

Self-Development: An Excavation Rather Than Construction.

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Abstract

This article examines the concept of self-development as a process of self-discovery and internal exploration rather than constructing an idealized version of oneself. It analyzes the idea that personal growth is not about acquiring new qualities but about uncovering and understanding one's authentic essence. Special attention is given to the impact of modern self-improvement culture on an individual's psychological well-being, particularly regarding perfectionism, self-criticism, and the potential loss of personal identity. The study explores the relationship between the search for inner harmony and the process of freeing oneself from societal and internal constraints that hinder the realization of the true self.

Keywords: self-development, authenticity, personal growth, self-discovery, perfectionism, developmental psychology, inner harmony.

Анотація

У цій статті розглядається концепція саморозвитку як процесу самопізнання та внутрішнього розкриття, а не побудови ідеального образу себе. Проаналізовано думку про те, що особистісний ріст полягає не у створенні нових якостей, а у виявленні та усвідомленні власної автентичної сутності. Особливу увагу приділено впливу сучасної культури самовдосконалення на психологічний стан людини, зокрема на її прагнення до перфекціонізму, самокритику та втрату власної ідентичності. Досліджено взаємозв'язок між пошуком внутрішньої гармонії та звільненням від соціальних і внутрішніх обмежень, що заважають усвідомленню справжнього "я".

Ключові слова: саморозвиток, автентичність, особистісне зростання, самопізнання, перфекціонізм, психологія розвитку, внутрішня гармонія.

Self-development is a continuous process of self-exploration, reflection, and growth, through which individuals strive to understand themselves and enhance their lives. It is often associated with acquiring new skills, refining personal qualities, and striving for success. [1] However, beyond these conventional notions, self-development is fundamentally about reconnecting with one's authentic self. It is not about constructing an idealized version of oneself, but rather peeling away the layers of fear, doubt, and external expectations that obscure one's true nature. By shifting the focus from relentless self-improvement to self-discovery, individuals can cultivate a deeper sense of fulfillment, authenticity, and inner peace, rather than feeling trapped in the exhausting pursuit of perfection.

This perspective challenges the conventional belief that self-improvement equates to adding something new to oneself. Instead, it posits that personal growth is a process of removing external influences that have distorted one's perception of who they truly are. As Pavlo Vrzheschch, co-founder and creative director of Banda Agency, insightfully states, "Self-development is not architecture, but archeology. You do not build yourself; you excavate and explore. You search for your true self beneath thick layers of fear and limitations. Your true beauty cannot be built—it can only be found within. We all have a fundamental need to grow, to become better. Yet, this very pursuit of improvement often makes our lives unbearable and excessively tense." [2] This idea suggests that self-improvement should not be viewed as a linear process of accumulating skills or eliminating perceived flaws, but rather as an introspective journey aimed at uncovering one's inherent identity. In a world that constantly promotes self-optimization, individuals may find themselves trapped in an endless cycle of striving for an ideal that is not inherently their own. Consequently, the pursuit of perfection often leads to internal conflict rather than fulfillment, as people feel pressured to conform to predefined standards of success rather than embracing their unique identity.

Moreover, the relentless ambition to become "better" frequently results in excessive self-criticism, anxiety, and burnout. While the desire for progress is a natural human trait, its misinterpretation can turn into a source of distress. Many individuals mistakenly believe that self-development means eliminating all weaknesses and imperfections, failing to recognize that true growth comes from acknowledging and integrating these aspects rather than eradicating them. According to Pavlo Vrzheshch, co-founder and creative director of Banda Agency, "The more perfect I become, the less of myself remains." This paradox highlights the fact that excessive pursuit of self-improvement may lead to a detachment from one's authentic self rather than genuine personal growth.

Furthermore, self-exploration requires courage, as it involves confronting one's deepest fears, traumas, and limiting beliefs. Unlike architecture, where a structure is meticulously designed and planned, archaeology deals with the unknown—one never fully knows what will be uncovered in the process. Similarly, the journey of self-discovery demands introspection and vulnerability, allowing individuals to accept and embrace their imperfections rather than viewing them as obstacles to success. [3]

In conclusion, self-development should be understood not as a process of creating oneself, but as an act of uncovering one's true essence. Instead of relentlessly striving for an unattainable ideal, individuals should focus on rediscovering their innate qualities, shedding societal expectations, and cultivating self-awareness. Only by embracing this perspective can they achieve authentic personal growth—one that is liberating rather than restrictive.

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