

The Sixth Great Step

~ Eliminate Put Downs ~

Low self-esteemers perform daily rituals—low self-esteem rituals. Gossiping, putting people down, dwelling on the past, and constantly complaining are the most popular. Why are these self-destructive activities so popular, such an integral part of society, such a mainstay of the radio, television, and movie industry? Simple. Low self-esteem rituals, the unacceptables, give people a sense of superiority—a feeling of power. Nasty remarks, body slamming, whining and complaining make low self-esteem sufferers feel good, feel important, feel noticed. Your sixth adventure looks at the cause of such self-destructive behavior.

First, people suffering from low self-esteem get a false sense of “feeling good” and “raising their self-image” by criticizing, contradicting, and making fun of others to the person’s face or gossiping behind the person’s back. A low self-esteem person is convinced: if I put them down I’ll bring myself up. These low self-esteemers are deathly afraid the other person might: (a) be smarter than them, (b) expose them for who they really are, or (c) ridicule and make fun of them.

By putting the other person in their place, the low self-esteem personality feels superior—bigger and better than their opponent. No wonder shock jocks, low self-esteem cartoon characters, and bigot comedians are so popular. Television tabloid talk shows reign supreme. Gossip is gold.

Secondly, low self-esteemers live in the past, dwelling on negative memories or their glory days. You often hear, “If only I was young again!” “I wish I’d known then what I know now!” “I miss the good old days!” “If I’d listened to myself, I wouldn’t be where I am today!” One

bad memory after the other. Unfortunately, dwelling on the past releases negative enzymes in the brain causing depression, anxiety, and stress.

Thirdly, people suffering from low self-esteem have such low opinions of themselves that complaining, whining, and arguing become second nature. Low self-esteemers complain about their jobs, their paychecks, their marriages, their parents, taxes, the price of groceries, the cost of health insurance, gas prices, the weather—just about everything imaginable.

Question: What makes low self-esteem complainers happy? The answer: “Nothing!”

Indeed, people with low self-image mistake power for true happiness. They’re convinced their feelings of power over others by intimidation, verbal threats, bashing, and body slamming—the accumulation of money, materialistic goods, and social status—represents true happiness and success. The more money and power low self-esteemers acquire, the more they desire.

As you’ll discover, it’s not how much money you have, the automobile you drive, or the clothes you wear that matters, it’s how you feel about yourself and how others feel about you that really counts. True power and success comes only from high self-image—healthy ego.

Success is attained through your ability to provide leadership and your ability to get along with people. Every individual you come in contact with is your gateway to lifelong contentment.

So, stop and think. Why would you want to talk about others behind their back, put others down, make fun of people, or hurt their feelings? You only hurt yourself.

SELF~PUT DOWNS

Stop putting yourself down. The next time another person compliments you or praises your performance, replying, “Thank you very much!” will satisfy your ego. Bashfully mumbling, “Ah, shucks, I can’t play piano!” after a great performance is a sure sign of low self-image. All forms of self-consciousness, shyness, and shame are low self-esteem behaviors you learned as a child. You’re often taught it is bad to admit you’re pleased with yourself, that you should be ashamed to admit you have self-worth or self-regard. Now that you’re aware of your self-esteem rights, you no longer have to put yourself down.

Perhaps it’s time for a serious self-evaluation, a review of how you treat others, for how you treat others is a direct reflection on how you treat yourself. Why do you waste so much energy on low self-esteem activities such as gossiping, bad-mouthing, and ridiculing others? Isn’t it time you stop hurting others and start helping yourself?

Below are four leadership skills that will make dramatic improvements in your relationships with others—practical and proven people skills. They are:

Find Positives In People

When you think, say and believe positive things about others your life change instantly. Once you master the art of listening, never saying “I”, and recognizing others you discover how to find goodness in others. What’s that old saying—if you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all? Guess what—it really works! It’s easy to find the good in everyone by reminding yourself they’re survivors of low self-esteem childhoods; therefore, they’re not to blame for their unacceptable behavior. You must remind yourself, “It’s not their fault.”

Be A Good Sport

Don’t worry about winning. The next time you play a game of ping pong, checkers, or tennis, let the other person win. You become their best

friend. When you lose, your opponents love you! It’s amazing how many parents enjoy “beating” their children at a friendly game of chess. Please remember, it’s not suggested you don’t try (or give up), you must simply learn to enjoy the game and stop worrying about winning and impressing others with superior play or level of excellence. It’s enjoying the competition that counts.

Playing to win simply means do the best you can. When children lose, you must tell them they played well, remind them it’s okay to lose, you’re proud of them. Too much emphasis is placed on winning in your low self-esteem society. Organized sports is a prime example. The majority of coaches, parents, and sports fans believe winning isn’t everything—it’s the only thing. This win at any cost and in your face attitude is totally unacceptable. It promotes an “obsessed with winning” behavior that carries over into your daily life, behavior that thrives on the “win at all costs” and “annihilate all opposition” lifestyle.

Why? Low self-esteem people can’t stand to lose at anything.

Does it really matter who wins any game as long as the game is competitive, as long as you do the best you can? The next time you go to a ball game, or watch a championship game or match on television, relax. It doesn’t matter which team or player wins. It’s only a game! From now on, have fun and do not annihilate and humiliate your opponents in a game of golf, backgammon, bowling, or Gametasia. Enjoy each and every game for what it is; a good time.

Praise Properly

Praise reinforces recognition. When you suffer from low self-esteem you often fail to notice others doing things correctly. You seem to catch people doing the wrong thing, or not doing it your way, or not meeting your expectations. As you learn to stop criticizing and putting others down you learn to be less critical, allowing you to properly recognize, then praise, other people.

What is praise? Praise is proof you’re

paying attention. Praise is caring about people's actions, accomplishments, and focusing on their achievements with direct compliments. Praise follows in the footsteps of recognition, it's offered after good behavior occurs. Praise takes thank you to the next level. You improve "Thank you!" with "Thank you for the excellent meal, you're a great cook!" or "Thanks, I couldn't have finished this project without you!"

Praise provides a positive ending. It's the frosting on recognition's cake. One of life's greatest gifts, praise, is easy to give away and always appreciated.

Criticize Correctly

Perhaps the most challenging communication technique is to constructively criticize an employee, spouse, or child and make them feel good about themselves—maintain their fragile ego. Please keep in mind, the more you use high self-esteem leadership, the less you need to use criticism or reprimands in your daily life. Let's review the rules of positive criticism.

1. Begin In Private With Positive Talk

Always criticize one on one—person to person. Never humiliate someone in front of others. "I'll make them feel so small they'll never do that again" is a low self-esteem technique that surely brings resentment, hard feelings, and isolation. The other person needs to feel you're not attacking their pride or ego.

Excellent self-esteem opening comments are: "This spread sheet you prepared is very good, however..." or "You've always done the best job possible, I need your opinion on something..." or "I truly appreciate your timely work...I was just noticing..." or "I'm very impressed with how hard you've worked on this project, I have an idea I'd like to share with you." or "If you have a moment...I need your help."

2. Criticize The Behavior Not The Person

You save a person's feelings by focusing on the problem, not the person. Since it's how you criticize that counts, let's look at the correct way

and the incorrect way to criticize.

"Could you run this data base again," is correct. "I don't pay you to make mistakes!" is incorrect.

"I know you will bring your science grade up," is correct. "When I was your age, I got straight A's in biology!" is incorrect.

"This letter is very good, but the introduction needs some revisions," is correct. "You're a terrible writer!" is incorrect.

"Please check these numbers," is correct. "Stupid, any dummy can see the right answer!" is incorrect.

Hear the difference?

Based on, "Don't worry, it was an honest mistake!" as the correct response, here are some low self-esteem criticisms attacking the person's ego, not the person's behavior (your emotions are quickly aroused if you think of children).

"I'm telling you this for your own good!"

"Of all the stupid mistakes!"

"Can't you do anything right?"

"You will never amount to anything!"

"I give up, you're hopeless!"

"I hate you!"

"You're a total failure!"

"You idiot!"

"How many times do I have to tell you?"

"I wish you were never born!"

These examples remind you that criticizing incorrectly is unacceptable. The next time you reprimand someone, think. Are you criticizing correctly or are you body slamming to belittle them—to put them in their place to make yourself feel superior?

3. End Friendly And Drop It Forever

You must make the other person feel good after discussing their unacceptable behavior. You must boost their ego, let them know you're on their team, pat them on the shoulder.

"I know you can do it!"

"I'm proud to have you on your staff."

"You have great potential," are all high self-esteem closers.

Nevertheless, you often hear "Don't ever let

me catch you doing that again!”

“Next time, you’re fired!”

“I’m watching you mister!”

“Do as I say, not as I do!”

“You’ll never learn!”

“I’ve never met anyone so stupid in my life!”

“Do you have a brain in your head?”

“Imbecile!”

Again, listen to the incredible difference between high closers and low closers.

4. When It’s Over, It’s Over

You must remember, when it’s over, it’s over. Bury it. Do not dig up dead issues. You can justify calling attention to an error or mistake once, twice is unacceptable, the third time becomes a nagging put down. Admit it, dwelling on the past and reminding everyone of their prior mistakes is a major put down to bring yourself up.

Examples of nagging reminders are, “Remember last year when you lost the keys!” or “We’ll never forget how you totally embarrassed us when you were growing up!” or “You’re going to fail just like last time!” “Meathead, when will you ever learn?” Each statement allows the speaker to humiliate the person being reprimanded—an excellent and effective way to gain an unfair psychological advantage. All low self-esteem reminders never help other people do better or improve; put downs only antagonize and alienate, making things worse.

Letting go of the past, of prior mistakes, and not humiliating the people in your life, is a big step on the road to self-improvement.

SARCASM, JOKING, AND NAME CALLING

Sarcasm, joking, just-kidding remarks, and name calling must be eliminated. Many of us grew up with sarcastic parents and teachers who simply didn’t know any better. As long as the unwritten code of sarcasm exists, better known as society’s “joking and just-kidding rule”, people will continue to make fun of each other—do put downs—make racist

remarks—all in the good name of “acceptable sarcasm”. Any excuse to make fun of others. The truth is, sarcasm and making fun of others is a low self-esteem personality trait, one of the unacceptables.

People verbally abuse others and disguise it as a joke or funny incident. After body slamming another person they laughingly declare, “Just kidding!” Their victim appears to be smiling or amused, but the person is emotionally hurt, socially upset, and sometimes visibly shaken by the sarcastic statement. How were they suppose to feel? Their most prized possession’s been attacked—their ego.

Stand-up comedians, TV sitcom stars, movie stars, and radio celebrities make racist and bigot remarks about ethnic, religious, and social groups, literally the truth about how people feel, and the audience laughs it off as a joke to cover up their own low self-esteem feelings and beliefs—their own deep-seated envy of others. Sarcasm is an excuse to get away with the truth, of how you feel about an issue you’re afraid to discuss in serious terms. Sarcasm is wrong.

Take control of your life. Sarcasm, joking, and name calling are very serious matters. By now, you are reluctantly admitting, “Criticizing others is one of my favorite past times; it’s going to be a hard habit to break.”

The next time you make fun of how others look, act or talk, their financial condition, their homes, their furniture, the food they eat, their ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, or political preferences; when you envy other people’s looks, their personalities, their clothing, automobiles or personal possessions; when you criticize other people’s personal views, opinions, and past mistakes, or their careers—stop and think! You’re only dragging yourself deeper and deeper into the darkest depths of low self-esteem.

The darkest depths of low self-esteem? “Wait just a minute!” you declare, “Everyone is doing it, why should I be different, I’ll end up with no friends, no job, no life!” You might declare, “It’s so much easier to go along with the crowd, to simply fit in, not make any waves—making fun

of others is fun...I like my life the way it is...I like myself the way I am!"

Whether you've figured it out by now or not, it's too late to turn back to your old lifestyle, your unacceptable bad habits. As you finish your sixth enduring journey, your conquest of self-control, you've traveled too far.

You know too much. You have passed the point of no return. Moreover, you're forced to ask yourself some soul-searching questions. Is your own behavior unacceptable—counter-productive—undeniably negative? Is your gossiping, ridiculing, and criticizing bringing you down and destroying your personality?

In concluding your sixth great step, your sixth great adventure, certain truths rule your thoughts. Like a slap in the face, you've awakened to self-reality, to the visualization of your own behavior. The truth is, the day you stop complaining, stop bad-mouthing and putting down others, stop gossiping and being sarcastic, stop wasting away in the past, stop being envious of others, is the day you'll finally feel good about yourself, experience functional relationships—begin living.

That day is near.

Obtaining the sixth great treasure, self-control, presents a critical challenge in your Open Road adventure. It means sweeping away years of bad habits first learned during childhood and reinforced during adulthood.

Prior to beginning the seventh great step—Forgive and Forget—rest and allow your mind time to reflect on your past behavior. Self-control puts you in charge of your life.