

Self-Esteem

Workbook

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Challenging Negative Thoughts

There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.

– William Shakespeare



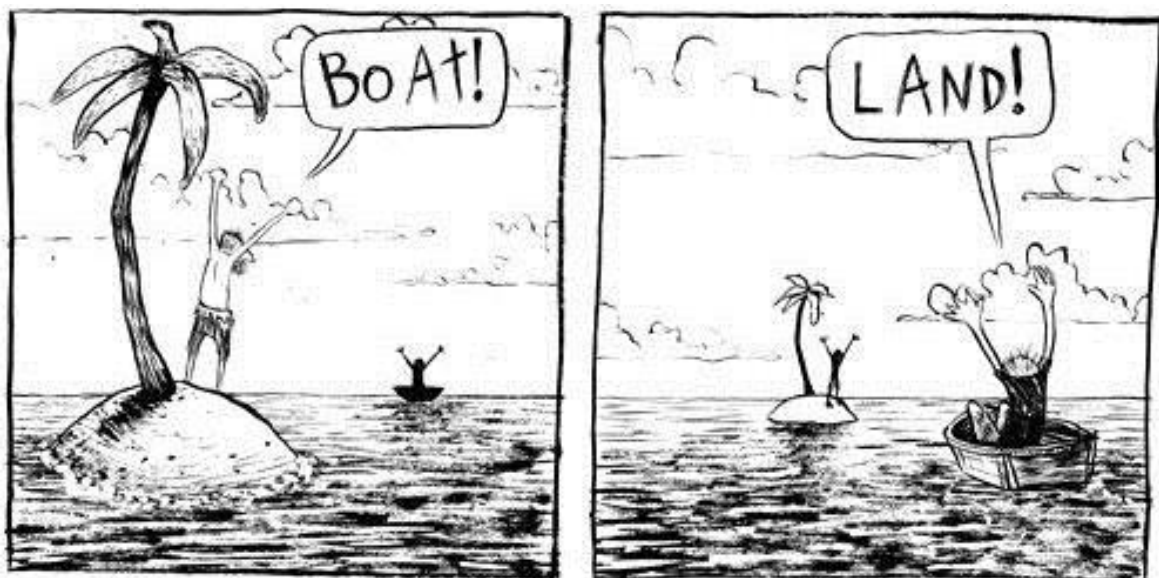
Depression, poor self-esteem, and anxiety are often the result of irrational negative thoughts.

Someone who regularly receives positive feedback at work might feel that they are horrible at their job because of one criticism.

Their irrational thought about job performance will make them feel bad about themselves.

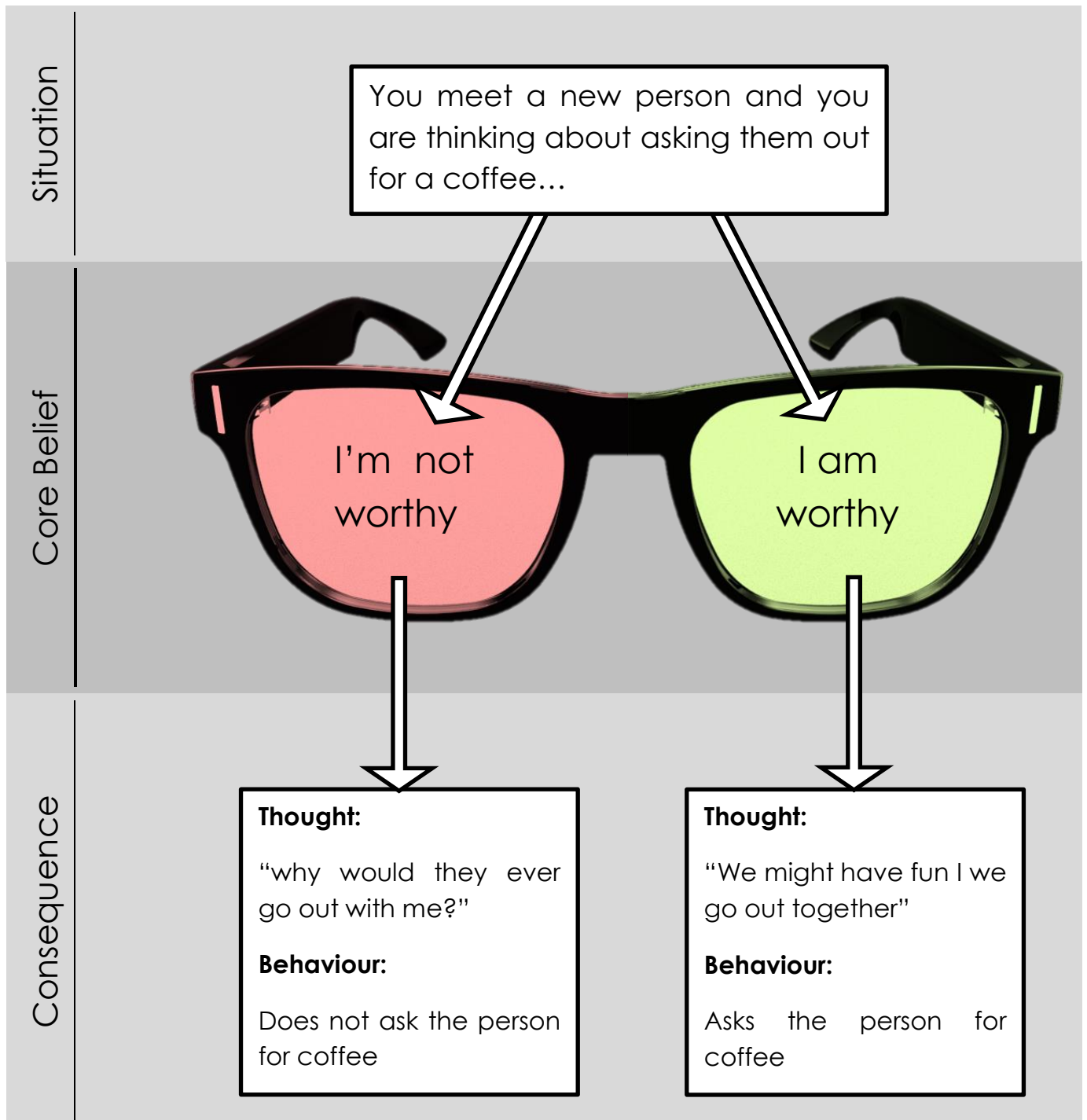
Challenging irrational thoughts can help us change them.

Everyone looks at the world differently. Two people can have the same experience, yet have very different interpretations of what happened.



Core beliefs are the deeply held beliefs that influence how we interpret our experiences.

Think of core beliefs like a pair of sunglasses. Everyone has a different “shade” that causes them to see things differently. Many people have negative core beliefs that cause harmful consequences.

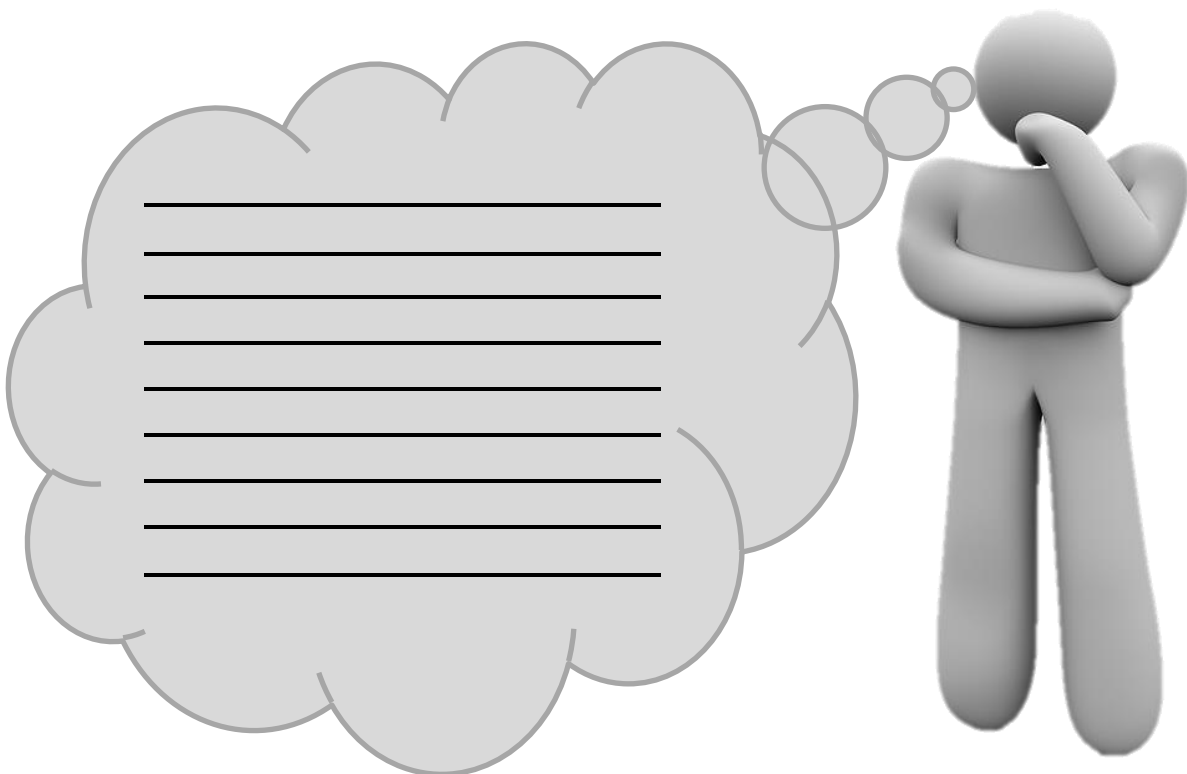


To begin challenging your negative core beliefs, you first need to identify what they are. Here are some common examples:



- I'm unlovable
- I'm stupid
- I'm boring
- I'm not good enough
- I'm ugly
- I'm worthless
- I'm a bad person
- I'm abnormal
- I'm undeserving

What are some of your negative core beliefs?



Answer the following questions to assess your thought:

- Is there reasonable evidence for my thought?
 - What makes me think that this is true?
- Is there evidence which contradicts my thought?
 - Is there anything which proves my thought wrong?
- Am I attempting to think about the situation without all the evidence?
 - Do I know everything?
- What would a friend think about this situation?
 - Would they agree with your opinions?
- If I look at the situation positively, how is it different?
 - If you think about it negatively, is it the same as your opinion?
- Will this matter a year from now? How about five years from now?
 - How long do you think it will be before this issue doesn't matter anymore?

List three pieces of evidence contrary to your negative core belief.

Magic wand

Sometimes people feel like one aspect of their personality has a negative impact on their whole life. This can lower their confidence and self-esteem.



Often, it just takes a few small things to change to make a big difference in someone's life.

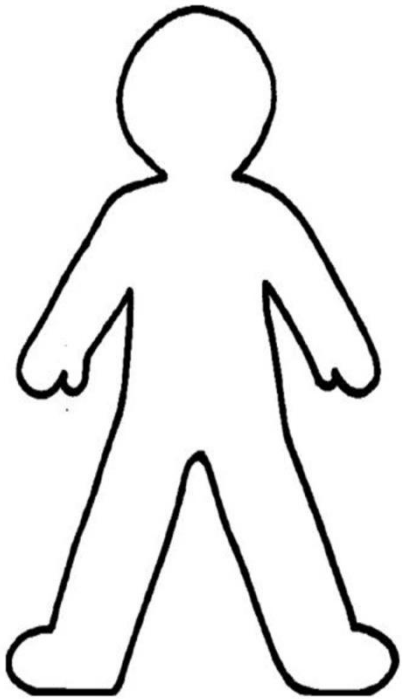
What would it take to break Imaginary Bob's negative cycle?

If you had a magic wand which could change your negative self-beliefs, what would you change and why?

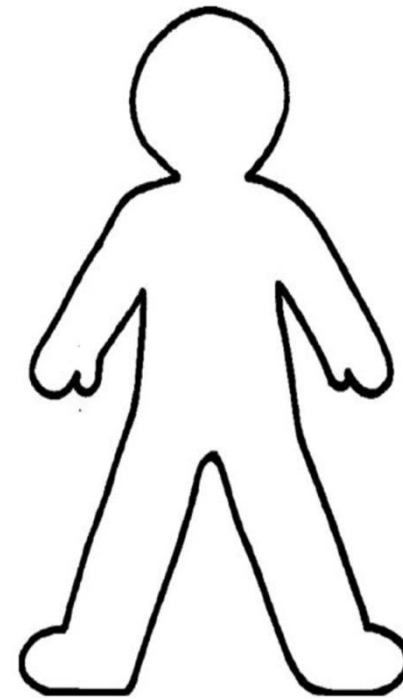


How I would like to be seen

As we saw in the last section, it is important to identify and challenge negative thoughts that you may be having.



How people see me



How I would like
to be seen

Assertive Behaviour

Assertive behaviour enables people to act in their own best interests and stand up for their rights, whilst also respecting the rights and feelings of others. It enables people to express both positive and negative feelings comfortably and without undue anxiety.

You do:

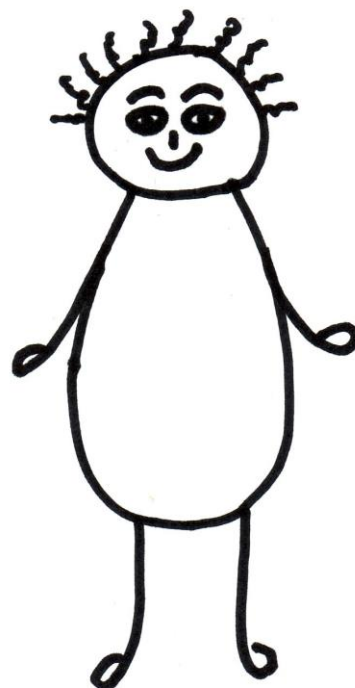
- ✓ ask for what you want
- ✓ behave openly and directly
- ✓ believe in yourself
- ✓ know you have rights
- ✓ ask confidently and without undue anxiety
- ✓ look for 'win-win' situations

You don't:

- X violate other people's rights
- X expect other people to guess what you want
- X freeze up with anxiety

The Assertive Person...

- direct, clear, honest
- respects themselves and the people they are dealing with
- responsible for their choices and behaviour
- self-esteem comes from within
- able to be themselves
- spontaneous
- BUT they are not perfect and can forgive themselves and others



Examples:

"I acknowledge and respect your opinion"

"I choose to take risks and have the right to make mistakes"

"You are important to me but my needs are important to me too"

"I appreciate your wish to help, but I can speak for myself"

Passive Behaviour

Passive behaviour involves the denial of personal feelings and rights which are rarely expressed openly. Needs are therefore seldom met, with a consequent loss of self-esteem. Typical behaviours are sighing, hinting, wishing and sulking.

You do:

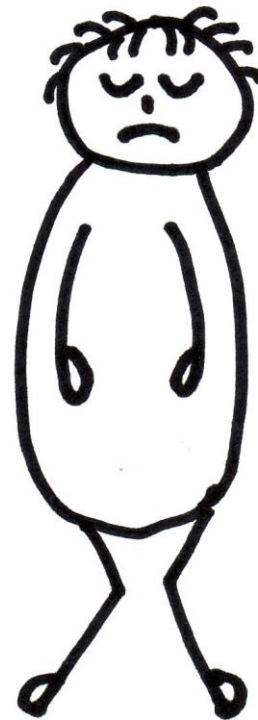
- rely on others to guess what you want
- hope that you will get what you want
- 'Sit on' feelings
- sigh, sulk, hint, wish...
- feel trampled on

You don't:

- ask for what you want
- express your feelings
- usually get what you want
- feel good about yourself

The Passive Person...

- suffers in silence
- timid
- holds back
- finds it difficult to make decisions
- plays helpless
- inhibited
- unable to be themselves
- always apologising
- self-hating
- self-blaming



Examples:

"It's alright for you, I'm useless"

"What's the point in making friends, I always let them down"

"It's not fair"

"It's all my fault"

"Why does it always happen to me?"

How assertive are you? Quiz

Before learning how to develop assertiveness, it is important to take a few moments to get some idea of where you are now. Answer the questions below honestly. They will help you to gain some insights about your current level of assertiveness.

Assign a number to each item using this scale:

Always : 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 : Never

I ask others to do things without feeling guilty or anxious	
When someone asks me to do something I don't want to do, I say "No" without feeling guilty or anxious	
I am comfortable when speaking to a large group of people	
I confidently express my honest opinions to authority figures (such as my boss / teacher)	
When I experience powerful feelings (anger, frustration, disappointment, etc) I express them easily	
When I express anger, I do so without blaming others for "making me cross"	
I am comfortable speaking out in a group	
If I disagree with the majority opinion in a meeting, I can "stick to my guns" without feeling uncomfortable or being abrasive	
When I make a mistake, I will acknowledge it	
I tell others when their behaviour creates a problem for me	
Meeting new people socially is something I do with ease and comfort	
When discussing my beliefs, I do so without labelling the opinions or others as "crackpot", "stupid", "ridiculous", "irrational"	
I assume that most people are competent and trustworthy and do not have difficulty delegating tasks to others	
When considering undertaking something I have never done before, I feel confident I can learn to do it	
I believe my needs are as important as those of others and I am entitled to have my needs satisfied	

Total score: |

Explaining the Results:

60+

If your total is 60 or higher, you have a consistently assertive philosophy and probably handle most situations well.

45-59

If your total is 45-60, you have a fairly assertive outlook. There are some situations in which you may be naturally assertive, but you may be able to increase your assertiveness through practice.

30-44

If your total is 30-45, you seem to be assertive in some situations but your natural response is either unassertive or aggressive. Working on assertiveness techniques to change some perceptions and practising new behaviour should allow you to handle things much more assertively in the future.

15-29

If your total is 15-30, you have considerable difficulty being assertive. If you work on assertiveness techniques, practise, and allow yourself time to grow and change; you can become much more comfortable in situations where asserting yourself is important.

Basics of Assertiveness

Assertiveness is:

a way of communicating which enables you to be clear about what you want and protects you from being pressured, manipulated or 'guilted' into things by other people. It helps you negotiate or 'stick to your guns' but only works if you don't try to bully other people in return.

Assertiveness isn't:

being aggressive, making others do what you want, always getting your own way

Assertiveness means:



Respecting yourself - who you are and what you do

Taking responsibility for yourself - how you feel and what you think and do. For example 'I feel angry when you put me down' is more assertive than 'You make me feel angry when you put me down'

Making clear 'I' statements about how you feel and what you think. For example 'I feel unhappy with this decision' and 'I think that it is a good idea to do an action plan'

Recognising your own needs and wants independently of others that is separate from what is expected of you in particular roles, such as 'girlfriend' 'boyfriend' 'daughter' 'son'

Allowing yourself to make mistakes - recognising that sometimes you will make a mistake and that it is O.K. to make mistakes

Changing your mind if and when you choose to



Asking for time to 'think it over' for example when people ask you to do something and you need time to consider whether or not to do it, 'I would like to think it over and I will give you my decision by the end of next week'

Allowing yourself to enjoy your successes - validating yourself and what you have done and sharing it with others



Setting clear boundaries for example 'I know that you would like me to visit you and thank you for inviting me. However, I am unable to come this weekend and would like to visit you later in the year'

Asking for what you want rather than hoping that someone will notice what you want and moaning later that you didn't get what you wanted

Recognising that you have a responsibility towards others rather than being responsible FOR others. Parents have responsibility for and towards their children which is different from having responsibility towards each other as adults

Respecting other people and their right to be assertive



Three Steps to Assertiveness



Step One: Actively listen

Concentrate on what the other person is saying, or what their position is. Too often we spend our time thinking about our reply whilst they are speaking so that our defence or attack is ready for when they stop. By listening effectively you can demonstrate an understanding of their views or argument even if you don't wholly agree with them. E.g. 'I can see that you would really like a cigarette, and I appreciate you asking'

Step Two: Say what you think and feel

Saying what you think allows you to state your own thoughts and feelings. This should be done in a direct way by the use of 'I' Statements. Whilst this may sound easy it can prove to be a bit of a struggle to say it with confidence. Once you have taken the plunge and done it once, it becomes easier on successive occasions. E.g. 'I feel very uncomfortable with cigarette smoke'



Step Three: Say what you want to happen

This is the most essential of the three. You need to be able to present a different or alternative view. It should be communicated in a clear straightforward way without hesitation or being too insistent. This response focuses clearly on exploring situations and not on self-defence. E.g. 'I would prefer you not to'

The Most Confident Person

Have a think about the most confident person that you can imagine. They may be based on someone you know or could be a combination of ideas you put together.

Draw and describe this person using the template and questions below:

What do they look like?

What are their clothes like?

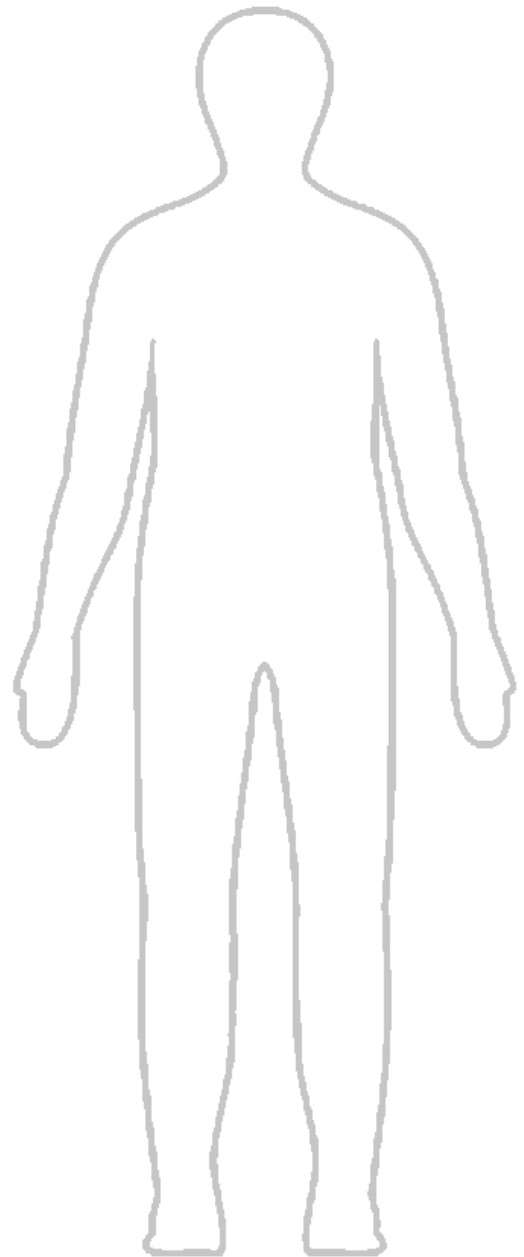
What do they sound like?

How do they act?

What do they smell like?

Do you like them? Why?

Do you want to be like them? Why?



Positive Identity

Something that makes you proud



When people suffer from low self-esteem it can be hard for them to identify things in their life which are good. You could feel proud about something you've done, something you made, or something you've achieved. It doesn't matter how silly or insignificant it might seem, you should feel proud about it.

Try and think about a few times when you felt proud:

Good Times – Significant and every day

Sometimes people find it hard to notice all of the good things that happen every day. Good things happen in all shapes and sizes and can come out of the blue.

For example, you might get a good mark in a test, or it could be as simple as someone you like smiling at you.

Think of something good that has happened to you in the last year:

Try and look out for at least one good thing that happens every day. It will be there if you look for it!

Puzzle – Pieces of Me

To have confidence and self-esteem, people need to be aware of their own identity. Everyone is different and has unique things about them which make them stand out from the crowd. These differences are what make friendships and other relationships interesting and worthwhile.

Imagine how boring the world would be if everyone was exactly the same!

People who constantly compare themselves to other people will find it hard to be happy as they will be focusing on whether or not they are as good looking, or talented, or popular, etc. By having a clear idea of your own identity, you won't feel that need to compare yourself to other people.

On the grid below, write or draw in the boxes to create your own unique identity jigsaw.

<u>TV Shows</u>	<u>Films</u>	<u>Books</u>	<u>School</u>
<u>Friends</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Sisters</u>	<u>Brothers</u>
<u>Music</u>	<u>Clothes</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Foods</u>
<u>Skills</u>	<u>Interests</u>	<u>Drinks</u>	<u>Sports</u>

Questionnaire

The best time of day is:

My favourite films are:

My most special memory is:

My favourite animal is:

The best book I ever read was:

The best present I could get is:

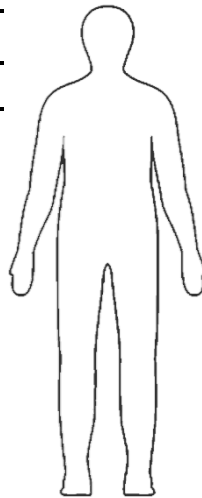
Music I like is:

My favourite food is:

My lucky number is:

The pet I would most like is:

The bravest thing I will ever do will be:



I am good at:

If I could choose to be anyone I would be:

My favourite time of year is:

I won a prize for:

My best holiday was:

People say I look like:

My best friend is:

My best feature is:

It's a real treat for me to:

When I need a hug I go to:

The hardest thing I ever did was:

If I had a time machine I would:

If I was a musical instrument I would be a:

I feel safe when:

When I was younger I used to:

The best dream I ever had was:

The best thing on TV is:

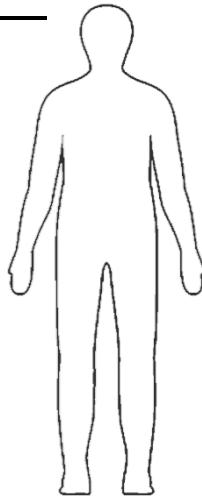
I like to daydream about:

I feel like singing when:

The happiest day of my life was:

If I were invisible for a day I would:

If I were a colour I would be:



I love the weather when it is:

My favourite sports are:

The most exciting thing I ever did was:

A mam is someone who:

If I had a magic bus I would:

A dad is someone who:

I would like to get a letter from:

My most treasured possession is:

My favourite clothes are:

My ideal room would be:

Life line

Place dots and write on this line with significant events in your life so far; e.g. when you started school, if you won any awards, birth of any siblings, etc.

Now in a different coloured pen, put on the line any significant events that you want to happen in your future; e.g. leave school, get a job, start a family, etc.



Having goals for your future is an important part of your identity. They can give you focus and motivation to work through any difficult patches that you might have.

Target Setting

Having goals for your future is an important part of your identity, giving you focus and motivation. Targets can be small – achievable on a daily basis, or they can be big – taking several days, weeks, months, or even years to achieve.

Targets should always be positive, try to avoid words like 'stop', 'don't', etc.

SMART targets follow 5 basic rules to make them easier to set and achieve:

S

Specific

If a target isn't specific then it is hard to know what you are working towards. Try and make targets as simple as possible – pin-point exactly what you would like to achieve.

M

Measurable

You need to be able to measure how much progress you have made towards your target. This helps to keep you motivated but also lets you know when you've achieved it.

A

Achievable

Is your target something that it is possible to achieve? For example, it is possible to live in a mansion, but it is not (yet) possible to live on Mars.

R

Realistic

Is your target something that it is realistic for you to achieve? For example, it may not be realistic on your current income to live in a mansion, but it might be realistic to live in a nice 3 bedroom house.

T

Time Limit

How long are you going to give yourself to achieve the target? Or when will you do what you are saying? Make sure to give yourself a realistic amount of time – not too long or too short!

Examples:

Example Targets	Comments
I will be in bed by 9.30pm and asleep by 10pm on school nights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear time limits – specific • Measurable – by the time they go to bed • Achievable • Realistic
I will go to bed on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not specific – what is ‘on time’?
In the next 12 months I will join a sports club and attend at least 3 sessions a month.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time limit – 12 months • Measurable – amount of sessions attended • Achievable • Realistic – not too many sessions
To socialise more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not specific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is ‘more’ ▪ Socialising could mean many different things • No time limit
To complete all of the work that the teacher sets in at least 3 lessons a day for the next 4 weeks at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time limited • Measurable – finished all work • Specific • Achievable
Not to get more than 10 behaviour points over the next 4 weeks at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative focus of target – ‘not to get...’

Give Yourself a Treat

This is an important part of the process in beginning to value yourself in a new way, so don't be tempted to miss it out.

Think of one way in which you can give yourself a treat.

1. How are you going to treat yourself?



2. When are you giving yourself a treat?



Congratulations!!

Well done you have completed the self-esteem workbook!

Good Luck!

