



Finding Back Your Self-Esteem

“It was an awful week!” Shelly told her weight-loss counselor. “It started going bad when I found out that I didn’t get the new position I’d applied for at work.”

She reached for a tissue to wipe her eyes, then continued, “I thought I’d done everything right, but somehow it wasn’t enough. When my boss told me the news, my confidence hit rock bottom.”

Shelly sighed. “That afternoon, I went home and started eating and I don’t think I’ve stopped since! Last night, my boyfriend and I had a terrible fight, and I know it was because I was so down on myself. My weight is totally out of control, my self-esteem is shot and I feel like a failure in everything!”

Who stole your self esteem?

It’s funny how easy it is to let events or situations ruin your confidence. Even when you’ve worked hard on building your self-esteem, a simple negative comment can destroy your inner spirit and send you running toward the refrigerator.

And it works, because food makes us feel good! When a grueling experience devastates your confidence and self-trust, food soothes the pain. It gives you the courage to face the world again.

Of course, at the same time, overeating hurts your self-esteem by making you feel disgusted and frustrated. Next thing you know, you grab more food to appease these negative feelings.

Regardless of your current life situation, you can still find your inner spirit and rebuild your self-esteem. And it won’t take years to accomplish. By making a few simple changes in your self-talk and your internal beliefs, you can improve your self-esteem almost immediately.

See your potential

Imagine you’re walking through a forest when you spot a piece of wood nearly hidden in a pile

of leaves. As you study the layers of moss and caked-on dirt, you can’t see any beauty in this scrap of wood and you question whether it has any value.

But something compels you to pick it up and carry it home. In your workshop, you carefully scrape off the dirt, then begin sanding and polishing your wood. To your astonishment, you uncover a deep grain filled with rich, beautiful colors.

As you continue restoring the wood, you start planning how you could use it for some special purpose. Your excitement builds as you envision creating a unique picture frame or a graceful table leg. There’s no doubt in your mind that this piece of wood has great value.

YOU are this piece of wood. Even when painful layers such as your weight or other burdens cover your beauty, the real you never leaves.

Your value as a person doesn’t change because of what you look like or what happens to you. Beneath your discouragement and low self-esteem, you are still you, as strong and vibrant as ever.

Hanging on to your confidence

If you ever watch the TV show “Dancing With the Stars” you certainly recognize confidence, self-esteem and inner strength. The contestants never win by focusing on their faults. Instead, they do lots of self-talk about their dancing skills and how great they look. Then they go out and dance like maniacs with total confidence and poise.

To help yourself focus on success, take the “dancing contestant” approach to managing your weight. Build an image of being successful and tell yourself you are totally capable of winning the weight-loss contest. Then dance your way through each day with a positive, confident attitude.

Think back to the earlier example of the piece of wood. You may have to scrape off a few old beliefs and habits, but you can build self-esteem that remains strong, no matter what happens in your life. Soon, your renewed self-image will add power to your efforts for managing your weight.