

UNDERSTANDING

**SELF
WORTH**

THE **HOPE** LINE

What do I do when I **HATE** myself?



Know that you are not alone.

Chat with a Hope Coach!

If you need someone to talk to, visit thehopeline.com/chat-live to chat with a Hope Coach about what you're experiencing. Hope Coaches are available 24/7 to listen and offer support whenever you need it.





Understanding **SELF-WORTH** & **SELF-HATE**

Self-Worth

Self-worth is how someone defines their value or worth as a person. Many people measure their value or self-worth on external factors, from body image and possessions to social acceptance and achievements.

True self-worth, however, is about who you are, not what you do or what you have in comparison to others. Comparing yourself with peers is always a losing battle and has lasting negative effects.

Many people who struggle with their self-worth can easily slip into a cycle of self-hate, characterized by destructive thoughts and often triggering self destructive behavior.

Self-Hate

Self-hate is also referred to as low self-esteem or bad self-image. **No matter what term you use, self-hate is a self-worth problem.** If you struggle with these extremely self-critical thoughts, you aren't alone.

SIGNS OF SELF-WORTH ISSUES

- Feeling that you are unloved, incompetent, or not good enough
- Constantly comparing yourself with others
- Avoiding people or activities, like social gatherings or school, because you're afraid of what people might think of you
- Intense, highly critical or judgmental thoughts about yourself and others

When someone bases their self-worth on **external factors**, the result is a **distorted** view of their own value.

Negative self-worth can also be a symptom of mental health issues. It is often at the root of depression, eating disorders, cutting and even suicide.

What starts out as a negative internal thought process can quickly turn into a pattern of self-hate that impacts every area of your life. Learning how to break the cycle of self-hate and adjust your self-perception is key to developing a healthy self-worth.

“Comparison is the thief of joy”

- Theodore Roosevelt



WAYS TO MAINTAIN A **HEALTHY** SELF-WORTH



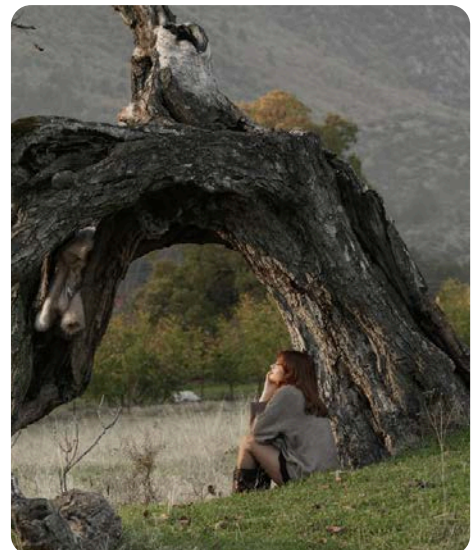
Challenge your inner critic

Everyone lives with a critical “inner voice” that judges and tears them down, but that voice is a liar and a bully. When you don’t learn to challenge this unhealthy self-talk, it becomes easier to believe the hurtful things it says.

When those negative thoughts start to feel overwhelming, try writing a kind, compassionate response to them. For example, if the thought is, “You can’t do anything right,” you might write, “I don’t always get everything perfect, but I am smart and capable.” Practicing this kind of gentle, truthful self-talk can help you develop a healthier, more balanced view of yourself when life feels difficult.

Stop playing the comparison game

Constantly comparing yourself to others is one of the quickest ways to feel discouraged. Even people who look famous or perfect face their own challenges and struggles. With social media and influencer culture, it’s easy to be misled by carefully curated images and highlight reels online. Real life isn’t always picture-perfect, and much of what’s really happening stays out of sight, behind the scenes.





Find activities that help others

Try a new hobby, do something kind for someone you love, or volunteer with a local nonprofit. New experiences can help you refocus on what really matters, grow your sense of gratitude, and give you a much-needed break from that harsh inner critic.

Get the support you need

You don't have to face this struggle by yourself. Reach out to someone you trust and share how you've been feeling—talking with a caring friend can offer comfort and remind you that you're not alone. You can also chat confidentially with a Hope Coach at thehopeline.com/chat-live for additional support. TheHopeline provides free [resources](#), [blogs](#), and [real-life stories](#) focused on self-worth and encouragement to help you along the way.



Valuing yourself is an ongoing journey, and you've already taken the first step. By reading this, you're actively choosing to work on your self-worth. It will take both time and effort to move from feelings of self-hate to self-love and self-respect, but that progress is real. you're already making important strides forward.

***Take a moment to feel
PROUD of yourself.***



A key element of self-worth is **SELF-RESPECT**

Most of us are told from a young age to “be respectful,” but what does that really mean and why does it matter? Respecting someone means letting your actions show that **you value them**—you recognize their worth, so you choose to treat them with care.

When you respect someone, you listen to them, consider their opinions, and want what’s best for their well-being. Those choices send a powerful message that this person matters to you.

But can you honestly say you treat yourself the same way? People who struggle with low self-worth often don’t extend that same respect to themselves.

[Explore our blog](#) to find valuable tips and habits that can help you strengthen your self-respect.



4 Habits

that can **DAMAGE** your **SELF-RESPECT**

1

Violating your own moral code

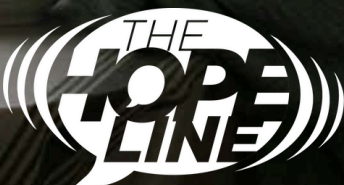
To avoid betraying your values, you first need to know what they are. Take regular time to reflect on what you believe and what matters most to you so you can understand your own moral code. When you know yourself well, you can make choices that align with those beliefs. As you stand firm and stay true to your convictions, you build self-respect by living in a way that matches what you value.

2

Acting against your values to gain approval from someone else

When someone pressures you to act in ways that go against your values, they are not showing you real respect, and they do not deserve yours. If you ever feel unsafe saying no to their demands or expectations, you may be in a toxic or abusive relationship, and it is important to seek help and find a way out of that situation.

Regularly doing things that conflict with your true identity and values slowly wears down your self-respect because it teaches your mind that your real self does not matter. Trust your instincts, honor your values, and allow yourself to decide who you are and how you want to live.





3

Letting other people's perception of you shape how you see yourself

It's natural to feel happy when someone approves of you or disappointed when they don't, but if you are constantly chasing the "high" of being liked or feel crushed at the thought that someone might not like you, you may be relying too much on others' approval. This can look like tying your sense of worth to whether you receive love, acceptance, or praise. Instead, it is important to remind yourself regularly that your value is not up for debate and that you deserve respect, regardless of what others think

4

Speaking badly about yourself

Using phrases like, "I'm a mess," "I'm a loser," or "I'm not good at anything"—is disrespectful and can harm your mental health over time. Even if you say these things jokingly, repeating them can eventually cause you to believe them about yourself. Instead, try using kinder language such as, "I am working on ___," or "I want to get better at ___." Treat yourself with the same care and respect you would offer someone you care about.

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

10 Ways to build a healthy sense of **SELF-WORTH**

1. Take Care of Yourself.

Self-care is a concept that gets a lot of attention these days, and it can be easy to dismiss it as a passing trend. However, taking care of yourself is essential for feeling confident in yourself. Simple actions like brushing your teeth, wearing deodorant, putting on clean clothes, brushing your hair, and bathing regularly can make a big difference when you're struggling with low self-worth. Eating healthy meals or snacks, staying hydrated, and exercising can also boost your self-esteem. These habits send a message to your brain that you deserve to feel clean and healthy, which helps build your overall sense of self-respect.



2. Be responsible. Do the right thing.

Showing up to school or work on time, caring about your studies by setting aside time for homework, and handling household chores will help you feel confident that you're at least **trying** your best in life. Simply doing what you know is right builds self-respect over time

3. Consider the needs of others.

There are many hurting people in the world. Caring about others and knowing that you might be able to help someone can be empowering. Leah says, "I might feel ugly or stupid or whatever the case may be, but there is still someone whose path I cross who needs a smile. So, I'm going to smile for that person. I'll make eye contact, look around, and see if there is someone else who needs some encouragement or a friendly face, even if I don't feel worthy."

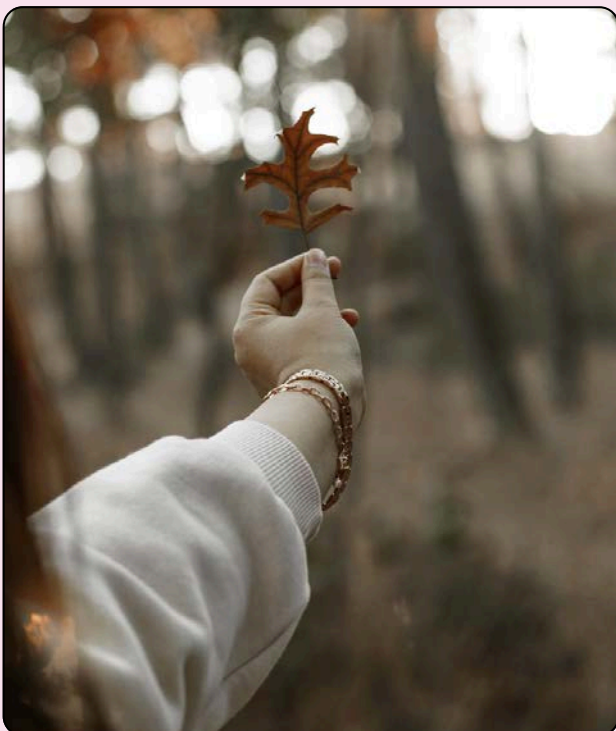
4. Seek out healthy relationships.

Surrounding yourself with the right people makes a big difference. Building healthy relationships and having people who truly love and respect you for who you are greatly benefits your self-esteem. It may take time and effort to find your circle, but cherish them when you do. On the other hand, spending time with or dating someone who doesn't treat you as a valuable part of their life will only harm your self-esteem and damage your self-respect.



5. Learn to control your emotions.

Emotions can feel overwhelming, which is why babies and young children cry and throw tantrums. Sometimes, expressing our feelings is necessary, but as we mature, it's important to learn healthy ways to manage our emotions. When we release emotions impulsively or destructively, we may later regret our words and actions, feel embarrassed, or damage relationships. All of these outcomes can harm your self-respect.



6. Embrace the concept of forgiveness.

Self-respect includes forgiving yourself for past mistakes, such as things you said when you lost your temper. It also means forgiving others for past hurts and wrongs, so those memories no longer control you or have any power over you. Research shows that having a mindset of forgiveness leads to an increase in your perception of positive experiences.

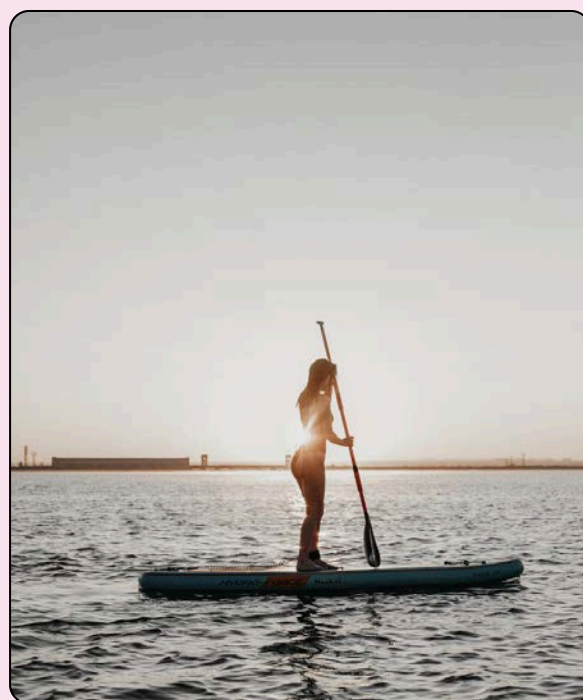


7. Learn as much as you can.

Learning about the world around you broadens your perspective and equips you to speak knowledgeably on many topics. Confidence in understanding current events boosts your sense of worth and earns respect from yourself and others. Self-education prepares you to seize opportunities and access resources when needed, building a healthy sense of self-respect over time.

8. Develop your interests and passions.

When you're struggling with low self-esteem, it can be hard to feel interested in activities or believe you deserve to have fun. But you do! There are countless things to try in this world—collecting, arts and crafts, games, sports, performing arts, music, and more. Experiment until you find something that clicks. At the very least, it will help relieve stress, but you might discover a lifelong passion.

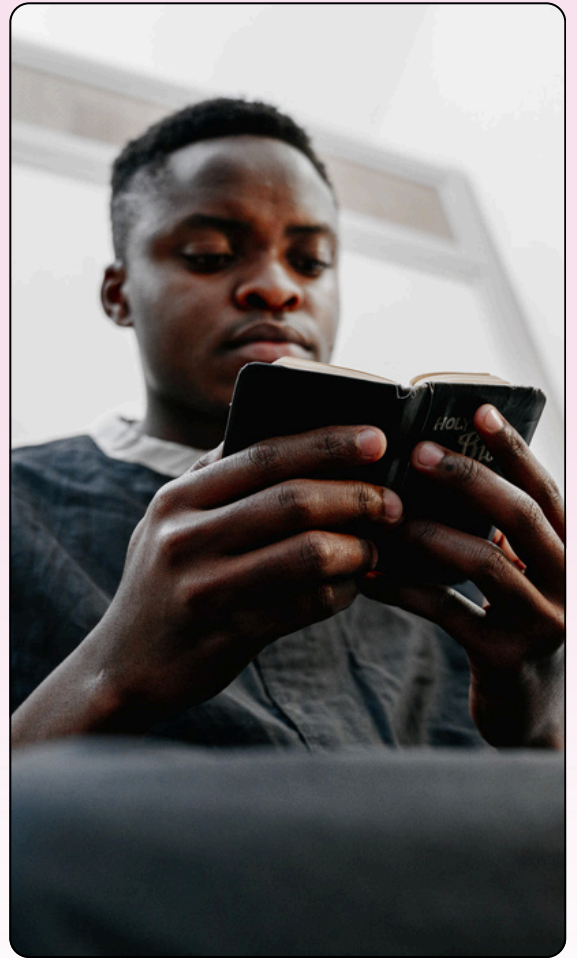


9. Practice gratitude.

Studies show that people who focus on the positive aspects of their lives and practice gratitude are generally much happier than those who don't. Everyone experiences negative thoughts and worries, but dwelling on them can lead to misery and exhaustion. Challenge yourself to reflect daily on something you're thankful for—whether it's enjoying delicious pancakes for breakfast, a friend's smile, nice weather, the color of the grass, or a good grade on a quiz. You might even take a picture each day of something that brings you joy or gratitude. Over time, reviewing these moments can offer comfort on tough days. As you develop the habit of appreciating life's small blessings, you'll likely notice a rapid shift in your outlook and attitude.

10. Grow in your relationship with God.

Knowing that God loves and respects you is the strongest foundation for self-respect. God knows us completely and loves us unconditionally, even when we can't see anything lovable in ourselves. Through a relationship with God, you can find confidence and peace beyond understanding. Reading scriptures, praying for guidance, and connecting with others who share this faith are excellent ways to nurture your relationship with Him. If you're unsure where to begin when it comes to having a relationship with God, reach out to one of our Hope Coaches for support on thehopeline.com/chat-live.



Don't be overwhelmed by thinking you need to accomplish all 10 items on this list today! Start with just one or two, and see if your perspective begins to change. Then, keep going step by step. **You can do it!**



THE **HOPE** LINE

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND STRUGGLING WITH **SELF-WORTH**

Listen to them.

Being a good friend starts with simply being present and listening when they are going through a hard time. Let them know you care and that struggling with self-worth is genuinely difficult.

Offer a positive perspective.

If your friend is stuck on their inner critic, gently remind them how you see them. Encourage them and point out the specific, positive, and unique qualities you appreciate about them, which can help replace negative thoughts and counter the lies of that inner critic before they lead to self-destructive patterns.

Do something kind.

A simple gesture, like writing an encouraging note or buying them coffee, can be a powerful way to show your friend they matter.

Share this ebook.

Everyone wrestles with self-worth at some point, so having a practical written reminder of healthy ways to handle low self-worth can be really helpful on the especially tough days. Let them know about the other self-esteem resources available so they do not feel alone in the process.



A *Spiritual* Perspective

No matter what challenges you're facing, remember there is always a solution because Jesus Christ loves you unconditionally. His love covers everything you might dislike about yourself; when He looks at you, He sees only His Father's divine creation—not a failure, mistake, or weakling lacking self-respect, but everything inherently wonderful within you.

The Bible affirms this in John 10:10 (The Message): Jesus lived and died so everyone could have "real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of." God desires you to discover your true self-worth and embrace lasting joy.

If you're unsure how to begin building your self-worth, **reach out to TheHopeline today.** We're here when your cup feels empty, as Christ invites "all who are weary and burdened" to come find rest—and that includes you.

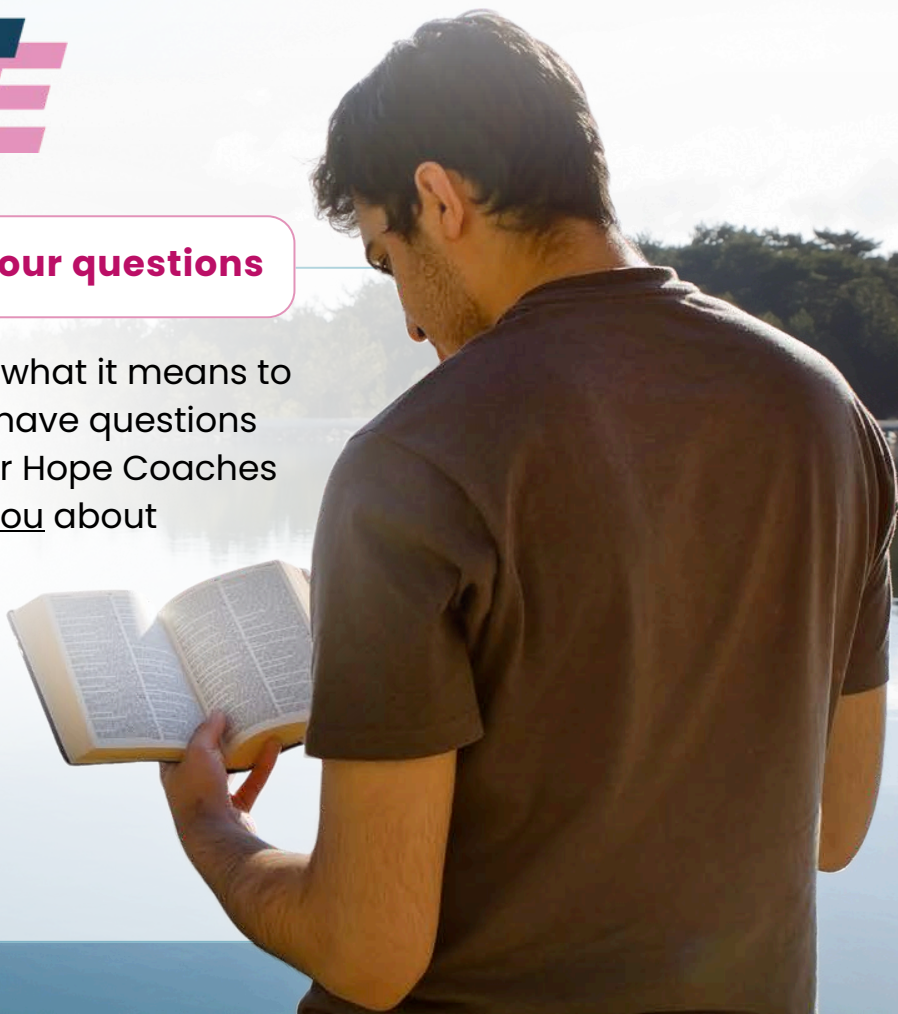


Talk with someone about your questions

If you want to know more about what it means to have a relationship with God or have questions about the topic of self-worth, our Hope Coaches are available 24/7 to chat with you about whatever is on your mind.



← **CHAT
LIVE WITH
A HOPE
COACH**



Let **GOD** Decide Your **WORTH**

Verses of Affirmation to Read Over Yourself

You are Chosen

Ephesians 1:4 - Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

You are Loved

1 John 3:1 - See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!

Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

You are a Delight

Psalms 18:19 - He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me.

Psalms 147:11 - The Lord's delight is in those who fear him, and those who put their hope in his unfailing love.

You are Made New

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT) - This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

You are a Masterpiece

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) - For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

You are Saved

Romans 8:1-2 - So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

You are Beautiful

Isaiah 61:1-3 - He has sent me to... bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

You are Not Abandoned

Deuteronomy 31:8 - Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.

THE HOPE LINE

Our mission is to help students and young adults in crisis by offering sound advice and a safe place to connect. Through our online resources and the ability to chat live with a Hope Coach 24/7, we are here to help people make a true connection.

Founded by Dawson McAllister in 1991, TheHopeLine is a 100% donor funded ministry. If you would like to learn more about partnering with us, visit [**thehopeline.com/partners-in-hope.**](https://thehopeline.com/partners-in-hope)



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