

# TEEN SELF ESTEEM



One of the issues that can affect teenagers is that of self esteem. Self esteem refers to how one feels about him or herself. Also, it refers to how you think others feel about you.

There are different factors that go into self esteem, and for teenagers these factors often make a bigger difference. People with healthy self-esteem are able to feel good about themselves, appreciate their own worth, and take pride in their abilities, skills, and accomplishments. People with low self-esteem may feel as if no one will like them or accept them or that they can't do well in anything. It is important to recognize that teenagers need to feel valued and loved.

## WHY IS TEEN SELF ESTEEM IMPORTANT (1)

How we feel about ourselves can influence how we live our lives. People who feel that they are likable and lovable have better relationships. They are more likely to ask for help and support from friends and family when they need it. People who believe they can accomplish goals and solve problems are more likely to do well in school. Having good self-esteem allows you to accept yourself and live life to the fullest.

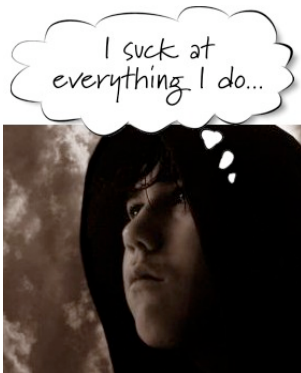
## WHAT CAUSES LOW SELF ESTEEM (2)

There are many factors that can contribute to a teen having low self esteem. Here are some of the factors that may contribute to teen self esteem problems:

- ✓ **Appearance (self image).** It may seem shallow, but most teenagers are concerned to some degree about their appearance. This can be difficult to overcome, because in some cases it can be difficult to change one's appearance. Overweight teens often feel bad about themselves, as do teens that think that there is some sort of irregularity with the way they look.
- ✓ **Peers.** Teenagers may have peers that make fun of them or put them down. If a teen feels like an outcast, it can have an effect on his or her self esteem.
- ✓ **Parents.** Sometimes parents or other authority figures put teens down and cause self esteem problems. Parents, coaches and teachers who always criticize can make a teenager feel as though he or she never does anything right, and is never valued. Such constant criticism may cause him or her to feel unloved.
- ✓ **Unrealistic expectations.** We all want to live up to our potential. But sometimes teenagers feel pressures from unrealistic expectations. Parents and teachers may expect too much of them. Often, a teen can develop low self esteem because he or she is not "living up" to the expectations that one sets for oneself. A teenager can, at some times, be his or her own hardest critic.

## STEPS TO IMPROVE SELF ESTEEM (1)

If you want to improve your self-esteem, here are some steps to start empowering yourself:



**Try to stop thinking negative thoughts about yourself.** If you're used to focusing on your shortcomings, start thinking about positive aspects of yourself that outweigh them. When you catch yourself being too critical, counter it by saying something positive about yourself. Each day, write down three things about yourself that make you happy.

**Aim for accomplishments rather than perfection.** Some people become paralyzed by perfection. Instead of holding yourself back with thoughts like, "I won't audition for the play until I lose 10 pounds," think about what you're good at and what you enjoy, and go for it.

**View mistakes as learning opportunities.** Accept that you will make mistakes because everyone does. Mistakes are part of learning. Remind yourself that a person's talents are constantly developing, and everyone excels at different things — it's what makes people interesting.



**Try new things.** Experiment with different activities that will help you get in touch with your talents. Then take pride in new skills you develop.



**Recognize what you can change and what you can't.** If you realize that you're unhappy with something about yourself that you can change, then start today. If it's something you can't change (like your height), then start to work toward loving yourself the way you are.



**Set goals.** Think about what you'd like to accomplish, then make a plan for how to do it. Stick with your plan and keep track of your progress.

**Take pride in your opinions and ideas.** Don't be afraid to voice them.

**Make a contribution.** Tutor a classmate who's having trouble, help clean up your neighborhood, participate in a walk-a-thon for a good cause, or volunteer your time in some other way. Feeling like you're making a difference and that your help is valued can do wonders to improve self-esteem.



**Exercise!** You'll relieve stress, and be healthier and happier.



**Have fun.** Ever found yourself thinking stuff like "I'd have more friends if I were thinner"? Enjoy spending time with the people you care about and doing the things you love. Relax and have a good time — and avoid putting your life on hold.



- (1) [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/mental\\_health/self\\_esteem.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/self_esteem.html)
- (2) <http://www.familyfirstaid.org/teen-self-esteem.html>



### **Beware the Perfectionist!**

Are you expecting the impossible? It's good to aim high, but your goals for yourself should be within reach. So go ahead and dream about being a star athlete — but set your sights on improving your game in specific ways.



### **Retrain Your Inner Critic**

Because it comes from inside you, you can take back control over that inner voice that puts you down or tells you not to bother trying something because you're sure to fail. Decide that your inner voice will only give you constructive feedback from now on.



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