

## Lesson 2: How Do You View Yourself?



**Mr. Romanchuk:** Have you ever taken a quiz in a magazine that was supposed to tell you something about yourself?

**Jamal:** I've taken quizzes like that. It's kind of fun. Sometimes I've learned something about myself. Sometimes the quiz just clarifies what I already knew.

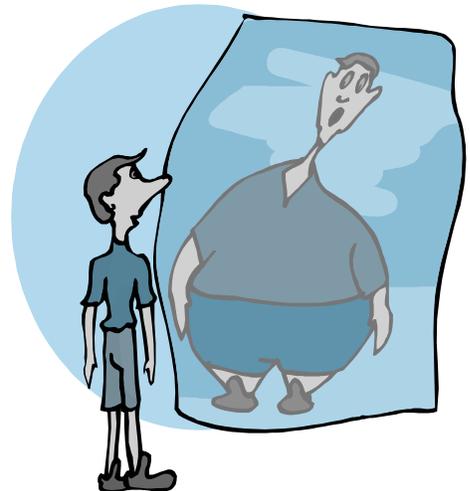
**Mr. Romanchuk:** You're about to have the opportunity to take a quiz on how you view yourself. Go to Segment 2: How Do You Really Feel About Yourself? on your Student Support CD.



**self-image:**  
*how you see  
yourself*

The quiz you just took revealed a lot about your **self-image**. Your self-image is the mental picture you have of yourself. It is a combination of your opinions about yourself, your impressions of how others view you, and your expectations for yourself—the person you think you should be, or could be. You may believe how you see yourself is how others see you. Your self-image, however, can be very different from how the world sees you. People often hold inaccurate images of themselves. For example, some slim individuals see themselves as overweight. Others who are capable and interesting may see themselves as being clumsy or boring.

Self-image includes both the picture you have of your physical self and pictures of your abilities, talents, interests, attitudes, roles, and personality traits. Your self-image changes and develops as you move from childhood through adolescence to adulthood.



*Note: If you are having difficulty, review the definition of each dimension in Lesson 1. Then turn to the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson for examples.*

1. Think about how you see yourself and who you are—physically, emotionally, spiritually, socially, intellectually, and vocationally. Then describe each of the following dimensions of your life.
  - a. physical dimension
  - b. emotional dimension
  - c. spiritual dimension
  - d. social dimension
  - e. intellectual dimension
  - f. vocational dimension
2. Think about all the descriptions that you wrote in question 1.
  - What do you like most about yourself and your life?
  - What most disappoints you?
  - Overall, do you feel good or bad about yourself and your life? Explain.

**Compare your answers with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.**

## Re-examining Your Self-Image

Is your self-image positive or is it negative? People with positive self-images see themselves as valuable people. They are confident that what they think and feel matters to others. On the other hand, people with negative self-images have low **self-esteem**. They judge themselves harshly and lack confidence.

*self-esteem: how you feel about yourself*

Is your self-image realistic? Having a self-image that is unrealistic can hinder you. If your self-image is unrealistically low, you will set goals and ideals that are too easily reached, and you may become complacent—unwilling or unable to move forward. If your self-image is unrealistically high, you will set unreachable goals and ideals for yourself.

## Improving Your Self-Image

Part of a healthy self-image is recognizing what you cannot change about yourself. For example, you cannot do anything about your genes, which determine things like your skin colour, type of hair, and height. You can, however, change the way you think about yourself and develop a positive **attitude**. Developing a positive attitude will give you the power to successfully deal with life's realities. Your attitude affects all aspects of your life.

*attitude: your outlook on life*

Having a positive attitude about your abilities will help the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of your life. A positive attitude will give you the power to resist the negative pressure of others and to do what you believe is the right thing. You will be more likely to succeed if you tackle problems with a positive attitude and focus on solutions rather than the barriers to solutions.

Having a positive attitude about your life will help the social dimension of your life. You will build better relationships if you are enthusiastic and optimistic. No one likes being around someone who complains a lot and is always pessimistic.

Having a positive attitude about your life will help the physical dimension of your health. Studies have shown that optimistic people get sick only half as often as pessimistic people. Of course, being well impacts your vocational health. Feeling well in other dimensions of health allows you to achieve your vocational goals.



## How Optimistic Are You? by Susan K. Perry

***Do you see the chocolate chip cookie as half-eaten or half still to be enjoyed?***

***If you're an optimist, you notice the sun peeking through the darkest clouds.***

***If you're a pessimist, you can find a down side to anything.***

**Take this quiz to learn your type.**

1. Your 6 p.m. date doesn't show up by 6:15. You think:
  - A. I've never been very good at attracting dates.
  - B. I must not have been clear about the time.
  - C. Probably got delayed in traffic or something.
2. You've just entered an essay contest. After dropping off your entry, you think:
  - A. I don't stand a chance. My ideas are always pretty dumb.
  - B. I hope I don't ruffle the contest judge's feathers with the topic I chose.
  - C. I'm a good writer with original ideas. I have an excellent chance to win.

3. You interviewed for a summer job at the local fast-food hang-out. The whole next week, you think:
  - A. They're not calling because they don't want me. I never make good first impressions.
  - B. I forgot to thank the interviewer. I probably blew it.
  - C. They'd be lucky to get me. If they don't call, it's because they've had dozens of applicants.
4. A group report you worked on in summer school with three buddies got a B+. You think:
  - A. The teacher must have been in a good mood when she read our report.
  - B. I know if I had worked a little harder, we would've gotten an A.
  - C. I'm glad I was on this team. I think I contributed a lot!
5. You haven't weighed yourself in months, and suddenly you discover you've put on three pounds. This is what goes through your mind:
  - A. I'm doomed to be fat forever.
  - B. I'd better cut out every single snack and start exercising so I can get back to my regular weight.
  - C. It's probably just water weight from the salty foods I've been eating lately. I'll weigh myself again next week.
6. Your parents are always talking about the rotten state of the economy. You think:
  - A. I'll never get a job better than flipping burgers.
  - B. I'd better do well in school, or I'll end up in bad shape.
  - C. When I'm through with school, the economy will be in better shape. Even if it's not, I'm a good worker and won't have any trouble getting a job I like.
7. Your best friend has joined an environmental group. Your brother bugs you if you forget to recycle a can. You keep hearing dire warnings about the ozone layer. You think:
  - A. It's no use. The air will be unbreathable in another 20 years.
  - B. I'd better find out what I can do to help out.
  - C. It's a good thing everyone's finally becoming aware of the environment. With this much effort, we're sure to save the planet.

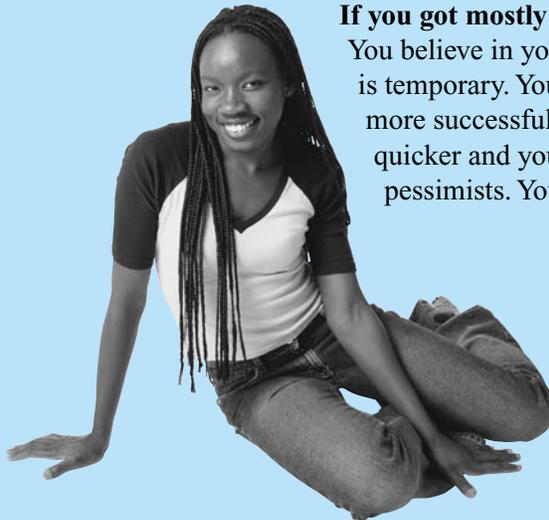
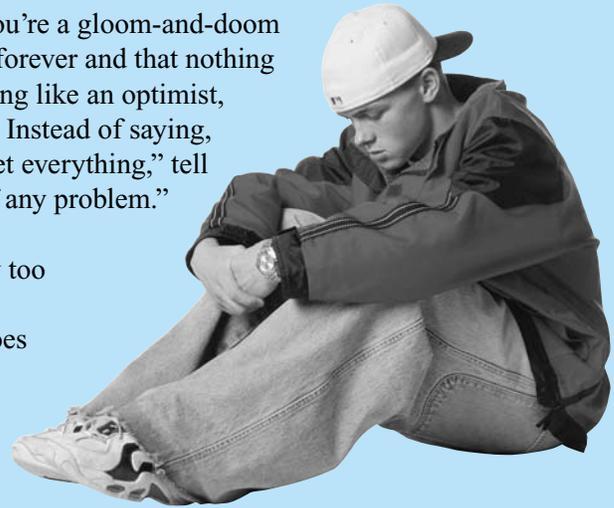
## Scoring

### Add up your A's, B's, and C's.

**If you got mostly A's:** Looks like you're a gloom-and-doom pessimist. You think bad breaks are forever and that nothing will go right for long. To start thinking like an optimist, change the way you talk to yourself. Instead of saying, "I'm always messing up," or "I forget everything," tell yourself, "I can work my way out of any problem."

**If you got mostly B's:** You take way too much responsibility for what goes wrong—and not enough for what goes right. Learn to give yourself credit where credit is due. And remember that bad stuff is going to happen—even to good people like you who work hard and try their best. See if you can stop giving yourself negative messages.

**If you got mostly C's:** Congrats, you're an optimist! You believe in yourself, and you know that bad luck is temporary. You hold up well under pressure, you're more successful in school and work, you bounce back quicker and you may even be in better health than the pessimists. You're more fun to hang out with too!



<sup>1</sup> © Susan K. Perry, Ph. D.



Having a positive outlook on life isn't easy if you don't feel good about yourself.

People with low self-esteem often put themselves down. They are their own worst critics. They are often pessimistic about the future; they expect things to go wrong. They attribute their successes to luck and their failures to their own inadequacies.

People with high self-esteem accept their strengths and weaknesses. They believe they can do what they set out to do if they try hard enough. They are proud of their successes and take failure in stride.



3. Discuss this question with a partner or a small group: Does a positive attitude create high self-esteem, or does high self-esteem create a positive attitude? Support your opinion with reasons.

**Compare your answer with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.**

*self-talk: the inner dialogue you have with yourself*

Your attitude about yourself is reflected in your **self-talk**—those things you say inwardly to yourself about yourself. Is your self-talk positive and optimistic or is it negative and pessimistic?

4. Think about an occasion when you said negative things like the following to yourself: “I just can’t do this! I’m so stupid. I’ll never learn. I might as well give up.” How did those pessimistic comments affect your feelings and actions?
5. Think about an occasion when you said positive things like the following to yourself: “Okay, I made a mistake, but mistakes are a part of learning. I’m a smart person. I know I can do better next time.” How did those optimistic comments affect your feelings and actions?

**Compare your answers with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.**

*cognitive restructuring:  
a technique  
to replace  
negative  
self-talk with  
positive  
self-talk*



If your self-talk is often negative, stop being so hard on yourself. Replace your negative self-talk with positive self-talk. This technique is called **cognitive restructuring**. Here are some tips to help you improve your attitude about yourself.

- Ease up. There is nothing wrong with having high expectations for yourself. But don't set your expectations so high that the pressure you place on yourself becomes unbearable. Give yourself some "me" time. Take a break from pressure activities. Do something fun and spontaneous with friends.
- Focus on the things you've got going for you, not the things you don't like about yourself.
- Don't dwell on past mistakes. No one is perfect, everyone makes mistakes. Making mistakes is a part of life; it doesn't mean that you are a failure. Try to learn from your mistakes and move on.
- Make a list of things you have accomplished. Read it often.

Go to page 5 of Assignment Booklet 1A and respond to question 4 of Section 1.

## Looking Back; Looking Ahead

In Lesson 2 you examined your self-image. You discovered ways to develop a positive attitude and increase your self-esteem. In the next lesson you will examine the social dimension of your life in more detail.

# Glossary

**attitude:** your outlook on life

**self-image:** how you see yourself

**cognitive restructuring:** a technique to replace negative self-talk with positive self-talk

**self-talk:** the inner dialogue you have with yourself

**self-esteem:** how you feel about yourself

## Suggested Responses

1. Descriptions will, of course, vary. Following are questions you may have answered as you described each dimension in your life.
  - a. Physical dimension: Do I wear glasses? Do I have braces? Do I have any physical disabilities or chronic illnesses? Am I physically fit?
  - b. Emotional dimension: Am I a risk-taker or am I cautious? How do I adjust to change and cope with stress and conflict? How do I respond to criticism?
  - c. Spiritual dimension: How do I feel about respect, honesty, fairness, human life, family, education, money, religion, community service, and cultural diversity? What values guide me and give meaning and direction to my life?
  - d. Social dimension: How do I get along with my family, friends, and the other people I interact with? Do I treat people with respect?
  - e. Intellectual dimension: Am I naturally curious? What things am I good at? What are my favourite subjects at school?
  - f. Vocational dimension: What volunteer work have I done? What do I see myself doing in the future?
2. Responses will vary. Following are some points to consider about your response:
  - If you identified several strengths and talents, celebrate them.
  - If you didn't identify many strengths and talents, challenge some of your perceptions about yourself. Are you too hard on yourself? What strengths and talents do you have that you may have overlooked?
  - If you have some areas of your life that you think need improvement, identify the specific circumstances where weaknesses occur so that you can work on these areas.

3. Answers will vary. Following is one student's response:

I think self-esteem comes first and affects a person's attitude. I agree that having a positive outlook on life isn't easy if you don't feel good about yourself. A person's self-esteem is affected by life experiences. For example, a person may not feel safe and loved by his or her family. Or he or she may have a lot of problems in school.

4. Answers will vary. Following is one student's response:

I remember one time when I was making major mistakes at a volleyball tournament. I wasn't having a good game and I started making negative comments to myself. I felt terrible. I wanted to quit the team. Fortunately, my friends talked me out of it.

5. Answers will vary. Following is one student's response:

In grade 9 I was having a tough time with my math course, but I knew I could do it if I tried, so I kept saying positive things to myself. It made me feel better and encouraged me to keep going. In the end I did well in math.

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