

STEP 3: GET HELP FROM OTHERS

Getting help from others is often the most important step a person can take to improve his or her self-esteem, but it can also be the most difficult. We

often don't ask for help because we feel we don't deserve it. But since low self-esteem is often caused by how other people treated you in the past, you may need the help of other people in the present to challenge the critical messages that come from negative past experiences. Here are some ways to get help from others:



Ask for Support from Friends

- Ask friends to tell you what they like about you or think you do well.
- Ask someone who cares about you to just listen to you “vent” for a little while without trying to “fix” things.
- Ask someone who loves you to remind you that they do.

Get Help from Teachers & Other Helpers

- Go to professors or advisors or tutors to ask for help in classes if this is a problem for you. **Remember:** They are there to help you learn!
- If you lack self-confidence in certain areas, take classes or try out new activities to increase your sense of competence (for example, take a math class, join a dance club, take swimming lessons, etc.)

Talk to a Therapist or Counselor

Sometimes low self-esteem can feel so painful or difficult to overcome that the professional help of a therapist or counselor is needed. Talking to a counselor is a good way to learn more about your self-esteem issues and begin to improve your self-esteem.

UCR's Counseling and Psychological Services will provide free and confidential service to all registered students.

05/16

HOURS

Monday through Friday • 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Call UCR's Counseling and Psychological Services during regular office hours

(951) UCR-TALK • (951) 827-8255

Or (951) 827-5531

On Campus: 2-TALK (2-8255)

COUNSELORS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE BY PHONE

24-hours Daily

(951) UCR-TALK • (951) 827-8255

Or 951-827-5531

On Campus: 2-TALK (2-8255)

ADDRESS

UC Riverside Counseling and Psychological Services
Veitch Student Center, North Wing
Riverside, CA 92521
counseling.ucr.edu

Made available by UCR's Counseling and Psychological Services

counseling.ucr.edu
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CRITICAL RESOURCES

RIVERSIDE HELPLINE 1-800-686-HELP

1-(800) 686-4357 • (24 Hours)

NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE 1-800-SUICIDE

1-(800) 784-2433 • (24 Hours)

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES (951) 827-3031

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Self-Esteem



CALL 24-HOURS A DAY:
(951) UCR-TALK
(951) 827-8255

Building healthy self-esteem entails accepting ourselves and our flaws; letting go of mistakes; and accepting our limitations as all part of being human.

WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM?

Most people's feelings and thoughts about themselves fluctuate somewhat based on their daily experiences. The grade you get on an exam, how your friends treat you, ups and downs in a romantic relationship—all can have a temporary impact on your wellbeing.

Your self-esteem however is something more fundamental than the normal “ups and downs” associated with situational changes. For people with good basic self-esteem, normal “ups and downs” may lead to temporary fluctuations in how they feel about themselves, but only to a limited extent. In contrast, for people with poor basic self-esteem, these “ups and downs” may make all the difference in the world.

POOR SELF-ESTEEM VS. HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

People with poor self-esteem often rely on how they are doing in the present to determine how they feel about themselves. They need positive experiences to counteract the negative feelings and thoughts that constantly plague them. Even then, the good feeling (from a good grade, etc.) can be temporary.

Healthy self-esteem is based on our ability to assess ourselves accurately and still be able to accept and to value ourselves. This means being able to realistically acknowledge our strengths and limitations and at the same time accepting ourselves as worthy and worthwhile.



THREE STEPS TO BETTER SELF-ESTEEM

Change doesn't necessarily happen quickly or easily, but it can happen. You are not powerless! Once you have accepted, or are at least willing to entertain the possibility that you are not powerless, there are three steps you can take to begin to change your self-esteem:

- Step 1: Rebut the Inner Critic
- Step 2: Practice Self-Nurturing
- Step 3: Get Help from Others

STEP 1: REBUT THE INNER CRITIC

The first important step in improving self-esteem is to begin to challenge the negative messages of the critical inner voice. Here are some typical examples of the inner critic's voice and how you can “rebut” that voice.

THE INNER CRITIC'S VOICE:	YOUR REBUTTALS:
Is Unfairly Harsh: “People said they liked my presentation, but it was nowhere near as good as it should have been. I can't believe no-one noticed all the places I messed up. I'm such an imposter.”	Be Reassuring: “Wow, they really liked it! Maybe it wasn't perfect, but I worked hard on that presentation and did a good job. I'm proud of myself. This was a great success.”
Generalizes Unrealistically: “I got an F on the test. I don't understand anything in this class. I'm such an idiot. Who am I fooling? I shouldn't be taking this class. I'm stupid and I don't belong in college.”	Be Specific: “I did poorly on this one test, but I've done O.K. on all the homework. There are some things here that I don't understand as well as I thought I did, but I can do the material-I've done fine in other classes that were just as tough.”
Makes Leaps of Illogic: “He is frowning. He didn't say anything, but I know it means that he doesn't like me!”	Challenge Illogic: “O.K., he's frowning, but I don't know why. It could have nothing to do with me. Maybe I should ask.”
Catastrophizes: “She turned me down for a date! I'm so embarrassed and humiliated. No one likes or cares about me. I'll never find a girlfriend. I'll always be alone.”	Be Objective: “Ouch! That hurt. Well, she doesn't want to go out with me. That doesn't mean no one does. I know I'm an attractive and nice person. I'll find someone.”

STEP 2: PRACTICE SELF-NURTURING

Since our self-esteem is in part due to how others have treated us in the past, the second step to more healthy self-esteem is to begin to treat yourself as a worthwhile person.

Start to challenge past negative experiences or messages by nurturing and caring for yourself in ways that show that you are valuable, competent, deserving and lovable. There are several components to self-nurturing:

Practice Basic Self-Care

Get enough sleep, eat in a healthy fashion, get regular exercise, practice good hygiene, and so forth.

Plan Fun & Relaxing Things For Yourself

You could go to a movie, take a nap, get a massage, plant a garden, buy a pet, learn to meditate -- whatever you enjoy.

Reward Yourself For Your Accomplishments

You could take a night off to celebrate good grades, spend time with a friend, or compliment yourself for making that hard phone call.

Remind Yourself of Your Strengths & Achievements

One way is to make a list of things you like about yourself. Or keep a ‘success’ file of awards, certificates and positive letters or citations. Keep mementos of accomplishments you are proud of where you can see them.

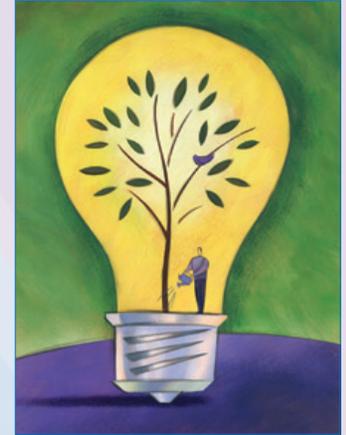
Forgive Yourself When You Don't Do All You'd Hoped

Self-nurturing can be surprisingly hard if you are not used to doing it. Don't be critical of yourself - remember that inner voice - when you don't do something just right.

Self-Nurture Even When You Don't Feel You Deserve It

“Fake it” until you can “make it.” When you treat yourself like you deserve to feel and be nurtured, slowly you'll come to believe it.

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