

## Self-Acceptance

**In a nutshell:** *Self-acceptance is the ability of someone to fully accept both the positive and negative attributes of themselves. It can be defined as an individual's acceptance of all of his/her attributes, positive or negative.*

Self-acceptance is a catalyst for personal improvement in eastern and western religion and culture. Different theologies (e.g., Christianity, Buddhism), psychological theories (humanism), and therapies (e.g., RET, CBT) view self-acceptance as a mechanism for reducing emotional misery.

Self-acceptance is crucial as it allows you to fully embrace your strengths and be real with some areas of growth or challenges you might have. Quite often self-acceptance is conflated with resignation – as if they are stagnating and don't want to change. However, the only way to truly embrace your strengths and start to change certain parts is with first accepting what is true and real at this very moment. To be present and accepting of one's reality is important, before one tries to change it.

A good exercise is to ask yourself what is really unique about you as a person? What would people close to you say? Your boss? Best friend? Family member? Partner? Quite often it is difficult to answer this question. Thus, it is worthwhile to ask the ones that you trust to get a fresh perspective. You can use the same technique to identify some of the challenges you have and decide if you want to stick with acceptance of these challenges or try and change some if not all?

Self-acceptance supports the progression towards happiness and self-fulfillment. Research shows that self-acceptance is strongly related to mental health and wellbeing in people of all ages. For instance, it has been found to influence the differential risk of being a member of a minority group on mental health. It gives you more confidence in yourself and makes you less vulnerable to criticism.

**Put into practice:** *Practice gratitude. Every day, write down three to five things you are grateful for.*

### **LINK: A deep dive into Self-Acceptance**

<https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/memberarticles/self-acceptance-and-the-value-of-a-deep-connection>

AXA is committed to help people to become 'fit to flourish'. To learn more, click [here](#).

- By Allison Heiliczer, *Rethink The Couch*.