

How To Stop Needing External Validation

QUESTION:

Why do I constantly need reassurance, approval, or recognition from others to feel good about myself?

ANSWER:

The craving for external validation is a survival pattern. Many women were raised to believe their worth depended on pleasing others, being good, or meeting other people's needs and expectations before they met their own. When childhood needs for love, safety, or recognition were not consistently met, you may have learned to seek approval as proof you mattered. But this endless emotional hunger leaves you exhausted; no amount of external praise can fill an internal void.

The truth is: your worth does not come from what others think of you, it comes from what you think of yourself. Healing the search for external validation means shifting the source of validation from outside to within. This is how we do that:

1. Recognise the Cycle of Approval-Seeking

Start by noticing the moments you instinctively look for reassurance – posting something online and waiting for likes, asking others if your decision is okay, or replaying conversations in your head hoping you came across well

and were liked. These moments are not signs of weakness but evidence of a learned coping strategy. By observing the cycle without judgment, you begin to interrupt it. Awareness empowers you to pause before seeking approval and ask, 'what am I really needing right now?' Chances are it's not someone else's approval, but the ability to validate and approve of yourself.

2. Identify the Root of Your Need

Often, external validation traces back to unmet childhood needs – the little girl who longed to hear, 'I'm proud of you', or 'you're enough'. Instead of shaming yourself, offer compassion to that younger part of you. Write her a letter, acknowledging her longing, and affirming that you, as the adult self, will now meet that need. Healing the root removes the urgency of chasing approval.

3. Build Inner Validation Practices

Replace external chasing with internal grounding. Begin each morning with self-acknowledgment: name three things you value about yourself that have nothing to do with others' opinions. Practice celebrating small wins privately. This trains your nervous system to associate safety with self-recognition, not external praise. Over time, your sense of value becomes self-sustaining.

4. Redefine Success and Worth

As long as your worth is tied to other people's responses, it remains unstable. When *you* define your worth it remains balanced and stable. Only you say when and if it changes. When your worth is aligned with your values, success becomes, 'did I honour myself' instead of 'did they approve.' This reframing shifts the power dynamic. You move from fragile dependence on external feedback to solid self-trust rooted in your own values, and *your* definition of your worth.

5. Challenge the Fear of Rejection

One reason we crave validation is fear of rejection. Begin experimenting with micro-moments of potential non-validation: share an opinion without checking for approval, say no without over-explaining, or resist explaining yourself at all. Each time you survive without seeking reassurance, you weaken your fear and strengthen your self-worth and resilience. Rejection becomes less of a threat and more of a sign that you're honouring yourself and feeling comfortable with disagreement and confrontation.

6. Create a Compassionate Inner Voice

The harshest critic often lives inside your own head. When you don't receive validation, that fear-based inner critic

may attack. Replace it with a compassionate inner dialogue, 'I'm proud of myself, I am enough as I am, my worth and integrity is not up for debate.' This is not about empty affirmations but about reparenting yourself with the love and acceptance you once sought externally.

Affirmation:

I am enough exactly as I am. My worth does not depend on external approval.

Journal prompts:

1. When do I most notice myself craving approval or reassurance?
2. What childhood experiences taught me that my value depended on other people's opinions?
3. How can I begin to validate myself daily in small, consistent ways?
4. What standards of success do I want to define for myself?
5. What would change in my life if I no longer needed external validation to feel whole?

Visualisation:

Imagine standing in front of a mirror. Around you are the voices of people whose approval you once chased – family, friends, colleagues. One by one, those voices fade into silence, leaving only your reflection. Look deeply into

your own eyes and hear yourself say, 'I see you. I value you. I am proud of you.' Feel the strength of knowing your worth begins and ends with you.

Conclusion:

The endless pursuit of external validation keeps you small, exhausted, and dependent. By understanding its roots, building inner validation, and redefining worth, you reclaim the power to define yourself. True freedom is knowing you are already enough.

Final Thought:

The love, validation, and self-worth you've been waiting for has always been within you.