

# What is Self-Esteem? By Joseph McClendon III

Self-esteem creates the feeling of confidence. Napoleon Hill once said that great self-esteem comes from simply taking the successes of the past, focusing on them, and projecting them into the future. When we do this, we use those references as the foundation of whom we are and what we think we are capable of. It is this focus that makes us feel better about ourselves and the actions that we will take.

Imagine you were in charge of a newborn baby boy. It was your duty to make sure that his little soul got all of the nourishment, love, education and physical attention that he needed to grow up happy, healthy and successful. Imagine that for your efforts you also would receive health, happiness, love and riches beyond your wildest dreams.

Very young children at play are the most confident beings and have an abundance of self-esteem.

You wouldn't go to the child and say, "OK kid, unless you do everything right, and be cute and smart and witty, and everybody likes you all of the time, then you're not going to get anything from me." Instead you, like most of us, would probably just do it. We would make sure that the baby had all that he needed whenever he needed it. Most of us would probably do it just out of caring alone, regardless of the rewards.

At feeding time, would you feed the baby with no strings attached? Of course you would. You wouldn't say, "OK kid, unless you do something clever, or sit up, or recite your ABCs, or perform flawlessly, you won't get your food." You'd feed the baby because he deserves to be fed, and loved and cared for. He or she deserves it because they are a human being and a part of this universe. When the child tried to walk or talk and failed at first, you would praise him for the effort given, thus teaching that child's nervous system to keep trying.

You deserve exactly the same treatment and consideration from yourself. You deserved it when you were born and you deserve it now. You are that child and you respond the same way. Too many people get the idea that unless they are clever, attractive, witty, or as highly paid or attractive as other people, that they know they are un-deserving of love and respect. They somehow believe that unless they get it right all of the time, then they are not deserving of praise or acknowledgment.

Self-esteem is NOT pervasive. It does not have to mean anything about your whole life. It's just a feeling about a particular occurrence that happened in the past, attaching it to now and projecting it into the future. The feeling that is produced by doing that is a feeling of negative or positive esteem.

A life often self-appreciated is a life well lived.