

How I See My Worth When Others See My Flaws

WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Self-esteem determines how much someone likes themselves, and if they feel they have value or a sense of self-worth. Teens with high self-esteem feel accepted, have a sense of pride, and believe in themselves. Teens with low self-esteem feel bad about themselves and think they are not good enough.

Self-esteem is especially important in teens, especially when social media and increases in cyberbullying teach them, they must look, act, or think a certain way. Social media culture results in teens with increased anxiety and feelings of perfectionism. It is important to understand self-esteem differs for males and females.

HOW IS SELF-ESTEEM UNIQUE IN FEMALES?

Social media floods girls with images of the perfect body and body shames girls who do not fit that image. Girls grow up thinking beauty is essential to their being a success. The image of perfection is even harder if you are a girl in the Black or Brown communities. The sexualization of society puts even more pressure on teen girls and their sense of belonging. It is crucial to teach girls to love themselves; important ways include creating an attitude of gratitude, practicing self-affirmation, and encouraging them to be creative and volunteer.

HOW IS SELF-ESTEEM UNIQUE IN MALES?

Boys are flooded with pressures to their self-esteem regarding having an athletic physique and being strong, independent, and intelligent. They always compare themselves to each other. Boys display low self-esteem differently than girls. Typical signs for males include bragging, aggression, arrogance, and egotism.

HOW CAN I BUILD MY SELF-ESTEEM?

Many ways exist for teens to have a more positive view of themselves. They should focus on being active, treating themselves with kindness and acceptance, avoid comparing themselves to others, capitalizing on talents and interest, and helping others. Examples of how teens can build their own self-esteem include:

- Setting goals and working to achieve them
- Surrounding yourself with people who treat you well
- Accepting that no one is perfect and asking for help when needed
- Focusing on things they do well and saying positive things to themselves

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM?

Parents can help teens develop self-esteem by accepting failure, creating affirmations, having them reflect on character strengths and what is important to them, teaching self-advocacy, and creating Action Plans to combat low self-esteem experiences.

To boosting your daughter's self-esteem:

- Model body acceptance
- Make her media literate
- Build her independence
- Let her develop her own style
- Raise her to not be a "pleaser"
- Get her involved in team sports
- Choose your magazines carefully
- Teach her the female perspective
- Praise her for actions, not appearance
- Praise her efforts, not her performance
- Support women, do not tear them down
- Make sure she knows she is always loved
- Dads: Don't treat your daughters as weak

To boosting your son's self-esteem:

- Spend valuable time with him
- Compliment him when he does things correctly, big, or small
- Encourage and allow him to develop new skills, and play up his strengths
- Use healthy language when talking to him, words that ask opinions and validate feelings
- Break the cycle of "I must be the best" – encourage friendships and activities with girls; teach empathy and expect him show it; and disallow him to demean others
- Break the cycle of perceived weakness – allow him to show emotion and talk about his feelings, and model these behaviors
- Break the cycle of competition - teach him to be different, not better; make him media literate; and show him he can have non-athletic and non-stereotypical male roles

RESOURCES

Below are some self-esteem resources for parents and teens.

- ✓ **Joon Teletherapy**
<https://www.joon.com/resources/low-self-esteem>
- ✓ **90 Self-Esteem Resources for Girls**
<https://onlinecounselingprograms.com/resources/self-esteem-resources-girls/>
- ✓ **TeensHealth**
<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/body-image.html>
- ✓ **15 Great Self-Esteem Building Activities & Exercises for Teens and Adults**
<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/body-image.html>
- ✓ **Teen Line**
<https://www.teenline.org/youth>