



My Lifestyle

Your lifestyle includes the quality and satisfaction that you experience with various areas of your life. Some of these areas include your relationship to yourself, others, work, money, hobbies, sport, diet and spiritual beliefs. Although all of these areas are important, here we will be taking a closer look at the relationship you have with yourself, others and money as these areas often have a significant ripple effect on the other areas of your life.

Self esteem

Your self esteem is the basis of the relationship you have with yourself and incorporates your self worth, ability to recognise your qualities and limitations and your capacity to act independently and responsibly.

Some of the characteristics of high self-esteem include:

- Acting independently
- Being proud of your accomplishments
- Assuming responsibility
- Approaching new challenges with enthusiasm
- Exhibiting a broad range of emotions
- Tolerating frustration well
- Being aware of your qualities and limitations

Some of the characteristics of low self-esteem include:

- Overly concentrating on your weaknesses or limitations
- Being easily influenced by others
- Avoiding situations that provoke anxiety
- Blaming others for your own problems
- Being overly critical or having unrealistic expectations of yourself
- Fearing rejection or not liked and experiencing difficulty in being assertive

Unhealthy self esteem can have you looking at outside sources to make you feel good about yourself. Often a lack of looking at or being blind to the positive aspects of yourself can lead you to believe that you are not worthy of certain things such as love, support, and getting your needs met. No matter what is going on in your life, if you have an unhealthy self esteem you may feel unhappy or dissatisfied with life. On the flip side, having a positive self esteem helps you to be more self reliant, feel more empowered, have greater self-direction and have healthier relationships with others.

Re Balance Your Lifestyle

Relationships

Relationships can provide a source of support, love, fun and growth, however, they can also leave you feeling scared, humiliated, pressured or controlled.

Some characteristics of a healthy relationship include:

- Assertive communication
- Trust, equality and respect
- Shared values
- Shared responsibility
- Negotiation and fairness
- Intimacy and separate identities

Some characteristics of an unhealthy relationship can include:

- Emotional abuse e.g. put downs, humiliating, name calling, mind games, flirting and commenting about other people in a sexual way and giving 'the silent treatment'
- Physical abuse e.g. any unwanted physical or sexual contact
- Financial abuse e.g. controlling finances or preventing employment
- Denying or blaming e.g. the person who is being abusive blames the other for their actions or denies it even happened
- Threatening behaviour e.g. threatening to leave the relationship, threatening to harm themselves or suicide, threatening to damage property or hurt any pets
- Isolation e.g. controlling contact with family and friends and limiting activities including work

If you are in an unhealthy relationship you might not understand what your needs and wants are. You may try to change yourself in the hope that the abuse will stop. Getting support and finding ways to enhance your relationship with yourself will empower you to take steps towards developing healthier relationships with others.

Finances

If you're struggling to keep up with your expenses and you don't seem to have enough money to meet your needs like groceries, rent or phone bills it can impact your self esteem and may leave you feeling overwhelmed and depressed. Taking ownership of your debt can help you to get out of the cycle. Once you start to pay off debt you will notice a sense of achievement and new motivation. Talk to a financial adviser around constructing a payment plan if you have accumulated debt that is incurring a lot of interest.

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Accommodation

The amount of time you want to spend at home can be a good indicator of how happy and safe you feel at home. There are different reasons why you might feel that your home is not your refuge, causing you to look for ways to leave. This could be anything from whom you live with to what conditions you live in. Figuring out if you and your flat mates have the same values, wants and needs can help you to understand the relationship you have with them. Often conflicts arise when people have different ideas on what "cleanliness" means or how often the washing up should be done. Alternately, is living at home stopping you from having direction in life? Be mindful if living at home is too easy and too secure. You may feel stuck and irritable. Having a stable home environment can greatly contribute to support, security and stability.

