

The Second Great Step

~ Recognize High Self-Esteem ~

Self-esteem is a paradoxical term. The dictionary defines self-esteem: 1. belief in oneself 2. undue pride in oneself (undue pride meaning conceited or vain). The two definitions are totally opposite, the first part describing high self-esteem and the second part describing low self-esteem.

Since esteem means respect, regard highly and admiration, should self-esteem even have a negative definition? In other words, is it possible to highly regard or admire yourself lowly? The fact is, low self-esteem is a term describing lack of self-regard and admiration. Admittedly, low self-esteem often means, literally, **no** self-esteem. Nevertheless, you may continue to use the popular term—low self-esteem (instead of no self-esteem), as you passionately pursue the mystery of self-esteem and its identity.

Before you begin your second great adventure—recognizing high self-esteem—you must first comprehend the meaning of the most misunderstood word of our era: ego.

EGO

Before you recognize self-esteem, you must understand the term ego—egoism—egotism. The dictionary defines EGO: 1. the individual as aware of himself; the self. 2. conceit.

EGOISM: 1. excessive reference to oneself in speaking or writing. 2. conceit (meaning vain). It gets more interesting when you look up EGOISM or EGOTISM in a synonym finder. You find the following words to describe EGOTISM: *selfishness, self-indulgence, self-gratification, self-serving, looking out for number one, individualism, self-conceit, self-esteem, self-love, conceit, pride, bighead, boastfulness, egocentric, wrapped up in one's self, gasbag, loudmouth, windbag, braggart, bullshooter,*

swellhead, puffed-up, overbearing, cocky, egotistical, and on an ego trip.

As you'll soon discover, the descriptions combine high self-esteem traits with low self-esteem traits. Please keep in mind, the majority of the descriptive words are **negative**.

Is it any wonder you're confused about the term ego, or even worse, convinced that ego is negative? Our society unknowingly portrays ego as an undesirable trait, something bad, but you'll soon discover ego is the **opposite** of what you've been taught. You're about to expand your mind.

YOUR EGO IS

Your Spirit

Your Essence

Your Individuality

Your Human Dignity

Your Unique Personality

Your External Life Force

Your Internal Energy Source

YOUR QUEST FOR EGO

We are all ego-seekers constantly searching for ways to satisfy and replenish our egos. Our quest for ego doesn't occur once a year, once a month, or once a day, but every waking moment—day and night.

The gratification of ego is directly responsible for your emotional health. Until you satisfy your ego's needs—until you quench your ego's thirst—you're unable to take your mind off yourself, stop thinking of yourself, and start thinking about others.

When your ego is unsatisfied you're not on good terms with yourself; consequently, you're not on good terms with others. You don't have to look far in your search for ego. The people you

love, the people you live and work with, hold the key to your ego quest, all you have to do is learn to like others by liking yourself. Maintaining a healthy ego gives you dignity—the emotional tools—to lead a functional lifestyle. Your ego is who you are, your ego is what you’re all about.

Every last one of us are egotists.

A SLEEPLESS EGO

To further understand ego, let’s compare ego to a vital physical need—take sleep for instance. When you get enough rest each night you never think of sleep. But if you go too long without sleep your personality is guaranteed to change. Without sleep, you go from good-natured and happy to angry, critical, and despondent. You lash out at people if they so much as look at you funny. You can’t seem to get along with anyone—all you think about is sleep.

It will not help for someone to tell us, “Get your mind off sleep!” “Quit thinking of yourself!” or “Stop worrying about your problems!”, because your basic physical needs always come first. The only way to feel better is to get some sleep. The same with your ego, it must be nurtured and properly cared for or you suffer emotionally.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR EGO

As you’ve just learned, only when your essential physical needs are satisfied can you feel good about yourself. In comparison, only when your essential emotional needs are satisfied can you feel good about yourself—only when you take good care of your ego will you experience true happiness, true success, and true self-esteem.

Low self-esteem people lack a healthy ego because they do not know how to take care of it. Low self-esteemers are self-abusive, they can’t forget about themselves, they’re all wrapped up in their own problems, their own shame and self-pity, their own self-doubt and insecurities. Fact: low self-esteem people have dysfunctional egos.

EGOTISTICAL IS GOOD

Being egotistical is good, not bad. As a society we call people “egotistical” to indicate a low self-esteem condition such as stuck up, vain, self-centered, snobbish, arrogant, rude, or conceited. Since you’re in a habit of calling people egotistical, one of your first obstacles along the trail to higher self-image is to completely change your perception of what egotistical actually means. It’s going to take time and deep concentration to reprogram your mind—to learn egotistical is a positive word.

HEALTHY EGO

The secret to a successful lifestyle is getting along with people, from family to total strangers. People with unhealthy egos are not emotionally equipped to interface with the people around them. Daily routines are filled with stress and turmoil. Even sadder, their life are empty and unfulfilled. Relationships fail, careers falter, health deteriorates.

People with sick egos spend each day in a low self-esteem fog, a constant state of flux, a nightmare of negative thoughts. Unhealthy personalities think, “Why am I here, where am I going?” “Is this all there is to life?” “I’m filthy rich; why am I so miserable?” “I’ve got to gain control of my life!” “I have no friends!”

Sound familiar? It’s the haunting voice of an ego filled with low self-image. “Alright!” you announce, “I admit my ego’s not as healthy as it could be!” Your curiosity heightens as you add, “Okay, how do I heal my unhealthy ego, my sickly self-esteem?”

Simple. Accept the self-esteem creed.

THE SELF-ESTEEM CREED

“I am an ego-seeker ...

I must take good care of my ego ...

When I take care of my ego I’m on good terms with myself ...

When I’m on good terms with myself I’m on good terms with others ...

When I’m on good terms with others I experience a higher self-image.”

As you begin believing and living the self-esteem creed: to trust yourself—to trust your thoughts—to trust other people—you recognize exactly what self-esteem looks like. People with self-esteem stand out from the crowd. They have energized auras. They possess magnetic personalities. High self-esteemers have a warm glow about them. It's true, people with healthy, happy egos possess recognizable personality traits. For example:

High self-esteem people are: *Ambitious, Admired, Brave, Confident, Charismatic, Cheerful, Carefree, Courageous, Conversationalists, Determined, Devoted, Dedicated, Delightful, Ethical, Enthusiastic, Eager, Exceptional, Exciting, Energetic, Entrancing, Enlightened, Friendly, Functional, Faithful, Fun To Be With, Full Of Life, Fair, Free, Honest, Happy, Honorable, Impartial, Ingenious, Inspirational, Intelligent, Loyal, Loving, Listeners, Leaders, Moral, Noble, Optimistic, Outright, Organized, Prosperous, Patient, Passionate, Powerful, Proud, Peaceful, Positive, Relaxed, Real, Remarkable, Respectable, Successful, Sensitive, Self-Motivating, Spirited, Sensible, Sincere, Safe, Sympathetic, Trustworthy, Truthful, Untroubled, Unbiased, Understanding, Unforgettable, Vivacious, Warm, Wonderful, and Utopian.*

Yes, high self-esteem individuals are truly utopian!

UTOPIANS DO EXIST

Yes, there really are utopians—individuals beaming with high self-esteem. At first, these high self-esteemers might seem few and far between or hard to find, but once you've completed your first two steps to personal freedom—your first two adventures into self-improvement—you begin to recognize them. Once you become enlightened, when you admit that utopians do exist, there appears to be more of them than you ever realized.

Quite often, especially during the first part of your quest, you find yourself apprehensive—afraid to meet or interface with these unique individuals. You don't trust them or don't know what to make of them. After all, they seem so different, so sure of themselves, so together. You discover you're in awe of these special people or just the opposite—jealous.

As you uncover the great treasures of self, your fear will subside and you find yourself attracted to these utopians. You feel yourself wanting to be near them, trying to meet them. You will experience strong desires to somehow, somehow, make them part of your life.

You will soon be able to spot them in a large crowd, sense their presence when they're in the same room with you. Utopians light up the entire room wherever they go. When these high self-esteemers speak to you or shake your hand, you instantly sense their undeniable warmth and charisma. You want to know them, talk to them, you want to be just like them.

HIGH OR LOW?

Now that you've reviewed the first and second steps comparing low self-esteem and high self-esteem personality traits, the first question that comes to mind is, "Do I, myself, have low self-esteem or high self-esteem?"

There is good news, and bad news. The good news is: most people you know or meet possess one or more high self-esteem personality traits. The bad news is: for each high self-esteem trait, people possess twice as many low self-esteem traits—traits that dominate their behavior.

Since we live in a society that teaches and promotes low self-esteem behavior (unknowingly of course), many people are “guilty” of low self-esteem behavior, of low self-esteem leadership. High self-esteem behavior seems to shine through only on rare occasions. Clearly, your goal, your commitment to change, must be to eliminate all symptoms of low self-esteem behavior from your life—immediately.

YOUR LIFESCRIPT

Your life story, your lifescrypt, begins at birth and ends at death. Like a wonderful book, play or movie, your lifescrypt has a first half, an intermission, and a second half or conclusion. The first part of your lifescrypt, especially the first few scenes, are written for you by your parents, peer group, teachers, and television/movies.

As you enter puberty the plot thickens. By your teens you should be writing your own lifescrypt; yet, all too often your adult lifescrypt has already been written for you. By whom? Why, the same people who wrote the opening scenes!

But you mustn't be alarmed. Like all great plays and unforgettable movies, it's intermission time. For you, it means time for rewrites and revisions—for making changes—for creating a happy ending.

If you find the first part of your lifescrypt to be unacceptable, if the beginning of your story isn't what you'd hoped for, you now have the opportunity to write a remarkable second half, a blazing finish, an award-winning ending.

You may redeem the questionable first part of your lifescrypt right this moment. You simply need to agree you've reached intermission and the best is yet to come, the wonderful conclusion. Your lifescrypt is in your hands.

In concluding your second great step, your second great adventure, you have put high self-esteem in proper perspective, recognizing it's unending qualities and attributes. At last, you realize exactly what high self-esteem people, utopians, are all about. You want to be just like

them.

You now understand ego and how it relates to a high self-image lifestyle. By recognizing high self-esteem you've obtained the second great treasure—self-awareness.

As you continue down the path to personal freedom, the Open Road, you've discovered that the secret to a successful lifestyle, a life full of passion, exists by discovering people around you.

You've just discovered yourself. You may proceed to step three and discover others.