

# Self Esteem (Value)

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## What is it?

From ***Facing Codependence*** by Pia Mellody, Andrea Miller, & J. Keith Miller

- Healthy self-esteem is the internal experience of one's own preciousness and value as a person
  - Comes from inside
  - Moves outward into relationships
  - Doesn't change based on behavior or surroundings

## What is the issue?

From ***Facing Codependence*** by Pia Mellody, Andrea Miller, & J. Keith Miller

- Codependents have difficulty with self-esteem at one or both extremes
  - Low self-esteem
    - I think I am worth less than others
    - I don't measure up
  - Arrogant
    - I think I am superior to others
    - I have learned to find faults in others, making them inferior to me
- Both of these types of self-esteem result in what is called "Other-Esteem"
  - I get my value (sense of worth) from external things
    - It is based on my "human doing" or in the opinions and behavior of other people
    - Some examples
      - How I look
      - How much money I make
      - What I know
      - What kind of car I drive
      - What kind of job I have
      - How well my children behave
      - How attractive or powerful my spouse is
      - How well I perform

# What does it look like?

From ***Facing Codependence*** by Pia Mellody, Andrea Miller, & J. Keith Miller

- Healthy Self-Esteem
  - Self-Esteem, Reality (Value)
    - I am enough
    - I Matter
    - I am perfectly imperfect
  - Boundaries, Reality, Moderation (Power)
    - I have enough control
    - I can influence my environment
    - I am in control of myself
  - Self-Care (Abundance)
    - I have enough
    - I can survive
    - I have joy in my life
- Unhealthy Self-Esteem
  - Self-Esteem, Reality (Worthless)
    - Prestige
    - Other-esteem
    - I am never enough
  - Boundaries, Reality, Moderation (Helpless)
    - Power over others
    - Negative control
    - I never have enough control
  - Self-Care (Hopeless)
    - Money and possessions
    - Hoarding
    - I never have enough

# Understanding the Drama Triangle

- The Drama Triangle (The 3 faces of victim)
  - Generates shame
    - through internal interaction or external communication keeps the shame messages going
  - Victim
    - A twisted version of the desire to be innocent and vulnerable
    - Comes from an unconscious need to feel important
    - Becoming helpless
    - Deny their problem solving abilities and potential for self-generated value
    - Making themselves helpless becomes the primary way of avoiding failure
    - Comes across as less than
    - The Persecutor stage looks like resentment
    - The Rescue stage is done from a less than position
  - Rescuer
    - A twisted version of the desire to nurture and protect
    - Comes from an unconscious need to feel important
    - Taking care of others is how the Rescuer connects or feels worth
    - Deny their needs
    - Often operates out of the desire to eventually be taken care of
    - Making themselves indispensable becomes a primary way of avoiding abandonment
    - Comes across as better than
    - The Victim stage looks like depression and martyrdom
    - The Persecutor stage looks like withdrawing
  - Persecutor
    - A twisted version of the desire to protect and provide
    - Uses anger to hide their feelings of worthlessness
    - Comes from the unconscious need to feel important
    - Blaming others is how the Persecutor feels worth
    - Deny their weaknesses
    - Must be right
    - Making themselves right becomes the primary way of avoiding powerlessness
    - Comes across as better than
    - The Victim stage is used to blame other for the way they act
    - The Rescue stage is also painful and done in anger
  - Rescuer and Persecutor are opposite extremes of victim
  - All roles eventually lead back to victim
  - Many families only communicate in this way
  - We all have a starting position
  - We can act out this drama triangle in our everyday relations
  - We can act out this drama triangle internally within our thoughts
    - We can trap ourselves with dishonest and dysfunctional internal dialogue

## How do I get out of a drama triangle?

- Become Aware of the drama triangle
- Take responsibility for myself (own my reality)
  - Allow myself to have my feelings
  - Allow other to have their feelings
- Be willing to let go of the drama produced
  - Set boundaries

## How do I fix unhealthy self-esteem?

- Start with Reality
  - Learn what you are responsible for
    - Thoughts
    - Feelings
    - Choices
    - Limits
    - Behavior
- Contain your Reality with Boundaries
  - Where do my responsibilities end and someone else's start?
  - What limits do I want to place on my thoughts
- Understand your wants and needs with Self Care
  - Find out what my wants and needs are
  - Find out what wants and needs I want to share with others to allow them to meet those needs
- Set goals for moderation
  - Look at my Reality and value moderate responses
  - Give myself permission to miss the mark of moderation but ask myself "How do I want to do it different next time?"
- Look for feelings of self worth and value generated by the previous steps
  - Validate what you have done and celebrate the little wins along with the big ones
  - Trust the process that as you work on yourself, you will begin to see yourself as more and more valuable