

Building Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is directly tied to our identity and how we see ourselves. Self-esteem is a important key to success in life. The development of a positive self-concept or healthy self-esteem is extremely important to happiness and success. Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves, and our behavior clearly reflects those feelings. For example, a person with high self-esteem will be able to:

- act independently
- assume responsibility
- take pride in his accomplishments
- tolerate frustration
- attempt new tasks and challenges
- handle positive and negative emotions
- offer assistance to others

On the other hand, a person with low self-esteem will:

- avoid trying new things
- feel unloved and unwanted
- blame others for his own shortcomings
- feel, or pretend to feel, emotionally indifferent
- be unable to tolerate a normal level of frustration
- put down his own talents and abilities
- be easily influenced

Ways to Improve Self-Esteem

1. *When you feel good about yourself, acknowledge it to yourself.* Practice giving yourself words of encouragement throughout each day.
2. *Be generous with self praise.* Praise yourself when you accomplish something or do something you're proud of.
3. *Teach yourself to practice making positive self-statements.* Self-talk is very important in everything we do. Psychologists have found that negative self-talk is behind depression and anxiety. What we think determines how we feel and how we feel determines how we behave. Therefore, it is important to teach yourself to be positive about how you talk to yourself.
4. *Avoid criticism that takes the form of ridicule or shame.* Sometimes it is necessary and appropriate to criticize someone. Sometimes, however, criticism can cross line and deteriorate into ridicule or shame. Learn the signs of verbal abuse and try to avoid it.