

Healing Low Self-Esteem

Marilisa Sachteleben

Remember that healing is a process; one day at a time. Your self-esteem wasn't trashed overnight and true recovery takes a long time. But you will be energized as you begin to feel better.

Pause and listen to the negative messages you send yourself and talk back. Learn to catch yourself and delete negative messages. Generate some new positive images, memories and messages. If you are hearing negative messages about yourself, answer back. Speak up for yourself to others and to yourself. Be your own best friend.

Remove yourself from 'dangerous' situations and people. Detach from cruel, selfish, hurtful people. No one can make you feel badly without your permission. Get away from painful people. This may only need to be temporary, but it will help to salvage your self-esteem.

Don't put a red flasher on your car for everyone else's crises. Many of us have learned to 'give without counting the cost'. It is important to count the cost to yourself and your needs. There are people who thrive on chaos and crisis. You aren't obligated to bail everyone else out. You don't have to be the designated emotional ambulance driver.

Stop volunteering to be a victim. Many of us who have chronic low self esteem, cannot bear for anyone around us to be angry. We are afraid we've failed. Low self-esteemers go out of their way to be ultra nice, patient, forgiving, etc. Let them be angry, if you know you have done nothing hurtful. You don't have to join everyone in their misery

And let people own their feelings. Let people feel their feelings, but don't stress out over what is essentially their problem. You can say, 'I'm sorry that happened' or something like that but don't apologize for yourself if you have done nothing wrong. If they can't move on, you can. And pat yourself on the back for being a good friend.

Discover what you need and get it for yourself. Stop taking such good care of others that you don't care for yourself. Nourish and comfort your mind, soul, body and spirit.

Vent your frustrations. Don't just smile and say I'm fine. If someone asks, you can say, no I'm not doing too well just now.' Be honest most of all with yourself. Don't cover it. Process it. Listen to yourself. Go to therapy.

Encourage yourself. Progress seems slow sometimes. Give yourself a pat on the back for your hard work.

JUSTASK
Paré