

Self Help 101 Plus
101+ Ways To Effectively Enhance Your Self-Esteem
and
Develop Self-Confidence

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Introduction

The terms, self-esteem and self-confidence, are often confused with one and other when referring to how we feel about ourselves. In order to enhance either or both we need to understand the differences between the two.

Self Esteem

Self-esteem, high or low, is created from what we believe about ourselves. When we have positive thoughts about ourselves, we will hold ourselves in high esteem. When we have negative thoughts about ourselves, we will hold ourselves in low esteem.

Self Confidence

According to Webster's New English Dictionary, self-confidence is an assurance of one's abilities, qualities, powers, and judgment.

Our level of self-confidence is achieved based on our past experiences; therefore, someone who has performed in public and has received a standing ovation from the audience, will have high self-confidence when performing in public in the future. Someone who has performed in public and has received catcalls and boo's from the audience, may have a very low level of self-confidence when it comes to performing in public in the future and may refuse to do so.

High self-confidence and high self-esteem are a winning combination. Self-acceptance and self-love are two keys to improving self-esteem. When you have a healthy self-esteem you are more inclined to try new things and keep trying until you master them, and this will ultimately improve your self-confidence.

By following the tips in this book you will enhance your self-esteem. You will learn how to exchange negative beliefs for positive ones, and as your change thoughts change, so you will your actions and nothing will prevent you from becoming a super, self-confident individual.

Ian D. Major

10 Ways To Overcome Barriers To Personal Growth

1. Learn To Break Out Of Your Bubble

Lacking a sense of purpose in life means that you will carry on down the same old road that you have been conditioned to take. Yet where you find yourself at the moment is not where you want to be or else you wouldn't feel so discontented. You live in a bubble of comfort and routine that your conditioning has created and you find it scary to think of breaking out of that bubble.

2. Learn To Realise Your Dreams

Many people wish that they could buy their home or get a better job, or earn more money, or of spending more time on vacation with their family and friends, but it's just a wish, just a dream. Not until that wish, that dream, has been written down in detail, broken down into a list of achievable outcomes, a list of specific steps that need to be taken will the wish be fulfilled and the dream realized.

3. Learn To Manage Your Emotions

You have to learn to overcome any disappointment that may encourage you to quit. You must overcome anger so that your thinking remains clear. You must remove any barriers of self-doubt that might hinder your path towards self-growth and personal development. Self-doubt leads to uncertainty and this in turn may cause you to experience uncertainty about your actions and those around you, miss good opportunities when they present themselves, or be scared of making appropriate decisions because of the perceived risks involved.

4. Learn To Overcome Your Fears

Procrastination is another barrier to personal growth. You fear. You procrastinate because you are afraid of something. It may be that you are frightened of failing, that you fear to commit or that you fear rejection. Perhaps you are scared of speaking in public, or maybe you are just plain scared of succeeding. Whatever the fear, it will lead to an excuse as to why you don't need to take action.

5. Learn To Let Go Of The Past

Any emotional attachment to the past such as anger, guilt, or shame could result in physical and or psychological problems.

Not all childhoods are happy, and pain suffered while growing up can lead to depression, ill temper, anger and low self-esteem. If you feel that you suffer from any of the foregoing, it is of vital importance that you learn to let go of these toxic emotions. If you do not, you will consistently impair any chance you have of transforming your life.

While there are parts of you that want to change your actions for the better, other parts will be telling you that you can't or shouldn't even try. One of the most useful solutions to this problem is to learn to forgive those who may have caused you pain.

6. Learn To Challenge Your Beliefs

As well as emotional attachment to the past, a mindset of limited beliefs might be responsible for any self-doubt, fear, or negativity. All beliefs should be challenged to ensure that they are of value to you, and this is especially true of any belief that you feel is holding you back. They must be questioned, challenged and if needs be, replaced with empowering beliefs that enable you to take action.

From time to time, as we go through life, we are presented with obstacles that may seem nigh impossible to get over, and perhaps some of them seem too much for us, but that doesn't mean that all hurdles are insurmountable. Beware of learned helplessness. Don't fall into the trap of believing that you can't change anything and don't give up trying.

7. Learn Self-Discipline

To achieve any of the forgoing will require self-discipline. Lack of self-discipline leads to idleness, non-commitment, poor time-management, and a loss of focus on the things that you need to achieve in order to move forward in your life. Self-discipline is much easier to achieve when our goals are aligned with our beliefs and values.

8. Learn To Surround Yourself With Positive People

We are open to the thoughts and influences of all the people around us. However, not all of those thoughts and influences are necessarily beneficial even when they are intended to be. Often we are advised against taking a particular action due to a loved ones fear for our safety and well-being.

Sometimes we simply spend time with people who are pessimistic, negative, jealous, and lazy.

I refer to them as “The Dream Stealers”

These people want to drag you down to their level or to stop you achieving in life, so do everything within your power to stay away from them. We need to surround ourselves with positive, supportive, active people in order to increase our knowledge and experience.

9. Learn To Deal With The Inevitability Of Change

Self-education should be a life-long experience. We can only go so far with whatever knowledge we have at any given time. We must constantly strive for improvement, to expand our understanding of the world around us. We must learn, try, and experience, and it is easier to do this now than it has ever been. In this way we can learn to deal with the inevitability of change.

10. Learn To Expand Your Mind

Nowadays, we are constantly bombarded with information, from the time we get up in the morning, until its time to go to bed. Newspapers, Radio, TV. They all try to persuade us that the world is a disastrous, tragic, negative place to live in. When they are not doing that, their commercials are trying to convince us that we are so inadequate, in so many ways, that we must rush out and buy this or that product so that we can feel good again.

In the meantime we can watch an endless variety of shows that depict “dysfunctional families” that cant but help us to feel better about ourselves, and the worst of it is, we volunteer to watch and listen. Nobody forces us to. We all want to relax this way sometimes, but perhaps we should be aware of how much time where spending doing it.

If we really want to move ahead, perhaps we should spend some of that time reading mind expanding books, listening to motivational recordings that may help us overcome some of our negative conditioning, or watch programmes that increase our knowledge on a specific subject, or we could spend time asking questions of people who know more about a subject than we do.

You may feel that the previous section creates a barrier to growth all on its own with its list of hurdles to be overcome.

But don't be overwhelmed by them.

If you recognize any of the barriers mentioned and feel that they are preventing you from moving on, well done. You have just taken the first step to changing your life by simply acknowledging that there may be some things you need to change.

There's no need to try to change them all at once. Take them one step at a time.

Perhaps you could take some time to reflect on where you are at this moment in time. Make sure you write down your findings and from there you could start to develop a plan for your personal growth. You can start to write out the personal goals that you wish to achieve. Don't forget to make them SMART, and as you reflect and plan you will find that you start to challenge any limiting beliefs that you might have and you will overcome any doubt or fear.

Having identified where you want to be you will be able to work backwards to where you are now and recognize the path you need to follow. One step leads to the next and soon you will be achieving all that you wish to achieve in each area of your life.

The following sections will help you to address any barriers to personal growth that you may have identified with.

8 Ways To Boost Your Enthusiasm

The Oxford Dictionary defines enthusiasm as intense enjoyment, interest, or approval. When you are overcome with enthusiasm, you have a feeling that you can take on the world and you feel that anything is possible. Enthusiasm is like gas in a car, fuel in a fire, or batteries in a clock. In other words, enthusiasm keeps you going. However, the thing about enthusiasm is that it's not constant and has a tendency to wane.

When your enthusiasm begins to wane, you lose the will to accomplish your goal. You can easily lose your zeal if your goal is unrealistic, if you encounter setbacks or roadblocks in achieving your goal, or if you are not seeing any results based on the work that you are putting in. Another factor that can contribute to the loss of enthusiasm is if things seem to be taking longer than you anticipated.

If you are prone to waning enthusiasm, here are 8 ways to give your enthusiasm a boost.

1. Find What You Love To Do And Do It

Have you ever heard the song, Love Can Move Mountains? Well, there's never been a truer statement. When you love what you do, even if there are obstacles in your way, you will find away to get around them. For example, if your dream job was to help people who are sick, one bad day at that job wouldn't make you quit. Why? Because you would be doing what you love to do. If you encountered problems, you would find a way around them because you would love doing what you do.

2. Be Inquisitive

It has often been said that curiosity killed the cat. However, when you are curious about things you learn more. It won't benefit you to be curious about just anything though. You should direct your curiosity to something that relates to your goal. Doing this will help you to develop more knowledge about what you are trying to achieve, and will ultimately help to maintain your enthusiasm.

3. Accentuate The Positive. Eliminate The Negative

If you find that you're beginning to lose enthusiasm, try feeding your mind with positives. Listening to motivational speeches and reading motivational books will help fuel your fire, and remember, the further you stay away from anyone who radiates negativity and pessimism, the better it will be for you.

4. Learn To Daydream

Part of your enthusiasm comes from your ability to see yourself succeeding. If you're not a daydreamer, now is the time to become one. You can start now by seeing yourself succeeding. If you want to become a nurse, imagine yourself in your nursing uniform, looking after patients or even administering medications or injections. If you can see it, you can achieve it.

5. Maintain Positive Expectations

You should always expect the best. You should nurture your strength of spirit to shield yourself from any sudden misfortune. If for some reason, things don't turn out the way you planned, don't lose heart. Instead, pick up the pieces, regroup, and move on. Setbacks pave the way for comebacks. Make your comeback a strong one.

6. Spend Time With People Who Are Likeminded

Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm. Therefore, hanging out with people who are full of enthusiasm will help to maintain and build your own enthusiasm. Stay clear, or run as fast as you can from people who try to discourage you from your goal, they are distractions and their primary goal is to extinguish your fire.

7. Keep The Momentum Going

If at first you don't succeed, try try again. No matter how badly you failed, you must keep your momentum going. The last thing you want is to seize up like an old grandfather clock. When you keep your momentum going you will maintain enthusiasm for your project.

8. Patience Is A Virtue

Patience is a virtue and is a crucial element on the way to achieving your goal. If it doesn't seem like things are working the way that you planned, don't be in a rush to give up. Instead, do something that will give your enthusiasm a boost. If you give up too soon, you will never know what might have been.

7 Ways To Overcome Fear Of Rejection

Fear of being rejected has often prevented many a man from asking a woman out and it's fear of rejection that makes some woman subservient. It's also fear of rejection that can cause job applicants to do poorly at interviews and why some people are incapable of asking for what they want.

Fear of rejection manifests itself in some through their belief that they are not worthy enough to make requests. In others, it's a simple case of having been turned down a few times or having grown up being told "NO" to the majority of their requests. If we are turned down often enough or are told "no" often enough we begin to lose self-esteem and self-confidence and will associate the pain of rejection with asking for something and be scared to ask thereafter.

1. Become Mentally Robust

When we ask for something, there are three possible outcomes.

Yes – No – Maybe

So your request only has a 1 in 3 chance of being refused. The most important thing to keep in mind is that it is the "request" that is being rejected not us personally. We need to develop some cheerful mental robustness and realize that we don't have to take it personally, that "rejection" is part of life, and if you choose to look at it this way, a good "learning experience".

2. Examine Your Emotions

Low level or non-existent mental toughness may cause us to take a "refusal" personally and experience emotional discomfort and in order to avoid that discomfort we may stop asking. In order to become mentally robust we need to understand the painful emotions that we feel when our request is rejected. You can't fix what you can't see. We must ask ourselves "what is it about this situation that I am scared of?" When we have found the underlying reason we can let go and move on.

There are several techniques and methods that can be utilised to enable the release of negative emotions and improve mental toughness such as relaxation techniques, meditation, and even physical exercise.

3. Do The Thing You Fear

One way to overcome the fear of rejection is to just "Go for it". Face your fear. If there's something you need or a request that you need to make, go ahead and ask for it. What's the worst that can happen? You may be told "No". So change the way you made the request and ask again or ask somebody else. The more you "ask" the more experience you will gain and the more you will come to understand that it's your request that is being rejected, not you personally.

4. Improve Your Skills

Do your communication skills need brushing up? Are you making your requests in the most suitable way? Learning to use the most effective social and nonverbal communication skills will increase your ability to persuade and influence others.

6. Act As If

Your imagination is a powerful thing. That which you fear, happens in your imagination. Those fears were created in your imagination by negative self-talk, therefore you can use positive self-talk to create the opposite, that of confidence and fearlessness and, in this way, enable yourself to act as if you are confident and fearless. You can in effect, "fake it till you make it". Do this often enough and you it will become your reality.

7. Learn About Human Behaviors

An understanding of human nature and behavior will go a long way in enabling you to uncover why certain people may say no to your requests. You will often find that there are well-meaning intentions hidden within their refusals. In the majority of cases, their intention is not to put you down. Your task is to try and understand the reason beyond their refusal. In learning to understand them, you will come to understand yourself more and your self-confidence will increase.

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion by Robert B. Cialdini – is an excellent resource for learning to “get what you ask for” and is available on Amazon.

7 Ways To Overcome Feelings Of Insecurity

People with a poor self-image or a lack of self-confidence often suffer from feelings of insecurity. Struggling with insecurity can create havoc in our lives by ruining our relationships or by disrupting our peace of mind.

Teenagers often suffer from feelings of insecurity because they undergo a phase where they are not sure of themselves. However, as they grow and develop skills and talents and form friendships, feelings of insecurity diminish. Some teenagers however do not overcome these feelings and often carry them into adulthood.

We can know if insecurity is dominant in our lives if we are frequently overcome by feelings of inadequacy, jealousy, and mistrust, or demonstrate excessive neediness in our relationships. Our words, actions, attitude, and even our body language are all indicators of our insecurity. If we fail to address these issues, we risk losing the ones who are near and dear to us.

Here are some suggestions for dealing with feelings of insecurity.

1. Forgive And Forget

People who have hurt you in the past may have helped to create in you a feeling of insecurity. However, you have to refrain from living in the past and learn to get beyond the hurt. Forgive the ones who have hurt you and avoid using another person's mistakes to judge another's actions. If your ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend cheated on you, forgive them and move on.

2. Take Note Of Your Reactions

You may have become so accustomed to reacting in a particular way that it becomes second nature to you. Try to step outside of yourself and notice how you react to various situations. Assess your reactions in a way that you think others would see you. If you feel that you are reacting in a way that is not helpful to you, practice counting to 3 before you respond to a situation and thereby give yourself time to react in a way that is different than your norm.

3. Take Stock of Your Values And Beliefs

Our values and beliefs have an enormous impact on the way we feel. In order to know whether our values and beliefs are contributing to any feelings of insecurity, we will need to assess them. By being tough and honest with ourselves we can question the validity of what we value and what we believe. When we do this, we might find we have been following a false value or belief and replace it with something that is more useful.

For example, we might believe that we are not worthy of someone's help. Yet if we think about it, there must have been occasions we asked for help and received it. Now we can change our mindset from "not being worthy of help" to "I must have been worthy of help in the past. Nothing has changed. Therefore I am still worthy".

4. Change The Way You See Yourself

Self-image is the way we see ourselves. If we do not see ourselves in a positive light, how do we expect others to see us? If we see ourselves as dumb, worthless, unattractive, or clumsy, we need to radically reform our self-image by seeing ourselves as a smart, attractive, able, and valuable human being with much to contribute to the world.

5. Celebrate Your Uniqueness

We must refrain from comparing ourselves with others for we may become vain and bitter. There will always be people who are greater and lesser than we are. We may not have the physique of Schwarzenegger, the beauty of Miss World, or the ingenuity of Einstein but we are valuable in our own very unique way.

6. Share Your Feelings With A Friend

Admitting our insecurity is a major step in overcoming our insecure feelings. Talking to a life coach, a trusted friend or a counsellor about our problems can help us overcome them. Not talking about them will not make them disappear.

7. Learn New Skills

Those who suffer from low-self esteem may find that they also suffer from feelings of insecurity. It is often found that learning new skills has the effect of boosting self-esteem thereby helping to alleviate feelings of insecurity. Classes in, Art – Cooking - Creative Writing - Public Speaking, or even an advanced computer course among many others can enable a felling of self-assuredness.

6 Ways To Overcome Self-Doubt

Do you lack faith in yourself? If you do, then this may be caused by negative inner voices. Thoughts such as "I can't", "I'm not good enough". Inner voices that criticise your abilities are stimulants to self-doubt.

Lack of faith in our abilities may cause us to procrastinate, or pass off tasks to others that we believe are more capable than ourselves. Many people who are hampered by self-doubt have had experiences that cause them to doubt themselves.

Self-doubters are unable to see beyond their abilities and find it hard to trust themselves. They are awed by great achievers but are unable to see themselves accomplishing great things.

If you are a prisoner of self-doubt, here are some suggestions for freeing yourself from captivity.

1. Eradicate Your Excuses

Recognising that we lack faith in our own abilities is the first step in overcoming self-doubt. Fearing to undertake a task or to set goals indicates a fear of failure or of being ridiculed. Recognising these factors forces us to stop making excuses and enables us to focus on the real problem.

2. Pay Attention To Your Thoughts

Our thoughts can provide clues as to what is creating our self-doubt. If we pay attention to our thoughts we can begin to create a list of the negative thoughts that we may be prone to. Over time, we will see a pattern emerge of the kind of negative thoughts that are causing our self-doubt. An example of the thoughts that may recur on our list might include:

They may laugh at me if I fail, so I might as well save myself the embarrassment.

I don't have the brains to do that!

No one in my family ever did anything great. What makes me think I can?

What's the point? I tried before and failed. Why waste my time?

One thing is for certain; our list will reveal that our beliefs are limiting our capacity to excel.

3. Continuously Challenge Your Beliefs

We will forever remain captive to self-doubt if we accept our limiting beliefs. We must consistently question and challenge our beliefs in order to set ourselves free. Taking the list of negative thoughts from the previous chapter, we must ask of ourselves the following questions.

Who said so?

Is there any truth in the statement?

What will result if I continue to believe these things?

Can I progress in life with these limiting beliefs?

How much better would my life be if I refused to believe these statements?

Be very honest in answering these questions. If you feel that changing your beliefs will cause you more pleasure than pain, go ahead and replace your negative beliefs with positive beliefs.

4. Swop Your Negative Beliefs for Positive Ones

Debilitating, negative beliefs should be replaced with nurturing, positive beliefs. Failing to do so may result in regression to our former belief system. We must replace our old beliefs with positive affirmations. We achieve this by simply changing our old negative beliefs to positive ones. Following is an example.

I am able to achieve anything I put my mind to.

I have a spirit of expectancy for great things to happen.

I am a magnet for success.

My future is so bright I have to wear sunglasses.

5. Imagine A New You

Picturing ourselves in a positive light will accelerate the process of overcoming self-doubt. By creating a mental image of the person that we desire to become and practicing this on a regular basis, we will eventually become that person. We must keep this image constantly in mind and aspire towards it.

6. Create New Goals

Setting new goals and working hard to achieve them will help overcome self-doubt. We can start out by making small, easily achievable goals. The more we accomplish the more confident we will become in our abilities. We should reward ourselves for our achievements and bask in our success. As we become more successful in our ambitions, we can set larger goals.

7 Ways Of Overcoming Despair

Not everyone is strong enough to deal with repetitive misfortune or failure. It is not uncommon to feel hopeless when there seems to be no way out. A person who believes that they have explored all of their options but still can't see a way out, will eventually throw in the towels and call it quits.

Despite this, there are many stalwarts who have risen from despair and failure to become successful. Colonel Sanders is a prime example.

At the age of 65, the colonel received his first Social Security check worth \$99. He realized this would never be enough for retirement and came up with an idea to improve his income. The idea was in the form of a secret recipe and Sanders approached several restaurants with his idea in exchange for a small percentage of the profit. The colonel received over 1000 rejections before he was successful.

Most people would have given up after 10 rejections but not Colonel Sanders, he carried on, and his persistence and never say die attitude led to him becoming a multimillionaire. Today, KFC is the number one “fast food chain” in the world.

Right now, you may be on the brink of giving up. But before you call it quits, re-assess your situation and explore all the possible options. To get you started, here are some tips you can employ to help you overcome any feelings of despair.

1. Brainstorm

We have all had unfair things happen to us, but we must refuse to throw in towel because of them, and one of the most important things that we must not do is constantly replay these negative scenes over and over again in our minds. That's just wasted time and energy. None of us can think straight while our minds are being side tracked by negative thoughts. Instead, we should use our minds to brainstorm a way out of negative situations.

2. Clear Your Head

Focusing on failure and misfortune leaves no room in our heads for the clear thinking that we should be undertaking. It is impossible to think clearly when all we are thinking about is how messed up our lives are. We can clear our heads from of toxic thinking by doing things that will take our minds off of our problems.

Physical activity, such as cycling, jogging or swimming, or any form of exercise will be of great benefit. Physical activities release endorphins into the brain and endorphins, amongst other things, are a mood enhancer. Practicing Yoga, Meditation or various methods of relaxation, will also help put the mind at ease and help to release stress and tension. When we are in a relaxed state of mind we are better able to think clearly and more likely to find viable solutions to our problems.

3. Concentrate On The Solution. Not The Problem

Do you feel that you're not where you want to be in life at the moment? Perhaps you're flat broke, jobless, or even up to your neck in bills. The trick is not to focus on your present situation but to see yourself in the future as being debt free, in your dream job and with a healthy bank account. That might sound crazy but it works. What you are doing, by thinking this way, is activating the law of attraction. Good things will come to you when you expect them to.

4. Rekindle Hope

If you're feeling hopeless, you may feel that life is not worth living. Why? Because as human beings we thrive on hope. We hope to get a better job, a good promotion, a better house, a better car, or simply a better life. If you have lost hope you must rekindle it by hoping for new and better things. It will give you something to wake up for each day.

5. Look To The Future. Not The Past

Just because you may have failed, doesn't mean you are a failure. Just because it happened in the past, doesn't mean that history will repeat itself. Be conscious of the fact that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger and instead of sucking on lemons and making your life miserable, start using them to make some refreshing lemonade. After all, a set back creates an opportunity for an even greater comeback.

6. Don't Be Afraid To Ask For Help

If you despair, don't try to bare the burden on your own, ask for help! We are all here to help one another. You can guarantee that someone will have gone through what you are now experiencing. Speak with them. Explain what you are feeling. They will be able to provide you with invaluable insights and suggestions that will help you to get yourself back on an even keel.

7. Forgive – Forget – Move On

It's easy to be indignant towards anyone who has acted towards you in a negative way. However, you will never be free from despair and depression if you do not forgive those who hurt you. When you release pent up anger and bitterness, it will feel as if a mighty weight has been lifted from your shoulders. You will have freed yourself and be ready to pursue your ambitions and move ahead in life.

8 Ways To Build Self-Respect

Self-respect is having pride and confidence in oneself. A person with self-respect has values and attitudes that they live by. They also like themselves. If you believe you are lacking in self-respect, the following 8 tips on how to develop this attribute will help.

1. Acknowledge Your Uniqueness

Everyone has a different set of talents and skills. Find out what you are good at and excel at it. Don't fear to be ridiculed for sharing your unique talents. You are not doing anyone any favors by not shining your light and sharing your gifts with the world. We are all human, and all humans are flawed. Accept that too. It's a part of who you are.

2. Values Are Not Flexible

There is a saying that "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything. Stand up for what you believe in. Don't be a "Yes Man" or a "Yes Woman". Never compromise your values just to please someone else. At the end of the day, you have to live with yourself, and going against what you believe to be right will only earn you sleepless nights. Never feel guilty for expressing yourself.

3. Stand By Your Word

A person with self respect and integrity will say what they mean and mean what they say. Don't be two faced about anything. If you honor your words by doing what you promised, people will trust and respect you and also know that you are an individual that they can count on. No one will ever vouch for a liar! You will also feel satisfied within yourself when you deliver on your promises.

4. Eradicate Bad Habits

Constant feelings of shame and guilt can destroy you. However, you can alter your feelings by taking on a different perspective on life. Shame and guilt are a result of negative actions; therefore you will need to change any bad habits and attitudes that you may have so that you will always have something to be proud about. For example, lying is a major character flaw and when lies are discovered it brings shame and guilt. Those who think that there is nothing wrong with lying are on a major path to destruction. However, those who change their perception of lying can regain self-respect and the respect of others.

5. Love Yourself

When you love yourself, then and only then can you truly love others. Don't be afraid to pamper yourself every now and again. Also, take the time to know yourself, examine what makes you tick, what makes you happy and what makes you sad. Learn to amuse yourself and love your own company. If you rely on others for your happiness, then like a junkie, you will always be looking for your next fix.

6. Be Mindful of Your Appearance

Your appearance says a lot about you and it has often been said that first impressions last. You don't have to have an expensive hair do or designer outfits to make a lasting impression on others. Simply honoring your body is enough. Therefore you should consider carefully what you put into your body and be scrupulous about your general personal hygiene. Do you know of any confident and successful person that doesn't take pride in their appearance? The thing is, when you look after your body, you feel better about yourself. People also respond well to others who take care of their appearance.

7. Take Responsibility

Everyone makes mistakes, but it's the way you react to them that tells what kind of person you are. When you have erred, don't play the blame game! Own up and accept that you were wrong. You won't achieve anything by looking for scapegoats. When you've accepted responsibility for your mistake, try as much as possible to learn something from it and use it as a stepping-stone.

8. Respect Others

Respect for self and respect for others go hand in hand. We are all unique individuals, which means we don't all share the same values and beliefs. Show respect to other people even if they don't share your beliefs. Don't cast judgement. Treat others the way you would like to be treated.

6 Ways To Overcome Self-Criticism

Are you a self-critic? The best way to know if you are guilty of self-criticism is to consider whether you are constantly finding fault with yourself, or are disapproving of your own actions. There is no pleasure in self-criticism and neither can you derive any benefit from constantly berating yourself. When someone is self-critical, he or she may have a poor self-image and will often make incorrect judgments or evaluations of themselves. Why? A person, who is self-critical with a poor self-image, doesn't see him or herself in a positive light and as a result undermines their own abilities.

If you highlight your inadequacies by berating yourself, you will continue to do the things that force you to see yourself in a negative way and this leads to further self-criticism. If you do not identify and consequently nip this behavior in the bud, it can escalate into self-hate, which can be even harder to rectify.

It is very important that you examine any flaws that you feel you may have, and the first step in doing this is to be honest with yourself. If you are honest with yourself, it will help you to reform your negative actions and prevent a repeat of those behaviors. However, there is a right and a wrong way to do this and self-condemnation is not one of them.

Getting to the root of the problem is a great way to address self-criticism and the best way to do that is to improve your self-image. The truth is, if you feel good about yourself and see yourself in a positive light, you are better able to evaluate your actions. Now that doesn't mean you're going to lie to yourself, it simply means you will be less harsh in judging your flaws and shortcomings. In addition, a positive self-image will help you to be a lot less sensitive and more receptive to other people's negative comments about you. You will not see it as an attack on your character, but instead will use their feedback as a way of self-improvement.

If you feel that you suffer from self-criticism, here are six ways that will help you change your behavior.

1. Pay Attention To Your Thoughts

The first step in overcoming self-criticism is by paying attention to your thoughts. Do this every once in a while and you will be surprised at your thought patterns. When you experience a change in your emotional state, that is the time when your critical voice may be even more evident.

Here's an example.

Let's say you want to start a pastry business. Your critical voice may try to talk you out of it by telling you that you can't even stick to your own budget much less maintain a business. It may even go on to tell you that your baking skills are not all that great and that there are better bakers out there.

2. Challenge That Critical Voice

Part of self-criticism is the replaying of things that have happened in the past. Think carefully whose voice you are hearing. It may not even be your own. It could be the voice of your teacher, a relative, or anyone else that may have constantly berated you. One thing you can do is not to accept these critical statements. How? Challenge the critical voice by questioning the criticisms and by refusing to believe them. You must understand that the critical voice or voices will never stop if you just accept the criticisms and never question them. If you constantly question every critical voice, those critical voices will eventually change and conform to what you believe is good and true about you.

3. Positive Self-Talk

The saying that "sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me" is not entirely true. Words are powerful and they can either break you or make you. Words are what you use when you are displeased with your own actions and those words affect your mood and reactions. Therefore, instead of telling yourself how silly you are when you make a mistake, say things like, " Oh, I slipped up this time, but I will do better the next time around." You should also stop taking yourself so seriously. Laugh at your mistakes and that will put you in a better frame of mind to find solutions to those mistakes.

4. Track Your Self-Criticisms

You can monitor your self-criticism in a journal. Doing this enables you to keep track of your self-criticisms and eventually you will be able to spot negative thought patterns and what events trigger those thoughts.

5. Stepping Stones

Understand that you are human and part of being human is to make mistakes. Failing doesn't mean that you are a failure. Let me say that again, failing doesn't mean that you are a failure. Therefore, whenever you fail at something, see it as an opportunity to reinvent yourself and do better the next time.

6. Identify Your Strengths

Be nice to yourself. It's really hard to be happy if you are constantly being self-critical. Identify your strengths and embrace them. Remember your past successes and celebrate them. Praise yourself when you manage to accomplish a task.

10 Ways Of Dealing With Stress

Perhaps you've heard it said that “there is no such thing as stress” or “that stress is only of the imagination” and while there is some truth to these statements, stress is, nevertheless, part of our hectic everyday life and many of us are looking for ways to handle it.

Under Pressure

We might assume that if we were leading the perfect life, we could not suffer stress and yet there are many who have achieved those things that they believe give them contentment only to find that they are still stressed out. Some of the people with the most money are the most stressed for example. I've even known people who got stressed because they had nothing to worry about! So, while we tend to see stress as coming from the world around us, much of it is created in our own mind. Internal or external, the detrimental physical effects are just the same.

Balance

Someone once said, "When the wheel of life gets out of round, the ride gets bumpy". So how can we manage stress? How can we bring balance back into our lives?

Well, first you have to recognise what stress is.

Acute Stress

When we find ourselves trying to meet deadlines or deal with immediate problems we may well undergo acute stress. This is the most common form of stress and will disappear as soon as the deadline or problem disappears.

Chronic Stress

When we find ourselves struggling with situations such as long term unemployment, bad relationships and the like, we might well begin to suffer from chronic stress and this is the kind of stress that can have an adverse effect on both the mind and the body. This kind of stress can leave us feeling helpless and unable to control our day-to-day lives. There may be negative things going on in our lives that we cannot change, but we can change the way we react to them.

So we need to look out for the warning signs that indicate that we may be beginning to suffer from chronic stress.

Symptoms of Stress

There are several warning signs that we can be on the look out for, such as outbreaks of spots and pimples on the skin, anxiety attacks, stomach ulcers, headaches, irritability, and depression.

If these symptoms are ignored they can lead to high blood pressure and heart failure. The way to avoid the side effects of stress is to become aware of what's bothering us and take steps to deal with the situation before it becomes acute. If we can be in control of ourselves, we can be in control of stressful situations.

If in doubt, de-stress the situation by consulting a physician.

Following are 10 causes of stress and how to deal with them.

1. The Best Medicine

Nothing beats stress like a good belly laugh. When we laugh, our bodies lower stress-inducing hormones, allowing them to fall to normal levels. So whether you enjoy comedy shows, funny movies, or funny conversations, make sure that you indulge yourself in more of them. In fact, one of the best ways to combat stress is to smile a lot and laugh more.

2. There Lies The Rub

Have you ever noticed that when your head gets stressed out, so does your body? We are all familiar with the tense feeling we get around our neck, shoulders and back when we are experiencing stress. Let this go on long enough and we can actually get used to it and this in turn can result in muscular distortion, headaches and worse. The trick is not to let tension build up in the first place. My way of releasing built up tension is by way of a monthly visit to my chiropractor. Other ways of releasing stress may be regular visits to a masseuse or physiotherapist or by taking a sauna, a hot bath, or gentle exercising.

3. Get Away From It All

Many people take a vacation in order to relieve their stress, but you don't have to incur a lot of expense in order to wind down. Drive or walk to your favorite beauty spot and take in a sunset or sit quietly and listen to the sound of nature. If you live in the city and can't get away, listen to soothing music on your headphones.

4. Learn To Daydream

Some people believe that the practice of meditation is a bit "out there" and while there are many forms of meditation, meditating can be as simple as just daydreaming. Meditating has been proved to lower blood pressure and improves memory among other benefits. Practiced on a regular basis, meditation will leave you feeling happy, nourished, and creative.

5. Be Just a Little Selfish

All of these methods of lowering stress have one thing in common; you have to find time for yourself. If you think about your life and all the time you have for others, surely you can take some time for yourself. It may only be twenty minutes a day but it's the time out that you deserve.

6. You Have To Have A Plan.

Like Jim Rohn, one of the top personal development teachers has said, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail". You could also say "If you don't have a map, how will you know when you've arrived"?

Much of our time can be wasted if we fail to plan and that's frustrating and ultimately stressful. Simply planning out your day and the week ahead can help you in avoiding most of this wasted time. A plan will enable you to concentrate on those things that are important to you and ignore those that are not.

7. Learn To Delegate

In the hustle and bustle of today's busy world it can seem like there are a million and one things that we have to get done, but there's only so much you can do in any given day. So who does the rest? In short, someone else. You must learn to delegate, whether it via other members of the family, friends, or work colleague's. If you have to pay someone to do these tasks then do so. If you can't afford to pay them, then see if you can swap chores. What seems like a chore to you might seem enjoyable to them and vice versa. The important thing is that you concentrate on doing those things that are most valuable to you.

8. Food For Thought

What we eat and drink can have a noticeable effect on stress levels. The consumption of too much refined food can lead to irritation of the gastro intestinal tract, discomfort, and eventually stress. Too much caffeine can do the same. Going

for long periods without eating can cause irritability. Try to eat a balanced diet on a regular basis. But don't stress out about it!

9. A Walk In The Park

One of the most pleasant ways of de-stressing that I know of is that of "exercising". It doesn't have to be particularly strenuous, just walking in the fresh air, taking in the sights and sounds that are around you and feeling grateful for just being alive can really drop your stress level. If you have nowhere pleasant to carry out your "daily constitutional", if your environment is stressful, try to find somewhere that you can. Remember, this is about dealing with stress.

10. If Music Be The Food Of Love

Many TV programs and much of our daily news are negative and can lead to stress. Stay up to date with current affairs only as much as you need to and spend the rest of your time listening to music that you enjoy. That will help lower your stress levels no end.

3 Ways To Learn From Your Mistakes

There Are No Such Things As Mistakes - Only Feedback.

Does making a mistake get you down? It shouldn't. After all, if we didn't make mistakes we would never learn and move forward.

So instead seeing mistakes as something negative, learn to see them as feedback that is helping your personal growth.

1. Own Up

Don't try and hide from your mistakes. Admit to yourself that you got it wrong and decide what it is that you can do to avoid making the same mistake again.

2. Chill Out

Don't get emotional. Stay cool and unflustered. Getting wound up will affect your decision-making abilities. If you can, come back to the problem later. Try to sleep on it if you can.

3. Feedback

The smartest people are happy to make mistakes. It's by making mistakes that they became smart people. They know that they can use their mistakes as "feedback". They stop doing what doesn't work and try something new until they get to the point where it does work.

Think of anything you've ever learned how to do. I bet, while you were learning, that you got it wrong sometimes. But you never gave up. You kept on trying until you had mastered the situation. You were using "feedback" and that's all you have to do.

5 Ways Of Gaining Self Control

Lack of self-control can lead to negative emotional reactions, impulsive actions such as self-harming and addictive behavior and lead to feelings of guilt and shame. To overcome the foregoing, self-control will need to be practiced and developed.

1. Make a Firm Decision to Develop Self Control

In order to develop self-control, we have to decide who is in control of us, for if we are not in control of ourselves then somebody else is. We must make a firm promise to ourselves to take control of our own lives. No wishing or hoping for things to change will do, but a firm decision to shun temptation and instant gratification whilst truly believing that we can achieve it.

2. Change Your Emotional Response

We are a bundle of conditioned reflexes and in the majority of situations this is a good thing. But there are times when acting on impulse to a situation can have a negative effect.

Consider the scenario where someone is trying to quit smoking. They have always lit up a cigarette after finishing a meal and a moment's lapse in self-control will find them lighting up as soon as they move away from the meal table.

It's a pattern that has become ingrained in their mind and in order to succeed, they need to interrupt that pattern. In this situation, they might decide to always pop a breath freshening mint into their mouths as soon as they finish a meal. This action will interfere with that of wishing to place a cigarette there and change the focus of their attention.

Have you ever been given the advice of "count up to ten" when you've been vexed or annoyed? It's excellent advice and a really good way of preventing yourself from acting on impulse. You don't actually need to count to ten. Just get into the habit of pausing for "a second" before you react to any stimulus.

Another way to change our emotional response to others or ourselves is to try to look at things in a different way. We can ask ourselves questions like. "How would I react to this situation if I was him" or "What am I missing or not understanding in this situation"?

3. Change Your Inner Talk

They say that talking to oneself is the first sign of madness. I doubt that that is true, but negative self-talk will cause problems. Self-talk triggers our emotions and we will tend to react to those emotions in our usual way. If our self-talk is negative, we will tend to act in ways that we are not happy with. This is where we have to remember to take a "pause" before we react.

Another action we can take, is to listen carefully to our "self-talk". We can ask ourselves questions like "What emotions am I experiencing right now"? What was it that "triggered" these emotions"? "What would I prefer to feel in this situation"?

4. Release Emotional Attachment

What you believe will create your attitude towards yourself and your life. If you hold a belief that emotional outbursts or overindulging in food or drink is the only way you can let go of your emotions, you will be blindfolded to other ways of dealing with your problems.

It can be both difficult and painful trying to identify what beliefs we are emotionally attached to, for it's probable that these beliefs were developed while you were growing up. But identify them you must.

Acceptance and forgiveness are good ways of letting go of emotional attachments. Forgive all those who you feel have contributed to the way you currently feel. But most of all, accept and forgive yourself.

You can try using emotional freedom technique or the EFT tapping method. Or you can use any mind and body relaxation technique.

Here are some healing, self-affirmations that you might like to use, or you can create your own.

I forgive myself
I forgive everyone
I will easily gain self-control
I will discover new and constructive ways to respond to any situation.
I will love myself in spite of the mistakes that I have made.

Now that your mind is open to suggestion, use a visualization technique to create a new self-image. Know fully, in your mind, how it is to be in complete control of your life. See it. Feel it. Carry out this exercise on a daily basis and soon you will be able to ignore any negative impulses and be in complete control of your actions.

When you have gained self-control, don't forget to give yourself a pat on the back. You deserve it. You will have learned that you do possess the inner strength, self-discipline, and will power to become the person that you want to be.

5. Replace With Something Better

You may have been holding on to negative emotional beliefs for a long time and will have got quite used to them. When you let them go, a void will be created, so you will need to fill the void with positive, enabling habits that allow you to feel good about yourself and boosts your self-esteem.

8 Ways Of Combating Negative Self-Talk

Most of us converse on a daily basis with people face to face, or via the telephone, email, video, chat, and even instant messaging. To have an effective conversation, we are required to listen to each other, but have you been listening to yourself lately? Yes, you!

If we want to find out the underlying factors behind our negative actions, we need to listen to our self-talk. Self-talk can be in our own voice, or the voice of another person. Talk is not cheap! The basis of our self-talk, be it positive or negative, can impact on our character and ultimately our relationships. This is because it activates images in our minds and these images affect our mood and thereby, our decisions. Self-talk is often reflective of our fears and inhibitions.

If your self-talk is not “positive”, here are 7 tips to help stop that pessimistic chatter that is going on in your head.

1. Question Your Negativity

One of the ways of counteracting negative self-talk is through rebuttal. As soon as you become aware of the negative talk in your head, stop what you are doing and question yourself. Answer with rebuttals such as "what am I thinking?" or "That can't be right!"

2. Write Them Down

Make a journal of your thoughts. This will help you to identify patterns in your thinking and enlighten you to your emotions. The words that you use to describe your thoughts can tell you a lot. Since words have the power to effect change, you can reword your thoughts and change the negative self-talk in your head.

3. Pinpoint Your Thought Processes

Pinpointing the patterns in your thought processes can help you overcome the challenge of negative self-talk. You can do this by paying close attention to how you talk to yourself and at what times you are most likely to do so. You should also take note of your thoughts when you are relating to strangers and unique situations. Do you berate yourself if you say the wrong thing or if things don't go according to your plans?

5. Identify The Triggers

Negative self-talk doesn't just happen on it's own, but can be likened to a person who suffers from allergies. The allergy is only triggered when the person comes in contact with the pet dander, the flowers, the perfume, the peanuts, or other kinds of food. In the same way, painful memories, beliefs, or certain individuals may trigger your negative self-talk. To help deal with your negative self-talk, you can reform your beliefs and refrain from focusing on your bad experiences. If a particular individual is influencing the way you speak to yourself, you will have to take a firm stance and distance your self from that person. If it is someone that you have to be around, you will have to learn how to become more assertive.

6. Employ Positive Affirmations

One of the most effective ways of combating negative self-talk is through the use of positive affirmations. For example. If the voice in your head tells you how stupid you are when you make a mistake, that you are not attractive, or that your future doesn't look bright, you can refute those statements with affirmations such as:

I am smart
I am beautiful and wonderfully made
My worst days are behind me and my best days are ahead of me

7. Create Positive Mental Images

Your poor self-image is as a result of your negative self-talk and negative mental pictures. You can change this by tearing those old negative mental images off the walls of your mind and replace them with positive mental images of all the things that your self-talk has convinced you that you are not. How do you do that? Begin to see yourself as confident, smart, successful, gorgeous, courageous, and kind. Pull up that positive self-image in your mind on a daily basis. The more you visualize it, the more you will start acting like it. This is acting on the premise that if your mind can conceive it, you can achieve it.

8. Meditate

Amidst the hustle and bustle of daily life, endeavour to find time for meditation and relaxation. In order for your meditation to be effective, find a quiet place where you can be alone. It is up to you whether you lie down or sit upright.

Close your eyes and inhale deeply through your nose and exhale slowly through your mouth.

During your meditation, don't allow your mind to wander, forget all your troubles, and focus on your breathing exercise.

Meditation puts you in a relaxed state of mind by clearing your head and putting things into perspective. This will ultimately lead you to make the positive changes that you desire.

9 Ways Of Improving Concentration

Many people struggle to concentrate. Concentration involves focusing one's attention or mental effort on an object or activity. If you struggle daily to concentrate on the task at hand, part of your problem may be the noise around you, or the thoughts in your head. Other factors that contribute to the lack of concentration include lethargy, boredom, or having too many tasks to compete.

If you want to put your wandering mind under subjection, here are 8 tips that may help you resolve the problem.

1. Prioritize

It is easy to become overwhelmed when you feel that you have too many tasks to do, and as a result, your mind tends to wander as you think about the other tasks that still need to be done. In order to avoid this, make a list of the things that you need to do and arrange them in order of importance. Stick to the list and tick off each task as soon as it is completed.

2. Write Down The Reasons Behind Your Objectives

It is important to have objectives. However, probably more important is the reasons for wanting to achieve them. If your inability to concentrate is as a result of boredom or lack of motivation, it may help to write down the reasons why you want to complete a particular task. Doing this will serve as a reminder and help you maintain concentration in seeing it to its completion.

3. Make a Deadline

When you set a deadline for your projects, you are more inclined to give it your full attention. For example, an employee who has a deadline to meet by the end of the day will not allow herself to be distracted by emails or office gossip. Why? There's a deadline to meet and an unmet deadline can have major consequences. When you make a deadline, promise yourself a reward. When you are working for a prize, it's almost like a competition with yourself and will help to increase your concentration.

4. Focus

If your mind has become accustomed to wandering, it's even harder to maintain concentration. You can improve your concentration with the following activity. Focus your attention on any particular object around you and try to concentrate on it for at least five minutes. If it's a mobile phone, think about the size, the colour, the digits, and the keypad. When you realize that your mind has strayed to thinking about the lemon meringue pie in the oven, draw your focus back again to the phone.

5. Time Out

If you're doing a task and you realize that your mind is going in and out of sync, it's time to take a break. When your brain is tired it is hard to keep focused on the task at hand. When you take a break, try to do something that has nothing to do with what you were doing. If you were studying, try not to do or think about anything that is related to academics. Instead, play a game during your break, or do some mindless browsing on the Internet.

6. Satisfy Your Hunger

Hunger can also impact on your concentration. I remember how hard it was to concentrate in class as a youngster when I didn't have breakfast in the mornings. All I could think of was food and sometimes I hardly heard a word the teacher said. All I longed to hear was the sound of the bell that indicated that it was lunchtime. If you're finding it hard to concentrate, get a snack to fill the gap.

7. Deal with Emotional Issues

If you have unresolved emotional issues or conflict, it can be extremely hard to maintain concentration. You may find your mind wandering throughout the day back to the argument you had with your spouse or your friend. This will disrupt your concentration and may result in you being unproductive. Therefore, forgive and make up quickly. It will free up space in your mind to concentrate on your projects.

8. Rest

In order to function effectively, it is generally recommended that we get 6 to 8 hours sleep per day. When the brain is tired, it is very hard to focus. No amount of coffee will enable you to concentrate and even if you do complete the task, you may find out later that you made a lot of errors. Therefore, ensure that you are well rested before attempting tasks that require maximum concentration.

9. Operate in a Quiet Environment

There are a few people who can function in a noisy environment, but for many of us, noise is a distraction. With that said, whenever possible ensure that your environment is peaceful and calm. It is one of the best methods to improve concentration.

7 Ways To Become More Positive

Staying positive is not really hard, all that is required is for you to stay in control of the thoughts that you focus on. You can become more positive if you identify your negative thought patterns and replace them with positive thoughts. Also, eradicate thoughts that make you feel lonely, sad, depressed, frustrated, and angry and focus on thoughts that make you feel confident, successful, happy, and relaxed.

Here are 7 tips on maintaining a Positive Vibe

1. Eliminate Negative Thoughts

The first and most important step in becoming a more positive individual is to eliminate negativity. You can do this by making a conscious effort to focus on the bright side of things at all times. It is not an easy task but it can be done.

Whenever you feel the onset of a negative emotion, nip it in the bud and replace it with something positive. Another way of reforming your thought patterns is to monitor what you say to yourself. Words are very powerful and it is especially true when we repeatedly say things about ourselves. Once you start to speak negatively about yourself you will eventually begin to accept and believe what you are actually saying. If, for example, you are always criticising your body weight, then you need to stop. You'll never lose the weight if you continue to tell yourself how fat you are. Instead, create a mental picture of your ideal weight and start telling yourself that you will get to that size. You will find that you will begin to take the necessary steps to achieving your ideal weight.

2. Identify Your Life's Purpose

If you do not know your purpose in life, you will wander aimlessly and feel insignificant. Address this problem by thinking about what your true calling is. Start by asking yourself what you are good at, and what kind of contribution you would like to make to humanity? If you answer these questions honestly and take steps in that direction, you will begin to find true fulfilment in your life.

3. Set Achievable Goals

A man without dreams and goals is like a ship without a sail. If you do not have any goals in your life, then you will have nothing to look forward to each day. You will dread waking up each day and you will find that you literally have to coax yourself out of bed. When you have goals, you are full of zest and you can hardly wait for the beginning of a new day because you have something to look forward to. Start out by making short-term goals that are achievable. The more goals you accomplish, the more confident you will feel to undertake medium and long-term goals.

4. Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life

If you've always seen the glass as half empty, then endeavor now to start seeing it as half full. If you make a real effort to see the positive side of things, or the good in people, you will see it. Negative news and negative people can skew your vision of the world. Avoid reading negative news and stay away from people who radiate negative vibes.

5. Take Care of your Health

If you are always sick and lethargic, it will almost be impossible to maintain a positive outlook. Therefore, you should take extra care of looking after number one- you. Ensure that you eat a balanced diet, exercise and get at least an annual check-up from your doctor. Remember, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Therefore, ensure that you make time for fun and relaxation. It helps your mind to function more effectively.

6. Broaden Your Knowledge

The more you know about the ways of the world, the more open minded you are to things. To expand your knowledge

base, read more books and talk to people who have an abundance of knowledge. Explore more and don't be afraid to try new things.

7. Count Your Blessings

Always count your blessings or other people will count them for you. You can keep track of the many things you have been blessed with by writing them down in a journal. Doing this helps you to be more grateful for what you already have. Counting your blessings also leaves you limited time to complain about what you don't have and comparing yourself with other people.

8 Ways To Become More Optimistic

Optimism is hopefulness and confidence about the future or success of something. Being optimistic is a choice. An optimistic person always sees the positive side of things but simultaneously accepts that negative things can happen. On the other hand, a pessimist only sees the negative aspects of things.

An optimist maintains an upbeat attitude, makes a deliberate effort to think positively, and always expects great results even the face of a dark situation. The pessimistic person speaks and thinks negatively, fails to see the positive side of things, and complains and worries about almost everything. A pessimist will even worry because they have nothing to worry about.

If you can think it you can achieve it and an optimistic person can accomplish almost anything. Individuals who make the choice to be optimistic handle stress better, and also cope well in trying situations. Believe it or not, the spirit of optimism is like a magnet, the more positive you are the more positive things happen to you.

When a person decides to be optimistic, they are always expecting good things to happen, but it does not mean they have their head in the clouds. Being positive activates the law of attraction, which means you will almost, always get whatever you expect.

Here are 8 ways to become an optimist.

1. Make a Decision to Remain Optimistic

Since optimism is a choice, the first step to becoming an optimist is to make a conscious decision to maintain a positive attitude regardless of any situation that you are faced with. If you decide to maintain a positive attitude, it will result in you making positive actions to overcome obstacles. Don't worry if you fail the first few times. It may be hard, especially if you are a recovering pessimist but if you continue to be intentional about being positive, you will become an optimist in time.

2. Train your Brain

Train your brain to think positive thoughts. Talking positively to yourself, keeping track of your emotions, and creating positive mental outcomes are ways in which you can train your brain into thinking positively. Replace all negative thinking and self-criticism with positive thinking and positive self-talk. For example, if you were use to thinking constantly about unattractive you are and criticizing your crooked teeth, replace those thoughts with thoughts of how beautiful you are and stop criticizing your teeth. Even your teeth are crooked, forget about that and focus on your ability to make people laugh. Doing these activities consistently, trains your brain into actively thinking positive thoughts without much effort.

3. Question Your Beliefs

Your belief system greatly impacts on how you perceive and respond to a situation. If you are a pessimist, chances are that your believe system is distorted. Once you've established that your belief system is distorted, you need to question them. Questioning your beliefs constantly will ultimately lead you to doubting them and change your way of thinking.

4. Accept The Things You Cannot Control

Life can be quite unpredictable. Things happen and people change. Since you are not God and therefore, completely powerless, you should learn to go with the flow and accept the things that you cannot change. You should also bear in mind that you cannot control people or situations; you can only control your reaction to those people and situations.

5. Expect The Best

The Optimist creed says that you should think only of the best, work only for the best and expect only the best. What

you expect will determine exactly what happens to you. Create mental pictures of your future and you will begin to see them materialise. Imagine the feeling of success before it even happens. By doing this you are attracting great things into your life.

6. Acceptance

Optimism doesn't mean that you are always happy. Furthermore, optimism is not a wishing well. Sometimes you do not get what you were hoping for, but if you learn to accept things as they are you will recover from a bad situation quickly.

7. Discover Role Models

A great way to maintain a positive attitude is to actively seek out role models. You can do so by reading self-help books like, Think and Grow Rich, The Seven Habits of Highly Successful people and The Power of Positive Thinking, all available on Amazon. After absorbing all this information, put it into action. Otherwise, it is of no use to you.

8. Avoid Pessimists

If you really want to become an optimist, then you should avoid pessimists at all costs. Pessimists love company and will try to dissuade you from becoming an optimist. Never attempt to convert a pessimist to your way of thinking, especially if you have not been practicing optimism for long; you may lose the battle. Instead, actively search for individuals who are positive and have great expectations.

8 Ways To Gain Inspiration

If your work involves any measure of creativity, you will be expected to provide material that is in some way new, unique or different and in order to get those creative juices flowing you will need to feel motivated and inspired.

If you are unable to experience inspiration for some reason, you may be tempted to put your work aside and take a break and if that fits in with your deadline that's OK.

But what if your deadline is imminent? You don't want to press on and find that you have produced something that is insipid, dreary, and wishy-washy, so here are 8 ways for you to gain inspiration when it really matters.

1. Change Your Environment or Surrounding

We all suffer from lack of inspiration at one time or another, and a good way to overcome this is to change your working environment in order to stimulate your mind and therefore your creativity.

If you find your work area uninspiring, do what ever it takes to make the changes that will inspire you and enable you to feel more comfortable. It might be something as simple as moving the furniture around, or you could go for total redecoration.

Keep your work area as tidy and as organized as possible. You know what they say.

“A tidy desk equals a tidy mind”.

A great way of discovering inspiration is to commune with nature. Being outside in the fresh air, with or without your work will raise your spirits.

2. Expand Your Mind

An excellent way to find inspiration and increase your thought processes is to read stories that motivate. Get your hands on a copy of Helen Keller's life story. It never fails to inspire. You could also watch videos that have inspirational plots or listen to uplifting music. They say that “travel” broadens the mind” but it is also a good way boosting inspiration.

3. Be Willing To Accept New Ideas And Receive Inspiration

We all become bored of doing the same thing over and over again and it can be difficult to become inspired if you are caught in this kind of endeavour. The way out of this trap is to learn to do the same thing in a number of different ways.

Constantly search for new ways of doing things. These new ideas might come from something you read, watch, or hear. Get into the habit of practicing deep relaxation and new and inspiring idea will flow from your subconscious.

4. Look At What Other People Are Doing

Whatever you are creating, you can bet that others are creating or have created something similar. By carrying out some research on the Internet, or wherever you would expect to find similarities to your work, you will find, and be able to take inspiration from their examples. If you are inspired by their work, take their methods and by redesigning and tweaking, make them your own.

5. Recall Your Previous Success Strategy

If you think about it, you've probably lacked for inspiration in the past and yet somehow regained your inspiration through something you did.

The trick is to go back in time and try to remember what you did to re-manifest your creativity.

Perhaps you went for a walk, or re-read your goals and aspirations. Or maybe you had a visualization exercise that enabled you to become re-motivated. Whatever it was that worked for you; repeat it and it will work for you again.

6. Start A Master Mind Group

Be sure to spend time with and around positive people. It is very difficult to feel down and uninspired when those around you will go out of their way to help you.

7. Look At The End Result

Another way to find inspiration is to “Begin with end in mind” and mentally work backward to where you are now. If you can see clear to the end of your project, it will give you a target to work towards.

8. Do the Thing That You Enjoy

This is why it is imperative to do that which you love to do, but even while doing our favorite tasks we can become demotivated. When this happens, our mind is telling us to take a break, or do something different for a while. It is amazing how taking a breather or concentrating on something else can enable us to eventually return to our original task, ready and raring to go.

5 Ways To Be Truly Happy

True Happiness Comes From Within You

Life has its ups and downs and sometimes, when it's having one of its downs, I take the time to look around me and find those people who continue to lead interesting and fulfilling lives, the kind of lives that will have me asking myself,

"What is it that they do that enables their lives to run so smoothly? How did they become so truly happy?"

Someone once said that "to love someone, means accepting that someone, just as they are".

We can only be truly happy when we can accept our own faults and imperfections and we have learned to love ourselves.

True happiness also comes from being content so here are 5 ways to find contentment and be truly happy.

- 1. When you are content with your family.**
- 2. When you are content with your friends.**
- 3. When you are content with where you live.**
- 4. When you are content with the job you have.**
- 5. When you are content with the way you look.**

in fact, when you are content with all the things that make up your life, you will be truly happy.

6 Ways To Build A Super Strong Self-Image

Your self-image is who you believe yourself to be, and your beliefs about your “self” establish how you interrelate with those around you, your behavior, your mind-set, your personality, and therefore, your actions.

Someone with a poor or negative self-image will probably experience poor or low self-esteem. However, self-image is a matter of conditioning. Your self-image has been created during your formative years.

If you grew up hearing only positive and nurturing comments from significant others, such as teachers and parents, you will have developed a positive self-image.

If on the other hand you received only criticism, the chances are that you may have developed a poor self-image. Fortunately, conditioning can be altered and with hard work and determination, a poor self-image can be improved upon.

How can you tell if you are suffering from poor self-image?

Here are some indicators.

You might often feel:

- Extremely shy and timid
- Extremely humble
- Easily beaten and inadequate
- Remorse over past hurts and failures
- Inferior when you compare yourself to others
- Shame at your appearance

If you suffer from any of the forgoing emotions, here are 6 ways to help build a super strong self-image.

1. Like Your Body

One of the symptoms of poor self-image is feeling shameful of your appearance, and feeling shameful about your appearance can lead to disrespect to your body and the subsequent habits that can harm it. Being unhappy with your body image can also make you feel awkward around others.

If you're not happy with your physical appearance you can examine your feelings and to try to discover specifically what it is that you're unhappy with. You can't hit what you can't see, so trying to understand why you feel like you do is important. Once you have achieved this you can go to work on changing your body image.

3. Create New Positive Experiences

Someone with a positive self-image will tend to be full of confidence. The opposite is true if you have a negative self-image you will probably suffer from a lack of confidence. In order to build self-confidence you can gradually take on new tasks that are slightly out of your comfort zone. Once you have succeeded at that task, take on something that is slightly more of a challenge. Each success will build up your self-confidence. As your self-confidence grows, so will your self-worth.

4. Replace Your Limiting Beliefs

How you see yourself, how you believe yourself to be, has had a direct impact on your life experiences. If you want to experience better relationships, joy and happiness, you need to believe that those things are possible for you. You will need to develop a positive self-image.

As your beliefs developed, emotions were attached to them. If you currently hold limiting beliefs, change them by analysing them, by questioning them. Write out a list of personality traits that you're not happy with. Think about each personality trait and ask questions of yourself. Is this personality trait really me? If so, how can I change it?

Keep digging away at your list and you will find positive change happening.

5. Use Positive Affirmations

We all subconsciously indulge in self-talk, in affirmations, and what we are constantly yet subconsciously telling ourselves can have either a positive or negative effect on us.

We rarely notice such self-talk consciously, especially negative self-talk, in the form of self-criticism, so how can we monitor these thoughts? One way is to observe our emotions. There will be a feeling associated with negative thought. The feeling is different from individual to individual, but it's there. If you learn to recognize the feeling, you will be able to stop for a moment and give thought to what you have been saying to yourself.

The same applies to positive self-talk. Learn to notice when you are using positive self-talk and use it to replace negative self-talk.

You can consciously boost your positive self-talk by employing positive affirmation such as:

I love and approve of myself.

I matter and what I have to offer the world matters.

I am beautiful and smart and that is how everyone sees me.

A really good way of boosting self-image and self-esteem is through visualization exercises.

An excellent visualization exercise follows.

6. How To Improve Low Self Image

Bear in mind that the self-image that you have of yourself is a “mental” image. Therefore it is in the mind and you can use your imagination to instil a new positive self-image.

The fact that you can achieve a new positive self-image should always be foremost in your thoughts.

As far as “the new you” is concerned you need to: **See it - Hear it - Smell it - Taste it and Touch it.**

But how can this be achieved

It can be achieved through the wonderful gift of imagination and visualisation

The first thing you will need to understand in order to visualize your new positive self-image is to realize that the world you live in is not "out there". Your problems do not exist "out there" and the answers do not lie "out there".

Your world exists inside your head. My world exists inside my head; therefore the world we live in is personal to us and exists inside our heads.

If you doubt this, think about it this way. If you couldn't see, hear, feel, taste or smell, the world would not exist for you, for it is through our senses that we interpret the world around us. This is real good news because it means that all we have to do to change our world is to change our "minds". You can use your imagination and your five senses to visualize your new positive self-image any time you want to by creating vivid images and moving pictures in your mind of how you really want to be and how you really want to feel, and run these mind movies often.

The subconscious mind doesn't know the difference between that which we physically experience and that which we imagine. If you have a negative mindset, that is what your subconscious will accept as real and act upon, so keep those mind movies positive.

If you know what you want, you will know what it looks like in your imagination, and you will be able to visualise it.

To reinforce your powerful, new positive self-image, work through the following exercise.

You'll be amazed at the beneficial effect it will have on you.

Find somewhere where you can sit for twenty minutes that is quiet and where you won't be disturbed or distracted.

Sit straight but relaxed. Eyes to the front. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose and let it out through your mouth. Let your breath out with a sigh. Repeat this four or five times or until you're feeling completely relaxed.

Now think back to a situation where you felt relaxed, content, and happy. If you can't think of one, make one up. Perhaps you were on vacation relaxing on the beach, the sun on your face, a warm gentle breeze blowing across your body, the sound of children laughing. Whatever the memory might be, it will have certain aspects that relate to your five senses.

Now imagine the new you. This is the person you want to be. The new you is there, in front of you.

What can you see in your mind's eye? What does the new you look like? What can you hear? What can you taste, smell, and touch?

Make this image, this picture as large as you can. Let it completely surround you.

Are there colors? If so turn up the brightness. Just imagine you have a TV remote control and press a button. Make what you can see appear in glorious Technicolor. If you don't see colors, create them in your mind.

What sounds do you hear now that you have achieved the way you want to be? Use your remote control to turn up the sound.

Now that you have created the new you, how do you feel? Happy. Excited? Press the button and increase your happiness and excitement.

What does your new life taste like, what does it smell like? Sweet? Make it sweeter.

Now you're feeling great for having created the new you. But you can feel even better. Just tell yourself that you can.

Whilst doing this, you will probably drift off into a daydream. That's good.

As you come out of the daydream, take a couple of deep breaths as before.

When you are ready, stand up and stretch your body. Take a long luxurious stretch.

After using this visualization method to enable you to experience the new you, I absolutely guarantee you that you will feel full of energy and be ready to forge ahead; you'll feel ready to tackle anything.

Do this exercise on a daily basis and you will be amazed at the results.

6 Ways To Reward Yourself

A reward is something given or received in recompense for good behaviour or in retribution for evil acts. We reward the dog for doing a trick, employees for going the extra mile, customers for their loyal support, but we hardly ever think about rewarding ourselves for doing something good or achieving a goal.

There is nothing wrong with rewarding yourself for achieving your objectives. In fact, if you can berate yourself when you slip up, what's wrong with you patting yourself on the back or treating yourself when you do get it right?

The next time you make a goal, make plans also to reward yourself when you've achieved that milestone. Rewarding yourself will only empower and encourage you to do more and be better.

It's often been said that encouragement strengthens labor, and just as how an employee who is rewarded for outstanding work continues to go above and beyond the call of duty, rewarding yourself will have the very same effect.

Rewards can take many forms. You can reward yourself by going for a spa treatment, or taking a vacation or a weekend getaway. However you decide to reward yourself, it should be something extra special that you would love.

Here are 6 things you might consider rewarding yourself for.

1. Losing Weight

Losing weight is a challenge for many people. The fact that you have attempted to shed the pounds is enough grounds for a reward. When you've achieved your weight loss goal, remember to reward yourself. Reward can be in the form of a photo shoot to show off your new figure, or buying that dress that you've dreamed of wearing for so long. One reward you should never consider giving yourself is food. Why? Rewarding yourself with food is like defeating the whole purpose of losing weight and may lead you right back to square one.

2. Furthering Your Education

Furthering your education is a significant goal. You deserve a medal if you've managed to accomplish the feat while taking care of a family and holding down a full time job. Since you've made huge sacrifices and invested a lot of time to achieve this goal, you can reward yourself by getting a vacation or a weekend getaway.

3. Quitting Smoking

Smoking is a habit that many people struggle with. It is one that requires great self-control. Take this goal in strides and reward yourself every time you resist the urge to smoke. Save the money that you would have otherwise spent to purchase tobacco and use it to treat yourself when you finally manage to kick the habit.

4. Reward Yourself For Not Overspending

Being a spendthrift or a shopoholic can be detrimental to your finances. When you are trying to break this habit, don't tempt yourself unnecessarily. Avoid going to the malls for the purpose of window shopping, or flipping through designer catalogues. Reward yourself every time you overcome the urge to buy that product that you don't really need. Give yourself a badge of honor for different levels of accomplishment.

5. Landing Your Dream Job

Not everyone gets the opportunity to have his or her dream job. When you have aced that interview and edged out other candidates for the promotion, reward yourself. It doesn't even have to be anything big. Buying a bottle of expensive champagne or taking yourself out to dinner are nice rewards. You may even book an appointment for a full body massage for all the hard work you did to get where you are.

6. Reward Yourself for Controlling your Anger

If you tend to fly off the handle easily and are trying to stop it, reward yourself every time you manage not to flare up. Grinning and bearing it even when you want to tear someone to shreds, deserves a medal. You can reward yourself by doing some yoga exercises, which tends to calm the mind.

The promise of a reward upon the accomplishment of a goal will help to keep achieve that goal.

Below are some other ideas for rewards that you can give yourself.

Gift Certificates - Going To The Cinema - Taking A Limo Ride - Buy Something For Your Hobby
Creating A Trophy Or Plaque - Creating An Award Certificate

Rewards don't have to cost you anything at all.

In fact, the best things in life are often free.

Ian D. Major

Summary

“This is my wish for you: Comfort on difficult days, smiles when sadness intrudes, rainbows to follow the clouds, laughter to kiss your lips, sunsets to warm your heart, hugs when spirits sag, beauty for your eyes to see, friendships to brighten your being, faith so that you can believe, confidence for when you doubt, courage to know yourself, patience to accept the truth, Love to complete your life.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ian D. Major

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