

Dealing with Insecurities (1)

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Insecurity is a feeling of general uneasiness that may be triggered by perceiving oneself as vulnerable or inferior in some way or the other. It is a sense of vulnerability or instability which threatens one's self-image.

American psychologist, Abraham Maslow has described an insecure person as a person who "perceives the world as a threatening jungle and most human beings as dangerous and selfish; feels as a rejected and isolated person, anxious and hostile; is generally pessimistic and unhappy; shows signs of tension and conflict; tends to turn inward; is troubled by guilt-feelings; has one or another disturbance of self-esteem; tends to be neurotic; and is generally selfish and egocentric."

Insecurity has many effects in a person's life. A person with high levels of insecurity may often experience a lack of confidence regarding many aspects of life. She/he lacks trust in herself or himself or others, has fears that a present positive state is temporary and will let her or him down and cause her or him loss or distress by "going wrong" in the future. This is a common trait, which only differs in degree between people. The greater the insecurity, the higher is the degree of isolation. Insecurity is often rooted in a person's childhood years. Like offense and bitterness, it grows in a layered fashion, often becoming an immobilizing force that sets a limiting factor in the person's life. Insecurity robs by degrees; the degree to which it is entrenched equals the degree of power it has in the person's life. Insecurity may contribute to the development of shyness, paranoia and social withdrawal; or alternatively it may encourage compensatory behaviours such as arrogance, aggression or bullying, in some cases.

There are many factors that can lead to the growth of insecurities. Insecurity may stem from a traumatic event; it can also result from one's environment. Insecurity also tends to surface in adults whose parents pushed them excessively in childhood, often due to their parents' desire for success rather than their own, and in adults whose significant others drive them to excel, often to an unrealistic level, regardless of the individual's own desires or goals. Children with a parent who is inconsistent or self-absorbed may grow up unable to form lasting emotional connections and become anxious and fearful, not knowing what to expect from life just as they did not know what to expect from the parent.

Although we all struggle with insecurities, they are definitely more crippling to some than to others. While it is not so easy to find ways to magically solve self-confidence problems, it is possible to overcome insecurities simply by understanding how they affect our daily lives and our crucial personal growth. Here, I have listed five major effects of insecurities in a person's life.

Need for Validation

When someone gives us approval, we feel we are worthy. But the problem then becomes that we need more approval to keep this self-image and we fear not getting the approval because then this great self-image will go away. We become stuck in a cycle of needing constant approval and fearing disapproval. We read into everything that everyone says and does, in real life and on social media, in terms of approval or disapproval. This becomes a fearful cycle of need. We must be able to find our own footing, to realize what matters to us and why, so that we may better navigate our futures.

Criticism and Self-Hate

If a parent or other relatives criticize a child while they were growing up, or if they were bullied, they have the tendency to internalize that and foster a negative self-image. This instigates a scary, slippery slope of self-hate. The more a person dislikes oneself, the more they hate themselves for doing so; subsequently inhibiting any possible progress made in the process and eventually, getting sucked into the cycle of self-hate.

Lack of Acceptance and Satisfaction

We humans, often, have a problem in accepting ourselves. We don't like that we are overweight, or have pimples, or something about our bodies. We also reject parts of our inner selves, the parts that are undisciplined, uncaring, fearful or lazy. We reject the parts of ourselves that are insecure. We always try to find faults. Finding faults can begin as a good first step in self-improvement but it is discouraging to be unsatisfied with everything we do. In such a situation, however, it is important to realise that people are not perfect. Our work will not always be perfect. And there is nothing we can do but accept our faults and live with them.

Lack of Trust

We learn not to trust other people to stick with us, to accept us, to see our side of things as understandable. This is trained in us over the years as people do things that we think of as abandonment or rejection. We stop trusting in the moment to turn out alright. Fear

Fear is the most difficult aspect of insecurity to deal with. When we are afraid of failure or rejection, we stop ourselves from trying new things. As responsible adults, all of us have the fear of letting go. We don't like things to be out of our control. We don't know how to deal with uncertainty. We don't know how to let life happen. Although the task of dealing with insecurity appears to be a difficult one, but it is not impossible. Here are some of the ways.

Understand your Feelings

Understand your insecurity. Ask yourself why you have feelings of insecurity in the first place. Determining where those feelings originate helps you discover two vital things: first, that your insecurities have a valid foundation and that you are not silly for feeling insecure; and second, that these issues have a logical cause and can therefore be logically cured. Forgive the Past

If your insecurities have been shaped by a relative or authority figure criticizing you, recognize this. Then start to forgive them. Understand that they were driven by their own insecurities, struggling with their own demons. They weren't right in what they did, but you can understand it nonetheless; and forgive them for their bad behaviour, because holding on to resentment is not going to help anyone.

Take Baby Steps to Grow

Since you know the circumstances that cause the most difficulties, try to gradually overcome your tendency to feeling insecure by introducing yourself to those situations slowly. This could be thought of as a sort of a desensitization process.

Accept Yourself

Pause and take a self-assessment. Notice the parts of yourself, both your body and your inner self, that you don't like. Take a look at these parts of you, and see if you can send them love. See those imperfect parts of you as a friend who is imperfect and deserves love. Think about how you would treat this imperfect friend and treat yourself in the same manner. Give yourself assurance, give yourself compassion. Embrace all the parts of you and see the beauty in them. They are what make you who you are and they are wonderful. Change Your Perspective

In a world full of negativity, everyone must look at the positive side of life. Try to think of yourself in another light. Visualize the things that you like or admire and stop looking at yourself so critically. You are likely to be the only person who judges you so harshly. Be kind, first to yourself, then to the entire world.

Reward Yourself

Dealing with insecurity will become easier and easier if you reward yourself for successes. Any success, no matter how small, should be recognized and celebrated. For every goal you reach, have a planned reward. Focusing on the anticipated reward helps to take focus off of the problem ahead.

Embrace Non-Comparison

Comparing yourself with how others look, what they are doing, where they are traveling, how much fun they are having; such a comparison is never useful, rather it actively harms you. Instead, when you see someone else, instead of comparing yourself with them, see them as apples to your oranges. Be happy that they are having fun, be joyful for their successes. They are on a completely different path from you, and they can be happy and have a great time and you can too, on your own path. Wish everyone well, but see their awesomeness as different from yours.

Develop Trust

Through all these practices, start to develop a trust in yourself that you'll be fine. Develop a trust in the moment that it will unfold and all will be well. Develop a trust in

the Universe that it has your back, no matter what. Trust develops over time, by making small predictions about the moment and then seeing if the prediction comes true.

This is the path. You find the things you're struggling with, and learn to work with them; learn to shift your perspective; learn to see what's tripping you up, and turn it into an opportunity to practice new skills. Take charge of your life and deal with your insecurities. Happiness and confidence are not around the corner, but right in front of you. You already have everything you need to be strong and confident in a world full of insecurities.

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