

Self Esteem

*A session from
the Rx CD System*

Rx

Self Esteem:

The ability to realize and appreciate your own self-worth.

Why is this skill important?

This capacity could also be referred to as "self acceptance," because it describes a person's ability to realize and appreciate their own self-worth—based on internal factors, not external ones. This internal belief in their own value allows them to appreciate themselves not based on what they do, what role they occupy, or what public success they attain, but rather, how they know themselves to be inside.

People who have good Self Esteem are able to value themselves as unique entities aside from and apart from their role or ambitions. They base their value on their own internal standards. Not surprisingly, this internal sense of satisfaction or happiness with one's self plays a crucial role in job performance and satisfaction.

In contrast, people who have low Self Esteem tend to base their opinion of their own self-worth on culturally programmed factors such as professional success, physical appearance, financial success, etc. A low score in this area can be a major hindrance to someone's performance and manifest itself in the person becoming dominant, perfectionist, risk averse, and unable to handle criticism effectively.

None of us can relate to the whole population of the world at once—but we want to talk to people, to care about people, and to matter to them. So we cluster in groups and find our identities among them. These groups are called subcultures. All of us constantly find ourselves involved with several different subcultures. We are members of families, social peer groups, groups of co-workers; we may also belong to special interest groups such as religious groups, clubs, and sports teams.

The problem this poses is that each group exerts its unique pressures on us to conform to its values and expectations—whether we are conscious of it or not! Some people would say that your only hope of becoming your own person is to disavow identification with any subculture and go it alone. But that lifestyle would not really be possible, and even if it were possible, it would be awfully lonely. And most of us wouldn't be able to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves without contact with other people.

The answer to this conflict is to forge your own identity as a person in the midst of the subcultures that surround you. This may not feel easy to do, but if you strengthen your Self Esteem, it will get a lot easier. And you will find the rewards for your efforts in your own increased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment on your own terms.

What are skills associated with Self Esteem?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Self Esteem:

- Has a strong intuitive understanding of and belief in his or her own value.
- Is in touch with his or her strongest personal values, and strives to behave consistently with them.
- Recognizes the impact subcultures have on him or her, but chooses to consciously accept or reject that influence.
- Is respectful of and honors him or herself and other human beings, regardless of position, skill level, race, gender, or any other factor.
- Is able to manage and subdue feelings of insecurity or envy in him or herself.

How do you develop your own skills in Self Esteem?

- Choose and live by your own values. Know clearly what YOU believe in and are acting upon.
- Don't get caught up in "group think." It may be easier to follow others, but often, it's not the right thing to do.
- Forge your own self expectations. Only YOU know what you are really capable of doing.
- Use positive affirmations to remind yourself daily of your value and worth.
- Separate actions from being. What you do is only an expression of who you are, not who you are. First, get in touch with the inner you. Then, make your actions consistent with it.
- Make a conscious effort to function in a manner that is totally consistent with how you see yourself. Get things sorted out and concentrate on your own goals.
- Compete with yourself, not anyone else.
- Don't try to be like someone else. Remember that you can improve aspects of yourself, but there is a unique YOU that can't be just like anyone else.
- If you are feeling insecure about something, stop yourself and remind yourself that these feelings should act as a stimulus to rise above them—they should inspire you to beat them!
- Accept your limitations, but work consciously and diligently toward expanding them.
- Don't continue to blame yourself for mistakes. Look at mistakes as events that needed to happen in order to teach you something. See what you can learn from your mistakes, and move on toward success with your new lessons.
- Don't blame others for mistakes or hold grudges. It is a waste of your time and focuses you on THEM, not YOU.
- Be kind to yourself. See yourself at your best, and focus on your best traits.

- Strive toward the best version of yourself you can imagine. Picture this version and work toward becoming it.
- Put yourself on a path of continuous learning. Keep up with developments in your field—read books, magazines, and journals; network with peers; join industry trade groups, etc.
- Remember that every day, other people look to you for advice, strength, leadership, and inspiration. Whether they are friends, family members, co-workers, or others, you are important to every one of them.
- Be friends with, and associate with, people who affirm you and encourage you to act within the value system you are most comfortable with.

Self Esteem Activities

Activity 1: Subcultures

In this activity, we'll look at how you are influenced by subcultures around you. The point here is to identify what positive and negative traits you have developed as a result of your membership in each subculture.

For each of the typical subcultures listed below, describe two primary values the group has (one positive and one negative) and two expectations of yourself that you developed from your association with the group (one positive and one negative).

When you have done this, think about the effect the subcultures have had on how you perceive yourself. How have they affirmed you? Rejected you?

PARENTS:

Primary Positive Value— _____

Primary Negative Value— _____

Positive Self-Expectation— _____

Negative Self-Expectation— _____

SCHOOL:

Primary Positive Value— _____

Primary Negative Value— _____

Positive Self-Expectation— _____

Negative Self-Expectation— _____

SOCIAL GROUP:

Primary Positive Value— _____

Primary Negative Value— _____

Positive Self-Expectation— _____

Negative Self-Expectation— _____

RELIGIOUS GROUP:

Primary Positive Value— _____

Primary Negative Value— _____

Positive Self-Expectation— _____

Negative Self-Expectation— _____

CO-WORKER GROUP:

Primary Positive Value— _____

Primary Negative Value— _____

Positive Self-Expectation— _____

Negative Self-Expectation— _____

Activity 2: Personal Values

Isolate three personal values that you have. Then, make a firm decision as to how you can live more consistently with them. Make a solid commitment and begin to act immediately upon it.

Three most important personal values:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are three of the nicest compliments you ever have received?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are three of the strongest criticisms you have ever received?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How are the compliments and criticisms related to the most important personal values you wrote down? Are the three things you've been recognized for consistent with your personal values? Are the three things you've been criticized for inconsistent with your personal values?

Activity 3: Inferiority Complexes

Even the most confident, self-assured people feel insecure around certain individuals. It is (unfortunately) natural that we feel the need to judge ourselves by our friends, competitors, etc. But a big part of overcoming your self esteem problems is getting OUT of that mindset, and comparing yourself only to your previous best.

This activity will help you see that inferiority is a two-way street—you aren't the only person who feels insecure, and others have insecurities about YOU. Make a list of five people to whom you feel inferior or around whom you feel insecure. Then, write down the reason you think you feel this way.

Person's Name	What makes you feel inferior or insecure?
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

Now, list each of these people again. Then, write a reason why THEY might feel INFERIOR or INSECURE about YOU:

Person's Name	What makes you feel inferior or insecure?
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____