Self-Centeredness: Is It Really Bad?

When one hears the words “self-centeredness” it is immediately followed with a negative connotation. It is now considered wrong to put oneself before others. A person is view as arrogant and egotistical, and even selfish for doing do. George Saunders and David Foster Wallace have a negative view of self-centeredness in their commencement addresses. They encourage their audiences to shy away from being self-centered. People forget that a person can be self-centered and selfless. Self-centeredness is a good quality to have in today’s world. Self-centeredness is necessary to make it somewhere in life because it provides the extra push one needs to go the extra mile and accomplish things he or she never though he or she could do.

There are only a few constants during a person’s life. One is that a person will die at one point. The other is that the only person who will be a constant in a person’s life is that person. People must take care of themselves first before they can help another. Think of the airplane videos the passengers are forced to watch before a flight where the air masks drop down. They encourage a person to secure themselves first, before helping others who need assistance. There is another saying, “A person has two hands, one to help themselves, and the other to help others. People forget the hand that helps them so often. A person has to help him or herself first, before he or she can help others. It is the way of life and yet for some reason it is looked down upon and viewed with such negativity.
People are going to let other people down. It is not as easy to trust anyone anymore. It is vital to love oneself during this day and age. There is a common saying I have heard in many movies and in many television shows, “You have to love yourself before anyone else can love you.” This is true in many ways. It is why being self-centered is not a bad thing. A person has to love him or herself. No one is going to do it for them. No one is going to go out of their way to make a person like himself or herself. That comes from within. That confidence that puts all eyes on a person when they walk in a room is derived from self-centeredness. I like to think highly of myself at times. It makes me feel confident. The more “self-centered” I am, the more confident I become. This adds a little kick in my step. It allows me to take risks and go the extra mile. If a person is constantly waiting on others to prop them up on a pedestal, then he or she is going to have to wait a very long time.

Like Wallace said, “You get to decide what to worship,” so why not let the thing a person worship be themselves (Wallace 7)? I am not saying take this to the extreme. A person should not only worship himself or herself, but they should be one of the people or things on their own list. A person will never be happy in life if they do not think well and highly of themselves. A person will not be happy if he or she does not put him or herself first at times. A person should not always take the backseat just to please others. That is going to lead to a very unhappy and unsatisfactory life.

I believe that to succeed in life, at times we must “prioritize our own needs over the needs of others” (Saunders 4). I am not saying always step on people to get on top, but a person needs to put him or herself first at times. This is not selfish as most people see. It is giving a person a sense of self worth. Very few people have the means and the resources to give and give, but never receive. Since most people do not have those resources, they have to put themselves first if
they want to get somewhere in their life. They have to fight for that thing they want most.

All in all, this comes down to the fact that being self-centered is not a bad thing. It should not be confused with selfishness. At times a person has to be self-centered and put him or herself first. Being self-centered instills a sense of confidence and this helps a person to make his or her own decisions with confidence. It enables them to go after what they want and to succeed in life. Self-centeredness should not be viewed as a bad thing. It should be looked at as self-preservation. It should be looked at as loving oneself. We are so often taught to love others, but we are rarely taught to love ourselves. The sooner a person starts being self-centered and loving himself or herself, the happier and more successful that person will be.
Works Cited

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