



Self-Worth – Self-Employed

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While being self-employed comes with benefits—such as being your own boss, flexibility, control over all aspects of your life—there are also down sides. The burden of responsibility lies with you for everything, you may need to work excessive hours to keep on top of the workload, and working from home might lead to a lack of self-discipline, with it being all too easy to get up late or get distracted by things like family or household chores. Self-employed people might also have a small circle of people they interact with on a daily basis, leading to issues like social isolation. With no or few peers to interact with, it's easy for a self-employed person to start to second guess themselves and their decisions, all of which is detrimental to self-worth.

Here are some of the issues that can lead to a loss of self-worth specific to those who are self-employed or small business owners:

- Feeling isolated
- Putting in too many hours
- Worrying about money
- Lack of physical activity if deskbound
- Always connected to devices or work if you work from home
- Not taking enough breaks
- Heavy workload with no help
- Long periods with no work or pay
- Lack of socialisation.

Signs of workplace unhappiness

There are some early warning signs of being unhappy at work, whether employed through a company or self-employed, to look out for and which can be addressed when they are understood, including:

- Finding it difficult to concentrate on tasks
- Procrastination
- Feeling overtired or exhausted
- Easily angered or frustrated by tasks or people
- Overly emotional or teary
- Using illicit substances to cope
- Having trouble making decisions
- Avoiding conflict to the detriment of performance
- Working beyond designated hours



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- Isolating yourself in work
- Feeling trapped
- Feeling like you don't belong at your job
- Trouble turning off
- Changes in mood
- Increased resentment about work
- General unhappiness with your job.

Looking after yourself

It's important to set appropriate boundaries when if you're self-employed or run a small business. Consider these points when determining how best to look after yourself.

- **Availability:** Set work hours and adhere to them. Ensure your clients are aware of your availability and enforce boundaries where possible.
- **Routine:** Don't forget to take lunch and routine breaks when setting your schedule.
- **Time away:** If you started a business for flexibility, then be flexible. Take time off or spend more time with your kids if that's your goal. If you've got a good routine and set availability then there's no reason your clients won't understand.
- **Outsourcing:** You don't have to do everything else. Consider outsourcing the books or other tasks that you know others can do better.
- **Weekends:** Working 7 days a week is too much. Take time off to recharge and approach work with fresh vigour at the start of every week.
- **Find a confidant:** If you're a soloist, then consider finding someone you can talk about your work. Consider connecting with a mentor so you can talk about work and foster a growth mindset.

Self-employment to follow a life purpose

Theoretically, if a person starts their own business it's because they're getting closer to living their life's purpose or want to live a happier life. Nothing can build self-worth like having a purpose. It's a life validating experience and can give meaning to a person's existence. If you've ever thought about starting your own business, consider how your life purpose fits into that goal. Consider asking yourself these questions about purpose.

- What do you want to do?
- Does money matter in your pursuit of purpose?
- Do you know how to attain your purpose?



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- Are you committed to making your life purpose a reality?
- Do you think you *could* make a life out of your purpose?
- Is it a realistic purpose?
- Is it okay if your purpose can only ever be a hobby?
- Will you get discouraged if there are roadblocks on the path to success?
- What needs to happen to make your purpose real?
- Do you think people will support you as you make your purpose your reality?
- Do you understand what's required to make your purpose happen? List the steps.
- Do you think you'll be happier living your purpose?

If you're realistic with your answers, you might find an avenue to self-employment, or at the very least, an idea of what will make you happy.

If a person with low self-worth is self-employed and feeling any signs of workplace unhappiness, then there's likely an aspect of their work that is making them unhappy overall. There's also a chance that their life purpose isn't aligned with their work. This can lower self-worth, as it means they're likely doing work that either doesn't suit them or it has lost its passion for them. Having passion and purpose in the work we do, as well as a healthy work environment and a good routine, is a good way to maintain healthy self-worth when self-employed.

Where to get help

Always remember you are not alone. Your doctor or registered health professionals are there to help you.

Our online resource page also has a full list of organisations where you can get further information. <http://mindshift.org.au/suggested-links/>.

Things to remember

Being self-employed, while having benefits, can also lead to low self-worth when a person is isolated or working too hard. When a self-employed person operates with purpose, they can better maintain healthy self-worth.



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In summary

Being self-employed in work that is fulfilling, aligned with our life purpose, and conducted in a healthy environment with a good routine is conducive to healthy self-worth. Working to set routines and being available at appropriate times will ensure that a person isn't overwhelmed by their work, and taking time off can help to recharge the batteries. Talking to other people in their industry can also help, as it fosters a growth mindset and allows for socialisation with others.

Updates and Further information

For the latest updates and further information please visit www.mindshift.org.au.

Our Mission

It is our mission to ensure that every person has access to the resources available to build healthy self-worth, to have a positive sense of self and to find meaning in life.

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