

'A SIGNIFICANCE OF *SELF ESTEEM* IN LIFE'

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ABSTRACT

Nathaniel Branden (b.1930) “the father of the self-esteem movement”, is a renowned Canadian-American Psychotherapist and writer. He is basically known for his contribution to the psychology of self esteem. Branden especially focused on developing his own psychological theories and modes of therapy. His famous works are: The Psychology of Self Esteem (1969), The Six Pillars of Self Esteem (1994) and My Years with Ayn Rand (1999). In this essay, the researcher’s attempt is to investigate the definition of self esteem, positive (healthy) and negative self esteem, various pillars and urgent need to possess self esteem. It helps us to face the challenges in life courageously. In present era, self esteem has gained a crucial significance in complex, challenging and competitive world. Through this research paper, the researcher has made sincere efforts in removing misconceptions about self esteem. In fact, self esteem works as a spiritual guide. It directly projects the reflections of happiness in our life.

Key Words: *Self Esteem, types, pillars, spiritual guide, reflections of happiness, competent to cope, self- reinforcing, self- concept, self-trust, self-reliance, initiative, adaptiveness, destiny etc.*

INTRODUCTION

It is the general tendency of human beings to look into another's matters unnecessarily which is not at all tolerated by anyone. It is the time to ponder on the matter-why people pass judgment on others? Why they don't look at and judge themselves? Judgment impacts every moment and every aspect of our existence. Self- analysis or self -evaluation is the key through which we can understand the motive and existence of our life. Our self-evaluation is the basic area where we can behave i.e. to act and react, choose our standards and values, set our targets and goals and meet the challenges that confront us. Considering all these things, the question arises in our mind: what may be the solution over this? The only solution is Self-Esteem.

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What is Self -Esteem?

The term self esteem is defined as 'our responses to events are shaped in part by whom and what we think we are'.

Self- Esteem teaches us how to competent with the situations. It is the experience of dealing with the problems and ability to tackle the basic challenges in life. It is the key to success and happiness. Self -esteem consist of two elements:

1. Self-Efficacy:

It is the ability to think, learn, choose, and make appropriate decisions in our life.

2. Self-Respect:

It is the confidence in our right to be happy and in the belief that achievement, success, friendship, respect, love and fulfillment are appropriate to us.

The basic challenges of life include the responsibility to earn our bread and butter, to take independent care of oneself in the universe, to become competent in building human relationships, to interact with others with mutual satisfaction and ability to recover from adversity to aspirations. At practical level, self esteem is a basic human need. It is essential to normal and healthy development. It has a survival value.

Types of Self- Esteem:

1. Positive / High Self -Esteem:

The self esteem which helps for the psychological growth of a person is called as positive self esteem. It provides resistance, strength, and a capacity for regeneration. Positive self esteem teaches the spirit of optimism and helps us to experience joy. It develops the sense of self-realization and self belongingness. Therefore we should believe in ourselves. We need to identify our strengths and weaknesses. We should have a realistic confidence in our mind and value. If we feel secure within ourselves, we tend to respond appropriately to challenges and opportunities. Self-esteem empowers, energizes, motivates. It inspires us to achieve and allows us to take pleasure and pride in our achievements.

High self-esteem seeks the challenge and stimulates us to achieve desired goals. Reaching such goals nurtures good self-esteem. The more solid our self-esteem, the better equipped we are to cope with troubles that arise in our careers or in our personal life; the quicker we are to



pick ourselves up after a fall; the more energy we have to begin anew. Setbacks will not stop the most self-confident person. The higher our self-esteem, the more ambitious we tend to be, not necessarily in a career or financial sense, but in terms of what we hope to experience in life – emotionally, romantically, intellectually, creatively, and spiritually. The higher self-esteem boosts the stronger the drive to express ourselves and reflects the sense of richness within. The higher our self-esteem, the more open, honest, and appropriate our communications are likely to be, because we believe our thoughts have value and therefore we welcome rather than fear the clarity.

The higher our self-esteem, the more disposed we are to form nourishing rather than toxic relationships. Health is attracted to health. Vitality and expansiveness in others are naturally more appealing to persons of good self-esteem than are emptiness and dependency. Self-confident women and men are naturally drawn to one another. If you hope to achieve a happy relationship with someone, in you and in the other person, then learn to love yourself. This trend will motivate you to love and accept others. Without that confidence, another person's love will never be quite real or convincing to us; and in our anxiety we may find ways to undermine it.

A decent level of self-esteem teach us to value others. In fact, it removes the feeling of insecurity from our mind. Self-esteem is an intimate experience; it resides in the core of one's being. It decides our self, our feelings of love, affection, affinity, admiration and intimacy. Positive self-esteem projects the image of assurance and sense of adequacy. It foster us to fulfill the expectations of others and win in every honor. To attain "success" without attaining positive self-esteem is to be condemned to feeling like an imposter anxiously awaiting exposure. The acclaim of others does not create our self-esteem. Neither does material possessions, marriage, parenthood, sexual conquests. These things can sometimes make us feel better about ourselves temporarily, or more comfortable in particular situations.

2. Negative / Low Self- Esteem:

The self-esteem which prevents the psychological growth of a person is called as negative self-esteem. When self-esteem is low, our ability to recover and facing the problems is vanished. We become pessimistic and always tend to be influenced by the desire. Such kind of mentality creates pain and suffering. If we fail in understanding ourselves, the world will become a frightening place for us. Low self-esteem seeks the safety of the familiar and undemanding. The lower our self-esteem, the less we aspire to, and the less we are likely to achieve. Either path tends to be strengthened by self or preserved and continued by self. The lower self-esteem demands the more urgent the need to prove ourselves. The lower our self-esteem, the more muddly, evasive, and inappropriate our communications are likely to be, because of uncertainty about our own thoughts and feelings and anxiety about the listener's



response. In low self –esteem, insecure women and men are also drawn to one another and form destructive relationships. Negative self-esteem creates the sickening sense of fraudulence and emptiness. Lack of self-esteem results in defensiveness, anxiety, depression and difficulty in relationships.

Six Pillars of Self Esteem:

Branden argued that self-esteem is a human psychological need. There are six pillars of self-esteem. They are as under.

1. Living Consciously:

To live consciously means to present what we are doing, to seek to understand whatever bears on our interests, values, and goals and to be aware both of the world external to self and also to the world within.

2. Self-acceptance:

To be self-accepting is to own and experience, without denial or disowning, the reality of our thoughts, emotions and actions; to be respectful and compassionate toward ourselves even when we do not admire or enjoy some of our feelings or decisions and to refuse to be in an adversarial or rejecting relationship to ourselves.

3. Self-responsibility:

To be self-responsible is to recognize that we are the author of our choices and actions; that we must be the ultimate source of our own fulfillment. We must imbibe in our mind that no one is coming to make our life right for us, or make us happy, or give us self-esteem.

4. Self-assertiveness:

To be self-assertive is to honor our wants and needs and look for their appropriate forms of expression in reality; to live our values in the world; to be willing to be who we are and allow others to see it and to stand up for our convictions, values, and feelings.

5. Living Purposefully:

To live purposefully is to take responsibility for identifying our goals; to perform the actions that allow us to achieve them and to keep on track and moving toward their fulfillment.



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