



## How Your Self-Concept Effects Your Panic

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I received an email today from a 16-year-old girl asking for help. She is having problems with her self-esteem. Sound familiar?

It seems to me that most of us with Panic and Anxiety disorders have self-image and self-esteem issues. Learning to accept and honor ourselves is key to dealing with Panic Disorder, in my opinion. My panic has subsided greatly since I changed my self-image.

**What is self-image?** There are many key issues wrapped up in your self-image. Let me offer some definitions for your consideration.

**Self-Concept:** This is an individual's evaluation of himself or herself - a self-appraisal.

**Self-Image:** This is the picture that you have of yourself, the sort of person you believe you are. How would you describe yourself to someone?

Your self-image is created by your peers, your parents, those around you. Whether feedback is positive or negative, this is how you tend to view yourself.

**Self-Esteem:** This is how you **feel** about yourself. You may have a very positive self-image and very low self-esteem.

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### How do you go about improving your Self-Concept?

- ~ Become aware of yourself.
- ~ Establish a positive attitude towards yourself and others.
- ~ Acknowledge all of your feelings.
- ~ Focus on yourself.
- ~ Strive to believe that you, and others, are worthy of being liked and accepted.
- ~ Develop the belief that you, and others, are worthy of respect.

~ Stay away from those people who are highly critical of you.

~ Surround yourself with people who support you.

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Remember, the people around you expect you to behave in a certain way. As your self-concept improves, these people may need some time to get used to the 'new' you!

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Try these exercises to speed you on your way to self-actualization, to being all that you can be, to loving, honoring and respecting yourself!!

*(The Communication Handbook, 1986, p. 274, Joseph DeVito)*

1. Answer the question "Who am I?" by writing 10 to 20 times "I am..." Complete the sentence with what comes to mind first.
2. Take a sheet of paper and divide it into two columns: "Strengths" and "Weaknesses." Fill the two columns as quickly as possible with strengths and weaknesses you see in yourself.
3. Take another sheet of paper and, under the heading "Self-Improvement Goals," complete the statement "I want to improve my..." as many times as you can in 5 minutes.

These exercises are the beginning of a dialogue with and about yourself, but remember that you change, so update the exercise occasionally.

[http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/panic\\_disorder/51679](http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/panic_disorder/51679)