

Self-Worth

We start developing our morals, values and core beliefs when we are children, with a child's simple perspective, guided by our parental figures and environmental influences. We rely on core beliefs to guide us through life. Well, life can be more complex and challenging. By rationalizing this disconnect, our logic tells us there is something fundamentally wrong with us, instead of placing blame on our unfair/unjust world.

What happens when we tell ourselves we are inherently not *enough* (i.e., good, pretty, smart, handsome). Well, not only do we believe it, but we also live as if it were true. Many of us struggle with feeling not enough. We are often our very worst critics. Even when we are kind to others, it can be hard for us to be nice to ourselves. We tend to judge ourselves harshly. We're conditioned by society to look and behave a certain way and when we don't conform to these impossible standards, it's easy to believe we are not enough. Below are some tips to help combat negative self-talk.

- **Remove comparisons.** When we look at other people through a lens of compassion it is easy to judge ourselves by the differences. Look from a lens of understanding rather than judgment and jealousy; we are better able to see others for what they are—human beings. They are beautifully imperfect human beings going through the same universal challenges that we go through.
- **The mind can be a very convincing liar.** We allow cruel or discouraging thoughts to dictate how we feel about ourselves and how the world perceives us. These thoughts become our facts. Try reminding yourself, thoughts are just thoughts. **Don't believe everything you think.** It's unhealthy and exhausting to give so much power to the negative thoughts.
- **There is more right with you than wrong with you.** It is easy to zoom in on perceived flaws. Remember there are lots of things to like about ourselves—like the fact that we are alive and able to pave new paths whenever we choose. When a negative thought pops into your head telling you how you are not *enough*, challenge that thought with an affirmation on how amazing you are.
- **We need love the most when we feel we deserve it the least.** This might be an epiphany moment. We find that it is most difficult to accept love and understanding from others when we are in a state of anger, shame, anxiety, or depression. But adopting the above truth can really shift perspective and help us realize that love is actually the greatest gift we can receive during difficult times.
- **Focus on progress rather than perfection.** One of the causes of self-loathing is the *belief* we “need to get it right.” We strive for perfection and success, and when we fall short, we feel less than and sometimes worthless. We forget that working towards goals and being willing to be vulnerable are accomplishments within themselves, regardless of failures. Instead of berating ourselves for messing up and stumbling backward, let's validate ourselves for trying, making progress, and coming as far as we have.
- **We can't hate our way into loving ourselves.** Telling yourselves what a failure you are won't make you any more successful. Repeating *not enough* phrases like “I'm worthless and unlovable” won't make you feel any more worthy or lovable. The only way to achieve self-love is to love yourself—regardless of who you are. Tell yourself out loud daily “***I am enough just as I am***”, and self-love will be a little bit easier every time you remind yourself of that.

