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Self worth meaning

Self-awareness is a critical tool to help you reach higher levels of job satisfaction, become a better leader, improve relationships with colleagues, and manage your emotions better. It's also positively correlated with higher levels of overall happiness. And yet, as one study estimates, only 10-15% of people are truly self-aware. Luckily, self-awareness can be practiced and cultivated -- it's not a fixed trait. If you begin to consciously practice self-awareness, you can evaluate how your values, passions, and goals fit into your current environment and emotions -- and how to align them better. You can also understand how other people view you, creating stronger, more authentic relationships with colleagues. Self-awareness will help you become a happier and more productive employee and leader, and can help you align your current life with your passions. Here, we'll explore what self-awareness truly means, how to tell if you're self-aware, and, best of all, how to improve your own self-awareness, right now. If you're still unconvinced that self-awareness is a valuable trait to cultivate, here's a list of general benefits of being self-aware. What is self-awareness? Self-awareness was first defined by Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund (1972), who proposed that, at a given moment, people can focus attention on the self or on the external environment. Duval and Wicklund noted, "When we focus our attention on ourselves, we evaluate and compare our current behavior to our internal standards and values. We become self-conscious as objective evaluators of ourselves." In other words, when you focus on yourself, rather than your environment, you compare yourself with your standards of correctness. These standards of correctness specify how you ought to think, feel, and behave. They are, essentially, your values and beliefs, otherwise known as your ideals. You feel pride or dissatisfaction depending on how well your behavior matches up with your standards of correctness. If you're dissatisfied, you might make changes to your behavior to better align with your standards. For instance, you might note feelings of discontent in your current role, and recognize you value creativity but don't have the opportunity to exercise that passion. That dissatisfaction could lead you to pursue other creative outlets, changing your behavior to fit your standards. Self-awareness, then, is a fundamental tool for self-control. Make sense? One more thing. Tasha Eurich, a researcher and organizational psychologist, and her team of researchers came up with two categories of self-awareness, which I think are important to note: internal self-awareness, and external self-awareness. Internal self-awareness is something I've already mentioned -- it is how clearly you see your values, passions, and aspirations, and how well those standards fit with your environment and your reactions (which include thoughts, feelings, behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses). Essentially, internal self-awareness is recognizing your current job doesn't match your true passion for marketing, or feeling dissatisfied with a heated conversation you had with your colleague, which conflicts with your belief that kindness is important. External self-awareness, on the other hand, is the ability to clearly see how other people view you. People who know how others see them are typically more empathetic. Leaders who can see how their employees view them are usually more effective, and have stronger relationships with their employees. External self-awareness is recognizing your employee took your feedback personally because of your tone, or realizing your employees are disheartened by the data provided in your last email. Self-awareness test Okay, so we've covered what self-awareness is, and why it's important. Now, how are you supposed to know if you're as self-aware as you should be? The iNLP Center self awareness test is a quick, free online test to measure your self-awareness. Although it's not a scientific or clinical assessment, the test was created by Mike Bundrant, who has 25 years experience as a counselor, NLP trainer (Neuro-linguistic programming, which is an approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy), and life coach. The test, made up of 12 multiple-choice questions, provides you with a score and interpretation of your level of self-awareness, and which areas you should focus on improving. Additionally, consider taking a basic personality test: the results might contradict with how you view yourself, encouraging you to re-evaluate your true strengths and weaknesses. There are other, non-standardized test ways to measure your self-awareness, too: First, you could apply feedback analysis to your own life whenever you make important decisions. For instance, you might write down why you chose to switch departments at work, including your motivations, thoughts during the decision-making process, and what you expected would happen as a result. Then, a couple months later, check back in with your notes -- what's gone according to plan, what were you wrong about, etc.? This can provide you with a deeper understanding of how you make decisions and how you can improve the process, as well as what motivates you. Or, write down a list of what you perceive to be your strengths and weaknesses. When you're finished, check with someone you trust to give honest feedback: are you missing any strengths or weaknesses, or do other people perceive you differently? Ideally, over time, you'll use various methods to slowly gain a deeper understanding of who you are, what you want, and how those things overlap or conflict with how you behave, think, and feel. How to become more self-aware Once you've discovered how self-aware you are, you're probably wondering how you can get better at it. There are dozens of ways to improve and cultivate self-awareness, but here are four of the biggest to start you off. 1. Ask "What?" instead of "Why?" When people assess their current state, emotions, and environment, they all too often ask, "Why?" Like, "Why am I feeling so sad? Why did my boss give me that feedback? Why isn't my project going the way I'd hoped?" Here's why asking "Why?" is ineffective: research has shown you don't have access to a lot of your unconscious thoughts, feelings, and motives. Odds are, you're wrong about why you act, do, or think certain things. For instance, you might hear harsh feedback from a boss, and rationale it's because you're not cut out for the job, or harp on your insecurities -- it's hard for you to unbiasedly evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and come to a correct conclusion. Plus, you don't often factor physiological responses into the equation when you're trying to understand your behavior. For instance, maybe you lost your temper at your employee because of low blood sugar or lack of sleep, not because you're an unfit leader. Research has also found people who are introspective are more likely to ruminate on negative thoughts when evaluating the self. Self-evaluation through "Why" questions could leave you feeling depressed and anxious, while being entirely unproductive. Rather than asking "Why," highly self-aware people ask, "What?" "What" questions are more productive, and focuses on objectives and future goals, rather than past mistakes. For instance, let's say you're feeling frustrated at work. "Why am I feeling awful?" will likely only leave you feeling more depressed, forcing you to ruminate on negatives. On the other hand, "What are the situations at work making me feel bad?" guides you to recognizing factors outside your control that don't align with your passions or goals, and helps you strategize how to fix those situations. 2. Spend Time With Yourself It's not easy to reflect on yourself when you've got the TV blaring, you're out to dinner with friends, or you're glued to your phone. Give yourself the space and time necessary to self-reflect, by avoiding distractions. Try spending time reading, writing, meditating, or practicing other solo activities to connect with yourself. Try to give yourself 30 quiet, distraction-free minutes a day. 3. Practice Mindfulness Mindfulness allows you to be present with yourself and observe your thoughts in a non-judgmental way. What better way to become self-aware than focusing nonjudgmentally, on you? Mindfulness forces you to focus on yourself on purpose, in the present moment. Next time you're feeling frustrated at work, use mindfulness to check-in with yourself: what thoughts are going through your mind? How are you feeling? Simply being present enough to acknowledge your thoughts, feelings, and emotions, will help you become more acquainted and better at recognizing them properly within yourself. Take a look at these Mindfulness apps if you need help getting started. 4. Become a Better Listener, and Ask for Feedback When you learn how to listen to your friends, colleagues, and managers without evaluating or judging them, you'll become more empathetic and understand people better. Listening, by the way, isn't the same as hearing -- like mindfulness, the practice of listening takes purpose and control. Listening to the important people in your life should give you a true sense of how they perceive you. You can translate those listening skills to yourself, too, and become better at understanding your own thoughts and emotions. Listening to others and yourself is critical to becoming self-aware. Additionally, it's important to ask for feedback from the people you work with, or lead. It's impossible to have true, complete self-awareness, if you only turn inwards -- gaining different perspectives on who you are will help you see a truer, more complete picture. Originally published May 11, 2018 6:00:00 AM, updated May 11 2018 Written by Melissa A. Fabello on December 14, 2020 — Fact checked by Jennifer ChesakWhat is a thirst trap?Good or bad?BenefitsRisksHow to set a thirst trapDear New Romantics,You pick up your phone, even though it's only been 20 seconds since the last time you checked, and click to your Instagram notifications.Your latest post is getting a lot of likes. It's a throwback to summer 2019: You're faking a candid shot, looking casually sexy in your leopard print bikini top and cut-off jean shorts, licking an ice cream cone on the boardwalk. Your caption is a casual, unassuming note about the hell this year has been. You're hoping, somewhat subconsciously, that people will think you look good — without it looking like you're trying to look good. It's an art form.And there it is. The babe you've recently developed a crush on liked the picture. Not only that, but they commented with a simple but effective heart-eyes emoji, too. You think, Hell yes! I've practically got them wrapped around my finger.The best words: It gave you a small confirmation that maybe, just maybe, they're crushing on you too.Smugly satisfied, you put your phone down — without even responding to their comment. You don't want to look desperate now, do you?You're caught in the thirst trap.Share on PinterestDesign by Dana Davenport, Photograph by Dimpho Sametsi/FarukUlay/Getty ImagesSetting a thirst trap is the idea that by posting something provocative and receiving the sought-after response, you have "trapped" (tricked) people into admitting their "thirst" (interest in or desperation for you). And it's often done intentionally. According to Urban Dictionary, it's specifically a "sexy photograph or flirty message posted on social media." Some definitions argue that thirst traps are inherently attention-seeking or that the goal is to motivate DM slides.A thirst trap can cast a broad net, posted more generally for the confidence boost of positive responses, or it can be narrowly focused, posted to gauge the interest of someone(s) in particular. And it can be posted either publicly or privately (like to a close friends group or a finsta).Thirst traps can look lots of different waysImages or videos that are often suggestive but not overtly sexy. They're posted to receive admiration, hopefully. They could be a boomerang of how good your butt looks in your new yoga pants (hello, fire emoji!) or a sweet picture of you casually braless in bed.Text — either on its own, like in a story post, or accompanying an image — that suggests a flirtatious air, like "Who wants to come cuddle me to sleep?" or "Spending another Sunday alone."Open invitations to sexy content, either directly ("I'm in the mood for sexy banter. DM me to shoot your shot!") or indirectly (starting a close friends group on Instagram for exclusive content, like nudes).They're not usually well concealed, but that's often what makes them flirtatious — and even effective. Thirst traps are a clear communication of desire, but still coy enough to feel light and fun.Thirst trapping is often looked down upon as desperate or otherwise unbecoming. This stems from the idea that people who seek validation (uhh, isn't that all of us?) in a public manner are less worthy of that love and affirmation. There's also the "are thirst traps feminist or anti-feminist" debate: where some believe that asking for affirmation of physical attractiveness is inherently anti-feminist while others argue that displaying sexual confidence and naming your desire (especially the more marginalized you are) is a feminist act. A lot of the push and pull around thirst trapping is rooted in a social justice issue called desirability politics, according to Everyday Feminism. They're the idea that some people are unanalytically considered more attractive than other people. Desirability politics highlight how the belief that thirst trapping is desperate or anti-feminist may be rooted in the belief that (especially marginalized) people should display humility instead of self-confidence. But the politics of wanting to be desired, at the foundational level, are much simpler: Humans are social. We enjoy community belonging. Love and sex are two examples of that. And thirst trapping is a form of flirtation: an attempt to measure romantic or sexual interest in a fun, low stakes way.But let's talk some more about why we desire validation in the first place.There are often two extreme camps that people fall into when thinking about validation: Camp A believes that validation is a human need for acceptance and feeling understood that we all have a right to seek.Camp B believes that we are over-reliant on external validation for self-concept and that a consistent need for validation, especially given how that can be measured online in likes, can point to crises in self-assurance.I think we can infuse some nuance into this and settle on the truth: We all crave validation, and validation-seeking behavior can become unsupportive to our mental health.To start, let's acknowledge that self-esteem is a debated topic in psychology. On the one hand, the word captures a unique phenomenon: our subjective evaluation of our own worth. But our obsession with self-esteem — and the idea that building it can combat problems that are social in nature, rather than individual — is a relatively new phenomenon, according to The Guardian. The self-esteem boom was born around the same time millennials were: in the mid 80s through early 90s. We are, truly, the Self-Esteem Generation. And criticisms of this movement abound, according to Will Storr's book Selfie: How We Became So Self-Obsessed and What It's Doing to Us. But if we think of self-esteem in simple terms — how we feel about ourselves — then it comes from two places: internal and external validation. That is, what we believe and communicate about ourselves matters, and what others believe and communicate about us matters too.A quick Google search for "self-esteem building" shows that we tend to focus on the individual responsibility for self-esteem (as anyone who's ever been directed to practice affirmations in front of a mirror can tell you). Most of the suggestions fall under self-work and self-love, which of course, is awesome — we probably all need to incorporate more of it into our lives. But when we individualize it, we also create a bootstrap mentality around it. "If you have low self-esteem, that's your fault — and it's your job to fix." As social beings, much of what we learn about ourselves and our place in the world comes from other people.If we grow up with caregivers who abuse, neglect, or reject us, we probably won't grow up to be particularly self-assured. This is also true of people who experience more marginalization in society. The more oppression one experiences, the more difficult it is to build positive self-concept. Disapproval from people around us can be devastating.But that works both ways: Approval from other people is also formative! We want to be loved, cared for, and validated by the people around us because it helps us understand how and where we belong. Growing self-esteem from how other people applaud us is something we're all doing, whether we post thirst traps or not.The concern comes when our need for external validation overrides our ability to feel safe in ourselves.When we are dependent on other people's opinions of us to the point that we're unable to define ourselves without that input or manage the disappointment of disapproval, we may need to pause. This is when we might need to tip the self-esteem building balance inward, so that we can learn to feel confident about who we are and what we deserve.Posting a thirst trap is not a cry for help or an indication that someone has low self-esteem. Most of the time, it's a healthy, supportive expression of a desire for external validation.Now, I don't think we need to analyze our own psychology each and every time we decide to post something on the Internet. But I do think we could engage in reflection sometimes to gain a better understanding of ourselves and our behaviors. This can be especially important when we notice patterns of feeling disappointment or frustration after engaging in certain behaviors.The next time you're ready to post a thirst trap, try sitting with these three questions:What do you dig about this post? How does the post reflect how you're feeling about yourself? If you feel good about the picture because it's an awesome representation of your unique self, feelings, and authentic expression of desire, that's perfect.What am I hoping will result from posting this? There's no right or wrong answer here. There are lots of reasons why we post thirst traps. But getting a sense of what we want it to accomplish — like if we're looking for general validation of our cuteness or if we're hoping someone in particular will respond — can be clarifying. If you're hoping someone in particular will respond, is there a specific type of response you're looking for?How will I react (both internally and interpersonally) if that result is not achieved? If you get low engagement on the post, how will that make you feel? If the person you're crushing on doesn't respond, will you be mad at them? This can be a great moment to decide if maybe you want to wait on the post, or maybe it's time to directly communicate with someone instead!Does this feel fun, flirty, and low stakes? Or does it feel high stakes, like the result will impact your mood or confidence? If posting has the potential to leave you feeling badly, maybe there's another way to have important validation needs met: Think of five things you love about yourself. Or send the post directly to a friend to get props instead!Remember: Thirst trapping shouldn't be pressure-filled. It should be casual and enjoyable — no bd!The advent of social media has given us lots of fun new ways to flirt and otherwise explore our sexualities. Thirst traps are no different! And especially at a time when we can't flaunt our stuff out in the real world, it makes sense that folks are more often turning to Instagram to be appreciated and approached.And I'm all for it.Melissa Fabello, PhD, is a social justice activist whose work focuses on body politics, beauty culture, and eating disorders. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram.

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