

What is self-esteem?

Low self-esteem can leave you feeling depressed and hopeless. Life seems too difficult. People are seen as either enemies or saviours. You see yourself as a victim unable to change the situation. With high self-esteem, on the other hand, you are assertive, and can express your wants and feelings. People around you tend to reflect this positive attitude, so that you feel good about yourself and them. Thus reinforcing your self-esteem and stimulating your inner growth.

Events involving loss or threat, can give your self-esteem a huge knock. Positive achievements can leave you feeling pleased and proud; with a boosted self-esteem. A person with a positive sense of self is more able to deal with blows to their self-esteem.

Causes of low self-esteem.

At certain times in our lives we may be more vulnerable to low self-esteem. Sometimes life seems to involve too many difficulties, all at once, and asking for support from friends, family and community can help us survive it.

Other factors contributing to low self esteem can include physical ill-health, a sense of powerlessness and problems left over from childhood.

Childhood experiences affect self-esteem.

Children tend not to have much power or status in our society, and therefore may still be subject to many common experiences that can undermine their self-esteem. These include, in particular prejudice, loss, domestic violence and emotional neglect.

Healing the past.

One way to do this is through therapy or counselling, but that may not be available or appropriate for everyone.

Other ways can include:

Creative self expression

Learn to be assertive

Form a support group

Tell your friends what you are doing and ask them to help

Keep a journal

How can I build up my self-esteem?

There are many ways to help improve your susceptibility to low self-esteem.

Some of these are:

Take care of your physical health

Reduce your stress levels

Accept a challenge

Enjoy yourself

Take action

Give yourself a treat