

Personal Development Starts With Self Esteem

Low self esteem can cripple you emotionally and stop you reaching anything even close to your full potential. We all hear about low self esteem issues but do we really understand what it is and how to combat it?

Self esteem begins with a positive self-image. It involves having a healthy, approving and loving view of yourself. Having said that, this character trait is neither arrogance nor is it narcissistic self-love. True self esteem gives us a balanced realistic appreciation for our own talents. It allows us honest introspection of our strengths and a complete acceptance of our human limitations. High self esteem is a reflection of the true value in which you hold yourself. It also frees you from any overtly polarised view of others and how you perceive they think of you.

Those people who display traits of high self-esteem have a very strong sense of who they are. They know who they are and what they want. They have a realistic world view of others and themselves. Their self-image is positive but also very rational.

However, do not think that people with high self esteem always feel great and proud of themselves. Self esteem is about having a balanced view of yourself. Even people with high self esteem make mistakes and do things that they later regret. The key difference with these people is that they recover quickly make the changes they need to make, apologize for their behaviour where necessary and learn from the experience. Individuals who have developed a healthy degree of self-esteem are able to use these situations as a form of feedback and learn from them. It is alright to feel bad about their behaviour and make atonement for it but they do not let it effect their entire sense of identity nor do they carry it with them as emotional baggage.

If you are rude or aggressive with a person it doesn't mean you are a terrible person or should be punished in some way. People with high self esteem are aware of this. These people are capable of taking full responsibility for their behaviour, admitting that it was undesirable. They will then try to make the situation "right" before they learn from it and put it behind them. They do not see themselves as bad people, just a good person that made a bad mistake. However, people with low self esteem tend to pile blame on themselves and think themselves unworthy and unlovable because they are "so bad" and "so unworthy and worthless". They think because they have behaved badly it is a reflection of the total person they are when, in fact, it is only one portion of the complex personality they have. People with high self-esteem have a well-rounded view of themselves. They mostly know their own weaknesses and faults. However, because they know this they can either accept that this is a part of who they are or they can change the thing about themselves that they find undesirable. People with high self esteem can do this relatively easily because they don't see a change in one aspect of their character as an assault on their whole personality! So they can still have self criticism but also have high self-esteem at the same time.

A key to being in this mental and emotional state is to avoid generalising about mistakes made by ourselves and others, recognising that our weaknesses are part of who we are, while recognising that some of our behaviour can be changed without it affecting our sense of identity!

So start to see yourself as those who love you see you. Ask them what they think. Ask them to be realistic and to point out your good characteristics. Then take stock of yourself and start to believe in yourself. You can develop the skills needed to be critical of yourself, in order to learn and grow, while at the same time realizing that you are a unique, special, loving yet slightly flawed child of the Universe. You are wonderful. Accept that!

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