

“Probably the most important decision you will ever make, will be the decision to love yourself.”

Dr. Nathaniel Branden

## What is Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem has to do with interiors. It is “how I feel about me - my reputation with ME.” It is impossible for one to have high self-esteem when one is not living congruent with their belief system. Self-esteem deals with personal integrity, values, attitudes, and self-love.

True self-esteem is based on a feeling one is worthy of love and happiness. It comes from a knowledge of who you really are and of being at peace with who that person is. Dr. Nathaniel Branden, a psychologist who spent his life studying self-esteem, believes that positive self-esteem is the immune system of the spirit, helping an individual to face life’s problems and bounce back from adversity.

## Acquiring a Healthy Self-Esteem

Acquiring a healthy self-esteem starts during infancy and is affected by a myriad of experiences and decisions. As a child, when standard of treatment is low, one may think, “Something must be wrong with me or they wouldn’t treat me this way.” The child then internalizes an image built on this exterior information which affects the child’s self-esteem. However, “if someone mistreats me, it does not identify me, it identifies them.”

Having a healthy regard for self, one’s talents, and abilities is a necessity. It is not uncommon to come from a background or experience where one feels less than adequate in some areas. It is important to learn to be accepting of oneself, here and now. This does not mean there is no need for improvement, it simply means that “I am beautiful as I am. I am; not my hair, my face, my clothes, or my possessions.”

## Avoid Comparison

It is important not to base our self-worth on others. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf said, “God is [...] fully aware that the people you think are perfect are not. And yet we spend so much time and energy comparing ourselves to others—usually our weaknesses to their strengths. This drives us to create expectations for ourselves that are impossible to meet. As a result, we never celebrate our good efforts because they seem to be less than what someone else does.” Instead of comparing, focus on who you are and the wonderful things you have to offer this world.

I am me, a beautiful unique individual, a special edition of ONE!



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Self-esteem cannot be separated from the choices we make. Every day we make choices about what we will think, feel, and do. All of these choices affect our self-esteem. To help you define your self-esteem, take the Women's Services & Resources Be You 10 Day Challenge. For more information visit [wsr.byu.edu/be-you](http://wsr.byu.edu/be-you)*

*“Truth, Lies, and Your Self-Worth” by Mindy Raye Friedman from the January 2014 New Era*

*“The Reflection in the Water” by Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf from a 2009 CES Fireside*

*“Who You Are: A Message to All Women” by Jon Jorgenson*

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3326 Wilkinson  
Student Center  
(801) 422-4877  
[wsr@byu.edu](mailto:wsr@byu.edu)

 [@byuwsr](https://www.instagram.com/byuwsr)

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