

TEEN Turning Points



Team Up with Self-Esteem

We all have a picture of ourselves in the mirror of our minds. We know how we see ourselves and how we feel about what we see. This is called self-esteem.

Teenagers with high self-esteem like themselves, and they feel good about the picture they have of themselves. On the other hand, those who have low self-esteem are not satisfied with their lives and usually put themselves down. These people need to work on feeling good about themselves.

Self-esteem has a great effect on your life. It affects the way you feel and behave at school, at home, with your friends, and, later, in your job. Low self-esteem affects your ability to maintain relationships with people who are similar to or different from you.

Parents' behavior can affect teen's view of self

If one or both parents drink, use drugs or engage in any other negative activity, teens often feel shame, embarrassment and guilt because of their parents' behavior. Even though they have no control over their parents, this can lead to a teen doubting his or her self-worth. Also, low self-esteem can lead to the same types of behavior in the teenager.

Put downs hurt self-esteem

Many things affect our self-esteem. For example, if someone says negative things about us enough times, we may begin to believe them. It is important that you know that you control your life – no one else can. Therefore, you have total control over your self-esteem. No one can take your self-worth away from you. Most often, people who put others down don't have very high self-esteem themselves.

Never too late to change the picture

If you have low self-esteem, it's never too late to change the picture. Instead of dwelling on the things you don't like about yourself, focus on the things that make you a terrific person. You can always change what you don't like with a little help and determination.

To boost your self-esteem ...

So work on feeling good about yourself and improving your self-esteem. Here are some suggestions to get you on your way.

- **Start thinking of yourself in positive ways.**
- **Be nice to yourself.**
- **Set some realistic goals for yourself.** If you set your goals too high and don't achieve them, it may lower your self-esteem. A realistic approach is healthier.
- **Realize that nobody is perfect,** and you can't expect yourself to be. There is always room for improvement. If you already like yourself, keep it up. A person with high self-esteem can't go anywhere but higher!

If you need more help

Sometimes it helps to talk about how you feel. You can do this with a trusted friend, teacher, a close adult or clergy. For help in an emergency, call Crisis Services, at (810) 257-3740, where a counselor is available 24 hours a day. TTY users call (810) 232-6310. For non-emergency services, call (810) 257-3705. ©