

self esteem

1. Stop Value Judging

Most people spend lots of time *shoulding* on themselves. “I should do this, I shouldn’t do that. I should have said this, I shouldn’t have said that.” All those shoulds are value judgments that lower your self-esteem. Try accepting yourself, others and reality. Replace your *shoulds* with non-judgmental words like *want*, *choose* or *prefer*. Just this one change will raise your self-esteem.

2. Stop Comparing

You can’t win in a comparison. Usually you will come out *less* than the person you compare yourself to. “Jan is smarter than I am.” If you do win in the comparison, there is a tendency to devalue the winning trait. For example, “I’m a better supervisor than Lynn is, but so what! It takes computer skills to get ahead here.” Instead of comparing yourself to others, notice differences; don’t judge them. Remember, *you are unique*.



3. Prune Relationships

A negative times a positive equals a negative, whether you’re talking about numbers or people. Surround yourself with people who are positive and affirming. Sometimes this means you need to let go of a relationship. Or at least limit the amount of time you spend with that person. Your self-esteem will flourish like a

flower in a garden, when you keep the garden weeded.

4. Accept Yourself

You don’t criticize a seed because it isn’t a tree yet. Accept yourself. Like a seed you have lots of growing to do. That’s normal. Accepting yourself as you are now makes it possible for you to grow and develop. When you feel okay about yourself, you are able to risk change.



5. Make Learning Mistakes

A mistake does not make you a failure. It’s a sign that you’re on your growing edge. Treat a mistake as the gift it is—an opportunity to learn. Don’t fall into the low self-esteem traps of blaming others, denying your mistakes, hiding them, defending your behavior or criticizing yourself for not being perfect. Stretch yourself to be uncomfortable every day. Practice saying “I don’t know.” If you aren’t making mistakes, you’re playing it too safe.

6. Stop Improving. Start Developing

When you try to improve yourself, you start from a belief that there is something wrong with you that needs to be fixed. Each improvement leads to the need for still more improve-

ments. Instead, start with your strengths, your talents, the gifts you were given. Then *develop* these talents. Then you can grow from a foundation of strength instead of a foundation of weakness.

7. Affirm Yourself

Each night before you go to bed, jot down ten things you feel good about from the day. They don’t need to be big things. They could be kindnesses you showed, feelings you expressed, commitments you honored. For example, “The alarm went off, and I got up.” Or “The traffic light was yellow and I stopped.” Do this every day for one month and watch your self-esteem grow!



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