

THE SCIENCE OF  
**SELF-ACCEPTANCE**

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WORKBOOK

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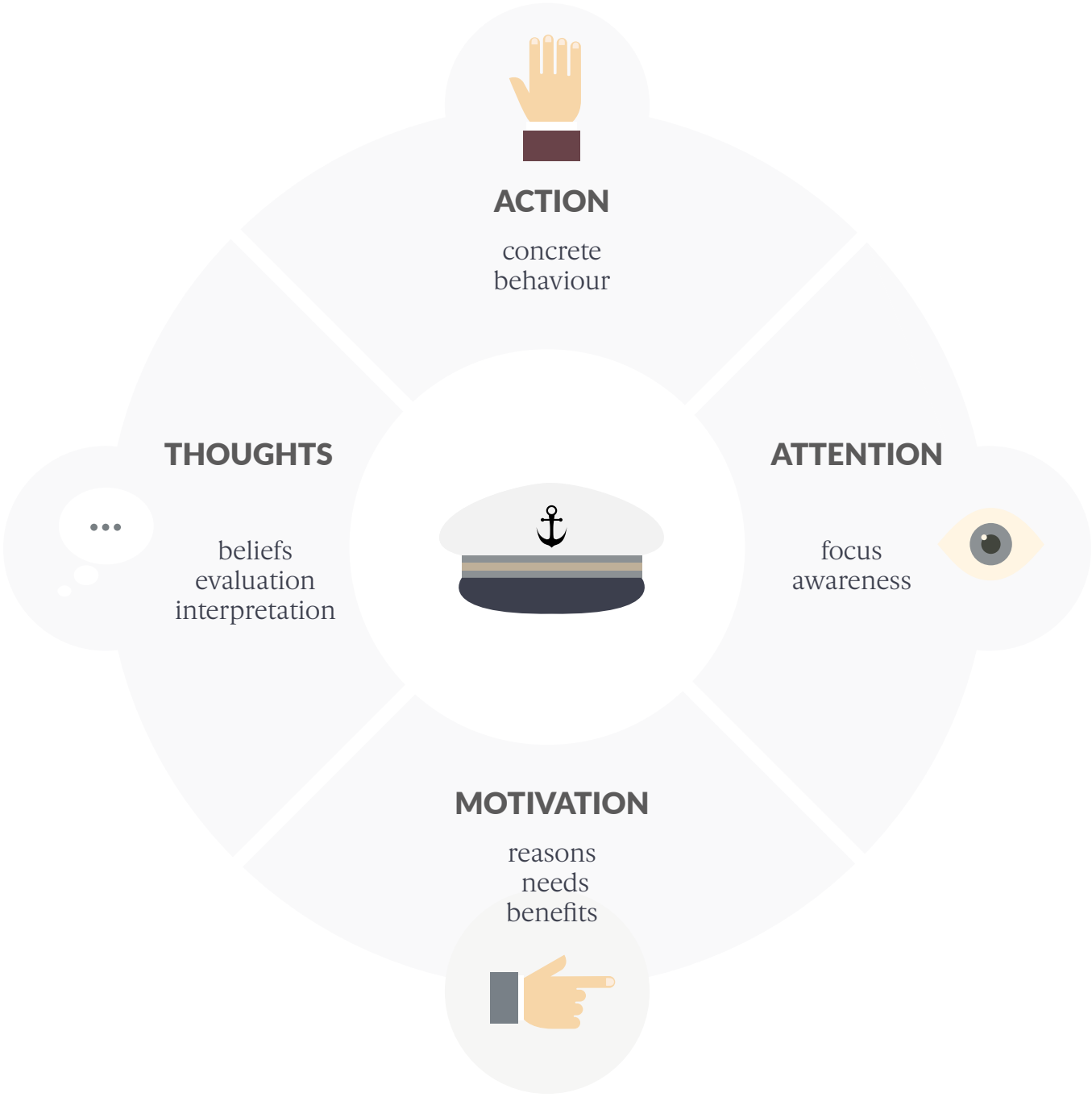
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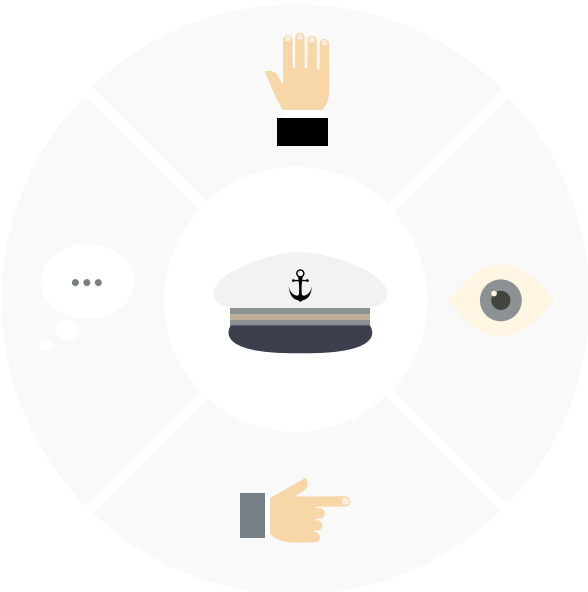
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# THE SAILBOAT METAPHOR

■ THE SAILBOAT METAPHOR





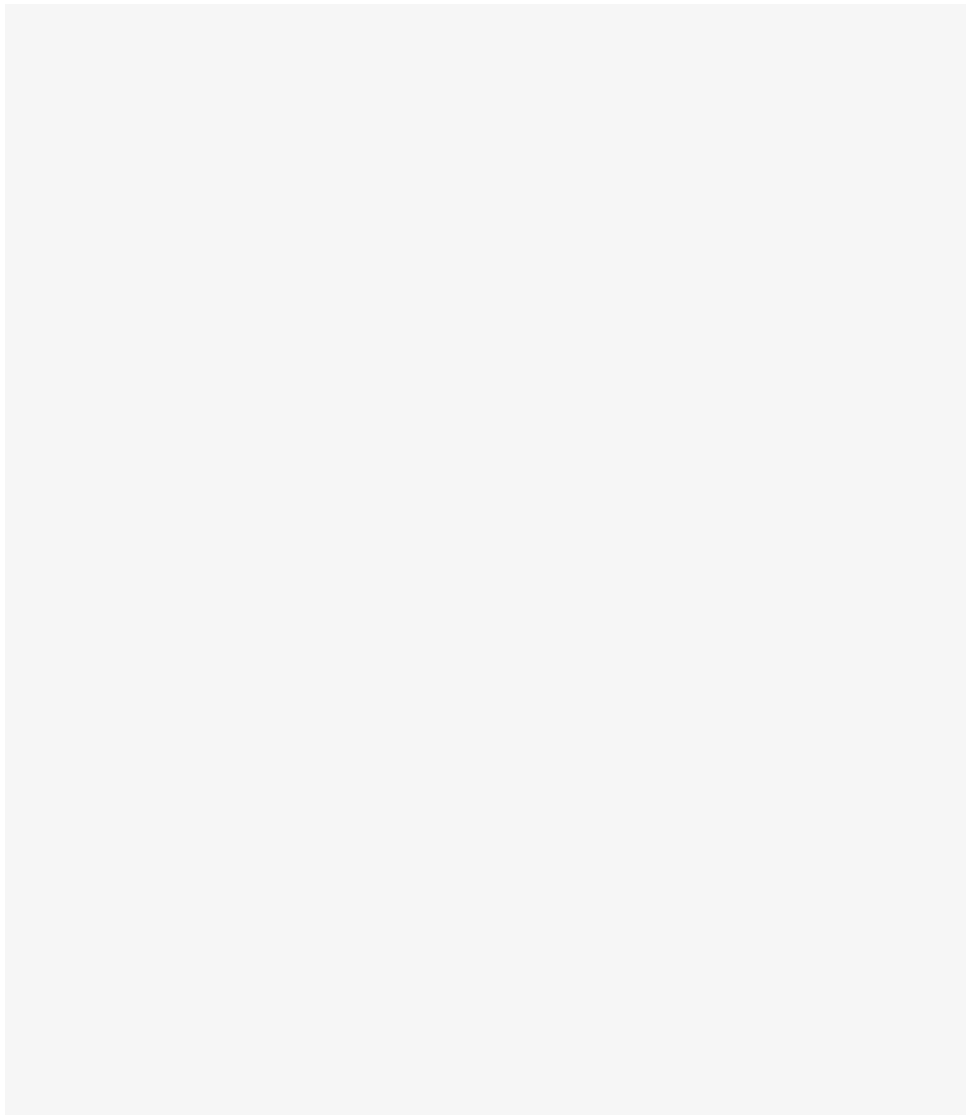


## ■ THE STATUS OF YOUR SAILBOAT

Ask the other person to use the sailboat metaphor to describe how he or she is currently doing. You may ask the following questions:

- What is the current status of your sailboat?
- How would you describe your current journey?

Invite the other person to speak as much as possible in terms of the different elements of the sailboat and their interaction.



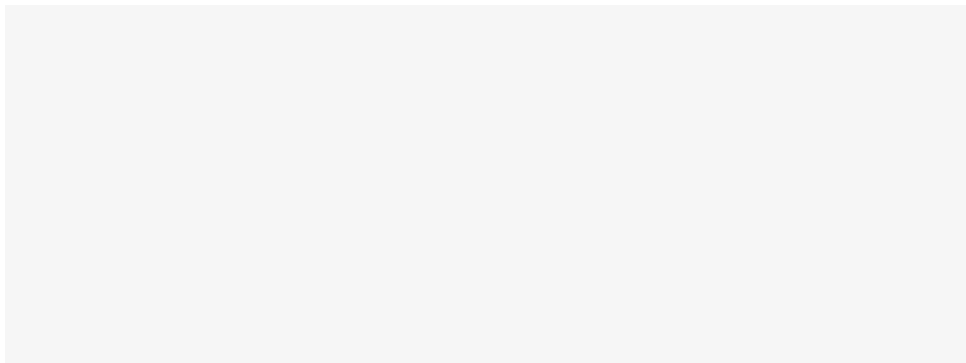
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# SELF-ACCEPTANCE

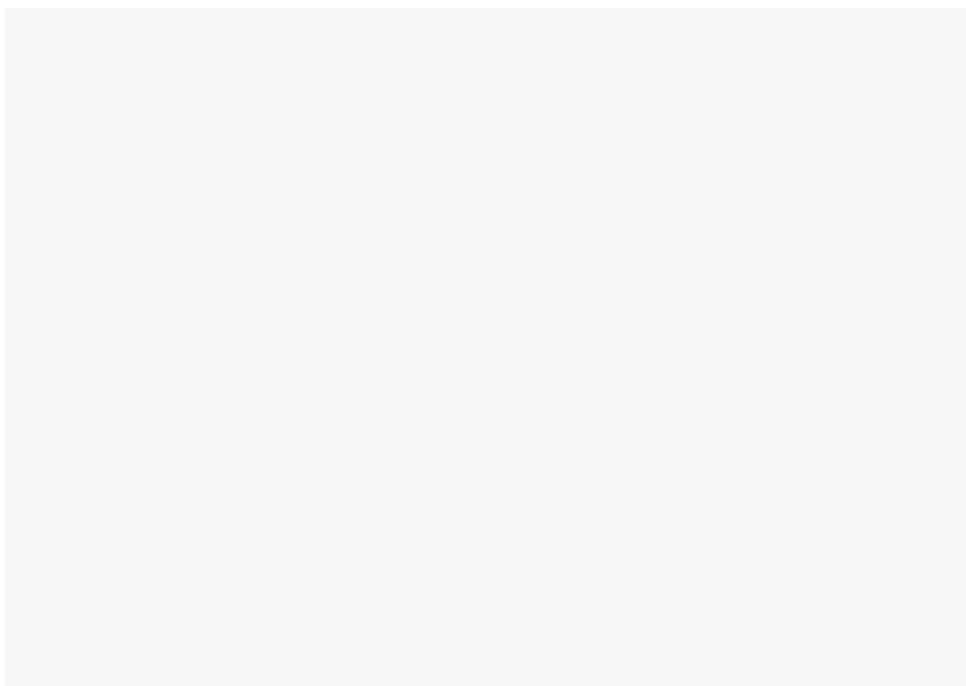
## ■ IDENTIFYING WEAKNESSES

The goal of this exercise is to gain insight into factors that prevent well-being. Ask the other person to reflect on the following questions:

Which personal characteristics (physical/cognitive/behavioural) reduce your well-being?



In terms of the sailboat metaphor, how do these “leaks” influence the overall functioning of your sailboat?



## ■ UNCONDITIONAL SELF-ACCEPTANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate how often you feel each statement below is true or untrue about you. For each item, write the appropriate number (1 to 7) on the line to the left of the statement, using the following key:

1. almost always untrue
2. usually untrue
3. more often untrue than true
4. equally often true and untrue
5. more often true than untrue
6. usually true
7. almost always true

rating	statement
1	Being praised makes me feel more valuable as a person.
2	I feel worthwhile even if I am not successful in meeting certain goals that are important to me.
3	When I receive negative feedback, I take it as an opportunity to improve my behavior or performance.
4	I feel that some people have more value than others.
5	Making a big mistake may be disappointing, but it doesn't change how I feel about myself overall.
6	Sometimes I find myself thinking about whether I am a good or bad person.
7	To feel like a worthwhile person, I must be loved by the people who are important to me.
8	I set goals for myself with the hope that they will make me happy (or happier).
9	I think that being good at many things makes someone a good person overall.
10	My sense of self-worth depends a lot on how I compare with other people.
11	I believe that I am worthwhile simply because I am a human being.
12	When I receive negative feedback, I often find it hard to be open to what the person is saying about me.
13	I set goals for myself that I hope will prove my worth.
14	Being bad at certain things makes me value myself less.
15	I think that people who are successful in what they do are especially worthwhile people.

---

16	I feel that the best part about being praised is that it helps me to know what my strengths are.
17	I feel I am a valuable person even when other people disapprove of me.
18	I avoid comparing myself to others to decide if I am a worthwhile person.
19	When I am criticized or when I fail at something, I feel worse about myself as a person.
20	I don't think it's a good idea to judge my worth as a person.

---

Scoring this questionnaire involves reversing the scores for questions marked in grey. Reverse scoring means that the numerical scoring scale runs in the opposite direction. So, a score of 7 would be 1, a score of 7 becomes 2, etc.

After reversing the scores, higher scores on the questionnaire reflect greater self-acceptance.

Total Score:

Average Score (Total Score /20):

## ■ SEEING THROUGH THE ILLUSION OF SELF-RATING

The goal of this exercise is to understand that self-rating is irrational inasmuch as there is no objective basis for determining the worth of a human being. Accurate or true self-ratings or global ratings are virtually impossible to make. This realization may help you to stop trying to measure your inherent value as a human being and facilitate the development of self-acceptance.

When used with clients, the practitioner should allow clients to come up with their own arguments for the irrationality of self-rating. If clients are unwilling or unable to come up with counter-arguments, it is advisable for the practitioner to abandon the exercise and refrain from starting an intellectual debate about whether or not a worthless person exists or not. Such a rational debate misses the point of the exercise completely as it is often driven by the “need to be “right”. It is not unusual that “being right” represents a way for clients to prove their “worth” (e.g. their intellectual capabilities), which is exactly the opposite of what this exercise aims to accomplish.

This exercise considers the “worthiness” of human beings. Are people either worthwhile or worthless? Can people be superior or inferior? Are these concepts meaningful or meaningless? In fact, considering the worthiness of people is nonsensical.

If we were to attempt to define a “worthless” or “inferior” human being, we would find that we are in fact describing all humans. For example, one may hold the belief that a worthless or inferior person is someone who can’t do anything right or someone who makes many mistakes; however, everybody can do some things right, just as everybody makes mistakes. Thus, according to these definitions, all human beings are worthless.

### ► STEP 1. COUNTERING DEFINITIONS

In the table on the following page are a set of definitions describing a worthless or inferior person. Your task is to write a rebuttal to each of these definitions. You can also make up some definitions of your own to rebut. Once you have completed the exercise, compare your answers with the ones provided in Appendix A.

definition of a worthless or inferior person	rebuttal
Someone who does bad things	
Someone who fails or make mistakes	
Someone who is unattractive	
Someone who does mean, hateful things on purpose to hurt other people	
Someone who has no value to society because he/she is lazy, self-centered, and unproductive	
Someone who is unpopular	
Someone who is unintelligent	
Someone who is untalented	
Someone with low self-esteem	
Other	

**► STEP 2 EVALUATION**

How was it to do this exercise?

What did you learn?

What was easy or difficult about the exercise?

Did your definition of the worthiness of a human being change? If so, how?

**► STEP 3 DEBRIEF**

This exercise aimed to demonstrate that it is impossible to define human beings as “worthless.” While specific activities may be described as more or less worthwhile, we cannot describe people in the same way. People may be less talented or less intelligent than another person, but this does not make them inferior or less worthy.

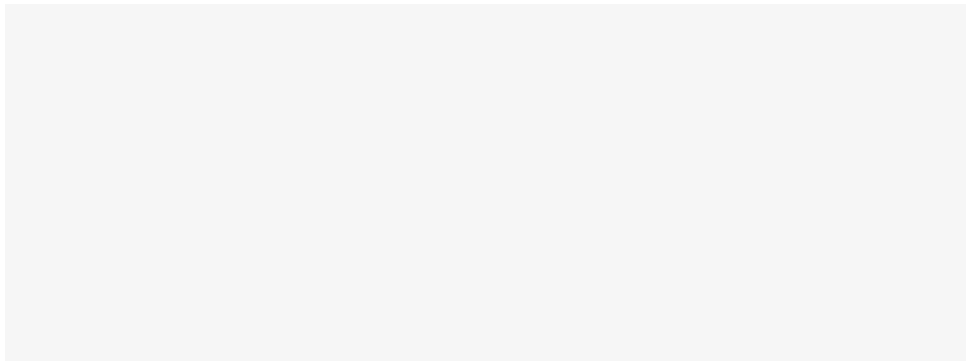
It is important to understand that people cannot be described as worthless or inferior because, unfortunately, it is an all too common occurrence. When we feel low, we tend to believe with all our heart that we are somehow inferior, or not as worthy. In the same vein, believing one is they somehow superior to others characterizes narcissism.

Hopefully, this exercise will help you stop trying to measure your inherent value as a human being. While behavior may be described as good or bad, or foolish or silly, human beings may not. Put simply, we can rate our traits, but not our selves.

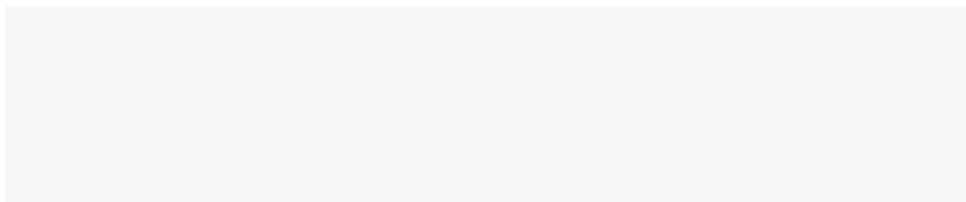
## ■ REFLECTING ON SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Invite the other to reflect on the following questions:

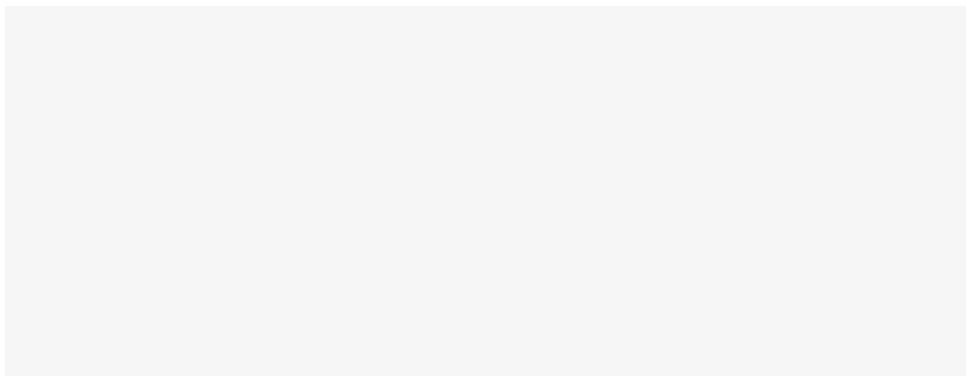
Have there been moments when you found it difficult to accept yourself for who you are? If so, when?



Which standard do you fail to achieve in these moments? Describe the standard.



How would it feel if you were able to let go of this standard and accept yourself for the way you are in these moments?



## ■ SELF-ACCEPTANCE MEDITATION

The goal of this tool is to familiarize yourself with self-acceptance, reflect on the self's inability to unconditionally accept yourself, and set an intention to become more self-accepting.

When used with clients, it is recommended for clients to practice this meditation first during session before trying it at home on their own. In this way, the practitioner can examine the effects of and experiences during the meditation with the client. Moreover, inform clients that it is very common for emotions to arise during this meditation. Clients should be encouraged to allow emotions to be present, rather than pushing them away or avoiding them. If clients report that the meditation has become overwhelming, stop the exercise and encourage discussions around what triggered the strong emotions.

### ► MEDITATION SCRIPT

This meditation is about self-acceptance. Self-acceptance means accepting ourselves for who we are at this very moment. It means relating to ourselves as we would to someone who we love and care deeply for. When we accept ourselves, we give ourselves permission to be human; to fail, to make mistakes, and to learn and grow. We accept our weaknesses rather than feeling somehow less because of them. Likewise, we accept our strengths, but do not feel superior because of them. Self-acceptance means that you allow yourself to be as you really are.

I would like to ask you to close your eyes if you haven't done so already. Now try to focus your attention on your breath. Just notice how you breathe in and breathe out. Allow yourself to do just that; breathe in and breathe out. There is nothing you need to achieve or become. In this meditation, you cannot fail or succeed. Just see how it goes. Simply breathe in and breathe out. Feel how the air flows through your nose, how your chest expands when you breathe in, and how the air moves out when you exhale. Follow the breath like this for a few moments.

Self-acceptance, as the term suggest, is about the self. But who is this self? Who are you? Let's go and explore how your self developed. For this, I would like to ask you to go back with me in time. Imagine the moment you were born. The moment you came to this planet as a little baby. You had no idea about right or wrong, no idea about anything really. You just were. You were looking at this world with brand new eyes. Try to visualize yourself as this little baby as vividly as possible.

Now imagine that someone would tell you, this baby, that you are not good

enough yet. That you need to find a good job later in life... that you need to make enough money or become successful in order to be enough...that you would be worthy of love only if you were to become successful in the future. That you are not enough the way you are now...that something needs to be “added” to you, this baby, for you to become worthwhile. Can you imagine yourself saying to your own new born child that it is not good enough yet? Perhaps you agree with me that it makes no sense to consider the worth of this new human being to be dependent on something that it may or may not become. Can you feel how ‘enough’ you have been from the very moment you entered this planet? You have always been enough. You have always been whole, always been worthy of love. Love is not something you need to earn, it is your birthright. For a moment, allow yourself to see if you can feel the truth behind these words.

Now let’s slowly move into the future. You are no longer a newborn baby... You are a young child. As you mature, you learn about right and wrong, and good and bad. Your parents teach you what it’s like to be a good girl or a good boy. Soon, you notice, that some things cause people around you react more positively towards you. They praise you and say they are proud of you. Maybe you notice that when you work hard at school, help others, act kindly, get high grades, or look beautiful, you receive positive attention from others. Likewise, you learn that some things you do result in negative attention from others. Maybe you notice that when you fail at school, or hang out with the ‘wrong’ crowd, or dress differently, that people react in a disapproving way towards you.

Soon, you learn that some things cause the people around you to approve of you, and perhaps even admire you. For a moment, being approved by others feels good. It feels as if you are good enough. It feels as if you are whole, that you are loved. How reassuring this is! However, this feeling does not last long, and you now need to make sure that after this moment of praise, you continue to get their approval. It is like a drug; once the effect is gone, you need more. And so you continue to do what will give you that feeling of relief---that feeling of being good or enough.

Now, I’d like you to think back to you as your youngest self that you can remember, and connect to this young person. Remember what it felt like to be you at this young age. This might take a little time, but just see how far back you can go and try to connect to yourself as this child. Perhaps you are around 7 years of age, or maybe you are 12, or maybe older. How far back you can travel doesn’t actually matter. All that matters is that you connect to yourself at this younger age.

Now, have there been times in your few years of life where you have felt a need to be approved by others? If you can, allow yourself to go back to such a moment. What do you see? What do you feel? What are doing to reassure yourself that you

are “enough”? Just see what comes up.

*Pause*

Now let's continue to move forward in time. As you grow older and become more mature, you continue to be exposed to a world in which you notice that there appear to be rules for a successful human being. Things that people need to do or become in order to be considered 'valuable' or 'worthy'. Depending on your environment, you may learn that things like money, status, appearance, intelligence, power, and physical strength, are important. These things are important because they reveal information about your worth.

For a moment, try to remember what it was like when you were a teenager or a young adult. Visualize yourself around this time as best you can. What was important to you at this age? What were you striving for? What did you believe made you worthy, successful or 'enough'?

*Pause*

So far, we have explored what we can call your conditions for self-worth. Conditions for self-worth are those things that we believe make us lovable, or 'enough'. We strive for these things, so that we can feel that we are loved unconditionally. Most people live in constant fear of being “not enough”, and as a result spend their entire lives trying to live up to the expectations and standards that surround them. These standards are conditions. And so we suffer from what we can call “conditional self-acceptance”: We accept and love ourselves as long as we meet these standards.

OK, now come back to this present moment. Keep your eyes closed, but bring yourself back to where you are, sitting here, in this room, with my voice. Consider your current life. Are there standards that you've picked up during your life and that you are using to evaluate yourself today? What are they? How do you know these standards are still influencing you today? How do you feel when you are not able to meet these standards?

*Pause*

Imagine the little child inside of you, the child you once were, who was afraid of being unloved...that they might do something that will cause other people to disapprove of them.

Now, visualize this little boy or girl standing in front of you, looking back at you. You can feel the child's fear of not being enough. This child is in deep need of being

loved. Thankfully, you have the opportunity now to say something to this child. What would you say? What would you do?

*Pause*

Can you see that you have always been worthy of love...from the very first day you arrived?

Can you see that everyone is equally worthy from the time they are born until the time they die? As a child, you may achieve very little, and yet you are still precious and worthwhile. And when you are old or ill, relaxed or asleep, or simply doing “nothing,” you still are “worthy.” Your “worthiness” cannot be measured. It can never change. During your lifetime, you may do “bad” things, but these things don’t make you a bad person. Similarly, you may do “good” things, but these don’t make you a “good” person. Your “worth” is always there, along with your potential to grow and learn from your mistakes. Since you cannot measure or change your worth, there is no point in being concerned about it. As best you can, let it go. You are enough, just the way you are. Rather than seeking out your “worth,” devote your time to learn, explore, grow, connect, and enjoy life.

We cannot control whether other people appreciate us or accept us, but we can learn to accept ourselves. Now, if you are ready for it, you can decide to make an intention to become more accepting of yourself. This is a moment in which you can decide to see yourself for who you are, rather than what you believe you should be.

To start with, allow yourself to be exactly as you are in this moment. How do you feel right now? Whatever you feel at this moment, whether it’s pleasant or unpleasant, , allow it to be there. This is you at this moment, and that’s ok. You are ok the way you are right now, regardless of what you think or feel. Just notice what goes on in your body. Maybe there is tension in your shoulders, or pain in your stomach. Maybe you feel relaxed. You may feel nothing at all. It’s all good. If you want, you can say to yourself “it’s ok, whatever I feel, it’s ok.” Let go of the need to mold your feelings into something different. This is you at this moment, and that’s enough.

Now finally, if you’d like, you may silently repeat the following phrases to yourself.

- May I accept myself, for who I am right now
- May I realize that my strengths don’t mean that I am more than others
- May I realize that my weaknesses don’t mean that I am less than others
- May I accept my imperfections. They don’t define me or take away from who I

am as a person.

- May I feel and deeply know that I am enough now and that I will always be enough, regardless of what happens.
- May I realize that I deserve to be loved now like I deserved to be loved when I was born
- May I treat myself the way I treat those who I care deeply for

Now for a moment or so, bring your attention back to your breath. And when you feel ready, open your eyes.

## ■ EXPLORING DOMAINS OF SELF-WORTH

The goal of this tool is for clients to become aware of the domains in their life that they use to base their self-worth on. This tool can be a valuable starting point for clients to develop more unconditional self-acceptance.

It is important to note that this tool was not designed to increase self-esteem or reduce the negative impact of searching for self-esteem. Rather, this tool was designed to help clients cultivate a more self-accepting attitude towards themselves. Rather than using conditions to evaluate the self's worth, self-acceptance involves the unconditional acceptance of the self, including weaknesses and strengths. By cultivating more self-acceptance, clients learn to build a relationship with themselves in which their self-worth is not reduced by their mistakes, weaknesses or failures. In order to cultivate self-acceptance, it is important for clients to become aware of what prevents them from developing a more accepting attitude towards the self. This tool can be the first step for clients to explore the conditions they have created for themselves to be worthy so that they can later move beyond these conditions.

Clients may find it difficult to indicate exactly how important each domain of self-worth is. The goal of drawing the wedges is not to be as accurate as possible but rather for the client to foster self-reflection and make an estimation of the importance of the domains of self-worth.

### ► STEP 1 INTRODUCING SELF-ESTEEM

What is self-esteem? Self-esteem is about self-worth. When people are said to have high self-esteem, they believe they have worth as a human being. In contrast, people with low self-esteem believe that they are not worth much. But how can we objectively evaluate the worth of something so complex as a human being? Is that even possible?

The answer is no. But yet most of us are constantly evaluating our worth as a human being. How do we determine our own worth? By evaluating ourselves against all kinds of different standards. For some people, these standards are mostly related to appearance (e.g., "I should look attractive"), whereas for others they are related to achievements (e.g., "I should perform well at work"). Whatever standard is being used to evaluate ourselves against, the idea is always the same: as long as we feel we are living up to the standard, we are worthy. Self-esteem is high in such cases. However, if we feel that we are not reaching some personal standard, our self-esteem may drop. If you hold a personal standard about high achievement at

work, receiving negative performance feedback may cause you to feel badly about yourself, as if you are somehow “less”, and self-esteem will likely drop.

So, self-esteem is all about self-evaluation. A person who is said to have high self-esteem evaluates him or herself against different standards and when this evaluation turns out favorably, he feels worthwhile. It is like an if-then code of a computer program: If I meet [insert standard here], I am worthwhile. Note that there is nothing wrong with evaluating actions. By evaluating our actions, we can learn from our mistakes and grow as an individual. However, there is a difference between evaluating actions and evaluating personal worth. In this exercise, we will explore what occurs when you evaluate your own self-worth.

### ► STEP 2 REFLECTING ON YOUR PERCEIVED WORTH

Take a look at the questions below. Choose five or more questions and try to answer them truthfully. Do not worry about spelling or grammar. Just write down what comes up first.

- When do you feel most insecure?
- In what areas are you most critical of yourself?
- Have there been situations in which you were pretending to be someone you are not so others would like and accept you? If so, describe these situations.
- What kind of judgments from other people make you feel the worst about yourself?
- What kind of feedback from others makes you feel as if there is something wrong with you?
- When do you feel less compared to others?
- What is the thing you fear most that people will say of you?
- What is it that you are most afraid of that others will disapprove of you?
- When do you experience the feeling of not being enough?
- In which situations do you tend to compare yourself with others?
- When do you feel like your sense of self-worth increases?
- When do you feel worthwhile?
- When do you feel like your sense of self-worth decreases?
- When do you feel worthless?

Question:

My response:

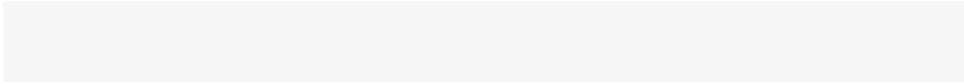
Question:

My response:

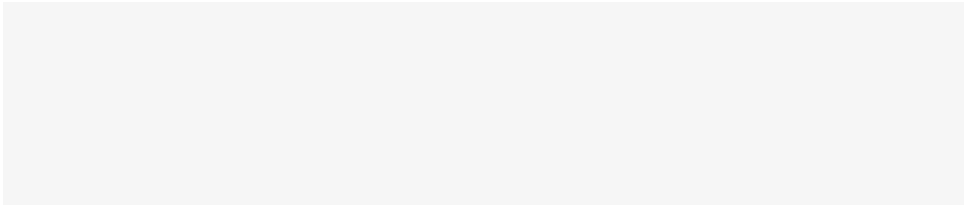
Question:

My response:

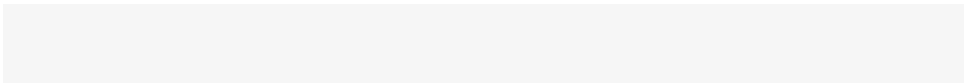
Question:



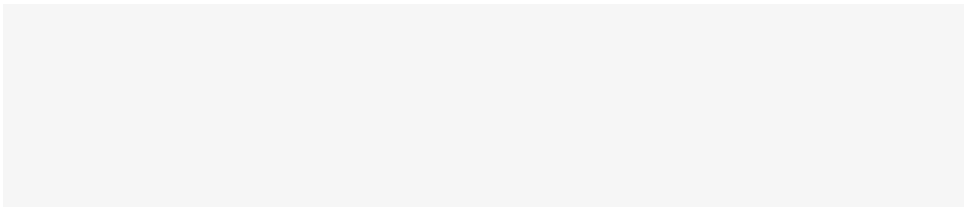
My response:



Question:



My response:



### ► STEP 3 IDENTIFYING DOMAINS OF SELF-WORTH

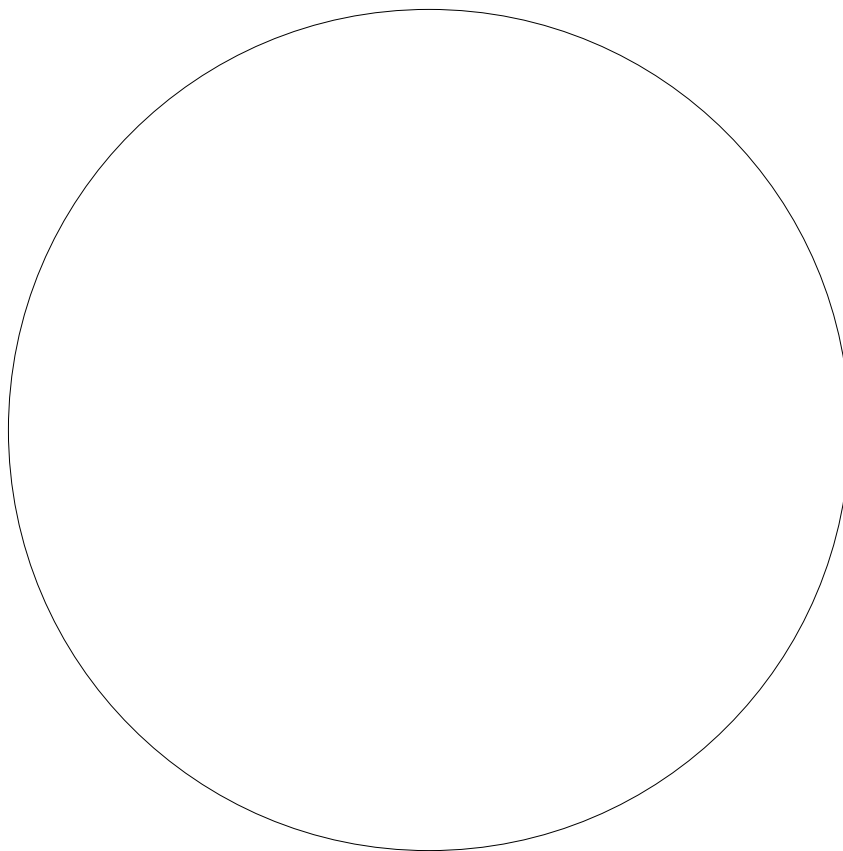
In this third part of this exercise, we are going to consider all the things in your life that you are using to evaluate yourself as a person. There are many different things that people use as a standard to evaluate their own worth. Some common examples include:

- appearance
- financial status
- creativity
- athletic ability
- artistic ability
- spirituality/religious practice

- weight
- performance at work/school
- role as a mother/sister/partner/ mentor
- competence/knowledge in certain areas
- achievements

These things are also known as 'domains of self-worth'. Take a look at your answers to the first part of this exercise. Are there common themes that relate to a specific domain of self-worth? For instance, perhaps your appearance or financial status is mentioned once or more. These are likely to be domains in your life that you base your self-worth on.

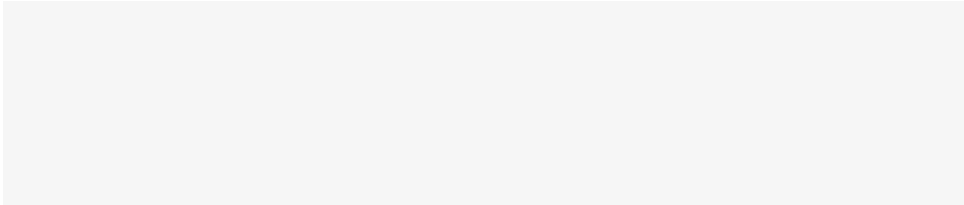
Now take a look at the circle below. Identify all your different domains of self-worth and draw a wedge into the pie to represent each domain. The size of the wedge represents the importance of that domain when you are evaluating yourself as a person. Thus, a larger wedge means that that domain is a relatively more important source of self-evaluation. Label your wedges. For an example of a completed circle, see appendix 2.



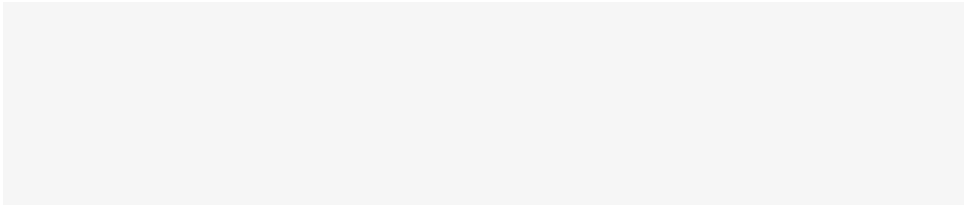
**► STEP 4 EVALUATION**

Now take a look at the different parts of the circle you completed in step 2.

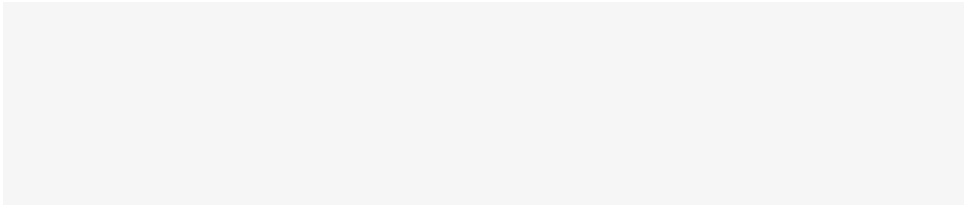
1. How was it to complete the exercise?



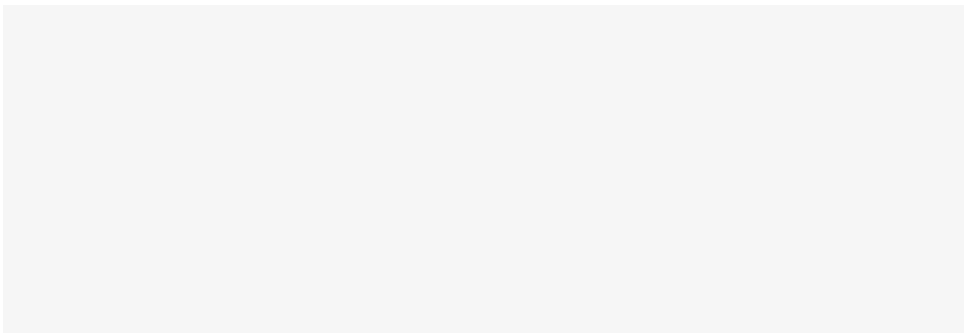
2. What did you notice?



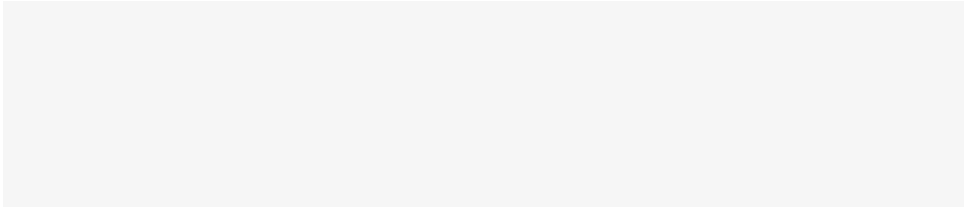
3. Which wedges (domains) are bigger than others?



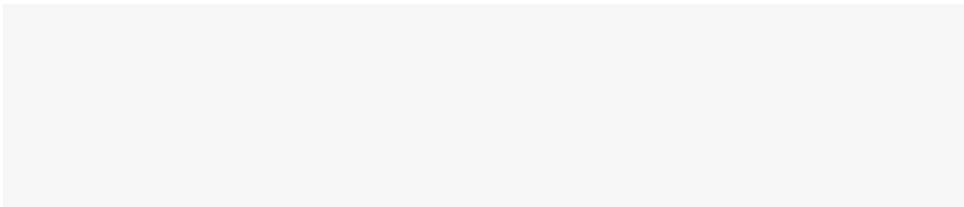
Why do you think these wedges (domains) are bigger than other wedges?



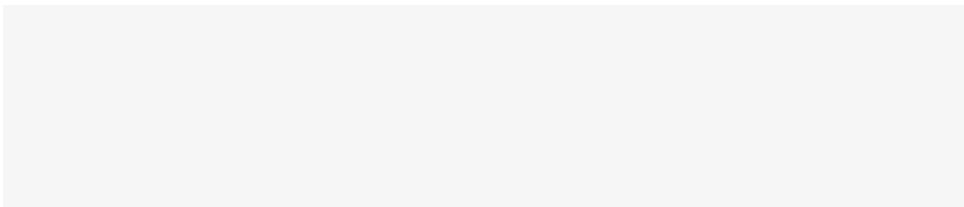
Can you identify the standard(s) that you feel you should meet in these domains?  
(E.g. “I must help others” or “I should deliver exceptional work”)



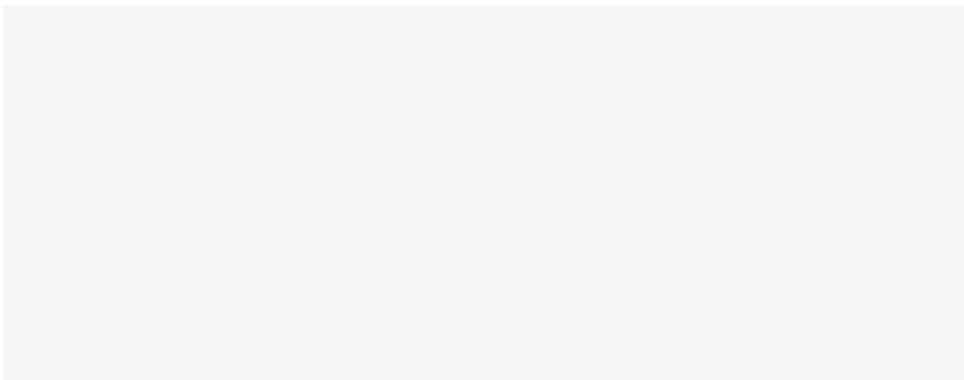
How do you feel when you are unable to meet these standards?



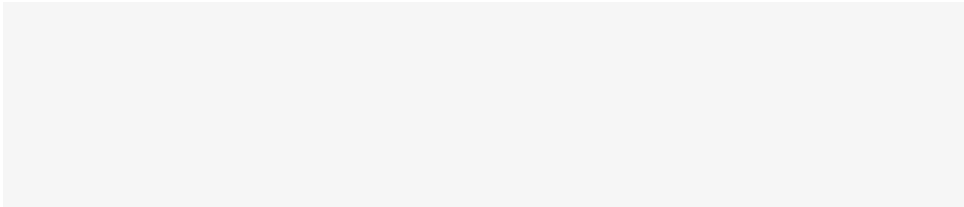
4. Are there wedges that are big today, but were not so big in the past? If so, which ones?



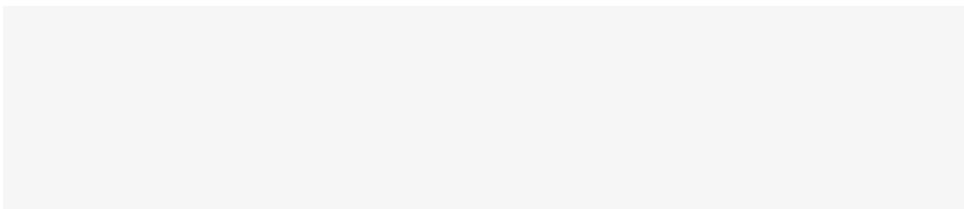
Why have these wedges increased in size?



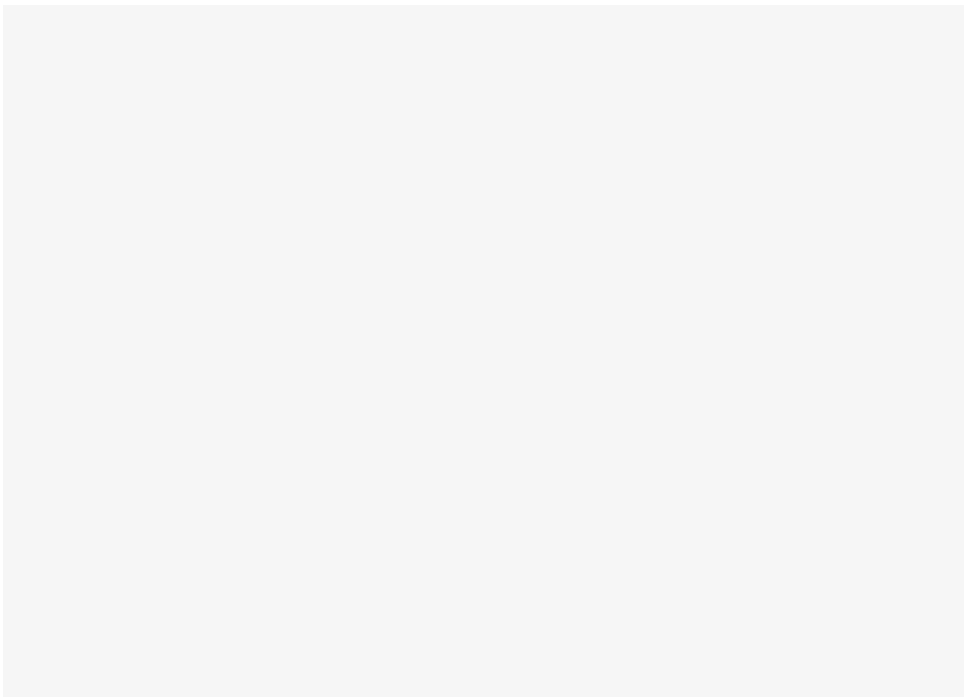
5. Are there wedges that are currently not so big, but have been bigger in the past? If so, which ones?



Why have these wedges decreased in size?



6. What would life be like if you no longer had to live up to the norms and standards in these domains? If you could learn and develop in these domains without the fear of “not being enough”?



## ■ STACKING PERSONAL STANDARDS

This tool aims to increase clients' awareness of personal standards and to demonstrate how burdensome it can be to live life under such standards. It can also serve as a first step in relating differently to the standards a client has for being okay with himself in the present moment.

When using this exercise with clients, please consider the client's age and physical strength when stacking books (steps 2 and 3), to ensure that he/she is not over-stacked, leading to a potential injury.

### ► STEP 1 INTRODUCING STANDARDS

We live by the rules that we have created for ourselves. For instance, I must look both ways before crossing the road; I should be financially stable; I must find the right partner; I should love my work; I have to be the best parent; and so on. It makes sense that we want to have and do more and better things. We've been evolutionarily wired to live this way (i.e., to secure survival and ensure procreation). However, therein lies a problem when our rules become prerequisites for being okay with ourselves, like:

- I'm only okay if I look right.
- I'll be okay once I'm financially comfortable.
- I'm going to be okay when I find the perfect partner.
- I'm okay as soon as I find my dream job or am running my own successful business.
- I know I'll have been a great parent after my kids have their Ivy League university degrees.

*If, once, when, as soon as, and after.* All these words point to the conditional relationship we have with ourselves. The standards we hold ourselves to in order to be okay with ourselves and to accept ourselves.

But these standards can become problematic if they lead to constant subordination of the present moment for an idealized future. The reason for this is that life only takes place in the present moment. Even memorizing the past or visualizing the future takes place in the present moment. Therefore, quite literally, if you don't appreciate yourself (in the here and) now, you will never appreciate yourself.

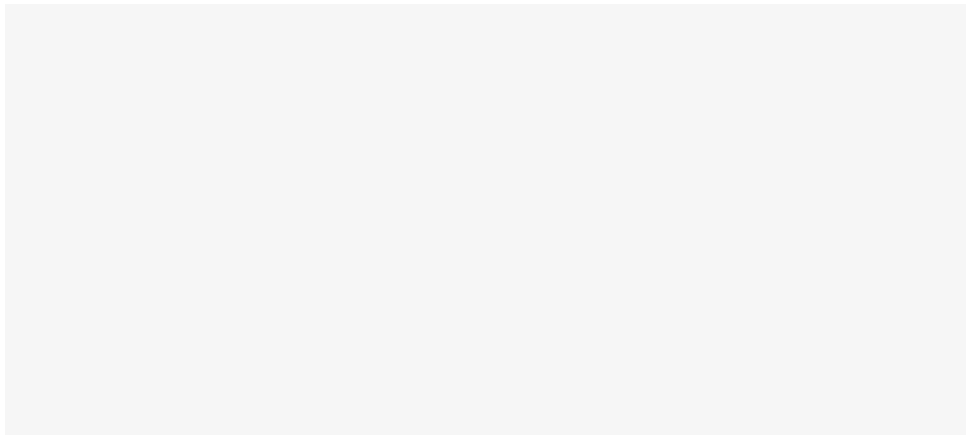
Furthermore, anxiety is almost always anxiety about the past or about the future, not about the present moment itself. Thus, it makes sense that the more time one

spends in the present moment, the less anxiety one will experience.

Becoming aware of one's standards and relating differently to them (i.e. being okay with the self) makes it easy to spend more time in the present moment, because there is less to be anxious about.

### ► STEP 2 IDENTIFY STANDARDS

Ask the client to reflect on the standards (or rules) he/she needs to comply with in order to feel "okay" or "enough"? Examples of standards include: having the perfect figure, excelling at work, making a certain amount of money by a certain age, owning a house and/or a flash car, having the perfect marriage, being the best parent, and being the perfect son/daughter. Come up with as many standards as possible, and write them in the space below:



### ► STEP 3 STACK BOOKS ONTO CLIENT

Ask your client to hold out his/her arms, and one by one, place a book into their arms for every standard identified in step 1. As you stack each book onto the client's arms, ask the client to state the standard out loud, for example, "I must have the perfect body!"

Continue stacking books as per each standard in this way, until the client is holding a large pile of books (one for every personal standard).

**► STEP 4 HOLD AND REFLECT**

Have the client stand with his pile of books in arms for a few minutes. Explain that this stack of books represents the standards the client holds throughout his/her life. As the client stands here, ask him/her to reflect on the following:

- What does it feel like to hold these standards?
- Do they weigh the client down?
- Do they make life easier or more difficult?
- What do they add to the client's life?

Explain to the client that while it is OK to carry around the stack of books for a time (i.e., to mindfully hold oneself to high standards), if he/she were to carry them around all day unawares, they would become burdensome, heavy, and begin to dictate his/her life by getting in the way of things he/she may want to do.

## ■ LEARNING TO RATE BEHAVIOR RATHER THAN THE SELF

Self-acceptance refers to the relationship an individual has with himself, and is conceptualized as the acceptance of self in spite of weaknesses or deficiencies. Self-acceptance does not mean that the individual refrains from evaluating his behavior. The individual does reflect on his behavior and is willing and motivated to make changes and improve the behavior, but the evaluation of the behavior is detached from an evaluation of the self. When confronted with personal shortcomings, the individual evaluates his actions and still experiences sadness, disappointment or loss. Importantly, however, the self as a whole is not devalued. This individual realizes that he:

- is not a bad person when he acts badly; He is a person who has acted badly
- has faults and can work on correcting them without blaming, condemning, or damning himself for having them
- can identify weaknesses without defining himself by them

The reason the self as a whole is not devalued is that the individual experiences himself on a fundamental level as worthy of esteem and love. This individual knows and feels deeply that he is “enough”, and that a mistake or shortcoming does not mean that he is not worthy of love.

### ► STEP 1 INTRODUCING THE EXERCISE

We all make mistakes, and we all do things that we are not proud of from time to time. However, the way in which people evaluate their mistakes or regrettable actions can differ. While some people may see such actions as proof of being a “flawed” or “unworthy” human being, others may see them as inevitable occurrences that are merely a part of being human. In this exercise, you will explore these two ways of evaluating mistakes or regrettable actions.

### ► STEP 2 IDENTIFY PAST MISTAKES

Make a list of 5 things in your past that you are not proud of or that you wish you did differently. For example, you may have forgotten a close friend’s birthday, or said something unkind to someone, or became overly angry at some driver, or made a mistake, or treated someone unfairly. List each of these past regrets in the first column in the table on the following page.

past mistake or regrettable action	evaluation of the self	evaluation of behavior
I forgot my friend's birthday	I am a lousy friend; I am careless	Forgetting the birthday was not very thoughtful of me

**▶ STEP 3 EVALUATE YOURSELF AS A PERSON**

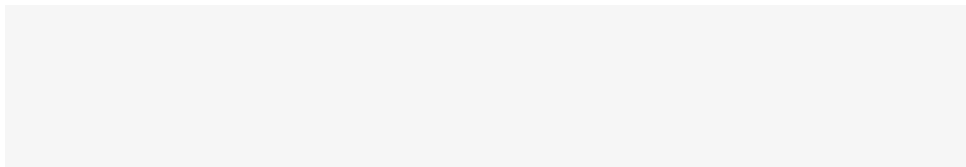
For each of the actions listed in the first column, evaluate yourself as a person for making the mistake. What personal characteristics could explain the mistake? Write down this global evaluation of yourself in the second column.

**▶ STEP 4 EVALUATE YOUR BEHAVIOR**

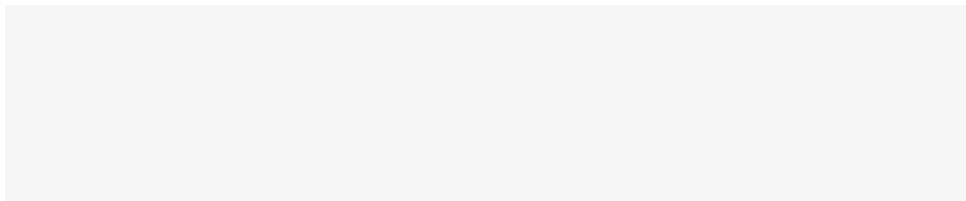
Now, in the third column, evaluate your behavior with regards to the mistake. What actions or behaviors could explain the mistake?

**▶ STEP 5 REFLECTION**

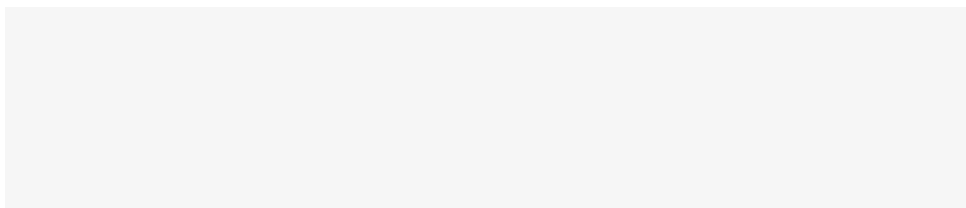
How was it to do this exercise?



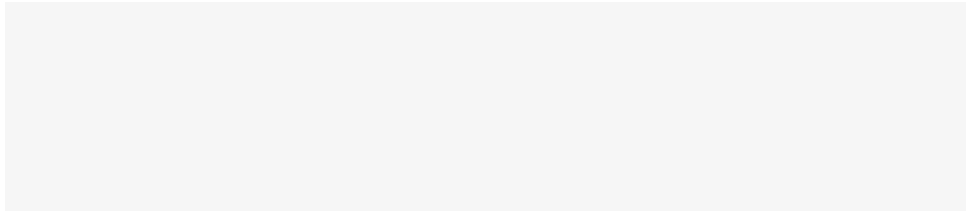
Do you feel differently about yourself when you consider your responses in the second column versus the third column? If so, how?



Which responses (second or third column) are more motivating in terms of improving yourself to do better next time?



Going forward, will you aim to evaluate yourself or your behavior with regards to mistakes or regrettable behavior? Why?

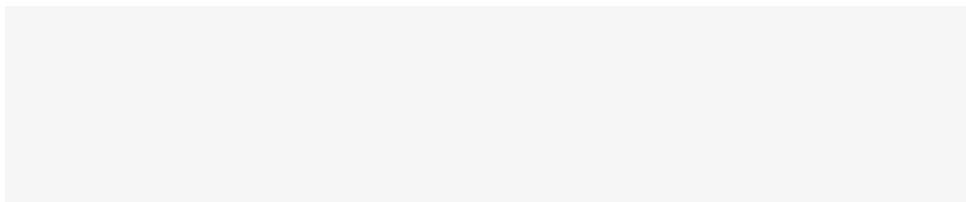


## ■ HOW WOULD YOU TREAT A FRIEND?

Invite the other to reflect on the following questions:

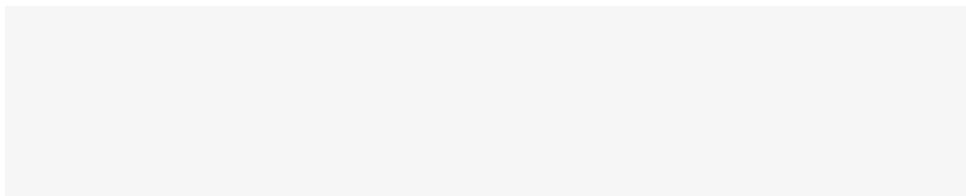
### ▶ STEP 1

Bring to mind a time when a close friend was confronted with a personal weakness, or felt badly about themselves. Please describe the situation.



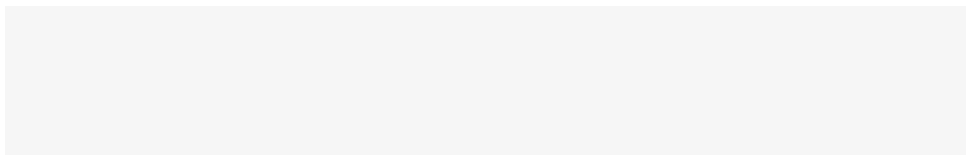
### ▶ STEP 2

What would you tend to do and say to your friend?



### ▶ STEP 3

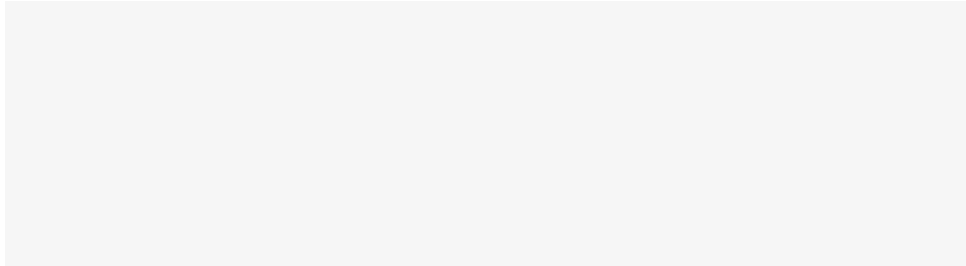
Now think about a time when you yourself were confronted with a personal weakness. Perhaps there is something about yourself that you feel badly about? What do you tend to do and say to yourself?"



### ▶ STEP 4

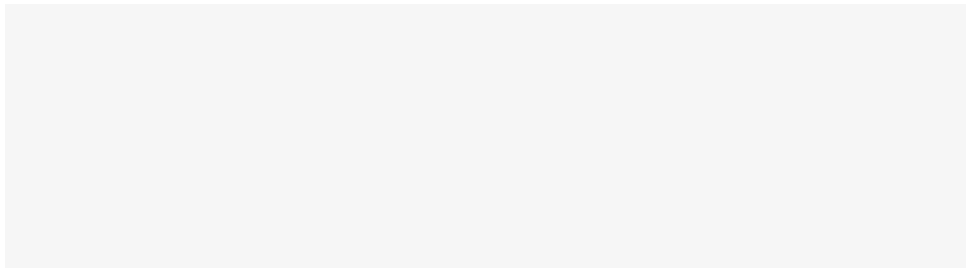
Was there a difference between how you tend to respond to a friend versus how you respond to yourself? If so, why may this be so? What might lead you to treat

yourself and others so differently?



► **STEP 5**

How do you think things might change if you responded to yourself in the same way you would respond to a close friend when you're confronted with personal shortcomings or mistakes?



## ■ SELF-CARE VISION BOARD

Self-care activities are those things we do to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. This exercise aims to increase self-care and self-compassion in a creative way. It involves a playful and intuitive search for potential self-care activities that, when completed, can serve as a visual reminder and motivator.

Some practical advice for clients includes:

- Use pen and paper to make drawings; Use scissors to cut pictures and texts from hardcopy magazines and glue them together on a piece of paper; Use apps, like Bloom (<http://appcrawlr.com/ios/bloom-2>) or Corkulous Pro (<http://appcrawlr.com/ios/corkulous-pro>); Use Powerpoint or Keynote to build a presentation with images, photos, and text.
- Exposure to the vision board can serve as a prime or reminder. Therefore, suggest to your client to place the vision board in a visible spot (e.g., on the refrigerator or office desk). Note that some clients may consider their board a private source of inspiration. If this is the case, they should think of a place that limits who can view their work. The point is that your client's vision board should be accessible to him/her, and should not be placed where he/ she will fall out of the habit of looking at it.
- When creating the vision board, it is important to enjoy the process and work intuitively. Rather than creating the vision board in a rational mode (a lot of thinking and internally debating), it often works best to just go with the flow: select images or texts that feel good or appropriate, without overthinking it. Prioritizing can always be done afterward.
- After clients have created their vision boards, ask them if they would like to discuss the vision board together in a session. Allowing clients to share their vision boards with the practitioner can not only enhance the therapeutic alliance but can also create a fruitful starting point for behavioral change. Questions that can be discussed during this reflection include: Can you explain to me what we are looking at? How was it to create this board? What did you experience while making it? What did you learn from this exercise? What kind of goals can be formulated based on your vision board? Which self-care activity would you like to initiate first?
- Although this exercise may be done at the very beginning of an intervention, it may also be valuable to do it at the end of an intervention because self-care continues to enhance wellbeing once the intervention is over. In this way, the vision board can serve as a reminder for staying on course or as a buffer against relapse.

**▶ STEP 1 INTRODUCING THE EXERCISE**

This exercise involves creating a self-care vision board. A vision board is a visual representation of a particular concept using images, illustrations and/or words. Thus, a self-care vision board is a collection of images and words that reflect ideas for self-care. Self-care activities are those things we do to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Follow the following three steps to create your self-care vision board.

**▶ STEP 2 BRAINSTORM SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES**

Come up with a list of as many potential self-care activities as possible. Be bold and creative, allowing yourself to consider new and different potential activities. Only include activities that you would genuinely enjoy doing and that fit with your lifestyle and your values. Refer to Appendix 3 for inspiration.

**▶ STEP 3 COLLECT IMAGES FOR YOUR VISION BOARD**

Find positive images that correspond with your chosen self-care activities. Look for images that resonate with you, and inspire you. You might like to use the internet, magazines, and photographs as potential sources. Use photos of activities that you can do to take better care of yourself and your needs.

**▶ STEP 4 COLLECT WORDS FOR YOUR VISION BOARD**

You can decide to keep your vision board completely visual or to add words and phrases to it. The words and phrases you choose should reflect or relate to your chosen self-care activities. You might like to cut words out of magazines or print them from the internet. Choose words and fonts that resonate with you and inspire you.

**▶ STEP 5 PUT YOUR VISION BOARD TOGETHER**

Once you have gathered your images and inspiring phrases, get creative with your arrangement.

3

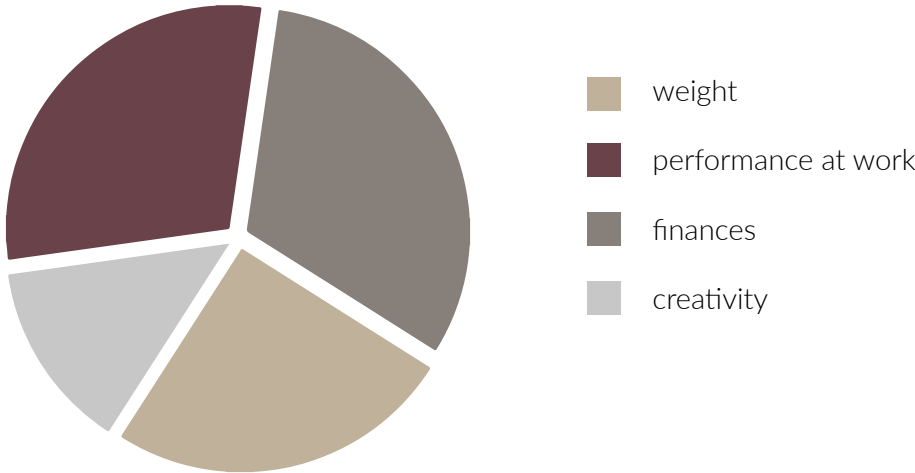
# APPENDIX

*Appendix 1 Examples of rebuttals to each of the definitions of a worthless or inferior person*

definition of a worthless or inferior person	rebuttal
Someone who does bad things	We must all be worthless then, because everyone does bad things from time to time
Someone who fails or make mistakes	Failing and making mistakes is an inevitable part of life.
Someone who is unattractive	Different people have different views on what (or who) is beautiful.
Someone who does mean, hateful things on purpose to hurt other people	We all do things that are somewhat mean or hateful at times, especially when we feel hurt and angry. The urge to get back at someone who has wronged us is an undesirable but virtually universal human characteristic.
Someone who has no value to society because he/she is lazy, self-centered, and unproductive	Everyone can be lazy and unproductive at times, therefore we must all be worthless.

Someone who is unpopular	Even our greatest heroes, like Abraham Lincoln, had many enemies. By the same token, some of the most destructive people, like Saddam Hussein, Hitler, and Charles Manson, were idolized by many people and considered “popular”. Does this mean that Abraham Lincoln was worthless whereas Hitler was worthwhile?
Someone who is unintelligent	No one knows everything about everything; everyone has areas in which they are not knowledgeable about (e.g., knowing a particular foreign language).
Someone who is untalented	We all are reasonably talented at many things, e.g., reading, writing, gardening, cooking, talking, listening to music, and general mathematics.
Someone with low self-esteem	Most depressed people do not feel worthwhile. They do not like themselves. Low self-esteem is a symptom of depression. Does it follow that all depressed people are worthless? In addition, many serial killers like themselves intensely. Does this make them worthwhile?

*Appendix 2 A completed domains of self-worth circle*



*Appendix 3 Examples of self-care activities**Emotional self-Care*

- Learn to say “no.”
- Intentionally schedule “me time” on your calendar or planner.
- Reward yourself for completing small tasks.
- Use online tutorials to learn something new.
- Develop a relaxing evening ritual.
- Allow yourself to feel and express all of your feelings (in a safe and appropriate environment).
- Try some mindful exercises to help bring you into the present moment.
- Try some adult coloring as a form of anxiety and/or stress release.
- Remind yourself of the good stuff in life by writing a list of things you’re grateful to have.
- Take a moment to allow your feelings to be present without judging them.
- Stop being your harshest critic. Allow yourself to make mistakes.

*Physical Self-care*

- Do some stretching exercises.
- Take a walk.
- Drink more water.
- Exhaust yourself physically. Do whatever helps you feel fatigued.
- Get a massage.
- Go out and spend 10 minutes under the sun.
- Go for a bike ride to nowhere in particular.
- Go hiking, camping, or backpacking and spend some time in nature.
- Go to bed early.

*Social self-care*

- Avoid toxic people.
- Ask for help. Let people know you need some help.
- Call a trusted friend or family member and talk things out.
- Choose who you spend your time with today. Spend time with people who are enthusiastic and positive.
- Intentionally reconnect with someone you’ve lost touch with or have unresolved conflict with.

- Join a support group for people who are going through what you're going through
- Schedule a regular date night with your significant other.
- Take a road trip with your siblings.

### *Spiritual self-care*

- Make time for meditation in your day.
- Do a 10-minute body scan technique to check in with each part of your body.
- Do something nice for someone in secret.
- Donate money to a charity of your choosing.
- Help someone in some way.
- Find an opportunity to use your strengths, the things that energize you, more often.