

Module 3. Lesson 20. Proven Strategies to Eliminate Negative Self-Image.

Proven Strategies to Eliminate a Negative Self-Image

So far in this self-acceptance module, you've learned strategies that can help you accept yourself as you forgive yourself for past mistakes, leave your inner critic behind, and break free from crippling self-doubts. These negative situations, though, may have left their mark on your self-image.

Your self-image is your perception of yourself. You might think of yourself as intelligent, lazy, bad with money, likeable, and eccentric. ***Your beliefs about yourself can be liberating or constricting.***

Your self-image can influence your decisions and limit your ability to succeed. For example, if you believe that you're bad at speaking with strangers, you may avoid social situations that include people you don't know. As a result, you might miss out on your biggest opportunity to meet the love of your life, a recruiter for your dream job, or a life-long friend.

Change your self-image and enhance your life with these techniques:

1. **Address your bad habits.** No one is perfect. If you're being completely honest, there are things about you that could use a little work. Shore up your shortcomings. Get in shape, practice being more patient, or be a better friend.
 - ***Focus on making progress.*** Perfection is an unreasonable goal.
2. **Make a list of your good points.** Do this in the morning and the evening. Make a long list and then add at least one item each morning and evening. Remind yourself of all the things you're already good at. What do you appreciate about yourself? Review the list regularly and notice how good you feel.
3. **Live by your morals.** You have your own opinion about what's right and wrong. If you can live according to your values, how can you feel bad about yourself? ***It's only when we stray that we feel guilty or displeased with ourselves.***

- Make a list of the behaviors you'll no longer accept from yourself.

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- How do you think a person should behave? What qualities are most important to you? Set standards for yourself that you refuse to violate.
4. **Spend time each week helping others.** Volunteer or help a neighbor. Do something for someone else without receiving anything in return. ***Your self-image will improve considerably by this one strategy alone.***
 - There are websites that list the volunteer opportunities in every city. Find your community's listings and make a positive difference in someone's life. You'll benefit as much as they do.
 5. **Experience success. *You have the right to feel good about any success, so make it easy to succeed.*** Set small goals and accomplish them. It could be a goal to save \$100 this month or make it to the gym three times this week. Show yourself that you can be successful consistently.
 6. **Spend time with those that think highly of you.** A great way to increase your respect for yourself is to spend time with others who already think you're great. Avoid those that are negative, unkind, or unsupportive.
 7. **Spend time on activities that you enjoy.** Make yourself feel good on a regular basis. You can carry those good feelings with you into other parts of your life. ***The more time you're able to spend feeling positive emotions, the better you'll feel about yourself.***
 8. **Let go of the need to be perfect.** If being perfect is the only way you can feel good about yourself, you're going to be unhappy most of the time. Perfection isn't possible. Be interested in improvement and effort. These are controllable and achievable.
 9. **Treat yourself well.** By treating yourself well, you'll believe that you deserve it. Be as kind to yourself as you would a good friend. Take care of your needs. This includes eating well, getting enough sleep, having an active social life, and buying yourself the things you need.

Do you think highly of yourself? ***A negative self-image can have negative repercussions on every part of your life.*** It's well worth the time to enhance your self-image. You'll find it difficult to achieve more than you think you deserve. So believe that you deserve a lot and you'll enjoy more of what you desire in life.

We'll end this self-acceptance part of your journey to authenticity in the next lesson as you learn to build a healthy self-image you can be proud of!

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Here's what you need to do today:

Spend time with those that think highly of you. Call your most positive friend or loved one and schedule time for coffee together.