



“Faith and Self-esteem”

By: Eddy Cisneros, BA

A very popular term in psychology is self-esteem, we hear people talking and writing about it everywhere. Self-esteem it's understood as a person's love for self, the value that is given, and that is also reflected in their everyday behavior. This concept is not far away, in my opinion, from the meaning given to it in psychology, even when there is no single definition adopted by the different psychological schools, briefly, self-esteem refers to the dimension of our subjectivity that contains the complex systems of beliefs, images, perceptions, feelings and behaviors that we possess and exert ourselves; It is, therefore, how we relate with ourselves.

Self-esteem's development is a complex process, in which various factors are important; one, certainly fundamental, is the relationship with our parents (or those who played that role) especially in the early stages of life. How much we are loved, accepted, encouraged to be truly who we are, or conversely, how distorted our feelings and perception of feel-

ing welcome and loved by them. An unhealthy self-esteem is mostly a haul of beliefs and feelings about ourselves that blur the reality of who we really are, through a partial, rigid self-look and little caring; at the same time, it generates an unhealthy attitude toward our self and others who are part of our relationships.

While it is true that the first years of life mark an important guideline in the development of the essential formation of the adult's personality, such as self-esteem, it is also true that improvement is possible whenever you make a conscious effort and appropriate means are utilized. One factor that can exert enormous influence throughout our adult lives is the experience of God. If our experience of the sacred mystery is faithful to that of the expressed by Jesus of Nazareth in his existential journey, and we truly know the God of truth, goodness, and beauty, then all our relationships change, as well as our relationship with ourselves. Therefore, a healthy self-esteem will become one that is seeing, treating and accepting myself the

same way God does. How do I see myself? Objectively. How do I feel about myself? With tenderness. How do I care for myself? With respect.

Objectively seeing me is to understand that I am not perfect, like many are not perfect; which doesn't mean to give up the desire for self improvement. Let us not confuse what others think about me, with who I am, because what others



How does God see me?

see is also partial, and it can be conditioned by resentment, envy, jealousy, love, etc. It means also to accept the positive criticism of others about us when it's about the truth or one aspect of our personality that we have or we do not recognize in us.

This seeing our self is deepened by self-knowledge of our per-

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sonal misery and discovery that, many times, our life becomes the search frenzy of the indulgence of our desires of wanting to be recognized, or for pleasure, comfort or money, at the expense of whatever or whoever it is, or perhaps looking for power, in politics, or oppression of workers, or holding a recognized status in the Church. Seeing me with objectivity is to have the courage and maturity to see me as who I am, not as whom I would like the others to see me, recognize when I use masks. But is also seeing me not only with my limitations, but in my potential, realizing that I am much more than a collection of personality traits and characteristics: I am a being opened to the infinite, with darkness, but capable of light, with misery, but deserving prosperity, with emptiness, but called to plenitude.

Being compassionate with myself means not feeling "ugly" because I'm fat or skinny, or "trash" because I haven't found that someone who will value me for whom I am and not for what I have or how I resolve things, or feel useless because things do not go the way I want, and sometimes only see that for others things go well. I am compassionate means to accept and be at peace with me when I cannot change things about myself.

Be respectful with myself is to understand that as a human being I have basic and elemental needs. Such as rest, nutrition, leisure, healthy emotional relationships, etc. I and nobody else I have the responsibility to fulfill my needs. Even when these are met many times in the interaction with others, I am I the responsible one for them. Self respect encourages me to change what

I can and need to change, being aware, of how much I need it and the good that such change can generate on a personal level and to others with whom I interact. It helps me to change from self understanding, not by pounding myself or punishing me, but being patient and resolved at the same time.

We cannot expect relief or the freedom of both personal and collective suffering without the development of a healthy self-esteem. It is an achievement which we undertake with determination and consistency. Two factors are essential for the road: an intense self-knowledge and a profound experience of God. The kind of self-knowledge that will help me to perceive, recognize and accept my own truth; and divine experience that gives life to my clay and help me share my worth with others.



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