

Low Self-Worth and Suicidal Thinking.

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How is self-worth and suicidal thinking linked?

Ask yourself what is worth it to you - is life one of your top responses? Do you know why you value that answer? It's probably something you were taught to see as valuable in childhood. It may be something you learned to value despite childhood. What we value can be chosen for us but can also be a choice we make after understanding more about ourselves.

What about life is worth it to you? Is love worth it? Would you separate out the different types of love like being loved versus being loving? If you haven't made a list of why life is worth living, today is a good day to start making that list. That list can become a life sustaining guide for the days when what you care about fails to make life easier.

A professor in one of my undergraduate psychology courses offered us a bit of wisdom in a short and simple phrase; You either ripe or you rot, there is no stasis. He wanted us to understand that there are two directions to travel, in his opinion, and there is no spot where we can stop working on living without starting to rot.

I have borrowed this phrase to support the idea that we are either working towards affirming that life is worth something or we are shifting away from letting it be worth anything. We won't notice the first subtle shift, in fact, we won't notice how quietly we amass worth-denying thoughts. I wish we could pinpoint when a lack of self-worth turns into the practice of denying the value of living.

I have heard the guess that we can think around 60,000 thoughts per day. We aren't born thinking about dying so it takes some coordination to turn those thoughts into actions and then lots of practice to turn those actions into habits which could add up to several millions of thoughts that aren't life-affirming and eventually familiar worth-denying patterns that one little life just can't matter.

Living takes work. We start just living by receiving. When we receive enough love and support, which most of us get, we then can give to ourselves and others. We can expand the experience of being valued and valuing others which is life-affirming. We can also receive messages that something about us is not worth keeping, not worth knowing, or not worth growing. If we internalize the message that there is something that makes us seem less than valuable to someone who we see as important, we can use that message against ourselves for years. Turning against ourselves is the worst betrayal and it doesn't have to happen.

Life-affirming thinking is about who you are, just the way you are, and that you being you matters.