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GLOBAL
EDITION

Human Relations

Interpersonal Job-Oriented Skills

TWELFTH EDITION

Andrew J. DuBrin



ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

3

CHAPTER

Building Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence

Scott Gould went from trader to waiter—by choice. Growing up in Florida, Gould enjoyed working in restaurants as a waiter and bartender. But he also liked working with numbers and after graduating from the University of Florida, he went into finance. He got a job as a fixed income trader in 2000, and later raised money to invest in new markets and helped develop avenues for investors. He learned to do research and listen to customers. Every client wanted something a little different with respect to risk.



LEARNING Objectives

After studying the information and doing the exercises in this chapter, you should be able to

On the morning of September 11, 2001, Gould was working in his office near the World Trade Center. He evacuated after the first plane hit. As he walked down 36 flights of stairs, he saw the second plane flying into the tower. It made him reevaluate his career. "I had to think, 'Do I love what I'm doing?' and I couldn't answer yes," he says. "It's not like I hated going to work, but we spend so much time working and it wasn't exciting and I wasn't running to the office on Monday morning."

Gould kept thinking back to how he had liked working at restaurants. As a trader, he had taken clients regularly to Del Frisco's, a steakhouse in Midtown Manhattan. On a whim, he called a manager he knew and asked for a job. And, he was told that there was an opening as a server. He handed in his notice the next day, and started at Del Frisco's in August 2002. Three months later, he moved behind the bar for another three months.

"Obviously coming here as a guest two months earlier and then becoming a waiter—it wasn't insulting but it messes with your pride a little," he says. "I think if you can get over the pride factor of taking a step down and understand that sometimes you take a step backwards to eventually take three steps forward, it is more than worth it."

In February 2003, Gould got a big break. A sommelier (wine specialist) was leaving, and he was offered the chance to step in by David O'Day, the director of wine for Del Frisco's Restaurant Group. O'Day says Gould's financial background helped him work with customers. Some of them wanted to talk about a \$40 bottle of wine and others asked about a \$4,000 bottle. Gould was comfortable working with both. In November 2007, he was promoted to general manager of the restaurant, a big popular place with 475 seats. He now oversees 17 managers and 250 employees.

Gould says he has brought the listening skills he learned during his finance days onto the restaurant floor, and the hectic pace of trading helps him stay calm during crises now. One Sunday night in fall 2007, the ventilation system stopped working, causing the room to overheat and the kitchen sprinklers to go off.

There were inches of water on the kitchen floor, a fire department on the way and 300 diners waiting to eat. "I went from table to table with my cell phone in one hand and a Zagat's in the other, asking people what their second choice was," Gould said. (Zagat is an online restaurant directory.) He tried to stay calm, thinking that if he panicked, so would his staff.

"Instead," he says, "For months people came back and said, 'I was here on that Sunday night. That was so crazy.'"¹¹

The story about the career-switching Wall Street trader illustrates many human relations topics covered in this book. Our focus, however, is how high self-esteem and self-confidence enabled Scott Gould to do the type of work he really loved. For example, his strong self-esteem enabled him to shift down to a server's job temporarily without worrying about status. Gould's

self-confidence helped him recognize that he could move upward in the restaurant, and also help him stay cool under pressure.

Many other people you will meet in this book score high in self-esteem and self-confidence otherwise they would never have been so successful. In this chapter, we focus on two of the biggest building blocks for more effective human relations: the nature and development of self-esteem and self-confidence. The development of both self-esteem and self-confidence include refining certain skills.

THE MEANING OF SELF-ESTEEM, ITS DEVELOPMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1

Understanding the self from various perspectives is important because who you are and what you think of you influence many different facets of your life both on and off the job. A particularly important role is played by self-esteem, the overall evaluation people make about themselves whether positive or negative.^[2] A useful distinction is that our self-concept is what we *think* about ourselves whereas self-esteem is what we *feel* about ourselves. People with positive self-esteem have a deep-down, inside-the-self feeling of their own worth. Consequently, they develop a positive self-concept. Before reading further, you are invited to measure your current level of self-esteem by doing Human Relations Self-Assessment Quiz 3-1. We look next at the development of self-esteem and many of its consequences.

HUMAN RELATIONS SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ 3-1

The Self-Esteem Checklist

Indicate whether each of the following statements is Mostly True or Mostly False as it applies to you.

	Mostly True	Mostly False
1. I am excited about starting each day.	_____	_____
2. Most of any progress I have made in my work or school can be attributed to luck.	_____	_____
3. I often ask myself, "Why can't I be more successful?"	_____	_____
4. When my manager or team leader gives me a challenging assignment, I usually dive in with confidence.	_____	_____
5. I believe that I am working up to my potential.	_____	_____
6. I am able to set limits to what I will do for others without feeling anxious.	_____	_____
7. I regularly make excuses for my mistakes.	_____	_____
8. Negative feedback crushes me.	_____	_____
9. I care very much how much money other people make, especially when they are working in my field.	_____	_____
10. I feel like a failure when I do not achieve my goals.	_____	_____
11. Hard work gives me an emotional lift.	_____	_____
12. When others compliment me, I doubt their sincerity.	_____	_____
13. Complimenting others makes me feel uncomfortable.	_____	_____
14. I find it comfortable to say, "I'm sorry."	_____	_____
15. It is difficult for me to face up to my mistakes.	_____	_____
16. My coworkers think I am not worthy of promotion.	_____	_____
17. People who want to become my friends usually do not have much to offer.	_____	_____
18. If my manager praised me, I would have a difficult time believing it was deserved.	_____	_____

(Continued)

- _____ I am just an ordinary person.
- _____ Having to face change really disturbs me.
- _____ When I make a mistake, I have no fear owning up to it in public.
- _____ When I look in the mirror, I typically see someone who is attractive and confident.
- _____ When I think about the greater purpose in my life, I feel like I am thriving.
- _____ When I make a mistake, I tend to feel ashamed and embarrassed.
- _____ When I make a commitment to myself, I usually stick to it with conviction and await the rewards that I believe will come from it.

Scoring and Interpretation: The answers in the high self-esteem direction are as follows:

Mostly True	8.	Mostly False	15.	Mostly False	22.	Mostly True
Mostly False	9.	Mostly False	16.	Mostly False	23.	Mostly False
Mostly False	10.	Mostly False	17.	Mostly False	24.	Mostly False
Mostly True	11.	Mostly True	18.	Mostly False	25.	Mostly True
Mostly True	12.	Mostly False	19.	Mostly False		
Mostly True	13.	Mostly False	20.	Mostly False		
Mostly False	14.	Mostly True	21.	Mostly True		

20-25 You have very high self-esteem. Yet if your score is 25, it could be that you are denying any self-doubts.

14-19 Your self-esteem is in the average range. It would probably be worthwhile for you to implement strategies to boost your self-esteem (described in this chapter) so that you can develop a greater feeling of well-being.

0-13 Your self-esteem needs bolstering. Talk over your feelings about yourself with a trusted friend or with a mental health professional. At the same time, attempt to implement several tactics for boosting self-esteem described in this chapter.

Questions:

- How does your score on this quiz match your evaluation of your self-esteem?
- What would it be like being married to somebody who scored 0 on this quiz?

Source: Statements 21-25 are based on information in the National Association for Self-Esteem, "Self-Esteem Self-Check Tour - Rate Your Self-Esteem," <http://www.self-esteem-nase.org/jssurvey.shtml>, accessed May 6, 2005, pp. 1-4.

How Self-Esteem Develops

Part of understanding the nature of self-esteem is to know how it develops. Self-esteem develops and evolves throughout our lives based on interactions with people, events, and things.^[4] As an adolescent or adult, your self-esteem might be boosted by a key accomplishment. A 44-year-old woman who was studying to become licensed practical nurse (LPN) said that her self-esteem increased when she received an A in a pharmacology course. Self-esteem can also go down in adulthood by means of a negative event such as being laid off, and not being able to find new employment.

Early life experiences have a major impact on self-esteem. People who were encouraged to feel good about themselves and their accomplishments by family members, friends, and teachers are more likely to enjoy high self-esteem. Early life experiences play a key role in the development of both healthy self-esteem and low self-esteem, according to research synthesized at the Counseling and Mental Health Center of the University of Texas.^[5] Childhood experiences that lead to healthy self-esteem include

- being praised
- being listened to
- being spoken to respectfully
- getting attention and hugs
- experiencing success in sports or school

In contrast, childhood experiences that lead to low self-esteem include

- being harshly criticized
- being yelled at or beaten
- being ignored, ridiculed, or teased
- being expected to be “perfect” all the time
- experience failures in sports or school
- often being given messages that failed experiences (losing a game, getting a poor grade, and so forth) were failures of their whole self.

A widespread explanation of self-esteem development is that compliments, praise, and hugs alone build self-esteem. Yet many developmental psychologists seriously question this perspective. Instead, they believe that self-esteem results from accomplishing worthwhile activities and then feeling proud of these accomplishments. Receiving encouragement, however, can help the person accomplish activities that build self-esteem.

Leading psychologist Martin Seligman argues that self-esteem is caused by a variety of successes and failures. To develop self-esteem, people need to improve their skills in dealing with the world.^[6] Self-esteem therefore comes about by genuine accomplishments followed by praise and recognition. Heaping undeserved praise and recognition on people may lead to a temporary high, but it does not produce genuine self-esteem. The child develops self-esteem not from being told he or she can score a goal in soccer but from scoring that goal.

In attempting to build the self-esteem of children and students, many parents and teachers give children too many undeserved compliments. Researchers suggest that inappropriate compliments are turning too many adults into narcissistic praise-junkies. As a result, many young adults feel insecure if they do not receive compliments regularly.^[7]

As mentioned above, experiences in adult life can influence the development of self-esteem. David De Cremer of the Tilburg University (Netherlands) and his associates conducted two studies with Dutch college students about how the behavior of leaders and fair procedures influence self-esteem. The focus of the leaders' behavior was whether he or she motivated the workers/students to reward *themselves* for a job well done, such as self-compliment. Procedural fairness was measured in terms of whether the study participants were given a voice in making decisions. Self-esteem was measured by a questionnaire somewhat similar to Self-Assessment 3-1 in this chapter. The study questionnaire reflects the self-perceived value that individuals have of themselves as organizational members.

The study found that self-esteem was related to procedural fairness and leadership that encourages self-rewards. When leadership that encouraged rewards was high, procedural fairness was more strongly related to self-esteem. The interpretation given of the finding is that a leader/supervisor can facilitate self-esteem when he or she encourages self-reward and uses fair procedures. Furthermore, fair procedures have a stronger impact on self-esteem when the leader encourages self-rewards.^[8] A takeaway from this study would be that rewarding yourself for a job well done, even in adult life, can boost your self-esteem a little.

The Consequences of High Self-Esteem

High self-esteem has many positive consequences for people, as well as a few potential negative ones. Table 3-1 outlines these consequences, and they are described in the following.

TABLE 3-1 Several Consequences of High Self-Esteem

1. Career success, including a high income
2. Good mental health
3. Profiting from feedback
4. Organizational success
5. Trying too hard to preserve one's status (negative consequence)

paragraphs. Low-self esteem would typically have a negative impact on the first three factors. People with low self-esteem are likely to have less career success, poorer mental health, and profitless from feedback. Also, an organization populated with low self-esteem workers would be less successful. Yet on the positive side of low self-esteem, it would not lead to trying too hard to preserve one's status.

Career Success. No single factor is as important to career success as self-esteem, as observed by psychologist Eugene Raudsepp. People with positive self-esteem understand their own competence and worth, and have a positive perception of their ability to cope with problems and adversity.^[9]

As part of a larger study of personal characteristics and career success, the University of Florida psychology professors Timothy A. Judge, Chalice Hurst, and Lauren S. Simon studied the impact of *core self-evaluation*. Core self-evaluation is a personality trait representing the favorability of a person's overall self-concept. The self-evaluation includes self-esteem, belief in self-control of events in one's life, self-confidence, and emotional stability. Three hundred participants were studied over a 10-year period. One of the many findings in the study was that people with a higher core self-evaluation tended to have higher incomes. Two other factors studied, general mental ability and physical attractiveness, were also found to have a positive relationship with income from employment. A partial explanation of these findings was that being smart and physically attractive contributed to having high self-esteem.^[10]

Good Mental Health. One of the major consequences of high self-esteem is good mental health. People with high self-esteem feel good about themselves and have a positive outlook on life. One of the links between good mental health and self-esteem is that high self-esteem helps prevent many situations from being stressful. Few negative comments from others are likely to bother you when your self-esteem is high. A person with low self-esteem might crumble if somebody insulted his or her appearance. A person with high self-esteem might shrug off the insult as simply being the other person's point of view. If faced with an everyday setback, such as losing keys, the high self-esteem person might think, "I have so much going for me, why fall apart over this incident?"

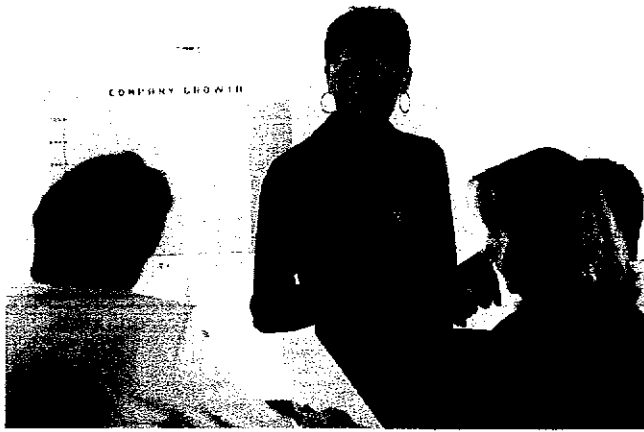
Positive self-esteem also contributes to good mental health because it helps us ward off being troubled by feelings of jealousy, and acting aggressively toward others because of our jealousy. Particularly with adolescents, lower self-worth leads to jealousy about friends liking other people better.^[11]

Profiting from Feedback. Although people with high self-esteem can readily shrug off undeserved insults, they still profit well from negative feedback. Because they are secure, they can profit from the developmental opportunities suggested by negative feedback.

Organizational Success. Workers with high self-esteem develop and maintain favorable work attitudes and perform at a high level. These positive consequences take place because such attitudes and behavior are consistent with the personal belief that they are competent individuals. Mary Kay Ash, the legendary founder of a beauty products company, put it this way: "It never occurred to me I couldn't do it. I always knew that if I worked hard enough, I could." Furthermore, research has shown that high self-esteem individuals value reaching work goals more than do low-self-esteem individuals.^[12]

The combined effect of workers having high self-esteem helps a company prosper. Long-term research by Nathaniel Branden, as well as more recent studies, suggests that self-esteem is a critical source of competitive advantage in an information society. Companies gain the edge when, in addition to having an educated workforce, employees have high self-esteem, as shown by such behaviors as the following:

- Being creative and innovative
- Taking personal responsibility for problems
- A feeling of independence (yet still wanting to work cooperatively with others)
- Trusting one's own capabilities
- Taking the initiative to solve problems^[13]



“ Self-esteem is key to succeeding in the business world. You can maintain high self-esteem by facing problems, avoiding excesses, defining clear goals and associating with positive people. May high self-esteem and success be yours!”
 —TigerByte, www.helium.com.

Behaviors such as these help workers cope with the change of a rapidly changing workplace where products and become obsolete quickly. Workers with high self-esteem are more likely to be able to cope with new challenges because they are confident that they can master their environment.

Potential Negative Consequences. High self-esteem sometimes have negative consequences, particularly for individuals with high self-esteem work hard to preserve their high status relative to others. When people with high self-esteem are placed in a situation where undermining behaviors helps them maintain their status, they will engage in behaviors that diminish others. In one study, it was shown that high self-esteem individuals who are also a little neurotic (somewhat emotionally unstable) will often engage the following undermining behaviors: criticizing group members in front of others, intentionally ignoring others, talking down other group members, going back on their word, giving others the silent treatment, belittling others, and not listening to people.^[14]

According to economist Robert H. Frank of Cornell University, our own reference group has the biggest impact on self-esteem. He writes: “When you see Bill Gates succeed, you don’t actually aspire to have one like it. It’s who is local, who is near you personally and who is most like you—your family members, coworkers and hold high status classmates—with whom you compare yourself. If someone in your reference group does a little more, you get a little anxious.”^[15]

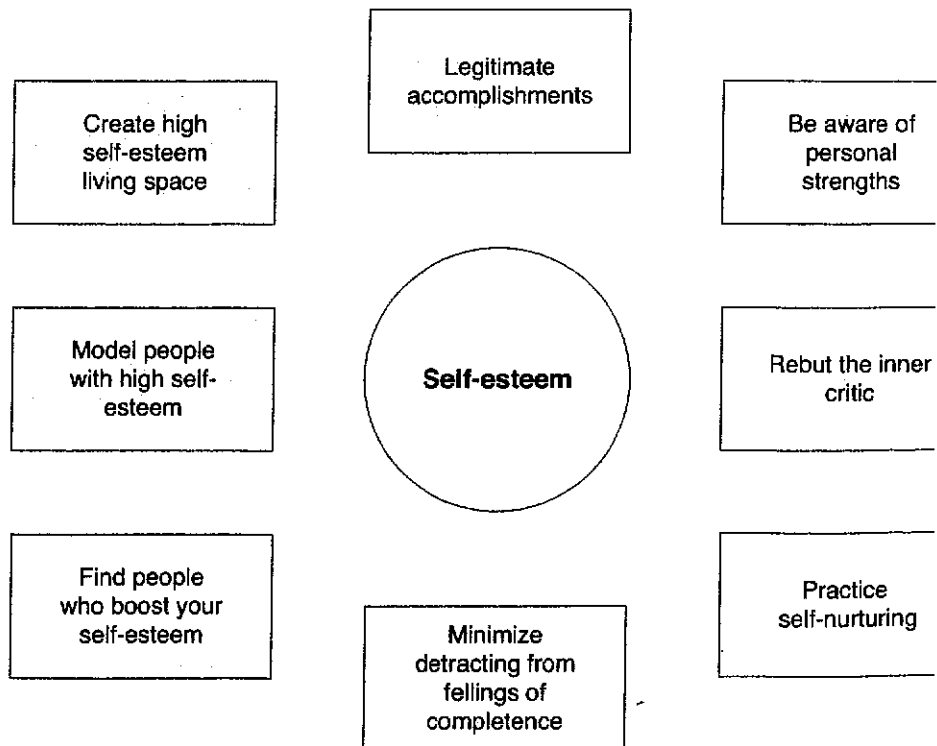
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ENHANCING SELF-ESTEEM

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2

Improving self-esteem is a lifelong process because self-esteem is related to the success of our activities and interactions with people. Following are approaches to enhancing self-esteem that are related to how self-esteem develops. (See Figure 3-1.) Each of these approaches

FIGURE 3-1 Methods of Enhancing Self-Esteem



has a skill component, such as learning to avoid situations that make you feel incompetent. In addition to working on skills to enhance self-esteem, it is helpful to maintain a constructive attitude. A representative statement to keep in mind as you work on self-esteem enhancement is as follows:^[16]

"I am a very special, unique and valuable person. I deserve to feel good about myself."

Attain Legitimate Accomplishments

To emphasize again, accomplishing worthwhile activities is a major contributor to self-esteem (as well as self-confidence) in both children and adults. Social science research suggests this sequence of events: Person establishes a goal; person pursues the goal; person achieves the goal; person develops esteem-like feelings.^[17] The opposite point of view is this sequence: Person develops esteem-like feelings; person establishes a goal; person pursues the goal; person achieves the goal. Similarly, giving people large trophies for mundane accomplishments is unlikely to raise self-esteem. More likely, the person will see through the transparent attempt to build his or her self-esteem and develop negative feelings about the self. What about you? Would your self-esteem receive a bigger boost by (1) receiving an A in a course in which 10 percent of the class received an A or by (2) receiving an A in a class in which everybody received the same grade?

Be Aware of Personal Strengths

Another method of improving your self-esteem is to develop an appreciation of your strengths and accomplishments. A good starting point is to list your strengths and accomplishments on a word processing document or paper. This list is likely to be more impressive than you expected.

You can sometimes develop an appreciation of your strengths by participating in a group exercise designed for such purposes. A group of about seven people meet to form a support group. All group members first spend about 10 minutes answering the question, "What are my three strongest points, attributes, or skills?" After each group member records his or her three strengths, the person discusses them with the other group members.

Each group member then comments on the list. Other group members sometimes add to your list of strengths or reinforce what you have to say. Sometimes you may find disagreement. One member told the group, "I'm handsome, intelligent, reliable, athletic, self-confident, and very moral. I also have a good sense of humor." Another group member retorted, "And I might add that you're unbearably conceited."

Skill-Building Exercises 3-1 and 3-2 provide additional ways of developing self-esteem, both of which focus on appreciation of strengths.

SKILL BUILDING EXERCISE 3-1

Reinforcing a Positive Self-Image

To do this exercise, you will need a piece of paper and a pencil or pen or a word processor, and a timer or clock. Set a timer for 10 minutes or note the time on your watch, cell phone, or a clock. Write your name across the top of the document. Then write everything positive and good you can think of about yourself. Include special attributes, talents, and achievements. You can use single words or sentences. You can write the same things over and over if you want to emphasize them. Your ideas do not have to be well organized. Write down whatever comes to mind. You are the only one who will see this document. Avoid using any negative words. Use only positive ones.

When the 10 minutes are up, read the document over to yourself. You may feel sad when you read it over because it is a new,

different, and positive way of thinking about yourself. Your document will contradict some of the negative thoughts you have had about yourself. Those feelings will diminish as you reread this document. Read the document over again several times. Print the document if written by computer, and put it in a convenient place, such as in your pocket, purse, wallet, or your bedside table. Read it over at least once a day to keep reminding yourself of how great you are! Find a private space and read it aloud. If you have a good friend or family member who is supportive, read it to that person. Maybe your confidant can think of a positive attribute that you have missed.

Source: Adapted from "Building Self-esteem: A Self-Help Guide," <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/>, accessed September 7, 2007.

HUMAN RELATIONS SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 3-2

The Self-Esteem Building Club

You and your classmates are invited to participate in one of the most humane and productive possible human-relations skill-building exercises, membership in the "self-esteem building club." Your assignment is for three consecutive weeks to help build the self-esteem of one person. Before embarking upon the exercise, review the information about self-esteem development in the chapter. One of the most effective tactics would be to find somebody who had a legitimate accomplishment, and give that person a reward or thank you. Record carefully what the person did, what you did, and any behavioral reactions of the person whose self-esteem you attempted to build. An example follows, written by a 46-year-old student of human relations:

Thursday night two weeks ago, I went to the athletic club to play racquetball. Different than usual, I had a date after the club. I wanted to look good, so I decided to wear my high school class ring. The ring doesn't have much resale value, but I was emotionally attached to it, having worn it for special occasions for 28 years. I stuffed the ring along with my watch and wallet in my athletic bag.

When I was through with racquetball, I showered, and got dressed. My ring was missing from my bag even though my wallet and watch were there. I kind of freaked out because I hate to lose a prized possession. I shook

the bag out three times, but no luck. Very discouraged, I left my name, telephone number, and e-mail address at the front desk just in case somebody turned in the ring. I kept thinking that I must have lost the ring when I stopped at the desk to check in.

The next morning before going to class, I got a phone call from a front-desk clerk at the club. The clerk told me that Karl, from the housekeeping staff, heard a strange noise while he was vacuuming near the front desk. He shut off the vacuum cleaner immediately, and pulled out my ring. To me Karl was a hero. I made a special trip to the club that night to meet with Karl. I shook his hand, and gave him a ten-dollar bill as a reward. I also explained to Karl what a difference he had made in my mood. I told him that honest, hardworking people like him who take pride in their work make this world a better place. It made my day when Karl smiled and told me it was a pleasure to be helpful.

Your instructor might organize a sharing of self-esteem building episodes in the class. If the sharing does take place, look for patterns in terms of what seemed to work in terms of self-esteem building. Also, listen for any patterns in failed attempts at self-esteem building.

Rebut the Inner Critic

Another early step in attaining better self-esteem is to rebut your inner critic—the voice inside you that sends negative messages about your capabilities. Rebutting critical statements about you might also be considered another way of appreciating your strength. Two examples of rebutting your inner critic follow:^[18]

Your unfairly harsh inner critic says: "People said they liked my presentation, but was nowhere as good as it should have been. I can't believe no one noticed all the places I messed up. I'm such an imposter."

Your reassuring rebuttal: "Wow, they really liked it. Maybe it wasn't perfect, but I worked hard on that presentation and did a good job. I'm proud of myself. This was a great success."

Your harsh inner critic makes leaps of illogic: "He is frowning. He didn't say anything but I know it means that he doesn't like me!"

Your rebuttal that challenges the illogic: "Okay, he's frowning, but I don't know what it could have nothing to do with me. Maybe I should ask."

The above are but two examples of the type of putdowns we often hear from our inner critic. To boost your self-esteem in spite of such criticism, you need to develop the skill of rebuttal by rebutting your inner critic frequently.

Practice Self-Nurturing

Although you may be successful at pointing to your strengths and rebutting the inner voice that puts you down, it is also helpful to treat yourself as a worthwhile person. Start to challenge negative experiences and messages from the past by nurturing and caring for yourself in ways that show how valuable, competent, deserving, and lovable you really are. Self-nurturing is often referred to as treating yourself well or spoiling yourself. Here are two suggestions for self-nurturing, both of which involve a modest amount of skill development.

- **Administer self-rewards for a job well done.** When you have carried out an activity especially well in relation to your typical performance, reward yourself in

small, constructive way. You might dine at a favorite restaurant, take an afternoon off to go for a nature walk, or spend an hour at a Website you usually do not have the time to visit.

- **Take good care of yourself mentally and physically.** Make sure that you get enough sleep and rest, eat nutritious foods, avoid high-bacteria environments such as a public keyboard unless you use a bacteria spray, and participate in moderate physical exercise. Even taking an extra shower or bath can give you a physical and mental boost. The suggestions just mentioned are also part of stress management.

Real estate agent Laura provides a helpful example of how self-nurturing can help bolster self-esteem. While watching her son play soccer at 4 in the afternoon, she was asked by another soccer parent, "How's business?" Laura replied, "I haven't made a deal in two weeks, but I know times will get better. So for now, I'm enjoying myself watching Todd [her son] play his little heart out. Afterwards we are going for pizza, and a few video games. My soul will be energized again."

Minimize Settings and Interactions That Detract from Your Feelings of Competence

Most of us have situations in work and personal life that make us feel less than our best. If you can minimize exposure to those situations, you will have fewer feelings of incompetence. The problem with feeling incompetent is that it lowers your self-esteem. Suppose, for example, Sally is a very poor golf player, and intensely dislikes the sport. She is better off excusing herself from a small group of people at the office who invite her to a golf outing. A problem with avoiding all situations in which you feel lowly competent is that it might prevent you from acquiring needed skills. Also, it boosts your self-confidence and self-esteem to become comfortable in a previously uncomfortable situation. In Sally's case perhaps she can eventually learn to play golf better, and then she will be mentally prepared to participate in golf outings.

Get Help from Others

Self-esteem is strongly shaped by how others perceive us, so getting help from other is major step a person can take to improve his or her self-esteem. However, getting help from others can also be difficult. People with low self-esteem often do not ask for help because they may not think they are worthy of receiving help. Yet help from others is effective in overcoming the negative messages received from others in the past.

Asking for support from friends can include such basic steps as these: (1) Ask friends to tell you what they like about you or think that you do well. (2) Ask someone who cares about you to listen to your complain about something without offering a solution to your problem. (3) Ask for a hug. (4) Ask someone who loves you to remind you that he or she does.

Getting help from teachers and other helps can include these steps: (1) Ask professors or tutors for help with work you find challenging. (2) If you lack self-confidence in certain areas, take classes or attempt new activities to increase your competence. An increasing number of retired people today are taking classes in such subjects as computer utilization and digital photography to help catch up with younger people whose skills have challenged their self-esteem.^[19]

Another way of getting help from others is to talk and socialize frequently with people who can boost your self-esteem. Psychologist Barbara Ilardie says that the people who can raise your self-esteem are usually those with high self-esteem themselves. They are the people who give honest feedback because they respect others and themselves. Such high self-esteem individuals should not be confused with yes-people who agree with others just to be liked. The point is that you typically receive more from strong people than weak ones. Weak people will flatter you but will not give you the honest feedback you need to build self-esteem.^[20]

For many people with low self-esteem, casual help with others will not increase self-esteem. In these situations, discussing low self-esteem with a mental health specialist might be the most effective measure.

Model the Behavior of People with High Self-Esteem

Observe the way people who believe to have high self-esteem stand, walk, speak, and act. Even if you are not feeling so secure inside, you will project a high self-esteem image if you act assured. Raudsepp recommends, "Stand tall, speak clearly and with confidence, shake hands firmly, look people in the eye and smile frequently. Your self-esteem will increase as you notice encouraging reactions from others."^[21] (Notice here that self-esteem is considered to be about the same idea as self-confidence.)

Choose your models of high self-esteem from people you know personally, as well as celebrities you might watch on television news and interview shows. Observing actors on the large or small screen is a little less useful because they are guaranteed to be playing a role. Identifying a teacher or professor as a self-esteem model is widely practiced, as is observing successful family members and friends.

Create a High Self-Esteem Living Space

A panel of mental health specialists recommends that to enhance your self-esteem you should make your living space that honors the person you are.^[22] Whether you live in a single room, a small apartment, or a large house, make that space comfortable and attractive for you. If you have a clean, inviting living space, others are likely to treat you with more respect, which will contribute to your self-esteem. If you share your living space with others, dedicate some space just for you—a place where you can keep your things and know that they will not be disturbed and that you can decorate any way you choose.

Your living space is part of your self-image, so you may want to ask yourself if your living space projects the right self-image. Also, you arrange your living space to fit your preferences you will feel better about yourself.

How a Manager Helps Build the Self-Esteem of Group Members

Above we mentioned that leaders who are fair and who encourage self-rewards contribute to the self-esteem of subordinates. There are many other actions and attitudes of managers that help group members enhance their self-esteem. Many of these approaches are related to suggestions for enhancing self-esteem just mentioned. For example, a manager who provides subordinates with an opportunity to accomplish challenging tasks, and then rewards them appropriately will help bolster their self-esteem. Also, if the manager has high self-esteem, he or she can be your person to model in terms of developing high self-esteem.

Giving subordinates positive feedback about legitimate accomplishments is a powerful approach to enhancing their self-esteem. When accomplishments are out of the ordinary they can be celebrated through such means as public recognition electronically or during face-to-face meetings. Accurately assessing the strengths and skill sets of subordinates will often point them in the direction of accomplishing tasks that will boost self-esteem. Helping subordinates develop new skills by coaching can be quite useful in developing their self-esteem. (See Chapter 12.)

Skill-Building Exercise 3-3 presents an easy, non-time-consuming activity for enhancing your self-esteem. Should the exercise not have a remarkable impact on your self-esteem at least it will have no damaging emotional consequences.

SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 3-3

The Self-Esteem Calendar

Find a calendar or daily planner on paper or on the computer, with large blank spaces for each day. Schedule into each day a small activity that you enjoy doing such as "watching YouTube to look for videos about people I know personally," "jogging through my neighborhood," "texting a few people I care about," "reading the classified ads in *The Wall Street Journal*," or "hugging somebody I love." Now make a commitment to check your enjoy-life calendar

every day, and follow through to make sure that you engaged in the activity you entered into the calendar. The accumulation of small, enjoyable activities should boost your self-esteem a little because you will feel better about yourself.

Source: Adapted from "Building Self-Esteem: A Self-Help Guide," *Health* (athealth.com/Consumer/disorder/self-esteem.html, p. 7).

IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CONFIDENCE SELF-EFFICACY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3

Self-confidence can be considered part of self-esteem (or almost its equivalent), but it is important enough to study separately. Self-efficacy is confidence in your ability to perform a specific task in contrast to generalized self-confidence. Various studies have shown that people with a high sense of self-efficacy tend to have good job performance, and self-confidence is important for your career. They also set relatively high goals for themselves.^[23] Self-confidence has also long been recognized as a trait of effective leadership. A straightforward implication of self-efficacy is that people who think they can perform well on a task do better than those who think they will do poorly.

Research by college professors and psychological consultants George P. Hollenbeck and Douglas T. Hall suggests that our feelings of self-confidence stem from five sources of information.^[24] The first source is the *actual experience, or things we have done*. Having

successfully inserted a replacement battery into your watch without destroying the watch, you will be confident to make another replacement.

The second source of self-confidence is the *experiences of others, or modeling*. You gain some self-confidence if you have carefully observed others perform a task, such as resolving conflict with a customer. You might say to yourself, "I've seen Tracy calm the customer by listening and showing sympathy, and I'm confident I could do the same thing." The third source of self-confidence is *social comparison, or comparing yourself to others*. If you see other people with capabilities similar to your own perform a task

successfully, your will gain in confidence. A person might say to himself or herself, "If that person can learn how to work with enterprise software, I can do it also. I'm just as smart."

The fourth source of self-confidence is *social persuasion, the process of convincing yourself or another person*. If a credible person convinces you that you can accomplish a particular

task, you will often receive a large enough boost in self-confidence large enough to give the task a try. If the encouragement is coupled with guidance on how to perform the task, the self-confidence gain will be higher. So the boss or teacher who says, "I know you can do it, and I'm here to help you," knows how to build self-confidence.

The fifth source of information for making a self-confidence judgment is *emotional appraisal, or how we feel about events around us and manage our emotions*. We rely sometimes on our inner feelings to know if we are self-confident enough to perform the task.

Imagine a person standing on top of a high mountain ready to ski down. However, he or she is trembling and nauseous with fear. Contrast this beginner to another person who only feels mildly excited and challenged. Skier number one has a self-confidence problem, whereas skier number two has enough confidence to start the descent. (Have your own emotional sensations ever influenced your self-confidence?)

The more of these five sources of self-confidence are positive for you, the more likely your self-confidence will be positive. A subtle point about self-confidence is that being too low in self-confidence is a problem yet being too high is also a problem. The overly self-confident person may not listen carefully to the suggestions of others, and may be blind to criticism.

Human Relations Self-Assessment Quiz 3-2 provides some insight into your level of self-confidence.

TECHNIQUES FOR DEVELOPING AND ENHANCING YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4

Self-confidence is generally achieved by succeeding in a variety of situations. A confident civil engineering technician may not be generally self-confident unless he or she also achieves success in activities such as forming good personal relationships, navigating complex software, writing a letter, learning a second language, and displaying athletic skills.

Although this general approach to self-confidence building makes sense, it does not work for everyone. Some people who seem to succeed at everything still have lingering self-doubt.

HUMAN RELATIONS SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ 3-2

How Self-Confident Are You?

Indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements. Use a 1-to-5 scale: (1) disagree strongly, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) agree strongly.

	DS	D	N	A	AS
1. I frequently say to people, "I'm not sure."	5	4	3	2	1
2. I perform well in most situations in life.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I willingly offer advice to others.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Before making even a minor decision, I usually consult with several people.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I am generally willing to attempt new activities for which I have very little related skill or experience.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Speaking in front of the class or other group is a frightening experience for me.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I experience stress when people challenge me or put me on the spot.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I feel comfortable attending a social event by myself.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I'm much more of a winner than a loser.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am cautious about making any substantial change in my life.	5	4	3	2	1
Total score: _____					

Scoring and Interpretation: Calculate your total score by adding the numbers circled. A tentative interpretation of the scoring is as follows:

- 45-50: Very high self-confidence with perhaps a tendency toward arrogance
- 38-44: A high, desirable level of self-confidence
- 30-37: Moderate or average self-confidence
- 10-29: Self-confidence needs strengthening

Questions:

1. How does your score on this test fit with your evaluation of your self-confidence?
2. What would it be like working for a manager who scored 10 on this quiz?

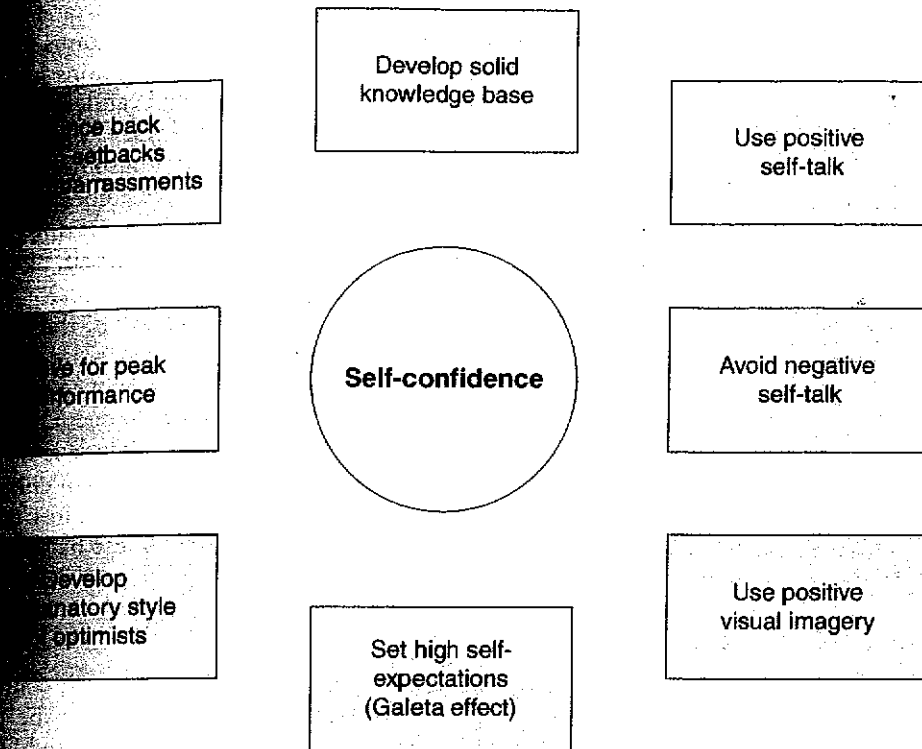
Low self-confidence is so deeply ingrained in this type of personality that success in later life is not sufficient to change things. Following are seven specific strategies and tactics for building and elevating self-confidence, as outlined in Figure 3-2. They will generally work unless the person has deep-rooted feelings of inferiority. The tactics and strategies are arranged approximately in the order in which they should be tried to achieve best results.

Develop a Solid Knowledge Base

A bedrock strategy for projecting self-confidence is to develop a knowledge base that enables you to provide sensible alternative solutions to problems. Intuition is very important, but working from a base of facts helps you project a confident image. Formal education is an obvious and important source of information for your knowledge base. Day-by-day absorption of information directly and indirectly related to your career is equally important. The major purpose of formal education is to get you in the right frame of mind to continue your quest for knowledge. In your quest for developing a solid knowledge base to project self-confidence, be sensitive to abusing this technique. If you bombard people with quotes, facts, and figures, you are likely to be perceived as an annoying know-it-all.

A solid knowledge base contributes to self-confidence also because the knowledge facilitates engaging in conversation with intelligent people. A weak counterargument is that having information stored in your brain is no longer important because information is so accessible online. When in a gathering of people, you could then use a smart phone to access some facts to talk about. Such behavior is unlikely to help a person project a confident, intelligent image.

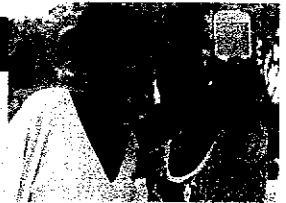
2 Boosting Your Self-Confidence



BACK TO THE OPENING CASE

...d, the fixed-income trader turned manager of a luxury restaurant used his self-confidence to help propel him toward an ambition for himself. He needed self-confidence to move from bartender in a New York restaurant with the most demanding clientele. Gould then needed even more self-confidence that his knowledge and love for wines would enable him to become a sommelier in the same restaurant. He was then

self-confident enough to tackle the job of being the manager of a Del Frisco restaurant, only seven years after beginning as a server. Furthermore, Gould's high self-confidence facilitated his being able to cope with the pressures of managing an upscale restaurant.



Positive Self-Talk

One method of building self-confidence is to engage in positive self-talk, saying positive things about yourself. The first step in using positive self-talk is to objectively state the incident that is casting doubt about self-worth.^[25] The key word here is *objectively*. A person who is fearful of poorly executing a report-writing assignment, might say, "I've been asked to write a report for the company, and I'm not a good writer." The next step is to objectively interpret what the incident *does not* mean. Terry might say, "Not being a skilled writer doesn't mean that I can't figure out a way to write a good report or that I'm an ineffective employee." Next, the person should objectively state what the incident *does* mean. In doing so, the person should avoid put-down labels, such as "incompetent," "stupid," "dumb," "airhead," or "airhead." All these terms are forms of negative self-talk. Terry should state what the incident *does* mean: "I have a problem with one small aspect of this job." The fourth step is to objectively account for the cause of the incident. Terry would say, "I'm really worried about writing a good report because I have very little experience writing along these lines." The fifth step is to identify some positive ways to prevent the incident from happening again. Terry might say, "I'll get out my textbook on business communications and review the chapter on report writing" or "I'll enroll in a course or seminar on business report writing."

The final step is to use positive self-talk. Terry imagines his boss saying, "This report is really good. I'm proud of my decision to select you to prepare this important report."

Positive self-talk builds self-confidence and self-esteem because it programs the mind with positive messages. Making frequent positive statements or affirmations about the self creates a more confident person. An example would be, "I know I can learn this new equipment rapidly enough to increase my productivity within five days."

Business coach Gary Lockwood emphasizes that positive self-talk is also useful for getting people past difficult times. "It's all in your head," he said. "Remember you are in charge of your feelings. You are in control of your attitude." Instead of berating yourself after making a mistake, learn from the experience and move on. Say to yourself, "Everyone makes mistakes," "Tomorrow is another day," or "What can I learn from this?"^[26]

Despite the many advantages of positive self-talk, as with optimism, there can be times when thinking too positively can create problems. Negative thoughts are often useful in alerting us to potential problems, and prompting us to develop a plan of correction. Imagine that Lisa is job hunting, and that she has an urgent need of employment. She has a promising interview, and her positive thinking prompts her to think, "There is no doubt that I will receive an offer real soon." Her positive thinking blocks her from continuing her job search. When the offer in question does not come through, Lisa has lost momentum in her job search. In the words of author John Derbyshire, we must be "vigilantly realistic" toward against the potential dangers of positive thinking.^[27]

Avoid Negative Self-Talk

As implied, you should minimize negative statements about yourself to bolster self-confidence. A lack of self-confidence is reflected in statements, such as "I may be stupid but . . .," "Nobody asked my opinion," "I know I'm usually wrong, but . . .," and "I know I don't have as much education as some people, but . . ." Self-effacing statements like these serve to reinforce low self-confidence.

It is also important not to attribute to yourself negative, irreversible traits, such as "idiotic," "ugly," "dull," "loser," and "hopeless." Instead, look on your weak points as areas for possible self-improvement. Negative self-labeling can do long-term damage to your self-confidence. If a person stops that practice today, his or her self-confidence may begin to increase.

Use Positive Visual Imagery

Assume you have a situation in mind in which you would like to appear confident and in control. An example would be a meeting with a major customer who has told you by e-mail that he is considering switching suppliers. Your intuitive reaction is that if you cannot handle his concerns without fumbling or appearing desperate, you will lose the account. An important technique in this situation is positive visual imagery, or picturing a positive outcome in your mind. To apply this technique in this situation, imagine yourself engaging in a convincing argument about why your customer should retain your company as the primary supplier. Imagine yourself talking in positive terms about the good service your company offers and how you can rectify any problems.

Visualize yourself listening patiently to your customer's concerns and then talking confidently about how your company can handle these concerns. As you rehearse this moment of truth, create a mental picture of you and the customer shaking hands over the fact that the account is still yours.

Positive visual imagery helps you appear self-confident because your mental rehearsal of the situation has helped you prepare for battle. If imagery works for you once, you will be even more effective in subsequent uses of the technique.

Set High Expectations for Yourself (the Galatea Effect)

If you set high expectations for yourself and you succeed, you are likely to experience a temporary or permanent boost in self-confidence. The Galatea effect is a type of self-fulfilling prophecy in which high expectations lead to high performance. Similar to positive self-talk, if you believe in yourself you are more likely to succeed. You expect to win, so

do. The Galatea effect may not work all the time, but it does work some of the time for many people.

Workplace behavior researchers D. Brian McNatt and Timothy A. Judge studied the Galatea effect with 72 auditors in three offices of a major accounting firm over a three-month period. The auditors were given letters of encouragement to strengthen their feelings of self-efficacy. Information in the letters was based on facts about the auditors, such as information derived from their résumés and company records. The results of the experiment showed that creating a Galatea effect bolstered self-efficacy, motivation, and performance. However, the performance improvement was temporary, suggesting that self-expectations need to be boosted regularly.^[28]



Develop the Explanatory Style of Optimists

According to the research and observations of consultant and trainer Price Pritchett, optimism is linked to self-confidence. Explaining events in an optimistic way can help preserve self-confidence and self-esteem. When experiencing trouble, optimists tend to explain the problems to themselves as temporary. Bad events are expected to be short-lived, and optimists look to the future when times will be better. Another aspect of optimists' explanatory style protects their self-confidence. Rather than condemn themselves for failures, they look for how other factors or circumstances have contributed to the problem. Optimists then do not take all the blame for a problem, but look to external factors to help explain what went wrong.

Interpreting difficulties in this way gives the optimists a sense of control. Instead of looking at the unfortunate situation as hopeless, they have faith in their ability to deal with the problem.^[29] Suppose an optimist purchases a computer workstation that comes packed in a box with many parts along with directions. A problem arises is that some of the screws and dowels do not fit, and the directions are unclear. A pessimist might suffer a drop in self-confidence and self-esteem, saying "What a fool I am. I can't even assemble a piece of office furniture." In contrast, the optimist might say, "I'm doing something wrong here, and I will get a buddy to help show me my mistake. But the manufacturer can also be blamed. The instructions are terrible, and all the parts may not fit together." In this way, the optimist does not take such a big hit to self-confidence and self-esteem.

Strive for Peak Performance

A key strategy for projecting self-confidence is to display peak performance, or exceptional accomplishment in a given task. The experience is transient but exceptionally meaningful. Peak performance refers to much more than attempting to do your best. Experiencing peak performance in various tasks over a long period of time would move a person toward self-actualization.^[30] To achieve peak performance, you must be totally focused on what you are doing. When you are in the state of peak performance, you are mentally calm and physically at ease. Intense concentration is required to achieve this state. You are so focused on the task at hand that you are not distracted by extraneous events or thoughts. To use an athletic analogy, you are *in the zone* while you are performing the task. In fact, many sports psychologists and other sports trainers work with athletes to help them attain peak performance.

The mental state achieved during peak performance is akin to a person's sense of deep concentration when immersed in a sport or hobby. On days when tennis players perform way above their usual game, they typically comment, "The ball looked so large, I could read the label as I hit it." On the job, focus and concentration allow the person to sense and respond to relevant information coming both from within the mind and from outside stimuli. When you are at your peak, you impress others by responding intelligently to their input. While performing in peak performance, you are experiencing a mental state referred to as *flow*.

HUMAN RELATIONS SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 3-4

Building Your Self-Confidence and Self-Efficacy

Most people can use a boost to their self-confidence. Even if you are a highly confident individual, perhaps there is room for building your feelings of self-efficacy in a particular area, such as a proud and successful business owner learning a new skill such as editing digital photos or speaking a foreign language. For this skill-building exercise enhances your self-confidence or self-efficacy in the next two weeks by trying out one of the many suggestions for self-confidence building described in the text.

As part of planning the implementation of this exercise, think about any area in which your self-confidence could use a boost. A candid human relations student, who was also a confident cheerleader, said, "Face it. I'm terrible at PowerPoint presentations. I put up so many details on my slides that the audience is trying to read my slides instead of looking at me. I have to admit that

my PowerPoint presentation consists mostly of my reading my slides to the audience. I'm much better at cheerleading." So this student studied information in her human relations text about making better graphic presentations. She revamped her approach to using her slides as headlines and talking points. She tried out one presentation in class, and one for at her church. She received so many compliments about her presentations that now she has much higher self-efficacy with respect to PowerPoint presentations.

Your instructor might organize a sharing of self-confidence building episodes in the class. If the sharing does take place, look for patterns in terms of what seemed to work in terms of self-confidence or self-efficacy building. Also, listen for any patterns in failed attempts at self-confidence building.

Although you are concentrating on an object or sometimes on another person during peak performance, you still have an awareness of the self. You develop a strong sense of the self, similar to self-confidence and self-efficacy, while you are concentrating the task. Peak performance is related to self-confidence in another important way. Achieving peak performance in many situations helps you develop self-confidence.

Skill-Building Exercise 3-4 gives you the opportunity to work on enhancing your self-confidence.

Bounce Back from Setbacks and Embarrassments

Resilience is a major contributor to personal effectiveness. Overcoming setbacks also builds self-confidence, as implied from the description of the explanatory style of optimists. An effective self-confidence builder is to convince yourself that you can conquer adversity such as setbacks and embarrassments, thus being resilient. The vast majority of successful leaders have dealt successfully with at least one significant setback in their careers, such as being fired or demoted. In contrast, crumbling after a setback or series of setbacks will usually lower self-confidence. Two major suggestions for bouncing back from setbacks and embarrassments are presented next.

Get Past the Emotional Turmoil. Adversity has enormous emotional consequences. The emotional impact of severe job adversity can rival the loss of a personal relationship. The stress from adversity leads to a cycle of adversity followed by stress, followed by more adversity. A starting point in dealing with the emotional aspects of adversity is to *accept the reality of your problem*. Admit that your problems are real and that you are hurting inside.

A second step is *not to take the setback personally*. Remember that setbacks are inevitable so long as you are taking some risks in your career. Not personalizing setbacks helps reduce some of the emotional sting. If possible, *do not panic*. Recognize that you are in difficult circumstances under which many others panic. Convince yourself to remain calm enough to deal with the severe problem or crisis. Also, *get help from your support network*. Getting emotional support from family members and friends helps overcome the emotional turmoil associated with adversity.

Find a Creative Solution to Your Problem. An inescapable part of planning a comeback is to solve your problem. You often need to search for creative solutions. Suppose a person faced the adversity of not having enough money for educational expenses. The person might search through standard alternatives, such as applying for financial aid, looking for more lucrative part-time work, and borrowing from family members. Several students have solved their problem more creatively by asking strangers to lend them money as intermediate-term investments. An option the investors have is to receive a payback based on the future earnings of the students.

A useful approach to finding a creative solution to your problem is to use response-oriented thinking that focuses on finding answers. A resilience program developed by Joshua D. Margolis of the Harvard Business School and Paul G. Stoltz, the founder of a global research and consulting firm, includes finding answers to then four following questions:

1. What features can I improve or potentially improve?
2. What sort of positive impact can I personally have on what happens next?
3. How can I contain the negatives of the situation and generate currently unseen positives?
4. What can I do to begin addressing the problem now?^[31]

It is highly recommended that you write down answers to these questions rather than merely thinking about them. Writing offers people more command over an adverse situation than does mere reflection. A plausible reason is that writing down something is an early step in developing an action plan. Getting back to the person concerned about educational expenses, he or she might write down in response to question 4, "What do I or my family members own that I might be able to sell over eBay that would raise a little cash to get me started?"

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZZES IN OVERVIEW

The self-assessment quizzes presented in this chapter support each other well. Self-Assessment Quiz 3-1 is a self-esteem checklist. People who score high on the Self-Esteem Checklist should also score high on Self-Assessment Quiz 3-2, How Self-Confident Are You? The reason self-esteem and self-confidence are closely related and may be part of the same concept is that some people might like themselves even though they are not particularly self-confident in many situations. Perhaps their attitude is, "So who cares if I am not self-confident? I like myself."

Concept Review and Reinforcement

Key Terms

self-esteem 48

positive visual imagery 60

peak performance 61

Summary

Self-esteem refers to the overall evaluation people make about themselves. People with high self-esteem develop a positive self-concept. Self-esteem develops from a variety of early-life experiences. People who were encouraged to feel good about themselves and their accomplishments by key people in their lives are more likely to enjoy high self-esteem. Of major significance, self-esteem also results from accomplishing worthwhile activities, and then feeling proud of these accomplishments. Praise and recognition for accomplishments also help develop self-esteem.

Self-esteem has many important consequences, as follows: career success, including a high income; good mental health; profiting from feedback, and organizational success. One of the links between good mental health and self-esteem is that high self-esteem helps prevent many situations from being stressful. Workers with high self-esteem develop and maintain favorable work attitudes and perform at a high level. A company with high self-esteem workers has a competitive advantage.

High self-esteem can sometimes have negative consequences such as undermining others to preserve one's own status. Our own reference group has the biggest impact on self-esteem. Self-esteem can be enhanced in many ways: (a) attain legitimate accomplishments, (b) be aware of your personal strengths, (c) rebut the inner critic, (d) practice self-nurturing, (e) minimize settings and interactions

that detract from your feelings of competence, (f) from others including talking and socializing frequently with people who boost your self-esteem, (g) imitate the behavior of people with high self-esteem, and (h) high self-esteem living space. The manager can play an important role in helping build the self-esteem of employees, such as giving positive feedback for legitimate accomplishments.

Various studies have shown that people with a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to have good job performance. So self-confidence is important for your career. Our sources of self-confidence stem from five sources of information: actual experiences, or things that we have done; expectations of others, or modeling; social comparison, or comparing yourself to others; social persuasion, the process of convincing another person; and emotional arousal, or how we feel about events around us and manage our emotions.

A general principle of boosting your self-confidence to experience success (goal accomplishment) in various situations. The specific strategies for building self-confidence described here are: (a) develop a solid knowledge base, (b) use positive self-talk, (c) avoid negative self-talk, (d) use positive visual imagery, (e) set high expectations for yourself (the Galatea effect), (f) develop the explanatory power of optimism, (g) strive for peak performance, and (h) bounce back from setbacks and embarrassments.

Questions for Discussion and Review

1. Why does holding an important job contribute to a person's self-esteem?
2. A study by economists indicated that workers with higher levels of self-esteem tended to be more productive. What would be an explanation for this finding?
3. Exercises to boost self-esteem and self-confidence often emphasize focusing on your positive qualities.

- Why might it also be important to be aware of your weak points to develop self-esteem?
4. The criticism is often heard that the American emphasis on building the self-esteem of children has resulted in a generation of young adults who expect to be strongly praised by their bosses, no matter what they accomplish. What is your opinion of this criticism?
 5. When you meet another person, on what basis do you conclude that he or she is self-confident?
 6. What positive self-talk can you use after you have failed on a major assignment?
 7. In what way does your program of studies contribute to building your self-esteem and self-confidence?
 8. Many pharmaceutical firms actively recruit cheerleaders as sales representatives to call on doctors to recommend their brand of prescription drugs. The firms in question say that cheerleaders make good sales reps because they are so self-confident. What is your opinion on this controversial issue?
 9. For what type of job might a worker having low self-esteem and self-confidence actually be an asset?
 10. Interview a person whom you perceive to have a successful career. Ask that person to describe how he or she developed high self-esteem. Be prepared to discuss your findings in class.

The Web Corner

www.athealth.com/Consumer/disorders/self-esteem.html

(Measuring and building your self-esteem)

www.self-confidence.co.uk

(Developing your self-confidence)

www.mindtools.com/selfconf.html

(The difference between self-confidence and low self-confidence)

Internet Skills Builder: Learning More about Your Self-Esteem

The *Self-Esteem Checklist* in this chapter gave you one opportunity to assess your self-esteem. To gain additional

insights into your self-esteem, visit www.more-selfesteem.com. Go to “quizzes” under Free Resources, and take the self-esteem test. How does your score on this quiz compare to your score on *The Self-Esteem Checklist*? If your level of self-esteem as measured by the two quizzes is quite different (such as high versus low), explain why this discrepancy might occur.

Developing Essential Business Communication Skills

The Confetti Man

Nick Jablonski works for a manufacturer of property maintenance and recreational vehicles such as lawnmowers, snow blowers, and all-terrain vehicles. The company prospers even during downturns in the economy. This is true because when economic conditions are worrisome many people invest more money in taking care of their property and enjoying themselves close to home instead of traveling. Nick holds the job title, "celebrations assistant." The more traditional part of his job is to organize company events like picnics, sales meetings, and shareholder meetings.

When asked to explain the celebrations assistant part of his job in more detail, Nick replied with a smile:

My job is to help workers throughout the company celebrate accomplishments that help the company reach its goals. I'll give you a couple of examples. Suppose I learn that a production technician has exceeded quota on inserting dashboards on riding mowers, I will visit the factory floor and help the technician celebrate. Sometimes I will attach a smiley face to his or her work area. I might shake his or her hand or pat the person on the back. Yet to be dramatic, I will shower the person with confetti.

Just last week I was told by her supervisor that one of our customer service reps was working on the phone with a woman suffering from arthritis. The customer was having a difficult time starting one of our lawnmowers. The rep stayed on the phone twenty minutes with the lady until she could pull the start

cord correctly. The customer was so pleased that she wrote a letter to the CEO praising the helpfulness of the rep.

My response was to visit the customer service area and have a little celebration. Not only did I throw two bags of confetti, I blew a fog horn. I could tell the rep became a little embarrassed because she blushed. Yet I knew that I really boosted her self-esteem.

When Jablonski was asked why his work as a celebrations assistant boosted worker self-esteem, he answered as follows: "My job is to make our employees feel great about themselves. My smiley faces, my encouraging remarks, and especially my confetti throwing make people feel great. If people feel great about themselves and their accomplishments, their self-esteem heads north. It's that simple."

Case Questions

1. To what extent do you think that the celebrations assistant is really boosting the self-esteem of workers?
2. Assume that Nick is successful in boosting worker self-esteem. How might this help the company?
3. Advise the CEO of the company in question as to whether having a celebrations assistant on the payroll is a good investment of company money.

Source: Several facts in this case are based on Jeffrey Zaslow "The Most-Praised Generation Goes to Work," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 20, 2007, pp. W1, W7.

Homeboy Industries Helps Ex-Cons Go Green

When Albert Ortega was released from prison, he was determined to turn his life around. So he went green. Ortega sports tattoos of an Aztec warrior on his back, a dragon on his chest, and the name of his former gang rings

his biceps. Drug trafficking kept him locked up for most of the past seven years, he says. But after serving his last term, he heard about a solar installation course. "I wanted a new way of life," says the tall, brawny 34-year old. "Solar put me on the cutting edge."

In the race to train America's "green collar" workforce, a group composed mostly of former Los Ange-

gang members on parole is an early participant. Their training is funded by Homeboy Industries, a Los Angeles nonprofit that helps people with criminal pasts find employment.

For years, Homeboy Industries put former felons to work at a bakery and café it runs in East Los Angeles. A few summers ago, founder Greg Boyles, a Jesuit priest, was approached by a supporter about the idea of preparing them for the green economy. "I leapt at the opportunity," says Father Boyle.

Homeboy joined forces with the East Los Angeles Skills Center, a public vocational school that offers a hands-on program to teach the design, construction, and installation of solar panels. The center created an intensive course for Homeboy. "I loved the idea of doing something for these guys," says Brian Hurd, the senior instructor who designed it. "My best student ever in a construction course was a Homeboy referral who needed a second chance." Homeboy participants are paid an hourly wage of \$8. The class meets for two months, weekdays from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M.

"I was so motivated, I would fall asleep with the books on my bed," says Ortega. Determined to get into the course, he phoned or visited Father Boyle for two weeks, until he was asked to take a drug test. Ortega passed and was offered a spot in the class. "I knew I was good at wiring," says Ortega, who once installed car-stereo systems. "I was always good at math."

Manuel Delgado, 42, who dropped out of high school, said he struggled at first. But four weeks into the class, he's doing "real good," he says. "I got 76% on my last math test." Another student, Jessica Espinoza, 23, says she couldn't find a job after being locked up for two years because she helped a felon escape from a courthouse. "The minute they saw I went to jail, employers didn't give me the time of day," she says. "Hopefully I can take what this school gave me and make a career in this new industry."

Doug Lincoln, 61, who once managed luxury car dealerships, was offered admission in the Homeboy course after he inquired about a faster-paced class. On hearing it was

mainly for ex-cons, he said, "I thought it was a joke." Now, Lincoln is about to graduate. He plans to start a solar-panel installation firm and hire some of his former classmates. "These guys are more motivated than hundreds of employees I've managed in the car business," he says.

Ortega recently passed an examination that qualifies him to install solar panels nationwide. He says he has already been approached by employers. But he says he is waiting until when he is off parole before starting work, because until then he can't travel out of Los Angeles County. When that happens, he says, "I'll be just another citizen."

Several of his classmates who completed the course are already working, earning about \$15 an hour. Experienced installers can make about \$30 an hour. Phillip Hartley, general manager of Phat Energy, a Los Angeles solar company, has hired several Homeboy graduates. The Los Angeles Unified School District plans to start hiring some graduates of the program to install 50 megawatts of solar power units on its campuses. "Being former gang members doesn't preclude them from building a career in solar technology," says Veronica Soto, a school district director.

Case Questions

1. Why might an ex-con enrolled in the Homeboy solar-panel building program have a self-esteem problem?
2. In what way might the Homeboy solar-panel training program be building the self-esteem and self-confidence of its students?
3. What suggestions can you offer for the staff at Homeboy to do an even better job of building the self-esteem and self-confidence of its students?
4. Should the instructor for the solar-panel installation class give high grades in math to all the students, just to raise their self-esteem? Explain your reasoning.

Source: Miriam Jordan, "A New Gang Comes to Los Angeles: Solar-Panel Installers," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 14-15, 2009, pp. A1, A9.