

# Increasing Your Self-Esteem with Inner Child Dialogues

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## What is an Inner Child?

We all have an Inner Child. It is who we are when we were born, our natural core self. That includes our natural feelings, personality, playfulness, intuition, spontaneity, curiosity, passion, joy, sense of wonder, and creativity. Our Inner Child is our right-brain, inner experience as felt through our bodies. It is the place of our gut feelings.

## Besides increasing self-esteem, why learn to talk with your Inner Child?

There are three main reasons besides increasing self-esteem to dialogue with our Inner Child. Firstly, for present-time, everyday happiness and inner peace. Our Inner Child at any given moment either feels loved, or unloved by our Adult self. If the Child is feeling loved, we can work and play with joy and passion. When the Child is feeling unloved, it is lonely, sad, scared, panicked, depressed, and feels empty.

Secondly, there are times when we may be in conflict with other people, or experiencing painful or frightening life events. We need our inner resources especially in these times. The dialogue helps keep us resourceful. When we are feeling empowered we get along better with others and manage life's inevitable scary and painful events much more effectively.

Thirdly, we can heal the pains of the past, both beliefs we formed about ourselves and painful memories. What happened in the past to hurt us is not the problem. The problem is that we learned to believe false and unempowering things about ourselves. And we learned to treat ourselves in ways that we are still doing and that are still hurting us. We can learn now the truth about ourselves and we can learn now to treat ourselves better. We are not stuck in the past if we can talk with our inner Child.

Ultimately, as an Adult, it is our job to be both good mother and good father to our Inner Child. The mothering job is listening to our inner child, understanding the feelings and needs, exploring the false beliefs and giving comfort and nurturing. The father job involves taking action in the world to protect and advance our Inner Child.

## How does talking with our Inner Child help increase self esteem?

The emotions of shame and inappropriate guilt are what get in the way of our natural self-esteem.

- One source of shame is when we know that another person we care about isn't interested in us. Talking regularly with our Inner Child tells her/him that it's feelings and needs matter, and that alone can increase self-esteem.
- Another source of shame occurs when we don't accept our feelings and needs. For example, "If I'm angry, I'm bad." Or, "If I'm scared, I'm weak." When we can accept all of our Inner Child's feelings, we are not shaming ourselves, so our self esteem goes up.

- False beliefs about ourselves increase shame. For example, “I’m stupid.” In Inner Child dialogues, you explore false beliefs and learn the truth. False beliefs can also lead to inappropriate feelings of guilt. “I ruined my mother’s life when I was born,” is an example.
- Helping our Inner Child speak to us and understanding her/him, releases the buildup of uncomfortable emotions. That helps us be less distracted and more able to focus on any Adult activities we are involved in. Better focus increases the chances you’ll do a better job. And increased success also breeds increased self esteem.

### **How long does it take to learn to dialogue with our Inner Child?**

Learning to talk with our Inner Child takes practice. And the more we practice, the better we get at it. Remember when you learned to drive? In the beginning, even applying pressure to the gas pedal may have required intense concentration. Now, it’s so automatic that you probably don’t even think of it. So in the beginning, it takes consistency and commitment. Later, it is a natural part of your everyday self talk.

### **What is required to learn how to dialogue with your Inner Child?**

Obviously, from what you read above, patience is one thing required. What’s patience? That’s an ability let go of demanding instant gratification or perfection.

There are two other requirements. One is an intention to learn about yourself. That intention is very different from the intention to protect yourself against feeling your feelings.

In order to embrace the intent to learn, you need to believe that there are good reasons for your feelings and behaviors- even if you don’t yet know what they are. You can’t learn when you are judging and shaming yourself for your feelings and actions.

Another necessity is the willingness to experience your pain. As soon as you start resisting feeling pain, you move away from the intent to learn and go into the intent to protect yourself.

### **Specifically what are the steps to doing a dialogue with our Inner child?**

In the next article, [How To Dialogue with Your Inner Child](#), I will outline the methods of using the dialogue.

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