

I MATTER

DEVELOP A HIGH LEVEL OF SELF-RESPECT ECOURSE



LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO SELF-RESPECT

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Self-Respect 101

Self-respect, while something of great importance often eludes many of us. Rooted in self-esteem, self-respect is related to how you view and feel about yourself.

What Is Self-Respect

The dictionary defines self-respect as, *“pride and confidence in oneself; a feeling that one is behaving with honor and dignity.”*

Self-respect is the regard that one has for oneself. Self-respect means that you love yourself and believe in your own value, even if others may not.

According to VeryWell Mind, *“According to the American Psychological Association, having self-respect means having a healthy regard for your character, values, and dignity.¹ It is a measure of your self-worth. Self-respect demands an appreciation of your identity as an individual, which in turn impacts your thoughts, values, emotions, commitments, and behaviors, says Judith Zackson, PhD, Founder and Clinical Director of Zackson Psychology Group.”*

Ultimately, self-respect is about being true to who you are—even when it's very difficult, ultimately you put yourself first, always.

8 Reasons Self-Respect Is Important

Self-respect is the compass of how you live your life. Self-respect is a reflection of many parts of your life, including your behaviors, your feelings about yourself, the health of your relationships and even your professional life.

When You Respect Yourself, You Are Better Overall

When you respect yourself, you are defining your own self-worth and reflecting that you are worthy of love. From this belief stems a slew of joyful things, including people who love and respect you, improved mental health and a more positive attitude. Self-respect makes you better as it will reflect in everything you do and strive for.

Those Who Respect Themselves Are Aware Of Their Own Weaknesses And Strengths

They are not scared to admit fault as they have the confidence to do so. They embrace their strengths and value them and use them to thrive and live their best lives.

Self-Esteem And Self-Love

Those who respect themselves also love and cherish themselves. They tend to have healthy levels of self-esteem, which positively affects all areas of their lives.

Strong Sense Of Identity And Self-Acceptance

People who respect themselves have a strong sense of identity and they accept themselves fully. They know who they are, and respect who they are and let this guide them through all their choices and decisions in life. Self-acceptance is important because when you appreciate and accept everything about yourself, you can then respect yourself that much more.

Responsibility For Your Needs, Desires And Actions

A major part of self-respect is taking responsibility for your own desires, actions and needs. It is about owning what you do, say, and feel. Self-respect allows you to stop being a victim who blames the world for anything that happens and regain control over your own life and the decisions you make along with any consequences that may follow.

Living By Your Values

People who respect themselves are able to look in the mirror and feel proud. One of the main reasons for this is they live within their own values. They remain true to themselves and are able to stand up for what they believe in no matter who may say otherwise.

Boundaries

Self-respect also includes setting healthy boundaries within yourself and with other people. Those boundaries help safeguard you from harm and help you maintain a high level of comfort to keep out those things that compromise your beliefs and your needs.

No More Comparing

Those who respect themselves never compare their lives or who they are to others. They are content and happy with who they are, they have no need or desire to feel jealous or envious of others.

Self-Respect Versus Egoism

The first thing to understand is that self-respect is a positive quality while egoism is a negative one. Being egotistical often evolves around arrogance and not confidence such as they case with self-respect.

The egotistical have an overly inflated sense of self-importance, thinking they are better than anyone else, versus the self-respecting who are confident, which allows them to be confident without taking away from other people.

Self-Respect

Someone who respects themselves also respects others, while the egotistical want respect but have little for others. Self-Respect features a healthy level of self-esteem.

A person who respects themselves will believe the following about themselves:

- I am a good person.
- I look out for myself.
- I live by my values.
- I respect others and demand respect from them
- I feel good about how I look.
- I am assertive and can speak my mind.
- I deserve good things in life
- I take care of my needs.
- I forgive my mistakes.
- I do not engage in self-sabotaging behaviors.
- I am responsible.

Self-respect allows us to feel good about ourselves independent of what others think, and from that those who respect themselves also believe others to deserve respect.

Egoism

Egoism arises from an absence of self-respect. The egotistical person does not really respect themselves; they only want that respect from others. The egotistical person thinks, “all that is missing inside of me, I am demanding from you.”

Often a lack of self-respect is disguised by arrogance, and an attitude that the world owes me something. Egoism in a person does not allow them to give freely and own their thoughts, feelings, and actions, instead they put all the responsibility outside of themselves and expect the world to give them what they lack.

For example, Anna graduated from cooking school and two years later is not working in the field. She has not done much to seek career opportunities and when asked she says, “sure I worked my butt off, but the chef world is a man’s world, and a woman can never get ahead, so why even bother.”

Another example is Moses, who takes care of his elderly father. Instead of feeling good about this and gaining positive feelings and fulfillment from that act, he expects his father to cut other family members out of the will because he is “doing so much for his dad.” Moses’ ego is driving him to believe that because he chose to provide the care, his father owes him something back. But if Moses had self-respect, he would own that decision and derive positive feelings and pride from making the sacrifice without expecting anything in return.

A person who is egotistical will believe the following:

- The world owes me for all I do.
- I pay the bills around here, my wife better do my laundry.
- I look better than anyone else here.
- I am smarter than all the people I work for.
- I better get the promotion; I work harder than anyone here.

15 Major Benefits Of Self-Respect

Support Your Self-Esteem And Self-Love

A common misperception is that self-respect, self-esteem, and self-love are the same. However, the three do have differences. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary:

- **Self-respect** means that a person's behavior reflects that he values himself.
- **Self-esteem** means that a person is fulfilled and confident.
- **Self-love** is a gratefulness for one's value or morality.

A recent [study](#) suggests that an essential part of self-respect is morality. In contrast, self-esteem has no connection to moral values.

So, why does self-respect support self-esteem and self-love? A journal [article](#) written by Constance E. Roland & Richard M. Foxx and published by the American Psychological Association states: "We submit that not only is self-respect important in understanding self-esteem, but that it also uniquely contributes to individual functioning."

You can learn to respect yourself by caring for your health, focusing on your positive qualities, building relationships with positive people, and accepting yourself. Self-respect gives you the support that you need to foster self-love and self-esteem.

Strong Sense Of Identity

Self-identity is "the recognition of one's potential and qualities as an individual, especially in relation to social context", per Oxford Languages. Self-identity is based on a person's choices, including hobbies, relationships, politics, and career choices.

There is a relationship between self-identity and self-respect. A person with a sense of identity understands their values and goals, which are vital for good mental health. Your identity can influence others to be open to new values and beliefs.

You can elevate your sense of identity by taking care of yourself, identifying your strengths, knowing your beliefs and core values, and accepting yourself. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment”.

Self-Acceptance

Acceptance of oneself means that you accept both your positive and negative aspects. When you accept yourself, your well-being can be lifted, making you feel happier and more self-confident. People who do not accept themselves may suffer from low self-confidence, anxiety, depression, stress, and substance abuse.

A person can learn to accept themselves by trying various techniques. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy ([ACT Therapy](#)) is a psychotherapy that can help you to learn mindfulness techniques. Mindfulness means living in the moment, being aware of your surroundings, and being mindful when negative thoughts occur.

You can learn to love yourself unconditionally by.

- Ignoring negative self-talk
- Forgiving yourself
- Understanding your limitations
- Practicing self-compassion

A major step to achieving self-respect is to love yourself.

It Means Taking Responsibility For Your Needs, Desires, And Actions

With self-respect, a person is accountable for actions and decisions that are under their control. Someone who willingly accepts responsibility may decide to pursue a challenging situation resulting in greater self-respect due to the sense of achievement. One must be willing to be

accountable, and with practice, taking responsibility becomes easier over time.

Recognizing the positive outcome of your actions can boost self-respect and improve mental health. When responsible for your needs, desires, and actions, you do not overreact to people or bad situations. You do not make excuses or blame others.

- Treat yourself as #1, consider yourself as a priority
- Be accountable for your decisions and actions
- Be kind to yourself
- Eliminate negative self-talk
- Avoid negative people

Someone who takes responsibility for their life has a sense of control, self-respect, and a positive outlook.

With Self-Respect You Live By Your Values

Values are the source of a person's behaviors, attitudes, and actions. They are a person's core beliefs that contribute to decision-making.

A person needs to define their values to achieve self-respect. This can be a matter of identifying satisfying times in your life or knowing your interests.

For example, your values may stem from the following:

- Choice of career
- Sports
- Volunteer opportunities
- Inspirational stories

- Personal accomplishments
- Family

Personal values can also be formed from personal growth, integrity, assertiveness, self-reliance, or family.

People who live based on their values are more likely to live purposefully and make better choices, contributing to self-respect.

Self-Respect Includes Setting Boundaries

Having personal boundaries demonstrates that you take responsibility for your wellbeing and you place limits on what you are willing to tolerate. It is a key action in respecting yourself. A person that does not have personal boundaries can be taken advantage of and lose respect for themselves.

For example, you might spend significant time and energy doing what others want instead of what you want. A person with personal boundaries has a true sense of self.

For example, they set aside time for personal care, communicate their boundaries to others, or are not afraid to say “no,”

Healthy boundaries can help a person to:

- Improve their mental and emotional well-being
- Boost self-esteem
- Become independent
- Increase sense of identity
- Understand their personal beliefs

Healthy boundaries are beneficial for the self as well as for other people.

Setting Boundaries within Self

The following are examples of boundaries (or goals).

- Limiting yourself to 1 hour of social media per day
- Creating a budget and adhering to it
- Not answering the phone after 8:00 p.m.

Setting Boundaries with Other People

- Communicate: Let people know that you have boundaries and what they are.
- Follow through: If someone crosses the boundary, remind them of the boundaries you have set.
- Make time for yourself: Remember that you are your top priority.
- Recognize the boundaries of others: This is being respectful. If you respect others, the chances are good that they will respect you.
- Be accountable for your decisions and actions.

Boost Your Mental, Emotional, And Physical Well-Being

Someone without self-respect may experience depression, anxiety, guilt, and other feelings that put a person on an emotional roller coaster.

A lack of self-respect can seriously impact a person's life. People might view a person with no self-respect as weak or undisciplined. They may make harsh remarks or criticism. Behavior such as this magnifies a person's sense of worthlessness.

A person with self-respect is confident and accountable for their actions. There are measures that people can initiate to increase their self-respect.

Self-Help Guidance

- Take care of your health by eating nutritious foods, exercising, and learning relaxation techniques.
- Identify your positive qualities and focus on those. Think of what you do well.
- Do not compare yourself to others. Focus on your life and accomplishments; be proud of yourself.
- Don't put yourself down. Accept and believe in yourself.
- Build relationships with positive people.
- Find your passion, whether it be a hobby or just something that you enjoy doing,
- Accept your imperfections; no one is perfect.

If you need additional help to overcome negative feelings, consider CBT.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines CBT as “a form of psychological treatment that has been demonstrated to be effective for a wide range of problems including depression, anxiety disorders, alcohol and drug use problems, marital problems, eating disorders, and severe mental illness.”

The treatment strategy can vary; the psychologist will work with the patient to find the most effective approach.

The key components of CBT include:

- Learn how to recognize negative self-talk, beliefs, and conduct. For example:
- When a negative thought occurs, think of something positive instead.

- Determine what caused the negative thought and take corrective steps.
- Focus on your strengths and abilities.
- Identify ways to cope with adverse situations. The common triggers are life events such as changes in a relationship, buying a house, starting a new job, or issues at work.
- Learn to face your fears. Common techniques include deep breathing, visualizing a happy place, or simply talking about it.

People must try various techniques to find the best ones for their needs. The journey will be well worth it when individuals realize they are confident, positive- thinking, strong, and proud.

Reduce Anti-Social Conduct

Researchers on one side of the debate have argued that individuals with low self- esteem are prone to real-world externalizing problems such as delinquency and anti-social behavior (Schooler & Schoenbach 1989).

Anti-social conduct includes the following, to name a few.

- Making unnecessary noise
- Shouting
- Swearing
- Causing physical harm
- Intimidation
- Harassment
- Verbal abuse

Environmental factors, such as domestic abuse and genetics, can cause anti-social traits in a person. It is possible to overcome anti-social behavior by learning self-respect techniques.

Self-Respect Leads To Personal Success

Personal success may be achieved by knowing how to set boundaries and limits and knowing your strengths. Combine this with recognizing negative thoughts, beliefs, and behavior patterns.

For example:

- When a negative thought occurs, think of something positive instead.
- Determine what caused the negative thought and take corrective steps.
- Focus on your strengths and abilities.
- Identify ways to cope with adverse situations. The common triggers are life events such as changes in a relationship, buying a house, starting a new job, or issues at work.

Self-respect enables you to have the confidence to establish boundaries. A person with self-respect knows their values, strengths, and weaknesses and accepts them. Self-respect is a quality that people need to develop.

Respect Yourself To Improve Relationships

Self-respect is the foundation for being confident and for keeping good relationships with people. A lack of self-respect can make a person insecure in a relationship, causing a range of negative emotions.

Strategies for Improved Relationships

- Balance your wants and needs with the wants and needs of the other person.

- Offer your opinion, listen well, and allow others to share their thoughts openly.
- Compromise to find a solution that is agreeable to both people.

Self-respect leads to establishing and keeping positive relationships in your life.

Self-Respect Supports An Optimistic Attitude

According to Merriam-Webster, optimism is a doctrine that this world is the best possible world or an inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and events or to anticipate the best possible outcome. Self-respect is a positive and proactive experience, and it naturally influences a positive and optimistic attitude.

- Surround yourself with positive people.
- Try not to focus on things that you have no control over.
- Strive to improve your life and the lives of those around you.
- Use challenging situations as an opportunity to grow or learn.

With Self-Respect You Can Stand Up For Yourself

Each day, we find ourselves in situations where we must stand up for ourselves. Not every situation warrants the same response. People will have more respect for you when you stand up for yourself calmly, factually while making eye contact.

This builds your self-respect and influences others' perceptions of you. Look out for your well-being while sharing your point of view. Remember to set boundaries to prevent people from taking advantage of you.

Enhance Your Coping Skills

Self-respect promotes your motivation to develop healthy coping skills, which can be learned and perfected. Healthy coping skills allow you to face and deal with challenges and obstacles that

may come your way. Having healthy coping skills is a unique part of day-to-day self-care.

When you respect yourself, you tend to ensure your own wellbeing and survival and so you will tend to choose proactive and self-supporting coping skills versus those that are self-defeating or sabotaging.

Examples of healthy coping skills include

- Stress management
- Proactive problem solving
- Be kind to yourself
- Forgive yourself. Everyone makes mistakes
- Learn from failure
- Be assertive and speak up for yourself
- Avoid 'should' and 'must' statements
- Focus on the positive
- Use positive self-talk
- Process your feelings
- Step out of your comfort zone
- Face up to your fears
- Accept yourself
- And many more

Banish Negative Thoughts

Negative self-talk is when a person's inner voice is critical of oneself. For example, someone may think, "My proposal was a failure, I'm a loser," or "Can't I do anything right?". Negative thoughts can also be about other people or life in general.

According to the Mayo Clinic, "Self-talk is the endless stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your head."

4 types of negative self-talk:

- Personalizing: Blaming yourself for situations that you have no control over
- Filtering: A person "filters" the positive thoughts out and replaces them with negative self-talk.
- Catastrophizing: Jumping to the worst conclusions when it is unlikely that the expected disaster will ever occur.
- Polarizing: This is also known as all-or-nothing thinking. This occurs when a person does not evaluate all the facts for a specific situation.

Negative self-talk can contribute to having low self-respect and hopelessness, leading to chronic stress and unhappiness in life. On the other hand, positive self-talk is when a person anticipates the best outcome and has optimistic thoughts.

There are various techniques that a person can use to overcome negative self-talk to improve their quality of life.

Positive Self-Talk Techniques

- Proactively change negative scripts in your head to more positive statements.
- Repeat positive affirmations daily.

- Building relationships with positive people may help you to adopt a new perspective.
- Identify negative thought triggers and take steps to avoid those triggers.
- Remember to find humor when bad situations occur, as this will help to alleviate stress.

Improved Quality Of Life

Quality of life includes physical and emotional health, happiness, belonging, and well-being.

Quality of life is influenced by a person's beliefs and a high level of self-respect goes a long way to improving quality of life.

Learning self-respect is a journey that may be short or long. Each person is unique; a given strategy may not work for everyone. People must try various techniques to find the best ones for their needs.

The journey will be well worth it when individuals realize they are confident, positive-thinking, strong, and proud.

“Self-respect is the fruit of discipline...”

Abraham J. Heschel

10 Ways To Develop A Healthy Sense Of Self-Respect

Love Yourself - Take Care of Your Health

The benefits of taking care of yourself are numerous, one of them being a boost to your self-respect. People with good health tend to have stamina, a lowered risk of diseases, such as high blood pressure and obesity, a better sense of well-being, and possibly a longer life.

Even small changes to your health habits can make a significant difference in your life. You can achieve good health by eating nutritious foods, exercising, and learning relation techniques.

Nutritional Foods: The [Centers for Disease Control](#) recommends eating nine servings of fruits and vegetables daily, protein foods such as lean meats and seafood, legumes, high-grain, non-fat, or low-fat foods. Limit saturated and trans fats and reduce salt intake.

Exercise: Strive to be physically active for at least 30 minutes daily. Find an activity you enjoy, such as walking, riding a bicycle, playing a sport, or going to the gym.

Relaxation Techniques Include:

- **Meditation:** This entails focusing your attention to eliminate thoughts that are causing stress.
- **Deep Breathing:** Relax your muscles, take a deep breath, and hold it for 10 seconds, then exhale slowly through your nose. When taking a deep breath, your abdomen should expand fully.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Focus on each area of the body one at a time. Start with the lower extremities, then the face, abdomen, and chest. Take a breath, tense up your legs, for example, and hold for 5 – 10 seconds. Exhale and release the tension. Move on to the next body area.

Identify Your Positive Qualities

Find a relaxing atmosphere and take time to think about yourself. What do you do well? What do you like about yourself? For example, consider your accomplishments and talents, such as being selected as employee of the month or being a good piano player.

You may be known as a kind person, or you have good public speaking skills. Once you have identified your positive qualities, focus on those as you proceed throughout your day and your life.

Do Not Compare Yourself To Others

In the age of social media, we see our friends, acquaintances, or family posting comments and photos of luxurious vacations, new cars, or other enviable events. In the workplace, perhaps a co-worker was promoted to a position you were interested in.

You might tend to criticize yourself and wonder why you weren't selected. Avoid comparing yourself to others by focusing on your life and accomplishments; be proud of yourself.

Don't Put Yourself Down

Acceptance of oneself means that you accept both your positive and negative aspects. When you accept yourself, your feeling of well-being can be boosted, making you feel happier and more self-confident. People who do not accept themselves may suffer from low-confidence, anxiety, depression, stress, and substance abuse.

A person can learn to accept themselves by trying various techniques. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy ([ACT Therapy](#)) is a psychotherapy that can help you to learn mindfulness techniques.

You can learn to love yourself unconditionally by:

- Ignoring negative self-talk
- Forgiving yourself

- Understanding your limitations
- Practicing self-compassion

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Build Relationships With Positive People

It is difficult to develop self-respect if you spend time with people who are negative; that negativity can transfer to you. Building relationships with positive people will help you to adopt a new perspective and will help you to be a more positive, self-respectful person.

Optimistic people tend to be skilled communicators, assertive, empowered, and happy. They tackle fear head-on and live in the moment.

Find Your Passion

Identify the things that you like to do. Think about what makes you feel happy, whether it's a hobby, work, volunteering, or other activities. For example, you might find that you enjoy jigsaw puzzles. Puzzles allow us to focus on a positive activity, keeping negative thoughts out of our minds.

Volunteering is an excellent way to stay active while helping those in need. The range of passions is unique and vast among people. Find your niche, do your best with it, and be proud of your passions.

Boost Your Overall Wellbeing

Someone without self-respect may experience depression, anxiety, guilt, and other feelings that put a person on an emotional roller coaster. A lack of self-respect can have a serious impact on a person's life. People might view a person with no self-respect as weak or undisciplined. They may make harsh remarks or criticism. Behavior such as this magnifies a person's sense of worthlessness.

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- Improve their mental and emotional well-being
- Boost self-esteem
- Become independent
- Increase sense of identity
- Understand their values and beliefs

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- Surround yourself with positive people.
- Try not to focus on things that you have no control over.
- Strive to improve your life and the lives of those around you.
- Use challenging situations as an opportunity to grow or learn.
- Practice positive affirmations.
- Begin proactively reframing your negative thoughts to more positive ones.

Enhance Your Coping Skills

We use our coping skills to help manage stress and negative emotions. Healthy coping skills are all part of the respect you have for yourself in ensuring that you deal with life and its problems in positive and proactive ways.

The following are actions that you can take to better cope with challenges.

- Stress management
- Proactive problem solving
- Be kind to yourself
- Forgive yourself. Everyone makes mistakes
- Learn from failure
- Be assertive and speak up for yourself
- Avoid 'should' and 'must' statements
- Focus on the positive
- Use positive self-talk

- Process your feelings
- Step out of your comfort zone
- Face up to your fears
- Accept yourself
- And many more

Final Thoughts

Building a healthy sense of self-respect is essential for living an enjoyable life full of confidence and joy! Developing strong self-respect takes time but is absolutely achievable with some dedication, attention, and perseverance.