

LIFE SKILLS FOR SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

Dr. K. V. Deore

Associate Professor

PVDT College of Education,

SNDT Women's University, Mumbai - 20

INTRODUCTION

Life skills are very important for an individual. Self-knowledge is basic to growth and development. In case, you know very little about yourself, your chances for development are meager. It is awareness about your positive and negative aspects that motivate you to make the most of your positive qualities and eliminate your weaknesses. It is awareness and intense motivation that enable you to spend your time and energy to accomplish tasks. If you develop life skills such as self-esteem, self-awareness, assertiveness, coping with stress and coping with emotions, they will provide you with the required insight into all aspects of your life that will help you manage yourself well. Hence these life skills should be dealt with at some length.



Global Online Electronic International Research Journal's licensed Based on a work at <http://www.goeirj.com>

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to the state of mind of an individual arrived at as a result of accurate and objective assessment of his or her abilities, affiliations, and influences. The way we think, feel and act depends largely on our self-esteem. It is such a state of mind that hardly leaves any sphere of your life untouched. Whether or not you are confident, assertive, willing to take risks, responsible, optimistic, internally-driven and proactive depends to a great extent on your self-esteem. When your self-esteem takes a downward trend, you begin to show up the tendency to run away from responsibilities, turn out to be fatalistic, reactive and wait for things to happen rather than take the initiative needed to make them happen. You become lonely and moody, and get hurt easily, exhibit lack of confidence and wait for approval from others. As you lack vision, you fail to set moderately challenging goals and carry them through to success. You will then hardly get opportunity for experiencing success and the happiness that accompanies it. Enhancing your self-esteem is important, if you wish to develop a wholesome personality, increase your capacity to learn, and not to fall a victim to depression and other psychological disturbances. The causes of low self-esteem are many. Lack of clear-cut and meaningful goals and objectives, self-indulgence, procrastination, lack of self-discipline, harbouring shame, guilt, remorse, self-pity, comparing yourself and your accomplishments with those of others, depending on others for doing things, judging yourself for

every frailty, shortcoming or mistake are some of the major reasons that prevent you from cultivating a high level of self-esteem. In case, you wish to nurture a high level of self-esteem, you have to set realistic goals, develop assertiveness skills, take up responsibility for your own growth and development, monitor your own emotions and impulses and lead a life of values and principles.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is knowledge about yourself. It has to do with paying ongoing attention to your internal state such as your moods and feelings, your beliefs and values, your behaviour and attitudes, etc. and having an impartial assessment of them. It is a 39 neutral awareness of what is happening in you. It involves awareness about your own emotions, your behaviour, your locus of control, and your strengths and weaknesses. Individuals with a strong sense of self-awareness can know where they are strong and where they are weak. As we develop awareness about our self-worth, we become more self-confident. As a result, with the passage of time, we will be more decisive, make sound judgments using the emotional and cognitive information available within us. In case we lack self-awareness, there are quite a number of ways to build it up. Introspection and feedback from others are just two of these ways. You may begin your introspection with a single thought related to some period in the past. Then you allow your mind to gradually work backward recalling specific incidents, people, places and events associated with that particular period. This type of reflection about the past, your role in various occasions will give you the required insight about yourself. In spite of introspection, you may not get to know all what you need about yourself. In that case, asking one of your close relatives or friends for feedback would be a fine way of knowing more. This will enable you to have another's opinion about your strengths and weaknesses, to get assurance whether or not what you are doing is right, to verify whether you see yourself the same way as others see you. Feedback, be it positive or negative, is important. It gives another's opinion on how you behave. It is a way of learning more about yourself and the effects of your behaviour has on others. Unless you seek feedback, you may never come to know about those aspects. In the absence of feedback, no change can be worked out. You stand to lose the opportunity to learn and develop.

Decision-Making

Decision-making is one of the life skills that we have to utilize before solving problems and handling issues. Students have to take decisions on many occasions. At some time or other, they have to decide the school or institution they have to enroll or the course of studies they have to pursue. Similarly, they have to decide whether to stay at home or in the hostel during their period of study. In case they are clear about how decisions are generally made, it would make the task easier. They have to study each situation carefully before decision is being made. Hence, it would be nice to know what decision making refers to and how it is generally made.

Problem-Solving

Problem-solving, like decision-making, is a life skill that is as important as and perhaps more important than decision making. Problems are situations that are not easy to surmount. Problems, be they big or small, have to be faced and overcome. In case we fail, life would come to a standstill, goals would remain unaccomplished, and the person concerned will be filled with anxiety and worry. Problems can immobilize and render us helpless. Unless we tackle them at the proper time, they will render us handicapped. If we allow problems to get the better of us, they will slow down our overall growth and development. Our happiness and prosperity would show up a downward trend ultimately resulting in a degrading downfall. Hence we are left with no choice but tackle them in time as they arise.

Coping with Stress

Coping with stress is just another life skill that you need to know. Stress generally refers to the reaction that people show when they encounter excessive pressure. Depending upon our attitude and our level of tolerance, the pressure we experience may keep varying. Stress lays much more of a demand on the person's ability than it can meet. This tension which is beyond one's capacity to cope with lead to stress. People tend to experience stress when the pressure becomes excessive. Causes of stress are many. Every day we are confronted with several situations that produce stress. As a student, you may feel stressful if you have the habit of postponing your task of learning. What you are supposed to learn today, you put off for tomorrow. This postponement goes on and on till the exam date approaches. Then you have a lot of things to study in a little time. It is quite natural to feel tense. Apart from this, your ways of thinking, feeling and acting, can lead to stress. Similarly, when you are involved in dull and uninteresting tasks, conflict with peers whom you love, physical ailment, threat to your security, personal loss through death, etc. stress can occur. Even though stress when it is excessive is harmful, a slight amount of stress is a great source of assistance. It is essential for spurring motivation providing the stimulation for taking up challenging tasks. To get the most out of life, we require a certain amount of stress. It would act as an impetus to complete tasks that are important. Thus a mild stress can be a useful source for creative energy.

Communication skill

Communication skill is the ability to express our ideas by speaking, writing or using body language in a suitable manner to current circumstance and culture, at the same time, to listen, to respect others' ideas even when they have different viewpoints. Expressing opinions also includes expressing the thoughts, ideas, demands, wishes and feelings, at the same time asking for assistance and consultancy if necessary. Communication skill helps people know how to assess the communicative situation and adjust the communicating manner properly and efficiently, to open our heart and mind but not doing any harm or causing any hurt to others. This skill helps us have positive relationships with other people, at the same time, know how to build a new friendship which

is a very significant factor for the joy in life.

Coping with Emotions

Emotions are powerful feelings that are directed at something or someone. Emotions and impulses propel people to action. Emotions can be positive or negative. Anger, fear, anxiety, worry etc. are examples of negative emotions while hope, optimism, love, etc. are examples of positive ones. Emotions, be they positive or negative, would keep on crossing the mind. We cannot stop them. But whether we entertain them is something that is within our power. In case we entertain them they can run riot and land us in trouble. We have to intervene in time and put a check on them before they assume the shape of a monster. Emotional management, however, doesn't mean total suppression. In fact, emotions are an important element in our lives. What is required is emotional restraint, some sort of tempered balance and wisdom. Total absence of emotions can make our life dull and isolate us from the richness of life.

Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationship is yet another life-skill that helps us get along smoothly with our peers. These skills are techniques that help us relate to others. They tell you what you should and what you should not do in your dealing with your friends. In short, they highlight the mutual give and take in any relationships. The mutual give and take is an important feature of successful interpersonal interaction. These skills are learned. Family, school, neighborhood are the main places that give scope for learning these skills.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a skill that helps us look analytically at events, people, objects, actions and even literary works with a view to gathering information that is relevant and objective with the help of which we can assess and evaluate them. In our day-to-day life, we have to think critically before we speak or do anything. If we spurt out something or do something without thinking, it would often land us in trouble. In case you speak sarcastically and hurt the feelings of your friends, you are likely to lose them as friends. If you join a course of study without thinking about its utility, scope, and nature, you may have to drop out of it in a short while. As a result, you will lose not only a lot of money, but also your precious time and energy. Hence critical thinking is important and we need to learn it. We need to know what it is and practice a lot to be proficient in it. Critical thinking being so important, you need to do all what you can to develop it. There are several ways for developing it. One of them is to focus on "how?" and "why" in addition to what happened when you read reports on events and incidents. Another way to develop it is to search for evidence before you accept anything as you read or listen to others. The habit of comparing various answers to a question and finding the best one is yet another way to develop critical thinking. You can also develop critical thinking through asking questions to yourself and speculating beyond what you already know to create new ideas. Evaluating and possibly questioning what others say rather than immediately

accepting it as truth is yet another way to develop it. In short, critical thinking will help you in your studies, in making decisions, solving problems, passing judgments, and ensuring maximum utilization of resources. It will also help you to be more inquisitive, insightful.

Creative thinking skill

Creative thinking is the ability to acknowledge and settle the problem in a new way, with new idea, by new method, new arrangement and organization, the ability to discover and connect the relation among concepts, ideas, viewpoint, event, independent in thinking. Creative thinking skill helps people think dynamically with more initiatives and imagination, know how to judge and be adapted, have a wider vision and thinking capacity than others, not limited in directly undergoing experience, think soundly and differently. Creative thinking is an important life skill as in our life people are often placed in unexpected or incident circumstances. In such situations, we are required to have creative thinking to cope with the circumstances flexibly and appropriately.

Conclusion

Life skills are skills, strengths, and capabilities that can help human face life problems with a positive attitude and carry out various tasks with effectiveness and efficiency. Life skills are so many that we cannot learn all of them. We need to learn only a few that are considered to be core life skills. Some of these core skills like self-esteem, self-awareness, coping with stress and coping with emotions help us understand and manage ourselves. Similarly, life skills like effective communication, interpersonal relationships, and empathy and conflict resolution help us get along peacefully and amicably with others. Another set of life skills like critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making and problem-solving help us to handle issues and problems that we confront in our day-to-day life. The importance of learning life-skills is being widely understood today and efforts are already on in equipping human with life skills.

REFERENCE

1. Agarwal J.C.,(2005)Recent Developments And Trends In Education, Delhi, Shipra publication.
2. BhattacharyaSrinibas(2006)Sociological Foundations Of Education,Delhi, Atlantic publication.
3. DharmaBharti,(2005)Role Of Teacher In National Regeneration, Hyderabad, Dharma Bharti Foundation. .
4. Kulkarni, V.&Kaldate,S.(2007). Education in Emerging Indian Society.(3rd ed.) Pune : India printing works.
5. Kulkarni, S.(2006). Education in Emerging Indian Society.(1st ed.) Pune :Nutan publishers.
6. Cottrell, S. (2003). The study skills handbook. New York: Palgrave Macmillan,
7. Delors, J. et al. (1996). Learning: The treasure within. Report to UNESCO of the

International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Paris: UNESCO.
Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/15_62.pdf. on 15/11/2015.

Websites

1. Global Leadership of **Social Harmony** from <http://www.peacefromharmony.org>
2. Fundamental Concepts of **Peace Education** - University for Peace, from <http://www.upsam.upeace.org/pdf/Curricula/Ti...> - Cached - Similar
3. **Social Harmony** is Possible Through Universal **Education** – A counter ...
From priyatu.files.wordpress.com/2007/04/s... - Cached – Similar

