

9 SIGNS OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM AND STRATEGIES FOR FIXING THEM

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Low self-esteem is practically an epidemic. We're bombarded with images of impossible success and beauty on a daily basis. **It's hard to avoid making comparisons, and those comparisons never seem to work out in our favor.**

Add to that a few mean comments received in childhood, a workplace bully, and a few extra pounds, and your self-esteem is in the toilet.

Recognize the signs of low self-esteem:

1. Difficulty accepting compliments. If you have a hard time hearing someone say something nice about you, you might be suffering from low self-esteem. Most people enjoy receiving a genuine compliment, but those with a low opinion of themselves feel very uncomfortable being on the receiving end of praise.

- **Start by giving yourself compliments in the mirror.** Keep doing this each day until the discomfort is greatly diminished.
- Next, ask people if they like your shoes, new haircut, or your brand-new gas grill. People will almost always say they do. Enjoy the compliments.

2. Overly sensitive to criticism. On the other hand, those with low self-esteem can't handle criticism either. They tend to overreact and to take criticism too personally.

- Even constructive criticism is handled poorly. Do you bristle when someone offers a helpful suggestion for improvement? If so, your lack of

self-esteem might be the reason.

- **Ask someone for advice about how you could improve how you currently do something.** Then, thank them for it and make good use of their feedback.

3. Fear of failure. Low self-esteem and avoidance are commonly found together. Those with low self-esteem expect to fail, and who is going to try to do something if they expect failure?

- Do things that will likely result in failure and realize that it isn't so bad. Apply for jobs you have little hope of landing. Ask out a stranger for coffee.

4. People-pleasing behavior. While compliments are hard to handle, who doesn't like the gratitude of others? When people show appreciation to someone with low self-esteem, that appreciation is soaked up like a dry sponge soaks up water. People-pleasing is done to feel a sense of value and worth.

- **Do what needs to be done without trying so hard to make others happy. Do something that makes YOU happy.**
- That doesn't mean you shouldn't consider the negative impact your words or actions can have on other people.

5. Difficulty prioritizing your own needs. When you think you don't matter, you put everyone else above and ahead of yourself. If you're regularly getting the short end of the stick, ask yourself why you continue to allow it to happen.

- **Put yourself first for a change.** That doesn't mean you have to take

advantage of anyone but think about what would be best for you and your life and give that a try for a while.

6. A lack of boundaries. People with high self-esteem have boundaries that they enforce religiously, but calmly. If people are walking all over you and disregard any boundaries you attempt to enforce, your self-esteem might need a little work.

- **Begin by saying “no” more often.** Prioritize your time and your life by turning down requests that don’t fit in with your plans or are too burdensome.

7. Critical self-talk. Do you speak kindly to yourself or are you hard on yourself? People with a healthy level of self-esteem tend to be kind and encouraging to themselves. Those with low self-esteem tend to be much more critical.

- **Monitor your self-talk and stop yourself when you speak poorly to yourself.** Compliment yourself each time you catch yourself being negative toward yourself.

8. Underachieving. Does everyone consider you to be an underachiever? This is another sign that you likely don’t value yourself as much as you should.

- **Seek to improve some part of your life each day,** even if it’s only in a small way.

9. Difficulty giving an opinion even when asked. When your self-esteem is low, you think that your opinions don’t matter. You also want to avoid having your opinions judged by others, so you keep them to yourself.

- Give your opinion whenever asked. See what happens.

Low self-esteem is common, but that doesn't mean it's normal. **Recognize the signs of low self-esteem in yourself and your children and do something about it.** Low self-esteem is extremely limiting.

Raising self-esteem is a great gift to give yourself and the ones you love.