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How to Improve Your Self-Esteem: 12 Powerful Tips

by HENRIK EDBERG on SEPTEMBER 11, 2013

“Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.”

**Maria
Robinson**



Nothing is more important than how you feel and think about yourself.

A high opinion about yourself and who you are and what you do and basically a love for yourself is also one of the things that people often miss or have too little of in today's society.

I read about it in newspapers every month.

I see it every week based on how many of my readers that join my [Self-Esteem Course](#). It is – close to 2 years after I launched it – still my most popular course.

I see it in my inbox almost every day as people share their challenges with me.

But why is building and being able to maintain high self-esteem so important?

Life becomes simpler and lighter.

When you like or love yourself more then things simply become easier.

You won't make mountains out of molehills (or out of plain air) nearly as often anymore. You won't drag yourself down or beat yourself up over simple mistakes or over not reaching a perfect and inhuman standard.

You'll have more inner stability.

When you like yourself more, when your opinion of yourself goes up then you'll stop trying so eagerly to get validation and attention from other people.

And so you become less needy and your inner life becomes much less of an emotional roller coaster based on what people may think or say about you today or this week.

Less self-sabotage.

Most people's worst enemy are themselves. By raising and keeping your self-esteem up you'll feel more deserving of good things in life.

And so you'll go after them more often and with more motivation. And when you get them then you'll be a lot less likely to [succumb to self-doubt](#) or to self-sabotage in subtle or not so subtle ways.

You'll be more attractive in any relationship.

With better self-esteem you'll get the benefits listed above. You'll be more stable and able to handle tough times better. You'll be less needy and more of a natural giver.

Being with you becomes simpler and a lighter experience with a lot less drama, arguments or fights based on little or nothing.

And all of this is attractive in any relationships, not matter if it is with a friend, at work or with a partner.

You'll be happier.

That has been my experience and it is why I write so much about self-esteem and why I value my own self-esteem so highly and try to keep it steady every day.

Because it has made my life so much happier.

So those are some of the most important whys.

But how do you improve your self-esteem in a practical way?

Well, today I would like to share 12 of the most powerful tips and habits I have found for improving and maintaining my own self-esteem. Even through the rough days and tough months.

Bonus: Download a free step-by-step checklist that will show you how to improve your self-esteem and keep it stable (it's easy to save as a PDF or print out for whenever you need it during your day or week).

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1. Say stop to your inner critic.

A good place to start with raising your self-esteem is by learning how to handle and to replace the voice of your own inner critic.

We all have an inner critic.

It can spur you on to get things done or to do things to gain acceptance from the people in your life. But at the same time it will drag your self-esteem down.

This inner voice whispers or shouts destructive thoughts in your mind. Thoughts like for example:

- You are lazy and sloppy, now get to work.
- You aren't good at your job at all and someone will figure that out and throw you out.
- You are worse or uglier than your friend/co-worker/partner.

You don't have to accept this though. There are ways to minimize that critical voice and to replace it with more helpful thoughts. You can change how you view yourself.

One way to do so is simply to say stop whenever the critic pipes up in your mind.

You can do this by creating a stop-word or stop-phrase.

As the critic says something – in your mind – shout: STOP!

Or use my favorite: No, no, no, we are not going there!

Or come up with a phrase or word that you like that stops the train of the thought driven by the inner critic.

Then refocus your thoughts to something more constructive. Like planning what you want to eat for dinner or your tactic for the next soccer game.

In the long run it also helps a lot to find better ways to motivate yourself than listening to your inner critic. So let's move on to that...

2. Use healthier motivation habits.

To make the inner critic less useful for yourself and that voice weaker and at the same time motivate yourself to take action and raise your self-esteem it is certainly helps to have healthy motivation habits.

A few that I have used to replace and fill up much of the place that the inner critic once held in my mind are these:

- **Remind yourself of the benefits.** A simple but powerful way to motivate yourself and to keep that motivation up daily is to write down the deeply felt benefits you will get from following this new path or reaching a goal.
Like for example getting into better shape and having more energy for your kids and the people close to you. Or making more money and through that being able to travel with the love of your life and experience wonderful new things together.
When your list is done then save it and put it somewhere where you will see it every day. For instance in your workspace or on your fridge.
- **Refocus on doing what YOU really, really like to do.** When you really, really like doing something then the motivation to do that thing tends to come pretty automatically. When you really want something in life then it also becomes easier to push through any inner resistance you feel.
So if you lose your motivation, ask yourself: Am I doing what I really want to do? If not and if possible, then refocus and start working on that very important thing instead.

After you have used your stop-word or phrase focus on one of these techniques. Over time it will become a habit and your inner critic will pop up a lot less often.

3. Take a 2 minute self-appreciation break.

This is a very simple and fun habit. And if you spend just two minutes on it every day for a month then it can make huge difference.

Here's what you do:

Take a deep breath, slow down and ask yourself this question: what are 3 things I can appreciate about myself?

A few examples that have come up when I have used to this exercise are that I:

- Help quite a few people each day through what I write.
- Can make people laugh and forget about their troubles.
- Am very thoughtful and caring when it comes to our cats.

These things don't have to be big things.

Maybe just that you listened fully for a few minutes to someone who needed it today. That you took a healthy walk or bike ride after work [instead of being lazy](#). That you are a caring and kind person in many situations.

These short breaks do not only build self-esteem in the long run but can also turn a negative mood around and reload you with a lot of positive energy again.

4. Write down 3 things in the evening that you can appreciate about yourself.

This is a variation of the habit above and combining the two of them can be extra powerful for two boosts in self-esteem a day.

Or you may simply prefer to use this variation at the end of your day when you have some free time for yourself to spare.

What you do is to ask yourself the question from the last section:

What are 3 things I can appreciate about myself?

Write down your answers every evening in a journal made out of paper or on your computer/smart phone.

A nice extra benefit of writing it down is that after a few weeks you can read through all the answers to [stay positive](#) and get a good self-esteem boost and change in perspective on days when you may need it the most.

5. Do the right thing.

When you do what you deep down think is the right thing to do then you raise and strengthen your self-esteem.

It might be a small thing like getting up from the couch and going to the gym. It could be to be understanding instead of judgmental in a situation.

Or to [stop worrying](#) or feeling sorry for yourself and focus on the opportunities and gratitude for what you actually have.

It is not always easy to do. Or even to know what the right thing is. But keeping a focus on it and doing it as best you can makes big difference both in the results you get and for how you think about yourself.

One tip that makes it easier to stay consistent with doing the right thing is to try to take a few such actions early in the day. Like for example giving someone a compliment, eating a healthy breakfast and working out.

This sets the tone for the rest of your day.

6. Replace the perfectionism.

Few thought habits can be so destructive in daily life as perfectionism.

It can paralyze you from taking action because you become so afraid of not living up to some standard. And so you procrastinate and you do not get the results you want. This will make your self-esteem sink.

Or you take action but are never or very rarely satisfied with what you accomplished and your own performance.

And so your opinion and feelings about yourself become more and more negative and your motivation to take action plummets.

How can you overcome perfectionism?

A few things that really helped me are:

- **Go for good enough.** When you aim for perfection then that usually winds up in a project or a task never being finished. So simply go for good enough instead. Don't use it as an excuse to slack off. But simply realize that there is something called good enough and when you are there then you are finished.
- **Remember that buying into myths of perfection will hurt you and the people in your life.** This simple reminder that life is not like in a movie, a song or a book can be good reality check whenever you are daydreaming of perfection. Because reality can clash with your expectations when they are out of this world and harm or even possibly lead to the end of relationships, jobs, projects and so on.

7. Handle mistakes and failures in a more positive way.

If you go outside of your comfort zone, if you try to accomplish anything that is truly meaningful then you will stumble and fall along the way.

And that is OK. It is normal. It is what people that did something that truly mattered have done throughout all ages. Even if we don't always hear about it as much as we hear about their successes.

So remember that. And when you stumble try this:

- **Be your own best friend.** Instead of beating yourself up, ask yourself: How would my friend/parent support me and help me in this situation? Then do things and talk to yourself like he or she would. It keeps you from falling into a pit of despair and helps you to be more constructive after the first initial pain of a mistake or failure starts to dissipate.
- **Find the upside.** Another way to be more constructive in this kind of situation is to focus on optimism and opportunities. So ask yourself: what is one thing I can learn from this? And what is one opportunity I can find in this situation? This will help you to change your viewpoint and hopefully not hit the same bump a little further down the road.

8. Be kinder towards other people.

When you are kinder towards others you tend to treat and think of yourself in a kinder way too. And the way you treat other people is how they tend to treat you in the long run.

So focus on being kind in your daily life.

You can for example:

- Just be there and listen as you let someone vent.
- Hold up the door for the next person.
- Let someone into your lane while driving.
- Encourage a friend or a family member when they are uncertain or unmotivated.
- Take a few minutes help someone out in a practical way.
- Share what has helped you in a difficult situation on social media, a podcast or [on your own blog](#).

9. Try something new.

When you try something new, when you challenge yourself in a small or bigger way and go outside of your comfort zone then your opinion of yourself goes up.

You may not have done whatever you did in a spectacular or great way but you at least tried instead of sitting on your hands and doing nothing.

And that is something to appreciate about yourself and it can help you come alive as you get out of a rut.

So go outside of your comfort zone regularly. Don't expect anything, just tell yourself that you will try something out.

And then later on you can do the same thing a few more times and improve your own performance.

And as always, if it feels too scary or uncomfortable then don't beat yourself up. Take a smaller step forward instead by gently nudging yourself into motion.

10. Stop falling into the comparison trap.

When you compare your life, yourself and what you have to other people's lives and what they have then you have destructive habit on your hands.

Because you can never win. There is always someone who has more or is better than you at something in the world. There are always people ahead of you.

So replace that habit with something better.

Look at how far you have come so far instead. Compare yourself to yourself. Focus on you. On your results. And on how you can and how you have improved your results.

This will both motivate you and raise your self-esteem.

11. Spend more time with supportive people (and less time with destructive people).

Even if you focus on being kinder towards other people (and yourself) and on replacing a perfectionism habit it will be hard to keep your self-esteem up if the most important influences in your life drag it down on a daily or weekly basis.

So make changes in the input you get.

Choose to spend less time with people who are nervous perfectionists, unkind or unsupportive of your dreams or goals.

And spend more time with [positive, uplifting people](#) who have more human and kinder standards and ways of thinking about things.

And think about what you read, listen to and watch too. Spend less time on an internet forum, with reading a magazine or watching a TV-show if you feel it makes you unsure of yourself and if it makes you feel more negatively towards yourself.

Then spend the time you used to spend on this information source on for example reading books, blogs, websites and listening to podcasts that help you and that make you feel good about yourself.

12. Remember the whys of high self-esteem.

What is a simple way to stay consistent with doing something? As mentioned above: to remember the most important reasons why you are doing it.

So remind yourself of the whys at the start of this article to help yourself to stay motivated to work on your self-esteem and to make it an essential priority.

Doing this simple thing and keeping these powerful reasons in mind has done wonders for me. I hope it can do the same for you.

Here's the next step...

Now, you may think to yourself:

“This is really helpful information. But what's the easiest way to put this into practice and actually make a real change with my self-esteem?”.

Well, I've got something special for you...





A free step-by-step checklist that includes all the steps in this article... save it or print it out so you have it for your daily life and for the next time when your self-esteem starts to sink.

Download it now by entering your email below.

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steve werner

7&11 win.

I definetly need to handle mistakes and failures better

really awesome post!!

SW

LINK

The Counselling Room

One of the best articles over self esteem....Thanks for posting such great content.... :)

LINK

ilena

“When you compare your life, yourself and what you have to other people’s lives and what they have then you have destructive habit on your hands.

Because you can never win. There is always someone who has more or is better than you at something in the world. There are always people ahead of you.”

I really love this. I find it difficult for me to interact with people coz of my self-esteem and i use to compare my life to people’s around me, why my life’s such a mess. This article kind of reminding me to be more grateful for what i have and i am. Now that i’ve read this, i’d try my best to live my life well.

LINK

Rainer Proksch

A good topic presented with simple tips and thoughts. Thank you. We should learn to improve our self esteem. If we do not have respect for ourselves, we cannot expect others to give us the respect that we deserve. Those people with high self esteem are usually accepted by others.

LINK

Social Natural

All of these make great affirmations to hang on your refrigerator. When comes to self-esteem, you are your own worst enemy.

[LINK](#)

MOP TOP

i really need what you say. i am encouraged. thax a lot^^

[LINK](#)

Gav

I love your tip to “Go for Good Enough” :)

Loving oneself is perhaps the most important thing we can do. Far from being perfect at it, just loving myself a little more has allowed me to let better things come into my life, and I feel I am in a better place from which to help others as well.

I know a lot of people can think that loving oneself is wrong, or that doing things for oneself is selfish, yet it is the greatest service we can provide for others by being centered, stable, strong, a good example and in a better place from which to change the world around us.

[LINK](#)

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Hi! I'm Henrik Edberg and I live on the west coast of Sweden.

Since 2006 I've written about simplifying life, productivity, [self-esteem](#) and [happiness](#).



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