

Self-Esteem for Parents

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Healing from codependency is a step by step process. First the codependent must admit that they have a problem and reach out for help. Next they must change how they think and behave, as well as their values concerning relationships, especially with their children. Once their codependency is under control, codependents must turn inward and heal some of the underlying issues which turned them into codependents in the first place. Foremost among this is building self-esteem.

Codependents cannot heal without taking this step because low-self esteem robs them of the confidence they need to raise healthy children.

While one could go on and on about how low self-esteem feeds codependency, it might be more helpful to elaborate on what high self esteem does for recovering codependents. It helps them because now they can:

- Discover a willingness to grow and change into better parents.
- Make their own needs as important as being the perfect parent.
- Look after themselves as well as their children.
- Find joy in parenting.
- Get through the hard times.
- Develop self-control.
- Reduce depression and anxiety.
- Protect themselves from abusive and manipulative children.

Steps to Building Up Self-esteem

1. Adopt an *attitude* of self-acceptance or self-love. This means really understanding that you are a worthy person. This is a mind set.
2. Affirmations are an important part of building ourselves up to a level of optimum confidence. I like affirmations like “I’m ok; I am a work in progress; be patient God is not through with me yet.
3. You can’t burn down a house and feel good about yourself. You must earn some of your self-esteem by acquiring some self-respect. Self-Respect comes from self-discipline, being responsible, honoring your own value system, and handling adversity well.
4. Self-respect, which is a kind of conditional love, does not necessarily contradict the notion that you should love yourself unconditionally. Both concepts are important to maintain self-esteem. You must try to find the balance between loving yourself unconditionally and pushing yourself to do things that will engender self-respect.
5. Stop trying to be perfect. No one is perfect.
6. We value what we take care of. So take care of yourself. (This includes pampering.)
7. Do nice things for your children but don’t over do it. Altruism builds self-esteem but too much giving is codependent.
8. Stop comparing yourself to other parents.
9. If you have a monopoly on giving, to build a false sense of self-esteem, learn how to receive. Let the love come in.

10. Everyone has a gift. Find it and spend time doing it apart from parenting. Then find an audience even if it is just your family. Don't let all your self-worth come from being a good parent.
11. Many codependents have a hard time standing up for themselves. This has to change. Start setting boundaries, saying no, expressing your opinion, walking away from neglect or abuse, being assertive when appropriate, and no longer apologizing when you haven't done anything wrong.
12. Low self-esteem goes hand and hand with codependency, therefore it is important to build yourself up and surround yourself with people who validate you.

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