

Self-Esteem – Eleven Things You Can Do Today To Build Your Self-Esteem

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

Self-esteem, as they say, is truly an "inside job." Regardless of the challenges stemming from your family background or other life experiences, be it deprivation, abuse, or abandonment, you can take steps today to enhance your self-esteem, bolster your self-confidence, and initiate a transformative journey. Here are some actionable suggestions to implement right away:

1. **Start Writing:** Begin by expressing your thoughts on paper. Write about your likes, dislikes, pet peeves, and awe-inspiring moments. Dive into your feelings, identify them, label them, and proudly declare them with statements like "I feel..." Embrace your expertise on your own emotions, using this as a tool for self-discovery.
2. **Identify Your Values:** Reflect on your values. Question the origin of these values and assess whether your actions align with them. Consider adjusting your behavior to align with your values if there's a mismatch. Release the concern about others' opinions, as focusing on external judgment perpetuates feelings of fear and inadequacy. Practice prioritizing what you believe to be correct.
3. **Cultivate Affirming Relationships:** Surround yourself with individuals who uplift rather than criticize. Spend time with people who bring positivity into your life, avoiding those who drain your energy with negativity. Minimize your investment in harmful relationships. Seek companions who contribute to your personal growth and can introduce you to new perspectives and experiences.

4. **Learn and Practice Assertiveness:** Identify areas where assertiveness is challenging and contrast them with situations where you feel confident. Understand what actions differentiate assertive behavior from non-assertive behavior. Often, the critical factor is the willingness to take risks. Assertiveness skills are transferable; take the risk to apply them in areas where fear has held you back.
5. **Challenge Negative Self-Talk:** Monitor your internal dialogue and resist self-criticism. When you engage in negative self-talk, replace it with positive affirmations. Shift your focus from self-deprecating statements to constructive observations. For instance, replace "I look horrible!" with "I have such pretty eyes" or "I look better with makeup on."
6. **Accept Compliments Graciously:** Practice acknowledging compliments with grace. Instead of deflecting praise, respond with gratitude. For example, when complimented on your appearance, respond with affirmations like "Yes, this is a nice dress, isn't it?" or "Thanks, I appreciate that."
7. **Say "No":** Practice saying "no" to requests you are not on board with. You don't have to make excuses, and you don't have to give a reason. A simple "I don't want to" is usually reason enough.
8. **List Your Strengths, Talents, Accomplishments:** Make and keep an ongoing list of your strengths, talents, and accomplishments. Add to it as you identify ones you didn't see before. If you need help starting the list, ask others for their perceptions of your strengths and talents. For accomplishments, keep searching and give yourself credit for even the smallest of accomplishments.
9. **Don't Compare Yourself To Others:** Stop comparing your accomplishments against others. You don't have all the information about others' achievements and probably look at your own through negatively distorted glasses.

10. **Take Risks to Try New Things:** Try new things you are interested in without judgment about how well you "should" be able to do something. Please do it for fun, without the expectation of instant mastery.
11. **Engage in Self-Care:** Practice relentless self-care. It will go a long way to help you manage stress and feel more competent in your life on a day to day basis.

These simple suggestions can begin a journey of self-improvement, fostering a healthier and more positive sense of self. Remember, building self-esteem is an ongoing process; small changes today can lead to significant transformations over time.

Consider '[Self-Esteem: Eleven Things You Can Do Today to Build Your Self-Esteem](#),' and the other articles on this page,

WWW.PEGGYFERGUSON.COM/Self-esteemAndSelf-Confidence, as a start toward a more confident you.

And when you're ready to explore your self-esteem issues a little deeper, try our Brief Lesson, 'Building Self-Esteem: A Workbook.' It offers a more structured approach to self-discovery and empowerment. Let's explore the myriad paths to nurturing a healthier self-image, one step at a time.



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