



## DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- In the video Mr. Walsh explains, "...that's the whole point of self-esteem: to be proud of yourself even when there's no reason to be proud of yourself. Of course, apologists will claim that self-esteem is simply about confidence; and that you need confidence to succeed in life. Okay. But if self-esteem is simply about confidence then why don't we just call it confidence? Because confidence must be earned." Why is this difference, between confidence needing to be earned but self-esteem not needing to be earned, so important to a person's development and growth? Do you agree with the apologists that confidence is necessary to success in life? Why or why not?
- Mr. Walsh further points out that, "In a saner, less confused time, people saw it the opposite way. It didn't matter how you felt about yourself; it mattered what you did... I remember one time explaining very calmly to my dad that he couldn't expect me to do my math assignment because math made me feel bad about myself. In return, he suggested that maybe I should study more and then math wouldn't make me feel so bad. 'But in the meantime,' he said, 'It doesn't matter how you feel. Do your homework.' It doesn't matter how I feel? What a scandalous notion." What, specifically, do you think changed over time and led to the condition of many people, especially parents and teachers, valuing feelings over outcomes? Do you think that this condition is related in any way to the generation of parents that want to be friends with their kids and find it difficult to say 'no' to their kids? Why or why not? Explain.
- Later, Mr. Walsh argues that, "If this self-esteem thing was just another benign form of entertainment, we could just laugh it off. But it's become a serious problem because this 'I'm special,' 'love yourself,' 'you get points for breathing' dogma taints everything it touches. It equips you for nothing. It won't help you at school, it will stifle your career ambitions, and it will certainly wreak havoc on your relationships." What problems do you think advocates of self-esteem initiatives in schools and clubs are trying to solve? What might some better solutions to those problems be?
- Mr. Walsh goes on to state that, "...insecurity and self-doubt can also be defeating, but at least there's a chance that they might drive you to be better. Self-esteem actually prevents improvement, because you can only improve if you first acknowledge what you're not good at." Why do you think that so many parents and teachers would rather falsely prop up a child's confidence rather than acknowledge the truth about a child's current lack of ability or achievement? What methods and tools could parents and teachers use to help a child cope with the reality that he or she might not be good at something and to cope with that child's associated hurt feelings?
- At the conclusion of the video, Mr. Walsh recommends to viewers to, "...have no self-esteem, as in, stop thinking about it. Period. Do good things with your life and you'll have all the esteem you'll ever need." Why do you think that Mr. Walsh is making this recommendation? Do you think he is right? Why or why not? Explain.

## EXTEND THE LEARNING:

### CASE STUDY: Participation Trophies

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Participation Trophies Send a Dangerous Message,” then answer the questions that follow.

- Why is the author of the article against giving out participation trophies?
- How does giving out participation trophies fit into the false, progressive narrative that all kids are deserving of being treated equally? What other short and long-term consequences are likely to arise for people who receive participation trophies?
- How does this article support the points made by the presenter in the video?



# QUIZ

## WHY SELF-ESTEEM IS SELF-DEFEATING

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- 1. Self-esteem is \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a. vitally important
  - b. a fantasy
  - c. sorely lacking in society
  - d. the foundation of personality
  
- 2. What is the point of self-esteem?**
  - a. To better relationships between individuals.
  - b. To fight systemic racism.
  - c. To be proud of yourself even when there's no reason to be proud of yourself.
  - d. To challenge conventional social constructs.
  
- 3. Self-esteem can be defined as \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a. a confidence builder
  - b. an exercise of power
  - c. unearned confidence
  - d. a reflection of self
  
- 4. Self-esteem actually prevents improvement, because you can only improve if you first acknowledge what you're not good at.**
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
- 5. Which of the following is a result of the self-esteem problem?**
  - a. It equips you for nothing.
  - b. It won't help you at school
  - c. It will wreak havoc on your relationships.
  - d. All of the above.



# QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/10/06/should-every-young-athlete-get-a-trophy/participation-trophies-send-a-dangerous-message>

## Participation Trophies Send a Dangerous Message



Betty Berdan is a high school junior from Connecticut who has participated in competitive sports since she was 7.

**Updated** October 6, 2016, 11:43 AM

Like many other kids my age, I grew up receiving trophy after trophy, medal after medal, ribbon after ribbon for every sports season, science fair and spelling bee I participated in. Today the dozens of trophies, ribbons and medals sit in a corner of my room, collecting dust. They do not mean much to me because I know that identical awards sit in other children's rooms all over town and probably in millions of other homes across the country.

Trophies should be given out for first, second and third; participation should be recognized, but celebrated with words and a pat on the back rather than a trophy.

Trophies used to be awarded only to winners, but are now little more than party favors: reminders of an experience, not tokens of true achievement. When awards are handed out like candy to every child who participates, they diminish in value. If every soccer player receives a trophy for merely showing up to practice and playing in games, the truly exceptional players are slighted. The same applies to teams. Regardless of individual effort or superior skills, all who participate receive equal acknowledgement.

Trophies for all convey an inaccurate and potentially dangerous life message to children: We are all winners. This message is repeated at the end of each sports season, year after year, and is only reinforced by the collection of trophies that continues to pile up. We begin to expect awards and praise for just showing up — to class, practice, after-school jobs — leaving us woefully unprepared for reality. Outside the protected bubble of childhood, not everyone is a winner. Showing up to work, attending class, completing homework and trying my best at sports practice are expected of me, not worthy of an award. These are the foundations of a long path to potential success, a success that is not guaranteed no matter how much effort I put in.

I believe that we should change how we reward children. Trophies should be given out for first, second and third; participation should be recognized, but celebrated with words and a pat on the back rather than a trophy. As in sports as well as life, it is fact that there's room for only a select few on the winners' podium.