

## Lesson 9 - Self Esteem

### Sabbath:

**Is the concept of 'Self Esteem' God given or has it resulted from sin??**

**Did Adam and Eve consider their self esteem before the fall??**

**Where do we see the first example of 'Self Esteem' gone wrong?? Hint – Isa. 14:12-14.**

**Did you know there are sports events for children where there are no winners / losers?? School classes where everyone gets the same grade?? All in the interest of improving self esteem.**

### *Definitions of Self Esteem [yes, they are from Wikipedia – deal with it].*

1. The original definition presents self-esteem as a ratio found by dividing one's successes in areas of life of importance to a given individual by the failures in them or one's "success / pretensions".[6]

Problems with this approach come from making self-esteem contingent upon success: this implies inherent instability because failure can occur at any moment.[7]

1. In the mid 1960s Morris Rosenberg and social-learning theorists defined self-esteem in terms of a stable sense of personal worth or worthiness. [Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996]

1. Nathaniel Branden in 1969 briefly defined self-esteem as "...the experience of being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and being worthy of happiness". This two-factor approach, as some have also called it, provides a balanced definition that seems to be capable of dealing with limits of defining self-esteem primarily in terms of competence or worth alone.[8]

Branden's (1969) description of self-esteem includes the following primary properties:

1. self-esteem as a basic human need, i.e., "...it makes an essential contribution to the life process", "...is indispensable to normal and healthy self-development, and has a value for survival."
2. self-esteem as an automatic and inevitable consequence of the sum of individuals' choices in using their consciousness
3. something experienced as a part of, or background to, all of the individuals thoughts, feelings and actions.

Self esteem is a concept of personality, for it to grow, we need to have self worth, and this self worth will be sought from embracing challenges that result in the showing of success.

Implicit self-esteem refers to a person's disposition to evaluate themselves positively or negatively in a spontaneous, automatic, or unconscious manner. It contrasts with explicit self-esteem, which entails more conscious and reflective self-evaluation. Both explicit self-esteem and implicit self-esteem are subtypes of self-esteem proper.

Implicit self-esteem is assessed using indirect measures of cognitive processing. These include the Name Letter Task<sup>[9]</sup> and the Such indirect measures are designed to reduce awareness of, or control of, the process of assessment. When used to assess implicit self-esteem, they feature stimuli designed to represent the self, such as personal pronouns (e.g., "I") or letters in one's name.

[6] James, W. (1983). *The principles of psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1890).

[7] Crocker, J., & Park, L. E. (2004). "The costly pursuit of self-esteem". *Psychological Bulletin*, 130(3), 392–414.

[8] Mruk, C. (2006). *Self-Esteem research, theory, and practice: Toward a positive psychology of self-esteem* (3rd ed.). New York: Springer.

[9] Koole, S. L., & Pelham, B. W. (2003). On the nature of implicit self-esteem: The case of the name letter effect. In S. Spencer, S. Fein, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Motivated social perception: The Ontario Symposium* (pp. 93-116). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

High self-esteem correlates highly with self-reported happiness. However, it is not clear which, if either, necessarily leads to the other.<sup>[20]</sup> Additionally, self-esteem has been found to be related to forgiveness in close relationships, in that people with high self-esteem will be more forgiving than people with low self-esteem.<sup>[21]</sup>

[20] Baumeister, Roy F., et al. (2003). "Does High Self-Esteem Cause Better Performance, Interpersonal Success, Happiness, or Healthier Lifestyles?", *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4 (1), pages 1–44; May 2003. (ed: other researchers: Jennifer D. Campbell, Joachim I. Krueger and Kathleen D. Vohs)

[21] Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006.

The concept of self-esteem has been criticized by different camps but notably by figures like Dalai Lama, Carl Rogers, Paul Tillich, and Alfred Korzybski.

Perhaps one of the strongest theoretical and operational critiques of the concept of self-esteem has come from American psychologist Albert Ellis who on numerous occasions criticized the philosophy as essentially self-defeating and ultimately destructive.<sup>[24]</sup> Although acknowledging the human propensity and tendency to ego rating as innate, he has claimed that the philosophy of self-esteem in the last analysis is both unrealistic, illogical and self- and socially destructive – often doing more harm than good. Questioning the foundations and usefulness of generalized ego strength, he has claimed that self-esteem is based on arbitrary definitional premises, over-generalized, perfectionistic and grandiose thinking.<sup>[24]</sup> Acknowledging that rating and valuing behaviours and characteristics is functional and even necessary, he sees rating and valuing human beings' totality and total selves as irrational, unethical and absolutistic. The healthier alternative to self-esteem according to him is unconditional self-acceptance and unconditional other-acceptance and these concepts are incorporated in his therapeutic system Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy. In 2005 he released a book with a detailed analysis of the concept of self-esteem titled "The Myth of Self-esteem".

[24] Ellis, A. (2001). *Feeling better, getting better, staying better*. Impact Publishers.

## **Rosenberg self-esteem scale**

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

SA -A -D -SD

2.\* At times, I think I am no good at all.

SA -A -D -SD

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

SA -A -D -SD

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

SA -A -D -SD

5. \* I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

SA -A -D -SD

6. \* I certainly feel useless at times.

SA -A -D -SD

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

SA -A -D -SD

8. \* I wish I could have more respect for myself.

SA -A -D -SD

9. \* All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

SA -A -D -SD

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

SA -A -D -SD

Scoring: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored, that is, SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem. Scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

**Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The only means by which human beings can come to a true estimate of their worth is by looking at themselves through the eyes of God. God has placed a high price on us: the blood of His Son.** [Teachers Quarterly].

**Sunday:**

**Origins – Do our beliefs regarding humanity’s origin affect our self esteem?? Should it??  
How could a belief in an evolutionary beginning damage ‘self esteem’??**

**Monday:**

**Do we see ourselves as others see us?? Do we generally see ourselves more positively or negatively than others see us?? Matt 22: 34-40.**

*34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ [c] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ [d] 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

**Rom 12: 1-3.**

*1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. 3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.*

**Tuesday:**

**The lesson asks an important question: “How does gender/class/nationality prejudice affect people’s self esteem??**

**Gal. 3: 26-28.**

*26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.*

**Wednesday:**

**Luke 15 – Parables of the lost sheep / coin / prodigal son.**

**Thursday:**

**Eph. 4:21-24.**

21if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

**Did you know that deceit was lustful?? Does this sound like those who love lies more than the truth?**

**What does this “new self” look like??**

**Eph. 4: 25-31.**

*25 Therefore, putting away lying, “ Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. 26 “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

**Friday:**

**Thoughts on the last quote from EGW??**

“We lose many and rich blessings because we neglect to seek the Lord with humble hearts. When we come to Him in sincerity of heart, asking Him to reveal our defects, He will show us a true picture of ourselves, reflected in the mirror of His Word. Then, having seen ourselves as God sees us, let us not go away forgetting what manner of men we are. Let us study critically the features of our character that are defective, and seek for grace to make them like the pattern presented in the Word of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Lake Union Herald*, November 3, 1909.