How You See Yourself
By Set to Go
2019

In this informational text, the author explains how a stable self-image helps a person develop positive decision-making skills and maintain good relationships. As you read, take notes on the importance of maintaining a stable self-image.

Throughout our lives we continually develop and construct an image of ourselves. This image is based on how we interact with the world. It is also formed through reflection on our experiences and how we feel. As we get older, the image that we have of ourselves becomes clearer and more consistent. We develop a better idea of who we are in the world and how we feel about ourselves. This becomes our stable and consistent core. And this image of ourselves influences how we act and present ourselves.

Of course, in different environments, we show different parts of ourselves. We have different ways of behaving in the classroom versus how we act with our friends and families. But our core self-image usually stays stable, consistent, and balanced. Being able to rely on this stability is what allows us to make good decisions in any environment and stay true to ourselves.

Describe yourself

When you stop to think about it, your self-image is actually made up of many small ideas that have been shaped and forged over time. Most of your self-image develops naturally without you thinking too much about it.

If you had to describe yourself by filling in the statement “I am a(n)_____ person,” what would you say? You could include descriptors like:

• happy

• serious

1. **Consistent (adjective)**: unchanging over a period of time
The adjectives that you connect with yourself help make up your self-image. Of course, we don't often stop to write them down, but it is a helpful and thought-provoking exercise.

Why does it matter?

It is important to learn about and be aware of your self-image. This is because a stable self-image is key to a healthy sense of identity. When a person's self-image is not an accurate reflection of them, trouble can sometimes follow. There are two kinds of problems that can occur with self-image. The first is social. The second is personal.

Ever-changing self

Have you ever known anyone who seemed really different each time you saw them? Maybe one time they were really quiet and serious, and then another they seemed silly and childish, and the next time bossy and demanding. It is very likely that if you've had to spend any significant amount of time with a person like this, you found yourself feeling confused and irritated. In order to relate to other people, we need to have a kind of steady idea of who they are, how they react to things, and how we will react to their reactions. People having relatively stable self-images is pretty important in having and maintaining good relationships with others.

It is also worth noticing that people whose self-image and behavior vary drastically may be dealing with an emotional problem, and this might indicate a need for professional care.
Clueless self

Have you ever watched a talent show like American Idol or America's Got Talent? Typically, in the first few episodes, there are quite a few people who seem to be convinced they are incredible singers or performers — when in fact they are quite obviously awful. These moments can be funny because it may seem as if these people are just having fun on TV. But these moments can also be sad, as some of these people seem to be totally “clueless” and believe they are incredible singers. Here is the second type of self-image problem. Some people have a really big gap between their self-image and their actual self. Singing in a talent show is just a small, specific example.

You can probably imagine, if someone is completely out of touch (or “clueless”) about themselves, this can lead to all sorts of problems — they may make a lot of bad decisions and experience all kinds of trouble with others.

Get to know yourself

As you continue to grow and mature, take some time to get to know who you are. Think of the ways you can complete the statement: “I am a ______person.” (See if you can come up 10 adjectives!)

And then maybe think about how your friends and family might complete that sentence for you. Or ask them yourself! How well do all these sets match up with each other?

As kids, we might imagine we are a superhero or a famous actor. But as we mature, we need to sync our imagination with reality more and more, so that we can develop a consistent image of ourselves. Without this, we can never really successfully connect with other people.

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2. to occur or operate at the same time or rate
Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement best expresses the central idea of the text?
   A. Television talent shows can have a dangerous and negative impact on a person's self-image.
   B. A stable self-image is important in making good decisions and building relationships.
   C. Social and personal problems are a direct result of a negative self-image.
   D. Striving to be like a famous person can be dangerous for a young person.

2. PART B: Which statement from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
   A. "Being able to rely on this stability is what allows us to make good decisions in any environment and stay true to ourselves." (paragraph 1)
   B. "In order to relate to other people, we need to have a kind of steady idea of who they are, how they react to things, and how we will react to their reactions." (paragraph 7)
   C. "It is also worth noticing that people whose self-image and behavior vary drastically may be dealing with an emotional problem, and this might indicate a need for professional care." (paragraph 8)
   D. "But these moments can also be sad, as some of these people seem to be totally "clueless" and believe they are incredible singers." (paragraph 9)

3. How do paragraphs 4 and 5 contribute to the development of ideas in the text?
   A. It describes the qualities a person needs to have to build their self-image.
   B. It suggests that readers take time to evaluate their self-image.
   C. It provides the negative effects of a changing self-image.
   D. It shows how people are unaware of their self-image.

4. What is the meaning of "forged" in paragraph 3?
   A. managed
   B. developed
   C. determined
   D. understood

5. What is the author's purpose in paragraph 9?
   A. to explain the dangers of talent show television
   B. to illustrate the importance of sharing talents with others
   C. to show how self-image is a difficult idea for most people to grasp
   D. to highlight an example of gaps between self-image and actual self
Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. In the text, the author discusses how a person's self-image develops over time. What life experiences have shaped your self-image? What do you remember about those experiences, and how do you think they shaped the way you think about yourself?

2. In the text, the author explains that the gap between a person's self-image and actual self can lead to problems in decision making. Think about a situation in which a person has experienced this gap. How did it lead to poor choices? What other struggles did this person face?

3. In the text, the author provides adjectives that people could use to describe themselves when considering their self-image. What adjectives define your self-image? Have the adjectives you use changed over time? Why might these adjectives change or stay the same?