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## How to Build High Self-Esteem



### What Is *Low* Self-Esteem?

**Self-esteem** is how you feel about yourself. **Low self-esteem** is when you have a low opinion of yourself. In this, it contrasts with **low self-confidence** which is your opinion of what you think you can't *do*.

Many people suffer from low self-esteem. It often begins during our school days, especially with the unrealistic notion that no one must fail. This results not in each child feeling good about him or herself, but paradoxically, in more and more children suffering from low self-esteem.

This is because non-accomplishment yields a negative self-image. And the self-esteem of those children who *have* achieved good academic scores is undermined because of the "no failure" policy. How important can good grades be when everyone passes regardless of how poorly they perform?

### Symptoms of Low Self-Esteem

- people pleasing
- sarcasm
- false confidence
- fear of being alone
- shyness.

*People pleasing* may be a symptom of low self-esteem. Its opposite -- people using, manifested by utter selfishness coupled with arrogance-- may likewise be a symptom but those who display this kind of behaviour rarely seek help.

*Sarcasm* pops out of the mouths of people with self-esteem despite their desperate need to be liked by others. It's paradoxically a self-sabotaging way to keep others at a distance.

*False confidence* is a fake front that a person with low self-esteem may establish to conceal his or her inner shame.

*Fear of being alone* intensifies the sense of unworthiness which leads to an intensification of low self-esteem.

*Shyness* is partly a fear of being found out. That is, "I'd better stay to myself otherwise people will find out what a horrible person I am."

## **Hypnotherapy Can Overcome Your Low Self-Esteem**

Hypnotherapy can deal with both the symptoms and the underlying causes of low self-esteem, such as guilt and shame.

Hypnoanalysis can uncover the origins of our guilt or shame. Thus we can understand the reasons for our low self-esteem (beyond obvious ones such as non-achievement).

So, instead of going through life vainly wondering why we feel so badly about ourselves we can know what caused our low self-esteem. Even more importantly, hypnotherapy can deal with those causes and free us to raise our self-esteem.

Hypnotherapy is particularly useful in the battle against shame. Very often people who suffer shame and the consequent low self-esteem, have no real reason to be ashamed. For example, those who were sexually abused when they were [young](#).

The guilt and shame properly belong to the abuser, not to the [victim](#)

## **How Hypnotherapy Built Ronald's Self-Esteem**

Ronald prided himself on being "God's gift to women" so he was puzzled by the growing feeling of dissatisfaction that dominated his days.

"I can't understand it. The wife and the girlfriend have nothing to complain about. Maybe they know and maybe they don't [about the frequent dallying with other women while Ronald was away 'on business'] but the more women I bedded the better I felt. For the last few months, though, I have this gnawing inside me. I can't shake this feeling of dread. It's an emptiness, a sense of unworthiness that I can't explain. Unworthy! That's not me."

But it was him. In hypnosis, Ronald was asked to amplify this empty feeling.

And then to allow the first time he felt this sorrow to come to mind.

After a short pause, Ronald began to sob. "I'm five years old. My mother is saying goodbye. She's leaving my brother and me with our father. Why? Why is she leaving us? Daddy says she loves someone else. Auntie Maureen. [more sobs] Why does Mummy love Auntie Maureen more than me?"

The hypnotherapist helped the 5-year-old Ronald deal with his grief using a re-framing technique known to be a powerful antidote to childhood misery.

Out of hypnosis, Ronald began to re-evaluate his unfaithfulness towards women, and his refusal to fully commit to one woman. As he made sense of both his betrayals and his inner discomfort Ronald's self-esteem rose. He forgave his mother and himself, developed a more realistic self-appraisal and changed his exploitative behaviour towards women. The inner dissatisfaction faded away and in its place grew a sense of calm, of better self-esteem.

While Ronald took several sessions for the changes to take a firm hold, the guilt that infuses some people with low self-esteem can sometimes be banished in one session of hypnotherapy. Like Olga, who had condemned herself for forgetting her 2-year-old daughter in a shopping mall.

### **Olga's Guilt Banished with Hypnotherapy**

Olga wasted so much energy in self-blame that she would lie awake at night worrying about why she had forgotten her daughter [for ten minutes] and whether her absentmindedness would return.

In a single session of hypnotherapy, Olga was asked to picture herself as the opposite to the negative picture she'd been reinforcing of herself as a bad mother.

In addition, the therapist offered Olga firm suggestions of forgiveness. That is, she could forgive herself for her temporary lapse of attention. Her sleep at night would from then on be deep and refreshing as she knew she would always remember her daughter wherever the two of them went, shopping or to the park or to a playdate, for example.

Olga's face took on the serene look that is so often seen when someone is in hypnosis. A few days later she called to let the hypnotherapist know that indeed her sleep had been revitalizing and she felt totally confident in her abilities as a mother.

Preoccupation and dismay with one's appearance can also be signs of **low self-esteem**. Like Thomas.

### **Hypnosis Transformed Thomas' Low Self-Esteem**

Shy and self-conscious, Thomas would take a long time trying to decide what to wear. A half hour could go by as he fussed with his hair, fearful that people might laugh at him if it stuck out.

It was particularly difficult for Thomas to arrange his hair satisfactorily because he hated to look at himself in the mirror.

Consequently, he was often late for work.

Socially, high school had been a nightmare for Thomas. When he left school and joined the workforce his awkwardness around other people, his reluctance to make eye contact and his poor sense of what clothing was appropriate alienated him from bosses and co-workers alike.

Eventually the pain of being lonely and feeling unworthy pushed Thomas into therapy.

His low self-esteem did not arise from parents who abused him physically. But Thomas did grow up with the aching certainty that he was of no more importance to his parents than the rug at their front door.

Small for his age Thomas took no part in sports. His low self-esteem was reinforced every time teachers and other children ignored him.

However, Thomas is highly intelligent. That, coupled with the countless hours he spent daydreaming as a child probably underlies his terrific talent for hypnosis.

The therapist hypnotized Thomas and asked him to go back in his imagination to a time when he felt good about himself. After a few moments such a time floated into Thomas' mind. A time before low self-worth had set in.

He had not been as self-conscious and lonely in elementary school [before the family moved from the east coast to the west] as he later was in high school and as a young adult.

Thomas' face lit up as he described a particularly happy day. "It was my seventh birthday. My parents had said nothing, but at school Mrs Steinberg put on a little party for me. All the kids wore party hats. We had chocolate cake and Mrs Steinberg had even arranged for presents."

Thomas smiled at the recollection. His speech was energized, quite unlike his customary monotone. "I knew Mrs Steinberg liked me. I always did well in her classes. And I loved it when she hugged me close. She even smelled good."

The hypnotherapist suggested Thomas once again feel the comfort of Mrs Steinberg's hug, and that he breathe in the familiar scent.

After Thomas gave a slight nod to indicate that he was once again safe in Mrs Steinberg's embrace the hypnotherapist gave a series of positive suggestions to Thomas.

"When you emerge from hypnosis you vividly recall the scent of Mrs Steinberg. And from now on whenever you smell that wonderful smell you are filled with the delight, comfort and feeling of protection and of being loved that you enjoyed as a seven-year-old. It's as though Mrs Steinberg were here, accepting and liking you for yourself. And you absorb that acceptance and it frees you to similarly love and accept yourself."

When Thomas emerged from hypnosis he smiled and said, "She smelled like a fresh rose."

Perhaps Mrs Steinberg used rose-scented soap, or rose-scented water or perhaps wore a rose-scented sachet. Where the scent came from [and even if it were a figment of Thomas's imagination] didn't really matter.

What was, and is, important is that now Thomas had a way to enhance his self-esteem. Anchoring to the scent of this positive person who had unconditionally accepted him as a child meant that he could use this process to change his attitude towards himself.



He began to wear a rose so that the scent would be with him all the time. The post-hypnotic suggestions took hold. So the feelings of warmth and acceptance, of love and worthiness that the scent invoked filled Thomas daily. He found himself enabled and energized to face people and situations he had previously run from.

Slowly he improved his life. Gone was the fear of mirrors. His preoccupation with the opinion of others is diminishing. Higher education and better work are on the horizon. He's even convinced it won't be long before he has a girlfriend.

Hypnotherapy has transformed Thomas's low self-esteem into high self-esteem.

To **make an appointment in Montreal with Dr Knight** go to [Hypnotic Testimonials and Hypnotherapy Fees](#). Or email me [drknight@therapy-insights.com](mailto:drknight@therapy-insights.com)