



Is Self-Help a Scam?

Willie Horton

www.Gurdy.net

I recently read an article on the BBC's International News website – *Self Help Makes You Feel Worse*. The article cited new Canadian university research and stated that people with “low self-esteem actually felt worse” as a result of what the article's author obviously considered to be practicing self-help. The article went on to explain that the University of New Brunswick and the University of Waterloo had measured research participants' moods after they had repeated “I am a lovable person”. The researchers' conclusion was that “self-help” only works for people with high self-esteem and, in fact, makes people with low self-esteem feel worse.

The problem is that repeating “I am a lovable person” to yourself – when the facts of your daily life suggest otherwise – is not self-help, it's self-delusion. It's just like the magical illusion where the magician saws his beautiful assistant in two – we all see it happen but we know in our heart and soul that the theatre isn't littered with bloodied body parts!! The researchers in question appear to me to have been a little naive.

If you don't believe your own self-worth in your heart and soul, no amount of trite self-affirmation will fix you up. Of course you'll feel worse for the experience because you'd tried to convince yourself that you were a “loveable person” (or whatever other nonsense you might repeat to yourself) and not only have you proved that such nonsense doesn't work – you've proved yourself right, all over again, that you're not, in fact, a “loveable person”!

So, self-affirmation is, indeed, a scam – but it's got very little to do with true self-help that can, to quote from Nelson Mandela, “liberate us from our own fears” and enable us “shine our light” for all the world to see. First things first – as I've just said, self-affirmation is a scam, smoke and mirrors that make no difference to the quality of your life, your self-image, your success or happiness. Why? Because self-affirmation is addressed to the conscious mind – the part of our mind where we do our thinking. But it's our subconscious mind where we do our doing. Seventy years research proves conclusively that your subconscious mind creates your behaviour and reactions and, as a result, creates your life and who you think you are. It's in your subconscious mind that you hold your beliefs – in your heart and soul, so to speak.

So, if you don't believe, in your heart and soul, that you're a “loveable person”, no amount of self-talk will convince you otherwise. You need to get to the very heart of the matter – in your

subconscious mind. Before we explore how to do that, it's important to understand that your current limiting self beliefs are there because, as young and impressionable children, things were impressed on our subconscious mind. If something happened us in our formative years that made us feel uncomfortable or inadequate, our subconscious mind's replaying of that event continues to make us feel that same way many years later.

You need to by-pass your subconscious mind's proven obsession with the past. And, when you stop to think about it, the solution to your perceived problems is absolutely and obviously found in the present. You simply need to re-learn how to focus in the here and now. I say "re-train" because, as children, we were all expert at paying attention to the present moment – we didn't worry about next month's mortgage, whether we'd get that promotion or why our neighbour had a bigger car than ours – we simply went about our business in the here and now.

If you want to improve your life, your "self-esteem", your happiness, your success, you need to become like a child all over again – childlike, not childish. You need to train your subconscious mind to focus in the present moment – the more you do this, the less your subconscious mind can focus in the past. Your past "programs" won't go away but as you give them less and less energy, they will hold less and less power over you and your life will begin to change.

You retrain your mind to focus in the present by using your five senses – by training yourself to pay detailed attention to what you see, feel, hear, smell and taste only in the present moment. For starters, this should be done in the privacy of your own home – otherwise normal people will think you're mad (by the way, all the evidence points to the fact that it's the normal people who are, in fact, mad). Or you could deliberately choose to go for a stroll to practice using your five senses. If you like working out or jogging, you could use these activities as an opportunity to pay full attention to what you're feeling in your body, in the muscles and muscle groups that you're using – it means you'll have to unplug the iPod!!

Little by little, day by day, we can all recreate our lives through bringing our attention into the only place and time that we have – the here and now. Little by little we will realise low self-esteem for what it is – another illusion, this time created by subconscious snapshots we took of events long gone. Little by little anybody – and that includes you – can create the life, happiness, success, relationships that your heart desires. But it's something that's done little by little – every day – and the little by little will give rise to startling results.