

THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT AWAY TO RAISE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

A good starting point is to begin to take very good care of yourself. Treat yourself as a wonderful parent would treat a small child or as one very best friend might treat another. If you work at taking good care of yourself, you will find that you feel better about yourself. Here are some ways to take good care of yourself:

- Eat healthy foods and avoid junk foods (foods containing a lot of sugar, salt, or fat). A healthy daily diet should include five or six servings of vegetables and fruit, lot of whole grain foods like bread, pasta, cereal, and rice and serving of protein foods like beef, chicken, fish or low fat cheese.
- Exercise. Moving your body helps you to feel better and improves your self-esteem. Arrange a time every day or as often as possible when you can get some exercise, preferably outdoors.
- Have a physical examination every year to make sure you are in good health.
- Do things that make use of your own special talents and abilities. For instance, if you are good with your hands, then make things for yourself, family, and friends. If you are musical, think about taking up an instrument.
- Dress in clothes that make you feel good about yourself. This does not have to be an expensive project – if you scout around, you will find what you are looking for without having to break your budget.
- Spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself —people who treat you well. Just avoid people who treat you badly.
- Make your living space a place that honours the person you are. Whether you live in a single room, a small apartment, or a large home, make that space comfortable and attractive for you.
- Do something nice for another person. Smile at someone who looks sad. Say a few kind words to the check-out cashier. Help your spouse with an unpleasant chore. Take a meal to a friend who is sick. Send a card to an acquaintance. Volunteer for a worthy organization.
- Take advantage of opportunities to learn something new or improve your skills. Take a class or go to a seminar. Many adult education programs are free or very inexpensive.
- Take time to do things you enjoy. You may be so busy, or feel so badly about yourself, that you spend little or no time doing things you enjoy. Make a list of things you enjoy doing. Then do something from that list every day.

You may be doing some of these things now. There will be others you need to work on. You will find that you will continue to learn new and better ways to take care of yourself. As you incorporate these changes into your life, your self-esteem will continue to improve.