

# Redefining Health & Wellness

## #76

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

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**Shohreh Davoodi:** Hey y'all! This is episode #76 of the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast, and it's the third and final episode of my three-part Self-Trust Series where I'm discussing the ins and outs of learning to trust yourself. Today in Part 3 I'll be talking about what it actually takes to develop a deeper sense of self-trust using my Pillars of Self-Trust Framework. Self-trust may not be easy to cultivate, but what you stand to gain from it makes it a challenge worth taking on. To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to [shohrehdavoodi.com/76](https://shohrehdavoodi.com/76). That's [shohrehdavoodi.com/76](https://shohrehdavoodi.com/76). In the show notes you can also find a free download for this episode which provides some self-trust journaling prompts specific to Part 3 of the series.

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However you choose to invest in the podcast, thank you for believing in me and tuning in each week.

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Welcome to the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. I'm your host and resident rainbow glitter bomb, Shohreh Davoodi. I started this project because I saw how black-and-white messaging about health harms everyone, and I wanted to paint a more honest and vibrant picture. This podcast is a space where we can reimagine health together by confronting limiting misconceptions, delving into aspects of well-being that are often ignored, and prioritizing conversations with marginalized individuals. I encourage you to take what you need and leave behind what you don't. Are you ready for this? Let's fucking go!

Hi everyone. It's time to round out the Self-Trust Series by getting to the part I know you've been waiting for: actual actionable steps for improving self-trust. To quickly recap our self-trust exploration thus far, in Part 1 of the series, episode #74, I talked about what self-trust is and why it's so important. In Part 2 of the series, episode #75, I detailed many of the things that erode self-trust, including childhood experiences, the ghosts of self-doubt, and getting stuck in our own mistakes.

Today in Part 3, the final leg of our journey, I'm going to share with you how to start cultivating more self-trust. Because not only is it possible, but you deserve that shit. You don't have to resign yourself to a life of self-doubt and shame. You're fully capable of coming home to yourself, and I want to give you some strategies to get started.

As a general rule, any time I'm working with people who are trying to reach certain goals, whether it's developing a deeper sense of self-trust like we're talking about here, committing to a more consistent movement practice, spending less time on social media, etc., it's important to establish your why. That means asking yourself why the hell you picked

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this particular goal and getting really honest with yourself about the answer.

The true why is not going to be surface level, so it's important to dig deeper to get to the core reasons. Your why matters because when things don't come easy right away, when you struggle, or when you backslide, you're going to need some kind of anchor. Your why is something you can return to, to help you keep pushing forward. It's there to give meaning to your hard work. Your why has to be something that's actually valuable to you, otherwise you won't have the motivation to keep working towards your goal.

So if working on self-trust feels important to you, you need to understand why that is first. What will a stronger sense of self-trust give you? What will it free you from? What's it worth to you? You can also frame your why in terms of what will happen if you don't achieve your goal. When I think of living a life without self-trust, I think of having to live with constant indecision. Having to live with a desire for approval and a need for external validation. Having to live with perfectionist tendencies and constantly falling short of impossible-to-meet expectations and questioning my worth when I fail. I know that's not the life that I want, so that makes my commitment to self-trust a high priority for me.

Once your why is established—and I've been saying "why" singular, but it's totally fine to have multiple whys—then it's time to actually get down to the work of self-trust development. Self-trust encompasses a lot of ground, so again, you need to think about goal-setting best practices before just jumping in without any kind of a plan. When I'm working with a client, we'll look at whatever their bigger goal is and then break it down into smaller

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categories with actionable steps within each category to help them get moving in the direction they want to go in.

Luckily for y'all, I've already put a ton of work into breaking self-trust down into meaningful categories so that you don't have to. Because I will always be a lawyer at heart, I took all of my knowledge and wisdom about self-trust and I organized it into a unique framework that makes self-trust easier to visualize and work on. I call that framework the Pillars of Self-Trust. This framework is the big-picture process that all of my coaching and content fits within, and it's made up of three fundamental pillars. Pillar I is Consciousness Practices, Pillar II is Care Practices, and Pillar III is Courage Practices. Each of these pillars is important standing alone, but it's by bridging them together that you can build a strong structure of self-trust. So let's talk about why each pillar is important and what's included underneath the umbrella of each pillar.

The first pillar of the framework, Consciousness Practices, is directly related to Part 2 of the series. Pillar I is about bringing awareness to your ghosts of self-doubt and all the other things holding you back from deeper self-trust. Without awareness, you won't have the information you need to take meaningful action. And in this case, you need awareness of both your inner world and the world around you, because as you'll recall from Part 2 of the series, the erosion of self-trust has both individual and systemic roots. So it's important to be able to place yourself in the bigger picture.

Two things that will serve you well when working on consciousness practices and when working on self-trust in general are curiosity and openness. Try to look at your self-trust journey as an opportunity to learn more about yourself and grow from what you discover. And that framing isn't meant to discount that exploration can be scary and can bring up a lot

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of challenging feelings. But I operate on the belief that it's better to know than not to know. When people say, "What you don't know can't hurt you," I think most of the time that's bullshit. What we don't know robs us of being able to make informed decisions. Not only that, but the things we don't know often *are* hurting us, but because we're unaware of the cause of the hurt, we end up wrongly blaming others or ourselves for it.

Consciousness practices are also as much about unlearning as they are about learning. Part of the process is figuring out the rules, beliefs, and stories you've told yourself that actually aren't serving you and maybe never did.

Okay, so let's talk about some of the most important pieces of consciousness practices. First, you need to better understand your ghosts of self-doubt. This means working on noticing the voices in your head and getting more curious about them. Where do they come from? What do they want from you and what are their intentions? As those ghosts are poking and prodding you, don't be afraid to poke and prod them right back. Think about what it would mean to not always listen to their advice and insistence.

A skill that goes hand-in-hand with learning more about your ghosts of self-doubt is working to strengthen your interoceptive awareness.

Interoceptive awareness is our ability to feel physical sensations that arise within our bodies, such as a full bladder, racing heart, hunger and fullness signals, the physical manifestations of our emotional states. etc.

Interoceptive awareness is something that keeps us in the present moment because it's all about things we can feel in our body as they're happening. This type of awareness is important because it allows us to understand our needs better and eventually respond to them.

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Many people have a very blunted sense of interoceptive awareness because they're not used to regularly communicating with their own bodies, which means they only respond to their bodies' signals when they reach an acute state. Like needing to pee so badly that you have to rush to the bathroom with your legs squeezed together or being so hungry that you want to eat everything in sight and you're unable to stop yourself when you reach a point of fullness.

I think of interoceptive awareness as being part of the antidote to the poison that the ghosts of self-doubt are spreading because it allows you to hear your own voice more clearly amongst all the noise. In order to work on interoceptive awareness you need to take stock of what signals from your body you struggle to hear and decipher. You also need to make a point to intentionally check in with your body before your alarm bells start ringing because you've waited too long.

Another key component of this pillar is learning to recognize black-and-white, all-or-nothing thinking. Otherwise you'll find yourself backed into corners all the time. Being aware of your tendency to get stuck in certain thought patterns will give you more opportunities to practice cognitive flexibility. The more cognitive flexibility a person has, the better they can adopt new perspectives, change their thinking, and adapt to their environment. People with greater cognitive flexibility tend to be more innovative and have an easier time recognizing nuance. Increasing cognitive flexibility requires questioning assumptions and more closely examining should, musts, and have tos.

All of these individual components of the Consciousness Practices pillar could be broken down into further subcategories where each subcategory is made up of different tools and skills you could work on. You'll notice the

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same thing with the components of Pillars II and III when I get into those. For purposes of this episode though, I only have time to give a brief overview of each of these pillars and the practices contained within them. But I'm hopeful this will at least help you generate some ideas.

In an ideal world, our self-trust would never fade and my job as a self-trust coach wouldn't even exist. But unfortunately, that's not the world we live in, and as a result, figuring this shit out can be pretty complicated and challenging. So if you're feeling like, holy crap, Shohreh has only talked about one pillar of this framework so far and I'm already feeling overwhelmed, that's okay. Take a deep breath. This stuff *is* doable, it just takes having a good strategy in place.

Alright, so let's move into Pillar II, which is Care Practices. The Care practices pillar includes all of the ways that we can nourish and reenergize ourselves in order to not just survive as humans, but also thrive and feel fulfilled. This pillar recognizes that caring for ourselves isn't selfish, it's actually essential. It also recognizes that ideal care practices are individual and there's no best or healthiest approach to care.

When I was talking about Pillar I, I mentioned the importance of interoceptive awareness. In Pillar II, we can take that one step further and think about interoceptive responsiveness. So not just being aware of what our bodies need, but actually responding to those needs. And in some cases, being able to anticipate those needs before we ever get a signal.

As y'all know, I tend to do a lot of intuitive eating work with clients, and intuitive eating has been scientifically proven in multiple studies to improve interoceptive awareness and responsiveness. As people get more skilled at recognizing hunger and fullness signals, they tend to become more attuned with their bodies overall. So intuitive eating, or any form of eating

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that moves you away from diet culture and into your own body, is absolutely a care practice.

When we're talking about interoceptive responsiveness, we're talking about being able to meet both our physical and mental needs. So on the physical front, that might mean working on your relationship with movement and figuring out how to make it a sustainable part of your life if that's something that's important to you and makes your body feel good. It's also going to include sleep and rest. So making sure that you're getting the highest quality sleep that's possible for you and having enough down time to keep you from burning out and make sure you have the energy you need.

I also include medical care on the physical front, particularly preventative medical care, if that's accessible to you.

Then there are the many care practices we can engage in to meet our mental and emotional needs. And plenty of the ones I'm going to mention have crossover with our physical needs as well, so these aren't necessarily neat and tidy categories.

One particularly important thing is prioritizing pleasure and joy in our lives and working to extinguish the guilt we feel for doing that. That means making time for play. Making time for sexual exploration, whether solo or partnered. Pursuing hobbies outside of work. It's truly believing that pleasure and joy are necessities, not just extras because they're not seen as productive in a capitalist society.

Self-compassion is another crucial piece of the care practices puzzle, which includes reducing negative and demeaning self-talk and learning

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how to extend grace to yourself. Part of that might include inner-child work, a gratitude practice, or eliminating perfectionism.

Your care practices will be bolstered by finding different ways to turn inward. That might be through intentional movement, meditation, spending time in nature, journaling, listening to music, engaging in different creative practices like painting or making things, and allowing yourself to have unstructured thinking time to dream, and scheme, and imagine.

I also think that social connection is a necessary and life-giving part of caring for yourself. Remember, self-trust helps you know yourself better so that you can also show up more fully in relationships and in your community. We are social creatures and we need spaces where we feel like we belong in order for self-trust to truly bloom.

Care practices are an essential part of this framework because if we don't care for ourselves, we're more limited in what we're able to do and achieve. When we engage in care practices, we strengthen the partnership between mind and body, which allows trust to flow more easily.

The final pillar of the Pillars of Self-Trust Framework is Pillar III, Courage Practices. And this is where things start to get juicy. Pillar III is all about engaging with fear and discomfort in ways that will allow you to grow and change yourself, while also changing the world around you for the better. Courage practices exemplify precisely why self-trust is not an egotistical pursuit. The result of you working on yourself isn't only that you'll feel better in your own skin and get to live a life that is more aligned with your authentic self and values. It's also that when you show up with more self-trust, you're giving other people permission to do the same. When you

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show up with more awareness of the world around you, and more compassion, and more empathy, you'll be primed to see injustice and want to do something about it instead of burying your head in privilege and ignoring it.

So let's talk about some of the different courage practices you might want to work on. The first one is prioritizing your needs and setting boundaries according to them. And this one is a great example of the symbiotic relationship that self-trust creates between you and the rest of the world. Because as you get better at setting clear boundaries, you'll also get better at respecting the boundaries of other people, which fosters a culture of consent. I know that setting boundaries can feel unkind when you're not used to it, but it's actually a very loving thing to do. Setting a boundary is a way of saying to other people, "I trust myself to know what I need and what I will accept."

Another courage practice is embracing vulnerability, which encompasses so many things. Vulnerability is about putting yourself out there even though that may open you up to rejection. It's about learning how to fail forward and apologize like a damn grown-up when you fuck up so that you don't continue to relive past mistakes. It's about understanding when it's time to ask for help. Lastly, it's about feeling fear and doing it anyway. All of that shit is courageous as hell.

Resilience goes hand-in-hand with vulnerability. Resilience requires accepting that change is the only constant and understanding that it's a skill to be able to get back up and dust yourself off when you fall. Because you will fall. Probably a lot. So the only question mark is how you react to it when you do.

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Getting clear about your values and your purpose and adjusting your life to better align with those things is also a practice of courage. It's worth noting that values and purpose are not necessarily stagnant things. They can grow and change along with you, so they need to be revisited regularly. Living according to your values and purpose is one of the keys to embracing your authentic self. It's how you move away from people pleasing and likeability in order to do what's right for you.

Finally, engaging in activism, social justice, and community care/mutual aid are essential courage practices. Once you've learned how to hear your own voice, you also have to take steps to feel confident in using your voice to advocate for others who need it. You have to learn to speak up in the face of injustice even, and especially, when it's hard. Self-trust allows you to step outside the cocoon of privilege to use your unique gifts and talents to help others who haven't had the same experiences or been given the same opportunities as you. Self-trust allows you to humble yourself enough to realize that you don't need to be the one taking up space in every room and that it's important for you to listen and learn from others who are more marginalized than you.

The Pillars of Self-Trust Framework covers a lot of ground, but you don't need to be perfect at all or any of the things I've mentioned in this episode to become your own self-trust icon. There's a reason each of the pillars ends in the word "practices." Self-trust is not some idyllic mountain top you reach and then have forever. The idea of arriving at a permanent destination where you're always self-assured and confident, and never experience any doubts, is a fantasy. Self-trust occurs on a spectrum, and practicing it is how we get better at it. You can think of self-trust as a muscle. You have to exercise that muscle in order for it to grow bigger and

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stronger. And as time goes on, the exercise will start to feel easier and more familiar.

Consider how you establish trust with other people. A person has to keep showing up for you over time in order for your sense of trust with that person to expand and deepen. And not all things require the same level of trust. At first, you'll probably only trust someone with smaller and easier things, but over time they may have opportunities to prove to you that they can be trusted with more challenging stuff. Additionally, if a person breaks your trust, that doesn't necessarily mean you'll never be able to trust them again. It's typically how the breach is handled that determines its effect on the overall sense of trust and the relationship as a whole.

The same thing is true when it comes to trusting yourself. You have to start showing up for yourself consistently in little ways so that over time your self-trust will bloom and grow, and you'll be able to show up for yourself in bigger and more complex ways. Work on keeping the commitments you make to yourself, and once you get a little momentum going, self-trust will start to pick up speed. And if you fuck up, that doesn't mean it's time to throw in the towel, it just means you need to be honest about what happened and try to repair the damage.

Ultimately self-trust is about spending time with yourself and getting to know yourself better. You have to explore and unlock what you like and dislike, what you do and do not want, what's important to you and what you could care less about, etc.

The three pillars of self-trust I've outlined in this episode are your guidebook to cultivating more self-trust in your life, and I hope it's clear how they stand together. Consider the courage practice of engaging in activism. How can you expect to meaningfully take on social justice work if

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you're constantly down, depleted, and feeling crappy? You have to care for yourself in order to make the pursuit of social justice sustainable. Further, how can you possibly know the importance of activism and what your role should be if you're not aware of your own privilege, the systems of oppression that hurt us all, and the position you occupy? Consciousness is what opens you up to seeing the need for activism in the first place. The three pillars bridge together beautifully to create a stable foundation of self-trust.

I also want to remind you that what you need on your self-trust journey is going to look different from what your best friend needs or your partner needs. Try not to compare yourself to anyone else. We're all starting from different places and coming from a variety of lived experiences. We don't all have the same ghosts of self-doubt haunting us.

Some of the things I talked about in this episode you may already be crushing, and some of them you may be struggling with or have never even thought about before. But if you can build up your consciousness practices, care practices, and courage practices to be strong, your sense of self-trust will skyrocket, and your run-ins with self-doubt and shame will be greatly diminished.

If you'd like another way to explore what I've talked about in Part 3, for each of the episodes of the Self-Trust Series, I'm offering a free download of self-trust journaling prompts around that episode's topic. Even if you're not a journaling person, you can think through the prompts, make a list, talk through them with someone you trust, or use them in other creative ways to dive a little deeper into the topic of self-trust. To get the free download for Part 3, just head to the show notes for this episode at [shohrehdavoodi.com/76](https://shohrehdavoodi.com/76). That's [shohrehdavoodi.com/76](https://shohrehdavoodi.com/76).

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Thank you for joining me for this three-part Self-Trust Series. I promise that with practice and patience, more self-trust is within your reach.

And that's our show for today! If this podcast has taught you anything or helped you in any way, I hope you'll consider supporting me in my effort to keep it going. You can join my Patreon community and receive members-only perks by going to [shohrehdavoodi.com/Patreon](https://shohrehdavoodi.com/Patreon), or you can tip me for my work through the payment links located at the bottom of the show notes for each episode. I would also encourage you to subscribe and submit a rating and review through your podcast provider of choice. I love hearing from listeners, so feel free to screenshot from your podcast player, post on social media, and tag me. Finally, if you're looking for more information on what I'm all about and how to work with me directly, head over to [shohrehdavoodi.com](https://shohrehdavoodi.com). Hope to see you for the next episode.