

Part 2: Theoretical Background and Further Information

When we ask how it is possible to eliminate such phenomena as aggression, bullying, hostile behaviour etc. we can besides other come out from humanistic psychology.

For instance Rogers says that individuals dispose of many vast inner potentials of self-understanding and transformation of self-concept, basic approaches and behaviour intent on own self. Rogers states that the individual is to a great extent creator, architect of himself, his own self. He views dimension of self-understanding as an important factor for behaviour prediction (in.: Rogers, 1998).

Also Franken (1994, p. 443) says that, perhaps, the self-concept is "the basis for all motivated behaviour. It is the self-concept that gives rise to possible selves, and it is possible selves that create the motivation for behaviour". He also suggests that self-concept is related to self-esteem that "people who have good self-esteem have a clearly differentiated self-concept" (Franken, 1994, p. 439).

The question is how to define self-esteem. In psychology self-esteem reflects a person's overall self-appraisal of their own worth. The original definition presents self-esteem as a ratio found by dividing one's successes in areas of life of importance to a given individual by the failures in them or one's "success / pretensions" (James, 1980, in Wikipedia encyclopedia).

Branden's (1969, in Wikipedia encyclopedia) description of self-esteem includes the following primary properties:

1. Self-esteem as a basic human need, i.e., "...it makes an essential contribution to the life process", "...is indispensable to normal and healthy self-development, and has a value for survival."
2. Self-esteem as an automatic and inevitable consequence of the sum of individuals' choices in using their consciousness.
3. Something experienced as a part of, or background to, all of the individual's thoughts, feelings and actions.

Huitt (2004) defines self-esteem as "the affective or emotional aspect of self". It generally refers to how we feel about or how we value ourselves. Johnson (1997, p. 8) defined self-esteem as "the degree of worth, value, respect of love and the individual may hold for himself as a human being in the world". Most often the concept of self-esteem is used to refer to a persons' global, overall evaluative view of oneself (Salmivalli, 2001).

When we speak about self-esteem we usually do it in terms of low or high self-esteem.

Low self-esteem is connected with anything negative and undesirable. People with low self-esteem for instance tend to speak negatively about themselves, they tend to be over critical and disappointed in themselves, they have low tolerance for frustration, they do not believe in their competence and so they often tend to avoid new things. In connection with aggression and violence the tendency to social sadomasochist behaviour can appear (Fromm, 1997). It means that they pose very submissively even as "masochists". They prostrate themselves and show how weak and obedient they are. Toward weaker persons they tend to be aggressive, dominant, and even sadistic.

High self-esteem fosters well-being and socially desirable behaviour (Salmivalli, 2001). People have positive attitudes about themselves, they positively evaluate themselves and they believe in their competences. In some cases we can see in high self-esteem a tendency to self-importance, uncritical self-acceptance, to self-love. Such high self-

esteem can lead to aggression, violence and bullying too because of the need to defend the existing "high self-esteem". Those people feel insecure, having an inflated view of self. They feel vulnerable to threat or they fear to lose self-esteem at any moment. Baumeister et al. (1996, in Salmivalli, 2001) speak about "underlying self-doubts" which corresponds with high but unstable self-esteem. That is why we prefer "healthy self-esteem" to low or high self-esteem. Healthy self-esteem consists not only of seeing oneself in as positive a light as possible, or as perfect, but also of feeling intrinsically worthwhile, or accepting oneself as one is (Buss, 1995, p. 206). People with healthy self-esteem are able to assess themselves accurately because they know their positives and negatives, their strengths and limitations and still they are able to accept and value themselves realistically and unconditionally.

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