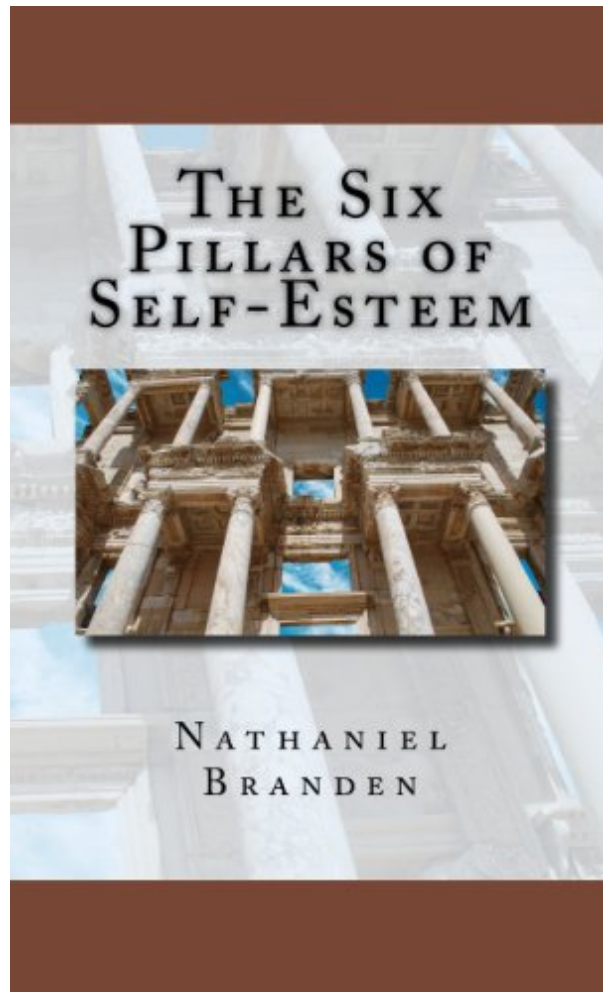


# THE SIX PILLARS OF SELF-ESTEEM BY NATHANIEL BRANDEN



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From Publishers Weekly

Branden, the author of *The Psychology of Self-Esteem* and perhaps the best-known guru of self-esteem, here presents a sensible guide to daily living. First defining and explaining self-esteem, he then isolates six pillars of this characteristic: self-acceptance, self-responsibility, self-assertiveness, personal integrity, living consciously and living purposefully. Readers will find his emphasis on responsibility and self-reliance a refreshing change from trendy self-help guides that shift blame for personal shortcomings onto a neglectful parent or an alcoholic spouse. Branden also includes an analysis of cultural factors that inhibit self-esteem and suggests guidelines for parents, teachers, employers, psychotherapists and others who are instrumental in fostering this behavioral quality. A 31-week program and a reading list round out the guide. First serial to *New Woman*.

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From Library Journal

Branden, who has already explored issues of self-esteem in *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*, LJ 2/1/70, and *How To Raise Your Self-Esteem*, LJ 3/15/87, argues that acquiring high self-esteem is essential to a person's survival in the world. His core assertions are believable enough, but he does not outline the six pillars until well into the book, which is too late to hook the reader. Ultimately, this is a repetitive, verbose, and somewhat rambling book. Better choices would be Richard Bednar's more scholarly *Self-Esteem: Paradoxes and Innovations in Clinical Theory and Practice* (American Psychological Assn., 1989) or, for public libraries, Matthew McKay, *Self-Esteem* (New Harbinger, 1992). Not recommended. Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 10/15/93.

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well grounded, a valuable, credible addition to the psychological self-help shelves. Mary Ellen Sullivan

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Nathaniel Branden's book is the culmination of a lifetime of clinical practice and study, already hailed in its hardcover edition as a classic and the most significant work on the topic. Immense in scope and vision and filled with insight into human motivation and behavior, *The Six Pillars Of Self-Esteem* is essential reading for anyone with a personal or professional interest in self-esteem. The book demonstrates compellingly why self-esteem is basic to psychological health, achievement, personal happiness, and positive relationships. Branden introduces the six pillars-six action-based practices for daily living that provide the foundation for self-esteem-and explores the central importance of self-esteem in five areas: the workplace, parenting, education, psychotherapy, and the culture at large. The work provides concrete guidelines for teachers, parents, managers, and therapists who are responsible for developing the self-esteem of others. And it shows why-in today's chaotic and competitive world-self-esteem is fundamental to our personal and professional power.

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392 of 405 people found the following review helpful.

### What Are Your Agreements With Yourself?

By Carmen Matthews

An interesting passage from this book reads, "Some of the most important things I learned came from thinking about my own mistakes and from noticing what I did that lowered or raised my own self-esteem."

This interests me to reread this, because having first read this book in 1994, I wrote so many detailed introspective notes that I too can say, I've learned a lot from thinking and writing about the "learning lessons" of my life.

And this is a life-time process.

So, what are the 6 Pillars of Self-esteem?

First, I'd like to say that a healthy dose of self-esteem is thinking for yourself, no matter what is going on around you; while you maintain the belief that you deserve to be happy.

And happiness is when you can say that you have more joy than pain in your life.

The 6 pillars are:

#### 1. Live Consciously

This requires us to be fully in the present moment. And for most, this takes a bit of practice, because many of us are conditioned to disown the here and now, to survive what we have thought that we cannot handle.

#### 2. Accept Yourself

Yes. You have flaws and attributes. You also have the opportunity to enhance who you are, by accepting everything about yourself. In fact, the only way to enhance who you are is to accept yourself.

#### 3. Take Responsibility for Your Experiences

Through my journey, I have learned to be in conversations where I say to myself, "It comes down to 'this is where you end, and I begin,'"

Saying such an affirmation has helped me to congruently say what I will and will not experience. And this is quite liberating not only to myself, but also to my interlocutor (most of the time)

#### 4. Assert Who You Are

Honor what you think, feel, believe, need and want. Yes, for many readers this may be a challenge. But the results of accepting this challenge are wonderfully fulfilling.

#### 5. Live Purposefully

Make an agreement with yourself to reach your highest

potential, while you maintain balance in your life.

#### 6. Maintain Your Integrity

Know exactly what your principles are. And stick to them,  
no matter what others think or do.

This is an easy to follow book that is also between the caliber of a "self-help" book and a "psychology" book.  
Enjoy!

135 of 138 people found the following review helpful.

Well worth the effort

By Crystal Eitle

This is a good book for anyone who enjoys a systematic approach and enjoys doing exercises, because the book provides both. It's called "The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem", but one thing that is important to grasp is that self-esteem is not built directly; rather it is an indirect result of what you do. Branden breaks this down into the six practices of Living Consciously, Self-Acceptance, Self-Responsibility, Self-Assertiveness, Living Purposefully and Personal Integrity. If you are aware (conscious) of the real conditions of your life, accepting of yourself, take responsibility for yourself, assert yourself, have a sense of purpose and are rigorously honest, then self-esteem is the natural result.

The heart of this book is the sentence-completion exercises which Branden has developed during his decades as a practicing psychologist. The exercises are designed to bring about change gently. Because the effect is gradual and cumulative, you will begin to notice subtle positive changes in your thinking and behavior without having to summon superhuman resources of willpower. The exercises take about fifteen minutes a day to do and there are about a year's worth in the book. The most profound beneficial effect this book has had on me so far is to make me more aware of my own values and desires and to keep me honest with myself; this awareness of who I really want to be has served as a reminder when it comes time to make choices, and has helped me to make the right choices for myself.

101 of 105 people found the following review helpful.

5 stars for efficacy - i.e. it works

By Mr. John M. Macgregor

At 54, I've come to the astonishing conclusion that your life can be changed via books.

Branden's 'Six Pillars' is the leading example of this presently, in my life.

After an insightful look at the roots of self-esteem, the sentence-completion exercises he leads you thru start stirring up powerful stuff.

(NB: I didn't believe mere sentence-completion exercises could achieve much before I began them.)

My first reaction was horror, at how low my self-esteem had sunk over the years. I'd bet that's a common response.

Then some new stuff started to be 'installed': in small practical ways I started feeling better about myself, and life.

Simultaneously I saw bad, old ideas dissolving - bad, old patterns breaking up.

Some are still there, of course: you have to keep at it.

Seven weeks now, and I'm still game for quite a bit more. Tho I don't want to become a lifelong therapy junkie - that's one of the more subtle form of addiction IMO - so will pull the plug at some stage.



I also experienced (once) hitting bedrock: low self-esteem stuff that would not be moved, and felt it was as old as the cells in my body.

Just coming thru that now: it seems the exercises will shift that stuff too, or at least some of it.

All up, this is the most powerful therapeutic method I've employed. That might be because self-esteem is the most basic, or all-embracing, psychological phenomenon I've yet worked on.

I can't imagine anyone not benefiting from this book, tho the more assiduous you are in absorbing its message and doing the exercises - that is, the more desperate you are to change - the more you'll get out of it.

John Macgregor

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