

UWE Wellbeing Service

Self-Esteem



'The more you work at just being yourself, the more likely you'll feel purposeful and significant in your life' – Wayne W Dyer

Do you think or talk about yourself in a way you would never do about others?

- 'I'm useless', 'I always mess everything up',
- 'I'm ugly', 'I'm stupid', 'I don't deserve anything.'

We don't talk like that to others because we know it would make them feel awful and destroy their confidence – of course it has exactly the same effect on ourselves.

- Do you think other people's needs are more important than your own?
- Do you dislike yourself or think you aren't as "good" as other people?
- Do you have a haunting feeling that you are "not good enough" no matter what you achieve?

This low self-esteem can affect every aspect of our lives:

Behaviour – difficulty in asserting needs, apologetic, fears failure, insecure, perfectionist traits

Thoughts – negative beliefs, self-criticism, self-blame and self-doubt such as those above.

Emotions – perhaps sadness, anxiety, guilt, shame, frustration or anger

Physically – perhaps fatigue, low energy, tension, poor sleep or low appetite.

We have 'learned' to have these kinds of thoughts and feelings that leave us with low self-esteem and feeling fearful. We can also learn how to challenge them and practise how to treat ourselves with the same respect and care that we treat others. We deserve it. We can rebuild our self-esteem so that we do feel 'good enough' to genuinely enjoy our lives.

Mindfulness is a practical technique to help you find peace and self-acceptance. It can help with many aspects of your life, including self-esteem, through guided techniques and meditations.

Mindfulness and Compassion handouts are available from the UWE Wellbeing Service if you would like more information. Please ask!



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UWE library

- Fennell, M. (2009) **Overcoming low self-esteem**: a self-help guide using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques. Available : [Alexandra Warehouse](#), Frenchay, Glenside, Bower Ashton.
An easy to read self-help guide to:
 - Understanding how low self-esteem develops and is maintained
 - Practical ways of improving self-esteem based on clinically-proven CBT approaches

Further reading

- Lawrence, D. (2010) 4th ed. **365 Steps to Self-confidence**: a complete programme for personal transformation. An easy to read guide offering practical ways to improving your self-esteem:
 - Practical exercises, hints, insights and words of inspiration.
 - Structured approach that you can dip into in a relaxed, playful way.

Websites

- **Mind** - useful guide explaining what low self-esteem is, what someone can do to help themselves and what family and friends can do to help.
<http://tinyurl.com/hm3d587>
- **CCI website** - an excellent free, online alternative to the Fennell book – detailed modules on development of low self-esteem and ways of tackling it
<http://tinyurl.com/aqge88p>
- **Get Self Help website** - a useful and popular introduction to understanding and challenging low self-esteem and particularly how to silence the 'Poisoned Parrot' in your head that constantly criticises you
<http://get.gg/esteem.htm>

Self-compassion and affirmation websites

- **The Compassionate Mind Foundation** –audio, video, books, scales, exercises on how to build a compassionate image, compassionate letter writing etc.
<https://compassionatemind.co.uk/>
- **Self-Compassion** - this website is full of great resources – the work of Kristen Neff
<http://www.self-compassion.org/>
- **Mindful Self-Compassion**- another good website with hand outs and meditations
<http://www.mindfulselfcompassion.org/>
- **Daily affirmations** from Louise Hay
<http://www.louisehay.com/affirmations/>