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# SELF-ESTEEM

SIMPLE STEPS  
TO BUILD YOUR  
CONFIDENCE

**Gael Lindenfield**

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

Gael Lindenfield

**Self Esteem: Simple Steps  
to Build Your Confidence**

«HarperCollins»

## **Lindenfield G.**

Self Esteem: Simple Steps to Build Your Confidence /  
G. Lindenfield — «HarperCollins»,

The new updated and fully revised edition of this bestselling title. Poor self-esteem can sabotage relationships and careers, cause self-destructive behaviour and can hold us back from achieving our full potential. In this new updated and fully revised edition of this bestselling title Lindenfield helps us to recover from a deep-seated hurt and cope with knocks to our pride. The beginnings of poor self-esteem usually lie far back in our childhood, but our confidence can easily be knocked in our adult life by criticism and trauma. A practical program that can make us feel more energized and self-reliant than ever before; and ultimately, overcome our doubts and fears to achieve self-fulfilment.

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# SELF-ESTEEM

**Gael Lindenfield**



*To my little brother John, whom I now look up to with much love and admiration.*

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## Acknowledgements

Many thanks again to all the many participants on my courses who have shared so honestly and worked so courageously to rebuild their damaged self-esteem.

Thanks also to James and Marie for sharing some of their enviable knowledge about cars.

Thanks to Ari Badaines for unknowingly sowing one of the seeds which led to the development of my thinking around this subject and also for being such an inspirational and creative psychodrama trainer. I would also add that he deserves considerable credit for helping me to rescue my own flagging self-esteem on several crucial occasions.

Many, many thanks to my family (and Marie) for tolerating the tension and feeding me during the final fraught stages of producing this book.

Finally, as ever, my husband Stuart has been a wonderful support. Not only does he willingly give up his increasingly precious free time to edit on demand but he also acts as a stimulating sounding board for my ideas even when they emerge at the most inconvenient times!

## Note to 2014 Edition

It is twenty years since I wrote this book. During this time I have had wonderful feedback on how it has helped many readers from all over the world. It perhaps says something about my own deep-seated self-esteem issues that this has been a great surprise to me!

Reading the book again for this new edition was a great pleasure, as it brought back many memories of the time when I wrote it. It was a wonderful spring and summer. My two daughters were in their late teens and both very happy, confident and excited about their plans for their future lives. I was, too. I also had very adventurous ideas for filling my emptying nest. My own self-esteem had never been higher.

But soon after this book was first published tragedy hit our family. Laura, my youngest daughter, was killed in a freak car accident. Each one of us in the family was of course plunged into deep grief. As anyone who has had a similar experience will verify, this kind of trauma plays havoc with self-esteem. This may not seem an obvious or logical consequence of such a tragedy but I have yet to meet anyone who hasn't felt this same knock-on effect. Perhaps it is the guilt and powerlessness we feel at not being able to reverse the damage that was done. For me, as a mother, I know that these feelings (however irrational) were there in relation to Laura but they were there also in relation to my other daughter. Her life and confidence were shattered and because of my own fragile emotional state I could not help her in the way that I wanted so much to do so. Also I could not function well at my work and indeed for quite a long time I was dependent on others even to organize my simple day-to-day housekeeping chores.

We did however all get back on our feet much more quickly than I would ever have thought was possible. And, I am sure that much of the credit can go to the strength of our self-esteem, which had been built on the foundations which I wrote about in this book. Every tip and technique in this book had been tried and tested to good effect by me personally and also by my long-suffering family.

Now, as I reach the latter decades of my life, my self-esteem has faced some new challenges. So the strategies have become particularly useful to me once again. Although for the vast majority of time, I am thoroughly enjoying my new senior life, there are many moments when my self-esteem begins to wobble. I understand this is a common experience for people of around my age. Maybe it was too for other generations but I am most aware of our own current issues. I think it is generally accepted that we live in times where youthfulness is idealized and ageing is frequently viewed as a demeaning experience and a depressing nuisance for those going through it and those who have to support them.

But, of course, ageing and bereavement aren't the only life transitions that can depress our self-esteem. There are many others. The good news is that the lessons and advice in this book can be used over and over again at any stage of your life. They can also be used to help anyone else you care about whose flagging spirits need either a little or large morale boost.

I hope you will find this book and its ideas as helpful as I and so many others have found them to be.



## Introduction

Would you believe me if I told you that I wished I lived in a world where a second edition of this book was not needed?

But it is true. I would genuinely rather be living in a world where everyone's self-esteem was bursting at the seams. This is because I am totally convinced that it would be a happier, safer and more positively exciting place to be.

At the start of this new millennium, there are some encouraging signs. When I first started writing this book in 1994, awareness on the subject was minimal. The phrase 'self-esteem-building' was still mysterious jargon used by a limited few in the world of therapy. Today, only six years later, not only do most people understand what is meant by 'self-esteem', they are complaining loudly and clearly when their precious supply is diminished by others. They know the value of this inner resource and are demanding its protection. For example:

in the workplace, employees are demanding more praise and understanding from their bosses

at home, children are demanding their fair share of cuddles or quality time, and rejecting parental put-downs

in relationships, partners are demanding more respect for their individual needs, and making it known if they feel under-valued

even in the 'public world', the rich and famous are demanding more protection from the paparazzi, and claiming that the media's thirst for sleaze is knocking their self-worth and driving them to drink, drugs and depression.

Having said this, I believe that showing more human consideration and respect for each other are not the only answers.

This is why I wrote this book as a *self*-help guide, and why I have been very pleased to have the opportunity to revise and update it. Perhaps one day my wish will come true, and the tools of self-esteem-building will be in everyone's natural armoury. Perhaps one day good self-esteem practices will have become cultural and personal habit. But for the moment, in this fast-changing, ever-expanding and globally competitive world, it seems these tools are needed more than they have ever been.

**Ultimately, the health of our own self-esteem is our own responsibility.**

I believe I have made this new edition much more user-friendly, and hope that you will find it easy to read and dip into when your (or anyone else's!) self-esteem needs a boost.

## **An Overview of the Book**

Like my other personal development books, this one is also designed as a self-help programme. It can be done on your own or in the more supportive setting of a group.

There are four main sections of the book, each covering a different area:

Section One (Exploring the Essential Elements) explains the concept and effects of self-esteem and how it is built, boosted – and battered.

Section Two (Laying the Foundations for Action) describes the essential healing and self-protective strategies needed to underpin self-esteem-building work.

Section Three (Self-help Programmes) offers practical exercises and checklists to help you rebuild flagging self-worth and keep it in tip-top condition. It includes an exercise which can be used as an annual ‘service’ for your self-esteem, and another which will help you to regain personal power after an emotional trauma such as a rejection, bereavement, divorce or job loss or a major mistake, setback or failure.

Section Four (Using Your Strength to Empower) contains tips and exercises to help you develop your ability to build self-esteem in others. It includes guidelines on how to do this in the three specific roles of Manager, Parent and Citizen.

You will probably derive most benefit from the book if you first read it through reasonably quickly to get an overall idea of the material and practical work it contains. You will then be better able to plan an effective programme for yourself or your group, using the book’s different sections to suit your individual needs.

I hope you find this self-esteem-building work as fascinating and rewarding as I and many thousands of others have done. Good luck!

### **ONE**

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