



Lesson Eleven

Be Proactive to Increase Your Satisfaction in Life

One of the most reliable ways to enhance your self-concept is to make some positive changes. It's easier to think positively about yourself when you have an enjoyable and successful life.

In this lesson, we continue with our self-concept makeover by looking at how you can take action in several different areas of your life to acquire a more positive self-concept.

There's nothing inherently wrong with living in a studio apartment, eating instant soup every night, and sporting a 45-inch waist. However, happy thoughts are easier to come by when you're pleased with yourself and your life!

Consider the main parts of your life and seek to make the changes you desire.

Health and Well-Being

Are you as healthy and fit as you'd like to be? ***It's not necessary to have a 6-pack to show off at the beach, but being healthy has its advantages.***

Good health should be a high priority for anyone that values himself. An attractive body also boosts self-esteem and demonstrates to you that you can control yourself.

Prove to yourself that you're worth the time and energy to maintain good health:

1. **See your physician for a check-up.** Everyone should see the doctor at least once per year. There are plenty of health conditions that don't always show obvious symptoms, yet are very serious. Diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol are just a few examples.
 - Taking care of yourself demonstrates your belief that you're valuable and relevant. An "I don't care" attitude demonstrates the opposite.
2. **Exercise regularly.** Again, show yourself that you're worth the time and energy.
3. **Find and maintain a healthy weight.** No one enjoys being overweight, and it can be a serious challenge to one's self-esteem. However, it's also challenging to change your bodyweight for the better in the long-term.
 - ***Make small nutritional changes that you can maintain.*** Eliminating a can of fizzy drink each day and substituting water is one such change.
 - Those at a healthy weight simply have better habits. Create healthy habits, one at a time.

Be as healthy as possible. Eat a healthy diet, get some exercise, and see your doctor regularly. ***Take good care of yourself. You're worth it.***

"Don't rely on someone else for your happiness and self-worth.

Only you can be responsible for that.

If you can't love and respect yourself – no one else will be able to make that happen for you.

Accept who you are – completely; the good and the bad – and make changes as YOU see fit – not because you think someone else wants you to be different."

– Stacey Charter

Social Life

No man (or woman) is an island. **Humans are social creatures, so unless your dream is to sit on top of mountain after taking a vow of silence, it's necessary to involve others in your life.** Your self-concept is affected by the quality of your social life. If you wish there were more people interested in spending time with you, it's easy to feel bad about yourself.

A more fulfilling social life can be right around the corner:

1. **Decide on the type of social life you desire.** Not everyone wants to be the life of the party and spend time in a large group every night. Maybe you'd rather have a couple of close friends that you meet for dinner once a week and a regular social activity on the weekend. It's up to you. Give it some thought.
2. **Determine what's been standing in your way.** When you know the cause, you can make a plan. A few possibilities include:
 - I work at home and don't have regular contact with others.
 - I'm shy.
 - I don't know what to say to people.
3. **Create and implement a solution.** There are books on how to be more charismatic. You can find videos on how to get over social anxiety or how to deal with shyness. Maybe you need to reach out to the people you already know. Perhaps you can join a club or start a new hobby that involves other people.
 - Build your social life one person at a time. **Most people only need a couple of good friends to feel satisfaction and self-esteem in this part of their lives.**

Building an enjoyable social life is much easier than you think. **Always remember that most people are lonely to varying degrees.** It's not difficult to find others that would like to get out of the house and share a meaningful activity or conversation.

“Don't ask yourself what the world needs, ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

– Howard Washington Thurman

Finances

It's hard to be pleased with yourself if you're filling your gas tank \$3 at a time. ***Having the ability to pay for life's basic expenses is important to your self-concept.*** It's easy to think negatively about yourself when you can't take care of your expenses.

Get your finances under control:

1. **Create a simple budget and stick to it.** Whether you earn \$10,000 or \$10 million, everyone needs a budget. There are numerous websites and books dedicated to personal finance and budgeting. Teach yourself what you need to know.
2. **Learn how to save.** A proper budget will provide for an excess of funds at the end of the month. Save it and invest it appropriately.
3. **Earn more.** If you can't meet your expenses with your income, the only solution is to either cut expenses or earn more. There are several ways to increase your income:
 - Find a second job.
 - Get a raise at your current job.
 - Find a better paying job.
 - Create a primary or secondary job for yourself. There are many opportunities online in today's world.

Think about the type of financial life that appeals to you and take steps to make it happen. Money isn't everything, but it is relevant. You'll feel more capable and less discouraged if your financial life is healthy.

***“You have been criticising yourself for years, and it hasn't worked.
Try approving of yourself and see what happens.”***

– Louise L. Hay

Have Goals

Do you have goals? ***Being excited about the future and making consistent progress in life will enhance your concept of yourself.*** Numerous studies have shown that those with goals outperform those without goals in every area of life. Having a few goals creates a sense of purpose, direction, and control.

Setting goals is simple and effective:

1. **Set goals with a timeline no longer than 12 weeks.** It's hard to maintain focus and enthusiasm longer than this. If your goal is too big to reach in 12 weeks, set short-term goals that will take you in the right direction.
2. **Measure your progress.** This keeps your goals fresh in your mind and provides the feedback you need to maximise your effectiveness.
3. **Get excited by progress.** If you want to enhance your self-concept, feel good about yourself at every opportunity. Most people have been stuck in the same place for years, so any progress in life is worthy of celebration.

Setting goals can seem to be a complicated process, but it doesn't have to be. ***Having a few goals and making regular progress can be great for your self-concept.*** It proves to you that you can make changes in your life and control your future.

Give of Yourself Regularly

It's not all about you. Your self-concept isn't all about you either. ***It's also about your perception of your value to the world.*** Providing value to the world selflessly is a great way to change your self-concept and boost your self-esteem.

1. **Volunteer.** Organisations are always looking for more volunteers. Find something that appeals to you and get involved.
2. **Find a job or second job that helps others.** You could tutor children or teach adults to read. Maybe you work with senior citizens one night a week in the evenings. There are many jobs available that provide a meaningful service to others.
3. **Random acts of kindness.** Life presents endless opportunities to help others. You can't help but love yourself when you're doing something wonderful for another person.

Help others when possible and you'll benefit in many unpredictable ways.

Think about your average day. What small changes could you make to be more helpful or kind to others?

You have a higher opinion of yourself when you're pleased in these main areas of your life.

The more satisfied you are with yourself, the easier it is to be authentic.

Your next lesson finishes your makeover with giving you some prompts to help you reflect on others you look up to.

They may be great examples for you to follow when deciding what kind of action you may want to take to bring more satisfaction to your life.

Here's what you need to do today:

Set a 12-week goal to make one change in one of the areas mentioned in this lesson.

Make the goal small enough that you'll find it pretty easy to see success with it.

Write down your goal and remind yourself of your new goal several times each day.

But avoid just *thinking* about it – **take action** each day to make it happen.