

**AWAKENING THE POWER WITHIN YOU
(Enjoy Your Everyday Worthy Life)***Self-Enrichment and Inspirational series ...*

“Too many people overvalue what they are not and undervalue what they are.”

Malcolm S. Forbes

For many years, I am living in one of the myth of successful living – My worth is determined by my performance. When the economy went belly-up, affecting my business result, dipping into savings to get by, I got depressed. My happiness and self-worth seem to be fluctuating with the market conditions. I feel good and worthy only when things are going well and when my performance is great – in other words, I am only as worthwhile as my performance.

Some readers may be getting a bit critical at this moment, “How could he be putting his self-worth with his performance?” “That is really silly!” True, and I totally agreed. But then, how many of us feel good only when we performed well, and felt bad when we are not performing well or not being able to bring in the results? How often do we actually allow my performance determines our self-worth?

Our culture has an obsession with performance. We want to know how many units a salesman sold, how many ‘A’s a student made, how many degrees an applicant has, how many new members are we bringing into our association, and on and on. These are somehow the signs of being not just successful but worthwhile in our culture. Somehow, we have gotten achievement mixed up with worth. I have spent my whole life equating my worth as a human being with how well I do on the field of competition. Growing up as a kid, I allowed sports to determine my worth. In college, grades decided my worth. As an adult, the amount of money I made dictated the matter. Many of us who struggle with those two issues – having to be perfect and having personal worth dictated by achievement – reach a point of total despair, when we experience failure.

At the same time that we try to see ourselves as better than others, we also tend to eviscerate ourselves with self-criticism when we don’t meet our high standards. As soon as our feelings of superiority slip — as they inevitably will — our sense of worthiness takes a nose dive. We swing wildly between overly inflated and overly deflated self-esteem, an emotional roller coaster ride whose end result is often insecurity, anxiety and depression.

We should base our worth not by what we do but who we are!

“Whoa, Peter, what worth do I have apart from what I do?” That is a good question – What is the basis of human worth?

Self-worth is defined as the opinion you have about yourself and the value you place on yourself. I love the Webster’s version “one’s worth as a person, *as perceived by oneself*”. Thus, it is your perceived value and opinion of yourself that truly determines your worth – nothing else!

So what’s the alternative? How do we feel good about ourselves without needing to feel better than others and thus falling into the narcissism/self-loathing trap? One answer is to develop self-compassion.

Self-compassion involves being kind to ourselves when life goes awry or we notice something about ourselves we don’t like, rather than being cold or harshly self-critical. It recognizes that the human condition is imperfect, so that we feel connected to others when we fail or suffer rather than feeling separate or isolated. It also involves mindfulness — the recognition and non-judgmental acceptance of painful emotions as they arise in the present moment. Rather than suppressing our pain or else making it into an exaggerated personal soap opera, we see ourselves and our situation clearly.



Self-compassion doesn't demand that we evaluate ourselves positively or that we see ourselves as better than others. Rather, the positive emotions of self-compassion kick in exactly when self-esteem falls down; when we don't meet our expectations or fail in some way. This means that the sense of intrinsic self-worth inherent in self-compassion is highly stable. It is constantly available to provide us with care and support in times of need.

Instead of endlessly chasing self-worth as if it were the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, we should encourage the development of self-compassion. That way, whether we're on top of the world or at the bottom of the heap, we can embrace ourselves with a sense of kindness, connectedness and emotional balance. We can provide the emotional safety needed to see ourselves clearly and make whatever changes are necessary to address our suffering. We can learn to feel good about ourselves not because we're special and above average, but because we're human beings intrinsically worthy of respect.

Nothing is more important than how you feel and think about yourself. A high opinion about yourself and who you are as well as what you do with a love for yourself is also one of the things that people often omit or give it a little thought in today's society. The importance of maintaining high self-worth are:

- **Life becomes simpler and lighter.** When you like or love yourself more, then things simply become easier. You won't make mountains out of molehills nearly as often anymore. You won't drag yourself down or beat yourself up over simple mistakes or over not reaching a perfect and inhuman standard.
- **You'll have more inner stability.** When you like yourself more, when your opinion of yourself goes up then you'll stop trying so eagerly to get validation and attention from other people. And so you become less needy and your inner life having more inner stability becomes much less of an emotional rollercoaster based on what people may think or say about you.
- **Less self-sabotage.** Most people's worst enemy are themselves. By raising and keeping your self-worth up you'll feel more deserving of good things in life. And so you'll go after them more often and with more motivation. And when you get them then you'll be a lot less likely to self-sabotage in subtle or not so subtle ways.
- **You'll be more attractive in any relationship.** With better self-worth you'll get the benefits listed above. You'll be more stable and able to handle tough times better. You'll be less needy and more of a natural giver. Being with you becomes simpler and a lighter experience with a lot less drama, arguments or fights based on little or nothing. And all of this is attractive in any relationships, not matter if it is with a friend, at work or with a partner.
- **You'll be happier.** That has been my experience and why I value my own self-worth so highly and try to keep it steady every day. Because it has made my life so much happier.

So how do we improve or increase our self-worth?

1) Stop Inner Critic

First, learn to recognize and handle the voice of your own inner critic. It can spur you to get things done or to do things to gain acceptance from people and at the same time it will drag your self-worth down.



This inner voice whispers or shouts destructive thoughts in your mind. Thoughts like for example:

- You are lazy and sloppy, now get to work.
- You aren't good at your job at all and someone will figure that out and throw you out.
- You are not able to do anything right and you think you can complete the project on time?

You don't have to accept those thoughts. You know your worth, you have come this far in life, and I bet you have already accomplished some amazing results before. Thus, you need to minimize that critical voice and replace it with more helpful and fruitful thoughts. Remember, you can change how you view yourself! As the critic says something in your mind, shout: STOP! Then refocus your thoughts to something more constructive such as planning the action steps that need to be taken; approach people who have the expertise or knowledge to share with you; focus on what you can do instead of what you cannot do. By so doing you dismiss that inner critic voice and feeling much better knowing you are trying to move the ball forward.

2) Take a Self-Appreciation Break

Try doing this exercise, spend 2 to 3 minutes **every day** appreciating yourself for what you have done, accomplished, and for being able to exercise self-control, etc. for a month, I can assure you that it can make a huge difference in your self-worth. The things you appreciate about yourself need not be big things, but small things, simple things such as holding the elevator for an elder person to walk in; or helping your co-worker putting together his presentation slides; or listening to someone who may be going through a rough-patch of life. These short breaks not only build your self-worth in the long-run but also turn a negative mood around and reload you with a lot of positive and creative energies.

3) Help Someone

When you do what you deep down think are the right thing to do then you raise and strengthen your self-worth. Simple act such as giving someone a compliment; writing a card to wish someone well and showing your concern; making a call to someone whom you have not touch base for a long time; giving way to someone who is in an urgent rush; etc.

When you are focusing on helping someone, you took the focus off yourself; and knowing that you did something right, it gives you an inner sense of self-pride, positive emotions, and definitely, help boost your self-worth.

When you are kinder towards others you tend to treat and think of yourself in a kinder way too. And the way you treat other people is how they tend to treat you in the long run. So focus on being kind in your daily life.

4) Stop trying to be perfect in everything; but seek progression

Perfectionism in our daily life can be destructive and it can paralyze you from taking action because you become so afraid of not living up to some standard, thus, you procrastinate and end up not getting the result you seek. This make your self-worth sink. On other hand, you may take action but are never or very rarely satisfied with what you accomplished and on your own performance, constantly doubting your standard of work or achievement. And so, your opinion and feelings about yourself become more and more negative and your motivation to take action plummets.



Here are two principles that can help you overcome your perfectionism:

- Go for good enough. When you aim for perfection, then that usually winds up in a project or a task never being finished or completed. Simply realize that there is something called good enough and moved the task or project on. Trust me, no matter how perfect you have made it, there will always be room for more improvement. Thus, when you are good enough to move, there are always room for progression along the way. At least you have rolled out the project or getting the task moving to the timeline.
- Do not buy into myths of perfection as projected in a movie, a song, or a book. Because reality can clash with your expectations. Stop living in fantasy thinking that everything need to be perfect or that only when you have every resources before you can move on in a project or task. The best way to start doing a project or task is simply to do it – take action! You need not becoming everything to do something. All you need is to start doing something, learning something, picking up new knowledge and skills along the way, talk to people who are expert in their fields, and step by step moving your action toward accomplishment.

5) Handle mistakes in a positive way

It is normal and just being human when you go outside your comfort zone and you stumble along the way. It is what happened to people who tried to do something new or different, and learning along the way of discovering, and that did something truly mattered. There is always an upside to the downside. When you stumble, ask yourself “What is one thing I can learn from this? And what is one opportunity I can find in this situation?” This will help you change your viewpoint and hopefully not hit the same bump a little further down the road. Making a mistake or an oversight in a project? It’s just being human, that is why we are human beings – we learn, unlearn, and relearn.

6) Do not fall into the Comparison Trap

There will always be someone who is better in interpersonal intelligence, linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, visual intelligence, structural intelligence, and kinaesthetic than you. So stop comparing! When you compare your life, yourself and what you have to other people’s lives and what they have then you have destructive habit on your hands. Because you can never win. There is always someone who has more or is better than you at something in the world. There are always people ahead of you. So replace that habit with something better. Look at how much you have progressed and how far you have come instead. Compare yourself to yourself. Focus on you. On your results. And on how you can improve your results. And acknowledged that you have certain unique talents that will always give you that cutting advantage. This will both motivate you and raise your self-worth.



7) You are here for a reason

I always believe that we are here for a reason – you have an ultimate purpose in life. My self-worth is definitely more than my career or the house I stayed or what brand of car I drive. I know my worth – I am a loving husband who will always give my spouse to the best of my ability; a loving father who will always nurture my son to be a better person; and a dedicated speaker who would be more than willing to share my experiences and knowledge that others can benefit from me. That's my worth. And I am proud of it. A good friend of mine once asked me why am I sacrificing so much of my career for my family and always giving my most in every speaking engagement, and my answer was simple, "There are no sacrifices. When you do things out of love and meaning, you see it as the true reason of your being. And even if I die at this instant, I know that I know I have given my best to my wife and to my son, I will die with no regrets. The worst fear in death is not what I have not achieved, but regrets!" Psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl once wrote, "Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose."

There is a big difference in being happy and having a meaningful life. Happiness is about getting what we want in life—whether through people, money, or life circumstances. Meaningfulness, in contrast, seems to have more to do with giving, effort, and contributions. It is clear that a highly meaningful life may not always include a great deal of day-to-day happiness, rather it will definitely increase our self-worthiness. But our obsession with happiness may be intimately related to a feeling of emptiness, or a life that lacks meaning – bringing down my worthiness in pursuit of happiness.

What is the purpose of life for you? Finding and clarifying your life purpose and core life intentions can help you to move with greater focus and clarity every day of your life. Especially in these challenging times, setting clear intentions and developing and refining our life purpose can make it much easier to navigate stormy waters. There are many ways to both find and develop your life purpose and intentions. A great way to start exploring your life purpose and intentions is to stop for a moment and ask yourself these two key questions:

What is most important to me in my life?

What are my deepest values and beliefs?

Give yourself time to explore these important questions and notice what touches and inspires you most deeply. Write down any answers or thoughts that come to you as you ponder these questions. Then use what you've written as a basis upon which to craft your life purpose and intentions.



Acting on principles, in ways that you respect, is an important quality to foster as you develop a higher level of self-worth. “Make a concerted effort to maintain personal integrity in your life by insisting that your actions correspond to your words,” suggests Dr. Robert Firestone. When our actions do not match our words, we are more vulnerable to attacks from our critical inner voice and less likely to respect ourselves. The more consistently you live your life with personal integrity, the higher you valued and respect your own self-worth, and you will also become much happier and positive in your daily living.

By challenging your critical inner voice and stopping comparing yourself to others, you can begin to get a feeling for your own self-worth. By pursuing activities that are meaningful to you and acting in line with your own personal beliefs, you can develop your sense of yourself as a worthwhile person in the world even further. Your self-worth has nothing to do with your performance – it is simply who you are and why you are here. It is time to get up and live your everyday worthy life!

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Positive Leadership – The Workshop

A new program has been launched at Singapore National Employers Federation titled “Positive Leadership: Becoming a Leader with a Difference”. In this workshop, you will embark into an exciting journey of self-discovering of becoming a much more resilient and productive leader. Contact Ms Shirlin Lee at www.sgemployers.com.

Resiliency Quotient – The Book

Due to changes in my website over the next couple of months, the purchase of the book is not available via my website. If you are interested to purchase the book (for Singapore only), please make a cheque payable to Peter Ng Training Consultancy and mailed it to:

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