

# THE MOTIVATION WORKBOOK

**20 Psychological Techniques to Help You Overcome Your  
Problems & Live a Happier and More Fulfilling Life**



**BY ANGELA M. DOEL, M.S.**

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## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Eight Ways to Increase Your Motivation.....	4
Stages of Change.....	7
Motivating Yourself to Change.....	9
Map Your Life to Make Changes.....	11
Setting Goals Using the GROW Model.....	16
Aligning Your Values with Your Goals.....	26
Creating a Personal Mission Statement.....	32
Behavior Contract.....	35
Focusing on Solutions.....	39
Solving your Problems in Five Simple Steps.....	42
Stretching Out of Your Comfort Zone.....	46
Cultivating the Habits of Successful People.....	50
Increasing Flow Experiences.....	55
What Would You Like Your Life to Look Like?.....	58
Overcoming Self-Doubt.....	62
Improving Your Self-Efficacy.....	66
Creating a Vision of a Happier Life.....	70
How to Stop Feeling “Stuck”.....	74
Reducing Self-Criticism by Reducing “Shoulds”.....	79
Learned Optimism A.D.V.E.R.S.E. Events Log.....	83

## Introduction

Change is difficult. We all know that. Whether you are trying to lose weight, cut down on your drinking, make a career change, or leave an unhealthy relationship, it's hard to even to take small steps that can lead to a more positive direction in your life.

Why is it so difficult to change? First, it's important to understand the complicated nature of how the brain operates in making the decision to change and carrying out the necessary steps to move you in a new direction. There are at least 12 areas of the brain involved in motivating change, from the nucleus accumbens (the part of the brain that release dopamine, the biochemical that makes us feel pleasure), to the hippocampus (where memories are formed of past attempts to change), to the amygdala, which supports motivation by linking actions and outcomes to emotional significance.

Next consider the biological concept of homeostasis, the need for all living things to remain in balance. Just as the body strives to maintain a stable physical state, individuals typically strive for psychological balance, resisting changes to established routines, beliefs, and behaviors – even when from an objective view, the patterns are problematic. Another way of putting it is that on a deep psychological level, nearly all of us prefer things to stay the same. We find comfort in familiar patterns, and change (even positive ones), can be perceived as stressful.

This workbook offers new ways to motivate yourself to change your behaviors so you can create a happier and more fulfilling life. As you explore the worksheets, you may suddenly realize that you have choices in your behavior and that you can shape your life as you want it to be, one day at a time.

This book will help you discover your “grit,” the ability to focus on long-term goals and persevere when things are difficult.

It will help you become more resilient and give you the inner strength to cope with change and adapt your behavior with positive choices.

It will inspire intrinsic motivation, so you choose to make changes because they are consistent with your values and beliefs, rather than just making changes because of external rewards or pressures.

Change isn't easy, but it's entirely within your reach. People make small and huge changes in their lives every day, and if they find that their decision to change isn't taking them in the direction they want, they find the motivation to go in another direction. It's also important to note that you may need help to make significant changes in your life. A therapist, counselor, or coach can give you the support and guidance you need to implement changes that will have a lasting and positive impact on your life.

Angela M. Doel, M.S.

Between Sessions Resources, Inc.

# Eight Ways to Increase Your Motivation

## Objective

To identify ways to increase your motivation to complete tasks, achieve goals, and increase the likelihood of success.

## What to Know

Motivation is your desire to get things done. Everyone needs the motivation to complete short- and long-term goals, responsibilities, and tasks. You require motivation to exercise, finish a big project, clean your home, and even get out of bed in the morning!

Having lots of motivation is good, but it is common to have highs and lows. You might be really motivated to work on a project today, but you might not feel well tomorrow and end up watching videos all afternoon.

Why is motivation important? It's the drive that helps you do what you need to do. When you are highly motivated, you can often do a task quickly and easily. If you are unmotivated, though, finishing that same task might feel challenging and time-consuming.

Here are some strategies to boost your motivation.

- 1. Stay positive.** When you're positive, it's easier to stay motivated.
- 2. Find ways to boost your mood.** Find ways to improve your mood to increase your motivation. You might take a walk, watch a funny video, or spend time with your pet. If you do not feel your best, you are likely not going to DO your best.
- 3. Work toward your goal.** Know what you want so you can come up with the steps to accomplish it.
- 4. Give yourself rewards.** Sometimes just giving yourself a small prize, like a sweet treat or coffee break, can help you complete a task.
- 5. Start with just one thing.** Sometimes it is hard to get started. So, make a list and choose just one thing to do. Once you accomplish that, it will be much easier to keep going. Take a break if you need it.
- 6. Use reminders and cues.** Reminders can be on paper, electronic, or a verbal reminder from a loved one. Reminders can push you to get going.
- 7. Do not give up.** Avoid allowing failure to take you off track. You might feel bad about yourself if you fail to do well at something, but it is important to find ways to get over failures and move on.
- 8. Celebrate success.** Take time to feel good about completing tasks or goals. Learn to be satisfied when you accomplish something!

Have you already used any of these strategies? If so, which ones? Do they work for you?

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**What to Do**

First, answer the following questions.

What does being motivated mean to you?

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Describe times you felt really motivated. What were you doing? What helped you finish the task or project? Be specific.

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How can increasing your motivation help you – now and in the future?

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Write down a project, task, or responsibility you have been putting off or you have had a hard time completing.

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Referring to the eight strategies to boost motivation, choose 2-3 strategies from that list that may help you complete this task.

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## Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# The Stages of Change Model

## Objective

To identify your current readiness for change by applying the Stages of Change model to your own experience.

## What to Know

Are you ready for a change? Before you decide, let's look first at how people typically make changes. The Stages of Change model, developed by psychologists James Prochaska, Carlo DiClemente, and John Norcross, is a wonderful tool that can be used not just to identify where you are with making life decisions, such as leaving relationships, changing jobs, losing weight, and so on.

Change is a process that typically follows these stages:

*Precontemplation* - This is the stage when people are not thinking about changing their behavior. They are perfectly happy and not concerned now about any harmful consequences. Loved ones, friends, or health-care professionals might have expressed concern, but people in the precontemplation stage of change don't believe they have a problem, at least not one that requires changing their habits.

*Contemplation* - In this stage, people recognize that they have a problem and are thinking about the pros and cons (benefits and costs). They might also be thinking about making changes *someday* but aren't doing anything about it right now.

*Preparation* - People in this stage are starting to make small changes in their behavior.

*Action* - In this stage, people are taking definite action toward changing their behavior.

*Maintenance* - The maintenance stage means that people have instituted change for around six months.

## What to Do

In this exercise, reflect on your stage of change, being as honest as you can be.

What stage of change best describes where you are *right now*? Explain why you chose that stage.

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Think of a time (now or in the past) when you were in the precontemplation stage. Describe when and where, and what it was like.

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What about the contemplation stage? Describe when and where, and what it was like.

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What about the preparation stage? Describe when and where, and what it was like.

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Have you ever been in the action stage of change? Describe when and where, and what it was like.

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Describe any time when you have been in the maintenance stage—that is, maintained your desired change—for at least six months.

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**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Motivating Yourself to Change

## Objective

To identify ways to motivate yourself to change.

## What to Know

Some of the most challenging aspects of dealing with a difficult situation are feelings of low energy, pessimism, and a belief that things will never improve. When it comes to tackling the tasks in this workbook, it is important to recognize that making changes can be hard! However, insights from motivational psychology indicate that various strategies can aid in overcoming such hurdles.

## What to Do

Review the following ten motivational tips and then assess their potential effectiveness in helping you make progress. Rate each technique on a scale of one to seven, where 1 = you do not believe it would be useful, and 7 = you believe it would be extremely helpful. Select at least three motivational techniques that resonate with you to guide your efforts in facing and addressing the challenges ahead. Remind yourself of these techniques daily to maintain your focus and drive.

\_\_\_\_\_ **1. Schedule tasks.** Pick a time each day to work on a task. Write it down, just like you would any important appointment and do your best to do it at the appointed time.

\_\_\_\_\_ **2. Reward yourself.** You are more likely to do something when you experience a reward immediately after doing something new or difficult. Think of some ways you can reward yourself after completing a task or project.

\_\_\_\_\_ **3. Sign a contract and commit to it.** Contracts are surprisingly helpful when it comes to making changes in your life.

\_\_\_\_\_ **4. Share what you are doing with people you know.** One of the most effective motivators for change is to tell a select group of friends and family about what you are trying to do. You do not have to confide everything about your problem, but just let these people know you are working on a specific aspect of your life and ask for their support. It goes without saying that you should only ask for support from people who can give it to you.

\_\_\_\_\_ **5. Set a goal.** You might also wish to identify the sub-goals or steps you need to take to achieve your main goal.

\_\_\_\_\_ **6. Track your progress.** Recording your progress every day is essential to keeping you motivated, even when change seems difficult to achieve.

\_\_\_\_\_ **7. Set intentions.** Many coaches and therapists encourage people to “set their intention” at the beginning of each day, preferably before meditating. Deepak Chopra, best-selling spiritual writer, notes, “The sages of India observed thousands of years ago that our

destiny is ultimately shaped by our deepest intentions and desires. An intention is a directed impulse of consciousness that contains the seed form of that which you aim to create.”

\_\_\_\_\_ **8. Adopt a compassionate attitude toward your efforts.** Being self-critical and perfectionistic will likely get in the way of your efforts. You will have setbacks and even reversals. Imagine you are a good “parent” to yourself, guiding, encouraging, and always believing the goal can be achieved. Remember to offer yourself compassion and love.

\_\_\_\_\_ **9. Act like your heroes.** Inspiration is an important aspect of motivation. Think about someone who inspires you because they overcame an almost insurmountable problem. Take a moment during the day to imagine what that person would say to you to encourage your efforts.

\_\_\_\_\_ **10. Look for progress each day.** Focus on the small positive changes you make in your life each day, rather than on the things that cause you problems. Even when times are difficult, you can do things each day that will help you lead a happier and fulfilling life.

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Map Your Life to Make Changes

## Objective

To map your life to identify what is required to make changes.

## What to Know

Maybe you're tired of how your life is going. You want to make changes, but you don't know how, or you might not know exactly what needs to change – you just know something *must* change! You can map your life to begin to identify how to make positive changes in your life.

## What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Why do you want to make changes in your life?

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What parts of your life do you want to change?

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Is there something you wish you could do? Somewhere you would love to visit? Do you wish you had more time to build a skill? Are you longing for new friendships? Pinpoint the thing or things that you desire the most to change or accomplish.

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How willing are you to make changes to attain the things you want? A little? A lot? Explain.

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What beliefs are keeping you stuck?

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Where did these beliefs come from?

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What else keeps you stuck?

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Look at the page with the large rectangle that has three sections.

Imagine this is a map of your life. The left side of the map represents the land where you are living now. The right side of this map represents the land where you would like to live. Between the two pieces of land (the narrow section in the middle) is a river that you must cross.

Without putting too much thought into it, draw the land you are living in now. Use symbols, pictures, and words to describe your current “landscape,” or life.

Now, move to your ideal landscape – the place you would like to be. Fill this space with words, symbols, and images that represent everything you’d like to have in your life.

Look at the river that separates the two lands. What’s in the river? What’s stopping you from getting from where you are to where you want to be? Describe these obstacles or challenges on the lines below, then use words, symbols, or pictures to represent what you need to overcome in the river.

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Now, draw a bridge that will allow you to cross the river. What is it made of? Whom or what can help you cross from one land to the other?

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After you finish, write down the first three steps you can take to cross the bridge and move into the land where you would like to live.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

When will you take these steps? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any resources, people, or other things that can help you accomplish these first steps? Explain.

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What else can help you make the changes necessary to cross the bridge? Consider resources, people, and so forth. Be specific.

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Was there anything that surprised you about this exercise?

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**The Land Where You Are Now**

**The Land Where You  
Would Like to Be**

## Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Setting Goals Using the GROW Model

## Objective

To use the GROW model to set a goal and create a plan to achieve that goal.

## What to Know

The GROW model is a solution-focused framework used for problem-solving, goal setting, and performance improvement. Created by Sir John Whitmore, GROW is an acronym for **G**oals, **R**eality, **O**ptions, and **W**ay forward (or **W**ill). This leadership tool has four steps:

The essential first step is to set a **Goal** which is clear, inspiring, and challenging – not just SMART (**s**pecific, **m**easurable, and **a**chievable in a **r**ealistic **t**ime frame). When you have clarity, you can more easily envision the steps required to move forward to achieve your goal and establish a personal connection to the goal. You can always revisit the goal as needed.

Next, consider your **Reality** or the current situation, including internal and external obstacles. You will also explore your motivation for achieving the goal.

When you review your **Options**, think of your strengths, resources, and all the possibilities. Brainstorm various strategies to achieve the goal. Let your imagination run wild! It can be fun to imagine an unlimited budget and resources.

The final step, the **Way Forward** (sometimes referred to as **Will**) is your barometer of success and involves actions and accountability – including what, when, and by whom. Your intentions and desire to achieve the goal must be converted into successful action steps. What are you willing to do to achieve the goal? Include a way to track your progress.

GROW can promote confidence and increase motivation, leading to increased productivity and personal satisfaction. The model takes goal setting to a higher level. When using this approach, most of your time should be focused on the goal and reality steps.

This worksheet will guide you through using the GROW model.

## What to Do

For each step of the GROW model, answer the questions. Be as honest and detailed as possible.

### Step 1. Goals

First, think about something you would like to achieve. Write it down.

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Next, you will clarify your goal. Answer the following questions.

What's important to you right now?

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What does your ideal future look like?

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What will you be doing in five years?

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What new skills do you want to learn or develop?

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Where is your life out of balance?

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What challenges are you facing right now?

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What are you currently working toward? For example, at home, at work, or within a relationship.

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Now, write down one goal you have using only positive words.

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Why is achieving this goal important to you?

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**Step 2. Reality**

What is working well right now?

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What do you need?

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What excuses have you always used for not achieving your goals?

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What have you done so far to improve your life?

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What parts of your life will be impacted if you achieve your goal?

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What is the biggest obstacle you are currently facing?

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What does self-sabotage look like for you?

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What does your inner critic say to you?

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What are your fears?

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What are you passionate about?

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What impact or effect does your fear have? Your passions?

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What steps have you taken so far toward achieving your goal?

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Any other relevant factors? If yes, list them.

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**Step 3. Options**

What is your first step to achieve your goal?

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If you had 50% more confidence, what would you be doing that would be different?

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If success was guaranteed, what would you do?

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If money was not an obstacle, what would you do?

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What action step is the best use of your time?

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If someone else came to you with your obstacles, what would you tell them?

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What strengths can you use to move forward?

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If you could do only one thing this week toward achieving your goal, what would it be?

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What would you do if you answered to no one?

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What is the most efficient use of your time right now?

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Identify any other obstacles (people, resources, environment, etc.).

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What else prevents you from reaching your goal?

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What personal changes do think you would have to make to achieve your goal?

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What is stopping you from changing?

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**Step 4. Way forward.** It's time to create an action plan.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how motivated are you to achieve your goal? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not at all motivated, and 10 = extremely motivated)

What will it take to get your motivation closer to a 10?

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Considering all the options you listed above, what steps can you take right now?

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(Note: It is also an option to do nothing and review later!)

Whatever your first step is, can you think of anything that might stop you from doing it?

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How committed are you to achieving this goal? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not at all committed, and 10 = extremely committed)

How do you want to be held accountable for this goal?

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Who can hold you accountable? \_\_\_\_\_

How will you celebrate when you've achieved your goal?

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What step can you take toward your goal in the next 24 hours?

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What else do you need to consider before starting?

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What are your next steps? List three and be specific.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What is the timeframe for each? Be specific.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



What might get in the way?

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What support do you need?

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How and when can you get that support?

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How will you track your progress? For example, you might use an app or write in your journal each day.

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What will you do when you've achieved your goal?

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

What did you learn from this exercise that you did not know before?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What can you do differently to make progress in this area?

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# Aligning Your Values with Your Goals

## Objective

To identify your values and effectively incorporate them into your life goals.

## What to Know

Your values are the basic and fundamental beliefs that determine your priorities, and they shape how you live, work, and measure whether your life is turning out the way you want it to. When your goals and choices match your values, life is good – you probably feel satisfied and content. But when your choices and goals do not align with your values, you might feel unhappy, stressed, or discontented with life.

This is why making a conscious effort to define your values is important. Values motivate your attitudes, choices, and actions. Values help you identify what is important to you. Your values influence how you interact with the world around you, and they are the foundation for purposeful action and goal creation. Your values might be very different from another person's values.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) It is an empirically based psychological intervention that uses acceptance, mindfulness, commitment, and behavior-change strategies to increase psychological flexibility. ACT offers tools to consciously connect to the present moment, choosing to behave in a manner that is consistent with your values. Connecting and clarifying your core values is a key element, utilizing those values to guide your actions and create specific goals. In simple terms, goal setting is guided by your values.

This worksheet will help you clarify your values to create goals aligned with those values.

## What to Do

Below you will find a list of the most common values. Not all of them will be relevant to you. Read through the list below and rate each value, where 10 = very important, 5 = somewhat important, and 1 = not at all important.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Acceptance.** I am open and accepting of myself, other people, and life circumstances.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Adventure.** I actively seek, create, or explore novel or stimulating experiences.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Assertiveness.** I respectfully stand up for my rights and request what I want.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Authenticity.** I strive to be genuine, real, and true to myself.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Beauty.** I appreciate, create, nurture, and cultivate beauty in myself and my surroundings.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Caring.** I am caring toward myself and others.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Challenge.** I continuously challenge myself to grow, learn, and improve my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Compassion.** I act with kindness toward suffering people or animals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Connection.** I engage fully in whatever I am doing, and I am fully present with others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Contribution.** I contribute, help, assist, or make a positive difference.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Conformity.** I am respectful and obedient of rules and obligations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Cooperation.** I am cooperative and collaborative with others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Courage.** I am courageous or brave, and I persist in the face of fear, threat, or difficulty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Creativity.** I am creative and innovative.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Curiosity.** I am curious, open-minded, and interested in exploring and discovering new things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Encouragement.** I encourage and reward behavior that I value in myself or others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Equality.** I treat others as equal to myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Excitement.** I seek, create, and engage in activities that are stimulating or thrilling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Fairness.** I strive to be fair to myself or others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Fitness.** I maintain or improve my fitness and look after my physical and mental health and well-being.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Flexibility.** I adjust and adapt readily to changing circumstances.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Freedom.** I live freely and choose how I live and behave.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Friendliness.** I am friendly, companionable, or agreeable toward other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Forgiveness.** I am forgiving toward myself or others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Fun.** I am fun-loving, and I seek, create, and engage in fun-filled activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Generosity.** I am generous, sharing, and giving to myself or others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Gratitude.** I am grateful for and appreciative of the positive aspects of myself, others, and life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Honesty.** I am honest, truthful, and sincere with myself and others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Humor.** I see and appreciate the humorous side of life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Humility.** I am humble or modest and I let my achievements speak for themselves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Industry.** I am industrious, hard-working, and dedicated.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Independence.** I am self-supportive and choose my own way of doing things. \_\_\_\_\_  
**Intimacy.** I open up, reveal, and share myself, emotionally or physically, in my close personal relationships.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Justice.** I make every effort to uphold justice and fairness.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Kindness.** I am kind, compassionate, considerate, nurturing, and caring.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Love.** I act lovingly or affectionately toward myself and others.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Mindfulness.** I am conscious of, open to, and curious about my present experience.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Order.** I am orderly and organized.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Open-mindedness.** I think things through, see things from other's points of view, and weigh evidence fairly.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Patience.** I wait calmly for what I want.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Persistence:** I continue resolutely, despite problems or difficulties.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Pleasure.** I create and give pleasure to myself or others.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Power.** I strongly influence or wield authority over others by taking charge, leading, or organizing.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Reciprocity.** I build relationships in which there is a fair balance of giving and taking.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Respect.** I am respectful by being polite, considerate, and showing positive regard.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Responsibility.** I am responsible and accountable for my actions.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Romance.** I am romantic by displaying and expressing love or strong affection.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Safety.** I secure, protect, or ensure safety of myself or others.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Self-awareness.** I am aware of my own thoughts, feelings, and actions.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Self-care.** I look after my health and well-being, and get my needs met. \_\_\_\_\_

**Self-development.** I keep growing, advancing, or improving in knowledge, skills, character, or life experience.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Self-control.** I act in accordance with my own ideals.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Sensuality.** I create, explore, and enjoy experiences that stimulate my five senses. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sexuality.** I explore or express my sexuality.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Spirituality.** I connect with things bigger than myself.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Skillfulness.** I practice and improve my skills and apply myself fully when using them.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Supportiveness.** I am supportive, helpful, encouraging, and available.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Trust.** I am trustworthy, loyal, faithful, sincere, and reliable.

\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Once you have rated each value, select the top six that are most important to you. Write those six values down below.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Next, thinking about the values you identified above, begin to formulate short- and long-term goals related to those values. Using the list above, match the values you identified with four primary life priorities: Love, Work/Education, Play, and Health.

1. **Love** – Your deepest and most meaningful relationships.

Related Values:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Short-Term Goal:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Long-Term Goal:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Work/Education** – Paid work, study/education; volunteering, domestic tasks.

Related Values:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Short-Term Goal:

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Long-Term Goal:

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3. **Play** – Rest, relaxation, hobbies, sports, all forms of leisure, recreation, and entertainment.

Related Values:

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Short-Term Goal:

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Long-Term Goal:

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4. **Health** – Physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritual health and well-being.

Related Values:

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Short-Term Goal:

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Long-Term Goal:

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

Describe what it was like defining your top six values.

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Now that you are aware of your values, do you think it will be easier to set goals based on your values? Why or why not?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Creating a Personal Mission Statement

## Objective

To write your personal mission statement.

## What to Know

If you want to live each day to the fullest, you will need to think about what you really want out of your life and the principles and values that will guide your day-to-day decisions. This worksheet is designed to help you create a personal mission statement (sometimes called a purpose statement) which can be a simple road map to help you live a happy and fulfilling life.

**A personal mission statement provides clarity and gives you a sense of purpose. It defines who you are and how you will live.**

A personal mission statement is different than your goals. In fact, it is what your goals are based on. A personal mission statement includes your values, beliefs, and priorities in just a sentence or two. Your mission statement will not only show you the path on which to make your decisions each day, it will also give you permission to say no to distractions.

A personal mission statement is not written in stone, but rather it will change over time as you change with your life experiences. Your personal mission statement is focused on self-discovery as well as purpose.

Here are some personal mission statements:

"To be a teacher. And to be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be."

*-Oprah Winfrey*

"To have fun in [my] journey through life and learn from [my] mistakes."

*-Sir Richard Branson*

"My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style."

*-Maya Angelou*

## What to Do

### Developing Your Personal Mission Statement

Fill in the following statements.

Write down the names of people you admire and the traits they have that you think are important or valuable.

Three people you admire:

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Traits these people have that you admire:

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Name five values that define you.

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Think about the roles you play in the lives of others—friends, family, co-workers. Write down all the important roles you have in your life.

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Write down the most important things you want to accomplish in your life.

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Imagine who you want to become in this world; what you want to be known for; and how you want to be remembered. Write it down below.

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Write down some things that you are good at.

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### **YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT**

Write down your personal mission statement in a sentence or two. Incorporate your values, your aspirations, your positive traits and abilities, and what you see as your purpose in life.

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Write down three ways you will incorporate your mission statement into your daily life.

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

What did you learn from this exercise that you did not know before?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What can you do differently to make progress in this area?

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# Behavior Contract

## **Objective**

To empower you to proactively initiate positive changes in your life by setting clear goals, implementing actionable steps, and engaging in a structured commitment.

## **What to Know**

Behavioral contracts, often associated with children, possess an unexpected yet remarkable potential when embraced by adults seeking transformative change in their lives. These contracts, openly shared with others, wield an inherent potency capable of catalyzing substantial personal growth. By harnessing the principles of accountability, intentionality, and structured commitment, you can propel yourself toward your desired transformation with vigor and purpose.

By distilling your goals into precise behavioral objectives and openly acknowledging your intentions, you cultivate a sense of direction and focus that empowers you to confront challenges head-on.

This personalized document serves as a compass, guiding you through the uncharted waters of change. By detailing your objectives and formulating a strategic plan, you lay the foundation for purposeful action.

Sharing your behavior contract with others is a declaration of your commitment. This act of vulnerability and transparency fosters a support network that holds you accountable, motivating you to persevere even in the face of adversity. Friends, family, or an accountability partner become invested in your journey, offering encouragement, constructive feedback, and a reminder of your dedication.

## **What to Do**

Fill in the following contract.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective: To increase and sustain motivation toward achieving personal and professional goals.

**Goals**

*Clear Goal Identification: I will identify and define clear and specific short-term and long-term goals that I am passionate about and committed to achieving.*

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Goal Breakdown: I will break down each major goal into smaller, achievable tasks to create a sense of progress and accomplishment.*

- 1a. \_\_\_\_\_
- 1b. \_\_\_\_\_
- 1c. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2a. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2b. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2c. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3a. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3b. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3c. \_\_\_\_\_

*Daily Progress Review: I will dedicate time at the end of each day to review the progress I've made toward my goals, celebrate achievements, and identify areas for improvement.*

How you will do this: \_\_\_\_\_  
(You may use an app, journal, note, phone notes, and so on)

*Positive Self-Talk: I will practice positive self-talk and replace self-doubt with affirmations and encouragement to maintain a confident and motivated mindset.*

Affirmations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Visual Reminders: I will create visual reminders of my goals and place them in prominent locations to keep them fresh in my mind and maintain focus.*

How you will do this: \_\_\_\_\_

**Actionable Steps**

*Morning Routine: I will start each day with a motivational routine, including affirmations, visualization exercises, and reviewing my goals for the day.*

What else will you do?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Task Prioritization: I will prioritize tasks based on their significance and potential impact on my goals, focusing on high-priority tasks first.*

How you will do this: \_\_\_\_\_

(You may use a calendar app, planner, journal, etc.)

*Regular Breaks: I will schedule regular short breaks during work or task sessions to prevent burnout and maintain sustained motivation.*

When will you take breaks each day? \_\_\_\_\_

*Inspirational Content: I will expose myself to motivational content, such as books, podcasts, and videos, to continually fuel my inspiration.*

Write down some ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Accountability Partner: I will share my goals and progress with an accountability partner who will provide support, encouragement, and constructive feedback.*

Who is your accountability partner? \_\_\_\_\_

How/when will they check in? \_\_\_\_\_

*Timeline: I commit to my Contract for a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ days / months, during which I will consistently implement the defined goals and actionable steps.*

**Rewards and Consequences**

*Rewards: When I successfully maintain motivation and achieve significant milestones, I will reward myself with \_\_\_\_\_*

(pre-determined reward, e.g., a day off, a special treat, a leisure activity)

*Consequences: If I consistently fail to implement the goals and steps outlined in this contract, I will hold myself accountable by \_\_\_\_\_*  
(consequence, e.g., donating to a charity, volunteering, performing a specific task].

By signing below, I acknowledge my commitment to increasing and sustaining motivation through the goals and actionable steps outlined in this contract.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Focusing on Solutions

## Objective

To engage in a problem-solving exercise.

## What to Know

You may find yourself caught in a cycle of ruminating about your problems, dwelling on your difficulties, and feeling overwhelmed by your challenges. This worksheet aims to guide you toward a new perspective – focusing on solutions.

By shifting your attention from the problem to potential solutions, you can unlock opportunities for positive change and personal growth.

Imagine that your thoughts are like a spotlight, illuminating the canvas of your mind. When that spotlight focuses on the problems, they take center stage, casting shadows over everything else. It is as if the difficulties themselves become larger than life, looming ominously.

Focusing on solutions holds the key to unearthing hidden treasures within your challenges. Just as a sculptor chisels away the excess stone to reveal the masterpiece within, so too does a solutions-oriented mindset carve out opportunities from seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

By training your attention on potential solutions, you magnify the avenues that lead to positive change. This perspective does not negate the existence of challenges; rather, it empowers you to view those challenges as gateways to growth.

## What to Do

Reflect on your past experiences and how you have successfully navigated challenges.

Think of a specific challenge you faced in the past. It could be related to work, relationships, personal growth, or any other aspect of your life. Write down the details.

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How did you successfully address or resolve this challenge? What actions did you take? How did you approach the situation?

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What did you learn from this experience? Consider the skills, strengths, or insights you gained from finding solutions to this challenge.

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Identify a current challenge you are facing. Describe it briefly and acknowledge how it is impacting your life.

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Rather than focusing on the problem itself, brainstorm possible solutions. What actions could you take to address or improve this situation?

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Sometimes, even small changes can lead to significant improvements. List a few small steps you could take to move toward a solution.

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Challenge yourself to think outside the box. Are there alternative approaches or perspectives you haven't considered before?

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Envision how your life could be better if you implement the solutions you identified above. How might these changes positively impact your overall well-being?

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Select one solution or small change that resonates with you. Commit to taking action within a specific timeframe. Remember, even incremental progress is valuable! What will you do? By what date?

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Shifting your focus from problems to solutions can create a profound shift in your mindset and outlook. By approaching challenges with a solutions-oriented mindset, you open the door to transformation and growth.

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

What did you learn from this exercise that you did not know before?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What can you do differently to make progress in this area?

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# Solving Your Problem in Five Simple Steps

## Objective

To solve a problem using five simple steps.

## What to Know

Problem solving is the process of identifying a problem, developing possible solutions, and taking appropriate actions. The ability to solve problems is a basic life skill that is essential to your day-to-day life at home, work, or school. You probably solve problems every day without really thinking about it.

To develop your problem-solving skills, focus on the why, what, and how of the problem. Ask yourself the following five questions.

**1. Why should I care about this problem?** Describe your problem using specific details. Instead of, “I spend too much money on takeout,” a better statement is, “Last year, I spent an average of \$300 each month on takeout food.” Think about why this problem is an issue for you – or why you should care.

**2. What does success look like?** Write down what you want to achieve by solving this problem. Focus on the goal, not the solution. For example, “Within the next 6 months, I’ll spend 50% less each month on takeout food.”

**3. How can I solve this problem?** Now think about solutions to your problem. You might find out as much as you can about it, or search for resources that can help you solve it. Maybe there is someone who can help you. Brainstorm as many solutions as possible. Ask for help from others if you get stuck.

**4. How can I *actually* solve the problem?** Look at your list of possible solutions and identify which is the best one.

**5. How can I take action?** Make a simple step-by-step plan to solve your problem. Remember that no matter how well you plan, things will change, and your plan might change, too.

Problem solving can be an easy process if you follow these steps. This worksheet will help you follow the five simple steps to solve your problem.

## What to Do

Describe your problem.

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Why should you care about this problem?

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What does success look like? Or, how will you know you solved the problem?

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How can you solve this problem? Write down as many solutions as possible. Use additional paper if you need more space.

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How should you actually solve the problem? Pick one solution from the list above and write down why it's the best solution.

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How can you take action? Use the following chart to write down all the actions that make up your problem-solving steps. Write down when each step should be done. In the final column,

check off when each action step is complete.

Action step to solve your problem	Due date	Completed?

Did this activity help you solve your problem? Why or why not?

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## Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Stretching Out of Your Comfort Zone

## Objective

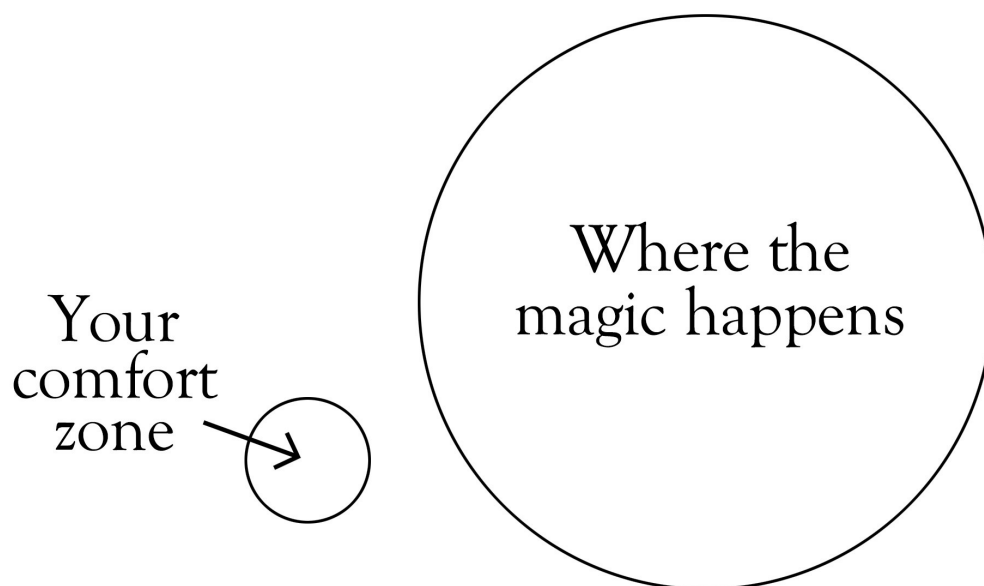
To begin taking safe steps toward new and different life experiences by identifying your comfort zone and thinking about how you can move beyond it.

## What to Know

Sometimes the mere idea of creating a safe network might feel daunting. If you are shy, anxious in social situations, tend to isolate, or otherwise avoid people or unfamiliar situations, it can be especially challenging.

Changing habits is hard. It is not like we, as creatures of habit, go marching forward from one stage to the next in one straight line. For most of us, it is three steps forward, one step back, or even cycling round and round, as we face our natural resistance to—and, often, fear of—change.

We all have a comfort zone—the things and objects, people, activities, and habits that keep us feeling safe. But here’s the catch. Changing habits in a big way inevitably involves some discomfort.



Some years back, this image was making the online circuit.

This is a great image! First, the MAGIC circle is a lot bigger than the COMFORT ZONE circle. That is encouraging! But see that empty space between the circles? That space represents the UNKNOWN, which can be both exciting and scary to most people.

To get from one circle to the other, you will have to navigate some unknown territory. Have you ever heard the saying “Leap, and the net will appear”? It is the same idea. With good planning

and good support, you can succeed. But there are no guarantees. As Yoda from the *Star Wars* movies said: "Do or do not. There is no try."

**What to Do**

In this exercise, you will identify the components of your personal comfort zone. Next, you will imagine "where the magic happens" for you. Then, you will identify some concrete steps to take to guide you along your journey.

What are the components of your comfort zone? What helps you feel safe but might be interfering with your moving forward? Be as detailed as you can.

Things/Objects

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People

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Activities

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Habits

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What are your thoughts and feelings about the unknown (that blank space between the circles)? What has helped in the past when you succeeded in moving out of your comfort zone and into the unknown in your life?

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What items in your list represent “where the magic happens” for you?

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What steps are you willing to take to get closer to “where the magic happens” for you? Be detailed. Be optimistic while still being realistic.

Today

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Tomorrow

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In the next week

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In the next month

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In the next year

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**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Cultivating the Habits of Successful People

## Objective

To identify and practice habits that increase the likelihood of success in life.

## What to Know

Have you ever wondered what it takes to be a successful person? Success is often defined as the ability to reach your goals. But success is not a destination, but a journey where you develop the skills and identify the resources you need to thrive. Researchers have identified the behaviors you can utilize in your daily life to become more effective and ultimately more successful.

Apart from skills, intelligence, and opportunities, successful people have good habits that make a difference. So, if specific habits are the key, you might want to adopt some of these behaviors and activities to increase the likelihood of your success.

**Social expertise.** Successful people tend to have a large network of people around them. To do that, they learn and practice social skills. Socializing is a skill you can learn and improve on. Start by reading self-help books or blogs about making small talk and networking. Consider joining groups such as Toastmasters to increase your confidence and public speaking skills. Specific social skills you might want to focus on are:

- empathy
- active listening
- small talk
- asking open-ended questions
- emotional intelligence
- body language
- humor and charisma

**Surround yourself with people who inspire you.** Surround yourself with people who are more like who you would like to become. This increases the likelihood their positive influence will influence you. Spend more time with people who have achieved goals you want to achieve.

**Network.** Once you have built your social skills, start to create relationships with new and different people. Join community organizations, business groups, or even volunteer for an organization to expand your network.

**Constantly learn.** This can include learning a new hobby or skill or expanding your knowledge about your profession. Successful people read—for pleasure, but also to gain knowledge and insight.

**Focus on improving yourself.** Even if you excel in your career, you can benefit from continuing your education. Learn a new language, practice a musical instrument, improve your technology skills, or even learn to garden. Learning something new can also increase your motivation.

**Wake up early.** You can take the time to properly wake up before starting your day. Use this time for self-reflection, exercise, journaling, or sitting down to read the news and eat breakfast. In addition, you can use this time to organize your day.

**Stay organized.** Without taking time to organize your life (and maintain that organization), you may feel overwhelmed or annoyed. There are many organizational tools available, including apps, planners, calendars, self-help books, physical systems, and more. If you want to accomplish your goals, getting organized can help you.

**Set clear intentions and write down your goals.** Put them somewhere you can see them. Otherwise, you might forget the steps required to achieve your goals. To reach your potential, steer your path based on your goals and intentions.

**Practice effective to-do list habits.** Make one list that includes a general outline of things you want to accomplish, but without deadlines. Keep a second list of things to do over the next two days, including urgent items. Avoid putting too many things on your lists. Keep a brief “urgent” list and add another item when you complete a task.

**Prioritize saving for an emergency.** Experts recommend you have an emergency savings to cover three months of expenses—in case you lose your job, become injured, or just need an unexpectedly large sum of money.

**Relax.** Relaxing—by meditating or simply avoiding distractions—is one of the most-often mentioned habits of successful people. The act of “taking a breath” can help you prepare for what is to come next in your day. Concentrate on your breathing for three to five minutes, 2-3 times each day.

**Think toward the future.** It can be easy to focus on instant gratification, rather than meeting long-term goals. If you struggle with this, set reminders on your phone to remind you to review your goals and re-focus.

**Stay on track.** Set time every morning when you put away your electronic devices and review your daily plan and goals. Consistency is key in achieving almost anything, which is why it is important to regularly remind yourself of what you want to achieve.

**Develop a positive attitude.** According to some successful people, having a positive attitude is one of the root causes of success. Gratitude and positive self-talk are often priorities in the lives of the ultra-successful. Frequently remind yourself *why* you are grateful to achieve a stronger effect.

**Eat a nutritious diet.** There is a strong connection between eating well, success, and happiness. What you fuel your body with is very important, because what you eat does not just affect your physical health—it can also affect your brain functioning and mental health. This can impact your social life, financial health, work productivity, happiness, and much more. If you are serious about being successful, prioritize meeting your nutritional needs.

**Be physically active every day.** You do not have to do an hour-long gym session every morning. You can take a walk, stand up and stretch throughout the day, or find other pleasurable ways to

get your body moving. Find an activity you love, such as swimming, hiking, playing pickleball, and so on. If you are sedentary most of the day you may notice it affects your sleep.

**Improve your self-confidence.** Focus on the things you want to achieve in life, and find ways to improve your confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth.

**Share.** Whether through donating money to charity, volunteering time at a local non-profit, or sharing ideas, successful people have a habit of giving and understand the value of sharing.

**Prioritize sleep.** Not getting enough sleep reduces your brain’s capacity to work at its full potential. If you do not get good sleep, your productivity will be reduced—and you are less likely to achieve your goals. You might be tempted to stay up all night to complete a project, but you may cause more harm than good. Developing good sleeping habits is essential. Here are some tips:

- turn off electronic devices about an hour before bedtime
- decide on a set bedtime and wakeup time and be consistent
- engage in a calming activity just before bedtime (e.g., take a bath, read a book, etc.)
- make sure your bedroom is dark and the temperature is cool while you sleep

**Boost your energy.** Staying physically active, eating well, and getting enough sleep help boost your productivity and increase your energy. Taking just these three steps contribute to your success!

Successful people tend to have more of the types of habits that contribute to their success. If you want to be successful, add the above habits to your daily routine. Some of the best habits for success require only conscious effort. Others, such as becoming organized, may take some time and skill but ultimately result in the desired outcome—success. This worksheet will help you identify and practice the above habits to increase the likelihood of your success.

### **What to Do**

Use the following chart for three weeks to practice your “success habits.” There is no need to add ALL of them to your daily routine. Pick just a few that seem easiest to implement. When they become habits, add another. Note the date, what you did (activities/behaviors), and the total time spent on each. Write down how you felt after completing each activity or task. Finally, note whether it was easy or difficult to complete the activity or task.

Date	Activities/behaviors	Total minutes	How did you feel after?	Was it easy or difficult?

Did this exercise help you feel more successful? Why or why not?

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Increasing Flow Experiences

## Objective

To identify the activities that put you in a state of “flow” and practice getting into this state more frequently.

## What to Know

In psychological terms, “flow” is a mental state in which a person is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus while performing a challenging activity. People more commonly call this “being in the zone.” Many psychologists feel that when people have frequent experiences of “flow,” preferably several times a day, they experience more positive emotions, as well as a sense of well-being and purpose.

Flow is a feeling in which even difficult tasks become easy. You lose track of time because you are so involved in the activity. Runners often talk about a “runner’s high,” when running even long distances becomes almost effortless. Some people experience flow while doing a hobby, like gardening or restoring their car. Some people are lucky enough to experience flow doing their work.

Sonja Lyubomirsky, in her book *The How of Happiness*, writes, “The experience of flow leads us to be involved in life (rather than be alienated from it), to enjoy activities (rather than to find them dreary), to have a sense of control (rather than helplessness), and to feel a strong sense of self (rather than unworthiness). All these factors imbue life with meaning and lend it a richness and intensity. And happiness.”

You will know you are experiencing a flow activity when:

- you are completely involved in and focused on what you are doing.
- There is a sense of great pleasure as you perform a flow task.
- you feel outside of everyday reality.
- there is a sense of inner clarity.
- you know what needs to be done and you get immediate feedback on how well you are doing.
- you know the activity is doable, even though it may be difficult.
- you are confident you have the necessary skills to complete the task successfully.
- you lose your sense of self, and your worries and concerns drift away.
- you lose track of time, and you are completely focused on the present moment.

There is an intrinsic motivation – whatever you do to produce flow becomes its own reward. During moments of flow, your brain becomes a symphony of neurotransmitters, and dopamine takes center stage. This remarkable chemical, often dubbed the brain's reward molecule, floods your system, creating feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. Imagine your brain offering an



enthusiastic round of applause for your wholehearted engagement in an activity that resonates with your abilities and passions!

Flow is not only about pleasure – it also plays the role of a natural pain manager. Endorphins, your body's pain-relieving superheroes, are released during flow, acting as soothing companions that reduce discomfort and promote a sense of well-being. This is why you might find yourself disregarding time and bodily sensations while immersed in a flow state.

Flow may also introduce euphoria – a sensation facilitated by *anandamide*, aptly nicknamed the "bliss molecule." This cannabinoid neurotransmitter enriches your experience with a gentle wave of happiness, contributing to the sense of elation that often accompanies the flow state.

Norepinephrine takes on a crucial role in amplifying focus and attention. Flow enhances the release of this neurotransmitter, sharpening your concentration, heightening your senses, and deepening your connection with the task at hand.

Serotonin, the mood regulator, boosts self-confidence and generates feelings of accomplishment. As serotonin levels rise, your belief in your abilities and the joy of achievement flourish.

The magic of flow does not merely fade once the experience ends. Its positive effects linger, creating a ripple that extends into other facets of your life. The enduring impact of increased well-being, elevated mood, and enhanced motivation can enrich your days with newfound positivity and creativity.

## What to Do

List hobbies that you feel produce a sense of flow.

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List challenging activities that produce flow, such as crossword puzzles, Scrabble, and so on.

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List exercise or other physical activities that produce flow.

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List cleaning and organizing activities that produce flow.

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List any other activities that produce flow.

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Next, for the next two weeks track activities where you find yourself in a state of flow. Note the date, describe the activity, and describe how you felt after.

Date	Activity	How you felt after

### Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# What Would You Like Your Life to Look Like?

## Objective

To identify the personal strengths and people in your life who can support you in setting and meeting your goals.

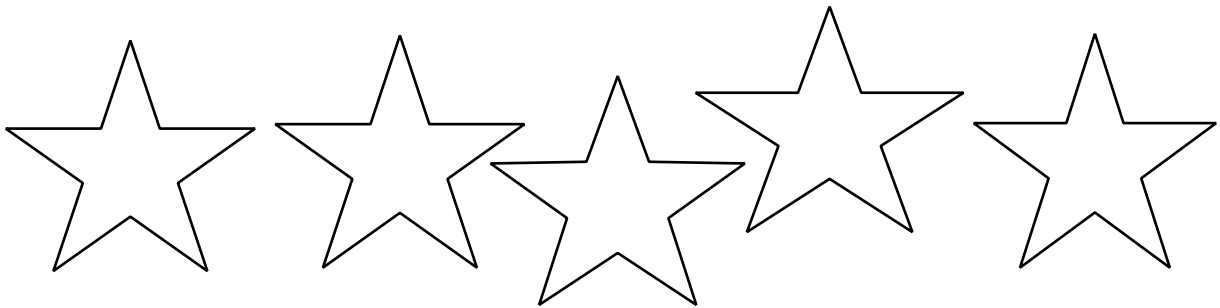
## What to Know

Even if you are currently having a hard time, you can begin your new story today! You can decide what you want for your life by setting goals and taking the steps that are right for you. This tool will help you brainstorm what you'd like your life to look like. As you think about the future, what goals do you have? Who can help you reach your dreams and goals? What strengths do you have to help you get there?

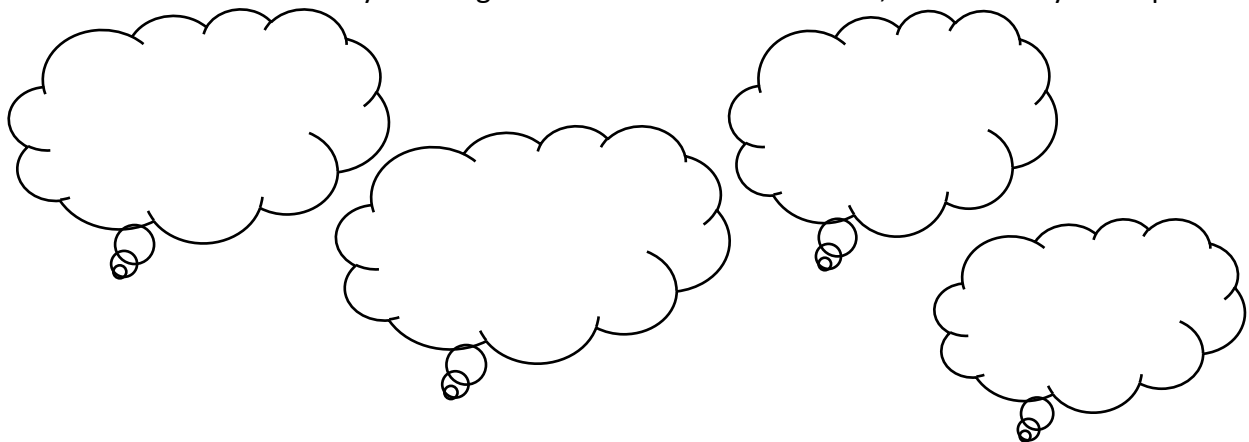
This worksheet will help you identify your personal strengths, hopes, and dreams; set some goals; and think about the people who can support you along the way.

## What to Do

In the stars, write down your personal strengths. What are you good at? For example, being a good friend or having great problem-solving skills.



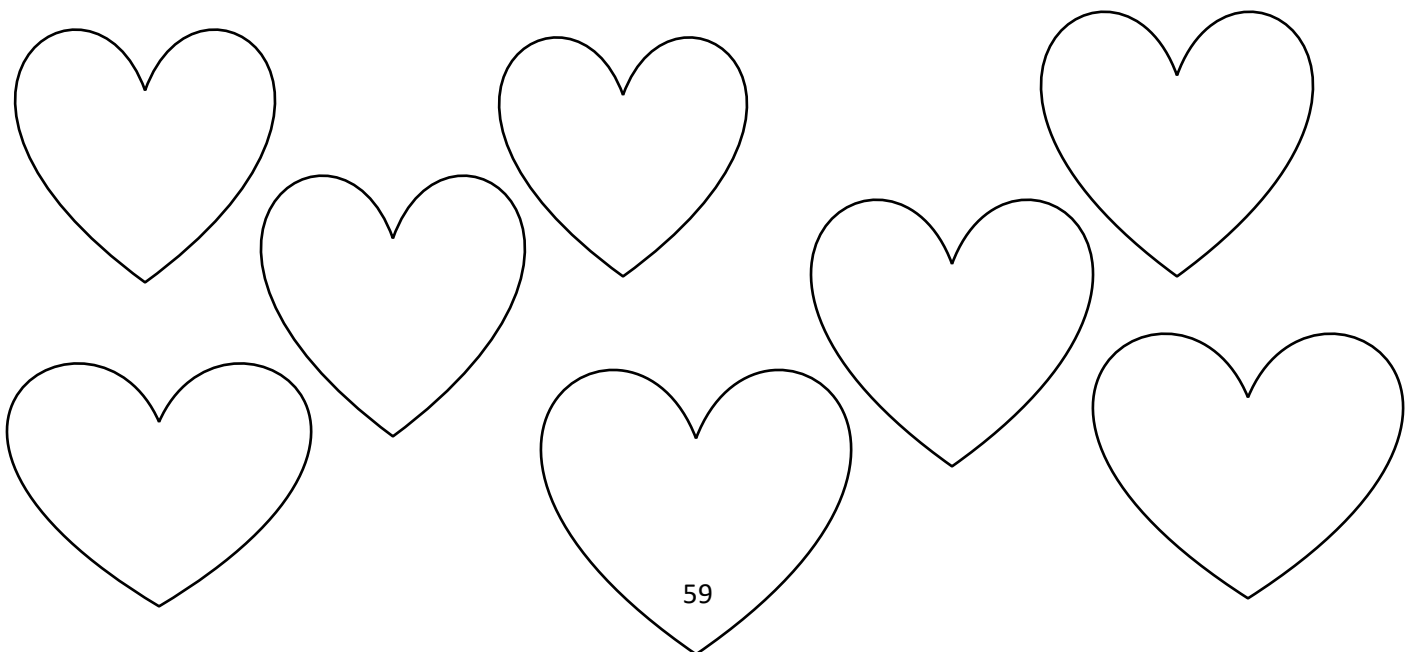
Dreams: Let your imagination run wild! In the clouds, write down your hopes and dreams.

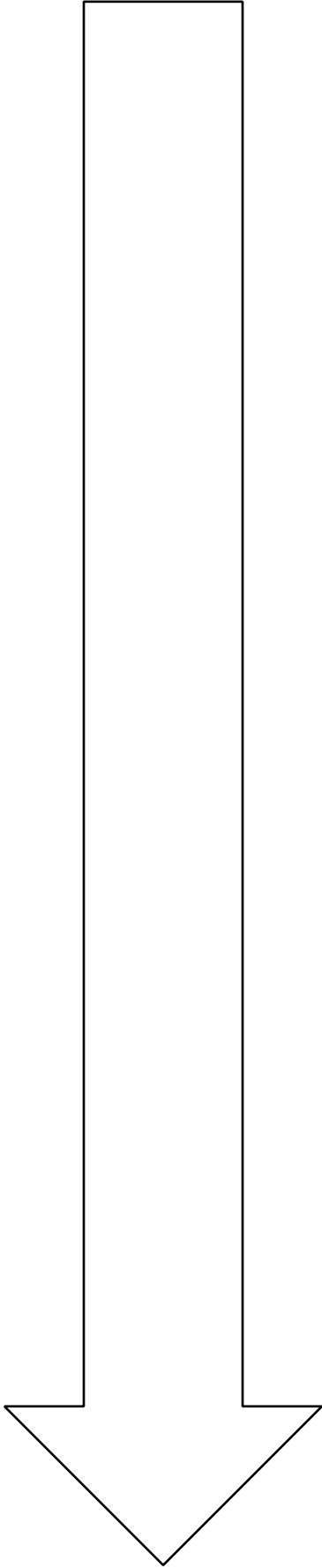


**Personal Goals** – What would you like to do soon and in the future? It is important to set goals to be sure you are planning for what you want to happen in the future. In the three boxes that follow, write down what you'd like to accomplish in one month, in one year, and in ten years.

In one month...	In one year...	In ten years...

**Supportive People** – In the hearts write down supportive and caring relationships you have.





On the line at the beginning of the arrow, write down today's date. On the line at the arrow, write down a date in the future – it could be one year from now, five years from now, or even ten years from today. Now, cut out the shapes with your personal strengths, hopes and dreams, goals, and supportive people. Tape or paste the shapes on the arrow. Be creative – use stickers, paint, markers, and so forth to decorate your personal timeline. Think about your hopes and dreams, and the people and resources that will help you meet your goals. Use another piece of paper or poster board if you need more space.

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

What did you find most challenging about this exercise?

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What was your favorite part of this activity? Least favorite? Why?

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After completing this exercise, were you able to see how your personal strengths and the people and resources around you can support you in meeting your goals? Why or why not?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Overcoming Self-Doubt

## Objective

To reduce self-doubt and increase your confidence.

## What to Know

Self-doubt protects you from embarrassment, failure, or heartbreak. But it is driven by fear, and it prevents you from achieving excellence, taking healthy risks, and obtaining what you want. You were not born with self-doubt – young children typically have a high degree of confidence. But by the time you reach adulthood, your natural confidence has been undermined by the opinions of others and by your own experiences.

Self-doubt can feel like overwhelming and intense uncertainty. You may question your abilities and reevaluate what you think you can achieve. It can stop you from trying new things. You can either shut down the doubt or allow it to grow. If you do not address your self-doubt, it can result in:

- procrastination
- “imposter” syndrome
- depression
- anxiety
- low self-esteem
- lack of self-confidence

Here are some tips to help you overcome self-doubt to move forward with increased confidence.

1. **Recite daily affirmations.** Reading daily motivational quotes and reciting positive affirmations can give you encouragement and helps you start your day on a confident note.
2. **Avoid comparing yourself to others.** When you compare yourself to others, you may start believing everyone else has a better life than you – resulting in feeling badly about yourself. Learn to appreciate where you are in life and what you have.
3. **Reflect on past achievements.** If you believe you cannot achieve anything, consider your past achievements, which serve as proof that you can achieve anything you put your mind to.
4. **Be kind to yourself.** You will make mistakes and fail. Avoid beating yourself up and view mistakes and failures as valuable life lessons.
5. **Identify when you began to doubt yourself.** Spend time considering your past to identify when and why you started to have self-doubt. You may need the help of a therapist or counselor.
6. **Take a break from social media.** You may believe what you see on social media is real. But people only show what they want others to know – which are the best parts of their lives. If you focus on others’ successes, you may end up feeling like you are not good enough.

7. **Journal.** As you put your thoughts down on paper (or in a digital journal), you will get new insights and view situations from a different perspective. A journal can also help you observe and track your behavior, allowing you to detect patterns or events that trigger self-doubt.
8. **Ask for help.** Talk to trusted friends or family members about how you feel. They can offer you alternative perspectives and remind you of how awesome you are! Surround yourself with positive and supportive people who will help you when you are down and keep you motivated.
9. **Let go of the past.** Do you replay in your mind an embarrassing encounter or failure that happened years ago? When you focus on such memories, you may begin to doubt yourself and lose motivation. Master the art of letting go of the past and forgiving yourself. Your past experiences do not define you – or your present and future.
10. **Embrace failure.** If you are afraid to fail, you may not try anything new. Failure helps you learn and grow. When you do fail, learn from it, and try again.
11. **Change your self-talk.** Stop believing everything your inner critic says. Argue with it and replace negative self-talk with positive and affirming statements.
12. **Give more power to your desires than to your fears.** When you are more afraid of what you are going to miss out on than the negative consequences of failure, your life can change dramatically.
13. **Take action.** Choose to stop making excuses and begin working toward real, actionable goals. Start small, and the more you achieve, the more you will build confidence and eliminate self-doubt.

This worksheet will help you reduce self-doubt and increase your confidence.

### What to Do

Why do you doubt yourself? Did it come on suddenly, or is it something you have struggled with most of your life? Explain.

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What triggers your self-doubt?

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Examine your limiting beliefs and identify what is holding you back. Be specific!

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Do one thing each day to overcome your self-doubt. Use the suggestions from the list above or come up with your own ideas. Small steps count! Record your progress on the chart below for the next two weeks. Note the date and the activity you did that day. Write one sentence about how it reduced your self-doubt (be specific!). Finally, write down any patterns or triggers related to self-doubt you noticed that day.

Date	What did you do?	How did it reduce your self-doubt?	Note any patterns or triggers

Did this activity reduce your self-doubt? Why or why not?

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**Reflection on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Improving Your Self-Efficacy

## Objective

To identify ways to improve your trust in your abilities and competencies.

## What to Know

Self-efficacy refers to the strong sense of trust in your abilities and competencies and determines how you think and feel about yourself. It influences your thoughts, emotions, actions, and motivation, and enhances self-control. It is a way of understanding and acknowledging what you are truly capable of! An important component of resilience, self-efficacy supports you in achieving goals, feeling accomplished, and enhancing overall wellbeing.

There are four sources of self-efficacy:

1. **Mastery Experiences** - Success directly impacts the way you think about yourself, boosting your confidence and increasing the likelihood you will achieve similar tasks again. Building self-efficacy through mastery requires resilience to manage expectations and accept inevitable failures.
2. **Vicarious Experiences** - Observing others around you, especially people you can relate to, motivates you to believe that if they can do it, you can too.
3. **Modeling Experiences** - Role models are the people you follow, admire, and want to replicate. Their actions, principles, and achievements teach you and motivate you. You are more likely to put in the effort and believe you can be successful.
4. **Positive Emotional Experiences** - Your mental and physical wellbeing influences self-efficacy. Self-efficacy improves when you have experiences that bring you a sense of happiness and fulfilment.

Check off any of the following statements that apply to you:

- I avoid accepting challenges because I think I will fail.
- I strongly believe I am incapable of performing complicated tasks.
- I tend to focus on my failures or shortcomings.
- I am not confident.
- I have a hard time making commitments.
- It is hard for me to recover from setbacks or failures.
- I quickly lose interest in activities, projects, or work.
- I want results without putting in the effort.
- I am very anxious about failing.
- I feel depressed thinking about past failures.

\_\_\_ I tend to focus more on my weaknesses and less on my strengths.

\_\_\_ I lose motivation and feel helpless when my efforts fail or are not appreciated.

\_\_\_ I don't trust myself.

\_\_\_ TOTAL

If you checked off more than three statements, you may need to work to improve your self-efficacy. People with low self-efficacy may experience more disappointment and feel less fulfilled.

What can you do to increase your self-efficacy? Here are some ways that can help you improve self-efficacy:

1. **Set simple goals.** Goal setting is crucial to building and sustaining self-efficacy. Set reasonable goals and break them into smaller sub-goals, working on achieving them one at a time. You can celebrate small successes, avoid stressing about the results, and more easily manage your goals – one step at a time.
2. **Stay in the “stretch zone.”** If you want to be highly productive, spend more time in the “stretch zone,” where you take reasonable risks and bounce back from failures and setbacks. Try new things outside your comfort zone, face challenges, and accept failures and criticism with grace.
3. **View the big picture.** Look beyond short-term loss, sort your priorities, plan, stick to your goals, and focus.
4. **Reframe obstacles.** Increase self-efficacy by identifying obstacles and reframing or replacing them. Redefine the way you view obstacles to effectively cope with and understand life's inevitable challenges.

There are things you can do to build and improve your self-efficacy. This worksheet includes four exercises that will help you do just that!

### What to Do

**1. The Three Things Exercise.** This activity allows you to track daily activities and how they make you feel.

List three things you did within the past week that went well.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel after doing these three things successfully?

\_\_\_\_\_

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Describe three things you want to accomplish within the next few weeks/months.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Are there potential obstacles? List them and try to reframe them.

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How will you feel after you have accomplished them all?

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**2. Positive Self-Talk.** Set aside 10 minutes every day to talk to yourself in front of the mirror. Say whatever you would like to say! You can complement yourself, motivate yourself, or ask yourself what is making you happy or sad. Remember to respond and note what your inner voice says. Use a journal to write about your self-talks. Refer to the “Four Ways to Improve Self-Efficacy” as a reminder how to view the big picture and reframe.

**3. Review your achievements.** It is easy to focus on failure, but if you have high self-efficacy, you will more likely focus on your successes and achievements. Recalling achievements and past successes reignites your self-confidence and makes you feel optimistic that you can be successful in the future. Make a list of past accomplishments and successes, small or large. Refer to the “stretch zone” way of improving self-efficacy and see if you can come up with ways to stretch outside your comfort zone.

List your past achievements and successes here:

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What can you do to stretch outside of your comfort zone? Successfully accomplishing tasks that make you slightly uncomfortable will increase self-efficacy.

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**4. Self-awareness.** Gretchen Rubin stated, “self-awareness is a key to self-mastery,” and self-mastery is the direct path to self-efficacy. You can practice self-awareness in a journal by recording your thoughts and feelings each day. Include physical cues to help you understand your feelings. Refer to the “Four Ways to Improve Self-Efficacy” for ideas.

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

After completing the four exercises to improve self-efficacy, describe your experiences.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# Creating A Vision of a Happier Life

## Objective

To generate a sense of hope by creating a vision of what you would like your life to look like in six months, one year, and two years.

## What to Know

Whenever you make a big change in your life, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. You might feel excited, but you might also feel anxious or sad. That is normal and understandable. With all those difficult feelings, it can be hard to get in touch with a sense of hope—hope for success and hope for a happier future. It is okay to tap into hope, even if you are going through a tough time—maybe *especially* then. A vision of your future can serve as a powerful guidepost.

## What to Do

Do you know what you want in your life? Is there anything in the way of your working toward what you want? Describe briefly.

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First, make a list of twelve things you want in your life. There are no right or wrong answers, and you do not even have to be realistic. Just go for it, whether it is getting a new job, moving to a new place, buying a house, taking a vacation, falling in love, having children, or simply having peace of mind—anything goes! Use extra paper if needed. You can create a collage of images from magazines or download photos or images from the internet.

Things I Want in My Life:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

How did that feel? Was it fun or stressful? Both? It is okay to dream and hope.

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Focus on your vision for six months, one year, and two years from today. You may refer to your list of wants to help you shape your statement.

Some categories you might want to include:

- Relationships with friends
- Relationships with family
- Finances
- Health
- Career/School
- Spirituality

The key is to write in the present tense, pretending it is actually six months, one year, or two years from now.

### **Six-Month Vision Statement**

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**One-Year Vision Statement**

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**Two-Year Vision Statement**

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**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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# How to Stop Feeling Stuck

## What to Know

Do you feel stuck in life? Maybe you have a boring job, an unfulfilling relationship, or just a general sense of indifference. Perhaps you lack a sense of direction and purpose. You can stop feeling stuck by identifying why you feel that way, and then make some changes to improve your mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

**Why do you feel stuck?** There are ways you can get emotionally and mentally unstuck and it begins with self-awareness. Identifying the cause of your feelings can help you narrow down strategies to regain a sense of purpose and forward momentum. Check off any of the following that apply to you. Do you:

- feel overwhelmed, stressed, or burnt out
- have many life challenges
- have a mental health issue
  
- feel unsure what you want out of life
  
- doubt your self-worth or abilities
- feel exhausted, like you never get enough rest
- self-sabotage or limit yourself
- lack adequate support or resources
- have financial problems
- feel lonely
- feel confused
- frequently experience boredom
- lack a deeper sense of meaning or purpose
- refuse to accept change, loss, or transition
- have unclear goals
- tend to be a perfectionist
- fear uncertainty
- experience a conflict between your desires and what other people want
- have excessive concern about somebody else's opinions
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some tips to get unstuck.

- 1. Become aware of patterns.** Notice patterns that cause you to recreate familiar cycles.
- 2. Take responsibility.** Blaming others can lead to feeling like you've given up control of your life and choices. Instead, take responsibility of what you can.
- 3. Be present.** Practice mindfulness techniques to become present in the here and now. This allows you to make decisions from a place of calm and clarity.
- 4. Detach from unrealistic expectations.** If you tend to be a perfectionist, remind yourself to have realistic and manageable expectations.
- 5. Choose self-love.** Be your own best friend, instead of your own worst critic. When you practice self-compassion and self-care, it increases your energy and motivation.
- 6. Create a vision.** Develop a vision for what you want in life. Write out your personal manifesto, create an action plan with measurable steps, and regularly visualize what success means to you.
- 7. Ask for help.** Your support network is essential to your well-being. Ask for the support you need and deserve.
- 8. Practice healthy detachment.** Honestly evaluate how you feel about your current relationships, job, or even yourself.
- 9. Cultivate inner strength.** View setbacks and mistakes as important parts of learning, and turn them into opportunities.

This worksheet will help you create a plan of action to stop feeling stuck.

### What to Do

The first step is to determine exactly what in your life is not working. What is making you feel stuck where you are? Be specific.

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Why do you feel stuck *right now*? What's going on?

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What is holding you in this situation?

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Describe a time in the past you felt stuck. What did you do then to get unstuck?

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Evaluate how you feel about your current relationships, job, or even yourself. Are there any aspects of these things that make you feel stuck? Explain.

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Is change possible? Why or why not?

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What might happen if you let go of all the negative thoughts surrounding where you feel stuck?

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What are the resources, people, places, qualifications, money, or whatever else you might need to get unstuck? Be specific.

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Is there a mantra, quote, or something you can repeat every day that will motivate you? Write it down.

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Who or what inspires you?

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Who can help you?

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What specific tools do you need to make a change?

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What can you do *right now* to shift your mindset to feel ready to take the first step?

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Who or what is holding you back from taking that first step?

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What is one action step you can take *right now* to feel less stuck?

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Now write down your plan of action. Describe each step, big or small, to make the changes you need to make to get “unstuck.”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_

Commit to doing one thing. Circle the number above of the step you will take. Write down the date you will do it: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Reducing Self-Criticism by Reducing “Shoulds”

## Objective

To reduce self-criticism by reducing the use of the words “should” and “shouldn’t.”

## What to Know

Do you find yourself frequently saying “should” or “shouldn’t?” Can you think of recent examples of times you used these words with yourself or others? If you can’t, here are a few “should” statements you might relate to:

“I should work harder.”

“I should be doing better/making more money.”

“I shouldn’t eat that.”

“I should exercise more!”

“I should be more fun/exciting/have a different life.”

“I shouldn’t be upset. I should be able to cope.”

So, what is the problem with the word “should?” The definition might give you a clue – “used to indicate obligation, duty, or correctness, typically when criticizing someone’s actions.”

If you frequently use this word, you’re implicitly criticizing yourself (or someone else). How does this affect you? It can:

- get in the way of goal achievement.
- prevent you from accepting who you are.
- create anxiety and stress.
- shut down your problem-solving abilities.
- cause you to fall into old automatic patterns and habits.
- cause a response that prompts you to run, freeze, or fight.
- lead to self-sabotage.

No wonder you sometimes have trouble doing the things you know you *should* do!

When setting goals, if you begin from “should,” you undermine yourself. Instead of starting from a place of strength and empowerment, you begin from a place of less-than or not good enough. In addition, insecurity won’t motivate you in a sustainable way. It may drive you in the short term, but it can quickly lead to burn out or self-sabotage – resulting in feeling like a failure.

Here’s what you can do:

- Start to notice when you use the word should. Ask a partner, friend, or family member to help point it out.
- Begin to question why you think you (or someone else) should do the thing.



- Ask if the statement fits with your beliefs and values.
- Reflect on whether should-ing yourself has helped you achieve goals in the past.
- Repeat the statement as “I could,” or “I want to.” Notice how that changes the sentence and what it means for you.

Perhaps you will be pleasantly surprised by how removing “should” from your vocabulary makes a positive difference in your life.

### **What to Do**

Write down recent examples of when you used should or shouldn’t with yourself.

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With others?

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Who can help point out when you use “should?” \_\_\_\_\_

You might not notice how often you use “should” or “shouldn’t” when talking to yourself. Fill in the following chart. In the first column, write down all the things you think you should be doing. The list can be as long or as short as you like. In the second column next to each “I should,” write down why. In the third column, write down who you think says you should (it could be yourself!). The “Says who?” column will challenge your assumptions and begin to reveal how you have been programmed to believe certain things. In the final column, rewrite the “should” statements as “I could” or “I want to” statements.

If you need more space, make a copy of the chart.

<b>I should...</b>	<b>Why?</b>	<b>Says who?</b>	<b>I could... I want to...</b>

## Reflections on This Exercise

How difficult was it to reduce or eliminate “should” from your vocabulary? Explain.

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Was it hard to catch yourself when you said should or shouldn’t? Did you ask someone to help you with this exercise? Why or why not?

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Did you have a hard time rephrasing your “I should” statements into “I could” or “I want to” statements? Describe.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful to 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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## Learned Optimism Adverse Events Log

Identifying ways to challenge your thoughts and feelings about adverse events (while creating new ways of thinking) is the hallmark of Martin Seligman's work on learned optimism. This log allows you to track adverse events then challenge them using Seligman's A-B-C-D-E model:

### 1. Adversity:

- Describe a recent adversity.
- Include who, what, when, and where of the situation.
- Be precise, detailed, specific, and accurate.
- Avoid letting your beliefs about the adversity influence your description.
- Be objective and use "truth statements" (focus solely on the facts).

### 2. Beliefs:

- Record what you were saying to yourself during the adversity event.
- What beliefs were running through your mind? Self-talk?

### 3. Consequences:

- How did your thoughts affect how you felt? Be specific!
- How did you react or behave?
- Did you experience body sensations?
- Do the consequences make sense given your beliefs?
- Identify other beliefs you may not have been aware of initially.

### 4. Disputation:

- Generate one piece of evidence to point out the inaccuracy in your beliefs.
- Is there another way you can look at this situation?
- What were environmental factors, other people involved, or issues outside of your control?
- View your beliefs from a different perspective. Did you learn something from this event?
- You might say, "That's not completely true because..." or, "A more accurate way of seeing this is..." or, "The most likely outcome is...and I can...to manage or cope."

### 5. Energization:

- How did your Disputation change your Energy?
- What happened to your mood and emotions?
- How did your behavior change?
- What new solutions did you see?

## What to Do

Use the following chart for two weeks. First, fill out the first three categories (A-B-C). Then, go back and look for examples of pessimism and negativity. Highlight or circle them. You may need to use an additional piece of paper if you run out of space. During

the second week, use all five categories (A-B-C-D-E). You will actively challenge negativity and pessimism while teaching yourself to be more optimistic. Refer to the previous page for information about what to include in each section.

	<b>Adverse Event #1</b>	<b>Adverse Event #2</b>	<b>Adverse Event #3</b>	<b>Adverse Event #4</b>	<b>Adverse Event #5</b>
<b>Adversity</b>					
<b>Beliefs</b>					
<b>Consequences</b>					
<b>Disputation</b>	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?
<b>Energization</b>					

Reference: Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York, NY: Vintage Press.