Your Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

Guide to Reading

- Building Vocabulary
  Write a sentence using each of the terms below. Trade papers with a classmate. Write the possible meanings of the terms based on the sentences.
  - self-concept (p. 149)
  - self-esteem (p. 150)
  - optimistic (p. 150)
  - confidence (p. 151)

- Focusing on the Main Ideas
  In this lesson, you will be able to
  - explain what self-concept and self-esteem are.
  - describe the benefits of high self-esteem.
  - identify ways of improving self-esteem.

- Reading Strategy
  Skimming Quickly look over the major and minor headings in this lesson. Then write a sentence or two describing what you think this lesson will be about.

Quick Write

Write a few sentences describing how self-confidence might benefit health.

Your Self-Concept

How would you describe yourself to someone who didn’t know you? Your answer reveals a lot about your self-concept. Your self-concept is the way you view yourself overall. This mental picture includes how you see not only yourself physically but also your abilities and how you “fit in.” Your self-concept includes the way you see yourself as a student, as a friend, and as a member of groups, such as a sports team. It is based on external input from others as well as internal thoughts and experiences.
Your Self-Esteem

Part of your self-concept is your **self-esteem**, how you feel about yourself. Do you like yourself? If so, then you probably have good self-esteem. Good self-esteem gives you a sense of pride in your accomplishments and helps you to be comfortable around others. People with high self-esteem respect themselves as well as other people. When you like yourself, others will like you because they will see how confident you are.

**Reading Check**

Compare What is the difference between self-concept and self-esteem?

**Influences on Self-Esteem**

Many factors influence your self-esteem. One factor is the messages you get from family and friends. Supportive and loving family and friends build your self-esteem. Critical, hurtful messages from family and friends hurt your self-esteem.

The media also affects your self-esteem. Television, movies, the Internet, radio and magazines all tell you how you should look, what you should buy and how you should act. It is important to recognize that the media doesn’t always present a true picture of life.

Your own attitude affects your self-esteem. If you think positive thoughts about yourself, you will build your self-esteem. If you think negative thoughts about yourself, you will lower your self-esteem. People with low self-esteem may think negative things about themselves no matter what nice things others say about them.

**Benefits of Self-Esteem**

Jared is **optimistic**, which means having a positive attitude about the future. Being optimistic is one of the benefits of having high self-esteem. Other benefits of high self-esteem include the following:

- Taking care of yourself, including your health and personal hygiene.
- Meeting new people and being with others. You are friendly and outgoing, which makes you fun to be around.
- Increased opportunities. You are willing to take on new challenges. You set goals for yourself and believe you can meet them.
• Having **confidence**, or belief in your ability to do what you set out to do. People with high self-esteem tend to think that they will succeed before they try a new activity. If they don’t succeed at first, they keep at it until they do.

**Reading Check** Define What is confidence?

### Building Self-Esteem

Your self-esteem will change depending on how you view what happens to you. Everyone has low self-esteem sometimes. Here are some **strategies** you can use to build your self-esteem.

- **Set realistic goals.** These are goals that are reasonable to accomplish. Divide your larger goals into smaller goals. You can build on each smaller success to reach your overal goal.

- **Focus on what you are naturally good at.** Find something you like to do, such as a hobby, school activity, or sport. Work to improve your skills. Try to enjoy yourself, even when you make mistakes. This will help you develop more confidence as well as self-esteem.

- **Ask for help when you need it.** Recognize and accept when you might need help. This is especially true when you are learning something new. Find someone who can help guide you.

- **Accept that no one is perfect.** Everyone has different abilities. You may be better at writing or swimming than some of your friends. Recognize that there is always room for improvement. Identify your weaknesses without judging yourself and make a solid effort to improve them. If others give you constructive feedback, try to learn from it. Be proud of yourself when you succeed, but know that sometimes failure is out of your control. Mistakes can teach you what doesn’t work and push you to grow.

> Taking care of your physical health can boost your self-esteem. **What are two ways this teen’s self-esteem might benefit from this activity?**
Helping others can boost your self-esteem. How are these teens demonstrating self-esteem?

- Think positively. Even when you’re not entirely sure of yourself, a positive attitude can help you be more confident. Being positive also helps you relate better to others. You’re likely to be more honest and honorable and to respect others’ life experiences.

Reading Check List Name two ways to build self-esteem.

Lesson 2 Review

After You Read

Review this lesson for new terms, major headings, and Reading Checks.

What I Learned

1. Vocabulary What does optimistic mean?
2. List What are two benefits of high self-esteem?
3. Explain How can the media affect a person’s self-esteem?
4. Identify What is an individual’s self-concept based on?
5. Explain Why does thinking positively help to improve self-esteem?

Thinking Critically

6. Evaluate How can learning a new skill improve your self-esteem?
7. Infer Describe some character traits that people with high self-esteem have in common.

Applying Health Skills

8. Communication Skills Imagine that a friend of yours is feeling discouraged because he tried out for the school play but was not chosen. Write a letter of encouragement to your friend to boost his self-esteem.