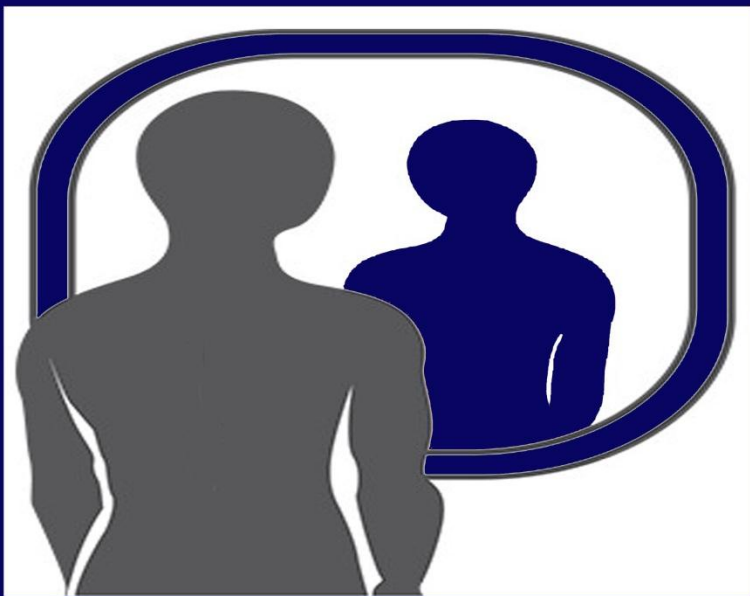


A Self-Help Booklet



Improve Your Self-Image

By Riffat Sadiq, Ph. D

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Current era is moving so fast that people do not have time to think or be relaxed. Everyone is deeply involved in competition for one's survival. Dr. Riffat Sadiq has tried to present a soft and natural way of life so that everyone can improve his or her self-image. Good self-image will make us realistic and courageous for combating the life problems.

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Preface

Virtually, we all undergo stress, become worried and have interpersonal problems. Some of us try to mask their weakness, some try to change others according to their own beliefs, whereas some get involved in blame game. In fact, our success and failure in life largely depends on how we perceive our self.

Our perception of self is formed in living, learning and working environment. Role of environmental factors in the formation of self-image can never be denied but consistent work hard improves the way we perceive ourselves. Self-image needs equal attention as we groom ourselves apparently.

Self-image is reflected in different forms (physical self, emotional self, social self and spiritual self). One may have positive emotional self but may have problem with physical self. Some have positive perception of their social self but their spiritual self lacks of positivity.

The present self-help booklet will serves two functions; one is to guide you to work upon on each domain of self-image and second is to help you in maintaining balance among physical, emotional, social and spiritual self. I hope you will find it informative and easy enough to implement the strategies in your daily life.

Riffat Sadiq PhD

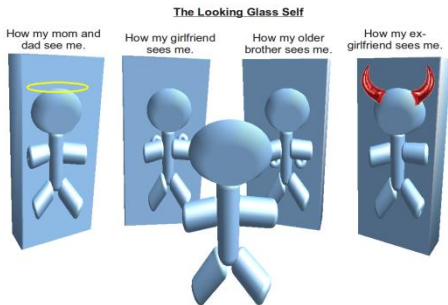
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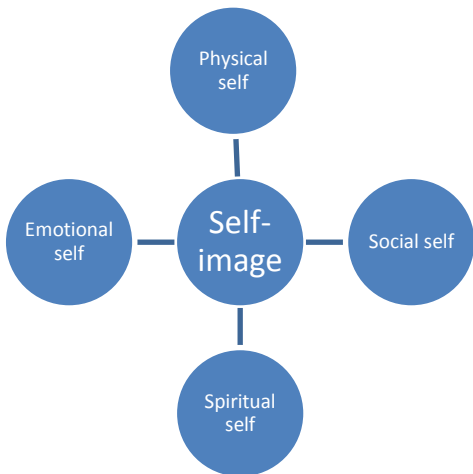
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What is Self-Image?

Self-image is defined as the way one perceives him or herself. Self-image can be positive or negative depending on the type of mental picture people have regarding their self. Positive self-image is the reflection of having positive mental picture of self. This positive self-image helps to grow successfully, develop skills and reduces the risk of psycho-social maladies.

Self-image is the combination of four components including physical self, emotional self, social self and spiritual self.





Self-image entails a balance among all four components. Extreme tilt towards any one of the components generates complexity in the form of psychosocial and spiritual issues. An individual needs to work upon all four components to be productive part of his or her society.

Improving physical, emotional, social and spiritual self and maintaining balance among all of them is an ongoing process. No one can get desired results in few days, even months are not enough. Our environment has significant impact on all of us. We get influenced by frequent changes occurring around us such as; economical variations, socio-political situation, natural disasters, significant life events, daily life stressors and so on.

Sometimes, situation is beyond of our control. Our self-image fluctuates according to the situation occurs, from positive to negative and from negative to positive. Take an example of a person (Mr. X) who remained successful for 10 years. Due to consecutive success, he went up on the ladder of self-image (positive self-image). After 10 years, he faced significant problems that blocked his way of success. He failed again and again despite working hard and determination. He remained under the umbrella of problems for next 10 years. Owing to his problems, people started leaving him alone and stopped relying on him. He tried hard to come out of his problem but in vain. Eventually, he stepped down on the ladder of self-image (negative self-image).

Not necessarily, one, during adversity, will be fully negative about self but to some extent his/her self-image will get influenced by external events. Any one of us can have similar experience in life. Therefore, we all of us need to work constantly in order to sustain positivity in the perception regarding self.



Strategies to Improve Self-Image

1. Improve Your Physical Self-Image

Physical Self-Image refers to how people perceive their body and appearance. People' content with their physical attributes indicates positive physical self-image. Then, they do not need to show them stronger in front of others or feel inferior if disapproved by society. Body and appearance is naturally creature that could not be changed but the image we have towards own physique is possible to be improved.

Following are some strategies which can help to convert your negative mental picture of physical self into positive one;

- Focus on your cognitive process. Restructure your thoughts, if you view yourself physically behind than others. Think for a while that Allah (God) has created people with different faces, structures and complexion. People themselves are not responsible for their appearance. If you have not

pretty face; then do not get depressed. Allah would have blessed something else to you.

- If you are rejected because of your face, not getting suitable marriage proposals, then do not take it to your heart. People who are rejecting you just because of your ugly face, in fact, have narrow vision. They are not able to see positive aspects of anything. Today, they are rejecting you for one reason, very next day they will find another weakness in you. Living with them you too will learn to see things with narrow mind. You should be grateful to Allah (God) Who has saved you from people with confused self and complexes.
- There are too many people around you who are deprived of sense organ or suffering from physical/mental abnormality or chronic diseases. You have been blessed with eyes to see world, ear to hear sound clearly and hands to work by own. Compare yourself with physically and mentally

handicapped not with those who have beautiful faces and fantastic physiques.

- Sit calm in the room or somewhere else you feel comfortable. Close your eyes and take breathe for five times, first inhale and then exhale. Daily 5 minutes exercise will haltingly make you feel relaxed.
- Then, list the organs and senses you have been blessed by Allah (God). Make two columns on a paper with a pencil. In one column mention the organs/senses you have and in the second column mention what you have not been blessed.

<u>I have</u>	<u>I do not have</u>
Eyes with clear vision	Fair complexion
Ear with clear hearing	Pretty features
Proper hands and legs to work	Ideal height
Brilliant mind	Smart body

- Compare both blessings and think for a while that what is most essential to lead a normal life. Do it instantly and decide how to view self in future.
- If you are worried because of your physical health, then amend your some habits. Physical health can be improved with exercises and healthy diet. If you want to be slim then go for jogging, do walk regularly at least for half an hour. You can walk on the roof, terrace or courtyard. Games and physical activities are suitable for your health.
- You should check your eating habits. Try to eat simple food and avoid spicy and oily one. Take your meal slowly and carefully. Do not eat too much. Take water as your body requires and develop the habit of taking water before eating.
- Be careful about your sleep. Try to go to bed early in the night and get up early in the morning. Excessive use of internet and mobile phone is pertinent for your health.

- Try to be away from all kinds of drugs including cigarette and prescribed medicines. Healthy life style makes you physically healthy and you will feel good about your physical self

Improve Your Emotional Self-Image

Emotional Self-Image refers to whether people are aware of their emotional needs; understand their personality, skills, talents and aptitudes etc. People having positive emotional self-image perceive themselves competent enough to do a job and to face a problematic situation. They can effectively deal peer pressure, face life stressor and can find the solution of a problem instead of becoming delinquent.

Sometimes, people fail to differentiate the situation that can be controlled or situation that is beyond of their control. They make wrong decisions related to their life, career or relations. Eventually, they fail and get depressed. Moreover, they show irritability, frustration and anger in response of failure. By improving emotional self-image,

you can convert your failure into success besides overcoming psychological problems.

Following are the simple steps to improve your emotional self;

- Every one of us has some strengths and weaknesses. You can never do everything. Few of us say that man can do everything if he or she wants. But I believe that man cannot do everything because he is not perfect. You have been provided different capabilities, talent and resources by nature. Some are polished up by environment you are living in. Make choices according to your strengths and capabilities.
- Set your life goals according to your capabilities and resources. Never try to achieve a task for which nature has not blessed you enough intellectual resources or aptitude. Do focus on your inner not on others' opinion pertaining to career choices.

- Sit calm in the room or somewhere else you feel comfortable. Close your eyes and take breathe for five times, first inhale and then exhale. Daily do it for 5 minutes in order to make you mentally relaxed.
- After brief relaxation, take a paper and list the things you can do or in which you are interested. For examples;

I want to do	I can
I like to write a novel	I can write small articles/stories
I like to paint	I can draw simple things

- You have to differentiate what you can do or want to do. Sometimes we strongly desire to do something but at initial stage we are not able enough to perform high level task.

- Determine the level and resources to perform the task

I want to do	Resources I have	Level
I want to write a novel	Talent	Initially I can write short stories
	Writing skills	
	Intuitive ability	
	Imaginative power	

- Take steps one by one so that you do not fall at any stage; otherwise you will get fear of failure. This fear of failure will invite another fear of failure.
- Consult a psychologist regarding your problems.
- If you have not enough money or permission to go to psychologist or any mental health professional

is not available in your town/institution, then find the most educated or sensible person in your department, family, relatives or neighbors. We have people around us who believe in justice and cooperation. There are people who have been blessed with folk wisdom. You may discuss your problem with them.

- You can also talk to your teacher, bosom friend, colleague etc. Sharing problems with significant one is the way of releasing tensions.
- Close your eyes and feel that Allah (God) is around you. Tell your problems to Him and ask for His guidance. Ask Him that no one is ready to help you and you are alone. He will certainly help you.
- Ask Allah (God) to help you to handle the situation you are fixated in, to accept the situation that is beyond of your control. Pray Him to

provide you enough patience to tolerate the life problem until it gets solved.

Improve Your Social Self-Image

Social Self-image refers to how a person perceives his position in living and learning environment; how he or she perceive people and interpersonal relations as well. Feelings of being confident to interact with people, to make proper relationships and having balance perception of society are the indications of positive social self-image. This positive social self-image will prevent the development of inferiority feelings, hopelessness, frustration and loneliness. Sense of being able to be part of social environment reduces the risk of delinquent behaviors.

To have positive view of social self, you need to work in the following ways;

- Do accept yourself, your appearance, socio-economic status, family background etc. Society

will not accept you until you accept your own self. Do not try to impress people by showing off. Present yourself to society as nature has made you.

- Your attire and hair style should match to your status, age and position.
- Having dark complexion is not the fault. Take care of your face but do not use too much cosmetics to hide the real face. Your artificial look cannot help you in getting along with people in a long run.
- Do communicate with people in simple and original way. Avoid excessive talk, self-praising and discussing your achievements in front of others.
- Focus on listening others and let them express their feelings. Listen carefully and give suggestions honestly, if they ask
- Do visit and stand with people at the time of their happiness and sorrow

- Forgive the mistakes of others in order to get rid of emotional pain.
- Take care of your own needs and rights besides showing care for others.

Improve Your Spiritual Self Image

Spiritual Self-image refers to whether a person has a sense of right and wrong, differentiates between duties and rights and perceives Allah Almighty to be there to support him or her in the time of adversity. People having positive spiritual self-image adopt appropriate ways of gratifying needs, rely on the decisions Allah takes for them and always ask for His help. By improving spiritual self-image, you can fulfill your responsibilities, strive for your rights, forgive self and others and seek help from Allah when there is no one to help you.

There are some strategies which can help you to improve your spiritual self-image

- Do remember Allah (God) all the time. Offering prayer and remembering Allah is different. You need a clean and specific place to say your prayers but remembering Allah (God) requires the presence of heart and mind. You can call Him everywhere, every time. You do not need to be formal to remember Him. Your purity of heart is enough to have Him.
- Try to love Allah (God). Relation of love with Allah will make you stronger.
- Daily prayer, according to your religion/sect, is essential to show your obedience to Allah. Allah has some rights over us. Divine service is the way of fulfilling His rights.
- Read Holy Book/Scriptures, biographies of religious people/heroes who have made a history.

- Listen religious lectures of authentic scholars available in audio/video form
- Do maintain a balance between rights of Allah (God) and rights of human being. Imbalance between rights of both will make you extremist. Always remember that extremism has no place in any religion.
- Do not try to impose your religious beliefs and rituals on others. Let other people to know Allah and understand the religion.
- Show respect and kindness for people belonging to other religion and sect
- Do exercise. Meditation is the way to make your mind and body relaxed. Initially, do meditate for few minutes sitting in the comfortable place. Gradually increase the time duration.

*Doing all this, you can improve your self-image
and enjoy a happy and healthy life*

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