

# A HEALTHY SENSE OF SELF

## A More Authentic You

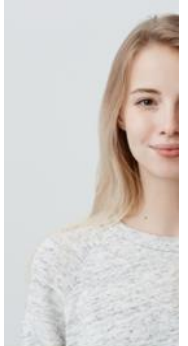


Long-term happiness starts with having a strong relationship with yourself and a healthy sense of who you are and what you want. Here are seven powerful tips to help you be a more authentic you!

1

### Define your values.

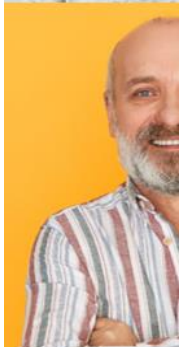
Your values and personal beliefs are fundamental to who you are. They are what you deem to be important in life, which, helps inform the choices you make and how you live your life. Values give us focus, energy, and a clearer sense of self. They can also guide the boundaries you set with others. It's important to make a conscious effort to define your true values. At times, we believe we know our values, but are actually choosing values we believe we *should* have because our family members or friends have them. Living according to another person's values can leave you feeling unfulfilled because you are working against yourself.



2

### Set healthy boundaries.

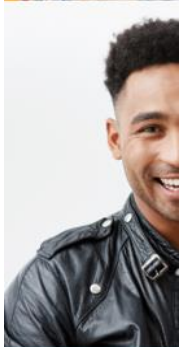
Your time and energy are precious resources and learning how to set healthy boundaries ensures that they are not diminished. Without boundaries, others can begin to influence and sometimes dictate how you live your life. Setting boundaries doesn't mean you aren't there for others, but it does mean giving yourself permission to say "no". This can be difficult for people-pleasers who fear being considered mean or rude, but there are kind ways to say no. Healthy boundaries simply mean you are making yourself the priority, which allows you to live your life according to your values and, at the same time, build your confidence and self-worth.



3

### Spend time alone.

If you want to get to know someone, you need to spend time together. The same is true about getting to know yourself better! It's healthy to spend time away from others – even your family or partner. If time alone isn't something you're used to, it may feel strange at first, but in time you will begin to hear yourself more clearly and better understand your likes and dislikes, aspects of your life you are happy with, and those you'd like to change. So, carve out an hour a day, one evening a week, or whatever you can manage to do something for yourself, by yourself. Choose an activity that you enjoy like a long walk, reading, writing in a journal, or use it as an opportunity to explore new interests.



4

### Practice self-affirmation and positive self-talk.

Research has shown that the simple act of self-affirmation can rewire your brain, reducing stress and protecting your sense of self and self-worth. Your internal dialogue is influenced by your subconscious mind, and it reveals your thoughts, beliefs, questions, and ideas. Self-talk can be both negative and positive, but you definitely want to emphasize the positive variety! Take note of your internal critic and become aware of how you talk to yourself. If you believe your self-talk is too negative, you can learn to shift your inner dialogue. When you catch yourself saying something negative to yourself, swap it for a positive statement. To practice, choose one or two affirmations that resonate with you and say them aloud several times a day and before you go to sleep. You can even write them down as you say them as further reinforcement. Choose simple, easy-to-remember phrases like "I believe in, trust, and have confidence in myself" or "I know I can accomplish anything I set my mind to".



**5 Accept yourself.** Self-acceptance is one of the most important qualities to develop. While it's easy to accept our strengths and talents and celebrate our successes and achievements, self-acceptance is not just about focusing on the "good". Know the whole picture of who you are and accept the shortcomings and failures rather than shy away from them or trying to hide them. And if there's really a part of you that you aren't happy with, then face it and commit to making a change.

**6 Be grateful to your physical self.** Practice gratitude for your body by eating well and exercising, but also taking time to simply appreciate it. We tend to ignore our bodies until something goes wrong, but there are so many amazing functions and systems that deserve our appreciation! Many of us easily fall into the trap of criticizing our bodies and constantly finding flaws when we see our reflection. Change that habit! Take a few minutes in front of the mirror each day to practice gratitude for your body. Notice the beautiful things about yourself. If can't think of anything at first, don't make excuses or give up. Commit to recognizing at least one thing. As you get more comfortable with the process, the list of things you love and appreciate about yourself will grow!

**7 Limit external negativity.** Anything that leaves you feeling less than good about yourself is something that you don't want in your life. In some cases, that may be people. While it's not always possible to avoid toxic relationships entirely, you can make a conscious effort to limit the time you spend around these people and also learn how to handle these relationships so they don't negatively impact your life and how you feel about yourself. Media is another common source of negativity. Maybe it's the magazine subscription with articles on getting that "bikini body" or the social media posts your friend keeps posting about her amazing business successes since her recent promotion. Think about what you're consuming and how they influence your relationship with yourself. Be intentional about what you expose yourself to.



## Checking in on Yourself

We often get so wrapped up in life and the things we need to do that we often forget to consider how we are feeling. Taking the time to check in on yourself helps us make informed decisions. It also helps to ensure that our priorities are actually the priorities we want to have. Make a point to regularly ask yourself questions like those below to stay connected with your authentic self.



How am I taking care of myself? Am I giving myself what I need?

How satisfied do I feel in my personal and professional relationships? What changes can I make to improve the quality of these relationships?

What is taking the most time out of my day? Am I content with the activities I'm spending the most time on? If not, what changes can I make?

Do I feel connected to something I believe is important and valuable?

What is something that I've always wanted to do? Do I have a plan to make that happen? Am I doing what I need to do to accomplish that?

**Sources** [www.healthline.com/health/sense-of-self#factors](http://www.healthline.com/health/sense-of-self#factors) | [www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/your-emotional-meter/201908/how-build-strong-sense-self](http://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/your-emotional-meter/201908/how-build-strong-sense-self) | [psychcentral.com/lib/how-to-build-a-healthy-relationship-with-yourself-every-day#4](http://psychcentral.com/lib/how-to-build-a-healthy-relationship-with-yourself-every-day#4) | Images from Freepik.com