

Self-Care: Accepting Ourselves For Who Truly Are. (Including Worksheets)

When Did It All Go Wrong?

We live in world that can create a feeling of being constantly on trial about how we look and who or what we should be. The images and information posted in the media puts pressure on us to buy into some pretty impossible dreams. We can easily get caught up in it all and forget that the people depicted have a whole team making them, and their lifestyle, look that way for the picture. Alongside that computer programs are used that can touch-up the images to make them as perfect as possible and impossible for everyone else to replicate.

Everyone can, and most do, post pictures daily of their “perfect” lives. This adds to the pressure we are placed under already. But why are we so interested in throwing away our true self? Why are we so willing to accept that we should do this in the first place?

For many of us we received messages as children that we were not good enough and needed to change in so many ways to fit in. We began to believe that if we changed enough eventually someone would love us, see us as pretty, or just acceptable in some way. What a message to receive as a child, it leaves us with a whole host of emotional baggage as adults. This is so abusive.

As we grew the messages expanded from home to the outside world and along the way we lost the ability to just accept ourselves who we really are. To end up feeling not good enough and buy into the messages, we are now constantly bombarded with, that we still have to change in order to fit in. We simply forgot how perfect we were.

We seek out validation from external sources in an attempt to feel connected, to be part of something. Plus we can do this to feel we are part of a tribe, therefore any shortfalls we feel we may have are mitigated or eliminated by being included. We forget that there really are not shortfalls or imperfections at all, it's all just an illusion we were told we needed to accept. We are not to blame for this, it can be scary to let go of what we have known and stand up for our true selves.

How do you regain your acceptance of yourself?

It can be hard to let go of any false self as we have adopted this persona in order to fit in with our friends and family. But if they love us unconditionally they will accept us just as we are. They will support our changes and celebrate alongside us.

We have to decide firstly, if we really want change and secondly, if we can we need to let go of the labels we have assumed. Labels can be good sometimes, but if one has a negative connotation for you, and then you have to let it go. So you have decided to step up to the challenge of re-learning to accept yourself, now what?

Get To Know Yourself Again.

When we lose ourselves it's important to reconnect. It's not just about your likes and dislikes but about delving deeper into your thoughts, emotions, passions, and motivators, to find the real you. [Journaling](#) and [meditation](#) are great tools to use here.

The meditation opens us up to listening to our inner voice and to become more aware of what we are thinking and feeling. If we follow this by using a journal to make note of what these thoughts are we can begin to examine and reflect on them. Are they [positive or negative](#)? Who first told us this? Are just some of the questions we can ask.

You simply cannot disown or change your thinking, or even your life, if you are not aware of what needs to be [changed](#). Getting to know ourselves allows us to build and acceptance of ourselves including all the bits we may not like but know we can change if we wish to. We can then let go of the false self, the one that was built by beliefs and thoughts we adopted and become a stronger self that serves the life we want.

Let Go Of The Need To Seek Outside Approval.

While growing up if you had to seek approval for what you did, or were under constant criticism, then of course you will seek approval from external sources as an adult. If you grew up in a home that was [abusive](#) or neglectful you will also do this. You simply never felt good enough.

But this leaves us open to long-term unhappiness. We can feel the need to people please, be [co-dependent](#), and always feel like we are walking on eggshells around others. We seem to take on others responsibility, feel stressed, overworked and always on the bottom of our own to do list.

We need to let go of this need of seeking approval just to feel worthwhile. True happiness lies within, as is the validation of your worthiness. Inner validation is at the core of your being and it offers you positive thoughts, feelings, happiness and can be called upon at anytime.

Again, getting in touch with your inner self through meditation and journaling will help you reconnect with yourself. It will help you eliminate your inner critic. But also reducing your [stress](#) and handing back other's responsibilities will also be a good first step to take here. I have a free resource [here](#) to help you evaluate your to do list and eliminate some of the things from it including handing back tasks to others.

Accept Where You Are Right Now Is Perfect.

Yes, life may not be the way you want it right now but that doesn't mean everything was, or is, wrong either. Recall some of the decisions you made or memories you have and see that you made the best decision you could at that time.

Hindsight is great, but don't use it to beat yourself up. What happened, happened, accept that. It's now time to move on and make better decisions based on what you want in your life now. Learn to live in the now, using a 3 minute breathing meditation

will help you learn to do this ([podcast here](#)). Using the phrase “One Day At A Time” can also help to have a centering affect when you feel off balance. Any affirmation can, it refocuses the mind and reminds us that we really only have this moment in time.

Make time for [forgiveness](#) work. Forgiving yourself first and foremost will make a hugely positive impact on your life. You will then be more open to forgiving others after that. There are two things you need to be aware of here. Firstly, forgiveness doesn't require you to reconcile with the person or for them to ever say they are sorry. That can be a difficult step to take. Secondly, you never have to forgive anyone if you don't want to, but if you hold on to grudges then it will eat you alive while the other person has long forgotten what happened and are living their life.

Make Time For Yourself First.

One of the simplest ways we can build self acceptance is to start by looking after ourselves first. This is not a [narcissistic](#) thing to do, although if you have been a co-dependent/people pleaser your guilt will make you think you are being one.

Our [basic self-care](#) needs should be met every day, from this we can build the life we deserve. It will form the foundation of our life and self-acceptance. It will keep us balanced and help build our [self-esteem](#) and self-respect. It will teach us to [set healthy boundaries](#) maybe for the first time in our life. How can we treat others with a healthy sense of respect if we don't treat ourselves with respect first?

When we have our basic needs met we are more comfortable with our life, mind and body as they are. We stop seeking happiness from external material and emotional sources as we have met our own needs first. I have a list of basic self-care needs [here](#).

Learn To Ask For What You Want.

Not only will people treat you how you teach them to do, but they won't know what you need, or want, unless you ask. No one can read your mind. So if you are unclear about what you want in your life, then you won't be clear in what you want to receive.

Take some time to explore your needs, wants and desires, as you get to know yourself. Engage in hobbies and interests and have some fun along the way. Meet up with positive friends and family members; leave the [negative ones alone](#) from now on.

The next step is to then ask for what you want. But remember to ask yourself also. Make a list of things you can get, or give, to yourself, then go and get them. As I've already said, make sure you have your basic self-care needs met first and move on from there.

Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it. Your partner or children can't help out, if you are always trying to be superwoman for them then it's time to hang up your red cloak. Yes children can do chores; you are teaching them how to look after themselves and their future home. The same goes for your friends, family, and in work, ask for what you need and want from them too.

A good technique to try is visualization. Sit quietly for even 15 minutes and visualize what you want, what are your goals and dreams? Make a note of these in your journal and work out the steps you can take towards them. How can others help you?

Remember, it's okay to be bold in working towards your dreams and goals in life. It is your life and no one else should ever dictate how you can live it. So be passionate about moving forward and asking for what you need.

Believe In Yourself!

As I've said it can be scary to change something in your life, but once you get beyond the fear you'll wonder why you didn't do sooner. A little self-belief will go a long way in this process. When we believe we can do something it changes our whole mindset. Believing in yourself can help you find the solution as it actually paves the way towards the solution.

Apart from doing some of the suggestions above I would also add in taking some steps to step outside of your comfort zone. You can use the steps and questions below to help you.

1. **Identify your comfort zone first.** What can you do already that feels okay or you do as part of your normal everyday to do list? Are there things here that other women wouldn't be able to do? Look at all areas of your life: family, work, friends, health, spirituality, etc. What you are looking for here are ways in which you already succeed and that you do well. Most of the time we don't even realize we are doing these things we take ourselves for granted. It sometimes takes us making a list like this to realize we can and do succeed already in many areas of our life.
2. **Find and Identify the edge of your comfort zone.** What are the things you just about do? You may feel a little fear but you know you can still do them? Make a list of these. Again you are looking at what you fear but you can also see you have overcome this fear and succeeded.
3. **List what you don't feel confident in.** This is the list you will work towards getting more confident in. Firstly are they things you really want to do? If they are not then you will sabotage yourself, so let these go. Now keep this list somewhere it's easily accessible.
4. **Identify what you can do within the next week to help you see you can do things that step you outside of your comfort zone.** Yes this is the scary bit for most of us. Don't take a big item off your to do list, you'll only fail. Start small, as this will help you succeed in the future. Now plan it into your diary, yes even if it's just speaking up at a meeting or saying hello to a complete stranger. Perhaps prepare something to say in advance and then make your contribution. Small actionable steps each day is what we are aiming at here.
5. **Take time to notice what happened in response.** Not just someone else's response but how you felt. Don't worry about looking stupid you'll learn from what you did and how people responded to it. Journal it out and tackle any

negative comments you hear coming up in your head. Really question them, don't let these comments bully you into taking a step backwards.

6. **Repeat.** Now you have to do it all again. Remember small steps, so if any item on your to do is big break it down into manageable smaller steps. Ask for help if you need it sometimes we can gain a lot of confidence by simply asking for help.
7. **Act as if.** If you put off taking action until you have confidence, remember you'll never do it. Psychology teaches us that when we change our behaviour we can also change our feelings. So by taking the small actionable steps above what is perceived as outward confidence will soon find itself turning inside to a true feeling of confidence.
8. **Find a mentor.** Most successful people have a mentor, someone they can confide in and ask for feedback from. This mentor won't do the work for them but they do support and encourage them no matter what. You need this too. Find someone you can confide in, someone you know what judge you, will give you good advice when asked for it and will support you no matter what.

Worksheets Below

Know Your Why Sheet 1

Where in your life do you want to make a change?

Why do you want to make a change? Your why is big, make sure to write it down and keep it where you can be reminded of it often.

What is going to shift in your life if you make this change?

What are the excuses that are getting in the way of you making a change? Be honest!

What is your willingness to release these excuses and take action to make a change? Again be honest.

Know Your Why Sheet 2

Your Life Vision

Write out a vision of your life if nothing or no one stood in your way and money wasn't a problem. Then go back and answer the above questions.

Know Your Why Sheet 3

Reflection

How does it feel to know that you hold the power to make this change?

Did anything shift for you? If yes what was it? (Thought/feeling etc.) Detail it below.

Automatic Thoughts Challenger Worksheet

Most of the time our thoughts happen so quickly that we don't realise how they are impacting on our emotions, feelings and our lives. These are automatic thoughts. For some of us they may be negative and we learnt these thought patterns from someone else. It is really their voice that is going on inside our heads.

Taking time to slow down using meditation will help you recognise these thought patterns will allow you to take back control. You can then start to challenge and change them.

Trigger	Automatic Thought	Challenge This: Ask yourself "How true is that thought?"	New Thought
<p>Example You made a mistake at work.</p>	<p>I'm a failure, I always make mistakes. I'll be lucky if they don't fire me.</p>	<p>Am I really a failure because of one mistake? Who always said that to me in the past? My ex/mum/dad/last boss. They told me I always mess up, I'd never amount to anything. That's not true I've already achieved so much. Such as(list out examples here.)</p>	<p>Okay I made a mistake that could happen to anyone. I'll correct this like I always do. I know I can ask for help if I don't know how to remedy this.</p>

Review What I have On My Plate Right

1. Write Down All My Responsibilities Right Now

2. Are Any Of These Someone Else's Responsibility

Hand These Back!

3. Is anything On This Out Of My Control

Try To Let These Go!

New To Do List

N.B. Must be smallest possible step you can take for each task/goal

Personal Responsibilities	Work Responsibilities

Now schedule them into your diary. Have a start & finish date/time!

Treats & Rewards List

Treats cost nothing or very little & should be given freely every week.

Rewards cost money & should be given after you finish something or complete a goal.

Treats	Rewards

Allocate these to you tasks/goals listed above. Schedule into your diary now!

MY TEAM OF SUPPORTS LIST

Family/Friends/Partner	My Mentor/Guide	My Mastermind Group/Network
Employee (er)	Professionals I Can Ask For Help	Contractors
Jobs I need to hire someone else to do!	My Accountability Partners	Notes
White Space: How I will take time off this year. Holidays I will observe: (Weekly/Monthly)		

My Goals

After reviewing your priorities it's time to set up some goals for the future.
Break each goal in to actionable steps I suggest 5 but you can make these as small as possible. Never work on more than one goal at a time so you can completely focus on it.

Goal 1	1 2 3 4 5
Goal 2	1 2 3 4 5
Goal 3	1 2 3 4 5
Goal 4	1 2 3 4 5
Goal 5	1 2 3 4 5
Goal 6	1 2 3 4 5
Goal 7	1 2 3 4 5
Goal 8	1 2 3 4 5
Goal 9	1 2 3 4 5

The following worksheets are an extract from my book “The Building Blocks Of Self-Care”. If you would like to read this book and get more worksheets like these you can purchase it [here](#).

Building Self-Esteem Worksheet 6

Identify Your Comfort Zone In Each Area This is where you feel the most confident/comfortable already				
Work	Family	Friends	Children	Home
Hobbies/Interests	Health	Asking For Help	Other	Notes

Building Self-Esteem Worksheet 7

Identify The Edge Of Your Comfort Zone In Each Area This is where you do things but with a little fear added				
Work	Family	Friends	Children	Home
Hobbies/Interests	Health	Asking For Help	Other	Notes

Building Self-Esteem Worksheet 8

Identify What You Don't Feel Confident In Each Area Remember to ask yourself: Do I really want to do this now? If not let them go, at least for now.				
Work	Family	Friends	Children	Home
Hobbies/Interests	Health	Asking For Help	Other	Notes

Building Self-Esteem Worksheet 9

Pick One Area, From Above List, You Want To Work On.

(Pick easiest first for the quick wins)

Write A List Of Action Steps You Can Take This Week

Building Self-Esteem Worksheet 10

Reflect Back

1. How did I feel when I pushed my comfort zone?

2. Where there any negative comments?

Internal ones:

External ones:

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