

The negative effects of having a low self-esteem

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One's self-esteem will affect how a person's life is lived either positively or negatively. A low self-esteem is commonly associated with negative outcomes while a high self-esteem is associated with positive outcomes.

People struggle with their confidence, and are therefore, unaware of the consequences that come with a low self-esteem. It is important to realize the negative results of a low self-esteem first, in order to boost one's confidence.

In the novel, *Speak*, by Laurie Halse Anderson and modern sources, the authors explore the negative effects of having a low self-esteem in a person's life. According to "Effects of a Self-Esteem Intervention Program on School-Age Children" by Peggy Dalgas-Pelish and *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, having a poor academic performance in school is commonly caused by a lack of high self-esteem. Dalgas-Pelish writes, "Self-esteem is essential for school-aged children's optimum health. High self-esteem is linked to increased school performance, improved health, and productive behavior" (Dalgas-Pelish 341).

People with a low self-esteem tend to set higher expectations for themselves, making it harder to achieve those goals. With higher expectations, it was studied to bring lower grades on assignments in school because the person has not reached their goal. Similarly in the novel, *Speak*, the author chooses to show Melinda's report card at the end of each marking period to the readers to make evident her low self-esteem. Melinda's report card consists of mainly C's, D's, and F's, which is not representing a high academic performance. Melinda states "My parents commanded me to stay after school every day for extra help from teachers.

I agreed to stay after school” (Anderson 50). This addresses Melinda’s poor performance because she admits she is struggling through the words, “ I agreed”. Because of the rape, Melinda treats herself harsher than others and sets higher expectations for herself. Her lack of self-esteem caused by the rape is the reason why she has such high expectations for herself. These set goals are therefore, harder to achieve and distract Melinda from focusing on her school work. Along with a poor academic performance, the article mentions that low self-esteem leads to a decrease in productive behavior in school.

Students are less likely to get assignments completed in school when they have a low self-esteem. The readers understand that having a low academic performance is an outcome in which no one wishes to get. With a lower self-esteem, it is proven that students behave more poorly in school than if they had a high self-esteem. A low self-esteem will decrease positive social behavior and involvement in activities according to “ Does High Self-Esteem Cause Better Performance, Interpersonal Success, Happiness, or Healthier Lifestyles” by Roy Baumeister and Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson. Whether it is in school or outside of school, getting involved in activities is always perceived as a good idea. Baumeister writes, “ People high in self-esteem claim to be more likable and attractive, to have better relationships, and to make better impressions on others than people with low self-esteem” (Baumeister 1).

From this, it is clear that with more confidence, one can interact easier with others because they have no fear, whereas one with no confidence thinks poorly of themselves and builds up fear. This fear of talking to others leads <https://assignbuster.com/the-negative-effects-of-having-a-low-self-esteem/>

to isolation and no participation. In *Speak*, Melinda does not speak because of her low self-esteem. The author writes, "It is easier not to say anything. Shut your trap, button your lip, can it. All that crap you hear on TV about communication and expressing feelings is a lie.

Nobody really wants to hear what you have to say" (Anderson 9). Melinda is more cautious with what she does and how she acts around people because of the fear that people will hate her even more than they already do from the summer party if she interacts with them. Because she thinks this, Melinda does not expect anyone to want to listen to her; therefore, she chooses not to talk. This isolation will cause more problems including a lack of participation in activities. Also, the article proves that friends are crucial to raising self-esteem, so Melinda sitting alone will only make her situation worse. The fear of not speaking to others also correlates to participation in activities as show in the article.

When a person is scared, they think of the worst possible outcomes that can occur when they are involved in an activity. An example would be in sports; a person will not want to participate in a game of soccer if they imagine them getting hurt. This fear of getting involved causes a person to sit alone and feel outcast. A lack of self-esteem will lead to poor social skills inside and outside of school and will lead to no involvement in activities. In "Suicidal and Nonsuicidal Adolescents: Different Factors Contribute to Self-Esteem" by Berit Groholt and *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, it is proven that one will act upon him/herself in a harmful way due to a low self-esteem.

Groholt states, " Low self-esteem is also associated with problematic emotions, such as depression and loneliness. Depression and low self-esteem are two factors that have been found to predict suicide ideation and attempts" (Groholt 526). Causing physical harm tends to be the most common effect of a low self-esteem as shown here. Having a low self-esteem makes people look at themselves poorly and judge themselves more critically, which is when isolation occurs. This study also proves that friends are crucial to gaining confidence, and preventing loneliness.

With depression, such actions can go so far to where suicide occurs. With a low self-esteem, a person is more likely to be depressed and lonely, which will lead to suicide as a final outcome. Similarly in the novel *Speak*, Melinda cuts her wrist with a paperclip. She says, " If a suicide attempt is a cry for help, then what is this. A whimper, a peep" (Anderson 87)? This shows readers that Melinda has a low self-esteem and is trying to make it evident to her parents by cutting herself. Melinda's mom reacts by saying that suicide is for cowards and Melinda is cutting herself only for attention.

If her self-esteem was higher, attention from her parents would not have been needed, and the self harm would have never happened. A low self-esteem is like a chain reaction. At first, one will deny asking for help and engaging with others leading them to become lonely. The loneliness then leads to depression, which then triggers the thoughts of suicide. As mentioned before, a lack of friends will only worsen self-esteem and allow it to continue.

This explains that loneliness is one of the most common causes of depression. Depression caused from loneliness will lead to self harm, which is a common negative effect of a low self-esteem. People find that low-self esteem brings several negative effects to a person's life, and from the novel *Speak*, by Laurie Halse Anderson and modern sources, the authors prove this thought to be true. It is important to realize that going through life with a low self-esteem will bring danger to oneself and worryment in others. Acting as a chain reaction, dignity will affect how lonely one is, which will lead to depression, and eventually harmful actions.

Self-esteem is found in everyone, and affects each person differently depending on how confident they are. Having a high self-esteem will only bring positive outcomes, and working hard to achieve a high self-esteem will bring many benefits to one's life. Not only is it important to realize that low self-esteem brings negative outcomes, but also to understand that how high one's confidence is, will determine how happily a person lives their life.