

# Earning self-esteem

I was listening to an interesting audio tape the other night. The presenter suggested our society is becoming altogether too accepting of getting something for nothing, especially where self-esteem is concerned.

He said rather than suggest people should expect self-esteem merely because "you're you," that rather we should actively work to earn the right to feel good about ourselves.

The next day, I was reading a motivational quote tacked onto the bottom of some corporate communications. Like most of you, I read a fair number of news sources, Internet sites, and company information. On the bottom of this web page was this quote, from Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of Great Britain:

**"Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end. It's not a day when you lounging around doing nothing; it's when you've had everything to do, and you've done it."**

These two items fascinated me. Altogether too often, we try and tell ourselves that no matter how much or how little we have accomplished, that we deserve whatever accolades we have self-sold ourselves. We tell ourselves that we deserve the best, whatever it may be, even when we haven't put forth the time, effort and energy to deserve the best. We suggest we should have the self-esteem of a surgeon, when we put out the effort of a panhandler.

Totally disregarding the "law of the sower" (we reap whatever we sow), we suggest that we deserve to gain the income, without ever putting in the investment.

Earl Nightingale used to talk on his long-running radio program about this law. He taught that if we sow corn, we'll get corn; if we sow nightshade (a deadly poison), we'll get that as well.

Whatever we plant, we get. If we don't plant anything, we don't get anything, even if we are "entitled" to it.

So -- if we don't make the effort, no amount of wishing will make success, and the positive self-esteem that it brings, come our way.

Sales representatives who don't make calls won't gain sales. People who don't cut calories won't lose weight. Authors who won't write will never gain royalties.

No amount of wishing, screaming, complaining, or legislating will ever bring it to pass.

The story of the Little Red Hen was right -- the people who contribute effectively are the people who deserve the proceeds.

The world needs people who find somewhere they can contribute, and then contribute effectively, challenging themselves each day to become a little bit better. We need people who are constantly striving to improve their self-worth, even though they know they're worth quite a bit already.

There are too many people who never contribute, never challenge themselves, and as a result, never gain the self-esteem they need to carry on effectively.

Challenge and work yourself. Then bask in your well-earned success, for just a moment, until you start the whole process over again.

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