

# [Cross-posted with r/malementalhealth]Slowly finding the source of my low self-worth

September 25, 2021 | 16 upvotes | by [Toxic\\_Lord](#)

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I (19 M) has had a low self-esteem and self-worth for a good few years now. After some reflection I have a good idea why. When I was younger I always do my best in everything I do, the problem is that it was partially for the sake of external validation like recognition from my parents due to their expectations, or from my peers in that I wanted to be among the best. But sadly in everything I do, I never seemed to find a niche that I truly excelled at. I was always stuck in the void of "good, but never great or met an arbitrary standard". I was always second place, overlooked, rejected for better people. I always thought there was something wrong and I constantly change myself to get myself closer to that standard, but it's never enough. Even with dating I was always rejected for better people, once again in the realm of fairly attractive but not attractive enough. My self-worth suffered from this and even nearly lost myself trying to meet a standard I may never meet. And that's why my self-esteem became extremely low, that I may never be worthy of many things like success, happiness or even love. Even recent achievements are seen as hollow and things any idiot can do, so I can't even feel pride in those achievements.

So clearly breaking out of that cycle is difficult, I want to see myself as worthy of happiness but some of my life experiences has caused me to write myself off as not having any inherent self-worth, that I had absolutely no value to myself and others. It's almost like I know my worth... and it isn't much...

I'm looking for things that can help break out of this cycle. I already gym regularly so that suggestion is out. This is a long and painful journey so any help, I can appreciate. If not, simply relating to me can help a bit. All I really want in life right now, is to have a positive opinion of myself

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## Comments

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a-man-from-earth • 6 points • 25 September, 2021 08:11 AM

Low self-esteem is a very common problem among young people. So you're not alone in that. Do you have friends who you can talk to about this?

Finding one's place in life, finding purpose, and knowing your self-worth has only become more difficult in modern society, especially for men. We're no longer expected to follow in our father's footsteps, and to continue being a part of the community we grew up in. The freedom of following your own path as well as urban life have certainly come with downsides as well.

I would advise to develop your strengths, but try to stay away from perfectionism. See how you can use your strengths to add value to other people's lives, and to the environment you live in. Many people find great value and sense of purpose in volunteering, for example with a soup kitchen, or an animal rescue shelter, or as a coach for a kids' sports team.

When you focus on the value you add, rather than whether you're the best at something, you'll find more fulfillment and happiness.

And if you're a reader, I recommend the book *The Undefeated Mind: On the Science of Constructing an Indestructible Self* by Alex Lickerman. He is a bit preachy about the particular brand of Buddhism he follows, but if you can ignore that, the book has some great advice. At least, I found it helpful.

quesadilla\_dinosaur • 2 points • 18 October, 2021 04:07 AM

OP, this is good advice, I can't stress that enough.

Finding purpose for many people tends to come in building relationships with others using our abilities/skills/crafts. I mean, think of a time you made a meal for a friend and they enjoyed it, or when you drew something for your mom/sibling and they said it looked nice, etc. You put a little bit of joy in their lives with what you've made: you've made an impact on someone else.

I think if you're feeling lost, that's a good place to start