

## Boosting Self Esteem

Former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt once remarked that “no one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” There are five simple steps you can follow to boost your self-esteem.

1. **Cultivate self-awareness.** Know just where you stand today in terms of self-esteem. Be honest with yourself. Look at how you respond to the challenges and the people in your life. Think back to your childhood. Who were your secure bases? Who were the positive and negative authority figures? What successes and what failures stand out in your mind? Who cared if you succeeded or not? Who celebrated your successes with you? Did you grow up in an encouraging constructive environment or a negative, destructive one? How has that influenced you today? What did you learn from your secure bases? From this information, you can gain an understanding of the foundations of your self-esteem. For example, do you work better under pressure or when you have plenty of time? The more you can learn about yourself, the more you can build your self-esteem.

2. **Accept what you cannot change.** We cannot change some things in life, or at least it is difficult to do so, and we must learn to accept ourselves as we are. For example, we cannot change our parents, the country we were born in, our height, our complexion and skin color, our basic body shape, and so on. Also, if we have faced loss, we have to accept those losses in order to be able to move on. Are there losses in your life that you have not said good-bye to properly? Learning to grieve is essential to finding joy in yourself, around you and in life. Acceptance of who you are is vital in the composition of your self-esteem.

3. **Make friends with your inner voice.** Practice listening to what you tell yourself. Catch what you are saying in your mind. Is it positive, constructive, and helpful, or is it negative, destructive, and unhelpful? After a presentation, do you focus on the fact that people congratulated you and said it went well, or do you focus on the message you forgot to give or the section where you went backward with the slides instead of forward? When people compliment you, do you tell yourself that they are right, or do you question it and think they were just “being nice?” Let yourself off the hook. No one is perfect. Do not expect perfection in yourself or anyone else—if you do, you are bound to be disappointed. Borrow from secure bases in your life who are models of high self-esteem and say the same things they say to you.

4. **Celebrate yourself.** If you bought an expensive car, you would make sure that you looked after it. You would put the right gas in the tank, keep it clean, and make sure it was serviced regularly. Treat yourself in the same way. After all, a car may last a decade. Your body and mind have to last your whole life. Make sure that you get enough sleep, you exercise regularly, you keep good hygiene, and you eat reasonably well. Do things you enjoy doing, no matter how simple or small. Reward yourself for small accomplishments or compliment yourself when you have done something well. Enjoy that relaxing bath, glass of wine, or book. Leave a voicemail message wishing yourself a nice day.

5. **Get help from others.** Humans are social animals, and all the research shows that we generally feel more positive when we have a strong social network. If you are more introverted, it is important to create the bonding you need to recharge your energy. Having the courage to ask those around you for help is a key way to improve your self-esteem. Ask someone who is a secure base for you what he or she would do if they were in your shoes. Write down positive things people have said and keep them posted on your refrigerator or on your desk. Find friends to just sit and listen while you confide your feelings and offload your frustrations. Ask for a hug, handshake, a physical touch. Go to a class or read up on self-esteem through books or on the Internet. If the situation warrants it, seek professional help.