

GIVE  
YOURSELF A  
SELF-CONCEPT  
**MAKEOVER**



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a Self-Concept  
Makeover

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# Introduction

The life you're currently living is the result of your self-concept. If you believe you can't earn a good living, you won't. If you believe that others don't like you, your social life will be unsatisfying. **Your self-concept serves as a self-imposed barrier.** It's necessary to eliminate the barrier if you wish to venture beyond it.

You are limited by your beliefs regarding your past, your current situation, and your habits. Fortunately, these are manageable challenges that can be overcome with effort and persistence.

*"You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe,  
deserve your unlimited love and affection"*

*- Buddha*

# Reevaluating the Past

Everyone carries around a past with negative experiences. Some of these experiences were our own fault, while others were not. ***What's most relevant is how the experiences of the past are interpreted.*** It's challenging not to assign meaning to these experiences, but is the meaning that's been assigned accurate? More importantly, is it useful?

**There are several signs that you're not using your past constructively:**

1. **You continue making the same mistakes.** The past should be useful. From the past, we learn what works and what doesn't, provided the experience is interpreted correctly.
2. **You ignore your past.** Easy to do, but has negative consequences. Time doesn't heal all wounds. Healing heals all wounds. If there's something in your past you feel the desire to forget, it's hurting you in the present.
3. **You've adopted negative attitudes, beliefs, or behavioral characteristics from your parents.** Do you have the same short temper your father had? Do you lie excessively like your mother did? Do you

mistrust rich people? Dislike anyone that's a democrat? Beliefs and attitudes that you didn't choose for yourself can be damaging to your self-image.

4. **A single negative experience is affecting your belief system today.** These experiences are most likely to occur in childhood, but aren't limited to your early years.

For example, perhaps you didn't do well in art class in 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

You may have drawn the conclusion that:

- \* You have no artistic ability.
- \* Your art teacher didn't like you.
- \* Your art teacher wasn't a good teacher.
- \* You're not a good person because you're not good at creating art.
- \* You lack any creative ability.
- \* You're not good at learning new skills.
- \* You're not very smart.
- \* You're not a well-rounded person.

And it can snowball from there. Suppose one of your classmates made fun of your drawing in art class.

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- \* I'm not a good enough.
- \* People don't like me.
- \* I shouldn't let anyone see something as personal as my artwork in the future.
- \* I will avoid exposing myself to any criticism in the future by being very reserved and cautious.

It's easy to see how negative and erroneous beliefs can develop from negative experiences. These beliefs can be extremely limiting and influence every part of your life.

*"Love yourself first and everything else falls into line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world."*

*- Lucille Ball*

### **Determine if your past is negatively affecting your self-concept:**

1. **Make a list of your beliefs about yourself.** Focus on negative beliefs and any limitations. Include all areas of your life where you feel limited or dissatisfied. A few examples include:
  - \* I'm not good with money.
  - \* No one will hire me.
  - \* I'll never had a good relationship.
  - \* I can't lose weight.



- \* I don't have any self-control.
2. **Question the belief.** Most of your beliefs aren't justified if you examine them closely. This is an important step.
- \* Where did this belief come from? Is the source credible?
  - \* Is it based on sufficient evidence? One experience usually isn't enough. Touching a hot stove is sufficient experience to draw a valid conclusion. One failed attempt at dating or starting a business is not.
  - \* Is the belief reasonable?
3. **Determine what the belief is costing you.** Inaccurate beliefs can cause a lot of damage. What are the beliefs you hold about yourself costing you?
- \* A lack of confidence.
  - \* Lower income.
  - \* Fewer friends or a dissatisfying social life.
  - \* The belief that your options are limited to change your life.
  - \* Overall dissatisfaction with yourself or your life.
4. **Choose an alternate belief.** Choose a belief that better suits reality and supports a healthy self-image.

“No one likes me” can become “I am able to make friends easily”.

5. **Find evidence.** Staying with the previous example, even if you’re friend-free at the moment, you can recall previous friendships. Remember a time in your life when your social life was more active. It’s only logical to believe that if you can make a couple of friends, you can also create numerous friendships.

\* Convince yourself that your new belief is possible.

It’s common to be limited by the past. **We often fail to consider that many of our beliefs about ourselves are based on faulty evidence.** At one point, you didn’t walk or read well. Does that mean that you can’t do either well today? The human brain feels the need to assign meaning to everything that happens.

Sometimes that meaning is incorrect. Sometimes there is no meaning at all.

*“If only you could sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person.”*

*- Fred Rogers*

# Build Your Self-Esteem

Self-esteem isn't quite the same as your self-concept, but they're related. Your self-concept is your perception of yourself. Your self-esteem is a measure of how happy you are with yourself. By increasing one, you can increase the other.

## **Give your self-esteem a boost and think more highly of yourself:**

1. **Guarantee success by starting small.** Success breeds confidence and self-esteem. Create small successes in your life. Drink water instead of soda at lunch. Pay all of your bills on time this month. ***Any little thing that would make you feel good about yourself is a great place to start.***
2. **Do something that frightens you.** Afraid of dogs? Make a visit to the dog kennel. Afraid of public speaking? Tell a story to several friends simultaneously. Prove to yourself that you can stretch beyond your current comfort zone.
3. **Show off your strengths.** Are you a great athlete? Sign up for a softball team. Get out and show your stuff. It feels good to do something that you do well.

Remind yourself of how skilled and competent you can be. This will boost your confidence and sense of self-esteem. It's enjoyable to show off a little, too.

4. **Do something for others.** When you help someone else, you feel good about yourself. Down deep, the average person worries about being selfish or inconsiderate. Do something for someone else and you'll convince yourself that you're a good person.
5. **Eat a healthier diet.** When you eat poorly, you don't feel good. ***You don't know how bad you feel. You're just used to it.*** Your mood and outlook on life will improve when you improve your diet.
6. **Avoid comparisons.** There's always someone else smarter, better looking, wealthier, or more charismatic. There are a lot of people in the world. Notice the progress you're making in your life and be happy with that.
  - \* We always choose exceptional people to compare ourselves to. So yes, Brad Pitt is better looking and Warren Buffett is wealthier than you. This will always be true for 99.9999% of the population.
7. **Fill your mind with uplifting information.** There are plenty of workshops, music, and books with a positive message. ***With positive information entering your***

**brain on a regular basis, you'll be happier with life and yourself.** By the same token, avoid negative information and people.

8. **Observe your thoughts.** If you pay attention to your thoughts, you'll be both amazed and horrified. It's amazing how your mind jumps around to different topics and the crazy things it says. If a real person acted in the same way, you'd call the people in the white coats to come make a pick-up.

\* Notice how odd your self-talk can be.

9. **Create a list of affirmations.** Make a list of affirmations that you'd like to believe and keep it handy. Whenever your mind is idle, repeat your affirmations to yourself. When you're not busy, your mind will start chattering. Take control of the chatter and keep it positive.
10. **Remember your greatness.** You've accomplished some impressive things. Make a list of everything you've managed to do in your life up to this point. It's easy to forget how far you've come. Make a list and review it often.
11. **Learn something new.** Children are so proud of themselves when they learn new something new. It might not be as obvious to us as adults, but we

experience the same phenomenon. Learn how to bake a cake from scratch or how to hit a golf ball. What interests you? Try to learn a new skill each month.

12. **Exercise.** You know you're supposed to do it. When you don't do things you know that should be done, you become annoyed with yourself and doubt your self-discipline. Exercise feels good, too. Take care of yourself.
13. **Introduce yourself to someone new.** This activity carries no risk and has a lot of upside. You feel like you have control over your life, begin to eliminate any shyness, and possibly make a new friend. Everyone fears strangers to some extent. Minimize yours and you'll feel more confident and pleased with yourself.

Everyone can benefit from a little more self-esteem.

**When you think more highly of yourself, you're in better position to change your self-concept and your life.** Think of more ways you can boost your self-esteem and apply these concepts every day.

*"A healthy self-love means we have no compulsion to justify to ourselves or others why we take vacations, why we sleep late, why we buy new shoes, why we spoil ourselves from time to time. We feel comfortable doing things which add quality and beauty to life."*

*- Andrew Matthews*

# Enhance Your Life

One of the most reliable ways to enhance your self-concept is to make some positive changes. It's easier to think positively about yourself when you have an enjoyable and successful life. There's nothing inherently wrong with living in a studio apartment, eating instant soup every night, and sporting a 45-inch waist. However, happy thoughts are easier to come by when you're pleased with your life!

Consider the main parts of your life and seek to make the changes you desire.

## Health And Well-Being

Are you as healthy and fit as you'd like to be? ***It's not necessary to have a 6-pack to show off at the beach, but being healthy has its advantages.*** Good health should be a high priority for anyone that values himself. An attractive body also boosts self-esteem and demonstrates to you that you can control yourself.

**Prove to yourself that you're worth the time and energy to maintain good health:**

1. **See your physician for a checkup.** Everyone should see the doctor at least once per year. There are plenty of health conditions that don't always show obvious symptoms, yet are very serious. Diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol are just a few examples.
  - \* Taking care of yourself demonstrates your belief that you're valuable and relevant. An "I don't care" attitude demonstrates the opposite.
2. **Exercise regularly.** Again, show yourself that your worth the time and energy.
3. **Find and maintain a healthy weight.** No one enjoys being overweight, and it can be a serious challenge to one's self-esteem. However, it's also challenging to change your bodyweight for the better in the long-term.
  - \* ***Make small nutritional changes that you can maintain.*** Eliminating a can of soda each day and substituting water is one such change.
  - \* Those at a healthy weight simply have better habits. Create healthy habits, one at a time.

Be as healthy as possible. Eat a healthy diet, get some exercise, and see your doctor regularly. ***Take good care of yourself. You're worth it.***



*“Don't rely on someone else for your happiness and self-worth. Only you can be responsible for that. If you can't love and respect yourself – no one else will be able to make that happen. Accept who you are – completely; the good and the bad – and make changes as YOU see fit – not because you think someone else wants you to be different.”*

*-Stacey Charter*

## Social Life

No man (or woman) is an island. ***Humans are social creatures, so unless your dream is to sit on top of mountain after taking a vow of silence, it's necessary to involve others in your life.*** Your self-concept is affected by the quality of your social life. If you wish there were more people interested in spending time with you, it's easy to feel bad about yourself.

**A more fulfilling social life can be right around the corner:**

1. **Decide on the type of social life you desire.** Not everyone wants to be the life of the party and spend time in a large group every night. Maybe you'd rather have a couple of close friends that you meet for dinner once a week and a regular social activity on the weekend. It's up to you. Give it some thought.

2. **Determine what's been standing in your way.**

When you know the cause, you can make a plan. A few possibilities include:

- \* I work at home and don't have regular contact with others.
- \* I'm shy.
- \* I don't know what to say to people.

3. **Create and implement a solution.** There are books on how to be more charismatic. You can find videos on how to get over social anxiety or how to deal with shyness. Maybe you need to reach out to the people you already know. Perhaps you can join a club or start a new hobby that involves other people.

- \* Build your social life one person at a time. **Most people only need a couple of good friends to feel satisfaction and self-esteem in this part of their lives.**

Building an enjoyable social life is much easier than you think. **Always remember that most people are lonely to varying degrees.** It's not difficult to find others that would like to get out of the house and share a meaningful activity or conversation.

*“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs, ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”*

*-Howard Washington Thurman*

## Finances

It’s hard to be pleased with yourself if you’re filling your gas tank \$3 at a time. Having the ability to pay for life’s basic expenses is important to your self-concept. It’s easy to think negatively about yourself when you can’t take care of your expenses.

### **Get your finances under control:**

1. **Create a simple budget and stick to it.** Whether you earn \$10,000 or \$10 million, everyone needs a budget. There are numerous websites and books dedicated to personal finance and budgeting. Teach yourself what you need to know.
2. **Learn how to save.** A proper budget will provide for an excess of funds at the end of the month. Save it and invest it appropriately.
3. **Earn more.** If you can’t meet your expenses with your income, the only solution is to either cut expenses or

earn more. There are several ways to increase your income:

- \* Find a second job.
- \* Get a raise at your current job.
- \* Find a better paying job.
- \* Create a primary or secondary job for yourself. There are many opportunities online in today's world.

Think about the type of financial life that appeals to you and take steps to make it happen. Money isn't everything, but it is relevant. You'll feel more capable and less discouraged if your financial life is healthy.

*"You have been criticizing yourself for years, and it hasn't worked. Try approving of yourself and see what happens."*

*-Louise L. Hay*

## Have Goals

**Do you have goals? *Being excited about the future and making consistent progress in life will enhance your concept of yourself.*** Numerous studies have shown that those with goals outperform those without goals in every area of life. Having a few goals creates a sense of purpose, direction, and control.

## Setting goals is simple and effective:

1. **Set goals with a timeline no longer than 12 weeks.**

It's hard to maintain focus and enthusiasm longer than this. If your goal is too big to reach in 12 weeks, set short-term goals that will take you in the right direction.

2. **Measure your progress.** This keeps your goals fresh in your mind and provides the feedback you need to maximize your effectiveness.

3. **Get excited by progress.** If you want to enhance your self-concept, feel good about yourself at every opportunity. Most people have been stuck in the same place for years, so any progress in life is worthy of celebration.

Setting goals can be a complicated process, but it doesn't have to be. Having a few goals and making regular progress can be great for your self-concept. It proves to you that you can make changes in your life and control your future.

## Give Of Yourself Regularly

It's not all about you. Your self-concept isn't all about you either. ***It's also about your perception of your value to the***

**world.** Providing value to the world selflessly is a great way to change your self-concept and boost your self-esteem.

1. **Volunteer.** Organizations are always looking for more volunteers. Find something that appeals to you and get involved.
2. **Find a job or second job that helps others.** You could tutor children or teach adults to read. Maybe you work with senior citizens one night a week in the evenings. There are many jobs available that provide a meaningful service to others.
3. **Random acts of kindness.** Life presents endless opportunities to help others. You can't help but love yourself when you're doing something wonderful for another person.

Just be a nice person. **Help others when possible and you'll benefit in many unpredictable ways.** Think about your average day. What small changes could you make to be more helpful or kind to others?

*"The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity and an understanding of life that fills them with compassions, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen."*

*-Elizabeth Kubler-Ross*

# Who Do You Wish To Be?

Most of us never aspired to be an average person working in a cubicle at a job we don't enjoy. ***When you can be the person you've always wanted to be, your self-concept will be perfect for you.*** Isn't this what everyone dreams about? When you're the person you want to be, you'll have the life you desire. You'll rise above the idea of a "self-concept".

## Consciously decide who you want to be:

1. **Who do you admire and why?** Do you wish you were more like James Bond? Why? Are you a fan of Abraham Lincoln? Albert Einstein? Why?
2. **What personal qualities have you always admired in others?**
  - \* Charisma?
  - \* Confidence?
  - \* Mental toughness?
  - \* Kindness?
  - \* Cool under pressure?
  - \* Happiness?
3. **What can you do today to start being the person you've always wanted to be?** There's no one that can

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stop you. Anyone that tries to get in your way can be ignored. Be on a mission to become the person you would admire.

This is the ultimate goal. If you're the person you wish to be and living the life you desire, your opinion of yourself will be at the highest possible level. Everything else is just a stepping stone to reach this point.

*"Because one believes in oneself, one doesn't try to convince others. Because one is content with oneself, one doesn't need others' approval. Because one accepts oneself, the whole world accepts him or her."*

*-Lao-Tzu*



# Conclusion

Your self-concept has been shaped by your past. Or rather, your perception of your past. **Review the uncomfortable experiences from your past and find a more positive resolution.** Remember that the past is over and no indication of what the future can hold. The past is only a limitation if you allow it to be.

Building your self-esteem will give you the fuel to make alterations to your self-concept. This is an ongoing process. You already have plenty of reasons to be happy with yourself. Ensure you remind yourself of how wonderful you already are.

Enhance your life in every possible way. By creating and living the life you desire, your self-concept will change. And start acting like the person you know you should be. This is really the key to the ideal self-concept. When you have evidence that you're living your idea of the right life and being the right person, you've achieved the ultimate.