

An Ounce of Prevention

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The Importance of Self-Worth

PsychAlive

The dictionary defines *self-worth* as “*the sense of one’s own value or worth as a person.*” However, there are many ways for a person to value themselves and assess their worth as a human being, and some of these are more psychologically beneficial than others. In this article, we discuss the value of true self-worth, how to build this type of self-worth and why so many of us lack a feeling of worthiness.

Although real accomplishments are important to acknowledge as you build your sense of self, your self-worth should also take into account the unique qualities that make you *you*. As mindfulness expert, Dr. Donna Rockwell points out, we are all unique and that, in and of itself, gives each of us inherent value. According to Dr. Firestone, “We shouldn’t be rating ourselves; we should just be ourselves.”

How to Build Self-Worth

The first step in building self-worth is to stop comparing yourself to others and evaluating your every move; in other words, you need to challenge your critical inner voice. The critical inner voice is like a nasty coach in our heads that constantly nags us with destructive thoughts towards ourselves or others. This internalized dialogue of critical thoughts or “inner voices” undermines our sense of self-worth and even leads to self-destructive or maladaptive behaviors, which make us feel even worse about ourselves.

However, we can challenge the inner critic and begin to see ourselves for who we really are, rather than taking on its negative point of view about ourselves. We can differentiate from the ways we were seen in our family of origin and begin to understand and appreciate our own feelings, thoughts, desires, and values. However, by following the strategies and steps below, you can develop better self-acceptance with time and practice.

A true sense of self-worth can also be fostered by practicing self-compassion. Developed by Dr. Kristin Neff, self-compassion is the practice of treating yourself with the same kindness and compassion as you would treat a friend. This involves taking on what Dr. Dan Siegel describes as the “**COAL**” attitude, which means being Curious, Open, Accepting and Loving toward yourself and your experiences rather than being self-critical. There are three steps to practicing self-compassion:

- 1) Acknowledge and notice your suffering.
- 2) Be kind and caring in response to suffering.

3) Remember that imperfection is part of the human experience and something we all share.

Adding meaning to your life, by taking part in activities that you feel are important, is another great way to build self-worth. Helping others, for example, offers a huge boost to your sense of self-worth. Generosity is good for you, both physically and mentally, and studies now show that volunteering has a very positive affect on how people feel about themselves. Other studies have found that religion correlates with a higher sense of self-worth in adolescents. People find meaning in many different ways; think about the activities and interests that feel meaningful to you personally and pursue those activities to build a more positive feeling of self-worth. Researcher Dr. Jennifer Crocker suggests that you find “a goal that is bigger than the self.” As Dr. Robert Firestone says, “Investing energy in transcendent goals and activities that extend beyond one’s self interest, for example, contributing to a humanitarian cause or trying, in some way, to improve the lot of future generations, helps build self-esteem.”

Acting on principles, in ways that you respect, is another important quality to foster as you develop a higher level of self-worth. “Make a concerted effort to maintain personal integrity in your life by insisting that your actions correspond to your words,” suggests Dr. Robert Firestone. When our actions do not match our words, we are more vulnerable to attacks from our critical inner voice and less likely to respect ourselves.

By challenging your critical inner voice and stopping comparing yourself to others, you can begin to get a feeling for your own self-worth. By pursuing activities that are meaningful to you and acting in line with your own personal beliefs, you can develop your sense of yourself as a worthwhile person in the world even further.

5 Self-Care Practices for Every Area of Your Life

Elizabeth Scott, MS (VeryWellMind)

What is Self-Care?

Self-care describes a conscious act one takes in order to promote one’s own physical, mental, and emotional health. There are many forms of self-care one may take. It could be ensuring you get enough sleep every night or stepping outside for a few minutes for some fresh air.

Self-care has been defined as, “a multidimensional, multifaceted process of purposeful engagement in strategies that promote healthy functioning and enhance well-being.” Self-care is vital for building resilience toward those stressors in life that you can’t eliminate. When you’ve taken steps to care for your

mind and body, you'll be better equipped to live your best life.

Unfortunately, however, many people view self-care as a luxury, rather than a priority. Consequently, they're left feeling overwhelmed, tired, and ill-equipped to handle life's inevitable challenges.

It's important to assess how you're caring for yourself in several different domains so you can ensure you're caring for your mind, body, and spirit.

1. Physical Self-Care

You need to take care of your body if you want it to run efficiently. Keep in mind that there's a strong connection between your body and your mind. When you're caring for your body, you'll think and feel better too.

Physical self-care includes how you're fueling your body, how much sleep you're getting, how much physical activity you are doing, and how well you're caring for your physical needs. Attending appointments, taking medication as prescribed, and managing your health are all part of good physical self-care.

2. Social Self-Care

Socialization is key to self-care. But, often, it's hard to make time for friends and it's easy to neglect your relationships when life gets busy.

Close connections are important to your well-being. The best way to cultivate and maintain close relationships is to put time and energy into building your relationships with others.

There isn't a certain number of hours you should devote to your friends or work on your relationships. Everyone has slightly different social needs. The key is to figure out what your social needs are and to build enough time in your schedule to create an optimal social life.

3. Mental Self-Care

The way you think and the things that you're filling your mind with greatly influence your psychological well-being.

Mental self-care includes doing things that keep your mind sharp, like puzzles, or learning about a subject that fascinates you. You might find reading books or watching movies that inspire you fuels your mind.

Mental self-care also involves doing things that help you stay mentally healthy. Practicing self-compassion and acceptance, for example, helps you maintain a healthier inner dialogue.

4. Spiritual Self-Care

Research shows that a lifestyle including religion or spirituality is generally a healthier lifestyle. Nurturing your spirit, however, doesn't have to involve religion. It can involve anything that helps you develop a deeper sense of meaning, understanding, or connection with the universe. Whether you enjoy meditation, attending a religious service, or praying, spiritual self-care is important.

5. Emotional Self-Care

It's important to have healthy coping skills to deal with uncomfortable emotions, like anger, anxiety, and sadness. Emotional self-care may include activities

that help you acknowledge and express your feelings on a regular basis.

Whether you talk to a partner or close friend about how you feel, or you set aside time for leisure activities that help you process your emotions, it's important to incorporate emotional self-care into your life.

self worth

The only one who gets to decide your worth is you. It doesn't come from your bank account or the number of friends you have. It doesn't come from what someone else says you are worth. And it doesn't come from a number on the scale or the number of nights you go out... It's called *self* worth for a reason— your worth comes from *you*. It comes from being yourself and being proud of who you are. It comes from being someone that you can count on and being someone you love. Because when it comes down to it, the numbers will change. But what won't change is who you are deep inside— beautiful, limitless, wonderful, creative, strong, capable— and *that* is where your worth comes from.

- *Walk the Earth*

Net News

Here are some web sites you & your family may find helpful.

Mindfulness Training & Physical Health Podcast

<https://journals.lww.com/psychosomaticmedicine/Pages/podcastepisodes.aspx?podcastid=1>

Small Things Often Podcast – The Gottman Institute

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/small-things-often/id1498172564>

Signs That It's Time For Therapy

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/20/well/mind/therapy-advice.html>

Self- Help Corner:

Alcoholics Anonymous: 780-424-5900

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

Al-Anon/Alateen: 780-433-1818

Support Network / Referral Line: 211

Distress Line: 780 482-4357

Cocaine Anonymous: 780-425-2715

Access 24/7 – 780 424 2424

Informative Links:

The National Women's Health Information Center:

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/>