

# ***Contents***

**Page 2** Forward

**Page 3** So. . . . What Is Self Esteem?

**Page 4** Tip 1 Access The Power Of Your Subconscious Mind

**Page 5** Tip 2 Practice The Art Of Good Deeds, Good Find's Good

**Page 6** Tip 3 Activate Your Positive Chemicals. Think And Feel Better

**Page 7** Tip 4 Develop An Attitude Of Gratitude

**Page 8** Tip 5 Visualize Your Way To Self Esteem

**Page 9** Tip 6 Live A Life Of Laughter

**Page 10** Tip 7 Become Your Own Best Friend

**Page 11** Tip 8 Live In The Present, There Is Nowhere Else

**Page 12** Tip 9 Develop The Skill Of Empathy

**Page 13** Tip 10 Accept All Compliments With Thanks

# *Ten Ways To Greater Self Esteem*

## *Forward*

Hi, I have worked in the field of counselling and coaching for some time now, and I am always amazed at the God given ability we humans have to improve our lives for the better. There has been great philosophical debate throughout the centuries, as to 'why we are here', and 'what life is about'. In simple terms, people of all walks of life have fundamentally come to the same conclusion. That is, we are here to make what we can of life, to lead meaningful relationships, to reproduce, and master areas of our own choice. Happiness is an achievement we can come to know and love, through improving our thoughts and beliefs about the world and each other.



Maybe you are reading this book because you wish to improve your own self esteem, if so I am quite sure the things you shall learn about will help you greatly. Maybe you are reading this book because you have things going on in your life which you are struggling with. If this is the case then please do read on, as I know the ideas you will get from this book will have some benefit to you both emotionally and psychologically. Or, maybe you are reading this book because you want to feel better today. While I can not promise immediate relief from inner burdens, I can ensure you that if you are to take some of the ideas in this book and practice them like you would a hobby, self esteem will happen for you

## *So . . . What Is Self Esteem?*

Put simply, self esteem is a person's own evaluation of themselves psychologically, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Self esteem is mainly about the worth we give ourselves, how much we like ourselves, and how well we feel about ourselves. Self esteem is something we have internalized over time, and has often been influenced by other sources such as friends, family, and any significant other figures in our lives. If a person is told that they are 'not good enough' over a certain period of time by a close one; or colleague; or teacher for example; it is likely this person will to some extent have believed the criticism as 'truth'. We can often be tricked into thinking rich and successful people have undoubtedly got the highest levels of self esteem. This however is an illusion. Our lives can be broken down into different categories and, while career; wealth; and status are three particular categories; self esteem may be lacking in family, relationship, and health categories for example. We are all human, so it follows that our self esteem will fluctuate throughout the different changes and challenges we meet.

## *So . . . Why Is Self Esteem Important?*

Self esteem is important because it gives you the piece of mind you need to appreciate your own life and the lives of others. Self esteem, brings a person joy; confidence; well being; and wholeness. A person with a good level of self esteem, has the ability to live life joyfully regardless of set backs. The good news is, improving self esteem is easy when a person realizes that she/he can take responsibility over there own thoughts feelings and behaviors. Improving self esteem is as easy as taking up a small hobby such as reading. Learning to do self esteem enhancing exercises will lead you toward a better and happier life.

## *And . . . How Do I begin To Improve My Self?*

You can simply begin today to work through some of the ideas and exercises listed in this book. Some of them might be more appealing to you than others (After all we are all different) as you read through the information, become aware of how what you are learning you can incorporate into your own life. Be sure to try to relax, there is no need to be anxious about the exercises. If you do feel a little anxious though, remember that this is only because you want what's best for yourself (in this case building self esteem as best you can). Throughout this book, relaxation will be a core message which will undoubtedly lead you to becoming more self aware and at peace with yourself. Please note, this book is only aimed as a complimentary therapy, and if you are suffering with a medical condition, you might wish to consult a Doctor who could direct you to a relevant source of her/his recommendation.

## Tip 1 Access The Power Of Your

### Subconscious Mind “You effect the unconscious mind through verbal repetition” Clement Stone

Most people go through life without having any knowledge of an amazing intelligence born in to us all as a precious gift, which allows us to use our minds to create what we want. Our conscious minds are involved in processing our conscious thoughts through our sensory perceptive systems. What ever we touch, feel, smell, taste, see, or hear will be processed through our conscious minds. So while eating a favorite food we are consciously aware that the food tastes nice, and we begin to tell our subconscious mind how wonderful the food is by continually affirming it verbally, and through taste and smell. **WHATEVER WE CONTINUE TO TELL OUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND, OUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND WILL DIGEST AND MAKE TRUTH OF.**

So, in simple terms, one sure way to increase self esteem which has been proven to work, is to continually practice verbal affirmations which lead our subconscious minds into happiness. Now. . . lets think about this logically and simply. Low self esteem is a result of the subconscious mind being fed with negative and defeating beliefs such as: **I CAN'T, I'M USELESS, I WILL NEVER DO IT, NOBODY LIKES ME, I'M SO ANGRY, I'M SO DEPRESSED, LIFE SUCKS. (THE LIST GOES ON).**

The subconscious mind is all powerful, it is working while we are asleep and awake. It is designed for us to lead satisfying lives, and has been responsible for the great creations of mankind. However, far too many of us, struggling in our day to day lives have not come to understand how we can use it for it's good. And. . . believe me, the subconscious mind is amazing in ensuring our well being in body, mind and soul. It is responsible for all unconscious processes such as heart beat and hair growth. It heals our wounds, reproduces our cells, and grants us unlimited creativity.

So, here is the key to improving self esteem through the subconscious mind. Follow my instruction, personalize it to your own needs, practice the exercise daily, twice daily, or thrice daily and notice great results:

- Find a quiet place to relax alone, a comfy space where you are not likely to be disturbed. Do not try this exercise while driving or operating machinery.
- Sit or lie comfortably, and if possible set the scene with some nice quiet relaxation music (there is loads on the internet).
- Focus on your breathing, breath through the diaphragm by pumping your tummy out like a balloon as you breath in, holding it for five seconds, then breathing out again, do this continually.
- Visualize being on a nice beach with sunshine beating down, and notice how relaxed you are. Be aware still of your breathing and its calming effect on your body.
- Repeat the following words “ I'm feeling good, I feel relaxed, I like myself in all situations” repeat this ten times as a kind of lullaby.
- Step six: repeat the following words “ My joy is within me, I like myself in every way, I'm strong”
- repeat this ten times as a lullaby. Create new and personal affirmations for your mind..

Always remember the infinite wisdom of the subconscious mind is a source of divine energy which can be tapped into at any time. Always feed your subconscious mind with positive healthy thoughts by affirming positive phrases. Likewise create nice vivid images in your mind of beautiful scenes, look regularly at sunsets, clouds, trees, and lakes or rivers. These images are great for the mind!!

## Tip 2 Practice The Art Of Good Deeds, Good Find's Good. “Goodness Is The Only Investment That Never Fails” Thoreau

Many of us, lose track of feeling good about ourselves, because we lead busy demanding lifestyles. Some of us are that busy doing things for others that we end up feeling burnt out and unappreciated. Some of us, are that busy trying to meet a deadline or finish a project, that we lose valuable time with family and friends. Then there are some of us, who are so burdened with current worries, problems, and setbacks, that we seem to lack in appreciation of ourselves and who we really are.

Self esteem can reach different points in different areas of our lives, and is a very internal concept. By this I mean that we might try hard to create an image of ourselves as having great esteem, when really inside we are aware of quite the contrary. Take for example a look at our Hollywood stars, or indeed our great British pop idols. In this current age of multi media, some of us actually find entertainment in noticing the unhappiness in these rich successful stars. The truth is, self esteem has nothing to do with what we have physically, or materially, but is more to do with what is going on in our hearts and minds.

If you want to start feeling good in your life **START BY INWARDLY CREATING SOME GOOD THINGS YOU CAN DO IN EVERY AREA OF YOUR LIFE AS FROM TODAY! THEN ACT ON THESE IDEAS.**

I don't want this to sound daunting, or too much like hard work, and, I'm not asking you to become a miracle worker. To embark on this new mini project, we simply set ourselves some small achievable tasks which hold the same end result **YOU WILL FEEL GOOD!**

Here is what I did when I embarked on this mini project for the first time. I was reluctant to try it, but believe me the end result was amazing. My self esteem went 'through the roof' and I felt great.

My Plan was as follows. . . . please create your own. Three good things a day will suffice (oh. . . and don't tell anybody about your good deeds!)

- Exchange greetings with a stranger, comment on what a beautiful day it is
- Pay a friend/colleague a compliment on how well they look today (and mean it)
- Take a bag of goods to a local charity shop and don't tell anyone (this is important)
- Pick litter up on the local play area where my son plays regularly
- Empathize with the lady in the shop who is going through a rocky divorce
- Congratulate the next door neighbor who just found a job.
- Smile at passer by who you find particularly attractive.

Please, only see my action plan as something I needed to do to create some 'goodness' in my life, the idea is for you to recognize that you can incorporate small and simple things into your own life, to create inner feelings of self worth. It can be as simple as offering a warm smile to a passer by, thanking a shopkeeper for a kind service, or picking up the phone and telling a distant relative that you miss them. Start now creating goodness! And enjoy the results. And. . . remember to tap into your subconscious mind, by becoming relaxed and asking it to provide you with the means to create new ideas around 'good' things.

## Tip 3 Activate Your Positive Chemicals.

Think And Feel Better. “Movement is a medicine for creating change in a person's physical, emotional, and mental states” Carol Welch.

You are probably well aware of the term 'endorphin' which relates to our amazing process of creating natural innate opiates as a result of doing a physical activity we enjoy. We all have within us this ability to produce positive chemicals in our minds which will lead us to a great sense of serenity and joy.

The foods we eat and the drinks we consume also have an effect on the way we feel. However, for many of us, the thought of eating lots of healthy vegetables, fish, and wholegrain foods seems more of a burden than a pleasure. Likewise, to many of us, the thought of engaging in some good physical exercise seems daunting and overwhelming. However this needn't be the reality.

If you are not getting any regular exercise, start to list down on a piece of paper some activities you could start doing lightly. This does not have to be a costly affair, It also does not have to take up a great deal of your time. It does however, have to be something you can realistically achieve. **Your self esteem levels will immediately soar, as you embark on a small physical activity which you can achieve.**

To the beginner, the activity could be something as simple as taking a walk around the block. If you are lucky enough to have a safe, populated park nearby, you could also consider listening to a personal stereo. This needs to be risk assessed however. It is more safe and sensible to exercise while listening to music, in a light, safe place such as a gym, or a staffed park. Music and exercise bring more vibration to your own natural rhythm. This can have a profound effect on your mental and physical response which is highly influenced by a rush of endorphins.

Please do not be put off by the thought of exercise as a means to building your self esteem. There are some of us who can not physically walk or do any form of physical exercise, due to sickness or disability. However, finding something which enables you to be creative in some way is also a means to get in touch with those positive chemicals which will lead to higher levels of self esteem.

Follow these steps in creating achievable self esteem boosting activities:

- Pick an activity of your choice, anything which you feel interested in or passionate about which is achievable for example: walking;jogging;writing;painting;cooking;music
- Carry out some research on your chosen activity, visit places where you can practice your activity, use the local library/internet for tips on improving your activity
- talk to like minded people who enjoy the same activity as you.
- Use your chosen activity as your own bit of space, notice the positive responses you experience while doing the activity.
- Increase the frequency of the activity, make it a priority and a common habit, by doing this, higher self esteem will become a common response

Once you come to understand the simplicity of boosting your own self esteem by practicing activities which help you to feel good, you will gain a greater sense of self. The key is to start small and reward yourself accordingly. Whether you have walked the block; or written a poem; run a marathon or climbed a mountain, be sure to reward yourself with something you deserve.



## Tip 4 Develop An Attitude Of Gratitude

“To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch heaven” Johannes A Gaertner.

Ask yourself the question “How grateful am I?” and then listen to yourself being as truthful as you can. Having worked with many wonderful clients over the years, many have struggled to list ten things they could be grateful for in their lives. So, I challenge you right now. Take a pen and some paper and jot down ten things you really have to be grateful for, these could be things from the past or the present. How easy is it for you to do this exercise? Did the ten things come to you immediately, or, did you struggle consciously recollecting them?

Gratitude and being thankful for what we have, what we love, our special gifts both materially and spiritually, is a positive attitude which has an amazing effect on our level of self esteem. The truth of the matter is, you do have something to be grateful for if you will be open enough to allow it. Many of us have a human tendency to focus hard on what we don't like in our lives, we are determined to dwell on things which cause us anger, hostility, frustration, and shame. Much of this can be to do with our past experiences. We have been so overwhelmed by something 'bad' which happened in our earlier days, that we continually tarnish our current experience with negativity.

When you decide to be grateful for the things you have, you are making a conscious decision to like and appreciate these things. This immediately evokes a sense of joy and contentment which will add to your measure of self esteem. Many of us take for granted the beauty of a day, the blessing of good health, strengths and attributes, loved ones, material possessions, and the free will to choose our own life path.

Many of us take for granted the flow of running water, heated homes, comfy beds, and an endless supply of the foods of our choice. The Victorians would be a very confused people if they were to glance into their future and see mankind in this twenty first century. They would see our advanced technology, our abundance of nice foods and clothes, an elaborate welfare state, and cures to many killer diseases. Then they would see alongside these great things, the doom and gloom, the tension and stress, and the general pessimism of the today's people.

Being grateful about the little things in your life is the start to creating a greater sense of inner gratitude which will lead to greater self esteem. To many, it will seem like an unusual concept, to some it will seem abnormal. Many choose to be ungrateful and meet with frustration, want, and discontentment. You can begin right now to develop an attitude of gratitude:

- As day dawns or night draws in, look to the skies and their beauty. Look at the trees and the different colors and in your mind say thank you for the day. Use your heart to really express the gratitude, take deep breaths and relax into the gratitude
- Think about a loved one and the imprint they have had on your life, those happy times, their unique character and beauty. In your mind say thank you for this person. E.g “I'm so grateful for Fred and the laughter he gives me so often”
- Think about your 47 inch LCD television with Dolby surround. Think of the impact this has on your enjoyment of films and programmes. Start to say thanks for the great quality of picture and sound you regularly experience.
- Think about a difficult time when you were unsure how things were going to pan out. A time where you felt all alone. Be grateful for the fact you came through it and the strength you have now gained as a result
- Be grateful for the small things, a friendly greeting from a stranger, the peace of a nice quiet place, a new person who has come into your life, or the relief of a person who has left .

**REMEMBER GRATITUDE IS SOMETHING YOU CAN BEGIN TO DEVELOP RIGHT NOW. IT REALLY WILL LIFT YOUR SELF ESTEEM!**

## Tip 5 Visualize Your Way To Self Esteem

“Visualize the thing that you want, see it, feel it, believe in it, mark your mental blue print, and begin to build” Robert Collier

Are you aware of the power of your mind and nervous system? Did you know you have the ability to experience anything you wish to just by visualizing. Well, to start with then, close your eyes and imagine standing in front of a rose garden, as you look at the roses you can see their vivid colors, smell their fragrant smells, and feel a summer breeze. So. . . how was that? Did you find the colors came easily, the fragrance easily, and the feel of the summer breeze quite real? If you did, you have just proven to yourself that you can create any experience you want by using your own mind. If you did not find it so easy, do not be disheartened. Visualization is a skill which can be learned by us all, and gets easier and easier the more we practice it.

It is important to learn to get into relaxed states of consciousness when visualizing. A nice quiet place in a safe environment is key. Many of us again, have a tendency to visualize on negative things, which is not good for us, as we immediately experience the feelings and emotions we attach to those negative things. Some of us wake up in the morning in a state of fear, dread, frustration, or fatigue. The very thought of a new day can seem like quite a burden. Some of us wish the day had ended before it began. Ever had that? I know I have had many a waking experience like this. The good news is that, **ONCE YOU REALISE THAT YOU CAN VISUALISE A POSITIVE VIEW OF YOUR DAY, MORE SATISFYING RESULTS WILL FOLLOW.**

Lets think about this for a moment. Can anybody else influence the way you choose to think and feel? Can your boss decide how you will think and feel? Can your friend? Can your enemy? Can a Hollywood movie star? I'm going to ask this question in a similar way now: Do you let anybody else influence the way you chose to think and feel? The truth is **ONLY YOU DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO THINK AND FEEL.**

Some of us go through pretty rough times when we are faced with situations in which we have to engage with others who annoy and frustrate us. We can easily lose track of who we are, and our self esteem can lower as we struggle with feelings of anger and hostility. It is during these times visualization can be of a great benefit to us. Here's something you can begin today! Start making visualization a part of your life. Enjoy it like a hobby and reap the benefits of a greater self esteem follow this simple example exercise

- Nominate a quiet room where you will not be disturbed, select some nice relaxation music, use cushions and either sit in lotus position or lie comfortably on your back.
- Take some nice slow deep breaths and close your eyes, as you inhale utter the words peace and light, as you exhale feel the tension go out of your body
- Now imagine viewing your day on a big movie screen, each part of the day fragmented into chapters. Picture bright colors. See yourself upon that screen full of calmness and peace. Imagine that you are smiling as you go to your first destination
- Now still being aware of your breathing, look up at the screen and notice yourself full of laughter, excitement, and peace of mind
- feel in your body these great feelings of peace of mind, fun, and confidence
- Make the pictures on the movie screen brighter, and the good feelings you have stronger and stronger
- Now imagine, all things throughout your day turning out positive, don't be afraid, see these positive things happening upon that screen, and feel the joy and greatness of the day
- **BE AWARE THAT YOU CREATE YOUR OWN REALITY THROUGH YOUR OWN MIND, YOU CAN ACCESS FEELINGS OF PEACE, CALM, JOY, AND STRENGTH WHENEVER YOU CHOOSE.**

Practice positive visualization daily and reap the benefits of a greater self esteem



## Tip 6 Live A Life Of Laughter

“Laughter Is The Best Medicine” Proverb

Laughter has a great impact on our self esteem levels. Some of us move within social circles where laughter is commonplace. Laughter is undoubtedly healthy and scientists have proven that laughter is linked to happiness. Dr Robert Holden in his happiness experiment, highlighted that when combined with exercise, and positive thinking, laughter would create great happiness in people.

How much laughter do you have in your life at present? Are you mixing with people who laugh lots. Do you watch any television which provides you with the entertainment to lead you toward laughter. One step you can take right now, is to keep a laughter journal. Please, do consider this as an active way to improve your self esteem. Carry with you a small note pad and record how many times a day you laugh. Be your own researcher and act as your own laughter consultant. Do you have a favorite comedian or comedy actor? If so start to watch more films/programmes with your favorite comedy sketches on. Do you watch much television at present? If so start to cut out things which will bring you doom and gloom. Stop watching the news, documentaries based on crime, and soaps where deceit and hatred are the drama. Instead, explore when you can watch pure comedy shows which are your preferential choice. With our modern T.V technology, you might even be able to store your favorites and watch them as you like.

You are an amazing person, and once you come to understand that you can control all aspects of your life, you will start to notice better levels of self esteem. Control your ability to increase the amount of fun you have. The more childlike you can be, the more creative you can become. Children are always laughing, they are innocent to the negative ways of the world. They are seldom interest in international conflicts, local newspaper headlines which promote fear, or general negativity. Children can teach adults lots about they way we could improve our lives. Laughter is a great example of this. Learn to laugh more, and if you think you are a great laugher, then approach someone else and tell them your secrets. Laughter is an instant vacation from fears and sorrows. Laughter is universal, it is custom to all nationalities. Laughter brings us hope and happiness.

Do not attempt the following exercise if you have a heart condition!

Here's an exercise you can try, to help get you in the habit of laughing more:

- Forced laughter tricks the mind into real laughter from the heart, so start now to force a chuckle using the following: ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho. And again he he he he he he he he
- Don't feel silly but continue each ho an he 8 times per breath:ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho then he he he he he he he he
- Now give it some more well really go to town bring it up from the tummy: ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho and again really power it he he he he he he he he
- Continue this for five minutes and notice how real laughter will follow each time. This is actually good for you and can influence better sleeping patterns
- While you may feel silly, practice this exercise regularly when you are alone, or with a good friend/partner who you will not feel silly with.
- Learn to laugh passionately and from the heart

Make laughter a hobby, remember that forced laughter tricks the mind into activating real hearty laughter which is good for the soul “Laugh And The World Laughs With You” and you gain great self esteem.

## Tip7 Become Your Own Best Friend “Love yourself first and everything falls into line” Lucille Ball

How much do you like yourself at the moment? Find a quiet place and ask yourself this question and see what answers you immediately come up with. Now, building on that question how much do you love yourself? Daft as it may sound, these two questions will provide you with relevant answers as to the measure of self esteem you are experiencing in your life at present.

Some of us are not clear what love is, and we all have our own definition of the meaning of love. Many of us find it easy to love others, but, due to unresolved inner conflicts, we struggle to love ourselves. There has been much debate over the true meaning of loving oneself. Some of us who struggle with the idea of putting ourselves first, take on the role of martyr, doing everything we can to please others, but ending up feeling burnt out and frustrated. In contrast, some of us find it very difficult to empathize with anyone else, and due to our own fears and insecurities we go out of our way to only please ourselves.

The best way toward great self esteem is to treat yourself as your own best friend. This does not mean that you lack in the capacity of offering love, humility, and compassion to others. No, it means that you learn to love yourself so much, that this abundance of love pours out to friends, family, colleagues, and strangers.

In order to love yourself more from this very moment you need to understand a basic truth: **YOU ARE AN AMAZING CREATION WITH GREAT POWER AND ABILITY. YOU HAVE GREAT RICHES OF TALENT WITHIN YOU AND YOU CAN FIND THIS AND GIVE IT FREELY TO THE WORLD**

I'm not just making this up, this stuff is real whether you like it or not. I'm sure many of you reading this will know straight away about the great talents you have been blessed with. So, given that you are amazing (And you are. . . You really are), start today to give yourself the love and appreciation you deserve. Become your own best friend. A true best friend will defend you when you are unfairly criticized by others, they will forgive you when you make mistakes, they will celebrate your successes, and ease your burden when you cry. This is what you need to do for yourself.

Forgive yourself, again, and, again, and again, if you are critical of yourself or feeling guilty be aware of this. Try and immediately create a thought which is not self blaming. If you have let yourself down in someway, forgive yourself and draw a line under it. Guilt provides us with a lesson from which we can learn to adjust. Think about times you have forgiven others, the power that this forgiveness had on that other person and yourself. Think of yourself from this moment forward as your own best friend. Encourage your friend to try new things, defend your friend from the undue criticisms of others. Use your subconscious mind (see Tip 1) to start using positive dialog with yourself. Heres an exercise you can use to start liking yourself more:

- Fix an appointment with yourself which cannot be broken, your best friend(yourself) is counting on you to attend . Write the appointment down and stick to it under all costs
- Plan what the appointment is going to be, something which will be good for you, which you can enjoy soberly and do alone. Pamper yourself, take a swim, or visit the cinema, walk in some nice landscape, anything which feels healthy and good to you!
- Learn to enjoy your own company, talk to yourself (in your head, you might feel silly doing it out loud) and use appreciative dialog
- Relax Relax Relax, enjoy every moment of this appointment with yourself and be aware of your inner voice, a voice which likes and loves you.
- Feel the benefits of having piece of mind, be aware of how you can benefit others through your grounded reliance in yourself

A great way to self esteem is buy becoming your own best friend. Learn the art of discipline, by working at knowing yourself better and better.

## Tip 8 Live In The Present, There Is Nowhere

Else “The ability to be in the present moment is a major component of mental wellness”

Abraham Maslow

Whether we like it or not, much if not all, of our unhealthy thoughts and feelings which lead to low self esteem, are based on past and future events. Regrets from the past bring guilt in the present, guilt in the present lays a foundation for inner turmoil and anxiety about tomorrow. Many of us are that inclined to dwell on the unpleasant experiences of the past, that we attempt to predict our future in negative ways. What follows is a constant stream of unrest, irritability, and fear which paves the way for a general sense of unhappiness and lower self esteem.

Many Of us in this western culture, have been conditioned into believing that joy and happiness are out there, under the condition of various things. We say things like “I'll be fine in a weeks time when I go on holiday”, or, “Can't wait until next year when Fred comes home”, or “Can't wait until the weekend” or “Everything will be fine when I get promotion”. The list goes on, we have this habit of believing happiness is out there when certain conditions are met.

**THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS, THE ONLY THING WHICH REALLY EXISTS IS THIS VERY MOMENT IN WHICH WE LIVE. THE GOOD OLD DAYS DO NOT EXIST, AND NEITHER DOES THE PERFECT FUTURE.**

Your present experience is full of beauty and can be so much more enjoyed and appreciated, If you would stop, and really come to know it. The true joy available to you in each moment can be greatly appreciated through all of your senses including smell, touch, sight, hearing, and taste. Many of us find the comprehension of the present moment something difficult to know, because we are unfortunate enough to be overwhelmed by our past or future.

You have within you, the amazing capacity to find greater self esteem by merely being present in this moment. Here is something you can do right now to appreciate the present. Sit in a comfortable position wherever you may be. Relax your feet on the floor and your hands on your lap. Relax your shoulders down and take some nice relaxing breaths. Now, with your ears be aware of all the sounds going on around you. Notice every sound but try not to analyze what you hear. Relax your eyes and be aware of any colors you might experience behind your eyelids. Become aware of the beating of your heart and the constant flow of energy circulating around your body. By simply focusing on the base of your tummy and your breathing, you might find a greater awareness of the current moment. Learn that the future or the past is of no immediate threat to you. You can be free from these burdens by simply being more aware of what is going on 'now'.

Heres another exercise you can do to help you live in the moment

- Next time you have a mundane task to do like washing the dishes, focus your attention on your surrounding environment. Be aware of the feeling of your hands in the water
- As you clean each item, look closely at it, listen to the sound of the water, the scrubbing motion, the different colored bubbles, the 'squeaking and squelching' of the crockery
- Generally become fascinated by the shape and feel of each pot, listen closely to the different sounds coming from the murky waters
- Look at every minor detail, the smallest soap sud through to the ripples in the washing up bowl
- Be aware of how you are feeling, what posture you are standing in, the speed of your breathing, the beating of your heart
- Begin to develop an attitude of utter amazement at anything you wish to focus upon

Remember, learning to be content and at peace in the present will determine a happier outcome, regardless of whatever lies ahead. Worry is a problem of it's own and can not add or take away from unwanted experiences. Be free and learn to live joyously this very moment.

## Tip 9 Develop The Skill Of Empathy “Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution” Kahlil Gibran.

The ability to empathize with others will have a profound effect on your self esteem levels. Not only will a greater level of empathy have a great bearing on your communication skills, but also, you will tap in to a greater form of self awareness which is good for your body and mind. Being empathic does not mean that we aim to get embroiled in everyone else's problems. Some of us have tried this and we end up feeling burnt out. No, being empathic means standing by someone, exploring their own world with them for a moment or two, and clarifying that you have understood them or not. It is a desire to really hear and understand someone else.

Many of us have no idea of what empathy is. When in conversation with someone else, we merely wait for them to shut up so we can then get our own point across. The problem with this, is that other people sense that we are not listening to them, and conclude that we are not open to other ideas. If we are not open to other ideas and will not listen to others, we could be perceived as being selfish, arrogant, narrow minded, and generally not pleasant to be around. Empathy is a skill which will immediately build your credibility among others. Empathy belongs to a family known as 'emotional intelligence' and is a great tool in building and maintaining long lasting relationships both in and out of the home. In fact, if empathy is at the core of every intervention you have with other people, you will improve your self esteem greatly. The main key to empathy is to pay attention to what people say linguistically, and bodily. We talk with our bodies more than we do with our words, so when engaging with another person pay attention to their posture, and their verbal and bodily expression. It is important to demonstrate to the other person that you are really listening to them. We do this verbally by paraphrasing the other person. The following is an example of paraphrasing, you can try this out when talking to friends Friend says: “ I'm out of my depth with Ted, he just patronizes me all the time, I hate the way he makes me feel small, and that damned irritating expression on his face when he belittles me is repulsive” you reply: “ Right, I sense you're finding it difficult with Ted at the moment, he's really giving you bad feeling”. This is a simple example of an empathic response. Next time you are engaging with someone get into the habit of paraphrasing. Do not over do it, but try to get into the habit of really listening to the other person and paraphrase occasionally as best you can.

Always remember **THE BETTER THE ABLITY TO EMPATHISE, THE GREATER THE LEVEL OF ESTEEM YOU SHALL AQUIRE. WE GAIN MUCH OF OUR ESTEEM FROM OTHERS, PEOPLE WILL DEVELOP A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD YOU.**

Here's an exercise you can try to improve your empathic skill

- Next time you talk to someone face to face, be aware of their posture. Notice the movement of their hands, the speed of their speech, and tone of their voice
- Try to maintain a good level of eye contact, and while you do take nice slow relaxing breaths
- Paraphrase the person by calmly reflecting what they have said
- Sense what the person is saying with their body, if they display tension in their hands, face, or posture be aware
- If the person asks your opinion on a matter, depending on how well you know them, gently touch them on the shoulder by giving your own view
- Practice this daily and you will improve greatly at the art of empathy
- REMEMBER, the more you practice the better at it you will become, do not beat yourself up if you find it difficult to start with.

## Tip 10 Accept All Compliments With Thanks

“A compliment is verbal sunshine” Robert Orben.

How well do you accept compliments? Think hard for a few moments and be as honest as you can be. When was the last time someone paid you a good compliment? Depending on your ability to accept compliments, will depend on how often you notice them going on. Some of us find it very easy to compliment other people, and carry on through life putting others on wonderful elaborate pedestals. While many people are very gifted and highly talented and skilled, they do not always have the measure of self esteem to really appreciate themselves. In Britain there has over the centuries been a custom to not be 'boastful' of one's abilities. The Christian tradition and perception of the bible has often been misinterpreted, leading people to believe that they must be humble, meek, and under hardship in order to gain God's blessing. However, these teachings have been internalized by many in negative ways, so that a general sense of not appreciating or liking oneself has followed.

**REMEMBER, YOU HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH TALLENTS, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES AND YOU CAN COMPLIMENT YOURSELF FOR THESE REGULARLY.**

When you get in the habit of complimenting yourself for the good things you do, you will find it easier to accept the compliments of others. I saw a news story recently, where a brave man jumped into a river in the winter time to save a young child who had fallen in the water. When interviewed the reporter commented on the man as being heroic and bold, to which the man replied “Oh it was nothing, anyone would have done the same”. The fact is, not many would have done the same, and this man's bravery saved a child's life. It seemed as though this man had an internal belief that suggested to him he did not want to be credited, or praised by others regardless of his bravery.

There is a big difference between 'showing off' and accepting a compliment.

Ladies particularly, find it difficult to accept a compliment about their beauty and good looks. I told a lady colleague that her hair looked nice once, to which she replied “Yeah Right, Pull The other One” she obviously found the compliment uncomfortable, yet it was meant sincerely. **IF SOMEONE PAYS YOU A COMPLIMENT SIMPLY SAY 'THANK YOU'.**

By saying thank you, you are taking ownership of the compliment and accepting it as truth.

We humans have a very unusual tendency of grabbing hold of negative things and clinging on to them as much as we can. While conversely, when positive things come our way we dismiss them straight away. Try to cling to positives instead of negatives. If someone insults you, try to forget it straight away. If someone compliments you, thank them for it and remind yourself of the compliment again and again and again and again.

Here's an exercise you can try to improve your responses to compliments.

- Pay ten compliments a day to different people and watch their response to it, make sure the compliments are genuine, No point complimenting for the sake of it
- Watch the responses of these people, their verbal expression and body language will be a key indicator of their response.
- Notice how you feel as a result of their response, how do you feel when they are thankful? How do you feel when they are dismissive or awkward?
- Now. . . think carefully about how you will respond to future compliments.

Self esteem is something you can improve in others by offering general compliments, by doing this you will also boost your own positive feelings. Always make sure you are specific about the compliment for example “I like your new hair style, the colors, and shape are beautiful”

Remember when someone feels awkward with the compliment, it has an impact on the person who made it. So, be sure to accept all compliments with thanks.



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