Creating a Healthy Relationship with Yourself

If someone asked you about the important relationships in your life, you'd probably start listing your family and friends. However, there's one name that you may forget to mention. We often overlook our relationship with ourselves.

It can be challenging to find time for yourself when you're busy trying to keep up with responsibilities at home and work. You may even resist looking inwards because you're uncomfortable with what you might see.

Unfortunately, this kind of neglect can have a high price. Your relationship with yourself plays a significant role in determining your happiness and success.

Turn things around with these suggestions for creating and maintaining a healthy self-image.

Cultivating Self-Awareness:

Question your assumptions. You might be overestimating how well you know yourself. That's especially true if you have trouble understanding and regulating your emotions. Examine your beliefs to see if there is any evidence to back them up.

Take time to reflect. In addition to relieving stress, quiet reflection can help you gain insights into your thinking and behaviour. Set aside a few minutes to observe what's on your mind. You can gradually increase the time if you find it helpful.

Start a journal. Use an app or notebook to track your daily activities. A written record will be more reliable than your memory and reviewing it enables you to spot patterns you may want to change.

Ask for feedback. Others can sometimes see us more objectively. Find someone you trust and tell them that you appreciate their honest assessment.

Make art. Do you struggle to put your feelings into words? Expressing your creativity through drawing or crafts is another way to process your emotions. You can also learn about yourself based on your reactions to the works of great artists and novelists.

Set goals. Demanding experiences often show us our hidden strengths or areas we need to become more resilient. Instead, take on challenges that will help you to learn and grow.

"Your relationship with yourself sets the tone for every other relationship you have"

Robert Holden
Psychologist & Author

Treating Yourself with Care:

Let go of judgements. Love and accept yourself as you are. Catch yourself when you're being critical so that you can replace negative thoughts with more positive and encouraging messages.

Praise yourself. Pay yourself at least one compliment each day. Look in the mirror while you admire your amazing parenting skills or your recent weight loss.

Eat healthily. Basic self-care is fundamental to your relationship with yourself. Start with a nutritious diet that gives you the energy you need to enjoy life. Then, instead of feeling deprived, treat yourself to your favourite foods in moderation.

Exercise regularly. Current guidelines recommend that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity each week. Find a variety of activities that will keep you motivated.

Sleep well. Shortchanging yourself on sleep speeds up your heartbeat, raises your blood pressure, and impairs your memory. Stick to a consistent bedtime and aim for 7 to 8 hours of high-quality rest.

Give generously. Taking care of yourself increases your ability to have a positive impact on others, and that brings more joy into your life. Consider volunteering in your community and supporting worthy causes. Do favours for neighbours or coworkers.

Consider professional help. Changing your self-image can take a lot of work. Talking with a counsellor may help you deal with childhood experiences or other longstanding issues.

Take charge of your life by making yourself a top priority.

Give yourself the same love, respect and care you would show a close friend. You'll make your life more satisfying and have more happiness to share with others.