

# InPresence 0036: Two Secrets of High Self-Esteem with Jeffrey Mishlove

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(00:39) Hello, I'm Jeffrey Mishlove, and today I'd like to share with you two of what I will call secrets of high self-esteem. Let me say right at the outset that I didn't always have high self-esteem. As a teenager, I had what I called an inferiority complex. In fact, I remember when I was a senior or maybe junior in high school, I was being interviewed for a college position - I had actually applied to Harvard - I was being interviewed by somebody from Harvard to see if I was an appropriate student. I told the man, "I have an inferiority complex." Well, that didn't sit too well, I'm sure.

(01:27) Eventually, I overcame many, maybe not all, but many of my self-esteem issues. I recall, I was working as a bellhop at Schwartz' Resort at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, one summer before I entered college and I noticed one other bellhop who just seemed extremely popular with everybody. I began observing him. What I noticed is that he asked questions. Really, that was the beginning of my career as an interviewer, by noticing that he asked questions. He got engaged. He showed real interest in other people. It dawned on me then that people like it when you show a genuine interest in them. That knowledge has served me very well the rest of my life, I can tell you that. I'll call that my number two secret for self-esteem.

(02:29) And now, I'm going to share with you my number one secret for self-esteem. It's very simple, but it's a secret for a reason. It's simply this: anytime, any person ever tries to put you down, to say that you're a jerk, to say that you're worthless, to say that you're stupid, to say that you can't do this or you can't do that, or you're ugly or somehow they are attacking you at the core of your essence as a human being - the secret is this: one hundred percent of the time they are projecting their own low self-esteem and their own insecurities onto you. Because there is never, ever, any reason for a person to devalue another sacred, precious human being.

(03:33) As far as I'm concerned, and I'm not particularly a religious believer, but it's a metaphor - we are all children of God. We all have a soul. We all have consciousness. In fact, we all share and partake of the same consciousness. Every human being, no matter what they have done, the worst criminals in the world deserve courtesy and respect. Now, that doesn't mean a person can't correct your behavior. There's always an opportunity for improvement. There's always the possibility of giving and receiving constructive criticism.

(04:19) But there's a big difference between constructive criticism and putting you down. Or you, putting another person down. Let me reverse it and say there is no reason for you ever to devalue another human being. Never. When I grew up I was told, "If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all." That's a good guideline but it goes deeper.

(04:50) Because, you see, where does all of this come from? You might recall in the Bible there's a phrase, "The evil that men do gets passed down through seven generations." As young children, before the age of six, let's say, we don't have the ability to distinguish when an adult, or even another child says you're stupid, or you're ugly, or somesuch thing as that. We take it in. If our parents get angry at us it must be our fault.

(05:24) But most of the time when parents belittle their tiny children, it's the parent projecting their own low self-esteem onto their children. If you have children and if you have ever done that to your children, let me tell you - you owe them an apology, because their self-esteem might be hurt by something you said to them when they were four years old. You will do them a big favor if you make it very clear that if you ever did that, it was your problem and not theirs.

(06:00) So, when people put other people down. I know now there's a certain political style, particularly here in the United States, of devaluing other human beings. There's one very prominent politician who is known for that. I can tell you with 100% certainty - even in the political arena where one might say, oh it's just strategic - no, its projection of low self-esteem. One hundred percent of the time.

(06:34) You have to learn, of course, to distinguish between constructive criticism and a put down. Sometimes a person is putting you down, they're doing it subconsciously. They don't recognize that it's their own low self-esteem that they're projecting. One of the reasons I call it a secret is simply this. It does no good to come back at them and say, "You're just projecting your low self-esteem upon me." That's likely just to make the situation worse. But, you can know it inwardly and you can reject it.

(07:08) Even if you've made a mistake, you can say, "Yes, I've made a mistake - mistakes can be corrected." If you're ignorant, "Yes, I'm ignorant, I can learn." If someone says to you, "You'll never be able to do x, y or z," you can say to yourself, "I've never done x, y, or z, but who knows in the future I might be able to do that." You do not have to buy into the put downs that you receive from other people.

(07:41) If you look around you, you'll notice on television, situation comedies and the like, it's widely practiced in our culture. It's considered a form of humor, the put down. Some of them are really clever. It's not that I don't enjoy humor. But, oftentimes, it's really vicious, because people inwardly, you could say, they hate themselves. How do they deal with their own self hatred, but by taking it out on other people.

(08:13) You don't have to buy into it, you can let go of it. You can realize that whenever anyone is doing that to you, it's their problem, not yours. You may have problems that you need to address, but that is not one of them. If you find that you have an impulse to put other people down, to say "Oh, what a jerk that person is," remember that person is a sacred, precious human being, no matter what they've done. It's not that they are a jerk, it's that their behavior needs correction. Maybe you can offer constructive criticism, and maybe you can't. Maybe they'll be open to it, and maybe they won't. It's often [that] constructive criticism, unless it's invited, is often rejected. So, it's not as if you can come up to some person and say, "I have some constructive criticism for you." They may not be open to it. In any case, there's certainly no need to call them a jerk or something worse.

(09:22) That's my secret of self-esteem. It's something I hope you'll ponder very, very seriously. It's something I truly believe at the core of my being. Thank you for being with me. (09:39)

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