

UNCOVER YOUR WORTH

Of the many factors that shape our lives (family dynamics, geographical location, self-concept, attitudes, support systems, beliefs, motivation, karma, relationships, fate, luck, . . .) our sense of self-worth is the single most important determinant of the abundance, health, and joy we allow into our life. There is a high correlation between how much we doubt our worthiness and how much we sabotage or limit our efforts, we undermine our health, finances, relationships, and all the other areas of our lives.

No one else can give you an improved sense of self worth. This article is not about raising your self-worth, it is about discovering it. Your intrinsic worth has never been compromised, lowered, or touched by fate or circumstance. It exists as a fact of life, like water and air, and doesn't need to be revitalized, raised, or earned.

Self-Reflection

Ask yourself the following questions, and answer "Yes," "No," or "Sometimes." When fortune smiles on you, do you have thoughts such as, "There is no way this can last"? Does your life continually seem like one problem after another? Does money feel difficult to come by or scarce? Is it easier for you to give than to receive? Do you envy people who take frequent holidays? Are your work or your relationships unsatisfactory? Do you resent those who have a lot more money than you do? Do you feel awkward or embarrassed when you receive applause, praise, lots of attention, pleasure or gifts? If someone asks the cost of your services, do you charge less than others in your field to be "fair"?

If you answered "Yes" to several of the above questions, do you believe these situations or circumstances happen to you because of karma or solely through bad luck? Is it at all possible that where you are today is the result of the choices you made and the actions you took?

When the choices we make lead to difficulties, it is important to understand the results in the context of our self-worth. For example, if you were abused as a child, the abuser was responsible – not you. But if you are abused as an adult (by a "friend" or troubled spouse), the abuse itself is not your responsibility – but the choice to stay in a relationship with that person may point to low-self worth. (Note: This article is about acknowledging our role or responsibility in any given situation and empowering ourselves to change, and is not about blame.)

Taking Responsibility

Sometimes bad things just happen – a hurricane, tornado, tsunami, earthquake, or some other natural disaster – we may become a victim of circumstance. We can only make the best of those events, learn from them and grow stronger.

But much of the time, our lives are shaped by the choices we ourselves make, and the actions we take. So if the results you are getting are not what you want, ask yourself: "Who or what is causing this to happen to me?" If the reason for your unhappiness seems to be anyone aside from you, e.g. your boss or your spouse or a partner or some person other than you, then ask yourself, "Who chose to be around this person? Did I truly not have any other options? Who selected this job or this situation?" Perhaps you might want to contemplate other possibilities.

The only way to end self-sabotage is by taking responsibility for the choices and actions that created it. Only when we stop blaming other people and things, our parents, our boss, our spouse or partner,

random circumstances, the government, our children, fate or God, are we able to change our lives and proclaim with certainty, "I chose where I am and who I am with, and whenever I want I can make other choices."

Taking responsibility has nothing to do with blame or finding fault. Fully taking responsibility is taking control, because it is the moment when we recognize the degree to which our difficulties are self-generated, and that which we created, we can also change.

The Root of Self-Worth

We don't always get what we deserve in life; we always get what we believe (deep down) we deserve. Thus the problem is not your actual worth, but what you perceive your worth to be. Nearly everyone of us has lost touch with our intrinsic goodness and has allowed our wonderfulness to be hidden by memories of a million wrongdoings, real or imagined, so that we feel at most partially deserving of life's blessings.

EXERCISE:

Give yourself a numerical rating, anywhere between 1 and 100, based on how deserving you honestly believe you are at this point in your life. Discover whatever rating feels right and true for you. Is it 60? 75? 90? 95? Why did you pick that value?

Remember that you have been subconsciously rating yourself since childhood. Now you are bringing it into consciousness and looking at how this self-perception has shaped your choices and your experiences.

Our sense of self-worth comes from many influences, beginning in our early years - how we were treated by parents or other caregivers (as judgments placed upon us by other people become internalized over time). Many people, whether they were abused children or grew up in a stable and loving household, but with extremely high standards, have developed self-worth issues. The causes of self-worth issues are varied and complex – it is much more involved than how well or how poorly we were treated while growing up. Whatever the reasons are for your perceived level of worth, the purpose of this article is to make you more aware of those reasons.

Self-Sabotage

As I wrote above, self-worth is a subconscious self-assessment of our perceived value, goodness, and deservedness. We allow ourselves to receive only those people, experiences and blessings that reflect our sense of worth.

Success involves talent, attitude, effort, and creativity. The most important ingredient, however, is a willingness to receive. The saint Ramakrishna said, "Rain or blessings may pour down from the heavens, but if you only hold up a thimble, a thimbleful is all you receive."

The primary theme of self-worth is that you choose or allow into your life, whether consciously or subconsciously, the level of people and experiences (both positive and negative) that you believe deep down that you deserve.

In any given moment, all of us are free to choose the high road by being kind to others, setting good examples, working hard, following good role models, and finding supportive partners. Another choice is to use drugs or alcohol, burn bridges, treat others badly, follow poor role models, or choose destructive

relationships. Through our choices, our sense of self-worth influences whether or not we choose to learn lessons the easy way or a more difficult way, and whether we thrive or struggle.

Almost always these choices are not conscious. Sane people don't suddenly wake up one morning and say to themselves, "Today would be a good day to destroy my primary relationship. Wait, I did that last week; today I think I will screw up my finances."

Many of us get in our own way and block our success or abundance – we will start some schooling or training that leads to a better career opportunity but never finish it. Sometimes we experience great success temporarily but soon thereafter we self-destruct, self-sabotage, or don't allow ourselves to enjoy the success.

Reflecting back on your life, have you ever wondered why you said something, or why you did some particular action? Have any of your friends or loved ones ever advised you against a choice or action, but you did it anyway because you felt you just had to? Now that you understand the source of those actions, you can finally get out of your own way, and make more positive, empowering choices and take actions to build a new life -- whether in the realm of diet, exercise, rest and recreation, improved working conditions, travel, more education or training for a better income, a spiritual practice – the whole world opens up to you.

Your Inherent Worth

Getting to the place where you appreciate your inherent worth has nothing to do with arrogance, entitlement or thinking you are above others. Instead it just involves a basic acknowledgement of your intrinsic and essential value as a human being – recognizing that at every moment in your life you have done the very best you could and have made the best choices you could make at that time. It is even more important to understand that unconditional worth does not have to be earned; you have it now just as you did when you were a young child.

If any one of your friends asked you to look at infant child, almost all of us would rate it 100 on the inherent worth/deservedness scale. You were in that kids shoes once. At what point did you start diminishing your worth, and why? If you were perfect, chances are you would not still be here on earth. All humans make mistakes and say unkind things in anger or for other reasons. Sometimes we lack integrity, are disrespectful, or have a bad day and are not nice. All of this is part of being human.

Now is the time for you to recognize that you've done the best you could every day of your life. You made the best choices you could see at the time. Now is the time for you to appreciate your inherent worth and choose the higher roads of life.

Most of us have been our own "worst enemy" sometime in the past. Do you remember a time when you made a choice that you now see was an act of self-sabotage? What will you do the next time to keep away from damaging yourself in the future?

Up until now how have you reacted when someone offered you favors, gifts, or opportunities? What might you do differently now? If your best friend was in your position, what recommendations would you give him/her regarding allowing yourself to live a more successful, abundant, enjoyable life?

It is important to reinforce the behaviors you want to endorse. For example, the next time an opportunity that interests you comes along, or someone gives you a compliment, simply say, "Yes!

Thank you!" Even if you feel you are not deserving, the more you just say yes, the more you will increase your capacity to receive.