

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem consists of individual's thoughts, feelings and bodily feelings. These can be positive or negative thoughts about the person's acceptance of herself / himself. Having a positive and realistic approach about herself / himself and the situations may indicate that the person has high self-confidence. Most people's feelings and thoughts about themselves fluctuate based on their daily experiences.

Self-esteem, however, is something more central than the normal "ups and downs" which is associated with situational changes. People with high self-esteem have more realistic expectations for themselves and they are prone to take responsibility for their behaviors, are open to criticism and have control over their lives. High self-esteem helps the individual to build positive sentences about him/herself, feel active, talented and good.

On the other hand, people with low self-esteem usually need the approval and appreciation of others to feel successful. People with low self-esteem often fear failure and cannot stand criticism. These thoughts can make the person feel worthless, unloved, or useless. Especially childhood experiences have an important role in the formation of self-esteem. In this period, the overly critical approach of people in the immediate environment such as parents, teachers, relatives, older brothers and sisters may lead to low self-esteem development..



However, as a result of new relationships and experiences, self-esteem will continue to change throughout life. In general, positive experiences and relationships contribute to high self-esteem, while negative experiences can lead to low self-esteem.



5. Do not let other people criticize your character. If you're going to be criticized by someone, these criticisms should be directed at your behavior, not your personality, so you have the opportunity to change your negative behavior. Perceive the criticism that you receive as information that will help you improve personally.

6. Use positive language while you are speaking to yourself. Everyone can have negative thoughts about himself/herself once in a while. Pay attention to the situations in which you feel negative about yourself. When you notice these, you can evaluate them realistically, identify your areas of development and get away from negative judgments about yourself. Remember, nobody is perfect.

7. Stop comparing yourself to other people. There will always be someone "better" than you at something. Accept this and focus on your own growth.

Suggestions to Improve Self-esteem

1. Notice your strengths from everything you put effort to. Appreciate the effort you put in more than the results you have achieved.
2. Take risks. Approach new experiences as opportunities to learn rather than occasions to win or lose.
3. Do not label yourself as "lazy", "ugly", and "untalented".
4. Notice the positive and supportive attitudes of your friends with high self-esteem. Let the positive and supportive attitudes of your friends affect your attitude towards self-judgment.

Low self-esteem may cause;

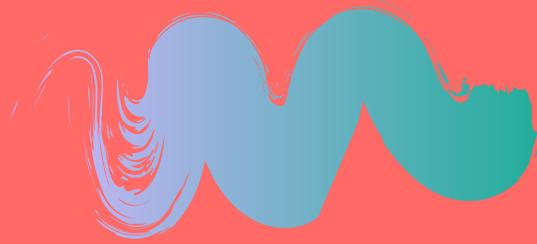
- Anxiety, stress, feeling of loneliness and increased likelihood for depression,
- Having problems in friendship and family relationships,
- Self isolation,
- Impaired academic and job performance,
- Possibility of unwanted, uncontrolled and unprotected sexual intercourse,
- Underachievement
- Increased risk of alcohol and substance use

Can Self-Esteem Be Improved?

Yes, self-esteem can be improved. Remember, you are a unique person and you are very precious as you are.

Negative thoughts:

- All-or-none thinking: "I'm a failure in every way."
- Focusing only on the negative: "Something bad is going to happen to me at this class as well."
- Magnifying the negative and minimizing the positive: "I've done four of five questions, but I've done such a mistake that I feel like a stupid."
- Uncritical acceptance of emotions as truth. "I feel ugly, so I am ugly."
- Extreme perfectionism: "Everyone should have a career plan when they come to college. I don't have any plan, so there must be something wrong with me."
- Labeling. "I am a loser and it's my fault.". "No one likes me. I'm not a good friend."



Make sure that your negative expressions are replaced by positive self-talking. Try to use more realistic and positive messages about your life and yourself.

For example;

- "Sometimes" instead of "always"
- "Some places, things, some people, partially" instead of "Everything, all, completely"
- "I'm not as good at statistics as at other things, but my essays are really good" instead of "I'm always unsuccessful"
- "I'm a terrible photographer." instead "My photos come out beautiful sometimes."

Where can I get more help?

If you think that you need extra support about self-esteem, you can reach to psychologists at Koç University Counseling Service (KURES) or a mental health specialist outside of the university.

For more information:

KURES – Koç University Counseling Service

 <https://kocunikures.ku.edu.tr/>

 e-mail: kures@ku.edu.tr

 Instagram: [kocunikures](https://www.instagram.com/kocunikures)