

How We're Harmed by Our Dissatisfaction with Ourselves

Over the last five years or so, as I've worked with thousands of people on changing their habits, I've come to a realization: dissatisfaction with ourselves is a pretty universal phenomenon.

We are unhappy with who we are, sometimes in small ways but often in very fundamental ways.

We doubt ourselves, feel inadequate, dislike our looks, criticize our failing harshly, feel uncertain about whether we're worthy of praise or love.

The result is anxiety, procrastination, fear, and the inability to change our habits. I've seen so many people who are unable to stick to an exercise program or healthy diet changes because they don't believe in themselves. At the heart of their failure to make positive changes is a deep feeling of unworthiness and inadequacy.

Every time we fail, we are harsh with ourselves, and we see it as just more evidence that we suck. Every time things are less-than-ideal, we blame ourselves (or, if we don't want to be blamed, we blame other people).

What if, instead of beating ourselves up (or blaming others), we just accepted what happened and then took appropriate action? What if we took this as an opportunity to see our humanness, to love ourselves, to see ourselves as innately good?

This dissatisfaction with ourselves doesn't just hurt our health habits ... **it hurts our productivity and ability to focus on meaningful work.** We doubt whether we're up to facing this task filled with discomfort and uncertainty, so we look for relief from all of it instead of just trusting that we're up to the task. We procrastinate, seek distraction, try to run from the uncertainty.

Our relationships are also harmed by this dissatisfaction with ourselves — when we don't believe in ourselves, we are insecure in our relationships. That can result in jealousy, anger, fear of losing someone, and treating the other person with distrust. That's not a good recipe for a good relationship, and if the relationship becomes shaky, we often either blame the other person or see it as more evidence that we suck.

Our happiness is marred by this dissatisfaction with ourselves— if we don't like ourselves, don't trust ourselves, don't see ourselves as worthy of love ... then how can we truly be happy in each moment? Underlying each moment is a dissatisfaction, a lack of contentedness, a wish that things would be different.

These are just a handful of ways that dissatisfaction with ourselves is harming us. This problem actually affects every area of our lives, from jobs to finances to parenting and more.

The Way Out: Loving Ourselves

Instead of harming ourselves with this self-doubt, this constant feeling of inadequacy ... what if we loved ourselves instead?

What if we trusted ourselves, believed in our basic worthiness, believed that we would be OK even if things didn't work out as planned, believed that we are loving, kind, and innately good human beings?

That would change everything: we'd be more trusting in relationships, we'd procrastinate less because we knew we could handle uncertainty and discomfort, we'd become healthier because we would see healthy food and exercise as just two more ways to love ourselves. We'd seek ways to love others, to serve the world with meaningful work, to enjoy the basic goodness of every moment. We'd be happier, and in the times when we're not happy, we'd still be able to find contentment in the middle of difficulty.

Of course, that's *much* easier said than done. We have so many years of experience in disliking ourselves, in being harsh with ourselves, that loving ourselves can seem impossible. It's not. You can do this.

It starts with the simple intention to love yourself, to see yourself as adequate and worthy of love, to wish for your own happiness and the relief from pain and stress.

Once you have this intention, you can practice a **daily session of wishing for your own happiness**, wishing for an end to your pain. **A daily session of gratitude for the good things about yourself.**

You can start to see the basic goodness in everything you do, even if it's less than perfect (as all humans are). You can see the good hearted nature in every one of your actions, even the ones that are harmful. You can start to see the good-hearted nature in what everyone else does as well.

This is the practice, and it takes lots of practice. But loving yourself might just be the most important project you've ever undertaken, because it will change your world.

My New Course: How to Love Yourself

I'm happy to offer a new course, called "How to Love Yourself," as part of my Sea Change Program.

I invite you to join us in this 4-week course, by joining Sea Change today.

Sea Change is my monthly membership program for changing habits, learning mindfulness and changing your life. Each month, we focus on something different, and this month it's procrastination.

What you'll get with this course:

1. Two video lessons per week
2. A challenge to do a short compassion session six days a week for the whole month
3. A weekly check-in for the challenge so you stay accountable
4. A live video webinar where you can ask me questions

I encourage you to join me and have your efforts to change your old patterns be supported by me and more than a thousand other Sea Change members.

Join Sea Change today and start the course.