
Improving self-esteem



‘Self-esteem’ is a loaded concept; one that can dramatically change the relationships we have with ourselves, other people, and the world around us.

In essence, self-esteem refers to the confidence that we have in our own worth. It describes the extent to which a person feels good enough.

Types of self-esteem

Self-esteem is often seen as being separated into two subtypes: **global** and **domain-specific**.

Global self-esteem refers to a person's overall sense of worth (or lack thereof). An individual may also have varying levels of self-esteem in different domains of their life. Some domains include academic competence, physical appearance, and romantic appeal. For example, one person may have high self-esteem in their fitness, but low self-esteem in maintaining their interpersonal relationships.

Each person plays many different roles. For example, an individual may hold the role of a significant other and an employee. The more importance a person places on a given role, the more impact the corresponding self-esteem domain will have on their global self-esteem. For instance, the more a person values their role as a student, the more impact their academic self-esteem will have on their global or overall self-esteem.



What high self-esteem looks like:

Generally, self-esteem is described as either 'high' or 'low'. When a person has high self-esteem, they feel worthy and valuable, which is not the same as feeling superior to others. Someone can practice self-love and feel worthy without thinking that they are better than other people.

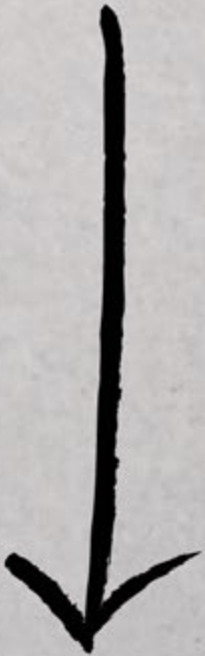
Moreover, when someone has high self-esteem, they still recognize that they are imperfect and identify areas where they can improve. However, they do not see their mistakes as diminishing their sense of worthiness as a person. Rather, these mistakes are a part of being human. They are also part of being a man.



How low self-esteem manifests itself:

People vary in how their low self-esteem manifests. However, there are some common consequences of low self-esteem. For example, a person might be more sensitive to criticism from other people, with feedback damaging their sense of worth. As well, they might spend a lot of time and energy contemplating how others see them. To protect their self-esteem from being further diminished, people avoid taking risks. When they feel that they have made a mistake, they might downplay their positive qualities and amplify the weight of their mistake.

Low self-esteem can be debilitating, affecting a person's daily life and interactions. However, having low self-esteem is not a sign of weakness or something to beat yourself up for. It likely stems from your circumstances or surroundings. For instance, growing up with critical family members or experiencing many emotional bumps (like job loss) can make you feel as though you are not 'good enough'.



Tips to develop your self-esteem



Thankfully, self-esteem is pliable. Some folks may not have faith in their ability to better their self-esteem because traditional methods, like using positive affirmations, have not been helpful. But described below are some steps to work on it.

- Identify the negative beliefs that you have about yourself. What thoughts do you have?
- Look for evidence that contradicts the negative beliefs you have about yourself. Where do your negative beliefs come from?
- If there are people in your life who contribute to the negative beliefs you have about yourself, consider creating boundaries which might limit the types of circumstances when they tend to tear you down, or perhaps prioritizing more positive relationships.
- Create a list of your positive qualities, recognizing that you are a balanced individual.
- Remind yourself that you may just have some areas for improvement – as we all do! Every person is a work-in-progress and there is no such thing as perfection.
- Exercise or practice another form of self-care. Your mind and body are worthy of being looked after.

Though there are steps you can take to strengthen your self-esteem, know that you do not have to do it all on your own. In addition to the support of your family and friends, it can help to access counselling and other kinds of therapy.