

Six Behaviors that Increase Self-Esteem

"It's not what you are that holds you back;

it's what you think you are not"



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Six behaviors that increase self-esteem, enhance your self-confidence, and spur your motivation. You may recognize some of them as things you naturally do in your interactions with others. If you don't then I suggest you motivate yourself to take some of these important steps immediately.

First, greet others with a smile and look them directly in the eye. A smile and direct eye contact convey confidence and self-respect. Answer the phone pleasantly whether at work or at home, and when placing a call, give your name before asking to speak to the party you want to reach. Leading with your name emphasizes that a person with self-respect is making the call.

Second, always show genuine appreciation for a gift or complement. Don't evade expressions of affection or honor from others. The ability to accept or receive is a universal mark of an individual with solid self-esteem.

Third, don't brag. Genuine modesty is actually part of the ability to gracefully receive compliments. People who brag about their own exploits or demand special attention are simply trying to build themselves up in the eyes of others — and that's because they don't perceive themselves as worthy of respect.

Fourth, don't make your problems the focus of your conversation. Talk positively about your life and the progress you're trying to make. Be aware of any negative thinking, and take notice of how often you complain. When you hear yourself criticize someone — and this includes self-criticism — find a way to be helpful instead of critical.



Fifth, respond to difficult times or depressing moments by increasing your level of productive activity. When your self-esteem is being challenged, don't sit around and fall victim to "paralysis by analysis." The late Malcolm Forbes said, "Vehicles in motion use their generators to charge their own batteries."

Sixth, choose to see mistakes and rejections as opportunities to learn. View a failure as the conclusion of one performance, not the end of your entire career. Own up to your shortcomings, but refuse to see yourself as a failure. A failure may be something you have done — and it may even be something you'll have to do again on the way to success — but a failure is definitely not something you are.

Even if you're at a point where you're feeling very negatively about yourself, be aware that you're now ideally positioned to make rapid and dramatic improvement. A negative self-evaluation, if it's honest and insightful, takes more courage and character than the self-delusions that bring about arrogance and conceit. Disappointment, defeat, and even failure are in no way permanent conditions unless we choose to make them so. These painful experiences can be the basis on which to build future success.

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