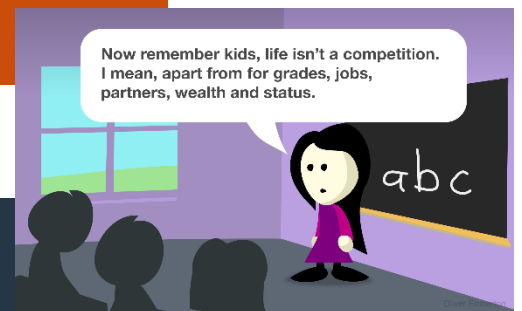




Self-Esteem

WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM?

Self-esteem reflects a person's overall confidence and satisfaction with oneself. Glenn R. Schiraldi, Ph.D., author of *The Self-Esteem Workbook*, describes healthy self-esteem as a realistic, appreciative opinion of oneself. We are born with all the "capacities needed to live fruitfully," although we all have different skills at different levels. Self-esteem is our reaction to how we feel about our abilities and ourselves.



DO I HAVE LOW SELF-ESTEEM?

- Do you dislike yourself?
- Do you think that you're inadequate in comparison to others?
- Do you feel you must always be a follower rather than a leader?
- Do you find it hard to say NO to others?
- Do you find it hard to take criticism from others?
- If you feel angry, or unjustly treated, do you tend to keep quiet about it initially, but later erupt and really lose your temper?
- When you are not happy in a relationship, do you find it difficult to pluck up the courage to leave?
- Do you feel you have to be in a relationship to be happy?
- Do you feel devastated when someone disagrees with you?

FEELINGS OF LOW SELF-WORTH CAN NEGATIVELY AFFECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND OTHER AREAS OF LIFE, SUCH AS SCHOOL, RELATIONSHIPS, AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.



HOW DO I IMPROVE MY SELF-ESTEEM?

- **BE MINDFUL:** Become aware of your self-talk and ask yourself if what you say to yourself is negative in nature. Sometimes we can unconsciously become our own worst enemy. Make it a habit to examine your thoughts when you are observing, receiving feedback, or interacting with others.
- **QUESTION YOUR NEGATIVE SELF-TALK AND PERCEPTION:** It is important to question the validity, or proof, of your perceptions of self and others. Realize that your thoughts are just thoughts, not concrete facts. The story always changes when you look at it from different angles. Challenge your thoughts – flip the thought from a negative to a positive. Affirm your strengths on a daily basis and work on improving in those areas you are not happy about.
- **AVOID COMPARING YOURSELF TO OTHERS:** We all have strengths and weaknesses. We never have the full story or picture of that individual we think of or perceive as “Perfect.” Assert your individual and innate beauty and talents, as we all have something unique to offer.
- **EXERCISE AND ENGAGE IN SELF-CARE:** Engaging in physical activities and exercise improves our mood, focus, and energy level. Exercises such as walking, running, climbing, doing yoga poses, etc., engage our mind and body simultaneously and at no cost! Having enough hours of sleep impacts our mood, memory, and focus. Make sure that you sleep at least 8 hours per night – especially when you are experiencing stress related conditions.
- **FORGIVENESS:** Forgiving yourself for past mistakes and letting go of past hurtful experiences liberates you from daily pain and suffering. Holding on to past hurts impacts only YOU and does not serve you in any positive way. So, make a daily choice to LET GO of resentment, anger, hurt, and any negative feeling that ties you down and makes you unhappy. Be kind and gentle to yourself.
- **REMINDE YOURSELF THAT YOU ARE SEPARATE FROM CIRCUMSTANCES AND PROBLEMS:** We are all susceptible to conditions we dislike or that make us feel uncomfortable. However, problems are just circumstances that arise at any given moment. These circumstances do not define who you are. Your approaches to problems and negative circumstances is what makes the difference. Take your time, be mindful, separate yourself from the problem, question your perceptions and the validity of your thoughts, be kind and gentle to yourself, forgive yourself, and give yourself another chance. We are all human, and to make mistakes is to be HUMAN.



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