



You Need Self Esteem

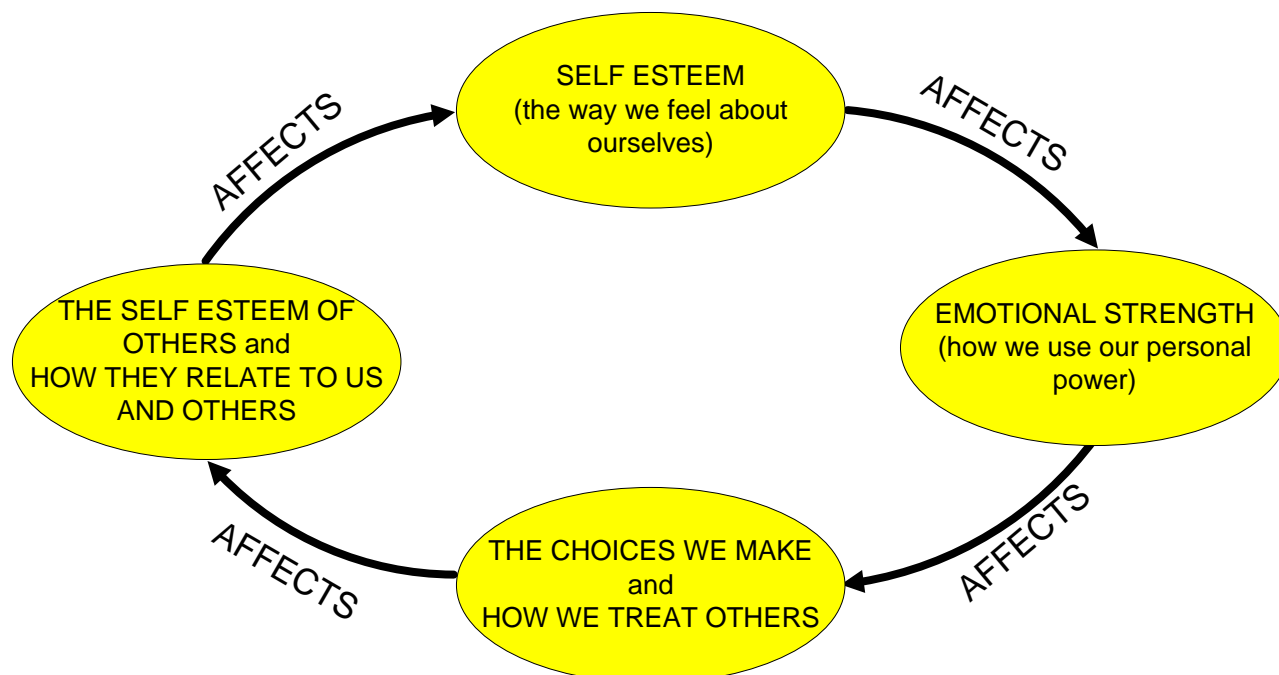
Self Esteem is the way we feel about ourselves; how much we like ourselves. We can have high self esteem and feel confident, positive, relaxed, friendly and likeable or we may have low self esteem and feel worried, negative about ourselves, putting little value on ourselves and our skills.

Self esteem can be shaped, raised or lowered through our relationships with others; by the way people have treated us in the past and by the messages we give to ourselves as a result of that treatment. All messages, good and bad affect how we feel about ourselves:

- Negative messages (put-downs and criticism) can lower our confidence and self esteem.
- Positive messages (compliments, constructive criticism and encouragement) can raise our self esteem.

The way we feel about ourselves affects the way we regard others and how we relate to them and this in turn can influence the way they respond to us:

- Having high or low self esteem can affect the quality of our relationships, the choices we make, our behaviour and our ability to handle difficult situations.
- If we have high self esteem and are happy within ourselves we are more likely to make choices and decisions that are good for us and feel more confident when handling problems.
- It is important to remember that we also, by our actions and comments, may affect other people and their self esteem.



WE RAISE OUR SELF ESTEEM AND INCREASE OUR EMOTIONAL STRENGTH BY:

- Treating ourselves with respect and looking for **the good in ourselves**.
- Looking at what **we can do** rather than what we can't do.
- Being aware of our own needs and feelings and **accepting ourselves**.
- Trying to **make good choices**.
 - Sometimes talking to someone can help us to organise our thoughts and understand our feelings.
- **Taking responsibility** for the choices and decisions that we make and the consequences that result.
- **Developing empathy** - sensitivity towards others and what they are feeling.
- Learning to **express feelings in helpful ways**.
- **Communicating** without blaming others or criticising them.
- Developing **listening skills**.
- Developing a **set of goals and values**.