

# Elements of a Healthy Self-Concept

## THE SELF-CONCEPT RESEARCH GROUP

### A HEALTHY SELF-CONCEPT IS:

#### **Durable**

A healthy self-concept needs to be there when you need it most. When your ideas about yourself are challenged or even contradicted, you need to be able to endure it without falling apart or taking it personally. Your self-concept needs to be resilient when you're faced with failure or when your results fall short of your expectations rather than paralyzing you with doubt.

#### **Accurate**

Your self-concept needs to be an accurate representation of who you are. If your behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes don't match and people see you completely opposite of how you see yourself, it will create problems. You probably have met people who believe themselves to be something they're not or capable of something they're not. These beliefs don't serve them nor do they serve others. You want to know the truth about whether or not you are good at something. If you are good at something and you know it, you will have confidence about it and achieve more. If you're not good at something but you believe you are, you're likely to get yourself into trouble and possibly harm others.

#### **Self-Correcting & Responsive to Feedback**

Some people have fixed ideas about themselves that may have been true at one time but are now outdated. This is the "armchair" quarterback who may have been highly skilled in football when he was in high school, but hasn't ran or thrown a football in decades. Seeing himself as he was in high school makes him delusional about himself. Not responding to external feedback and updating your ideas about yourself can create a shadow self. This can go on for years until you hit a breaking point and you have to come to terms with who you truly are. The shock can be unbearable and you may slip into confusion and chaos and experience an identity crisis. Check in with your ideas about yourself. Are they still true? Pay attention to feedback you receive from others. You don't necessarily have to believe everything other people tell you, but listening to them can help you maintain an accurate self-concept. All of the processes that make the self-concept durable also make it sensitive and responsive to feedback.

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### Unconscious

An unconscious self-concept rather than being self-conscious will make your sense of self more solid. Self-consciousness is often a symptom of perfectionism, self-doubt, worry about what others think of you, low self-worth, and comparing yourself to others. These will only weaken your sense of self. Accept yourself, associate into the present, and turn your senses outward especially when you need to perform at your peak. When your self-concept is unconscious instead of self-conscious you more easily slip into a flow state, which is ideal for high performance.

### Connecting

Ideally your self-concept should connect you to yourself, to others, and to your environment. Often people think that they can strengthen their sense of self by isolating themselves from others. The opposite is true. When we isolate, become self-conscious, or disassociate, we disconnect. Disconnecting weakens your sense of self. The more you look for opportunities to connect and integrate parts of yourself as well as connect with others and integrate their ideas, the stronger you become.

**Source: Transforming Your Self by Steve Andreas 2002**

Identifying your values is a very important step when creating change in your life. When you live according to your values, you fulfill your desires and live a happier life.

We have free assessments on our website that help you find your values in various contexts of your life.

- [Click here to go to the Free Self-Concept Assessments](#)