

The Flaw of Comparing Yourself to Others.

In the previous lesson, we looked at approval-seeking behaviours. Today, we explore another self-esteem diminishing behaviour: comparing yourself to others.

If you're lacking contentment, it could be because you're comparing yourself to others. You've been on Facebook and seen the pictures of other people living their seemingly exciting lives. ***It only takes a moment to find yourself wishing you had someone else's career, body, house, or vacation.*** Comparing ourselves to others is a common activity.

But there's a critical flaw in this mental exercise. You simply don't have all the information. Someone might have a great body, but they might be seriously ill. That great vacation might have been paid for with an inheritance after a family member passed away.

A smarter strategy is to compare yourself to your own recent past. How is your figure compared to 6 months ago? How are your finances compared to last year? If you're making progress, congratulate yourself. Most people aren't doing nearly as well. They've weighed the same 210 lbs. and had the same \$1,200 in their bank account for the last 20 years.

If your life isn't moving forward, then you ought to take pause and address the situation.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "*Comparison is the thief of joy.*" Think about that statement and decide if it rings true for you.

Check out a few more tips that can free you from unnecessary comparisons:

1. ***Catch yourself early in the process. As soon as you realize that you're making comparisons to others, shift your focus to something else.***
 - You can control your thoughts, so use that ability to your

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advantage.

2. **Remember that the journey is what matters.** Everyone is on a journey to learn, create, and become something unique. It's an individual experience that isn't impacted by what others are doing or accomplishing.
3. **Comparing yourself to others is a game that can't be won.** There are a lot of people in the world. Through sheer statistics, there will constantly be someone with a more attractive spouse, more money, a better car, or a more interesting life.
 - ***There's no way to compete with 8 billion people in every facet of life.***
4. **Look to your strengths.** Comparisons tend to focus on our weaknesses. We usually compare our shortcomings against others. Embrace your strengths and be proud. Now use those strengths to your advantage.
5. **List the things you have.** Comparisons highlight the things we lack. It's much more productive to think about the things you do have. Your mood and frame of mind will be better, and you'll be in a better position to compete and succeed.
6. **People only let you see the things that want you to see.** Sure, they'll let you see their new BMW and the vacation pictures from Maui. But you'll never see the tears and fights in the bedroom, or the verbal abuse they take from their mother-in-law. ***Keep in mind that social media is primarily used for showing the good, rather than telling the bad.***
7. **It's just a habit.** Our lives are filled with habits, and some of them are harmful. Poor mental habits are restrictive. It's like going through life with the emergency brake on.
 - Labelling the tendency to compare as a habit has a powerful advantage because we know that habits can be broken.

Comparing yourself to others is limiting and self-defeating. No one can be expected to compare favourably to the vast number of people in the world. Make an effort to limit your comparisons to your own recent past. Are you making progress or backsliding? If you continue to enhance the important areas, your life is likely to be fulfilling and exciting!

In the next lesson, you'll learn even more strategies for learning to like yourself.

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Here's what you need to do today:

Pay particular attention to your thoughts today and tomorrow. Catch yourself quickly when you have a thought that compares you to someone else. Stop that thought in its tracks by replacing it with a short, positive affirmation.