

SELF-ESTEEM

You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.

- BUDDHA

The importance of self-esteem

One of the best ways to lead a happy, healthy, and successful life is to have good self-esteem. As youth are developing socially, emotionally, and physically, it's important to develop good self-esteem-building habits early on. According to the Child Development Institute:

Youth with high self-esteem tend to...

- Be more confident.
- Try new things.
- Handle their emotions better.
- Treat others with more kindness.

Youth with low self-esteem often...

- Lack confidence.
- Avoid new things.
- Struggle with their emotions.
- Struggle in their relationships with others.

Helping teens build self-esteem

Show support and encouragement. Let youth know when they've done something well to help them develop a more positive view of themselves. Make it a point to focus on their strengths and point out the things they *can* do. Perfection should not be the goal.

It's okay if I didn't get a perfect score on that test. I did my best, and I'll try again on the next one!

Avoid put-downs. While criticism is something we all have to navigate in life, how it's delivered can have a huge impact on self-esteem, especially when coming from an adult. For example, have a discussion together and talk through it, brainstorming solutions. Don't put them down or make fun of what they did. Be sure to recognize when they do make good choices, and be specific in describing what they did well.

Embrace their interests. Be active in learning about the hobbies/interests of your youth. Ask questions. Support their exploration of that hobby. If they don't have one, encourage them to try something new. While this might push some out of their comfort zone, it can result in a positive and exciting experience. The feeling of accomplishing something new promotes a boost in self-esteem.

Goal setting. Help youth to identify goals they have for the future and plan out how to accomplish said goals. This important skill set will aid them for the rest of their lives. Achieving goals, big or small, has a positive impact on self-image.

University of Illinois Extension In the Moment: Self-Esteem 1

IN THE MOMENT

SELF-ESTEEM

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Recognize that you are a worthy person. Sometimes we believe that other people have more value because of who they are or what they do. You hold value just because you are you.

Putting it into practice

- Set goals. When we set personal goals and achieve them, we feel good about ourselves. Start with small, achievable goals such as increasing your water intake each day. Be proud and celebrate when you meet those goals.
- **Be kind to yourself.** How do you see yourself? What words or thoughts come to mind? Focus on your positive attributes and remind yourself of those rather than the negative. Be proud of who you are. Embrace your uniqueness!
- **Be kind to others.** When we do good by others, we feel good inside. Volunteer at a local animal shelter. Check in on a friend who's going through a rough time.
- Who's in your circle? Be with those friends who support you and care for you, not tear you down.

In your moment

What are things you do currently that make you feel good about yourself? What other ideas are you inspired to try in the future?

SELF-ESTEEM BUILDERS
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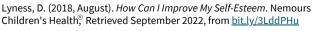
For additional SEL resources, visit: go.illinois.edu/InTheMoment

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