

Establish a Sound Relationship with Your Body

The moment you arrived here on this Earth, you were given a body. The body you are given will be yours for the duration of your time here. Love it or hate it, accept it or reject it, it is the only one you will receive in this lifetime. It will be with you from the moment you draw your first breath to the last beat of your heart. Since there is a no-refund, no-exchange policy on this body, it is essential that you establish a sound relationship with it. So, the challenge here is to make peace with your body, and share its valuable lessons of acceptance and self-esteem. If you are open to all these lessons, it can impart to you valuable bits of wisdom that will guide you along your path of life.

Acceptance Acceptance is the act of embracing what life presents to you with a good attitude. Unfortunately, for many people, their body is the target for their harshest judgments and the barometer by which they measure their self-worth. They hold themselves up to an unattainable standard and berate themselves for failure of perfection. Imposing harsh judgments on your body limits the range of experiences you allow yourself to enjoy. How many times has a potentially wonderful day at the beach been spoiled by your judgments about how you look in a bathing suit? Imagine how liberating it would be to happily walk across the warm sand without feeling self-conscious.

I have a friend who dreams of learning to scuba dive, but refuses to even try, because she worries about how she would look swaddled in a tight rubber wet suit. What a pity! Though a good sense of self-acceptance would allow her, and you, to fully participate in all aspects of life, without reservation, immediately. You know you are moving in the right direction when you can accept your body exactly as it is in its present form. True acceptance comes when you can appreciate your body as it is, and no longer feel that you need to alter it to be worthy of someone's love--most especially your own. Of course, it doesn't mean that you should never endeavor to improve your body, or that you have to be resigned to what you have been given. What this does mean, however, is that you need to stop criticizing, finding fault with your body. The drive for self-improvement is completely healthy as long as it comes from a place of self-love rather than a feeling of self-contempt. Love all the parts of yourself, and if you can't love them, change them. If you can't change them, then accept them as they are.

Don't you know The Special Olympics are filled with people who have accepted their bodies despite obvious handicaps? As to your body, you can either continue to complain bitterly and immerse yourself in self-deprecation, or you can make the mental shift into acceptance. Either way, the reality remains the same. Acceptance or rejection of your body only carries weight in your mind; it has no bearing on how you actually look, so why not choose the ease of acceptance rather than the pain of rejection? The choice is yours.

Self-Esteem Self-esteem is feeling worthy and able to meet life's challenges. It is as essential as the air we breathe, and just as intangible. It comes from the depths of our core, yet it is reflected in every single outward action we take, grand or small. It is the essence from which we measure our worth and the most important building block in the foundation of our intangible. If self-esteem is a lesson that you need to learn, you will be tested over and over until you feel confident about who you are and believe in your intrinsic value. Mind you, do not measure your worth by external appearance. Looks will change and fade--ultimately being an unreliable source of self-esteem, while your true

inner self will always be with you--actually being the underlying source of self-esteem.