

## The 3 Parts Of Your Self-Concept -- Brian Tracy

Your self-concept is made up of three parts, like three layers of a cake. The first of these three parts is your **self-ideal**. This is the vision or ideal description of the person you would most like to be in every respect. This image exerts a powerful influence on your behavior and on the way you think about yourself.

Your self-ideal is a combination of the qualities and attributes that you admire most in other people, living and dead. It is the sum of your dominant aspirations. It is your version of what the perfect person should be.

Exceptional men and woman have very clear self-ideals, toward which they are constantly striving. They set high standards for themselves and strive to live up to them. And so can you. **The more clear you are about the person you want to become, the more likely it is that, day by day, you will evolve into that person.** You will rise to the height of your dominant aspirations for yourself. You will become what you most admire.

Sadly, unsuccessful men and women have very fuzzy ideals, or in most cases, no self-ideals at all. They give little or no thought to the person they want to be or to the qualities they would like to develop in themselves. Their growth and evolution eventually slows and stops. They get stuck in a mental rut and they stay there. They lose all impetus for self-improvement.

When one looks up to, and respects, the qualities of integrity, purposefulness, courage, and action orientation in others, one begins to incorporate those values in oneself.

As you clarify your fundamental values and work to integrate them into everything you do, your personality improves, and because your outer life reflects your inner life, your work, your relationships, and every aspect of your outer life improves as well.

The second part of your self-concept is your **self-image**. Your self-image is the way you see yourself, and the way you think about yourself, as you go about your daily activities. Your self image is often called your “inner mirror” into which you look to see how you are supposed to behave or perform in a particular situation. **You always behave consistently with the picture you hold of yourself on the inside.** Because of this, **you can improve your performance by deliberately changing the mental pictures you hold about yourself in that area.**

This process of self-image modification is one of the faster and more dependable ways to improve your performance as you begin to see yourself and think about yourself as a more competent and confident, your behavior becomes more focused and effective.

**When you deliberately change your self-image, you'll walk, talk, act and feel better than you ever have before. You will change both your personality and your results by changing your mental images.**

The third part of your self-concept is your **self-esteem**. Your self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. It is the emotional component of your personality, and it is the foundation quality of high performance. It is the key to happiness and personal effectiveness. It is the reactor core in a nuclear power plant. It is the source of the energy, enthusiasm, vitality and optimism that powers your personality and makes you into a high achieving man or woman.

Your level of self-esteem is determined by two factors, which are like the opposite sides of the same coin. The first is how valuable and worthwhile you feel about yourself, and how much you like and accept yourself as a good person. This is the “**personal assessment**” side of self-esteem. This is your rating of yourself, aside from what is going on in your life at the moment.

This first factor is not dependent upon external variables. **A person with genuinely high self-esteem can have innumerable difficulties and setbacks in life and still retain a high, positive estimate of himself or herself as a human being.** Unfortunately, there are very few people who have reached this state of evolution where they can retain a sense of inner value independent of external circumstances.

The second factor determining your level of self-esteem is your feeling of “**self-efficacy**,” **how competent and capable you feel you are in whatever you do.** This is the “**performance -based**” side of self-esteem. It is the bedrock upon which most real and lasting self-confidence and self-respect are built.

These two parts of self-esteem reinforce each other. When you feel good about yourself, you perform better. And when you perform well, you feel good about yourself. Both are essential. Neither can endure without the other.

The best measure of self-esteem is how much you like yourself. The more you like yourself, the better you do everything you put your mind to. The more you like yourself, the more confidence you have, the more positive is your attitude, the healthier and more energetic you are, and the happier you are overall.

And since how you feel is largely determined by how you talk to yourself, silently or aloud, you can raise your self-esteem at will by saying, over and over, with enthusiasm and conviction, the words “I like myself! I like myself!

Or, better yet you can say “I love myself! I love myself! I love myself!” This may sound corny when you first hear it, but it is extremely powerful. As an experiment, look up from this page and say to yourself, as if you meant it from the bottom of your heart “I like myself! I like myself!” several times. Better yet, look in the next mirror you pass and say “**I like myself.**” You will find that you can’t say this five or six times without feeling genuinely better about yourself.

You can teach this idea to anyone, especially children. Whenever a child is unhappy or misbehaving, coax them into saying, “I like myself,” and soon they will break out into smiles and cheer up. It seems that **the more open and receptive a person is to this message, the greater impact it has on his or her personality.**

Liking yourself is very healthy. In fact, it is the key to personal effectiveness and to happy relationships with others. The more you like and respect yourself, the better you perform in everything you do. You are more relaxed and positive. You are more confident about your abilities. You make fewer mistakes. You have more energy and are more creative.

Some people have been taught to believe that liking yourself is the same as being conceited or obnoxious. But exactly the opposite is true. Both the “superiority complex,” behaving in an arrogant or conceited way and the “inferiority complex,” behaving in a self-deprecating way, are manifestations of low self-esteem, of not liking oneself very much at all. People with genuine self-esteem get along easily and well with just about everyone.

### **THE RULES OF SELF-ESTEEM**

There are **two rules of self-esteem** and self-liking: **Rule number one is that you can never like or love anyone more than you like or love yourself.** You can't give away what you don't have.

**Rule number two is that you can never expect anyone else to like or love you more than you like, love or respect yourself.**

Your own level of self liking and self acceptance is the control valve on the quality of your human relationships. It is the problem or solution in any human situation. Everything you do to build and reinforce your own self-esteem increases the amount of satisfaction you enjoy with the other people in your life.

If your self-concept is the master program of your subconscious computer, where does it come from? How is it formed? What is it composed of? And most important, how can you reprogram it to improve yourself and increase your effectiveness in everything you do?

### **SELF-CONCEPT FORMATION**

You were not born with a self-concept. Everything that you know and believe about yourself today, you have learned as the result of what has happened to you since you were an infant. Each child comes into the world as pure potential, with a particular temperament and certain inborn attributes, but with no self-concept at all. **Every attitude, behavior, value, opinion, belief, and fear you have today has been learned. Therefore, if there are elements of your self-concept that do not serve your purposes, you can unlearn them.**

Once you understand how your self-concept was formed, you will be able to bring about changes that make you into the kind of person you admire and want to be like. You will learn how to become the kind of person who can accomplish the goals and dreams that are most important to you.