

The Seventh Great Step ~ Forgive and Forget ~

People with low self-esteem won't forgive. They hold grudges. They seldom say they're sorry. They think they're right all the time. Low self-esteemers are full of revenge, hatred, and more often than not, take out their revenge and animosities on everyone around them. Often, you hear someone explain, "Their pride got in the way," or "They're too proud to say they're sorry." Your seventh adventure begins with the second most misunderstood word in society—pride.

PRIDE

What exactly is pride? The dictionary describes PRIDE as 1. an overhigh opinion of oneself b. haughty, arrogance. 2. dignity and self-respect. How interesting. The dictionary gives pride opposite definitions. The first definition perfectly describes low self-esteem, while the second definition describes high self-esteem. The same thing happened with the definition of EGO. No wonder people become confused trying to understand pride and ego. The reality is, pride is ego and ego is pride. Pride is good. Pride is healthy. People who lack pride suffer from low self-esteem. People with low self-esteem do not feel proud of themselves or others.

TRUE LOVE

Before you take another step, you must comprehend the true meaning of the most popular emotional word of all time—love. The following statement will clear up all the love cobwebs in your heart and mind, allowing you to experience the reality of absolute love, of unconditional love—true love.

Only when you have a healthy ego can you experience self-love—only when you love yourself, can you possibly love another person.

Love is a wonderful word. The phrase "I love you" sounds so soothing and reassuring as it rolls off your lips. Unfortunately, the word love and the phrase "I love you" are the most overused words in our everyday vocabulary.

As you've already learned, without a healthy ego, true love does not exist. Without self-pride, true love does not exist. Without a high self-image, true love does not exist. The more high self-esteem you have the more you trust yourself, and only with self-trust does the ability to love yourself, and therefore others, exist.

Stated more simply, only when your ego is healthy do you even like yourself or feel good about yourself. Therefore, self-love only exists when you like yourself, when you trust yourself, when you respect yourself. To demonstrate how the word love is misused, an excellent love test is to replace the word love with like, trust, respect, or admire. In other words, the next time you whisper to someone, "I love you", try replacing the word love with like, trust, respect, or admire and see how you feel. Are you saying, "I love you" but possibly do not like, trust, or admire the person you're saying it to? Do you unknowingly use low self-esteem love?

LOW SELF-ESTEEM LOVE

It's so easy to confuse low self-esteem love for real love. Low self-esteem love occurs when you haven't learned to truly love yourself, but honestly believe you love another person. Once again, your dysfunctional condition, your misconception of love, is not your fault. After all, low self-esteem love is learned in early childhood by observing parents who loved dysfunctionally; then, is reinforced during adulthood by society in general—especially the media. Yes, magazines, books, music, music

videos, movies, and television portray and promote low self-esteem love every day of your life. You're bombarded with incorrect instructions on how to love, on how to conduct a functional relationship with people in your life.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM LOVERS

Low self-esteem lovers are famous for their l.s.e. one-liners. Unhealthy language between couples with low self-image focuses on feelings of: Insecurity: "I'm not good enough!" "I need you—don't leave me!" Selfishness: "I don't care what you think!" Jealousy: "I know you're looking at other men when we're not together!" Suicide: "If you leave me I'll kill myself!" Stubbornness: "I'm right; you're wrong!" Blame: "You've ruined my life...because of you I'm overweight!" Conceit: "Aren't I beautiful!" "I hope the children don't end up looking like your side of the family." Possessive: "You're mine, all mine!" Short-lived: "We've only been married a month and you're already getting on my nerves!" Pitiful: "Nobody loves me...oh, poor pitiful me." Lonely: "You don't have to be alone to feel alone." Threats: "If you ever leave I'll take you for all you're worth!" Guilt: "Sorry honey, I promise I'll make it up to you." Confusion: "You said you'd love me forever, was it only my imagination?" Frustration: "I'm tired of games, love's got to be real to me!" Co-Dependence: "No one appreciates me, I've been used!" Denial: "Wrong? Nothing's wrong!"

L.S.E PARTNERS

Low self-esteem love is enacted by people from all walks of life. Many loving relationships are filled with dysfunctional actions or behaviors leading to miscommunication, ruined romances, separation, divorce, and single parenthood. Why?

Low self-esteem partners expect you to make them happy. They love to control you, intimidate you, solve your problems for you, make you behave as they think you should (after all, they know what's best for you), say yes when they

really mean no and suffer in loud silence.

Low self-esteem partners are complainers, naggers, screamers, liars, soreheads, entrappers, accusers, overprotectors, stalkers, slavedrivers, bribers, seducers, game players, provokers, lecturers, punishers, and manipulators.

Partners with unhealthy egos threaten to kill themselves, chase after you, get even with you, dominate you, act helpless, blame their parents, blame their boss, blame society, overeat, overdrink, want sex all the time or not at all, and make you jealous. They search your belongings, gossip about you, accuse you, physically abuse you, scream they can't live without you—all in the name of love.

What are the chances of low self-esteem lovers having a functional relationship? Absolutely none. Why? Low self-esteem lovers are insatiably attracted to one another, becoming hopelessly entangled and totally obsessed with their partner, avoiding people who are good for them. Infatuation rules.

Low self-esteem lovers can't get along—but can't live without each other. Their daily lives are dysfunctionally functional. Relationships between low self-esteem lovers are doomed for failure—unless they change.

HIGH SELF-ESTEEM LOVE

Love is another word for a healthy ego. Love is high self-image, love is personal pride, love is attentive listening, love is never having to say "I". Love is many things to many people, but one thing is certain, high self-esteem love is the only love that lasts. Real love is: the ability to love yourself, and therefore, others.

SEXUALITY

Male and female sexuality is directly related to each individual's self-esteem. Low self-esteem people are either oversexed or undersexed, and in many cases, sex is the major topic or issue in their life. Since low self-esteem sex is a by-product or result of low self-esteem love, much of society is sexually dysfunctional.

An example of a low self-esteem sexual

lifestyle occurs whenever couples argue and fight, then “make up” without ever resolving the real issues, then immediately complete the dysfunctional cycle with sex. How often do you hear someone admit, “We fight all the time, but our sex life is great!” or “I can’t leave him ‘cause he’s good in bed!”

Only low self-esteem people are capable of sexual harassment, only low self-esteemers promote sexploitation, only low self-esteem lovers are sexually perverted. Sex is a major issue in today’s society due to people’s low self-esteem behavior; that is, many people confuse sex with love and attention. When a person has a healthy ego, and therefore, a healthy self-image—sexuality is no longer an issue.

FINDING A SOUL MATE

Selecting your mate for life is a challenge often ending in failure or personal disaster. There are millionaires that would give up their fame and fortune for the right person to spend their life with. There are thousands of people worldwide involved in dating services desperately searching for their soul mate, yet divorces and dysfunctional relationships are at an all-time high.

Until you trust yourself, know who you really are, possess more high self-esteem traits than low self-esteem traits, you will select the wrong partner—choose poorly. An openly honest and functional relationship only exists when both partners feel good about themselves, more specifically, when both people in the relationship are continually striving for a high self-esteem existence.

ANGER

The low self-esteem emotion responsible for creating an unloving, unforgiving, revengeful, jealous, and violent lifestyle is anger. Anger is learned during childhood and is perceived (unfortunately) by the majority of society as acceptable human behavior. Acceptable? Well, why wouldn’t it be? Anger, often followed by violence, is promoted in all forms of

entertainment—television, movies, books, video games, and professional sports.

Your media heroes teach you that anger is acceptable and the right thing to do, especially when followed with violent acts of revenge. Murder, rioting, wife beating, child abuse, and screaming temper tantrums (just to name a few) usually begin in a fit of anger. By controlling anger, the vast majority of violence would never occur. You control the anger in yourself and in others by developing one simple habit:

Never Raise your Voice In Anger!

A loud voice (following an emotional episode) causes anxiety, tension, stress, and anger. Ever notice how two people get into a shouting match? When one person raises their voice the other person’s voice raises (and so on) until both people are using the language of the angry—out-shouting and dominating each other—violence often follows.

By deliberately keeping your voice soft, it becomes difficult for the other person to begin shouting or to continue screaming. When the other person realizes you’re not shouting back, they usually become embarrassed, self-defensive, and immediately calm down. Your normal voice “forces” the other person to remain calm, thus eliminating rage and self-anger. Screaming at people—chronic yelling—merely announces you suffer from serious low self-image.

Screaming parents produce screaming children! Screaming teachers produce screaming students! Screaming coaches produce screaming players!

When you harbor anger in your heart you cannot truly love yourself or the people around you. The next time you feel yourself really losing it, by keeping your voice soft and relaxed you won’t become angry or upset. By curbing anger, remaining calm becomes part of your behavior.

Only when you control anger will you experience patience. One day when you least expect it, one magic moment, an incredible calmness will overtake your personality. You’ll feel relaxed and in total control of your emotions, your voice will remain calm.

Controlling anger is merely your initial step. You must take it to the next level, you must learn to forgive. The key to letting go of rage and anger, letting go of the past, is to forgive.

FORGIVENESS

People with a high self-image are non-angry and non-violent; thus, they are forgiving. Your lifelong forgiveness formula is: non-anger = forgiveness. Based on this esteem formula, let's perform a high self-esteem exercise guaranteed to lift a tremendous emotional burden off your shoulders. Ready?

First, think of all the people you are angry with, mad at, disgusted with, even the people you claim you hate. Be honest, they could be your parents, your spouse, your children, your friends, your relatives, your boss, a co-worker, or a complete strangers.

Next, all the people you just thought of probably suffer from some form of low self-esteem. Since it's not their fault, they learned low self-esteem behavior in early childhood and are convinced it's the proper way to behave, how can you be angry with them?

Isn't it time to forgive, to realize these unaware wanderers simply can't help themselves? By forgiving others you immediately acquire a higher self-worth, a clear self-purpose, allowing you to get on with your life.

FORGET MEANS LETTING GO

In step seven the "forget" part means let it go—drop it—get on with your life. Completely forgetting low self-esteem traumas in your life is impossible, especially childhood events such as molestation, violent and arguing parents, being screamed at, or isolation from being ignored.

But it is possible, as you learn forgiveness, to place bad memories and negative feelings in the back of your mind. It is a special place where, every time you remember a bad memory, you go through a forgiveness process—a self-cleansing—allowing your inner-self to deal with the problem.

In other words, the more forgiving you

become the less you think or talk about childhood traumas or recent low self-esteem episodes in your life. The negative self-talk in your mind begins to disappear. You learn to let go. Bad memories become hazier and hazier in your "mind's eye" as you become healthier and happier with who you are. Self-cleansing is a powerful emotion in your search for self-image.

Rationalize. Since your parents didn't plot and plan to give you low self-esteem (they were childhood victims themselves) shouldn't you re-evaluate your feelings for them? Isn't it time to drop all the excess baggage, all the unnecessary pain, all the anger?

As parents, what about negative feelings you have toward your children? How can you be upset when you're the one who has given your child low self-esteem in the first place—you've raised your kids just like your parents raised you.

Yes, the legacy of low self-esteem survives deep within your own family, yet, no one's to blame. Blame must be buried.

Change is in the air; you've found freedom—you've found forgiveness. Whether you're thirteen, thirty-three, or ninety-three, you're a potential leader. When you learn forgiveness, you learn leadership. Soon, everyone around you changes before your very eyes.

The next time you confront a spouse, a parent, a friend, or a supervisor who never listens to you, is never satisfied with your performance, screams to the top of their lungs at you or constantly complains, forgive them by sharing your self-esteem treasures.

People will eventually change.

JEALOUSY

Of all the low self-esteem emotions, perhaps the one emotion that gives you away as a low self-esteem partner is jealousy. Jealousy has three ugly children: physical violence, verbal abuse, and hidden agendas.

In romantic relationships, when you're threatened and insecure about the presence of another man or another woman, it's a direct reflection on your self-confidence, your own

self-trust. If you don't trust the person you're with, you simply don't trust yourself. When you don't trust yourself, jealousy rules your decisions, wrecks your relationships, ruins your life, undermines your partnerships. Jealousy is one of the unacceptables—avoid it.

PASSION

A life worth living is a life full of passion. What is passion? The dictionary defines passion as any emotion or intense emotional excitement as hate, love, rage, enthusiasm, lust, etc. As always, direct opposites are described. There is high self-esteem passion and low self-esteem passion. Society encourages and praises passion, but unfortunately, the wrong kind. Angry, violent, possessive, and jealous people are often complimented for being so “passionate.”

As you already discovered during your journey, low self-esteem passion such as anger, hate, jealousy, revenge, and lust are self-destructive and unacceptable—they must be eliminated. From now on, the choice is yours. You can possess passion that enhances your life or you can possess passion that ruins your life. Choose wisely.

EMOTIONAL GROWTH

As you grow emotionally, the people around you change. As you use the high self-esteem techniques you've learned on your journey, as your behavior changes, your life changes forever. You look, act, and feel totally different. As you change and become emotionally healthy, what will everyday life be like? How will the people you live and interact with, especially the family and friends you've known for years, react to your new behavior—your new personality?

One thing's for certain, positive or negative, there will be reactions from everyone around you. You'll notice many different social reactions from family members, parents, friends, and co-workers as they observe the change in you. Typical reactions are disbelief, happiness, suspicion, amazement, anger, confusion, admiration, withdrawal, and jealousy.

Meeting the challenge of negative reactions from friends and loved ones is easier than you think, that's because your commitment to change is stronger than your desire to remain dysfunctional. Once you taste success, there is no stopping your quest for self-improvement.

Here are examples of what you may encounter—of what to expect.

Parents

You've always felt like a failure around your parents; you can't seem to do anything right. Every conversation is incredibly frustrating, ending in a terrible argument. Suddenly, by practicing high self-esteem habits, you and your parents get along. Mom and Dad think you act strange because you don't argue or fight with them anymore, they even admit they enjoy your company. Your parents can't believe what's happening. They're suspicious but seem happily confused. You're all getting along. You look forward to family functions.

Peer Group

Your friends like to gossip and make fun of other people wherever you go. Lately, you've noticed they're uncomfortable around you because you change their awful bad-mouthing into positive conversation. You won't condone or become part of their negative fun. You realize they talk about you behind your back, but as your self-image improves, it doesn't bother you. Although your friends wonder about you, they look at you with new respect and admiration. They feel your strength—your power.

Spouse (Life Partner)

For several years now, you and your spouse, the person of your dreams, have not communicated properly. Lately your spouse realizes you're attentive, listening, and no longer raising your voice in anger. Your disbelieving sweetheart is so shocked, suspicion has set in. After all, “pumpkin” has never seen you act this way before. Although tentative, your spouse loves the new you. Communication lines have

opened up; your marriage has never been better.

Children

Your hyperactive kids have been totally out of control since they were terrible toddlers. Recently, you've stopped yelling and screaming at them and started to listen to every word they say. Your emotionally stunned and uncertain children look at you funny, still flinch when you talk, but you've notice an immediate and miraculous change in their behavior.

Teenagers

You always knew little Junior would be such a nice boy when he grew up, but when he hit his teens he became your worst nightmare. First, his grades dropped, then the drugs, then the gangs, and finally his total rejection of you—his own parent. You tried everything, but his bad behavior intensified. Then you discovered high self-esteem parenting and you've seen dramatic improvement. You no longer get angry and overcritical, and more importantly, you now provide the one thing he wanted most—attention and recognition. Your son's in complete shock with the functional family relationship. The two of you have never gotten along better.

Employers

You have unsuccessfully managed your office staff like Captain Kraken since day one. Over the past few years you've hired and fired one employee after the next—no one stays with your company very long. The worst part is, most of the people you hire always end up being predictably unproductive. Since your recent decision to utilize high self-esteem management techniques, productivity has increased and your employees are no longer quitting. The workers are still a little gun shy of you, but they're beginning to trust you. Many of them now look to you for leadership. It's taken several weeks but the results are incredible; you look forward to going to the office again.

Strangers

You've always been afraid or nervous to meet new people. Like oversensitive Lizardo, you avoid all strangers, convinced they're out to get you and cannot be trusted. Lately you've been trying some high self-esteem talk with total strangers and a personal revelation has occurred in your life. You now realize why your career in sales is unsuccessful, why you don't seem to fit in at social gatherings, why the people you meet seem unimpressed with you. You've failed to tap-in to your greatest resource—other people. You've finally discovered that the people around you hold the key to your happiness and success. Life's never been more rewarding. The world is a safe place.

These selected examples barely scratch the surface of the real-life dramas that unfold during your quest for self-esteem. What will probably be your most challenging situation—your most frustrating experience? Time. Time? Yes, the longer you've known someone, the longer it will take to convince them you're actually changing—becoming a better person. But with self-patience, time becomes your welcomed friend.

In concluding your seventh great step, your seventh great adventure, you realize that the combination of pride, love, non-anger, and forgiveness make you the person of your dreams, the person you've always wanted to be. For the first time, you calmly and confidently deal with all conflicts, all challenges, and all changes in your daily life. There are many.

Your ability to forgive and forget—to love yourself and the people around you—to control your anger and possess high self-esteem passion, rewards you with the seventh great treasure—self-confidence. An incredible change is occurring as you enter the final passage of your life journey, the Eighth Great Step—Live Life as a Leader.