Increasing Your *Passion* for *Life* by Building Your **Self-Esteem**

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"You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love & affection."
~Buddha

Have you ever wished that you felt better about yourself? Maybe you've felt kind of "blah" about your life and where it's going.

The good news is if you put your mind to it, you do have the power to grow your self-esteem! When you do, ***you'll also, as a happy result, turn up your passion and galvanize your efforts to live the life you seek and deserve.***

This guide provides specific actions to take in seven different areas of your life to achieve greater self-esteem:

- Discover how your job can increase positive feelings about yourself.
- How to use your thoughts to feel better about yourself
- The importance of doing some physical and emotional "house-cleaning"
- Engaging regularly in cherished activities to cultivate feelings of self-love and self-worth
- In re-connecting with your life roles as a partner and parent, you'll find your opinion of yourself improves quickly.
- Your physical well-being is intimately aligned with what you think and believe about yourself, so we've included a chapter about how to enhance your physical self.

- Finally, learn the powerful impact that recognizing your uniqueness can have on your efforts to increase your self-esteem.

Begin your journey now to construct self-esteem that will drive you to valiantly create the existence you've always dreamed of for you and your family.

> *"A man is but the product of his thoughts; what he thinks, he becomes."*
> ***~Mahatma Gandhi***

1. Apply Yourself At Work To Increase Your Self-Esteem

One of the main sources of your self-esteem as an adult is your career. ***Regardless of the kind of work you do, it's important to recognize its value in your life.***

Your job is the source of your livelihood. It provides much of the main structure to your existence. How you feel about your work plays a major role in how you feel about yourself.

Hopefully, you have a positive view of your career and put forth your best efforts at work. But even if you don't, it's time to realize its impact

on your life. Your work can bring you positive experiences, feelings, and self-esteem if you choose to apply yourself.

Consider these points to galvanize your job efforts and pump up your self-esteem:

1. **Discover the value in working hard.** No matter how you feel about your job, if you can re-frame it so you focus on your efforts, your self-esteem will improve. Whether you're working diligently at filing and answering the phones or making as many sales calls as you can in a day, you'll feel better about yourself.

    - At the end of the day, when you step back and look around at all you accomplished, you can't help but have positive feelings.

2. **Learn to love your job.** After all, someone somewhere benefits because of the work you complete. Work toward finding an inner peace related to your career.

    - ***Make a conscious decision to love your work.*** In order to allow yourself to love your job, let go of the negativity and seek to find the love for what you're doing for a living. There is something positive to be said about every job.

    - Identify the positives of your job and focus on them each day. Make something great happen by loving your job.

3. **Be the best** office assistant, garbage collector, or insurance agent you can be. What will it take for you to be the star worker at your workplace? If you're unsure where to start, begin observing a co-worker whom you believe does a top-notch job.

    - How does the person conduct himself? What do you notice about their work ethic? What about work habits? Do they consistently arrive early and stay a bit late? Perhaps they ask questions to clarify assignments and works creatively on each project.

    - Use your observational skills to find out how to be the best, and then apply what you've learned to rise to the top.

Putting your nose to the grindstone will aid you to re-discover what's important to you in terms of your career. ***Make every effort to re-connect with your job.*** When you see the value of working hard, decide to love your job, and strive to be the best worker you can, you'll increase your self-esteem tenfold.

"Work joyfully and peacefully, knowing that right thoughts and right efforts will inevitably bring about right results."
~James Allen

2. Use Your Cognitions To Build A Positive View Of Yourself

Although self-esteem has to do with how you feel, you can affect your level of self-esteem by using your thoughts or "cognitions." The good news is that you have control over your thoughts and can change them if it will help you feel better or progress toward improved self-esteem.

Survey this list of strategies to utilize your cognitions to increase your self-esteem:

1. **Refrain from negative self-talk.** What do you say when you talk to yourself? Perhaps you say mostly positive things. "I know I'm going to do a good job" or "No one can make better cakes than I can" are examples of positive self-talk that serve to enhance how you feel about yourself.

    - On the other hand, negative self-talk can be destructive to your self-esteem. Examples of negative self-talk are comments like, "I know I'll never amount to anything" or "My boss will never pick me to work on an important project."

    - Strive to avoid negative self-talk by practicing the subsequent strategies in this chapter.

2. Learn to distract yourself from negative thoughts. As soon as you begin to think negatively, it's your responsibility to change those thoughts.

- Notice right away when negativity is floating through your mind. Then, make a decision to think about something else.

- Tell yourself, "I'm not going to think about that right now. Instead, I'm going to watch a movie." Or you could say, "I'm going to do something positive right now, like wash the car."

- ***The key is to be aware of your thoughts so you can immediately change your thinking (and perhaps your activity) at the time you begin thinking negatively.***

3. **Reflect on your successes.** Remembering what you've done well in the past will help you gain some wind beneath your wings. When you remind yourself that you've enjoyed some great successes, you'll realize that you can also have great success in your present and future.

    - Consider the skills and character traits that helped you succeed. Perhaps you used patience and tact when dealing with someone in power over you. Maybe you persevered through a very rough time by thinking positively and received a promotion as a result.

    - ***Those elements are still inside of you.*** Vow to re-discover the aspects of yourself that kept you going to achieve past successes. You'll feel great about yourself.

4. **Do some self-evaluation—what are you really good at?** Delve in further to your personality and preferences. ***List the talents, skills, and activities you do well.***

    - Perhaps you're creative and make beautiful scrapbooks or like to stay busy so everything around the house is always in tip-top condition. Maybe you decided to get in shape a few years ago and have done a great job maintaining your good health.

    - Look deep inside to acknowledge what you excel at. As you recognize the positive traits within you, you'll realize you have a lot of reasons to have a healthy self-esteem.

5. **What positive elements do people notice about you?** Do they say, "You're really good with numbers" or "You type faster than anyone I know?"

    - Recognize that people usually don't make complimentary statements unless they really believe you possess those qualities. Use those statements to remind yourself of more positives about yourself. Find personal strength in the idea that you're good at some things and people notice.

It's smart to use your thoughts however you can to feel better about yourself. Avoid engaging in negative self-talk. Distract yourself when you begin to think negatively. Ponder past successes and think about what you're good at. Take a look at what others say you do well. Re-

align your thoughts to produce more self-esteem and you'll like what happens.

> *"Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results."*
> ***~Willie Nelson***

3. Do Some Housecleaning—Physically And Emotionally

When you're looking to ignite your passion, it's helpful to live an uncluttered existence, physically and emotionally. Have you considered that maybe it's time to do a bit of housecleaning?

Whether it's your physical or emotional "environment" that is cluttered, why not gussy up your surroundings?

Ponder these points:

1. **Clutter is a deterrent to positive self-esteem.** Because clutter in and of itself is distracting, it's wise to tidy up the world around you. Physical clutter draws your attention away from what's important and on to the messy situations surrounding you. Emotional clutter serves to do the same thing—divert attentions from what really matters.

    - ***Banishing chaos and messy spaces from your life will help you re-gain the space to work on things that matter to you.*** When you do, you'll build your self-esteem immensely.

    - If you're unsure about the suggestion to physically clean up your surroundings, try cleaning out just one drawer, cabinet, or closet. You'll see you completed a task and made something better. Then, you'll feel pretty good about it.

    - If you're overwhelmed at the prospect of getting your home in order, start small. For example, focus on one room at a time, or even one corner of the room or a piece of furniture that's piled with clothing.

2. **Bring order into your life.** When there's order in your home, you can look around and feel good about your environment and yourself. You'll feel calmer and self-esteem will grow.

    - Elicit your partner's help to get things organized at home.

3. **Examine your close relationships.** Our close relationships have a profound impact on how we feel about ourselves. If you're in a relationship with someone who's supportive, kind, and loving, you'll believe you're worthy of love and affection.

    - On the other hand, if one or more of your major relationships causes you to feel hurt, discouraged, disappointed, or angry, your self-esteem probably suffers because of it.

    - Are most of the people you're close to positive and encouraging toward you? Do you feel emotionally supported by them? ***When you fill your life with loving, caring people, it will make it easier for you to maintain healthy self-esteem.***

4. **Take action to change relationships that bring you down.** Tell the person how you feel when they speak negatively toward you and then share what you want the person to do instead.

    - "It hurts my feelings when you call me, 'Tubby.' I'd like you to call me by my name instead." You could also say something like, "When you yell at me, I get scared. Can you please lower your voice or wait until you're not angry before you talk to me?"

    - There may be times when you must make a decision to end the relationship for your own best interests. If you feel unhappy more than you feel happy about being with a

person, it's wise to consider moving on to a more emotionally uncluttered existence.

- Nothing will bring down your self-esteem quicker than a relationship filled with negativity and angst.

Having a cluttered home or emotional state can hamper your efforts to build self-esteem. Take action to bring order into your life. Evaluate close personal relationships and work to resolve any that are messy or chaotic. ***Clean up your act in every way and you'll feel better about you.***

Plus, when you find yourself without chaos, you can better focus on the life you've always wanted.

> *"Remember always that you not only have the right to be an individual, you have an obligation to be one."*
> ***~Eleanor Roosevelt***

4. Immerse Yourself In Hobbies And Activities You Love

Part of stoking your self-esteem is allowing yourself the time, space, and supplies to just be you—to enjoy taking part in the activities that you choose.

If you've found yourself feeling angry, resentful, or just empty lately, maybe it's time to get back into doing what you love to do.

1. **Recognize that doing something you love ignites your passion for life.** You tend to be good at things you like to do. People will praise your efforts. You'll feel great about doing what you love. In essence, your self-esteem can be found by doing your special pastime.

2. **Focus your efforts.** Rather than trying three new activities or hobbies you want to explore, pick one that you get excited about. Then, channel your efforts into that hobby. You'll see yourself getting better and better and it will feel marvelous!

3. **Schedule "fun time" into your appointment book.** When you do what you love on a regular basis (at least once weekly), your interest and excitement in the activity is piqued. You have something to look forward to. You want to learn more and do more. It's exhilarating.

    ✶ ***There's no easier way to get excited about life than to get in to something you really want to do.***

How can you not feel better about yourself when you're taking part in activities you adore? When you do those things, you develop more

passion in your life. Immerse yourself into your beloved hobbies and you will truly enhance your self-esteem.

> *"The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are."*
> ***~Joseph Campbell***

5. Concentrate On Being A Great Partner Or Parent

When you demonstrate who the most important people in your life are, something wonderful happens. The relationships bloom and so does your self-esteem.

Review the strategies below to increase your efforts to be a fabulous partner or parent and in turn, cultivate your self-esteem and happiness:

1. **Notice what you're good at in your role as a partner or parent. Pat yourself on the back.** Recognizing your strengths in your relationship will help you realize what a giving, caring person you are.

2. **Decide what you can do to improve as a partner, mother, or father.** And then do it. Perhaps you could deepen your relationships with your kids by spending one-on-one time with each of them every week. In your partner relationship, bring some romance to the time you spend together to re-ignite sparks and keep the fires of romantic passion burning.

    ✴ ***You'll boost your positive feelings about yourself when you work to be a better partner or parent.***

3. **Find the joy in your role.** What is it about being a mom, dad, wife, husband, or partner that makes you happy? Recognize there was a time in your life when you likely yearned to be in the very role you now have. Take some time to find the real satisfaction and joy in your important life role(s).

    ✴ Immerse yourself in the joy of the stage of life you find yourself in right now. Notice the attraction you feel toward your partner. Smile at your child's sweet ways. Recognize all that is good, fresh, and true around you.

4. **Identify with your gratitude for your partner or children.** It's easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of working and paying the bills. Take some moments to give thanks for those special people in your life.

- ***When you recognize the fascinating, loving people you have close to you, you'll realize you must be a pretty worthy person, too.***

5. **Refuse to take your relationship for granted.** Stay in tune emotionally with the people closest to you. Notice their wants and needs. Be there for that special someone as much as you can.

    - When you connect with the fact that neither of you really have to be where you are, you can see that you each chose the other. And that's pretty awesome, don't you think?

Focusing your efforts to be the best partner or parent you can be will bring incredible feelings of passion, joy, and self-satisfaction to your life. Figure out what you're good at and determine the areas you need to work on. See the fun and joy in your role.

Let yourself feel thankful and vow to never take your relationship for granted. Your self-esteem will bloom.

"Tell me how a person judges his or her self-esteem and I will tell you how that person operates at work, in love, in sex, in parenting, in every important aspect of existence - and how high he or she is likely to rise. The reputation you have with yourself - your self-esteem - is the single most important factor for a fulfilling life."
~Nathaniel Branden

6. Recognize Physical Well-Being Is Intimately Connected With Your Self-Esteem

The state of your physical self is an integral aspect to how you feel about yourself. ***Think about the time, effort, and money you put in to your physical appearance.*** Regular haircuts, professional shaves, facials, manicures, pedicures, and nice clothes are investments, not only in your appearance, but your self-esteem as well.

Try these tips for keeping up your physical appearance to build your self-esteem:

1. **Take part in regular physical activity at least four times a week.** Exercising five or six times weekly is even better.

- When you exercise consistently you look better. Your skin is clearer. Your eyes are brighter. You appear more toned. And you walk with a certain renewed sense of confidence.

2. **Become good at one sport.** Read about it. Study it. Practice it. Make it your "thing." When you do, you'll feel physically stronger. ***And when you feel physically stronger, your confidence thrives.***

    - People will come to you and ask your advice on the sport. You'll feel proud about what you know and how you excel.

3. **Discover a hair style or haircut that's exactly right for you.** A good barber or hair dresser can help. Rather than continually try to change your hair to go with the trends, instead, find the right cut for you that consistently looks great.

4. **Take care of your skin.** Whether you're male or female, take care of your skin, especially your face.

    - Check out the cosmetics counter at a local department store and inquire about an effective skin care regimen. Don't forget some body lotion for your arms and legs, too.

5. **Wear good-fitting, classic clothing.** Your clothes don't have to be expensive, but they should fit and flatter your body. If you struggle to select the styles that look best on you, ask for help when you're shopping. Or seek assistance from a friend who always looks fantastic.

- Even a small wardrobe of 8-10 high quality, nice-fitting pieces that mix and match can make you feel really great about yourself.

You've probably suspected that how you care for yourself physically is connected with how you feel overall about yourself. Take pride in how you appear physically and self-esteem will grow.

> *"Regardless of how you feel inside, always try to look like a winner. Even if you are behind, a sustained look of control and confidence can give you a mental edge that results in victory."*
> ***~Arthur Ashe***

7. Rejoice In Your Uniqueness

When you recognize your special sense of uniqueness and fully accept every part of yourself, you have successfully embraced the essence of you. And when you do, you'll have achieved great comfort and satisfaction with yourself.

Reflect on these strategies to move ahead in your quest for self-esteem:

1. **Identify that there is only one you.** That's right: no one else on this earth is quite like you. Your one-of-a-kind blend of character traits isn't repeated by anyone else.

2. **Take note of your unique mix of talents and skills.** Maybe you're a highly talented artist or musician and can wash a car or mow the lawn quicker than anybody else on your block.

    - You love to tell stories and your friends always call you to seek advice of how to deal with challenges with their friends.

    - Write down every talent and skill you believe you have. Then enjoy the glory of all the great things you can do. Let yourself feel marvelous about what's on your list.

3. **Acknowledge the compliments you receive from others.** Learn to be open and accepting of what others tell you that you do really well. If you pay attention, your friends and loved ones will mention what you're fantastic at through the compliments they give you.

    - Maybe you're the safest driver, funniest person to be around, or the best cook in your group of friends. When your friends remind you of these things, tell them you appreciate their comments. ***Let yourself feel the love.***

4. **Realize you've survived troubles before.** You've no doubt survived your own set of struggles to make it to where you are right now. So, thank your lucky stars for providing you with the skills and talents that can help you survive and thrive.

There's no one else quite like you, and that's something to feel good about. Notice your own mix of personality characteristics, talents, and skills. Bask in the compliments you receive from others. And rejoice about whatever you have that's good in your life.

> *"The greatest difficulty is that men do not think enough of themselves, do not consider what it is that they are sacrificing when they follow in a herd, or when they cater for their establishment."*
> ***~Ralph Waldo Emerson***

8. Summary

You enhance your passion for life whenever you increase your self-esteem. Some activities to take part in include applying yourself at work, using your thoughts to help yourself feel better, and doing some housecleaning, physically and emotionally. Also, take time to practice the hobbies and activities you love and work to be the best partner or parent you can be.

Focus on sprucing up your physical self and allow yourself to feel joy about your special set of talents and skills—there is only one you.

As you begin working on these areas of your life, you'll notice something slowly flowering: your self-esteem! And when you have self-esteem, you're ready to build the life you crave and so richly deserve.

"Think like a queen. A queen is not afraid to fail.
Failure is another steppingstone to greatness."
~Oprah Winfrey