If you are pained by any external thing, it is not this thing that disturbs you, but your own judgment about it. And it is in your power to wipe out this judgment now.
-Marcus Aurelius

I recently came across this quote by Marcus Aurelius and I found myself thinking about self-esteem. Self-esteem is the confidence in one's own abilities and worth. It is a common train of thought that high self-esteem is beneficial and is more desirable then having a low self-esteem. Numerous studies have shown that a high self-esteem is correlated with outcomes which are attributed to success. However, I think it is important to delve deeper then just the magnitude of self-esteem. Humans are extremely complex, and self-esteem is greatly influenced by both internal and external factors. I believe that beyond just high self-esteem, it is beneficial to have an unconditional component to self-esteem, so that one's level of self-esteem does not fluctuate significantly due to external factors. This requires someone to find their worth from within themselves intrinsically, and not dependent on external factors like status and recognition. When one's self-esteem is contingent to external factors, it can be damaged when those external factors are taken away. However, when someone knows their intrinsic worth as a human being, then external factors have a smaller influence on their self-image. Having a realistic and stable self-image promotes wellness and improves mental health.

- Joshua Greendyk