

## 21 days to power self-esteem

**Click on a day and get your daily power exercise. Once you've read and understand the instructions, put them into practice!**

### Day 1: Gain self-awareness

“Our strength grows out of our weaknesses.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Self-esteem is not about having only strengths. It is also about embracing your weaknesses and learning how you can turn them into an opportunity to discover more about yourself. Self-awareness, then, is the first-step to making a change.

Start by taking a life inventory — like a business would do if it were not performing well. List your assets (strengths) and your liabilities (weaknesses). Review your weaknesses and try to identify ways that you can turn them into strengths. For example, if your weakness is “I’m too shy in large groups,” then work on ensuring your one-to-one relationships are the best they can be while enrolling in a public-speaking course. That way, you’ll gain more confidence when in large groups but still have solid intimate relationships to enrich your life.

### Day 2: Believe in yourself

“Yes, I can!”

Self-esteem is about believing in yourself. So give yourself this vote of confidence.

Just the fact that you believe will give you power because what you believe becomes your reality regardless of whether or not it’s true. Belief is also what fuels positive thoughts. Without believing, your thoughts would be like paying lip service and you could find yourself in the “all talk + no action = no results” dilemma.

To harness the power of belief, give yourself permission to succeed. And rather than focus on excuses or assumptions of why you may fail, focus on the results. Focus on your success — and nothing else.

### Day 3: Silence your inner critic

Challenge your inner critic; don’t just take the abuse.

Do you have an inner critic who is an expert at finding faults? Are you aware of the voices inside your head? How often do you put yourself down during the day?

Many of us do, so try to watch your inner language — the conversations you have with yourself. Have a rebuttal and handle your self-criticism assertively by replacing negative words with positive affirmations. Imagine someone you admire and how would they handle it or what would they say. Their voice can help jumpstart your own inner confident voice.

As you become aware of your negative self talk, you can begin to turn down the volume and replace it with constructive feedback and praise. For starters, change your reactive words to proactive ones: Replace “I can’t” with “I can” or “I want to.”

#### **Day 4: Use affirmations — the right way**

The process of affirming is to make firm statements using words that reinforce the positive.

While many of us make them all day long, we usually do so unconsciously or our affirmations embrace a negative connotation. (For example, “I will not stumble during my presentation”.) This keeps you in a low self-esteem holding pattern.

For your daily affirmations, use short, strong positive statements in the present tense as if you have already obtained your goal. For example, “I am a great public speaker.” This will help reprogram your subconscious mind and increase your sense of self.

Write down your favourite daily affirmation, carry it with you and repeat the statement several times throughout the day so it can become ingrained and you can start to experience these positive feelings about yourself.

#### **Day 5: Use visualization**

In order for affirmations to gain strength, align them with your thoughts, goals and desires.

We need to match pictures that go hand-in-hand with our affirmations. That means we need to paint the picture of what we want, not of what we don’t want. The stronger the image in our mind, the better.

Try visualization to “see” yourself radiate positive self-esteem. Really feel it — and become it. [LINK: <http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/visualize>]

#### **Day 6: Know where you’re going**

Before you set sail, it’s a good idea to know where you would like to go — and get the right directions!

In order to turn our dreams into goals, we need to start setting intentions. Ask yourself, “What do I really want?”

Take control of your life by:

Deciding which direction you want to go and take aim by enlisting the help of your mind and harnessing your inner energy and the energy that surrounds you.

Align your mind with your true heart’s desire.

Get clear about your intention.

Let your heart — not fear — rule; otherwise fear will become your goal.

Be sure to write down your intention and send your brain the message that you are serious about your dreams and you believe that you will reach your destination.

## **Day 7: Give yourself unconditional love**

Self-esteem is not about being perfect.

It is about knowing that you are worthy of being accepted and loved.

The ultimate act of unconditional love is self-acceptance. So love yourself just the way you are. Love the whole you, nothing but you and all of you — not just bits and pieces. The opposite of this is conditional love, which states that you are worthy only if and when you satisfy certain conditions.

To get to unconditional love of yourself, pick one thing that you have been carrying around in your emotional baggage and seek closure by writing a forgiveness letter to yourself. Forgiveness is a process of moving through different stages until we reach acceptance. Your forgiveness letter will help you let go and heal an old wound from the past. It will also help you find the positive in the lesson and help you move away from what you lost to what you have gained.

## **Day 8: Take a stand**

If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything.

Self-esteem takes commitment — to yourself. Like any relationship, in order for your relationship with yourself to work, you need to commit, spend time and work it out. If you don't already, you need to start making choices that lead to action.

Try making yourself a priority in your life and be willing to make changes that will ensure the health of your own relationship. This could mean actually scheduling time in your calendar for “me time.”

Once you're committed to yourself, you'll learn to handle any setback with a sense of inner security and purpose.

## **Day 9: Show some respect — for yourself**

The highest form of respect is how well you listen to others — and that includes yourself.

If you put yourself down or compare yourself to others, then you're not showing yourself any respect. Rather, schedule time daily to listen to yourself and your inner voice. That could include working on affirmations, journaling or going for a walk to reconnect with nature. [LINK: <http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/journaling>]

Remember that when we pay attention and become mindful of our lives, we start to trust ourselves more — which, in turn, will lead us to make better choices.

### **Day 10: Be grateful for your journey**

Gratitude is accepting where you are right now as being part of your journey to more positive and desired outcomes.

Showing gratitude will shift your focus to the positives and will therefore generate more positives into your life. Focus on what you don't have or want, and that's what you'll get.

Every night, before going to bed, think of five things for which you are grateful. This will help you turn your focus to the positive and seek opportunities for learning and growth.

### **Day 11: Face your fears**

It is only in the face of fear that we can find our true courage.

Self-esteem is directly proportionate to how much fear you carry with you. To reduce fears, face them. This will improve your self-esteem. To have courage is to believe you can do something and then put yourself to the test. [LINK: [http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/facing\\_fears](http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/facing_fears)]

Plan to take a risk and try new things every day — even if your “new thing” is a baby step toward a bigger (and possibly riskier) goal.

### **Day 12: Make full use of mistakes**

Mistakes are powerful — in a good way.

Making mistakes is part of being human and they do not mean that you are bad or inferior. Rather, mistakes are the key to progress. You learn from them and then move on to make new mistakes.

When you receive constructive feedback, look at that criticism as a way to improve your performance or behaviour. Put into action what you've learned and then move on. If you don't, then you will probably end up repeating the same mistakes. So don't dwell on the negative; rather, focus on the positive and what you have learned.

### **Day 13: Accept compliments**

Don't sell yourself short.

Every time you reject a compliment, you are basically saying that you do not deserve the praise.

Next time someone gives you a compliment, say, “Thank you.” Get into the habit of telling yourself, “I'm accepting it.” Remember, you are worth it!

## Day 14: Take responsibility for yourself

You cannot control people. You cannot control life's circumstances. You can only control yourself.

This is where responsibility comes in.

Rather than blame people, the world, your past or your parents, choose to do something about it instead by taking charge and responding in a different way. And when it comes to taking responsibility for yourself, know that only you can change the person you are.

## Day 15: Lighten up!

Make the time to celebrate and enjoy your journey!

How many times have you heard this: "It's not the destination, it's the journey that counts"? Self-esteem is about enjoying the ride. So lighten up. But doing so requires an attitude adjustment. [LINK: <http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/laughter>]

Remember that how we choose to look at things is really up to us. For example, the next time you're about to start a fight with your partner, ask yourself, "Would I rather be happy or would I rather be right?"

Acknowledge your achievements and your gifts and allow yourself to enjoy your life journey.

## Day 16: Fuel your body

Take care of your body for it is the vessel with which you go through life.

If you keep your body in good working order, it will make your journey a lot more pleasant. Remember to:

Get good quality sleep [LINK: [http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/sleep\\_you\\_need](http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/sleep_you_need)]

Eat right [LINK: [http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/everyday\\_portion](http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/everyday_portion)]

Engage in regular physical activity [LINK: [http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/start\\_doing](http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/start_doing)]

Keeping your body healthy also means calming your mind. Research shows that as you relax, you feel more in control and can deal with life's ups and downs with positive self-esteem. Try these stress-busting exercises to calm your mind:

Inhale. Exhale. Breathe.

The 5-minute stress busting exercise Anytime, anywhere, everyday meditation techniques

## Day 17: Combine assertiveness with respectfulness

Assertiveness is one of the major components of positive self-esteem.

When dealing with difficult people, remember to treat yourself and others with respect.

Try to develop a communication style where you look for solutions to problems and find a win-win situation for yourself and the person challenging you.

It is your basic human right to protect and serve yourself. If you feel that you are being bullied or taken advantage of, then you need to stand up, say no, develop boundaries and fight back assertively.

### **Day 18: Ask for the positive**

Ask and you shall receive.

You are not alone and are not expected to do it all on your own. In many areas of our lives, it is vital to have support, so don't be afraid to ask for it.

One way to ensure you have support is to surround yourself with positive people. When you are accepted and encouraged, you feel better about yourself. Enlist the help of some true friends, family and, if needed, a therapist or support group. [LINKS in order of appearance: [http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/mental\\_health](http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/mental_health); [http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/find\\_support/](http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/find_support/)]

Dealing with the negative: Negative people like to drain your energy and sabotage your plans. If you must be with negative people, remember your job is not to change them but to change how you see them and how you deal with them. Try to steer them into a positive realm and don't let them pull you down.

### **Day 19: Plan for action!**

You cannot develop self-esteem just wishing for it.

You must take action in order for you to move out of your comfort zone and conquer your fears. This reinforces the belief you have in yourself and, in the end, you will feel better about yourself.

For example, if you want to introduce more fitness activities into your life, you must first set measurable goals so that you can keep them. This is as true for creating a plan of action to boost your self-esteem as it is for training for a 10K charity walk. [LINK: [http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/fitness\\_goals](http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/article/index/fitness_goals)]

### **Day 20: Live in "the now"**

Free yourself from the past, finish up unfinished business and learn to let go.

Even though your self-esteem had its beginning roots in your childhood, you cannot change the past nor can you change your upbringing. You were not responsible for how you were brought up. You were not responsible for your past experiences as a child.

However, today, as an adult, you can change how you feel. You can choose to get rid of old barriers from the past that keep you locked in a low self-esteem pattern. And the most vital tool you have in creating your future is the present.

Try this: Change your mantra from “Why did that happen to me in the past?” to “What can I do now?”

And to ensure your children don’t fall into a pattern of low self-esteem, try the interactive Kids and confidence: know your ABCs. [LINK to T6\_M01\_Interactive\_ABCs when it goes live]

## **Day 21: Patience will get you there**

Being patient means having the ability to stay positive while you wait.

Just like we are with children, we need to have patience for ourselves as we are always in a state of learning and growing. Patience also requires a gentle persistence and, through repetition, we can finally get to where we are going.

As you nurture your self-esteem, the real you will emerge. Be true to yourself. Be your own best friend. Learn to love and accept yourself.

Remember, you are up for the challenge!