



Self-Esteem: The First Step to a Great Interview

By Valerie Hayes, The Pageant Coach™

Ahh, the comforts of being snug at home on a Friday night with a toasty fire, bowl of popcorn, and the remote control. I just love relaxing on the couch after a busy day and catching a few of my favorite shows. You can often find me watching CNN, the Discovery Channel... or wait, is that a makeover show? I can't resist a makeover show! I love the "reveal"... the excitement of family and friends, the wonderful new self-esteem... it sucks me in every time. I admit that after watching I feel slightly wistful about the seductive idea of perfect beauty. It's so easy to let TV shows and fashion magazines make us feel uncomfortable about how we look, contributing to a dip in our own self-confidence.

One of the problems with these magazines and makeover shows is that we are often seeing a very narrow view of what is beautiful. We need to open up our eyes and look around a little. There are many beautiful, intelligent women who don't fit the stereotypical vision of a perfect face and a perfect body. Some of our favorite celebrities don't fit that stereotype. Queen Latifah, a multi-talented beautiful woman, didn't wait until she was a size 2 to pursue her dreams. And while Sex in The City may be a favorite show I've never thought of Sarah Jessica Parker as a classic beauty. However, I completely admire the stylish aura she has created. And how about Eva Longoria? Working in an industry that clearly prefers tall, long-legged Amazons, Eva proves that inch for inch she's just as sexy and beautiful as the next desperate housewife. All of these women have made a decision to accept the way they look and make the most of it. They exude self-confidence.

Sometimes makeover shows focus too much on physical changes but don't really give you much insight into the psychological changes required to build self-esteem. It's not just all about what great hair and make-up can do for you; it's also about what you can do for yourself. Two years ago my sister and her family were visiting to celebrate a long Thanksgiving weekend. She and I decided to go shopping while the rest of the family was parked in front of the TV recovering from too much turkey. At a local boutique we shared a dressing room and started in on our armload of clothes. She looked in the mirror with great pleasure



and smiled. I looked in the mirror with great pain and winced. What was the difference? Well, actually nothing. We were trying on similar styles in exactly the same size! She was thrilled with her sleek size 10 and I was depressed with my huge size 10. You see it was all the self-talk. She had recently lost 30 pounds and this was probably the smallest she had ever been in her life. She looked in the mirror and told herself she looked great! I have always tended towards a size 4 and consider a size 10 to be at the depressing end of my weight range. I took one look in the mirror and told myself I looked horrible. We laughed out loud when we realized the ridiculousness of the situation. I made a decision then and there to stop feeding myself negative thoughts about myself and accept myself at that weight. I stopped punishing myself for not being Miss Perfect. I can honestly say that am happier with the way I look and feel more self-confident than I have ever felt and I haven't lost a pound. My self-esteem has soared and I've accomplished goals that seemed just out of my reach.

Should you stop watching these wonderfully tempting reality shows? Absolutely not! The images on TV and pictures in the magazines can't force you to question your worth if you see them for what they really are. Try seeing the photos and "reveals" as a fun work of art created by highly skilled make-up artists and photographers. It's fun to look at, but like a dream, it's not real. Go ahead and see these programs as inspiration to be the best you can be... realistically. Accept yourself for who you are and then go ahead and play the cards you were dealt. Quick, run to the mirror right now and find three things about you that are wonderfully unique and beautiful. Now, get out your best red lipstick and write those three things on the mirror. Focus on those things every time you look in the mirror and decide that you're going to celebrate your own wonderful beauty. So put down the remote, get up off the couch, and go out and pursue your dream to be a model, pageant queen, or award-winning actress. With self-esteem based on reality, you can live your dream!

And if you're looking for something to give your self-esteem a needed boost, don't miss my internet talk radio show, Pageant Talk Radio. Each week we talk about important information you need to know to be an elite contestant, plus each show ends with a motivational and inspirational message. It's just what you need to stay on track with your pageant preparation. And, if you miss an episode you can access it via the archives section of the website. Here's the link to listen: www.PageantTalkRadio.com. Enjoy the show!