

The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem

Planned obsolescence started with lightbulbs.

The Centennial Bulb's lifespan is impressive, but there's a reason few bulbs have come close. "Planned obsolescence" is the practice of designing products to need replacing. Today, we see it everywhere, especially in technology such as the latest smartphones, but it dates back about 100 years. In the mid-1920s, decades after the Centennial Light first switched on, an industry group called Phoebus engineered a 1,000-hour lifespan for incandescent bulbs so households would have to replace them more frequently. That money-making strategy became the standard from then on

Nathaniel Branden's The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem

The definitive work on self-esteem by the leading pioneer in the field has never been a more critical and debated concept than today. There are many definitions and quick guides to achieving exemplary self-esteem, but what do we know about this fundamental psychological concept?

The author draws on a lifetime of clinical practice and research to offer a comprehensive definition.

This book explores the six daily practices that create healthy self-esteem.

You'll learn how increased awareness, acceptance, responsibility, assertiveness, purposefulness, and integrity raise self-esteem.

1. Awareness, 2. acceptance, 3. responsibility, 4. assertiveness, 5. purposefulness, 6. integrity, all raises self-esteem.

#1

Self-esteem is the immune system of consciousness, essential for performing at your best.

Self-esteem is the immune system of consciousness, essential for performing at your best.

How many self-help gurus have you heard spout claims like these? Probably many.

We hear about self-esteem all the time, but could you define it?

Self-esteem is the immune system of consciousness, essential for performing at one's best. **It provides strength, resistance, and the ability to regenerate.**

Like our immune system, self-esteem is innate, and we need it to handle life's difficulties. Calcium is another fitting analogy for self-esteem. Calcium strengthens our teeth and bones and is essential for a healthy body, while self-esteem is vital for strong psychological development. (The soul)

While we wouldn't necessarily die from a lack of calcium, our ability to live life fully would be significantly limited. The same goes for self-esteem. We don't need it to survive, but we cannot live a "whole" life without it.

Why is this? It all concerns how our self-esteem works, which creates certain expectations about our capabilities. These expectations influence our behavior and turn them into reality.

Self-esteem becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Consider the story of a recovering alcoholic from the author's psychotherapy practice. He was about to land the most significant commission of his career as an architect. Still, instead of being excited, he felt incredibly anxious and didn't deserve it.

Why? Because of his low self-esteem and low expectations, he chose to drink to steady his nerves, became very drunk, behaved rudely, and lost his job. Unfortunately, his low self-esteem led to his downfall. (a Kamikaze Spirit).

1. Recognize your worth in God's eyes: The Bible teaches that every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). Understanding that you are valuable and loved by God can help you develop a healthy sense of self-worth.

#2

Self-esteem is about fighting for your right to happiness (joy) and confidently facing challenges. Because self-esteem is so important for our consciousness, it's worth looking into the topic a bit more, starting with the fundamental ideas it's based upon. Self-esteem really comes down to something quite simple.

We all have a right to be happy. From this, it follows that high self-esteem sees us assert this right and take steps to achieve it. On the other hand, when we let our right to happiness be overridden, we have low self-esteem. Let's explore this difference in real terms. Consider the client who asked the author why she always fell for married guys who didn't care about her. This pattern started to make more sense once the client revealed that her father abandoned her family when she was a child, and her mother blamed her.

So, how does this relate to self-esteem? Her father's departure and her mother's negativity shaped her self-esteem by making her feel that she was unworthy of love. Later in life, she began to behave in a way that made her reality conform to this belief. **(As a man thinks in his heart, so does he.) Proverbs 23:7** By falling for married men who'd always leave her, she reinforced the feeling that she was undeserving of love. Low self-esteem often manifests itself like this. We make choices that make our negative beliefs about others become reality, often harming ourselves. **Low self esteem is the seed bed for the demonic,**

Conversely, if we have high self-esteem, we're not only less likely to be happy but also better at persevering in the face of difficulties.

Psychologists have proven this by setting subjects with varying levels of self-esteem the same task. Unbeknownst to the participants, the tasks include several unsolvable problems. Nevertheless, the high self-esteem participants persevere longer than those with low self-esteem. **Perseverance is one of the spiritual gifts**

2. Embrace your identity in Christ: As a believer, your identity is not solely based on your achievements, appearance, or the opinions of others. Your true identity is found in Christ. The Bible teaches that you are a child of God (John 1:12), chosen and adopted into His family (Ephesians 1:5). Embracing your identity in Christ can give you a solid foundation for self-esteem.

#3

The first pillar is the mindset and practice of living consciously.

The first pillar is the mindset and practice of living consciously. So, what do we have to do to build self-esteem? It's more abstract than you might think.

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Let's examine the six pillars which will guide us. It begins with a shift in mindset. If we want to improve our self-esteem, we must first start living consciously. And no, living consciously doesn't entail some zen, esoteric approach to life. Living consciously means simply being willing to distinguish between three facets of perception—**facts, interpretation, and emotion.**

Here's a basic example of how those three can get tangled together. Because you see your spouse frowning, you interpret that he is angry, which hurts you. But what if you didn't see him frowning? If you realize that you may have misinterpreted his facial expression,

you can reassess your interpretations from a distance without reacting emotionally. We can retain this mindset by asking ourselves simple questions throughout the day, such as, How am I feeling at the moment? Why am I feeling this way?

And, do my actions match my feelings? This way, we'll stay in touch with our internal world. However, living consciously isn't just a mindset, **it's a practice too.**

We've got to keep seeking information from our environment and adjusting our actions accordingly. Here's a simple example that shows conscious living as a mindset and practice.

Say you'd like to buy a new outfit. You'll have worked this out by consciously engaging with your internal world or desire to look different. But then you'll also need to check your external world too, or more specifically, whether you have enough money, the practice side of your purchase. As this process takes both your feelings and your situation into account, you can be sure that the decision you make will be a sound one.

Living consciously in this way provides a fundamental understanding of ourselves, which is a prerequisite to nourishing our well-being. **(Walking in the Spirit Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.)**

#4

The second and third pillars of self-esteem will teach you to accept yourself and take charge of your own happiness..

Self-acceptance, self-responsibility, self-esteem—the first two are so intertwined with the third that it's a bit hard to see the difference.

The fact that they share the same prefix doesn't help.

But the difference is clearer than you think. Self-acceptance and self-responsibility are things that we do to increase our self-esteem.

When we choose to value ourselves, we're practicing self-acceptance, the second pillar of self-esteem. For example, have you done anything in the last week that you regret? Snapped at someone or neglected something you shouldn't have?

Self-acceptance doesn't mean you justify or like these negative actions. Rather, it seeks to understand the underlying causes that led to them. Perhaps you felt patronized or were stressed about something else. If you accept why you reacted this way, you'll reduce the likelihood of this undesirable behavior recurring.

But if we accept our current behavior, isn't there a risk that we'll grow complacent and lack the motivation to change it? Herein lies the paradox.

If you don't accept yourself as you are now, you'll never find the drive to improve, as you'll spend all your energy agonizing over your shortcomings. **The practice of self-responsibility is the third pillar of self-esteem.** It entails taking control of your existence and your happiness **Peace and Joy** by being solution-oriented. This means asking the following question whenever a problem arises, **What can I do about it? Don't try to blame others. Take responsibility for your behavior.**

Instead of saying, He pushes my buttons, or I would act different if only she would, remember that it's not someone else's job to make us happy. Yes, that task belongs to you. Acknowledging this fact will help us empower ourselves, a crucial part of self-esteem,
Luke 10:27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

The fourth pillar of self-esteem is self-assertiveness – this entails standing up for yourself, which is more difficult than you might think.

It's a statement you can agree with. Now here's a challenge for you. Say those words out loud. Even when you're alone, doing this feels a little embarrassing, but why? Most of us don't realize this, but we often struggle to assert such a basic right.

To highlight this, the author asked his class of psychology students if they believed that they had a right to exist.

Everyone agreed, but when asked to say that statement aloud, they tensed up and even sounded fearful.

This subtle fear of asserting our rights is quite normal. It comes down to the following instinctive thought processes.

If I express myself, I may provoke disapproval; if I affirm myself, I may provoke resentment.

This mindset is a direct obstacle to building our confidence, but we can counter it by adhering to the fourth pillar of self-esteem, self-assertiveness.

To be self-assertive is to be who you are simply openly, and to practice self-assertiveness, you need the conviction that your beliefs are important.

For example, say you're at a party and you hear a racial slur or a off color joke that you find offensive. Having the courage to state your opinion is practicing self-assertiveness.

Or perhaps you've just seen a movie with your friends and felt deeply moved by it. Say so, and don't shrug indifferently for fear of being considered uncool. Each time you express yourself or stand up for your values, you strengthen your self-esteem.

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with

Jesus. 14 But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

But there are still two more pillars of healthy self-esteem to follow.

#6

The fifth and sixth pillars are living purposefully and practicing personal integrity.

How do you want to live your life? Many would say with purpose and integrity.

These two qualities are also vital pillars for healthy self-esteem. As we build our confidence, it's essential that we first take responsibility for our goals.

By asking yourself what you want and where you want to go, you've already started to take the fifth pillar of self-esteem, living purposefully, as your guide. But that's not enough. You have to continue to monitor your own progress.

We can see this in Jack's story.

Jack dreamt all his life of becoming a writer, but instead of building his skills, he decided to wait until he felt ready. So what do you think happened? Was Jack's desire to become a writer enough to make it happen without any work on his part? Of course not. Years later, Jack was far from achieving his dream. Although he'd outlined a clear purpose for himself, being a writer, Jack did not take any proactive steps to achieve it, so he failed to live purposefully.

So, our self-esteem depends on our actions matching our goals. But it also entails making our behavior match our words, or having personal integrity.

This trait can manifest itself in several small, everyday things, such as keeping promises and telling the truth even when lying would make things more pleasant.

Dishonesty and hypocrisy show a lack of personal integrity, on the other hand. Sometimes, personal integrity can be the most difficult pillar to practice, given that we live in a society where amorality is normal and cynicism is even considered cool.

Yet, personal integrity is so vital for healthy self-esteem that you should not let those around you tempt you into sacrificing it.

Godly character is who you are in the dark, when nobody else is around.

#7

Parents and teachers have a central role in nurturing a child's self-esteem. So far, we've explored the self-esteem bolstering actions and mindsets that lie within our own power.

But there's another factor that can be hugely influential on our self-esteem, the people that have been with us from the beginning of our lives, our parents.

Parents can make it both easier and harder for a child to develop self-esteem. A study by psychologist Stanley Coopersmith found that while parental factors such as social class, money, education, and geography didn't contribute to a child's self-esteem, **the quality of the relationship did.**

But what creates a positive relationship between parent and child? There are several aspects to it.

First, parents need to accept their child's thoughts and feelings so that she learns that they are valid and valuable.

Second, parents themselves should demonstrate their own high levels of self-esteem so that children can learn from them as role models.

Third, parents should set clear boundaries for their children to create a firm sense of security. This may sound like a lot, but it is crucial for a child's development.

If parents cause their children to believe that something is wrong with them, low self-esteem will quickly take root.

Luckily, children who haven't developed healthy self-esteem in their early years have a second chance at school. A teacher that builds confidence in a child can have an incredibly positive influence.

Research shows that a teacher's expectations can be self-fulfilling prophecies.

If a teacher trusts the child's ability to master a particular skill, this belief often becomes reality. However, a teacher's motivation should never be based on applauding success or punishing failure.

Instead, teachers succeed when they nurture a reality-based self-esteem.

The key to this approach is making the child feel acknowledged so that their thoughts and actions are recognized and valued. This is achieved through positive, constructive feedback that encourages them as they grow and succeed.

Matthew 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

#8

Successful companies foster high self-esteem in their employees. We've seen how self-esteem can be useful in our personal lives. But what about the workplace?

There's been a surge in entrepreneurship in recent decades. By the late 1980s, up to 700,000 new enterprises were being founded every year, compared to only 100,000 during the peak years of the 1960s.

With this entrepreneurial explosion came an urgent need for leaders and employees who were capable of **self-direction, personal responsibility, and initiative**. **These are all traits fostered by high self-esteem.**

It's no surprise that successful companies are geared toward nurturing self-esteem. But how can an organization foster this precious quality?

One simple rule is to give employees feedback that builds on their strength. This makes them feel good about themselves and more confident about facing future challenges.

Leaders also play a big part. They can nurture high self-esteem by, for example, constantly finding new ways to stimulate innovation and creativity in their organizations.

Self-esteem and its six pillars aren't just something you can strive for.

They are values that help organizations grow and thrive, too.

Proper self-esteem is important for our overall well-being and can be guided by biblical principles.

Here are some biblical principles that can help you develop and maintain proper self-esteem:

- 1. Recognize your worth in God's eyes:** The Bible teaches that every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). Understanding that you are valuable and loved by God can help you develop a healthy sense of self-worth.

2. Embrace your identity in Christ: As a believer, your identity is not solely based on your achievements, appearance, or the opinions of others. Your true identity is found in Christ. The Bible teaches that you are a child of God (John 1:12), chosen and adopted into His family (Ephesians 1:5). Embracing your identity in Christ can give you a solid foundation for self-esteem.

3. Practice humility: Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but rather thinking of yourself less. The Bible encourages humility and warns against pride. By recognizing that our abilities and achievements are gifts from God (1 Corinthians 4:7), we can maintain a balanced perspective and avoid arrogance.

4. Guard your thoughts: Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinks within himself, so he is." Negative self-talk and dwelling on past mistakes can erode self-esteem. Instead, focus on God's truth and renew your mind with positive and affirming thoughts (Philippians 4:8).

5. Surround yourself with positive influences: Choose friends and mentors who speak life, encouragement, and truth into your life (Proverbs 27:17). Avoid toxic relationships and influences that tear you down or undermine your self-worth.

6. Serve others: Jesus taught that true greatness comes from serving others (Matthew 20:26-28). By focusing on the needs of others and using your gifts to bless others, you can develop a sense of purpose and fulfillment, which in turn can contribute to healthy self-esteem.

Remember, developing proper self-esteem is a journey, and it takes time. You can cultivate a healthy and balanced view of yourself by aligning your thoughts and actions with these biblical principles.

What are some common misconceptions about self-esteem?

Several common misconceptions about self-esteem can hinder our understanding and development of it. Here are a few:

1. Self-esteem is all about being confident: While confidence is a component of self-esteem, it is not the sole defining factor. Self-esteem encompasses our overall sense of self-worth, self-acceptance, and self-compassion. It goes beyond just feeling confident in certain areas of life and involves having a healthy and balanced view of ourselves.

2. Self-esteem means always feeling good about yourself: It is unrealistic to expect to feel good about yourself all the time. Self-esteem involves acknowledging and accepting our flaws, imperfections, and limitations. It is about embracing our whole selves, including the ups and downs, and learning from our experiences.

3. Self-esteem depends on external validation: Relying solely on external validation, such as praise, compliments, or achievements, for our self-esteem is problematic. While external validation can provide temporary boosts, true self-esteem comes from within and is not solely reliant on others' opinions or approval.

4. Self-esteem is selfish or narcissistic: Some people associate self-esteem with selfishness or narcissism. However, healthy self-esteem is not about being self-centered or thinking only of oneself. It involves having a balanced perspective, recognizing our own worth, while also valuing and respecting others.

5. Self-esteem is fixed and unchangeable: Self-esteem is not fixed and can be developed, nurtured, and improved upon. It is a lifelong journey that requires self-reflection, self-care, and personal growth. **We can cultivate healthier self-esteem over time through self-awareness, self-compassion, and intentional effort.**

It is important to understand these misconceptions and embrace a more accurate understanding of self-esteem. By doing so, we can work towards developing a healthier and more balanced sense of self-worth and well-being.