SELF Talk

Discover the Hidden Side of Yourself

# Introduction

Think about being involved with someone you aren't in love with or someone you find worthless and unworthy. Then assume that you have to spend the rest of your life with them. What would it be like? You might feel negative emotions or even confusion. Now, consider the case where *"someone"* is you. What would your reaction be?

The purest relationship is the one you have with yourself. The way you see yourself, how you feel, and what you do are all reflections of yourself. This reflection depends on your self-worth as well as your self-esteem. We are better able to solve problems in our lives when we perceive ourselves as confident and secure. In contrast, when we see ourselves as inadequate or inferior, we tend to believe that the root cause of our problems lies solely with us or with others. Additionally, the way we relate to ourselves reflects how we will relate to others. It is important to recognize that our lives are a mixture of black-and-white situations—especially gray. However, when we focus on only one aspect of life instead of seeing the full picture, it causes problems. Moreover, the way we deal with ourselves and those around us depends on our perception, which reinforces the beliefs we hold.

The sense of self-worth is the belief that you are fundamentally valuable as a person, so you respect and value yourself. In the absence of self-worth, we lack a sense of dignity. On the other hand, our overall perception of ourselves is greatly affected by our self-esteem. Despite being relatively stable, self-esteem can fluctuate. The state of our self-esteem influences everything from how we think to how we behave. If we consider self-esteem as a continuum, both healthy and unhealthy sides coexist. Healthy self-esteem enables us to recognize our strengths and weaknesses, fostering confidence as we accept that we are all flawed and can improve. In contrast, unhealthy self-esteem adversely affects our ability to cope with disappointments. It impacts every aspect of our lives, including our relationship with ourselves. As a result, we may feel insecure, inferior, or overly self-critical. Our worth goes unrecognized, and our needs and wants remain unexpressed.

Since both self-worth and self-esteem play a role in shaping the self, it is important to understand how they differ. Self-worth serves as the foundation, while self-esteem is a part of it. Self-worth refers to the inherent value we hold about ourselves, whereas self-esteem pertains to our perception of ourselves.

Having a healthy sense of self-worth and self-esteem allows us to view ourselves and others more positively. It helps us think critically and navigate different situations with confidence. Conversely, unhealthy self-esteem and self-worth make us prone to engaging in negative and harmful behaviors.

The purpose of this book is to highlight the negative effects stemming from an unhealthy sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Here, we will explore the role of self and early experiences, supported by their current manifestations.

Since the negative impacts of low self-worth and self-esteem develop over time, they often become deeply ingrained in our thought patterns. As a result, recognizing these signs can be challenging, but it is not impossible. In this book, I will outline methods to help generate insights. For a deeper understanding, seeking the guidance of a Mental Health Professional is recommended. A professional can help identify signs and provide relief. Treatment methods vary depending on the pattern, its manifestation, and severity. Some approaches include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Psychodynamic Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, or even Psychoanalysis.

It is crucial for the reader to understand that the interpretations of signs provided in this book serve as a foundational understanding. This book does not claim to be the sole or definitive way to gain insight into self-worth and self-esteem.

# Trigger Warning

This book contains information that may be distressing. If you feel uncomfortable, you may choose to skip certain sections. The content is intended for general awareness and does not allow for inferences about oneself or others. A diagnosis cannot be made based solely on this information. Avoid self-diagnosing. If you need further assistance, please consult a Mental Health Professional.

# The Concept of Self

*“In order to love who you are, you cannot hate the experiences that shaped you.”*

 *-Andrea Dyksra*

Do you ever ask yourself, "Who am I?"

Though we may hold positive or negative opinions about ourselves, we rarely explore our true, unique identity. To gain a clear understanding of ourselves, it is important to develop a concept of self—our perception of our behavior, skills, and individual traits. We observe both our mental state and external reactions, and these observations help us learn about ourselves. Over time, this process shapes our sense of self, allowing us to recognize our individuality and understand who we are.

The three components of self, as suggested by Carl Rogers, can be understood from a theoretical perspective. The first is Self-image—how we see ourselves. Our self-image is influenced by our physical appearance, social roles, and internal characteristics. However, our perception may not always align with reality. We may exaggerate our strengths or weaknesses, forming an image of ourselves that differs from the truth.

As our self-concept develops, we also form Self-esteem, which reflects how we evaluate ourselves. Self-esteem is shaped by our comparisons with others and how we believe others perceive us. If we excel in a certain area compared to others, our self-esteem increases. Conversely, when we feel we are lacking or face criticism, our self-esteem may decline. It is also possible to experience varying levels of self-esteem depending on different aspects of our lives.

Through life experiences, we develop a vision of the person we aspire to become—our Ideal Self. It is important to distinguish self-image from the ideal self: self-image is how we currently see ourselves, while the ideal self represents who we wish to be. When there is a gap between the two, it can create incongruence, affecting our self-concept and lowering self-esteem.

According to Rogers, this incongruence often originates in childhood. When caregivers place conditions on their affection, children may feel they must meet expectations to be worthy of love. As a result, they may distort their memories to justify feelings of unworthiness. On the other hand, unconditional love fosters congruence, allowing children to feel accepted as they are. This helps them maintain consistency between their self-image and ideal self.

This book explores how incongruences develop within the self-concept. We will discuss this concept in greater depth later. For now, let’s examine the differences between positive and negative self-concept.

A positive self-concept arises from congruence. It enables us to cope with life’s challenges, recognizing both strengths and weaknesses. With a clear self-understanding, we can navigate both successes and failures. Since humans are social beings, we live in environments where we receive both praise and criticism. A positive self-concept allows us to accept both without excessive emotional distress. It also encourages self-reflection, helping us take a realistic view of ourselves and the world.

Conversely, a negative self-concept leads to heightened sensitivity to criticism. People with a negative self-concept often struggle to accept both praise and mistakes. They may doubt their abilities or question others' intentions when receiving compliments. They may also feel unliked or seek excessive approval from others, prioritizing external validation over personal needs and desires.

Now that we have a basic understanding of self-concept and how incongruences can manifest, a deeper exploration of the negative self-concept will help clarify how incongruence affects our self-perception.

# Self-Abandonment

*“The difficulty in overcoming self-abandonment is that it is very often unconscious behavior. Some of us are so deeply ingrained in our survival traits, and swamped in self-delusion, that we cannot see when we are neglecting ourselves. It is extremely difficult to heal from self-abandoning behavior without help. We need non-shaming people to mirror back to us our disempowering behavior.”*

*-Christopher Dines*

Have you ever thought about how much you value yourself? How much do you trust yourself? Is it hard for you to express your feelings and ideas? Do you sacrifice your own needs to please others? Have you ever felt that you don't matter?

You might feel a little uncomfortable or curious about these questions, so let's delve into the concept more thoroughly. Often, when one rejects, suppresses, or ignores parts of oneself entirely, this phenomenon is referred to as "self-abandonment." In this process, we give up on ourselves when we don't appreciate what we have, when we fail to act in our own interests, and when we don't encourage or comfort ourselves. Self-abandonment can happen in subtle ways—often without us even realizing it. When we were young, we were sometimes encouraged to reject parts of ourselves to avoid making others uncomfortable.

There are different ways self-abandonment can manifest in our lives, such as:

* You find it impossible to trust your instincts. You spend a lot of time overthinking or ruminating, and you rely on others to guide you. You assume they know more than you do.
* You suppress your needs and interests to please others in order to gain their validation.
You hide parts of yourself, including your interests, goals, and emotions, rather than sharing them.
* You have unrealistic expectations of yourself. No matter how much you accomplish, you never feel worthy.
* You cultivate negative views about yourself. Your painfully high standards often cause you to speak hurtful, mean things to yourself.
* You feel guilty for making small mistakes.
* You don't see your needs as valid and feel unsympathetic toward yourself.
* You actively avoid or ignore uncomfortable feelings.
* Your actions are motivated by pleasing others, even when they conflict with your beliefs.
* Your values aren't the foundation of your decisions.
* You neglect your own well-being and focus on other people's needs, wants, and problems instead.
* You don't stand up for yourself. You don't ask for what you want.
* Your boundaries are unclear or nonexistent. You let people take advantage of you.

Self-abandonment is learned through experience, but it's important to note that it can also be unlearned. During childhood, when caregivers struggle to meet our emotional needs, we may feel emotionally abandoned. The same applies when caregivers physically abandon us.

As we grow up, we internalize the belief that we are unworthy or undesirable. This results in a lack of confidence in ourselves. Consequently, we rarely recognize or respect our own needs, wants, and boundaries—we abandon ourselves. Essentially, as we grow older, we tend to repeat the same patterns we experienced in childhood. We choose partners and friends who mistreat, exploit, or fail to support us—just as we do to ourselves. The truth is, we don’t know how to care for ourselves because no one truly looked after us as children.

As adults, we develop a fear of intimacy. Our instinct is either to avoid closeness or to attach ourselves to people who prefer distant relationships—people who seem to provide protection but ultimately reinforce our abandonment. These relationships may offer just enough closeness to meet our needs temporarily, but they often create distance through constant issues. As a result, unfulfilling relationships reinforce our feelings of unworthiness and hopelessness, further distorting our perception of relationships.

When relationships end, they can intensify feelings of abandonment and intimacy-related fears. Some individuals may withdraw completely, becoming more reclusive, while others may struggle to acknowledge or accept the end of a relationship. Fear of rejection may lead us to misinterpret situations, scan for negative signals, and avoid discussing our needs and feelings. In turn, this can cause us to sabotage relationships through distancing behaviors such as criticism or spending more time with others. When relationships fail, our feelings of isolation, rejection, and hopelessness deepen—continuing the cycle of self-abandonment.

The Self-Abandonment Cycle:
Childhood abandonment → Fear of intimacy → Abandoning relationships → Greater fear of intimacy → Loneliness and hopelessness → More abandoned relationships

Because this cycle is self-destructive, it contributes to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, trust issues, and unhealthy relationships. While abandoning ourselves may have been a survival mechanism in childhood, it is no longer helpful in adulthood. To break the cycle and begin trusting and valuing ourselves, we must explore how to regain self-worth.

Primarily, it’s important to understand that we don’t actively choose to abandon ourselves. Therefore, we can't simply decide to stop doing it overnight. However, by understanding our patterns, we can take small but meaningful steps to heal.

To break the cycle, it is essential to recognize that self-abandonment stems from a lack of self-confidence. The solution lies in developing self-trust and internal commitment. Any activity that fosters self-care, self-exploration, or self-expression can help. Pay attention to your thoughts, observe how you feel when you acknowledge your emotions, and be honest with yourself rather than judgmental.

Ask yourself meaningful questions:

* Are my thoughts influenced by negative emotions or actual circumstances?
* What shapes my thinking—my own values and beliefs, or the opinions of others?

By engaging in self-reflection, you can resolve internal conflicts based on your own thoughts rather than external influences.

In addition, therapy is a crucial step in healing the inner wounds of self-abandonment. Therapy allows us to examine both the nature and impact of our upbringing. This does not mean endorsing or excusing our caregivers' actions; rather, it is about separating their influence from our self-concept and reclaiming our sense of self-worth.

# Self-Blame

*“You have to let it go. You can hold on to the hate and the love and even the bitterness, but you have to go of the blame. The blame is what's tearing you down, babe."*

*― Colleen Hoover*

“I am not worthy, I am not lovable, and I am not smart enough.”

We are all faced with situations in our daily lives where we unknowingly repeat these negative sentences in our minds. Being self-critical is not necessarily a bad thing. Our sense of responsibility, guilt, and shame helps us learn from our mistakes and prevents us from hurting others. It can make us more compassionate toward each other. However, it becomes problematic when we hold ourselves accountable for actions we didn’t take or for things we shouldn’t feel responsible or ashamed of. Even though we may not be aware of it, these feelings or actions associated with such thoughts can impact our self-esteem.

Our minds tend to generate these thoughts whenever we feel inadequate in a challenging situation, as a way of controlling or protecting ourselves from pain or insecurity. Essentially, the thought creates a loop, leading us to assume something is wrong with us, rather than with the situation. This makes us internalize the feeling, and we can console ourselves by owning it. As these thoughts are repeated and we accept them as our truth, shame and self-blame become effective control mechanisms. Consequently, we lose the ability to see our lives as a whole, and self-blame becomes entrenched.

It’s important to distinguish between the healthy act of taking responsibility and the unhealthy act of self-blame. Our actions allow us to determine whether we are at fault, and if so, we can apologize or pledge to act differently in the future. Self-blame, on the other hand, is a reaction to negative events, even when we aren’t involved.

In difficult situations, it’s easy for blame to become personalized, creating a vicious cycle. Any negative event may lead us to feel incapable of controlling the situation. As a result, we may start blaming ourselves, either because we think we made a mistake or because we believe we are inherently bad individuals. This belief then manifests as guilt, passivity, depression, or anxiety. Moreover, this cycle can affect our lives in specific ways:

* People with an unhealthy pattern of self-blame may be overly critical of themselves, unfairly blamed by others, and expected to live up to unrealistic standards. These judgments become part of how they perceive and relate to themselves and the world. They may identify as "bad" or "worthless."
* Their thinking tends to be polarized, viewing things as either entirely good or entirely bad. Common thoughts include, "I'll never be able to do that," "I'm always unsuccessful," and "I'm always wrong."
* They may struggle with indecision and self-doubt.
* Those who feel responsible for their mistakes may neglect self-care, and some might even engage in self-harm.
* In interpersonal relationships, they may normalize abuse, finding it difficult to resolve conflicts constructively and struggling with a distorted view of healthy relationships.

It is particularly damaging when children experience emotional neglect, physical abuse, or even sexual abuse, as they are often not allowed to feel the emotions they should—anger, betrayal, abandonment, or hurt. They are typically not comforted or given the mental resolution necessary to heal and move forward. Furthermore, since the child is dependent on the caregiver who is responsible for the harm, it becomes difficult for them to harbor negative feelings toward that caregiver, who is supposed to protect them.

The child begins to sense something is wrong and believes they are the cause of the problems. Their minds begin to wonder, "What is my fault? Why is this happening?" They are often blamed for the pain they experience. Caregivers may downplay or invalidate their feelings while blaming or threatening them for everything that happens. These experiences set the child up for a pattern of self-blame, which represses their true feelings, leaving them unaddressed and often underreported. These issues can then carry over into adulthood.

Though it can be challenging to break the unhealthy cycle of self-blame after a lifetime of conditioned thinking, we can learn to understand this cycle and work to resolve it. Professional assistance can be very helpful in addressing this pattern more effectively. In the meantime, try to become aware of your beliefs about your actions, feelings, or thoughts. Instead of judging yourself, ask yourself questions. Take time to reflect on the feelings you may be experiencing and find ways to transform those destructive feelings into more constructive ones. Keeping track of your thoughts can help you recognize the pattern and begin to address it.

# Self-Betrayal

*There is nothing worse than betraying yourself.*

*-Oprah*

An act of betrayal is probably the most devastating loss anyone can endure. In other words, betrayal involves someone breaking the trust we have in them. In contrast, self-betrayal involves deceiving oneself. A refusal to trust oneself or their own intuition underlies this phenomenon. Self-betrayal can occur in a wide variety of ways. For instance, it is possible to sacrifice all your own needs to maintain a relationship—not necessarily a romantic one, but also a friendship or a family relationship. If we are in a pattern of self-betrayal, we may do this most often. There is a natural apprehension in us, and sometimes we feel as though we can never be enough, or perhaps we are afraid of what life would look like without that relationship and cannot imagine life without it.

Another way self-betrayal manifests is by neglecting oneself with obligations, leaving no time for personal care. Instead of owning up to self-responsibility and taking responsibility for one's own choices, we may excuse our actions by pointing to someone else's needs. In essence, we are not ready to take responsibility for ourselves, which is unhealthy. A related manifestation of this is saying "yes" to things that later cause resentment. It's like making all kinds of commitments and obligations when you really don't mean to. Due to your willingness to say "yes" so many times, you will become resentful of all those commitments, obligations, and the people you've committed to.

The reason behind doing all these things is the desire for external validation, without actually wanting to do them. It is likely that you continue to do something despite not liking it because you seek others' approval. The fact is, you have no clue what you truly want. If we are doing things just for the sake of getting someone else's approval, we may get their approval, but it won't make us feel good, and that is a betrayal. By doing so, we are betraying ourselves.

In addition to the desire for approval from others, the need for approval can also stem from within ourselves. By constantly comparing ourselves to others, we may try to feel good enough by reaffirming our worth. This is considered a major betrayal because, at its core, the primary concern is that you're not good enough.

A lack of confidence in oneself may also convince us to make safer decisions rather than those that feel right to us. It is even possible that we may not take the necessary actions to perform at our best or expect others to make us happy.

Due to the feeling that we are not good enough within ourselves, we seek out others to fill the void in order to feel whole. This is where self-betrayal truly boils down to, and why it's so important to heal self-betrayal and catch ourselves when we are doing it. If we repeatedly indulge in this cycle of betrayal, it becomes impossible to stand on our own two feet.

We can betray ourselves in other circumstances too, such as when we procrastinate or hold back from pursuing something we want. This may happen because we want to please others, or perhaps we are simply intimidated. When we behave in a way that's meant to please other people rather than ourselves, we admit to ourselves that we don't like who we are, which activates the belief that we're not enough. Often, we search for other people or ways to fill these voids and avoid taking responsibility for ourselves. It becomes difficult to have compassion or forgiveness for ourselves when we're in self-betrayal mode. We carry a great deal of shame and guilt. In our constant state of self-betrayal, so many things weigh us down that, if we don't recognize these factors, it becomes very hard to break out of this cycle.

The first step in eliminating the self-betrayal pattern is to understand why it exists. The act of self-betrayal often starts in childhood. It is usually conditioned, imitated, or learned through conditions of worth. These conditions determine whether something is deemed "worthy" of affection. A child must attain something specific according to the caregiver's preference to gain parental affection. Everything revolves around a give-and-take principle. When a child is unable to fulfill their wish, they are treated as though they are worthless. As a consequence, the sense of not being "good enough" develops. The urge to be praised remains with the child, and they perform activities aligned with the caregiver's interests. As a result, people-pleasing and approval-seeking tendencies grow stronger in later life, often manifesting in adulthood as the accommodating partner who always puts their partner's needs last, while sacrificing their own.

It is important to understand that if our reality was denied in childhood, we may quickly adopt our parents' reality, as well as their choices and behaviors. This leads us to identify their reality as our own, causing us to betray our own. As a result, impulsive behavior, poor choices, and toxic habits emerge, leading to a denial of our basic need for self-love.

One of the biggest steps to breaking the cycle of betrayal is to begin forgiving ourselves. Often, we must forgive ourselves for the mistakes we made when we were trying to survive or had no other choice. We need to take action on these things. Keeping an honest account of your own needs and desires will allow you to focus on your life rather than someone else's. It's important to realize that no one knows you and your path better than you do. So, your best bet is to trust yourself—your inner wisdom and intuition. Give yourself the respect and love you deserve. Make sure to give yourself the love and affection you would like to receive from the world. By taking care of yourself, you will be able to care for others without neglecting your own needs.

# Self-Criticism

*“You've been criticizing yourself for years and it hasn't worked. Try approving yourself and see what happens.”*

*― Louise Hay*

“I look awful in this dress.”
“She must be remembering that embarrassing moment.”
“I am horrible at this.”

These are just a few examples of how our inner critic responds to the events and actions we encounter every day. Before diving into the patterns of self-criticism, it is important to understand a few things about it. Specifically, we need to distinguish between being self-reflective and being self-critical.

Having the ability to reflect on oneself is an essential aspect of being human. Reflecting on ourselves in this way can be helpful when we examine our thoughts, feelings, or actions in an objective manner. This process can assist us in developing wisdom. Some benefits of self-reflection include: becoming aware of negative patterns in our lives, feeling motivated to achieve our goals, seeing the big picture, soothing difficult emotions, identifying values, and supporting decision-making. In contrast, self-criticism is a reflexive form of reflection that is demeaning, devaluing, and destructive. Through self-criticism, we turn our attention inward in a way that inhibits our ability to live fully and engage assertively with life. When individuals are overly self-critical, they may experience guilt, a sense of failure, fear of rejection, and a tendency to prioritize achievement over social connection. As a result, they may find it difficult to build close relationships.

Self-criticism can manifest in various ways, including:

* Blaming yourself swiftly when bad things happen, while ignoring the role of external factors.
* Failing to examine what caused the problem or what can be improved, while feeling self-conscious and lacking confidence in your abilities.
* Avoiding risks because you believe you will fail.
* Not expressing your opinions.
* Comparing yourself to others and feeling disappointed if you fall short, or perceiving others as better than you.
* Setting excessively high standards for yourself.
* Dwelling on the worst-case scenario, using worry as a form of self-doubt and self-criticism to avoid failure and humiliation.
* Reluctance to ask for help.
* Disregarding self-assertion out of fear of rejection.
* Analyzing past mistakes without learning from them, instead of blaming yourself.
* Overreacting to others' comments and taking things personally.
* Thinking in terms of black-and-white values.

To explore where this pattern of self-criticism originated, we must look back to early childhood. Some caregivers may have extremely high expectations or rigid demands. When children fail to meet such expectations, caregivers may react in a way that implies criticism. Additionally, siblings who receive attention and praise for their achievements may cause the child to feel inferior or unworthy. This perception may lead the child to engage in inner criticism. As children, we often internalize how our caregivers and peers treat us, attempting to rewire our behavior to avoid further criticism in the future. In response, the child may try to meet the demands of others. Over time, the child may begin to criticize themselves as a result of living in such a critical environment. There may come a point when the child has criticized themselves so much that external criticism from parents has less impact.

These past experiences may contribute to extreme perfectionism, causing feelings of shame in front of others and even in front of oneself. Additionally, it may lead to feelings of unlovability and undesirability when trying to connect with others. These experiences can fuel an internal voice that echoes the criticisms heard in childhood, becoming the dominant voice in explaining why something went wrong.

To break the cycle of self-criticism, we must keep a few things in mind. The first step is to recognize that our self-criticism arose for a reason and likely served some purpose in our lives. Therefore, we should avoid criticizing ourselves for being self-critical. Instead, we can focus on identifying and tracking the feelings behind our self-criticism, so we can recognize where it shows up in our lives. By listening attentively to our inner dialogue, we can catch when it becomes harsh and critical. Often, feelings of anger and anxiety stem from our inner voice becoming disrespectful.

By becoming more aware of our critical inner voice, we can restructure it with a more realistic perspective. As much as possible, we should be compassionate with ourselves and treat our thoughts with respect. Take a moment to examine the evidence supporting negative thoughts, and ask yourself how likely they are to be true. Try to imagine yourself from someone else’s perspective to understand their viewpoint. Above all, focus on self-improvement that involves acceptance, rather than dwelling on negative thoughts.

# Self-Doubt

*“When self-doubt creeps in, don't ignore it - address it. Respond to harsh self-criticism with something more compassionate. Talk to yourself like a trusted friend and refuse to believe your unrealistic, negative inner monologue.”*

*-Amy Morin*

We have all experienced self-doubt at some point in our lives. In order to invest in or learn about something, doubt helps us to be curious and allows us to examine a number of aspects. When tackling any task, it is sometimes useful to ask ourselves questions about our abilities, as this can give us an idea of the assumptions we need to challenge. As we reflect inward, we question and challenge ourselves through self-doubt. Having some self-doubt makes us humble and able to relate to others better. However, there can be a downside to self-doubt as well. It can prevent us from recognizing our own good qualities, making it harder to maintain motivation if we cannot see our positive attributes. We may begin to believe that we will never achieve our goals, never possess talent, never be worthy of something important, or never succeed. Every small failure becomes a sign that we are unworthy. We may feed unhealthily on our own self-esteem or self-worth when we let unhealthful self-doubt consume us.

Our repeated conversations with ourselves form a structured pattern over time. Our minds become accustomed to certain thoughts and begin to believe them, making them our reality. For instance, if we constantly tell ourselves, "I am incapable," "I am not good enough," or "I am stupid," these ideas become ingrained in our minds and affect our perception of ourselves. Once we build up enough of this perception, our belief system prevents us from making efforts based on our assumptions. When we stop making efforts to achieve something, we unknowingly reinforce our own negative beliefs and create a vicious cycle.

Sometimes, we may refuse to be accountable for not accomplishing a task and place the blame on an external factor. It may appear as though it wasn’t about us or our abilities that failed, but the situation itself. This arises from a fear of failure, leading to procrastination. However, if this behavior continues too long, we will eventually come to believe that we are incapable of succeeding, as we forget how good we are when we do try. We might also find ourselves in situations with excessive demands, a result of our fear of failure affecting our self-confidence. As a consequence, we put in too much effort in an attempt to avoid failure. We become unsure whether our abilities alone can lead to success, so we overcompensate by investing extra effort to increase our chances of success and reduce failure risks.

It is also important to recognize that by denying our own achievements, we contribute to an underlying issue of self-kindness. Our tendency to be harsher toward ourselves stands in stark contrast to the way we are supportive and nurturing toward others in need. We become consumed by the need for approval from others when we are plagued by self-doubt. Typically, we worry more about failures and negative evaluations, and we judge ourselves more harshly. This often results in isolation.

Experiences in childhood, particularly when caregivers act inconsistently or negatively or when interactions are neglectful, can lead to self-doubt. Children who experience this kind of exploitation may begin to question their worth and develop a needy nature, potentially leading to other mental health concerns. These children often struggle to participate in situations where they can exert some control, and their minds are constantly filled with questions about their incapability, resulting in a constant sense of uncertainty. Alternatively, some children raised by caregivers may lack healthy self-esteem due to their upbringing. Every time they seek safety and reassurance from their caregivers, they are praised and rewarded with affection. This cycle can lead to a savior complex in parents and unhealthy dependencies in children when taken to an extreme. In addition, because children learn they can relieve anxiety by seeking reassurance from their parents, they never learn to manage their own anxiety and make decisions in situations of uncertainty. When faced with a challenging situation, they may doubt their abilities and engage in the pattern of self-doubt. The past is a powerful force that shapes our beliefs, and difficulty forging and maintaining healthy relationships as an adult can be linked to the patterns formed in childhood.

Several factors contribute to and perpetuate the habit of self-doubt, but there are strategies to help undo it. To become aware of the negative voices we encounter within ourselves, it is important to identify them. Once we acknowledge and embrace our self-doubt, we can deal with it and refocus our energy on completing our goals. Ignoring, suppressing, or changing the mechanism within us may provide temporary relief, but it will resurface more powerfully. After accepting it, try to remain present and prepare something positive to refer to whenever you feel negative or uncertain. Begin restructuring the negative statements in your mind, replacing them with beliefs that you are capable and reinforcing them by repeating positive inner thoughts. It may also be necessary to give ourselves time and space to unwind and focus on something else. In doing so, we clear our minds and gain a fresh perspective.

Most importantly, practice self-compassion. Instead of berating yourself for failures or doubting your abilities, treat yourself as you would a good friend—understanding and kind. Alongside working on yourself, it’s a good idea to seek support from loved ones, like friends and family. You can always ask for help when needed for your self-improvement.

# Self-Gaslighting

*“I owe myself the biggest apology for putting up with what I didn’t deserve.”*

*-Anonymous*

"I am being overdramatic."

"My problems don’t matter that much."

Have you ever had these thoughts running through your mind? Have you ever questioned your own actions in response to what’s happening around you? Do you ever question your own reality?

If so, then you are probably gaslighting yourself. Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation in which an individual causes another to question their reality, memories, or sanity. When we doubt our perception of our own experiences or emotions, we tend to gaslight ourselves by dismissing them. Our environment can shape how we see ourselves and the world around us. If we are constantly subjected to an environment that makes us feel bad about ourselves and creates a sense of distrust in our surroundings, it can negatively impact our self-esteem. Therefore, when we experience external difficulties, we often internalize those patterns. We may continue to repeat those patterns later in life when we've been gaslit by someone else.

Because gaslighting is a mechanism involving manipulation, it can manifest in several ways in our lives. It’s important to recognize when it has become a part of our mindset. If you display any of the following signs, you may be gaslighting yourself:

* The way you behave and react may conflict with your morals or intentions. Rather than recognizing the emotion you're feeling, you try to explain or justify how you "should" respond to it.
* You are constantly critical of your actions and reactions. You frequently compare yourself to others.
* You disregard your own experiences and emotions, often convincing yourself that you’re overreacting or that you’re in the wrong.
* You tend to doubt your accomplishments. You might not acknowledge your achievements or might downplay their significance, failing to value your own worth.
* You start questioning whether events actually happened or if you're making them up.

It can be hard to recognize and accept the pattern of invalidating our own experiences and emotions. To begin identifying it, it's crucial to recognize the visible signs in our daily lives. Acknowledging them is the first step. In order to resolve the issue, self-acceptance is key. The next step is to ask yourself and identify the root cause of the problem. Given the complexity of this issue, it can be difficult to recognize the full pattern on your own. Therefore, it's often helpful to consult a mental health professional who can help you understand why you tend to gaslight yourself. Validating your own experiences is essential to breaking the pattern of self-gaslighting.

It’s vital to trust yourself and understand that your experiences, feelings, and perceptions are real—they affect you, and they matter. Practicing positive self-talk can help you reprogram your inner thoughts. Even though this may feel uncomfortable or untrue at first, the more you repeat it, the more you’ll begin to internalize what you really feel. You might also find it helpful to write down your thoughts without judgment, which can give you a safe space to process your emotions and better understand them.

Focus on yourself. Engage in activities that make you happy and help you accept your accomplishments. Learn to transform your discomfort into confidence. When you’re with others, try to understand their perspectives and continue reflecting on the situation. As you take the time to get to know yourself, you'll be better equipped to identify the pattern and empowered to heal.

# Self-Justification

*“If you are trying to justify something, you are trying to escape from something that you don’t want to admit to”*

*-Twel Swan*

All of us try to maintain a positive view of ourselves, especially when faced with evidence that contradicts this belief. We like to think that we are reasonable people who make sound decisions and refrain from engaging in cruel behavior. All of these thoughts are based on how we perceive ourselves. Therefore, we feel uncomfortable when we are confronted with information that we believe goes against our beliefs or is otherwise contrary to who we think we are. Self-justification occurs when we convince ourselves and others that the way we behaved, felt, and thought is logically correct, and we may even invent reasonable explanations for why we acted the way we did.

Before we move forward, it's important to recognize that self-justification can be both positive and negative. Life is full of embarrassing moments, and if we don’t justify or explain them to ourselves, we may struggle to move on and live peacefully. Without self-justification, we might be trapped in a loop of embarrassment. However, this blind justification can also make it difficult to recognize our genuine mistakes, distorting our reality. As a result, we may fail to release unhealthy behaviors or take accountability for our actions, which harms our overall attitude and impacts both ourselves and others negatively.

What prompts us to justify ourselves? Cognitive dissonance can help us understand this phenomenon. We need to make sure that our beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes are in sync with one another. When we become aware of an inconsistency among two or more of these cognitive processes, we experience the unpleasant psychological state of cognitive dissonance. As a result, we are motivated to eliminate this dissonance by changing our beliefs or adding new thoughts that restore consistency. This process happens because we cannot tolerate the inconsistency in our self-image or positive view of ourselves.

When there is dissonance between what we believe and what we experience, the discomfort is so strong that we tend to ignore or dismiss information that undermines our beliefs. This leads to several unhealthy behaviors:

* We become stuck by ignoring uncomfortable experiences for the sake of being right.
* We become rigid in our thinking, unresponsive to information that reveals a better perspective.
* As long as rigidity persists, forgiveness and a fresh start become impossible.
* Rather than learning lessons or changing our life path, we continue to engage in biases we've created.

We need to understand why we fall into patterns of self-justification through cognitive dissonance. One factor is that we are unlikely to forget our past trauma, which may resurface spontaneously in our memories. However, we may also deny these memories, reinforcing the self-justified narrative we hold. In both cases, self-justification influences how we remember past events. Memory becomes unreliable, shaped by an ego-enhancing bias that blurs the edges of past events, softens the implications of blame, and distorts the truth. We tend to recall our past in a way that supports our perception of ourselves.

In instances when we can’t clearly remember something, our mistakes aren’t random. Normative memory distortions help us reduce dissonance, protect our decisions, and preserve our beliefs. Distortions are more likely when we desire to maintain a certain self-concept.

When our memories are used to strengthen relationships with ourselves and others, dissonance arises when those memories turn out to be false. To perceive things more accurately, we often need to restructure our understanding of the situation. Seeking help to work through these complex issues for self-improvement is a great idea. Additionally, it’s important to keep an eye on your own thoughts, beliefs, and actions. To achieve this, separate your perception of yourself from uncomfortable thoughts or feelings and acknowledge them. To truly understand yourself, recognize that an embarrassing situation or mistake does not define who you are. We all make mistakes as humans, but that doesn’t diminish our worth. Instead, we should be prepared to reflect, take responsibility, and move forward. Learning to forgive yourself and others will not only relieve the burden but also help you accept things more effectively.

# Self-Loathing

*“Hatred is the stuff that we turn on others because we turned it on ourselves first.”*

*― Craig D. Lounsbrough*

“She is so beautiful, I will never look like her, and I hate myself.”

We often compare ourselves to others, whether it's based on our abilities, achievements, or even appearance. While it can be healthy to introspect and draw inspiration from others, constantly evaluating where you stand compared to them can be mentally harmful and negatively impact your self-image. In the example above, the individual is comparing herself to a woman who appears very beautiful to her. Instead of admiring the woman, the individual becomes trapped in self-criticism, leading to feelings of self-hatred and frustration. This negative self-view, often accompanied by misguided thoughts and beliefs, can manifest in various ways, including:

* Seeing things from an extreme perspective. You perceive your life as either completely positive or negative, with no middle ground. A small mistake may feel like a catastrophic event.
* Seeking validation through your feelings. When you feel inadequate or inferior, you may assume your emotions reflect reality and that something is wrong with you.
* Having low self-esteem. You may often feel inferior when compared to others.
* Viewing situations pessimistically. You focus on negative events, even if they are minor.
* Seeking external approval for self-worth. Your self-view is influenced by how others evaluate you or what they think of you.
* Struggling to fit in. You may feel like others dislike you and don’t understand why anyone would want to spend time with you.
* Taking constructive criticism personally. Instead of seeing it as helpful feedback, you may interpret it as an attack.
* Feeling jealous of others. You may try to bring others down to boost your own sense of self-worth.
* Avoiding positivity. Fear of ruining relationships or isolating yourself may lead you to push people away.
* Being self-pitying. You might feel like life is unfair or that the world is against you.
* Having difficulty forgiving yourself. You may hold onto past regrets or mistakes, unable to let go of them.

Now that we understand the different ways in which self-loathing can manifest, it’s important to ask: why do we feel this way? What drives us to hate ourselves? While there are no simple answers, we can look at a few general factors that contribute to this phenomenon.

If you often find yourself thinking, “I hate myself,” you might be influenced by an inner critic that constantly tells you you're not good enough. You may start to believe these negative thoughts, assuming they reflect reality. This inner voice often originates in childhood, where we absorb the beliefs and attitudes of our caregivers. If caregivers struggle with their own self-esteem, they may unknowingly pass on those feelings of inadequacy to their children.

Caregivers are human, and their own experiences—such as unresolved emotions or past trauma—can impact how they treat their children. Children are especially sensitive to the emotional states of their caregivers, and even small displays of anger or frustration can leave lasting impressions. Stressful situations may feel life-threatening to children, which leads them to internalize negative beliefs about themselves.

As children, we may not see ourselves as individuals needing help; instead, we identify with the caregiver’s negative emotions. Over time, these early experiences shape how we view ourselves, often leading to feelings of inadequacy and the belief that we need to prove our worth.

Traumatic events, such as bullying, can also contribute to feelings of self-hatred. Negative experiences in childhood—whether through bullying or other forms of trauma—can leave lasting scars on how we see ourselves. The emotional impact of these events may linger long after the bullying has stopped, reinforcing feelings of worthlessness. To overcome these persistent negative thoughts, it's essential to confront the trauma and engage in deep, reflective work.

Understanding the origins of self-hatred is crucial, but we also need to recognize how it manifests in our daily lives. When caught in the cycle of self-loathing, our self-confidence may plummet, and we may give up on pursuing our goals for fear of failure. This doubt in ourselves makes it difficult to trust our own decisions, and we may seek constant external validation before taking any action.

The habit of perfectionism may arise as we try to feel better about ourselves by presenting an idealized version of our accomplishments. We may view the future with dread, excessively worrying about what lies ahead.

These feelings of inadequacy often lead to self-destructive behaviors, such as substance abuse or overeating, and may cause us to neglect our physical and emotional well-being. Moreover, our relationships may suffer as we unknowingly attract people who take advantage of our vulnerabilities.

It’s essential to recognize that this cycle creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more we stay stuck in this pattern, the harder it becomes to break free. It’s vital to seek help from professionals and gain a better understanding of our emotional state. Tracking and challenging negative thoughts can be a helpful step, as well as trying to view situations from a more objective perspective.

To build faith in yourself and cultivate a positive mindset, catch yourself during negative inner dialogues and replace them with positive affirmations. By repeating these affirmations regularly, you’ll foster a sense of self-contentment. Finally, practicing self-care and forgiveness will allow you to release past regrets and move toward realizing your full potential in life.

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# Self-Obsession

*“Self absorbed people only think about what makes them feel good-at the moment, they don’t have any respect or regard for anyone else. Then they wonder why their relationships fail.”*

*-Anonymous*

In advance of analyzing the concept of self-obsession, it is imperative to emphasize that we will focus only on the fundamental aspects necessary to understand what self-obsession is. Since self-obsession encompasses a great deal of information, it will not be possible to cover everything here.

Now, let's discuss self-obsession. What does it refer to? Essentially, self-obsession is being preoccupied with oneself or one's own needs while excluding the outside world. When we become engrossed in our own interests, it becomes difficult to show concern for others. As a result, we fail to understand others' thoughts and feelings, instead over-focusing on ourselves. While it's important to recognize our own wants and needs, when we become overly concerned about our perceived exclusivity or how others see us, or even try to maintain a special status, we fall into the pattern of self-obsession.

One question that arises when considering this concept is how self-love differs from self-obsession. There's a thin line between self-love and self-obsession, and often we fail to recognize these subtle differences. To clarify, it's essential to remember that not loving ourselves is harmful, but excessive love for ourselves can also be detrimental, preventing us from growing both mentally and physically.

Therefore, let's identify the key points that can help us distinguish between self-love and self-obsession:

* **Self-awareness:** To love and accept ourselves, we must know our strengths and flaws. Our self-awareness is a valuable resource, as we understand ourselves better than anyone else. While everyone has flaws, it's essential to work on them, acknowledge our mistakes, and move forward. However, when we become self-obsessed, we refuse to accept any flaws, believing we are perfect. Criticism, even if constructive, may be met with defensiveness, leading to further conflict.
* **Empathy and responsiveness:** Loving ourselves allows us to be responsive and empathetic toward others. In contrast, when trapped in self-obsession, we cannot genuinely care for others. We may only feign empathy if we believe it serves our agenda. Self-obsession makes it difficult to relate to others' feelings, rendering us insensitive.
* **Humility and accountability:** Self-love helps us recognize right from wrong, acknowledging that we are not always right and learning from our mistakes. In self-obsession, we believe we can never be wrong and blame others for any shortcomings.
* **Respect for others:** Loving ourselves enables us to respect others and treat them with dignity. However, when self-obsessed, we are solely focused on our own dignity and crave attention and admiration from others. Instead of showing respect, we may express arrogance to maintain our sense of specialness.
* **Recognizing the gray area:** Life and people are rarely black or white; there is always a gray area. Self-obsession, however, prevents us from seeing this nuance, as everything is seen in terms of opposition—those who support us and those who are against us.

As mentioned, self-obsession has many layers that reveal deeper meanings and causes behind this pattern. The fundamental cause of self-obsession often stems from our early years, where we are solely focused on our own needs because we are incapable of understanding others. At this stage, we only perceive our basic needs, and when those needs are met, we feel fulfilled. As we grow more aware, we begin to recognize the outside world and learn that others can fulfill our needs. We also start to develop an understanding of differences, preferences, and the ability to choose.

However, self-obsession occurs when we cannot move beyond the self-centeredness typical of childhood. We fail to develop the independence that others do, remaining dependent on the world around us and unwilling to accept that it may not fulfill all our needs. Our desires and needs shift into demands when we become self-obsessed. At some point, we may realize that others cannot fill our emptiness, which may lead to grandiose beliefs about ourselves, seeking admiration, or feeling entitled to superiority.

It's important to recognize the signs of self-obsession in our own thoughts and actions. By understanding and regulating our emotions, tolerating criticism and failure, and reducing unrealistic expectations, we can better maintain relationships and cope with these tendencies.

For a deeper understanding of the roots of self-obsession and how to manage it effectively, consulting a Mental Health Professional is crucial. They can provide a broader and more specific perspective, helping individuals find healthier ways to cope.

# Self-Pity

*“Feeling sorry for yourself, and your present condition, is not only a waste of energy but the worst habit you could possibly have”*

*-Dale Carnegie*

"Why do these things keep happening to me?"

"Why am I unable to be happy?”

Sometimes, we feel sorry for ourselves or even say negative things about ourselves. Our tendency is to fall into self-pity when faced with a tough situation, seeking to justify our actions. At some point in our lives, we all do this, but when we become conditioned to use self-pity as our primary coping mechanism for every aspect of life, it becomes a harmful pattern.

We often choose this phenomenon because it makes us feel good. It allows us to reject the ultimate truth of a situation and soothe ourselves simultaneously. The actual scenario fades into the background as we focus on ourselves, avoiding its consequences.

It’s necessary to understand the nature of self-pity to gain insight into this pattern:

* Self-pity is addictive. When we express pity for ourselves, especially in front of others, we tend to attract their attention. We feel good being in the spotlight, even if only for a moment. Once this attention is validated, it becomes a habit we seek to sustain.
* As a result of constantly seeking validation, your self-esteem may suffer.
* Because you're too busy feeling sorry for yourself, you neglect to express your emotions. When faced with a problem, you don't try to find a solution but instead bury your emotions, keeping yourself miserable.
* On your bad days, you may find yourself alone, as people are not always there to give you attention.
* Your view of yourself, others, and life in general becomes pessimistic. This leads to doubts and negativity about your circumstances, which prevents you from being productive.
* Even if someone tries to help you see that you're stuck in the self-pity pattern, you may not be ready to recognize it. This cycle becomes difficult to break, and you find yourself repeatedly trapped in it.
* Self-pity is often used as a coping strategy. Sometimes, it serves to conceal the wrongs we've done by making ourselves the victims instead of confronting our own mistakes.

If you notice that you’re frequently engaging in self-pity, it's important to acknowledge and address it head-on. Every individual is flawed and fallible, and it’s okay to embrace our imperfections. Rather than staying stuck in self-pity, it’s better to face challenges and take steps to change the situation. Gaining a deeper understanding of the issue is often best achieved with professional assistance.

However, you can also take personal action, such as keeping a gratitude journal where you write down the things you're thankful for each day. This helps reprogram your thought patterns. Consider looking at situations from a different perspective, especially if it’s hard to seek support from loved ones. Engage in activities that provide you with a better understanding of life's challenges. Take care of others by meeting their needs. The goal is to break the self-pity pattern, allowing you to move beyond it and become more effective in achieving your goals.

# Self-Rejection

*“The greatest trap in our life is not success, popularity or power, but self-rejection.”*

*- Henri Nouwen*

All of us have experienced the fear of rejection at least once in our lives, whether it was when presenting a new idea to our boss or when showing love to someone. This fear stems from the assumption that others won't appreciate our efforts or work. As a result, we become afraid of rejection. However, when we distance ourselves from opportunities because we don’t believe in our own abilities or feel that our strengths are inadequate, we tend to reject ourselves. By rejecting ourselves, we prevent ourselves from experiencing true happiness, and as a result, we hinder our ability to grow in life.

The subtle nature of self-rejection is something we cannot easily grasp when we become caught in its pattern. Let’s explore the various ways in which self-rejection manifests in our lives:

* Your lack of confidence prevents you from seizing opportunities for growth and improvement or pursuing your desired goals. This happens because, when you fall into the pattern of self-rejection, you become stuck within your assumed comfort zone. You’re never allowed to believe that good things can also happen to you.
* You tend to constantly judge yourself. Regardless of the situation, you usually perceive yourself as "stupid," "pathetic," "inadequate," or "inferior."
* You tend to ignore your emotions or disconnect from them when you feel hurt, trying to convince yourself that nothing significant happened.
* Ignoring your feelings can leave you devastated, leading to emotions like guilt, sadness, anger, or anxiety. To avoid these negative consequences, you might engage excessively in self-judgment, causing you to rely on external distractions to alleviate these feelings, often resorting to substance abuse as a coping mechanism.
* You may exhibit perfectionistic tendencies to gain a sense of worth or mask your lack of self-love, showing that you are valuable.
* You try to push away people who love you sincerely because you believe you are unworthy. This leads you to question why others care about you, what their intentions are, and can create suspicion about their motives.
* You focus more on short-term pleasures rather than recognizing the long-term benefits that could be gained.

We can think of self-rejection as an inner voice that constantly instructs us to judge ourselves or makes us feel inadequate by repeating negative assumptions about ourselves. It all depends on our assumptions and how we perceive ourselves. Whenever we indulge in negative thinking, it triggers negative feelings, which often result in unhealthy behavior. Through self-rejection, we deny ourselves opportunities that could be beneficial, creating a protective wall that prevents us from thinking more openly or improving our actions.

However, there are steps we can take to break this cycle and move in the right direction. First, you must identify the signs of self-rejection in your life. It’s not easy to recognize these signs right away, but by paying attention to your thoughts and feelings, you can start to understand what they’re trying to tell you. Once you recognize the signs, it’s important to understand the reasons behind your self-rejection. While you may not fully understand the causes on your own, mental health professionals can help you identify the problem and take the necessary steps to address it.

The reasons for self-rejection may stem from how you were treated as a child or from difficult times in your life. Another important step is to spend time with yourself, understanding your needs, desires, strengths, and weaknesses. Have faith in yourself and learn to be kind to yourself. You cannot regain happiness or rediscover yourself if you continuously blame yourself for everything happening in your life or around you.

Additionally, forgiving yourself for the things that make you feel bad is crucial. Try viewing situations from different perspectives. This approach will help you think more rationally and provide you with a clearer understanding of the people around you. By decoding your feelings and needs, you will be able to gain a broader perspective on life and live it fully.

# Self-Sabotage

*“Self-Sabotage is when we say we want to say something and then go about making sure it doesn’t happen.”*

*-Alyce Cornyn Selby*

Self-sabotage occurs when we deliberately, either actively or passively, harm our well-being or disrupt our own success. It arises from our inner critical voice that holds us back and undermines our efforts. By sabotaging ourselves, we prevent ourselves from achieving the things we desire most in life. At times, we self-sabotage as a way of escaping uncomfortable feelings. In the process, we may try to bury difficult emotions and thoughts that we haven’t been taught how to process.

Self-sabotage can manifest in various ways, such as:

* **Constantly listening to a negative inner critic**: Each of us has an inner critic, but we also have the choice of whether to listen to it. When we are repeatedly exposed to negative messages like “you are stupid” or “you are incapable,” we are more likely to believe them and try to live according to these beliefs.
* **Indecision and negative outlook**: We often become indecisive about life situations, viewing things through a negative lens.
* **Procrastination due to fear of failure**: Fear of failure leads to procrastination, which in turn reinforces the negative belief that we are inadequate.
* **Avoiding conflict or difficult situations**: Due to fear of failure, we avoid situations that require us to step outside of our comfort zone.
* **Difficulty setting boundaries**: Even if we don’t want to say yes to someone, we tend to agree in order to please others, putting their needs ahead of our own.
* **Low self-esteem**: Negative beliefs and inaction can lead to the perception that we are unimportant or unworthy, damaging our self-esteem.
* **Engaging in self-destructive behaviors**: These may include overeating, excessive drinking, self-injury, or overspending.
* **Looking after others to avoid facing our own issues**: This can lead to codependency, where we neglect our own problems while focusing on others.

This is the basic picture of self-sabotage, but it can manifest in other ways, depending on the underlying mechanisms. To better understand it, we need to explore its causes.

First, the patterns formed during early relationships often repeat in later ones. Childhood neglect can lead to questioning our worth from an early age. If we only received parental attention when we had something to convey, we might believe there’s something wrong with us. If we struggled to cope with our caregivers' behavior, we often blamed ourselves.

As this pattern persists, we internalize the belief that we are unworthy, leading us to engage in self-destructive behaviors. It's possible we even model our parents' neglectful behavior as adults. The logic behind this is simple: we inherit and internalize the patterns we grew up with.

Additionally, past relationships, particularly those where we were mistreated or had unmet needs, can lead to self-sabotage. If we experienced abuse or neglect, we may shut down and avoid expressing our needs. This self-protective behavior prevents us from advocating for ourselves, perpetuating the cycle of self-sabotage.

Fear of failure is often a key factor in self-sabotage, reinforcing negative beliefs about ourselves. It’s a cycle: we refrain from acting because we believe we will fail, and the more we believe we will fail, the less likely we are to take action. Self-sabotaging behaviors can also emerge from a desire to control the people, situations, or outcomes around us, in an attempt to feel more comfortable and avoid vulnerability.

Breaking the cycle of self-sabotage requires talking to a mental health professional to gain a clearer understanding of these behaviors. The key to overcoming self-sabotage is identifying and acknowledging the patterns we exhibit. Recognizing these behaviors can be challenging, but it’s essential to break the cycle. Once identified, we need to actively choose to stop engaging in them, as these patterns take time to develop and will not disappear without intentional effort. Tracking our habits can help us understand their significance, enabling us to work on reversing them. Given the role of inner criticism, it’s crucial to gain clarity about our feelings and thoughts in order to prevent self-destructive behavior.

Switching from negative inner voices to positive ones is essential to improving our self-perception. This process doesn’t require radical changes immediately—small steps can lead to more positive habits. Practicing self-compassion and forgiveness can help us understand where the behavior originated and what function it served. Over time, we can adopt healthier, more effective behaviors that benefit us in the long run.

# End Note

The book consists of articles written after gathering relevant knowledge from various sources and life experiences. These articles are intended to provide an overall understanding of the phenomenon and to make readers aware of the associated concepts. The articles emphasize the importance of seeking mental health advice for individuals who wish to gain a better understanding or find a path to improvement.

It is important to note that these approaches are not definitive criteria for the manifestation of the phenomena, but rather general guidelines through which anyone can gain a glimpse of it. Manifestations differ from person to person and situation to situation. Therefore, it is our responsibility to correctly identify and acknowledge these phenomena to ensure that appropriate help can be provided to oneself and others.

# Thank You

It is truly wonderful to see that you have successfully read the entire book. I am honored that you chose it to gain insight into the hidden aspects of the self. I hope this book has provided you with a deeper understanding of the fundamental concepts of self.

My sincere gratitude goes to you for purchasing this book and exploring these concepts with curiosity. I deeply appreciate the value you’ve placed on the work.

Remember, the journey doesn’t end here; it has only just begun. Keep exploring, continue learning, and always remember to acknowledge and accept yourself.