

What Is Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves; it is how we see ourselves when we look in the mirror. It affects every aspect of our lives – how we think, how we act and feel, and how we relate to others.

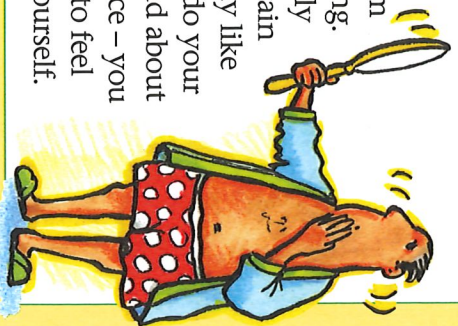
Where Does Self-Esteem Come From?

We are not born with self-esteem. Self-esteem comes from a lifetime of experiences. Our family, home, school, work and social life all contribute to our self-esteem.

High or Low?

If you feel good about yourself in most areas of your life, you probably have good self-esteem. If you feel bad about yourself in many areas of

your life, then your self-esteem may be suffering. Even if you only feel bad in certain areas – you may like how well you do your job, but feel bad about your appearance – you can take steps to feel better about yourself.



✓ Self-esteem affects every part of our lives.

✓ If you have low self-esteem, you may have trouble in relationships, work or school.

Taking steps to build your self-esteem can help. Learning to feel good about yourself can help you overcome depression, stress and loneliness.

This pamphlet is not a substitute for professional medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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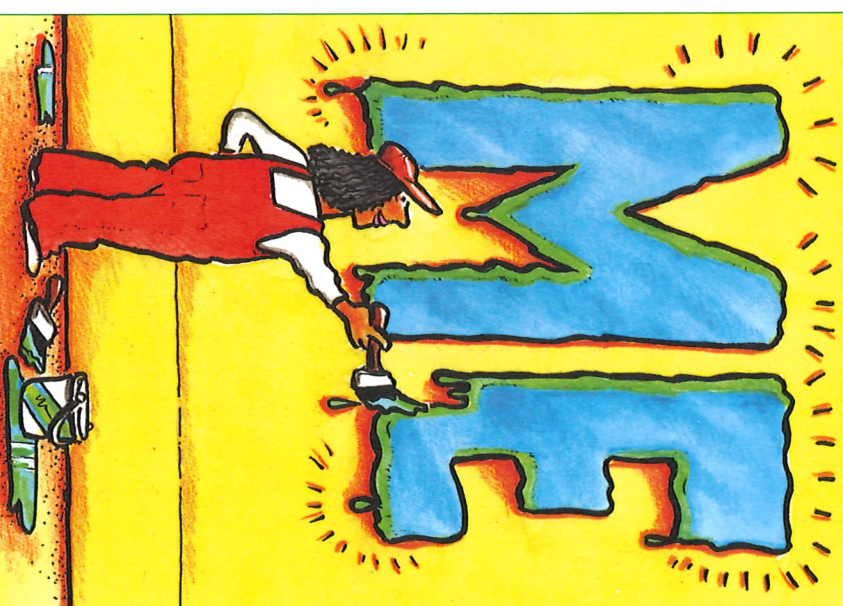
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STEPS TO FEELING BETTER

Building Your Self-Esteem



HELPING YOURSELF

Creating Positive Self-Esteem

Look At Your Strengths

- ✓ Building self-esteem takes action. Start by making a list of things you do well. Perhaps you are a good cook or play a great game of basketball.
- ✓ Then list the reasons other people like you. Ask a good friend or family member to help if you have trouble knowing what these things are.
- ✓ What do you like about yourself? Write that down too!



- ✓ By actually writing these things down, you can see your strengths. Keep your list handy and look at it often.

Identify Your Weaknesses

- ✓ We all have strengths and weaknesses. Take an honest look at the things you don't like about yourself.
- ✓ Identify those things you would like to improve. Identify those things you cannot change too.
- ✓ Sometimes accepting yourself is the best change you can make.

Make Changes to Feel Better

- ✓ Picture yourself at your best. Keep that picture in your mind and then take action.
- ✓ At first, take small, easy steps toward change. Then as your confidence grows, tackle the harder changes.
- ✓ Remember to acknowledge every small step. Focus on improvement, not perfection.

Focus On Your Good Qualities

- ✓ Use affirmations – or positive statements – such as “I am strong and competent,” or “I am lovable.”
- ✓ Write your affirmations down. Be as specific as possible. For example, write down “I am a good friend to John,” or “I am a great cook.”
- ✓ Put your affirmations on a mirror, beside your bed or in your pocket. Say them five, ten or even twenty times each day until they feel like a part of you.



People Can Help

- ✓ Be around people who help you feel good about yourself. Avoid people who are negative or put you down.
- ✓ The better your relationships, the faster your self-esteem will rise.



Set Yourself Up for Success

- ✓ Do things that help you feel good about yourself. Look at the list of things you do well for ideas.
- ✓ Try new things too. Take up a new hobby, make a new friend or volunteer to help others. Each new positive experience will counteract an old negative experience.
- ✓ Don't expect perfection. Everyone makes mistakes – even at the things they do well.

Be Your Own Best Friend

- ✓ Take pride in what you do. Encourage and praise yourself.
- ✓ Eat right, exercise, rest and play. Caring for yourself in these ways can boost your self-esteem.