

Building Healthy Self-Esteem

Low Self-Esteem can be the cause of many problems, from drug or alcohol abuse to marital issues. By boosting your self esteem, you can increase your odds of staying on your recovery track.

How to Build Self Esteem

There are many ways you can build your self esteem. You can start by trying to maintain a positive outlook and remembering that You are in control. If you are feeling down about yourself or a behavior or characteristic, you have the power to change yourself.

Ways you can improve your Self-Esteem:

1. **Review you strengths and achievements**

Make a list of the things you are good at. It can be anything from knowing how to hook up a stereo system or playing basketball to being a good speller. We have all struggled to learn something and we have all accomplished something, big or small. Make a list of your achievements and think of ways you can use and develop your strengths and skills in other situations.

2. **Stop comparing yourself to others**

If you are focusing on people you think are "Better" than you, it will only set you up for more negative thoughts and even lower self-esteem. No one is perfect. On the other hand, by noting the characteristics or behaviors of people you admire, you can try to develop those same characteristics in yourself.

3. **Don't be a doormat: Learn how to say No.**

You don't have to say yes to everything people ask of you. Start to develop boundaries and accept that it is perfectly OK to say no. If you don't acknowledge your needs and desires, no one else will. It leaves the door open for people to take advantage of you. If you can learn to say no sometimes, you are telling yourself you have value.

4. **Lean how to accept compliments**

It's great to receive compliments. Accept them graciously. Just say thank you and smile. If you dismiss compliments or ignore them, you are giving the message that you are not worthy of them. In the future people may be less likely to compliment you if they think you are just going to brush them off.

5. **Associate with positive people**

Being around people who are positive and supportive will help you feel better about yourself. If you surround yourself with negative people, they may influence your own attitude or put you or your ideas down. Find time for your friends. Stay in touch, whether by phone or e-mail. Having a network of positive, supportive friends can be a great source of support.

6. Celebrate your own special qualities

Make a list of qualities that you like about yourself, such as having a sense of humor, being a thoughtful person, having patience, being good with kids, etc. If you are having a hard time with your list, ask some close friends. You may be surprised with what they come up with. When you are having a bad day and feeling down, bring out this list and reaffirm yourself.

7. Stay Active

Exercise gets those endorphins flowing and helps promote a more positive attitude. Besides, when you look good and feel healthy, you feel more positive about yourself. You don't have to go to the gym if it is not your thing. There are lots of fun activities you can do to stay fit or active. Try walking your dog, going swimming, or any other activity you enjoy.

8. Take care of your physical appearance

This does not mean to obsess about your looks! Wear something you like and that you know looks good on you. Get a haircut. Stand tall. It is amazing how your posture can reflect on the way you feel. When you slump and shuffle along, you tend to feel the way you look. When you stand straight and walk with confidence, this gives you an immediate boost. Try it and see!

9. Distance yourself from people who are negative or overly critical

Or resolve not to let them bother you. Some people see the glass as half empty. Try to turn off those critical voices in your head putting out all that negative energy—that includes yours, too. It is hard to develop self esteem when you keep putting yourself down. Everyone makes mistakes. Try to learn from them rather than keep punishing yourself for them.

10. Try to do nice things for other people

(This doesn't mean you can't say "No" sometimes when people ask you for a favor). When you do something nice for someone, it makes you feel good, and that helps increase your self-worth and self-esteem.

The important thing is, take action, even if it is only a baby step. You have the power to change your life, one step at a time. When you start feeling better about yourself, your self confidence and self esteem will skyrocket.