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## Abandoned by My Self: Forms of Self-Rejection

### Opuszczeni przez siebie samych. Formy samo-odrzućenia

**Abstract:** Loneliness is usually defined as a feeling of lacking expected social relationships, being abandoned or being rejected by others. However, there is also the loneliness of self-rejection. There can be no deeper form of loneliness than being abandoned by one's own self. In this article, I analyse what self-rejection is, how it is demonstrated and what forms it can take. I illustrate the ethical aspect of the phenomenon and propose the direction of possible intervention.

**Keywords:** self-rejection; loneliness; self-love; self-respect; self-compassion.

**Abstrakt:** Samotność jest zwykle definiowana jako poczucie braku oczekiwanych relacji społecznych, opuszczenie lub odrzucenie przez innych. Istnieje jednak osamotnienie wynikające z odrzucenia siebie. Nie ma głębszej postaci osamotnienia niż bycie opuszczonym przez siebie samego. W artykule analizuję, czym jest samo-odrzućenie, jak się objawia i jakie może przybierać formy. Zarysowuję etyczny aspekt zjawiska oraz kierunek możliwej interwencji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** samo-odrzućenie; osamotnienie; miłość siebie; szacunek do siebie; współczucie dla siebie.

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## 1. Introduction

What is usually recommended to remedy loneliness? To ‘reach out to people,’ to go to the cinema with a friend or to attend a book club meeting, to name a few. However, as shown by new research, simply spending time with others rather than being alone does not cure loneliness and may even increase it. This is because extremely lonely people tend to feel worse among company than when alone. ‘The negative association between loneliness and well-being was stronger when participants were with others than alone. Further, being with others was associated with the same or with even a lower level of well-being than being alone’ (Stavrova & Ren, 2023). Considering this, what can actually help those who are lonely?

According to the literature, there seem to be three possible ways to support those who suffer from loneliness.

The first is indeed interpersonal contact, but the kind that is attentive, curious, kind, non-judgmental and open to connection; it is not easy to meet a person able to provide such comprehensive interaction. As Turkle (2011) noted, ‘We enjoy continual connection but rarely have each other’s full attention’ (p. 280). This is especially true in youth groups, where many are battling their own demons in an attempt to survive the transition from childhood into adulthood and all that entails it, including overcoming traumas; finding themselves; and resisting, desisting or recovering from illicit behaviours or habits. The emotional development phase of this age group often makes them unable to provide interested attentiveness towards others.

The second way to remedy loneliness is through seeking specialised psychological help, which may lead to improved communication skills. For many lonely people, their state of loneliness is a result of an inability to effectively interact with others due to previous traumas resulting in a fear of interaction, a heightened sense and fear of vulnerability, etc. As such, specialised psychological therapy could help lonely individuals work on the root cause of their loneliness.

The third way, which for many people constitutes a form of enlightenment, involves building an interesting, positive relationship with oneself. In his book *The Art of Living Single*, Broder (1990) argues that whoever accepts and likes themselves and their loneliness, enjoying its benefits, will become not only ‘self-sufficient’ but also, in many respects, a mature and attractive

potential partner. Broder's conclusions can be applied to a variety of relationships.

The root cause of loneliness for many people is precisely self-rejection, which happens to constitute part one definition of loneliness that describes it as 'pain accompanied by the idea of love that is now absent, when that pain is accompanied by self-rejection, for example because the absence is thought to be "deserved"' (Stern, 2014, p. 182). It is hard to imagine a more acute loneliness than that of being abandoned even by oneself.

## **2. What is self-rejection? Purpose of the study**

While no universally agreed upon scientific definition of the attributes of the self exists, there is a measure of agreement regarding the definition of the self. The self is generally considered to be a fluid/time-varying whole made up of characteristics, memories, thoughts, feelings, sensations and behaviours (Bernard, 2013). Baumeister and Bushman (2011) identified three main components of the self: self-knowledge (self-awareness, self-evaluation, self-deception, and so forth), the social self (relationships with others, social roles and group membership), and the acting self (decision-making and self-management). The concept of self-rejection, as a reference to the self, is located within the first component.

Self-rejection is a general category from the field of self-references, or self-attitudes, conceptualised as affective self-reactions, i.e. a person's emotional responses to their own perceptions and evaluations of their personal traits and behaviours (Kaplan, 1977). Self-rejection was explored by Kaplan as early as the 1960s. Later, it was described as a holistic 'self-denigration' and 'overall self-derogation combined with perceptions of rejection and failure in family and school' (Kaplan, 1977; Kaplan et al., 1986). Therefore, self-rejection attitudes are the result of a person's experiences as a member of groups in which they have been unable to resist, adapt to or work through circumstances that had a self-devaluing effect. Usually, these circumstances relate to the negative evaluation of the person by significant others (Kaplan et al., 1986).

A central theme of Kaplan's research is the self-esteem- or self-rejection-driven motivation of deviant behaviour. He showed that deviant behaviour

was intended to alleviate the experience of self-rejection and reinforce positive self-reference. Deviant behaviour was a response to an increase in negative self-reference (Kaplan, 1972).

The purpose of this study is to outline attitudes that can be collectively referred to as negative self-reference. In my opinion, self-rejection, literally and originally identified with low self-esteem, can also refer to other forms of self-rejection when considered broadly. In this paper, I propose a categorisation of these forms of self-rejection and briefly outline some of the respective attitudes (in light of an interdisciplinary approach, primarily psychological, pedagogical, and philosophical), illustrate the ethical aspect of the phenomenon and propose an exemplary direction for intervention.

### 3. Categories of self-rejection

Reflection on negative attitudes towards oneself is needed in pedagogy due to the potential for educational support in such situations and one's own work towards self-education. Various forms of self-rejection exist; some are a common occurrence, affecting many well-functioning people, and some fall into the realm of psychopathology and may require the help of specialists.

In undertaking this study of self-rejection, I noted that forms of negative self-reference can fall into three general categories. First, there are those that represent a person's consciousness turning against themselves, that is, they hate themselves and are consciously aware of it. These forms shall be categorised as 'Directly Negative Self-Attitudes.' The second form, appropriately categorised as 'Indirectly Negative Self-Attitudes,' is more veiled and subtle, occurring in people who are not aware (at least not fully) of their certain attitudes or behaviours as essentially arising from a lack of belief in their own worth or potential. The third category groups together forms of self-rejection that involve a lack of interest in oneself and an inability or unwillingness to 'self-discover' or 'self-find;' a lack of self-knowledge also constitutes self-rejection to some degree. An analogy of a person's reference to other people can further clarify this form of self-rejection: a person may have a close relationship with someone yet not see their potential, depth or truth and not care to find out more. The same can be true in a person's relationship with themselves. Such forms of self-rejection have been categorised

as ‘Lack of Self-Discovery.’ The following sections briefly examine the three general categories of negative self-reference described above.

### **3.1. Directly Negative Self-Attitudes**

Within this category falls a range of overtly self-loathing attitudes that are embodied when a person is aware that they do not accept themselves to some extent.

Low self-esteem: Being critical towards oneself

Here, I will begin with a real-life, highly illustrative example of this negative self-attitude.

The other day, my friend told her teenage son, ‘I must call the principal of your school to inform them there is a boy who bullies you! Who says you are fat, stupid and ugly!’

‘Who does so?!’ he asked.

‘You.’

In 1965, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a self-esteem tool originally aimed at high school students, was developed (Rosenberg, 1965). Using this scale, Kaplan and Pokorny (1969, 1976) proposed a self-derogation scale that indicates feelings of personal failure and worthlessness as well as lack of pride and self-respect, containing statements such as: ‘I feel I do not have much to be proud of,’ ‘I’m inclined to feel I’m a failure,’ ‘I certainly feel useless at times.’ It is not surprising that the development of this first tool was aimed at adolescents, given that there is a particular risk of self-rejection during this period.

According to Harter (1999, 2003), individuals are at particular risk of self-rejection during adolescence because self-esteem, as an overall evaluation of one’s worth or value as a person, is influenced by perceived competence in areas of importance and the experience of social support. As ‘the adolescents become vulnerable to feelings of social inadequacy’ (Bos et al., 2006), the variable ‘favour and disfavour’ of peers can cause self-rejection.

Of course, the opinions of caregivers and other relevant adults, which children easily assimilate, are not insignificant to self-esteem. Approving

parents are likely to build high levels of self-esteem in their children, while uninterested and unresponsive ones may break it down (Leary & MacDonald, 2003). However, during adolescence, peer approval becomes the most important predictor of self-esteem (Major et al., 1999; Robins et al., 2002). If a child has received a plenitude of negative comments about themselves from parents and peers, or at least one of these groups, they begin to see themselves through the others' eyes, resulting in internal attacks directed towards themselves. Unfortunately, the pressure of social media beauty standards and the need to prove one's worth to everyone (also at school) makes matters worse (Suchańska & Wycisk, 2006).

### Self-hatred and self-aggression

Low self-esteem can be either the origin or an element of self-hatred. Self-hatred constitutes extreme dislike or loathing of oneself. According to Rubin (1975), 'Hating oneself is always a part of an ongoing process ... we engage in self-hate when we hate any aspect of ourselves.' As such, self-hatred can appear on a continuum of feelings of mild or severe contempt when the self makes decisions that sabotage itself (Rubin, 1975). Turnell et al.'s (2019) scale is useful for examining self-hatred and includes statements such as 'I hate myself,' 'I am a failure,' 'I feel disgusted when I think about myself,' 'I'm unlovable,' 'I have no value,' 'I wish I could escape from myself,' 'I deserve to be unhappy' and 'I wish I was anyone but me.'

Similarities in leading researchers' (i.e. Freud, Horney, Winnicott, Klein and Kohut) works on self-hatred have been recognised, indicating several typical symptoms of this phenomenon, which include the caretaker's influence on the development of self-hatred, establishing a false, seemingly well-functioning person that is presented to the external world, a need to portray perfection ('an impossible race to achieve the never-ending list of shoulds') and an internalised aggression (Salerno, 2018). Self-aggression, in addition to internal anger towards oneself, can take the form of physical self-aggression. As the internal pain is unbearable, the person wants to relieve their pain by cutting themselves or enacting other forms of bodily harm (Suchańska & Wycisk, 2006).

### Lack of self-forgiveness

The underlying reason for low self-esteem or self-hatred may be guilt, where a person does not know how to forgive themselves for wronging another. They remain ‘trapped’ in the past, focused on the wrong done, immersed in feelings of sadness, self-contempt or self-hatred. Self-hatred makes social functioning, including relationships with one’s own family, difficult or impossible. Only self-forgiveness, i.e. the withdrawal of self-directed grief or hatred, can provide an opening to the future, a renewed belief in new opportunities and life challenges, mental balance and the recovery of the capacity for interpersonal relationships (Horowski, 2021a, 2021b).

Self-forgiveness is not self-innocence or self-justification as the person is aware of their responsibility and accountability for the wrong done; by recognising this and trying to make amends, the person knows they have no right to forgive themselves on behalf of the victim but can instead forgive themselves for the wrong they have done to themselves with their misdeed. In practice, this means withdrawing self-grief and regaining self-respect through the power of acknowledging the wrongs done and the will to pursue the good (Horowski, 2021a, 2021b). According to Holmgren (1993, 1998), self-forgiveness is the act of accepting oneself as a valuable human being despite the wrongs that one has committed.

### Eating disorders: Rejection of the past self

The purpose of this section is not to provide an exhaustive list of all the forms of self-rejection or their clinical details. However, eating disorders must be mentioned and assigned to the Directly Negative Self-Attitudes category because these disorders have consistently been described as resulting from the rejection of the past self.

In people with eating disorders, the obsession with body shame is held in a separate part of the ‘rejected self.’ This ‘rejected self’ is someone who actually existed in the past, but who the person never wants to be again; someone who represents an image of what shames and worries them. This former self-image still stands between the image seen in the mirror and the current image; when they look in the mirror, the person sees themselves through the

prism of the rejected self from the past and is unable to objectively assess their current body image as they still feel rejection, shame and anxiety (Seijo, 2012, 2015). The aim in therapeutic work for eating disorders is, among other things, to work through the trauma contained in the rejected self, to accept one's own body and to learn to care for it with respect (Seijo, 2016).

### Rejection of existence

A radical form of self-rejection is the rejection of existence. One of its motives may be the desire for freedom from this 'inner enemy,' from the contemptuous observation and narration of the self – the harsh, unforgiving superego. The desperate escape from the self-hating self is certainly one of the most dramatic consequences of 'abandoning oneself.' Together with the accompanying idealisation of death as a better world and a state of eternal bliss that enables meeting with lost people, this is the most common motive for suicide attempts. Given that a sense of hopelessness due to vulnerability to judgement and pressure as well as poor problem-solving skills are typical properties of adolescence, this group should be given special care (Radziwiłłowicz, 2020). According to data from the Polish Police (statystyka.policja.pl), in 2023, 2,054 people aged 13–18 attempted suicide, 138 of which had fatal consequences.

### 3.2. Indirectly Negative Self-Attitudes

Within this category falls a range of attitudes that do not appear to be evidently directed against the self but in fact stem from a lack of self-esteem or self-hatred.

#### Self-sabotage

Self-sabotaging behaviour, or self-destructive behaviour, refers to action (or inaction) that prevents people from accomplishing their goals and make them undermine their progress; through such actions, they thwart their suc-



cess, both in their personal and professional lives. Sometimes presented as a biological response, self-sabotage can be conscious or unconscious (Field, 2023). After the excitement of goal-setting, which is fuelled by a boost of dopamine (the feel-good neurotransmitter), comes the stage of taking action to achieve them. However, the fear of failure triggers avoidant behaviour, where a person will subconsciously start to shy away from their goals (Ho, 2019). Examples of self-sabotage include procrastination (postponing deadlines for completing a task due to fear of not succeeding) and perfectionism (related to procrastination because imposing impossible standards on oneself causes delays or failures; Field, 2023).

Similarly, certain patterns of thinking may be the root of self-destructive actions such as thinking too small, being overly fearful, worrying and holding back. People who 'think too small' minimize their value, avoid new experiences, do not dare to step outside their comfort zone, feel anxious or worried when encountering change, fear looking stupid and feel like impostors on the job (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). The impostor phenomenon, a manifestation of self-sabotage, was first described in 1978 following therapy sessions with women who had achieved significant success but attributed it to external factors rather than themselves, considering themselves unworthy of promotion, recognition or the rewards (Clance & Imes, 1978).

Among the causes of self-sabotage is, of course, low self-esteem, which modifies behaviours to correspond to critical judgements about the self (Field, 2023). The remedies for self-sabotage are self-formation, primarily the identification of self-destructive mechanisms through deepened self-awareness, and therapy.

### Self-deception

People are able to act morally for a reason: valuing is the key moral action carried out. Valuing is not only about recognizing significant values, but it is also a 'complex syndrome' of doxastic and affective attitudes, actions and commitments (Scheffler, 2011). This means that proper valuing is the combination of endorsing particular values and embodying them. Thus, valuing is not enacted properly when a person 1) embodies values they do not endorse and 2) avoids embodying the values they endorse (Mackenzie, 2022).

Every person is obligated to respect both their values (and their objects) and those of others and take them seriously. If a person disrespects their own values by improper valuing, i.e. not embodying the values they endorse and endorsing values contrary to those they embody, wrong boundaries are set and the person's judgments as well as the person themselves are not respected as rational agent (Mackenzie, 2022). In this sense, self-deception also constitutes (usually unconscious) disregard for oneself.

### Narcissism

The framing of narcissism as one form of self-rejection may come as a surprise; after all, it is difficult to find a person more in love with themselves than a narcissist. Narcissistic self-love focuses on the most attractive parts of the person, paying excessively selective and objectifying attention to the self and not willing to confront harsh truths and accept that some parts of the person's self-conception might need to change in light of new evidence. The person 'goes too easy on [them]self.' In fact, a person's unwillingness to investigate themselves may harbour fear or conviction that their actual self is not worth getting to know (Mackenzie, 2018). Narcissism is therefore one form of self-deception in relation to oneself, where a person rejects the full picture of themselves. The person in fact does not love themselves because, not being prepared to know their faults and mistakes by way of honest self-assessment, they do not accept the essential, true part of themselves. Since growth comes from acknowledging, understanding and correcting one's mistakes, narcissism effectively blocks it.

### Servility

An interesting form of self-rejection is servility, which is a manifestation of the absence of a certain kind of self-respect – recognition respect. According to Kant, servility is the opposite of respect. Unfortunately, it is a fairly common attitude, particularly in family or academic settings. A person embodying this form of self-rejection lets others disrespect them by silencing them, laughing at them, exploiting them, disregarding or forbidding their opinions, and so forth (Hill, 1973).

Servility is a kind of deferential attitude towards others resulting from ignorance or a misunderstanding of one's moral rights, involving a willingness to disavow one's moral status for no strong reason. The servile person refuses to fight for their rights, chooses not to exercise them and freely waives them. By denying their own rights, the person gives themselves a lower position than they are entitled to. The person disrespects the moral system not by violating others' rights but their own (Hill, 1973).

### **3.3. Lack of Self-Discovery**

A lack of 'self-discovery' or 'self-recognition' is the least obvious of the self-rejection categories, yet it is particularly interesting, partly because of the peculiarly commonplace nature of such attitudes yet poor recognition of them.

#### Being 'outside' oneself

As mentioned in the introduction, one possible way of remedying loneliness is building a good relationship with oneself, which seems possible only through positive and purposeful solitude. As Szczepański (1985) noted, 'Solitude is an ability to have exclusive contact with ourselves and our inner world; to take refuge, live and act in it.' Self-reflection, self-questioning about values and desires, the cultivation of thoughtful moral decisions and creativity need solitude, i.e. disengagement from other people and being (to the greatest extent) 'perceptual, cognitive, emotional, actional' (Koch, 1994, p. 52). This kind of solitude is intentional, involving a person's willing disengagement (Stern & Wałęjko, 2020) for the sake of personal or spiritual development (Wałęjko, 2022, p. 13).

A common problem hindering this remedy to loneliness is the unwillingness to disengage. An attachment to phones and incoming information (conceptualised by the fear of missing out [FOMO] syndrome) and the proliferation of activities are forms of 'talking the self down.' Not being in our inner world, but only outside, in the world of people and things can lead to loneliness, as defined by Szczepański (1985). Such behaviour causes a person to not care for their identity, instead emulating others and steadily becoming

dependent on the outside world, thereby causing their inner world to become empty and sterile (Szczepański, 1985). An unwillingness to be alone with themselves, not seeing this as a value, puts a person at risk of conformity and spiritual regression as well as a toxic dependence on other people who seem to be the only salvation from being unbearably alone (Wałejko, 2016, pp. 296–301). In this study's context, being exclusively 'outside the self' is a form of indifference to the self, which is not taken seriously or regarded with interest.

In addition to overstimulation, the cause of aversion to self-discovery may be self-hatred: a person who dislikes themselves does not want to explore themselves or does so selectively, seeing only the elements that prove their negative evaluation (Mackenzie, 2018).

### Disowned individuality

Another situation where a person does not discover their self and thus, in a sense, ignores and rejects themselves, is in the case of an imposed identity. Adopting an imposed identity can be involuntary and often takes place in sects or in cases of pathological upbringing. The incorrect or unethical interpretation of upbringing refers to a person's modelling of others according to the ideals of their own upbringing. In these cases, a person thinks they have the right to shape the views, beliefs or desires of those dependent (in a particularly nightmarish sense of the word) on them. A common example of this are parents and/or teachers who make a child their 'project,' tell the child who and what to be and what to think and feel. By doing so, they commit an assault on the child's integrity and autonomy. Consequently, the child has no chance to find out who and what they are or want to be because they think they should constantly satisfy adult expectations of their identity (Juul, 2013; Wałejko, 2023). For many, such a situation occurs silently and goes unnoticed as, to date, the phenomenon is still not sufficiently recognised in pedagogy, of which the traditional message is in fact guilty of this. In Märki et al. (2017), Juul, an acknowledged contemporary pedagogue, remarked that his adult son considered the most important gift from him to be the fact 'that his personal integrity was never compromised and he was always free to develop his personality. ... I never tried to bring him up and shape him according to my own ideas.'

The lack of opportunity and/or willingness to honestly explore one's needs, desires, opinions and autonomous self-construction occurs when having one's own individual identity is frowned upon. In this case, the child's true feelings are not accepted, so they feel guilty for having them and shy away from their true self, while still not feeling like themselves. Other actors with strong influence and pressure, such as peers and mass media, can pose a similar threat; however, the influence of these is rarely as strong as the systemic, (pseudo)pedagogical one.

#### **4. Self-rejection: Ethical perspective and antidote**

Now that a brief overview of the forms of self-rejection ascribed to the three general categories of negative self-reference has been provided, it is worth enquiring about the ethical aspect of such attitudes. Clearly, they are harmful to the person and therefore immoral – why is that?

In light of the Kantian principle of treating people as ends in themselves, not merely as a means, 'recognition respect' is owed to all people for being people (i.e. having dispositions to act for a reason), including ourselves (Darwall, 1977). This attitude is the path to happiness and growth. As Dillon (1997) firmly put it:

Individuals who are blessed with a confident respect for themselves have something that is vital to living a satisfying, meaningful, flourishing life, while those condemned to live without it or with damaged or fragile self-respect are thereby condemned to live constricted, deformed, frustrating lives, cut off from possibilities for self-realization, self-fulfilment, and happiness (p. 226).

Self-respect is demonstrated by a person carefully getting to know themselves in order to pursue their ends as reflective of their personhood; in doing so, those ends and the person are affirmed as worthy. In this way, self-deception, narcissism, servility or self-sabotage are avoided. However, apart from self-respect, a stronger motive of self-relation is self-love (Mackenzie, 2018). 'We are too close to ourselves to remain neutral' (Mackenzie, 2018, p. 251); hence, in the intrapersonal relationship, a person either neglects or cares for themselves. In fact, every person has the same reason to love themselves as they

have to love their close family members; this reason is even stronger with regard to themselves as they are within themselves for their lifetime.

Love is non-instrumental care and attention towards a person only for their own sake. So, when a person loves themselves, they try to get to know, listen to and understand themselves (Mackenzie, 2018). They also want to see the truth about themselves, which is both good and bad, thus preventing them from developing low self-esteem and narcissism. They want to build an independent identity, resisting attempts to have an identity imposed on them. They also want to get to know themselves honestly, taking refuge in their inner self from time to time for self-reflection.

Self-rejection in the various forms outlined in the previous sections can cause human suffering. For example, low self-esteem in children can cause learning difficulties, rejection by peers or anxiety and other psychopathological problems (Donders & Verschueren, 2004, as cited in: Bos et al., 2006; Mann et al., 2004). Meanwhile, for many years, self-love was equated with narcissism and treated with distrust. In family homes, children were taught to neglect their own rights and needs in the name of a misunderstood love for others. Self-rejection was viewed positively as, among other things, a religiously postulated 'self-hatred' intended to lead to the priority of loving others. As such, research indicating a link between self-rejection and the rejection of others and between self-love and the love of others is all the more puzzling.

Low self-esteem induces deviant behaviour, including harming others (Kaplan, 1977; Kaplan et al., 1986); narcissism, or inflated self-esteem, which also leads to aggression (Bushman & Baumeister, 2002); and servility, i.e. a lack of self-respect, which leads to disrespecting others (Hill, 1973). In contrast, self-acceptance leads to the acceptance of others (Sheerer, 1949), and self-forgiveness enables a person to forgive others (Horowski, 2021a). With the emergence of humanistic psychology and both Maslow and Rogers' research on the meaning of unconditional self-acceptance, a line of reflection on self-relating emerged, including interventions for those suffering from self-rejection.

A concept and antidote of great significance when considering self-rejection, both from an ethical perspective (as embedded in self-respect and self-love) and from a therapeutic perspective (a large effect size when examining the link with psychopathology; MacBeth & Gumley, 2012) is self-compassion.

Inspired by Buddhist teachings on the importance of non-judgmental awareness of the self, self-compassion is defined as a person relating to themselves with care and support when they suffer. The concept consists of three central components: self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness.

Self-kindness entails being gentle and understanding towards oneself and involves actively comforting oneself in times of struggle (in contrast to taking a self-critical approach). Common humanity refers to recognising that one's own experience of imperfection is connected to the experience of imperfection shared by all humanity, which fosters a sense of belonging. Finally, practicing mindfulness in responding to distress maintains equanimity (Neff, 2003a, 2003b). Self-compassion is a useful alternative to the concept of self-esteem as it is not based on self-evaluation, personal success and social comparison but rather stems from human kindness and understanding without the need for being superior to others (Neff & Knox, 2020).

## 5. Summary

Self-attitude is a psychological, pedagogical and ethical issue that is not often addressed in educational scientific research, although it influences a person's well-being and self-realisation as well as their relationships with others. A person's good relationship with themselves can protect them in situations of loneliness and can lay the groundwork for selfless, non-abusive relationships. In this study, my aim was to draw attention to the various obvious and not-so-obvious forms of self-rejection as a significant source of discomfort or even suffering for many people, often young people. The need to nurture self-love and self-compassion is important, and such knowledge is imparted through, among other things, parents, teachers and caregivers forming a benevolent attitude towards themselves.

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