



Michael Dawson MA, LPC-Intern
1001 Cross Timbers Rd. #2350 Flower Mound Tx. 75028
9741 Preston Rd. #208 Frisco Tx. 75034
972.310.4484

Understanding...Self Esteem

Self esteem describes the overall sense of self-worth or personal value in a person. It can involve different beliefs about the self, such as the measuring one's appearance, beliefs, emotions or behaviors. Sometimes self esteem is viewed as self image, self worth, self respect or the value of one's self. It can be understood from the standpoint of an essential need we have for normal, healthy development, something that comes from learned values and beliefs and generally has strong ties to our thinking, emotions and behaviors. Your self-image is how you evaluate your own life, feel about your job, relationships, where you're going in life, and how you see yourself among other things.

How do you really feel about yourself? Do you compare yourself positively with others, or tend to evaluate yourself as superior/inferior to others? Do you have a harsh, negative opinion of yourself? How do you know when your self-esteem is healthy?

Healthy self esteem is generally seen as a *realistic self appraisal*: I am equal to others, I have good qualities, I can do things as well as most people, I can be proud of myself, I am comfortable around successful people, I can evaluate myself honestly. A non realistic self appraisal would fall into the pride category-I am superior to others. Thoughts or feelings of inferiority when measured against others would signify low self esteem, an unrealistic appraisal of one's self. A sign of maturity is the ability to *give* to others and to meet other's needs. But we can only give to others when we have a balanced acceptance of ourselves.

Some of the ways to personally assess self esteem would be:

- You can appropriately express yourself.
- There is no fear of being rejected by others.
- You can make a final decision regarding you own well being.
- You take a positive attitude about yourself.
- You can forgive others and yourself for mistakes.
- You can accept yourself.
- On the whole, you are satisfied with yourself.
- You feel you have a number of good qualities.
- You can accept criticism graciously.

Good exercises in evaluating ourselves in the area of self esteem can be helpful to personal growth. What are you good at? Make a list of your accomplishments and personal strengths. How do you see yourself? Write down positive characteristics and traits you possess. What do you like to do? Plan time to take action on those things. Do something new, a hobby, recreation, a new event. What would you like to change about yourself or about your life? Make some goals and steps to reach them a little at a time. The person with positive self worth generally gets more of their needs and wants met, and lives a more satisfied and full life!

Mike