

# An Ounce of Prevention

Complimentary

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## What is Self-Esteem?

*Courtney E. Ackerman, Positive Psychology*

*"Believe in yourself."*

That is the message that we encounter constantly, in books, television shows, superhero comics, and common myths and legends. We are told that we can accomplish anything if we believe in ourselves.

Of course, we know that to be untrue; we cannot accomplish anything in the world simply through belief—if that were true, a lot more children would be soaring in the skies above their garage roof instead of lugging around a cast for a few weeks!

However, we know that believing in yourself and accepting yourself for who you are is an important factor in success, relationships, and happiness and that self-esteem plays an important role in living a flourishing life. It provides us with belief in our abilities and the motivation to carry them out, ultimately reaching fulfillment as we navigate life with a positive outlook.

Various studies have confirmed that self-esteem has a direct relationship with our overall well-being, and we would do well to keep this fact in mind—both for ourselves and for those around us, particularly the developing children we interact with.

### What is the Meaning of Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem refers to a person's overall sense of his or her value or worth.

According to self-esteem expert Morris Rosenberg, self-esteem is quite simply one's attitude toward oneself. He described it as a "favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the self".

Various factors believed to influence our self-esteem include:

- Genetics
- Personality
- Life experiences
- Age
- Health
- Thoughts
- Social circumstances
- The reactions of others
- Comparing the self to others

An important note is that self-esteem is not fixed. It is malleable and measurable, meaning we can test for and improve upon it.

### 6 Practical Tips on How to Increase Self-Esteem

#### 1. Take a self-esteem inventory to give yourself a baseline.

It can be as simple as writing down 10 of your strengths and 10 of your weaknesses. This will help you to begin developing an honest and realistic conception of yourself.

#### 2. Set realistic expectations.

It's important to set small, reachable goals that are within your power. For example, setting an extremely high expectation or an expectation that someone else will change their behavior is virtually guaranteed to make you feel like a failure, through no fault of your own.

#### 3. Stop being a perfectionist.

Acknowledge both your accomplishments and mistakes. Nobody is perfect and trying to be will only lead to disappointment. Acknowledging your accomplishments and recognizing your mistakes is the way to keep a positive outlook while learning and growing from your mistakes.

#### 4. Explore yourself.

The importance of knowing yourself and being at peace with who you are cannot be overstated. This can take some trial and error, and you will constantly learn new things about yourself, but it is a journey that should be undertaken with purpose and zeal.

#### 5. Be willing to adjust your self-image.

We all change as we age and grow, and we must keep up with our ever-changing selves if we want to set and achieve meaningful goals.

#### 6. Stop comparing yourself to others.

Comparing ourselves to others is a trap that is extremely easy to fall into, especially today with social media and the ability to project a polished, perfected appearance. The only person you should compare yourself to is you.

## What Is the Difference between Self-Concept and Self-Esteem?

*Upem, PEDIAA.com*

The main difference between self-concept and self-esteem is that the self-concept does not evaluate who you are while self-esteem does. Self-concept is more of a cognitive aspect about self while self-esteem is more of an evaluation of oneself. Self-concept and self-esteem are two related aspects in psychology that deal with the overall understanding or perception of one's own self. Even though they are related and share common grounds, these two are two distinctive ideologies. Thus, apart from the above-mentioned main difference between self-concept and self-esteem, there are other differences between them as well.

## What is Self-Concept?

Self-concept or self-concept is the overall idea or the knowledge a person has about him/her own self. Hence, self-concept answers the question 'Who am I?'. Thus, this is a reflection on one's own self. In brief, self- concept is one's self-identity.

Self-concept, therefore, includes knowledge about one's gender, name, personality, physical appearance, race, beliefs, nationality, schooling, family, career, accomplishments, preferences, strengths, flaws, likes and dislikes, temperaments, principles, behavioral patterns, etc. In brief, self-concept refers to the detailed idea about who one is. Moreover, some people have strong self-concepts while some don't. Hence self-concept is built upon the pillars of one's social interactions.

According to psychology, self-concept is composed of two key parts: personal identity and social identity. Therefore, one's experiences and external commentaries or feedback about them from social interactions influence directly on building one's self concept. For example, if someone's friends start commenting that person is talented in a certain task and very assertive, he/she will start believing that they are indeed talented in that certain task in addition to being assertive as well. This happens even without that person's own understanding, regardless of whether it is true or not. Furthermore, self-concept includes what we were, what we are and what we will be in the future.

## Cultivating Kindness and Strength in the Face of Difficulty: Yin and Yang of Self-Compassion.

*Dr. Kristen Neff, Center for Mindful Self-Compassion*

Yin and yang is a perfect metaphor for the energies of self-compassion. Most people are familiar with the circle of yin and yang, black and white halves, and a dot of each in between. The yin is the dark energy; it's supposed to be more feminine, more of a passive energy, more the "being with." And the white, or yang, is supposedly the more active energy, the masculine energy — doing things that make a change. But really these energies are not male or female, these energies are in every single person and all life forms.

### Self-Compassionate, Constructive Criticism

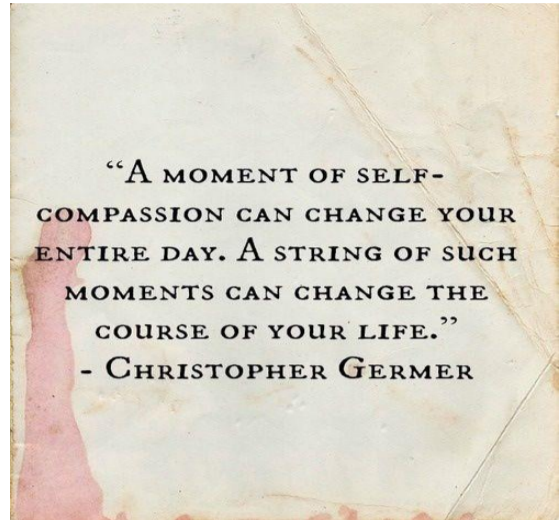
*What mistakes did I make?*

*How can I do it better next time?*

That's a caring, understanding, compassionate approach. What self-criticism tends to do is it just gives us not very wise information. Just like, "You're bad. You did it wrong. Do it better next time." It doesn't say what to do differently or how to do it differently. Or it doesn't see the bigger picture of all the causes and conditions that led to this outcome. That's actually pretty lousy information. Kindness, on the other hand, yields a kind of wisdom, "Oh I see. I did this. Maybe I can try this different next time and that would lead to a better effect." It's actually much more informational to give wise encouragement as opposed to the belittling name-calling.

Then also, the thing about having the vision. What we know, actually you probably know this from positive psychology, is that negative emotions tend to narrow our focus. It limits what we can see. We

only see what we did wrong and how we're wrong. We can't actually see possibilities because the negative emotion actually has the function, evolutionarily actually, of narrowing our vision. Positive emotions — kindness, safety, warmth — they have the effect of broadening our perspective so that we can have a larger vision so that we can see the possibilities so that we might get an idea of, "Oh, I can try this. This may really work better for me." The research we've done really backs up that this kind of encouraging, wise voice of compassionate motivation is actually much more effective and more sustainable in motivating ourselves to change.



### \*\*\*Net News\*\*\*

Here are some web sites you & your family may find helpful.

#### The Secrets of "Cognitive Super-Agers"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/21/well/mind/aging-memory-centenarians.html>

#### Do you really "See" your child?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/parenting/helicopter-parenting-problems.html?searchResultPosition=1>

#### I'm Often Wide Awake At 3AM. How Do I Get Back To Sleep?

[https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/13/well/mind/sleep-insomnia-tips.html?campaign\\_id=29&emc=edit\\_up\\_20210715&instance\\_id=35400&nl=the-upshot&regi\\_id=8400690&segment\\_id=63543&te=1&user\\_id=dca8f06878e01b4ab34fdc297f7d52f8](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/13/well/mind/sleep-insomnia-tips.html?campaign_id=29&emc=edit_up_20210715&instance_id=35400&nl=the-upshot&regi_id=8400690&segment_id=63543&te=1&user_id=dca8f06878e01b4ab34fdc297f7d52f8)

### Self- Help Corner:

Alcoholics Anonymous: 780-424-5900

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org)

Al-Anon/Alateen: 780-433-1818

Support Network / Referral Line: 211

Distress Line: 780 482-4357

Cocaine Anonymous: 780-425-2715

Access 24/7 – 780 424 2424

### Informative Links:

The National Women's Health Information Center:

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/>