

WHY IS SELF-ESTEEM IMPORTANT?

While many have seen the need and sought for greater self-esteem, too many were surprised to find their pursuit not well received by others. For some reason, some have the idea that building one's self-esteem will lead to that person becoming egotistical or arrogant or having an "inflated ego." But low self-esteem should not be confused with humility. It is not the same. Low self-esteem is the devaluing of ourselves in our eyes and often leads to accepting mistreatment by others. Low self-esteem is often the source of emotional upset, relational difficulties, poor decision-making, negativity, hopelessness, and so forth. Low self-esteem decreases our self-respect and self-worth while humility is about being unassuming or modest. Good self-esteem has a good balance to it. It is based on an accurate estimation of one's worth as a person—something that everyone possesses.

This idea of balance is an idea even promoted in the scriptures. Note Paul's words in Romans 12:3, "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you." NIV There is no caution given against thinking well of one's self as long as it is a balanced and accurate estimation. This is something we must find for ourselves because others sometimes devalue us or overvalue us. Depending on others to determine one's worth or set one's level of self-esteem will only result in an emotional rollercoaster ride.

People who frown on us for wanting to build our self-esteem might be people who don't understand what it is that is being accomplished. In other cases they might be those who want to control us or who want us to believe their mistreatment is what we deserve. The fact is that good self-esteem leads to one being more secure, having better relationships, being more forgiving, having a positive outlook, having more empathy for others and more. A study I read recently showed that people with healthy self-esteem even exercise better judgment in their behavior. It's true! People who see themselves in a positive light are more prone to make decisions that will reflect well on them, while people with low self-esteem are often more careless or fatalistic about their choices. The fact that a decision might reflect badly on the person with low self-esteem doesn't mean as much if that person already sees themselves in a bad light.

Aren't sure if your self-esteem is too high or too low? Though a competent professional counselor would be best to consult, one can learn more about the topic of and importance of self-esteem by going to websites like: www.mayoclinic.com or www.psychcentral.com and many others. One can also do an internet search on the subject of self-esteem. However, for guidance in making lifestyle or mindset changes always consult a qualified professional.

Just remember, there is certainly nothing wrong with improving one's outlook on one's self and/or on one's life—it's all about achieving balance. Don't be worried about ending up with an inflated ego. In my experience, there will always be someone around who is willing to let the air out of your ego if it gets too big. Let your focus be on keeping it properly inflated.

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