

"TWO MEN LOOKED OUT FROM PRISON BARS,
ONE SAW MUD, ONE SAW STARS."

THIS SAYING EXEMPLIFIES THE IMPORTANT PRECEPT OF LIVING THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS PERCEIVE A REALITY THAT IS UNIQUE SOLELY TO THEMSELVES. ONE'S VIEW OF ONE'S LIFE SITUATIONS GREATLY INFLUENCES HOW ONE EXPERIENCES THE WORLD. BASIC TO THIS IS THE IMPORTANT FACTOR OF HOW ONE VIEWS ONESELF. A STRONG SELF-IMAGE GREATLY INFLUENCES HOW A PERSON IS TO ACT AND RESPOND TO THE WORLD.

IN DEALING WITH THIS BASIC PREMISE - THAT AN INDIVIDUAL'S VIEW OF SELF GREATLY INFLUENCES ONE'S SOCIAL REALITY - DOCTOR DAVID DAVIS, A PSYCHOANALYST FROM BEECHHURST, LONG ISLAND, AND BROTHER LEO RICHARD, A MEMBER OF THE MARIST BROTHERS AND COUNSELOR AT ARCHBISHOP MOLLOY HIGH SCHOOL, HAVE DELVED INTO THE POWERFUL CONCEPT OF SELF-ESTEEM AND ITS PERVASIVE INFLUENCE IN LIFE. LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE OF ONESELF IS THE FOUNDATION UPON WHICH A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM CAN FURTHER EXPAND.

TEN POINTS OF SELF - ESTEEM

- 1) The only reality in any social situation is the feelings we have about ourselves. When I enter a room with other people in it, I can project my own feelings into what they are actually thinking about me. I might meet someone's eyes and see a negative look on his face. If my esteem is low, I might feel that he is rejecting me only because of the opinions I have about myself. When I am truly confident, I have no need to obsess about what others are thinking and saying about me.
- 2) The way I shall view myself, I shall view people and the world about me. When I believe that I am good and have worth, I will feel that way about others around me. If, however, I feel that I am worthless, I shall view others with hostility, mistrust and fear. I will always be treated according to the feelings I give off e.g. quiet, outgoing - .
- 3) I should always be going in-out and not out-in. When I am going in-out, I have total self-control. I don't allow the moods and desires of other people to influence my behavior. In this way, my feelings are not controlled by people and events outside of myself. I have the final say about how I will feel. When I am going out-in, I am people - controlled and can be easily encouraged by others to do things I don't want to do, which will cause frustration and anxiety.
- 4) Always remain neutral and have no reaction in any social situation unless the people out there can tell us on the spot what we're feeling at the time or write down what we're feeling at the time.

I try not to jump to hasty conclusions about people, what people think, nor treat them in a particular way because of the assumptions I may have concerning them. I try to give all people a chance and hold off on my opinions and responses to them until I definitely know something about them.

5) In life act on Damn Detailed Facts.

I try not to act a certain way because I take for granted that something is true, or suppose that I know exactly how a person feels about me. In this way, I can eliminate much anxiety. I act only when I know definitely that something is true, or has really happened. I don't know everything, so I shouldn't be afraid to ask others about their feelings. In this way I get the facts, for nine times out of ten I will find that my opinions about others were false assumptions. By asking questions, I start to deal in reality rather than in the fantasy world of my own assumptions.

- 6) In social situations, always be frank and assertive about our feelings, but not at the expense of others.

CONCERNING OTHERS

If the way someone acts towards me makes me uncomfortable or causes me to experience anxiety, then I tell them so. By being truthful about my feelings, and asserting my desire to curtail this behavior, I take control of the situation rather than have my feelings manipulated by it.

CONCERNING MYSELF

When I am asked my opinion about something, I am honest and not influenced by what others may think of me because of what I believe. However, I answer with common sense and avoid hurting anyone else.

- 7) If you want to know something ask the person, or nerves will build and a lot of false assumptions as well.

By directly asking a person how they feel about me, I can avoid unnecessary anxiety, and clarify my own assumptions before they totally distort the reality of the situation. In this way, I receive a clear and accurate picture of what the person thinks about me. However, the person I do ask is one whom I respect, and whose opinion will matter to me.

- 8) Outside of obligation, do what you want to do.

There will always be certain things (work, school, home) that I must do. However, I always try to find some time for myself, and do the things that I enjoy. When I go along with the group out of habit, I find that I experience anxiety because I am doing things that other people want me to do. Therefore, I do things which I enjoy doing and which relax me, alone or with others. If I do

8) - - continued

things which make me feel nervous or tense, I'm not really eliminating anxieties. Finally, it is a great thing to help others, but I never under-rate the importance of doing things for myself.

- 9) Look at people eyeball level, if you are looking up and placing the person on a pedestal, or holding yourself as greater than he, the person will be a threat and you will start to look down upon yourself.

Whenever I raise someone to be greater than myself, I am naturally lowering my own self-image. I will never be able to find satisfaction in what I am as a person, for there will always be others that are better than myself.

Also, when I lower someone and regard the person as my inferior then the person acts as an outside agent who builds up my esteem. My ego will be threatened when the person does not perform according to my expectations of his inferiority. Thus, my own self-image becomes dependent upon how better I am than the other person.

The best way to deal with people is on an equal level. In this way, I build up my ego and self-concept, separate from others, and I avoid anxiety by ceasing to compare myself with others.

- 10) People are always treated according to the feelings that they give off.

If I dislike myself, it is unjust of me to demand that others like me. When I feel worthless, people tend to treat me this way. Thus a vicious cycle forms.

Once I start believing in myself, and accepting the fact that with all my limitations, I am as good as everyone else, then I will be treated as I feel I should be. And when one does not treat me in this way, I still maintain control over my self-image.

Finally, NO ONE can be a THREAT to my own greatness, EXCEPT MYSELF.

- (1) If I love myself, I can love others and others can love me.

- (2) When I HAVE SELF-ESTEEM, I'm almost always doing what I want to do.
When I LACK SELF-ESTEEM, I'm doing things I don't want to do.

- (3) Self-Esteem is a constantly growing process which entails risks. However, it is not a matter of winning or proving anything, but working towards my own happiness.