

A Practical Guide for Growing Self-Esteem and Confidence

MY
SELF-ESTEEM
JOURNEY



Etienying Akpanusong

A Practical Guide for Growing Self-Esteem and Confidence

My
Self-Esteem
Journey

By

Etienying Akpanusong

Copyright © 2020 Etiening Akpanusong
First published by Etiquette with Eti

Published by;
Etiquette with Eti
www.etiquette.ng
Instagram: @etiquettewitheti
Facebook: @etiquettewitheti

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any methods, electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the written permission of the author.

Meet the Author

Etienying Akpanusong is an Engineer, serial entrepreneur and Etiquette coach, with years of experience helping people live a happier and more fulfilled life.

As an Etiquette and Image expert, she has been trained and certified by the British School of Etiquette and the International Association of Professions Career College (IAP).

Through her etiquette trainings, she has helped children, teenagers, adults, professionals, and members of corporate organisations attain personal refitment and corporate image rebranding.

For more information about her and her work, please visit www.etiquette.ng

CONTENTS

Introduction

Chapter One:

1. What Exactly is Self-Esteem?
2. My Story
3. The Enemy called Low Self-esteem

Chapter Two:

1. Symptoms of Low Self-Esteem
2. Identify some Causes of Low Self-Esteem
3. Steps to Building Your Self-Esteem
4. Self-Esteem and Your Confidence Journey

Chapter Three:

1. Confident Behaviours vs Diffident Behaviour
2. Tips for a more Confident You
3. The Arrogance Factor
4. Conclusion: Go Forth Confidently!

Introduction

Do you know that lack of confidence and low self-esteem account for why seventy percent of people fail in life? Think about that for a moment.

A timid person is constantly walking over opportunities, while a less qualified, yet confident person is grabbing those opportunities just because they believe they can.

“All you need in life is

Confidence and Ignorance,

then success is sure” – Mark Twain

As controversial as the above quote sounds, many people have succeeded in life by virtue of ignorance and confidence. That is the reason why the richest are not always necessarily the smartest, the most intelligent or most skilled. But confidence leads them to seek out opportunities, and then find a way out. They believe they deserve an opportunity despite their incompetence. When they get the opportunities, they're confident enough to ask for help and get the work done.

CHAPTER ONE

What Exactly is Self Esteem?

Self-esteem refers to one's overall sense of personal value and self-worth. It simply means how much love, appreciation and regard you have for yourself. So, when you hold yourself in high esteem, this implies that you have a deep appreciation and regard for you.

People with good self-esteem generally feel positive about themselves, and about life. This makes them much more resilient, and better able to cope with life's ups and downs.

Those with poor self-esteem, however, are often much more critical of themselves. They find it harder to bounce back from challenges and setbacks.

The art of growing your self-esteem starts with self-love. It involves a wide range of beliefs about yourself: the way you feel about your right to love and respect, the way you appraise your looks, how well you accept your emotions, and how much favour, goodness or rudeness you believe you are entitled to.

How much love and regard do you have for yourself?

My Self-Esteem Journey

If you don't think you are likeable or worthy of love, nothing anyone says will help you because you've already set a barrier for yourself with self-doubt, self-rejection and self-hate.

Self-esteem is accepting yourself with all your flaws knowing that there is absolutely no one on the planet who is flawless.

You see, those you admire the most either on TV or in real life still have a certain level of insecurity they are dealing with. That is why your favourite celebrities who seem to have everything going for them still visit the cosmetic surgeons to have their bodies fixed. But they choose to love and accept themselves despite their imperfections.

Good self-esteem is knowing that it's great if everyone loves you, but you're still great if no one does.

It is accepting that you are good enough even when you know that you aren't the best.

It lies in being comfortable as the best and most flamboyantly dressed person, yet equally comfortable being the least dressed.

Certain factors can influence your self-esteem. Things like your mindset, disabilities or physical limitations, and even potential illnesses. But the greatest factor that influences self-esteem is overly critical or negative comments from those we love or hold in high esteem.

MY STORY

I remember when my teacher in Secondary School called me a *Stock Fish* in a classroom of over 80 students. I was eleven years old and that experience was an effective move towards killing my self-esteem.

This was a Religious Studies teacher who should have been a good example of morals and values, yet she inflicted me with pains that lasted years.

What was my offence? I sat beside a boy who was eating a chocolate bar during her class. Rather than concentrate on the offender, she said the boy was already healthy enough and didn't need chocolates, it should be for the "Stock fish" beside him, pointing at me. Of course, the class had a good laugh on my account.

It was not until a few years later – in 2001 to be precise – when Agbani Darego became Miss World, and everyone started calling me "Agbani" and "Miss World" that I realised that being skinny wasn't necessarily a bad thing and that as a matter of fact, it was a prerequisite for winning a beauty pageant.

Despite that, it was still very difficult for me to accept and love myself the way I was. I couldn't even share this painful experience with anyone either because, I imagined they would have immediately blamed me for "not liking food".

Matters got worse when a guy broke up with me with the excuse that he had always admired Beyoncé's kind of beauty, and that he preferred light skinned girls who were "well endowed". I could not comprehend the disrespect, the insensitivity. I cried. It was painful, and

My Self-Esteem Journey

the worst part of it was that he was nothing compared to Jay-Z. I promise you – that was the last time anyone ever broke up with me.

Update is that he is still calling and texting me more than a decade later. And in his words, he never knew I would grow into such an “attractive and charming woman” My reply: “your loss”.

Today I look back in disbelief at myself like “Really? You gave such a person a chance for a minute? You must have been very generous and insecure.”

I’m so proud of myself and how I have evolved. I realise now that I must have really hated myself in the past without even knowing it.

The Enemy called Low Self-esteem

“Confidence is the most beautiful thing you can possess” - Sabrina Carpenter

If you have a healthy self-esteem, you will most likely be confident and have a positive outlook to life. Whereas if you have low self-esteem, you may find yourself struggling with confidence, and find it difficult to express your needs.

Low self-esteem is a silent killer and I totally understand the struggle because I've been there. But unlike me, you don't need to spend fifteen years or more struggling with your self-esteem. Know that you are the shark in the ocean and the solution lies within.

CHAPTER TWO

Symptoms and Effects of Low Self-Esteem

How do you know that you have a self-esteem problem, or simply put: low self-esteem?

The interesting thing about low self-esteem is the fact that just like COVID-19, it's no respecter of class, social status or even age. The difference is that unlike COVID-19, younger people are more vulnerable to the low self-esteem virus.

You may have low self-esteem, if:

- ✓ You're too hostile and/or have a negative outlook to life.
- ✓ You're too quick to criticise, yet too sensitive to criticism.
- ✓ You're socially withdrawn.
- ✓ You tolerate abuse /You have trouble saying 'No'.
- ✓ You're too apologetic.
- ✓ You're always seeking validation.
- ✓ You're too self-conscious.
- ✓ You have difficulty expressing your needs and opinions.
- ✓ You have trouble accepting compliments and positive feedback.
- ✓ You give up too easily.
- ✓ You don't want to be seen or spotted in the crowd. You are always procrastinating.

My Self-Esteem Journey

- ✓ You put other people's needs before your own, even to your own detriment.
- ✓ You always settle for less than you know you deserve.
- ✓ You get depressed often.
- ✓ You focus on your weaknesses.
- ✓ You struggle with confidence.

Let's Identify the Causes of Low Self-Esteem

In building your self-esteem, what you think about yourself is what matters, not what others think or say about you. That is because what others think about you or say to you which hurts you, only affirms what you think about yourself. The reason why it gets in and influences you is because it finds homogeneity within you. The unkind words nurture the seed within you which blossoms negatively and kills your self-esteem.

What could be making you insecure?

No child is born with low self-esteem, it is something that gradually seeps into the mind as they begin to experience life. Every baby is very confident. They open their arms to you if they like you and they refuse to be touched by you if they're not comfortable with you. Whether a baby is friendly or reserved, they don't seek your validation to know that they are loveable. If you don't reach out to them, other people will. When they need their mothers, they cry out in confidence knowing that they'll get the attention they need. Their attitude shows that they know that they're worthy of attention. You were not born with low self-esteem, thus,

in order to fix the problem, like any other problem you must be able to first find the root cause.

Is it something someone or people said to you like in my own case?

There are many reasons why someone might have low self-esteem. However, it often starts in childhood, when a child constantly feels unable to live up to expectations. It can also be the result of adult experiences such as a difficult relationship, either personal or at work.

1. Self-esteem and Upbringing

In many homes, the primary method of correction is through the use of corporal punishment. Some parents and guardians not only cane their children and wards, they also deprive them of basic needs at the slightest mistake and some go so far as to torture them with frequent punishment.

Some people develop a low self-esteem after years of having their parents constantly comparing them to a sibling or a neighbour. "Can't you be outspoken like your sister?" "Why can't you come first like Mr So-and-so's son, does he have two heads?"

These kinds of behaviour, if sustained over time can lead many children to feel that their parents lack the necessary love and affection for them. Children who grow up this way can be so damaged without knowing, and then they begin to also bring others down, all because they are insecure within them, and they are searching for

ways to fill up the void that they have carried within them, from childhood.

The bulk of work lies with parents here. They need to understand that every child is special and gifted differently, and it is their responsibility to find their child's own unique gift and make it shine.

What to do if you may have suffered low self-esteem as a result of such faulty upbringing?

Accept the fact that you have self-esteem issues. Then, look for a counsellor to help you overcome that low self-esteem. If you can't find a counsellor, or can't afford one, you can start your recovery process by discussing with a trusted friend, who will not judge you, but encourage you to be the best you can be. Other steps will be outlined in subsequent pages.

2. Peer Pressure, Bullying and Self-esteem:

When a child is constantly bullied or intimidated, either through being bossed around, or through the use of threats, or actual violence, it could leave a scar on the psyche. This is particularly worse when the child is unable to count on any support from home. Although this kind of low self-esteem can be remedied, in some cases it can continue till adulthood.

Then there is the case of undue peer pressure, or wanting to "feel among" - especially in the early teenage years. An unnecessary wanting to feel among can lead to a feeling that one is not good enough, or a sense of inner lack that the person attempts to cover up with material

things, and unnecessary flamboyance. It is important for a young person to be taught to appreciate what he/she has. And to also learn that worth is not measured by material wealth, or the kind of 'clique' that one belongs to.

3. Domestic Violence, Abuse and Self-esteem

Victims of domestic violence, and persons who experience mental or physical abuse over time often have low self-esteem.

Most abusers usually start out with mental or psychological abuse – this is the most damaging form of abuse, where the abuser spends time belittling the abused and making them feel bad about themselves, thus steadily corroding or reducing their sense of self-worth. In other cases, it could also be that the victim's low self-esteem made them more vulnerable to being abused because they did not feel that they were worthy of more.

If you are, or were this person, do not worry, there is hope for you. The first step towards reclaiming your self-esteem is to believe that you are valuable. You are important!

4. Life Experiences and Self-esteem

Have you recently experienced loss or some other traumatic experience?

My Self-Esteem Journey

People grieve in different ways and to various degrees of intensity, and we all process trauma differently too. Depending on the nature of the loss, and the circumstances surrounding the event, a person may suddenly feel like they are less worthy than the next person. Not to worry, this is the time to pick up your pieces and regain your self-esteem. No one deserves as much love, care, opportunity and applause as much as you do.

Whatever the cause(s) of your low self-esteem, you need to take a moment to figure it out, accept it as part of your past, then decide to deal with it, in order to move ahead.

Accept your flaws, love you and elevate yourself to the level you deserve. Did I hear you ask how you can love and value yourself when you think you have so many flaws?

The next section gives answers to this.

Steps to Building Your Self-Esteem

Building your self-esteem is no quick fix, you must be willing to put in the required work if you must have sustainable results.

Below are some powerful tips which will take you from 0% to 100% in your journey to a high self-esteem - if applied religiously.

1. Embrace your flaws

My Self-Esteem Journey

Your scars don't define you. Your body doesn't define you. Your attitude does.

Haven't you seen beauty pageants where the most beautiful contestants did not win the crown? Haven't you seen project defences where the smartest students didn't get the highest score? Or job interviews where the most brilliant applicants were turned down?

What do all these winners have in common? What makes them attractive and most appealing despite their flaws and shortcomings? Your guess is as good as mine. It's the confidence they exude.

The first step is to worry less about people liking you and start liking and accepting yourself just as you are.

In the words of Tyrion Lannister, a character in the famous Game of Thrones movie, "when you've accepted your flaws, no one can use them against you".

A popular saying goes "You can't shame the shameless". How about we rephrase that by saying, "You can't intimidate those with good self-esteem".

2. Focus on your strengths

Your life is never that bad that you can see nothing good about yourself. There's something that makes you different and that is what makes you special. Is it something as little as your smile? Is it how you speak, your eloquence, or use of unique grammatical expressions? Is it your dress sense? Or your intellectual prowess, your special talent – that thing that only you can do best? Whatever little good thing it is that people compliment about you, it's time to focus on it. Your focus

will ultimately redirect everyone else's attention to your strengths as well.

Years ago, I identified one of my strong points as speech making and capitalised on it whenever there was an opportunity to make a presentation. I used that to 'fool' so many people into believing I was very smart and intelligent even when I was always struggling with the thought that I was not good enough. I would use this charm on my lecturers and direct their focus to what I really wanted them to hear, all the lectures would be impressed. I was never one of the most intelligent students in class, but I would leave everyone feeling "she's very smart", and it worked all the time. There's always something within which you can shine with; focus on that.

3. Build Positive Relationships - and Avoid Negative Ones

While still struggling with your self-esteem, avoid people with negative vibes. The energy drainers, those who only want to remind you of how much better than you they're doing, how your shape isn't perfect, how they've got what it takes to woo the girl of your dreams. By the time you've totally accepted your flaws, these opinions wouldn't even matter because remember, "you can't shame the shameless". If you don't have such seeds within you, their hurtful words will find nothing to nurture.

4. Apply Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Sometimes, people bully you, body-shame you, or try to make you feel bad about yourself because subconsciously, they see in you what they lack in themselves and they project their insecurities on you so that they can see you feel as terrible as they do inside. Despite their personal emotional struggles, these set of people need more help than we can ever imagine. So, every time you allow their negativity get to you, they feel a sense of achievement, which is however, temporary. Embracing this understanding is Emotional Intelligence - a refreshing and liberating reality!

The knowledge of EQ makes you empathetic rather than offended, knowing that they're only projecting their insecurities on you. Always remember that you remind them of their flaws and pity them; empathy is what they really need.

5. Fix your insecurities

“Insecurity kills all

that is beautiful” - Demi Lovato

After identifying the things that make you insecure and cause your low self-esteem, it's time to fix them. And what do I mean by fix your insecurities after I have asked you to accept your flaws? You see, it all lies in the attitude you put into dealing with these insecurities. Picture the attitude of a loving mother helping her child with its weaknesses. She speaks the language of love, of encouragement, of hope and support. She encourages the child to do better in whatever the child may be struggling

My Self-Esteem Journey

with. Not out of hatred but in genuine love. She knows that this child isn't perfect but deserves all the love, care and attention from her in order to get better. She reaches out for help from professionals who have the requisite skill to help her child get better. She is her child's cheerleader and is constantly motivating the child every step of the way by reminding them of not how badly they are doing, but how far they've come. This, my friends, is the attitude you need towards your very own self.

So, what are your insecurities and what can be done to make you feel better?

When I finally accepted that being skinny wasn't a curse and as a matter of fact, I was stunningly attractive in my skinny body, I saw my body naturally aligning in the right places. The multivitamins I was taking started influencing both my weight and my skin, then I realised the power of my mind.

If your insecurities are physical, find a solution to them. Do you think you are too skinny? Talk to a dietician.

Do you think your skin is a mess? Talk to an aesthetician or a dermatologist

You think you are over-weight, talk to a dietician, a fitness trainer and so on.

Is it your dress sense that gives you concern? Hire a stylist or consult style magazines and sites.

You don't like your makeup? Get a makeup artist.

But remember that the process will only be interesting, fun and ultimately effective when you've

My Self-Esteem Journey

changed your attitude toward yourself by loving and accepting yourself just the way you are.

If your insecurities come from your inability to excel in business, workplace or personal goals then maybe you need to invest in some targeted training.

6. Give yourself a break

You don't have to be perfect every hour of every day. You don't even have to feel good about yourself all the time.

You are not the only one who sometimes feels a bit down or finds it harder to believe in yourself.

What to do? Don't be too hard on yourself. Be kind to yourself, and not too critical.

Avoid criticising yourself to others, because this can reinforce your negative views – and it can also give other people a (possibly false) negative opinion of you.

Instead, you can boost your self-esteem by giving 'you' a treat each time you succeed at something that was particularly difficult, or when you manage to get through a tough day.

7. Become more assertive and learn to say No

A person with low self-esteem often has difficulty standing up for him or herself. Such a person will find it hard to say no to others.

Imagine having all the workload in the office, or even school work or house chores dumped on you –

simply because you can't say NO. That's a perfect recipe for disaster. It is similar to allowing yourself get walked over like a doormat. No one should allow that happen to them.

Believe that you have a right to your opinion. You have a right to rest, and you have a right to disagree with a popular opinion, without disrespecting or insulting anyone. When you learn to be assertive, whether it's by taking a stand or calmly saying no, you automatically improve your self-esteem, and people around you will subliminally get the memo: You are not to be walked over or toyed with.

8. Improve your physical health

It is said that good health is the greatest wealth. And from experience, I can assert that it is easier to feel good about yourself when you are fit and healthy.

A person with low self-esteem might often neglect their health, since they feel deep down that they don't 'deserve' to be looked after.

Here's what to do: try some exercise, eat healthy, and ensure you get 6 -8 hours of sleep daily. Find time to relax and/catch some fun - you deserve that and much more. The idea behind this is to do something that you really want to do, not what others expect of you. Simple lifestyle changes like the ones highlighted here can make all the difference in your overall outlook.

9. Take on a new challenge

One way to improve self-esteem is to try a challenge or challenging situation. By this, I don't mean that you should do everything all by yourself, that would be impractical. Part of the challenge might be to seek help when you need it – brace yourself to try something that you know will be difficult to achieve.

When you succeed, you prove to yourself that you can achieve something. This is progress and it challenges the doubts and negative beliefs you have about yourself; it will therefore improve your self-esteem.

10. List your accomplishments

It is very unlikely that you will complete your journey from low to high self-esteem overnight. It is more probable that you conquer the fears and doubts in small steps. And you need to celebrate these small steps!

Make a mental note of all the things that you have accomplished, then write them down. Be sure to add to this list, everything you have done that you feel proud of; I mean every little thing you've done well.

Keep this list handy for the times when you need a reminder of your ability to get things done and to do them well.

11. Do or learn something creative

Creative tasks are a great way to put the flow back into your life. Creativity stimulates the brain, so the more you use it, the more the benefits you will reap. Draw the skyline nearby, or an attractive building or interesting scenery. Pull out your old guitar, write a story or poem, do some knitting, crochet or needlework.

Don't know any of these? No problem, learn something, take a dance class or sign up for a community theatre production. When you challenge yourself with trying something new, it helps you even more.

12. Set boundaries

One very good way to up your self-esteem is to create personal boundaries, and ensure that absolutely no one is allowed to cross them. When you set your boundaries you also need to decide how you wish to respond when people cross them. A boundary may be something as commonplace as deciding that you will not allow a neighbour use your resources indiscriminately- e.g. use your washing machine at odd hours, eat your food at each meal. Maintaining firm boundaries means not allowing others to control you, or manipulate you.

13. Find your purpose

Every single person is born with special gift and abilities. Nick Vujicic's book: **Life Without Limits** gives a lot of insights, and it is a classic confirmation that nobody is without purpose. If a man who was born with no limbs at all has found a way to become an influential motivational speaker, what then is your excuse? Your excuses are limitations that you create. They are fictional therefore, not real.

When you find purpose in a chosen craft or skill and gradually achieve results, you will naturally feel empowered to take over the world. Think of what you

like, what comes easy to you, what gives you a sense of achievement, and start to work on it.

14. Help someone

Offer your talents, skills and abilities to help others who need it. You can do this by giving someone direct assistance, by sharing helpful resources or simply teaching someone something they want to learn. When you put yourself in a position to offer something you do well as a gift to someone else you will begin to feel a deeper sense of self-worth – simply because you are able to add value to another person. In a short time, you can even become a mentor.

If you can be there for someone who needs your guidance, your leadership and your support, you will earn their respect and gratitude. In addition: watching them progress and rise higher with your help will boost your self-esteem. Giving of yourself can only add to you.

15. Welcome failure as part of growth

It is a common response to scold and criticise yourself when you've failed or made a mistake. But if you can adjust your thinking to understand that failure is an opportunity to learn, and that it can be a necessary moment in your growth curve, this can help you maintain the right perspective in life.

More importantly, remember that failure means you're making an effort.

16. Always remain a student

My Self-Esteem Journey

In this self-esteem journey you need to see yourself as a life-long learner. Approach everything that you do with a student's mentality. This kind of mentality is what Zen Buddhists call *Shoshin* or the "beginner's mind". You must be open, eager, unbiased and willing to learn. These traits will help you on your self-esteem journey.

Self-Esteem and Your Confidence Journey

Confidence is basically about how much faith you have in yourself to perform any task or activity. It means believing in yourself and your abilities.

Self-confidence is the ability to interact successfully with the world around you. You can build it over time, with a defined set of skills and achievements that you can rely on. Building your self-confidence is like arming yourself with necessary weapons to face the world with; and win!

Confident people are not different from you and me; they simply invest in themselves and believe in their abilities.

Confidence shows in the ability to eat with beggars and dine with kings without feeling out of place in either of those situations.

It is knowing that you belong in the front row but you're equally comfortable sitting at the last row because you know that the seat doesn't define you.

When you begin to build your self-esteem, it will become easier for you to exude confidence, wherever you are. Imagine being that person whom others look up to, even in times of uncertainty.

Remember: Confidence lies in finding balance. It is not a destination, but a state of mind.

CHAPTER THREE

Confident Behaviour vs Diffident Behaviour

Now, we will take a look at some behaviours which can often be related to or derive from confidence and others which are often associated with the lack of confidence (we will call this self-doubt or diffidence).

Confident Behaviour	Diffident Behaviour (Associated with Low Self-Confidence)
Doing what you believe to be right, even if others mock or criticize you for it.	Limiting your behavior based on what other people think.

Being willing to take risks and to go the extra mile to achieve better things.

Staying in your comfort zone, fearing failure, and avoiding risk.

Confident Behaviour	Diffident Behaviour (Associated with Low Self-Confidence)
Admitting your mistakes, and learning from them.	Working hard to cover up mistakes, and hoping that you can fix the problem before anyone notices.
Waiting for others to congratulate you on your accomplishments.	Extolling your own virtues as often as possible, and to as many people as possible.
Accepting compliments graciously. E.g.: "Thanks, I really worked hard on that prospectus. I'm pleased you recognize my efforts."	Dismissing compliments offhandedly. E.g.: "Oh, that prospectus was nothing really, anyone could have done it."

Tips for a More Confident You

Confident people inspire confidence in other people: their co-workers, their bosses, their customers, listeners, and their friends. You are on your way to success when you are able to gain the confidence of others. I will show you how you can do this.

A potential investor might not want to embark on a project with you if you are visibly nervous, or constantly apologizing while pitching your business idea. On the other hand, they are more likely to be persuaded by you if you hold your head high, answer questions confidently, speak clearly, and readily admit when you don't know something.

The following tips can help take your confidence several notches up:

1. Maintain the right gestures and body language

Keep your head upright and level. Don't lean too far forward or backward, as this can make you look aggressive. And if you're presenting, use open hand gestures. Spread your hands apart, with your palms facing slightly toward your audience. This indicates a willingness to communicate and to share ideas. Keep your upper arms close to your body.

2. Learn to make and maintain eye contact

This is one simple yet difficult task which is most important in expressing confidence. There are many reasons why this may be difficult for some people, and this takes us back to the earlier point I made, which was: identifying the origin of your low self-esteem. Maybe you were intimidated and abused a lot in your childhood as happens in many African homes, maybe you're just shy, or maybe you were hurt after being accosted for doing something wrong. Whatever your reason may be, it's time to move on and gain back your confidence.

The ability to maintain eye contact alone speaks volumes, especially while making a first impression. The eyes they say are the window to the soul. A person who is afraid of making eye contact can be wrongly perceived as insincere, so this is a very important tip to master, especially while engaging in business discussions. You want to look confident, certain and transparent, so you should not mind being seen.

Here's a small exercise- bring out your phones and record yourself while looking down, around or at anything but the lens of your camera. Make another video while looking into the lens of the camera and then compare both videos. The latter simply looks more captivating. This is an exercise you can practice daily until it becomes normal to you.

3. Master your craft

“Knowledge is power” - Sir Francis Bacon

A fresh air of pride comes with knowing that you are a master in your chosen craft. When you know you are good, nothing will tell you otherwise, so invest time in mastering your craft. Read more on it, spend more time than you previously did practicing, and remember, you are doing this with the right attitude which is: You are good but you want to be better because you have what it takes to be the best.

4. Dress impeccably

“Looking good is good business” - Bertram, John E

Everyone has experienced that moment when they felt all eyes were on them just because of how good they looked. A person with a good sense of style is attractive and perceived to be a person of class. If you aren't sure of your style sense, you can engage the services of a professional stylist to ensure that you step out at that special event looking your best.

5. Embrace Vulnerability

“Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change” Dr. Brene Brown.

Pride, they say, comes before fall, does that mean it's bad to be proud, No. I think it's the stupid kind of pride which comes with arrogance.

I remember when I was once invited to give a training on dining Etiquette. Prior to that occasion, I had had many years of training children, families, groups and individuals on general etiquette, but on this occasion, I had in my audience an immediate past president of the International Association of Agricultural Funds (IFAD). A personality with such level of exposure who has dined at the finest places around the world, with kings and queens on different continents. I was almost intimidated. I experienced a sudden fear that I would not get something right - and this was based on his pedigree.

As the smart lady that I am, I embraced the fact that I was afraid, and before my intimidation could be noticed by him or other members of the audience, I started off by recognising his presence and declaring how honoured I was to have him in my audience. I went on to ask if he was ready to correct me if I got something wrong, the audience found my request hilarious. What they didn't know was that I had just politely asked "my would-be judge" to become a member of my team and when he said "Yes" I felt empowered to go ahead with the training confidently. I executed the training excellently like the superstar that I am.

Allowing people to lower their expectations of me has always given me the opportunity to "wow" them. Remember, I was already an expert on the craft I was training on. But intimidation would have ruined my presentation if I did not embrace my vulnerability.

6. Exude Elegance

"An elegant person is always

My Self-Esteem Journey

attractive” - Etienying Akpanusong

Knowing the basic principles of Etiquette and applying the soft skills of social grace is going to give you an aura of gracefulness and alluring charm. It's a whole new level of confidence when you are sure how to act and react in different situations. Taking a course on Etiquette will empower you with the skill set to exude elegance and confidence in every situation.

The Arrogance Factor

“Confidence is great but over confidence will drown you in the sea of reality” - Norain

Can Confidence be too much?

The answer to this is YES. There is a lot of truth and sense in the wise saying that ‘Too much of any good thing is bad’.

When you begin to believe that you are impeccable and beyond growth or improvement, that is the moment you'll need to put your confidence level in check. Over-confidence can often come across as arrogance, and this is almost as bad as lack of confidence.

You need just the right amount of confidence, so, remember to embrace vulnerability and remember to always remain a student.

When you think you're too good to make mistakes that could just be when you'll ultimately embarrass yourself. As much as you are confident in your abilities, always know that you can get better. Be humbled by the fact that someone you're not aware of may know more than you do. Speak with conviction but acknowledge that there's always room to learn more.

CONCLUSION

Go Forth in Confidence

Now that you have been armed with the right ammunition to boost your self-esteem as well as your confidence, this is the time to strike out and achieve all those dreams you were once afraid to even attempt, before now. Go forth in confidence and you will reap bountiful rewards.

Don't forget to help others attain the height, after you have risen. Pay it forward!

THE END