

ELSA Newsletter



confidence in one's own worth or abilities; self-respect.

So what does self-esteem really mean? It's very simple, it's all about liking yourself and being comfortable with who you are. It's not always easy to do this and can take a lot of practice, sometimes you may feel like you've cracked it and you're really pleased with who you are and other times you may start feeling down about yourself. This is normal especially when you're a teenager as so many things are happening in your life and there are lots of changes happening to your brain and your body.



It sounds a bit big headed when you say that you love yourself and there is a balance with self-esteem so that you don't come across as being overly confident and thinking that you know everything. The important thing is that we all need to understand what we're really good at and the things that we need to improve, no one's perfect and we all have things that we could improve.

Becoming a teenager is a big step in your life and it is really important that you understand how self-esteem works as this will give you a sense of belonging in the world and will help you achieve life long goals. It will also help you to make really positive relationships that are right for you and give you the confidence to learn new skills.



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So how do you know if you have low self esteem? Here are some things that could mean that you have low self-esteem

People say I'm good at stuff but I don't believe them

I always feel frustrated with myself

I find it really hard to make friends because I'm not confident enough to talk to new people

It's not my fault I can't do new things it's everyone else's fault for making me try new things

I get really cross with myself and others when I get something wrong



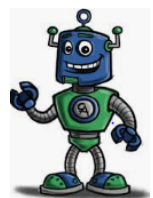
I find it really hard to make the right type of friends; they always get me in to trouble or we always fall out

I'm not good at anything

There's no point in me trying because I'm rubbish at everything

I don't want to try anything new because I'll be rubbish at it

Have you noticed that all of these thoughts are really negative? As clever as our brains are they can sometimes be unhelpful when they start making us think that these thoughts are true. Sometimes we look at other people and think "I'd really like to be like them" but this really isn't healthy as we need to look at ourselves and think "this is who I am and I'm really pleased that I'm like this". Comparing ourselves to others doesn't make sense as we are all different and we all have different strengths and weaknesses. If we were all the same the world would be a very boring place as we would all be like robots with the same skills and personalities.



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If someone suffers with low self-esteem they may also have a negative body image, this basically means that you don't like the way you look. What you have to remember is that teenagers bodies go through a lot of changes which are caused by hormones. You can get taller, your body shape begins to change, you may put on weight, your hair and face may become greasy which can cause spots, you begin to grow body hair. All of these are normal changes but happen to people at different times therefore it's important to remember that the person you wish to be may not have been through these changes yet.

It is also useful not to compare yourself against pictures that you see in magazines or on social media as there are lots of filters that you can use that can change images, so they may not be real. Celebrities also have lots of help to look the way they do such as make-up, professional hairdressers and good lighting when they have pictures taken. If they didn't have any of this they would probably look very different.

When you have a negative body image, low-self esteem can make it really difficult to make things better and you end up going around in circles. You may know that you need to do some exercise to improve your fitness but you may not have the confidence to join an exercise class or you may feel like you can't be bothered to make the changes.



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In order to stop this happening and to improve self-esteem we need to use something called Positive Self Talk which involves changing the negative thoughts in to positive thoughts. Lets look at some negative thoughts and change them to positive thoughts:

Instead of thinking....	Try thinking.....
I can't do this	I can't do this at the moment
No one likes me	I like myself and I need to show people what I'm like so they can get to know me
This is too hard	I need to work out a way to understand this better
I'm so stupid	I made a mistake but that's OK because everyone makes mistakes and learns from them
I hate myself	I've got some really good qualities that I'm proud of, I like the way I am but will try and change the things I don't like
I wish I looked like them	I should be who I want to be and not look the same as everyone else
I give up	I'm going to take a break and then give it another go
It's too hard	This may take some time and effort but I'll get there in the end
It's always me that makes mistakes	Other people do too they probably just hide the fact that they have made a mistake
I hate trying new things	I get nervous when I try new things but that's normal and once I've tried it I will feel like I've achieved something
There's no point	I won't know unless I try
It won't make a difference	It might make a difference and if it doesn't I can try something else

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It's important that we keep ourselves healthy both mentally and physically. We should take regular exercise and eat healthy food to keep our bodies healthy but it's also important that you are kind to yourself and recognise all the things that you are really good at so that you can like who you are. Sometimes this is hard so you could ask some people that know you really well to help you with this. Here's an exercise to help you work out the things you are good at:

I am a good friend
because....

I am really good
at....

I have worked
hard to improve....

I am proud of
myself when....

I am helpful
because....

I am thoughtful
because....

I like that I can....

My biggest
achievement so
far has been....

*you
are
amazing.*