

INTRODUCTION TO SELF-DEVELOPMENT (The 5 Ws of Self-Development)

What is Self-Development?

Self-development is a lifelong process. Most of us want to improve ourselves, especially after facing various challenges in life. Personal development can be a powerful and transformational mental tool, provided you have the inner motivation to follow it through. It is like a self-empowerment.

Personal development' is often used interchangeably with 'self-development', but they're two different approaches to life. The former focuses on developing new capabilities and adding a new direction to life. The latter focuses on ways to improve things that are already a part of one's life. Both processes deal with personal development and complement each other but shouldn't be confused with each other.

Self-development, on the other hand, focuses on personal growth in all aspects of your life. It targets areas of both strength and weakness. It does not just focus on areas of weaknesses. Self-development will address areas of weakness to make them less challenging but is not the focus.

Self-development is a conscious process of improving oneself in various aspects of life. It's a constant pursuit of growth by developing skills, competencies, and knowledge. The ultimate goal for self-development is to be a self-fulfilled person. The process includes three key components: Mental conditioning, habit creation, and skills enhancement.

When do we need to develop ourselves?

Understand what's driving you. Self-development requires internal motivation, so it often helps to pinpoint what's at the root of your desire for improvement. So, take an honest look at who you are, how you're wired, and what you want to get out of the journey.

Get to know the people around you. A simple starting point is to ask questions! There is likely someone down the hall or on your team whose job seems interesting to you. Ask them about it! Networking is vital in any healthy career, so put your name and face in the minds of influencers.

Isolate a particular skill to master. Someone wise once told us: "We can do anything, but we can't afford to do everything." When you're tackling self-development, it's impossible to do it all at once. If you focus on just one skill for a certain amount of time (developing better listening behaviors, for example), you'll be more in tune with your progress along the way.

Where do we start in developing ourselves?

Individual Growth – Individual growth or personal development encompasses many things. Participating in community events and networking with others helps you to expand your perspective and develop better interpersonal and communication skills. Failure, trial and error, reflection and self-awareness are the tools that help us to grow and realize our own potential

Prioritise Yourself – Do something that matters to you. If you doubt your selfishness, stop. Ask yourself if you'd encourage or aid someone with your plan. The time to follow your passion is now.

Teamwork – Most jobs and activities involve some degree of teamwork. Learning how to collaborate with others and being open to others' perspectives is a skill you will need throughout your life. Join different

groups on campus, volunteer, become a sorority or fraternity member, volunteer for a school project, hold an executive board position on a campus organization, run for student government.

Avoid Comparing Yourself to Others – Comparing is unpleasant. Social media encourages comparisons. Particularly unjust ones. We compare our worst selves to others' finest. Comparing ourselves focuses on the incorrect person. One life is yours to govern. You can't live your best life, be optimistic, and joyful if you consistently encourage your worst qualities. If you think you can improve, do so. Don't wallow in "poor me, I'm the worst."

Always Try Something New – Changes in habit and comfort zone create resilience. It boosts confidence. It might be a significant move like traveling abroad. Try a new hobby or change your commute to work. Start small and grow. Change is healthy.

Who are the people/things that can help us to develop ourselves?

Friendships have a huge impact on your mental health and happiness. Good friends relieve stress, provide comfort and joy, and prevent loneliness and isolation. Developing close friendships can also have a powerful impact on your physical health. Lack of social connection may pose as much of a risk as smoking, drinking too much, or leading a sedentary lifestyle. Friends are even tied to longevity.

While developing and maintaining friendships takes time and effort, healthy friendships can:

- Improve your mood. Spending time with happy and positive friends can elevate your mood and boost your outlook.
- Help you to reach your goals. Whether you're trying to get fit, give up smoking, or otherwise improve your life, encouragement from a friend can really boost your willpower and increase your chances of success.
- Reduce your stress and depression. Having an active social life can bolster your immune system and help reduce isolation, a major contributing factor to depression.

Reasons It's Important to Surround Yourself with Positive People

- *With positivity comes authenticity*

Those with a positive outlook on life will look out for your wellbeing instead of trying to destroy it. They are looking to make a friend out of you- not an enemy.

- *A support system*

Having a positive person in your life brings comfort. If you ever need a shoulder to cry on, you'll know who to turn to. Instead of keeping you down in the dumps they will try to uplift you, even if it's just lending an ear or lightening up the mood a bit.

- *Good vibes only*

With these favorable people in your lives, good times are easier to have, even if it's just wanting to unwind for five minutes, because guess what? These type of people focus to keep the mood flowing positively.

Why is it important to develop ourselves?

- *Improvement of your mental health*

Mental health has been a constant focus of the current generation's maladies, so many students should already have one foot in the door.

Self-development helps to boost crucial mental health factors such as confidence and self-belief. Better mental health will allow you to focus better on your studies without having to deal with the consequences of depression or anxiety. It's also a lot easier to make friends that way.

- *Being able to communicate effectively*

It may sound simple, but if you think at a deeper level, it is what makes us function, be it work or home. People get into unnecessary conflicts, gossips, at work or home, and the only reason is communication. It's how you talk to your boss or your loved ones with respect, how effectively you deliver a speech, your performance in an interview. Using the right words at the right time is what is powerful.

- *Having faith in yourself*

Voicing out your opinions in meetings, being able to organize your thoughts and present it effectively, ready to take firm decisions in critical situations depend on how confident you are. Being self-confident unlocks new opportunities in life. Once you believe in yourself, you achieve more in life. It is essential to be successful in life.

- *Ability to take up challenges*

Life is monotonous without challenges. There is no fun in doing the same easy job every day. Taking up new challenges brings you new possibilities. It is what helps you discover your capabilities.

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