

Wake Up the Sleeping Giant of Your True Potential!

Steps to changing a negative self-image

By Paul J. Meyer

Did you know that your mind functions much like a computer? It does! Since the moment of your birth, your mind has recorded and stored in database form everything that has ever happened to you - the things said to you by your parents, family, friends, or even perfect strangers, including how you responded to all of these situations.

Each time you responded to a certain stimulus in the same manner, you formed a habit of thought. Over time your subconscious mind began to tell you what kind of person you were based on the data it had collected. In brief, your self-image is a mental picture you carry of yourself made up of six things:

- *What you believe about your talents and abilities*
- *What you believe about your worth as a person*
- *How you expect others to treat you*
- *What you believe you can become*
- *What you expect your world to be like*
- *What you believe about how you came into existence*

If you were exposed to a great deal of negative input from a variety of sources, it is almost certain you have a distorted or negative self-image. Your true potential may be hidden from your awareness, covered over, if you will, by all the false things you've been taught to believe about yourself.

Three different self-images

To fully understand yourself, you must realize that that each person has three separate self-images:

1. **The me I really am** - this image represents your true potential
2. **The me I think I am** - this image is dependent on how well you know yourself.
3. **The me I want to become** - this image can expand as you discover your true potential.

The closer these images are to each other, the better off you are. Otherwise, your true potential can be buried, remaining the equivalent of a sleeping giant. But the good news is this: what you are willing to become is the only reality that counts! You can wake up that giant!

7 barriers to a positive self-image

While it is very good news that your self image can be changed, there is no "quick fix." Be aware of the seven barriers or beliefs that can derail you on your way to building a new and positive self image:

1. *I prefer to stay in my comfort zone.*
2. *I'm afraid of failure.*
3. *I don't want other people to disapprove of me.*
4. *I don't want to rock the boat.*
5. *I don't have what it takes.*
6. *I think success might not be good for me.*
7. *God doesn't want me to succeed.*

4 steps to a new self-image

You already have within you all the raw material you need to create a positive self-image. However, like so many things in life, breaking out of the shell of your limitations is a solo job. Just as the chick has to peck its way out of the shell alone in order to build the perseverance for survival, you will also have to take the initiative on your own behalf.

I've found there are 4 important steps to creating the positive self-image you desire:

1. **Learn the power of dreams:** Dreams help you visualize something as possible and transform it into reality. You must see yourself achieving something mentally before you can bring it to pass physically.
2. **Cultivate a burning desire to reach your dreams:** Remind yourself often of the rewards you will experience when you reach your dreams. Rewards motivate!
3. **Exercise freedom of choice:** If you don't choose, others will choose for you, directing you toward their goals, not yours. Be willing to act on your own behalf rather than waiting for others to lead.
4. **Learn who you are and what your Creator says you can do:** 2 Corinthians 5:17 states, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, the new has come" while Philippians 4:13 adds, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Take God at His word!

You are not stuck with your present negative self-image. Just as you were programmed from childhood by the things you were told and experienced, you can begin to reprogram yourself with new life-giving beliefs. If you truly desire to change your self-image, to wake up the God-given potential within, and are willing to diligently apply the steps I have recommended, you will succeed!

Paul J. Meyer, best-selling *New York Times* author and founder of the Success Motivation Institute has written two dozen full-length programs plus numerous books on attitude, motivation, goal setting, management, leadership, and time management. In his inspirational and instructive CD, *Harness the Power of Your Attitude* available at www.pauljmeyer.com, Paul shares the principles of positive expectancy and a spirit of gratitude that will propel you toward success in every area of your life.

