

# How to Stop Needing Other People's Approval



We grow up learning that we need to get the approval of those around us. Firstly we seek the approval of our parents or caregivers followed by teachers, religious leaders and so on. While seeking approval is part of the learning process, we are rarely taught to be independent and seek our own approval. If we don't develop our individuality, we will spend life seeking approval from those around us.

The need for other people's approval can be a sign of insecurity, a lack of belief in ourselves and a belief that we alone are not sufficiently competent to approve of

ourselves and what we do. Ideally, we need to meet our own emotional needs rather than seeking out others to do that for us.

Seeking the approval of others results in us making choices to avoid disapproval or criticism, instead of making decisions that are important to us. By relying on others approval, we sabotage ourselves through placing obstacles in our path and striving for unachievable goals.

Reducing or eliminating the need for approval from others and approving ourselves will require deliberate action. It will not happen overnight, but will be a journey that will deliver significant changes in your life.

## Identify what you are believing

Do you believe that it is possible for every significant person in your life to approve of everything that you do? How many knots will you need to tie yourself in while you attempt to achieve this? Is it possible to be your authentic self while trying to do this, or is there a need to entirely comprise who you are?

People pleasers are always seeking approval from those around them. My experience in working with people pleasers is that despite their best efforts to please everyone, life just doesn't work out.

You are a unique person with unique skills, even if you don't believe that. Invest time in finding out who you are, rather than spending time in trying to be what others want you to be. Your strength lies in being who you are.

To face your addiction to approval, you also need to face the negative feelings that come with it such as shame, anger and guilt. The need for approval from others encourages a sense of worthlessness. Not getting approval from others increases the feeling of worthlessness.

## Accept yourself for who you are

Requiring approval from others to feel that you have value means that you believe that self-value and self-worth have to be earned. But the truth is others cannot give you value, as you already have value. You need to acknowledge it.

To start to see your value, keep a written record of what empowers you. It could be choices that you make, things that you learn about, what you are good at and what things feel right for you. It does not matter how small it is or whether anyone else believes it has value.

### **What do you want?**

Always seeking the approval of others will eventually take over your whole decision-making progress. All significant action will require the approval of others, resulting in your life being controlled by the values of others.

Your dreams and drives are unique for you. Nobody else knows what they are. Seeking others approval means sacrificing who you are. You need to focus on what you want instead of what other people believe you want.

Focus on your decisions and your actions. How much of it revolves around pleasing others wanting them to tell you that you are OK? Focus on yourself when you make a decision and ask yourself if you feel right about your decision. It is your choice, and only you know what is right for you.

### **Replace irrational beliefs**

Our level of stress and emotional problems are directly related to our beliefs. Placing the needs and opinions of others above your own through seeking others approval, means you are going against your own beliefs. If who we are on the inside doesn't match what we do on the outside, the incongruence produced will lead to stress and emotional upset.

Furthermore, the need for others' approval before you see yourself as valuable and lovable, means that not receiving their approval will make you feel worthless. How can anyone else know what you are capable of doing and what you should be doing? Only you know this, and only you know whether your actions are consistent with who you are.

It appears to be irrational to expect that you can obtain your best in life, by seeking other people's approval. When you start a new task or project in your life ask yourself are you doing it because it is right for you or are you doing it to get others approval?

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