

Transformation *from the inside out*

What is self-esteem?

The term self-esteem is often misunderstood. Many people think self-esteem comes from “feel good” strategies: Everyone gets chosen for the team; no one gets a failing grade; everyone is praised; no one is disappointed. Many people think that self-esteem comes from having the perfect face or body, a big house or new car, or the latest “must have” gadget.

Nathaniel Branden says that “self-esteem is the reputation we acquire with ourselves.” Healthy self-regard comes not from receiving false praise or by taking the easy way out. It comes from doing hard work. It comes from coping with life’s difficulties and disappointments. Healthy self-regard doesn’t come from having a perfect face, body, house, car, or gadget. You can have all of that and still not think much of yourself.

“Self-esteem is an ever flowing reflection of what you think about yourself on the inside and what you do on the outside.” Mike Brescia, Think Right Now International

“Self-esteem is both the means to recovery and it is the goal.” Lindsey Hall and Leigh Cohn, *Self-Esteem Tools for Recovery*

Why does self-esteem matter?

Our philosophy is simple: “When I feel better about myself, I do better.”

Many of us, at one time or another, have been “stuck” in our lives. We feel unable or unwilling to cope with the challenges of everyday life. Our negative self-talk roars at us: “I’ll never amount to anything!” “I’m such a loser!” Given these feelings, it’s no wonder we’re stuck! Moving forward seems impossible. And yet, moving forward, even if it’s only by inches, is the way toward greater self-esteem. When we begin to feel more competent, we can face life’s challenges. When we believe that we deserve happiness, we can go for more in life.

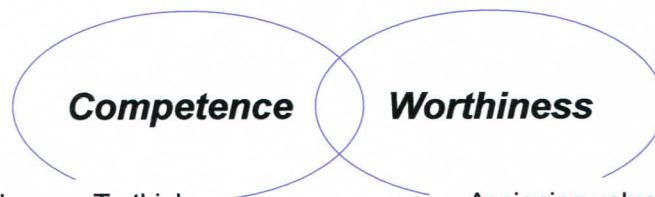
How do I build my self-esteem?

Once the concept of self-esteem is defined, we help participants work through the principles, beginning with the two components of self-esteem: competence and worthiness. Then we look at how to put those principles into practice. There are six elements needed to build and maintain a healthy level of self-esteem: Awareness, Acceptance, Accountability, Assertiveness, Intention, Integrity. Each element is explored through group discussions, exercises, and self-reflection. (See next page.)



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Self-esteem is something all human beings need in order to function well in the world. It comes from two sources: a sense of competence and a sense of worth. Practicing the six elements of self-esteem helps us to feel more competent and worthy. We don't need to practice all of the elements, nor do we need to attain perfection in any one of them. Even small improvements in any of these areas will lead to greater self-esteem.



Navigating life's challenges. To think, understand, learn, and make decisions.

Assigning value to myself. Affirming my right to live, love, and achieve happiness.

Elements	Low Self-Esteem	Healthy Self-Esteem
Awareness	Blind to reality <i>"I don't want to think about it."</i>	Awakening <i>"I can see the truth of my life."</i>
Acceptance	Self-hate <i>"I am no good."</i>	Self-love <i>"I treat myself with respect."</i>
Accountability	Blaming others <i>"It's your fault that I'm this way."</i>	Answering to myself <i>"I am accountable for my actions."</i>
Assertiveness	Staying silent <i>"People walk all over me."</i>	Finding my voice <i>"I know how to stand up for myself."</i>
Intention	Living by accident <i>"I go wherever life takes me."</i>	Living on purpose <i>"I set my own course in life."</i>
Integrity	Losing face <i>"Everyone lies and cheats."</i>	Gaining honor <i>"I refuse to live by values I don't respect."</i>

