

Regain Your Self-Respect

Objective

To increase your self-respect.

What to Know

Self-respect is loving yourself, knowing you are worthy, and treating yourself accordingly. It is at the core of self-care, and it is the first step toward understanding that you deserve love, consideration, and positive opportunities. You accept yourself and stay true to your values, making choices consistent with your beliefs. This results in feeling fulfilled and confident – ultimately improving your sense of well-being. You are less likely to compare yourself to others or minimize your achievements.

Your self-respect lets others know how to engage with you. When you have respectful relationships, you are surrounded by people who support you and treat you well.

You may have a hard time respecting yourself if you lacked role models early in life, believe you are not worthy, and are unclear what respect even means! If you have a history of trauma, you are more likely to feel unworthy of respect. Here are some suggestions to regain your self-respect.

- 1. Set and maintain firm boundaries.** Self-respect includes setting boundaries and sticking to them. Avoid letting someone convince you to do something you do not want to do.
- 2. Practice mindfulness and present moment awareness.** Relax your mind by following a guided meditation to manage your thinking. Download an app on your phone or tablet or watch meditation videos on YouTube.
- 3. Avoid putting yourself down.** Putting yourself down with deflating or mean remarks or self-deprecation damages self-respect. Treat yourself with kindness and compassion. Saying, “I’m not good enough,” or “What’s wrong with me?” is unkind.
- 4. Say no.** This is part of setting boundaries, and it may be hard to do. If you say no to someone, they may try to convince you otherwise. This shows a lack of respect when they attempt to persuade you. If you give in and say yes, you are not respecting yourself.
- 5. Practice emotional regulation.** You may have a hard time respecting yourself if you fail to manage your emotions. If you react to every emotion you feel, you are likely to feel overwhelmed or lose control. Controlling fleeting emotions is all about being patient and taking care of yourself.
- 6. Stand up for yourself.** Do not allow others to push you around or treat you like a doormat. If you fail to respect yourself, people will assume they do not need to respect you. Even though it might sometimes be challenging, show others you will not tolerate disrespect. Build a support system who will stand behind you as you regain self-respect.

7. Choose integrity. When you have self-respect, you have a consistent and reliable character and strive to make good decisions. You are not perfect, but you try to have good habits, and you value trustworthiness. You make difficult moral choices—even when there are consequences.

8. Find role models or mentors. Identify people you admire, such as leaders, mentors, or other role models. If you do not know them personally, read books or articles about them if they are successful.

9. Be honest. Honesty is also an essential component of self-respect. You show self-respect when you are honest all the time. This is not easy! Sometimes, it is hard to tell people the truth. To respect yourself, lay out the truth with kindness and compassion.

10. Live life on your terms. While it can be uncomfortable to lose relationships, sometimes that is what will need to happen when you live life on your terms.

11. Have romantic relationships with people who respect you. Do not be afraid to walk away from a disrespectful relationship. Make it known that you value respect, draw the line, and share your expectations.

12. Make changes when needed. You control how you present yourself, who you are, who you become, and how you evolve. You can change aspects of yourself at any time. Let go of traits and habits that no longer serve you. Avoid changing yourself to accommodate others.

13. Practice self-care. When you invest time in taking care of yourself, you respect yourself. Schedule time to relax, read books, spend time in nature, exercise, or engage in any other activities to care for yourself physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally.

14. Revisit your values. To act according to your values, clarify what your values are. Some of your values might be:

- tolerance
- loyalty
- generosity
- cooperation
- wisdom
- commitment

15. Take inventory of your relationships. Surround yourself with people who empower and accept you. Consider distancing yourself from toxic people that bring you down.

16. Focus on activities you enjoy. Self-respect includes life satisfaction, so spend time and effort on what you are passionate about. Include a few activities in your daily routine that make you happy. Here are some examples:

- start a new hobby or reconnect with one you used to do
- set professional goals and make a 90-day plan that outlines specific tasks
- read a book about personal growth or career development
- start a blog, vlog, or journal

- dance, sing, or listen to your favorite playlists
- start a new exercise routine
- learn to cook
- plan a family event or vacation
- volunteer your time for a cause you are passionate about
- do things you are good at

19. Identify your needs. Check-in with yourself daily and avoid shaming yourself for having needs. Attending to your needs is essential to your well-being and can help you take better care of others.

Self-respect is understanding and honoring your own needs. It is knowing your worth and acting accordingly. If you need to work on regaining your self-respect, first identify your values, set boundaries, and nurture your needs through self-care. This worksheet will help you begin the process.

What to Do

On a scale of 1-10, where 1 = no self-respect, to 10 = total self-respect, how would you rate your self-respect today? _____

Why? Explain your rating.

Check off any of the following statements that apply to you.

- ___ You attract people who mistreat or use you.
- ___ You have no time for yourself.
- ___ You feel exhausted most of the time because of your commitments to others.
- ___ You settle for less.
- ___ You feel “less than” others.
- ___ You struggle to speak up.
- ___ You cannot ever say no to requests.
- ___ You lack self-confidence.
- ___ You are always there for everyone, but no one is ever there for you.
- ___ You undervalue your strengths, talents, gifts, and achievements.
- ___ You let others walk over you.

___ You are excessively worried about what others think about you.

___ You are unhappy with the quality of your life.

___ Total the checkmarks.

If you checked off more than four statements, you may want to actively work on regaining your self-respect.

What do you value most in life?

Are your daily actions taking you closer or further away from what you value?

Who do you admire and why?

What are some things you are not willing to compromise on?

What would you like to be known as?

What are some things you want to become as a person that you have not yet worked on?

What is important to you in your relationships?

What is important to you in a romantic relationship?

In what areas of your life do you need to set boundaries?

How do you think people with different views and experiences should be treated?

Do the people you surround yourself with build you up? Why or why not?

Does your support system support your dreams, opinions, lifestyle, and preferences?

Do others treat you as you wish to be treated?

What are your needs? What would make you feel completely fulfilled and satisfied?

Referring to the above list, what can you do right away to begin rebuilding your self-respect. Be specific, and include a date, who will be involved, and any other details.

Reflections on This Exercise

Did anything surprise you while completing this exercise? Explain.

What was the biggest obstacle you encountered when completing this exercise? Describe.

Were you successful at regaining self-respect? _____

Why or why not? _____

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
