

## SELF-AFFIRMING THOUGHTS

- 1.) *I think well of myself. This is good.*
- 2.) *I accept myself because I realize that I am more than my mistakes, or any other externals.*
- 3.) *Criticism is an external. I examine it for ways to improve, without concluding that the criticism makes me less worthwhile as a person.*
- 4.) *I can criticize my own behaviour without questioning my worth as a human being.*
- 5.) *I notice and enjoy each sign of achievement or progress, no matter how insignificant it may seem to others or myself.*
- 6.) *I enjoy the achievements and progress that others make, without concluding they are more valuable than I am as a person.*
- 7.) *I am generally capable of living well, and of applying the time, effort, patience, training, and assistance needed to do so.*
- 8.) *I expect others to like and respect me. If they don't that's okay.*
- 9.) *I can usually earn people's trust and affection through sincere and respectful treatment. If not, that's okay.*
- 10.) *I generally show sound judgment in relationships and work.*
- 11.) *I can influence others by my well-reasoned viewpoints, which I can present and defend effectively.*
- 12.) *I like to help others enjoy themselves.*
- 13.) *I enjoy new challenges and don't get upset when things don't go well right off the bat.*
- 14.) *The work I do is generally good quality, and I expect to do many worthwhile things in the future.*
- 15.) *I am aware of my strengths and respect them.*
- 16.) *I can laugh at some of the ridiculous things I do sometimes.*
- 17.) *I can make a difference in people's lives by what I contribute.*
- 18.) *I enjoy making others feel happier and glad for time we shared.*
- 19.) *I consider myself a worthwhile person.*
- 20.) *I like being a one-of-a-kind portrait. I'm glad to be unique.*
- 21.) *I like myself without comparison to others.*
- 22.) *I feel stable and secure inside because I rightly regard my core worth.*

## Strategies for Self-Acceptance

**Remember, "I am what I think!"** If I think I am a worthwhile human being, I am a worthwhile human being. Focus on the positive. Be confident about being you.

**Develop a positive mental attitude:** Learn to talk to yourself and about yourself in a kind way. When you hear yourself being negative, say "stop" and substitute it with a positive statement. Can someone think of an example of this?

**Be aware of your impact on others:** For example; A friend has cut her hair and you think she looks awful. You say to her, "What did you do to your hair?" Remember that you affect the self-esteem of others, just as others can have an impact on your own self-esteem. Avoid saying cruel things to others. Being open and honest is not the same as saying everything that pops into your head.

**Learn to accept compliments:** A simple "thank you" said with a confident smile is appropriate and helps to internalize the positives that you receive each day.

**Make a list of your talents:** Include as many skills as possible, examples could be, organizing fridge and cupboards, feeling comfortable while speaking on the telephone, making others feel welcome, encouraging others to work together, etc.

**Become a good time manager:** Make a list of what you want to accomplish during the day and try to stick with it as much as possible. Then feel good about what you accomplish, even if you weren't able to finish everything on the list.

**Find some time "just for you":** We all need time to engage in activities that relax and energize us. Find out what this is for you and try to do it, once a day.

**Find someone who needs your help:** When we feel that we have the time so that it doesn't become burdensome, reaching out to help others can make us feel better about ourselves. Helping others and trying to make the world a better place is a very important self-esteem building strategy; we help ourselves by helping others.

**Choose to live above criticism:** A woman who is highly critical has low self-esteem. When we put others down, we are sending a message of self-hatred. When we are being criticized by others, we don't have to buy into it. Decide for yourself if there is some truth to what they are saying or they are trying to make themselves feel better by making someone else feel worse.

## KEY CONCEPTS ABOUT PERSONAL QUALITIES



Each of us is unique, one-of-a-kind. Our qualities combine in such a way that we are totally special. No one else on earth, past or present, has the same exact combination of qualities that we have.



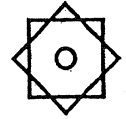
Despite our negative qualities, each one of us is worthwhile and valuable – right now, exactly the way we are. Each of us is important and has a right to be here. Each of us matters just as much as anyone else does in the overall scheme of things; no one else in this room, in this city, in this world, is any better than you are.



It is difficult to let go of certain pieces of our selves, perhaps even the negative ones. Each of us has qualities which we prize and would regret losing.



It is possible to change the qualities we dislike. It can be challenging work, but it is possible. However, it is also important to remember that no one is perfect.



## Some tips on improving self-esteem

by Wendi Rockert and Maria Jacobsen

1. If you make a mistake or are criticized, remember that it is your *behaviour* that is the issue, not your *worth* as a person. You are not a "bad person" because you made an error.
2. In evaluating yourself, focus on the many facets of your personality and abilities, not just your weight. Think about areas you do well in, personal qualities you have, and your relationships with others. You, as a person, are far more than the numbers on the scale.
3. Explore your opinions and beliefs before asking for advice or decisions from others. Learn to listen to and trust your own judgements. Question why you give more weight to other people's opinions than you do to your own.
4. Give yourself credit for your accomplishments, even the small ones. You probably criticize yourself harshly for your weaknesses and ignore or minimize the successes you have. Start to recognize the positive things you do and remind yourself when you have done a job well.
5. Try to accept compliments rather than discounting them. Instead of not believing the compliment, realize that it is most likely that the person is not lying and genuinely means what he or she is saying. To deny or reject the compliment can result in the compliment giver feeling awkward. To accept the compliment helps the giver feel acknowledged and leads the receiver, you, to begin to believe positive qualities about yourself.
6. Take an assertion course and put new skills into practice. Being more assertive can build self-esteem.
7. Recognize your personal rights, i.e. I have the right to say no, I have the right to express my opinion. Plan ahead how you will exercise your rights. For example, plan to say no the next time someone asks you to do a favour and you do not feel like it.
8. Work towards recognizing that you, like everyone else, have your vulnerabilities. Balance trying to make small realistic changes with accepting the way that you are. For example, you might be anxious and self-conscious in groups. You could try new behaviours such as "I will talk to one person, whoever I am most comfortable with". Also balance this with realizing that "I will probably always be somewhat anxious in certain groups, and I would not expect myself to always be a fluent, at ease public speaker".
9. Challenge all-or-nothing thinking, i.e. "if I am not perfect in every respect then I am a complete failure". To challenge these thoughts, find evidence for and against these beliefs. Replace the thought with something more realistic, flexible and helpful. For example, "I do not need to be perfect to be successful" or "if I make mistakes, then it means I am trying to learn something".

## Food For Thought

- \* If Barbie were a real woman, she'd have to walk on all fours due to her proportions.
- \* The average woman today stands 5feet, 3inches tall, weighs 144 pounds and wears a size 12-14.
- \* Models today weigh on average 23% less than the average woman.
- \* 11% of respondents in a recent survey said that, if a genetic predisposition to obesity was identified in their unborn children, they would opt for abortion.
- \* 90% of people who enter weight-loss programs have regained the weight they lost by the end of one year. Of those who have gained weight, most gain more than they have lost.
- \* At any given time, 40% of all women in Canada are dieting and 61% of adolescents and young adult women are dieting and for socially dictated, cosmetic reasons rather than health reasons.
- \* A recent Health Promotion Survey discovered that 70% of all Canadian women (including heavy, averaged sized , and thin women) wanted to reduce their weight.
- \* In a review of medical studies of obesity researchers found that the food intake of obese individuals did not differ from that of those considered to be of normal weight. In other words, fat people don't eat more than thin people.
- \* Research has demonstrated that children as young as young as 3 years old attribute negative qualities such as, "cheating", "dirty", "mean", and "lazy" to fat people. The majority of five year olds in the study would prefer to have a life threatening illness than be fat.
- \* More than 80% of Canadian Women dislike their bodies.
- \* A recent study of female Canadian university students revealed that over 75% of self-esteem was based in body image.