

Passion for Life Coaching

Making Deliberate Choices for a Fulfilling Life

Newsletter by Suzette Langley, Life Coach and MSW

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How to Update Your Self-Image

It's not who you are that holds you back, it's who you think you're not. ~Author Unknown

In my last newsletter, I discussed updating your self-image. Given all the positive feedback I received, I decided to write a little more on the topic. One question I received was, "So how do I update my self-image?" Great question!! I really paused to think about this and what had gone into the process of making that change. I defined 4 steps that can help update your self-image. No single question or exercise will automatically create a new self-image and increase confidence. The change takes time, awareness and practice. I created my newsletter as a worksheet that you can use to get started on your new self-image.

First, describe, in detail, what self-image you carry around with you. For our purposes later on, we will refer to this as your "old self." Recall from last month, my "old self" was the fat, shy, nerdy, awkward kid. Make your "old self" as real as possible with a voice, clothing and hairstyle. In order to change, you must know what you are changing.

Now that you know how you see yourself, do a reality check. Is this really who you are now? Honestly assess who you are right now. Be willing to brag a little. No one else needs to know. What skills do you possess? What knowledge and wisdom have you acquired? How would you describe your physical appearance and personal style? How do you cope with stress, relate to others, handle conflict, manage finances? Really assess all areas of your life. This we will call your "true self."

Next, identify what situations make you feel like your "old self". For example, when I feel unfamiliar, overwhelmed, or uncertain, I begin to feel like my "old self" - shy, nerdy, fat, awkward. For me, specific situational triggers can be large group functions, people who appear extremely self-confident and issues/problems where I lack knowledge.

Now that you have identified the situational triggers that make your "old self" appear, bring up the image of how you described yourself in reality. How can you bring your "true self" to a situation where your "old self" usually appears? Do not overwhelm yourself by altering everything all at once. Focus on 1 or 2 things you can change. I started to combat shyness by setting a goal to talk to 3 new people at networking events. I also consciously stood up straight and wore clothing that made me feel confident about my appearance.

Why exactly did these 4 steps help update my self-image? I stopped believing an old reality and moved from the past into the present. Then, I specifically identified what circumstances triggered my outdated beliefs. Admitting that there were situations and people that made me uncomfortable was challenging. However, knowing my triggers helped me consciously choose different actions which made me feel in control. Instead of being shy or awkward out of the blue, I expected it and had a plan. And, in turn, other's responded positively to my "true self" which reinforced my new self image.

I hope this helps clarify the how of updating your self-image and gives you somewhere to begin. Thanks for asking! As always, I welcome additional thoughts and feedback.

Argue for your limitations and, sure enough, they're yours. ~Richard Bach, Illusions

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