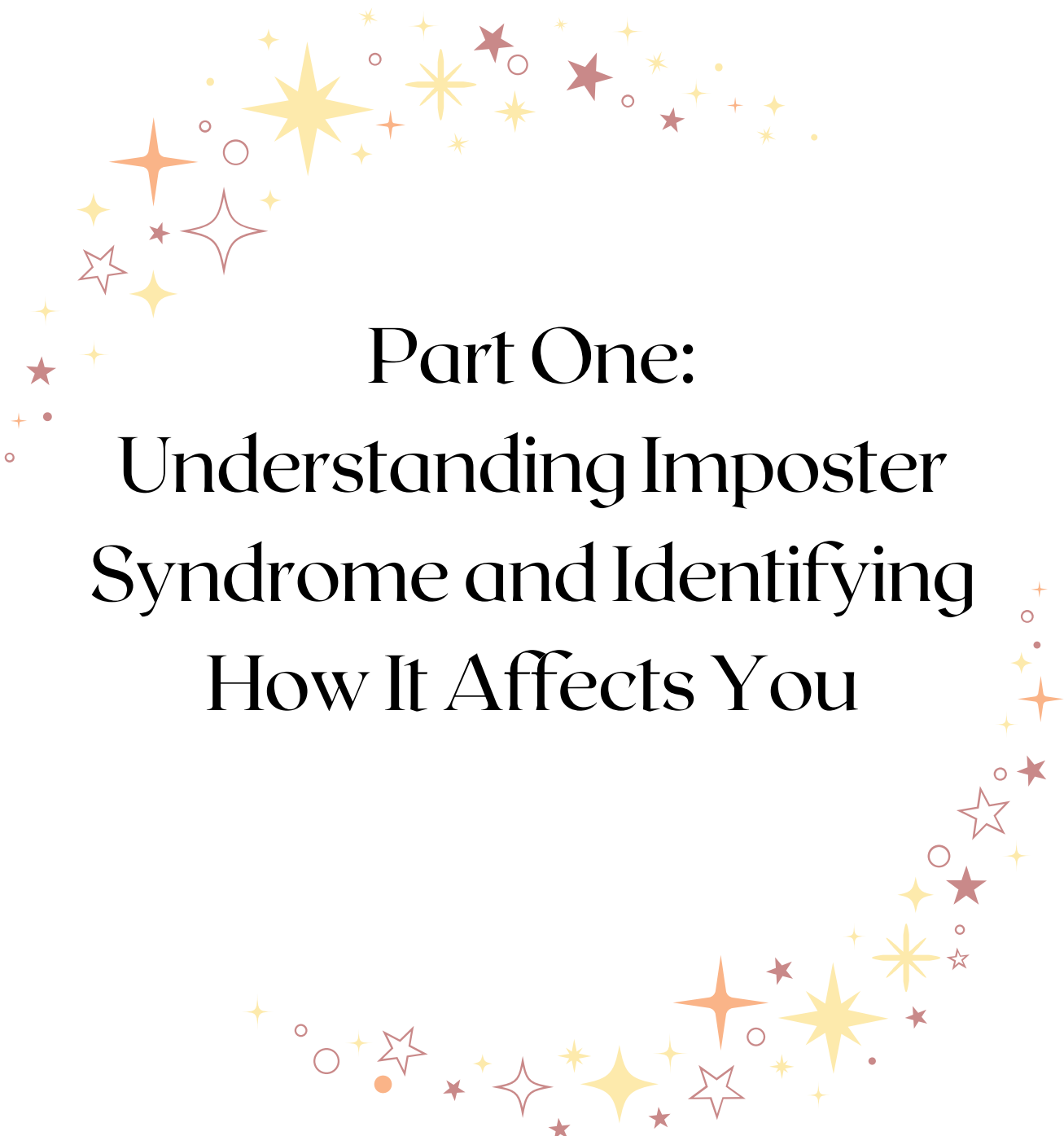


Imposter Syndrome Workbook



Nicola Richardson
@thepeoplementor.co.uk

A decorative graphic consisting of a large, stylized 'C' shape formed by a variety of stars and sparkles. The stars are in shades of yellow, orange, and pink, with some having multiple points or being simple circles. They are scattered along the curve of the 'C', with a higher density at the top and bottom. The background is white.

Part One: Understanding Imposter Syndrome and Identifying How It Affects You

What is Imposter Syndrome?

Imposter syndrome is a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent fear of being exposed as a "fraud." Despite evidence of their competence and success, individuals with imposter syndrome often attribute their achievements to luck or just happenstance. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and a constant need to prove oneself.

Imposter syndrome can have a significant impact on an individual's mental health and well-being. It can lead to feelings of self-doubt, anxiety, and even depression. The constant fear of being "found out" as a fraud can lead individuals to second-guess themselves and their abilities, decreasing confidence and making them reluctant to take on new challenges or opportunities.

It is important to work on healing from imposter syndrome because it can hold you back from reaching your full potential. When individuals constantly doubt themselves and their abilities, they may miss out on valuable opportunities for career advancement or personal growth. By addressing and overcoming imposter syndrome, individuals can build confidence, embrace their achievements, and take on new challenges with a healthy and positive mindset.

Healing from imposter syndrome involves recognising and challenging negative thought patterns, seeking support from friends, family, or mental health professionals, and practising self-compassion and self-care. It is important to acknowledge your achievements and give yourself credit for your hard work and success. By addressing imposter syndrome, individuals can build resilience, improve their mental well-being, and pursue their goals with confidence and self-assurance.

Imposter Syndrome Self-Evaluation

Read each question and ask yourself if this is a thought/feeling you've struggled with. If so, check the box next to the question. If you check several boxes, it's ok! Imposter Syndrome is extremely common.

☐ *"I don't deserve the success I've achieved."*

This thought reflects self-doubt and a lack of self-worth..

☐ *"I feel like a fraud, like I'm just pretending to be competent."*

Indicates feelings of inadequacy and a fear of being exposed as fake.

☐ *"Why can't I just feel confident in my abilities?"*

Expresses frustration with a persistent lack of self-confidence.

☐ *"I worry that people will find out I'm not as capable as they think I am."*

Ongoing fear of being discovered as undeserving of praise or recognition.

☐ *"I'm always comparing myself to others and feeling inadequate."*

Reflects a pattern of comparing oneself to others and feeling inferior.

☐ *"I feel like I'm just lucky and haven't actually earned anything."*

Persistent belief that past successes are due to luck rather than skill.

☐ *"I struggle to accept praise because I don't believe I deserve it."*

Illustrates difficulty receiving positive feedback due to lack of self-belief.

☐ *"I have to work so much harder than others to be taken seriously."*

Constant pressure to overachieve in order to feel validated.

☐ *"I wish I could just believe in myself and my abilities."*

Expresses a longing for self-confidence and self-acceptance.

☐ *"I constantly second-guess my decisions and feel like I'm not qualified."*

Perpetual self-doubt and a lack of confidence in decision-making.

Decoding Imposter Syndrome Traits

Imposter syndrome encompasses a complex set of traits that can significantly impact an individual's mental well-being and overall quality of life. Recognising these traits and their associated behaviours is the first step to addressing and overcoming the challenges posed by imposter syndrome.

1 Overachievement: While it may seem like a positive trait, the constant need to overperform can be a sign of imposter syndrome. This leads to burnout and can affect personal relationships.

2 Fear of Failure: A deep-seated fear of failure can paralyse those with imposter syndrome, leading to a reluctance to take risks or try new things to avoid the possibility of not meeting their own high standards.

3 Avoiding Recognition: Those with imposter syndrome often prefer to fly under the radar and avoid attention, fearing that any praise or recognition will highlight their perceived inadequacies.

4 Perfectionism: People with imposter syndrome often obsess over getting everything exactly right, fearing that any mistake will reveal their incompetence. This can lead to chronic stress and an unhealthy fear of failure.

5 External Validation-Seeking: People with imposter syndrome often seek external validation to reassure themselves of their own worth and capabilities, as they struggle to provide it for themselves.

6 Attribution of Success to Luck or External Factors: Imposter syndrome can lead individuals to attribute their successes to uncontrollable external factors, such as luck or timing. This prevents them from recognising their own hard work and skills.

7 Minimising Accomplishments: Individuals with imposter syndrome tend to downplay their successes, dismissing them as insignificant or unworthy of praise.

8 Procrastination: Imposter syndrome can lead to procrastination, as individuals may delay tasks out of fear of not meeting their own or others' expectations.

9 Self-Doubt: An individual experiencing imposter syndrome often struggles with a perpetual lack of self-confidence. They question their own abilities and have difficulty accepting their accomplishments.

10 Constant Comparison to Others: The tendency to constantly compare oneself to others is a common trait of imposter syndrome. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and increased self-doubt.

Self-Evaluation: Real-Life Ramifications of Imposter Syndrome

The consequences of imposter syndrome can silently shape our thoughts, behaviours, and opportunities - touching nearly every aspect of our lives. By peeling back the layers of this complex phenomenon, we can begin to understand its far-reaching effects and pave the way for self-discovery and growth. Rate how accurately each statement applies to you.

	Not me at all				This is definitely me
☐ Self-Doubt: Deep-seated self-doubt and a lack of confidence in one's own abilities	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Fear of Failure: Prevents individuals from setting ambitious goals or embracing challenges, limiting growth	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Mental Health Struggles: Anxiety and depression from pressure of perceived expectations	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Burnout: Drive for perfection and the need to constantly prove oneself can lead to burnout and a lack of balance	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Undermined Success: Attributing their success to luck or external factors rather than their own skills	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Strained Relationships: Strained from feelings of inadequacy and worth	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Perpetual Stress: Pressure to live up to perceived standards and fear of being exposed as a fraud	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Limiting Potential: Prevents individuals from reaching their full potential, stifling creativity, innovation, and the pursuit of their dreams	1	2	3	4	5

Risk Factors For Imposter Syndrome

Below are five broad categories of risk factors associated with the development of imposter syndrome. Triggers, often hidden in the depths of our experiences and environments, can shape our self-perceptions and influence how we navigate our personal and professional lives. By shedding light on these factors, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of impostor syndrome and pave the way for self-discovery and growth.

High-achieving individuals:

People in competitive environments who are expected to perform at a consistently high level may be more susceptible to imposter syndrome, as the pressure to excel can breed self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy.

Perfectionism:

Perfectionistic tendencies, often cultivated in childhood or adolescence, can contribute to the development of imposter syndrome, as individuals struggle with unrealistic standards and a fear of falling short.

Lack of supportive mentors or role models: The absence of mentors or positive role models to provide guidance and encouragement can elevate the risk of imposter syndrome, as individuals may struggle to build confidence in their abilities without the support of mentors.

Experiences of discrimination or prejudice: Instances of discrimination or prejudice can compound feelings of unworthiness, intensifying the risk of imposter syndrome as individuals battle against negative external influences that diminish their sense of self-worth.

Anxiety or depression:

Individuals who grapple with anxiety or depression may be especially vulnerable to imposter syndrome, as these mental health conditions can exacerbate feelings of self-doubt and diminish self-worth, heightening the risk of experiencing imposter syndrome.

Self-Reflection: Risk Factors For Imposter Syndrome

In reviewing the 5 broad categories of risk factors for the development of imposter syndrome on the previous page, which category stood out as relating best with your situation? Why?

What insights are you having about how your imposter syndrome developed over time?

Introduction to The 5 Types of Imposters

There are five types of imposters commonly recognised within imposter syndrome: **The Perfectionist, The Expert, The Soloist, The Natural Genius, and The Superwoman/man.**

The Perfectionist feels like they must excel in every task they take on, leading to an intense fear of failure. Their inner dialogue often involves a constant need for validation and recognition, with a focus on their flaws and mistakes. This negative self-talk can lead to a cycle of anxiety and self-criticism, ultimately hindering their ability to feel confident in their abilities.

The Expert type of imposter feels a constant need to know everything before taking on a task, which can lead to procrastination and avoidance. Their inner dialogue often revolves around feeling like a fraud if they don't have all the answers, causing them to downplay their expertise and minimise their accomplishments. This can lead to missed opportunities and underestimating one's true abilities.

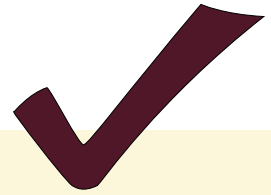
The Soloist believes they must accomplish tasks on their own, without asking for help or support. Their inner dialogue often involves feeling a need to prove themselves and not being worthy of assistance. The consequences of this mindset include burnout, missed opportunities for collaboration, and the inability to seek out resources that could enhance their performance.

The Natural Genius type believes they should effortlessly master new skills and tasks without the need for hard work or effort. Their inner dialogue often revolves around feeling like an impostor if they struggle or have to put in extra effort. This can lead to a fear of failure, avoiding challenges, and a lack of resilience when faced with setbacks.

Lastly, **the Superwoman/man** type feels the need to excel in all aspects of their life, whether at work, home, or socially. Their inner dialogue often involves fears of not being able to live up to high standards or of being exposed as less capable than others perceive them to be. This can lead to feelings of burnout, overcommitment, and an inability to delegate or seek support when needed.

Let's get to know each type of imposter better by taking a deeper look.

The Perfectionist



Traits:

Extreme attention to detail: Perfectionist imposters often become hyper-focused on every small aspect of their work, leading to a fear of making even a minor mistake.

High standards for themselves: They set unattainably high standards for their performance and constantly feel like they are falling short of these expectations.

Reluctance to seek help: Perfectionist imposters may be hesitant to ask for assistance or admit when they need support, as doing so may be seen as a sign of weakness or incompetence.

Inner Dialogue:

"I must not make any mistakes."

"I need to work harder and do better than everyone else to prove myself."

"I can't let anyone see that I'm struggling or feeling overwhelmed."

Consequences:

- **Anxiety and burnout:** The constant pressure to be flawless can lead to chronic stress, anxiety, and burnout.
- **Strained relationships:** Perfectionist imposters may struggle to connect with others or create authentic relationships, as their focus on achieving perfection can create distance and barriers to intimacy.
- **Missed opportunities:** Their fear of failure or making mistakes may prevent them from taking risks or seizing opportunities for growth and advancement.
- **Impostor syndrome:** Perfectionist imposters may never feel satisfied with their achievements, as they constantly feel like they are not measuring up to their own impossibly high standards.

Self-Reflection: The Perfectionist

How closely do you identify with The Perfectionist? Do you recognise traits within yourself that are consistent with traits held by The Perfectionist? Why or why not?

Think of a time when you exhibited characteristics or thoughts of The Perfectionist. Describe the scenario and what positive affirmation would have better helped you cope.

The Expert



Traits:

Over-preparation: The expert imposter tends to go above and beyond in their efforts to appear knowledgeable and competent in their field, spending excessive amounts of time researching and rehearsing.

Avoidance of challenges: They may shy away from opportunities that they fear they cannot excel in, leading to missed chances for growth and learning.

Downplaying achievements: Despite having accomplished a great deal, expert imposters may attribute their success to external factors and undermine their own capabilities.

Inner Dialogue:

"I need to know everything before I can speak up in this meeting."

"If I don't have all the answers, people will see that I don't belong here."

"I got lucky that time, but it won't happen again. I'm really not as good as people think I am."

Consequences:

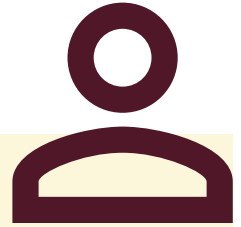
- **Stagnation:** Because they are always in search of perfection, expert imposters may miss out on opportunities for advancement and growth due to their fear of not being knowledgeable or skilled enough.
- **Self-doubt:** Constantly feeling like they need to prove themselves, expert imposters experience imposter syndrome, which can lead to feelings of inadequacy and undermine their self-confidence.
- **Stress and anxiety:** The pressure to constantly perform at a high level can lead to chronic stress and anxiety, affecting both their professional and personal lives.
- **Overwork:** The intense need to over-prepare and appear competent can lead to a cycle of overworking, resulting in burnout and decreased overall well-being.

Self-Reflection: The Expert

How closely do you identify with The Expert? Do you recognise traits within yourself that are consistent with traits held by The Expert? Why or why not?

Think of a time when you exhibited characteristics or thoughts of The Expert. Describe the scenario and what positive affirmation would have better helped you cope.

The Soloist



Traits:

Excessive independence: The soloist type of imposter tends to take on responsibilities and challenges alone, believing that asking for help or collaboration will reveal their supposed inadequacies.

Fear of being perceived as a burden: They hesitate to delegate tasks or seek support from others, often feeling the need to prove themselves solely capable.

Isolating behaviour: The soloist imposter may distance themselves from others, fearing that collaboration will highlight their perceived deficiencies and feeling like they must handle everything independently to maintain their facade.

Inner Dialogue:

"I can't ask for help, or they'll see that I'm not as competent as they think."

"I have to prove that I can handle this on my own, no matter how overwhelming it feels."

"I should be able to do this without needing others' help. If I can't, then I'm a failure."

Consequences:

- **Overwhelm and burnout:** By taking on excessive responsibilities without seeking support, soloist imposters often find themselves overwhelmed and at risk of burnout.
- **Missed growth opportunities:** Their reluctance to collaborate can lead to missed opportunities for learning, growth, and skill development.
- **Strained relationships:** Their fear of appearing inadequate may lead to strained relationships, as they avoid asking for help and may come across as distant or unapproachable.

Self-Reflection: The Soloist

How closely do you identify with The Soloist? Do you recognise traits within yourself that are consistent with traits held by The Soloist? Why or why not?

Think of a time when you exhibited characteristics or thoughts of The Soloist. Describe the scenario and what positive affirmation would have better helped you cope.

The Natural Genius



Traits:

Quick mastery: These individuals are known for their ability to grasp new concepts easily and excel in various areas. They may have been labelled as exceptionally bright from a young age, creating pressure to consistently perform at a high level.

Fear of failure: Natural genius imposters often have an intense fear of not living up to the expectations placed upon them. They may believe that any sign of struggle or effort will shatter the image of effortless intelligence they have cultivated.

Denial of effort: They may downplay the effort they put into their achievements, attributing their success solely to innate talent rather than hard work. This denial of effort can lead to feelings of fraudulence when faced with challenges.

Inner Dialogue:

"I have to excel effortlessly or else I'll be exposed as a fraud."

"I can't let anyone see me struggle; they expect me to be perfect all the time."

"I should have known this already; it's embarrassing that I'm not getting it right away."

Consequences:

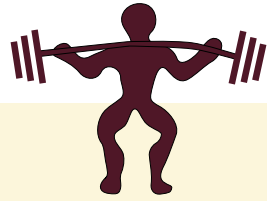
- **Perfectionism and stress:** The pressure to constantly perform at a high level, coupled with the fear of failing to meet expectations, can lead to chronic stress and a relentless pursuit of flawlessness.
- **Procrastination:** A fear of not achieving immediate success may lead natural genius imposters to procrastinate on tasks or avoid challenges that could be perceived as difficult.
- **Impostor syndrome:** Continually attributing success solely to innate talent can lead to feelings of fraudulence and inadequacy, despite evidence of their accomplishments.

Self-Reflection: The Natural Genius

How closely do you identify with The Natural Genius? Do you recognise traits within yourself that are consistent with traits held by The Natural Genius? Why or why not?

Think of a time when you exhibited characteristics or thoughts of The Natural Genius. Describe the scenario and what positive affirmation would have better helped you cope.

The Superman/Superwoman



Traits:

Reliance on independence: The superman type of imposter is characterized by an insistence on handling all tasks and responsibilities without any indication of struggle or vulnerability. This can lead to burnout and a lack of work-life balance.

Overcommitment: They tend to take on an excessive workload in an attempt to prove their capabilities, often saying "yes" to various projects or requests, which can lead to exhaustion and stress.

Suppression of emotions: Superman imposters may avoid expressing any feelings of inadequacy or struggle, believing that they must maintain an appearance of unshakable competence and strength at all times.

Inner Dialogue:

"I have to juggle all these responsibilities perfectly; showing any sign of stress or struggle is a sign of weakness."

"I can't let anyone see that I'm overwhelmed; I have to be the one who has it all together."

"I'll just take on one more thing; I can handle it, no matter how much it adds to my plate."

Consequences:

- **Burnout and exhaustion:** The relentless pursuit of handling everything independently while suppressing emotions can lead to chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and physical fatigue.
- **Strained relationships:** The refusal to ask for help or share vulnerabilities may strain personal and professional relationships, as others may feel disconnected from the person's true emotional state.
- **Decreased mental well-being:** The persistent pressure to maintain an image of invincibility can erode mental well-being, leading to anxiety and feelings of isolation.

Self-Reflection: The Superwoman/Superman

How closely do you identify with The Superwoman/Superman? Do you recognise traits within yourself that are consistent with traits held by The Superwoman/Superman? Why or why not?

Think of a time when you exhibited characteristics or thoughts of The Superwoman/Superman. Describe the scenario and what positive affirmation would have better helped you cope.

Developing the Mindset for Overcoming Imposter Syndrome: Shifting Thoughts

Identify common imposter thoughts you tend to experience in your day-to-day life. Write the thought just as you hear it in your own head in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column, write a more positive, affirming thought with which you can replace the imposter thought.

	Imposter Thought		Positive Thought
Negative Thought #1			
Negative Thought #2			
Negative Thought #3			
Negative Thought #4			
Negative Thought #5			

Notes:

A decorative graphic of various star shapes and sizes in yellow, orange, and red, arranged in a curved path from the top left towards the center.

Part Two: Silencing The Inner Critic

A decorative graphic of various star shapes and sizes in yellow, orange, and red, arranged in a curved path from the bottom right towards the center.

Your Inner Critic

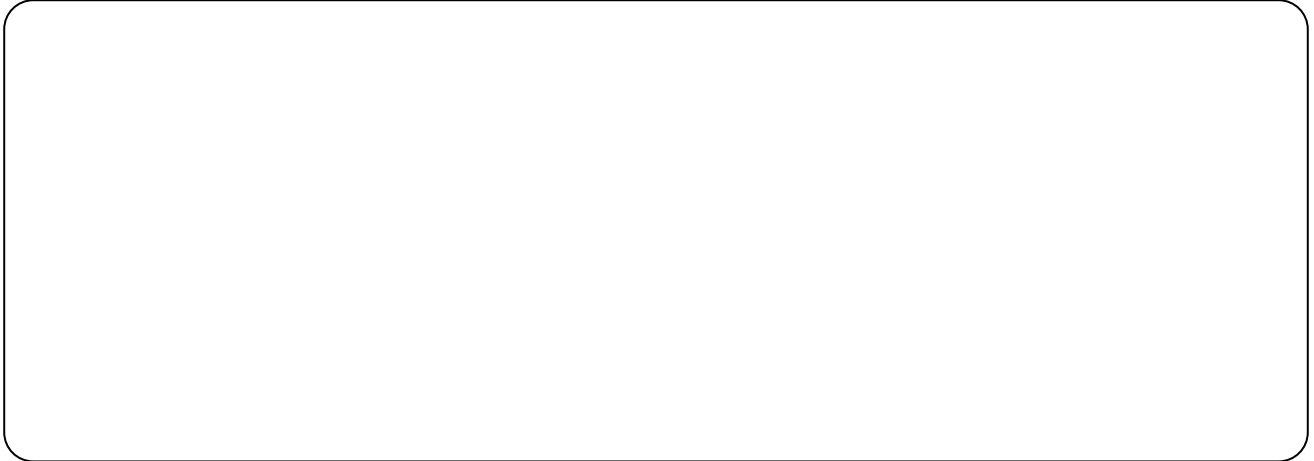
The inner critic is the voice inside your head that constantly critiques and judges your thoughts, actions, and decisions. It can be incredibly harsh and negative, often undermining your self-confidence and causing feelings of doubt and insecurity. This inner critic can make it difficult to trust yourself and can lead to feelings of anxiety and low self-esteem.

Learning how to recognise and manage your inner critic is an important step in building self-compassion and confidence. Finding ways to challenge and reframe negative thoughts can help silence the inner critic and create a more positive, empowering mindset.

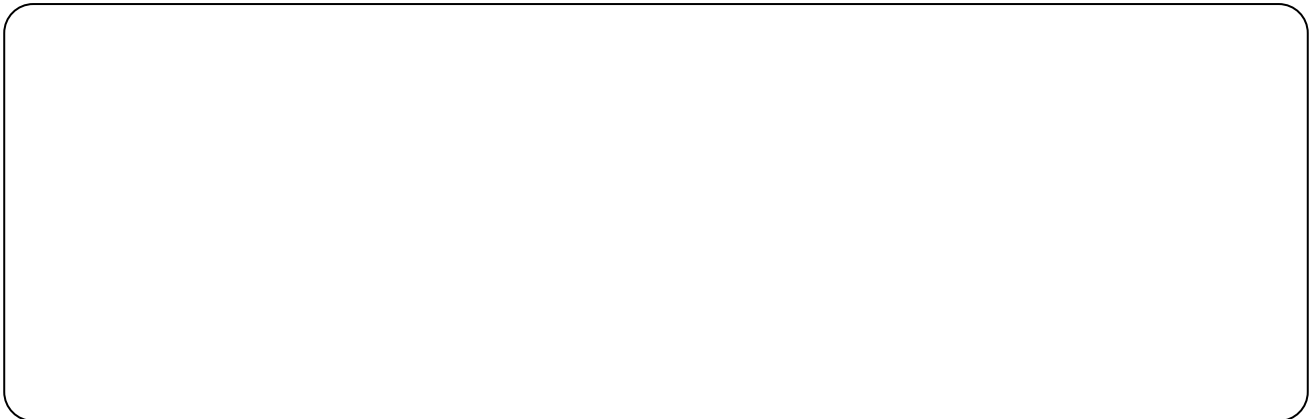
What are some of the most common criticisms you have about yourself?

Reflections on Your Inner Critic

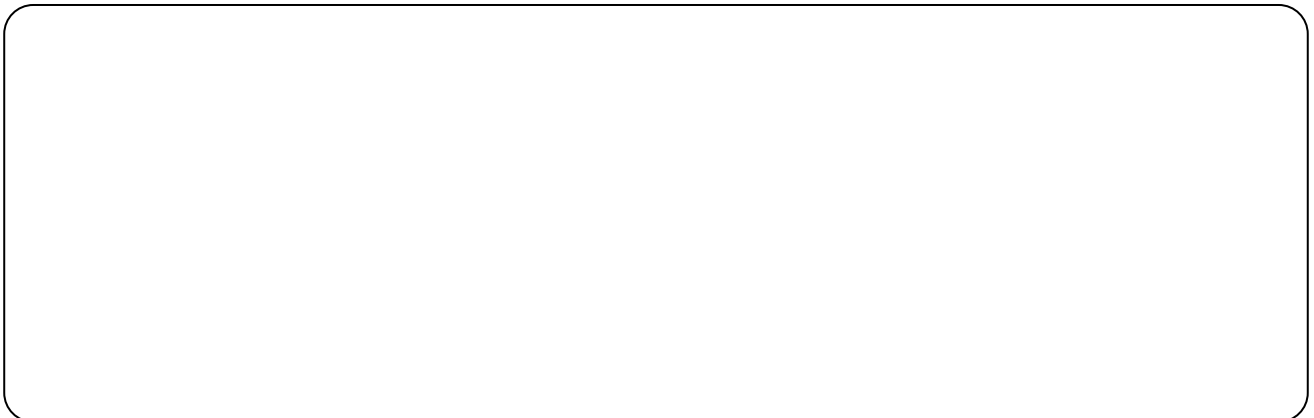
Do you feel your inner critic has a negative impact on your life? Explore in what ways it most commonly tends to affect you.



What do you believe your inner critic has been trying to tell you lately?



If you could get your inner critic's voice under control, what changes do you believe you would see in your life? Identify both good and bad changes.



The 7 Types of Inner Critics

The Perfectionist

1 This inner critic sets impossibly high standards and is quick to criticise any perceived flaws or mistakes. It can make you feel like you're never good enough.

"That's not good enough yet."

The Task Maker

2 This critic pushes you to constantly achieve more and work harder, leading to burnout and feelings of overwhelm. It sets stringent standards and demands constant productivity, often leaving us feeling exhausted and makes it challenging to find a balance between work and rest, leading to burnout.

"Stop being so lazy! You've got to get this done."

The Moulder

3 This critic tries to fit into the mould set for you by your family, culture, and society, making you fearful that if you show your true self, you'll be rejected and left feeling abandoned.

"You're not fitting in and are making a fool of yourself."

The Inner Controller

4 This critic constantly lays down the law when it comes to impulsive behaviour and sets high demands for your behaviour, making you feel as if you slip up, you're just not trying hard enough.

"You're never going to break free from this."

The 7 Types of Inner Critics

The Guilt Tripper

5

This critic is like an overbearing, judgmental companion constantly making you feel guilty and inadequate. This unrelenting critic can create a cycle of self-blame, leading to feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem.

“Why would you do something like that?!”

The Underminer

6

This critic makes you second-guess yourself and your abilities, leading you to doubt your worth and potential. It thrives on pointing out your flaws and shortcomings, often making you feel incapable and inadequate and can leave you feeling hesitant and afraid to take risks, ultimately holding you back from reaching your full potential.

“You’re just going to fail anyway, so why even try?”

The Destroyer

7

This critic attacks your self-worth, leaving a trail of emotional devastation in its wake. It constantly tells you that you're not good enough, unworthy of love and success, and that you will never achieve your goals. This critic is destructive and doesn't hold back in highlighting your perceived flaws and mistakes, leaving you feeling defeated and demoralised, leading to feelings of despair, hopelessness, and a deep sense of inadequacy.

“You’re so stupid and worthless.”

Reflection: The 7 Types of Inner Critics

Refer back to the 7-types of inner critics and reflect on which 2 most sound like your own inner critic. Being as detailed as possible, describe your own behaviors that are consistent with the inner critic you identified.

Inner Critic Type #1

Inner Critic Type #2

Behaviours Exemplified

Behaviours Exemplified

Signs of The Inner Critic

Being too self-critical can manifest in a variety of ways, often leading to personal distress and a negative impact on mental well-being. Here are some examples:

Harshly judging your own appearance, body shape, or weight, leading to low self-esteem and body image issues.

Constantly dwelling on past mistakes and feeling a deep sense of regret, impacting your ability to move forward and find peace.

Holding yourself to unrealistic standards of achievement, leading to feelings of inadequacy and persistent self-doubt.

Always seeking validation and approval from others, rather than recognising one's own worth and capabilities.

Blaming yourself for any perceived failure or setback, leading to a cycle of self-loathing and emotional turmoil.

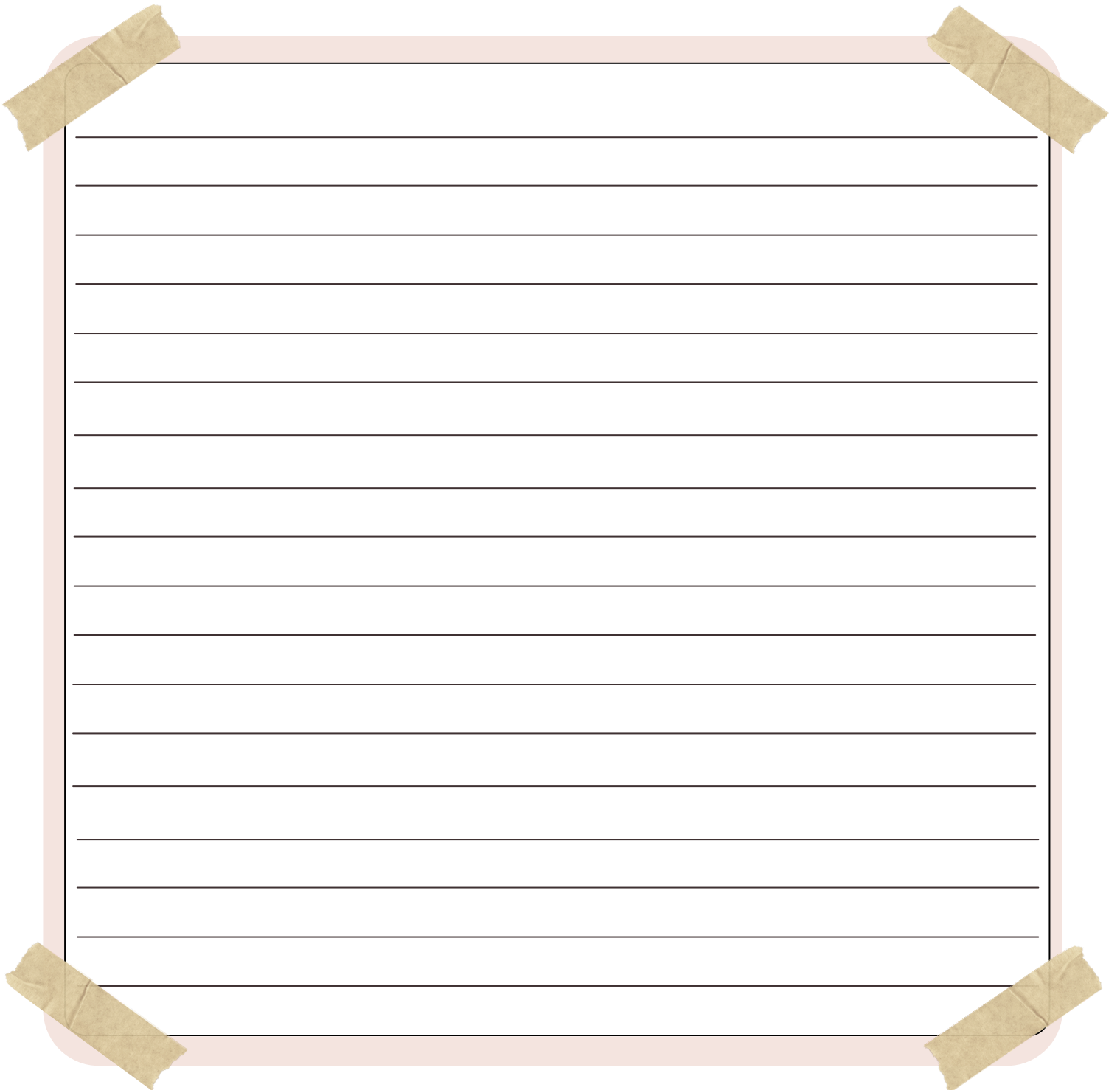
Difficulty accepting compliments or positive feedback due to a deep-seated belief that you're unworthy or undeserving.

Crippling fear of failure, which can prevent you from taking risks and striving for personal growth.

Feeling an overwhelming sense of guilt for taking time for yourself and practicing self-care, leading to neglect of personal well-being.

Reflection: Signs of The Inner Critic

Looking back to the signs of the inner critic on the previous page, spend some time reflecting on your experience with each of these signs. Which one resonates the most with you? Why? Do any of these signs NOT sound at all like you? Why or why not?



A large rectangular area with a light pink border and horizontal lines, designed for reflection. It is decorated with four pieces of torn brown paper tape at the corners.

Getting to Know Your Inner Critic

According to most psychologists, our inner critics take root during childhood, and our early experiences contribute to the development of these internal voices. Often, the negative voices originate from our parents or primary caregivers. We unknowingly absorb the adverse attitudes they have toward themselves and us. Our interactions with peers, siblings, and influential adults can also shape these inner voices.

When you think back to your early life experiences, can you think of anything that might suggest how your inner critic was formed?



Thinking back to the past week or month, what are some thoughts you've had where you've minimised or downplayed an accomplishment, or outright dismissed your pain, needs, or rights?

Getting to Know Your Inner Critic Continued

How significant has your inner critic been throughout your life? Has it gotten worse or intensified over the years? In what ways?



What are 3 powerful things you could say to your inner critic if you were standing in front of them?

Statement #1

Statement #2

Statement #3

Asserting Control Over Your Inner Critic: How It Behaves

Makes You Think It's Your Conscience

The inner critic is like that little voice in your head that pretends to be your conscience. It constantly criticises and judges your every thought and action, making you feel guilty and unworthy. It tells you that you're not good enough, smart enough, or worthy of love and success, which can damage your self-esteem and confidence.

Breeds Doubt and Attacks Your Authentic Self

Your inner critic attacks your authentic self by making you doubt your abilities and worth. It constantly compares you to others, making you feel inadequate and insecure. It undermines your sense of self-worth and prevents you from expressing your true thoughts and emotions. This can lead to feelings of imposter syndrome and a fear of failure, as you constantly feel like you're not living up to your true potential.

Chips Away At Your Relationships

The inner critic can also harm your relationships by creating insecurities and doubts about your worthiness of love and acceptance. It can make you over-analyse and catastrophise situations, leading to unnecessary conflict and misunderstandings with others. It also makes it difficult to fully trust and connect with others, as you're constantly questioning their intentions and your own self-worth in the relationship.

Asserting Control Over Your Inner Critic: Critic vs. Champion

Inner Critic

The voice that makes you think negative thoughts and keeps you feeling small and defeated

Traits

- Creates pervasive doubts about one's abilities and worth
- Perpetuates unattainable standards and excessive self-criticism
- Feeds self-defeating and belittling thoughts, undermining confidence and self-esteem
- Hypercritical, finding fault with even minor imperfections or perceived failures
- Breeds an intense fear of making mistakes or falling short, leading to avoidance of challenges
- Promotes negative comparisons with others, leading to feelings of inadequacy
- Perpetuates feelings of shame and guilt

Inner Champion

The voice that encourages positive thoughts, mindset, and actions with confidence

Traits

- Positive and supportive self-talk, offering words of encouragement and motivation
- Develops a sense of kindness and understanding towards oneself
- Promotes self-confidence and belief in one's abilities and potential for growth
- Encourages a resilient mindset
- Uses positive affirmations to counter self-doubt and negative self-talk
- Creates a sense of empowerment, helping you take control of your thoughts and actions
- Encourages a growth mindset, focusing on learning and improvement rather than fixed limitations

Asserting Control Over Your Inner Critic: Exercise

We often allow our concerns, doubts, and fears to take over our mindset before we're able to consciously shut them down. Arming yourself with responses that positively resonate with you ahead of time will help you reframe the negative thoughts in the moment.

Voice of the Inner Critic	Voice of the Inner Champion
<u>Negative self-talk that keeps you small</u> Ex: I could never start my own business - I'm scared people will see me fail.	<u>Positive self-talk for a growth mindset</u> Ex: You've always dreamed of becoming your own boss. You're willing to take chances that others are too scared to do!

Reducing Negative Self-Talk

Questioning Your Thoughts

When you catch yourself engaging in negative self-talk, take a moment to ask yourself if those thoughts are really true. Challenge them with evidence to the contrary and look for more balanced, realistic perspectives. By questioning the validity of your critical thoughts, you can start to shift your mindset and form a more positive self-image.

Distancing Yourself

When you notice yourself engaging in self-criticism, try to imagine those thoughts as coming from a separate person, not from your own mind. By creating this mental distance, you can begin to see those thoughts as separate from your true self, making it easier to dismiss them and replace them with more positive, affirming ones.

Growing in Mindfulness

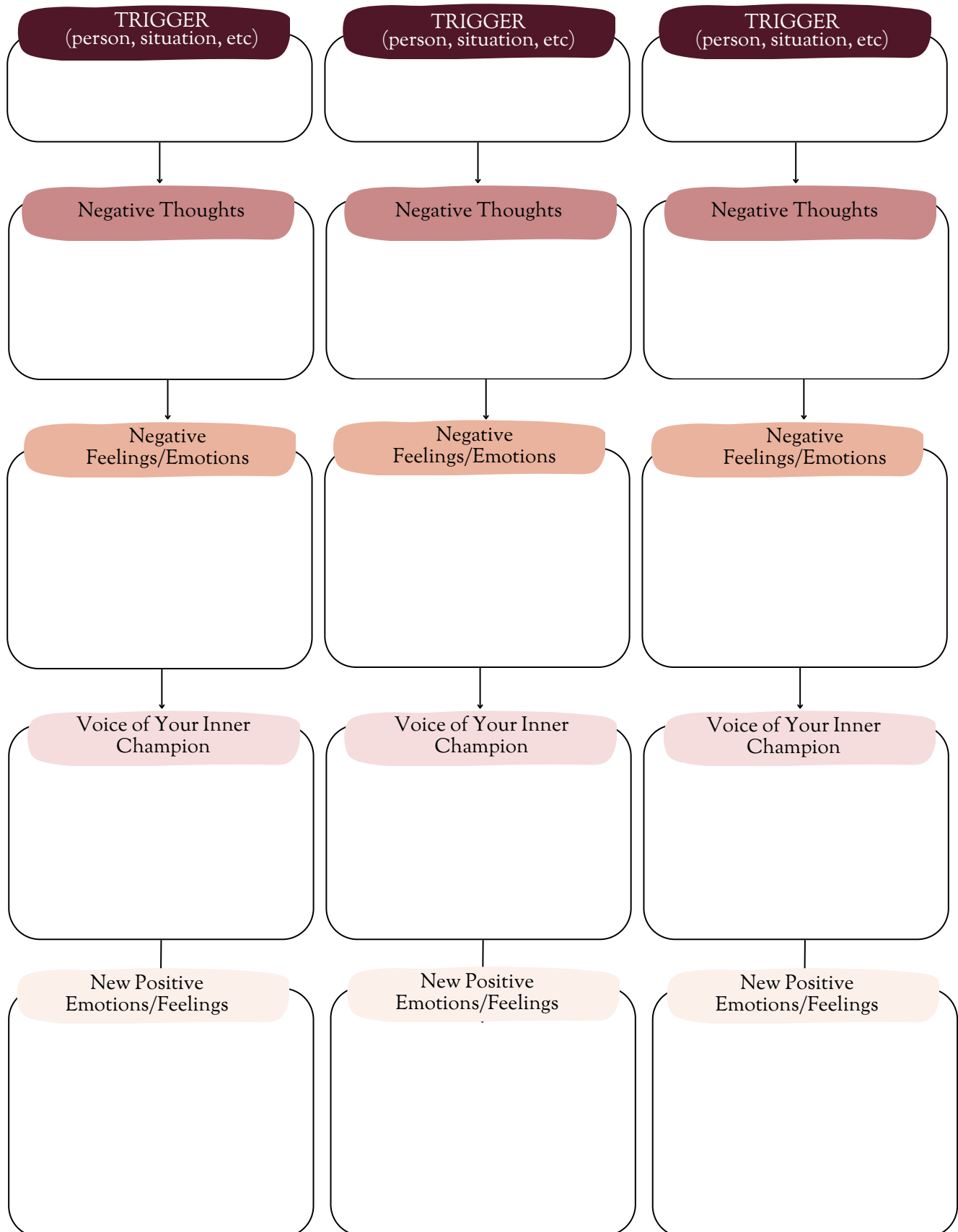
By being mindful, you can become more aware of your thoughts and feelings without judgment. This can help you observe your self-critical thoughts from a place of detachment, allowing you to let them go more easily and focus on the present moment. Additionally, mindfulness can help you cultivate self-compassion and acceptance, which are essential for combating self-criticism.

Embracing the Power of “YET”

Instead of saying "I can't do this," try saying "I can't do this yet." By adding "yet" to the end of your self-critical statements, you acknowledge that you are a work in progress and that with time, effort, and practice, you can achieve your goals. This small shift in language can make a big difference in how you view yourself and your abilities.

Confronting Your Inner Critic

Work through the following flowchart to confront, challenge, and shift your inner critic toward a more empowering, positive mindset.



Negative Self-Talk Inventory

Record the negative thoughts you have throughout the day and record them on this inventory sheet. Then, determine whether the thought is True or False.

[illegible]

Negative Self-Talk Inventory

Reflection

In reviewing your Negative Self-Talk Inventory, what do you believe you're being most critical about? Why do you think that is?

When you think about what makes you "worthy", what comes to mind? List your achievements, strengths, and positive qualities that you like about yourself.

A decorative graphic of various star shapes and sizes in yellow, orange, and pink, arranged in a curved path from the top left towards the center.

Part Three:

Shifting To An Empowered, Positive Mindset

A decorative graphic of various star shapes and sizes in yellow, orange, and pink, arranged in a curved path from the bottom right towards the center.

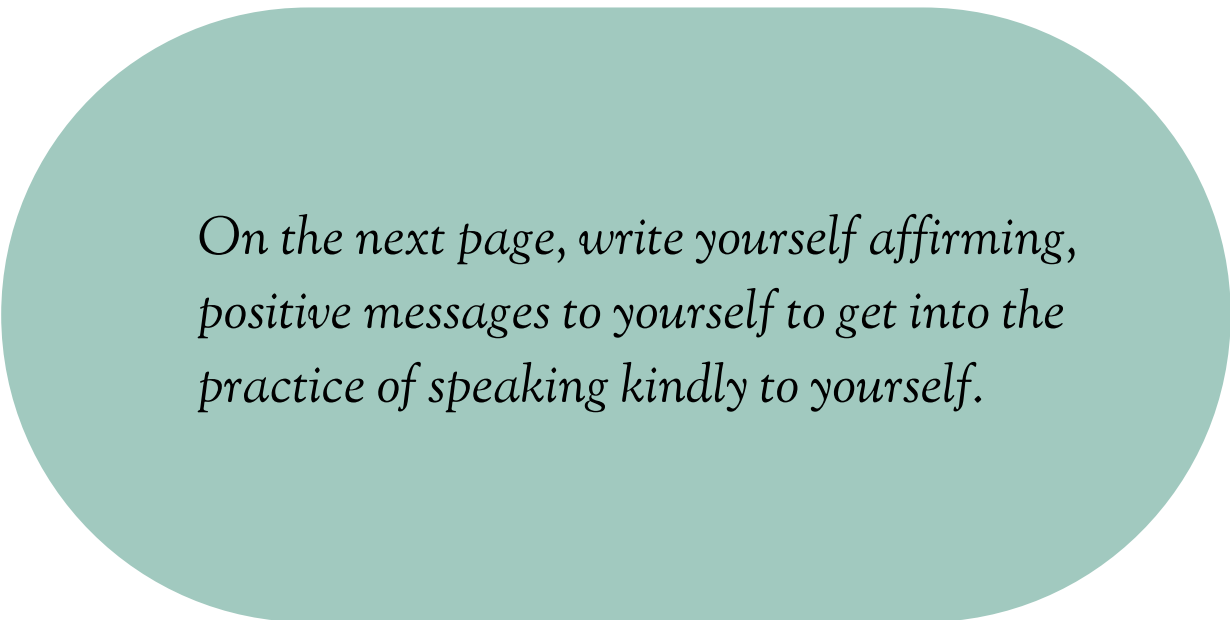
Speaking Kindly To Yourself

Speaking kindly to yourself is incredibly important for your mental and emotional well-being. When you use positive self-talk, you nurture healthy self-esteem, while negative self-talk can lead to increased stress and anxiety. By speaking kindly to yourself, you promote a more positive and resilient mindset, enabling you to navigate life's challenges with confidence and optimism.

Additionally, speaking kindly to yourself enhances your ability to cope with setbacks and failures. Instead of berating yourself, showing forgiveness and understanding allows you to bounce back and learn from experiences.

Moreover, speaking kindly to yourself can improve your relationships with others, leading to stronger, more fulfilling connections and a positive impact on your community.

In summary, practising self-compassion and self-kindness has far-reaching benefits for your mental, emotional, and social well-being. It is an essential aspect of personal growth and overall well-being.



On the next page, write yourself affirming, positive messages to yourself to get into the practice of speaking kindly to yourself.

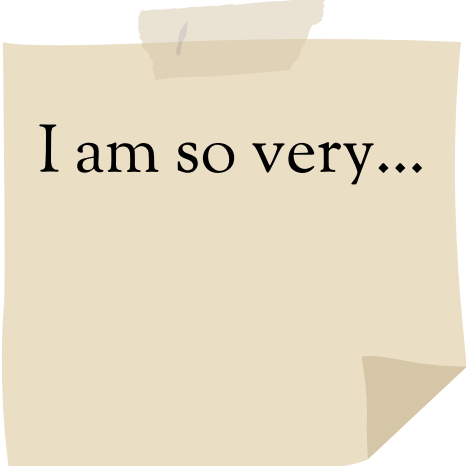
Speaking Kindly To Yourself



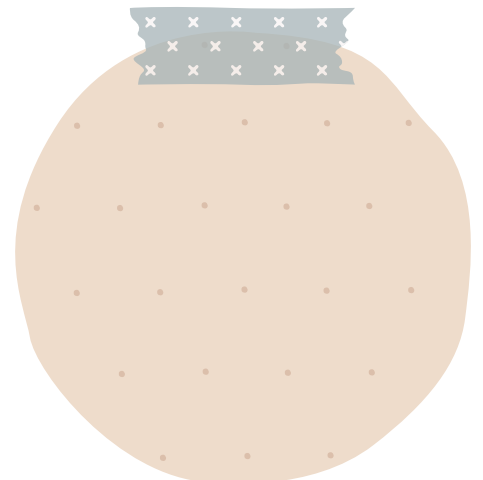
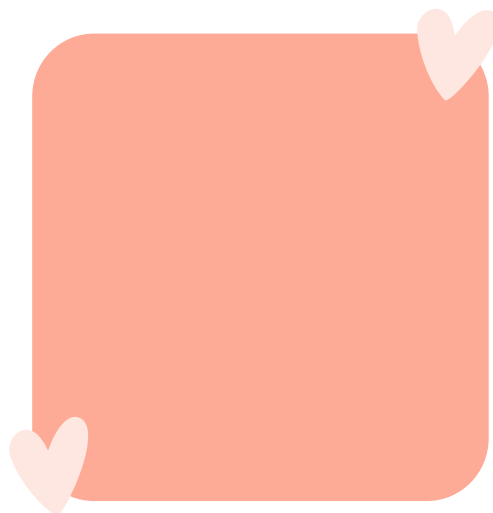
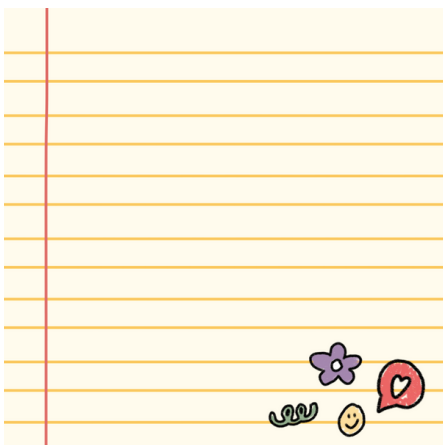
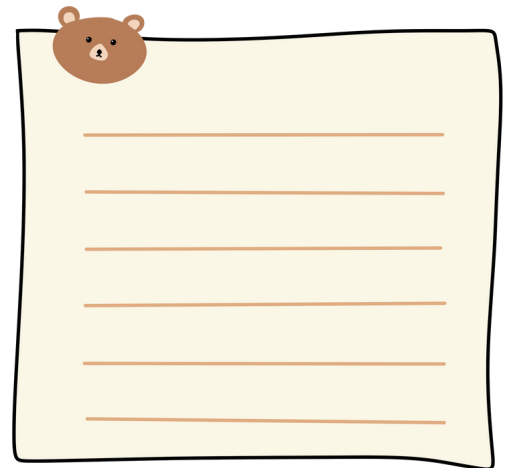
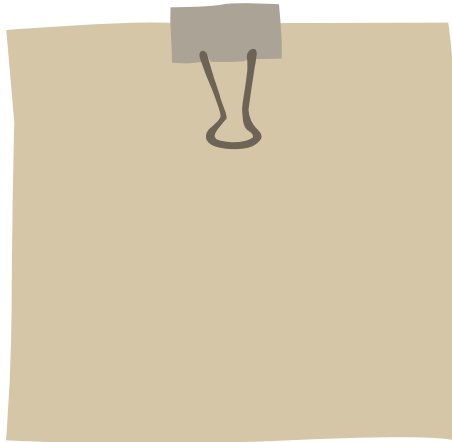
I am good at...



I like the
way I...



I am so very...



Embrace the Power of "YET"

Embracing the power of "yet" can bring about a powerful shift in mindset. When you adopt the mindset of **"I haven't achieved this yet,"** instead of **"I can't do this,"** you open yourself up to endless possibilities. This shift in perspective can lead to increased motivation, resilience, and empowerment. Instead of feeling defeated by your current limitations, you understand that they are temporary and can be overcome with effort and perseverance.

Growth Mindset

When you believe that your abilities and intelligence are not fixed, but can be developed through dedication and hard work, you become more open to learning and taking on new challenges. Instead of viewing failure as a permanent setback, you see it as an opportunity for growth and improvement. This mindset can lead to increased confidence, creativity, and a willingness to step outside of your comfort zone.

Success & Achievement

When you believe in your ability to grow and develop, you are more likely to persevere in the face of setbacks and challenges. This can lead to greater achievement in both personal and professional pursuits. By embracing the power of "yet," you become more resilient and willing to put in the effort necessary to reach your goals.

Optimism

Instead of focusing on what you haven't achieved, you shift your focus to what is possible in the future. This can lead to increased happiness, satisfaction, and fulfillment. By embracing the power of "yet," you open yourself up to a world of endless possibilities and potential for growth and success.

Embrace the Power of “YET”

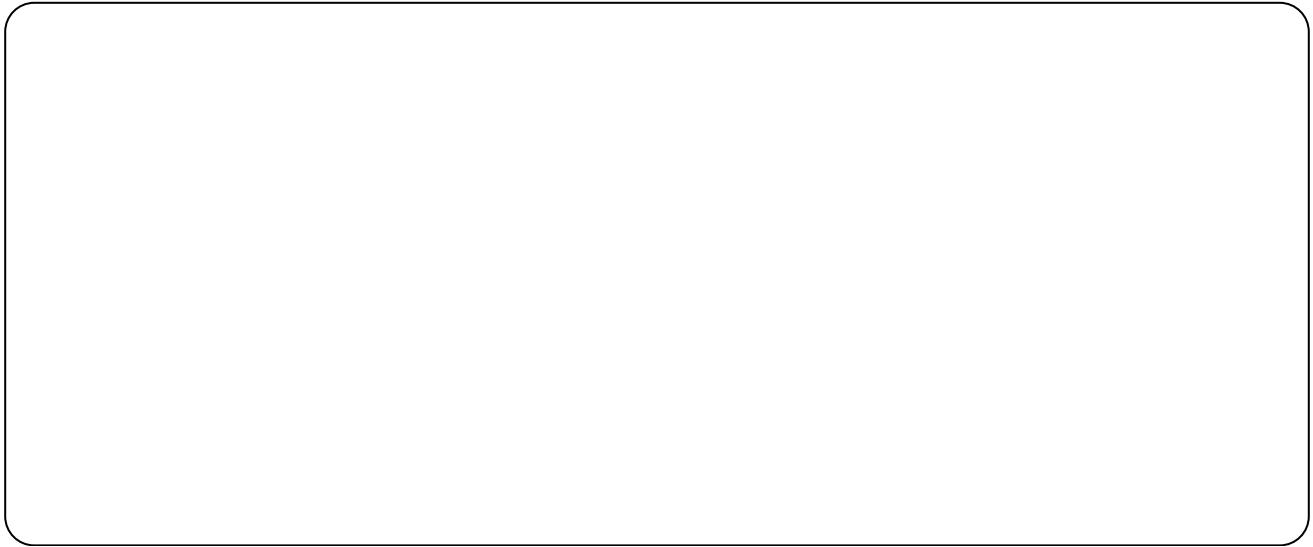
Brainstorm a list of things that you are able to reframe with an empowering YET!

[illegible]

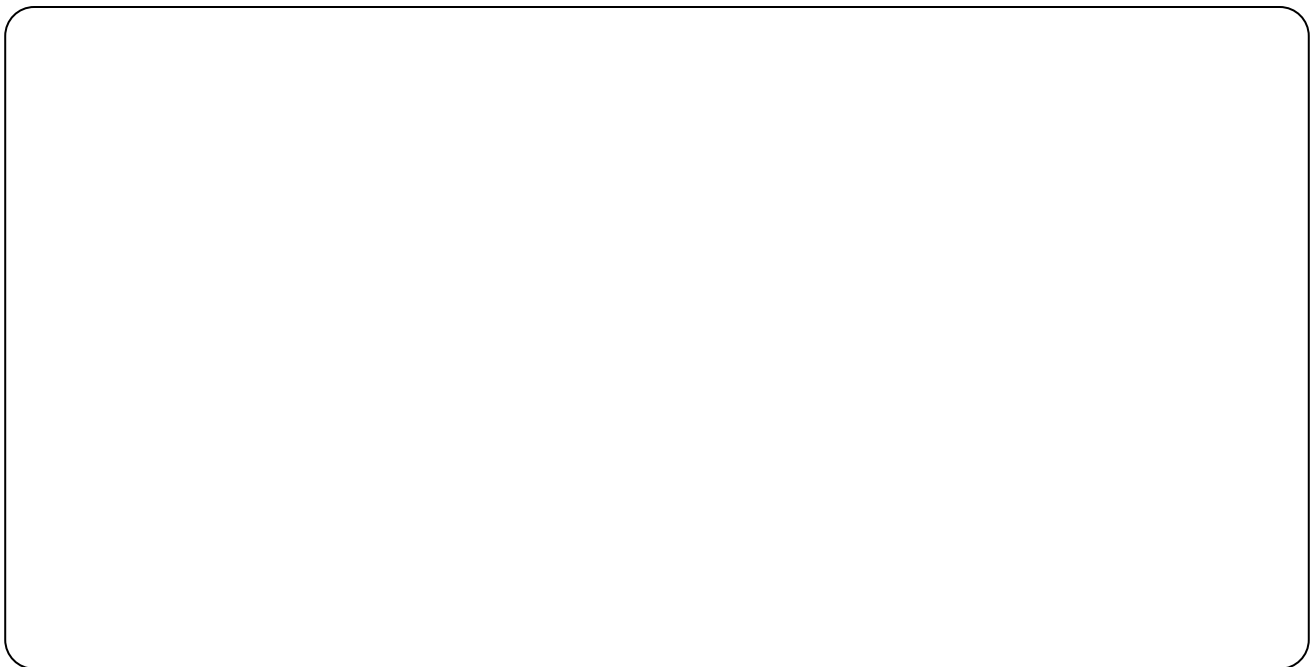
Drawing Out a Positive Self-Perception

Reflect on the following questions and answer honestly, and without judgment.

Draw a picture of how you see yourself right now, in this moment below.



Draw a picture of how you WANT to see yourself in the FUTURE.



Revealing The Truth: Building a Positive Self-Perception

What are some unkind things you think about yourself?

Evaluate how true are these thoughts in reality?



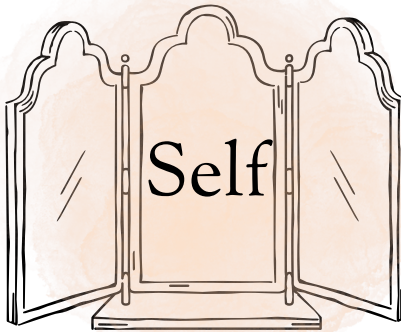
Notes:

Shaping a 360° Self-Perception

Outside

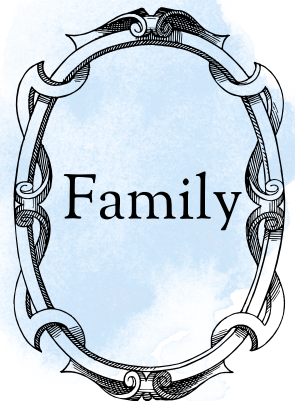






Inside





Evaluation of Your Unique Strengths

Make a list of all your STRENGTHS

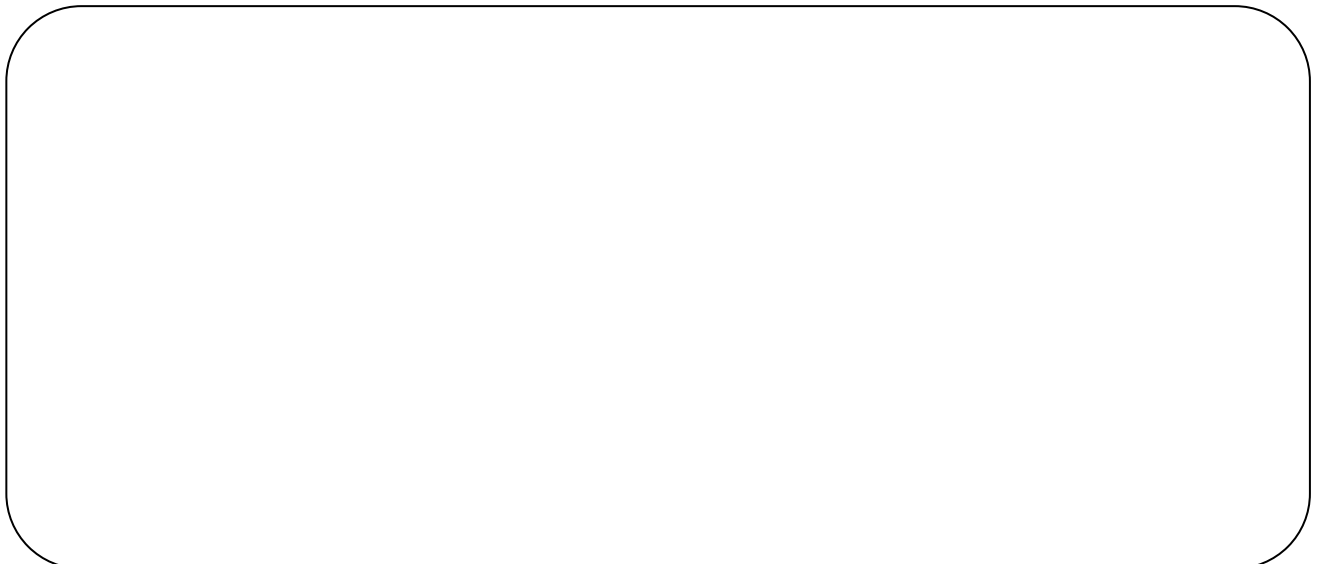
Which of your strengths help you achieve success or personal growth? Can you give a specific example of when you demonstrated this strength?

Evaluation of Your Unique Strengths

Which of these strengths have helped you in your close relationships? Can you describe a specific example of when you used this strength?

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the first question.

Which strengths would you like to see continued development over the next few months? What can you do to help facilitate your development in this area?

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the second question.

Daily Positive Affirmations and Self-Care

Today's Date:

Positive Affirmations:



Things I'm Grateful For:



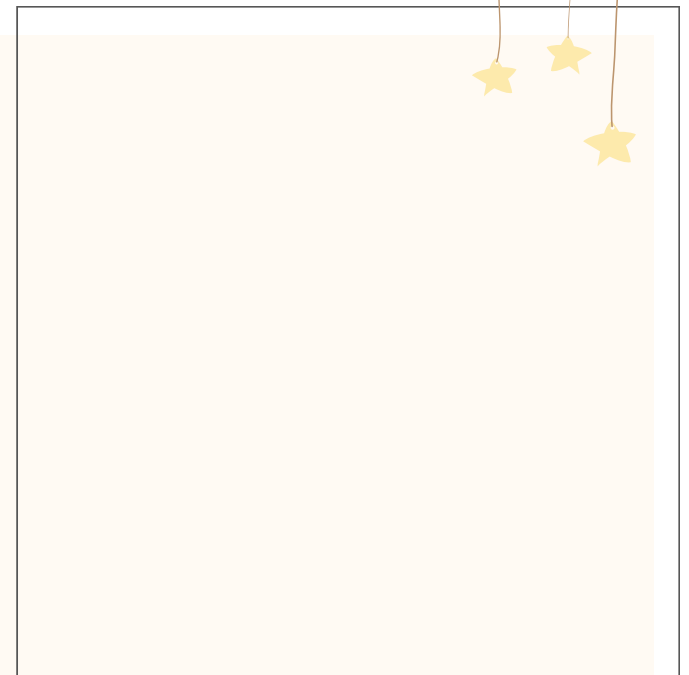
List specific self-care activities that will be easy for you to do today:



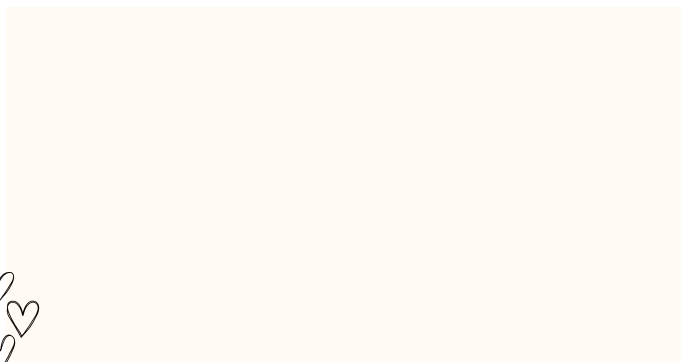
*Things That Surprised Me Today
(positive or negative):*



Notes:



Signs of Resilience Demonstrated:



A decorative graphic of various colored stars and sparkles in shades of yellow, orange, and pink, arranged in a curved arc above the title.

Part Four:

Goal Setting to Overcome Imposter Syndrome

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Setting Goals and Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

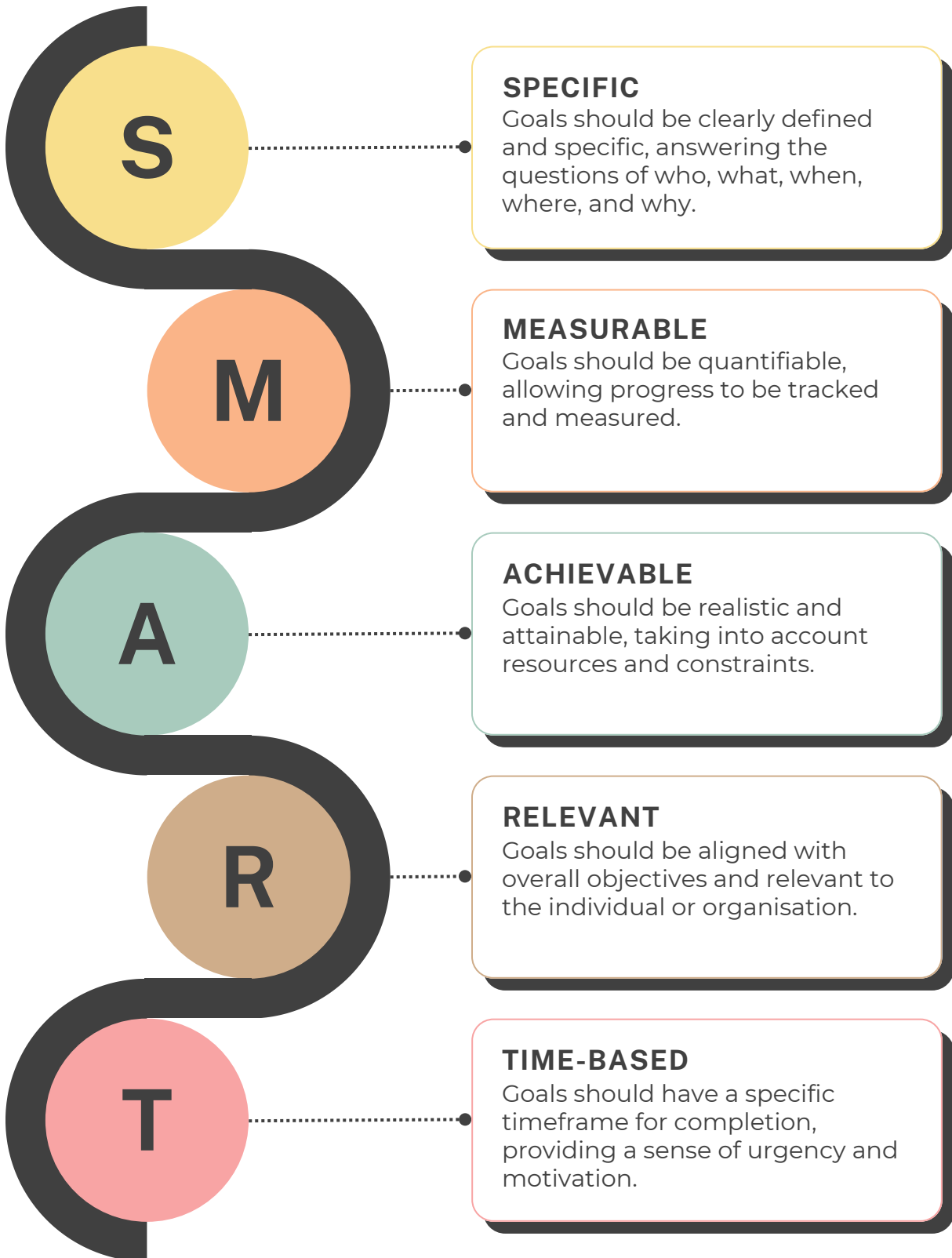
Setting clear, achievable goals can provide a sense of direction and purpose, helping boost confidence and combat the feelings of inadequacy often associated with imposter syndrome.

One method of goal setting that has been proven effective is the concept of **SMART goals** – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. By setting these types of goals, you can create a road map for success that is realistic and helps you overcome imposter syndrome.

When setting goals to overcome imposter syndrome, it's important to really examine the underlying beliefs and fears that are contributing to feelings of inadequacy and then setting goals that directly challenge these negative thoughts. This might include setting goals that push you out of your comfort zone, or goals that allow you to showcase your skills and talents in a public setting. By deliberately confronting the areas that are causing self-doubt, you can gradually build your confidence and overcome imposter syndrome.

Additionally, setting long-term goals can provide a sense of purpose and direction. By establishing clear objectives for the future, you can create a sense of stability and assurance that can combat the uncertainty and self-doubt that come with imposter syndrome. Long-term goals can also serve as a reminder of past successes and achievements, providing evidence to debunk the negative thoughts associated with feeling like a fraud.

SMART Goals



Setting SMART Goals to Overcome Imposter Syndrome

Define your specific goals as they relate to overcoming imposter syndrome. Include all areas of your life: professional, personal, relationships, etc.

	Goal #1	Goal #2	Goal #3
S Smart			
M Measurable			
A Achievable			
R Relevant			
T Time-Bound			

Construct Your Strategy For Achieving The Goals You've Set

Determine the best course of action for achieving your goals. Use the space below to plan the actions you will take. Be sure to address any possible imposter thoughts that might come up and provide an affirmation that will help you get through it.

Goal & Action Step	Imposter Thoughts

*Positive
Affirmation*

--

Notes:

.....

Goal & Action Step	Imposter Thoughts

*Positive
Affirmation*

--

Notes:

.....

Construct Your Strategy For Achieving The Goals You've Set

<i>Goal & Action Step</i>	<i>Imposter Thoughts</i>

*Positive
Affirmation*

--

Notes:

.....

<i>Goal & Action Step</i>	<i>Imposter Thoughts</i>

*Positive
Affirmation*

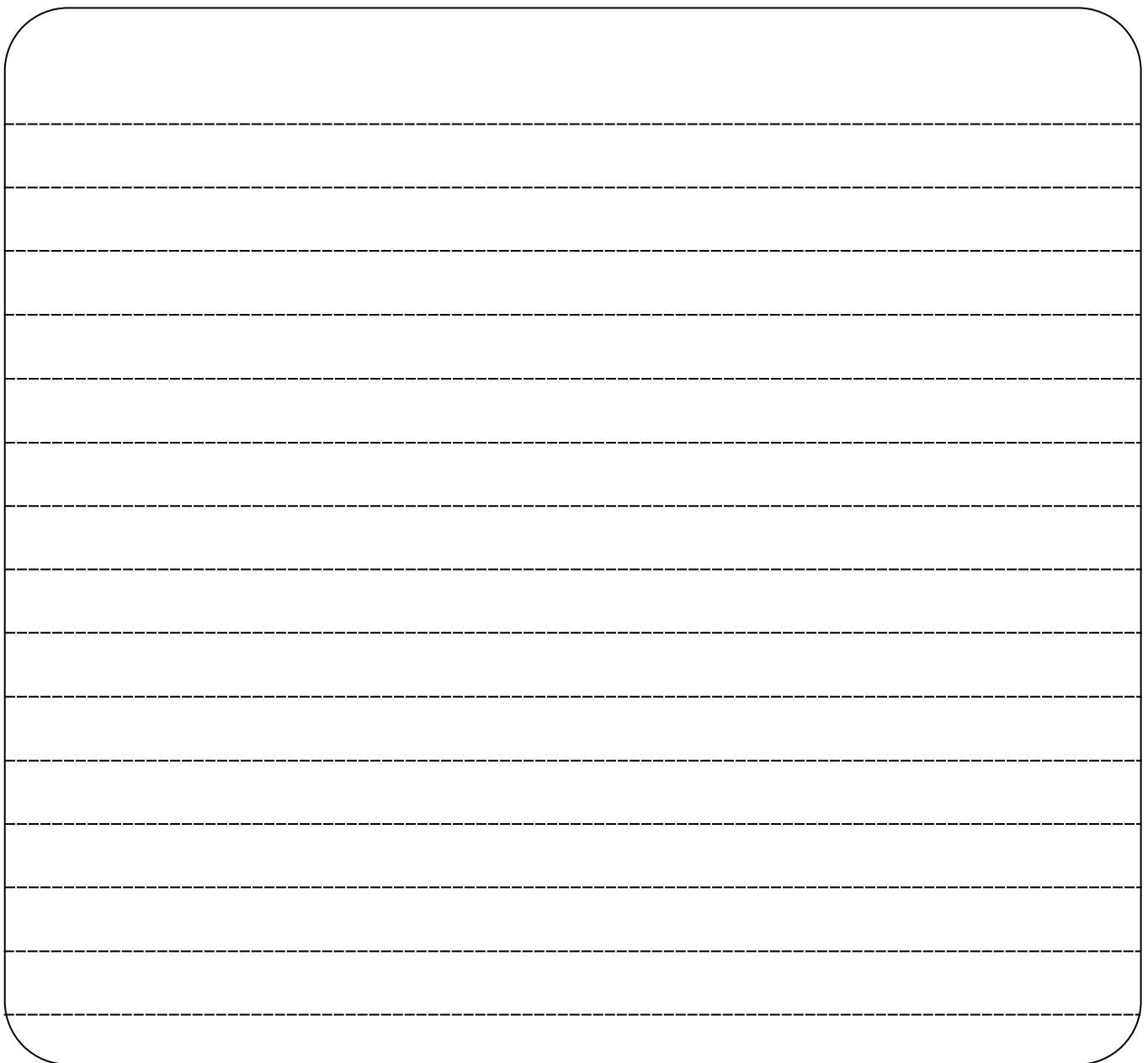
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Notes:

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Personal Reflection on Goal Setting

What feelings came up for you as you were identifying and setting goals for the future? Did you experience any imposter thoughts? Explore (without judgment) where you are with your mindset right now, and where you want to be soon.



A large, rounded rectangular box with a solid black border and rounded corners. Inside the box, there are 15 horizontal dashed lines for writing.

NOTES:

[illegible]



Nicola Richardson is The People Mentor, though she'll be the first to tell you she didn't start out as some naturally gifted leader. After 33 years in management, including leading teams of over 70 people in the Civil Service, she's learned that leadership skills aren't innate gifts; they're learnable, practical tools. And that feeling of "I have no idea what I'm doing"? She's been there more times than she can count.

Today, Nicola helps overwhelmed managers and leaders aged 25-55 transform their most dreaded workplace conversations into opportunities for growth.

Through her COMPASS Conversation Model and programmes like The Manager's Academy and Catalyst Conversations, she teaches leaders that handling difficult conversations doesn't require perfection; it requires courage, structure, and a willingness to be human. Because here's the thing: that voice telling you that you're not good enough at this? It's lying. You just need the right tools and someone who gets it to show you the way.

When she's not mentoring leaders through their Sunday night anxiety about Monday's difficult conversations, you'll find Nicola creating content across podcasts, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

Learn more at thepeoplementor.co.uk