

Mental Floss

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Self-Esteem for Adults

By Dr. Gary Calhoun

WEBSTER DEFINES SELF-ESTEEM AS “A CONFIDENCE AND SATISFACTION IN ONESELF”. THIS IS A VERY SIMPLE DEFINITION FOR SOMETHING WE TALK ABOUT SO MUCH AND BELIEVE TO BE SO IMPORTANT. HAVING DEFINED SELF-ESTEEM WE ARE LEAD TO ASK – “WHERE DOES SELF-ESTEEM COME FROM?”

SELF-ESTEEM STARTS DEVELOPING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CONTINUES THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES. SELF-ESTEEM IS BASED ON ALL OUR SUCCESSES, FAILURES, MESSAGES WE RECEIVE FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS, CO-WORKERS, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THAT INNER VOICE THAT TALKS TO US DAILY. WE ARE GOING TO BE TALKING ABOUT THAT INNER VOICE MUCH MORE LATER IN THIS ARTICLE.

WHEN WE HAVE A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM WE HAVE A REALISTIC VIEW OF OUR PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. YES, LEARNING TO ACCEPT OUR WEAKNESSES IS A VITAL STEP IN DEVELOPING A HEALTHY
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Self-Esteem for Kids & Teens

By Dr. Susan Calhoun

THE MORE YOU PRAISE YOUR CHILD THE MORE SELF-ESTEEM THEY WILL HAVE – RIGHT OR WRONG? THE ANSWER IS ONLY IF THE PRAISE IS DESERVED AND ACCURATE. CHILDREN HAVE A WAY OF KNOWING WHEN THEY HAVE TRULY EARNED YOUR PRAISE. FALSE PRAISE CAN BE AS CONFUSING AND HARMFUL AS CRITICISM. SO THE TRICK IS TO BUILD YOUR CHILDREN’S SELF-ESTEEM IN WAYS THAT ARE MEANINGFUL AND LASTING.

CHILDREN WITH A LOW SELF-ESTEEM OFTEN BECOME ADULTS WITH SELF-ESTEEM PROBLEMS. LOW SELF-ESTEEM IN CHILDREN OFTEN RESULTS IN POOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, PEER RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS, LONELINESS, ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND A GREATLY INCREASED CHANCE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE OR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

HELPING YOUR CHILD DEVELOP A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM IS ONE OF YOUR MOST IMPORTANT TASKS AS A PARENT. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF YOUR WORDS WHEN TALKING WITH YOUR CHILDREN.

A GOOD PLACE TO START IS TO FOCUS ON REWARDING EFFORT RATHER THAN OUTCOME. TEACHING YOUR CHILD THAT EFFORT PUT FORTH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE OUTCOME HELPS THEM LEARN TO ACCEPT FAILURE WITHOUT FEELING DEFEATED. REWARDING EFFORT RATHER THAN OUTCOME HELPS YOUR CHILDREN DEVELOP A READINESS TO TRY NEW EXPERIENCES, WITHOUT FEAR OF FAILURE. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN THAT THE GOAL IS NOT IN AVOIDING EVER FAILING, BUT IN RISING UP TO TRY AGAIN EACH TIME WE FAIL. CHILDREN WITH THIS ATTITUDE ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO ACHIEVE IN LIFE.

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SELF-ESTEEM FOR ADULTS, CONT'D.

SELF-ESTEEM. IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT A MAJOR TASK IN LIFE IS TO DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE AND THEN ACCEPT THE PERSON YOU FIND.

A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM PROVIDES US THE FOUNDATION TO FACE LIFE'S CHALLENGES. WITH A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM WE HAVE THE CONFIDENCE AND INNER STRENGTH TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY, LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES, AND REWARD OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

A LOW SELF-ESTEEM RESULTS IN BASING OUR SELF-WORTH ON THE IMMEDIATE PRESENT, WITHOUT REGARD FOR OUR PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR WHAT WE KNOW TO BE TRUE OF OURSELVES. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS TEMPORARY SELF-WORTH IS TOO OFTEN DEPENDENT ON WHAT OTHERS ARE TELLING US ABOUT OURSELVES. A LOW SELF-ESTEEM CAN OFTEN LEAD TO ANXIETY, STRESS, DEPRESSION, AND LONELINESS. PEOPLE WITH LOW SELF-ESTEEM RARELY PERFORM UP TO THEIR POTENTIAL AND SHY AWAY FROM NEW CHALLENGES. AT ITS WORSE LOW SELF-ESTEEM CAN LEAD TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE, FAILED RELATIONSHIPS, AND POOR JOB OR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE.

Your Inner Voice

ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL FORCES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTHY OR LOW SELF-ESTEEM IS OUR INNER VOICE – YOU KNOW, THAT COMMITTEE THAT IS CONSTANTLY GOING ON IN YOUR HEAD.

MOST OF US GREATLY UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPACT OF THE MESSAGES WE RECEIVE FROM THAT INNER VOICE.

TAKE THE CHALLENGE OF KEEPING TRACK OF WHAT THAT INNER VOICE IS TELLING YOU OVER THE NEXT 24 WAKING HOURS. ASK YOURSELF, IS THAT INNER VOICE GIVING ME REALISTIC, ACCURATE, AND HELPFUL FEEDBACK? IF YOU FIND THAT INNER VOICE BEING OVERLY CRITICAL AND FULL OF ALL-OR-NONE/BLACK-AND-WHITE STATEMENTS IT MAY BE TIME TO MAKE SOME CHANGES. HOW CAN YOU EXPECT TO HAVE A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM IF MOST OF WHAT YOU ARE HEARING IS NEGATIVE AND SELF-CRITICAL?

CHANGING YOUR INNER VOICE IS A TWO-STEP PROCESS. FIRST, YOU MUST BECOME AWARE OF SELF-STATEMENTS THAT ARE OVERLY CRITICAL. SECOND, YOU MUST REPLACE THE CRITICAL STATEMENT WITH A POSITIVE STATEMENT. IF THE OVERLY CRITICAL INNER VOICE IS NOT REPLACED IT HAS A HABIT OF RETURNING OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

DEVELOPING A HEALTHY INNER VOICE WILL BE A MAJOR STEP IN DEVELOPING A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM.

Tips for Developing a Healthy Inner Voice...

- WRITE DOWN POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS. CARRY THEM IN YOUR PURSE; PUT THEM ON POST-ITS STUCK TO YOUR DESK, MIRROR, MONITOR, ETC. THESE FORM THE BASIS FOR SELF-STATEMENTS THAT CAN REPLACE NEGATIVE SELF-TALK.
- USE THE STOP TECHNIQUE TO RID YOURSELF OF NEGATIVE SELF-TALK. WHEN YOU HEAR THAT OVERLY CRITICAL INNER VOICE SAY TO YOURSELF "STOP" AND IMMEDIATELY REPLACE THE NEGATIVE SELF-STATEMENT WITH A POSITIVE AFFIRMATION.
- MONITOR YOUR INNER VOICE FOR THOSE "ALL-OR-NONE" STATEMENTS SUCH AS "I ALWAYS FAIL", "I WILL NEVER GET IT RIGHT", ETC. REMIND YOURSELF THAT RARELY IN LIFE IS SOMETHING SO ALL-OR-NONE.
- MONITOR YOUR INNER VOICE FOR STATEMENTS SEEKING THE APPROVAL OF OTHERS LIKE "I MUST HAVE THE APPROVAL OF SOMEONE ELSE OR EVERYONE ELSE TO BE O.K."
- LEARN TO ACCEPT COMPLIMENTS BY SAYING THANK YOU. DON'T LET YOUR INNER VOICE NEGATE THE COMPLIMENT.

Does the Weight Scale Determine Your Self-Esteem?

WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING SIGN POSTED ON OUR WEIGHT SCALE...

Operators Warning: This scale will only provide you with a single number. This number will not differentiate between bone, muscle, hair, internal organs, fat, water, clothes, etc. This scale will not provide any useful information on the character or soul of the individual being weighed.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY DRs. GARY AND SUSAN CALHOUN:

OFFICE SESSIONS:

Office sessions are available by appointment only.

Individual, Couples, Adults, & Adolescents

Confidential counseling for those seeking an active, directive, but supportive counseling experience.

TELEPHONE SESSIONS:

We offer phone sessions for a select group of clients.

Telephone sessions are scheduled just like a regular office session. Busy moms, as well as professionals find telephone sessions fit their busy lifestyles.

NEED A SPEAKER:

Drs. Gary and Susan are available as speakers on a number of popular topics.

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**WE STRIVE TO OFFER THE MOST PERSONALIZED SERVICE
AVAILABLE FOR CLIENTS DESIRING OLD FASHIONED
PERSONAL SERVICE**

IN THE NEWS...

DR. GARY WAS RECENTLY INTERVIEWED BY THE
TAMPA TRIBUNE ON THE EFFECTS OF THE
HURRICANES ON STUDENT ATHLETES.

ABDUCTION PREVENTION TRAINING:

WE WOULD LIKE TO BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO A
COURSE BEING OFFERED IN PINELLAS COUNTY FOR
CHILDREN AND TEENS ON HOW TO PROTECT
THEMSELVES FROM BEING THE VICTIM OF AN
ABDUCTION. GIVE THE INSTRUCTOR, MR. EASTERLING
A CALL AT 727-804-6345. **PROTECT YOUR MOST
VALUABLE ASSET!**

GIVE POSTIVE FEEDBACK WITHOUT RESORTING TO FALSE
PRAISE. IF YOUR CHILD KNOWS HE/SHE IS NOT A GENIUS
THEN TELLING THEM SO WILL ONLY RESULT IN CONFUSION
AND A LACK OF TRUST IN YOUR FEEDBACK.

TOO OFTEN WELL INTENDING PARENTS STRIVE TO AVOID
THEIR CHILDREN EVER FEELING DISAPPOINTMENT OR BEING
CRITICIZED IN ANY WAY. AS WINSTON CHURCHILL ONCE
SAID, "CRITICISM MAY NOT BE AGREEABLE, BUT IT IS
NECESSARY. IT FULLFILLS THE SAME FUNCTION AS PAIN IN
THE HUMAN BODY. IT CALLS ATTENTION TO AN UNHEALTHY
STATE OF THINGS."

WHEN CORRECTING YOUR CHILD MAKE SURE TO FOCUS ON
THE BEHAVIOR AND NOT THE CHILD. THE EMPHASIS IS ON
CORRECTING THE BEHAVIOR WITHOUT GIVING THE
MESSAGE TO YOUR CHILD THAT HE/SHE IS A BAD PERSON.

HELPING YOUR CHILD DEVELOP NEW SKILLS WILL GO A
LONG WAY IN DEVELOPING THEIR SELF-ESTEEM. YOUR
CHILD WILL ALSO BE LESS HESITANT TO TRY NEW THINGS
AS A TEEN OR ADULT.

CHILDREN CAN BE VERY SELF-CRITICAL AT TIMES. WHEN
YOU HEAR YOUR CHILD MAKING OVERLY CRITICAL SELF-
STATEMENTS NEVER MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO REDIRECT
THEM AND SUBSTITUTE THEIR NEGATIVE SELF-STATEMENTS
WITH A POSITIVE.

CHILDREN NATURALLY GO THROUGH PHASES OF HEALTHY
AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS NOT UNUSUAL
FOR GIRLS WITH A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM TO GO THROUGH
PERIODS OF SELF-DOUBT IN THEIR EARLY TEENS. AS A
PARENT YOU MUST BE WATCHFUL DURING PERIODS OF LOW
SELF-ESTEEM AND HELP YOUR CHILD MAINTAIN A POSITIVE
ATTITUDE AND BELIEF IN THEMSELVES. IT WILL BE
IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THAT SELF-ESTEEM IS NOT
ALWAYS BASED ON LOGICAL AND RATIONAL THINKING. THIS
IS PARTICULARLY TRUE DURNG THE DIFFICULT TEEN YEARS.
YOU MAY NEED TO ASSIST YOUR TEEN IN CORRECTING THE
ILLOGICAL AND IRRATIONAL NATURE OF SOME OF THEIR
SELF STATEMENTS.

CHILDREN WITH A POSTIVE SELF-ESTEEM ARE CONFIDENT,
WITHOUT BEING OVERLY CONFIDENT. THEY ARE NOT
OVERLY WORRIED ABOUT FAILING. THEY ARE
RESOURCEFUL, BUT DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK FOR HELP.
THEY ARE NOT EASILY DEFEATED BY SETBACKS. THEY ARE
FOREVER THANKFUL TO THEIR PARENTS FOR HELPING
THEM BUILD A FOUNDATION FOR LIFE.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

SELF-ESTEEM BUILDING TIPS FOR ADULTS

- TAKE CARE OF YOUR BASIC NEEDS – SLEEP, EAT HEALTHY, EXERCISE, PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE.
- PLAN FUN AND RELAXING THINGS FOR YOURSELF.
- SET GOALS FOR YOURSELF AND REWARD THE ACHIEVEMENT OF YOUR GOALS.
- REMIND YOURSELF OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
- MONITOR YOUR SELF TALK AND REPLACE THE NEGATIVES WITH POSITIVES.
- ATTEMPT NEW TASKS AND CHALLENGES WITH THE FOCUS ON TRYING RATHER THAN ACHIEVING.
- DO NOT RELY TOO MUCH ON THE OPINION OF OTHERS TO DETERMINE YOUR SELF WORTH.
- LEARN TO SAY NO AND SET LIMITS IN RELATIONSHIPS.
- BE TRUE TO YOURSELF AND YOUR OWN VALUES.
- TREAT YOURSELF AS YOUR OWN BEST FRIEND.

SELF-ESTEEM BUILDING TIPS FOR KIDS & TEENS

- DO NOT RELY TOO MUCH ON THE OPINION OF YOUR PEERS TO DETERMINE YOUR SELF WORTH.
- TRY NEW THINGS AND FOCUS ON YOUR WILLINGNESS TO EXPERIMENT RATHER THAN THE OUTCOME.
- WATCH WHAT YOU SAY TO YOURSELF AND REPLACE THE NEGATIVES WITH POSITIVES.
- AVOID GOING ALONG WITH THE CROWD JUST TO BE LIKED. STAY TRUE TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS RIGHT.
- DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO LAUGH AT YOURSELF AND NOT TAKE YOURSELF TOO SERIOUSLY.
- TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. DISPLAY CERTIFICATES, RIBBONS, TROPHIES, ETC. YOU HAVE WON PROUDLY IN YOUR ROOM.
- BE WILLING TO HELP OTHERS AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS.
- SAY NO TO ALCOHOL AND DRUGS.
- BE YOUR OWN BEST CHEERLEADER.