

Feeling Good About Yourself

by *Richard K. Stratton*

All of us like to feel good about ourselves and feel good about the activities we are participating in, whether they are school, youth sports, scouts, church groups, or musical activities, just to name a few. Self-esteem basically means how you feel about yourself in general. Self-efficacy has many forms and includes sport self-efficacy, which is how confident you are about your capability to participate in sports. What can you do to develop and maintain a positive sport self-efficacy? The best path to confidence in sports is to constantly work hard to learn the skills and strategies needed to compete effectively in your sport. This means giving 100% effort in all your practice sessions. It also means understanding what you are realistically capable of doing and what you are not capable of doing. Trying to achieve unrealistic goals can only produce failure which will negatively affect your self-confidence. You need to strive to achieve goals that are realistic but that also challenge you to improve.

Another important consideration to developing your self-confidence is how you analyze your successes and failures. One thing to look at is did you cause the success or failure, or did something outside of you, like your competition, the weather, etc, cause the success or failure. Another factor you need to consider is called controllability, that is do you actually have any control over what caused the outcome, like your effort for example, or was it something that you have no control over, like the weather. Understanding these can help so that you do not feel bad about unsuccessful outcomes that were not your fault. You must be honest when you analyze the results of your performances. Do not use the ego protecting strategy of always taking credit for your success and always blaming external or uncontrollable factors for your failures. You may feel good for a while, but in the long run you will know that you were just kidding yourself and that is not beneficial to your self-confidence.

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