

Self Esteem

Unit 2 Lesson 2



★ ★ Self Esteem refers to how much you respect yourself and like yourself.

Self esteem is a continuum ranging from high self esteem to low self esteem. Many psychologist think that high self esteem has a postive impact on health, while low self esteem has a negative effect on health.

Benefits of High Self Esteem

Accepting of Self

Realistic View of Strengths and Weaknesses

Maintain a Positive Attitude Even After Failure

Form Close Relationships With people who Respect and Value Them Because They Value Themselves

Risks of Low Self Esteem

Little Respect for Themselves

Judge Self Harshly

Worry Too Much of What Others Think of Themselves

"Put on an Act" in Public to Hide Insecurities

Fear of Failure and Looking Bad Prevents them From Trying New Things

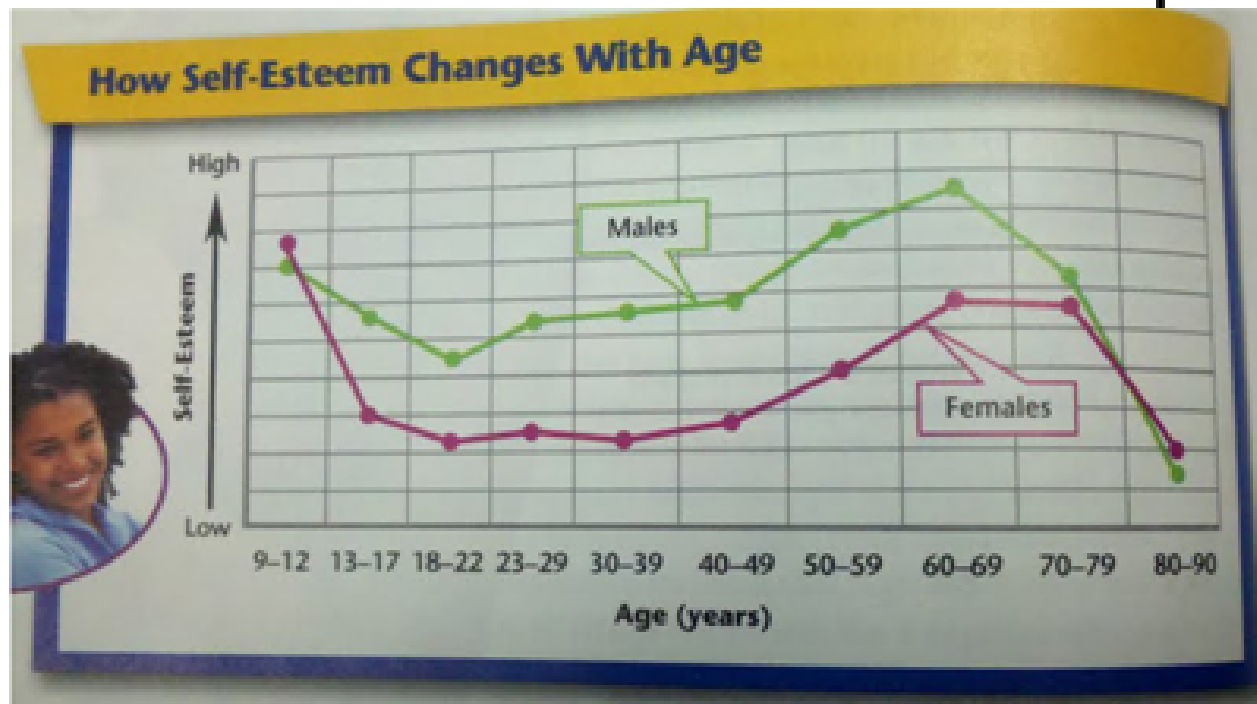
Negative Thoughts Make it Difficult to Succeed

Studies show that teens with low self esteem are more likely than their peers to use drugs, drop out of school, become pregnant, and suffer from eating disorders. They are more likely to engage in violent or self-destructive behaviors.

Boost Your Self-Esteem

1. Maintain a Positive Attitude
2. Focus on Your Strength
3. Form Close Relationships
4. Set Goals for Yourself
5. Avoid Risky Behaviors
6. Ask for Help
7. Help Others

How Self Esteem Develops



On average, self-esteem drops in early adolescence, increases gradually during adulthood and decreases again towards the end of life.

Children - Young children need support and encouragement from family members. If they have the chance to succeed at small tasks and to build skills, they are likely to become confident individuals. Most children enter school with relatively high self-esteem, but there is often a gradual decline in self-esteem during elementary school. This may be because students begin to compare themselves with other children. Or the students may receive more negative feedback from teachers, parents or peers.

Adolescence - It is normal for teens to be critical of their appearance, their abilities, their interests, and their shortcomings. But some teens are overly self-conscious and judge themselves harshly. They may compare themselves to only the best athletes or most attractive celebrities. As a result, their self esteem may suffer. Be careful about how the larger world around you may influence your self esteem.

Adulthood - Self esteem generally rises during adulthood. Adults begin to accomplish their goals and take control of their lives. Also, adults are better able to keep things in proper perspective.

Researchers are not sure why self-esteem tends to decrease in older adults.

The drop may be because of health problems or limited roles for older adults in society.

Improve Your Self Esteem

1. **Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses.** Learn to focus on your strengths and build on the things you do well. Don't dwell on your weaknesses, but identify areas where you can make effort to improve.
2. **Set ambitious, but realistic goals for yourself.** Then develop a plan to achieve your goals. Take the time to appreciate and reward yourself when you accomplish a goal.
3. **Don't be too hard on yourself.** When you make a mistake or experience a defeat, figure out what went wrong. Try to learn something positive from the experience and then move on.
4. **Rely on your values.** You will feel better about yourself when you do things that match your values. Avoid doing things just to 'go along with the crowd'. Choose friends who share your values, support your goals, and encourage your efforts to do your best.

Improve Your Self Esteem Cont.

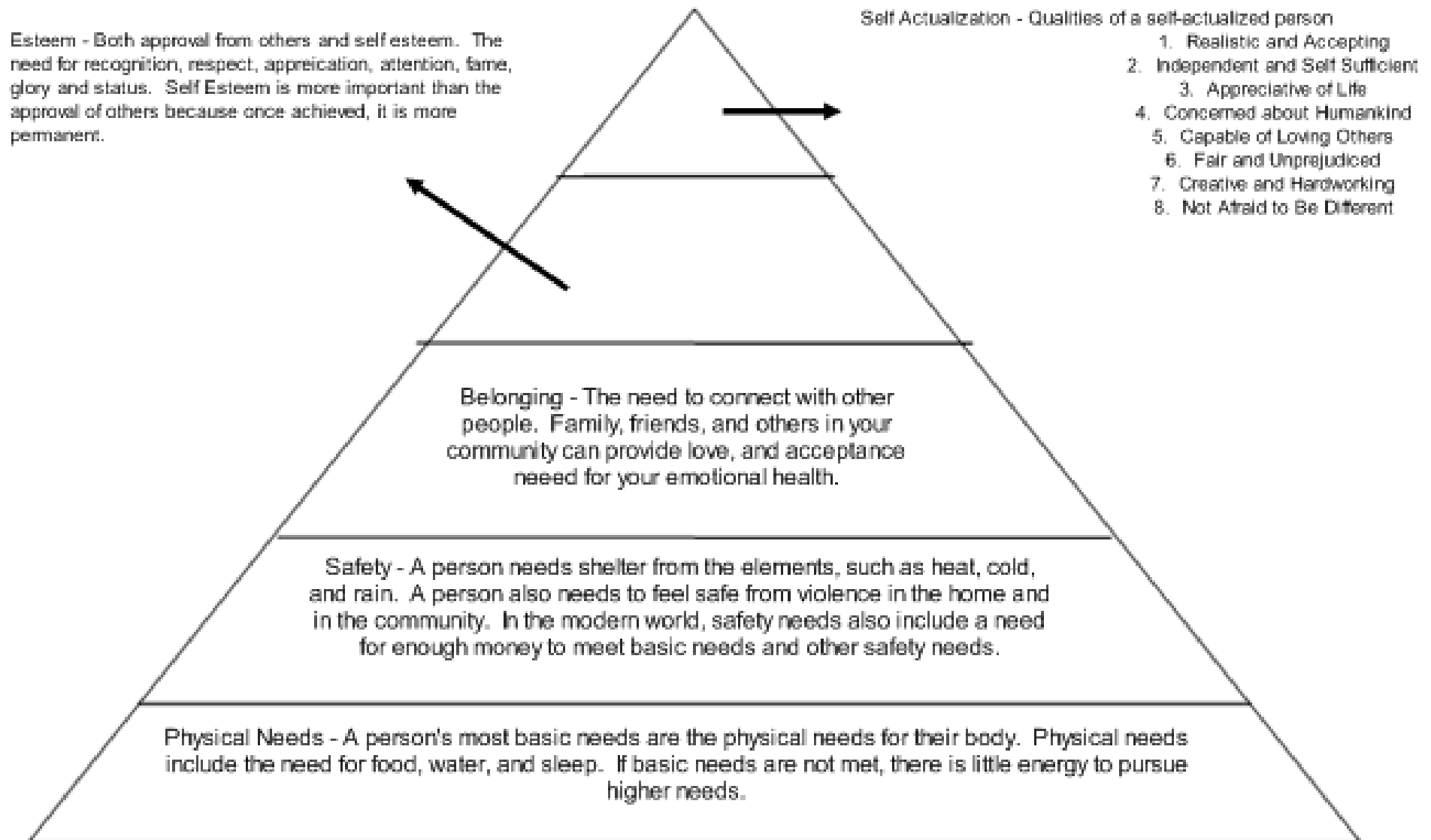
5. **Learn to accept compliments.** However, try to distinguish between genuine praise and insincere flattery.
6. **Look beyond your own concerns.** Do something nice for others. Consider helping out more at home or doing volunteer work in your community.
7. **Do not focus too much on appearance.** A focus on appearance can undermine self-esteem. Making sure that you are well-groomed, however, can help build self esteem.

The psychologist Abraham Maslow thought that people have an inborn drive to be the best that they can be. The process by which people achieve their full potential is called self actualization.

According to Maslow, before people can achieve self-actualization, their basic needs must be met. These needs are physical needs, the need to feel safe, the need to belong, and the need for esteem.

Maslow arranged these needs into a pyramid. He called this arrangement the "hierarchy of needs" (an arrangement of human needs in a pyramid with physical needs at the base and self-actualization at the top)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Research has shown that Maslow correctly identified the set of human needs. However, psychologists now think that people don't need to progress through the hierarchy of needs in the way that Maslow described.

For instance, Chris Gardner from the Pursuit of Happyness achieved his goals and had esteem even though his basic needs were not met. Nevertheless, a well-fed person who has adequate shelter is more likely to be friendly and self confident. The person is also more likely to perform tasks better than a person with low self esteem.