

Self-Assessment: What's Self-Esteem?

1. When you make a mistake do you tend to...

- a. Feel ashamed and embarrassed.
- b. Who me? I never make mistakes. But if I did make one, I would immediately correct it and hope no one was watching.
- c. I have no fear owning up to it in public, and I am open to receiving help from others in fixing it.

It is quite "normal," and human, to not enjoy making mistakes! That is why we often feel embarrassed, deny their existence, and/or blame others for our errors. We believe that the best way is to admit your mistakes, learn from them and take corrective action. After all, a mistake is a mistake - no more, no less.

2. On average, when you look at yourself in the mirror what do you believe you see?

- a. Someone who is attractive and confident.
- b. Someone who is average and often unsure about what to do in life.
- c. Someone who is ugly and insecure.

We live in a society that emphasizes glamour and sex appeal. That is why most of us try to achieve external beauty, but often we lose our uniqueness in the process. If we can accept the things we'd like to change without badmouthing or beating up on ourselves, we've come a long way toward self-acceptance.

3. When you are dealing with a problem in your life what do you tend to do?

- a. Blame everyone or anything that I think caused the situation. It's rarely my fault.
- b. I complain and vent to anyone willing to listen but rarely address my personal responsibility for the issue.
- c. Take responsibility for my thoughts, words, and actions because if I take ownership I am not a victim to the situation.

Taking responsibility for your own thoughts, words, and actions is more easily said than done. However, we believe the quality of your well-being is directly proportional to how much self-responsibility you are willing to take. When we blame others or outside events for our position or condition in life, we lock ourselves into a prison of pain. There truly is freedom in taking ownership for how we respond to what happens to us in life.

4. If my wants and needs are different from those of others I am likely to...

- a. Give up and give in. I'd accommodate.
- b. Say, "My way or the highway!" I argue until I get my way.
- c. Try to avoid them altogether. Why bother trying to get my needs on the table. Mine aren't important, and neither are theirs.
- d. Create a win/win.

Your wants, needs and self-worth are as important as those of anyone else. However, that doesn't mean others will automatically respect them. If you silence your own voice, others will not know what you want or need. It's up to you to claim your needs as important and learn how to respectfully assert yourself. With practice, you'll be amazed at how this will become second nature.

5. When you think about the greater purpose of your life what do you tend to think?

- a. I feel like I am drifting. I am ashamed to admit it but I don't know what I should be doing or even where to start.
- b. I have a general picture of what I want to do and what I am capable of creating for my life.
- c. I am on course with my purpose, and know I am capable of creating whatever my heart desires for my life.

Have you ever wondered "Why am I here?" or "What am I supposed to do in life?" If so, you're in very good company. This is one of the most fundamental life decisions you can make. Your purpose is about what you plan to achieve and the kind of person you want to be. Your character and your habits will lead you to be healthier, happier and more successful. What are you good at? What do you really enjoy? These are two good places to look when you're trying to decide your direction. Your life has the potential to be so much more than you might imagine. The most important thing is that your life has meaning for you.

6. When I make a commitment to myself I often tend to...

- a. Break it before the end of the hour, I am terrible at following up on my self-goals.
- b. I do it with hesitation and fear because I so desperately hate disappointment.
- c. Stick to it with conviction and await the rewards that I believe will come from it.

If you've ever heard the phrase, your word is your bond, you'll understand why honoring commitments is an aspect of healthy self-esteem. A commitment is a pledge; and a pledge is a guarantee. When you make a commitment to yourself or others you're putting your integrity on the line. As you learn to demonstrate that you can be counted on to do what you say, you build your self-esteem and your credibility at the same time. That way you and others will know that "you walk your talk."

7. When you talk to yourself (you know, that little voice in your head) what does it tend to sound like?

- a. Very critical and negative. I often put myself down and beat myself up emotionally.
- b. Fairly confident and supportive, but I still have those days when my self-talk holds back my true greatness.
- c. Extremely confident and helpful. I have learned to become my own best friend and weed out my limiting thoughts from the empowering ones.

If you're like most people you say things to yourself you wouldn't tolerate coming from another person. Negative self-talk scares us out of taking positive risks so we can avoid failure. Here's how you can start to build positive, self-empowering inner dialogues. First, recognize your negative self-talk. Next, interrupt the pattern; tell yourself "Erase that. Here's what I really mean!" The last step is to give yourself a positive instruction, like "I can do this. I'm up to the task," or "Let's try it on for size." The more you're able to replace your negative self-talk with positive, the more your self-esteem and self-confidence will grow.

8. How do you often react to what other people say about you?

- a. I take things personally, and if I think someone is saying something negative about me I take it too much to heart.
- b. I get defensive and often respond with an equal, if not greater, negative reaction to them.
- c. I value what others have to say about me -- but honestly -- I know who I am, and other peoples' opinions have no bearing on my self-worth.

When you put more weight on your own judgment than on others' it's easier to keep their words in perspective without becoming defensive. Your strong sense of self-worth allows you to maintain your power and still hear what others have to say without feeling bad about yourself.