# Self-Esteem: A Teen's Guide for Girls

# **Empowering Teenage Girl's and Women**

# A Healthier Body Image and Esteem

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Copy Editor Robin Jones

#### What People Say About This Book

Teen girls, women, and even parents suffering from childhood wounding will find resources and self-help methods for empowerment and reclaiming a healthier body image and self-esteem in 'Self-Esteem: A Teen's Guide for Girls.' Lawrience has over 10 years' experience and knowledge, as a Residential and Self-Esteem Coach and Mentor with adolescent girls. This book has experiential exercises and crystal clear summaries highlighting important tools, which can be adopted for your own tailor made program to build higher self-esteem. I will recommend this book to the teen girls I counsel in my practice.

#### Maryanne McKowen, Adolescent Therapist

Is it really possible to have healthy self-esteem? I have asked this question of myself and for my two daughters. Self-esteem faces bombardment on many fronts. As women, how do we stand strong against the challenges of media to positive self-esteem? Michael Lawrience delves into the battle, identifying society sources that negatively affect self-esteem. He offers practical tools inviting you to choose to appreciate and love your unique self. This book offers hope and encouragement to women and girls of all ages!

#### Robin Jones, Mother of a teen daughter

As the mother of a pre-teen girl, I know the importance of healthy body image and selfesteem to young, vulnerable women of her age. The book could not have come at a better time when we are raising young women who will grow up to be leaders tomorrow. I am happy that Michael covered important issues like body image and the pressure to be perfect, as teens need to know that it is ok to have flaws and to understand how the media preys on their young, impressionable minds to affect their self-esteem adversely. I highly recommend 'Self-Esteem: A Teen's Guide for Girls' to all mothers of young women and to all young women who feel the pressure to conform to society's impossible expectations.

# Priya Florence Shah, Author, From Doormat to Devi: 10 Steps to Stop Overfunctioning In Relationships and Take Your Life Back

We've always admired Michael David Lawrience's passion to assist people with healing and providing them the tools for a healthy mind, body and spirit. In his newest book, he has astounded us once again with his empowering message spoken directly to teen girls. He shows them how they can have a healthy self-esteem by making healthy choices, appreciating their own bodies, how they can choose positive reinforcing thoughts, and surround themselves with people who will support them. A confident girl grows up to become an empowered woman. 'Self-Esteem: A Teen's Guide for Girls' is a must have for every young woman.'

#### Carol Lawrence and Stacy Toten, Intentional Conscious Parenting

#### **About the Author**



teaching teenage girls.

Michael David Lawrience has dedicated his life for over 35 years, discovering and healing himself and others physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

Michael's spirit radiates healing, inspiration, love, and peace as an Energy Healer and a Professional Bowenwork Practitioner. As a personal development seminar leader for over 20 years, he has taught professionals as well as nonprofessionals in the United States, Canada, and Brazil. He also has experience as a Residential Coach mentoring and

Michael as a certified Residential Coach III with over 13 years' experience taught teen's self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-reliance. He has over 35 years' experience as a holistic health practitioner with a B.A in Sacred Healing and has been a certified Bow-enwork Practitioner since 2005. His niche is emotional health with extensive personal experience related to codependency recovery, strengthening self-esteem, healing the inner child, stress management, and meditation which he has practiced for over 40 years.

Michael created and taught ongoing self-esteem, codependency recovery, and body image groups for teenage girls for 5 years. He also has additional 5 years of experience assisting as a small group leader in emotional growth workshops for parents with troubled teenage daughters.

Michael offers top emotional health tips on his blog emotionalhealthtips.com

Michael also offers Bowen Therapy in person in Sedona, Arizona. Bowen Therapy stimulates the body to heal itself of physical and emotional pain and trauma. Other Books by Michael: *Emotional Health: The Secret for Freedom from Drama, Trauma, and Pain* - <u>amazon.com/Emotional-Health-Secret-Freedom-</u> <u>Trauma/dp/0615479170</u>

# Introduction

Did you know girl's self-esteem peaks at 9 years of age then nosedives as a teenager?

As a teenage girl, do you sometimes feel a lack of confidence? Do you feel depressed at times, unhappy, or worthless? Do you feel a lack of a sense of identity? Who am I really?

Do you feel the pressure to look and be perfect by boys, your friends, and your parents? Are you supposed to look like the skinny celebrities on TV and in teen magazines? Are you pressured to look attractive?

Do you have an eating disorder or a poor body image or know girls that do?

Have you overindulged in alcohol or drugs, stayed in relationships with abusive boyfriends, or self-harmed?

# Why have you never succeeded in feeling better about yourself? Is it because:

- 1. You believe you're unimportant?
- 2. You seldom look at your strengths?
- 3. You hate your body and refuse to take care of yourself?
- 4. You have yet to recognize your uniqueness?
- 5. You believe the criticisms of the inner voice in your head?
- 6. You ignore your small accomplishments rather than celebrating?
- 7. You never express gratitude for what you have done well during the day?

As you read this book, you will learn tips, exercises, and receive advice from other teens, as well as female celebrities who overcame body image and esteem issues similar to yours. You will also receive the benefit from my experiences teaching ongoing self-esteem groups for the last five years to teenage girls with poor body image, depression, drug use, eating disorders, family conflict, low esteem, and peer conflict etc.

I wrote this book to help teenage girls feel better about how you look and feel about yourself.

I have worked for the last 10 years as a Residential Coach and Mentor at therapeutic boarding schools teaching teenage girls self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-reliance. One of the purposes in my life involves assisting teenage girls to improve their emotional health and wellbeing.

# In this book you will learn:

- 1. How to feel better about your body
- 2. Improve your relationships with your friends and parents

# In this book you will learn tools:

- 1. To booster your self-esteem
- 2. Feel less depressed
- 3. Overcome eating disorders
- 4. Improve your body image

You have the power to change how you feel about yourself on the inside, regardless of how you look on the outside. You can let your inner beauty shine through by developing the qualities of confidence, happiness, intelligence, and loving kindness. Loving yourself builds the foundation for happiness and success in your adult life in college, career, and relationships.

Find the love you seek, by first finding the love within yourself. Ravi Shankar

This book can also help parents understand their daughters and assist them in building their self-esteem.

Michael David Lawrience - Sedona, Arizona

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# Chapter 1: What is Your Level of Self-Esteem as a Teen Girl?



Facts about Teens and Self-Esteem - Dove & Self-Esteem Institute

Did you know low self-esteem forms as a result of thinking of yourself as inadequate and unlovable?

Did you know 61% of teen girls with low self-esteem put themselves down?

Did you know 70% of teenage girls believe they fail in being good enough in looks, school grades, and relationships with family and friends?

Did you know your self-esteem relates to how you see your body rather than how much you actually weigh?

Did you know 75% of girls with low self-esteem engage in unhealthy behaviors such as bullying, cutting, eating disorders or overindulgence in alcohol and drugs when they feel bad?

Would you like to feel better about yourself? First let's look at your level of self-esteem.

# Girls Do You Know Your Level of Self-Esteem?

Your level of self-esteem depends on how much you value yourself, as well as how much you feel others value you.

Take the following brief quiz. Be as honest as possible and answer <u>rarely</u>, <u>sometimes</u>, or <u>often</u> in your journal.

**Note:** You will need a <u>self-esteem journal</u> to do the exercises in this book to get the best results improving your esteem.

- 1. Do you skip new things such as a team sport or class trip even when they sound cool?
- 2. Do you think that everything you do has to be perfect for you to be good enough?
- 3. Do you have a lot of critical thoughts about yourself?
- 4. Do you feel afraid of saying or doing something stupid?
- 5. Do you find it hard to believe it when someone compliments you?
- 6. Do you get yourself into risky situations because it's difficult to disagree with your friends?
- 7. Do you worry a lot about how you look?
- 8. Do you often compare yourself to others?
- 9. Do you make decisions on what would please someone else?
- 10. Do you fear making mistakes?

If you answered <u>rarely</u> most of the time you have good self-esteem, however, if you answered <u>sometimes</u> or <u>often</u> most of the time this reflects that you see and think of yourself as inadequate and unlovable. You have lots of room to improve your self-esteem, as you read and work through the exercises in this book.

Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. This good news is that you don't know how great you can be! **Anne Frank**, The Diary of Anne Frank.

Self-esteem builds from the inside out. Do the exercises which will start you on the road of believing in and loving yourself more.

**Self-Esteem Tip:** Rather than always looking at what you do wrong, your mistakes or your imperfections, start making a <u>list of your strengths</u> (these can be little things). Add to this list each day. Also, write down one or more positive things you have accomplished in your life. If you have never completed anything, think of one thing you would like to do and do it.

**Resource:** I have used the following self-esteem quiz at the beginning of each selfesteem group for teen girls and at the end again after 3 months. In a group of 20 or more, most girls' self-esteem increases from very low self-esteem or below average to average or above average. Of course, they do the exercises and practice to improve.

Copy and paste <u>Sorensen Self-Esteem Test</u> into Google search to take the 40 question quiz. Afterwards write down your score. When you finish reading this book, and after two months answer the quiz again to see your improvement.

**Note:** Your self-esteem will improve as you practice at least one esteem building tool each day.

Self-esteem isn't the only thing. It's just that there's nothing without it. Gloria Steinem, Spokeswoman for Woman's Liberation Movement

# Self- Identity: Who Am I?

As a teenager do you know who you are?

Do you struggle with knowing who you are - your self-identity?

Julia R., age 17 - Illinois in Teen Ink says, *I like reading The Economist and watching 'I love the 80s.' I like tennis, Fazoli's breadsticks and writing assignments. I value honesty, commitment, scholarship and kindness. These are hard and true facts, but there is a lot* 

I do not know about myself ... it is hard for me to give a comprehensive proclamation of who I am, for my identity unfolds more every day as my experiences grow. Since I am only 17 years old, life has a lot of unfolding to do.

I dislike saying 'I am trying to find myself' because my identity is not lost, it just need more uncovering. Luckily for me, what I love to do and want to be helps me uncover more about myself. I want to be a writer... because writing is my self-reflection.

Every day my experience and knowledge increase and I learn more about myself. Each time I write what is in my head as honestly as I can; another piece of the identity puzzle is revealed ... I am not worried that I don't know everything about myself. As I get older, I'll figure it out.

I like what Julia says rather than finding herself she uncovers more of herself. In my experience, the uncovering will continue in your adult years.

Do you know the ways to discover your self-identity?

# 7 Influences in the Struggle for Self-Identity

**1. Family Relationships** – You begin separating your identity from that of your parents. Also, growing up you seek separation by adopting a specific role for survival. You may take on the heroine, clown, people pleaser, or invisible child or rebel/black sheep.

Sometimes you may rebel as the *bad child* defining your identity by causing trouble.

I remember what it was like during my teen age years, the struggle for identity and the constant wish to be accepted for who I was. Being the "Black Sheep" of the family, I was constantly chided to conform.

As adults, we sometimes forget what it is like to be a teen, to experience all these new emotions and situations without the benefit of lifetime experiences behind us. These kids need us to embrace their uniqueness and encourage them just like we want people in our lives to embrace and encourage us for who we are. Marlene B. – Michigan

**2. Status Symbols** – Do you take on certain behaviors or buy designer clothes and status symbols to stand out from the crowd?

What crowd do you belong; the popular/cheerleader, the smart girl – high academic achiever, party girl, athletic group, bad girl/rebel, or the odd/outsider? Do groups exclude you or do you lack interest in groups, as a nonconformist?

Groups earn you a reputation you have to continue to live up to.

Groups (cliques) are like barriers; they don't keep people out but they do box you in. Ali S., Age 13 - Washington

**3. Grown-Up Behavior** – Do you do things adults do such as drinking, drugs, smoking etc.?

Do you engage in adult behaviors for adventure or curiosity, independence from family restrictions, or social acceptance?

Be who you really are. Always stay true to yourself. Never give up and never give in. Love life for even the smallest of things and appreciate what you have. Vickie R., Age 15 – Nevada

**4. Rebellion** – Do you or girls you know rebel to *find yourself*? Do you desire to be unique and also feel secure in the conforming behavior of a particular crowd?

5. Others' Opinions – Your self-esteem depends on how much you value yourself.
It, however, depends also on how much you feel others value you. Since as a girl your body image or how much others like your looks also affects your level of self-esteem.
How you see yourself also depends on what you believe others think about you. For ex-

ample, you may consider yourself smart; however, if you get a lower mark on a test and someone says, *You're stupid*, you may start to doubt your academic ability.

If, however, your parents want you to be supergirl to relieve the pressure you may go about proving them wrong or want to anyway.

Don't worry about what others think about you. If you try to act like something you're not, you're going to lose the ones who believed in you the most and then all you'll have is people who like someone for who you aren't. If you act like yourself then you will always have people behind you no matter how tough life gets.

This is something I had to look deep into my soul to find because I was in the position of not knowing who I was. So I said, I will be me and be hated by less, than be someone else and be hated by more. Krystian H., Age 16 – Michigan

I am who I am; your approval isn't needed. I think that it is funny when people try to judge me because what they don't know is that I could care less what they think about me! Shelby K., Age 15 –Indiana

How you see yourself is what other people are going to see! Ahmad Pittman

**6. Idols** – What musicians, athletes, movie, and TV actors do you like and identify with? Do you lose your identity by idolizing them or do you explore different aspects of yourself in your search for self-identity?

Sometimes, it doesn't really matter who or what you are, but rather the things you do in life that will make a difference. Dylan P., Age 17 – Malaysia

# 7. a. Cliques

- 1. What cliques do you belong to?
- 2. How do you feel as part of the group?
- 3. Do you hide your real identity to be part of a clique?

- 4. Do you do negative things to be part of your clique?
- 5. Do you believe to be *normal* you have to belong to a clique?
- 6. Does your clique help you in figuring out Who am I?

# What's so great about normal?

I mean why should we spend time trying to be like other people when we could be spending time discovering ourselves? If everyone did that then no one would feel weird or alienated because everyone would be their own unique selves. There would be no cliques. I hope you take the time to really ask yourself what's great about normal because it will change your perspective on life. I know it did me. Laura L., Age 15 – California,

# 7. b. Odd/Outside girl out

- 1. Do you belong to no cliques?
- 2. Does belonging to no cliques affect your self-esteem; *I am insignificant or not good enough?*
- 3. On the other hand, do you prefer being alone?
- 4. Do you consider other girls to be immature?
- 5. Are you creative or a high academic achiever?
- 6. Are you less influenced by peer pressure?
- 7. Do you have a stronger sense of self than most girls?

People think I'm a loner, but really I'm just a deep thinker. This helps me when I see all the cliques and wish I was in one. Then I realize that I don't belong in any one group; I can belong to any and all groups because I refuse to be stereotyped and see the world in just one way. Tori W., Age 13 –Idaho

**Journal** – Take time to write your answers in your journal to the 7 influences on developing your self-identity. You will continue discovering more throughout your adolescent, as well as your adult years.

# How Do You as an Adolescent Girl Handle Your Struggle for Self-Identity?

You can struggle with your challenges for self-identity, by holding them in, acting out, or working through them.

Do you tend to hold in your struggles by repressing or numbing your feelings and impulses, keeping your struggles to yourself and avoiding them?

Do you act out your struggles through impulsive actions, placing them on someone else, or by refusing to accept the reality of your pain by for example, becoming the *party girl*?

Do you see these behaviors becoming another way of avoiding your struggles? Do you work through your struggles by doing your best and taking responsibility for your actions?

Do you know you always have a choice of your attitude?

When it rains, all the birds fly for shelter. But the eagle alone avoids the rain by flying above the clouds. Problems are common to all, attitude makes the difference. Author Unknown

No matter what life throws you, always push on to the very end. Keep going forward until there is no place left to go! Author Unknown

Just believe in yourself and you can go far!!! D.S., Age 13 - New York

**Self-Esteem Tip:** Read *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom* by Don Miguel Ruiz on Amazon. This is the first book given to teenage girls to read at the therapeutic boarding school where I worked as a Residential and Self-Esteem Coach. This book will help you with all your struggles, including self-identity.

#### See the 4 principles:

<u>Be Impeccable With Your Word</u> - Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid speaking against yourself or gossiping.

<u>Don't Take Anything Personally</u> - Nothing others do has anything to do with you. What others say and do relates to how they see the world.

<u>Don't Make Assumptions</u> - Take the courage to ask questions and express what you really need and want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid drama and trauma.

<u>Always Do Your Best</u> - Do your best at any time rather than worrying about being perfect. This way you avoid verbally abusing yourself with critical self-talk and bruising your self-esteem even more.

I have always been that kind of person who always believes others' opinions. People used to comment on my way of doing things. They used to judge almost everything that I did. And I always believed them and tried my best to fulfill their expectations but with no success. Then came a point where I realized that none can know me better than me. What really matters is the opinion that I have about myself. From that day forward, my life has changed. Now I listen to my inner self and I don't care about people's opinion. So, don't let other people take control of your life. Gunja C., Age 17 – Nepal

**Journal: Self-identity.** Take a look at the following questions about self-identity. Write the answers in your journal. They will help with more clarity.

- 1. What am I good at?
- 2. How do others perceive me?
- 3. What will I do in the future?

- 4. What are my personal characteristics?
- 5. What kind of person am I?

Journal: Who Am I? Make a list of adjectives that describe you.

- 1. Write down the first 20 words that come to mind when you think of your personality.
- Write down the first 20 words to come up when you look in the mirror. (Go begin looking only at your face. Connect with a deeper part of you. Notice and write down your first thoughts even though they may be critical).
- 3. Check the ratio of positive words to negative adjectives.

Take your list of positive personality traits and skills and read it every day, <u>first thing in</u> the morning. Dwell on each item for a few seconds.

**Self-Esteem Tip: Create a Positive Playlist.** Put together a list of positive songs on your iPod which make you feel good. Play these when you need a self-esteem boost.

# Things to Ponder:

- 1. <u>Take 1 action a day</u> to improve your self-esteem.
- In 3 months do the Sorenson self-esteem 40 question quiz, again as honestly as possible.
- 3. Keep discovering who you are. Your self-identity evolves over time.
- 4. Create a habit of journaling every day.
- 5. Once a month review your journal for the month. Note improvements and continuing areas of self-esteem to strengthen. It takes time. Be patient.

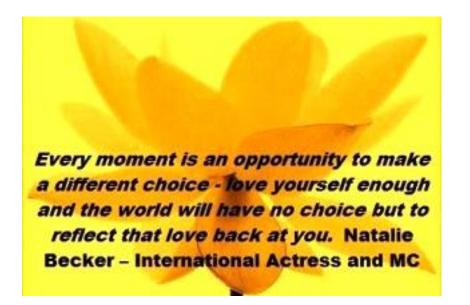
Decide what you want in the finest detail. Think BIG. Write it down. Believe it. Then get started living it. Each step is an action towards progress. Michelle Korevaar, Founder of SPICE4LIFE – a network of influential women committed to positive social change.

Ponder the words of Sandra Bullock after accepting her Oscar for the Best Actress in 2010, *There's no race, no religion, no class system, no color, nothing, no sexual orienta-tion that makes us better than anyone else. We are all deserving of love.* 

# In Chapter 2:

- 1. Find out why your self-esteem takes a drastic drop in your teenage years.
- 2. Discover what behaviors and beliefs lower your self-esteem.
- 3. Learn ways to change your behaviors and beliefs and boost your self-esteem.

# Chapter Two: Why as a Girl Does Your Self-Esteem Drop?



Be your own best friend. Love yourself. Feel the fear and do it anyway. Trust your intuition. Break the silence. Ask for guidance. YES and NO are the two most important words you will ever use. Become conscious of your power of choice and use it to lovingly create the life you have always dreamed of. Natalie Becker – International Actress and MC

# Have You Wondered?

- 1. Why you feel worse about yourself as a teenager than you did as a preteen?
- 2. Why you're so critical of yourself?
- 3. That maybe you need a self-esteem boost?
- 4. How you could love yourself more?

# **Discover:**

- 1. How to overcome behaviors which affect your self-esteem
- 2. How to overcome negative thoughts which lower your self-esteem
- 3. How to stop comparison and judgments about yourself

#### Why Does Self-Esteem Nose Dive After 9 Years of Age?

*Girls' self-esteem peaks when they are 9 years old and then takes a nose dive,* clinical psychologist Robin F. Goodman wrote on the New York University Child Study Center website.

Do you look like a long-haired beauty with chiseled cheekbones and curves that would bring out the best in any designer dress? Probably you would answer, No! So you compare and judge yourself to all the perfect beautiful women in the media and magazines wanting to look just like them.

According to experts good self-esteem remains a challenge for teenage girls like you.

# Have you:

- 1. Lost your voice or never had a voice so you can say YES and NO to assertive your needs and feelings?
- 2. Developed an eating disorder?
- 3. Abused alcohol and or drugs?
- 4. Self-harmed?
- 5. Engaged in abusive or unhealthy codependent relationships with boys or older men?

# **Did You Know?**

The *perfect* fashion model weighs 115 pounds and stands 5 feet 8 inches tall. The average North American woman weighs 144 pounds and stands 5 feet 3 inches tall.

**67 % of women** believe they have to be more physically attractive than women from their mother's generation.

75 % of 8 and 9 year old girls said they liked their looks. That figure dropped to **56 %** among girl's ages **12 and 13**.

At age 9 at least half of all girls report having been on a diet. **80% of eighth grade girls** say they are on diets.

**7 million girls and women have eating disorders**, compared with 1 million boys and men. Ten % report onset at 10 years or younger; **33 % at ages 11 to 15.** 

SOURCES: Smart-Girl.org; Dove Self Esteem Fund and et al.

Do you feel inadequate and unlovable? Is your self-esteem tied to dissatisfaction with your body shape and physical looks?

Is your relationship with your body your #1 worry?

You have the power to choose to stop comparing and judging yourself to all the perfect beautiful women in the media and magazines; wanting to look just like them.

You have the power to choose to love yourself more. Some time in their lives even celebrities felt ugly.

I feel more confident. I have embraced my flaws. I'm like everyone else. I have my days when I look in the mirror and I'm like, Oh my God, I wish I could change this or that. The more you mature; you realize that those imperfections make you beautiful. **Beyoncé** 

I grew up dancing a lot so I was very self-conscious, as I would call them, 'tree trunk' legs because they were very muscular. Legs become very muscular when you're dancing a lot, like every day, and I did not appreciate that at the time. Now I've learned to appreciate them and love them. **Vanessa Hudgens**, Singer and Actress – High School Musical Series I was the one small brunette among tall blondes. You only get one body, might as well love it. Nothing is the end of the world. Flash forward a year and ask, 'Is this going to be that big a deal?' Lucy Hale, Actress & Singer

I try to make healthy choices, but I know I will never be a size 2, and that's okay with me. There are definitely days when it gets to me, but I know part of the reason I have this platform is to be a normal-size person in an industry that tells everyone exactly how they should look. Your body is your body. You need to take care of it, you need to eat well, and you need to exercise for your life, not for anything else. **Hillary Scott**, Song Writer & Singer – Lady Antebellum

*Your body is your body.* Can you learn to embrace your flaws and imperfections? Can you appreciate your inner beauty and strengths?

**Resources: Heyugly.org** Dedicated to helping with self-esteem and empathybuilding programs to empower girls. This organization defines ugly as **Unique Gifted Lovable You**.

To be at peace with your body and appearance presents the biggest challenge for you as a teenage girl. See 3 tips to boost your self-esteem. These tips come from Becca Wertheim who wrote *Live High on Life for Teens* at age 19.

The following excepts come from Becca's article Self-Esteem Boosting Tips for Teens.

# 3 Self-Esteem Tips:

# 1. Stop Comparing Yourself to Others!

Every single day, we are bombarded with images, videos, advertisements, and messages that try to define and describe the 'perfect' look. We live in a society where appearance is a top priority for many, and sometimes it's easy to get sucked into the whole 'looks are everything' mentality.

As if having high self-esteem isn't hard enough, the media makes it even harder for us to feel good about our bodies.

Photo editing and computer alterations make it pretty simple for the media to create whatever body type and image they'd like. In addition to being tempted to compare ourselves to our peers, friends, and family, it's also really tempting to compare ourselves to people in the media. We may think, 'OMG, she's so much prettier than me' or 'I really wish I looked like her!'

When we stop comparing our appearance to others, we come to love and appreciate all the things that make each and every one of us uniquely beautiful. No one will ever look exactly like you. You're beautiful in your own way and it's important to embrace the things that make you unique!

#### 2. Surround Yourself With People Who Raise Your Self-Esteem!

I have a friend who used to date a guy who repeatedly told her that she was ugly. When she first told me about the things he'd said to her, I was so angry! I couldn't believe that a boyfriend would ever say those things to his girlfriend, and the saddest part was that she actually began to believe him. She is such a beautiful person, inside and out, but she was surrounded by someone who made her feel otherwise, and eventually, those cruel words started going to her head and her self-esteem dropped. She was spending all her time with someone who was constantly putting her down, and in turn, she began putting herself down, too.

If you have someone in your life that brings you down, talk to them and tell them how you feel. Let them know that you don't appreciate being around their negative comments and constant put-downs. If it's not someone that you feel comfortable talking to, or if you do talk to them and things don't seem to get better, then start spending time with others who actually lift you up, remind you that you're beautiful, and contribute to your positive self-esteem.

Remember that you deserve to live a life full of confidence and happiness, surrounded by people who make you feel good about being you!

# 3. Go Beyond Just Thinking You Are Beautiful; Believe It!

Being able to tell yourself 'I'm beautiful' or 'I'm happy with my body' is such a positive thing. When you're able to make confident, positive statements like that, it's something to be proud of. But just saying them to yourself isn't always enough – it's important to actually believe them. When you believe that you're beautiful, negative thoughts have a difficult time of sneaking into your head. Believing is so much more powerful than simply thinking. So how can you do that? How can you truly believe that you're amazing just by being you?

Well, it's not always easy, and it doesn't happen overnight. It may take time, but eventually you'll become a believer in your own beauty. Every single time you look in the mirror or think about the way you look, say to yourself, "I'm beautiful. I am unique and I'm happy with who I am. I am beautiful in my own way. And I believe that.' Becca Wertheim

I'm not one hundred percent comfortable in my skin, but I don't think there are body issues. I'm learning to accept everything that I am. I've accepted that I'm not going to be a stick-thin-model kind of girl. When I was 14, I was tall and spindly. By the time I turned 18, I had become a woman, and my body's not going to go back to what it looked like when I was 14. Mandy Moore, Actress, Singer/Songwriter

**Journal:** Answer the following questions. If your critical voice in your head tells you, you have nothing; look for even the smallest things.

- 1. What do you appreciate about yourself?
- 2. What qualities make you unique?
- 3. What qualities reflect your inner beauty?
- 4. List the friends and people who appreciate you and boost your self-esteem. If you have no one or want more, list the qualities you want in a friend and seek out these types of people.
- 5. Whenever you look in the mirror tell yourself, *I am beautiful, I am unique*. Critical thoughts will come up. I will explain a Mirror Exercise at the end of this chapter to assist you in boosting your self-esteem.

Every moment holds an opportunity of loving yourself more.

**Resources: Body gossip school -** Helps build body confidence and self-esteem.

**About face blog** - About-Face equips women and girls with tools to understand and resist harmful media messages that affect self-esteem and body image.

# What Behaviors and Beliefs Lower Self-Esteem in Teenage Girls?

Why do you hate yourself so? Hiding inside yourself Where is the girl I used to know? If only you had enough courage To love yourself as you should

From The Looking Glass by Jennifer Pierce

# 1. Do You Join Cliques in Search of Yourself?

Can you identify the *queen bee* in your clique or cliques you know? Do you follow her as a role model and does she have the most power in the clique?

Do you know of *outcasts* the *queen bee* dislikes? Do you or others victimize the *outcast* to be part of a clique? Do power struggles sometimes erupt for the position of queen bee?

Did some of the members of cliques join because of low self-esteem and wanting to fit in?

Have you or do you know someone who has been an outcast? Have you or that person suffered bullying, depression, eating disorders or trauma?

On a positive note, in the therapeutic all girl's boarding school I worked as a Residential Coach for 9 years, girls also formed lasting friendships, developed social skills, and gained a sense of belonging in cliques.

# **Resource: How to Deal with a Mean Girl Clique**

Audrina Patridge, Actress, American TV Personality, and Model, as a victim of school bullying says, *Girls were always rude and catty to my sister and I. They will say anything to put you down and make themselves feel better. I had a few close guy friends and the girls didn't like it, so they would call me names and spread terrible rumors.* 

You just have to hold your chin up and take it as a compliment that certain people dedicate that much time and effort to talk about you. I don't think I'll ever stop experiencing that, I have just gotten better at understanding and dealing with it

# 2. Do You Compare Yourself to Others?

What if you could accept appreciation and compliments from others? How would you feel? Would you appreciate yourself more and stop comparing yourself to others less? Consider the words of Mary Manin Morrissey, Inspirational Speaker.

The Universe holds nothing back from us. We hold back because we don't feel we're worthy and then we don't let the gifts grow into their fullness because we ignore them. For instance, suppose someone pays you a compliment. How much do you really let that in? Do you fend it off right away, or acknowledge your own goodness? The next time someone shows appreciation for you or what you've done; try simply accepting the gift without disparagement. Then consider how that acceptance makes you feel.

# 3. Do You Judge Yourself?

Take a look at the YouTube video. Rather than size it's what's inside. - <u>Opera duo Char-</u> <u>lotte & Jonathan - Britain's got talent 2012 audition - UK version – YouTube</u>

The next time you judge yourself or someone else on body shape or physical looks think about this video and open your heart to the possibility, *We are all the same on the inside.* 

# 4. Do You Surround Yourself with Negative Abusive People?

Avoid the company of chronic criticizers, naysayers, prophets of doom, materialists, fear mongers, gossipers, and the fearful, envious, and angry. If you must be around these lower-frequency energies, consider it a test of your ability to hold your own and keep your mind, emotions, and words in the spiritual zone - When you can do this, you become victorious, not a victim.

We must control our thoughts and words, or we are nothing more than stimulusresponse machines reacting from habit and fear- and lack-based programming. Seek the highest truth and act on it, regardless of your old habits and programming. Remember that you are making new habits and these are what will now start manifesting. Terry Cole-Whittaker, Spiritual lecturer & Writer in *Life Your Bliss.* 

# 5. Do You Have a Lot of Negative Thoughts About Yourself?

#### Be Aware Of Your Thoughts by A.J. Mahari, Self-Improvement Coach

Few people enjoy the company of individuals whose attitudes are persistently negative. Yet many of us tolerate the critical chatter that can originate within our own minds. Since we are so used to the stream of self-limiting, critical consciousness that winds its way through our thoughts, we are often unaware of the impact these musings have on our lives.

It is only when we become aware of the power of such thoughts that we can divest ourselves of them and fill the emptiness they leave with loving, peaceful affirmations.

**Journal:** To change first we need awareness. Become aware of your thoughts each day. Rather than judging the thoughts become a detached observer. Simply observe and note the thoughts that come up the most. In the evening, write these thoughts in your journal for at least one week.

You may the following types of critical thoughts or some variation of them.

- 1. I am unlovable
- 2. I am worthless
- 3. I am nothing
- 4. I am powerless
- 5. I am never good enough
- 6. I am bad
- 7. I don't matter

Becoming aware and choosing to change our unhealthy behaviors and critical beliefs improves our self-esteem. In this chapter, I will explain the Mirror Exercise which will

bring up more of your critical beliefs about yourself. It will improve your self-esteem over time, as the message *I Love You* sinks into your subconscious.

#### Self-Esteem Tip: Mirror Exercise

As a teenager, I had the lowest self-esteem. Like some adults by overcoming life's challenges my self-esteem improved over the years. Today, I have high self-esteem.

I offer you self-esteem tools to handle your day to day challenges easier, with more confidence now, rather than suffering with low self-esteem for years.

In the first week of teaching self-esteem groups I always explain the Mirror Exercise. First, I will talk about five factors affecting your self-esteem as they relate to the Mirror Exercise.

# **5 Inner Factors Affecting Your Self-Esteem**

**Body** – At first when you look in the mirror at yourself, you may be distracted by what you dislike about your face. Look beyond your outer appearance to the deeper aspect of yourself and connect with that part, your Higher Self or Soul. Even though you may be unaware of this part or have no belief about it, by your intent you can connect.

**Emotions** – You may be one of those girls who dislikes really looking at themselves in the mirror because you feel uncomfortable with your body shape or your appearance. So you have a tendency to avoid or on purpose forget to do the Mirror Exercise daily. The thought of doing the exercise brings up a lot of feelings.

**Thoughts** – How we think, even if it's untrue, about ourselves affects our self-esteem.

Critical thoughts will come up as you look in the mirror. You want to avoid these thoughts. Rather than getting worse, critical thoughts come to the surface so you may become more aware of them. Aside from beginning to feel better about yourself, the main purpose of the Mirror Exercise shows you critical thoughts that undermine your self-esteem. With awareness you can begin to change them.

**Self-Image** – The pictures in our heads affect our self-esteem. Even girls who weighed less over time, instead of feeling better, felt the same as their previous weight because they saw the same picture in their heads, as if they still weighed the same.

**Inner Child** – This part – the childlike aspect of yourself as a child - still lives within you and represents all your feelings like joy and peace. It also represents all your pain and hurt. When you look deep into your eyes connect with your deeper essence of who you really are as well as the little girl within you. If you feel unloved, this little girl also feels unloved.

In conclusion, change how you feel and think about your outer appearance and body, your inner picture of yourself, and connect with your inner child and your self-esteem will change.

#### **Doing the Mirror Exercise**

- 1. In your bathroom mirror look deep into your eyes past your physical appearance.
- 2. Say out loud *I Love You*. You say this to yourself, your inner essence, and your inner child.
- Notice without judging the first feeling or thought that comes up whether good or critical.
- 4. Take a sticky note and write *I Love You* on it and place it on your bathroom mirror to remind you to do the exercise.
- 5. Do this exercise morning and evening before you go to bed.
- 6. In your journal write down each day the feelings and thoughts that come up. Notice any repeating patterns, as well as new feelings or thoughts.

It takes a minimum of <u>21 days in a row to change a habit</u>. If you miss a day start at day 1 again until you practice 21 days in a row.

The purpose of the <u>Mirror Exercise rather than convincing yourself you love yourself</u> <u>mainly shows what critical thoughts get in the way of you truly loving yourself.</u> I will show you some ways later how to change your critical thought patterns. As a benefit once you do this exercise for 21 days in a row, you will begin to love yourself more. You can continue doing this exercise even after 21 days for more results.

Accomplishing the completion of the Mirror Exercise kick starts a journey along the road of increasing better self-esteem.

A friend asked me once to do an exercise and that was to look in the mirror and find something that you like about yourself.

So I looked in the mirror and I immediately started crying because there was nothing that I liked about myself. This was in my 30s. So I kept trying. I finally was able to actually just look at myself in the mirror without having any kind of emotion whatever and I realized that I like the sway of my back and my smile.

I never found myself attractive. JANET JACKSON

Do you want to meet the love of your life? Look in the mirror. Byron Katie, Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life on Amazon.

#### **Things to Ponder:**

- 1. Stop comparing; Stop judging yourself.
- 2. Make positive friends.
- 3. Become aware of your critical thoughts.
- 4. Practice the Mirror Exercise 2X a day for a minimum of 21 days.

#### In Chapter 3:

- 1. Find out how to handle parent and peer pressure.
- 2. Discover how to love our body more.
- 3. Do you have to look like your friends to be "cool?"
- 4. 2 ways to change negative self-talk.
- 5. How 15 top celebrities feel about their bodies.
- 6. 7 tips to feel better about your body.

# Chapter 3: Why Do So Many Teenage Girls Have a Negative Body Image?

When I think of the most beautiful women, they're not supermodels. My mother is 53 and comfortable in her own skin. My mom doesn't spend hours in front of the mirror or at the gym.

It's ultimate beauty when the insides and the outside match up. Becky Newton, Actress, Ugly Betty

# Do You:

- 1. Do you know why you can never measure up to the media and celebrity role models that surround you daily?
- 2. Do you have some dissatisfaction with your body?
- 3. Do you as many teenage girls have concern about your weight?
- 4. Do you ever leave your house without makeup?
- 5. Do you diet?

#### **Did You Know?**

1. 92% of teen girls would like to change something about the way they look, with body weight ranking the highest. Dove Global Studies

- 70% of girls believe that they are not pretty enough, smart enough, or popular enough. Real Girls, Real Pressure: A National Study on the State of Self-Esteem 57% of mothers criticize their daughter's appearance. Real Girls, Real Pressure: A National Study on the State of Self-Esteem
- 53% of American girls report at age thirteen that they are unhappy with their bodies. This rate grows to 78% by the time girls are seventeen. National Institute on Media and the Family

#### **Discover:**

- 1. How to overcome the supergirl dilemma
- 2. The truth about some of your body image misconceptions
- 3. How to change negative self-talk
- 4. How to feel better about your body

I worked as a Residential and Self-Esteem Coach, at a therapeutic boarding school with about 80 teenage girls 13 – 18 for nine years. I discovered most girls worried about their appearance, body weight, and dieting. An occasional girl struggled with anorexia or bulimia. In addition, a larger number self-harmed off and on, as an unhealthy way of dealing with their intensity of feelings and stress. Of course, we had therapists to assist with these emotional issues.

# Supergirl Dilemma: Teenage Girls under Pressure for Perfection

# 74% of girls say they are under pressure to please everyone. Girls Incorporated, The Supergirl Dilemma, 2006

The 'it' girl is smart, popular, slender, beautiful and a great athlete — in short, she's perfect. In her book, Supergirls Speak Out, writer Liz Funk, herself an overachiever, shares how impossible goals led her to have an eating disorder. See the 3 top types of pressure you may experience and one way other teens have handled them.

**Parents Expectations** - Are you expected to get high grades in school, make no mistakes, and be the perfect daughter?

We, as people, spend our entire lives trying to impress people. Make the person you impress be you and things will be simpler. I made this quote myself when sitting in class one day. We were doing a test and my parents had such high expectations of me. I thought, I am doing this to impress them. They won't be happy with my achievements anyway, so I will do my best to impress myself. Without that added load to impress my folks, I had less pressure and did well on that exam. Lachlan M., Age 14 - Australia

**Peers Competition** – Are your friend's jealousy and possible low self-esteem driving you to compete for boy's attention, being the prettiest, and wearing the latest fashions?

To be fantastic you have to be yourself, because if you become fantastic being something you are not, then it is not you that is fantastic!

I wrote this for my friend when she felt that she could not be herself because of peer pressure. I told her that if in life you want to become something fantastic you have to be yourself, or otherwise that thing that you have built into a fantastic thing will not truly be yours. Keshia Nicolson

**Media Influence** – Are you forced to fit in. Do you act like someone different than who you really are? Does society expect you to be skinny and perfect like the most popular musicians, actors, and models?

The world is based off of one look, 'the look.' The way each and every teenage girl is supposed to look. Our world is like a canvas craving to be splattered with paint. Not the same old portrait but something unique, in its own way; nothing anybody else would have ever thought up. Let us be that portrait. Ashley F., Age 14 - Florida

# Girls Why Do You Hate Your Body?

Check out the following misconceptions and also what some celebrities say.

#### 1. Your body doesn't look like a model.

You should diet and exercise to look like the models in the glossy magazines. You weigh too much. You're too short, you're too tall.

Everyone has a different body. No one type is better or worse than another. Models have to be very tall and thin, few people look like that.

I have cellulite. So what?

I've never claimed to be perfect. It's crazy anyone should assume that just because you're in the spotlight, you're flawless. Sometimes I pig out and I still feel great, and think, 'That was so worth it!' And don't forget: The vast majority of women - even thin, fit ones - sport lumpy bits, so don't let it sap your mojo. **Kim Kardashian**, Actress, model, & television personality

#### 2. You believe boys only like very thin girls.

Teenage boys may like to look at thin, pretty girls. They, however, prefer to date regular looking girls. You intimidate them less.

Pretty is cool, but it's not really about looks for me. It's more about personality. I like a girl with a good sense of humor, who's humble and sensitive. Justin Timberline, Actor, Singer-songwriter

#### 3. Celebrities look fabulous all the time.

Celebrities and models spend hours a day to look good. They sacrifice a lot to get and stay looking good. Few people make it to celebrity status.

I refuse to become part of this perfect-body syndrome. I like my body. It looks good onscreen, and it's not because it's perfect. I accept it and wear it like a good dress ... One guy I dated said: 'You're beautiful but you're soft. You can't compete with other actresses in Hollywood because everyone's in shape and working out.' I said: Very nice to meet you. Good-bye! **Salma Hayek**, Actress, Director, & Producer

# 4. You have to look, dress, and eat like your friends to be "cool."

Everyone has a different body type. What is best for you? Would you feel better having friends who accept you for you?

One day I had to sit down with myself and decide that I loved myself no matter what my body looked like and what other people thought about my body. I got tired of hating myself. **Gabourey Sidibe** Big Screen star 2009 in *Precious*.

Gabourey first started to diet at 6 years old. Weighing about 350 pounds with dark skin, she became comfortable in her own skin in her early 20s.

# Why Do You Have So Many Negative Thoughts About Your Body?

97 percent of women said they had at least one *I hate my body* moment each day, according to a Glamour survey.

Further research showed for 300 women of all sizes, on average, women have 13 negative body thoughts daily - about one every waking hour. Some women confess to 35, 50 or 100 hateful thoughts about the shape of their body each day.

The most common critical thoughts: *I am ugly, I am fat, I am stupid*, and *I am not good enough.* 

Do you have a *negativity receptor*? Do you pick up on the slightest criticism and never hear or accept compliments?

Do you ask, Why am I always thinking negative? Perhaps, you're wired for self-criticism.

According to Louann Brizendine, MD, Neuropsychiatrist and Author, *The Female Brain*, says about the female brain, *It turns out there's an area of your brain that's assigned the task of negative thinking*.

You have had 100's, probably 1000's of critical thoughts about your body and yourself. Even you may be unable to change your critical thoughts right away, you can become more aware and choose to stop letting them run your life.

Michael Merzenich, MD, has good news; your brain like plastic remakes itself. *Every* aspect of you is created by the brain revising itself in response to your interactions in the world ... That includes things that relate to your attitude and your emotional construct.

The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind. William James, Philosopher and Psychologist

Do you want to silence your inner *Mean Girl*, to lessen the insulting internal critical voice, to alter your attitudes? Practice journaling, Stabilizing Your Mind, and Byron Katie's Technique.

**Journal:** What critical thoughts do you have about your body? I hate my ... All the pretty girls are size 0. Fat, disgusting, ugly etc. How do you feel in your body when you think these thoughts? At the end of the day write them in your journal and see how many you have. Do this for at least 1 week.

Self-Esteem Tip: Critical self-talk devastates our self-esteem.

**Stabilizing Your Mind** – If you practice meditation or yoga, even if you have never done neither, I recommend this method. Anyone can benefit from this Buddhist Mindfulness technique. You can use this practice when critical thoughts come up about your body or with any critical thought. Be aware of the thought, how it feels in your body, and come back to focusing on your breath. This simple powerful method requires:

- 1. Going inside yourself and focusing on the in and out breath
- 2. When your mind wanders to the past or future come back to your breath
- 3. Coming back to your breath brings you back to the present moment
- 4. Coming back to the breath, that is the meditation practice
- 5. You gradually become more calm and aware of your inner body sensations, feelings, and thoughts, pleasant or unpleasant
- 6. You can practice mindfulness and come back to your breath as you walk around during the day

**Journal: Byron Katie's Technique:** Author and spiritual teacher Byron Katie, in 1986, after nearly a decade of struggling with depression, alcoholism, suicidal thoughts, and eating disorders, checked herself into a halfway house for women. There she had an awakening that changed her life forever. She realized the cause of her intense suffering and depression stemmed from her beliefs.

Katie shares her realization with a process of self-inquiry called, *The Work* which includes answering and evaluating four key questions to change your thoughts.

In the evening, write in our journal, examining the four questions below in relation to a major critical thought of the day. Write down your answer to each question.

- 1. Is it true?
- 2. Can you absolutely know it is true?
- 3. How do you react, what happens when you believe that thought?
- 4. Who would you be without that thought?

#### The following shows a further expansion of the questions.

- 1. Am I 100% percent confident of the truth in this thought? Am I deeply certain that this is a true thought?
- 2. How does this thought make me feel? Write down all the physical sensations you feel in your body.
- 3. Now reverse the thought and find out five reasons why it's true. For example, original thought *I am never good enough*, reversed *I am good enough*.
- 4. Now find five reasons why the reversed is true?

Use this technique with any negative thought pattern.

#### **Resources:**

#### Byron Katie book, Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life

Eckhart Tolle book, <u>The Power of Now</u>, teaches about being in the present moment. Being present with our pain means learning to stay in the now rather than the past or future. When there is no way out, there is still always a way through. Eckhart Tolle book of practicing The Power of Now

Eugene Gendlin book, *Focusing*, teaches a six step method to staying present with any sensation in our body, which also includes vague feelings. Staying present with the sensations without any desire to fix something, allows the sensations to open and change on their own.

# As a Teenage Girl Do You Have a Negative Body Image?

Consider what these celebrities have to say about their bodies and body image.

My smile is my favorite part of my body. I think a smile can make your whole body.

I want women to know that it's okay. That you can be whatever size you are and you can be beautiful inside and out. We're always told what's beautiful, and what's not, and that's not right. Serena Williams - Tennis Star.

Lasting beauty radiates from the inside out when we learn to love ourselves and choose to build our self-esteem, day by day.

I love my snaggle fangs. They give me character and character is sexy. **Kirsten Dunst** - Actress Spider Man.

Americans spend billions of dollars on tooth whitening treatments and porcelain veneers. Kirsten chose to forgo whitening and veneers, in spite of nagging from her mother. You can have a radiant smile beaming with confidence without perfect teeth.

To all girls with butts, boobs, hips and a waist, put on a bikini - put it on and stay strong.

Jennifer credits her strong body image with positive thinking: I fall asleep feeling beautiful. Then, in the morning, before I leave the house, I say five things I love about myself. Jennifer Love Hewitt - Actress and Singer

You can be happy and healthy without being thin as a rail.

I was one of the only girls in my high school that didn't get a nose job. And if anybody needed it, I probably did. But my mom always told me, growing up, 'Barbra Streisand didn't get a nose job. You're not getting a nose job.' **Barbra Streisand**, Actress, Director, Film producer, Singer-Songwriter

I'm proud to be on a positive show and to be a voice for girls and say, 'You don't need to look like everybody else.' Love who you are. Lea Michele -Glee star.

Girls embrace your body parts that society may consider unattractive. No reason you need to fit a cookie-cutter formula of beauty.

I have a crumble baby belly, boobs are worse for wear after two kids... I'm doing all right. I'm 33. I don't look in the mirror and go, 'Oh, I look fantastic!' Of course I don't. Nobody is perfect. I just don't believe in perfection. But I do believe in saying, 'This is who I am and look at me not being perfect!' I'm proud of that. **Kate Winslet** - Actress and Titanic star. Kate has topped Best of Body Image lists for years. She promotes a healthy image of beauty. She stands against airbrushing and undergoing plastic surgery.

What no woman or man needs is anyone telling them they are 'too fat' or 'too skinny.' That just adds to the many stereotypes out there about a person's weight. **LeAnn Rimes** - Country singer.

LeAnn has been criticized for being too thin. Maybe you have a fast metabolism or you build muscle easily. Does anyone deserve being judged for weighing more or being thinner than others?

I can do everything skinny girls can do, trust me. I honestly think Hollywood is getting real. They're saying, 'Hey this is what a lot of America looks like,' a lot of America doesn't wear a size 2. I think the studios and the media are starting to realize that overweight people want something they can relate to, so let's give it to them. **Nikki Blonsky** - Tracy Turnblad in Hairspray.

Girls does your self-esteem have to be dictated by the size of your jeans? Nikki shows you can experience happiness and health, regardless of your pant size.

Girls of all kinds can be beautiful -- from the thin, plus-sized, short, very tall, ebony to porcelain skinned, the quirky, clumsy, shy, outgoing and all in between. It's not easy though because many people still put beauty into a confining, narrow box... Think outside of the box... Pledge that you will look in the mirror and find the unique beauty in you. Tyra Banks, Swimsuit Model.

Tyra founded the **TZone** self-esteem camp for girls. *TZONE .... is a commitment to empower girls to be fierce, focused and in control of their futures.* Tyra Banks

Are you ready to begin to get out of the box, to discover your unique beauty, the inner sparkle? Begin practicing the Mirror Exercise – *I Love Myself* - described in this book for a minimum of 21 days.

Being pregnant finally helped me understand what my true relationship was with my body - meaning that it wasn't put on this earth to look good in a swimsuit. I was like, 'Look, I can carry a baby! I'm gaining weight right, everything's going well.' And I've had that relationship ever since. **Amy Adams** - Actress, Julie and Julia.

With the birth of her daughter, Amy experienced compassion, gratitude, and wonder for her body.

I get a lot of flak for it... people saying my body is not normal for a girl... But I'm okay with it. I think it's because I was a gymnast for eight years, from age's four to 12. My body was made before my bones were fully grown. Gymnasts are short, stocky, muscular powerhouses. **Pink** – Singer, *Perfect* 

Pink's empowerment song *Perfect* which she wrote for her daughter talks about changing the critical voices in our heads. You're so mean when you talk about yourself. You were wrong. Change the voices in your head. Make them like you instead.

God made a very obvious choice when he made me voluptuous; why would I go against what he decided for me? My limbs work, so I'm not going to complain about the way my body is shaped. **Drew Barrymore**, Model and Actress 50 First Dates

Drew battled a negative body image for years. Drew thanks her body for allowing her to live the life she wants. How often do you express gratitude for the miracle of your body that lets you walk, run, dance etc.? What does a little extra weight matter in the large scheme of the universe?

The more I like me, the less I want to pretend to be other people. Jamie Lee Curtis – Actress and Spokes Model

In 2002 Jamie posed in *More* magazine wearing only underwear with no makeup, hairstyling, or airbrushing. Then the magazine showed a glamorous Jamie in an evening gown. Her transformation took 13 people and 3 hours. It's a myth that celebrities always look camera ready. It took Jamie years to feel comfortable in her skin. What transformation will it take for you to begin to feel comfortable in your own skin?

I think that whatever size or shape body you have, it's important to embrace it and get down! The female body is something that's so beautiful. I wish women would be proud of their bodies and not dis other women for being proud of theirs! **Christina Aguilera** – Singer

One of the songs I use in teaching self-esteem groups is Christina's Beautiful:

I am beautiful no matter what they say. Words can't bring me down. I am beautiful in every single way. Yes, words can't bring me down. So don't you bring me down today.

When will you stop allowing your internal critical voice or other peoples criticism and judgments bring you down? How about today?

When I wake up in the morning, I feel just like any other insecure 24-year old girl. Then I say, 'You're Lady Gaga, you get up and walk the walk today. Lady Gaga – Singer.

Maybe some would not consider Lady Gaga pretty, however, her songs encourage selfempowerment and for young girls and women to own their look. Lady Gaga has launched The *Born This Way* Foundation. She teaches her fans to be empowered and be *brave*.

Lady Gaga with her music, her message, and her own story breaks the mold. As her passion to be a force for good, her Born This Way Foundation represents many of her core beliefs.

From Lady Gaga's song, Born This Way:

My mama told me when I was young We are all born superstars ... There's nothing wrong with loving who you are Cause he made you perfect, babe

# Self-Esteem Tips: 7 Ways to Boost Feeling Good About Your Body

Nicole Wood-Barcalow, Adolescent Psychologist, conducted a study of young women with good body image. 80% struggled with negative body thoughts earlier in their life. Nicole says, *The fact that they were able to boost themselves up is proof that it's possible for all women to adopt a better outlook on their body.* 

You just read about 15 celebrities who overcame their critical thoughts about their bodies.

Are you ready to create a better attitude about your body? Practice the following 7 ways to love your body.

**1. Rewire Your Brain**: Remember earlier Michael Merzenich, MD said that we can create new pathways in our brains with positive thoughts.

<u>Write in your journal daily</u> what makes you feel good about your body. Also expressing gratitude out loud about your body activates endorphins – we feel good.

Also, express gratitude about 5 things about your day before you go to sleep at night. Do this for 21 days in a row. Your brain will start automatically focusing more on the positive in your life.

**2. Ask Yourself**: Is this *Really* About My Body? When a critical thought comes up about your body think, does it relate to something deeper? Write in your journal using Byron <u>Katie's 4 Questions</u> in relation to the critical thought.

**3. Exercise**: Any exercise activates endorphins in our bodies. We feel good. You probably have heard about the joggers high. Besides being in better health, exercise also boosts our thoughts; we accomplished something challenging.

**4. Say Stop:** Become aware when a negative thought raises its head. Choose to stop thinking it. Again you can write in your journal using Byron Katie's 4 Questions when you have time.

**5. Stop Obsessing:** Does worrying about what you eat or look like make you feel better? Perhaps, consider eating mindfully – enjoy your food as you eat it – then stop before you get full. It takes 15-20 minutes for your stomach to alert your brain it's full.

6. Appreciate Your Body: Express gratitude for what your body does rather than how it looks. Do this daily. Remember what Jennifer Love Hewitt said earlier, *I fall asleep feeling beautiful. Then, in the morning, before I leave the house, I say five things I love about myself.* 

*My limbs work, so I'm not going to complain about the way my body is shaped* says Drew Barrymore.

Be grateful you can walk and you have a healthy body.

**7. Focus on Your Strengths:** Does comparing your body to other girls help? Compliment yourself on your strengths. <u>Journal daily listing more strengths</u>, as you think about them.

#### **Resources:**

Girls Inc. inspiring girls meet their potential. Find a Girls Inc. in your state.

Body Drama: Real Girls, Real Bodies, Real Issues, Real Answers by Nancy Amanda Redd

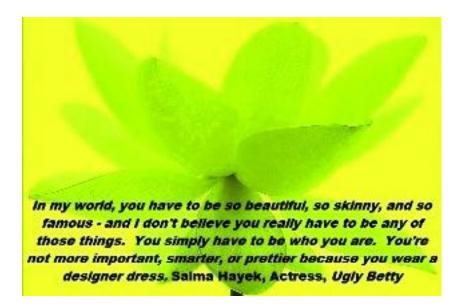
#### **Things to Ponder:**

- 1. What expectations do your parents have?
- 2. What types of peer pressure do you experience?
- 3. How do movies, teen magazines, and T.V. affect how you look?
- 4. What misconceptions do you have about your body?
- 5. Practice being aware and changing your critical thought
- 6. Practice some of the 7 tips daily to feel better about your body

# In Chapter 4:

- 1. The media effects on your self-esteem
- 2. How Teen magazines and Facebook promote low self-esteem
- 3. How media influences how you see your body
- 4. How media makes you an object rather than a unique person
- 5. A glimmer of hope in media messages

# Chapter 4: How Does Media Affect Teenage Girls Self-Esteem?



#### Do You Know?

- 1. How the media affects your self-esteem?
- 2. Teen magazines and Facebook promote low self-esteem?
- 3. How the media influences how you see your body?
- 4. How media makes you an object rather than a unique person?

#### **Discover:**

- 1. The media effects on your self-esteem
- 2. How Teen magazines promote low self-esteem
- 3. How to be your own unique person
- 4. The positive change in some media messages

#### How Does Media Affect Teenage Girls' Body Images and Self-Esteem?

Advertisements, the internet, magazines, movies, and television impact how you feel about your body and your self-esteem. Maybe you feel overweight or think you have to diet.

The average teen girl gets about 180 minutes of media exposure daily and only about 10 minutes of parental interaction a day. Renee Hobbs, Ed.D., Temple University

#### Have You Felt?

- 1. Discouraged by the content in magazines by how easy the media makes it appear to achieve a perfect body, wardrobe, and boyfriend?
- 2. Pressured by your parents to look and be perfect in certain ways making it more difficult to resist the unhealthy messages from the media?
- 3. Overwhelmed at an earlier age from the media's pressure to be thin and beautiful?
- 4. Read what Tyra Banks, swimsuit model, says about body types.

The modeling industry goes in and out of different styles and body types that are supposed to be hot at that moment.

But still such a stick, skinny ideal which would have worked for me when I was 11 years old because I was 98 pounds and my same height and now I'm 130. So I was really, really thin and insecure. It would have worked well for me to look at that in a magazine and see that that was called beautiful. But the majority of little girls aren't that way. The majorities of them are struggling with their weight and are the opposite way.

So I just think it's important to show different body types and say that they are all beautiful which is not really what they do.

When I lost all this weight... all of my white friends would be like, 'Oh my god, you're so gorgeous. You're so skinny. 'By the way, I looked disgusting, I looked sick. But they'd be like 'You're so skinny. I wish I could be like you.' And all my black friends would be like, 'Girl, eat a pork chop! You are so skinny.'

So, white women want to be super skinny because that's what white men seem to be attracted to. And the black guys want more meat. **Tyra Banks**, Swimsuit Model

Some white men, such as Justin Timberlake, Taylor Lautner, and Chace Crawford want more than looks from a girl or what the media advertises.

Pretty is cool, but it's not really about looks for me, it's more about personality. I like when a woman takes charge and does not just agree with everything I like - that's boring. If a girl has self-esteem and confidence, it definitely shows. That's the most attractive thing in the world. Justin Timberlake, Actor, Musician, & Singer-Songwriter

I think a girl is most attractive when wearing sweats and just being herself. **Taylor Lautner**, Actor and Model, Jacob Black in the Twilight Saga

When asked what he looks for in a girlfriend Chace said, *It's definitely more character and personality driven for me. I like a girl that keeps me on my toes.* **Chace Crawford**, Actor, *Gossip Girl* 

Even black men want more than the media type girl.

The perfect girl is one who is, of course, beautiful on the inside and out. She's extremely confident, focused, and knows what she wants out of life. She really just has to be comfortable in her own skin. Ludacris, Actor & Rapper

As Tyra says, because of hormonal changes you probably struggle with your weight. Everyone has a different body type. Accept, be grateful, and honor your body type.

**Journal:** Write some notes about the following questions.

- 1. What has more importance: your outer physical appearance and weight or your inner strengths, personality, and talents?
- 2. How have you changed your appearance due to media and peer pressure?
- 3. What would you like to tell magazine editors and media personnel, about positive changes showing more healthy portrayals of real girls and women?

# Self-Esteem Tip: Improving Your Body Image

- 1. Give a part of your body you hate a voice.
- Imagine or visualize that body part sitting in a chair opposite you. Ask it how it feels to be criticized. Imagine what it would say if it could talk. Listen without any censoring.
- 3. You can answer back. Go back and forth talking until you feel completed.
- 4. What did you learn?

# How Does the Media's Objectification of Teen Girls Affect Your Self-Esteem?

Sexual objectification means treating girls and women only as an object of pleasure rather than as a unique person. Advertising and fashion make money by showing females as objects. You buy beauty products, clothes, diet, and consider plastic surgery and enhancements. The fashion industry uses younger and younger girls as models making them up to look like women. The industry wants to sell more products to teens as well as tweens.

#### As a Result of Media Messages:

- 1. Do you consider yourself overweight? Would you be happier if you were taller, shorter, had curly hair, straight hair, a smaller nose or longer legs?
- 2. Do you compare yourself to women in magazines and TV and believe you have to be prettier and skinnier?
- 3. Do you believe thin, attractive women will be happier and more successful?
- 4. Would you diet for appearance rather than health?
- 5. Do you skip breakfast or lunch?
- 6. What is more important: how society feels about you or how you feel about yourself?

Supermodel Cindy Crawford tells girls to feel good about their bodies rather than striving to look like women in magazines.

Cindy changed the perception of the 'sexy American girl' from classic blue eyed blonde to a sultrier brunette with brains, charm, and professionalism to spare. **Michael Kors**, Fashion Designer

The thing I like about my body is that it's strong... I can ride my horse... I can play basketball. It's a well-functioning machine. Cindy Crawford

# Do You Believe Media Should Tell You?

1. How you should look?

- 2. Who you should be?
- 3. You need to spend money and time achieving a certain look?

Do you know this is *Mission Impossible*? The media sells images of perfection impossible to achieve, even for the models shown.

*I wished I looked like Cindy Crawford,* commented **Cindy Crawford** on photoshopped photos of herself.

Kate Winslet, Actress and Singer, said about British GQ Mag photoshopping one third of her weight off for the cover, *I don't look like that and I don't desire to look like that.* 

When I was a teenager, I was very overweight. I was 190 pounds when I was sixteen. And as an actress I wanted to play Alice in Alice in Wonderland... And, so, over the course of a year, I very, very sensibly lost the majority of the weight. I changed the way I thought about food and my body. **Kate Winslet** 

#### **Resources:**

Jean Kilbourne, Author and Filmmaker says, *The overwhelming presence in the media images of painfully thin women means that real women's bodies have become invisible in the mass media.* 

See YouTube video Jean Kilbourne *Killing Us Softly 4* - tells the truth about Ad images of women models

Feel Better About Yourself. Here's How Celebs Really Look. YouTube - <u>Before and Af-</u> ter Photoshopped Celebs

#### Will You Continue to?

- 1. Believe your outer appearance to be more important than your inner intelligence, personality, and strengths?
- 2. Feel depressed about how you look?

- 3. Believe you have to be obsessively thin?
- 4. Feel like you have to achieve physical perfection?
- 5. Have a negative body image?
- 6. Have low self-esteem?

Hey, girls, you're beautiful. Don't look at those stupid magazines with stick like models. Eat healthy and exercise. That's all. Don't let anyone tell you you're not good enough. You're good enough, you are too good. Love your family with all your heart and listen to it. You are gorgeous, whether you're a size 4 or 14. It doesn't matter what you look like on the outside, as long as you're a good person, as long as you respect others. I know it's been told hundreds of times before, but it's true. Hey, girls, you are beautiful. Becky J., Age 15 -United Kingdom took this quote from Gerard Way, a Musician.

Becky says, I chose this quote as it's an inspiration to teenage girls everywhere. Nowadays, the media is mostly responsible for all the self-esteem issues young girls go through. If you're beautiful on the inside, then you're also beautiful on the outside.

I think everyone has her own body type and looks good at different weights - that's what's so beautiful. There are thin women I think are beyond sexy, and then there are heavier women I think are beyond sexy. **BEYONCE** 

**Note:** I agree that if you have beauty inside and you develop your inner strengths they will shine through as beauty on the outside.

I always emphasize in self-esteem groups rather than self-esteem being about how you look, how many possessions you have, or prestige, fame and wealth, it's about how good you feel inside yourself. Good self-esteem comes from the inside out.

#### What Impact Does Reality TV Have on Your Self-Esteem?

Do you watch shows like American Idol, Jersey Shore, Project Runaway, Real Housewife's of ..., or The Hills? Do you believe these shows reflect reality?

Do they promote bad behavior?

Do they focus on physical appearance too much?

In 2011 The Girl Scout Research Institute did a survey, *Real to Me: Girls and Reality TV*. Of girls surveyed, regular reality TV viewers differed from their non-viewing peers in their self-image and understanding of the world.

#### **Girl Scout Research Findings:**

#### **1. Relationship Drama**:

- 1. 86% believe the shows pit girls against each other.
- 2. 78% believe gossiping is part of a relationship between girls.
- 3. 73% think fighting to be a part of romantic relationships.
- 4. 70% think it's okay to treat people badly.
- 5. 68% believe it's a girl's nature to be catty and competitive.

#### 2. Self-Image: Focus on Physical Appearance:

- 1. 72% spent a lot of time on their appearance.
- 2. 38% think how they look determines a girl's value.
- 3. 28% would like to be seen for their outer rather than inner beauty.

#### 3. Success:

- 1. 37% said you have to lie to get what you want.
- 2. 37% believe being mean earns more respect than being nice.
- 3. 28% think you have to be mean to get what you want.

# 4. Positive Results:

- 1. 75% said shows opened up conversation with friends and parents.
- 2. 68% said the shows made them think they can achieve anything.
- 3. 62% had raised consciousness of social issues.
- 4. 59% had been taught new things.

If you watch reality TV, how has it affected you? Answer the questions below in your journal.

#### Journal:

- 1. Do you accept higher levels of aggression, bullying, or drama than you used to?
- 2. Do you focus more on your appearance because of reality TV?
- 3. Do you believe it's okay to be mean or lie to get what you want?
- 4. Have you been inspired or learned something worthwhile?

#### **Resources:**

Reality TV Effects on Girls' Self-Esteem – YouTube - <u>Reality TV Effects on Girls Self-</u> <u>Esteem | Parent Tips | Girl Scout Research Institute</u>

# **Do Teen Magazines Promote Low Self-Esteem?**

Do you read magazines like Teen Vogue, GQ, Allure, Seventeen, or Cosmopolitan?

These magazines focus on ways to change your appearance to the way society believes you should look. How do you think that affects your self-esteem? 95% of regular girls look different.

- 1. Do you believe you will never be good enough?
- 2. Do you compare yourself to other girls?

- 3. Do you think because you look different than the girls in magazines that you're ugly?
- 4. Remember ugly means <u>Unique Gifted Lovable You</u>. Girl, you're one of a kind with special gifts, regardless of how you look on the outside.

It has been documented that seeing super thin models can make worse eating disorders in teenage girls. Models have progressed from willowy to wasted.

Findings suggest that in female adolescents, there is an interaction between intensepersonal celebrity worship and body image between the ages of 14 and 16 years. Maltby, 2005

Girls with eating disorders have lower self-esteem and see themselves negatively. Psychology of Medicine, 2011

# A Glimmer of Hope: Magazines and Organizations Making Positive Changes

*Vogue,* beginning in its June 2012 edition to promote a healthier body image, will no longer feature models under 16 or those who have an eating disorder.

Supposedly, *Dove* has taken a stand against Photoshopping for over a decade. See YouTube - *Dove Evolution* 

In 2002, actress Jamie Lee Curtis posed for a *More* magazine both *glammed up*" and in *real life* fashion to bring awareness to the way media digitally alters images. Jamie has a children's self-esteem book, *I'm Gonna like Me: Letting off a Little Self-Esteem.* 

Christina Kelly, editor in chief of YM, in 2002 announced banning dieting stories and to feature larger-size models in YM. *I always had this belief that as soon as I became editor in chief, diet stories would be gone,* Kelly says. *I'm really aware of the body-image issue.* 

Christina Kelly in 2005, as editor in chief of *Elle Girl*, also got rid of stories on weight loss and dieting. *YM* and *Elle Girl* no longer exist.

Social media websites such as Facebook, Tumblr, and Pinterest tend to ban proanorexia and pro-bulimia messages.

Some websites like <u>I Am That Girl blog</u> dedicate themselves to healthy portrayals of real women.

#### **Body Image Tips**:

- 1. Educate yourself on how media creates images through Photoshopping and the preparation models take to look glamorous.
- 2. Voice and write about your concerns to spread awareness. Support companies who promote a healthier body image.
- 3. Check out some to the following websites to continue to educate yourself about your body image and boost your self-esteem.

#### **Resources:**

<u>About Face</u> - Gives tools to understand unhealthy media messages affecting body image and self-esteem.

Adios Barbie – Promotes healthy body and self-image.

**Body Positive** – Boosting body image at any weight.

**TBIO** - Turn Beauty Inside Out - See link for action kit for facts, what you can do, and exercises to analyze media messages.

<u>Teen Voices</u> written for and by teenage girls helps change the world for girls through media.

#### Journal:

Check blog - *How Bad is Your Body Image?* Answer the 10 questions and total your score. See the suggestions with the scores.

#### **Self-Esteem Tips**:

A Practical Guide to Improving Your Body Image - 4 tips to change how you feel about your body, rather than changing your body. maddieruud.hubpages.com/hub/Improve\_Your\_Body\_Image

# **Positive Body Image Songs:**

I use songs in my self-esteem groups to boost feeling good and for the positive messages. These represent a few of the favorites the girls liked. Listen to them on YouTube.

India Arie, YouTube - india arie--i am not my hair

I have learned to love myself unconditionally

Because I am a queen

Does the way I wear my hair make me a better person?

Christina Aguilera, <u>Beautiful</u> YouTube - <u>Beautiful- Christina Aguilera</u>

You are beautiful no matter what they say

Words can't bring me down

Beyoncé, Halo - This is a feel good song. YouTube - Beyonce - Halo Live ( acoustic ) AMAZING !!!

#### Things to Ponder:

- 1. What will it take to use more of your strengths and talents every day?
- 2. What have you learned about how the media influences you?

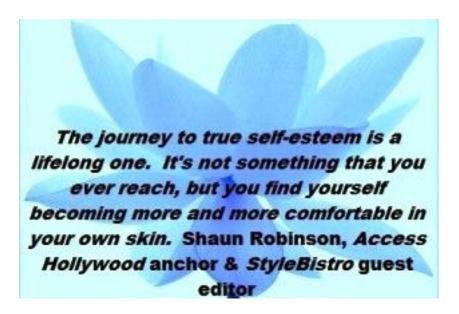
- 3. What actions will you take to promote a healthier body?
- 4. What actions will you take to boost your body image?
- 5. What actions will you take to be a positive force for change with your friends?

Be the change that you wish to see in the world - Mahatma Gandhi

#### In Chapter 5 Discover:

- 1. The main self-esteem issues affecting you
- 2. Does your weight get in the way of feeling good about yourself?
- 3. What to do if you feel self-conscious or shy.
- 4. More tips to conquer your critical inner voice.

# Chapter 5: What Main Self-Esteem Issues Affect You as a Teen Girl?



As you mature and you really start to realize that you're so much more than what, oftentimes, society tells us we are, you just become more solid with yourself, more forgiving of your flaws, and happy with the person that you are. **Shaun Robinson**, Access Hollywood anchor & StyleBistro guest editor

#### Ponder on This:

90% of girls feel pressured to be skinny by the media? - Girl Scout Research Institute. A majority of girls consider themselves unattractive when they compare themselves to models in ads and magazines.

Up to 50% of teenage girls have concerns about body image? 6 out of 10 girls think they'd be happier if they were thinner, UK Teen Body Image Survey.

Most girls feel self-conscious about how they look and want to feel beautiful?

You can change your critical thoughts about yourself; your brain will change.

**In 2011, Dove** released the findings of its global study of over 1,200 10-to-17-yearolds girls and their relationship with beauty - *The Real Truth about Beauty: Revisited*.

- 1. Only 4% of women around the world consider themselves beautiful. Concern about looks begins at an early age.
- 2. A majority of girls, 72%, said they felt pressured to be beautiful.
- Only 11% of girls around the world feel comfortable using the word beautiful to describe their looks.

All the above concerns, feelings, and behaviors affect your level of self-esteem. Feeling depressed about your appearance and handling your emotions with unhealthy behaviors lowers your self-esteem.

#### **Discover:**

- 1. What beauty is and what qualities give you inner beauty.
- 2. How to handle feelings about your appearance and weight.
- 3. How to deal with feeling self-conscious.
- 4. How to talk to friends and parents easier.
- 5. How to change your critical thoughts about yourself.

# How Beautiful Do You Feel?

Did you know an international study commissioned by Dove research found <u>up to 77 %</u> of UK and US girls between 10 and 14 describe themselves in negative ways when they compared themselves to attractive images in media ads?

- 1. Do you compare yourself to others and always feel less than?
- 2. Do you want to look like the cover girls on your favorite magazines?
- 3. Does your self-esteem drop because of the way you look?
- 4. Do you believe you're unattractive lack beauty?

To feel more beautiful, like I suggested in chapter 4, continue educating yourself how media creates images through Photoshopping etc. Continue to change the way you see your body and also keep boosting your self-esteem.

#### What is Beauty?

- 1. Does your beauty depend on who you would like to be?
- 2. Is beauty found in clothing, jewelry or makeup?
- 3. Can airbrushing give you inner beauty?
- 4. Perhaps, it lies within you.
- 5. Perhaps, rather than looking for beauty in the mirror, look inside your soul.
- 6. Perhaps, you're beautiful just the way you are.

Note: Practice the Mirror Exercise from chapter 2, *I Love You*.

I used to look in the mirror and feel shame, I look in the mirror now and I absolutely love myself. **Drew Barrymore** 

Beauty comes in different forms for every girl. Rather than feeling ugly maybe change your way of looking at yourself and be: <u>Unique Gifted Lovable You</u>.

**Tyra Banks**, Actress, Author, Model & Singer, says uniqueness represents a girl's beauty.

Women of every age, race, religion, and ethnicity have struggled in their lives with the narrow concept of beauty. The reason I created <u>America's Next Top Model</u> was to show the world that girls of all kinds can be beautiful. Every girl's unique look is important to me – from the thin, plus-sized, short, very tall, ebony to porcelain skinned, the quirky, clumsy, shy, outgoing and all in between.

It's not easy though because many people still put beauty into a confining, narrow box. So now, I'm asking women around the world to make a pledge to expand their definition of beauty - to put all types of beauty into the spotlight. Think outside of the box. Pledge that you will look in the mirror and find the unique beauty in you. Tyra Banks

### What is Beauty? Celebrity Quotes:

*My mom always tells me that imperfections equal beauty. All of us are imperfect.* **Miley Cyrus**, Actress & Musician, *The Climb* 

I think happiness is what makes you pretty. Happy people are beautiful. They become like a mirror and they reflect that happiness. **Drew Barrymore**, Actress, Director, Producer, & Model, autobiography, *Little Girl Lost* 

The true beauty in a woman is reflected in her soul. It is the caring that she lovingly gives the passion that she shows. The beauty of a woman grows with the passing years. Audrey Hepburn, Actress & Humanitarian

People often say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. I say that the most liberating thing about beauty is realizing that you are the beholder. This empowers us to find beauty in places where others have not dared to look, including inside ourselves. **Salma Hayek**, Mexican-American Actress, Director and Producer

The more I like me, the less I want to pretend to be other people. **Jamie Lee Curtis**, Actress & Author, I'm Gonna like Me: Letting off a Little Self-Esteem – a children's book

Beauty is how you feel inside, and it reflects in your eyes. It is not something physical. **Sophia Loren**, Actress

Beauty, to me, is about being comfortable in your own skin. ~ Gwyneth Paltrow, Actress, Author & Singer

#### Journal:

Write down your unique gifts, talents, and strengths. Add to this list as you think of more. Write down what qualities give you inner beauty.

#### Journal:

Do you feel bad a lot? You have the power to feel better. See over 200 types of feelings - Heyugly/how are you feeling. From the list write in your journal your feelings for the day. Do this every day for a week. Notice the changes.

#### ALICIA KEYS ~ On the importance of getting in touch with your feelings.

I have definitely been over accommodating. It gets to the point where I'm not taking a second to ask, How am I feeling today? We have to listen to our feelings. But a lot of times you ignore them. You're busy, you're in school, you're working, trying to get into college, to make you(r) mom happy, to be the best student you can be, to make your friends like you, to fit in. You don't want to disappoint anyone. But at some point you have to say, Enough! I can't be perfect. Alicia Keys ~ Actress, Record producer, & Singer-Songwriter

#### **Self-Esteem Tips:**

Begin having confidence in your unique looks, your strengths, and your lovability. For someone to love you, you need to learn to love yourself, otherwise you will attract someone who has little love for themselves or you.

Did you know abusive and codependent relationships reflect the lack of loving one's self?

Sexiness is a state of mind – a comfortable state of being. It's about loving yourself in your most unlovable moments. Halle Berry, Actress

#### **Resources**:

Are you enough? Listen to this song on YouTube. *I Am Enough* – song by Devyn Rush, American Idol Contestant – YouTube - Hey UGLY - Stop Bully School Assembly

#### Songs: To Feel Beautiful – Lift Your Mood

Selena Gomez, <u>Who Says</u> – I am no beauty queen. I'm just beautiful me. YouTube -<u>Selena Gomez & The Scene - Who Says</u>

One Direction, <u>What Makes You Beautiful</u>. Feeling insecure? YouTube - <u>One Direction</u> What Makes You Beautiful

**Bruno Mars,** <u>Just the Way You Are</u>. Because you're amazing just the way you are. YouTube - <u>Bruno Mars - Just The Way You Are [Official Video]</u>

India Arie, <u>Beautiful</u> - I wanna go to beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. YouTube - <u>India Arie -</u> <u>Beautiful</u>

**Miranda Cosgrove**, <u>Hey You</u> – See the beauty in yourself. YouTube - <u>Miranda Cos</u>grove Hey You (+lyrics)

**Pink**, <u>*Perfection*</u> – Do you ever feel like you're less than, less than perfect. You're perfect to me... Change the voices in your head. YouTube - <u>Perfect ~ Pink (Clean) lyrics</u>

Jesse McCartney, <u>Beautiful Soul</u> - I want you and your beautiful soul. YouTube - <u>Jesse</u> <u>McCartney - Beautiful Soul</u>

Jesse J, Who You Are - Be true to who you are. YouTube - Jesse J - Who You Are

Keri Hilson, <u>Pretty Girl Rock</u> – Don't hate me girl, I am beautiful. YouTube - <u>Keri Hilson</u> - Pretty Girl Rock

Katy Perry, *Firework* - Cause baby you're a firework, Come on, show 'em what you're worth. YouTube - Katy Perry- Firework

#### Self-Esteem Tips: Where Did Your Inner Sparkle Go?

Bring your inner beauty, inner power, uniqueness, the inner you out.

How do you bring your inner glitter from the inside out – that tiny spark of peace and light?

**<u>Smile</u>**: Brighten another's day. *Because of your smile, you make life more beautiful.* Thich Nhat Hanh.

**Be Impeccable With Your Word:** Be integral with what you say, with what you think. Let the inner you and the outer you match. Never allow gossip to dim your glimmer.

<u>Pay Full Attention:</u> When someone speaks give them your full attention rather than thinking about what you want to say back. Look them in the eye. Let your personality shine and shimmer by being present.

<u>Gratitude</u>: Express your appreciation of others. Express your gratitude about the good things in your life – even the little things.

Spend a few minutes every day reminding yourself of all the things you have going for you and the special qualities you have to offer. **Abigail Van Buren**, Dear Abbey col-umnist

Never dull your shine for somebody else. Tyra Banks, Swimsuit Model

Let's look at another issue which affects self-esteem.

#### **Do You Feel Self-Conscious?**

- 1. Are you the loner in the corner?
- 2. Have you always been shy?
- 3. Do you feel invisible around people in school hallways?
- 4. For teams or games do you always get picked last?

#### Journal:

- 1. Do you feel uncomfortable with yourself?
- 2. Do you feel overly aware of yourself in social situations?

- 3. Do you tend to see yourself in a negative light?
- 4. Do you focus on what's wrong with you in social situations?

If any of the above applies to you, write your answers in your journal. Now see how you can begin to improve your level of confidence from some of the following self-esteem tips.

#### Self-Esteem 10 Tips:

- 1. What unique strengths/qualities do you have? What do you do well?
- 2. What positive abilities do your strengths give you?
- 3. Learn to appreciate your uniqueness.

4. When others speak, practice listening and learning about them. Be present rather than focusing on yourself. Ask questions about the other person.

5. Release anxiety. A) Focus on inhaling for a count of 4 then focus on exhaling for a count of 4. Keep repeating until you feel better. B) Walk or jog.

6. Reprogram your thoughts when you feel a lack of confidence. Rather than repeating the thought of lack tell yourself you feel more confident. Eventually, you will begin to believe the positive thought.

Never take anything personally. What others say shows how they perceive reality.
 This says more about them than you.

8. Stop comparing yourself to others. Can you ever be like someone else? Be yourself.

9. Practice saying 5 good things about every bad thing you say about yourself.

10. Keep smiling. Smiling helps you stay positive. It makes others feel less intimidated by you. Smiling at yourself in the mirror when you wake up is a positive way to

begin your day. When you smile the brain produces endorphins ~ chemicals inside your body. They help relieve physical and emotional stress, creating a feeling of well-being.

If your self-esteem really does depend on how you look, you're always going to be insecure. There's no way you can get around it. Even if you get the perfect body, you're going to age. At some point, you have to take control, shift the focus, and decide who you are, what you can contribute to the world, what you do and say, is so much more important than how you look. ~ **Portia de Rossi**, Australian Actress & Comedienne

The real secret to total gorgeousness is to believe in yourself, have self-confidence, and try to be secure in your decisions and thoughts. ~ *Kirsten Dunst,* Actress, Spider Man

The key to life is confidence. A pretty girl can be ugly if she has no self-confidence and an ugly girl can be pretty because she has self-confidence. So don't let your insecurities override who you are. Whatever your insecurities are, I promise you, no one cares. People will love you for who you are, not who you try to be and when you try to be who you are not, it stands out. **Unknown** 

The only thing that will make you happy is being happy with who you are, and not who people think you are. ~ **Goldie Hawn,** Actress

## Do You Have a Hard Time Having Conversations?

- 1. Is it difficult for you to communicate with your peers?
- 2. When people talk to you is it hard to keep a conversation going?
- 3. Do you have a lot to say and feel like no one wants to listen?
- 4. Do you feel like no one knows what you think?
- 5. Do you feel the strain of awkward silences?
- 6. Do you feel like you can never make friends?

**Conversation Starters:** Use some of these when you feel awkward and selfconscious. If you want to get to know someone better, you should ask them about things you enjoy so you can see what interests you share.

- 1. Which are your favorite TV shows? What are your most liked TV characters?
- 2. What are your hobbies? Do you like to read? Which are your favorite books?
- 3. What foods do you like the most?
- 4. What are your favorite films? Who are your favorite actors/actresses?
- 5. What kind of music do you listen to? Who are your favorite singers?
- 6. What are all places have you traveled to? How many cities have you lived in?
- 7. How do you spend your weekends?
- 8. What are your future plans? Will you go to college or start working or take a break after high school?
- 9. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would that be and why?
- 10. Tell me five things that you like about yourself and five things that you hate.
- 11. What is the weirdest and craziest thing you have ever done in life?
- 12. If you were granted a wish to become any of the superheroes, which one would it be and why?
- 13. Do you have any role model? Do you look up to any celebrity or personality?
- 14. What is the one thing that you feel most passionately about in life?
- 15. Do you live by any life motto?
- 16. If you were to be reborn again, whom would you like to be and why?
- 17. Has there been any incident in your life, which you think has had an impact on the way you think or live your life?

Remember communication goes two ways. If you have a loss of words, ask questions. Let the other person talk and get to know them. Smile and make eye contact, even if you feel uncomfortable.

Another issue which affects self-esteem is your critical inner voice.

## How Can You Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice?

Like most girls you probably judge yourself. You probably have a few and maybe a lot of critical thoughts about being overweight, stupid, or ugly.

So I began to want to please myself first. I can't please everybody. I can't be the slimmest girl. Be the best you that you can be. I was drawing negative people around me with my negative thoughts. You gotta change the way you think about yourself or else everyone's going to think whatever you're thinking about yourself. **Mary J Blige**,

Like Mary Blige will you change your thinking?

## **Self-Esteem Tips:**

Make a list of at least 5 positive things about yourself and add to the list every day if you want to start feeling better. Make a choice to focus instead on your positive qualities when you become aware of judging yourself.

## Journal:

 Make two columns. In one column write your negative thought and in the other column write a positive thought opposite of the negative thought. Examples: I am worthless ~ I am a valuable person; I always make mistakes ~ I do some things well; I am stupid; I am smart.

2. Replace the negative thought with the positive one every time you become aware of the negative thought.

3. Repeat your positive thoughts over and over to yourself, out loud or in your mind.

4. Write the positive thoughts over and over each day.

5. Make signs with the positive thoughts and place them in different places in your house where you can see them.

6. It helps to reinforce the positive thought if you repeat if over and over to yourself when you are deeply relaxed, like just falling asleep or waking up.

**Note:** Remember it takes practicing a behavior a minimum of 21 days in a row to create change.

Do you deserve to think good thoughts about yourself?

## **Resources:**

**1.** Yes! You deserve to feel beautiful. Check out <u>Operation Beautiful</u>. It explains how leaving post-it-notes can change the way we see ourselves.

You're gorgeous

Believe in yourself

Be you

**2. Shaun Robinson**, an African-American journalist, authored the book, <u>Exactly as I</u> <u>Am.</u> The book shares stories from young girls, as well as women celebrities who share their struggles with self-esteem. Shaun also sits on the board of directors of <u>Girls Inc.</u> <u>online</u> - an organization which *inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.* 

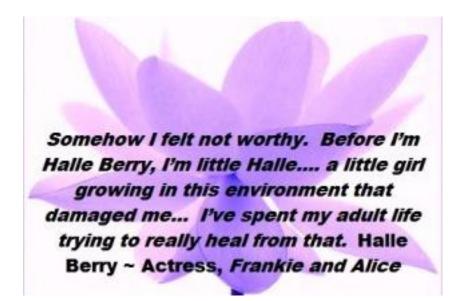
# Things to Ponder:

- 1. Practice the Mirror Exercise from chapter 2, *I Love You*.
- 2. Add to your journal list of unique gifts, talents, and strengths.
- 3. Make your own playlist of songs that make you feel beautiful.
- 4. At least once a day bring your inner sparkle out. Smile, be impeccable with your word, be present in the now and let your personality shine or express gratitude.
- 5. Become aware and choose to start a 21 day program changing your critical thoughts.

# In Chapter 6 Discover:

- 1. 10 Tips for improving your self-esteem.
- 2. 8 more Tips for boosting your self-esteem.
- 3. How to do a makeover for your self-esteem.
- 4. Self-esteem boosting sites.

# Chapter 6: Do You Know Ways to Build Your Self-Esteem?



#### Do You Know?

- 1. Your positive qualities?
- 2. Who you are?
- 3. The direction of your life purpose and dreams?
- 4. How to use your brain to boost your self-esteem?

#### **Discover:**

- 1. Your positive traits.
- 2. More of who you are.
- 3. How to stop the worthless dance.
- 4. How your brain affects your self-esteem.

**Note:** Maybe you or some of your friends, like Halle Berry did as a child, have a *sense* of low self-esteem. Parents do the best they know how. If they experienced emotional abuse or negative messages from their parents, this gets passed on without them wanting to or being aware of the effect on their children.

Do you know you can heal any damage done to your self-esteem and the negative feelings about your body now, rather than waiting until you become an adult?

#### **Things to Ponder:**

The primary cause of your low self-esteem or negative self-image probably goes back to childhood.

If you didn't have loving parents, then you had better learn to be a loving parent to yourself. ~ **Beverly Engels**, <u>Healing Your Emotional Self</u>: A Powerful Program to Help You Raise Your Self-Esteem, Quiet Your Inner Critic, and Overcome Your Shame on Amazon.

Being a loving parent to yourself requires learning to love you.

People always want to ask me about my drug problem, I never had a drug problem; I had a <u>self-esteem</u> problem. ~ **Gloria Gaynor**, Singer-Songwriter, <u>I Will Survive</u> (as long as I know how to love) I Will Survive ~ The Pussycat Dolls

Codependency and addiction are, in fact, symptoms of low self-esteem. People turn to these compulsive behaviors when they feel empty inside and want to feel better about themselves. **Carolyn Ball**, <u>Claiming Your Self Esteem</u>: A Guide out of Codependency, Addiction, and Other Useless Habits on Amazon.

When they feel empty inside – have a hole in their souls – some teens fill themselves up with addictions like alcohol and drugs, etc. They know no other healthy way to feel better, to feel good. To me this indicates a self-esteem issue at the core of their being.

Tell me how a person judges his or her self-esteem and I will tell you how that person operates at work, in love, in sex, in parenting, in every important aspect of existence - and how high he or she is likely to rise. The reputation you have with yourself - your self-esteem - is the single most important factor for a fulfilling life. **~Nathaniel Branden**, Founder of self-esteem movement in psychology

The **Dalai Lama**, the Tibetans Spiritual Leader, expressed astonishment when he heard many Westerners suffer from low self-esteem. The Tibetans have no concept for *a lack of compassion for oneself* or *self-directed contempt*.

In my experience of teaching self-esteem groups to teenage girls, I believe high selfesteem to be the basis of all happiness and success in life, including school, college, career, and relationships.

Low self-esteem, on the other hand, can lead to depression, drugs, eating disorders, and unhealthy relationships.

## **Do You Feel?**

- 1. Like other girls are always competing with you?
- 2. Boys want the perfect, pretty, skinny girl?
- 3. You have to fit in?
- 4. You should be someone different than yourself?

How do you build your self-esteem?

## **Top Ten Self-Esteem Building Tips for Teenage Girls:**

 Know Who You Are ~ As mentioned in chapter 1, this takes time. Begin now. Find out your likes and dislikes. Then join the right cliques and find the friends that have common interests and dreams.

Belief in oneself and knowing who you are, I mean, that's the foundation for everything great. ~ Jay-Z, Producer, Rapper

2. <u>Stop Comparing Yourself to Others</u> ~ There will always be people prettier and smarter than you. How would you treat your best friend? Treat yourself even better.

I emphasize that comparing ourselves to others can come from low self-esteem... Every person you meet, every situation you encounter, challenges you to become a stronger, more loving, and confident person.... Self-esteem comes from embracing this, working with what each day brings. Judith Orloff, M.D., Author, <u>Emotional Freedom</u>: Liberate Yourself from Negative Emotions and Transform Your Life.

3. Exercise or Practice a Sport ~ Do something you enjoy that makes you feel good.

Exercise is so amazing from the inside out. I feel so alive and have so much energy. ~ Vanessa Hudgens, Actress

It's important to work out and be the best version of yourself that you can be, but never feel like you have to be the skinniest girl in the room to be the prettiest. Be confident in yourself and you'll shine! ~ Kim Kardashian, Reality TV Star

4. <u>Educate Yourself</u> ~ Learn how to improve your self-esteem from books, CD's, and workshops. Whatever your mind dwells on, negative or positive, will be what shows up in your life.

Change your thoughts and you change your world. ~ Norman Vincent Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking

The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind. ~ William James, Psychologist

5. <u>Change Your Critical Self-Talk</u> ~ How often a day do you call yourself fat, stupid or ugly? These words sink into your unconscious. Your unconscious believes you 100% and creates in your everyday life what you tell it.

When participants in one study engaged in self-criticism and self-blame, their brains showed activity related to depression, eating disorders, and anxiety, NeuroImage, 2010. This means critical self-talk makes you eat more and hold on to excess weight.

First, become aware of your critical thoughts, then choose to replace the negative thought with a positive thought opposite of the negative one.

Replace critical thoughts with positive ones and you'll be amazed what a difference it makes in your day, your spirit, and your life. Author Unknown

I was seeing a lot of negative things going on in my life and I decided to turn them around and make them positive. Phil M., age 15, United Kingdom

6. <u>List Your Positive Traits</u> ~ Write down a minimum of 10 positive traits in your journal and keeping adding to it. Practice using at least one positive trait each day.

Whatever you practice over and over develops into your attitude, abilities and qualities of your life. Author Unknown

I find the less you focus on your flaws, the better off you are. Be yourself and be glad. Michelle Pfeiffer, Actress

**7.** <u>Associate With Positive, Supportive People</u> ~ Make friends with people who appreciate, boost your self-esteem, praise, and support you and your goals.</u>

When you face a crisis, you know who your true friends are. Magic Johnson,

The friends that stay with you through everything – they're your true best friends. Don't let go of them. Also remember, sisters make the best friends in the world. **Marilyn Mon-roe**, Actress

Friends surround us with the beauty of their caring.With friends we can share what we see, what we feel, and what we love.Friends help us with our problems because they listen.And as they listen we begin to hear the language of our own hearts. Author Unknown

8. <u>Change Negative Words into Positives</u> ~ Rather than continuing to unleash a force of negative energy, turn each of the letters in a negative word that you call yourself into a positive. Remember U.G.L.Y. stands for Unique, Gifted, Lovable, You. Start changing some of the critical self-talk words you use against yourself like fat or stupid into positives.

#### Your life is a reflection of how you think. Oprah Winfrey

 Claim Your Uniqueness ~ Rather than emotionally and mentally beating yourself up in your mind and with negative words ~ Claim Your Uniqueness.

Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind. ~ **Dr. Seuss**, Author, The Cat in the Hat

People say that you're going the wrong way when it's simply a way of your own. ~ **Angelina Jolie**, Actress & Director, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider. People* magazine named her one of 2012's <u>Most Beautiful at Every Age</u>.

That's the coolest thing in the world, to have success from you being you. ~ Jessica Simpson, Actress and Singer-Songwriter

Keep on Smiling ~ Bring your inner sparkle – your uniqueness - out by smiling.
 Keep smiling from the inside out.

Let us always meet each other with (a) smile, for the smile is the beginning of love. ~ **Mother Teresa,** Catholic nun. Gallup's list of <u>Most Widely Admired People</u>

**Note:** Are you ready to change your self-esteem for the better? As Obama says, you are the one you've been waiting for.

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek. **Barack Obama**, 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States

#### Journal:

Write these **Top Ten Self-Esteem Building Tips** in your journal. Practice at least one of these tips each day. At the end to the day write in your journal your experiences of the day.

**Resources:** For more information on Self-Esteem:

Hey U.G.L.Y

National Association for Self Esteem - HealthySelfEsteem.org

#### 8 More Self-Esteem Building Tips:

It's time for teens and young women to start focusing on their inner qualities and strengths. **America Ferrera,** Actress & Producer, *Real Women Have Curves* 

1. <u>Find Your Passion</u> ~ Explore and discover what makes you happy, what you would like to do more than anything else in the world? Discover what makes your heart sing, gives you joy. Take a look at what interested you between the ages of 7 to 10.

*Follow your passion. Stay true to yourself. Never follow someone else's path.* ~ **Ellen DeGeneres,** Standup Comedienne

You never achieve success unless you like what you are doing. ~ **Dale Carnegie**, Author, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* 

2. <u>Discover Yourself - Who Am I</u> ~ Review in chapter 1 the 7 Influences in the Struggle for Self-Identity. You will continue discovering more throughout your teen years.

If you aren't sure who you are, you might as well work on who you want to be. ~ **Robert Brault,** American Operatic Tenor

There is a limit to how much you can change to be liked for who you really are. ~ **Rob**ert Brault, American Operatic Tenor

The thing that is really hard, and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and beginning the work of becoming yourself. ~ Anna Quindlen, Author & Journalist

3. Stop the Worthless Dance ~

- 1. Do you have abandonment issues from being adopted?
- 2. Do you still constantly compare yourself to others?
- 3. Did you experience childhood abuse?
- 4. Is it difficult for you to receive praise?

#### See the following suggestions to begin dealing with your worthlessness.

- 1. Listen to uplifting music such as the songs to feel beautiful and uplift your mood listed in chapter 5.
- 2. Make your own playlist of upbeat songs.
- 3. For a sense of accomplishment decide to finish a project, big or small.
- 4. Begin being happier with your body.
- 5. See a healer or therapist to heal the scars of your past experiences.

Worthiness, or unworthiness, is something that is pronounced upon you by you. <u>You are</u> <u>the only one that can deem yourself worthy or unworthy.</u> You are the only one who can love yourself into a state of allowing, or hate yourself in a state of disallowing. There is not something wrong with you, nor is there something wrong with one who does not love you. You are all just, in the moment, practicing the art of not allowing, or the art of resisting. **Ester Hicks**, writer for Abraham Hicks

In every aspect of our lives, we are always asking ourselves, how am I of value? What is my worth? Yet I believe that worthiness is our birthright. **Oprah Winfrey,** Talk Show Host

4. <u>Teen Brain Power</u> ~ Changing hormonal levels in your brain affect emotional reactions, how you relate, and moods which affect your self-esteem.

Your brain's way of coping with all the hormonal stress you're under comes from your happiness hormone, called oxytocin. A rush of oxytocin is the brain's biggest neurological reward, and for teen girls nothing is more rewarding than connecting with friends...

Your oxytocin rushes center around talking, flirting and socializing. Louann Brizendine, M.D., Author, *The Female Brain* 

Check out the following Teen Brain Power site - <u>drlouann.ning.com/page/teen-brain-</u> <u>power</u> - for information on how to handle attraction to boys, healthy friendships, dealing with parents, and setting goals.

**5.** <u>Change Your Brain</u> ~ As I mentioned in chapter 3, Michael Merzenich, M.D., has good news; your brain, like plastic, remakes itself. *Every aspect of you is created by the brain revising itself in response to your interactions in the world … That includes things that relate to your attitude and your emotional construct.* 

The above quote tells you that you can change the pathways in your brain. You can change your attitudes and emotional moods, in spite of your hormones. You can change the negative thoughts you have about yourself and your body. You can build a higher level of self-esteem.

Jan Scholz, a researcher at the University of Oxford, in 2009 using MRI brain imaging said that she was able to see changes inside of people's brains after mastering a new skill.

Will you practice new skills to change your brain and your esteem? In the brain, practice makes perfect.

#### 6. Learn from Your Mistakes ~

- 1. Do you strive for perfection, afraid of making the slightest mistake?
- 2. Do you fear someone will find out something about you that you feel isn't perfect?

Remember from chapter one from the Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz – Always Do Your Best.

- 1. Perfection is doing your best and learning from your mistakes to change your behavior next time.
- 2. Doing your best is perfection.

The Japanese have an understanding of perfection they call Wabi-Sabi. An object is aesthetically perfect only through the acceptance of its imperfections.

I don't know if I continue even today, always liking myself. But what I learned to do many years ago was to forgive myself. It is very important for every human being to forgive herself or himself because if you live, you will make mistakes- it is inevitable. But once you do and you see the mistake, then you forgive yourself and say, 'well, if I'd known better I'd have done better,' that's all.

If we all hold on to the mistake, we can't see our own glory in the mirror because we have the mistake between our faces and the mirror; we can't see what we're capable of being. You can ask forgiveness of others, but in the end the real forgiveness is in one's own self... The real difficulty is to overcome how you think about yourself. If we don't have that we never grow, we never learn. **Maya Angelou**, African-American Activist, Poet, and Author, *I Know Why the Cage Bird Sings* 

Can you begin to accept your imperfections, your unique beauty?

#### Phenomenal Woman by Maya Angelou

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size But when I start to tell them, They think I'm telling lies. I say, It's in the reach of my arms The span of my hips, The stride of my step, The curl of my lips. I'm a woman Phenomenally, Phenomenal woman, That's me…

Listen to **Phenomenal Woman** by Maya Angelou on YouTube - <u>Maya Angelou - Phe-</u> <u>nomenal Woman</u>

#### 7. Be Here Now

Practice for one day living in the present moment. Focus on what you feel inside your body, at the moment. Focus on your surroundings, at the moment. Focus on the people you interact with, being fully present with them.

Challenging? Yes! You probably, like most girls, go over and over critical thoughts and images in your head all day. *I should weigh less, why can't I look like her*, etc. You feel bad as your self-esteem sinks lower and lower.

You will feel better about yourself by practicing being in the now moment, rather than in the past or worrying about the future.

Why do animals, even the ugliest, have no problem with self-esteem? They live only in the present all the time.

Check out Practicing the Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle

## **Eckhart Tolle Tips**:

- 1. Stay fully present in the now—your whole life unfolds here. In the now there is joy of being and deep peace.
- 2. Be present as the watcher of the mind.
- 3. Just observe and feel—do not judge anything.
- 4. Do not wish the present moment to be different from what it is.

5. Make it a habit to feel your body from inside as often as possible. The body is always in the present.

#### 8. Practice Meditation & Yoga ~

Referring to tip 7, meditation can assist in stabilizing your mind. The practice consists of when your mind wanders into the past or future, you come back to the present and focus on your in and out breathe.

<u>48 children, in a 6-week meditation program</u> showed significant improvements in behavior, <u>self-esteem</u>, and relationship quality, with an average 35% improvement in ADHD symptoms. Harrison, Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry 2004

The exercise and relaxation postures of yoga also help to enhance your inner sparkle – your inner beauty.

#### Journal:

**1. Stop the Worthless Dance** ~ Think back to the first time you felt worthless. When did you decide you were worthless? Write and reflect. Awareness becomes the first step to positive change.

**2. Teen Brain Power** ~ List the qualities that your friends like about you.

**3. Learn from Your Mistakes** ~ Write down your beliefs about making mistakes, being less than perfect.

4. Be Here Now ~ Daily write down your experience of practicing living in the present.

#### **Resources: Self-Esteem Boosting Articles for Teen Girls**

**Empowering Girls**: Venus, Serena, Jada Pinkett Smith and our expert get to the bottom of issues teen girls are facing: weight, sex and self-esteem. See <u>Oprah show em-</u> <u>powering girls</u> **Dear Every Woman I Know, Including Me:** There's never a better time to start loving yourself than right now. Author Amy Bloom tells women everywhere how. See - <u>Oprah</u> spirit improving body image how to feel beautiful improving self-esteem

How to Love That Woman in the Mirror: See – Oprah O magazine boost your selfesteem an interview with Nancy Etcoff

Step Away from the Mean Girls: Say bye-bye to feeling bad about your looks. See – Oprah spirit sign the beauty pledge O magazine beauty revolution pledge

Lessons Learned: Phylicia Rashad opens up in a "letter to her younger self." See – Oprah spirit lessons-learned Phylicia Rashad

Articles on Beauty, Health, Spirit: See - Oprah Live Your Best Life

8 Self-Esteem Activities: See – <u>Self-improvement-advice.org/free-self-esteem-</u> activities

See - Raven-Symone: Weight Loss Does not Affect Her Self-Esteem

When you want to succeed as bad as you want to breathe, then you'll be successful. From the video The Truth about Success, Eric Thomas

Inspirational Video *How Great I Am* – How great are you? YouTube – <u>INSPIRATON –</u> <u>HOW GREAT I AM</u>

With the realization of one's own potential and self-confidence in one's ability, one can build a better world.

According to my own experience, self-confidence is very important. That sort of confidence is not a blind one; it is an awareness of one's own potential. On that basis, human beings can transform themselves by increasing the good qualities and reducing the negative qualities **The Dalai Lama** 

#### Things to Ponder:

- 1. Keep adding daily to your journal list of positive traits.
- 2. Journal about how your experience as a child impacted your self-esteem.
- 3. Practice daily at least 1 of the self-esteem building tips from the list of tips.
- 4. Keep reading articles on self-esteem.
- 5. Remember when you want to succeed as bad as you want to breathe, then you'll be successful in boosting your self-esteem.

#### In Chapter 7 Discover:

- 1. 10 ways parents can help boost your self-esteem.
- 2. Facts about teens' low esteem behaviors and beliefs.
- 3. 3 tips how to be your best self.
- 4. Overall, how parents can educate, encourage, support, and teach to assist you in building higher self-esteem.

# Chapter 7: How Can Parents Help Their Teen Daughter Boost Her Self-Esteem?



In my experience with hundreds of parents and teenage girls, the level of your parents self-esteem can have a major impact on your self-esteem. Of course, there can always be other influencing circumstances. I have noticed teenage girls who have been adopted often carry a sense of unworthiness, *Why did my birth mother abandon me?* 

Parents who bolster a girl's sense of worth and who avoid physical and mental abuse can make a girl's path to healthy self-esteem easier.

No good purpose is ever served by assaulting a child's self-esteem. This is the first rule of effective criticism. We do not inspire better behavior by impugning a child's worth, intelligence, morality, character, intentions or psychology. No one was ever made 'good' by being told he or she was 'bad.' **Nathaniel Branden**, Psychologist

#### **Do You Know Girls Need?**

- 1. A connection with nurturing adults other than parents.
- 2. An attitude that they can do challenging tasks.
- 3. Developing relationships with mentors and positive role models.

- 4. To develop the ability to make decisions with the help of their parents as support.
- 5. An understanding of the biological, emotional changes and media influences affecting them.

#### 10 Ways a Parent Can Boost Your Self-Esteem

75% of girls with low self-esteem report being involved in bullying, drinking, eating disorders, self-harm, smoking, or using drugs when they feel bad about themselves according to the Real Girls, Real Pressure Report.

**Note:** Statistics come from *Real Girls, Real Pressures Report,* A National Report on the State of Self-Esteem commissioned by the Dove Self-Esteem Fund 2008.

These actions from your parents aid in building your self-esteem:

1. Assists You Understanding Your Body ~ Ask questions and talk with your mother or an adult you trust about the effect of hormones in your body and how you feel physically and emotionally.

71% of girls with low self-esteem feel their appearance does not measure up, including not feeling pretty enough, thin enough or stylish or trendy enough compared to 29% of girls with high self-esteem.

78% of girls with low self-esteem admit that it is hard to feel good in school when you do not feel good about how you look compared to 54% of girls with high self-esteem.

**Note:** I have seen in my experience with teenage girls, a girl's self-esteem <u>relates to</u> <u>how she views her own body shape and body weight</u> rather than how much she actually weighs.

2. Discusses Any Subject ~ Do your parents allow you the freedom to talk about any subject openly? Do they give you honest, accurate information?

34% of girls with low self-esteem believe that they are not a good enough daughters compared to 9% of girls with high self-esteem.

**3. Encourages Your Voice** ~ Have your parents allowed you the freedom to express your needs and wants? Do they listen to your opinions, even when they have a different way of seeing something?

**4. Encourages You to Join Groups** ~ Working with other girls toward a common goal, like a sport or other goal oriented groups, helps develop self-esteem. You get to appreciate what your body does rather than how you look. You get to show what you can accomplish.

**5. Encourages You to Learn from Mistakes** ~ Do your parents allow you to make mistakes or do they rescue you? Do your parents praise you for considering new ways to solve problems? Do they respect your thoughts, ideas, and feelings even when you make mistakes?

6. Explains the Reality of Media Messages ~ Have your parents discussed with you the reality of how magazines and TV portray women? Do your parents teach you to love your body no matter what type of body you have?

25% of teen girls with low self-esteem practice disordered eating, such as starving themselves, refusing to eat, or over-eating and throwing up when feeling badly about themselves compared to 7% of girls with high self-esteem. They want to be thin like the media images of women.

Has your mother talked to you about the reality of the beauty industry? See this video *Onslaught* on Beauty Pressure which dramatizes the barrage of beauty images girls like you face. YouTube - <u>Beauty Pressure</u>

Check out 11 Facts about Body Image YouTube - 11 Facts about Body Image

**7. Establishes Good Communication** ~ Do you feel comfortable talking to your parents? Do they spend regular time just talking with you about you?

More than half, 57%, of all girls say they don't always tell their parents certain things, about them, because they don't want them to think badly of them.

**8. Praises you** ~ Have your parents praised you through their actions and words as grew up and now? Do they tell you how beautiful, intelligent etc. you are?

Girls with low self-esteem are less likely to receive praise from both parents and more likely to receive criticism than girls with high self-esteem.

**9. Your Father Provides a Good Role Model** ~ By his words and most importantly by his actions your father or step-father by his degree of respect for your mother and other women impacts the way you see yourself. This affects how much you will expect boys and future adult partners to value you.

Does your father focus on who you are inside rather than how you look on the outside?

Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters: 10 Secrets Every Father Should Know by Margaret Meeker, M.D. on Amazon.

At 16, girls become more likely to seek support from male peers than from their own dads.

**10. Your Mother Values Herself** ~ Does your mother like her appearance rather than criticizing it? Is your mother consistent in her messages?

Your mother's degree of valuing herself affects how you value yourself.

57% of all girls have a mother who criticizes her own looks.

67% of girls ages 13 - 17 turn to their mother as a resource when feeling badly about themselves.

#### **Does your mother?**

- 1. Talk positively about her body?
- 2. Eat healthy?
- 3. Practice healthy exercise routines?
- 4. Feel comfortable in her body?

#### Journal:

- 1. What questions do you have about changes you experience in your body?
- 2. What healthy needs and wants do you have that you never give yourself?
- 3. What have you learned from your mistakes?
- 4. What would you like most to talk about with your parents?
- 5. What beliefs have you learned from your father about boys and men?
- 6. How has your mother affected how you value yourself?

# 3 Self-Esteem Tips: How to Boost Your Self Esteem and Be Your Best Self.

- 1. Tell Yourself You Rock
- 2. Find Friends Who Help You Rock
- 3. Take a Risk and Rock Your World

Find out more: See - How to Boost Your Self Esteem and Be Your Best Self

#### **Resources:**

Improving the health and lives of girls - See - helpingourteengirls.org

Dedicated to helping with self-esteem and empathy-building programs to empower girls. See – <u>heyugly</u> Helps build body confidence and self-esteem - See bodygossip school

National Association for Self Esteem - See HealthySelfEsteem.org

## Summary of Actions for Building Your Self-Esteem:

## Chapter 1: What is Your Level of Self-Esteem as a Teen Girl?

- 1. Take 1 action a day to improve your self-esteem.
- 2. In 3 months do the Sorenson self-esteem 40 question quiz again as honestly as possible.
- 3. Keep discovering who you are. Your self-identity evolves over time.
- 4. Create a habit of journaling every day.
- 5. Once a month review your journal for the month. Note improvements and continuing areas of self-esteem to strengthen. It takes time. Be patient.

# Chapter 2: Why as a Girl Does Your Self-Esteem Drop?

- 1. Stop comparing: Stop judging yourself.
- 2. Make positive friends.
- 3. Become aware of your critical thoughts.
- 4. Practice the Mirror Exercise 2X a day for a minimum of 21 days.

# Chapter 3: Why Do So Many Teenage Girls Have a Negative Body Image?

- 1. What expectations do your parents have?
- 2. What types of peer pressure do you experience?
- 3. How do movies, teen magazines, and T.V. affect how you look?
- 4. What misconceptions do you have about your body?
- 5. Practice being aware and changing your critical thoughts

- 6. Practice some of the 7 tips daily, to feel better about your body.
  - 1. Rewire your brain
  - 2. Ask yourself is this really about my body? Write in your journal using Byron Katie's 4 Questions in relation to the critical thought.
  - 3. Exercise
  - 4. Say Stop when a negative thought raises its head
  - 5. Stop obsessing about what you eat or look like.
  - 6. Appreciate your body
  - 7. Focus on your strengths

#### Chapter 4: How Does Media Affect Teenage Girls' Self-Esteem?

- 1. What will it take to use more of your strengths and talents every day?
- 2. What have you learned about how the media influences you?
- 3. What actions will you take to promote a healthier body?
- 4. What actions will you take to boost your body image?
- 5. What actions will you take to be a positive force for change with your friends?

#### Chapter 5: What Main Self-Esteem Issues Affect You as a Teen Girl?

- 1. Practice the Mirror Exercise from chapter 2. I Love You.
- 2. Add to your journal list of unique gifts, talents, and strengths.
- 3. Make your own playlist of songs that make you feel beautiful.
- 4. At least once a day bring your inner sparkle out. Smile, be impeccable with your word, be present in the now, let your personality shine and express gratitude.
- 5. Become aware and choose to start a 21 day program changing your critical thoughts.

#### Chapter 6: Do You Know Ways to Build Your Self-Esteem?

- 1. Keep adding daily to your journal list of positive traits.
- 2. Journal about how your experience as a child impacted your self-esteem.
- 3. Practice daily at least 1 of the self-esteem building tips from the list of tips.
- 4. Keep reading articles on self-esteem.
- 5. Remember when you want to succeed as bad as you want to breathe, then you'll be successful in boosting your self-esteem.

# Chapter 7: How Can Parents Help Their Teen Daughter Boost Her Self-Esteem?

- 1. How can your parents help build your self-esteem?
- 2. How can you use 11 facts about body image from the video to improve your body image?
- 3. How can you boost your self-esteem regardless of your parents' critical words and actions?
- 4. How can you communicate your needs better in your family?

#### Summary:

Parents' words and actions foster low or high self-esteem.

Again, the following percentages come from the Real Girls, Real Pressures Report.

93% of girls with low self-esteem want their parents to change their behavior towards them.

Girls wish most of all for their parents to communicate better with them. They want more frequent and open talks about themselves.

In assisting in emotional growth workshops for parents, I find the number one ability parents lack relates to good listening skills with their daughters. Most parents, however, believe they have good listening skills.

Parents, like most people, listen to be heard. In other words, rather than really hearing and validating you as a person and your feelings they focus on what they are going to be saying next.

In the workshop, the parents practice learning to **listen to validate feelings** – how to just listen without fixing anything or offering advice.

Listening to validate means learning to sense and feel beyond the words you say. 80% of communication lies in nonverbal messages. The listener practices hearing and feeling the message under the words. For example, *I hear your pain from losing your best friend's friendship.* 

Parents in the workshop get to experience what it feels like for someone to really get who they are – to be validated as a person. They can then become better listeners by using this method of listening with you their daughters. You will feel more listened to and understood.

#### In addition, with communication, girls with low self-esteem want:

- 1. To be understood better 60%
- 2. To be listened to more 52%
- 3. Parents to spend more time with them -43%

# **Other Resources:**

Note: <u>Under any of the Resource sections</u> in the various chapters <u>or in the chap-</u> <u>ters</u>, you can <u>copy any of the underlined links and paste them into Google search</u> <u>for more information</u>.

<u>Thank you for reading this book</u>. If you liked it, I would appreciate a review on Amazon. **1**. On Amazon, after the title **click liked**. **2**. At the bottom of Customer Reviews, **click Write a customer review** - If you don't have an Amazon account, add your email and create a password. Write a few lines of what you liked. **3**. **Rate the book 5 stars**.

Thank you gift: Email me and I will send you for <u>free a complete list of about 50</u> <u>clickable links</u> related to additional information on a healthier body image and self-esteem in gratitude for your review.

# **Teen Esteem: Other Programs**

**1.** Regarding **questions** on any material in the book *Self-Esteem: A Teen's Guide for Girls* contact Michael at <u>mdlawrience@msn.com</u>

**2. Sedona Healing Hikes:** I have hiked in the natural beauty of Sedona since 1984 and taken groups of 8 -12 teenage girls hiking since 2004.

A UK study released in April 2007 reported that people taking a "green walk" decreased their depression 71%, reduced their tension 50%, and increased their self-esteem 90%.

Mother/Daughter or Father/Daughter Healing Hikes: 4 hours, minimum 2 people, \$100 per person.

- 1. Connect with nature creates a natural high reduces stress
- 2. Connect heart to heart with each other
- 3. Improve communication
- 4. Experience emotional breakthroughs

I have over 5 years of experience assisting, as a small group leader in emotional growth workshops for parents with troubled teenage daughters.

**3**. **Person-to-Person Self-Esteem Teaching:** I created and taught ongoing selfesteem, codependency recovery, and body image groups for teenage girls for 5 years at a therapeutic boarding school for teenage girls.

I am available for person-to-person self-esteem groups with a minimum of 10 people, in the **Sedona/Verde Valley area**. Teaching involves 10 groups, 2 hours once a week. Fee: \$15 per person per hour with full payment after the first group.

**4. Email Course:** I <u>may develop</u> an email course for assistance in applying the concepts in more depth in the book, *Self-Esteem: A Teen's Guide for Girls.* It would involve 5 weeks. Fee: Total \$100.

- 1. Healing Family Conflict
- 2. Improving communication skills with family and friends

- 3. Strengthening Personal Boundaries, Developing the Ability to Say No
- 4. Focusing on Personal Inner Strengths
- 5. Learning to Nurture Yourself

Contact Michael at <a href="mailto:mdlawrience@msn.com">mdlawrience@msn.com</a> for further info