

Building Self-Esteem

By
Tharaka Rani Sreekumar
BA(Psy), MA(Psy), MBA
Psychologist, Ahalia Hospital

Building Positive Self-Esteem

- Simply put, self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves
- Our opinion about ourselves critically influences everything, from our performance at work, our relationships and our role as parent/student to our accomplishments in life.
- High self-esteem leads to a happy, gratifying and purposeful life

Causes & Effects

- Studies of young children clearly show that parents' style of child-rearing during the first 3 or 4 years determines the amount of self-esteem that a child starts with.
- After that, most studies of older children, adolescents and adults have a common confusion: what is cause & what is effect?
- Does academic success foster self-esteem or self-esteem fosters academic success?

Causes & Effects.....cont'd

- Are circumstances the only factor?
- The fact is that self-esteem & circumstances are only indirectly related.
- There is another intervening factor that determines self-esteem 100 percent of the time: your thoughts.

Causes of Low Self-Esteem

- Negative self-talk or negative auto-suggestion
 - I have a poor memory
 - I am not good at mathematics
 - I am not good enough
- Environment: Home, upbringing
- Education
- Poor Role Models: negative feedback from significant people in life, unfair comparison, unrealistic expectations, lack of discipline, labeling & putting down by parents

Self-esteem is our Self-concept

- Story of farmer who put his pumpkin into a glass jar
- Human beings cannot perform beyond the boundaries of their self-concept, whatever it may be.

Some Advantages of High Self-esteem

- Builds strong conviction
- Creates willingness to accept responsibility
- Builds optimistic attitude
- Leads to better relationships and fulfilling lives
- Makes a person self-motivated and ambitious
- Makes a person open to new opportunities and challenges

Some Advantages of High Self-esteem (cont'd...)

- Improves performance and increases risk-taking ability
- Helps a person give and receive both criticism and compliments tactfully and easily

People with poor Self-esteem:

- Judge a person's worth by his possessions, not by who he is.
- Constantly look at what kind of car you are driving, what kind of home you live in, what kind of clothes and jewellery you wear.
- Forget that people make things and not vice-versa.
- Get into a rat race. The problem with the rat-race is that even if you win, you are still a rat.

People with High Self-esteem:

- Talk about ideas
- Have caring attitude
- Shows humility
- Respects authority
- Have courage of conviction, confidence
- Concerned about character
- Assertive
- Accepts responsibility
- Optimistic

People with High Self-esteem:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| ■ Understanding | ■ Guided |
| ■ Willing to learn | ■ Disciplined |
| ■ Sensitive | ■ Internally driven |
| ■ Prefer solitude | ■ Respect others |
| ■ Interested in discussions | ■ Enjoy decency |
| ■ Believe in self-worth | ■ Know limits |
| | ■ Giver |

They put on a mask

- Low self-esteem people put on a mask of superiority.
- Why pretend? Story of a newly promoted executive.
- Our character can be judged by everything we do or don't do, like or don't like.
- Every action of ours gives us away.



Positive Self-Esteem leads to:

- Self-worth
- Self-confidence
- Self-respect
- Self-acceptance
- Self-love
- Self-knowledge
- Self-discipline



Negative Self-Esteem leads to:

- Self put-down
- Self doubt
- Self abuse
- Self denial
- Self centeredness
- Self deceit
- Self indulgence



Moral of the Story

- Unless a person is at peace with him/herself he/she cannot be at peace with others.
- Just as we cannot give to others what we don't have.



Steps to Building A Positive Self-Esteem



Steps to change the way you interpret your life

- Disarm the pathological **critic**, the voice inside you that criticizes and keeps your self-esteem low to eliminate interferences
- Make an accurate self-assessment of your **strengths** and **weaknesses**, the first step in changing your self-esteem
- Avoid **cognitive distortions** or irrational ways of thinking that contribute to low self-esteem
- Introduce the concept of **compassion** for oneself and others

cont'd....



Steps to change the way you interpret your life

- Revise your **shoulds**, the rules you have made for yourself about how you should act, feel and be – one of the most powerful ways to undo old negative programming
- Handle mistakes by changing how you relate to errors and by letting go of mistakes you made in the past
- Learn how to react to criticism without losing your self-esteem or having to attack others

cont'd.....

Steps to change the way you interpret your life

- Learn to ask for what you want, one of the most difficult tasks for people with low self-esteem
- Learn powerful techniques of **visualisation**, a way of setting and achieving self-esteem goals
- Learn techniques of **auto-suggestion** to reinforce affirmations you have created through the above steps

cont'd.....

Steps to change the way you interpret your life

- Even after following all the steps you may feel, "I,m Still Not OK" but you have to stop running away from pain while you develop an attitude of non-judgement
- Core beliefs will help you explore, challenge, and change deeply held convictions about your worth.

13. Take Inventory

- Make a list of all your strengths and weaknesses

Physical Appearance

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| + Large brown eyes | - Fat belly |
| + Dark curly hair | - Fat thighs |
| + Olive complexion | + Well shaped hips |
| + Clear, young looking skin | 5 feet 5 inches |
| - Buckteeth | 57kg |
| - Ugly nose | + Don't need makeup |

How I Relate to Others

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| + Warm | + Good listener |
| + Open | - Can't ask for what I want |
| + Accepting & Flexible | - Uncomfortable with strangers |
| - Can't set limits or say 'no' | + Protective |
| - Too accepting, then resentful | + Socially competent |
| + Good communicator | - Phony with friends |
| + Entertaining | |

Personality

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| + Responsible | - Sulky when I don't get my way |
| + Funny | - Sometimes irritable |
| + Open & outgoing | + Affectionate with family |
| + Friendly | - Try too hard to please |
| - Hate being alone | |
| - Blabbermouth | |
| + Love to be busy | |

How others see me

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| - Forgetful | + Strong |
| - Lose everything | + Independent |
| + Positive | + Warm |
| + Competent | - Irritable |
| + Funny | - Know-nothing |

Performance in studies

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| + Prompt | + Good Memory |
| + Hardworking | + Understands subject |
| + Motivated | - Mugs up |
| - Overstressed | - Nervous |
| - Restless | + Up-to-date |
| - Distracted | |

Performance of Daily tasks of life

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| - Forget assignments | - Shop stupidly |
| - Put things off | + Don't fret about appearance |
| + Good Hygiene | + Conscientious with safety, cleanliness of children |
| - Lousy housekeeper | |
| + Quick, competent cook | |

Mental Functioning

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| - Lousy at arguing, debating | + Like to learn new things |
| - Stupid about current affairs | + Curious about how things work |
| - Mentally lazy | + Quick mind |
| + Intuitive | - Uncreative |
| - Illogical | + Talented |

Auto-Suggestion- Steps:

1. Preparing to Relax
2. Systematic Relaxation of your body
3. Using Imagery to deepen your relaxation
4. Deepening the trance
5. Entering your special place
6. Erasing Negative Programming
7. Disarming the critic

Auto-Suggestion- Steps:

8. Letting go of shoulds
9. Creating Compassion
10. Revising old projections
11. Accepting mistakes
12. Posthypnotic suggestions
13. Coming-up suggestions
14. Coming-up count

Self-Esteem Induction

Step 1. Preparing to Relax

Let your eyes begin to close....and as they close take a deep breath. A deep breath all the way down into your abdomen. Now you can begin to relax every muscle in your body.

Step 2.

Systematic relaxation of your body

Let your legs begin to relax.....let your legs begin to feel heavy....heavier and heavier as they relax....heavier and heavier as they let go of the last bit of muscular tension. Your legs are becoming more and more heavy and they relax....like heavy lead pipes. Imagine them as heavy lead pipes...so heavy and relaxed.

Step 3.

Using Imagery to deepen relaxation

You feel that you are drifting and drifting.....floating and drifting down, down, down into total relaxation.....feeling almost drowsy, feeling peaceful and calm

Step 4. Deepening the trance

And now you see a staircase....a staircase going down to a lovely, peaceful place. In a moment you will go down the stairs and with each step you will relax. You will relax more deeply with each step. You will count backward from ten to zero counting each step as you become more and more deeply relaxed.....drifting down each step....relaxing more and more deeply. Ten...nine.....eight...seven...six....five...four...three....two...one.....zero

Step 5. Entering your special place

And now you come to a special place....your special place where you feel safe and calm...calm and peaceful. You feel totally relaxed in your special place. You look around, you notice the shapes and colours in your special place. You listen for the sounds of the special place. You notice how your body feels in this special place.

Step 6. Erasing negative programming

Now see a blackboard with the old negative labels you have been given in the past. See those labels in the blackboard. But you are a good person.a good person...you are a good person...you are fine..you are fine the way you are and you have always done the best you can. See those labels on the blackboard and now see an eraser in your hand. You have an eraser and you erase those labels from the board. You erase each one. They are gone. They are without meaning for you now. And now you write something on the board.

Positive Affirmation

I am good looking	I believe in God
I am smart	I have good memory
I am intelligent	I have good communication skills
I am honest	I am good at studies
I am responsible	I score good marks
I am disciplined	I am calm & peaceful
I am sincere	I am confident
I am funny	

Step 6....cont'd

You see your affirmation on the blackboard and now you feel good.....feel good.....feel good writing them.

Step 7. Disarming the critic

And now you know you can let go of your critic. You no longer need your critic. The critic always lies and you reject him. You reject your critic. The critic has cost you too much. The critic is becoming more and more silent....more and more silent

Step 8. Letting go of shoulds

You are letting go of your unhealthy shoulds. You are letting go of rules that hurt you. You are letting go of the rules that no longer fit you.

Step 9. Creating compassion

You are kind to yourself. You are a good person.....a good person...you are worthwhile because you live and feel. You are a unique and valuable human being because you live and feel. And you feel warm and loving towards yourself.

Step 10. Revising old projections

People see you as a good person, a worthwhile person. Those who fail to see your worth have something on their screen that keeps them from seeing the good person you are. When people really see you, they see you as a good person.

Step 11. Accepting mistakes

You know now that you are free to make mistakes, it is fine to make mistakes. You do the best you can. You always do the best you can within the limits of your awareness. Within the limits of what you know at given time you do the best you can. You love yourself, mistakes and all. You are a good person. You learn from your mistakes and are free to make them.

Step 12. Posthypnotic suggestions

Today you like yourself more than yesterday and tomorrow you like yourself more than today. And tomorrow you will feel able to believe more of the positive about yourself. You will remember more and more of the positive about yourself.

Step 13. Coming-up suggestions

In a few moments you will count back up from one to ten. You will come all the way up feeling alert, refreshed and wide awake.

Step 14. Coming-up count

You are starting to come up.....one...two...three....coming up...four...feeling more and more alert....five...feeling refreshed...six...coming up to full consciousness...seven....alert and more and more awake...eight...opening your eyes...nine...ten...fully alert, refreshed and wide awake.

What to do at home

- Write down your strengths and weaknesses
- Accept your weaknesses and ignore them
- Learn your strengths by heart
- Do the auto-suggestion induction twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening.
- Continue for 21 days

