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### SELF-ESTEEM

“Self-esteem is linked to both your body image and self image. If you can’t look the way you think you’re supposed to – no matter how hard you try or want to – your ideal and actual body images clash and you become vulnerable to self doubts and feelings of inadequacy. Your self-esteem goes down. You lose sight of your positive qualities, miscalculate how you’re coming across to others, and misinterpret their reactions to you.

You can see that self-esteem is based on a variety of different elements, such as: liking yourself, having a body image you can appreciate (even if it’s not model “perfect”), being able to take some risks in life and not be overwhelmed at the thought of failure, giving yourself credit when you deserve it, and having a realistic self image based on fact rather than fantasy. When these important elements are present, the thought processes that lead to eating disorders will have less of a chance to invade your mind and take over your life.

Choose the statement that best describes you. Most of the time, do you:

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Accept compliments?	Negate them?
Consider the total picture of who you are and what you've accomplished?	Look for the blemishes (errors) in that total picture and dwell on them?
Like things about your physical appearance?	Look for and point out your physical shortcomings?
Reach a goal and savour it?	Reach a goal and think you could have done better or should have done more?
Like your friends and seek them out?	Tolerate your friends or try to avoid them?
Prefer the company of others?	Prefer solitude and isolation?

If you chose all the “A” answers, chances are you have high self-esteem and your self image is in fine shape. If you chose all the “B” answers, you need to work on developing self-esteem, and you may be at risk for developing an eating disorder. If you chose some of each, ask yourself why you chose the “B” item rather than the “A” item!

from “*The Beginner’s Guide to eating disorders recovery*”, Nancy J. Kolodny, Gurze Books 2004

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 Self-esteem

