

QC0074 - You Need Something Better Than Self Esteem

Low self esteem. If you know, you know. It effects every part of your life. It even effects those around you. And yet it can be hard to see, let alone beat.

So, if you suffer with low self esteem, perhaps you need to make a switch. Because, there is something better than self esteem.

According to research from Dr. Joe Rubino, it is estimated that **85 percent of Americans suffer from low self-esteem**. This percentage may surprise you; especially from a culture that is so self-promotional and self-elevating. But low self esteem is rampant and not always easy to spot in this selfie culture.

What is Low Self Esteem?

Low self esteem is when you perceive and value yourself in a negative or degrading way. It's a lack of self confidence that leads to devaluing yourself through your negative thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Here are some possible signs of low self esteem:

- Low self confidence.
- Feelings of helplessness or lack of control.
- Feeling like you don't measure up to others.
- Self-doubt.
- Difficulty asking for what you want.
- Trouble accepting affirmation.
- Negative self-talk.
- Poor boundaries.
- Glass half empty outlook.
- Typically putting yourself last.
- Feeling others deserve more than you.
- Self-sarcasm.
- Self-blame.
- Over sensitivity to criticism.
- Self critical.

If you suffer with low self esteem, people may not see these symptoms in you. And if they do, you'll probably disguised them with a self-deprecating humor

that will be seen as as humility. But even if no one else sees your low self esteem, you do. you feel it at your very core.

What Causes Low Self Esteem?

Like most things in life, there's not a single or simple answer as to what causes low self esteem. Some possible causes are:

- Parents who were consistently critical.
- Being raised in a home where there was a low tolerance for failure.
- Parents who were too busy or self-absorbed to focus on you.
- A history of trauma and abuse.
- Experiencing a repeated pattern of hurt and failure.

And some people are born with genetics and personalities that predisposes them to depression and low self esteem.

What Are the Effects of Low Self Esteem?

Like the ripples from a stone tossed in a lake, low self esteem can effect your life in ever widening ways.

Personally.

Low self esteem attacks you personally...at your core. Low self esteem...

- Can leave you awash in internal depression, criticism, shame, guilt, anxiety, anger, or ambivalence.
- Can make it easier to justify poor self-care or even self-harming behaviors, such as: not taking care of yourself physically, misusing alcohol or other substances, developing eating disorders, cutting, or even suicidal thoughts.
- Can be fueled by an on-going barrage of negative self-talk, such as: "They don't really care about me. I don't matter. I don't measure up. They need someone better than me. I can never get things right." On and on it goes.

Relationally.

Because of the personal effects, low self esteem can cause trouble with your relationships.

- You may settle for a bad relationship, because you feel you don't deserve a better one.
- Your low self esteem may make your relationships difficult by keeping you from truly engaging in life with the other person.
- Your low self esteem may settle over your relationship like a dark cloud; taxing other's patience and tolerance.
- The underlying anger, that is often present with low self esteem, may become toxic to the relationship.

Socially/Occupationally.

Left unchecked, your low self esteem will continue to ripple out from your personal and relational life to your social and occupational life. Your low self esteem can...

- Keep you from making new friends or trying new things.
- Gradually separate you from friend groups.
- Prevent you from getting or accepting new opportunities at work.
- Keep you from bettering yourself.

What Can You Do About Low Self Esteem?

Now, let's get to the big question. The question everyone wants answered. Do you have to be stuck with low self esteem? Is it just the luck of the draw, or genetics, or life? Or is self esteem something you have some control over? Something you can improve?

I'm absolutely convinced that you don't have to be stuck with low self esteem. There are many things you can do to improve your self-evaluation.

- Start by changing your self-talk. This is one of the most productive things you can do to elevate your self esteem. Notice the things you say to yourself about yourself. Each time you catch yourself saying something negative, critical, or harsh about yourself, challenge that and rewrite it. For instance, when you make a mistake and you think to yourself, "Well, that was stupid!" Catch yourself and rewrite it to something like... "No, that wasn't stupid. It was just a mistake. People make them all the time. I'll just adjust and move on."
- When someone gives you a compliment, don't deflect it. Look them in the eye and say, "Thank you. I really appreciate that."
- Make a list of your strengths. This may be hard for you to do at first. You might have trouble thinking of any strengths to list. Or maybe the

strengths you list sound lame to you. But keep trying. Try to put something on the list each day. If you're having trouble getting started, ask your friends to weigh in and tell you some of the strengths they see in you. Get started and keep building the list.

- Make a list, or keep a journal, of all the good things you've experienced in your day...or even your life. When your self esteem is low, it's really easy to focus on the darker side of life and forget all the good things that are there also.
- Read some good books on self esteem.
- And finally, if low self esteem continues to interfere with your life, seek out a good friend, pastor, or counselor who can help you.

The Most Important Thing You Can Do

There's one more thing you can do.

When it comes to dealing with low self esteem, one of the most important thing you can do is shift your focus from self esteem to something better. What's better than self esteem? Self worth. Many people think self esteem and self worth are the same thing. That they're just synonyms of one another. But they are not the same thing.

Self esteem is just that...how you esteem yourself. Self esteem is your evaluation of yourself, and it's not objective. But self worth is what you, yourself are worth. This is more objective and more helpful.

Let me illustrate this with a story...

Suppose I found an old baseball card in a box in my attic. And let's say I'm not into baseball card or sports in general. So my esteem of that baseball card is not very high. I may value that card at \$100. But if a collector was willing to pay me \$5,000 for that card, then it doesn't matter that I valued the card at \$100. The true worth of the card is \$5,000.

Our self esteem (the value we give ourselves) will fluctuate with our circumstances...our successes, our failures, people's response to us, etc. But none of that has any bearing on what we're really worth.

There are people in your life that see you as priceless. Oh, they may get frustrated with you at times, but if you were terminally ill, they would pay anything to keep you with them. And, if you're a person of the Christian faith,

God paid everything he had to make you His own. That...not your self esteem... sets your worth and makes it incredibly high.

So consider exchanging self esteem for self worth. I guarantee you will come out better in the end.

A Final Word...

Low self esteem is like a slow growing blindness of the soul. It gradually lowers the blinds of your life...shutting out the light and leaving you in a dark room with a person you don't like.

Do the work to consistently change your negative focus and self-talk`. Trade your self esteem in for something better...self worth.

When you do these things, you'll find you have the power to turn your self esteem, and your life, around.