

Stop the Comparison Game

What to Know

Imagine you're comparing two items to each other: carrots and peas, candy bar and potato chips, or bananas and oranges. It doesn't make a lot of sense to compare these items, does it? When you think about it, it's not very helpful to compare your friendships, family situation, dating relationship, or school performance with others. To become all YOU can be, focus on *your* uniqueness - without playing the comparison game.

Consider the candy bar and potato chips. Both are snacks, yet they are different in taste, texture, shape, and color. No one would be fooled if you tried to disguise a bag of chips as a candy bar! Any changes you make wouldn't change what's inside the package, and you wouldn't think the candy bar fails to measure up to the potato chips.

What does this have to do with self-esteem? Sadness, disappointment, and feeling bad about yourself is often rooted in how you don't "measure up" to others.

What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Write down two great athletes that play different sports.

Name two actors. How is each talented in different ways?

Name two bands or music artists you like that perform different types of music.

Name two artists, writers, or other creators that are gifted, but in different ways.

Now, describe a time a parent or caregiver compared you to a sibling, or a teacher compared you to another student.

How did you feel? _____

Describe when a friend compared you to another friend.

How did you feel? _____

Describe when a person you dated compared you to someone else.

How did you feel? _____

Next, describe someone to whom you have compared yourself and describe how you felt.

Situation	Comparison	How did you feel?
At school		
In a club or other activity		
In your family		
In a friendship		
At work, if you have a job		
In a dating relationship		

Imagine this situation: You're with friends and they're not paying attention to you. In fact, they've completely excluded you from the conversation! They're focused on the "new girl" at school. This girl is smart, funny, and seems to have it together! How would you react to this situation?

Low Self-Esteem Thoughts and Feelings

High Self-Esteem Thoughts and Feelings

Low Self-Esteem Actions

High Self-Esteem Actions

What effects (if any) does this have on your relationship with your friends?

Think about someone that has a quality you admire. Write down their name and the quality.

What can you do to improve your different (but equally valuable!) strengths?

What do you do to be the best you can be?

Write down an example of a current situation where you compare yourself to someone else.

How will your awareness of your own individuality and special characteristics help you avoid comparisons? Be specific.

Describe a time when you compared yourself to someone you perceived to have less than you (talent, skills, intelligences, looks, and so on).

If that person could read your mind, how would they feel?

Do you think there will always be greater and lesser people than you? Why or why not?

What are some ways you can appreciate what others contribute, instead of feeling better (or lesser) than them?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful to 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
