

I'm Fabulous, Right?

Hello Fellow Women (Wait a second...aren't "fellows" men? How do we feminize this word?),

Well, hello to all of you anyway until we come up with a better alternative to "fellow"...

In this issue of my e-zine, I want to talk with you gals about that much-touted, not-so-easy to obtain, pop-psychology all-star concept; self-esteem. We all want to know:

- What is it?
- How do I get me some of that?
- How do I make it stay?

In this e-zine, I'm going to attempt to begin addressing these questions to get you thinking, questioning, and hopefully, moving forward to answering them for yourself.

In terms of what self-esteem is, I have found a few definitions by doing a web-search for the term. Here they are:

- Feelings of self-worth stemming from the individual's positive or negative beliefs about being valuable and capable
- a feeling of pride in yourself
- dignity: the quality of being worthy of esteem or respect

I'd say those are pretty good definitions and quite straightforward. If only it were as easy to HAVE self-esteem as it is to define it! I wish I could tell you that I was one of those women who treats low-self-esteem like a ridiculous practical joke and just laughs it away while I constantly feel fabulous, brilliant, beautiful, and at "the top of my game", but I'd be lying and I am really bad at lying and the guilt obtained from lying would decrease my self-esteem further, which is something I don't need at the moment.

Yes, I have moments of feeling like I can take on the world and dance around the kitchen singing "W-O-M-A-N" at the top of my lungs along with the CD, only to catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror to observe that, "wow- don't I look fabulous today?" Then I have a great day at work and really get it that I'm helping people to live better lives and I give myself the old pat on the back for a job well done...

Those are the good days...

On the bad days, I have what I call "low self-esteem attacks" wherein I temporarily forget who I am, what I do for the world, and what is good about me. And I know I'm not the only one because every day I hear stories from my clients about the exact same phenomenon. When I have positive self-esteem myself I look at these amazing women in

front of my eyes who think they're "nothing", "stupid", and "ugly" and I want to jump up out of my chair and scream, "Who told you these horrible lies about yourself?! None of it is true! You're brilliant, magnificent, and fabulous and have so much to contribute to the world!"

But, being the 'good therapist', I wipe the horror off my face and do my best to appear emotionally neutral and help them come to their own conclusions; in their own time. And I know that as a woman, it's useless to tell another woman over and over again just how great she is and why I admire her. While it's great to be reminded in our low times, we also need to work on remembering how fabulous we really are all on our own and not become dependent on hearing it from other people so much of the time.

Why is this so hard for so many of us? I have seen lots of women out there who really are convincing when they say that they don't care what other people think about them, but I'm not so sure they're being totally honest. I mean, is there one woman out there who has NEVER given a damn about what someone thought of her? If there is, I want to meet her and get her recipe for high self-esteem!

To end this brief thinking-out-loud session about women and self-esteem, I'd like to leave you with some tips on how to boost your self-esteem when you're having a "low self-esteem attack":

- write down all the negative things you're thinking about yourself on one side of a piece of paper, and on the other side, counter them with evidence to the contrary. For example, if you write, "I can't present myself professionally in public", you may counter it with, "Yes I can. I did a great job when I did the _____ presentation at work last week and people commented on how professional and organized I was."
- Call a woman who is less prone to "low self-esteem attacks" (I always call my mother!) and ask her to remind you who you are because you've temporarily forgotten...then have a good laugh and ask her how she's doing.
- When in the midst of a "L.S.E.A.", seek upliftment (is that a word?) from strong, you-go-girl women who make you feel like you can do anything and take on the world. For example, you may have a favourite female singer who tells it like it is and makes you feel powerful. I don't know about you, but every time I listen to Aretha Franklin belting out, "RESPECT" or "THINK", my self-esteem rises considerably.

- And lastly, if all else fails, PRAY!!!!!! Pray to who/whatever you believe in that has ‘higher power energy’ to help you let go of ‘playing small’ and to send you some reminders of your real self. Pray in earnest and then wait to be pleasantly surprised!

Esther Kane, MSW, RCC relocated to the Comox Valley almost three years ago from Vancouver. She is in full-time private practise as a psychotherapist in Courtenay at the Rosewall Wellness Centre.

Esther has over a decade of experience counselling women and their loved ones with a multitude of presenting problems. Her main focus is helping women to become free of barriers which keep them stuck so that they can become all that they dream of being.

To book a session or to set up a free 15-minute phone consultation, call Esther at (250) 338-1800. Or e-mail her at: esther@estherkane.com. You can check out her detailed website at: www.estherkane.com

Her books can be found at:

www.guidebooktowomanhood.com

www.dumpthatchump.com