

How To Feel Good About Yourself

God made me in His image—so how come I don't feel good about myself? Did God mean for me to be second-rate? Those are tough questions to answer when you don't feel good about yourself. Here are some positive steps you can take next time you don't feel worthwhile.

1 First make a list of all the things you like about yourself. List *everything*, no matter how insignificant something may seem: I have a nice smile. I'm good at math. I have Dave for a best friend. Next, make a list of the things you don't like about yourself and would like to change. List *only* the things that really bug you.

2 Tape the "good" list to your mirror or some other place where you will have to look at it every morning. Review it daily, telling yourself, "This is who I am. I am a good person. I have a good sense of humor, lots of good friends, I'm good at math," and so forth.

A positive attitude is a key to feeling good about yourself.

3 Now, to tackle the "bad" list. For each item on the list, describe the way you are now, Point A, and then describe the way you'd like to be, Point

B. Try to describe *behavior*. For example: Point A—I'm too shy. I don't speak to classmates I don't know. I have trouble making new friends. I avoid school activities where there will be a lot of people I don't know. Point B—I would like to be more outgoing. I would like to say hello to new students in my classes. I would like to make more friends. I would like to feel comfortable at school activities.

4 Next map out a step-by-step strategy that will get you from Point A to Point B. The secret here is to use *very small* steps. You can't say, "Tomorrow, I'll be outgoing." That's unrealistic and setting yourself up for failure. You can say, "Tomorrow I will say hello to the girl that sits next to me in history class. This week I will say hello to one new person every day. Today, I will introduce myself to the

new guy in the Spanish club." Making changes in small steps will get easier and easier until you soon notice that you're closer to Point B than Point A.

5 Finally, to feel good about yourself, smile, smile, smile. Even if you don't feel like smiling, force it. Pretend you are in front of a camera. Smile at yourself in the mirror. Make yourself hum or whistle for five minutes before you face the world.

Again, the power of positive thinking will take over. Pretty soon, your face will convince your brain that you really do feel pretty good. Besides, do you know what usually happens when you smile at people? They smile back. And that *really* makes you feel good.