

Self Esteem, The Missing Link in Practice Success and Satisfaction
by Dennis Perman DC, for The Chiropractic Summit

The most important things in life come from inside out – happiness is inside-out, love is inside-out, health is inside-out, and indeed, success in chiropractic practice is also inside-out.

So, what do you need inside you to experience the level of success and satisfaction in practice that you desire? There are many qualities that figure into this equation – discipline, creativity, presence, healing consciousness, willingness to do whatever it takes, decisiveness, confidence, technical skill, motivation, passion – to varying degrees, such characteristics seem to be predictors of practice growth and development.

But there is a single attribute that seems to drive all the others, and that is self esteem. You cannot develop or demonstrate any of these other traits unless you believe yourself to be worthy of so doing. Self esteem is the foundation of all positive movement, professionally and personally, so it will help you to understand and appreciate the importance of self esteem, and the ways to evaluate your own self-image to make the most of yourself and your practice.

Dr. Nathaniel Branden, the author of “The Six Pillars of Self Esteem,” says that self esteem is feeling “competent to cope with the basic challenges of life” and “worthy of happiness.” He goes on to say, “It is confidence in the efficacy of our mind, in our ability to think... our ability to learn, make appropriate choices and decisions, and respond effectively to change. It is also the experience that success, achievement, fulfillment — happiness — are right and natural for us.”

Notice the impact of self esteem on your evolution as a professional and as a healer – you’ll have to see yourself as being competent to deal with challenges and being worthy of happiness to generate any personal or professional progress. Why would you work at improving yourself if you didn’t feel competent and worthy? These are the precursors to optimal performance, and an invitation to achieve at the highest level possible.

And that’s why it’s so important for the doctor of chiropractic to understand the role self esteem will play in his or her practice success and satisfaction. Let’s compare those with sufficient self esteem and those without, and note the distinctions between them, so you can identify where you are in this continuum and take the necessary next steps.

Doctors with high self esteem feel good about themselves and their work. They are proud and confident, inspired to share their ideas, and driven to provide an outstanding service. These doctors invest in themselves, through seminars, reading, online courses, coaching, masterminding, and otherwise enriching their

internal maps, imprinting new ideas, constantly learning, and sharing with patients and other doctors.

Doctors with high self esteem have fair policies and effective, enforceable procedures. They are comfortable discussing finances with patients, and confront gently and professionally to guide patients toward compliance. They are neat, timely and organized, and they lead their teams with integrity, while caring attentively for their patients. They are reliable and service-oriented.

Doctors with poor self esteem, on the other hand, may feel insecure, indecisive, and weak. They resist change, are defensive, and underachieve for lack of drive to succeed, since they don't feel competent or worthy of success.

You can build self esteem by reinforcing positive habits and behavior patterns, and by establishing a constructive inner environment, so you perceive the world optimistically and respond accordingly. You can use affirmation, visualization, empowering self-talk and goal-setting to shift your self-concept, among other self-development tools and techniques.

Self esteem influences every aspect of a chiropractic practice. It encourages confrontational tolerance in asking for referrals, addressing delinquent payment or re-delegating staff responsibilities. It turbo-charges your patient compliance, because patients will automatically gravitate toward and follow the recommendations of a doctor who is certain and authoritative without being unpleasant about it. And finances are managed more efficiently because the doctor and staff with good self esteem expect to be properly compensated for their excellent work, and won't settle for less, since it would be out of balance any other way.

Like Wayne Dyer says, when you squeeze an orange, what comes out is orange juice, because that's what's inside. The same thing happens when you get squeezed – what comes out is what's inside. In practice, every day you'll need to perform professionally, charismatically, and compassionately. You'll also have to deal with patients or staff who may need extra guidance to stay on course, families who struggle to afford the care they need, and people's very real health challenges.

For those reasons and many more, you must feel good about yourself as a person and as a doctor to effectively handle modern-day practice. Who you are determines how well what you do works – success comes from you, not to you. Show up as a better version of you, and your patients will be better served, and your overall practice experience will be more fulfilling.