

## Self-Efficacy: What It Is, Why It Is Important and 4 Tips on Improving Your Self-Efficacy

A vital part of the “self-system,” self-efficacy is the belief one has about their abilities and capabilities. \* Not necessarily about always achieving a positive or successful end result, it is more about having the skills to “figure it out.” Self-efficacy affects one’s thoughts, emotions, actions, and motivations about achieving goals — big and small.

Developed in the earliest of childhood experiences, high self-efficacy is derived from positive feelings such as love, support, and encouragement, as well as education. Conversely, low self-efficacy is often the result of lack of encouragement, previous disappointments, and lack of self-fulfillment.\*

As one grows, their sense of self-efficacy continues to be shaped by patterns of life experiences, risks taken, skills developed, and efforts made. It can affect your: \*\*

- Thoughts about facing a challenge
- Level of motivation and aspiration in achieving goals
- Attitude and resiliency
- Vulnerability to stress and depression

The good news is that self-efficacy can be improved at any age. According to Dr. Lauren Fisher, licensed clinical psychologist, “The road to improved self-efficacy begins with self-awareness and is paved by healthy goal-setting, practice, and positive self-regard. Once people understand the framework, they often see and feel changes quickly.”

Fisher identifies the following tips to help adults build a higher sense of self-efficacy:\*\*\*

### 1. Identify Your Stretch Zone

There are three zones of personal achievement: the comfort zone, the stretch zone, and the panic zone. It has been shown that highly-productive people work in the stretch zone—where they take reasonable chances, are resilient and not stressed about setbacks, and are willing to persevere.

### 2. Set Simple Goals

Low self-efficacy can affect one’s motivation in setting goals. By setting reasonable goals, and approaching them one at a time, one will experience satisfaction in their success, and feel motivated to set more goals.

### 3. Look Past Short-term Losses

Not all experiences will have positive results. People with high self-efficacy have the ability to learn from a negative event, make changes as needed, and move on.

### 4. Reframe Obstacles

Reframing is a powerful tool in changing negative thoughts and attitudes. Identify your negative thoughts about achieving a goal, and change the narrative into a positive one. For example: “I am not smart enough to take that class,” can be changed to, “I am looking forward to the challenge of this class, and learning something new.”

The following resources provide more insight about self-efficacy and were utilized in creating these tips:

\*[Self Efficacy and Why Believing in Yourself Matters](#). Kendra Cherry. VeryWellMind.com. Last accessed May 25, 2021.

\*\*[Improving Self-Efficacy and Motivation: What to Do, What to Say](#). Intervention in School and Clinic. Howard Margolis and Patrick P. McCabe; SAGE Journals. 2006.

\*\*\*[4 Ways to Improve and Increase Self-Efficacy](#). Madhuleena Roy Chowdhury, BA. PositivePsychology.com. Last accessed May 25, 2021.