

Do You Have A Healthy Self-Esteem?

February 23, 2014

I'll be talking about self-esteem in my workshop later today, so it's been on my mind lately.

Earlier in the week my sweetheart mentioned his ex-fiancée as the "most beautiful woman in town." Several years ago, before I recovered my inherent self-esteem, this casual description would have put me into a tail spin. My ex-husband also had dated a model-beautiful woman, whose very existence made me insanely envious. I use the word "insane" on purpose because there was nothing rational about my self-assessment in comparison to her. I set off on so many dead-end careers and hobbies simply to outshine her (in my own mind). I studied French, though I cared little about learning the language, I took photography classes, any cool activity I could think of. By the way, I could never get to know her or hear why my ex-husband cared about her, because I just shut down the minute her name was mentioned. She was the beautiful elephant in the room for our entire relationship, which failed in part because I made it his job to reassure me that I was worthwhile.

I'm much more high on myself these days, so when my guy mentioned his ex-fiancée's beauty, it rolled off and I was able to tease him about it without my comments laced with hostility or passive aggression. Of course he hadn't meant to insult me, and I am strong enough now in my self-esteem not to have been offended by it. I'm not so humble in my self-regard anymore.

In fact, I disagree with humility. What's so great about it? The first definition of "humility" in the Oxford English Dictionary is "The quality of being humble or having a lowly opinion of oneself." What's so great about having a lowly opinion about yourself? Somewhere along the way someone equated "humble" with "holy," and healthy self-regard with pride -- the kind that goeth before a fall.

But pride is different from self-esteem, though they are often confused. Pride -- the kind that leans more towards arrogance -- is rooted in insecurity, the exact opposite of self-esteem.

Anyone raised in a Christian background is told to be humble for a number of reasons:

1. We must be humble or we won't obey any of God's other commandments.
2. In the Gospel of Matthew we're told to "become as little children or you won't enter the kingdom of heaven."
3. If we want to be forgiven we must be humble.
4. We must remember our unavoidable sinful natures and so we ought to be humble.
5. Because "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

I did some searching on the internet and discovered that most sources conclude it's better to be humble and small, to keep a low profile (unless you're going for a promotion, in which case we're reminded not to brag about our accomplishments but simply point out our contributions). Clicking on the *WikiHow* link, I found suggestions on how to be humble, including recognizing

your faults and mistakes, avoiding bragging, and not talking about personal achievements. Another source suggested that humility could help me be more content with my life.

We also think of self-esteem as self-assessment, but these are also polar opposites I think. When we assess ourselves we judge ourselves, usually our performance, relationships, bodies, and bank accounts. But self-esteem more about *who* are, and not what we've done or failed to do.

According to Wikipedia, self-esteem is a term used in psychology to reflect a person's overall emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. It encompasses beliefs (for example, "I am competent," "I am worthy") and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame. It's the positive or negative evaluations of the self, as in how we feel about it.

According to psychologist Nathaniel Branden, self-esteem is the sum of self-confidence (a feeling of personal capacity) and self-respect (a feeling of personal worth). It exists as a consequence of the implicit judgment that every person has of their ability to face life's challenges, to understand and solve problems, and their right to achieve happiness, and be given respect.

It also happens to be one of the buzz words that's become almost meaningless in its overuse.

So I'm going to give you my definition of what self-esteem might be in the context of your relationship with yourself and your Creator: *Self-esteem should be the concept of recognizing who we are, and recognizing the value inherent in our existence.* In my definition, it has nothing to do with the judgement of the ego, or an assessment of our accomplishments, behavior, or actions. It's understanding and accepting that we are perfect. I'm not saying that we *act* perfectly, but that our state of being *is* perfect.

How can you be humble and recognize your perfection at the same time? Doesn't that seem antithetical? The only time it seems acceptable to praise ourselves seems to be in sports! We get to cheer for ourselves when we win a medal.

In my work as a hypnotist, psychic medium, and minister, I've arrived at the theory that every single thing that's wrong in the world is rooted in low self-esteem. I just wrote a book on this topic called ***“Fix Your Screwed-Up Life. Recover Your Inherent Self-Esteem & Start Living the Life of Your Dreams.”***

My hypnosis clients are good men and women whose stories break my heart. Good people, trying so hard, but feeling unworthy. Who gave them this idea?

I have one client who is starving herself to death. She believes she doesn't deserve to take up space -- literally! Another client keeps all of her brilliant creative inventions to herself, because she believes no one will want to know about them. One man I work with is so anxious about

money because he feels he isn't making enough, so he's making himself sick. One client I work with doesn't feel it's right to talk about money, so he's not asking for help and slowly sinking into bankruptcy.

All of these are good, humble people. They even say things to me like, "I'm a nice person, I don't ask for too much."

The clients who come for intuitive guidance hear from their spirit people, who come through time and again to say, "Let it go! Enjoy your life! Stop judging!"

Let's consider the spirit for a moment, as separate from the body and the mind. I guess we'd all have to agree that these three are separate if you're going to follow me to the next part of my theory. If you're a spiritualist -- or anything other than an atheist I suppose -- there is probably some part of you that believes your spirit will live on, even after the body and personality are dead.

Our spirit is timeless. That's why I can look at my 52 year old self and say "What the hell? Wasn't I just 30?" I still feel the same. When I contemplate the words "I Am," the sense of self I have is consistent with what I felt as a child. I'm not talking about the accumulation of my experiences -- because that's the personality. But who I consider myself to *be*, well, that's the same. My mother is 76 now; we were talking a while ago about just how that happens, and how we can't believe we are our present ages.

In all the past life regressions, hypnosis sessions, and spirit communication I've facilitated, I've heard the same message: your spirit is already complete. It's already whole. There is nothing wrong with it. No part of it is broken, no part of it requires correction.

I had a client named Agnes whose grandmother came through from Heaven and told us: "There are two ways of being alive: physically and in the spirit. The spirit doesn't need to create because it's already created. So identifying with the spirit is better than identifying with the body or the mind. Your job is to recognize your spirit and recognize that it doesn't need correction or action. You already know your spirit, you've just forgotten it's wholeness and perfection. Let your prayer be to remember who you really are, and to remember that your mind is simply a tool and your body and the physical world is simply a place to use that tool. The mind is a bridge between who we might remember ourselves to be and what we can actually do in the world."

This wise spirit lady gave us the bottom-line: we have to choose which aspect of ourselves to put our energy into. We have to choose to focus on the spirit, remembering that it isn't broken and doesn't need fixing. If we perceive brokenness or incompleteness, that's the mind creating for itself or the body.

Another client of mine named Roger received this message from his uncle in spirit: "The mind has creative ability and creative power and we can do amazing things with it, but we have to

realize that it's not the Almighty. The spirit is beyond creation, beyond analysis, so it's important to realize that the mind is something that comes along for the ride in the body. The spirit is the alpha and omega, it is always there and always perfect, so the mind should serve the spirit, not serve itself. The mind can help the body, help create the lifestyle, but the mind should not simply serve itself." He encouraged the development of the rational, conscious, analytical mind, but he reminded us that the spirit was more important.

When the mind serves itself, we think that intellectual advancement is the way to measure goodness or 'betterness.' We can use our minds to bring great things into our lives, but sometimes we do that because we think something is missing or broken. This can lead to fear, feelings of inadequacy, and all kinds of problems. Then the mind goes into a more intense version of striving towards 'betterness' by fixing what it determines to be wrong or broken. All the while the spirit, which is the real engine of life, is running along perfectly without any flaws.

The spirit doesn't need fixing, because it's perfect. The mind when it serves itself instead of the spirit, focuses on the incomplete power of intellect. When the mind serves the spirit those corrections and drives all fall away and we know inner harmony, and then we can see and experience harmony everywhere.

Robert's uncle reminded us that the mind doesn't create harmony, but thinks it can when it's serving itself. When it serves the spirit it is *recognizing* Divine harmony, and that's a lot less work.

It's important to focus on the completeness of who you are. If you find yourself dwelling on humility or if you have a "lowly opinion of yourself," or if you compare yourself to another and find yourself wanting -- remember that your actions do not define your spirit. Your mind, your intellectual accomplishments or material achievements are not a measure of your worth. Remember this above all else: You're not broken, there's nothing wrong with you. You're perfect because you were created by a Perfect God out of Perfection, and you couldn't break that if you tried.

Amen.

Jodi story.

My self esteem now vs. earlier: Paul & Hannah