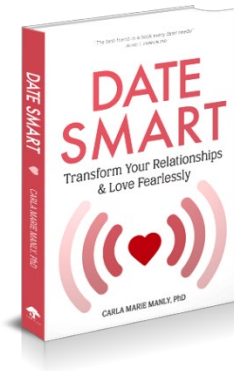


“YOUR JOURNEY”



Adapted from *Date Smart: Transform Your Relationships & Love Fearlessly*

by Dr. Carla Marie Manly

BUILDING YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

Do you want to feel truly great about yourself? Would you like to feel at ease wherever you are? Do you wish you felt more comfortable in your own skin? Do you want to be your best self and attract the love you deserve? If so, this powerful “Your Journey” self-esteem worksheet is meant just for you.

As you create a foundation of strong self-esteem, you’ll feel empowered by knowing you deserve to be loved for *all* of who you are! Solid self-esteem is rooted in love, respect, tolerance, and compassion. Without solid self-esteem, you may struggle with a chronic inner voice of self-doubt and even self-loathing. Low self-esteem may leave you feeling unlovable, anxious, and depressed. You may find yourself retreating into a gloomy world where you feel small and invisible. On the other hand, you might find yourself masking low self-esteem with a people-pleasing attitude, a false “happy face,” showy behavior, or self-absorbed tendencies. Low self-esteem often results in a sense of not being your best self—or even knowing what your best self looks like.

This worksheet will help you understand the nature of self-esteem and the meaning it holds for you. It will also help you begin to build your self-esteem so that you feel more in tune with who you are and *who you want to be*. It’s important to know what self-esteem is so that you can nurture it consciously.

- **Step 1:** What is self-confidence? Sometimes we use the terms self-esteem and self-confidence interchangeably, yet they are very different. Self-confidence arises from abilities or characteristics in certain areas and is often dependent on something external or fleeting, such as looks, achievements, or skills. Self-confidence often diminishes if a characteristic or skill declines; self-confidence is often dependent on something *impermanent*. It’s important to note that a person can be self-confident in a certain area and actually have low self-esteem. For example, a person might be confident about their physical appearance or business abilities but have very poor self-esteem. That’s why a successful person driving a fancy car or the “it’s all about me” individual often has low self-esteem. Some who appear “super self-confident” may wear a mask of superiority to hide a deep inner sense of inferiority—and they don’t want anyone (even themselves) to know about this worrisome secret.

In the following spaces, list the areas in your life where you feel confident. Include as many areas as you wish, whether describing your emotional capacities, physical presence, intellectual abilities, work life, athletic skills, creative talents, or some other area of your life or way of being.

- **Step 2:** What is self-esteem? Strong self-esteem is an incredible quality that is self-earned. Good self-esteem is not superficial; it does not rely on power, control, looks, external success, or money. Self-esteem is generally enduring as a part of a person’s character and is built by learning and growing from life’s experiences. Self-esteem can be *strengthened* by facing and moving through life’s challenges with an aware, intentional attitude. Self-esteem grows when we learn from our errors, take responsibility, and avoid blaming others. You can build stronger self-esteem by consciously striving to be compassionate, loving, tolerant, and respectful with yourself and others. In this way, you slowly craft strong self-esteem by striving to be the best version of yourself. Self-esteem takes time and energy to build, yet it is a far more pervasive, lasting quality than self-confidence. As you now have an understanding of the importance of self-esteem, you might want to generate more of this vital quality. Use the area below to make a few notes about what self-esteem means to you.

- **Step 3:** Take an honest, non-judgmental look at your level of self-esteem. If it feels right, you can even rate your self-esteem on a scale of “0-10” (with a “0” reflecting no self-esteem and a “10” reflecting the highest level possible). This will help you have an objective sense of where you’re starting from. If your self-esteem is lower than you’d like it to be, strive to be kind and compassionate with yourself—it’s never helpful to be judgmental or critical! Instead, just do an honest assessment of where you are now so that you have an idea of where you’d like to be. If it feels appropriate, use the area below to make a few notes about your current level of self-esteem.

- **Step 4:** It’s important to acknowledge and appreciate both your strengths and weakness in life with non-judgmental self-awareness. First, make a simple list of your greatest strengths. Then, make a simple list of your weaker areas. By tuning in to your strengths and capacities, you can reinforce and amplify these qualities in life. For example, you might be genuinely appreciative of your ability to listen, your tenacity, or your generosity. In the same kind and honest way, notice the areas where you feel frail or weak—these are the places that can be honored, healed, and strengthened when possible. As easy examples, you might notice that your boundaries aren’t as strong as you’d like or that you tend to be negative and highly self-critical. As you develop your two lists, strive to

be compassionate and non-judgmental. Your goal is simply to assess the areas where you feel strong and the areas where you feel rather weak or challenged.

Step 5: Your self-esteem will grow as you strive to nurture your strengths while gently attending to your weaker areas. Your work in Step 4 allowed you to generate two potentially life-changing lists. One list contains qualities that you like and may want to strengthen or increase. The other list reflects your weaknesses—the areas that you want to heal, strengthen, or shift in some way. Place your lists in a place you can see them every day—whether on your fridge, desktop, or cell phone. Each day, pick at least two of your positive qualities to focus on with loving awareness. Give gratitude for these qualities and smile in appreciation for the work you’ve done (and continue to do) to foster them. Then, select one item on your list of weak areas to work on just a bit each day. For example, you may choose to work on setting boundaries at work one day and being less judgmental the next day. Take a playful, can-do approach, and you’ll begin to see—and feel—results over time. Use the space below to make notes about your lists and how you will use them to build a stronger sense of self-esteem. You may wish to include notes about where you will place your lists as well as a few positive affirmations about the powerful work you have accomplished so far.

Step 6: Self-esteem thrives when you embrace an attitude of respectful, loving self-compassion that encourages learning and growth. Your self-esteem will grow as you consciously strive to be more compassionate, loving, respectful, and tolerant with yourself and others. As you let go of negative forces such as judgment, criticism, and resentment, your self-esteem will improve. A nonjudgmental mindset of curiosity and awareness will shift your perspective away from a dualistic attitude (e.g., “right/wrong” and “good/bad”) into embracing what is *beneficial*. This mindset shift will create greater positivity in your life. Your self-esteem will grow as you become more self-aware and intentional with your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. As you work on being more loving, tolerant, respectful, and compassionate with yourself, you will naturally extend this positive energy to others. Use the area below to outline at least three specific intentions that will help you cultivate greater self-love, tolerance, respect, and self-compassion. Your intentions might seem small to you, but the positive effects on your level of self-esteem will—with practice and perseverance—be incredibly profound. For example, you might note, “When my self-critical voice arises, I will notice it but not react to it. I will replace the self-critical thoughts with this mantra: I am wonderful. I am kind. I am loving. I am loved.” Create clear, positive intentions that feel freeing, supportive, and actionable.

Step 7: Strive to be consistently patient and kind with yourself as you build stronger self-esteem. By working on yourself with honesty, positivity, acceptance, and loving kindness, you will come to appreciate yourself more and more. Your self-esteem will grow strong roots that will allow you to feel deeply self-assured and empowered. Be patient with yourself, for change does not happen overnight. As you learn to accept that you are a “work in process,” your self-love will grow. This type of self-love is true and not dependent on looks, how much money you have, or the brand of car you drive. Use the space below to write out any positive thoughts or intentions that will support your journey. For example, using the example from Step 6, your first intention might be: “I will make sticky notes to place in my home that say, ‘*When my self-critical voice arises, I will notice it but not react to it. I will replace the self-critical thoughts with this mantra: I am wonderful. I am kind. I am loving. I am loved.*’ In this way, I will build my loving inner voice.”

As you attend to your self-esteem journey with conscious, dedicated attention, you’ll notice a true difference in yourself and your life. You won’t be chronically trying to impress anyone or prove yourself. You won’t feel like an imposter in your own life. Instead, you’ll be focusing your energy on being the kind of person you want—you *desire*—to be. You’ll know and radiate the power of strong, hard-earned self-esteem. And, perhaps for the first time in your life, you’ll find that you’re truly loving your beautiful self from the inside out. Remember that *you* are an amazing soul. *You* have what it takes to create strong self-esteem and wondrous self-love. *You* have the power to transform your relationships and love fearlessly.

CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE!

Every step you take forward in developing greater self-esteem is a gift to yourself and your world. You’ll find more compassionate guidance and healing exercises like this in Dr. Carla Marie Manly’s inspiring book, *Date Smart: Transform Your Relationships & Love Fearlessly*.

Free to You: If you want to be the first to enjoy new “Your Journey” worksheets and details on upcoming books and seminars, I invite you to subscribe to my **uplifting monthly newsletter** at www.drCarlamanly.com.

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