



Mental Health 365, Inc.

# 5 Ways To Gain More Self-Respect

## What is self-respect and what can we do to respect ourselves more?

Experts have defined self-respect in a myriad of ways and in a variety of contexts, but a common understanding of self-respect is as follows. Psychological researchers, in particular, may often define self-respect as an act of honoring your needs and desires, understanding your worth, and making choices that enable you to keep your dignity (Dillon, 2013). Self-respect remains important because it helps us to work through challenges, build resilience in life, and maintain our emotional health. Many researchers also argue that self-respect is closely related to our understanding of self-esteem and our behaviors of self-love.

The opposite of self-respect is disrespect. But what exactly does this look like? Here are some examples of how you might be disrespecting yourself:

- You may participate in negative self-talk (e.g., I'm not good enough, I can never do anything right, etc.)
- You may let people invade your boundaries
- You may have a hard time saying "no" which results in you being taken advantage of
- You may undervalue your talents, achievements, and character
- You may not take time to practice self-care
- You may think too much about what other people think of you rather than focusing on what you think about yourself
- You may not honor your wants and needs

Lacking self-respect can have a variety of causes. Perhaps you grew up in an environment where you were unsupported or abused by your caregivers. Maybe you were bullied in school and received little care from teachers. You may have been through trauma in relationships or family life that made you feel small or unworthy. Or, maybe you were just never taught the importance of self-respect in grade school when you learned about respect for others (Luchies et al., 2010). Regardless of the reason, I am glad you are here to learn how to gain some more self-respect.

# How to Gain Self-Respect

Perhaps you've read this far and realized that maybe you could be just a bit better off if you practiced self-respect more often. But for many of us, it's hard to change core beliefs and old habits, especially if we don't know where to begin. This upcoming list is by no means exhaustive, but we do hope it provides you with a place to start. Check out these examples of how to increase your self-respect.

- 1. Reflect on your values.** It is helpful to make a list of what you value in life, what your needs are, and what you want from life. Think about what values you have and how you go about living them each day (or perhaps, what you may need to improve upon).
- 2. Take a look at your relationships with others.** A good way to know if you are respecting yourself is by understanding how the people around you may also be treating you. How we respect and treat ourselves is a great indicator of how other people learn to treat us too. If you find yourself feeling neglected, disrespected, or unsupported by some of the people around you, look at how you can make changes to that relationship. The takeaway is you get to decide what you'll tolerate from others, and a good way to respect yourself is to not bend over backward for the folks in your life who cross your boundaries.
- 3. Practice self-care.** First and foremost, you deserve it. But secondly, when we make a conscious effort to take care of ourselves emotionally, physically, and spiritually, we remind ourselves that we are worthy of love, respect, and happiness. The more we appreciate who we are and give attention to our needs and wants, the more we make self-respect a priority in our lives.
- 4. Don't be so hard on yourself.** No critic outside of ourselves is louder than the one that lives inside. We all mess up from time to time. It's important to forgive ourselves for our shortcomings and to apologize with grace when we make mistakes.
- 5. Do more things you enjoy.** Do you have a favorite hobby but don't have time for it? Is there an activity that you like to do, even if you're not good at it? Are there things you like to do that no one else does? Do them anyway. Find the time, remind yourself you don't need to do things well to enjoy them, and tell yourself it's okay to do things alone. Whether it's brushing up on your sewing skills, trying a new bit for your stand-up comedy, or hiking in the mountains, take the time out of your schedule and surround yourself with activities you enjoy. When we nurture our souls, we learn to be more self-respecting.

## In Sum

It may take you time to process what you have learned here and apply it to your own life—and that's okay. The important thing is to remember how worthy you are of your own respect and honor yourself.

## References

- Dillon, R. S. (2013). Dignity, character and self-respect. Routledge.
- Luchies, L. B., Finkel, E. J., McNulty, J. K., & Kumashiro, M. (2010). The doormat effect: when forgiving erodes self-respect and self-concept clarity. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 98(5), 734-749.