
The Concept Of Self-Esteem Within The Human Behaviour

The widely known concept of self esteem can be defined as the confidence and awareness in one's own self-worth. Those with a high satisfaction in their own abilities and self-integrity are commonly recognized to be in possession of a higher level of physical and psychological health than those who maintain low self-esteem. This has a direct effect on all manners of life, ranging from the individual themselves to their own broader influence on society. Although a high level of self-esteem nurtures various positive aspects across a broad spectrum of human life, such as increasing confidence (Owens, 1993) and self-enhancement within healthy relationships (Sciangula et al, 2009), there are arguably more negative effects of maintaining a level of high self-esteem within human behaviour.

Cultivating a strong sense of self-esteem has clear benefits for every human being. Those who undertake a proactive effort in exercising self-care, such as getting enough exercise and sufficient sleep have been observed by researchers to increase their own perceptions about their self-worth, and in turn performing better at menial to difficult life tasks on a regular basis. Additionally, researchers Standage & Gillison (2007) found that Secondary level education students with high self-esteem were increasingly motivated to complete their schoolwork as a result of partaking in a small amount physical activity. Generating a sense of collective self-esteem has also shown its constructive qualities for the individual. The term 'collective self-esteem' can be described as the self-image that is developed by an individual based on their worldly interactions with those that they can establish themselves with. For example, individual transgender females who were transitioning from males were observed to sustain a better level of mental health than those who did not feel like they had a collective to turn to for support (Sánchez & Vilain, 2009). Self-esteem is certainly advantageous in the well-being of the individual. However, more prevalent issues can arise when an excess of self-esteem is fostered.

The cultivation of unrealistic and extreme self-views can have detrimental consequences for an individual and those around them. One such instance is the development of narcissism. Those with narcissistic personality disorder and narcissistic traits tend to have a reduced level of empathy for others. They usually appear increasingly confident but are extremely sensitive to criticism (Dickenson, et al 2003). They believe that their friends, family and associates should supply them with special treatment in their day to day life. This can deteriorate their relationships and place a strain on their own grandiose beliefs about themselves when their inflated views based around themselves are challenged.

High self-esteem can have undeniable positive attributes to the self. There is no doubt that self-esteem has an immediate effect on the personal relationships surrounding the individual, whether they may be familial, romantic or friendship based. It has been reported that those with an unhealthy level of high self-esteem form and sustain fewer beneficial relationships than those who self-proclaim to have a healthy view of themselves (Rusbult et al, 1987). Within the educational sphere, students who observed a comfortable level of self-esteem developed above relationships with their educators, which in turn led to students to become more motivated in their academic achievements. Researchers Thomas and Daubman (2001) focused primarily on 'the relationship between friendship quality and self-esteem in adolescent girls and boys.' They noticed that young women were more inclined to have a lower percentage of self-esteem than

young males. A positive factor of harbouring high self-esteem in females is that it reduces the chances of developing bulimia.

As mentioned earlier, those with narcissistic tendencies struggle with personal relationships. The fact that narcissists have trouble with committing to one long-term romantic relationship portrays the detrimental effects of fostering too much self-esteem. It is known that the various types of relationships for those who harbour an excess of positive self-views, such as stranger relationships, workplace relationships and education related relationships, do not differ from one another. Those with self-inflated views have been observed to display an above average increase of anger and aggression when challenged, which can understandably place a strain upon an individual's close connections. This deterioration of close positive contact can ultimately leave this person with high self-esteem increasingly isolated and confused. These problems will persist due to the fact that the escalated self-esteem causes an individual to believe that they themselves are not at fault, and blame will be placed on those surrounding them.

It is commonly acknowledged that an inflated level of self-esteem is a great benefit to society. Researcher Smelser (year) intelligently stated that the well-being of society depends on the well-being of its citizens. This can be seen in the relationship between a prosperous society and high self-esteem. For example, those with low self-esteem are more inclined to seek out negative behaviour to combat their interpersonal struggles. This negative behaviour can hastily evolve into a wide variety of social problems, which can have an unfavourable influence upon society and the population itself. Cultural views and expectations must be taken into account as to what the members of each individual society believes to be 'negative', for example; wedlock. The fact that those with low self-esteem tend to partake in petty crime, delinquency and act aggressively towards others in their surrounding circles (Donnellan et al, 2005) cannot rebuke the concept that fostering high self-esteem has an adverse effect on society.

While these factors are certainly positive for society on the whole, preserving high self-esteem in adolescents increases the chances that they may experiment with harmful activities such as substance abuse and promiscuity (Baumeister et al, 2003). This can have a steady negative impact on society as a whole as the 'future generations' fail to regulate their behaviour, and turn to illegal and unhealthy activities. An overbearing amount of self-esteem can nurture self-entitlement, which can have a direct opposing impact on a healthy society. Those with high self-esteem are less likely to be willing to work as part of an equal team. Young people with high self-esteem perform better in a group setting than those with low self-esteem. It is a definite positive for these individuals, but it can create a construct of favouritism for those who appear to apply more effort in this group work, leading to those with low self-esteem to be discriminated against within a group setting. Although those with an increased level of self-esteem are more likely to assist the less advantaged members of society than those with low self-esteem, it is only for their own benefit. Their inflated and sometimes unrealistic self-views can leave an individual requiring to make themselves appear better than others. While these efforts can cultivate a healthier society, those less privileged individuals and those in difficulty outside the societal norms are usually left to their own devices once the high self-esteemed person has proved that they are an above valuable member to society.