wiser in a manner that he never forgets. Because we stop ourselves, we don't grow as much.

Learn to recognize negative thoughts. Here are the signs:

- Automatic. These thoughts seem to come naturally to your mind. One would be mistaken to think they are the norm though. If children were observed, why would they be uninhibited then?

We are all naturally without negative thoughts. As children, to be integrated into society meant that we have to be trained to be a part of society. This meant that measures had to be taken to keep us in check at times.

Unfortunately some parents took to verbal and physical punishment as a means to control their kids. But the purpose to discipline gets outlived and we still remember the shaming incidents we went through more than a decade ago. Without conscious intervention, we keep the tape running over and over again.

- Emotionally charged. We feel strongly about it. We are involved with it. Our blood goes pumping and our heart rate kicks up more than a notch. We can't help it. But are we helpless?

Fortunately, we are not helpless. Though for years we have been avoiding the subject, we can choose to face the facts and make ourselves better again. The first step is to accept that we have this problem.

We can also choose the response we give this kind of stimulation. Viktor Frankl, a concentration camp internee taught that "between stimulus and response, there is a gap." With practice, we can widen this gap and create a space where we can react in a manner we choose to a situation.

- Draining. Negative thoughts do not give energy to go on doing things at the same level or makes us suddenly lose our enthusiasm. We become distracted and preoccupied where concentration and focus is required.

Negative thoughts take energy away from the work you do. It is counterproductive and makes you get in the way of yourself. If you find yourself in this situation, stop. Take a break, and take time to return to your center.

Find a quiet corner and sit down. Relax and close your eyes. Concentrate on breathing naturally through your mouth. Take slow deep breaths that go all the way into your center. When you find yourself totally on your breath, then you can think about things that make you happy and excited.

After a few minutes, you'll feel invigorated and ready to do another round.

Negative thoughts are a product of what happened to us in the past. It may well be good advice that we find ways to keep it in the past, let go and move on into the present and future without any useless baggage.

### **Don't apologize for your actions**

#### Never Apologize for Your Success

Deeply ingrained in the heart of every man, woman and child in the face of the earth is the drive to succeed. Now with six billion people in the world with the drive to succeed, that's a tall order.

Fortunately, not all men, women and children are equal. In fact, each man and woman is unique and varied in terms of goals, capacity, purpose, opportunities presented, threshold for risk, etc. Each has a slightly different style of learning, preference, and outlook in life.

It would also stand to reason that each human being on the face of the earth will have slight to extreme differences in defining what success is to them.

Success is defined as being in a situation of fame and/or prosperity. One might think people became successful because they had an advantage. And they actually do. They had the uncommon characteristic that they set their minds to succeed.

They have the drive and desire to be where they choose to be. If it is impossible at the present, they make plans to put themselves in situations where they will get to their destination step by step. They just don't give up, they never lose hope even in the face of great odds.

Yet why are most of the six billion not successful then? Is there a reason why not everybody is a millionaire? Everybody has the drive for success, so why aren't we all better off?

The answer unfortunately is not outside. It is because we stop or deny ourselves from success. It might sound strange, but most people choose to not succeed.

Success can be pretty scary. It is a lonely journey to the top. People who desire success can be viewed as caring only about money. Your talents will be less valued by people who don't see its worth. And quite possibly the social circles the person moves in will not appreciate the success he has achieved and will move to ostracize him.

Once success is achieved, a person is placed in a very unique situation of his own making. He can choose to either get used to success or decide that the discomfort of success is too much and withdraw back into familiar grounds.

Never say you are sorry for your success whether the situation required a person to strive for others or themselves. The very fact that he has reached a certain level of success signifies a payoff of all the hard work and sacrifice he has put into the effort.

Feel happy and enjoy the fruits of your labors. What is the value of tilling a field if you do not enjoy its fruits? It is okay to feel good about being a success. You do not have the world on your shoulders by yourself. Look around and you will see that others are more than willing to take up the burden with you.

Spread the wealth around. Give back to the community that supports you. If you feel discomfort that you have more than the poor, then this would be a perfect opportunity to make a significant contribution to your fellow men. Build schools, parks, libraries, etc. If you're not that successful, volunteer at church, teach; make others happy in your presence.

Choose to teach your fellow man to learn to be a success. Go on lectures. Share what you know with others. It will make the taste of success so much sweeter when others are with you at the top.

Stay simple. As a successful person, the lure of the glitter is great. You may be tempted to purchase extravagantly. Build three Jacuzzis in your ten million dollar home in Beverly Hills. Don't go over the top. Don't let things you own...own you.

Stick to your principles. The most successful people in the US are down to earth, simple folks with iron clad values. When one of them says they'll meet you at five pm on the corner deli, don't make the mistake of meeting the, five minutes after the appointed time. If you do, you better have a good reason to do so.

Truly successful people are people with integrity. They keep their word as much as they can and act warmly towards everybody they encounter.

And why shouldn't they? They were willing to take a chance on life. So life has given back what they put in, with interest.

### **Are you a perfectionist?**

Are you a perfectionist?

For some people, good enough is just not good enough. While for others, turning down a project is a lot better than finishing it off in a less than perfect way. Doing nothing, accomplishing nothing is a lot better than achieving something that is not at all one hundred percent exceptional. Be honest with yourself and see if you think the same way too.

For perfectionists, not doing anything is so much better than doing something yet failing.

Aiming to be perfect is the goal of perfectionists. For them, there is no room for mistakes. Trying is not good enough. Doing should be the only option, and doing it perfectly is the only decision one should make.

Perfectionists have constant stream of thoughts floating in their heads that are often self defeating. They dictate unnecessarily high goals for themselves. These goals sometimes are too high that they tend to border on the unrealistic.

However, society sometimes favors and smiles upon the perfectionists amongst us. This practice comes from the less known fact that being perfect is a requirement for success. But there are some studies that have proven that being always obsessed to be perfect is actually detrimental to success.

Striving to be always perfect denies someone the unique satisfaction of doing something for the sheer fun of it. The fixation to always be perfect could also cause someone to think more of failing than simply enjoying the process of getting there. It pays to have more realistic expectations.

Most perfectionists at times got to where they are now because of early life experiences they may have had which caused them to think that their value lies only on what they have achieved or accomplished. For them, their self-worth is based on how much others have approved of them. Therefore, their self esteem is based on outside standards.

Having this kind of attitude makes one easily vulnerable to the opinions of others. Perfectionists have also become sensitive to what others think of them. The desire to protect themselves from these "harsh" criticisms causes them to go on the defensive and strive to be perfect.

There is a list of attitudes, beliefs and overall negative perceptions that further fuel obsessive compulsive ruminations about being perfect. Check and see if you or any one of those you know possess any of the following.



Failing is something to be afraid of

Failing is a big thing for perfectionists. Failure signifies a lot of things to them. While non perfectionists may see failure as an opportunity to better themselves, the way Thomas Edison thought that his more than a hundred "mistakes" prior to inventing a working light bulb were not actual "mistakes" but only a hundred ways that led him to finally creating that perfect invention.

Perfectionists see it differently though. Failure is just what it is, their inability to make something better of themselves. Failing makes them feel worthless, expendable and totally worth nothing.

Mistakes – Oh the horror!

Mistakes are a no-no for perfectionists that sometimes their whole twenty four hour lives actually revolve around avoiding them. If we only live in a perfect world, doing this would be fairly easy. But since we do not, mistakes are actually a part of everyone's lives that sometimes, as in Thomas Edison's case, committing them may actually be an amazing opportunity for growth and learning.

Believe it or not, the vaccine for chicken pox as well as the discovery of radiation were both discovered by mistake!

Please love me don't hate me

Perfectionists try, as much as it is possible, to not let anyone see the flaws that they have. This is because they are afraid that once anyone has seen

them in their unguarded state, people will reject them outright. In order for them to not feel such or at least for them to avoid experiencing any form of criticism or disapproval, they try their best to be their perfect selves.

There are only two choices: All or nothing at all

Perfectionists have a firm belief in themselves that they are totally worthless if they do not have any accomplishments. A student who is only used to receiving all A's in his card may begin to perceive that the world is coming to an end if he receives a B+.

All in all, the cliché that says: don't sweat the small stuff, actually works in the perfectionist's case. Taking it easy and being easy on yourself is actually less complex, less stressful than worrying about all the details to achieve perfection.

## **Are you a procrastinator?**

Are you a procrastinator?

Do you delay doing the inevitable? Do you put off doing something for tomorrow when you can very well do them all today? Have you asked yourself why you are like that?

These are the hallmarks of a true blue procrastinator. In a practical sense, procrastinating is a waste of precious energy and time.

If you have any of the following attitudes and beliefs, it is high time you check yourself for personal rehabilitation and start changing those negative thoughts to positive ones.

Feelings of hopelessness

Feeling hopeless about a situation is a clear motivation for procrastinators to procrastinate. Either because they feel that the past is better and the future is bleak and doing something today is futile, a hopeless situation is enough an excuse for them to not do anything at all.

For procrastinators, doing anything is not worth anything. And doing something does not count at all.

## The young and the helpless

Procrastinators are so convinced that their moods are caused by someone, anyone or something. Or simply, everything and anything that is outside of themselves. They believe that their disposition is so beyond their control and that whatever actions or non-action they take is caused by an entity – visible or invisible that is external. They end up blaming the heavens, other people or fate for the misery they perceive they are in.

It is so overwhelming!

Those who procrastinate have the tendency to do the following: when assigned to complete a certain task, they will – as much as possible – magnify all the little (imagined or unimagined) problems they will encounter until actually doing the task becomes so overwhelming and difficult in their minds that their last recourse is to not do anything at all.

Procrastinators also try to do a lot in one get-up-and-go attitude instead of breaking up the chores into simple bite-size little pieces. Imagine if you would, try eating a whole steak and try to swallow everything in just one bite. Doing such is so unimaginably illogical and does not make any sense at all. It is also physiologically impossible and complex.

Jumping immediately to assumptions

Procrastinators also have a great excuse to not do anything or in delaying doing something. They have this ingrained habit that whatever it is they do is not enough and will never be enough to make them feel any better. This is because they have the tendency to engage themselves in negative thoughts and attitudes. Personal remarks like "I cannot," "I could, but" is their constant mantra.

They believe to not believe in themselves

Procrastinators also are good in labeling themselves into something they so firmly believe they are. The real person could range from anything as being "lazy," "good for nothing," etc. They believe that these labels are the real them and that they are unable to do anything about it. They believe they have no personal power to change themselves for the better so they do not expect a lot, or nothing at all from themselves.

The destination is worse than the journey

There are those who procrastinate and could not complete a task because they think that the end result of whatever it is they are to do is not worth the effort they are to put in the task. They think immediately of the immediate future of which they have no control over without taking into consideration the immediate present which they have the capacity to change and influence according to their will as much as it is possible.

The journey of getting there does not matter since the destination – wherever it is – will lead to nowhere, at least that is what they want to think.

Everything should be perfect

Procrastinators who have this kind of attitude makes them easily vulnerable to the opinions of others. Perfectionists have also become sensitive to what others think of them. The desire to protect themselves from these “harsh” criticisms causes them to go on the defensive and strive to be perfect. Eventually, being perfect is ultimately tiring since it is striving to achieve the unachievable. No one is perfect after all. And since doing nothing is better than doing something less than perfectly, procrastinators think that it is best to really do nothing at all.

All in all, perfection is an ideal that when achieved – if ever it is achievable – will be pointless. Real perfection only exists when flaws, mistakes, imperfections are present and the capacity to accept all these no matter what is the true mark of an honest accomplishment.

### **Listen to your Self Talk - Inferiority and Superiority**

Listen to your Self Talk - Inferiority and Superiority

Look at you, so fat, so ugly, and so hopeless. Whatever will I do with you?

Have you ever told yourself any of these statements? Have you ever thought of yourself as not worthy of any praise? Have you ever listened to the way you talk to yourself?

Such kinds of thought are the hallmark of a negative kind of attitude. It is self-defeating, it hurts --- emotionally, and in the practical sense, engaging in some form of it, no matter how little, does not help at all.

Have you ever tried doing this? Instead of a negative attitude, pepper the talks you have with yourself with positive yet realistic qualities. They could take the form of such statements like: I may be a size twelve now, but with a little effort day by day, maybe I could crunch my size down to eleven or ten? Or eight? I may have made mistakes then, but the present is more important than the past. It is never too late.

Did it not feel better having to hear such positive remarks? It pays to hear positive statements about yourself from yourself. According to some psychologists, the kind of self talk that people subject themselves to usually project and create their own emotional conditions.

Being able to feel calmer and a little less worried could depend on whatever it is you want to hear yourself say. Self talk also has the power to affect one's health and well-being. Stressful events, for example, are best handled calmly and with a little less drama.

With a little self-awareness and a lot of practice in focusing on how to best utilize the best out of a seemingly not good situation, developing the habit of positive self talk is easy as one two three.

The following are possible solutions and actions to make that constructive change from feeling and talking bad to feeling and talking good.

## Focus on the problem

Yes, there are problems. Yes, it helps to talk about them. But basically, problems are not the dominant reality. It would help so much for that problem to go away if the focus is on solving them and not griping or complaining about them. It is best that one should focus on how they want to make the situation a lot better.

## The worst is yet to come

Something that is clearly not happening yet but, for a lack of better thing to do or think about, negative self talk automatically transform these non-events to already bad situations. While preparing for an exam, negative self talk might just say, "I'll fail, definitely, I'll fail." Or while getting ready for a meeting, "I'll be a disaster, I'll make a fool out of myself and I'll be a disaster."

It helps to not focus on how you will appear, or how people will see you. Turn your attention beyond yourself, beyond your selfish and ego needs and towards the task at hand that is a lot bigger than you. Focusing on your self alone is one sure fire way to disaster.

Remember, not everything is all about you.



Pigeon-holing people is not good

People are unique. Just like fingerprints, no one is exactly alike. This is what makes them great, good, better, best. Variety is the root of all individuality. But, by putting people, and yourself, in boxes and pre-conceived notions and not thinking of them as distinct and original, enables one to think of others as less while putting yourself as someone who is more.

This denies everyone including yourself the appreciation and openness to various opportunities.

Could-a, would-a, should-a

Sentences that start with any of these words automatically set one up for un-called for and totally unnecessary regrets. There is no clear quantifiable proof that such kinds of self talk will help generate what one wants in life. What it does ensure are feelings of guilt, bitterness and even anger of not having done that, made this, said that, etc.

Appreciate the value of choices. There is power in not being able to know the outcome. It frees one from attachments and helps in letting go of expectations, be it good or bad.

All in all, consider self-talk as your soul, body and mind talking to you. Listen from within, your real voice is kind, compassionate and knows what is best for you. All you have to do is shut up bad-mouthing yourself and listen to the real silent witness within.

## **Underachiever and Overachiever**

### How to Deal with Overachievers and Underachievers

Overachieving and underachieving are two conditions which are experienced by many people. These are most commonly noticed in children, in terms of academics, sports and other activities which they take part in.

#### Overachieving

Overachieving can be defined as performing far better than what is expected. In academics, it is defined as one's academic performance which is way higher than one's performance in standardized tests such as intelligence quotient (I.Q.) tests.

A child may be an overachiever if he feels an impulsive need to get perfect grades and be on top of everybody else in his class. At first glance, it would seem that being an overachiever is no problem at all. What's wrong with being on top? Is there anything wrong with wanting to be the best? It's perfectly normal to feel that way. However, this desire to be on top affects someone mentally, physically, emotionally and socially, then it becomes a problem. An example would be someone who skip meals, refrains from conversations and mind nothing else but getting A's.

## Underachieving

An underachiever is someone whose performance is far below his potential. Underachieving can also be a problem and can seriously jeopardize a child's future if not properly dealt with. There are many reasons which lead to underachieving.

A child may be an underachiever if he:

- 1) Lacks interest in school work and other pertinent activities
- 2) Always blaming other for his mistakes
- 3) Engages too much in socializing or doesn't have a social life
- 4) Is disorganized

If one looks at overachieving and underachieving, they can be listed as antonyms. But even if the two concepts are almost paradoxical, they can both be associated with the same causes. They are two closely inter-related conditions.

## Low Self-esteem

The way one looks at himself very much related to overachieving and underachieving. Both the two conditions could have resulted from low self-esteem. For the overachievers, they may look at academic grades as personal barometers. They need assurance that they are worth something and getting high grades may be a way to fill that need. They tend to equate high test scores with self-worth.

For underachievers, they are afraid to perform at their best or in some cases, they are afraid to even try something out because of low self-esteem. They feel that they are not good enough to be able to do something and are afraid that they will fail which would cause their self-esteem to go down further.

There are other things which could aggravate the effects of low self-esteem, some of these are:

#### Lack of Opportunity

For children with low self-esteem, the lack of opportunities to grow will get them closer to being overachievers and underachievers. A child may become an overachiever if he realizes this and can become overly obsessive with getting high grades and beating every one in his class. A child may also become an underachiever and immediately stop trying.

#### Structure

Everything must have a balance, even structure. Children who grow up in homes where there is too much or too little structure are also in danger of becoming underachievers or overachievers. For example, in a house which is too structured, a child may feel that getting high grades is the only way to make his parents smile, or he may want to stop trying just to get even with his parents for being too strict.

## Attention

A child who is given too much or too little attention also faces the danger of being an overachiever or an underachiever. For example, a child who is given far too much attention will be inclined towards being an underachiever and stop trying because he needs some space between him and his parents.

Dealing with the problems of overachieving and underachieving should be done at the level of confidence building. Here are some points on how to deal with these problems:

### Communicate with your child

Constant and substantive communication between children and parents is one of the key factors for dealing with self-esteem problems. A child needs to be heard and needs to hear from his parents. Knowing one's child's problems and helping out if needed is one of the indicators of being an effective parent.

### Boost Confidence

Parents should encourage their children to become who they want to be. They should also give assurance that the children are to be loved whatever happens. Academic grades shouldn't be the barometer of parent's love for their children, and children should realize that.

## Allow the Child to Grow

Low self-esteem is associated with too little space to grow. Parents should learn how to let their children learn from their mistakes. This will fill in the sense of inadequacy in children. If a child doesn't want to study for a test, his parents should not force him to study even if he faces failing. Once the lesson is realized, the parent should then talk to the child so that he may be able to learn from it.

Low self-esteem can cause more serious problems in the later stages of one's life. However, not everything is lost, there are ways on how to deal with low self-esteem and avoid the problems brought about by overachieving and underachieving. A healthy self-esteem is needed if someone wants to be happy in life.

### **Attitude = Self-Esteem**

Self-Esteem is All about Attitude

“Self-esteem” as depicted by the word itself, refers to one's views about himself and his place in the whole scheme that is life.

Self-esteem is closely related to the concepts of self-worth and competence. Self-worth is all about seeing oneself in the whole context of reality, keeping in mind the basic human values. Competence refers to one's conviction on the belief that he can achieve things. These two concepts always go hand-in-hand with each other to be able to develop a healthy sense of self-esteem. A sense of worthiness prevents competence from becoming arrogance by reminding the person of the basic human values that should be achieved. Competence prevents worthiness become narcissism by reminding the person that good feelings are earned and not explicitly given.

Self-esteem is all about attitude. It is an attitude towards seeing oneself, one's potentials and the challenge of actualizing these potentials.

Oneself

Having a good attitude towards oneself is the basic foundation of a healthy self-esteem. One must have the confidence to be able to perform and this is founded through a good view of oneself.

People should always remember that everybody is different. Being different isn't necessarily bad, if one finds the uniqueness in himself. Everybody has a unique set of traits that sets him apart from the rest of the world. Low self-esteem can result from having a negative view of this uniqueness. This can later be followed by envy of people who are better in certain things. "Is there something wrong with me?" "Why did I lose?" These are some questions that result from self-doubting.

Low self-esteem can lead to underachieving. It is a condition wherein a person's performance falls short of his potential. The potential of underachievers are then put into waste. Underachievers tend to ultimately stop trying because of the belief that they are not capable of doing things. This can be a very dangerous situation since it will affect a person's mental, physical, social and spiritual conditions.

Self-acceptance and self-appreciation are the keys towards building self-esteem. A person needs to be able to see his qualities and accept himself for who he is. He takes into consideration his strengths and weaknesses and builds on his strengths and overcomes his weaknesses. A chubby person doesn't have to resort to diets which would eventually be detrimental to his health. A kid should not take drastic measures in reviewing for a test just to get a high score. A single aspect of one's life should not be equated to his total attributes as a person.

### The Self in the Context of the World

A positive attitude towards oneself is usually bugged by the things around the person. Low self-esteem is usually influenced by the wrong attitude of comparing oneself with other persons. Envy, as said earlier, leads to negative thoughts of one and can result to low self-esteem.

There's nothing wrong with idolizing other people for their abilities and their success, however, this should be done under a positive light. Putting yourself down because of others is not a healthy thing to do. Trying to become someone else is neither a good sign of finding self-worth and confidence.



The only standard that is worthy of being recognized is the standard that one sets upon himself. The world is full of different opinions and views but at the end of the day, the most important thing is that the heart is followed and happiness is achieved because of the beauty that is recognized from within.

Finding one's meaning in the context of the world maybe a difficult and challenging task. The journey should start from within one's soul. You must always remember that you were put in this world for a reason. Self-esteem can be found in one's purpose in this world. Forgive yourself if you have fallen short of your expectations and try to stand up as a better person.

Low self-esteem can eventually crush the totality of a person. Developing a good sense of the self and finding one's own place in the whole scheme of things can truly help in having a healthy self-esteem.

### **Growing a "YOU" attitude Instead of "ME"**

Growing a "You" versus "Me" Attitude: A Three-Part Exploration of Egotism

Are you someone who is infected with this disease that has plagued mankind for quite some time now? Egotism or blown up ego. It is also known as self-centeredness, selfishness, and is related to vanity or conceitedness.

This disease is likened to an adhesive with which people get stuck with themselves. If you can't get away from yourself, then indeed you have it.

Ever encountered people who are openly selfish and conceited? Those people who wave beggars away instead of sparing them a piece of bread or a penny? Those who can't think of anything but only themselves? Aren't they just annoying? Or, God forbid, are you one of them?

### Symptoms of a "Me-Me-Me" Attitude

Here are some of the signs that you have actually been infected with this disease known as egotism-itis:

1. You think of beggars as low-life thieves instead of love-needing humans.

People who see others who are in need as plain parasites of the community don't realize that it is actually them who are in need. This means that people who judge other by the way they look are actually the people who lack a big part of their lives. They lack understanding.

2. Your vocabulary is mainly composed of me, moi, yours truly, and I.

What could be more of an indication of selfishness than hearing someone talk about himself 24/7, right?

3. It always has to be "what's in it for me" when it comes to any of your endeavors.

You think that the whole world owes you a lot. So, everything that you do should benefit you and only you alone. Service means contributing something for his own advantage. It doesn't occur to an egotist that what's in there for him is the opportunity to give or to do something for someone.

4. The loss of others is your gain.

That's what you feel most of the time. When someone is empty you feel full. This easily translates to a person that lacks sheer concern for others. If you feel laughing when someone is just so grieving, surely, you have contracted the disease.

#### Complications of a "Me-Myself-and-I" Attitude

Now, how do you treat this very maligning disease of selfishness? Here are some thoughts that might motivate you to deal with this condition by hook or by crook.

1. With conceit, which is the best friend of selfishness, there's no room for improvement. Since conceited people think highly of themselves, what else will motivate them to improve themselves, right?

2. Egotism backfires. A lot! A conceited person, in his desire to show how great he is, often makes a fool of himself. And this makes him show much insecure he is with himself.

3. With selfishness, a person becomes a big turn-off. This is one of the worst downside of this trait - the loss of loved ones or the lack of gaining some friends. What could be more repelling than knowing someone who only thinks of himself?

4. It is simply pointless to be selfish. This is because what made everyone become the person that he is today is through the help of another person.

## Treating the "All by Myself" Attitude

After knowing the signs and complications of egotism here's a rundown of things you can do to gradually get rid of this communicable disease.

Egotism is founded by the thinking that we are different, that we are better than others. This can easily be destroyed by inculcating the fact that we are all the same. That we share the same fears, dreams, and hopes. What can be upsetting about that?

Superiority and inferiority is a dichotomy set by humans. It really is not one of the universal realities. If one continues to keep this dichotomy in mind, endless trouble will haunt him.

Also, a lack of judgment can easily lead to further trouble. Criticizing others which comes from plain narcissistic characteristics within yourself is one of the main causes of others miseries.

Always think of what you can contribute for the sake of being of help instead of being helped in the long run. This way you will reap what everyone has been struggling for - peace of mind.

Also, think of the truth in the words of Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749 ~ 1832) that "He who does not think much of himself is much more esteemed than he imagines."

## 10 Tips to Improving Self-Esteem

### 10 Helpful Tips in Gaining Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem can lead to various problems in someone's career, relationships and personal life. Low self-esteem can easily be transformed into depression which can further affect one's mental, physical and social disposition.

Respected psycho-therapist, Dr. Nathaniel Branden, defines self-esteem as the "disposition to experience oneself as being competent enough to be able to keep up with the challenges in one's life." The concept of self-esteem is basically all about how one views himself and his place in life itself. It is overall view of oneself based on reality.

Having a healthy self-esteem is important. It gives someone a positive outlook in life and this is reflected in his performance in his job, in his relationships and basically in everything that he does.

Here are 10 helpful tips on how one can boost his self-esteem.

#### 1) Accept yourself

People should remember that everyone is unique and beauty is to be found in every human being. Yes, other people can be better in doing certain things but this fact shouldn't hinder people from being the best that they can be.

Everybody is special and unique. A person's true worth cannot be seen in only one dimension of his life. For example, people usually envy the rich, thinking that they have everything and thus they are the happiest people in the world. However, the best things in life can never be bought by money. Stories of unhappiness among the rich are everywhere around us and this is a sign that wealth cannot be equated with happiness.

## 2) Self-Appreciation

Accepting oneself is different from appreciating oneself. Self-acceptance is a pre-requisite to self-appreciation but the latter must always be present. One might accept oneself under a pessimistic light and this is not very healthy. "I accept that I cannot do the things that I really want to do because I am weak" is a sample statement which depicts an unhealthy self-acceptance.

Appreciating oneself under a positive light is a definite self-esteem booster. One must highlight the good things about him and try to reinforce them and be better at those things.

## 3) Refrain from Comparing

Low self-esteem can be brought by the environment. Again, this can be traced to the lack of self-acceptance. Everybody is different and you have qualities that no other person has. A general sense of self-worth should be built without comparing oneself to other people.

#### 4) Don't Put Yourself Down

Nobody's perfect. Making a mistake is definitely normal and people should start accepting this fact. People with low self-esteem tend to put themselves even lower by continuously and harshly putting themselves down. An inner voice which reverberates inside their heads tells them that there is no hope. This should not be the case and having control over the inner voices can be the solution for this problem. Cut yourself some slack, you've done your best and that's what's important.

#### 5) Befriend Positive People

Having friends who are positive towards dealing with life's challenges can influence someone into seeing life in the same light and eventually build his self-esteem.

#### 6) Remind Yourself of the Positive Things About You

Again, there is beauty in everyone. Remember all the things that you like about yourself and the good things which you have done and make a list of the most striking ones. This will help in self-appreciation and definitely give you something to smile about.

## 7) Use tools

Buying books, cd's and other materials about building self-esteem wouldn't hurt, would it? These materials can definitely provide some informative ways on how to deal with low self-esteem. However, buying these materials would be useless if the lessons which they give wouldn't be applied in real life.

## 8) Engage in Fun Activities

Having fun once in a while releases stress, takes the negative ideas out of one's head and leaves space for positive thoughts to fill in. Having fun makes one feel happy about oneself.

## 9) Hangout with Friends

Having fun can be done privately but nothing beats fun with friends. Friends are usually a part of the primary support group of a person and can provide much needed conversations for a down-and-out person.

## 10) Seek Help

When all else fail, seek professional help from a psychologist. There's nothing wrong with taking care of yourself since low self-esteem can lead to more serious problems.

Having low self-esteem can be solved with the right tools and the right attitude. Loving yourself is the ultimate way which leads to a healthy and a better "you."





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