

8

You Are Who You Think You Are

Let's Begin

Let's begin with a small exercise.

Close your eyes and picture yourself in your mind. What do you see? Do you feel good about who you are, how you see yourself, and how others see you? You can write down the first thoughts, the first feelings and the first emotions you get when you visualise yourself in your mind.



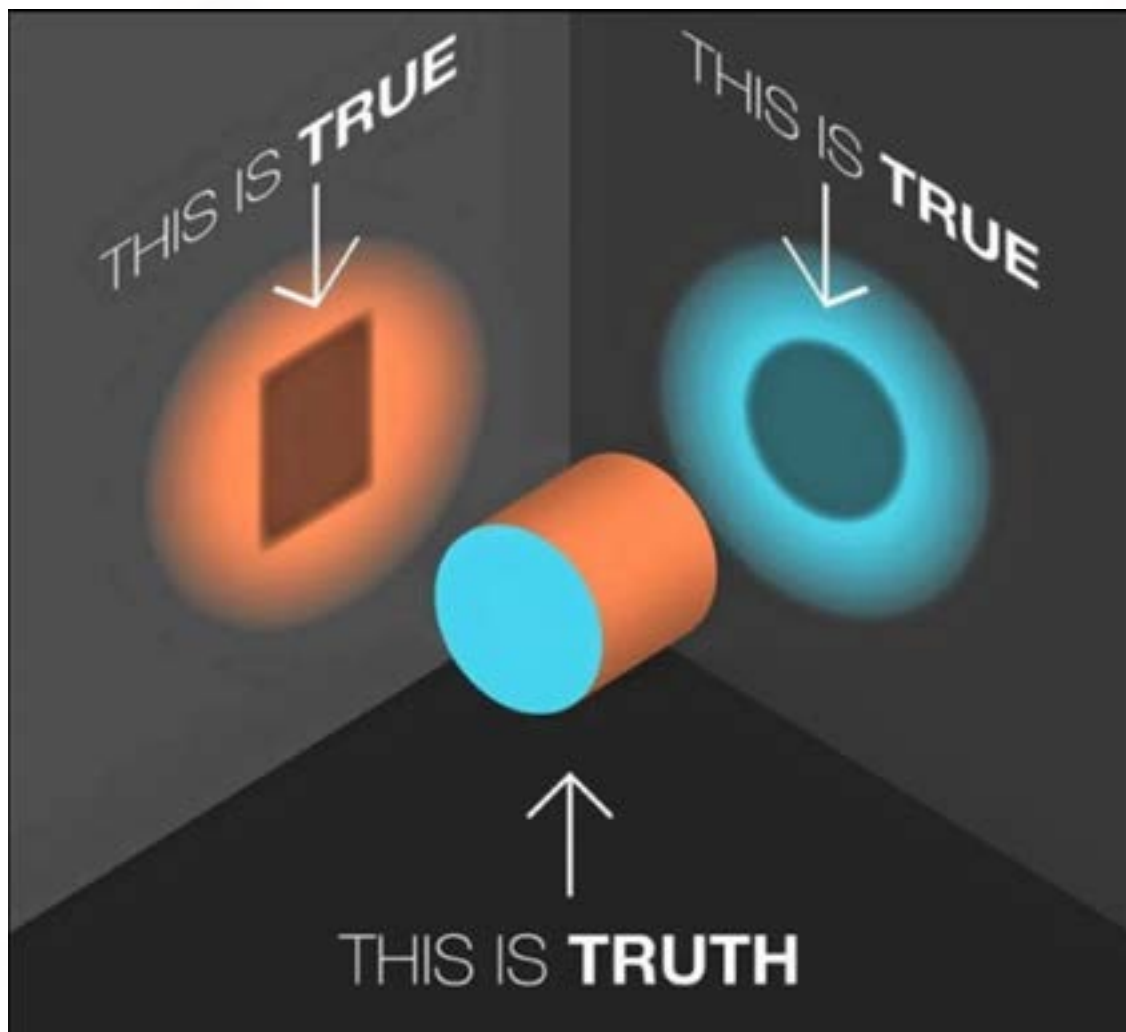
How you see yourself



How you think others see you

**Your thoughts are the seeds; your life is the garden;
Sow brave thoughts, grow a confident self.
Sow kind thoughts, grow a caring world.**

Life is created to be a delightful journey filled with exciting experiences and learnings. Every second of our life is a new chapter and we have the choice of how we receive it. All of us are unique and our uniqueness is what makes life an amazing journey.



Let's read the story of Shawn who lacked Self-Confidence.

Shawn was a quiet Secondary 2 student who loved basketball but never dared to try out for the school team. He always told himself, "I'm not good enough."

One afternoon, his PE teacher, Mr. Tan, noticed him shooting hoops alone after class. Shawn missed several shots and sighed, "See? I'm hopeless."

Mr. Tan smiled and said, "Your mind shoots before your hands do. If your thoughts miss, your shots will too."

That hit Shawn hard. For the next week, he decided to change one thing his self-talk.

Instead of saying “I can’t,” he told himself, “I can improve.” He practiced every day, not to prove others wrong, but to prove himself right.

At the next tryout, he wasn’t perfect but he was confident. And this time, his shots landed.

Shawn didn’t just make it to the team. He made it past his own doubts.

Believing in yourself shapes who you become. Your thoughts are the roots of your confidence nurture them, and your potential will grow.



Think and Answer

1. Think about a time when you doubted yourself. How did that affect what you did or didn't do?

.....
.....

2. What is one area in school or life where you often tell yourself, "I can't"? How might things change if you said, "I can improve" instead?

.....
.....

3. Shawn's story shows how thoughts can shape actions. What positive thought would you like to repeat to yourself this week?

.....
.....

4. Why do you think many people underestimate themselves?

.....
.....

5. Do you agree that our thoughts can affect our performance?

.....
.....

6. If your mind were your "coach," what kind of messages should it be giving you?

.....
.....

You are the protagonist of your own life and how you direct it and with what character determines your life experiences. An important factor that determines your character is self-esteem.

Self-esteem is an appreciation that an individual has for themselves. Self-esteem goes beyond beliefs about oneself which involves emotions and evaluation of oneself.

Know Yourself First

Feeling good about ourselves affects how we act and live. It helps us build healthy self-esteem and forms the basis for everything we do in life.

So, how can we build a healthy self-esteem?

Activity A: Flip It to Live It

Self-esteem doesn't just magically appear. We need to build it for ourselves, even when we may feel we aren't 'good enough'.

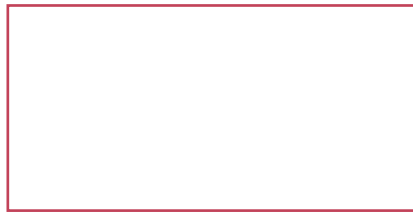
In the boxes below, write down what and why you think you are good at something and what and why you think you aren't.

For example: I am very good at Maths. I always score well in my Math tests.

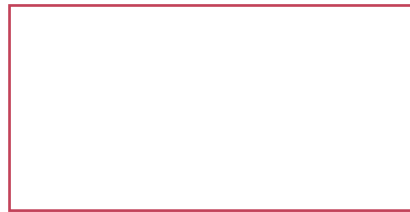
I am not very good at sports. I never get picked for any sports competition.

Let us now flip our mistakes/failures/obstacles/weaknesses to see how we can improve. All it takes is a small adjustment in how we view it.

For example: The statement - I am not very good at sports - can be flipped to a positive statement when we say - I want to get better at sports. So, I will put in extra effort during my physical education class and Practise harder.



I am good at



I am not so good at

Let's now do this exercise to 'flip' our weaknesses and see how we can develop them into strength. You can flip the situation and write down your way to work on your weak areas in the below box.



Flip it

Now when you visualise yourself, don't you feel better about the things you thought you weren't good at?

The art of building your self-esteem is to understand this process. We can't pass a math test by memorising $2+2 = 4$. We need to learn how to add, and once we do that, it doesn't matter how the numbers change. Building our self-esteem is something similar. And once we understand the process, we can just use the 'Flip It' exercise to keep building ourselves healthy self-esteem.

Activity B: We Are...

Did you know friends can build our self-esteem too?

Get into small groups and fill up the below boxes. Find common traits amongst yourselves and make this list of what makes you all very good at something.

We are good at because.....

1

2

3

4

What others think of you

Has someone ever told you about how you looked or the way you did something that hurt your feelings?

Our families, friends, classmates and teachers also influence our self-esteem. An encouraging word from a parent/friend/teacher can inspire you to work harder just as how some discouraging comments from either of them can pull you down.

Activity C: Interview for an Inner View

Let's do this simple exercise to learn how family, friends, classmates, and teachers influence our self-esteem.

Pair up with a classmate who isn't in your immediate friends' circle and interview each other. Ask each other simple questions to get to know the other person and make a note of it.

Here are a few questions you can begin with. Write down six more questions you would want to ask.

1. What is your favourite sport?
2. What are your hobbies?
3. What are you good at?
4. If the genie granted you three wishes, what would you wish for?
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

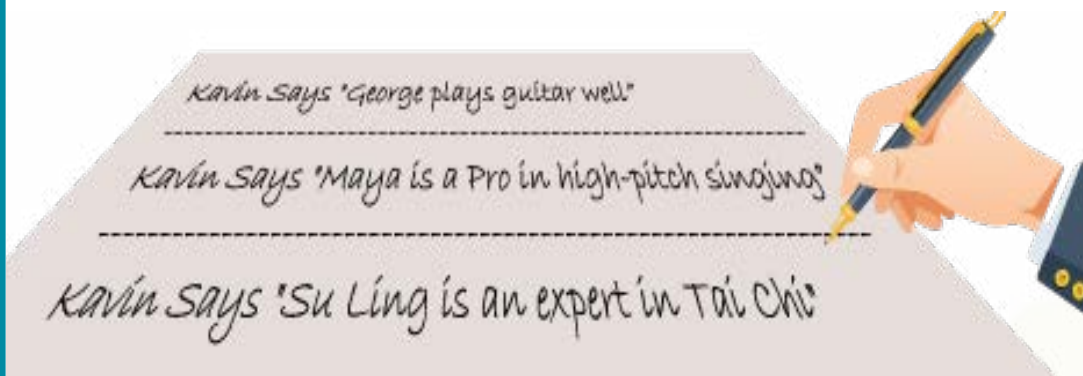
At the end of the session, make a presentation to your class about your interviewee (the classmate you interviewed).

After your classmate presents you before the class, write down how it felt.

Activity D: Integrity and Society

Let's do this simple exercise to learn how your classmates positively boost your self-esteem.

1. Take a sheet of paper and write the date, time and place of this activity on top of the paper.
2. Write your name in the left column followed by " says " and then write the name of one of your classmates
3. Now write one outstanding good quality of that classmate next to his/her name
4. Leave a blank line



5. Again write your name again in the left column followed by "says " and then write the name of another classmate
6. Now think and write one good quality of that second classmate next to his/her name

7. Leave a blank line

8. Repeat steps 2,3,4 for each and every classmate in your classroom including those who are absent on that day

9. Remember to leave a blank line after every line

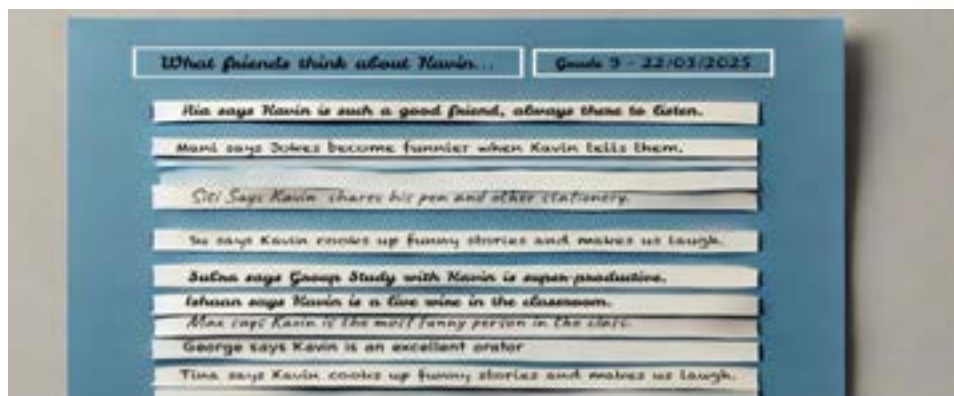
Teacher and Student's joint activity

10. Teacher has to collect all the sheets of paper and cut each of the lines carefully.

11. All the lines pertaining to each and every student are arranged nicely one below another and pasted in a single sheet

12. Every sheet will have lines that pertains to a specific student and starts with all the other student's names.

13. For example, Kavin's sheet will have lines that goes like this - "George says Kavin is an excellent orator", "Ria says Kavin is a live wire in the classroom", Max says Kavin is the most funny person in the class.



14. The first line of every sheet has the date, time and place of this activity

15. Teacher has to get every student to carefully read their sheet that contains all their classmates positive feedback
16. Keep this sheet of paper with you in your Treasure box.
17. Whenever you need a boost to your self-confidence, please go back to this sheet of paper.

Don't you feel different? It feels good to be presented positively in front of your class, right?

While what others think about us is important, what's more important is what we think about ourselves. There are many real-life examples of how people succeeded even when their families, friends and teachers didn't believe in them.

Remember to be kind to others, and help build their self-esteem!



P. Govindasamy Pillai (1887-1980)

In 1905, P. Govindasamy Pillai barely 18 ran away from home, boarding a ship in Tamil Nadu for Singapore. The early days in Singapore were tough as he struggled to find a job. With just 13 rupees to his name, he was unable to afford food and lodging. His circumstances slightly improved after a provision store employed him in exchange for food and board. Pillai wasted no time learning the ropes despite punishing work hours. Along the way he bought over the store and opened branches and expanded his business into a chain

of stores, becoming a prominent figure in Singapore's retail sector. Having led an impoverished life for the best part of his life, he always extended help to the poor. He was not only a successful entrepreneur, he was also god loving, deeply spiritual and a dedicated philanthropist. He founded the Ramakrishna Mission Singapore in 1928 to support the underprivileged. He contributed generously to institutions such as Mount Alvernia Hospital and the University of Malaya. He also donated generously to Hindu Temple at Serangoon Road. He played a pivotal role in establishing the Indian Chamber of Commerce in 1937 and was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1939.

The famous author of the Harry Potter series didn't have it easy either. She went through a lot of tests and challenges before her books saw the light of the day. The seven-year period when she worked on her first book, saw the death of her mother, birth of her first child, divorce from her first husband which culminated in relative poverty. She battled clinical depression and completed her first book only to have it rejected by 12 publishers. It took a year for the first book to get published. The rest is history.



J K Rowling

Tan Tock Seng was born in Malacca in 1798 to an immigrant father from Fujian province, China, and a local Peranakan Chinese mother. At the age of 21, he moved to Singapore in 1819. Despite having little to his name, Tan started as a vegetable vendor, bringing fresh produce from the countryside to sell in the city. His strong work ethic and business acumen soon allowed him to save enough money to establish his own

shop at Boat Quay by 1827. His humble beginnings shaped his deep compassion for the poor. Tan never forgot the struggles of the less fortunate. He was widely respected for his generosity, particularly towards the poor and destitute. He regularly covered burial costs for impoverished Chinese immigrants who had no family to support them. His most significant philanthropic contribution came in 1844 when he donated \$5,000—a considerable sum at that time—towards the construction of the Chinese Pauper Hospital, later renamed Tan Tock Seng Hospital, in his honor. It remains one of Singapore's leading healthcare institutions.



Tan Tock Seng (1798 -1850)



Carrie Tan Huimin (1982-)

Born in Singapore to a taxi driver father and a housewife, Carrie Tan's journey from a modest upbringing to a Member of Parliament is inspiring. She founded Daughters of Tomorrow, an organization dedicated to empowering underprivileged women in Singapore by providing them with skills training and employment opportunities. Her commitment to social causes and community service led her to enter politics,

where she continues to advocate for marginalized communities. In 2014, Tan was featured in a CNA documentary, "A Singaporean Abroad", about her humanitarian work in India, training women from villages, who were rescued from sex-trafficking, in cottage industry skills. Carrie champions women's development, mental

wellness, social mobility and community care. In her current profession as a transformative coach, she speaks, writes, coaches and trains on self-awareness, self-leadership, authentic communication, emotional awareness, change-making and contributes regularly at leadership, philanthropy and policy conferences to advocate for greater awareness towards wellness and sustainable human progress.

Did you notice anything common in the life stories of all these personalities? They didn't let personal struggles and others' opinions affect them. They all had a healthy self-esteem and even when faced with situations where they felt weak/challenged, they flipped it and went to become successful.

Activity E: **Who is your Hero?**

Whose story inspired you the most and why? (It can be anyone in your life. Need not be the personalities mentioned above) Write it in the journal below.

Write down how they didn't let others' thoughts about them affect them and went on to succeed in life

My hero is

I am inspired by my hero because

.....

.....

.....

Write a letter to your future grown-up self, chronicling what you would like to achieve and how you would go about doing it. Remember to flip any obstacles that you think might come in the way of your goal.

Activity F: Self-esteem Help Group

A positive attitude, willingness to seek creative solutions to challenges and setting realistic goals can help us build a good self-esteem.

Form a Self-esteem Help Group in your class/school/community and help other children develop a healthy self-image and esteem.



Remember you become a self-esteem builder by keeping their stories to yourself. Do not share what others confide in you to anyone.

Activity G:

Looking back to someone's teenage....

Extended Activity

Talk to three adults of your choice and interview them to understand how they built on their self-esteem as a teenager. Here are some questions to help you with the process.

- What were you not good at as a teenager?
- How did that make you feel?
- Can you share instances when someone said something hurtful and it discouraged you from putting in your best?
- What did you do to overcome and build your self-esteem and confidence?
- Now that you are a grown up, what would you like to tell your teenage self?

Make a note of their answers and jot down the essence of their interviews here.

Adult 1 - (Write name only if you have their permission)

I learnt the following from their life story –

.....

.....

.....

.....

Adult 2 - (Write name only if you have their permission)

I learnt the following from their life story –

.....

.....

.....

.....

Adult 3 - (Write name only if you have their permission)

I learnt the following from their life story –

.....

.....

.....

.....

Let's Remember

*Self-esteem is an appreciation that an individual has for themselves.
Self-esteem goes beyond beliefs about oneself which involves
emotions and evaluation of oneself.*

*It is important to have good self-esteem, even if we are faced with
situations that make us feel low.*

Build your self-esteem and also help others build theirs.

My Space

What I liked most about this lesson :

.....
.....

I learnt that

.....
.....



Sit with your family and do this fun sharing exercise.

Ask your family what makes you a good child, sibling, grandchild, nephew/niece and journal it here.

I am a good child because

.....

I am a good sibling because

.....

I am a good grandchild because

.....