

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is a term that refers to how you feel about yourself. It is based on the ways you think and how you feel about yourself on a day-to-day basis. It is not always the same.

People with low self-esteem often blame themselves when something goes wrong, but give the credit to someone else when they do something right. People with low self-esteem often have trouble accepting a compliment. They may feel embarrassed about praise. They may even feel like they are an impostor in their own lives.

Low self-esteem can be very damaging. People who are abused by their spouses may stay because they feel like they deserve it. Their home lives and work lives may suffer. They can even end up physically ill. Low self-esteem is also closely tied with depression. If you feel like your self-esteem is down, you should also wonder if you might be suffering from depression.

If you have low self-esteem, you are likely to:

- * put yourself down or do not know how to respond if you get a compliment
- * feel guilty a lot of times, even if you know something is not your fault
- * apologize all the time for everything
- * believe that you do not deserve things that others think you deserve or
- * do not feel like you are a good parent, spouse, or child

Individual or group therapy can often be very helpful. Ask your healthcare provider for more information. There are also many good books about self-esteem. Sometimes learning to be more assertive can really help your self-esteem. A classic book that has helped many people is called *Your Perfect Right* and is available in bookstores.

If you have low self-esteem, take some action to help yourself. The changes people can make are amazing. Just think of how it would feel to have someone say that you did a good job and hear yourself respond, "Thanks, I think so, too!"