

# Reverse the “Golden Rule”. Try Treating Yourself Like You Treat Others!



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When any of us cultivate relationships with new people in attempts to form lasting bonds, it's doubtful that we're going to try to change that person. We're not going to make them feel that they are any less of a person because of who they are, what they like, or what they pursue in life. We all know that this isn't the right way to make connections with another human being.

Yet when we approach ourselves and try to build our relationships with ourselves, there seems to be a desire to change, punish, or alter ourselves to meet certain expectations. If we were doing this to another person, it would be absolutely unacceptable. *And we shouldn't treat ourselves any differently!*

The simple truth of life is that our only stable and lifelong relationship is with ourselves. Because of this, it is the most important one we are going to have and, one that we will need to nurture if we want to lead a happy and purposeful life. True, we will want to change some things but there is a massive benefit to simply accepting and moving forward from there.

For the benefit of any of us who might have a hard time accepting ourselves as we are, warts and all, here are some tips on how to do that so that we can stop throwing obstacles in our own pathways!

## **1. Take Some Time to Sit with Yourself and Discover Who You Are**

The major problem that many people face when it comes to self-acceptance is that they have yet to engage in self-discovery. Many people who walk through our doors feel purposeless and lost, which is ultimately due to a lack of self and an unclear understanding of who you are and what you want. Attend "Learning To Love Yourself" group and pay attention! Engage in mindfulness practices and stop spending so much time in the past and the future.

Self-discovery is a necessary first step but it is one that comes with a lot of work and is fraught with set-backs and unhelpful false brain messages that have to be recognized and discarded (REBT). Starting your own self-discovery journey may consist of the following:

### **Discovering Your Purpose**

Each of us may feel like we are called to do something at some point in time that will help to grow others as well as ourselves. Attending "*Viktor Frankl: Purpose and Meaning Group*" regularly and paying attention to the exercises at the end of the booklet is a great start for this exercise.

What are you interested in or passionate about? What gets you fired up and makes you forget about everything else? What is something that you could picture doing for the rest of your life?

Sometimes, the best way to discover purpose is simply to go out and do random things that might seem like good ideas, instead of stewing in your own toxic soup that your brain has cooked up, until you learn more about where your passions lie. Don't take the beating that your brain is giving you



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without a fight! You will find that it's nothing more than a school yard bully that runs off as soon as you point at the first shiny thing! Try it! Distraction towards positive actually trains it to be as obedient as a service dog, but it takes work. Decide if your happiness deserves that minimal amount of work, and then try it!

### Learning More About Your Values and Beliefs

Values and beliefs (try temporarily using Above and Beyond's if you're having trouble figuring this out) to set up some structure in your life and drive you towards the things that matter most to you. It'll come.

Are you someone who has a strong desire to have friends, or to belong in a community? Then attend an *"Aloneliness Alleviation"* group and participate in it. Do you want to switch to honesty and integrity as a way to live your life? Then ask Stephen for a copy of our values and start customizing it to your liking. Are you drawn to spirituality or a church you grew up in? Then attend a *"Spirituality"* or *"Mindfulness"* or *"Meditation"* group and pay attention. If you're stalled on which direction to go, then dive into all of them and your pathway will be revealed by intuition. You will know which way you're drawn by what you like and that's your pathway. That is all there is to it.

These are some important questions to ask yourself because they help guide the choices you make on your journey.

### Journal and Keep Track of the Day-to-Day

Even if you are unsure of who you are, what you do on a regular basis will certainly tell you everything you need to know and you can get a tiny notebook to do this in from your counselor.

What are some things that you like to do? What are things that are not necessarily fun for you? What are some habits that you have cultivated, healthy or otherwise? What are your dreams? Ambitions? Goals?

We all have things that make us unique. Take the time to question and learn these aspects of yourself.

There's this misconception that acceptance goes hand-in-hand with a refusal to change but that's not true. Acceptance starts with recognition and embracing who you are. You will then go on to nurture yourself and to change some of the unhealthy aspects, so that you can become more of who you want to be slowly, over time. It's a transition, not an instant metamorphosis.

### 2. Accept What You Can't Change

You are who you are. You love what you love. There are some things that you will be able to change in your life (for the better) and, there are some things that will simply be for the rest of your time here on earth. We are constantly using the Serenity Prayer that you'll see on the wall by the bathroom: *"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and*



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*the wisdom to know the difference".* This is a powerful decision making tool and can help you discern what thoughts to give validity to.

Without this, expending your mental energy on wishing you can change things that cannot be changed is a waste of your time and will inevitably lead to sadness, relapse, and despair.

Whatever it is that you wish you could change, know that you are a worthy human being regardless of what it is you are insecure about.

Take time to be kind to yourself, let your guard down and embrace these things, and learn how to overcome that inner voice that tells you that you're not good enough. In order to be happy with who you are, you must allow yourself to be accepting of all aspects of what makes you you.

The biggest barrier for most people, however, is learning how to cultivate acceptance of the self. If you are struggling at this point, here are some tips that will allow you to tackle the project easier:

- Practice positive self-talk and challenge any negative thoughts that come out of you as they are released. Remember, your brain is not always your friend!
- Choose to be loving towards yourself and your flaws, rather than trying to hide them away or ignore them.
- Accept that everything that has happened to you has led you to this point and will carry you to your goals if you work towards them.
- Spend some time with yourself engaging in enjoyable activities so that you can bond with yourself and fall in love with that person.
- Know that you will have easy days as well as hard days. Take them as they come.
- It may take time but in the end, you are going to be grateful that you put in the effort to cultivate self-love.

### **3. Change What Needs to Be Changed for Your Benefit**

Not all change is good change. Some change can be harmful and that change needs to be avoided. Terry London is an expert in this field and teaches all you need to know during his *"Overcoming Procrastination"* group. It might be a good idea to try one out or to read his self-published, free booklet on the subject.

However, some change can be beneficial and that change is the type that helps to grow you as a person and allows you to blossom into the person you want to be.

Acceptance and acknowledging of yourself and the world around you is great but, you need to understand that acceptance can be both a tool of dissatisfaction and happiness. Things you can't change must be embraced and you need to love those things; but things that can and must be changed require your immediate attention.

You are a growing and constantly evolving person and, everything that you do needs to be done in your best interest. For example, let's say that you have made a number of bad choices in your past that



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have impacted your social and financial life. While you need to accept that these choices have been made and accept the experience that got you there, you shouldn't accept that old behavior as a definition of your current self. Don't let yesterday steal too much of your today.

Knowing what needs to be changed and what needs to be embraced boils down to one thing: does it allow you to live a happy life of purpose?

If it is (realistically) impacting you in a negative manner, it needs to go.

If it impacts you but it is a result of negative self-image and is not something that would need to be changed otherwise, embrace it.

If it is something that you are still going to change regardless, proceed with caution.

All paths should ultimately lead to happiness.

### **Final Thoughts**

You are you and that is something that is never going to change. When you learn to accept yourself and work towards the best version of you that you can be, you set yourself up for a life that has an abundance of happiness and progress.

We see the value in you, so if you can't see it from where you are, stop a counselor and ask. That's why we're here.

Our purpose and meaning is helping you to find yours.