

How to Accept Compliments Without Shrinking or Deflecting

QUESTION:

Why do I find it so hard to accept a compliment without brushing it off, deflecting, or turning the focus away from myself?

ANSWER:

Deflecting compliments is a self-protection habit rooted in discomfort with worthiness. If love or approval were conditional growing up, you may feel exposed or even unsafe when praise comes. Learning to accept compliments is an act of self-acceptance. Here's how to get comfortable with compliments:

1. Understand the Root Discomfort

Compliments feel like an uncomfortable spotlight. If you were taught that attention leads to criticism or rejection, then the spotlight feels threatening. Naming the root helps you reframe praise as positive validation and recognition, rather than as threatening or dangerous.

2. Notice How You Deflect

Do you acknowledge a compliment with self-deprecation, change the subject, or immediately compliment back? Awareness of your patterns is the first step in breaking them. Receiving compliments may once have been

embarrassing, awkward, or mortifying especially if you were shy or taught to be self-conscious and self-rejecting. You're safe now to receive positive feedback in the shape of a compliment.

3. Practice Receiving with Gratitude

When someone compliments you, pause, breathe, and simply say: thank you. Nothing more. It may feel uncomfortable, but it trains your nervous system to tolerate and eventually enjoy recognition. Also, by accepting it, you're recognising and acknowledging their kindness and generosity.

4. Let Compliments Land in Your Body

Don't just hear the words – feel them. Place your hand over your heart when receiving praise. Imagine the words soaking into your chest like warmth. Allow yourself to embody the compliment being given.

5. Collect Compliments as Evidence

Write down compliments you receive in a notebook or digital file. When the critical voice tells you you're not enough and you don't deserve the compliment, revisit the list. Let it remind you that others see your worth too.

6. Give Yourself the Compliments You Crave

Learning to accept compliments also means giving them to yourself. Affirm your qualities out loud. The more you

normalize celebrating yourself, the easier it is to believe others when they celebrate you too.

Affirmation:

I allow love, praise, and recognition to reach me without shrinking.

Journal Prompts:

1. What makes compliments feel uncomfortable for me?
2. How do I usually deflect or downplay them?
3. What would it look like to simply say "thank you"?
4. Which compliments have meant the most to me and why?
5. What compliment can I give myself right now?

Visualisation:

Imagine standing in a field of sunlight. Compliments float towards you like golden leaves carried by the wind. Instead of swatting them away, you open your hands and let them land softly. They dissolve into your skin, leaving you stronger, brighter, and more alive.

Conclusion:

Accepting compliments is not arrogance, it's self-acceptance. It's also acknowledgement of the person who gave the compliment. When you receive praise with grace, you give others permission to celebrate themselves too.

Final Thought:

You are worthy of being seen, celebrated, and embraced exactly as you are.