



Counselor Connection

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Newsletter Spotlight:

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Developing Self-Confidence

One of the most common complaints in the clinician's office is low self-esteem. However, self-esteem is a fairly new concept to the field of psychology. It can be defined as feeling worthy and valuable. Self-esteem is easily confused with being confident in oneself. Self-confidence is defined as being certain of one's skills, abilities, and self. It is important to understand the distinction, however subtle between self-esteem and self-confidence.

Typically, individuals attempt to feel better about their selves by looking to accomplishments and/or others' opinions of themselves. For example, "I will feel better when I finish my degree (or, get a new job, find a spouse)." Or, it may be more subtle, "I don't feel good when my family (or, spouse, parent) puts me down." These are all temporary solutions to finding self-esteem. Borrowing self from others can work, but may be hard on your relationships. How do you feel good about yourself despite circumstances and others?

One way to think about how one develops self-esteem is to base it on one's spiritual beliefs. That is, one's thinking about their purpose, value, and worth as a human can be answered with one's spiritual beliefs. McGee writes that, "this hunger for self-worth is God-given and can only be satisfied by Him" (p. 11). If spirituality is a resource to you, what do you believe about God, His creation, and His unique design of each human being?

Although I think both are important, thinking you are valuable is different than being sure of one self. I think it is possible to feel worthy, yet not be sure of one self in some area of one's life. I also think it is possible to be confident in one's skills on the job, yet be unsure when it comes to relationships. So, how does one develop sureness (or confidence) of self? First, each new ability or behavior will take time to develop. I think it is by being thoughtful observers of one self, identifying your part in the problem, repeating the new behavior. It will take hundreds of repetitions and interactions to develop a new habit or behavior. It is not a one time event, it is a process. You can't will yourself to be sure, it will develop and unfold.

Here's an example of how confidence can develop. If you can hold onto an objective view of yourself when you are in contact with others who don't approve, then you will be beginning a new brain connection, way of thinking, and interacting. Just because it is hard to contact your loved one who is critical of you, it doesn't mean it won't be good for you. Kids aren't the only ones that learn from their mistakes. Feeling like a failure, and learning from your mistakes is very different.

I don't think anyone is completely confident in all areas. I think humans are a mixture of their strengths and weaknesses. A person with an accurate view of them self, doesn't overemphasize either the positive or negative aspects of them self. Self-esteem is not to be confused with pride. Instead, it means you value yourself as much as others. All humans are doing their best, and are made up of strengths and weaknesses. *Life is a journey, not a destination* (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

To schedule a consultation or presentation, call 816-373-6761 (ext 2).

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Self-esteem Resources:

Differentiation of Self (Bowen Theory: <http://www.thebowencenter.org/pages/conceptds.html>)

Extraordinary Leadership: Thinking Systems, Making a Difference by Roberta Gilbert, MD

The Search for Significance by Robert McGee

Should Self-Esteem Be Esteemed? by Craig Ellison & Nicole Baker {*Christian Counseling Today*, 2001, 9 (1)}

Feedback Wanted



I want this newsletter to be relevant and useful to my readers; thus, I value your feedback. Please take 5 minutes to answer 10 short questions at the following link **before June 15th**:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=bpk328_2fH9ICXd3hdBLTDg_3d_3d

Your participation is anonymous and appreciated!

I am updating my Article page on my website to archive past newsletters. I want to know which topics and/or articles have been your favorites. Please participate in my web poll at: www.marcipayne.com (Click on "Articles")

Services Update...

I want to update you on the status of a few changes:

1. In addition to cash & check, I am accepting credit card payments (Visa, MC, Debit). I will no longer keep cards on file, so you will need to present your card at time of the appointment.
2. My Aetna provider status is currently being updated. I have been advised that I am in-network for some PPO products, but may take until mid-June to be complete.
3. The group of independent therapists I am sharing space with is now called **Bridges Counseling & Consulting**. You may notice a new sign outside, yet all other contact information is the same!

