

Full Esteem Ahead

By Kim Dannies

Healthy self-esteem is fueled from the mind and drives the body. It means liking yourself for who you are. It means standing up for yourself and setting personal boundaries. Low self-esteem is often the result of trying to live up to unrealistic standards that are often acquired early in life and are no longer relevant. The process of building self-esteem can be learned and polished with practice. It is essential to foster the development of people with healthy self-esteem in our homes, schools, and work environments because individuals who are confident, constructive, responsible and trustworthy are assets wherever they go.

A person with healthy self-esteem displays the following qualities:

- confident without being bossy
- a healthy risk-taker
- achievement orientated but not inappropriately driven
- generally happy with themselves as they are
- handles setbacks or defeat with grace
- accepts responsibility and learns from mistakes
- tolerant and respectful of others
- open and assertive in communicating needs
- self-reliant and resourceful without refusing help
- not overly worried about failing or looking foolish
- comfortable with questions about performance
- laughs easily and doesn't take things too seriously

People with normal self-esteem may have occasional bouts of self-doubt, but their sense of self-worth consistently reverts to a balanced state. Healthy self-esteem does not mean feeling perfect. Rather, it is a feeling of optimism and well being paired with a personal level of excellence.

To develop and maintain healthy self-esteem:

- Forgive yourself for your mistakes
- Learn to deal with disappointments
- Celebrate your strengths and achievements

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- Make choices around your strengths
- Set achievable goals and seek regular feedback
- Change your self-talk: stop putting yourself down
- Don't judge yourself against unreasonable standards
- Model the behavior of people with high self-esteem
- Become your own best friend

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