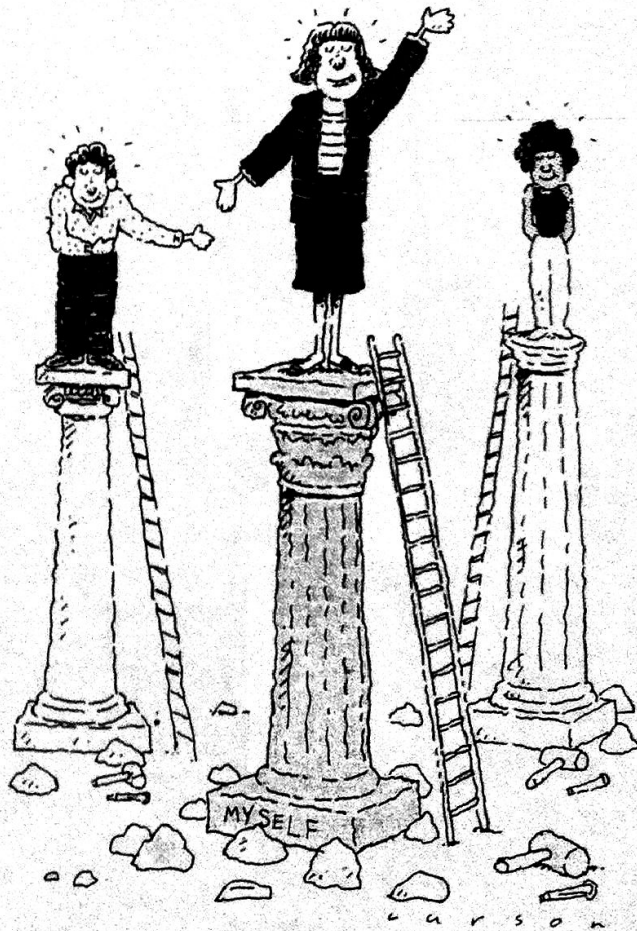




CELEBRATE YOURSELF

*Six Steps To Building
Your Self-Esteem*

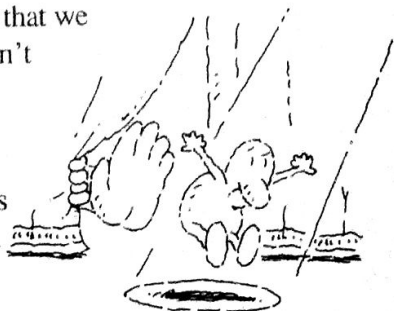


STEP 1: SPOT YOUR SELF-ATTACKS

Force the Nitpicker Into the Light

Because the Nitpicker often repeats the same put-downs day after day, we often wind up disapproving of ourselves without even realizing it. This lets the Nitpicker work in the dark—just the way a Nitpicker likes. It knows that we can't attack it if we don't see it at work.

But you don't have to play by the Nitpicker's rules. Instead, you can shine a light on the Nitpicker and make it



squirm. How? By putting the Nitpicker's attacks into words that bring those attacks out in the open. Once you do this, you'll find the put-downs are full of tricks, lies, and exaggerations.

Think for a minute about what you disapprove of about yourself. For some of us, it may be that we don't match up to others in a way that's important to us—in sports, say, or in grades, or in making money. Or it might be that a person or a group has rejected us. Maybe we got turned down for a school or team or job. For others, it may be that we're different. Maybe we belong to a minority group or are physically challenged. Or it may be that we don't like our nose or our hair or our weight. It may be that we've gotten criticized by parents, teachers, or bosses. Perhaps we don't have a skill that most people have.

If you find lots of things you don't approve of about yourself, choose just the *five* that bother you most. (If you're like most of us, you may find more than five. That just shows you have an active Nitpicker!)

Now write those five criticisms on a separate sheet of paper or in the space at the end of this section.

This way you really bring them out in the open—just where your Nitpicker doesn't want them to be.

(Note: There are other places in this booklet where you'll also be encouraged to write down on paper what's in your head. However, you can still get the benefit of the steps in this booklet by doing them in your head. The choice is yours.)



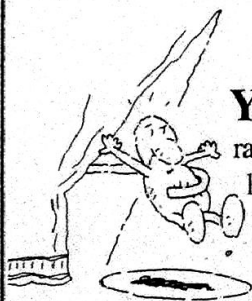
Keep your distance as you look over the self-attacks on your list. Be gentle with yourself. For the time being, hold off judging them or yourself. Instead, place them outside yourself.

My Five Biggest Self-Criticisms

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

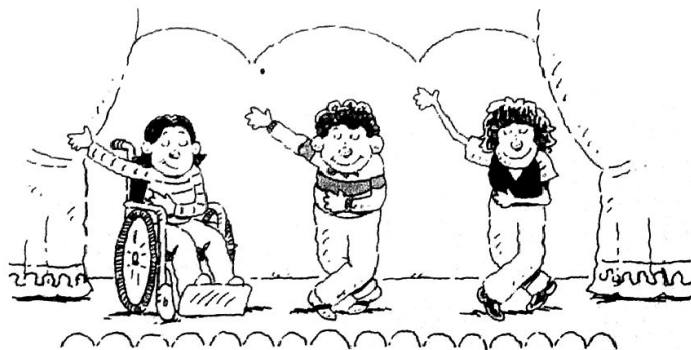
STEP 2: SEE WHAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL

Take a 'Nitpicker-Free' Look at Yourself



You are a one-time event in the human race. There has never been a person quite like you before. And nobody who comes after you will ever be able to offer the human race exactly what you can. You're *unique*. For that reason alone, each of us is a wonder, a marvel of creation.

Your uniqueness comes from the special combination of physical features, personality, talents, skills, habits, achievements, thoughts, and feelings that only you bring to the world. That combination is what we call the *self*. This *self* is not something you earned. It's an outright gift to you at birth—like a flowering plant *given* to you to enjoy and nurture. And share.



Appreciating your good points and loving yourself are different from being immodest, stuck-up, or self-centered. Vain, self-centered people are caught up in loving a fake self—one that can't feel real and important unless it has someone to look down on.

True self-love doesn't call for looking down your nose at other people. Everyone else is just as special—and so, just as lovable—as you are. It's healthy for you to love your own specialness. In fact, you can't care for others *unless* you first love that specialness, which is yourself. The more you love and delight in yourself in this healthy way, the more likely you are to make that self into the best that it can be and to create your life more positively.

If you're like most of us, you can give a lot more healthy love to yourself than you do. But to love the real YOU, you have to see it. The way to see it is to become more aware of what makes you valuable.

To see your real self more clearly, make a list of all the good things about you—a "*Celebration List*." (In making this list, it might help to picture yourself through the eyes of a good friend. What would your friend point to as the good things about you?)

To get you started, below is a "sampler" list of good qualities. You may have a number of them. In your head or on the page, check off the ones you have. But don't stop there. Add to the list. Use the blank lines under each category to do this. If you run out of space, great! Let the list overflow onto a sheet of your own paper.

A CELEBRATION LIST

✓ Good Things About Me

My Character. I'm:

- ☐ sensitive
- ☐ determined
- ☐ honest
- ☐ caring
- ☐ helpful
- ☐ responsible
- ☐ outgoing
- ☐ independent
- ☐ warm-hearted
- ☐ creative
- ☐ playful
- ☐ a good friend
- ☐ funny
- ☐ mature
- ☐ a dreamer
- ☐ athletic

- ☐ artistic
- ☐ organized
- ☐ bright
- ☐ persistent
- ☐ a leader
- ☐ awesome

And I'm also:

My Talents. I'm good at:

- ☐ working with my hands
- ☐ organizing events
- ☐ thinking fast
- ☐ fixing things
- ☐ sports (Name which ones below.)

- ☐ cooking
- ☐ writing
- ☐ telling jokes
- ☐ drawing

- ☐ making things
- ☐ making people laugh
- ☐ singing
- ☐ tough jobs
- ☐ learning new things
- ☐ playing trivia
- ☐ playing an instrument
- ☐ dancing
- ☐ dressing creatively
- ☐ babysitting
- ☐ working for a cause
- ☐ caring for others
- ☐ understanding people



- ☐ taking on responsibility
- ☐ meeting new people
- ☐ dealing with little kids
- ☐ working with older people

And I'm also good at:

My Body. I like my:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> smile | <input type="checkbox"/> arms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hair | <input type="checkbox"/> nose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> teeth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> legs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> voice | <input type="checkbox"/> hands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> strength | <input type="checkbox"/> gracefulness |

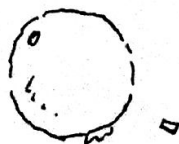
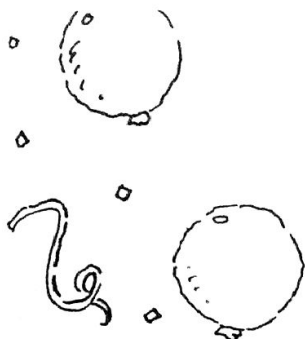
And my:

My Achievements. I'm proud of:

- ☐ something special I made. Write it here:

- ☐ a tough job I did well. Write it here:

- ☐ a goal I set and reached. Write it here:



- ☐ an award I won. Write it here:

- ☐ a good habit I've developed. Write it here:

- ☐ a grade I got. Write it here:

- ☐ a compliment I got for something I did. Write it here: _____

- ☐ something I did to help somebody. Write it here: _____

I'm also proud of these other achievements:

STEP 3: ATTACK YOUR SELF-ATTACKS

Call the Nitpicker's Bluff

Your Celebration List will make your Nitpicker nervous. That's because the more you become aware of what's good about you, the more you can *love* yourself. And people who love themselves are not as likely to believe what they hear from their Nitpickers.

So now—with your Celebration List to back you up—turn the tables on the Nitpicker by *picking* on the Nitpicker. Pull its criticisms apart. Suppose it launches an attack that goes something like this:

THE NITPICKER'S ATTACK: "See how you got a *big 'NO!'* when you asked for that date today? It proves *nobody* likes you. You're rotten."

YOUR COUNTERATTACK: "Wait a minute! Let's look at the facts."

- 1) Was the "No" *really* big? Or was it just a plain "No, thanks"—nothing more?
- 2) Did you *make* it big because you let the person who gave it become too important in your mind? A "No" from one person—no matter how "important"—can never reduce the value of another person.
- 3) Even if the "No" was big, did it come from the *whole world*? Of course not. Only one person was speaking. So it doesn't follow that *nobody* likes you. Others may say "Yes."
- 4) And no matter what kind of "No" it was, your unique *self* is still there, as good as ever. The core of you, the *self*, is never rotten.

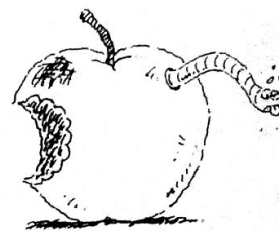
What does all this show about a typical Nitpicker attack? That it's full of tricks, lies, and exaggerations. In other words, your mischievous little Nitpicker is a phony. The way to disarm a phony is to call its bluff. Then its attack falls apart. Here are some tricks, lies, and exaggerations that the Nitpicker often uses:



1. "That Was Totally Awful."—Claiming a "no"—or any negative response from someone—was *worse* than it really was. Take another look at any "fact" the Nitpicker tries to pass off on you. It may be blown way out of proportion.

2. "See? Nobody Likes You."—Claiming that if one person or group turns you down, the whole world turns you down. That's an exaggeration.

3. "You're Rotten."—Claiming that if you fail at one thing, it wipes out everything else that's good about you. Another version of this one is "You're Not Perfect." Of course, you're not.



Nobody is, but there are still plenty of fine, imperfect people in the world—including you.

4. "You Always Do It Wrong."—Claiming that if you goofed up once at something, you goof up *all* the time—when in fact you do things right *most* of the time. Another form of this attack is: "You Never Do Anything Right."

5. "See What They're Thinking? They Don't Approve of You."—Believing that you can read other people's minds. Do you have X-ray vision? The frown you see on someone's face may not be aimed at you. Maybe that person just has a headache or is having a bad day.

6. "The Big Lie."—Claiming the opposite of what's true about you. For instance, some nice looking people are told constantly by their Nitpickers that they are unattractive or fat. They wind up believing the lie.

Except for "The Big Lie," all these criticisms start out with real facts. But then the Nitpicker sneaks in. Soon you're seeing the facts in false, exaggerated ways. When you uncover the false beliefs that have created insecurity, you can begin to let go of them and discover and accept your true self. But now that you're aware of the Nitpicker's methods,

you don't have to be fooled by these tricks. You can spot them and call the Nitpicker's bluff.

Recall the list of your five biggest self-criticisms you made in Step 1. In each criticism, see if you can spot one or more of the Nitpicker's six tricks. In the space below, you can write key words from each criticism, and next to it, you can write the tricks you see.

My Five Biggest Self-Criticisms	The Nitpicker's Tricks Hidden in Each
1. _____	_____

2. _____	_____

3. _____	_____

4. _____	_____

5. _____	_____

As you see the trick in any one of these put-downs, ask yourself, "Do I really have to believe that criticism anymore?" Chances are you'll tone it down or even dump it. As you do, you give yourself more room to feel good about yourself.

You can use this strategy again and again. 1) Watch for the Nitpicker's put-downs. 2) Examine them

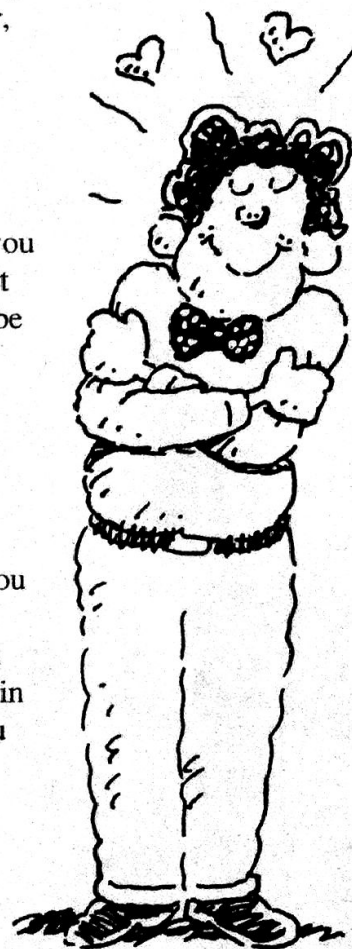
for tricks. 3) Call its bluff. 4) Cut them down to size. Gradually, you'll be listening less and less to that phony mischief-maker.

What About Our Real Flaws? Calling the Nitpicker's bluff doesn't mean refusing to see anything about ourselves that is not perfect. That would be unreal. We all have imperfections. It's honest and healthy to admit them. Once we do, there's a positive, healthy way to deal with them in three steps.

- 1) If a shortcoming *really is* there, admit it.
- 2) Put the shortcoming into perspective. Don't exaggerate it. And don't let it block out the wonderful *self* that's still there in spite of it.
- 3) Decide whether you can correct the shortcoming or not. If you have a hot temper, you can learn to control it. But if you're shorter or taller than you'd like, you can't change that. So you *accept* being short or tall—and maybe even learn to like your height.

Those three steps boil down to one thing: *Self-Acceptance*. You work with what you've got. You don't apologize for the YOU that you were born with. Instead, you glow in it, warts and all. And you work to make yourself better wherever you can.

There's a well-known prayer that many people



find helpful in accepting themselves and their situations in life. It's called the "Serenity Prayer." It goes like this:

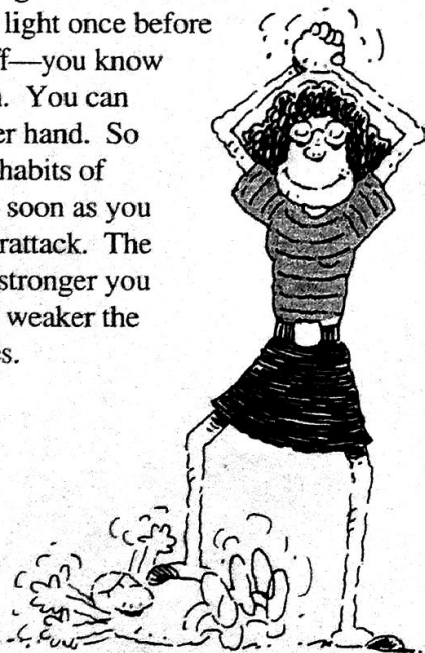
*Grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,*

*The courage to change the
things I can,*

*And the wisdom to know
the difference.*

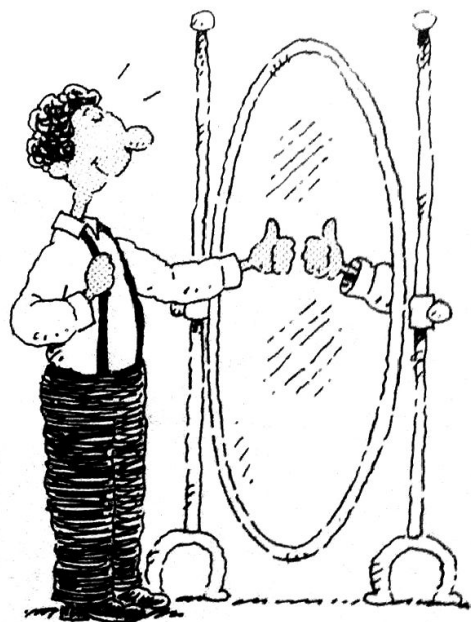
Serenity is peace of mind. Try using the Serenity Prayer when you're having trouble accepting yourself and your life.

The Return of the Nitpicker. Calling a Nitpicker's bluff sends it into retreat. Using the Serenity Prayer helps deal with what's really there after the Nitpicker has been sent packing. Still, sooner or later, the Nitpicker will return and try again to feed you its tricks. After all, a Nitpicker without an ear to whisper into is an unemployed Nitpicker. But there's no need to be thrown by a return of the Nitpicker. It happens to all of us. The difference now is that—having shoved the Nitpicker into the light once before and called its bluff—you know how to do it again. You can now take the upper hand. So keep alert for old habits of self-criticism. As soon as you spot them, counterattack. The more you do, the stronger you become—and the weaker the Nitpicker becomes.



STEP 4: MAKE LOVING YOURSELF A HABIT

*Celebrate Yourself
Every Day*



To get the most out of the Celebration List that you've made, don't think of it as something you draw up once and throw away. Instead, make it the start of a whole new way of seeing yourself. A better way.

You can do this by *using* the Celebration List to fill your head each day with what is really good about yourself. The more you do, the less room there will be for the Nitpicker's put-downs. One way to draw on your Celebration List is to use the *Celebrate Yourself Calendar* on the back cover of this booklet.

Here's how it works. Notice the statement at the top of the days of the week on the calendar: "Today I will celebrate this gift about myself." Below that, notice there is a box for each day of the week, but no numbers for the dates. That's so you can use the calendar any time of the year. In the box for each day, write a different item from your Celebration List.

Then check your calendar each day. Celebrate the good point for that day at least once during the day. You might look in the mirror and give yourself a "thumbs up" or a hug as you think about that gift. An even better way is to *use* the gift, if it's the kind of thing you can put into action. For instance, if you wrote "my great smile," greet someone with it. If you wrote "I'm a caring person," give a hand or a friendly ear to someone who needs it. If you wrote "I'm good at fixing things," fix something.

The Gifts of Self in You. Notice that the calendar refers to the good things about you as "gifts." That's a good way to think about them. Because the good things that make up yourself can be *shared*. They make the world a bit brighter. Thinking of them this way also stops you from getting stuck-up about them—the opposite of celebrating them.

If you'd like to use the calendar for a month or more, make several photocopies of the blank calendar page. Or you may prefer to use the calendar for only a week or just on certain days of the week. The point is to find a good way to make appreciating yourself an *everyday* habit. If you decide to use the calendar, take a few minutes now, and fill out the whole thing.

STEP 5: GO FOR THE GOAL

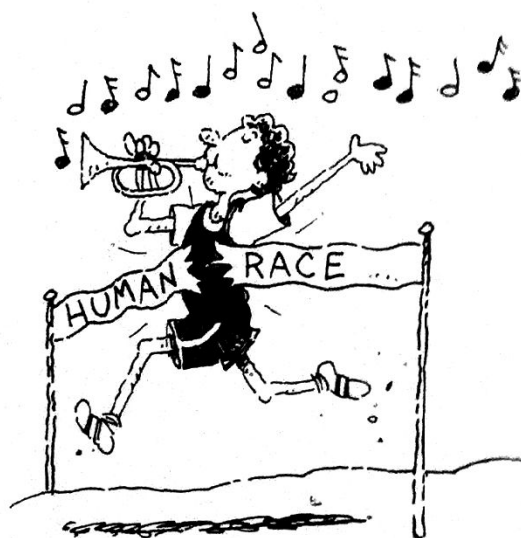
Create a Stream of New Achievements

Think for a moment of two things that you've done in your life that made you most proud. If it helps you focus on them, write them down here:

1. _____
2. _____

Chances are, doing those things demanded that you draw on the best parts of yourself—talents or personality traits or brains or muscle. In the process, your real *self* was coming to the surface. And so you felt great.

Well, why not have feelings like that more often? They're very healthy. Just do what you did before: Take on a goal you care about, stick with it, and achieve it. Achievement builds momentum.



If you like this idea, put it into action. At the start of each month, pick out something challenging to do during that month. Don't make the challenge too big (if it's too big, you may be less likely to stay with it). Make it just big enough that you can be honestly proud, even in a small way, about achieving it. It's also a good idea to make it something that you're good at and like to do.

For example, if you're good at music, the challenge you pick might be to learn to play a tough piece. Or if you like sports, it might be to break through a limit—maybe to run a half mile more than you thought you could. The point is not that you have to dazzle the world. The point is just to use your real *self* a little more fully. And then enjoy the healthy glow.

When you meet that challenge, replace it with a new one. With each challenge you meet, your *self* grows.

If this idea appeals to you, take a minute now to choose a challenge. If you like, write it down below.

The challenge I want to meet this month is to:

What If I Fail? Welcome to the human race. Nobody bats 1,000. Nobody succeeds 100 percent of the time. You can't ever win if you don't play. Life isn't about never failing. Life is about growing. And people who grow most are the ones who learn from failure. Their first question is always: "What could I do differently next time?" They always set a next time, too. They don't waste time listening to their Nitpicker. Instead, they go back and try again. Because the real growing is in the trying.



STEP 6: LEND A HAND TO OTHERS

Love Grows When You Give It Away

Going after a goal is not the only way to bring out the best in yourself. Another way—just as important—is to bring the love inside yourself to other people. Love of yourself is very different from selfishness, which ignores the needs of others.

Think about how you felt when you did something loving for someone. Maybe it was saving for a special gift that made someone very happy. You felt happy when you saw the happiness in the other person's face as the gift was opened. In other

words, you grew bigger inside by giving away a little of yourself in the form of a gift.

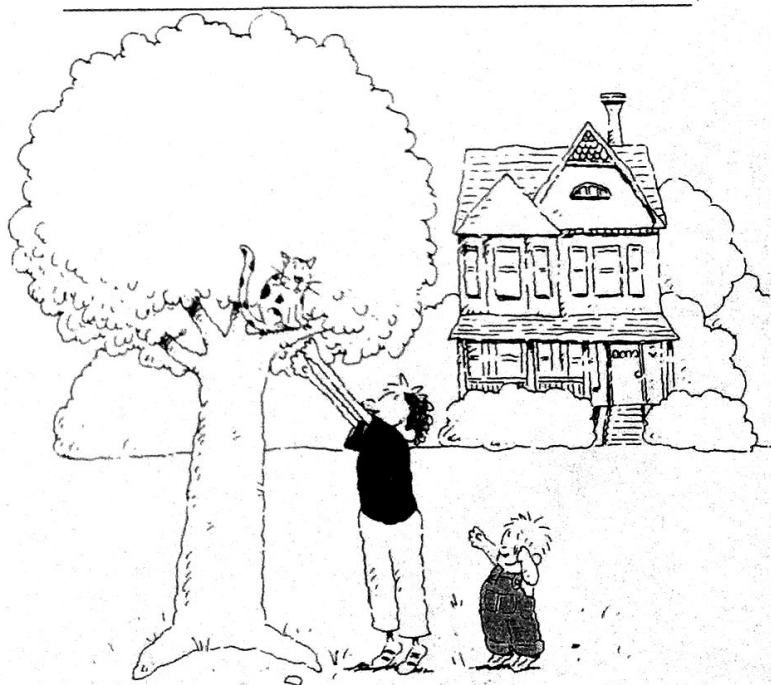
A gift is just one way. Helping the people in your life when they need help, listening to them when they may be hurting, are often the best gifts of all. And that applies to helping strangers—for instance, by volunteering in a hospital or a homeless shelter.

Think of the ways that you might extend your love and yourself in your everyday life. Make a short list—in the space below—of three things that you could do in the next month to extend yourself to others. Then choose one. And go for it. Add others as time goes on. You may well find that the love you give comes back to you. In the process, you will grow in loving yourself.

Three ways I could help people in the next month:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The one I plan to put into action now:



YOU CAN DO IT!

We hope the steps in this booklet help you learn to love yourself better and to build your self-esteem. These steps are only one of many possible ways to build self-esteem. They are not a quick-fix formula because building self-esteem is a lifelong process. They are no substitute for the experience, information, and guidance that doctors and other trained mental health professionals can offer people who have difficult problems. In such cases, to ask for help is never a sign of weakness. It's plain good sense. Young people can look for that help from a school counselor or a favorite teacher or parents or a trusted older person who can either help directly or help find an expert in mental health. Adults who need help can start with a trusted friend, a religious leader, or a mental health professional.

But the good news for all of us is that—on our own or with help from good people—we *can* get more in touch with and love ourselves.

No matter where you are on the journey to knowing and loving yourself, the further you move in it, the fuller and happier living can be. So be yourself. And enjoy yourself. It's the surest way to love yourself and to be loved by others. Good luck! You can do it!



I CELEBRATE MYSELF!

*Today I Celebrate This
Gift About Myself*



SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

Confidence

Confidence results from the comparison an athlete makes between the goal and their ability. The athlete will have self-confidence if they believe they can achieve their goal. **"You only achieve what you believe"**

When an athlete has self confidence they will tend to: persevere even when things are not going to plan, show enthusiasm, be positive in their approach and take their share of the responsibility in success and fail.

To improve their self confidence, an athlete can use mental imagery to:

- visualise previous good performance to remind them of the look and feel
- imagine various scenarios and how they will cope with them