

*"Probably the most important decision you will ever make will be the decision to love yourself."*

— Dr. Nathaniel Branden

## What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is confidence in one's own worth or abilities. It is impossible for one to have high self-esteem when one is not living congruent with their belief system. Self-esteem deals with personal integrity, values, attitudes, and self-love. True self-esteem is based on a feeling one is worthy of love and happiness. It comes from a knowledge of who you really are and of being at peace with who that person is. Dr. Nathaniel Branden, an expert psychologist, believes that positive self-esteem is the immune system of the spirit, helping an individual to face life's problems and bounce back from adversity.

## Acquiring a Healthy Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem can contribute to or be a symptom of mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression. Having a healthy regard for self, one's talents, and abilities is a necessity. It is not uncommon to come from a background or experience where one feels less than adequate in some areas. It is important to learn to be accepting of oneself, here and now. This does not mean there is no need for improvement, it simply means that "I am beautiful as I am. I am; not my hair, my face, my clothes, or my possessions." Some actions that you can take to help improve your self-esteem include:

- Become more aware of negative thoughts. Learn to identify the distorted thoughts that are impacting your self-worth.
- Challenge negative thinking patterns. When you find yourself engaging in negative thinking, try countering those thoughts with more realistic and/or positive ones.
- Use positive self-talk. Practice reciting positive affirmations to yourself.
- Practice self-compassion. Practice forgiving yourself for past mistakes and move forward by accepting all parts of yourself.

## Avoid Comparison

It is important not to base our self-worth on others. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf said, "God is [...] fully aware that the people you think are perfect are not. And yet we spend so much time and energy comparing ourselves to others—usually our weaknesses to their strengths. This drives us to create expectations for ourselves that are impossible to meet. As a result, we never celebrate our good efforts because they seem to be less than what someone else does." Instead of comparing, focus on who you are and the wonderful things you have to offer this world.

*Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.*



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Self-esteem cannot be separated from the choices we make. Every day we make choices about what we will think, feel, and do. All of these choices affect our self-esteem.

### "Truth, Lies, and Your Self-Worth"

Mindy Raye Friedman

### "The Reflection in the Water"

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf

### "Who You Are: A Message to All Women"

Jon Jorgenson

### "What You're Worth and How to Know It"

Hadley Griggs