

10 Tips to Overcome Self-Doubt

When your sense of self has been demolished by someone else like a partner, parent, or even the dominant culture, you likely struggle with self-doubt. Overcoming self-doubt takes time and effort. Here are some things you can do to work on validating yourself and overcoming your self-doubt.

1. Know that coming to trust yourself is a process, so it's OK to be on the journey.
"I've struggled with self-doubt for a long time, but I'm taking steps now to learn to trust myself."
2. Start small if you need to. Check in with yourself regularly to see what you want and what you like --from what to have for lunch to what color shirt you want to buy.
"What do I want right now? Do I want to go to the gym or would I rather do some yoga at home?"
3. Give yourself permission to change your mind. It's OK to think you'll like something and then find you don't really like it after all. And it's OK to allow your likes and preferences to evolve over time.
"I really thought I'd like living in the suburbs, but I actually liked living in the city better."
4. Cultivate a practice of acknowledging what you've done well—accomplishments, choices, etc.
"It was a good choice to skip that party. They drink a lot more than I do and that's not fun for me."
5. Cut yourself some slack and allow yourself to make mistakes. A "mistake" is just an opportunity for learning.
"I probably could have phrased my request a little better. I'll see if I can be a little clearer next time."
6. Tell yourself that you made the best decision you could, given the information you had at the time.
"I thought my partner was going to be engaged in the relationship because they liked being together in the beginning. I didn't know their behavior would change after we made our relationship exclusive."
7. Remember that research shows people tend to regret the things they DIDN'T do (like trying something new, starting or ending a relationship, or telling someone "I love you") more than they regret the things they DID do.
"I want to take this dance class. I'll give it a try and I can drop it later if I find I don't like it."
8. Practice listening to your intuition (a.k.a. pay attention to your "gut").
"I've got a bad feeling about this employer so I'm going to honor my intuition and decline the job offer."
9. Choose to spend time with people who show you respect and validate you rather than with people who minimize, dismiss or otherwise invalidate your opinions, feelings or experiences.
"Irene makes me feel like my concerns shouldn't be a big deal. Shannon, on the other hand, makes me feel like my concerns are quite reasonable. I think I'll spend less time with Irene and more time with Shannon."
10. Identify the person in your past that taught you to doubt yourself—it can be the beginning of deeper healing.
"My dad was really insecure and invalidated me to try and make himself feel more important. That affected me deeply. Now I need to learn to validate myself."