



# PEN Notes: Fact Sheet #3

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## SELF-ESTEEM

### Self-esteem:

Self-esteem is how we value and perceive ourselves and how valuable we think we are to others. Self-esteem affects how we trust others, our relationships, our work and all aspects of our lives. Positive self-esteem gives us the strength and flexibility to take charge of our lives and grow from our mistakes without feeling rejected.



### Signs of self-esteem:

- Values self and others
- Trusts others
- Builds wholesome relationships with others
- Takes charge of own life without the fear of rejection
- Has confidence in self and is comfortable with new people and situations

### Low Self-esteem...

...is a harmful condition that keeps individuals from realizing their full potential. Low self-esteem makes people feel unworthy, weak and inadequate. People with low self-esteem act helpless and unable to cope; they look to others for guidance, leading to such problems as extreme shyness, under-achievement, and too much reliance on others in relationships.

### Signs of Low Self-esteem

- Negative view
- Mistrusts others
- Blames others
- Fear of taking risks
- Dependent
- Feelings of being unloved
- Fear of being ridiculed



### How Low Self-esteem starts:

Low self-esteem is not something you are born with; it is learned. It's the result of filtering opinions, comments, suggestions, looks and actions of those around us. For example, if a child grows up with parents who are critical, he may learn he will never do well enough.



If a child grows up with neglectful parents, he may grow up feeling unworthy of care. These feelings may last a lifetime even though others may love and care for her or him. The low self-esteem will filter out the good; the child will hear only the bad and live up to the expectations of a person with low self-esteem. This behavior becomes "second nature."

**Every human being, of whatever origin, of whatever station, deserves respect. (U. Thant)**

## How to raise low self-esteem:

Letting go of low self-esteem feelings and behaviors that have built up over a lifetime is not an easy task. It takes time and hard work and may even involve professional counseling.

There are some simple, positive-thinking techniques that can help build self-esteem. These are called *affirmations*. Affirmations are encouraging messages we can give ourselves every day until they become part of our feelings and beliefs. We must begin every day looking in the mirror and giving ourselves affirmations.

### Affirmations:



1. I respect myself and others.
2. I am loveable and likable.
3. I care about others.
4. I am a good friend to myself and others.
5. I am confident and it shows.
6. I am creating loving, healthy relationships.
7. I accept myself just as I am.
8. I look great.

### Steps to good self-esteem:

- Concentrate on your strengths, not your weaknesses.
- Remind yourself of past successes.
- Associate with positive, supportive people.
- Use positive self-talk.
- Visualize future success.
- Get involved with work and activities you love.

## Things to do to build children's self-esteem:

- Notice them
- Smile at them
- Listen to them
- Seek them out
- Remember their birthday
- Ask them about themselves
- Look in their eyes when talking to them
- Be honest
- Be yourself
- Share their excitement
- Follow them when they lead
- Send them a postcard
- Know where they are
- Delight in their discoveries
- Discuss their dreams and nightmares
- Suggest better behavior when they act out
- Stay with them when they are afraid
- Take time and concentrate only on them
- Give them space when they need it
- Kneel, squat or sit so you are at their level
- Meet their friends and parents
- Encourage win-win situations
- Give them lots of compliments
- Praise more and criticize less
- Ask for their opinion
- Applaud their accomplishments Inspire their creativity
- Become their advocate
- Include them in conversations
- Show up at their concerts, games, and events

