

Boosting your self esteem

A self help guide

Do you find it hard to accept compliments? Does your confidence feel at rock bottom? Do you go along with people all the time in order to be liked?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then this self help guide aims to help you.

What is self-esteem?

We all have self-esteem. We all have an opinion of ourselves. Our self esteem is what we think about ourselves and can be based on many things. Our opinion of our self can change from time to time but people who do not feel good about themselves most of the time usually have low self-esteem.

What affects our self-esteem?

There are many things that can affect our self-esteem such as how you were brought up and treated as a child, where we live, our job, our body image, our strengths, our weaknesses, our relationships with others. Anything and everything in life can affect our self-esteem.

Our childhood and teenage years are especially important for our self-esteem. Adults who tend to have good self esteem were listened too, praised, loved, given attention, got along with friends, had successes and a chance to do things.

Adults who tend to have low self esteem were criticized, ignored, neglected, abused, bullied, made to feel that not being perfect and compliant was a weakness, felt different to those around them.

Our past affects our self esteem but what happens to you as an adult can affect it too. Financial worries, separation or divorce, stress at work, traumatic events, abuse, health problems, bad relationships, all have an affect on us as adults.

How does low self-esteem affect us?

It affects the way we feel: fragile, unlovable, awkward, incompetent, hypervigilant, emotional

It affects the way we think: you believe you're not good enough, you blame yourself, you dwell on criticism and mistakes, you feel shame, you get angry and frustrated, you doubt your capabilities, you criticise your appearance

It affects the way our body works: you feel panic in certain situations, you have trouble sleeping, you become more aware of your body, your heart beats faster when you are in company

It affects the way we behave: you avoid seeing people, you find it hard to make decisions, you try to please everyone, you shout and get into arguments, you pass up opportunities, you become over sensitive,

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Tips to improve your self esteem

1. Get positive

- List 3 positive characteristics that you have
- List 3 things that you are proud of
- List 3 things that you have done in the past to help someone
- List 3 things that make you laugh
- List 3 positive things your family and friend would say about you

2. Reward yourself

When something goes well give yourself a pat on the back and reward your good efforts. Take a long bath, switch off and read a book, watch that film that you have been meaning to watch

3. Forgive yourself

None of us are perfect. The perfect person does not exist. Forgive yourself for your past mistakes. Recognise that you will make more mistakes as you live your life.

4. Take care of yourself

Remind yourself that you are worthy, and you are worth looking after. Try to get enough sleep, eat well, get exercise and practice personal hygiene. When you look better you feel better.

5. Plan things for yourself

Make time to do the things that you enjoy. Take up a new hobby. Volunteer for something. Put something in the diary that you have always wanted to do. Spend time by yourself.

6. Fight the inner critic

Challenge your thoughts. Your inner critic never has a good thing to say about you, but if it told you that you were a space alien with 3 heads, a purple tongue and a long blue tail you wouldn't believe it. You therefore do not need to believe that you are useless, unlovable, fat, ugly, stupid.

Stop comparing yourself to others. Having standards is good but you might be setting them too high. You might never live up to who you want to be.

7. Ask for help

Most people who suffer with self-esteem do not ask for help as they believe they do not deserve it, they will look stupid, or that they should deal with everything on their own. If you choose to get help and support

- Pick someone who you trust to talk too
- Ask people what they like/love about you
- Read up on self esteem

8. Talk to a professional

If you find that you have tried different techniques and are still feeling that your self-esteem is low talk to someone that can help.

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