

# Why Self Esteem is Important and How You Can Improve Yours

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## **Introduction**

Have you ever heard the saying, “no one can love you until you love yourself”? This is a very powerful statement and reflects how one ought to view themselves. Self-esteem is a way of thinking, feeling, and acting that implies that you accept, respect, and believe in yourself, (Centre for Integrated Health, 2013). Everyone wants to feel amazing and look at themselves in a positive light. It is what most people strive for, yet, it is not as easy to accomplish as it sounds. Increasing your self-esteem may have major benefits on your life holistically. Your relationship with yourself is the first and most important relationship that anyone can ever have and should have.

There are at times, misconceptions that self-esteem is vanity. Those who believe this may tend to find themselves lowering themselves below what they actually are. Having a self-esteem is not thinking of yourself as greater or more important than anyone else. It is true that everyone is unique in their own special way and having a high self-esteem is embracing that difference and the goodness it brings. At times, we spend so much time trying to be like other people, yet those people want to be like someone else. There is no perfect person but there is a perfect “you”. Who is you.

In this article, we will go through the importance of self-esteem and how you can boost yours.

## **Why is self-esteem important?**

According to The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute (2014), self-esteem strongly influences one’s interpersonal relationships, behaviour, and learning. Unhealthy self-esteem in individuals has been linked to abusive, dysfunctional relationships, academic troubles, depression, and even violence and crime. Healthy self-esteem is extremely important because individuals who are confident are better equipped to cope better when things go wrong or not as expected.

A healthy self-esteem also helps in performance in different areas of life. Have you noticed some people at your work-place who carry themselves well doing better at work? This may be because of how they view themselves and the work that they are in. It is important to understand not to ground yourself completely in your work, otherwise when it sways, it may sway with you in whichever position it takes.

## **The different types of self-esteem**

There are three main types of self-esteem: low self-esteem, high self-esteem and an inflated self-esteem. Having a high self-esteem is ideal as this is where you learn to accept yourself best and do not rely on

others' opinions to keep you going or slow you down. The danger comes in when an individual has low self-esteem or an inflated self-esteem. What these are, will be continued in greater detail below.

Low self-esteem – it is not too difficult to spot someone with a low self-esteem because of its characteristics. Most people have come across someone like that. There are some signs that can tell if someone has a low self-esteem:

- Lack of confidence
- Negative view of life
- Perfectionistic attitude
- Mistrusting others inappropriately
- Blaming behaviour
- Fear of taking appropriate risks
- Feelings of being unloved and unlovable
- Dependence on others to make decisions
- Fear of being ridiculed
- Distorted view of self and others

According to the Centre for Integrated Health (2013), there are some causes of low self-esteem because nobody is born with a low self-esteem. The result of a high or low self-esteem is the result of filtering opinions, comments, looks, suggestions, and actions of those around us through a person's own feelings and self-image.

- Negative or controlling personal relationships – being part of a relationship like this can leave one feeling inadequate and unsure of oneself. Constantly having someone telling you what to do can leave you feeling like you have no control or right to make any decisions in your life.
- Negative experiences on the job – Organisations may not understand but Managers, Supervisor, Colleagues and organisational culture may have a large impact on an employee's outlook of themselves.
- Messages from society – Society plays a role in the shaping of individuals in the world. As much as parents may try to shield their children from the dangers of this environment, it will infiltrate somehow, good or bad. It is important to surround yourself with the good side of society and not let you bring you down.

High self-esteem as outlined by the Centre for Integrated Health (2013):

- Confidence
- Self-direction
- Non-blaming behaviour
- Awareness of personal strengths
- Ability to make mistakes and learn from them
- Ability to accept mistakes from others
- Optimism
- Ability to solve problems

- Independent and cooperative attitude
- Feeling comfortable with a wide range of emotions
- Ability to appropriately trust others
- Good sense of personal limitations
- Ability to set boundaries and say no
- Good self-care

Having a high self-esteem stems from the positive views that one has about themselves. Once you are in this place, you understand yourself and the role you have in the world. The biggest being, to be yourself. The points above are what we strive to do each day, as complex as it may be. Reaching this point does not guarantee that you will be here all your life, there may be days and periods in your life that can threaten the way you look at yourself. When this happens, always remember to strive for the above points.

Inflated self-esteem - People with inflated self-esteem are characterized by their inability to listen to others and to critique themselves. They are not capable of correcting their own errors and, as such, they are constantly blaming others. Furthermore, they tend to undervalue others, adopting hostile behaviours towards them. This is what may be seen as vanity which may be confused with high self-esteem. This type of behaviour may be dangerous to the individual and to the people around them.

Inflated self-esteem starts in [childhood](#), according to Exploring your Mind, (2020). A child who has not received adequate praise, admiration or love from their surroundings will see themselves as lacking value, which is why they will develop low [self-esteem](#).

Once the child is an adult, they can choose between two different paths: either they demand love and praise from those around them, being submissive to their requests, dependent, without knowing how to say no to anything and lacking assertiveness for fear of rejection. They can exaggerate their identity and their self-confidence, being vain and [narcissistic](#), in this way protecting themselves from the possibility that someone may hurt them or tell them that they have messed up or failed at something. Deep down, they are people suffering a great [fear](#) of rejection and failure, as well as not being praised and recognized by everyone. Their attitude is like camouflage.

It is crucial for parents to show their children the right love when they are growing up. Whether you have a child or not, and are planning on having one, knowing this may guide in knowing what to do in one sphere of their upbringing.

### **How to improve your self-esteem**

Having a low self-esteem is not the end of the world. This is something that can be controlled and tweaked in the right way to boost it.

- Take notice of and become more consciously aware of your needs
- Acknowledge the importance of self-nurturing and self-care activities and take appropriate steps in that direction

- Recognize and take pride in your accomplishments
- Focus on problem solving

### **Top 8 quotes to keep you going**

Below, are a few powerful quotes that may boost your self-esteem and confidence in times you feel that you are not feeling enough. Everyone is worthy of love and seeing themselves as a perfect creation.

- “How would your life be different if... You stopped allowing other people to dilute or poison your day with their words or opinions? Let today be the day... You stand strong in the truth of your beauty and journey through your day without attachment to the validation of others”? Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*
- “Confidence is the ability to feel beautiful without needing someone to tell you” – Mandy Hale
- “In order to love who you are, you cannot hate the experiences that shaped you” – Andrea Dykstra
- “There will always be someone who can’t see your worth” – Unknown
- “You are both good and bad and messy and complex and still worthy of compassion, love and acceptance” – Sarajane Case
- “Confront the dark parts of yourself, and work to banish them with illumination and forgiveness. Your willingness to wrestle with your demons will cause your angels to sing.” ? August Wilson
- “Wanting to be someone else is a waste of the person you are.” ? Marilyn Monroe
- “You can search throughout the entire universe for someone who is more deserving of your love and affection than you are yourself, and that person is not to be found anywhere. You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.” ? Sharon Salzberg

### **Conclusion**

Whether your self-esteem is high or low right now, strive to become the best version of yourself. Remember that a high self-esteem is not vanity and when you find yourself headed that way, remember real truth of yourself. When you feel low and unworthy, remember that no one can replace the person you are, nobody can do a better job at being you than you are at being you.

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Yours