HOW TO BUILD YOUR SELF ESTEEM
How you feel about yourself ultimately effects almost every aspect of your experience:

How you operate at work
In love
The way you operate as a parent
How successful you are at anything you try

Self Esteem is the key to success or failure. It’s also the key to understanding yourself and other people.
What is Self Esteem?

- Feeling of personal worth
- Feeling of personal competence
- Integration of self confidence and self respect
- An intimately personal experience
What causes low self esteem?

• May have been inadequately nurtured as children.
• May have absorbed negative messages about ourselves from others.
• May be judging ourselves by too harsh and too uncompromising a standard
• May simply fluctuate from average self esteem (sometimes you feel appropriate, competent, worthy of happiness, and sometimes not)
• When one grows in self esteem, they grow in the conviction they are confident to live, and worthy of happiness

• We all have a stake in cultivating our self esteem, not just those with low self esteem. We don’t have to hate ourselves to learn to love ourselves more. We don’t have to feel inferior to want to feel more confidence.
With a higher self esteem:

• We’ll be better equipped to deal with life’s adversities
• We’ll be more ambitious in life (emotionally, creatively, spiritually)
• We’ll be more likely to form nourishing, rather than destructive, relationships
• We’ll be more inclined to treat others with respect, benevolence, and goodwill
Best way to raise self-esteem: Live Consciously

• Living consciously refers to **seeing** our behavior and **thinking** about its consequences.

• a) a commitment to awareness: knowing what we are doing when we act

• b) acting in accordance with what we see and know
Living Consciously:

• Commitment to being aware of how you are feeling in your inner world, and how you are behaving in your outer world

• Involves thinking, even when thinking about yourself is difficult

• Involves striving after clarity, whether or not it comes easily

• Involves respect for reality, whether pleasant or painful
Child Within

May hold key to your self-esteem. Be conscious of it.

- Everyone was once a child and we carry that child with us as an aspect of who we are.
- We sometimes shift to the state of consciousness of the child we once were.

Sometimes desirable
Sometimes undesirable
Acceptance
The magazine of giving up on illusions

YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO LOSE THOSE TEN POUNDS p.21

YOU SUCK AT YOUR JOB p.30

YOUR SISTER IS SMARTER THAN YOU p.45

YOU'RE OLD p.47

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Self Acceptance exercise

• Even if you are unable to like or enjoy everything you see in the mirror, you may still be able to say “Right now, that’s me…I don’t deny the fact, I accept it.” This is respect for reality.

• Do exercise for 2 minutes every morning and evening, and soon you will understand the relationship between self-acceptance and self-esteem.

• A mind that honors sight, honors itself.
You’ll be given an incomplete sentence, a sentence stem, and you will keep repeating the stem with a different ending each time. No need to worry if each ending is true, or if any ending conflicts with another.
Sentence Completion exercise:

If the child within could speak, he would tell you

- I don’t understand.
- I’m afraid
- why is mother always shouting?
- why doesn’t someone protect me?
One of the things I had to do to survive was

• not feel.
• hide.
• trust no one.
• learn to be independent.
Sentence Completion exercise:

One of the things my child self needs from me is

• permission to be spontaneous!
• to make him feel safe.
• to let him cry.
• to hear his pain.
Acceptance

• Accepting ourselves is accepting the fact that what we think, feel, and do are all expressions of the self at the time they occur.

• Every moment is new.

• Every moment provides an opportunity for growth and change.
Battling Guilt

• This is important to do to gain self-acceptance.

• The goal of self-esteem is to have a strong positive concept and be able to maintain it regardless of our expertise or lack of it any particular and regardless of approval or disapproval from any other person.

• The way we think about our behavior and the standards by which we judge it are very important to our self-esteem.
Battling Guilt

Feel guilt when:

• we violate standards that aren’t our own, but we took over from other people.

• we violate our own standards.
Battling Guilt

• For example, think of an action you’ve taken or not taken in which you have punished yourself.

• Then, ask yourself, “Whose standards am I judging myself by?”

• “My own, or someone else’s?

• “What do I really believe about this issue?”
Battling Guilt

• You may find the courage to stop condemning yourself right at this point

• Or at minimum you may begin to gain a new perspective on the way you assess your behavior.

• Many people tend to be intimidated by the value preferences of others, at the expense of their own needs and perceptions, and at the expense of their own self-esteem.
Going against your beliefs

When you behave in ways that conflict with your own judgement with what is important:

• If you do something that goes against your beliefs, and then merely castigate yourself and then think nothing more about it, you deteriorate your self-esteem and increase the probability that you will have less integrity in the future.
Bad self-concept

- Self-fulfilling prophecy
- Leads to bad behavior

We do not improve by telling ourselves we are rotten. Our actions are a reflection of who we are and think we are.
Improving self esteem

• Need to learn an alternative response when we judge that we have behaved poorly.

• instead of collapsing into self damnation, you need to learn to ask:
Improving self esteem

- “What were the circumstances?”
- “Why did my choice or decision seem desirable or necessary in the context?”
- “What was I trying to accomplish?”
- “In what way was I trying to take care of myself?”
Steps to free yourself from guilt:

• Own the fact that it is you who has taken the particular action.

• If you have hurt someone else, acknowledge explicitly to this person the harm you have done, and convey your understanding of the consequences of your behavior.

• Take any and all actions available to make amends or minimize the harm you have done.

• Make a firm commitment to make a change in the future, because without a change in behavior, you will continually create self-distrust.
GUILT IS NOT A VIRTUE!

• It is a mistake to tell yourself that feeling guilty is a virtue!
• Harshness towards yourself will leave you passive and powerless.
• It doesn’t inspire change, it paralyzes one. Suffering is just about the easiest of all human activities.
GUILT IS NOT A VIRTUE!

• Being happy is the hardest.

• Being happy requires not surrendering to guilt, but freeing from guilt.

• This takes courage. Courage to liberate yourself from guilt.

• It takes honesty, and perseverance, and a commitment to independence.

• A commitment to living consciously, responsibly, and actively!
IT CAN BE DONE!
Improving self esteem

- Self-esteem IS NOT determined by worldly success, physical appearance, or any other value not directly under your control.

- Self-esteem IS a function of living consciously, living responsibly, living actively, living with honesty and integrity.

- Self-esteem is the feeling, the experience, the conviction of being appropriate to life, and to the challenges of life.
Improving self esteem

• The central pillar of self-esteem means living with a respect for facts, knowledge, and truth.

• Self-esteem requires self-acceptance
Protecting self esteem

• need to know how to assess appropriately your own behavior

• including being certain the standards by which you judge yourself are truly your own

• truly authentic

• not merely the values of others to which you feel obliged to pay lip service.
Protecting self esteem

• Need to bring to your assessment and attitude not only honesty but compassion

• A willingness to consider the context and circumstances of your actions
When you feel guilty

If you feel truly and appropriately guilty

• you need to take specific steps to resolve the guilt, rather than merely suffer passively.

• Need to live *actively* rather than passively, to take responsibility for your choices, feelings, actions, and well being.

• Need to take responsibility for your own existence.
Conclusion

You will raise your self-esteem by:

- living consciously with self acceptance
- living responsibly, and with integrity
Conclusion

When you have self esteem, you will have:

• greater self trust
• greater self love
• greater joy in your own being
• greater pride than what you have achieved in your own person
Conclusion

What will be different??

• your face, manner, way of talking and moving will tend naturally to project the pleasure you take in being alive

• you will be able to speak of your accomplishments and shortcomings with equal directness and honesty, since you are in a friendly relationship to the facts

• will tend to be open to criticism, and will be comfortable in acknowledging mistakes, because your self-esteem is not tied to any phony image “perfection”
Conclusion

• will find you have an attitude of openness and curiosity about new ideas, experiences, and possibilities of life, since existence has become an adventure

• will enjoy the humorous aspects of life in yourself and others

• will be more flexible in responding to challenges, moved by a spirit of inventiveness and playfulness, since you trust mind and do not see life as doom and defeat

• you will be quicker to speak up and speak for yourself
There will still be times of conflict, crisis and tough decision making, but now you will have far greater resources to respond to such situations.