



**THE POWER OF
POSITIVE
SELF-ESTEEM**

“DEVELOPING, IMPLEMENTING
AND SUSTAINING”

DR. WILLIE HOUSEAL

THE POWER OF POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM

*“DEVELOPING, IMPLEMENTING
AND SUSTAINING”*

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Acknowledgement

This book is dedicated to my wife, Cleopatra (Pat); to my children, Willie Jr., Yorshia, and Terry; my grandchildren, Adrian, Takeyra, Willie III, and Darren.

Acknowledgement

This book is proof that passion in life continues to burn; that there is life after retirement; that faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains. It was faith that inspired me to embark upon this publication. For it was during the last year of the doctorate program that I suffered a stroke and there was doubt that I would finish. Through it all, I completed the program ahead of time. I often told Pat (my wife) that if I could have her name placed on the diploma beside mine, I would have because it was her encouragement that kept me going. It was this endeavor that led to the desire to continue writing on the subject, self-esteem. First and foremost, I give thanks to God, to my wife and children, my grandchildren and a special sister, (Mamie) and remaining siblings. Finally, I give thanks to my sisters and brothers in Christ.

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Preface

Consider this book to be a revised edition of my first book, *The Power of Self - Esteem*, "Using It All to Get It All," published in 1998. Since that time, many situations have occurred. These occurrences gave rise to a renewed interest in the subject of self-esteem and its effect on us regardless of our age, race, nationality, religion, or ethnic background. The term self-esteem was defined in the previous publication; however, a revision of this term can be defined as a belief about one's own self-worth based on an overall self-evaluation.

According to Marsh (1990), self-esteem is measured by having survey respondents indicate their agreement or disagreement with both positive and negative statements. A positive statement on one general self-esteem survey is: "I feel I am a person of worth, the equal of other people." A negative statement is: "I feel I do not have much to be proud of." Those who agree with the positive statement and disagree with the negative statement have positive self-esteem. They see themselves as worthwhile, capable, and acceptable. People with low or negative self-esteem view themselves in negative terms. They do not feel good about themselves and are hampered by self-doubt. There is a term currently being viewed as self-efficacy which

relates to a person's belief about his or her chances of successfully accomplishing a specific task.

Chen (1995), an organizational behaviorist states, "self-efficacy arises from the gradual acquisition of complex cognitive, social, linguistic, and/or physical skills through experiences; that childhood experiences have a powerful effect on a person's self-efficacy." Researchers have documented strong linkages between high self-efficacy expectations and success in widely varied physical and mental tasks, anxiety reduction, control pain tolerance, illness recovery, avoidance of seasickness in naval cadets, and stress avoidance.

This publication will expose the reader to new insights on the nature of self-esteem from five perspectives to include: the sociological, spiritual, educational, psychological, and economical outlook on life. However, the primary focus of this book is on developing, implementing, and sustaining 'positive self-esteem' rather than simply defining the term loosely.

The primary concern in the first publication dealt with coming to terms with "self-esteem" in its purest form. This publication defines self-esteem based on personal experience, common knowledge, and documented research as we anticipate life's challenges. Challenges can be met with confidence or the lack of it. The means by which we conduct ourselves provide a vivid picture of how we feel about ourselves.

The reader is provided with the common knowledge of how to identify, acquire, and use self-esteem in a positive way, yet it goes on to provide valuable insight on the subject by integrating a literature

review of the five concepts as they relate to positive self-esteem.

We began by examining the effect positive self-esteem has had on the writer and incorporated the knowledge gained from self-esteem research as it applies to all ages, from young children through late adulthood. A portion of the research in this book was taken from a practicum study which focused on early childhood. Exerpts from my dissertation submitted for a Doctorate in Education Leadership was incorporated. The study entitled, "The Effects Positive Self-esteem has on Children in Grades K-3 at North Brooks Elementary," published at NOVA University April, 2001 provided valuable information toward the completion of this publication.

As in the first book, a chronological list of events emerged with regard to how adversity affects self-esteem and how I dealt with these encounters. Over the course of about five years, research on the subject has been conducted and applied so that the reader may have a more accurate account of the effect positive self-esteem has on us.

The first published book was a huge personal success, and the reviews were overwhelming. A proven point reveals that emphasis should not be placed on a perfect time for publishing your work, rather, the focus should be on developing a plan, committing to it, and seeing it through. As before, this book is dedicated to my significant others; first, to my wife, who watches my back; then to my supporting cast members, my children. In addition, to my grandchildren, who are

constantly reminding me of the importance of living life to its fullest. Not to forget my biological sisters and brothers who have never failed to support me over the years. However, I would be remised if I didn't mention the support I receive from my sisters and brothers in Christ at the River Street Church of Christ.

The Journey Continues...

I will write in a moment and there's no time to. This book captures the history of my journey of personal self-empowerment. My first book, *The Power of Self-empowerment*, "Through All we have walked as a woman to share personal self-empowerment to you and all women and the book that it's a celebration." The publication ended my journey, "I feel love you and the journey as well." For the next part, the journey continues.

The journey continued the walk of love and the journey continues as a woman who continues to walk the journey. My journey will continue and has been given the capacity to be a woman beyond the journey. I will continue to walk the journey in the way that I have walked the way that I have walked the journey. I will continue to walk the journey in the way that I have walked the way that I have walked the journey.

The journey continues the journey of love. Many of the journey continues the journey of love. The journey continues the journey of love. The journey continues the journey of love.

Chapter 1

The Journey Continues...

As in life itself, there is a beginning and there's an end as we know it. This book continues the journey of exploring the power of positive self-esteem. My first publication, *The Power of Self-esteem, "Using it All to Get it All"*, was written as a means to share personal experiences related to positive self-esteem and the lack of it. I called it "a labor of love." The publication ended with the statement, "God loves you and he wants you to love yourself as well." For the most part, the journey has continued.

The year, 1998 marked the end of one era and the beginning of a new one, as several projects were completed and new ones emerged. My curiosity still remains as to how man has been given the capacity to increase his intelligence beyond the imagination, yet very few are endowed with the instinct to do so. Animals do things the same way since the beginning of time. However, man has changed his ways of doing things at a rapid pace over time.

Oftentimes we become creatures of habit. Many of us seldom migrate beyond fifty miles from where we were born. The same holds true as we choose our pro-

fessions. During the height of the industrial revolution, the choices were limited. We worked in factories and industries which promoted manufactured commodities. This type of work provided little chance to explore the creative side of our minds, thus, we simply followed procedures and became content with our labor. Modern day employment presents a new and different challenge. Making career choices has become a major undertaking. Although I took a detour after graduating from high school, the choice to become an educator was made years earlier but done so subconsciously due to being nurtured in an environment insulated with educators. That experience afforded a number of mentors who would take the time to encourage academic excellence.

For many of my peers, one either became a factory worker, a skilled laborer, or service provider; acknowledging the fact that these are noble occupations, the issue here is this; young black men growing up in the south had very few career options from which to choose from. As a young man, I decided to join the military. Ten years later, I made the transition from being a military service member to starting a new career in education which lasted more than 25 years. Ultimately another decision had to be made; should I retire or should I continue working? This would be the last major decision regarding future plans. When the time came, the decision was made. I chose to retire and another era began.

This new era brought with it new challenges that were presented in ways that were difficult to imagine. For instance, I had more time on my hands than I ever

had as an adult; for time itself can be your friend or your enemy. The lack of time can cause stress because we live by the clock. We get up in the morning and the first thing we do is check the time. We rush to work and look forward to lunch time. We take off for lunch and rush to get back to work on time, and again, we watch the clock until its time to clock out for the day. Then we try to squeeze in as many activities as we can before retiring for the evening. Again, we watch the clock because we need to be in bed by a certain time; after all, we need our rest. Then the cycle begins all over again. This cycle goes on for years until we retire or until we depart this life.

On the other hand, too much time on our hands can also cause problems. If we're not careful, we may find ourselves becoming introverts, not knowing how to make the best use of our new found lifestyle. Oftentimes, we become volunteers in the community or become involved in other worthwhile endeavors. Then again, we just might re-enter the workforce out of necessity or simply due to not knowing how to spend leisure time. Regardless, time is in some ways a commodity (many say time is money) which requires careful consideration.

Chapter 2

Developing Positive Self-Esteem

Self-esteem ranks as one of the most important aspects of self-development. As we evaluate our own competencies and determine how they affect our emotional experiences and future behavior, we must be aware of the need to make long-term psychological adjustments. As soon as a categorical self with features that can be judged positively is in place, children start to become self-evaluative beings. Around age 2, they call a parent's attention to an achievement, such as completing a puzzle, by pointing and saying something like "Look Mom!" In addition, 2 year-olds are likely to smile when they succeed at a task set for them by an adult and look away or frown when they fail. Furthermore, by age 3, self-conscious emotions or pride and shame are clearly linked to self-evaluation. Self-esteem originates early, and its structure becomes increasingly complicated with age (Stippeck, Recchia, & McClintic, 1992).

The structure of self-esteem depends on both information available to children and the ability to process that information. By 6 to 7 years, children have formed at least three separate self-esteems—academic, physi-

cal, and social—that become more refined with age. For example, academic self-worth divides into performance in different school subjects, and social self-worth involving peers and parental relationships (Marsh, 1090). In fact, children seem to develop an array of separate self-esteems first. The ability to view the self in terms of stable dispositions permits school-age children to combine their separate self-evaluations into a general psychological image of themselves—an overall sense of self-esteem. Consequently, self-esteem takes on a hierarchical structure that calls for different needs at different times in life.

Knowing that self-esteem begins early in life, the focus should be on parents who can either make or break a child's self-concept. From a research point of view, the question is asked, "How Should Parents Boost Their Children's Self-Esteem?" A case scenario is provided concerning a student whose parents are having difficulty helping their son improve his self-esteem.

Marsh (1990) gives the scenario of Jared, a bright adolescent growing up in a well-to-do American family, earned C's and D's in academic courses because he seldom turned in his homework or studies for exams. His parents tried paying Jared for good grades, but to no avail. Next, they threatened to ground him. When Jared's report card again showed no improvement, his parents gave in to his pleas for weekend privileges, blaming his weak school performance on low self-esteem. "If only Jared liked himself better," his father reasoned, "he'd work harder in school and would associate with school friends who share serious interest".

Over the next 6 months Jared's grades dropped further, and he and two of his friends were arrested for property destruction at a shopping mall.

Will parenting that boosts children's self-esteem help increasing numbers of young people like Jared, who lack character and direction? Or is Jared's parents' child-centeredness at the heart of his problem? According to William Damon (1995), the child-centered philosophy was a major breakthrough when it was first introduced. It made parents and teachers aware that children have unique developmental needs and benefit from warmth and encouragement. But Damon argues, the modern child-centeredness has been stretched to the point of indulgence.

Many American parents are convinced that a child cannot develop meaningful goals and respect others without first coming to love himself. This idea is based on the assumption that self-esteem precedes health development. It must be built before anything else, through generous praise and unconditional acceptance. Yet, children with highly inflated self-esteem or self-perceptions are more judgmental of others and often have serious adjustment problems. In a recent study, second and third graders identified by their teachers as aggressive (frequently teasing, starting fights, telling mean lies, or excluding others) were far more likely than their classmates to rate themselves as perfect on a self-esteem measure. Their distorted views of their own competence appeared to undermine any motivation to improve their behavior (Hughes, Cavell, & Grossman, 1997).

Damon (1995) maintains that self-esteem that fosters favorable development must be the results of prior accomplishments. From this perspective, it cannot be gained through its own pursuit; it must be earned through socially useful commitment and responsibility. Instead of insisting on mastery of meaningful skills, too many American parents assure their children, regardless of circumstances, that they are "okay" in every way. Compliments, such as "you're great," "you're terrific," that have no basis in real attainment disrupt children's potential for development. In Damon's view, sooner or later children see through them, come to mistrust the adults who repeat them, and begin to doubt themselves.

Cross-cultural evidence supports the view that genuine self-esteem is the product (not the producer) of real accomplishment. In regards to developing self-esteem, it has been my experience to incorporate character as a means to enhance positive self-esteem. My involvement in sports at an early age was the vehicle by which my character was defined. This character included a competitive spirit which gave rise to a desire to achieve. This competitive spirit afforded me the opportunity to experience being a part of several successful sports seasons and three championship teams.

The first of the three championship games occurred during my elementary school years while playing baseball under Coach Joe Rivers. We played that game in a cow pasture and afterwards, enjoyed a championship dinner which consisted of barbecue goat (tasty). The second championship game occurred

in football at Lomax Junior High School under Coach Jack Bethay (deceased). We received red and white championship jackets that year. I believe I wore that jacket until it became too small for me to wear then I passed it on to my nephew (Marcus). The whole elementary and middle school focus was on anticipating the next school day to share our victories with each other and the entire school.

As one of the eight players on the junior varsity basketball team under Coach Frank Wilson, we would have perfect seasons on the court each year. It was a feeder team for the seniors. During our senior year, we were invited to the region high school basketball championship in Macon, Georgia where Coach Edward Jones (deceased) transported our entire team in his station wagon to the game. Sadly, we lost that game in the first round but it was great to be a part of that team, even though I rode the bench. During the high school experience, it was great to be a part of the week-long hype of the Friday night game. Knowing the answer already, young people would echo this question a million times over, "Are you going to the game Friday night?" These experiences and more would yield a sense of positive self-esteem that would carry over into my adult life.

Although sports provided the vehicle for building character, valuing an education was not at the top of my priority list, but it was near the top. Many of my peers attended college; this was somewhat unusual for young black males growing up anywhere in the U.S. especially in the south during the 60's; we didn't have the

HOPE grant then and many of us simply could not afford to attend, but for me I simply wasn't ready for college. Yet, I always knew that academic achievement would be the key to my success.

However, current research supports the notion that the academic achievement of children in the United States falls behind children of Asian nations, such as Japan and Taiwan. The primary reason for this observation is because of a mandate that all children in the United States are required to attend school as oppose to students educated in countries such as Japan which is no larger than the State of California.

Research also indicates that parents of Asian and Taiwanese high school students report higher parental expectations for school performance, they felt less stress and anxiety than do their American age-mates and display low rates of deviant behavior. Again, with the integration of all races, nationalities, and various socioeconomic levels, we can understand how there would be more stress and high rates of deviant behavior in schools in the United States.

As we pass through this territory, be advised that contrary to popular belief, Asian pupils do not attain their impressive level of achievement at the expense of their psychological well-being. Indeed the highest Asian achievers report the fewest psychological symptoms. Strong parental support for achievement seems to contribute to Asian students' ability to meet rigorous academic standards while remaining well adjusted (Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Crystal et al., 1994).

According to Damon (1995), parents serve children best when they guide them toward worthwhile activities and goals that result in credible self-esteem. Parents serve children poorly when they promote in them a false sense of self-regard. Had Jared's parents helped him sustain effort in the face of difficulty and insisted that he meet his responsibilities years earlier, they might have prevented the current situation.

Too often, we witness children at the mall, in the grocery store, or some other public place, displaying outrage for not being able to have their way. Many parents don't realize that there is a limit to reasoning with children due to their mental development. Parents set their children up for failure because they are made to believe that their sense of security is true whereas in reality, we are now witnessing generations upon generations displaying a false sense of security throughout our society. Based on standards established by our founding fathers, there seems to be a self-esteem deficit facing our society today. This deficit has a direct relationship to the lack of values and ethics and moral decay in our society. A lack of self-worth is prevalent in all segments of our society. Statistics on social ills in our society are at an all time high and the future calls for more of the same. By now, it is common knowledge that there are more young black males in prison than in college.

According to Bill Shipp, a Georgia Columnist, the State of Georgia alone is headed for a multi-billion-dollar prison crisis. We are running out of bed space for bad guys. The Georgia inmate population is expanding

at a high-speed clip—from 18,000 in 1987 to 37,000 in 1997 to 54,227 as of May 2007. Three primary reasons for this increase are: an increase population, illegal drug trafficking and the state's rigid "two strikes" law, and no end to the growth is in sight. Also staggering figures indicate that unemployment among young black males and females is averaging over 12 percent throughout this country and a positive self-esteem is non-existent in the lives of many of these individuals.

Chapter 3

Different Strokes for Different Folks

According to a study published by the American Heart Association News Media Relations, approximately 400,000 Americans have a first-ever stroke each year, and according to researchers from the University of Iowa, a current trend indicates that number will increase steadily. Also, the chance of having a second stroke is three times greater. Stroke occurrence will top the 1 million mark in 2030. The researchers projected that by 2030, a total of 1,017,099 Americans will have a first-ever stroke each year as opposed to the 400,000 Americans who currently have their first-ever stroke. This signifies a 167 percent increase in stroke incidence among men and 140 percent among women.

It should be noted that stroke is the leading cause of disability in the United States and the third leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer. According to the American Heart Association, stroke costs \$28.3 billion per year when the cost of care and treatment are factored in. Figuring in indirect costs such as lost productivity, the total rises to \$43.3 billion per year. It is estimated that there are over 2 million

stroke survivors in America who are suffering from paralysis, loss of speech and loss of memory.

As elusive as positive self-esteem can be, life's journey can present circumstances beyond control. For instance, a catastrophic illness such as having a stroke can challenge the very core of a person's belief and values. In this case, the effect of a stroke is shared in order to shed some light on dealing with the difficult task of overcoming such an illness. According to the American Heart Association's Fighting Health Disease and Stroke publication, a stroke is a brain attack and can cause changes in your body and your emotions. These changes can cause problems for you and for your family. Despite this, you can get better and overcome many of the problems created by this brain attack.

After having a stroke, performing routine activities was difficult and frustrating. Dealing with problems associated with speaking, seeing or coordinating your movements was very disturbing. To cope, one needs patience and the support of those around you. You may even need a speech therapist, physical therapist or an occupational therapist to help you relearn the skills you've lost. And just as you are reading this information concerning experiencing a stroke, many will say, "this doesn't apply to me or this probably won't happen to me". Well those words echoed in my mind as well, however, it did happen to me and in that process those words became a reality. For when that time came, these words were spoken, "this can't be happening to me", denial became the order of the day.

It was late August, on a Friday evening around 7 p.m. while making preparations to attend a football game, I awoke from a nap in my favorite recliner; there was numbness in my right leg. I stood up and my foot began to tingle as though it had what we sometimes describe as going to sleep. I lost my balance. Rather than going to the game, I decided to remain at home. Later around 9 p.m., I tried to lift my granddaughter from the couch to take her to bed; again, I lost my balance and bumped against the wall. I decided to go straight to bed.

It seemed as though I lost track of time and couldn't recall much more after that until the next morning around 8 am. I had difficulty getting out of bed. My equilibrium was getting worse. Loosing control of my entire right side, I tried to brush my teeth and kept dropping the toothbrush. Still determined to leave the house to run errands, this was one of the few times I followed my wife's advice and call the nurse hot line instead of leaving the house. The nurse instructed me to go to the emergency room as soon as possible. Upon my arrival, things got even worse. The right side of my face began to sag and my speech became slurred. The diagnosis was what we expected. You're having a stroke. This became the stroke of a lifetime. At that moment, I felt the whole world crashing down. My thoughts were "Man, I'm in deep trouble". Indeed I was. For the next four days I remained hospitalized with an IV solution in one arm and blood thinner in the other. I was weakened but felt no pain. The question continued to surface, "What is going on?"

Therapy began immediately. Learning to walk and use the right side became the goal for fear of permanent paralysis setting in. There was a slight loss of peripheral vision and by this time, my emotions were spiraling out of control. Fear, anger, denial, confusion and doubt of ever regaining my health became a grave concern. Eventually acceptance and hope began to emerge.

My recovery was slow and deliberate. The next three months were like riding a roller coaster. Learning to do the things we take for granted became an eye opener for me. Having a preschooler in the house was more therapeutic that I could ever have imagined. I could barely use my right hand. Fine motor was at its lowest, and writing became a difficult task. So together, my granddaughter (who was just beginning pre-school) and I began to learn to write. This made the task easier because the focus was not necessarily on me, but on her.

As a stroke survivor, I can truly say that I was blessed beyond measure because any number of outcomes could have resulted from experiencing this illness. With constant intervention of medication and physical therapy along with dieting and exercise, a complete recovery was underway. I also received valuable information on the intake of carbohydrates and calorie counting. Through it all, I developed a strong will to live, but my faith in God was my primary vehicle of travel toward this new lease on life.

Chapter 4

The Three Legged Elephant

One day a wildlife conservation researcher visited a zoo to observe the elephants in a social setting in captivity, and noticed the three legged elephant off to himself in the corner of his quarters and asked the zookeeper to explain the elephant's strange behavior. He was well aware that elephants were normally social animals yet the researcher would entertain the zookeeper's story about the elephant. He explained, from the time this elephant was a small calf, he showed signs of distrust and despair. He was defiant and wanted nothing to do with the zookeepers and made several attempts to escape and most of the time he avoided interacting with humans.

Finally, the elephant had to be restrained by chaining his hind leg to a wall. This was a method used to control elephants. Even though they had the strength to pull an entire wall down to the ground, they were conditioned by being shackled, at times even with the smallest rope. But this elephant would pull at the chain so hard until he would injure himself repeatedly.

Eventually, so much damage was done to his leg until it had to be amputated. The elephant would go

into seclusion and refuse to eat and did not want to be viewed by onlookers. The elephant had a longing to be free, to answer the call of the wild. The researcher offered to purchase the elephant and set him free, thinking he would eventually die from depression caused by not being able to cope with living in captivity. The zookeeper took the matter to the owner and after a period of time, the owner of the zoo decided to accept the researcher's offer and sold the elephant. The elephant was shipped back to Africa where he could live the rest of his life in his natural habitat.

The setting is twenty years later on a wildlife reservation in Africa in the middle of the summer. A herd of elephants emerged from the orange dusty plains. This one particular elephant drew attention to himself by exhibiting the status as leader of a herd of about thirty elephants. This three-legged elephant stood tall and courageous thrusting his trunk back and forth in the orange dust with confidence to spare. Ironically, a group of researchers was on an expedition to study the social life of the elephants in their natural habitat. One member asked the trusted guide, "what's with this three legged elephant leading the herd? Surely there are other able bodied bulls in the herd who could lead as well or even better."

In that group was an experienced researcher who quietly addressed the question. He explained, this was the elephant he had set free over 20 years ago, rescuing him from deep depression in a zoo. The researcher explained how he was involved with this elephant. To see this great transformation of the spirit proved obvi-

ous that positive self-esteem played a huge part in the elephant's successful rise to social power.

Over the years, the three-legged elephant emerged as the most crafty and intelligent bull of the entire herd. He sacrificed his health for a taste of freedom with hopes that no regrets would surface later, a lesson for each of us as we strive to overcome obstacles in our own lives. Regardless of the physical challenges we may face, a positive self-esteem can become the motivation we need to sustain us. Thinking positive enables us to stand tall and be ready to defend or make an offensive move toward overcoming obstacles.

Inferences: The elephant overcame the mentality imposed upon him through conditioning in captivity. In life, we too, have to conform to norms in society which dictate to the flow of normality. The elephant chose to follow a dream, a dream to be free and live a different life other than that of being a spectacle in a zoo. He emerged not only as a survivor, but as a leader as well. His leg was not sacrificed in vain.

We must be willing to give of ourselves in some way as a sacrifice in order to achieve our dreams. A positive self-esteem serves as a vehicle for our emotions and desires which strengthens us when we need it most. The picture of this magnificent beast leading a herd of elephants in the wild would lead anyone to ask the question, "what's the story on the three-legged elephant?"

Chapter 5

The Sociological Approach

After developing self-esteem, we are encouraged to implement and sustain a positive image of ourselves. At this point, the writer integrates five disciplines to include the sociological, spiritual, educational, psychological, and financial to make inferences on positive self-esteem and societal expectations.

As children growing up we tend to gravitate toward those who share similar interests, whether it's attending church, playing sports, or an array of other things. The sociological aspect of a person is as important as food, clothing and shelter. When I was growing up, I experienced undue pressure because my family was blessed to reside in one of the few middle class neighborhoods in existence at that time. We were blessed because we shared a good quality of life and through hard work and perseverance, we did not want for any of the necessities of life.

During my primary years, I had many associates, but there was an inner circle I remember most. As I mentioned in my first publication; hanging out with guys like Ronney, Warrick (AKA Tuffy) and Nunnally (deceased) was a constant. I was either with one of

these guys part of the time or with all of them most times. Then came the middle years, I'm not sure who I spent time with during that period because I spent many days floating in space; for this was an awkward time in my life.

During my high school years, there was one group of guys known as the Jazzmen Club. This club was considered to be the most privileged group of young men on campus. Members were expected to adhere to high standards set by our predecessors. I would say it was a cross between the Kappa's and the Morehouse Men. This organization molded young men in such a way that it prepared them to be academically competitive while at the same time, it prepared them for the future as the new vanguards of society. For me, I chose the fields of politics and education but most important, I became an Elder in the Church that Christ built, The Church of Christ.

There were many associates in this club, but there were other associates who were not members. Again, there was that inner circle; guys like, Johnny Simon, Jack Hodge, George Smith, Otis Moore, Ronald Thompson, Larry Baker, Lewis Emanuel, Calvin Cushion, and Anthony Thomas who left lasting impressions on me. I could probably name 25 other guys I highly respected, but mutual interest was greatest amongst those mentioned above.

Our sociological and economic status oftentimes depicts who we are or wish to be in our society. There are three categories that are known throughout our society; there's the Upper Class, also known as the Upper Socioeconomic Status (USES); the Middle

Class, also known as the Middle Socioeconomic Status (MSES); and the Lower Class, also known as the Lower Socioeconomic Status (LSES) or those who live in poverty. Each has its own value system and each cast shadows over the other.

Beginning with the Upper Class where values are set high, economics separates the masses by the huge salaries, prime real estate and fine automobiles, along with an accumulation of stocks and bonds and large bank accounts. For many, this status is deemed unattainable. Therefore, there is an unspoken rule that says wealth and power define who we are, where we live, and how we should conduct ourselves in our society.

The Middle Class (MSES) is considered to be the backbone of our society. It is the working class who pays most of the taxes. This segment of our society picks up the tab for both the rich and the poor in many ways. In particular, when the poverty stricken is in need of medical care, it is the middle class who picks up the tab by paying higher health care premiums.

Then, there's the Lower Class or (LSES). Most people consider this class to be responsible for much of the crime and violence in our society and can be identified as a permanent fixture. There is an old saying, "You can take old Jake out of the country, but you can't take the country out of old Jake" has some truth to it, but one has to be cautious and not become guilty of being judgmental or stereotypical. This class serves as a reminder to show humility toward our brothers and sisters. After all, according to the scripture, "the poor will be with us always."

It should be noted that the middle class supports the lower class in feeding, housing and paying their medical bills, by paying taxes, however few contributions are made to our society in return. Each level of our society dictates how we should act and react to the circumstances governing our lives. When circumstances are highly irregular, such as in the case of the elephant's rise to power and status, he dealt with his circumstances by exhibiting positive self-worth. In reality, human beings are no different.

There are instances where people have been physically challenged and have achieved much in life. Take for example, a man who had been wounded in combat in Vietnam. He lost both legs and an arm, yet he managed to become one of Georgia's outstanding senators of our time. That man is Max Cleland. He rose above his physically challenged condition and became an example for us all. His positive self-esteem was evident as he placed a just value on his appearance and focused on what he could contribute to our society. That power within can be found throughout our society.

At 19 months, Helen Keller contracted an illness that eventually left her without hearing and sight. Back then those labeled "deaf and dumb" were classified as idiots. But Helen's parents didn't agree. They hired teacher Anne Sullivan to work with her and eventually she learned to read and write using Braille. Amazingly, in 1904 she graduated with honors from Radcliffe College and devoted her life to helping others. Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie paid her an annual income. Writers, Mark Twain and Robert Louis

Stevenson praised her and almost every President of her day invited her to the White House. Even though Helen died in 1968, her legacy of courage lives on. When asked if there was anything worse than being blind, Helen replied, "Yes, having sight but no vision."

At 12 years of age, Thomas Edison developed such severe hearing loss that his teachers recommended he be taken out of school. Instead Edison used his disability to drown out distractions and focus on his work. As a result the boy who was labeled "a slow learner" gave the world over 1,000 inventions, including the light bulb, the phonograph and the motion camera (Swindoll 2006). Paul states in 2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT, "My power works best in your weakness." We just have to believe in ourselves.

Be advised that it is possible to move from one class system to another in a lifetime; and that a paradigm shift must occur (experiencing a different life model). There are various causes such as; one might be wealthy today and all of a sudden the stock market crashes, your job has just been outsourced, or your retirement plan has just been eliminated. It would be very difficult for someone who has lived the life of the rich and famous and now have to settle for less. Some would rather commit suicide than to live in a lower class other than what they were accustomed to.

Self-esteem is certainly in question when a person decides to take his or her own life simply because they are no longer wealthy. On the other hand, there's the instance when a member of the LSES would by a lottery ticket and become wealthy overnight. They too,

will have to experience a paradigm shift whereby they have to learn to live by higher standards set by the wealthy of our society. Oftentimes, the pressures are so great for them to conform until they tend to either give away their fortune or it becomes the culprit for an early demise. In each case, self-esteem will either increase or decrease.

Keep in mind that this point of view is just what it is, a point of view. Some will never accept the ideology of people being equal in our society. Regardless of the socioeconomic status a person identifies himself with, racism and prejudices will continue to separate us by either social or economic means.

Finally, during this journey from either upper socioeconomic to lower socioeconomic or vice versa, the person in question will have to spend some time in the middle. It is at this level where endurance, patience, and stability must be displayed. The MSES provides stability for its members because one will find the company man or woman, putting in those thirty years on one job. It is this class where many of our entrepreneurs are born. From the basement to the penthouse, the middle class is the station for transition and continues to be a major player in developing, maintaining, and sustaining a positive self-esteem.

Chapter 6

The Spiritual Connection

Regardless of the circumstances I find myself in, over the years, I call upon three scriptures to assist my efforts in achieving my goals. First, the apostle Paul says in Romans 8:20 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”. Believing this, helps me to strive to live a stress free life. When circumstances are beyond one’s control, a person is more apt to develop anxiety over the matter and anxiety leads to stress. The second scripture is similar to the first, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me” (Philippians 4:13).

As mentioned earlier, positive self-esteem is built on the premise that one must invest time and effort toward developing a sense of self-worth. Setting goals are easy, but the means by which we reach those goals can sometimes be very difficult. Oftentimes, obstacles can become so difficult that we abandon our goals—settling for less in life. Other times we grow stronger as circumstances become more difficult—and it seems as though there are forces preventing us from moving forward. Opportune times will come when our faith is

called upon to assist us in our quest to achieve our goals.

Finally, the third scripture, Philippians 4:11 refers to the ability to be content with our current situation in life—whether desirable or undesirable. Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ elaborates, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content”. All the ups and downs of life account for something. Being content with where we are at a certain point in our lives depends on the amount of faith we have in God and how we feel about our selves. Again, we find ourselves in a self-evaluating mode. There is a direct relationship to positive self-esteem and self-worth and is the basis for loving oneself.

In the book of Matthew chapter 22 and verses 37-40, Jesus gives us two commands, first we must love Him; then we must love others as we love ourselves. Speaking to a lawyer who tried to tempt him, Jesus said unto him, “Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. Of these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Therefore, according to God’s commandment, we cannot love someone else if we do not love ourselves.

The scripture does not contradict itself. We live in a society where many people do not love themselves. Evidence can be seen among those who sacrifice morals and values once held in high esteem by mistreating one another. There is little difference in the

projection of a violent movie and the six- o- clock news. Crime is running rampant and immorality is the order of the day. It is not uncommon to hear of the murder of innocent young children. The elderly are being murdered in their own homes. Husbands and wives are killing each other at an alarming rate and are taking their children's lives in the process. There are pestilences among us that are sometimes deliberately being spread from one person (AIDS) to another with no known cure in sight.

These things will continue to occur without love; for love must be taught and shared at an early age. Love is also synonymous with hope. Without hope, the chain of faith, hope, and charity will be broken. The lack of hope in our lives robs us of the blessings God has in store for us. Thus, we tend to develop our lives in such a way that self-esteem becomes simply a spark in the dark rather than the illumination. Jesus speaks about it in Matthew 5:16 when he says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven".

As time passes, we can relate to the importance of maintaining hope and how it helps us let our light shine. I am reminded of the phrase coined by Mr. Jessie Jackson as he says, (no disrespect to him for not addressing Mr. Jackson as Reverend because the scriptures instructs us to call no man your father, Matthew 23: 9-10; and that only the name of God is worthy of reverence, Psalm 111:9-10). "Keep Hope Alive" can be summed up by two means: developing and implementing. After developing a goal or plan. One must work

toward accomplishing that goal or plan. You must then continue to set personal goals for oneself.

When times of uncertainty are upon us, hope emerges to sustain us and helps us to keep our eyes on the prize. Others might identify hope as faith; both are used interchangeably depending on various beliefs. Hebrews 11: 1 explains faith this way, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen," so you see, you cannot have one without the other. Keep in mind that the amount of faith one has depends on the effort exerted in developing faith.

Knowingly, one must understand that faith is afforded by measures. Your faith increases over time. We say we have faith but we fail to exercise it. As for me, the same held true. There were times when I would pray for something and before you'd know it I would go back and pick up that prayer I left on the Lord's door step. As time passed my level of faith would increase and I would pray for something and would be surprised if it happened. At this stage of my life, I now pray for something and simply expect it to happen. My faith has increased and I now wait on the Lord because I have the faith that the Lord will do what he says he will do and the victory is already mine. Therefore by waiting on the Lord, our faith increases, enabling us to free ourselves from the bonds of despair; thus we use the wings of eagles to allow us to soar at greater heights. As spoken by the prophet Isaiah 40: 31, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." By having faith, we begin to experience the benefit of possessing positive self-esteem.

Chapter 7

The Education Connection

Our society tends to focus on education attainment (educating the masses) more than most other advanced countries. In this chapter, the writer inserts a practicum report taken from my dissertation, "The Effects of Positive Self-esteem on Reading Achievement of Students in Grades 1-3 at North Brooks Elementary School," April, 2001. This information will provide the reader with insight on personal experiences and contemporary research on reading achievement and positive self-esteem in children in grades 1-3 at this local elementary school.

From the pre-school years to higher education, we more often than not, measure our successes in life by how far we have advanced in the field of education. It is obvious that individual achievement has to be measured in some way. Most recently, the No Child Left Behind initiative has been the focus of using standardized test in order to measure school efforts and student achievement.

The 2001 federal initiative was designed to make sure students of all races and ethnic backgrounds perform as well as their classmates, but some critics say a loophole lets educators leave behind the very children who need the law's protection the most.

According to an Associated Press article, entitled “Lots of school children left behind” written by Doug Gross, he states, “test scores of more than 40,000 Georgia students—most of them minorities—have been ignored by education officials when measuring their schools’ efforts in order to meet the standards of the No Child Left Behind law”. The article points out that under the law, a school must consider the test scores of several subgroups of students—from boys and girls to black, Hispanic and Asian students—besides the school’s over-all score to determine if children are receiving an adequate education there. But the school is allowed to ignore a subgroup’s scores if the number of students in that group is small enough.

Problems arise when minorities are excluded from the testing pool. They are ultimately denied special instructions, and other resources necessary for academic gains. Note that the results of this initiative (NCLB), has jeopardized the self-esteem of approximately 1.9 million students across this nation.

An Associated Press analysis of 2003-04 U.S. Department of Education figures—the test on record—found that 40,532 Georgia students were excluded from the accounting of standardized test scores, roughly 28 percent of the students in the classes that were studied. The study checked students in grades 3-8 and 10—the most common grades for the No Child testing throughout the nation. In Georgia, 828,921 students were covered by the AP analysis.

Of the Georgia students whose test scores were excluded, 16,649 (41 percent) were Hispanic, 9,914

(24 percent) were Asian, 8,003 (20 percent) were black, and 4,677 (11 percent) were white. There were the more than 1.9 million students—or about 1 in every 14 test scores—nationwide excluded from the law's subgroup considerations in the survey. Minorities were seven times as likely to have their scores excluded as whites, the AP analysis showed. Less than 2 percent of white children's scores aren't being counted as a separate category. In contrast, Hispanics and blacks have roughly 10 percent of their scores excluded.

My experience as an elementary principal has afforded me the opportunity to compare and contrast data which indicated a correlation of students who scored low on standardized test or did not test, and those exhibiting poor behavior; due partly to having low self esteem. My dissertation report sheds light on this discovery. This chapter also provides a personal account of my own journey through the education process. As in my previous book, my educational attainment was mentioned in chapter 2, "Those Adolescent Years".

The focus is now placed on one of the most important achievements in my entire life; attaining a doctorate degree from NOVA University, Ft. Lauderdale Florida. This journey was one for the record books. For you see, it was the year of 1979 when I attempted to complete a doctorate in Public Administration. Eighteen months later I received a letter explaining my dismissal from the program. Twenty-two years later, I received another letter. This letter congratulated me for completing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership. I can truly

say that the effort put forth to earn a doctorate degree has been both uplifting and rewarding. As the saying goes, you can take away my possessions but my education attainment is something that cannot be taken away. Both letters are provided for review:



June 3, 1981

Mr. William Houseal
15475 S.W. 128 Court, C-103
Homestead, Florida 33030

Dear Willie:

A review of your progress since having been accepted into the DPA Program on a probationary status indicates that you have failed to work yourself off probation during the past six months. I have personally discussed your case at some length with Dr. Robert Baer, your Cluster Director, and he has asked that we extend your probationary period through Unit 3.2. Should you not have successfully brought your average up to 3.0 (a "B" average) by that point, we must unfortunately drop you from the program.

Willie, overcoming the two F's that you have received will be an extremely difficult task, and though we wish you the best of luck and any help that we can muster, I must tell you up front that the chances of your being able to work yourself off probation are not good.

If there is anything which I may do to clarify these points or elaborate upon them for you, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

David W. Britt, Ph.D.

David W. Britt, Ph.D.
Director, DPA Program

DWB:sh

cc: Dr. Robert Baer
Student File
Jane Gibson (Probation File)

NOVA
SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY

July 3, 2001

Dr. Willie H. Houseal (Macon VII)
576 Brookview Drive
Valdosta, GA 31602

Dear Dr. Houseal:

You have completed all of the academic requirements and the financial obligation of the National EdD Program for Educational Leaders. The formal award date for your EdD degree is April 30, 2001.

Enclosed is Nova Southeastern's Application for degree. Please check the information on this application. Your name will appear on your degree as it appears on this form. Make any changes, if necessary, and return all copies with your payment in the envelope provided. Upon receipt, the process for degree conferral will begin. If you have any questions concerning your transcript, diploma, or any issues related to your new EdD title, please contact Ms. Awilda Cordero, Program Office. A copy of your signature page is provided for your records.

The commencement date for 2001 is July 1st at 3:00 p.m., at the National Car Rental Center. Information will be sent by the Registrar's Office in the spring.

We would appreciate, although it is not required, your response to the enclosed Individualized Evaluation Questionnaire; it provides us with valuable information to improve the program.

Again, congratulations. The faculty and staff of the National EdD Program for Educational Leaders wish you well.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Faires, PhD
Program Dean

CLF: db
Enclosures



As in most cases, a positive self-esteem is synonymous with education attainment. Although there are studies on the subject of achievement and positive self-esteem, my personal letters indicated the importance of holding on to the belief that higher education promotes success. Those who share similar beliefs will agree that the feeling of accomplishment is similar to winning your own super bowl. Attaining this status yielded greater opportunities in the educational and corporate arena and promoted greater economic success.

In my opinion, achievement promotes positive self-esteem in many ways and can be the main drive toward becoming self-actualized. This reality was manifested in a practicum on student achievement and improved self-esteem at the elementary school where I was the principal.

This practicum focused on 55 students in Grades 1-3 at North Brooks Elementary School who needed to improve their reading skills and their behavior as well. The individual Norm Curve Equivalent Total Reading scores for these students fell below the 40th percentile on the 1999-2000 ITBS assessment. Even though they were served by various remedial programs, their reading scores did not improve. In addition, these students were responsible for the majority of discipline referrals reported from November 1999 - February 2000. Moreover, they displayed signs of low self-esteem.

During a 12-month period, the students participated in an intensive self-esteem program which placed emphasis on improving student behavior and enhancing reading skills. The terminal objectives in

this practicum were achieved by utilizing a combination of strategies.

To solve these problems, the writer implemented a self-esteem program which contained two key components: image-building and academic enrichment. The first component was image-building or self-esteem building. By placing emphasis on improving student behavior, the writer's first terminal objective exceeded the expected outcome. One strategy for this objective was to target only those students responsible for the 63 discipline referrals reported November 1999 - February 2000. In doing so, there were 35 fewer discipline referrals reported November 2000 - February 2001. The writer attributes this achievement to applying the image-building concept to improve student behavior.

The second terminal objective was also achieved. Individual and class average NCE scores for students in this practice in reading increased above the 40th percentile ranking for the same reporting period. This increase was attributed to the application of academic enrichment strategies such as computerized reading instruction and the use of phonic instruction (whole-part-whole reading model). As reading skills improved, the student's NCE scores increased as well.

Terminal Objective # 1 - Reducing Discipline Referrals

A positive self-esteem was imperative to the well being of the students. The image-building activities helped students develop more positive attitudes toward school and the courage to accept responsibility for their

actions. The process objective for image-building emphasized students' accomplishments using three recognition programs: closed circuit television program, Random Act of Kindness, and featured student achievements in the local newspaper.

The North Brooks Elementary Television program (NBE-TV) featured students in Grades 1-3 twice each week (Tuesday and Thursday). The Random Act of Kindness program provided deserving students with good behavior coupons for kind acts. The coupons were collected, counted, and placed in a file. These coupons were later redeemed for great prizes. In February 2001, 273 good behavior coupons were collected. Student accomplishments noteworthy for publication were featured in the local newspaper under the Times Feature Kids column. In February 2001, seventeen participants were featured.

Building self-esteem allowed these students to freely express themselves while at the same time, enhance their behavior. The positive reinforcement provided by the three image-building components also helped to reduce discipline referrals by 56% for the period reported; thus, the results of the terminal objective was met.

By utilizing the image-building component, 63 discipline referrals were reported (November 1999 - February 2000). However, only 28 referrals were reported by the Osiris Student Data System during (November 2000 - February 2001). The aim for this objective was to reduce these referrals by at least 50% within a designated period of time (November 2000 -

February 2001). Discipline referrals decreased by 56% exceeding the expected outcome for this objective.

Terminal Objective #2 - Increase Reading NCE scores of Program Participants to the 40th percentile by Improving their Reading Skills

Academic enrichment was the second terminal objective which focused on raising the NCE scores of these 55 students by improving their reading skills. This terminal objective was achieved when the combined average NCE reading scores for students in Grades 1-3 increased from the 31st to the 56th percentile in February 2001. Total Reading scores for 40 of the 55 students in this program exceeded the projected outcome. Specifically, individual Reading NCE scores showed significant gains and ranged from 30th percentile, to 60th percentile and above. This was accomplished by incorporating a portion of a computerized reading program, The Whole Language Approach and the Saxon Reading Approach became the whole-part-whole reading model. This model blended the necessary reading skills to allow for flexibility based on the students' needs.

Discussion of Results

Modern day schools reflect the ever-changing microcosm of our society. Students are faced with complicated challenges each day at school. Oftentimes, they lack the social tools and coping skills needed to compete, thus resulting in failure. Many students are performing poorly in academics and continue to cause

problems for themselves and others. Regardless of the demographic, the problems students encounter are more similar than different. With the combination of academic strategies and provisions allowed for students to achieve beyond academics, students were able to advance academically and enhance human growth development simultaneously.

Chapter 8

The Psychological Connection

Our psychological make-up consists of cataloging needs and desires that helps us sustain our lives. Those things that are needed on a daily basis require constant effort and preparation, and must be placed on the front burner. On the other hand, we oftentimes place our desires on the back burner.

One way of distinguishing our needs from desires is to establish a hierarchy of needs. Abraham Maslow, a noted psychologist and author, states, “the hierarchy of needs is based on the assumption that individuals are motivated to satisfy a number of needs”. These needs dictate to the order of ranking for most people. Maslow’s hierarchy includes:

1. Physiological—food, thirst, sleep, health, body needs, exercise, and rest
2. Safety—protection, comfort, peace, no threats, long-term economic and overall well being.
3. Social—acceptance, belonging, group membership and participation, love and affection.
4. Esteem—recognition, prestige, confidence, leadership, competence, and overall success.

5. Self-actualization—self-fulfillment of potential, challenge, curiosity, and creativity.

According to Maslow, when our immediate needs are met, we can then concentrate our efforts on the things that interest us most. The problems arise when our priorities are out of order and we engage in practices that are counter-productive and self-destructive.

A modern day issue which many would rather not talk about is vanity. Being caught up in vain endeavors toward physical attraction in an attempt to feel better about oneself is a multi-billion dollar industry and has caused a considerable amount of pain and suffering by those who engage in such practices. Our younger generation engages in extreme body mutilation by piercing and tattooing themselves from head to toe, just to say “Hello! Here I am”.

On the other hand, the older generation engages in all sorts of body augmentations as well. Procedures such as body part implants, liposuction; plastic surgery, face lifts, extreme dieting programs, hair transplants; and botox treatments become lifestyle decisions. All are futile attempts to change the way we look and feel about ourselves. Also note that we are currently facing an obesity epidemic in this country where the young and old are encountering health problems related to being overweight.

Kindness toward overweight individuals in our society tends to be somewhat null and void. Their lack of self-esteem is evident by their actions as they tend to live to eat rather than eat to live. Not to mention the

physical and mental abuse that is associated with this condition sometimes perpetrated by others. These and other issues are examples of people who suffer from problematic esteem issues.

Many times people go to the extreme in an attempt to create a positive self-esteem, only to find themselves having a false sense of security and self-confidence. I'm often reminded of the words of the Ecclesiastes preacher, "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity". (Eccl. 12:8)

We sometimes find ourselves seeking happiness as an approach to achieving positive self-esteem, only to discover that seeking happiness in love, family, or a relationship with a significant other can be a delusion. Harvard psychology professor, Daniel Gilbert Knopf, an author of the much talked about new book, "Stumbling on Happiness" suggests that everyone has an emotional baseline—level of happiness we tend to gravitate to after being happy or unhappy. Happiness can be delusional because happiness is not a possession. However, happiness in its purest form can be as simple as enjoying an old Andy Griffith rerun.

Nature endows us with an emotional thermostat that fluctuates. This fluctuation is caused by circumstances occurring below and above the baseline. These occurrences have emotional weights attached to them, for instance, not getting your mail on time may not affect you that much, but not getting your check in the mail on time may just raise your blood pressure.

People seek fame and fortune hoping that they find happiness and self-worth only to discover that these

things contribute little to increase their state of mind in relation to happiness and positive self-esteem. Even having a family can sometimes cause more stress than anyone can imagine because there may be a family member who struggles with drug addiction, alcoholism, or other social ills and are constantly causing disruption in the family.

Considering the fact that some may see the “Golden Age” as a time when many of our worries are over and the chase for the mighty dollar bill becomes a slow walk; this is a time when we’re suppose to be experiencing the best times of our lives, but all of a sudden, health problems or death of a significant other causes happiness to fall far below the baseline, and our self-esteem is dealt a devastating blow. As elusive as happiness can be at any age, just by hanging in there and being content with where we are in life, we will be able to realize the true meaning of happiness.

When it comes to having low or negative self-esteem, one issue seldom talked about is “depression”. In fact, depression and low self-esteem are synonymous with each other within our society today. The story is told by Jim Thornton, editor of Health Report, of Henry T’s life—he always had trouble getting close to people, and he depended on alcohol to take the edge off the loneliness and alienation. Henry endured bouts of depression, though he always bounced back after a few months. Following retirement from his job as a graphic designer, Henry now 68, experienced his worst depression ever. In the dead of one New York State winter, he stopped going out, stopped shaving, and

stopped washing. Many nights he couldn't sleep. His appetite vanished, and he lost 25 pounds.

By the summer of 2004, Henry's depression had become so deep that relatives in his hometown of Pittsburgh, feared he might take his own life so they convinced him to move back home. At the urging of a worried cousin, Henry reluctantly agreed to see Charles F. Reynolds III, MD, director of the Late-Life Mood-Disorders Center at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC). With this decision Henry took the first—and most difficult—step toward improving his self-image and reclaiming his life.

Though depression is a disease that afflicts both genders, a growing number of researchers believe men bear unique burdens that make it much harder for them to get treatment. In fact, depression hits older men with a particular vengeance. A variety of issues threatens the self-esteem of men when they grow older. Reynolds points out three main culprits responsible for attacking the esteem of older men:

Retirement—those who have derived their main sense of identity and self-esteem from careers can suddenly find themselves feeling purposeless.

Bereavement—loosing a spouse is an important risk factor for depression and low self-esteem, with roughly one in five of those widowed developing the disease in the first year. Men are especially vulnerable, because they tend to have fewer close friends to lean on than women do.

Disability—cardiovascular diseases, including heart attacks and strokes; chronic pain from

osteoarthritis or lower-back injuries; insomnia, Alzheimer and other medical conditions common with age can all precipitate depression leading to low self-esteem.

It is more likely than not that depression follows sudden disabilities and has both a psychological component (that is, it's depressing to lose the ability to move or speak normally) and a neuron-anatomical component (injury to specific brain regions can directly dampen a mood). Once disability triggers depression, the two conditions can feed off each other, though it doesn't have to be this way.

From a personal stand-point, I experienced both conditions only temporarily and mildly at best. A March 2005 study published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society showed that treating an older man's depression often translates into significant improved self-image, physical health and functioning as well. Realizing that depression is a disease that can be treated, the myth should be set aside and a plan should be initiated for healing.

Chapter 9

The Economical Connection

True believers understand the fact that the poor will be with us always. The poor by other names would be classified as Lower Socioeconomic Status (LSES) the disenfranchised, and those who live in poverty. We live in a society that sets economic boundaries within its classes of people, dictating to who we should be, where we live, and how we should act. Although great economic gains have been made among individuals within the ethnic and racial classes, for the masses however, the economic gap has become increasingly larger due to the new form of poverty emerging in our society.

This new poverty emerges as the results of layoffs, outsourcing, mergers, buyouts, and factory closures. The age-old debate has now come to an end between the Democrat and Republican Senate who argued back and forth concerning raising the minimum wage. Democrats claimed it was past time to boost the \$5.15 hourly pay that had been in effect for nearly a decade. Republican leaders made it clear they did not intend to vote on the issue without an attached bill. The Republicans argued that a minimum wage increase would hurt the lower-socioeconomic worker because

for every increase made, some of the hourly wage workers would loose their jobs. The argument ended in 2007 as the minimum wage bill was passed and will be increased to \$7.25 over the course of two years, but only after it became an attachment to the Iraq war spending bill.

It should be noted that no one who works hard for a living should be permanently locked into poverty. Philosophies clash among Democrats and Republicans in that one believes in the marketplace, (the competitive system and entrepreneurship) and the other believes that the government knows better and that top-down mandates work. Both arguments have merit.

Self-esteem has its place in both equations. Take for example, the 30-year company man or woman who depended on the promises made by the company, experiences a layoff or factory closure. These people must find a way to make adjustments at a later stage of their productive years. Imagine how you would feel if you had to face the obstacle of seeking employment at age 55.

Many middle class individuals are falling victims to an ailing economic system they once believed in and are now facing grave financial circumstances. Americans are confronted with situations that are currently jeopardizing their hopes for a decent quality of life during their retirement years.

Jacob Hacker, a Yale University political scientist, has emerged as an incisive voice on issues relating to retirement security and income volatility. In his forthcoming book 'The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Insecurity—And What Can Be Done About

(Oxford University Press), Hacker explores the trend of the decline of traditional pensions. He spoke recently in an AARP Bulletin.

What is the impact of the erosion of pensions for the American worker? He suggests that the “great risk shift”—the growing transfer of economic risks and responsibilities from employers and governments onto workers and their families are creating a new form of poverty. The psychological and economical impact on these workers is enormous. Those who were once considered as bread winners suddenly become dependent on unknown sources to make ends meet—causing a decline in self-worth and a reduction of positive self-esteem to a more defined negative or low self-esteem.

The writer shared the story of the “three legged elephant” in a previous chapter. Ironically, historically speaking, American retirement security was based on what experts called a “three-legged stool”; Social Security, traditional defined-benefit pensions and personal savings. It’s crucial to recall that two of these three legs were essentially guaranteed. Social Security and private pensions used to give workers a predetermined monthly income in retirement, regardless of exactly how long or how well the stock and bond market performed.

During the past 20 years we’ve gone from having two stable legs to only one. Families’ three-legged stool of retirement security has become more wobbly, and financially, more and more Americans are finding themselves falling without warning. What other risks are American workers facing?

Workers face new and intensified risks from three main directions—from the job market; which has become more uncertain and anxiety-producing despite robust employment numbers; from the restructuring of pension and health care benefits; and from the growing challenges many working families face balancing work and family. We can see these risks in many places. The rising numbers of Americans filing bankruptcy; the growing proportion of the mortgages that are in foreclosure; and the rising ranks of those without health insurance now exist at an alarming rate.

Perhaps most directly, we can see the great risks shift in the growing instability of American families' incomes. Hacker calculated that family income has become roughly twice as unstable since the early 1970s, that this instability has been rising ever faster than income inequality, and that the rise is just as steep for the well-educated as for the less well-educated.

Although the instability of retirement continues to plague the American worker, there are still other issues that could damage the esteem of those who once depended on the idea of being self-sufficient and economically stable. Issues such as disability and chronic illnesses must be dealt with as well. There's a huge risk that more and more of the benefits which these workers planned their whole lives around will soon be pulled out from under them. All of these issues take their rightful place in the long line of challenges in maintaining a positive self-esteem as we continue to maintain a decent quality of living.

Then there's one other group, the Lower Socio-Economic (LSES) members of our society who are having difficulty becoming gainfully employed. There are those who are being left behind as they grow older as well as many of those of the younger generation, in particular, black youth in our society who are having the most difficulty.

This group leaves me with a sense of deep unease and frustration over the prospect of so many young black men who are becoming a part of an unjust judicial system and are being pushed further and further out to the margins—so far from the mainstream that they no longer identify with anyone other than themselves.

Many of these young men chose to create their own identities, by wearing dreads, baggy clothing so low—showing their underwear, and harboring an attitude of anger and distrust. Keep in mind that there are many young members of the black community who are hard working and accomplished professionals. These are the physicians and medical service personnel, legal professionals, college professors, political consultants, journalist, business administrators, social service providers, public educators and more. However, there is a great majority of our society (whites as well as blacks) who live in a troubled universe of marginalized underachievers.

An article written by Cynthia Tucker, an AP Journalist, shares with the readers a story of being assigned to find laborers to help complete her mother's new house in Monroeville, Alabama, a small place with a declining textile industry. The assignment led her to

the alternate universe of black men without jobs or prospects or enthusiasm for hard labor. She looked among unemployed high-school classmates, members of her mother's church and men standing on nearby street corners. Her experience brought her face-to-face with every unappealing behavior that she'd heard attributed to idle black men but dismissed as stereotype. One man worked a couple of days and never came back. One young man worked 30 minutes before he deserted. Others promised to come to work but never did.

This story is hardly an academic overview. The evidence is anecdotal. But it jibes with the treatises we read about portraying a permanent underclass of black men with criminal records and low educational attainment; with multiple children and little cash.

These are men who can no longer count on the military as an option because it doesn't want them. The armed forces seek high-school graduates with decent reading and math skills to operate high-tech gizmos.

By some estimates, the unemployment rate among black male high-school dropouts in their 20's is 72 percent, while the comparable rate among young, uneducated white men is 34 percent, and among Latinos, 19 percent (keep in mind that this is the consequence of a dying manufacturing base that has stranded men who otherwise would have had jobs with decent wages and good benefits). A new problem now exist as a wave of illegal immigrants further marginalizes uneducated black men in our society.

One can go to any construction site and count the number of black men among the menial laborers. You

won't find many. Dig a little deeper and you'll find a web of stereotypes knotted up with some thorny truths. Among other things, employers in the building trades frequently brush aside black men in favor of Latinos, believing that immigrant labor is more reliable and certainly more economical. Every time a black man fails a drug test or disappears after a few days of work, he reinforces the stereotype, making it less likely that the employer will hire other black men.

Some economists say that native-born laborers—black, white and brown—are simply discouraged by the low wages that so many employers can get away with paying to illegal workers. George Borjas and Lawrence Katz of Harvard University estimate that U.S. high-school dropouts would earn as much as 8 percent more if it weren't for Mexican immigration. Of course, 8 percent of very little is still not much at all.

Globalization has taught us that the less complex the task, the lower the wage it will attract in a global marketplace. That's especially true if labor is willing to move around.

Cynthia Tucker's mother's house was finally completed. Her sister's father-in-law worked from dawn to dusk as he found enough willing workers to complete the job. That part of the tale has a happy ending but I'm afraid that our young black men are pushed so far away from the margins that they can no longer identify with the rest of us. That story simply cannot end well.

A recent discussion with my brother, Nathaniel yielded some interesting wisdom. Nat puts it like this for those who can identify with the mechanics of the

automobile; "the rotations per minute (RPMs) gauge the rotations of the engine, while the speedometer measures the miles per hour (MPH) and monitors speed and distance. Your RPMs (your efforts made) must constantly increase if you hope to get anywhere in life at a comfortable pace, especially during a time when we are working harder and longer and getting less in return".

Chapter 10

Savoring the Moment

I would rather live like a king and dream sweet dreams at night than to actually be a king, ruling a kingdom and not being able to sleep at all. We live in a society that has made it difficult to, as we say, “stop and smell the roses”. Many labor till the day is done (death), rather than take stock of their lives in such a manner that allows us to ask the question, what do we want out of life? Circumstances in my life afforded me to do just that. The result of self-examination was a real eye opener. At the same time, the results yielded a fascinating, invigorating and rewarding experience. As we labor to build a positive self-esteem, we can benefit from the accomplishments otherwise coined, “fruits of our labor”.

Upon completing a doctorate degree in 2001, I had flashbacks about the times I read the “regret to inform you” letter from NOVA University in 1980. I fell short back then, but not counted out. Nearly a quarter of a century later, I received another letter from NOVA congratulating me on earning a doctorate degree in Education Leadership. I will spend the rest of my life savoring the moment. What a great self-esteem builder and it didn't stop there.

When my career as a public school educator came to an end, there was no greater joy I could have known that I was able to raise the quality of education for my students, which allowed them to advance to the ranks of National and State Academic Performance during the school-year 2002.

awarded by the Governor of the State of Georgia

The same holds true for the date, March 20, 1999, the day when a proclamation was declared in my honor in Willie House of Day in the City of Valdosta, Georgia.

1999
March 20, 1999
Valdosta, Georgia

[Faint signature]



STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
ATLANTA 30334-0900

Roy E. Barnes
GOVERNOR

October 16, 2002

Dr. Willie Houseal
Principal
North Brooks Elementary School
RR 2, Box 667
Quitman, Georgia 31643

Dear Dr. Houseal:

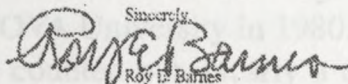
You, your teachers and staff are to be commended for the improvements in student achievement at North Brooks Elementary School that were reflected in your Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) scores in the spring of 2002. Dr. Davis Nelson, Executive Director of the Office of Education Accountability, has shared with me a list of schools that improved by moving students out of the "does not meet" category by 10 percentage points or more in reading, language arts, and math for grades four, six and eight. I am pleased to learn that your school is on the list of Succeeding Schools.

Two years ago, the first round of CRCT scores was released, and clearly North Brooks Elementary School responded to the challenge of raising student achievement: not because of rankings, but because of concern for children. You, your teachers, staff, parents and students have worked very hard to make this happen.

I have asked Dr. Nelson and Ms. Cathy Henson, Chair of the State Board of Education, to consult with you and others at your school, as well as with Mrs. Kathy Taylor, to help identify those improvement strategies that you think are working best. I am very interested in learning about the reasons for your success.

Please accept my sincere congratulations and best wishes as you continue to lead the way in raising student achievement.

Sincerely,


Roy E. Barnes

RRR:bw:nyw
cc: Mrs. Kathy Taylor

I attribute this effort to the residuals of achieving academic excellence through the doctorate program and a hard working staff. Once again, positive self-esteem proved evident to be a motivating force in goal-setting for my teachers and students. Savoring the moment can be an on-going experience. There's not a day goes by that I don't show appreciation for the recognition awarded by the Governor of the State of Georgia.

The same holds true for the date, March 20, 1999, the day when a proclamation was declared in my name as Willie Houseal Day in the City of Valdosta, Georgia.



James H. Rainwater
Mayor

CITY of VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

PROCLAMATION

WILLIE HOUSEAL

WHEREAS, Willie Houseal was born and raised in the small southern town of Valdosta, Georgia and has three children: Willie Jr., Yorshia, and Terry; and

WHEREAS, at an early age, Mr. Houseal joined the armed forces and served fourteen years, including duty in Vietnam as a member of the 19th Tass Reconnaissance Team; and

WHEREAS, upon his discharge, Mr. Houseal chose education as his field of interest and attended several institutions, including Pepperdine University and Valdosta State University and is presently a doctoral candidate of NOVA University; and

WHEREAS, in addition to writing, Mr. Houseal enjoys sports, music, reading and nature, and is a dedicated Elder of the River Street Church of Christ in Valdosta, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Houseal uses the culture of the rural south and the Civil Rights Movement in the early part of this century as the backdrop for his narrative. He traces the gradual improvement in the black white relations and the elimination of segregation, along with his own rise to City Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem, which attest to the many changes that have taken place in this country over recent decades; and

WHEREAS, throughout his book, *The Power of Self-Esteem Using It All To Get It All*, he presents us with pieces of simple but powerful wisdom, and meditations upon the nature of the individual. Mr. Houseal demonstrates, through his own life, how self-esteem turns obstacles into opportunities and how a whole new set of experiences awaits us.

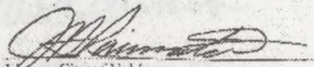
NOW, THEREFORE, I, James H. Rainwater, Mayor of the City of Valdosta, do hereby proclaim Saturday, March 20, 1999 as

WILLIE HOUSEAL DAY

in Valdosta and call upon all friends and citizens to attend a book signing at the River Street Church of Christ at 6:00 p.m. and offer congratulations to one who has contributed so much to the betterment of our community.

SO PROCLAIMED, this 20th day of March 1999.




Mayor, City of Valdosta

Then, there was the recognition from Congress, where Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. recognized the outstanding achievement, service and public distinction I made during my career as an educator. These memories will be with me to cherish and share with my family and friends forever.



Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition

*presented by
Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
to*

Dr. Willie Herman Houseal

*in recognition of outstanding achievement, service
and public distinction.*

May 22, 2002

Date

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

As we live from day to day, we often fail to cherish the moments. Many people feel they will live forever, thus paying no attention to the importance of living for today (the present). I am reminded of two Scriptures that bring attention to the importance of taking the time to cherish the moment by living for today. In the book of Luke 12:16-20, Jesus gives us the parable of the farmer who had a buffer crop. Instead of making the most of what he had and sharing with those without, he chose to keep it all for himself and build larger barns to store his buffer crop, thinking he would be around in the future to enjoy it. He had no control of his future, and his soul was required of him that very night.

The same was true for King Hezekiah (II Kings 20:6) when he was informed that he should get his house in order for he was to surely die. At least he was afforded the opportunity to do just that as an extension on his life was given to him. This is a luxury many people cannot and will not have. Therefore, we should focus on the moment and not get caught up in the past because the past is gone forever; nor should we become so engrained in future endeavors because tomorrow is not promised to us.

I close this chapter by recalling one of the most honored moments I experienced while writing this book. Instead of sharing moments of personal accolades, I felt it fitting to introduce someone other than myself; someone who has experienced one of the primary evils of our time to its fullest, racism.

It is my opinion that racism has been the primary weapon used to destroy the self-esteem of people of

color. African Americans in particular, have had to suffer shame and loss of dignity; for it was this reason why I chose this particular person because he experienced it first hand and lived to tell about it. He had to endure the insults for an entire race of people because of the position he held as a black fighter pilot during WWII.

On March 29, 2007, in Washington, D.C., A prestigious Congressional Medal (Congressional Gold Medal) award ceremony took place for over 300 members of the all black fighter pilot unit known as Tuskegee Airmen and their widows. I thought it would be enlightening to share with the reader insights on this special person who has a history of overcoming racism and other adversities, while maintaining dignity.

I had the privilege of having a phone conversation with one of the Tuskegee Airmen, Major Carroll S. Woods (now deceased). I realized that I was talking to one of the members of this most prestigious fighter pilot unit, a living legend, a trailblazer; and I gave him the utmost respect. This was one of those moments that I would cherish for a long time. It is common knowledge that The Tuskegee Airmen occupy a very special place not only in Black history, but in *American history* as well. However, Maj. Woods is of special interest to me because he was a native of Valdosta, Georgia. He graduated from Dasher High School in 1939 and accomplished something unheard of in his day; he went directly to flight training academy from high school.

Maj. Woods excelled as a P-51 Mustang pilot with the 332 Fighter Group and flew over 100 missions in

the skies over Italy, Sicily, and Central Europe as an escort for the Army Air Corps during World War II. The Tuskegee Airmen never lost a bomber to enemy fighters, a record no other fighter group achieved.

Unfortunately, as Maj. Woods was flying a mission over Greece, he was shot down. He was held captive for seven months (along with 10,000 other allied troops) in a Starlag prison camp, where he only suffered a sprained ankle during the entire ordeal. His background is full of rich experiences that set perfect examples of what can be accomplished with determination, persistence and desire.

These three ingredients are vital to the development of self-esteem. Maj. Woods faced many adverse conditions, from a youth throughout his adult life; recalling a time when he and his mother entered a bank and his mother shared her enthusiasm (of her son becoming a commissioned officer and earning his flying wings) with the white banker. His response was less than warm to say the least, or the time he went in the Kress department store and was told by his mother not to look suspicious and to maintain his dignity.

There were racially charged incidents on the buses and on the streets, yet Maj. Woods did not allow these encounters to dampen his spirit nor cause him to feel inferior. His self-esteem was intact. This sense of pride was given to him by his parents, but he earned his esteem by studying and working hard toward his mission in life. Maj. Woods' mission lasted far beyond the ages of flying P51 Mustangs.

After retiring from the military, he began a new career in higher education at Alabama State University where he retired in 1995. At 87 years of age, he still inspired the younger generation to know that positive self-esteem is essential in achieving personal goals in life.

Chapter 11

Sustaining Positive Self-Esteem

So far, we have focused on how the general structure and process of self-esteem changes with age. Intervals of time bring about self evaluation. And those evaluations provide the feedback as to how we feel about ourselves. Our main drive is to maintain a sense of pride and dignity as we live in our society. As the world's population continues to grow (more than 6.4 billion at the time of this writing), we strive to attain a unique identity that sets us apart from the crowd. By improving our self-esteem, we are able to successfully reinvent ourselves at any stage of our lives. Nathaniel Branden, Self-esteem at work: How Confident People Make Powerful Companies offers six pillars of self-esteem which helps us develop and sustain our positive self-esteem:

1. **Live consciously. Be actively and fully engaged in what you do and with whom you interact.** There's a cliché that states, "You can't hang out with the turkeys and soar with the eagles at the same time." Keeping company with those who constantly challenge and criticize your every move proves only to be a

distraction and should be avoided whenever possible. Being aware of your surroundings keeps one alert to the ever changing environment. By insuring personal goals are aligned with the mandates of our daily lives, a level of personal dignity will be sustained for those who possess high self-esteem.

2. Be self-accepting. Don't be overly judgmental or critical of your thoughts and actions.

It is often said, "We're our worst critics, our own worst enemy." We tend to second guess ourselves at critical times when making decisions. By accepting our limitations and being able to accept our weaknesses, we are able to develop realistic goals and are able to increase our chances of reaching them. This calls for a realistic self-evaluation of ourselves, and our circumstances, then conducting a self screening process of the variables and factors which could easily beset us.

3. Take personal responsibility: take full responsibility for your decisions and actions in life's journey. Blaming others for our mistakes or shortcomings only allows us to feel better about failure. Displacement takes place when we project our faults on others, particularly those closest to us. When experiencing displacement, our mirror image tends to become distorted with the faces of others staring back at us. It takes courage to own up to our shortcomings, and courage is one of the

main ingredients found in people who possess high or positive self-esteem.

4. **Be self-assertive. Be authentic and willing to defend your beliefs when interacting with others, rather than bending to their will to be accepted or liked.** I find it refreshing to know that we possess a special power within that allows us to establish our belief systems as we travel our own path in life. This drive within allows us to strive for that special something in life that means the most to us. For example, buying a new home, operating a successful business, or simply gaining employment oftentimes leads to a decent quality of life. We can be confident that we will succeed regardless of those who oppose us. There is a greater power out there that grants us the strength to wait on the Lord and mount up with wings as eagles which helps us to soar high above the adversities of life. This belief assures us that regardless of the out-come, things will work in our favor. I firmly believe that this greater power comes from The Son of the Living God, Jesus Christ.
5. **Live purposefully. Have clear near-term and long-term goals and realistic plans for achieving them to create a sense of control over your life.** As we focus on the goals for our lives, we must keep in mind that the dullest pencil is better than the sharpest mind. Take the time to use pencil and paper to create a time

line for achieving your objectives and goals. At each point of the continuum you are able to access the progress of your goals and take the necessary action to remain on track. This action yields a sense of autonomy especially at times when it seems that circumstances tend to dictate our every move.

6. Have personal integrity. Be true to your word and your values. Once upon a time a person's word was their bond. When you made a promise, you kept it. Today, things are much different. Lying has evolved to its highest level. Politicians, clergies, educators, and citizens alike are taking lying to the highest level. Some believe that the conflict in the Middle East is predicated upon a lie. Our government deliberately fabricated a crisis in order to sway public opinion. It is obvious that there is a sense of moral decay taking place in our society.

Although lying is widespread in our society, one can still maintain a sense of integrity as we operate from day-to-day. Keep in mind that God has labeled lying as one of the most hated sins. If we say what we mean and mean what we say, there would be no need to repeat ourselves. And if for any reason we need to repeat ourselves, the message remains the same, regardless of the lapse of time.

Between self-esteem and the practices that support it, it is my opinion that there is a link between possess-

ing high self-esteem and achieving personal success. In translation, behaviors that generate good self-esteem can be identified and incorporated into our daily lives. This allows us to become self-sustaining or self-actualized at some point in our lives.

For even eagles sometimes need a push. Although they are the masters of soaring high above the earth, there comes a time when they will have to leave the nest. I am sure that before they leave their nests, the parents would have endowed them with the necessary survival skills. It is equally important that we as parents teach necessary lessons which help our children survive while maintaining self-esteem at the same time. These lessons should focus on acquiring self-pride, self-awareness and self-esteem, and must be passed on to the future generations.

These lessons should include: self appreciation; for without the assumption about one's potential, unbelief will limit our sense of dignity; visualization, for without visualization, we have no fuel for motivation or fuel to take charge of our own future; confidence, for confidence gives us power of purpose; when we offer service to others we make a difference in this world. Confidence is directly linked to purpose; finally, we have commitment, for there are times when commitment is grossly underestimated.

The old cliché holds some truth that, "If we don't stand for something we will fall for anything". There is a difference between just being interested and being committed; the pig was committed but the cow was interested, for the difference is one died for the cause

while the other lived to give another day. But giving is a good thing, for if our youth are taught to give, then they will become adults who give. Life is empty when we are not being useful. Giving of ourselves promotes longlasting affects on our lives because life is at its best when we share with one another.

Chapter 12

Summary

Having written a second book on self-esteem, I now have a deep rooted interest in this subject. It is common knowledge that the journey of life has many ups and downs, therefore, the primary purpose of this book is to substantiate the importance of self-evaluation from early childhood to the golden years, how experiences sometimes dictate the challenges we encounter and how we handle these challenges. In writing this book, the term self-esteem is examined in relation to life experiences, information taken from current research, books, journals, and pamphlets.

From the time the first book was written and published in 1998, many events took place changing the course in my life. I met several challenges head on and lived to tell about it. There were moments of joy and sadness and in between. There were feelings of ambiguity, not really knowing what to make of things. As in the previous publication, there were shared moments of achievements one could only surmise as being a blessing from God. These moments were shared in hopes that the reader would be able to identify with my journey in life and perhaps become inspired by the positive outcomes.

It is hoped that the reader would realize the fact that at any age, one can experience a downturn in life that could leave one helpless and afraid, or the opposite could occur; being able to climb a mountain you thought was impossible. Take for example, being able to maximize your potential in your profession, or to recover from a catastrophic illness that could lead one permanently physically or mentally disabled.

Not only should this book remind us that self-evaluation is an ongoing process, but that our evaluation of ourselves can be shared by others around us. We are reminded in the scriptures that, "We are written epistles, read by men". It has also been noted that our beliefs dictate to our hopes and desires. If you want something bad enough you must work toward that end. Nothing happens by chance. Plans are made and plans are carried out. As the saying goes "We don't plan to fail, we simply fail to plan."

This brings us back to the true meaning of self-esteem. As previously stated, self-esteem is a belief about one's own self-worth based on an overall self-evaluation. It is measured by the respondents of statements indicating the agreement or disagreement with both negative and positive connotations. Statements such as, "I feel I am a person of worth, the equal of other people, or I feel I do not have much to be proud of". If one agrees with the first statement, that person exhibits positive self-esteem; seeming worthwhile, capable and acceptable. On the other hand people with low or negative self-esteem view themselves in negative terms. They do

not feel good about themselves and are hampered by self-doubt.

Regardless of the position one takes in this spectrum of life's realities, one must realize that life itself is a gift—a gift from God. Making the best of what life has to offer takes work, and blaming others for the pitfalls in life places unnecessary burdens on the individual, requiring twice the effort to rise from the depths of despair. While on the other hand, that same energy might well had been used to climb the highest mountain. When your life is in order, quality time can be spent preparing for the new journey that awaits us. We will spend eternity somewhere, it's up to you to determine where you spend it.

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A Word About the Author

Dr. Willie Houseal was born and raised in Valdosta, Georgia. At 17 years of age, he joined the U.S. Air Force and served as an aircraft mechanic and dental hygienist. During this time frame, he also served a tour in Viet Nam as a member of the 19th TASS Reconnaissance Team. Upon his discharge, he embarked on an education career which lasted more than 25 years. He is the author of the book *The Power of Self-Esteem, "Using It All to Get It All"* published in 1998. In 2002, he retired as an elementary school principal.

Dr. Houseal earned a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Pepperdine University; a Masters and Specialist Degree in Education from Valdosta State University, and a Doctorate Degree in Education Leadership from NOVA University. He has served as Student Supervisor for Early Childhood Education student teachers at Valdosta State University, Interim Academic Director at Park University, Moody AFB Valdosta, Georgia, and is currently an adjunct professor in Human Resources Management and Early Childhood Education.

In addition to writing, Dr. Houseal enjoys sports, music, nature watching, and is a dedicated song leader and Elder at the Church of Christ at River Street in Valdosta. He has three children and four grandchildren.



To order additional copies of *The Power of Positive Self-Esteem* . “*Developing, Implementing and Sustaining,*” make check or money order for each book in the amount of \$15.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling payable to:

Dr. Willie Houseal
764 Lake Laurie Dr.
Valdosta, Georgia, 31605
(229) 244-4608

About the Author



The message of hope continues as Dr. Willie Houseal produces his second publication on the subject of self-esteem. Although Dr. Houseal continues to write about his own life experiences, he incorporates research taken from his doctorate dissertation, books, journals, pamphlets, and the news media. The book presents us with pieces of simple but powerful wisdom, and meditations upon the idea that positive self-esteem has to be developed; should be implemented; and must be sustained in order to maintain a proper balance in life.

Dr. Houseal shares his passion on the subject of positive self-esteem by exposing his life experiences and the experiences of others in a manner which many can relate. Through research, he gives insights on the connection between self-esteem and the sociological, spiritual, educational, psychological, and the economical concept of life. He shares personal experiences of suffering a stroke and having to retire early at the peak of a career, and ultimately being able to cherish special accolades achieved over a period of time. In summary, he offers suggestions as to how to be content with where you are in life at any age in one's life, even during times of uncertainty.

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