



Self-Image: You Are What You Think

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Pretend you have a scale that you can use to rate your self-image. The number ten is "wonderful", and the number zero is "horrible" but you have the option of choosing either of those or any number in between.

Your mindset is largely based on past experiences and your self-image on what you have learned about your abilities, achievements, appearance and personality. Old messages, however, might not be accurate or realistic.

Now, once you have chosen the number that you believe best represents your self-image ask yourself the following questions:

1. What messages from others have influenced you? Were you bullied or abused as a child? Did someone make a comment that you just cannot forget even though it was given thoughtlessly several years ago? Can you remember compliments or encouragement that you received?
2. Where do you focus? Are you fixed on a process of rehearsing the negatives from the past or are you willing to treat today and the future as new opportunities to discover your strengths?
3. What might it take to move to a higher number? Do you need to make a drastic change in some area? Perhaps letting go of a thought or replacing it with a different thought will help you to move upwards.
4. What is preventing you from thinking better of yourself? Are you afraid of doing or thinking about something? Do you have a negative person in your life who continues to remind you of their toxic opinion? Are you relying on others to define you instead of forming your own opinion?
5. Would you be so hard on a close friend? Probably not. Perhaps the image that you have of yourself is as flawed as a "fun house" mirror.
6. Is there any payback that you are scared to give up? For example, do you benefit by being a "victim"? Are you rejecting positives because you think that this is a form of humility instead of just saying "thank you" and accepting the positive messages?
7. How has your self-image affected your choices in the past and present? Have you refused to participate in certain things because you might not look or do well? Do you inappropriately use humour to put yourself down instead of dealing with a weakness? Do you give up before you try because you have convinced yourself that you will fail?

Okay, here is a formula to help you raise your self-image number:

1. Write down three things that you will no longer tell yourself or focus on. Sometimes you might need to look for evidence that the message you got was not accurate. Looking at a photo of you as a child, for example, will quickly dispel any taunts you heard from other children about being "fat". Sometimes you just have to tell yourself that holding on to an old message is not helpful.

2. Write down three things you can and will accept about yourself. I know that at five feet tall, I will never be a basketball player! I just accept just and don't give it a lot of thought. No woulda, shoulda or coulda" to interfere with where I am or am going.

3. Name three things that you can change as well as how and when you will do this. Keep it simple. Perhaps making a commitment to go through your wardrobe and use the things you already have in an attractive manner every day will be your starting point. You see, when you look good, you walk a little taller and feel a little smarter. Choose things that you can do quickly and then enjoy the success that comes with making even small steps.

Remember, you got to choose your self-image number. And now you get to choose the things that will allow you to choose a higher one!