



Being positive



Positive self-statements

Positive self-statements are beliefs about you that are positive and true. They are good aspects of yourself that you know to be true, but may often forget to remind yourself about. It is very easy to believe the negative things you hear about yourself. Think about it. When was the last time you accepted a compliment gracefully? If you have, that's great and I congratulate you on your excellent progress. However, most people are not very good at taking compliments. For instance, how many times have you

been given a complement such as "you look fantastic today" and then responded with "No I don't" or "you look better than me"?

We are taught from a young age to accept criticism, but not to accept compliments. Children are conditioned to think that accepting compliments is 'big headed'. It is a ridiculous notion. However, in Australia, in particular, people are taught to respect the down to earth 'Aussie' who's laid back and relaxed, without being 'full of him/herself'. What you need to realise is that there is a difference between being happy with your achievements and being 'big headed' about yourself. If you were to observe children playing you'd notice that those who brag about the positive aspects of themselves, or their families, are often not well liked by other children and are considered spoilt. Who knows where these types of thoughts come from, however, one would suspect it's ingrained into people from a young age – at a terrible price for your self-esteem.

We have to reverse these childhood behaviour and attitude. This is possible through the use of 'positive self statements'. Use the exercise below to help you improve your ability to accept complements. Being able to accept compliments takes you one step further towards liking yourself and achieving your goals.

Exercise

In front of a mirror, practice accepting a compliment. Try to do this once a day. It's probably best if you do it in private, because you don't want people thinking you're talking to the mirror. Imagine that someone is telling you how nice you look today. Repeat out loud "Thank-you". Just do this a few times during your practice sessions. Once you feel confident about this response see if you can practice on a real person. If you can ask someone you know to help you practice, by paying you a compliment, that's great, but if you can't you can tape record the positive compliments, or simply keep practicing with the mirror until someone really gives you a compliment, in which case you can respond with "thank-you". It is important to also practice giving other people compliments. This will definitely increase your self-esteem. It doesn't take much effort and it makes you feel great too. In addition, the more you compliment others, the more likely they are to compliment you back. Use the examples below as a guide:

COMPLIMENT RESPONSE

- "You look nice today" "Thank-you"
- "I love what you are wearing"..... "I really like it too"
- "Your hair looks great" "I'm so happy with it too"
- "You are so nice" "It's really great of you to say that"
- "I love the way you do that" "Your opinion means a lot to me, thanks"
- "You are so smart" "Thanks, I think the same about you too"

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