

## [Information Sheet - Institute of Welfare](#)

### **Building Confidence**

#### **A Guide to Boosting Self Esteem**

Self esteem is confidence in one's own ability and as such is dependent upon recognising personal strengths, abilities and qualities. A person with a low self esteem will often have negative automatic thoughts and find excuses for the things that they do well and globalise as 'always happening to me' the events that do not go so well. It is difficult and often frustrating to reason with someone suffering low self esteem as they simply refuse to see things differently, often clinging on to their beliefs like an old security blanket.

#### **Action you can take today**

Write out all of your achievements and all of the positive things about you. Spend as much time on this as necessary and when you have a comprehensive list, acknowledge and congratulate yourself on each item. Refuse to dismiss any achievement as luck or 'right place, right time' or 'anyone would have done the same'. No, you did it so you accept the glory.

#### **Stand guard at the gate of your mind.**

Become aware of your thought patterns and identify the negative ones and see if you can replace them with positive alternatives. Ask yourself if there is another way of looking at this.

#### **Accept compliments with a thank you.**

People with a low self esteem often play down the compliments made towards them because they do not know how to accept them. Learn to thank people who compliment you. This may take practise but will help to change the way you see yourself.

#### **Question the validity of any negative comments made about you.**

Do not accept abusive remarks or criticism without understanding the motives or credibility of the source. The person making such remarks could be just thoughtless or a bully or even be trying to elevate their own position in the hierarchy.

#### **Act in a confident, expectant way.**

People who suffer from low self esteem tend to stoop and withdraw into themselves. Their voice will become low in volume and tone, and they will often mumble and experience shallow breathing. Their facial expression will look sad, often failing to make eye contact.

The good news is that by reversing these behaviours a person can dramatically change the way they feel about themselves. Walk tall with an erect posture, smile

and look people in the eye (try not to stare as this can seem aggressive) raise the level of your voice and speak clearly. If you are the kind of person who becomes tongue-tied when speaking to strangers or people in authority, then work out what you want to say in advance and keep sentences short and to the point. Practice breathing deeply and slowly, notice how much strength you gain by controlling your breathing.

By acting more confidently you will feel more confident and very soon this new confidence will become your reality.

Think of all the situations in which you lack confidence and begin to picture a confident you acting in the way described above. See how real you can make the scene and feel how good it feels to be in control. Notice how people react to you when you are full of confidence. Hold this feeling for as long as you can and do this exercise regularly.

You may ignore this information because it sounds too simple or perhaps you do not think it will work for you, but please try it before discarding it. You may discover that it is exactly what you need.