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[https://www.100test.com/kao\\_ti2020/255/2021\\_2022\\_\\_E5\\_A4\\_A7\\_E5\\_AD\\_A6\\_E8\\_8B\\_B1\\_E8\\_c67\\_255152.htm](https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/255/2021_2022__E5_A4_A7_E5_AD_A6_E8_8B_B1_E8_c67_255152.htm) TEXT Do you want a better life? According to the author of the following article, the solution is easy. Simply change the way you look at yourself - and you will change the way you live. Improving your self-image is your key to living a better life. Your Key to a Better Life by Maxwell Maltz

The most important psychological discovery of this century is the discovery of the "self-image." Whether we realize it or not, each of us carries about with us a mental blueprint or picture of ourselves. It may be vague and ill-defined to our conscious gaze. In fact, it may not be consciously recognizable at all. But it is there, complete down to the last detail. This self-image is our own conception of the "sort of person I am." It has been built up from our own beliefs about ourselves. But most of these beliefs about ourselves have unconsciously been formed by our past experiences, our successes and failures, our humiliations, our triumphs, and the way other people have reacted to us, especially in early childhood. From all these we mentally construct a "self," (or a picture of a self). Once an idea or a belief about ourselves goes into this picture it becomes "true", as far as we personally are concerned. We do not question its validity, but proceed to act upon it just as if it were true. This self-image becomes a golden key to living a better life because of two important discoveries:

1. All your actions, feelings, behavior -- even your abilities -- are always consistent with this self-image. In short, you will

"act like" the sort of person you conceive yourself to be. Not only this, but you literally cannot act otherwise, in spite of all your conscious efforts or will power. The man who conceives himself to be a "failure type person" will find some way to fail, in spite of all his good intentions, or his will power, even if opportunity is literally dumped in his lap. The person who conceives himself to be a victim of injustice, one "who was meant to suffer" will invariably find circumstances to verify his opinions. The self-image is a "premise," a base, or a foundation upon which your entire personality, your behavior, and even your circumstances are built. Because of this our experiences seem to verify, and thereby strengthen our self-images, and a vicious or a beneficent cycle, as the case may be, is set up. For example, a schoolboy who sees himself as an "F" type student, or one who is "dumb in mathematics," will invariably find that his report card bears him out. He then has "proof". A young girl who has an image of herself as the sort of person nobody likes, will find indeed that she is avoided at the school dance. She literally invites rejection. Her woebegone expression, her hang-dog manner, her over-anxiousness to please, or perhaps her unconscious hostility towards those she anticipates will affront her - all act to drive away those whom she would attract. In the same manner, a salesman or a businessman will also find that his actual experiences tend to "prove" his self-image is correct. Because of this objective "proof" it very seldom occurs to a person that his trouble lies in his self-image or his own evaluation of himself. Tell the schoolboy that he only "thinks" he cannot master algebra, and he will doubt your sanity. He has tried

and tried, and still his report card tells the story. Tell the salesman that it is only an idea that he cannot earn more than a certain figure, and he can prove you wrong by his order book. He knows only too well how hard he has tried and failed. Yet, as we shall see later, almost miraculous changes have occurred both in grades of students, and in the earning capacity of salesmen - when they were prevailed upon to change their self-images.<sup>2</sup> The self-image can be changed.

Numerous case histories have shown that one is never too young nor too old to change his self-image and thereby start to live a new life. One of the reasons it has seemed so difficult for a person to change his habits, his personality, or his way of life, has been that heretofore nearly all efforts at change have been directed to the circumference of the self, so to speak, rather than to the center.

Numerous patients have said to me something like the following: "If you are talking about positive thinking, I've tried that before, and it just doesn't work for me." However, a little questioning invariably brings out that these individuals have employed "positive thinking," or attempted to employ it, either upon particular external circumstances, or upon some particular habit or character defect ("I will get that job." "I will be more calm and relaxed in the future." "This business venture will turn out right for me," etc.) But they had never thought to change their thinking of the "self" which was to accomplish these things. Jesus warned us about the folly of putting a patch of new material upon an old garment, or of putting new wine into old bottles. "Positive thinking" cannot be used effectively as a patch or a crutch to the same old self-image. In fact, it is literally

impossible to really think positively about a particular situation, as long as you hold a negative concept of self. And, numerous experiments have shown that once the concept of self is changed, other things consistent with the new concept of self, are accomplished easily and without strain. One of the earliest and most convincing experiments along this line was conducted by the late Prescott Lecky, one of the pioneers in self-image psychology. Lecky conceived of the personality as a "system of ideas", all of which must seem to be consistent with each other. Ideas which are inconsistent with the system are rejected, "not believed," and not acted upon. Ideas which seem to be consistent with the system are accepted. At the very center of this system of ideas -- the keystone -- the base upon which all else is built, is the individual's "ego ideal," his "self-image," or his conception of himself. Lecky was a school teacher and had an opportunity to test his theory upon thousands of students. Lecky theorized that if a student had trouble learning a certain subject, it could be because (from the student's point of view) it would be inconsistent for him to learn it. Lecky believed, however, that if you could change the student's self-conception, which underlies this viewpoint, his attitude toward the subject would change accordingly. If the student could be induced to change his self-definition, his learning ability should also change. This proved to be the case. One student who misspelled 55 words out of a hundred and flunked so many subjects that he lost credit for a year, made a general average of 91 the next year and became one of the best spellers in school. A boy who was dropped from one college

because of poor grades, entered Columbia and became a straight "A" student. A girl who had flunked Latin four times, after three talks with the school counselor, finished with a grade of 84. A boy who was told by a testing bureau that he had no aptitude for English, won honorable mention the next year for a literary prize. The trouble with these students was not that they were dumb, or lacking in basic aptitudes. The trouble was an inadequate self-image ("I don't have a mathematical mind". "I'm just naturally a poor speller"). They "identified" with their mistakes and failures. Instead of saying "I failed that test" (factual and descriptive) they concluded "I am a failure." Instead of saying "I flunked that subject" they said "I am a failure." Instead of saying "I flunked that subject" they said "I am a flunk-out." For those who are interested in learning more of Leckys work, I recommend securing a copy of his book: self consistency, a Theory of Personality. The Island Press, New York, N.Y. NEW WORDS blueprint n. a design for a building or machine, with white lines on blue paper. a detailed plan or scheme vague a. not clear or distinct ill-defined a. not adequately explained. not well marked out. unclear recognizable a. that can be recognized, identifiable conception n. general understanding, idea. the act of forming an idea, plan, etc. humiliation n. the act or process of lowering pride, dignity or self-respect. the state or feeling of being humiliated triumph n. the act of winning. success v. be victorious or successful construct vt. build or put together validity n. truth or soundness. legal force, being legally binding 正确 ; ( 法律上 ) 有效 consistent a. in agreement. keeping to the same principles and habits consistency n. lap n. the front part of

a seated person between the waist and the knees victim n. a person harmed, killed or suffering some hardship or loss 受害者 injustice n. lack of justice. an unjust act verify vt. prove to be true, confirm. check for accuracy 证明 ; 核实 premise n. a statement that is taken as true, used as the basis for an argument. assumption 前提 ; 假设 thereby ad. by means of that, in that way vicious a. evil, wicked. savage and dangerous vicious cycle a set of events in which cause and effect follow each other until this results in a return to the first use. undesirable or unpleasant position and the whole matter begins again 恶性循环 beneficent a. doing good. kind or generous rejection n. (an example of) rejecting or being rejected woe be gone a. very sad in appearance 愁眉苦脸 hang-dog a. (of an expression on the face) unhappy esp. because ashamed or sorry 惭愧的 ; 自觉有罪的

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