12 Self Esteem Boosters
By Hiram K. Rampersaud

People with positive self-esteem consistently enjoy good mental health and are happier and more successful. On the other hand, low self-esteem can negatively affect virtually every facet of life, including relationships, job and health and can even lead to fatal consequences. So here are 12 tips to boost self-esteem:

**Make Yourself A Priority:** From young, we are taught that putting the needs of others before ours is a virtue; doing the opposite is considered selfish. However, we can’t develop high self-esteem if we don’t make our own needs a priority by putting them first. When we value our own needs, we value ourselves, which fosters high self-esteem.

**Be Yourself:** Aesop’s Fables teaches us, “He who tries to please everybody pleases nobody.” Indeed, if you spend your life trying to please everyone, then you are pretending to be someone other than yourself and this can lead to low self-esteem. On the hand, being your authentic self puts you on the track to positive self-esteem. So turn your gaze inwards and analyze what really drives you and brings you joy. It may feel strange at first, but there is no wrong emotion in this scenario — all are important towards your real self and increased self-esteem.

**Practice Positive Self Talk:** Whether out loud or just in your head, negative self-talk (for example thinking/calling yourself ugly or unlikeable) causes your self-esteem to drop, which leads to more negative self-talk, resulting in a vicious cycle. The most effective way to break the cycle is to counter that negative self-talk by being kind and positive toward yourself. Anytime something negative pops into your mind, write down something positive about yourself, until positive self-talk becomes a habit.

**Don’t Beat Yourself Up:** We are frequently harder on ourselves than we are on others. In fact, many of us view our mistakes as personal and/or moral failures. Instead of dwelling on our mistakes as some sort of personal punishment, try to view them as opportunities for self-improvement. There is
always something to learn from a mistake, even if it’s just ensuring that the mistake is never repeated. And this perspective definitely boosts self-esteem.

**Acknowledge Your Successes:** It is common for us to downplay our successes. We say, “It wasn’t that big of a deal. Anyone could do it.” This leads to feeling that we haven’t achieved much with our lives and definitely hurts self-esteem. To boost self-esteem, celebrate successes, no matter how small. Reflect on the person you were and recognize how much you’ve grown. Write successes down. In time the list of accomplishments will amaze you.

**Be Grateful:** Cultivating positive self-esteem also involves being grateful for what you have. Some individuals tie their entire sense of self-worth to what they have, but someone else will always have more than you do, whether it’s money, looks, or whatever. Instead of getting caught up in what you don’t have that others do, focus on what it is that you do have. When you focus on being grateful for the things that you do have, you start to feel happier and more self-assured.

**Nurture a Positive Attitude:** A positive outlook can be difficult to cultivate, as our brains naturally tend to dwell on the negative. Positive self-talk, emphasizing successes and being grateful for what you have, help to create a positive attitude; so too associating with positive people. Negative people can only bring you down to their level. Positive people will boost your self-esteem.

**Commit to Your Decisions:** Another way to cultivate positivity in your life is to fully commit to your decisions. Once you have decided on a course of action, don’t waste your energy on self-doubt and second-guessing yourself. Use that energy to do the necessary research and work to see your task through. When you give in to self-doubt and second thoughts, you are telling yourself that you don’t view yourself as a competent individual, capable of making the right decisions and successfully completing a task. On the other hand, totally committing yourself to your decisions boosts your self-esteem by eliminating those doubts and insecurities.

**Learn How to Say No:** When you learn how to say no, you let others know that your boundaries are to be respected and that you won’t be taken advantage of. In effect, you affirm such boundaries. This ensures that you avoid getting stuck with unwanted tasks and commitments that drain your energy and damage your positivity.
Be Generous to Others: Making your needs a priority and learning how to say no doesn’t mean that you have to shut others. Humans are social creatures and a lack of meaningful human connections can severely impact your self-esteem. Helping others provides a sense of meaning and purpose in life. If you have the time and the means, give to charity and/or volunteer your time to a cause you feel passionate about. The Caribbean Voice welcomes volunteers. Our focus is all things mental health, including all forms of abuse, suicide, alcohol and drug use.

Affirm Yourself: At the end of the day, a person with high self-esteem is a person who affirms him/herself as someone of value and worth. This positive self-affirmation leads a healthier mental life, which positively impacts every facet of life.

Be Consistent: The above boosters might not initially be easy to put in place, due to ingrained habits developed over a lifetime, but if you consistently practice them, they will start to become second nature and you will start to see an overall improvement in your self-esteem.

PS: Catch our Internet radio and FB live program The Mind Body Connection every Monday from 8 to 10 PM with hosts Shanaz Hussain and Hiram Rampersaud. Log on to The Caribbean Voice Media page on FB for videos of all programs. Also The Caribbean Voice can help you access help for any and all mental health issues. Please email us at caribvoice@aol.com, call 646-461-0574 (Annan), 917-767-2248 (Hiram), 631-805-6605 (Shanaz) or 516-286-8952 (Dr. Rodney). Also check out our website at www.caribvoice.org for more information.