

WHAT



YOU'RE WORTH AND HOW TO KNOW IT

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS TRYING
TO TELL US HOW WE SHOULD
MEASURE OUR VALUE.
HOW CAN WE KNOW WHAT
WE'RE REALLY WORTH?

By Hadley Griggs

“Oh no! I spent all day working on my science project, and I didn’t start my math homework, take the dog for a walk, call my grandma and wish her a happy birthday, or post on social! I can’t believe myself. I can’t do anything right.”

Does this sound like you?

Sometimes life can get so overwhelming that our to-do lists feel miles long, and all we see are the things we haven’t done. And while I’ve always loved to-do lists, there are some nights I feel like I didn’t accomplish anything. And because of that, I sometimes feel worthless.

I’m not alone—my mom can get discouraged with her to-do lists, too. But one time she shared with me a little secret: some days she doesn’t write out a to-do list. Instead, she’ll wait until she finishes something, and *then* she’ll write it down and cross it off. At the end of the day, instead of looking at a list of all the things she still has to do, she has a different kind of list—a “done list.” And then she feels so much better.

So what’s going on here? Why do we sometimes convince ourselves that we’re only worth what we’ve accomplished, what talents we have, or even what we are worth compared to classmates, or what we see in the mirror? Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explains it this way: “When we choose to define ourselves . . . by some characteristic that is temporary or trivial in eternal terms, we de-emphasize what is most important about us and we overemphasize what is relatively unimportant.”¹ In my case, and in my mom’s case, we’re sometimes overemphasizing achievements and de-emphasizing what’s really important. We’re measuring our self-worth by the wrong things.

WHAT IS SELF-WORTH?

It's important that we know what people mean when they talk about "self-worth." It's our actual, intrinsic value as individuals—and that never changes. (We'll talk about that in a minute.) What can and often does change is our *sense* of self-worth. So when we say that our own sense of self-worth can rise and fall with everything that happens each day, we're talking about how we *perceive* our value, not about our actual value as people.

It's also important to understand that our having a high sense of self-worth is not the same as unrighteous pride. According to President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, pride "is a sin of comparison," because prideful people measure their greatness as something that makes them better than others.² Self-worth should have nothing to do with comparison—it should be the opposite. It is the value that we can feel as individual sons and daughters of God.

HOW SHOULD MY WORTH BE MEASURED?

The world is always trying to tell us how we should determine our self-worth. Sometimes it's how physically attractive we think we are or how many followers we have on social media or how talented we are or how fast we can turn in tests at school . . . and the list goes on. With all of this going on around us, how can we know what we're *really* worth?

President Thomas S. Monson has given us the answer. He has taught, "The worth of a human soul is its capacity to become as God."³ In other words, our worth comes from who we have the ability to become: if we keep the Lord's commandments, "then shall [we] be gods, because [we] have all power" (D&C 132:20). This potential comes from being "spirit [sons and daughters] of heavenly parents,"⁴ and it is why "the worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10). Our true self-worth can't be measured by any earthly scale.

As children of God, we can also feel His love, which should be another boost to our sense of self-worth. In President Monson's words, "Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. It is not influenced by your appearance, by your possessions, or by the amount of money you have in your bank account. It is not changed by your talents and abilities. It is simply there. It is there for you when you are sad or happy, discouraged or hopeful. God's love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there."⁵



HOW CAN I SEE MY TRUE WORTH?

Of course, there are a thousand little things that can distract us from accurately understanding our true worth—and that’s when our sense of self-worth can start feeling a little low.

Luckily, there are also a thousand little ways we can get back in tune and cultivate a healthy understanding of self-worth. Here are a few:

- **Strive for righteousness.** Living righteously brings us one step closer to realizing our divine potential to become like God. On the other hand, when we make mistakes and sin, we may feel shame, which can overwhelm us and bring down our sense of self-worth. Instead, we should allow godly sorrow to lead us to sincere repentance. Because of Jesus Christ’s Atonement, our guilt can be swept away through repentance, which can help us focus on our future—not our past. We will also be worthy of the Spirit, which can give us peace and confidence, helping us have a true sense of our worth.



- **Serve others.** By magnifying our talents and our callings and by engaging in other forms of service, we can draw closer to Jesus Christ, and become more like Him—bringing us closer to our divine potential.

- **Remember who you are.** Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, has said: “The real source that we should turn to to find out our value is our Heavenly Father. . . . The thing that gives me the greatest comfort is knowing who I am. . . . If we really understood that we are literal sons and daughters of Heavenly Father, I don’t think we would ever question our value.”⁷



- **Rejoice in the successes of others.**

Instead of feeling jealous or upset that others get an A on a test, congratulate them. Remember that everyone has different strengths and weaknesses, and that comparisons are not an accurate measure of anyone’s self-worth. In the words of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “We are not diminished when someone else is added upon.” He says that feeling envious of others’ successes is like “downing [a] quart of pickle juice every time anyone around you has a happy moment!”⁶ When we are happy for other people, we can understand a little more how God rejoices in our successes—again helping us to draw closer to our potential.

- **Acknowledge the little things you do every day.** Allow yourself to feel enthusiastic about your daily successes, even the tiny ones. For instance, keep a “done list”! When you accomplish something, however small, write it down and cross it off. It’s OK (and good) to rejoice in the little things.



YOU ARE WORTH IT

We all struggle with feelings of low self-worth at times in our lives, because the world wants us to judge ourselves by so many different and difficult standards. But in the end, our worth has nothing to do with how much we cross off our to-do lists, who our friends are, or even what talents we have been given. Our divine worth is constant—and it comes from who we are: divine children of a loving Heavenly Father with the potential to become like Him. The more we try to reach that potential, the more we’ll discover our eternal worth. **NE**

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “How to Define Yourself,” *New Era*, June 2013, 48.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Pride and the Priesthood,” Oct. 2010 general conference.
3. Quoted in Thomas S. Monson, “My Brother’s Keeper,” Oct. 1994 general conference.
4. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “We Never Walk Alone,” Oct. 2013 general conference.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2012 general conference.
7. “Face to Face with Elder Rasband, Sister Oscarson, and Brother Owen,” Jan. 2016, facetoface.lds.org.