

Chapter One

Self-Esteem Building



On the morning of the first day of the training the Prince felt excited and nervous. He strongly believed that what he was about to learn in the next seven days would significantly alter the course of his life.

The training was held in a meadow, deep inside the forest, and consisted of twelve men. The group was diverse to include the Prince, five knights, four commoners, and two servants.

As the participants found their seats on the rocks and grass that were conveniently provided by the forest, the Wizard appeared. Standing in front of a grand oak tree, the Wizard began the session with what he felt was the most crucial tool for survival and what would be needed to build on the other tools learned in the coming days: Self-Esteem. The following is a transcription of the Wizard's presentation, written by the Prince so he could reflect upon it always.



We all struggle with self-esteem from time to time. Both internal and external influences can have a significant impact on how we view

ourselves. Sometimes we look in the mirror and don't like who we see. It is important to remember that our reflection is two dimensional—we do not see the whole picture of ourselves, yet we are the ones who judge most harshly. An exercise that I encourage you to use in building self-worth is the mirror and staff exercise.

Find a staff or a broom stick and grip it with your dominant hand. Stand in front of a mirror and declare, "I showed up. I matter!" Remember when the explorers came to the New World? Once they got off the boat they found some land and stuck a flag in it claiming it for their own. There was not anyone on that boat who was more worthy than another to have land, they merely found a piece of property and staked their claim. You, like those explorers, are as equally important as anyone else. You have the right to stake your claim on the planet. Say this affirmation every time you stand in front of the mirror, then when you leave your house to go to work, see a friend, go shop, etc., before you enter your destination stand up straight and affirm, "I showed up. I matter!"

Another effective way to work on self-esteem is to reprogram the negative messages you tell yourself on a daily basis. You may be surprised at the number of disparaging remarks you use throughout the day. A good way to track these messages is to buy a counter and every time you say something negative toward yourself click the counter and see how many add up at the end of the day. Affirmations are a useful tool for reprogramming your negative self-talk.

In Appendix A you will find a list of affirmations; please feel free to add your own. Make a copy of these affirmations and put them on your mirror. Every morning when you wake up and every night before you go to bed say these affirmations while looking at yourself in the mirror. Anyone can read anything from a piece of paper; however, to really internalize these statements you have to look at yourself in the mirror as you are saying them. Do this exercise for 45 days. Keep

in mind when you first start these you may laugh or look past yourself in the mirror, but the more you practice, you will start to notice changes in your attitude, eye contact, and body posture. You will begin to feel, act, and look more confident. When you say your affirmations use your name for a more powerful effect. For example, I Wizard am loveable and capable. I Wizard deserve good things.

A word of caution: After 20 days of saying these affirmations you may run into some roadblocks. You might start telling yourself, "This is stupid, I don't have time for this, and it's not working." What is happening is your ego has gotten in the way. Your ego hates change and will do whatever it takes to maintain the status quo, even if it's not in your best interest. It is at this point the new affirmations you have been saying for 20 days are now going up against the negative messages you have been telling yourself for a lifetime. Which side do you think will win? So when the ego takes over and you hear, "You don't deserve good things, you are not loveable, who are you kidding?" start saying the affirmations three to four times a day to push through the messages in your subconscious.

Oftentimes people will confuse their ego with their intuition. The ego, which is fear based is that loud voice in your head that never seems to quiet down. It drowns out the intuition that is a soft, gentle voice that persists when ignored. Keep in mind your intuition, unlike your ego, will never tell you to do anything that is harmful or not in your best interest.

After about 45 days you will notice these negative messages have faded away. You will genuinely believe you are loveable and you do deserve good things as well as everything else you have been affirming.

Some people struggle with affirmations as they fear they will become conceited. Conceit comes from low self-worth. People who are conceited have to let everyone know how wonderful they are because

they do not believe it themselves; they are looking for others' validation. People with self-confidence inherently know they are worthy and tend to attract others to them. Think of those you know who are confident and notice how you feel when you are around them.

Boundaries or lack thereof can play a role in self-esteem. If you are passive and allow others to walk all over you, you are letting the world know of your insignificance.

The Personal Bill of Rights list that is in Appendix B will help you learn to set appropriate boundaries. This list also goes on your mirror next to your affirmations. Say these rights to yourself twice a day for 45 days and then notice how you begin to exercise these rights.

Another word of caution: Everyone, not just you, has these rights, so in your efforts to assert your boundaries do not violate the rights of others. For example, you have the right to protest unfair treatment and criticism; however, you must do so with respect.

Finally, you cannot love what you do not know. In Appendix C you will find the self-esteem boosters worksheet. Some of the questions on this list will be similar, which will help you to identify patterns in your personality. If you do not know the answers to these questions go find out. For example, if you do not know what color looks best on you, go to your favorite department store, try on a bunch of clothes, and figure out which color you like. If you cannot own it, you cannot write it down. Asking friends and family which color is best on you is not honoring your journey of self-exploration.

People with low self-esteem tend to lose their identities, especially when their primary role is to serve or give to others to the point they don't know what they like or who they are. So if you are always catering your meals to your children's wishes and then you are asked, "What is your favorite meal?" you may be apt to reply, "My

favorite meal is macaroni and cheese." Suddenly you realize that is your children's favorite meal and you don't know what you like anymore.

Once you have completed the self-esteem booster worksheet ask yourself random questions like, "Who is my biggest influence? What are my political views? What are my beliefs and values about X?"

If you do not know who you are or if you do not like who you are, you are prone to end up in codependent and unhealthy relationships, as you will tend to attract people who don't have their own identities but will be more than happy to create yours. This creation will oftentimes go against your integrity. You may also find yourself in roles and life situations that do not make you happy or fulfilled just by default, due to lack of self-awareness.

Another way to ensure you are living in integrity to yourself is to do a non-negotiable list of your values, beliefs, and morality. This will help you to identify what you stand for and live by it. To complete this exercise, take a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle. On the left side of the page write your values, beliefs, and ethical standards. On the right side, write how you have been conducting your life to date. If what is on the left side of the page is not also written on the right, this is where you are going against your own integrity. Explore how you can make these two sides line up. If you are not honoring your own standards you may find it difficult to love yourself.

Remember, everyone has the right to be on this planet and stake their claim. Think of all the lives that would be impacted, even in subtle ways, if you never existed. You count! You matter! So honor yourself by living your truth and giving yourself the love you deserve.



Once the Wizard finished his lecture he encouraged the participants to rate their self-worth on a scale from 1 to 10 so they would have a barometer to work from. He stated tomorrow's lesson would focus on stress management skills and then he dismissed the group.

The Prince left the meadow to find a cabin for the night. Once he was settled he began to reflect on what he had learned. He felt his self-worth was at a five, as he was still trying to figure out who he was. He thought about his father and how much he respected his confidence and courage to stand up for what he believes in even if his beliefs were disagreeable to his people. The Prince, determined to identify the beliefs and values he stood for, wrote out his non-negotiable list, hoping he had inherited some of the admirable traits of his father. After completing his list the Prince looked in the mirror and declared, "I showed up. I matter!" Then he crawled into bed and drifted off into a peaceful slumber.