

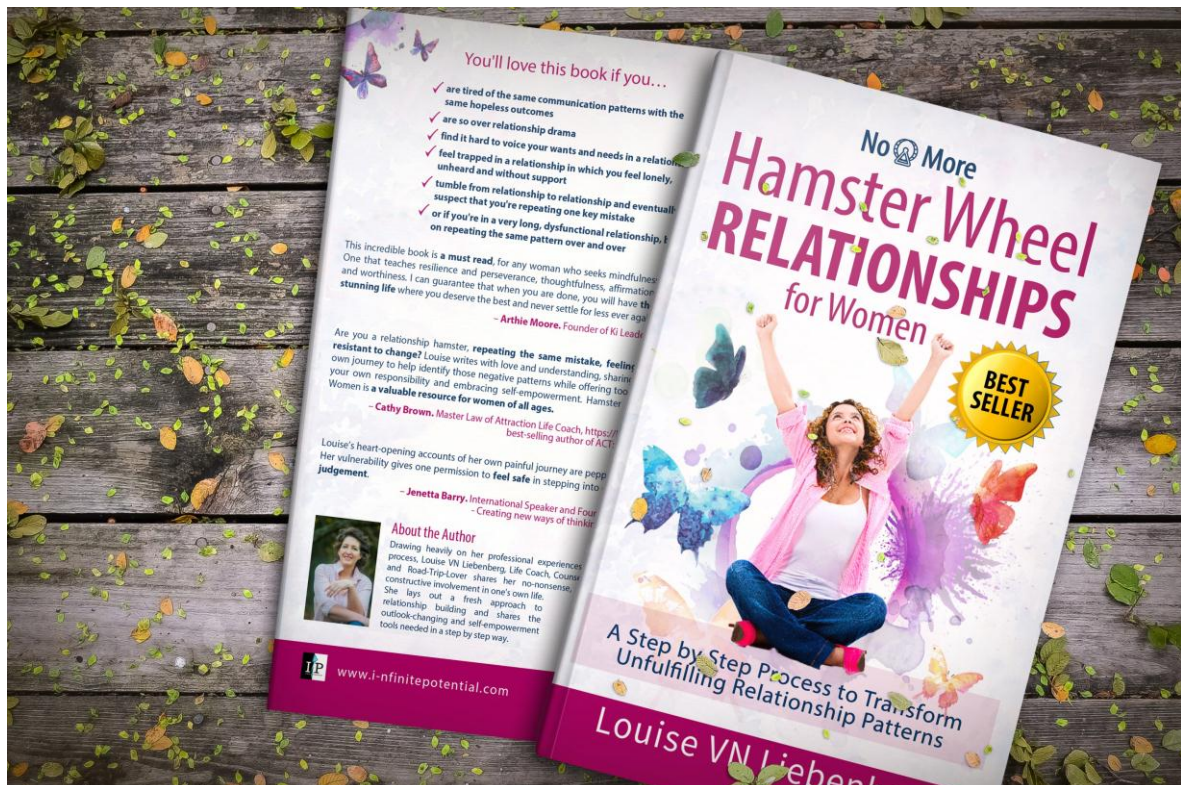
# Hamster Wheel Relationships for Women

A Step by Step Process to Transform Unfulfilling Relationship Patterns

Book 1 of the  
No More  
Series



Excerpt from:



## Self-Esteem 101



*“I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better.”*

– Maya Angelou

A positive sense of who we are is the one thing in life that smooths over our path more than anything else. It is the quality that makes you interact better with others and that spontaneously draws people to you. It is the fuel inside you that boosts you to achieve those things you want for yourself.

The opposite is true too. A lack of self-esteem presents itself in all areas of our lives.

Mark what you can identify as your problems in your Workbook on page 61:

- Reactiveness/blow-ups
- Anxiety/stress
- People-pleasing
- Inability to be yourself = Acting in a manner in which you think people will approve off
- Loneliness
- Feeling powerless, which gets misdiagnosed as depression
- Withdrawal
- Serial relationship disasters
- Under-achievement
- Over-achievement leading to burnout
- Addiction or substance abuse
- Procrastination

- Lack of assertiveness
- Body image problems
- Indecisiveness and being other-directed
- Unable to “own” your achievements
- Feeling helpless and unable to control your life
- Feeling undeserving of being happy
- Blaming others – a victim outlook

You can determine your own self-esteem score by seeing how many of these effects are currently true in your life, and then through committing yourself to a few key exercises which will improve your self-esteem.

### **Wait, I feel great about myself, but I am messing up my relationships!**

If you are a **high-achiever** who is **driven to succeed** you likely have **External Self-Esteem** in oodles! External self-esteem is **about what we do and achieve, not about who we are**. Although external self-esteem is useful in building our self-image and confidence, it is only when we celebrate who we are – not what we do – that we have repaired our self-image and can live as healthy adults.

Sometimes we firmly believe that we have good self-esteem. (yes, some people do truly like themselves), but often a dead giveaway of low self-esteem is how we let ourselves be treated – again and again and again.

### **When we have mainly external self-esteem we become**

1. either burned out by the need to overachieve, where no achievement is ever enough

or

2. utterly paralyzed by fear of failure, which in a relationship means losing someone.

### **First, Understanding Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem is not some magical quality we have to toil for. It is a birthright, and it is something that circumstances, parenting styles and the influencing people in our life can chip away from us or enhance. A lack of a good internal sense of self is not a life sentence. It is a starting point.

Self-esteem influences how we are in the world and how we are in relationships. It is like a window through which you view the world. If the window is clean and sparkly, the world looks brighter, but opaque glass completely obscures the world. Sometimes other people wrote letters all over your window, and you have to strip those letters off before you can see clearly.

We think of self-image as “who we essentially are”, but in an unconscious life it is made up of:

- Who we think we should be
- Who we pretend to be to please other people
- Who we wish to be
- Who we are too scared to be
- And the bit that got left over from who we are supposed to really be.

How we internalize these beliefs predicts which roles we will take on in life, which doors we choose to open and which paths we will be too scared to take.

If we wipe these other letters off our window, we can rewrite the story of where our life will go from this point forward. Although self-esteem takes time to build up, you can achieve immediate change through making a few small adjustments. Other self-esteem habits take a little more practice to settle into, but when you make celebrating yourself a daily habit you will be amazed at where you are six months from now! These changes will empower you to be braver through self-belief, make better choices for yourself through self-respect and attract better opportunities through self-worth.

### **The Four Self-Esteem Commitments:**

Combined with understanding that your self-esteem lacks exist only because you took on outside influences, these four actions have the power to make you improve your sense of self, one day at a time.

**1. No more self-bashing** – It is merely a bad habit. Stop. Yes, really just stop – every time you catch yourself. Ask people to support you by pointing out to you when you self-bash. It will not take long for you to drop the habit, especially if you say something positive instead: “You do better when you know better” or “I did the best I could and that makes me happy”.

**2. How you want others to see you** – How you see yourself is how others see you. Now think about how you see yourself. Is that how you want others to see you? Write down a full and complete statement about how you want others to see you, stick it somewhere you can see it, and start viewing yourself that way.

Our expectation that we will see a specific outcome shapes how we behave, which influences the way others see us. In turn, others’ positive feedback cements the new belief.

“Years ago, as an insecure twenty-four-year-old who could not reach out to others, I read this somewhere: ‘How you see yourself is how others see you’. I was horrified when I recognized how filled with shame I was about my father’s alcoholism. I saw myself as less than others. I did not believe that I could be liked for myself. I either did not speak or spoke way too fast because I was scared people would stop

listening. I did not want people to think I was unlikeable. I even avoided the tea room on the pretext that I was working, but in reality, I did not know that I was socially acceptable. It was painful, and it was lonely. I felt like an outcast, but I did it to myself.

"I decided I wanted people to see me as friendly, competent and successful as well as kind and acceptable. And so, I started acting as if I was all those things. And it got easier. And better.

Years later, when I was thirty-five years old, and my mother once again told me that I am a child of the devil and would never amount to anything, I said to her that I fought for my self-esteem, that I have added it inch by inch, and that I would not let her or anyone take it away from me. This habit, combined with refusing to bash myself any more, is what got me to the point that I could find it in me to say to my mother, after so many years of verbal abuse: 'No more!' It was the beginning of becoming whole."

**3. The good points list** – Make a list of your good points. If you struggle, ask your best friend to make the list for you. These can include things like being kind, a loyal friend, caring, empathetic, passionate, hard-working and funny.

Add all your achievements, your accomplishments, what you do for others, what people like about you. The list will grow as you open yourself to the amazing being you already are. Trust me!

**4. Positive affirmations** – Affirmations are a powerful tool that anyone can successfully apply to repair self-esteem holes.

They are self-fulfilling prophecies or beliefs that become true because we are acting as if it is already true!

How to do it:

- Write simple yet powerful messages to yourself
- Stick them where you can see them. The mirror, the toilet, the steering wheel, your screen saver...
- Repeat them out loud several times a day.
- Keep them short and positive.
- Writing affirmations is powerful, especially as part of morning pages, or before going to bed at night.
- Meditation changes your brain waves to a more receptive space and is recommended for anyone who want to have faster positive change. You repeat your affirmations during your meditation practice for maximum effect.

It has been proven that you do not have to start out believing your own specially created affirmation. As long as you keep repeating it your brain will start believing it until it becomes your new truth. A simple yet powerful tool, and the results are well worth the effort. (The alternative has not been working so well, has it? Nothing to lose then!)

The Law of Positivity states: “You are actively changing what you do not want in your life by replacing it with positive self-talk.” You are now using positive self-talk to create a new life. When you repeat repeat positive self-talk, you become a different person. You effectively change who you are by changing your thoughts and words. A positive conversation with your mind makes your life as positive as you want it to be.

### **Breaking Self-Esteem Acquiring Action into doable chunks:**

**Self-Worth** – When we feel like we are valuable, important people.

Affirmation: I am born worthy, like everyone else.

Action: Do something nice for yourself. For me, I would go and pick flowers in the garden or schedule a tea break with a friend and say, “because I am worthy”. Decide what it is you want to do for yourself, say out loud “because I am worthy” and do it regularly.

**Self-Compassion** – treating yourself with kindness, empathy and understanding.

Understanding your imperfect perfect humanness can change how you see yourself and feel about yourself. Decide to start treating yourself like you treat your best friend.

Action: Write down a list of how you can treat yourself better, like you do for those you love.

Affirmation: I am my own best friend. I am kind to myself.

**Self-Feeling** – learning that it is possible to accept and express our feelings

Action: Find a safe person or a support group you can express your feelings to. When you become ready those people will come on your path. Your part is to reach out. Find names for your feelings using a feelings chart. (There is one on page 47 in your Workbook.)

Affirmation: I have a right to my feelings.

**Self-Acceptance** – accepting ourselves in entirety, the good points and the points we like less.

Action: Self-acceptance is a decision more than anything else. It is understanding that being human comes with the tendency to make mistakes

until we know better. It is accepting that we could only do what we have been taught growing up, and if we were not issued tools, that is how it is.

Affirmations: I am fully acceptable. I accept all of me.

**Self-Focus** – the goal of self-focus is to be the master of our lives, to put ourselves first in our own queue.

Action: When you have not taken responsibility for your happiness for so long, you now bring your attention back to yourself each time you find yourself saying: “Yes but he...” or “She should...” You use the words “I can...” or “I choose to...”

Consider a challenging situation in your life and apply this principle.

Affirmations: I steer my own boat. I am first in my own queue.

**Self-Guidance** – Trusting one’s own guidance and judgment.

Self-guidance is to trust our ability to guide ourselves in a healthy way. When we have not had healthy role models, or if we have lost faith in our own ability to guide ourselves, or others, we have to learn to trust ourselves first of all.

Action: I stop asking people for input or approval every time. I review what I really want and take steps to make it happen.

Affirmations: I trust my own judgment. I determine where I want to go in life. I decide how my days are going to be.

**Self-Care** – Taking responsibility for one’s own well-being.

Action: Make a list: In which ways can I take better care of myself. Decide on the three most important things to do and schedule those in your diary. Take action, book that holiday, make the doctor’s appointment, get that massage, speak up for yourself, ask for what you need, use your voice...

Affirmation: I take great care of myself because I am worth it. I deserve joy. I can have fun.

**Self-Respect** – Self-respect is the base from which we make better decisions.

Action: Find a self-respecting person and think what they would do in your situation. Emulate their behavior until it feels natural. Self-respect feels great and once you know how great a feeling it is, you will not need to fake it anymore. You will start choosing self-respecting words and actions naturally.

Affirmations: I respect myself. I am worth more.

**Self-Determination** – The goal of self-determination is to feel that we are empowered.

When I focus on the fact that I am an adult and not a helpless child, I step into my power.

Action: What empowers me? Make a list of where you gave up your right to choose. Decide what you want to action.

Affirmations: I am an adult with free choice. I decide what I like and dislike. I have a voice.

**Self-Love** – Self-love is the ability to love ourselves as we are.

Am I re-parenting myself best or do I look to others to make me happy?

Action: Today I decide that I like myself exactly the way I am. I make a solemn declaration that henceforth I will treat myself like my own best friend.

Affirmations: I completely and truly love and accept myself. I am lovable. I am the only one who can be me. I do me best. I like myself.

And then you decide to be different:

Here is how **Ingrid** did it:

“For many years I suffered from low self-esteem. During therapy I worked on my self-esteem. After a time, I decided I needed to practice what I had learnt.

“I was invited to a wedding far from my home. The only people I would know at the wedding were the groom and the groom’s parents. The guests would be spending the weekend as they came from all over the country and overseas. I shared a chalet with a family I have not met before. We all got along well. On my drive there I did have a few misgivings but knew that there would be a lot of people there in the same boat as me.

“The Friday evening everyone got together for a welcome party. I met lots of new people and made connections. I had made the decision that I would involve myself in all the activities. The wedding was great. I talked to different people, danced with a group of people and had a really pleasant evening.

“The best part of the weekend was near the end of the wedding. I was standing outside as it was so warm. A lady started chatting and said she wished she was as brave as I was. To go away for a weekend, by myself, and still have a great time. I realized that it was about showing up and being yourself.”

It was not easy for Ingrid, and she had to push herself to do things different. As the weekend progressed she continuously built on her self-esteem by seeing the results of her bravery. By taking action and trying new things we discover a powerful self-esteem tool: new activities and purposely different behavior builds self-esteem!

**How we feel about ourselves** may be the simplest definition of self-esteem. To love yourself, value yourself and like yourself is to have self-esteem. Self-



esteem is a big job but taking these steps will get you there. Remember that where you put your attention is where you will go!

There are some powerful and life-changing **exercises** for you in the Workbook from page 61 to 64. They have the power to change your life forever in the best possible way.

If you want a more structured approach with help and individualized support on your road, this self-esteem course (<http://bit.ly/2GvPmLs>) will speed up your journey.

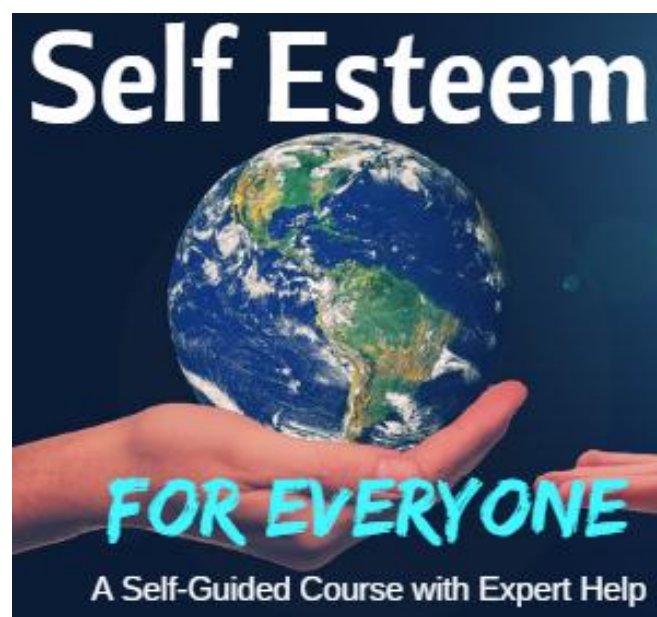
*You are a beautiful and beloved individual.  
It is good to be you.  
We will love you no matter what you do,  
as long as you are you.”*  
— M. Scott Peck

Self-esteem is our biggest gift to ourselves!

Should you want to read more, Hamster Wheel Relationships for Women is available on [Amazon](#) now! The book comes with a free 70 page downloadable and printable Workbook, with even more self-esteem workouts.

If you want to supercharge your self-esteem, register for the upcoming **Self-Esteem Online Course** [here](#)

If you liked this chapter more like this is available by joining our [Facebook Group](#) here or reading the [blogs](#) on [www.i-nfinitepotential.com](http://www.i-nfinitepotential.com)





**Hamster Wheel Relationships for Women. A Step by Step Process to Transform Unfulfilling Relationship Patterns. Accompanied by Stepping Off – The Hamster Wheel Workbook/ Louise VN Liebenberg — 1st edition.**

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