

Become Your Own Best Friend

You have the right to feel good about yourself. Those who do are able to develop healthy, honest relationships, to set realistic standards for themselves and others, and to weather stress in a resilient manner. Healthy self-esteem begins in childhood through experiences which include being praised, getting attention, being spoken to respectfully, having trustworthy friends, and experiencing success in school, sports, music, drama, and/or technology. Unfortunately some adults grew up with childhood experiences which threatened their self-esteem from the beginning. They were often harshly criticized, yelled at or physically punished, ignored or teased, or expected to be “perfect.”



Cognitive behavioral therapy strategies are especially helpful in changing negative thinking and those behavior patterns which are stumbling blocks to healthy self-esteem. Implementing these techniques can strengthen your self-esteem and are a part of taking good care of yourself.

- Do not dwell on past mistakes---just recognize them, correct them, and move on without blaming yourself.
- Wipe out negative messages such as, “I never do anything right,” “I’m a loser,” or “No one ever likes me.” Substitute positive affirmations such as, “I know I can do this.” Write them down and repeat them to yourself.
- Associate with people who are supportive of you and avoid those who constantly put you down.
- Work towards a healthy lifestyle by exercising regularly and making healthy food choices.
- Take time to do things you enjoy, even when time is scarce.
- Recognize your talents and accomplishments and allow yourself to feel proud of them.
- Decorate a small area of your living space that honors the person you are by including items and styles that are especially meaningful to you.
- Express your views, but respect other opinions also.
- Learn something new or improve your skills by taking a class.
- Volunteer to assist someone else: take a meal to a sick friend, share kind words with a cashier, help a family member with chores.
- Keep a journal and record ways you treated yourself well each day.
- Allow yourself rest, recreation and quiet time and know that you deserve it.
- Set reasonable goals for yourself and congratulate yourself when you achieve them.

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