



# **Believe In Yourself**

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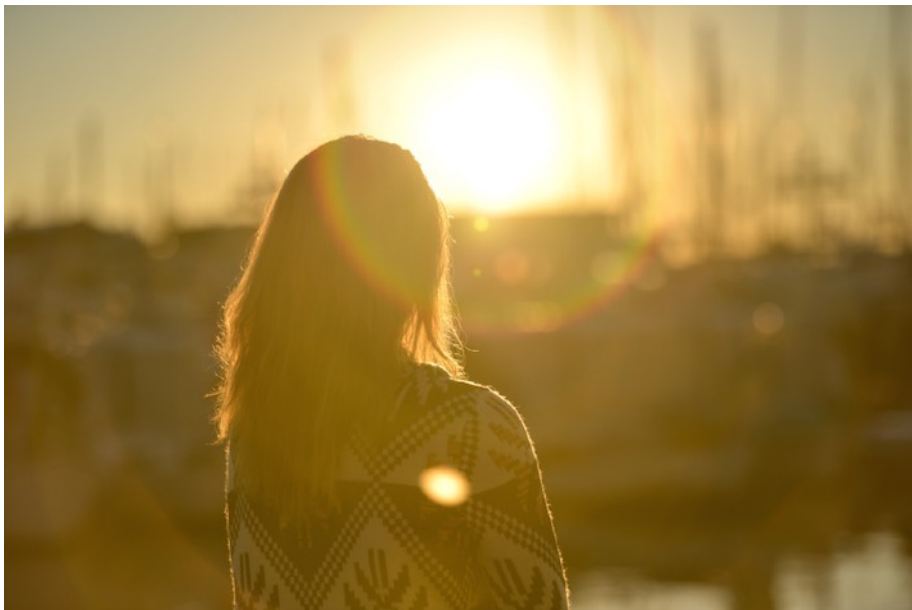
## Intro: What is Low Self Esteem and What Are Its Consequences?

Do you know someone who has a low opinion of himself? Perhaps someone who consistently thinks she is an under-performer and not worthy of praise or compliments? It could be that person is suffering from low self-esteem. Simply put, your level of self-esteem is how you think about yourself, how you see yourself.

Some people have an inflated image of their reality. Then there are those who have a good grip on who they are, and their range of abilities and self-worth. Unfortunately, there are also those people who suffer from a debilitating condition involving their self-beliefs that can actually lead to a shortened lifespan and physical health problems that arise from stress.

### Just What Is Low Self-Esteem?

The definition of low self-esteem is simple – **a feeling of unworthy, incapable and incompetent self-worth.** These thoughts can lead to a dangerous cycle where continued negative self-beliefs begin to create an unconscious pattern of behavior that reinforces those thoughts in that person's mind. They say to themselves, *"See, my behavior is proof that I am incompetent. Therefore, I am right to believe that I am unworthy and incapable."* The beliefs get stronger, and the thought-pattern continues.



When you have a negative view of yourself, you often display the following signs:

- You try to do everything perfectly
- You are afraid to love others and believe that you do not deserve love

- You blame others for your mistakes and faults
- You have a consistently negative view of just about everything
- You like to play it safe, scared to take risks, even small ones
- You are very suspicious of others, even friends and family
- You may prefer to let others make decisions, even important ones

**What you should understand is that, in many cases, low self-esteem is learned behavior. That means your inadequate feelings of self-worth were taught to you by someone else.**

This is good news, because learned behavior can be changed by adopting new beliefs.

Often an authority figure, parent or caregiver can negatively impact a person's self-belief. Since a child, tween or teen looks up to that person, they feel they have let him down in some way. This leads to the behaviors we just mentioned, symptomatic of someone with low self-esteem.

### **What Exactly Are Some of the Consequences of Low Self-Esteem?**

Your level of self-belief is extremely important, and often directly linked, to your overall health. People who think little of themselves frequently suffer the following consequences:

- Easily discouraged
- They have skin and hair conditions
- Scared and anxious
- Consistently find themselves in chaotic and even dangerous relationships
- Very defensive
- Drug and alcohol addiction
- Suffer eating disorders
- Weak cardiovascular and immune systems
- Stress and anxiety leads to heart conditions
- Promiscuous behavior with multiple partners
- Inability in women to orgasm, and impotence in men
- Failed relationships
- Negative impact on family and friends

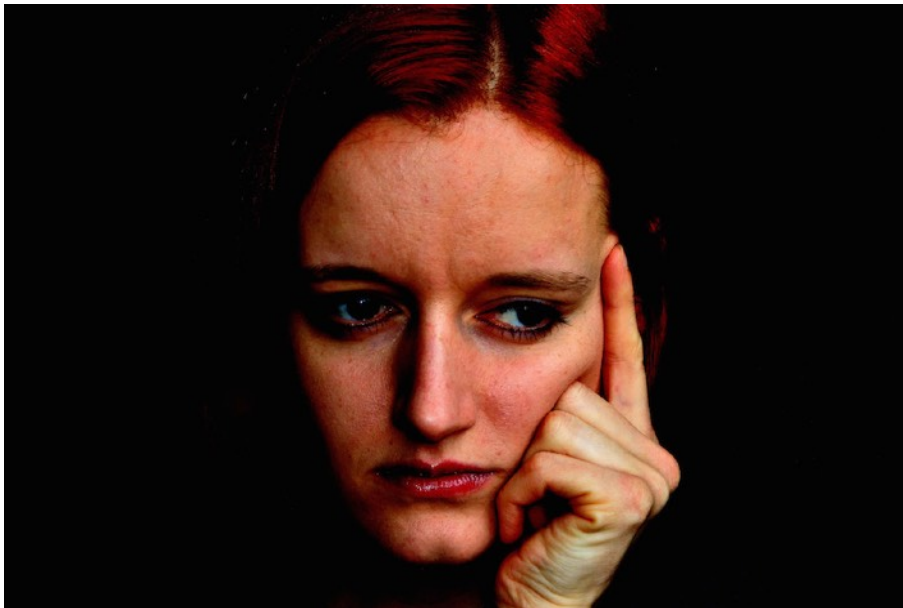
The consequences that arise from low self-esteem (LSE) do so because of 4 basic fears psychologists have noticed in individuals with LSE. They are a fear of...

- ... doing something they believe will confirm their low self-image.
- ... feeling depressed, desperate and humiliated once again.

- ... others recognizing their inabilities and inadequacies.
- ... losing what they already have, never being successful, and possibly leading to abandonment.

**How can this dangerous and crippling incorrect self-opinion be defeated?** What can be done to give the person suffering from LSE the personal tools to live a life filled with the rewards of a positive self-image?

That person needs to be able to point out thoughts and self-beliefs that are destructive and incorrect. They then need to challenge themselves to change those ideas. Both of those steps towards a healthy self-image are covered in the next section.



# Recognizing and Challenging Negative Thoughts and Beliefs

As we just mentioned, you need to be able to recognize LSE and the self-beliefs that accompany it before you can begin to correct those negative ideas. The key to identifying low self-esteem lies in spotting behavior that shows evidence of the 4 basic psychological fears that were discussed in the last section.

## Recognizing Negative Self Beliefs

Sometimes, people think so little of themselves that it is easy to spot low self-esteem. But a quick look at the fears and symptoms of a poor self image which we already covered show that sometimes identifying LSE can be difficult. It is not as clear-cut. For example, a confident acting person may always exhibit a high self-image, only because he is afraid that others will see what he believes is his truly inadequate self



**The following behaviors and actions are often present in people with low self-esteem:**

- A person expresses an *"always or never"* belief system.
- Someone constantly interrupts, attempts to finish your sentences and thoughts for you, and is always jumping to conclusions.
- The word "should" is constantly used. For instance, *"I shouldn't have tried that"* or *"I should have accepted the job."*
- A person makes huge generalizations based on little information or a single occurrence.
- Irrational behavior springs from emotional thinking that is not in line with factual information.
- A person often refers to himself as an "idiot", "failure" or "dummy".
- Someone tends to make everything personal, often blaming herself irrationally.
- Seeing every possible outcome as a catastrophe.
- Constantly seeking approval.
- Focusing on pain and pessimism.

The above behaviors and actions are common to people that have negative self-beliefs. Anxiety and depression, addiction and poor health are just a few of the symptoms of this type of mindset if it is allowed to exist over time, as we saw earlier. That is why it is so important to be able to recognize statements and actions that are symptomatic to a person suffering from LSE.



## Challenging Negative Thoughts

Once identified, harmful self-beliefs need to be challenged. **Psychologists call any incorrect self-belief a "cognitive distortion"**. These are irrational and exaggerated ideas, beliefs and thoughts. Obviously, if someone suffers from cognitive distortion, their nonfactual beliefs could lead to behaviors and actions that deliver many of the negative consequences of LSE we discussed earlier.

**One way to challenge cognitive distortion is to write out a cheat-sheet with LSE-challenging statements.** Keep this list on you and refer to it often, especially when you recognize some of the symptoms of a poor self-image that we just covered. Challenge your negative and incorrect thoughts and beliefs with the following list of statements:

- If you catch yourself saying **"I got lucky"**, remind yourself that instead, you actually were prepared and worked really hard to reach some goal.
- If you missed getting that big promotion, and you find yourself believing that you will never advance in your career, think this instead. Recognize this speed bump as a single negative event, but not who you are. Tell yourself that you will get the next promotion, and will work harder to make sure that happens.
- If you catch yourself **constantly seeing negatives**, focus on the positive. Challenge your *"always negative"* beliefs by aggressively looking for positive, rewarding, uplifting and invigorating occurrences in your everyday life. When you spend time looking for positive events and thoughts, fewer negative thoughts enter your mind.
- **Are you constantly jumping to conclusions?** A couple of minor failures happen in the morning, so you immediately think, "This is going to be the worst day ever!" This is a limiting belief that could create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instead, think about the justification or conclusion you are making, and consider if it is rational or not.
- Remember, if you use words and phrases like **"all of the time"**, **"always"** and **"never"**, you are practicing what psychologists call all-or-nothing thinking. Perhaps you think that you never get lucky. Challenge that mindset by identifying times when you truly did experience good fortune.
- If you personalize everything, **assuming personal responsibility** for things outside of your control, you need to challenge that belief. If you are honest with yourself, and think logically, you will see that certain things cannot be controlled by you. Try to determine if you have true control over a particular outcome before you blame yourself for it.



Challenging negative and incorrect self-belief is critical if you are going to enjoy a rational "real world" view of yourself and society. **You are worthy of love, success, happiness and peace.** And you only need to continue recognizing limiting thoughts and challenging them with sensible ones to begin to reap the wonderful rewards that a healthy self-image delivers.



## How to Identify Your Positive Qualities and Gain a More Objective View of Yourself

You know how unhealthy a negative self-image can be. And really, when your self-beliefs are incorrectly critical, you are cheating yourself of a happy and successful existence. The last couple of sections you learned exactly what low self-esteem is, how to identify its symptoms, and how to challenge unhealthy beliefs that are not factual.

**But if you suffer from LSE, that may sound a lot easier than it actually is.** Years of problematic thinking and cognitive distortion can probably not be changed overnight. After all, even if you identify incorrect beliefs that you have about yourself, and you begin to question and challenge them, you may still suffer thoughts of inadequacy and failure.

**This means you need to begin to identify your positive qualities.** Then, whenever limiting self-beliefs begin to appear, you can remind yourself that your negative self-thoughts are obviously incorrect, since you have these outstanding characteristics and habits.

**You can do this with a simple list.** On a piece of paper, write down 5 things you like about yourself. Don't think about anything negative. Think about successes you have had in your life, good relationships, memorable occasions and events. If you find yourself writing down more than 5 positive self-beliefs, excellent!



Another way to identify your positive qualities is to study the following list. These are words that psychologists have identified as evidence of positive self-beliefs and behaviors:

- Alert
- Compassionate
- Confident
- Cooperative
- Courteous
- Creative
- Decisive
- Disciplined
- Discrete
- Enthusiastic
- Forgiving
- Friendly
- Generous
- Grateful
- Loyal
- Patient
- Persistent
- Punctual
- Respectful
- Sensitive
- Sincere

**Now think about what types of behaviors you exhibit that qualify you for those descriptive terms.** A person with LSE may be cooperative, generous and always on time. However, because of limiting self-thoughts, they do not notice that these are awesome, positive qualities.

But that is exactly what they are! **Another way to identify positive character traits is to simply type "Positive Personality Adjectives" into an Internet search engine.** This will give you a list of things to look for in your life that help you recognize when your self-limiting negative self-image is incorrect.

Do not get too full of yourself, though. **Remember, an abnormally high self-image can be just as harmful as a low self-image.** So, how do you develop a more realistic and objective view of yourself? By always viewing your successes and failures, achievements and mistakes with a grain of salt.

You can do that by stepping outside of your situation. **Look at your behaviors, beliefs and thoughts from a logical and analytical point of view.** This needs to be an unemotional, straightforward, honest appraisal. However, you must be neutral as well. Look at both sides of the possible situation, action or thought process.

Remember that human beings will make mistakes, you and everyone else. Grade your mental beliefs and actions with a "*reality measuring stick*" rather than an emotional one. Recognize and embrace your failures, do not ignore them, but do not overstate them either.

**Finding honest friends is a great way to keep yourself grounded, and listen to criticism only from those people that you know will speak to you truthfully.** It can be tough to develop an objective view of your beliefs and actions, and it all begins with being honest with yourself.



# How Exercise and Activity Can Boost Your Confidence

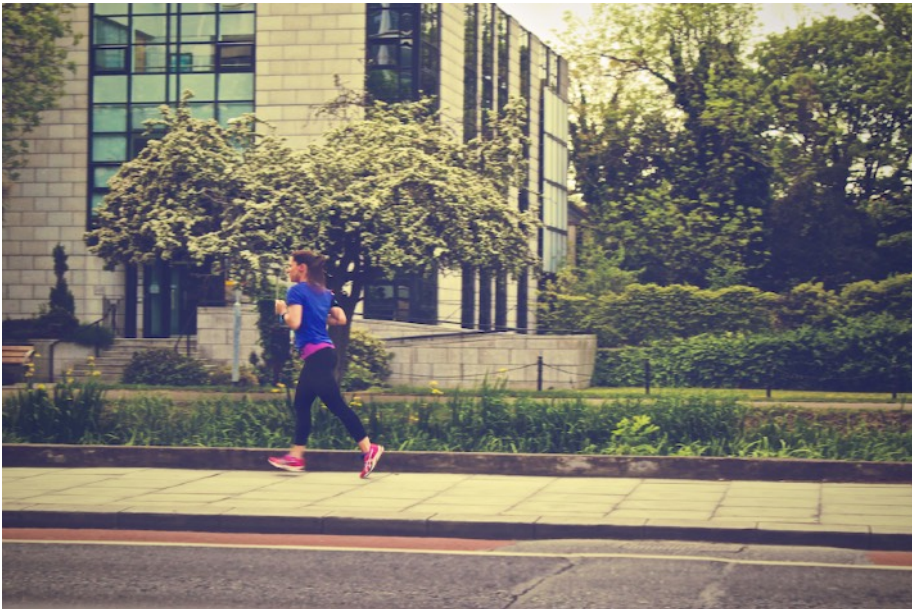
***Psssst!*** Would you like to know a quick way that you can skyrocket your confidence and self-esteem almost instantly? It works for everyone, young and old, men and women alike. You can do it just about anywhere and anytime, in only a few minutes.

**What is this secret LSE-killer?** Exercise, physical activity of any kind. When you are physically active, the process that goes on inside your body, one that automatically works the same way every time, rewards you with "feel-good" responses.

Here's how it works.

When you enjoy physical exertion, your heart beats faster than normal. Oxygenated blood is pumped through your body at an elevated rate. This energizes your muscles. Your ability to lift heavier weights and even perform simple tasks is improved. But what also happens is, **special endorphins are sent to your brain. This is the "feel-good" response we talked about earlier.**

They are naturally effective at helping you deal with anxiety, pain and stress, both physically and mentally. Your brain is telling you that exercise is good for your body and your mind. So you want to do it more.



The more you exercise, the quicker you regulate a healthy body weight, mental sharpness and improved memory, better skin and hair health and overall body benefits.

## **How Can This Help You Defeat LSE?**

The benefits of exercise deliver a self-confident boost in many ways. The natural process instantly makes you feel happier and better about yourself. You sleep better, your joints and bones are stronger, and you even benefit from improved sexual function.

You also begin to notice that you look and feel better. The compliments you receive from others who recognize your healthy and happy attitude begin a wonderful cycle of positive self-belief. You begin to realize that you are worthy of success, happiness, peace and a positive belief in yourself.

That means you need to get started today planning a regular exercise routine. It also means that when you recognize you are having incorrect thoughts of low self-esteem, you can pump out a quick exercise routine to empower yourself with positive thoughts that include a healthy self-image.



## How Your Daily Activities Can Boost Self Esteem

As we just discussed, it is beneficial in many ways to add a regular exercise routine to your daily and weekly schedule. But that is not the only way that you can harness the benefits of certain daily activities to boost your self-esteem. **Research shows that when you are doing something you love, you feel great about yourself, and about the world around you.**

This means taking some time to figure out what activities, hobbies and career tasks you enjoy performing or taking part in. Some people are very organized. They love filing, sorting and enjoy a very structured workday. Other people are just the opposite, preferring constantly changing tasks and responsibilities.

Whatever work lifestyle you prefer, find a way to get more of it in your daily routine. You will feel productive and useful, two things that usually do not exist in the individual that suffers from LSE.

Do you enjoy collecting stamps, playing cards, working in your garden or contributing your time to charitable organizations? If so, consciously schedule these activities so they have a greater presence in your life than they currently do.



Human beings enjoy certain hobbies and activities because of the same endorphins we discussed earlier, which gave you a peaceful sense of accomplishment and a higher level of self-esteem. **Make a list of the things that you love doing, and start doing them more frequently.**

You can also practice the ancient art of mindful meditation to put everything in its proper place. The correct level of self-esteem comes from properly identifying reality, and the positive traits you possess. **Mindful meditation**



**allows you to live in the present moment, giving you a clear and unadulterated view of yourself** and your surroundings that will not allow a nonfactual and negative self-belief.

## Learning to Be More Assertive

Another great way to keep LSE at bay is to learn to assert yourself. If you remember the feelings of inadequacy, inability and lack of self-worth we mentioned earlier which are identified in a person with low self-esteem, you can see the benefit of being more assertive.

**This can be difficult for individuals that suffer a poor self-image.**

However, by forcing yourself to aggressively do what is best for you, rather than someone else, you will experience a self-esteem boost.



For instance, **perhaps you are well known for being the “yes” guy or gal at work.** You are always “helping out” your coworkers, taking on jobs and tasks that help them but put you behind in your own work. There is nothing wrong with helping others, unless you are taken advantage of.

The next time you feel compelled to say yes when asked for a favor, say no instead. Never fear, **the sky is not going to fall down on your head.** You may find that people you considered your friends were simply taking advantage of your kindness.

The opposite can be true as well. If you consistently turn down offers to attend social outings or join someone in a work project, **why not be confident and assertive and say yes the next time?** These expressions of assertiveness are subconscious beliefs in yourself. They can help boost self-confidence immediately, fostering an ongoing positive self-image and fewer episodes of LSE in the long term.

## Conclusion

Low self-esteem can be mentally and physically debilitating, and actually take years off your life. Now that you have an idea of exactly what LSE is, begin aggressively identifying negative, irrational self-beliefs in your life.

Take action, challenging those beliefs by viewing them from an objective and rational standpoint. Look for positive character traits in your life, and mentally reward yourself with physical exercise and self-assertiveness.

People that suffer from an irrationally low level of self-esteem can reverse that behavior. A poor self-image was taught, either by themselves or others. Just as that thought process was learned, a new, healthy self-image can replace it, leading to a long life of happiness, success and peace.





**The End**



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