

# Miniwaukan News

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## Self-Esteem and Work Habits



Most social scientists agree that a person's self-esteem is formed early in life and is shaped by a variety of factors. One such factor is a person's role and status in society. (Other factors include but are not limited to culture, religion, other people, school experiences, work experiences, and illness, disability or injury.) It is also known that negative experiences in a person's life can lower the self-esteem of people who normally have good self-esteem. And those with low self-esteem can take steps to improve their self-esteem.

Your level of self-esteem is determined in part by the treatment you received in your home environment, those who you associated with while growing up, and the school you attended. If your experiences in these areas have been generally positive more than likely you have good self-esteem. On the other hand, if you received mostly negative feedback in these areas, if you were often criticized, teased, ridiculed or devalued by others, then you're more likely to have thought that you were not good enough and you probably struggle with poor self-esteem.



**Ethical Issues on Indian Reservations for Head Start staff will take place on July 17, 2009 also at Cankdeska Cikana Community College. Thank you for being part of the solution !**

## **Self-esteem & work habits** (continued from page 1)

Self-esteem is really your overall opinion of yourself — how you judge your worth as a person. According to the Mayo clinic staff, "People with healthy self-esteem feel good about themselves and see themselves as worthwhile. People with low self-esteem, on the other hand, put little value on their opinions and ideas and constantly think that they aren't "good enough."(Retrieved from the Internet June 23, 2009 <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/self-esteem/MH00128> )

Do you know people who are afraid to do things, especially in public, who seem to be ashamed of who they are, and who are constantly putting themselves down? Well those people probably have low **self-esteem**. And I am sure you know some people who are the opposite, people who view of themselves as better than others. These individuals have an unrealistically positive view of themselves, they feel they are better than others; there are prideful, arrogant, self-indulgent and believe they deserve special privileges or whatever they want.

These individuals have an **overly high self-esteem**. Finally, I am sure you also know people who have a balanced, honest view of them. They recognize their strengths as well their weaknesses. They recognize there basic worth as individuals yet they don't think they are better or worse than others. These people have a **healthy self-esteem**.

I see a significant difference in the self-esteem of Indians who are 40 years and older than those who are under 40 years of age. Those who are older than 40 years of age appear to have low self-esteem due to experiences in their childhood. These include their perceived "role and status" in society, their home environment (extreme poverty) and their (bad) school experiences.

Then there are Indians who are under 40 years of age who grew up in a home where their parents were relatively successful and who appear to have what social scientists would call an unrealistically positive view of themselves. They feel they are better or worth more than others.

## Self-esteem & work habits (continued from page 2)

Let me talk about those Indians **over 40 years of age** with low self-esteem. They take offence to everything. When you try to tell them they should show up for work every day and on time they say you are picking on them. It is common to hear them criticizing and making cruel comments about another tribal worker's perceived flaws and weaknesses although they have similar flaws and weakness. They have a hard time accepting compliments yet they seek constant reassurance from others. When they hear positive comments another worker receives they are quick to point out that person's flaws and weaknesses.

There are many tribal members **under 40 years of age** who suffer from an overly high self-esteem. Unfortunately, these tribal members make very poor workers also due to a narcissistic self-image of themselves. They grew up with all the benefits their parents did not have. They probably did not receive the proper parental training and as a result are prideful and arrogant. They have a hard time accepting and following orders. I jokingly say they should become lawyers because they find fault with everyone and everything around them. They often become self-indulgent and believe they deserve special privileges or whatever they want. This leads to using tribal programs' resources for their own personal use, ignoring policies and procedures, and making up their own rules for their workplace as they along. And they often regard themselves much smarter than other tribal members. This narcissistic self-image characterized by arrogance, pride and boastfulness makes them troublesome workers and hateful board members.

Remember Joe, The Tribal Worker? In my introductory course, Introduction to Ethical Issues on Indian Reservations, and on the Spirit Lake Consulting forum. My fictional character Joe The Tribal Worker is a composite of tribal members over 40 years of age who have low esteem and tribal workers under the age of 40 who have a narcissistic self-image of themselves. Truth be known I did not have to look very far or very hard in both age groups to find individuals to use as a model for my Joe character – who knows, I might have used you!

Now if I tell Joe The Tribal Worker he is living an unhappy life due to his self-esteem issues he would think I am crazy. After all, he would point out, just look at how "successful" my life is. And Joe would be right if you agree with his definition of success.

Wonder  
what your  
neighbors  
are  
thinking?

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## Self-esteem & work habits (continued from page 3)

A full day's pay for a half-day's work, who is more successful than that, Joe would argue?

However, if Joe really viewed himself as successful and if he is truly happy with himself he would not envy Susie Sainte. And unless Joe The Tribal Worker is truly evil, which I doubt, he is prone to painful feelings such as hopelessness, loneliness, worthlessness, guilt and shame. He may not have trouble expressing his needs and opinions confidently but there is a higher probability they are falsehoods. His relationships are shaky and based on deceit and deception. He has trouble relating to Susie who is an honest hard worker, he is overly eager to please others, mainly tribal leaders, at other people's expense, and he will stay in unhealthy relationships. My point is, Joe may appear to "have it made" but he pays a terrible price for his self-esteem issues.

Let's talk about Susie Sainte who appears to have high self-esteem and how high self-esteem improves all aspects of her life. Susie is open to learning and feedback from others, which increases her ability to meet and solve challenges. She has confidence in her abilities and tends to do well at school or work. She feels secure and worthwhile and has generally positive relationships with others.

Susie sets realistic standards for herself and others. This is why she does not criticize others, or deliberately seek out flaws or weaknesses in them. She weathers stress and setbacks better. For instance, she will show up for work although she may be facing a crisis that would make Joe stay home for a week. This is because she is more confident and resilient when facing unexpected challenges, disappointments or illnesses. Finally, due to her positive outlook on life she is less likely to develop certain mental health conditions, such as eating disorders, addictions, depression and anxiety disorders. Her relationships with those close to her— parents, siblings, peers, teachers and other important adults — are especially powerful.

Self-esteem affects every facet of life, especially the workplace. Therefore having a healthy, realistic view of yourself is important if you are to be a good, honest worker. Everyone desires to be liked and respected and to be happy at work. Having healthy self-esteem doesn't mean that you've turned into a conceited "I'm better than you" type of worker — it means you value yourself.

A person always has to be on guard, especially at work, when they feel down about themselves. During this time you will lack confidence to do difficult assignments therefore, your quality of work and at times, even your physical appearance will suffer.

Not everyone is aware they suffer from either low self-esteem or overly high self-esteem. To find out if you do you need learn about yourself. Self-honesty is critical to finding out if you suffer from low or overly high self-esteem.

## Self-esteem & work habits (continued from page 4)

An honest talk with yourself will have the biggest impact on self-esteem. Ask yourself these questions: What do you want out of life? Do you care how people perceive you? What are your ideas of "right and wrong"? Are you comfortable with your life? Do you think you can do better? Remember, "...how you measure success and failure in life affects your sense of self-worth. A series of perceived successes can lead to feelings of positive self-worth and high self-esteem. A series of perceived failures can make you feel inferior and reduce your self-esteem."

Believe me having a healthy self esteem is worth it. You will become a much better worker, spouse, companion, sibling, relative and parent – good luck.

## Don't just dream about a better future – be part of one!

We CAN change reservations for the better ! Be part of the solution .

The pilot study for the on-line course, Introduction to Ethical Issues on Indian Reservations is COMPLETED. We are sorry but there are no more complimentary registrations available. You can schedule a training session on-site or take the course on-line for \$50 per person. Volume discounts are available. To schedule a session on site. email Dr. Erich Longie [Ericstev@spiritleakeconsulting.com](mailto:Ericstev@spiritleakeconsulting.com) or call (701) 351-2175



### TESTERS WANTED !

The pilot study for the Courageous and Ethical Managers course will be beginning soon. We will be accepting 60 participants as part of this FREE trial. To add either yourself or your organization to the waiting list, email Dr. Erich Longie [Ericstev@spiritleakeconsulting.com](mailto:Ericstev@spiritleakeconsulting.com) or call (701) 351-2175 .

If you would just like to sign up for the on-line version of the Courageous and Ethical Managers course, please click on the linke below and you will be emailed a username and password when the pilot version comes on line.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2fv5APMDLcdjNfrID023w1Q\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2fv5APMDLcdjNfrID023w1Q_3d_3d)

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