

How can I improve my self-esteem?

Self-esteem is a condition of awareness, an attitude, an appreciation of yourself and all you have to give to others.

Low self-esteem can negatively affect many facets of your life, including your relationships, your job and your health.

Although it may seem difficult, there are ways to boost your self-esteem.

Here are some tips for increasing the love you have for yourself:

- Identify and challenge negative thoughts. Look for evidence that contradicts those negative beliefs you might have about yourself. Write down both statement and evidence, and keep looking back at it to remind yourself that your negative beliefs about yourself are not true.
- Promote a positive internal dialogue. Identify positive things about yourself and remind yourself of these attributes whenever you feel weighed down by negative thoughts.
- Love yourself like a friend. The reason you enjoy your friends is because they are much like yourself. So if you love and appreciate your friends, turn those same feelings on yourself as well.
- Realize that love comes from within. Many people, especially people who have survived years of abuse, often look for acceptance and love from others. They feel when they have won another's approval, they are then worthy of approval and appreciation. While it is difficult to do, you must realize that to love yourself is truly valuable. You do not need others to confirm that you are a good person worthy of appreciation and love.
- Do comforting and nurturing things for yourself. Make yourself something warm to drink, wrap yourself in a blanket or quilt, listen to music or read a book. These small efforts will make you feel more secure and that security will make you feel better about yourself overall.
- Surround yourself with loving people as much as possible. Your friends, spouse and significant others should love and respect you as well. Often, it is difficult to find these people if you believe yourself unworthy of those kinds of relationships. However, you are worthy and people in relationships with you should honor your feelings about yourself.
- Find a therapist to offer support. We all need a little push sometimes. A therapist or support person can offer positive reinforcement and compassion. Remember that therapists can only help you if you are willing to help yourself. You must realize you are a good person; a therapist will never convince you if you cannot see it in yourself.

Resources

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): www.nami.org

- National Association for Self Esteem: www.healthyselfesteem.org
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): www.nimh.nih.gov
- Mental Health America: www.mhanational.org

Here when you need us.

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