

Top Tips for Building Self-Esteem

Know What Effects Your Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem can be global, meaning that you have a poor view of yourself overall, or specific, meaning that you feel ok about yourself most of the time but doubt yourself in one or two key life areas. The first step in building self-esteem is identifying the situations that make you feel inadequate. Keep a diary and document the situations that make you feel self-conscious or insecure. This will help you to be more aware of triggers for negative self-talk.

Be Aware of Your Self-Talk

How you think affects how you feel. Criticising yourself not only makes you feel bad, it worsens your self-esteem. Monitor your thoughts and notice how you speak to yourself, especially before, during, and after situations that make you doubt yourself.

Challenge Your Thoughts

We assume that our thoughts are factual when in fact they're not, they're just opinions. Your thoughts might *feel* true, but have you ever stepped back to evaluate them objectively? Look at your self-talk and ask yourself: Is there any objective evidence for this thought? Is there evidence that I'm wrong? Are these opinions I have of myself or facts? How helpful is it for me to speak to myself in this way? If I knew my friend thought this way what would I say to them? Changing your self-talk will help to improve your self-esteem.

Acknowledge Your Strengths

Identify 3-4 of your positive qualities or strengths. You'll probably find this hard to do and that's ok – if you struggle to think of positive qualities know it's not because you don't have any, it's because your head isn't used to positive self-talk. If identifying your own positive qualities is too difficult, ask close friends to identify your strengths for you. Once you have a list of qualities monitor yourself closely and look for situations (past and present) that demonstrate your strengths. Building a list of "evidence" will help you to acknowledge your strengths.

Learn To Accept Compliments

When we see ourselves a certain way we have a keen eye for any situations that prove our point and a blind spot for any situations that prove us wrong. If you have a negative view of yourself, you're more likely to notice situations that you think demonstrate your flaws and to ignore or minimise situations that prove otherwise, like positive feedback or compliments from others. Learn to accept compliments without thinking others are lying or merely being nice and it will help you acknowledge your strengths.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is how we think and feel about ourselves and our perception of our own self-worth.

People with healthy self-esteem value themselves and take pride in their achievements, while people with low self-esteem question their worth and feel unsatisfied with themselves on a regular basis.

Other common symptoms of low self-esteem are:

- **Self-blame and critical self-talk**
- **Dismissing compliments**
- **Avoiding challenges because you expect to fail**
- **Feeling that you have to work harder than everyone else to compensate for your shortcomings**
- **Bending over backwards to please others and gain their approval**

Low self-esteem can affect all aspects of your life. It can affect:

- **Your mood**
- **Your relationships**
- **Your ability to make decisions**
- **Your confidence to try new things**
- **Your ability to cope with challenges and set-backs**

Healthy self-esteem is important for your overall happiness. If confidence continues to be a barrier to you achieving what you want to achieve, consider seeking the advice of a clinical psychologist.