



Benefits and Building Healthy Self-Worth

Benefits of healthy self-worth

A person with healthy self-worth thinks well of themselves and they are resilient, cope well with stress and change, and don't let life get them down. They know their worth and make choices that are mindful, decisive and realistic. They don't neglect themselves, but still find it within their capabilities to respect and encourage others. They don't fear their emotions and generally have positive self-talk. They don't think of themselves negatively, and won't let others do so either. There are benefits in living like this, as Dr Lars Madsen, clinical advisor to The MindShift Foundation notes:

1. We are more secure in who we are and what we have to offer the world.
2. We are able to see the good in others and the world around us.
3. We are able to move on from the past and experience joy in the present.
4. We are able to overcome adversity and setbacks more easily.
5. We are able to forgive ourselves and others.
6. We have a clear sense of our own values, worth, integrity, and character.
7. We take better of our physical and mental health.
8. We are able to develop a positive philosophy of life and live by that philosophy.
9. We are more optimistic, happier and able to give of ourselves to others.
10. We are able to take responsibility for our own thoughts, actions, and indeed, our life.

With plans for the future and a growth mindset, everything is possible. No one's life should be filled with negativity or doubt. You are worthy of living a happy and healthy life. Building self-worth is not something you should feel weak about. So many people don't even realise how unhealthy their self-worth is. We just get to a point where we accept our negative thinking as normal without realising how hateful we are towards ourselves. It doesn't have to be that way. It's not a crime to feel good about ourselves. All we're doing is moving ourselves to a place where we feel better about ourselves and we can make better decisions for our mental, emotional and physical health. And in enhancing our self-reliance, we can prevent the development of various physical and mental health conditions.

Building self-worth

Here are some things you can do to build your self-worth for better days ahead.

Ask for help

You don't have to do this alone. If you know that the emotional burden you carry is just too heavy to attempt this alone, then please talk to someone you can trust. Approach a healthcare professional, or trusted family members and friends. If you're a student, then perhaps a teacher or school counsellor is a good option.



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How does this help your self-worth? You will receive professional medical and/or psychological treatment that is focused on scientific and evidence-based methods if you talk to a registered healthcare provider. Friends and family provide comfort.

Action: Talk to someone you can trust.

Treat yourself as you would your best friend

Be supportive, kind and understanding of your needs. Don't be hard on yourself if you make a mistake, and try to end the cycle of negative self-talk. Whenever you say something critical about yourself, it's as if you're inviting in your worst enemy to bring you down. Every action you take needs to come from a place of self-compassion.

How does this help your self-worth? In treating yourself better, you're rewiring the hard code of your brain to accept a more resilient message of worthiness.

Action: Ask yourself if what you're thinking is a 'kind' thought. If not, then make it a kind and compassionate one.

Don't compare yourself to others

Everyone is different, and every life is valuable. We are who we are, so accept yourself for your best achievements but also your failures. Ignore what you see in the media or on your social feeds. Admire what you find desirable and develop new goals for yourself, but don't compare what you see with where you are at right now. It can induce feelings of envy, jealousy and frustration.

How does this help our self-worth? By not comparing yourself to others, you're affirming that who you are and what you have are just fine in this time and place. This reaffirms self-acceptance.

Action: Whenever you feel comparison envy, ask what yourself what's driving that feeling. Everyone wants things they can't necessarily have and if it's a material item, does it matter more than your health or wellbeing? Remind yourself what you do have and what your future looks like.

Acknowledge the positive things about yourself

Everyone has something great about their personality: whether you're kind to animals, know how to make other people smile or admired for your sense of quiet dignity. Create a list of your good points and refer to it often. If you're struggling to find anything for this list, then ask someone who knows you well to help. There *will* be something.

How does this help your self-worth? In acknowledging your strengths, you are affirming your belief in yourself.

Action: Write a list of great things about yourself. Remember to add a line about what makes you unique.



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Live in the here and now

Old hurts and disappointment can playback in our minds on a loop without intervention. Be mindful of where your thoughts are going and focus on today. You can't change the past, and the future isn't fixed, so what you do today is what matters. If you find yourself dwelling on things that you can't change, then find a way to stop the cycle of negative thinking, even if you just hold up a mental 'STOP' sign. I'll talk more about negative thoughts shortly.

How does this help your self-worth? In living in the here and now you put your attention where it matters the most – on the now. This means that your self-worth isn't bending to protect you from the past, but can focus on working for you in the moment.

Action: Find what helps you STOP a cycle of negative thinking. Catch the negative thought and reframe it into a positive thought. Use mindful thinking to focus on the now.

Fuel your body right

When you put the right food in your body, your energy levels should be healthy and you may find your life gets better in general. Try to give the junk food a miss and decrease your intake of sugar and salt. Fill your day with plenty of fruit and vegies and other staples from the five food groups.

How does this help your self-worth? Eating well can reduce the risks for serious health conditions and low feelings caused by lethargy. This can send the right messages to your mind. It's like your body is ready and says, 'I'm good, what's the world have to offer today?'

Action: Examine your diet and see what needs to change. Talk to your doctor or nutritionist about a diet that best suits your health needs.

Exercise

We have seen that exercise is a preventative tool for depression, and it's a great path to wellness in general. Go for a brisk walk, do some gardening or go for a swim – just keep active. Yoga is another good option if you're looking for relaxation-based activities. Remember, the recommended amount of moderate exercise per week is 2.5 hours. Try to give yourself 30 minutes of physical activity at least five times a week.

How does this help your self-worth? Exercise has been shown to prevent depression. The hormones released when we exercise can lead to better moods and contribute to better physical health.

Action: Develop a physical activity regime that works for you (in consultation with your healthcare provider).



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Rest well

It's hard to unburden your mind and body if you're pushing yourself to go harder and faster. Our bodies aren't designed to run 24/7 – they need time to slow down. If we're well-rested we're better placed to take on the challenges of our daily life. This can lessen the burden of stress on your mind and body and leave you fresh and invigorated.

How does this help your self-worth? A lack of sleep has been shown to affect moods and attitude. The right amount of rest is vital to wellbeing.

Action: Take time to rest every day. Make sure you get enough sleep!

Express yourself

Activities such as writing, painting, music and dancing can give you an opportunity to express yourself without necessarily focusing on always having to find the words to talk about things with other people. A creative release may help you express any low feelings in a manner that is safe and wholly unique to you. You might even discover a talent for creative expression!

How does this help your self-worth? Creative expression can allow you to share your feelings in varying fashions, and the personal achievement in expression can be self-validating.

Action: Figure out what you love to do and work at it. Try to spend time every week expressing yourself through creative activities.

Celebrate the little wins

Life is made up of small things. You made someone smile? That's a win. You made yourself a perfect cup of coffee? That's a win too. The big things can be like wrecking balls, but the little things see us from when we wake in the morning to when we turn out the lights at night. If you can smile at the little things, it can make the big things easier to tackle.

How does this help your self-worth? Enjoyment in the little things are a micro-expression of self-acceptance. Put them all together and they can lead to personal satisfaction.

Action: Celebrate everything. Take photos and record your journey to success.

Surround yourself in purpose

Is it your purpose in life to work all day and watch television until bedtime? Your life might have to look like that for right now (after all, you might have bills, children and mortgages, etc.), but does it have to look like that forever? Passion + Effort = Purpose. If there's something you really want out of life, then find a way to make your goal a reality. Purpose can relieve the bad taste left by things that feel like a chore.



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How does this help your self-worth? Purpose is everything when it allows you to feel that your life means something of worth.

Action: Find a way into your life of purpose. Start planning how you want your life to look.

Help others

Sometimes it feels really good to help other people. Building self-worth may seem so focused on what's going on within that getting out of your own world might be a relief. Consider doing something for someone else. It could be as simple as making someone a cup of tea or volunteering at your local animal shelter. Also, in helping others you show them that they matter too.

How does this help your self-worth? It's a self-validating experience. You are useful and worthy to someone else, which makes you useful and worthy as a person.

Action: Be mindful of others and help where you can. See what you can do to help your local community and consider doing some volunteer work.

Lose the people who don't fulfil you

If there is anything or anyone in your world that clearly damages your self-worth, then try to move them on or phase them out of your life. This might mean that you spend less time on social media, you don't see as much of that friend who constantly judges or criticises you, or you may need to set some new boundaries for your family and friends about what you feel is acceptable behaviour towards yourself.

How does help your self-worth? It removes negative external influences.

Action: Make a list of people in your life who perhaps aren't true friends. Consider how much time you give them and whether your relationship is reciprocal. Ask yourself if you want them to be part of your future and if the answer is 'No', then move on.

Be authentically yourself

Don't hide behind a polite facade if that's not really who you are. Be assertive and communicate your needs, wants and feelings. Be honest and direct with people and leave the rubbish to others. What need do you have for drama or exaggeration? People always prefer to deal with real people, and you are a real person.

How does it help your self-worth? It reaffirms to yourself that this is who you are. It shows that you're acting from a healthy place where you are comfortable just as you are.

Action: Just be yourself.



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

In summary

The benefits of healthy self-worth are worth the time to build healthy self-worth. With practical action, a person can see positive results and have a better quality of life.

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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