

## UNDERSTANDING SELF-ESTEEM AND ITS HEALTHINESS

We must have true self-esteem.

Real self-esteem is realising we have the right to be respected and to respect ourselves and to engage in self-compassion. It is respecting our right not to feel fabulous about ourselves all the time. The most courageous and strong self-esteem says, "I feel bad about myself right now but I deserve to feel better. I will let this pass for I have the self-esteem to know it will and that I will feel great." That in a way is a sense of well-being for it is being as positive as you can be about a bad patch and that feels good and anticipates good. It feels that bit better. It is refusing to judge yourself for feeling bad. Self-esteem can be as strong when you are doing this as it can be when feel on top of the world.

We all seek the feeling of wellbeing and self-esteem. It is impossible to develop the feeling of self-esteem in isolation. It can only be won if you surround yourself with people who have a good enough perception of you. It is your perception of what they perceive about you that gives you self-esteem - or not. Why do you follow your perception? You do it for you see no reason for it being wrong though you know it could be. To feel good with others it is necessary to have a healthy relationship with yourself. That way you will draw and be drawn to those who have healthy relationships with themselves. You will be protected from abusive situations. You will generate an example that attracts others to the beauty of healthy self-respect.

## A CRITICISM

If you say you can only love others if you start to love yourself that turns others into afterthoughts. It implies you can love without them and don't need them and because you love yourself now you can be generous and give them some love. You oppose the view that loving yourself is something that you do with others. Many say that love happens when you love others and then you find your love for yourself. So self-love is sharing love. You don't start off loving yourself on your own. Self love is a part of loving others. Anything else is not self-love but narcissism. So the paradox is that if instead of self-love you just love yourself with other people self-love will grow. Human nature reaches out so if you reach out you will find self-love.

## FALSE FORMS OF SELF-ESTEEM

Pride is the wrong way of loving yourself or inordinate self love. You think you are more valuable than God or anybody else. You may think that some feature, your fitness level or your good looks make you superior.

You can think others are your equal and still be proud for you look on many other people with disdain and as below standard.

What is called low self esteem is often just hurt pride. That will happen a lot to the person who is too proud. The more pride you have and the more ridiculous it is the more hurt pride you will have.

At best, the quest and struggle for stupidly higher self esteem is a distraction from life's realities. It is dangerous quackery at worst.

Selfishness - defined as abusing others to get what you want - only masquerades as self-esteem. If you really trusted yourself to get results from interacting with others you would not need to try to force them to submit. It is possible to be selfish and to feel good about it but as we are inviting others to be selfish too and refusing to develop properly this feeling good is our feelings lying to us that everything is okay. That is incompatible with true self-respect. True-self respect is the root of all goodness.

## CORRECT SELF-LOVE

Loving yourself means you make yourself happy and the only sure way to do that is to be nice and to do good things for others.

Some say that self-interest as in feeling valuable or useful should be our chief or only motive in all that we do. Or better still the only motive. Should I help others mainly or only because it is the only true way to respect myself?

Yes. Obviously.

But some say, "You would feel unimportant if you believed that even those who said they loved you were doing so to please themselves and not you even if it means they do a lot of good for you. We want others to benefit from our love but we do not want them to care only about what they can get from us. We want them to care about us too. To help others because you respect yourself is incoherent."

In reality that is not what happens. We are happy if people help us only for the sake of their own self-esteem.

This objection seeks to deny that my morality or right and wrong come from me (my morality and morality as in the principles I should have can be two different things). I rejoice if people help me for them not me. It does not bother me. Thus morality is man-made in that sense. Maybe you prefer to call it universally preferred behaviour.

Altruistic and God based moral systems that object to you creating a morality of your own does not mind the destruction that will take place if personal self-respect really is the root of goodness and community. The systems will still oppose it and put philosophy before practice. What the opponents are trying to do is encourage altruism - altruism is about sacrifice and getting nothing back and thinking of others and not yourself.

Some say, "We are predominantly selfless. If you give your life to save others, you are showing amazing self-esteem. You are treating yourself as valuable to the welfare of others." That is nonsense. It is like saying you value your rubbish when you give it to the recycling plant.

## SELF-ESTEEM AND OTHERS

Those who say you must put your self-esteem first are merely recognising that your well-being is primarily a personal task. Others cannot help you unless you are willing to work on cooperating with them and appreciating them.

Self-esteem is only about how you feel about engaging with others and letting them know you. It is about you as a social person. You as a social person means it is still all about you. It is about life in this world and not other. God is only a hindrance to it. You feel good about yourself so that you can engage with others and trust them and cope if you are let down. You cannot develop self-esteem by theory alone. It is the practice of the theory that assists it and develops it.

To invest yourself in others is to make goodness about you alone. Your involving others does not mean it is in any way about them. To invest yourself means you have to cherish and respect and value yourself.

## SACRIFICE

Some say, "Giving is joyful. Be a cheerful giver. Sacrifice is giving when not wanting to. It leads to anger and poor self-esteem. Giving and sacrifice are different things. Giving is good. Sacrifice is to be avoided. Selflessness and sacrifice are not exactly the same. If I have healthy self-esteem I will find myself tending to honour myself by doing good deeds and looking for nothing back. I see myself as good and I want to offer myself to others. I want to give them a good person. Even if they are ungrateful they will see that." But wanting to give is more important than the giving. Those who say the giving comes first forget that there can be no giving unless you want enough to do it. Having a bath would make no sense if you do it without wanting anything back. Wanting others to like the smell means you want them to like you and so you do want something back.

## CONCLUSION

Self-esteem is about making you the centre of your world in the best possible way and as you are not an island but connected to others that can only lift them up too.