



Self-Esteem WORKBOOK

**Easy and fun guide to help you boost your self-esteem,
accept yourself and stop toxic self-criticism.**



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What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem can be defined as the opinion we have of ourselves. Our sense of self-worth and value.

Let's see what opinions you hold about yourself.

Write a description of yourself.
Consider how you think and feel about yourself.

Low self-esteem

People with low self-esteem hold deep negative beliefs about themselves. Those negative beliefs are learned as a result of experiences we have in our lives, especially during childhood. If you have low self-esteem, it is likely that in your childhood, you have lived a variety of negative experiences that might have contributed to it.

Some of these negative experiences can be:

- ➔ Punishment, neglect or abuse: E.g.: violent punishment, abandonment, mistreatment, sexual or emotional abuse.
- ➔ Parents with unrealistic high expectations: E.g.: Having difficulty in meeting parents' standards, constant criticism, parents focus more on the child's weaknesses and mistakes than in their qualities or parents frequently teasing or making fun of the child.
- ➔ An absence of positive events in your life. E.g.: Not receiving enough attention, encouragement, praise or affection.
- ➔ Difficulty meeting your peer group standards: E.g.: not fitting in at school, or being bullied during childhood or adolescence.

What childhood experiences do you think had the biggest negative effects on your self-esteem?

Self-esteem Quiz

➡ Score how strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Sometimes, I think I'm not good at anything.	0	1	2	3
I am usually satisfied with myself.	3	2	1	0
I believe I have a lot of good qualities.	3	2	1	0
Sometimes, I feel like I'm useless.	0	1	2	3
I'm able to do things as well as most other people.	3	2	1	0
I feel I don't have much to be proud of.	0	1	2	3
I believe I'm worth as much as everybody else.	3	2	1	0
I wish I could have more self-respect.	0	1	2	3
I feel like a failure.	0	1	2	3
I have a positive attitude towards myself.	3	2	1	0

ADD UP YOUR SCORE FOR EACH ANSWER. THE HIGHER THE SCORE, THE HIGHER YOUR SELF-ESTEEM. IF YOUR SCORE IS BELOW 15, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT YOU HAVE LOW SELF-ESTEEM.

Write down any thoughts or feelings you might have after taking this quiz. Take note of any particular item you'd like to focus on. Remember to give yourself credit for embarking on this journey.

How do you talk to yourself?

If you have low self-esteem, it is likely that you experience self-criticism on a daily basis. Even though everybody has an inner critical voice, people with low self-esteem tend to have a more vicious, harsh inner critic.

The Inner Critic

The inner critic is that nagging inner “voice” or thoughts that create negative internal dialogues. It blames you for things that go wrong, compares you to others and is always trying to find new ways to undermine your self-worth.

One of the problems with our critical thinking is that we usually believe them as an absolute truth, as opposed to see them as what they are (just thoughts). When we accept our critical thoughts without questioning them, we allow the inner critic to grow and have a continuous negative impact on our self-esteem.

Stop "Shoulding" Yourself

'Should' statements are a common negative thinking pattern that the inner critic uses to make us feel wrong, guilty, frustrated or somehow behind in life. It makes us feel hopeless about the situation we are in and diminishes our sense of self-esteem.

Our 'shoulds' are unhealthy when:

We use them to make unfair or unrealistic demands of ourselves.

Self-reflection

Do you judge yourself as a bad or unworthy person if you don't live up to your 'shoulds'?

How often do you 'should' or 'shouldn't' yourself? List your more frequent 'shoulds' and shouldn't below.

Example:

"I should never feel certain emotions such as anger or jealousy."
"I should be more productive." "I should always be happy."

Review the list of 'shoulds' and 'shouldn'ts' above and mark the ones that your inner critic is constantly using to put you down.

Now that you have identified your unhealthy "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts", let's create a more balanced and flexible statement.

↪ Look for a better word choice to substitute each one of your unhealthy "should" statements. Instead of "I should", use words such as "I want", "I prefer", "I will", "I can" or "I choose".

Example:

"I should eat better." Becomes: "I want to eat more nutritious food."


Note that in this case, the word "want" lends itself to coming up with strategies to achieve what you want, which is more constructive than putting yourself down for not doing what you "should".

Remember: No one is expected to be perfect, including yourself.

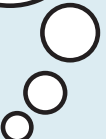
Notes and Thoughts

The best way to combat harsh self-criticism is:

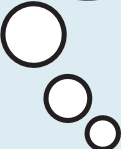
1.
Identifying the
negative thought



2.
Challenge the
negative thought



3.
Replace it with
a more positive and
realistic statement.



SELF-CRITICAL THOUGHT CHALLENGING RECORD

Do this exercise daily. Every time you notice that your inner critic is trying to beat yourself up again, follow the example below.

Negative Thought

I'm so ugly and fat. I don't want to go out looking like this. Nothing I put on looks good on me. I am going to stay home because I don't want to embarrass my friends.

Evidence For

The jeans I'm trying to put on are too tight. I definitely put on weight.
My ex-boyfriend used to call me an ugly cow.
I can't think of any evidence my friends would be embarrassed by me.

Evidence Against

I put on some weight, but there's no shame in it.
My ex-boyfriend was a bully, he always said mean things to everybody.
My friends already told me that they like me regardless of how I look.

More Positive and realistic Perspective

I put on a few pounds and that's ok, my weight does not define my worth. Lot of people have given me compliments saying that I look good, but I still think of the mean things my ex-boyfriend said.
His opinion is not a fact. My friends are interested in me as a person, my jeans being tight does not change the fact that I am worthy.

Catching you inner critic will take a real commitment. On the first day of this exercise, stay as aware of your thoughts as possible. You may be surprised at how frequently your inner dialogue turns against yourself.

SELF-CRITICAL THOUGHT CHALLENGING RECORD

The goal of this exercise is to identify and reframe the self-critical thoughts that have been negatively impacting your self-esteem.

Over time, you'll get better with the thought challenging skill and apply it anytime you need to, even without this piece of paper to guide you.

Negative Thought

Evidence For

Evidence Against

More Positive and Realistic Perspective

Negative Thought

Evidence For

Evidence Against

More Positive and Realistic Perspective

Negative Thought

Evidence For

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Negative Thought

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Evidence For

Evidence Against

More Positive and Realistic Perspective

Overcoming Fear of Failure

Fear of failure can be paralyzing. It can make you so afraid of failing at something that you may end up not trying at all. It can keep you from taking risks and achieving your goals.

When it happens, you miss not only the opportunity to succeed, you also miss the precious opportunity to learn and grow from your mistakes.

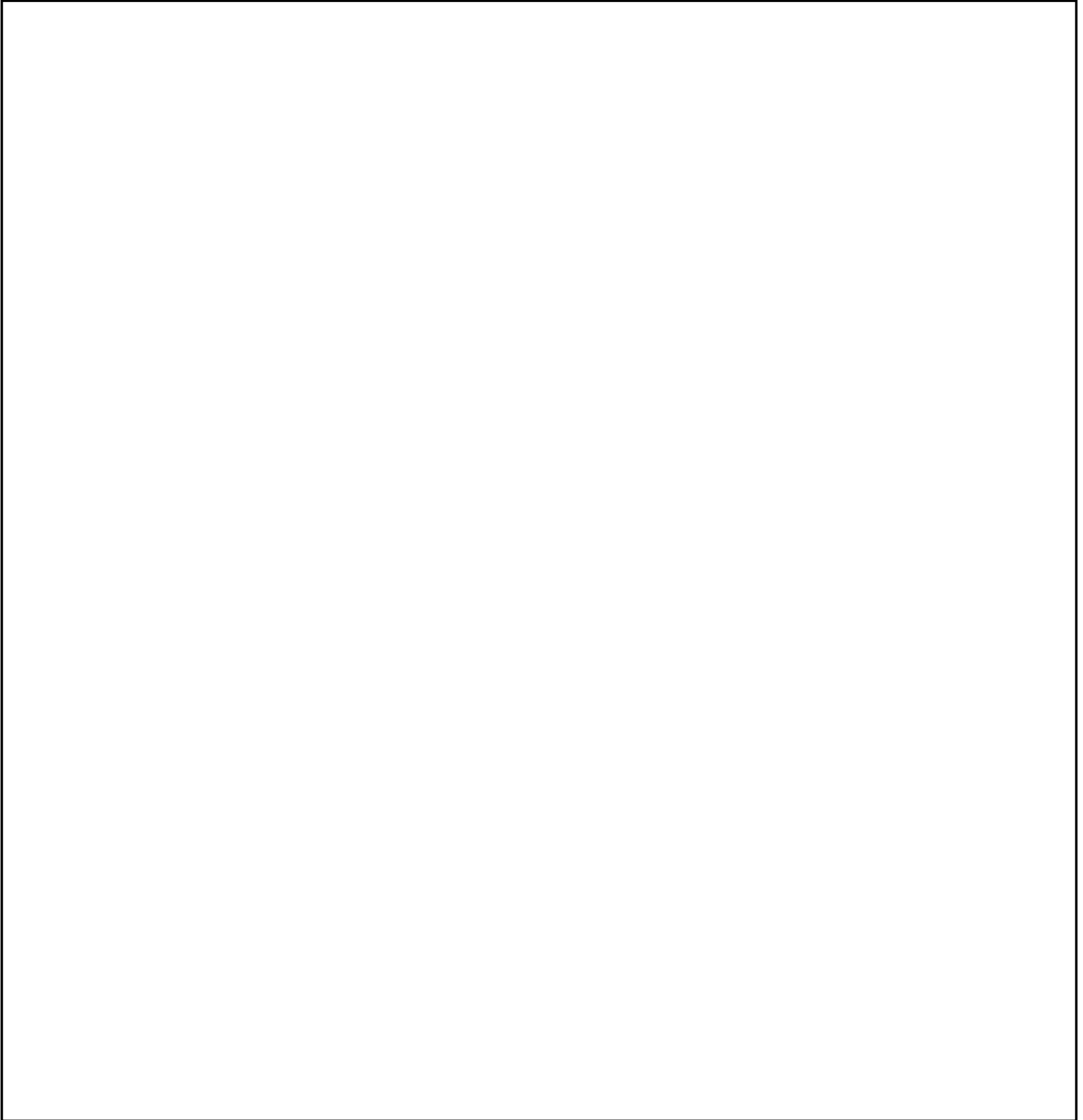
When fear of failure takes over, our mind goes into self-protection mode, then we might end up engaging in some of the following behaviours:

- Self-sabotage: it can come in form of procrastination or excessive anxiety, for example.
- Perfectionism: when you are only willing to try things you know you will do perfectly and successfully.
- Reluctance to try new things and get involved in challenging projects.
- Self-criticism: commonly using overly critical self-talk such as "I'm not smart enough to get that promotion." - "My competitors are way better than me." - "I might get rejected." - "I probably wouldn't be that great. I should just keep doing what I'm doing."

"We suffer more often in imagination than in reality."

Seneca the Younger

Can you relate to any of the behaviours listed on the previous page? Make a list below of all the times in your life, the fear of 'What might happen' prevented you from taking action.



When you are afraid of failure and you don't take action, it feels like you have already failed, doesn't it?

Right-Sizing Your Fear

Excessive fear of failure tends to distort our thinking when it comes to assessing risks. It can lead us to:

- ✓ Exaggerate and super-size the potential negative consequences of taking action.
- ✓ Undervalue the potential positive results of taking action.
- ✓ Ignore the consequences of inaction.

Fear Setting Exercise

This powerful exercise will help you clarify your thinking and right-size your fears. It will allow you to understand that your fears aren't as big as your mind wants you to believe.

By using this tool, you will be able to analyze the potential failure points of your plan and to create a strategy to prevent them to happen.

When should I use Fear Setting Exercise?

1. When you are making decisions about what to do next. (E.g. when you are thinking about getting a new job, moving to a new place or ending a relationship.)
2. When you already know what you are going to do, but you can't stop overthinking it. (E.g. you already know you are starting a new job in a few weeks, but you have fears and anxieties about how it will go.)

Instructions

PART 1:

Column 1: Define what might go wrong with your plan. Write the worst things you can imagine could happen if you took the action you are considering taking.

Column 2: Write ways you could reduce the likelihood of each of the worst case-scenarios from happening.

Column 3: For each of those worse possible outcomes, list ways you could repair the damage if things did go wrong.

Here is an example:

Andrea is an engineer who has 5 years of experience. She isn't happy in her current job and doesn't find it fulfilling anymore. She wants to look for another job, but she's afraid to leave behind stability and safety. Andrea fears that the new job will be too different from her current job and that she is taking too much risk in moving her whole family to a new location and a new job responsibilities.

This is an example of Andrea's fear setting exercise around looking for a new job.

Theme: Looking for a new job			
1	Worst possible outcome	What could I do to prevent that from happening	What could I do to fix things if that outcome happens?
2	I might hate my new job.	Investigate carefully to see if it will be a good fit.	Look for another job and leave.
3	My salary may not be enough.	Fully understand my costs and negotiate my salary.	Negotiate a higher salary or leave.
4	I might be asked to do things i'm not qualified to do.	I will carefully assess how new roles are assigned in the company.	I can ask for extra training.

Fear Setting Exercise

Theme:			
	Worst possible outcome	What could I do to prevent that from happening	What could I do to fix things if that outcome did happen?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Costs of Your Inaction

Part 2: what are the consequences of your inaction? List all the potential costs of not taking action (including financial, emotional, and physical) in 6 months, 1 year and 3 years from now.

Theme:		
In 6 months	In 1 year	In 3 years

Fear Setting Exercise

Theme:			
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Costs of Your Inaction

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Your Belief System

The belief system is a set of basic beliefs we hold about ourselves, other people, and the world we live in. They are perceived as absolute truths deep down in our subconscious mind.

Our beliefs can be positive: "I can do anything I set my mind to" or "Most people are good", for example.

We Can Also Have Negative Beliefs

Negative beliefs are false beliefs we have about ourselves that are self-limiting and harmful.

Our belief system shapes our thoughts, behaviors and ultimately our reality. For example: if you believe you're not worthy of love, you may subconsciously sabotage your relationships. Or if you believe you're not worthy of abundance in your life, you may subconsciously sabotage your own success.

People with low self-esteem often carry some of the following beliefs:

I don't belong. I'm not good enough. I'm a failure. I have to be perfect.
 I'm unlovable. I don't fit in. I'm not important. I'm worthless.
 I don't measure up to others. I'm a loser. My needs are not important.
 I can't handle anything. I'm abnormal. I can't get anything right.

Can you relate to any of these statements?

➡ Look through your "Self-critical Thought Challenging Record" and see if your self-critical thoughts resonate with any of the items on the box above.

Self-reflection Exercises:

Write down below all the negative beliefs you have identified on the previous page, then see if you can find experiences in your past that reflect those feelings.

Example:

Maybe you had overcritical parents, making you think that you can't make mistakes, or maybe your father left the family when you were little, leading you to think you're not worthy of love.

Changing your Negative Beliefs

To change your negative beliefs, you need to create an alternative belief to which positive information can be assimilated. In other words, you need to replace the negative belief with a positive one. Then, you need to work on finding evidence to strengthen this positive belief.

1. Choose the negative belief you want to change:

(E.g: "What I have to say is not important")

2. Once you choose the negative negative belief you want to change, you need to look for evidence to contradict it.

(Example: "What I have to say is not important" Evidence to contradict it "My friends are usually interest in what I have to say." or "People always seem to respect my opinions.")

3. Change the negative belief by creating a positive alternative to it.

Tip: Keep the new belief in the present tense and avoid negative words.

(E.g: "What I have to say is not important" Becomes "I matter, therefore, what I have to say matters.")

4. Find evidence to support the new positive belief.

E.g.: New belief: "What I have to say matters". Evidence to support it: My boss is interested in what I have to say. My colleagues usually appreciate my opinions at work. My friends call me for advice.

Whenever you're feeling negative, review this exercise. Keep noticing and recording any evidence or experience to support your new belief. Through repetition, you will work your way towards positive beliefs about yourself.

Changing your Negative Beliefs

Do this exercise as many times as you need.

1. Negative belief you want to change:

2. Evidence to contradict the negative belief.

3. Change the negative belief by creating a positive alternative to it.

4. Find evidence to support the new positive belief.

"The sky is not the limit. Your belief system is."

Vanessa Feils

Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance means accepting both your strengths and your weaknesses. If you want to build lasting self-esteem, you need to acknowledge and embrace the parts of yourself you are not able to accept. Practicing self-acceptance will help you be kinder to yourself and release self-judgment.

Self-Acceptance Exercise

Describe a negative trait
or weakness you have:

Write a statement to help you embrace
this undesirable part of yourself.

Example:

I procrastinate important things
I want to do.

*I acknowledge that I procrastinate and
need to change. Procrastination does not
make me a bad person.*

or

*I forgive myself for procrastinating. I
can correct this behavior without blaming
or condemning myself.*

or

*I can reprimand this behavior without
repriming myself.*

Self-Acceptance Exercise

Describe a negative trait
or weakness you have:

Write a statement to help you embrace
this undesirable part of yourself.

Noticing your positive qualities

To boost your self-esteem, it is important to start noticing and acknowledging your positive qualities.

Instant Self-esteem Booster Exercise

Set a reminder for 3 minutes and write continuously, as many of your positive traits, skills and innate gifts as possible within this time.

Identifying Your Strengths

People with low self-esteem tend to focus on their weaknesses and forget to honor their strengths. Identifying your strengths will help you build self-esteem and create a more positive self-awareness.

➔ **Respond to the prompts below:**

1. An important task I have tackled:

2. Challenges I have overcome:

3. An important role I have fulfilled:

4. Compliments I have received:

5. My best skills:

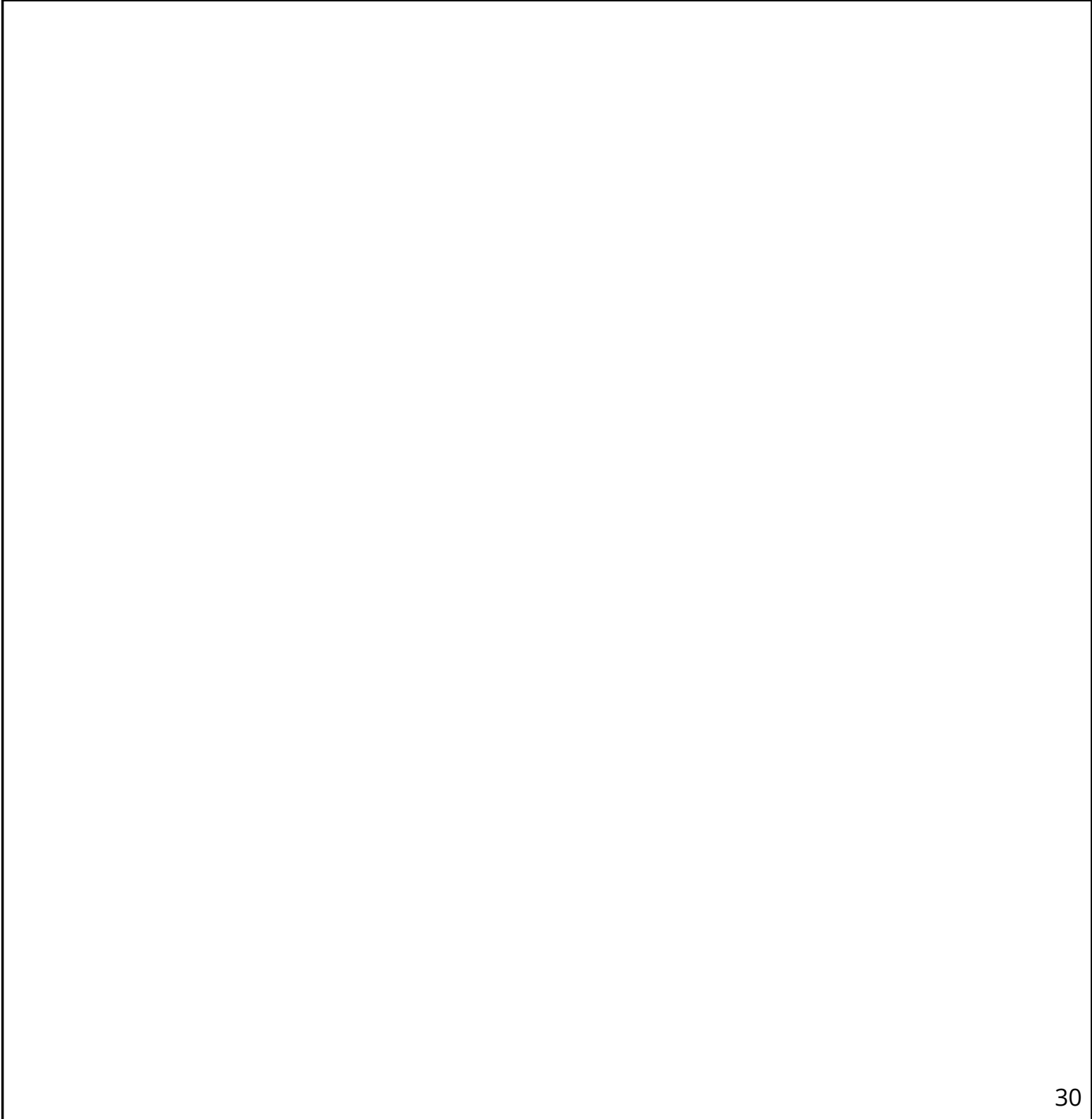
6. A time I have helped someone else:

Tip: Listing your strengths doesn't mean much unless you remember them. They will help you grow your self-esteem, especially at times when you feel more self-critical.

Write down some reminder signs emphasizing your strengths and have them in places where you can see them all the time like your mirror, your notebook or your laptop.

What would someone who loves you unconditionally say about you?

Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of someone else who loves you unconditionally. Here are some ideas: What would that person say to build yourself up? What would that person say about your best personality traits? What would that person say when you are struggling with your self-esteem?

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing a letter to oneself from the perspective of someone who loves them unconditionally.

"The Not Good Enough" Feelings

It is **normal** to continue to experience the "I am not good enough" feeling when you are in the process of creating lasting self-esteem. When this feelings and thoughts arise, rather than thinking that you will never be able to have healthy self-esteem, remind yourself that healing is not a linear process.

Don't let self-judgment hold you back. Keep in mind that this is just your low self-esteem programming coming to the light of your consciousness. There is no need to fight these negative feelings. Acknowledge them and focus on creating a new thought that supports your self-esteem. For example: "I am good enough, even as I grow and evolve."

Create a Validation Folder

If you can, create a "Validation Journal" or a "Validation folder" in your laptop, to catalogue and keep track of positive feedbacks, compliments and gratitude you have received. You can include letters, cards, comments, emails and text messages. Write down and document anything that helped you feel good about yourself. The human brain has a natural tendency to seek out and store negative feedbacks and discard positive ones. Documenting your positive feedbacks is an excellent way to overcome our brain's inclination to negativity.

Notes and Thoughts 

Reinforcements

Even though YOU are the most important influential factor to your self-esteem, what happens around you can heavily influence how you feel about yourself.

It's important to find out what factors in your life influence your self-esteem, because they can either build you up or drag you down.

Positive Reinforcements

Write down all the things that are good for your self-esteem.

(Including supportive people, work, places, social media and activities. Everything that makes you feel good about yourself.)

What can you do to add more of these positive things into your life?

Negative Reinforcements

What are the things that make you feel inadequate and bad about being you? List them in the box below.

(People, activities, habits, places or situations)

How can you avoid or find ways to change or address these negative situations into your life?

Tip: Make an effort to start seeking friendships and relationships with people that are supportive and positive.

Habits That Hurt Your Self-Esteem

Constantly Compare yourself to others:

Comparison kills your self-esteem because it makes you feel unworthy and inadequate. It makes you focus on what you were supposed to be and minimize your achievements.

Setting Unrealistic Goals:

Ruminating over negative past events is a self-esteem killer because it involves not just noticing the negative situations, but continuously experiencing them over and over again. It keeps you stuck in perceived moments of failure, weakness and self-blame.

Putting Everyone Else's Needs Before Your Own

When you only prioritize someone else's needs, you make other people feel good and supported, but you end up with lower self-esteem and feeling frustrated and less empowered.

Holding resentment against yourself:

The more you shame and blame yourself for past mistakes, the lower your self-esteem and the less motivated to change you will be.

Having poor boundaries:

Unhealthy boundaries involves a disregard for your values, needs, and limits. Every time you allow someone to hijack your time or space, you lower your sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

Dwell on the past:

Ruminating over negative past events is a self-esteem killer because it involves not just noticing the negative situations, but continuously experiencing them over and over again. It keeps you stuck in perceived moments of failure, weakness and self-blame.

Self-esteem Journal Prompts

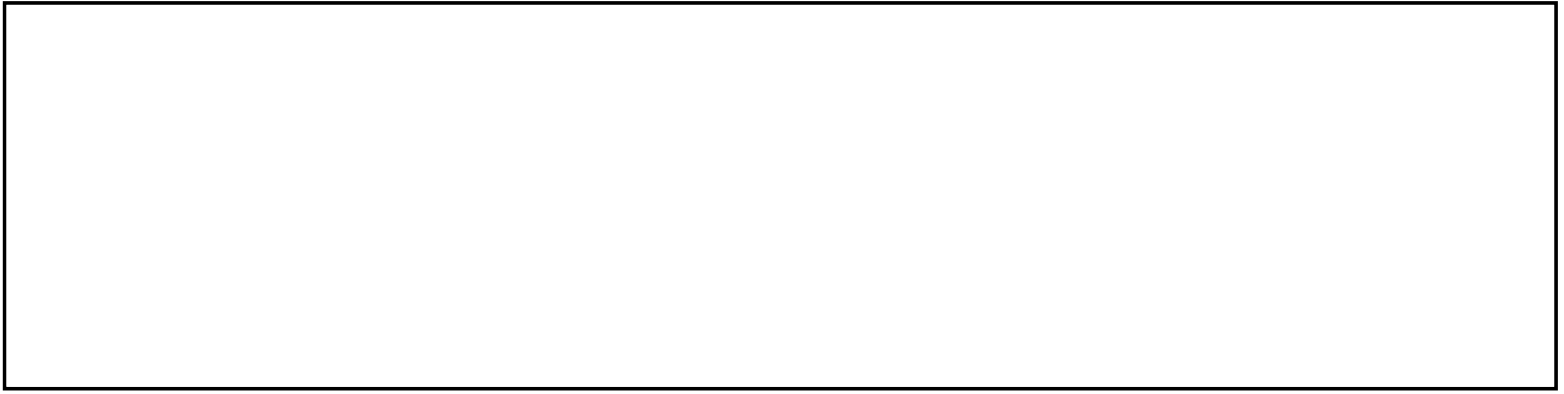
When we journal, we are able to tap into different states of mind that help us become clearer about our desires and the changes we want to make in our lives.

These journal prompts will help you get to know yourself on a deeper level and improve your self-esteem. There is no wrong way to do it. You just have to spend a few minutes writing and reflecting about yourself.

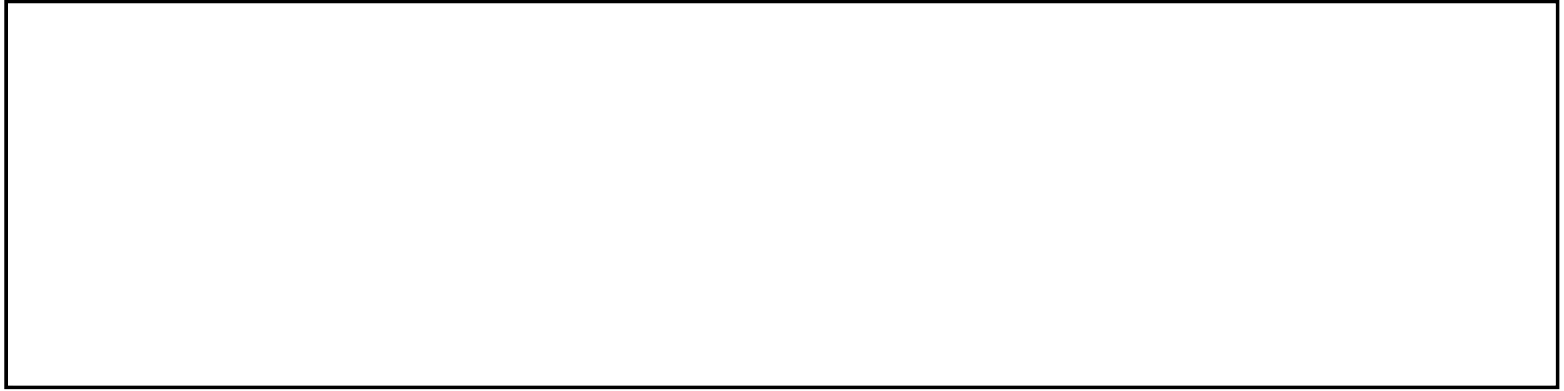
1. What makes you unique? (positive comments only)

2. What would you be doing now if you had 100% healthy self-esteem?

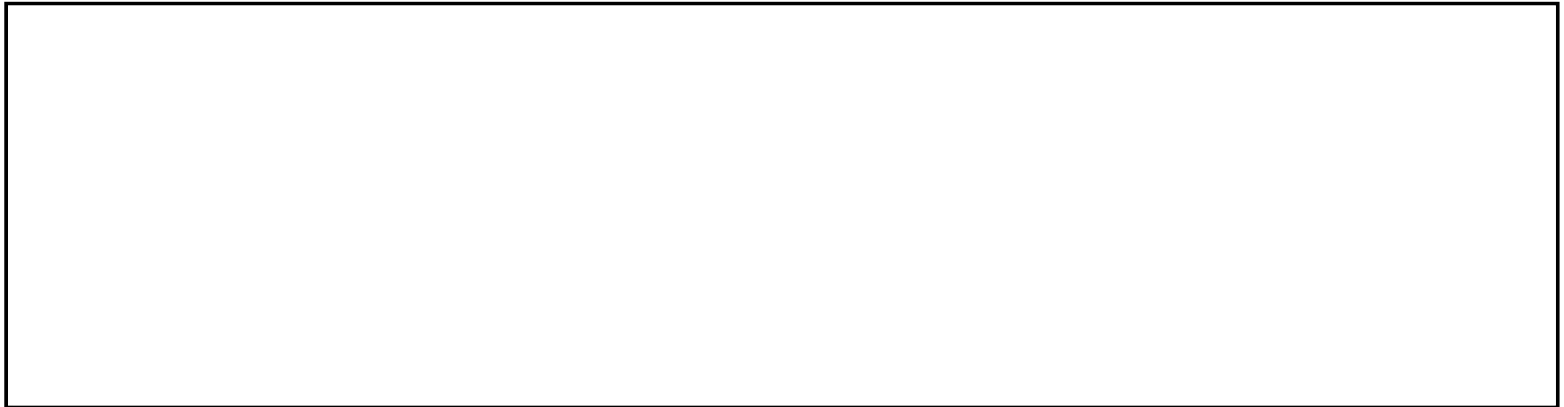
3. How would your best friend describe you?



4. What would you do if you knew you could not fail?



5. What can you do today to feel good about yourself?



6. When do you feel the strongest?



Motivational Plan For Bad Days

Difficult days are inevitable. Write below messages to inspire you on days you just don't feel good about yourself. Use inspirational quotes, words you heart from loved ones or role models.

<p>Example: Breath. It's just a bad day, not a bad life.</p>	<p>Example: I just want to remind you that you're doing the best you can.</p>		

Self-esteem Affirmations

Affirmations are positive self-talk statements that can empower you and boost your self-esteem. Practice these affirmations at least three times a day.

The light I see in others is a reflection of my own light.

I am full of compassion towards myself.

I release the stories that make me small.

I am safe being who I am.

I am not my mistakes;
I forgive myself.

I am patient with myself as I grow.

I am enough just as I am.

I release the need to judge myself negatively.

I bring consciousness instead of judgment to myself.

Self-esteem Affirmations

I respect myself deeply.

My needs are just as important as anyone else's.

I accept that I can be loved, respected and appreciated.

I love my body and all it does for me.

I trust my own judgment.

I choose to do and say kind things for and about myself.

Accepting myself as I am now is the first step in growing and evolving.

I only compare myself to myself.

I surround myself with people who bring out the best in me.

A Letter to Myself

I _____ promise that I will take care of myself and work on my self-esteem everyday.

I will invest and stand up for myself. I deserve _____.

I will not let _____ and _____ put me down.

I will be compassionate and say kind words to myself every time I fail. I promise to fight back every time that voice inside my head tells me _____.

I am _____ and _____!

I am not _____, I am _____ and that's ok. I'm ok with the fact that I'm not perfect.

I want to discover the _____ version of myself and I'm not afraid of what other people think about me. I will be true to myself.

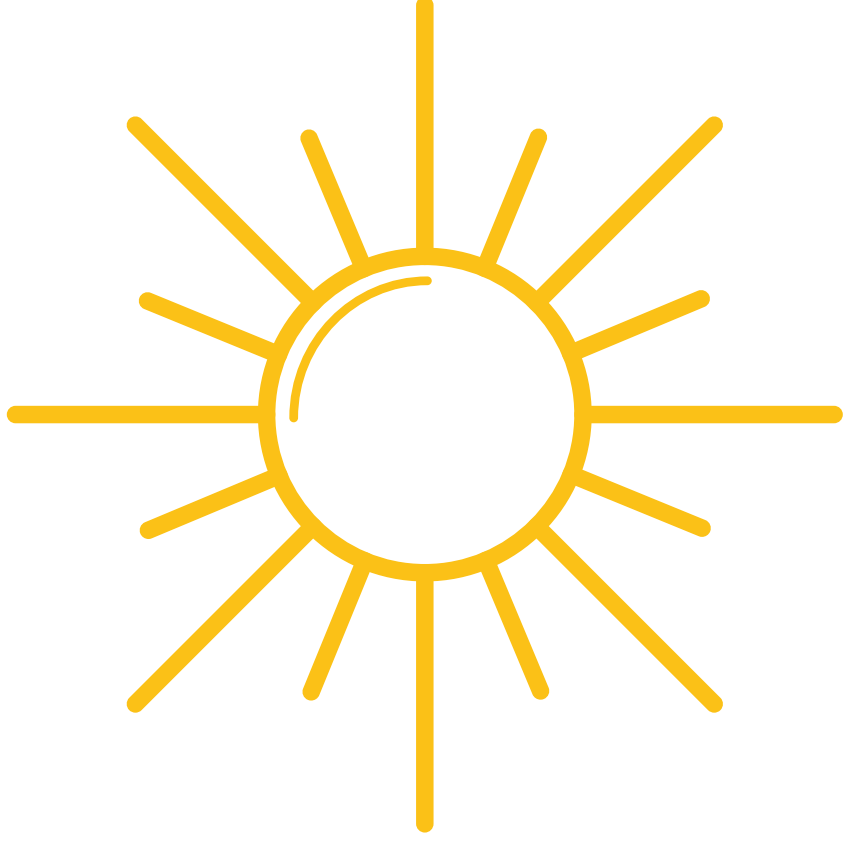
I want to love myself because I need to and because it is what is best for me.

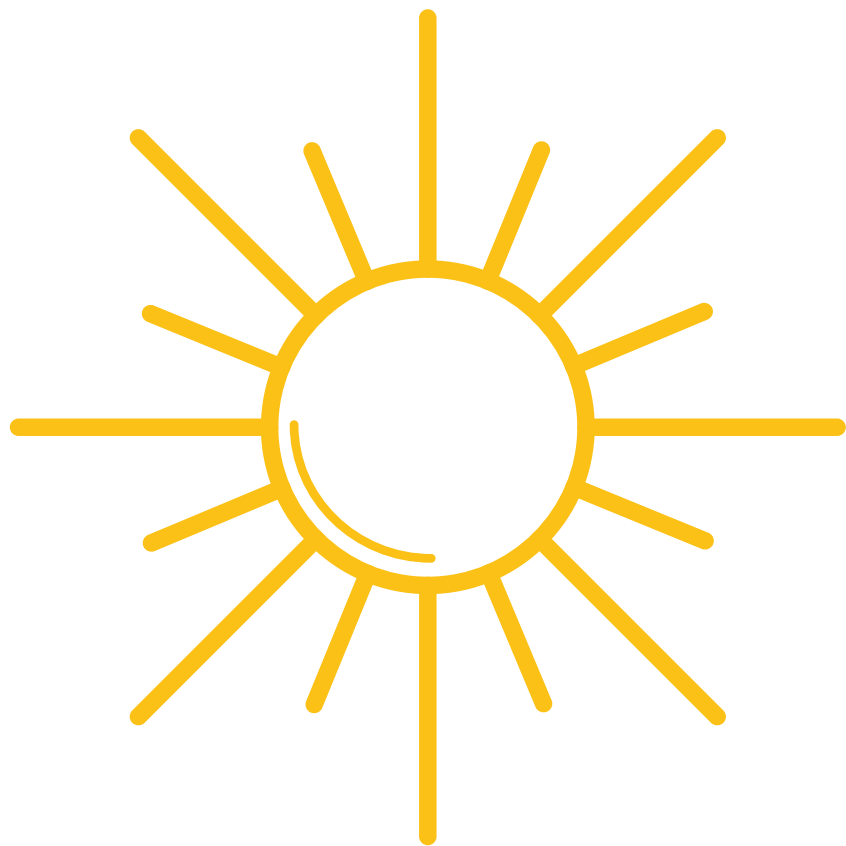
I am enough.

With love,

Self-esteem Board

Put your name or picture in the circle and write down positive words about yourself: your strengths, skills, things you like about yourself, achievements you're proud of and compliments you have received from others or from yourself.





Building Self-esteem Tracker

This tracker allows you to record the daily practices that will help you build lasting self-esteem. The blank Self-esteem Tracker was created for you to fill up and customize it with other practices that you would like to add. Print your tracker and use it every day as shown in the example below.



Self-esteem Tracker



Month October

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
Practiced Positive self-talk	✕	✕				✕																										
Was kind to myself	✕	✕	✕		✕	✕																										
Celebrated small victories		✕	✕		✕																											
Complimented myself					✕	✕																										
Allowed myself to make mistakes		✕	✕		✕																											
Avoided toxic people	✕	✕				✕																										
Said 'no' when I meant to			✕		✕	✕																										
Avoided self-criticism	✕				✕																											
Accepted compliments		✕	✕			✕																										
Used positive affirmations	✕																															
Practiced self-care					✕	✕																										
I forgave myself for something I did	✕	✕	✕																													
Spent time with supportive people	✕				✕	✕																										
Accepted my feelings without judgment	✕	✕	✕		✕	✕																										

Self-esteem Tracker

Month

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
Practiced positive self-care																																	
Was kind to myself																																	
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