

External Validation Seeking

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What is it?

Also referenced as "external locus of evaluation".

External Locus of Evaluation refers to a mindset where a person evaluates their worth, actions, or decisions based on the opinions and judgments of others rather than their own internal standards.

External Validation Seeking more directly describes the behavior of constantly looking for approval or affirmation from external sources, such as other people.

Both terms describe the tendency to rely on external feedback to form a sense of self-worth or to validate one's thoughts, feelings, or accomplishments.

People may seek validation in various areas, such as:

- **Personal appearance** (compliments on looks or style)
- **Work or achievements** (acknowledgment of success or skills)
- **Opinions and feelings** (approval of thoughts or emotions)

This behavior can be natural and healthy to some extent, as humans are social beings who value connection. However, excessive dependence on external validation can be problematic. It may lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, and a lack of internal confidence, as one's sense of worth becomes overly reliant on the judgments of others.

In contrast, *self-validation* involves recognizing and accepting one's own feelings, thoughts, and achievements, regardless of external feedback. Developing this skill is key to building a stronger sense of self-worth and emotional resilience.

Benefits of avoiding or reducing these needs?

Avoiding or reducing the need for external validation offers several psychological and emotional benefits, leading to a healthier sense of self-worth and improved well-being. Here are some key advantages:

1. Increased Self-Esteem and Confidence

- Relying on *self-validation* fosters a stronger internal sense of worth. When you trust your own judgment and feelings, your self-esteem becomes more stable, as it isn't contingent on others' opinions.

2. Emotional Independence

- By not depending on external praise or approval, you become more emotionally independent. You can handle criticism or lack of recognition without feeling discouraged or unworthy, allowing you to maintain emotional stability.

3. Better Decision-Making

- When you're not focused on pleasing others or gaining their approval, you're more likely to make decisions that align with your true values and goals. This leads to more authentic, meaningful choices.

4. Reduced Anxiety and Stress

- Constantly seeking validation can lead to social anxiety and stress, as you may worry about how you're perceived. Letting go of this need reduces the pressure to perform for others and frees you from the fear of judgment.

5. Improved Relationships

- Relationships become more genuine when you're not looking for validation. You can engage with others more authentically, without the need for constant affirmation, which fosters deeper connections based on mutual respect rather than approval-seeking.

6. Greater Resilience

- When your self-worth comes from within, you're less affected by setbacks or criticism. This resilience allows you to bounce back more easily from challenges, as you're not dependent on external praise to feel capable or competent.

7. Enhanced Personal Growth

- Internal validation encourages self-reflection and growth. By focusing on your own standards and progress, you're more likely to take risks, learn from mistakes, and improve without fearing external judgment.

8. Freedom to Be Yourself

- Letting go of the need for validation frees you to express yourself authentically. You're less likely to conform to others' expectations or suppress your true personality, leading to greater self-fulfillment and creativity.

Ultimately, avoiding external validation helps you cultivate a more empowered and balanced sense of self, leading to greater fulfillment in both personal and professional aspects of life.

PLAN TO AVOID SEEKING EXTERNAL VALIDATION AT WORK

Seeking external validation means relying on others' opinions, approval, or praise to feel good about yourself. At work, this might involve seeking confirmation from colleagues or superiors to feel competent or valued, which can undermine your self-confidence and independence.

How to Know When You're Doing It or About to Do It

- **Overexplaining:** Providing unnecessary details to get approval or agreement.
- **Asking for constant feedback:** Looking for reassurance on tasks you know how to do.
- **Changing opinions or ideas:** Altering your stance just to align with someone else's perspective for approval.
- **Worrying excessively about others' opinions:** Stressing over how others will perceive your work or decisions.

- **Bringing up personal life details:** Sharing aspects of your personal life in hopes of gaining empathy or bonding when it's not necessary.

How to Pull Back or Avoid It

- **Pause and Reflect:** Before seeking someone's opinion or approval, ask yourself, "Do I already know the answer or feel confident about this?"
- **Trust Your Knowledge:** Remind yourself that you are competent and capable, and trust your expertise without needing someone to reaffirm it.
- **Set Personal Standards:** Focus on your own goals and standards for success, rather than waiting for external praise. Ask yourself, "Am I happy with the quality of my work?"
- **Affirmation Practice:** When you catch yourself seeking validation, take a deep breath and mentally affirm, "I don't need others' approval to know I'm good at my job."
- **Keep Personal Life Private:** Remind yourself not to divulge personal details in work settings just to gain acceptance or approval. Focus on professional discussions.

How to Affirm Your Self-Worth Without External Validation

- **Internal Affirmations:** Regularly remind yourself, "I am skilled, competent, and capable without others needing to tell me so."
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** Acknowledge your own successes, even the small ones. Instead of seeking recognition from others, take a moment to appreciate your achievements.
- **Embrace Feedback Positively, Without Needing It:** Feedback can be helpful, but don't depend on it. Use it as a tool for growth, not as a source of validation.
- **Be Confident in Your Work:** When you complete tasks, say to yourself, "I did this well because I know what I'm doing."

Reminders

- **You don't need to seek acceptance:** You are already happy with who you are, and your worth doesn't depend on others' approval.
- **Workplace is for professional matters:** Keep personal life private unless sharing is truly relevant to the situation.
- **You are enough as you are:** No need to adjust your behavior to gain acceptance—you're already good enough.