

Dealing *with* Inadequacy

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Building 1, Level 5 (1.517) @Lobby C

<http://www.sutd.edu.sg/Campus-Life/Well-being-Services>

“Do your best”, “Try harder” ... are a couple of well-meaning words we may have heard or we ourselves might even have used as a form of ‘encouragement’.

But what does it really mean to do one’s best? Whose ‘best’ are we using as a benchmark to measure that we are up to par? And what would it take to reach the accepted standard of measurement?

Without a clear point of reference and few clues on how to go about doing it, we are not quite sure how much effort is really enough. So we think that if we muster our willpower, be more resolved, put in more hours, sacrifice rest and personal care, etc. then perhaps it would be deemed that we have tried our best or hard enough to measure up.

All is fine and dandy if we receive the stamp of approval. The question is what happens when we perceive that our best is not good enough.

Does our inability to achieve a desired goal suggest that we are not trying hard enough? Does that also imply that we are not good enough? Some of us are dogged by the self-belief that we are not good enough for a job, a position or a person, etc.

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Most could relate to the lyrics of a song that goes, *“I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough.”*

If we do not deal with this toxic “not-good-enough” mindset, it could result in self-loathing due to the distorted image of ourselves as weak, incompetent and of little value. It may even cause us to quit the very thing that we know we ought to be doing – that is to do our personal best in the midst of trial or difficulty, in order to better ourselves.

An important step to combat the thought that we are not good enough will involve us making a conscious and committed decision that our self-worth is not determined by how others measure us, using themselves or another individual as a source of comparison.

As helpful (*or unhelpful*) as their opinion or feedback may be, we need to serve gentle reminders constantly to ourselves that we would be better off if we treat ourselves with kindness and patience as we journey through life; learning and acquiring the attitudes, skills and knowledge to be the best that we can be.

Of equal importance will be our decision in allowing who (*preferably someone benevolent*) and what (*preferably something positive*) to define us and our worth if we wish to deal with the sense of inadequacy.

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SUTD Wellbeing Services offers professional counselling services for students in a private and confidential setting. If you would like to speak to a Counsellor to discuss any issue or challenge, please email us at wellbeing@sutd.edu.sg.