

# Self-esteem

Here Phil Harding, author of *"Motivate me, motivate you"*, takes a brief look at how we can regain our self-esteem when, perhaps, it has taken a knock.

*"There are no menial jobs, only menial attitudes"*  
- William Bennett

I have met many thousands of people over the years in my work and social life. People are what make life so interesting and worthwhile especially when we recognise that no two people are the same. There is one undeniable and wonderful fact I have come to appreciate, and this is best summed up by a famous statement from Mother Theresa:-

*"Everybody has something good inside them.  
Some hide it, some neglect it, but it is there"*

Even the most seemingly ignorant, hostile, arrogant, or selfish people we meet do have some redeeming feature; it's just that we can't see it because we are too distracted by the negative impression we get of them.

If we only had the opportunity to know them more, we would discover their good points and help them re-discover and appreciate the nicer, more positive and useful side of themselves.

In a similar way, when our self-esteem, or at a more temporary level our self-confidence, is low we forget or overlook our own qualities that others value and we concentrate on how incapable or inadequate we may feel.

But those qualities we have are there even if no-one has reminded us recently. In the words of Mother Theresa we are hiding or neglecting the fact that we have some wonderful qualities and one or two of those qualities may be unique or especially helpful amongst the people we come into contact with.

If you are feeling that your qualities have been neglected by yourself or others, Sandra Abell and Janice Napoleon in their excellent book *"Self-Esteem, An Inside Job"*\* make these helpful points:-

*"The exciting thing is that in reality, how others respond to you does not actually define who you are. Their responses only reflect who they are, and whatever is going on for them at a particular time."*

*"Your self-esteem is probably based on many incorrectly interpreted, non-verbal messages... and is not an accurate assessment of the unique person you really are."*

Sandra Abell and Janice Napoleon emphasise the difference between self-confidence and self-esteem:-

*I can live for two  
months on a good  
compliment*  
Mark Twain

*The best portion of  
a good man's life:  
his little, nameless,  
unremembered  
acts of kindness  
and love*  
William Wordsworth

*A person starts to  
live when he can  
live outside himself*  
Albert Einstein

*"Self-esteem is a constant, and is not affected much by everyday events, while self-confidence may fluctuate daily and even hourly. Self-esteem can be compared to the depths of the ocean that remain calm and unchanged even during violent storms. On the other hand, self-confidence is similar to a tiny ship that can be tossed about or sail smoothly depending on surface conditions."*

So, our self-esteem can be affected for the better or worse by others around us and often from an incomplete understanding by them or even ourselves of who we are. We need to pick our self-confidence and our self-esteem off the floor, and change these incorrect perceptions that drag us down.

The words of Toyotomi Hideyoshi remind us that it is a combination of our own effort, determination, energy and self-control that really counts:-

*"Sheer effort enables those with nothing to surpass those with privilege and position"*

The fear of failure can hold us back and lower our levels of self-confidence and then self-esteem. But not trying can feel a lot worse than trying but failing. That is because we learn lessons and become wiser from experiencing the occasional failure - we know WHAT NOT TO DO in future!

Your self-esteem belongs to you; don't let the temporary set-backs you encounter or the false and incomplete judgements of others bring it down.



**Phil Harding**

\* *"Self-Esteem, An Inside Job"*, ISBN 978-0-9772537-3-9 published by Inside Jobs Coaching Company and available as a Kindle book from amazon.com and amazon.co.uk.

***"Find out what you are and do it on purpose"***

**Dolly Parton**

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*You make a living  
by what you get,  
you make a life  
by what you give*

*Don't envy.  
Emulate.  
Don't be jealous.  
Be inspired.  
What's possible for  
anyone,  
is possible for you.  
Make it happen!*  
Kyle T Garrett

*Life may not be  
fair, but it's  
still good*

