

Twelve Valuable Steps to Raise Your Self Esteem

As adults, we can choose the messages we accept or reject. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, “No one can make you feel inferior without your permission.” Building high self-esteem is a process, not something you can develop overnight, says Jeffrey Keller. “Yet, I believe every person has the capacity of high self-esteem. The question is, are you ready to make a commitment to increase your self-esteem?”

If your answer is yes, here are 12 steps to get you started:

Step One

Stop comparing yourself with other people. There will always be some people who have more than you and some who have less. If you play the comparison game, you'll run into too many “opponents” you can't defeat.

Step Two

Stop putting yourself down. You can't develop high self-esteem if you repeat negative phrases about yourself and your abilities. Whether speaking about your appearances, your career, your relationships, your financial situation, or any other aspects of your life, avoid self-deprecating comments.

Step Three

Accept all compliments with “thank you.” Ever received a compliment and replied “Oh, it was nothing”. When you reject a compliment, the message you give yourself is that you are not worthy of praise. Respond to all compliments with a simple “Thank You”.

Step Four

Use affirmations to enhance your self-esteem. On the back of a business card or small index card, write out a statement such as “I like and accept my self” or “I am valuable, lovable person and deserve the best in life”. Carry the card with you. Repeat the statement several times during the day, especially at night before going to bed and after getting up in the morning. Whenever you say the affirmation, allow yourself to experience positive feelings about your statement.

Step Five

Take advantage of workshops, books and cassette tape programs on self-esteem. Whatever material you allow to dominate mind will eventually take root and affect your behavior. If you watch negative television programs or read newspaper reports of murders and business rip off; you will grow cynical and pessimistic. Similarly, if you read books or listen to programs, that are positive in nature, you will take on these characteristics.

Step Six

Associate with positive, supportive people. When you are surrounded by negative people who constantly put you and your ideas down, your self-esteem is lowered. On the other hand, when you are accepted and encouraged, you feel better about yourself in the best possible environment to raise your self-esteem.

Step Seven

Make a list of your past successes. This doesn't necessarily have to consist of monumental accomplishments. It can include your “minor victories” like learning to skate, graduating from high school, receiving an award or promotion, reaching a business goal, etc. Read this list often. While reviewing it, close your eyes and recreate the feelings of satisfaction and joy you experienced when you first attained each success.

Step Eight

Make a list of your positive qualities. Are you honest? Unselfish? Helpful? Creative? Be generous with yourself and write down at least 20 positive qualities. Again, it's important to review this list often. Most people dwell on their inadequacies and then wonder why their life isn't working out. Start focusing on your positive traits and you'll stand a much better chance of achieving what you wish to achieve.

Step Nine

Start giving more. I'm not talking about money. Rather, I mean that you must begin to give more of yourself to those around you. When you do things for others, you are making a positive contribution and you begin to feel more valuable, which, in turn, lifts your spirits and raises your own self-esteem.

Step Ten

Get involved in work and activities you love. It's hard to feel good about yourself if your days are spent in work you despise. Self-esteem flourishes when you are engaged in work and activities that you enjoy and make you feel valuable. Even if you can't explore alternative career options at the present time, you can still devote leisure time to hobbies and activities, which you find stimulating and enjoyable.

Step Eleven

Be true to yourself. Live your own life - not the life others have decided is best for you. You'll never gain your own respect and feel good about yourself if you aren't leading the life you want to lead. If you're making decisions based on getting approval from friends and relatives, you aren't being true to yourself and your self-esteem is lowered.

Step Twelve

Take action! You won't develop high self-esteem if you sit on the side-lines and back away from challenges. When you take action - regardless of the ensuing result - you feel better about yourself. When you fail to move forward because of fear and anxiety, you'll be frustrated and unhappy – and you will undoubtedly deal a damaging blow to your self-esteem.

The “real you” is a magnificent, unique being with enormous potential and capacity for experiencing love of yourself and extending love to others. As your self-esteem grows, this “real you” emerges. You begin to take more risks and not be afraid of failure; you aren't as concerned with getting approval of others; your relationships are much more rewarding; you pursue activities that bring a joy and satisfaction; and you will make a positive contribution to the world. Most importantly high self-esteem brings you peace of mind....

