

Self-image, self-esteem and ideal-self as components of self-concept



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I have never sat and fully thought out who I am, what makes me who I am and what influenced me to be who I am now. Psychologists agree that the self-concept is multidimensional and multidirectional, we as individuals have many ways of viewing ourselves ever-changing and molding to our circumstance and environment. We compare ourselves to others and perceive how others see us and therefore are influenced to alter our 'self-concept' accordingly. Charles H. Cooley coined this phenomenon as the 'looking-glass self', as it is our tendency to use others as a mirror to how we perceive ourselves. Carl Rogers believed that our self-concept had three different components, self-image (how you view yourself), self-esteem (how much you value yourself), and ideal-self (what you wish you were like). I will explore these three concepts and relate them to my own self-concept.

Self-image

Self-image is what we see when we look in the mirror; our height, weight, looks, sense of style etc. As we age out self-image changes and morphs to focus on different aspects, as we move into puberty and our body changes so does our self-image. Our personality and looks influence our self-image; if people are positive, you are popular and others agree our self-image is better than if we were to receive negative comments. I am pretty, and I feel like people tend to agree; I overthink, and it often gets me in trouble; I am very forgiving, which has sometimes come back to bite me; I wear my heart on my sleeve, which leaves me vulnerable to heartbreak. This list only touches on who I am as a human and my self-image like many others is not my ideal-self and there are things I would change about myself but as I grow and learn, I continue to work to become more of who I want to be.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is affected by our self-image; if we are unhappy with our self-image, our esteem is affected negatively. Our self-esteem is how we see ourselves, and how we perceive how others see and talk about us, it ebbs and flows throughout our life and we often accommodate the changes using material things like fashion or makeup as we feel it will make our self-image better thus increasing our self-esteem. My self-esteem has always been a rollercoaster, it switches and changes almost on a daily basis. I work on loving myself every day and learn to see 'flaws' as something unique and not always something I must change. Changing my 'inner dialogue' is what influences my self-esteem more than anything physical; if I tell myself I am pretty and that the day will be good then I must believe it, and more often than not its true.

Ideal-self

The ideal-self is who you want to be or who you aspire to be like if you are not part of the lucky few who are completely content with yourself, your ideal-self and your real self are two different people. Our ideal-self is not only about how we look, it is also about our lifestyle, our personality, our relationships with people, our career, and how we want others to think of us. My ideal-self currently at age 22 is independent, successful, 7kgs lighter, in a strong and happy relationship, confident in myself and my choices, and a fuller social calendar. Though not totally unrealistic it is something I strive to be and am constantly working to achieve. I believe I see my ideal-self this way as it is what is portrayed to be 'normal' for someone my age, looking at

the way I currently live my life versus how people I see on social media and in films, the two are very different.