

Master Your Inner Critic

Recognizing the inner critic and building an inner coach

Research-informed use. Self-compassion practices are promising supports, not cures. Self-care does not substitute for medical care, supervision, workload change, safety, or social and organizational support.

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

A client workbook on the inner critic: what it is and where it comes from, the seven types of inner critic, signs of being too self-critical, inner critic versus inner coach, thought records, a breathing exercise, the power of yet, mindset shifts, the circle of control, acts of kindness and gratitude practices.

The pages that follow reproduce the original handout exactly as published, placed inside the library frame. Nothing has been re-typed, reflowed or reconstructed, so worksheets, diagrams and forms print as designed. The header of each page names the source page it carries.

HOW TO USE IT

The seven critics on page 5 give clients language fast. Follow with the inner coach rewrite on page 12.

AT A GLANCE

AUDIENCE	Client Resource
FORMAT	Multi-page reference
FAMILY	self-compassion · self-care · burnout
PAGES	29 in this edition · 28 original pages

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Page numbers refer to this edition.



ALL ABOUT ME

Name _____ Nickname _____

Star sign _____ D.O.B _____

Favourite Foods







Favourite songs







If I won a million dollars, what would I do with it?

Words that describe me.







In my spare time i like to.







A QUOTE THAT INSPIRES ME IS.



WHAT IS THE INNER CRITIC?

“YOUR INNER CRITIC IS SIMPLY A PART OF YOU THAT NEEDS MORE SELF-LOVE.”

Amy Leigh Mercurie



WHAT IS THE INNER CRITIC?

The inner critic is that voice inside our heads that constantly criticizes us, puts us down, diminishes us, and is demanding, hostile, and harsh. We all have an inner critic. However, they can vary in degrees, with some being so powerful t

hat it sabotages a happy and meaningful life. It is a well-integrated pattern of thinking that undermines our ability to interpret ourselves, our surroundings, and events realistically. When our inner critic gains strength, it can affect our mental well-being, resulting in low self-esteem, confidence, and negative evaluations of ourselves.

WHERE DOES THE INNER CRITIC COME FROM?

The inner critic is developed in childhood from our unknowingly internalizing early experiences. It has been said that the inner critic is formed when we are very young and is often a reflection of how our primary caregivers or significant people speak to us. For example, if you were always told that you were not good enough, then when you get older, your inner critic will also belittle you and tell you that you will never be good enough. Thus, our inner critic is shaped by external factors that ultimately define how we speak to ourselves.

SIGNS THAT YOUR TOO SELF CRITICAL

- You're a perfectionist
- You're terrified of failing
- You're overly responsible
- You crave control
- You ruminate
- Your self-talk is negative
- You have low self-esteem
- You're easily annoyed or frustrated with yourself
- You feel undesirable
- You're insecure
- You often avoid expressing your own opinion

SELF-COMPASSION IS REALLY RECOGNISING WHAT IT IS TO BE
HUMAN: WHAT OUR BASIC NEEDS ARE



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IN YOUR OWN WORDS, HOW WOULD YOU EXPLAIN WHAT YOUR INNER CRITIC IS?

HAS YOUR INNER CRITIC HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE?

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, WITH 1 BEING NOT AT ALL AND 10 BEING VERY STRONG. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE STRENGTH OF YOUR INNER CRITIC? WHY?

IF YOU COULD MAKE YOUR INNER CRITIC VANISH, WHAT CHANGES IN YOURSELF WOULD YOU NOTICE?



THE 7 INNER CRITICS

THE 7 TYPES OF INNER CRITIC – WHICH ONE(S) DO YOU RECOGNISE?

Several different types of inner critics try to manipulate our behavior. You may identify with more than just one type, and it's entirely subjective and different for everyone.

THE PERFECTIONIST

- Sets high unobtainable standards.
- Wants everything to be perfect.
- Has difficulty saying something is complete and letting it go out to represent your best work.
- "You will never do it right."

THE UNDERMINER

- Undermines your self-confidence and abilities, so you stay small and don't take risks.
- Attacks your self-worth so that you don't take chances where you could be hurt or rejected.
- "You're worthless."

THE GUILT-TRIPPER

- Criticizes you for past wrongdoings.
- Is stuck in the past and unable to forgive yourself.
- It tries to protect you from repeating past mistakes.
- "You will regret this for the rest of your life."

THE MOLDER

- Tries to get you to fit a particular shape or standard.
- Fears of showing your true self will lead to rejection and abandonment.
- It wants you to be liked and admired and protect yourself from being abandoned, shamed, or rejected.

THE DESTROYER

- Attacks your self-worth.
- Shames you and makes you feel inherently flawed.
- Makes you believe that you shouldn't exist.
- "You should have never been born."

THE TASKMASTER

- Pushes you to keep going and fears that if you stop, you will become lazy or others will judge you as a failure.
- Wants you to work hard and be successful.
- Will do whatever it takes to get you to work as hard as possible

THE INNER CONTROLLER

- Tries to control your impulses around eating, drinking, spending, and sex.
- Is harsh and shaming.
- "You did it again... Shame on you!"
- "You have no willpower."



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WHEN YOU REFLECT ON YOUR EARLY LIFE EXPERIENCES, IS THERE ANYTHING THAT SUGGESTS HOW YOUR INNER CRITIC WAS FORMED?

HAS YOUR INNER CRITIC ALWAYS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN YOUR LIFE, OR IS IT SOMETHING THAT HAS GOTTEN WORSE OVER TIME?

THE INNER CRITIC CAN BE A GREAT SOURCE OF STRESS AND SELF-SABOTAGE. CAN YOU LIST EXAMPLES OF WHEN IT HAS CAUSED YOU STRESS OR SELF-SABOTAGE?

IF YOU COULD TALK TO YOUR INNER CRITIC RIGHT NOW, WHAT IS SOME POWERFUL WORDS YOU WOULD SAY TO STAND UP TO IT?



SIGNS THAT YOU'RE TOO SELF-CRITICAL

TICK THE INNER CRITIC TRAITS THAT RELATE TO YOU

Insecurity

- An overriding feeling of inadequacy
- A lack of self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth
- Like they are unable or ill-equipped to cope with stressors
- Generally uncertain about the world
- Anxious about their relationships with others

A perfectionist

- You expect perfection from everyone
- You struggle to complete tasks
- You view mistakes as evidence that your inadequate
- You avoid things in which you think you might fail
- You can't celebrate your success
- Your self-worth depends on your achievement

Terrified of failing

- You worry that things will go wrong
- Procrastination to avoid work
- Assigned tasks cause anxiety and panic
- Unnecessary rationalization when something goes wrong
- Feelings of constant fatigue and tardiness due to a lack of motivation

Overly responsible

- Have an overscheduled life
- Taking responsibility for other people's mistakes
- You like to please other people
- You won't ask for help
- You prioritize others
- You often feel like it's your job to do things

Control

- You believe you are 100% responsible for your success
- You invest a lot of time into trying to convince other people to change
- You have trouble maintaining meaningful relationships
- You spend a lot of energy trying to prevent bad things from happening
- You don't delegate tasks

Rumination

- Focusing on a problem for more than a few minutes
- Feeling worse than you started out feeling
- No movement toward accepting and moving on
- No closer to a viable solution

Negative self-talk

- You magnify the negative aspects of a situation and filter out all of the positive ones
- When something bad occurs, you automatically blame yourself
- You automatically anticipate the worst
- You are constantly putting yourself down

Low self-esteem

- Say negative things and be critical of yourself
- Joking about yourself in a negative way
- Focusing on your negatives and ignoring your achievements
- You blame yourself when things go wrong
- You think that other people are better than you

Self frustration

- You're always irritable and stressed
- You put yourself down over small things
- Lose your temper a lot
- You give up on tasks
- You have lost interest in the things that you once enjoyed

Undesirable feelings

- You are surprised when someone gives you a compliment
- You don't believe people when they give you a compliment
- You don't like the person you see in the mirror
- You wish you looked better



REFLECTION

After looking at the list of the seven inner critics, could you reflect on your inner critic and write down how you fit into one or more of those types?
Could you try and give real-life examples of your behavior?

Now, reflect on the self critical list. Is there anything that you feel you can relate to with your behaviour?



INNER CRITIC VS INNER COACH

YOUR INNER CRITIC SOUNDS LIKE	YOUR INNER COACH SOUNDS LIKE
Critical and cautious Focuses only on the negative Emotional and Judgmental Unfriendly and mean Depressing Destructive thoughts Focuses on problems	Supportive and encouraging Hopeful and focuses on the possibilities Objective and open Looks towards the future rather than focusing on the past Friendly and neutral Provides energy, rest and relief
THE ROLE OF YOUR INNER CRITIC	THE ROLE OF YOUR INNER COACH
The role of your inner critic is to help protect you from threats. It consistently holds you back by reminding you of, - Your biggest fears - Things that can potentially hurt you - Disappointments from your past - Limiting beliefs about your future "I couldn't do that job in the past. Therefore I'll never be able to do it in the future."	The role of your inner coach is to see what you can become. It helps you by encouraging you to, - Try new things - Learn and grow - Practice self-care and self-love - Be the best version of yourself "I couldn't do that job in the past. However, I should still give it a go now as I have learned so much since then."



TAMING YOUR INNER CRITIC

We have all received unwanted criticism in our lifetime, some warranted and some not so justified. Do you remember that feeling when you received negative feedback on a sporting game, drama performance, parenting skills, or even a job interview? You most likely walked away feeling unhappy, less confident, and even questioning yourself with self-doubt. Some criticism can be healthy, constructive, and beneficial. However, some can be downright negative and not needed. Unfortunately, individuals who internalize too much criticism throughout their lifetime will eventually internalize those negative words and make them their own verbally. So what can we do about all that upstairs chatter-chatter?

8 WAYS TO STOP BEING A SELF-CRITIC



MINDFULNESS

When you feel as though your inner critic is really getting you down and making you feel negative, overwhelmed or stressed out—that is the perfect time to start practicing your mindful meditation.



CHALLENGE YOUR SELF-CRITICAL THOUGHTS

Writing down your thoughts can bring them from your head and down onto paper. In addition, it helps create some separation, so you can see your thoughts rather than experience them in your mind.



EMBRACE THE POWER OF "YET."

Try adding "yet" to the end of your self-critical thoughts to transform them into a goal you're working toward vs. a statement of self-doubt.



PRACTICE KINDNESS

Learn to love yourself. Repeating mantras to yourself, such as, "I can't do this yet, but I'm trying my best," can be helpful reminders to accept your humanness.



PRACTICE GRATITUDE

By noticing, affirming and appreciating the good things in your life, you will reduce the focus on what you don't have. Gratitude can create a buffer against feelings of inadequacy and the tendency to ruminate.



ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Look back at your experiences and think of a few times when you did something well or were able to be proud of yourself.



GIVE UP CONTROL

The world around us comprises only two factors: The things we can control and those we can't. So learn to focus on the things inside your control and let go of the things you can not control.



MAKE A SELF-CARE PLAN

You care for yourself in many ways – emotionally, mentally, physically, and financially. Take time to engage in caring for yourself in meaningful ways.



MINDFULNESS

Take 5 Breathing

1. Stretch your hand out.
2. Get the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace around your hand.
3. Trace your finger around each finger on the other hand slowly.
4. While tracing, breathe in through your nose and out your mouth.
5. Keep going until you have traced around your whole hand.
6. Keep repeating until you feel calm again.

Close your eyes and imagine you are a turtle swimming through the ocean.

Breathe in slowly and fill your belly with as much air as you can.

Blow out slowly through your mouth and watch the bubbles float through the water.

Full body stretch

Stand up straight. Place both feet shoulder-width apart.

Find your balance.

Slowly stretch your arms up high; imagine you are trying to touch the sky.

Stretch so high that you have to stand on your tippy toes.

Wriggle your fingertips and feel the stretch in your toes, calves, back, shoulders, arms, and fingers.

Relax for 10 seconds.

Repeat ten times or until you feel calm again.

Neck and shoulder awareness

Sit comfortably and breathe in and out slowly. This exercise aims to notice how each part of your body feels.

Start at the top of your head. Can you feel your hair? What does it feel like? Is it rubbing on your face? Have you got a hat on? Can you feel your hair tie?

Start to make your way down to your shoulders. Can you feel any tension in your shoulder area? Do you feel tight? Take a deep breath and try to loosen your shoulders and neck. Next, do a few neck stretches, turn your head to the left and slowly to the right.

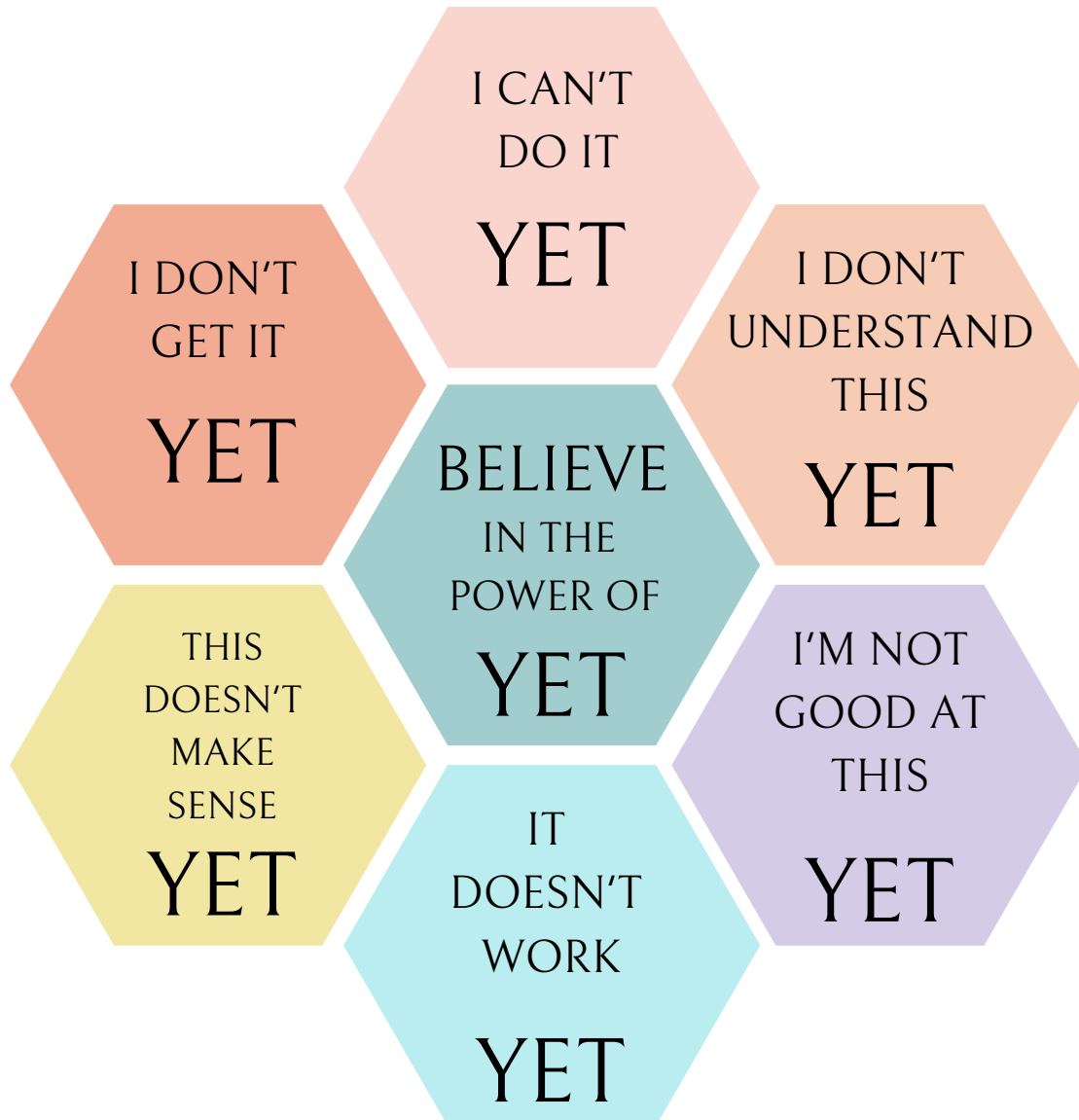
Breathe in and out, and repeat until you feel calm again.

CHALLENGING MY INNER CRITIC

SELF CRITICAL TRIGGERS Events, people or situations. For example, you make a mistake at work and your boss is upset at you.	SELF CRITICAL THOUGHTS "I am useless, why do I always make silly mistakes."	SELF CRITICAL FEELINGS Useless, helpless, doubt, frustrated.	INNER COACH VOICE "Everyone makes mistakes, it's how we grow and learn. Accept the mistake and think of all the good things that you do."	NEW FEELINGS Empowered, inspired, happy.



POWER OF YET





YOUR TURN

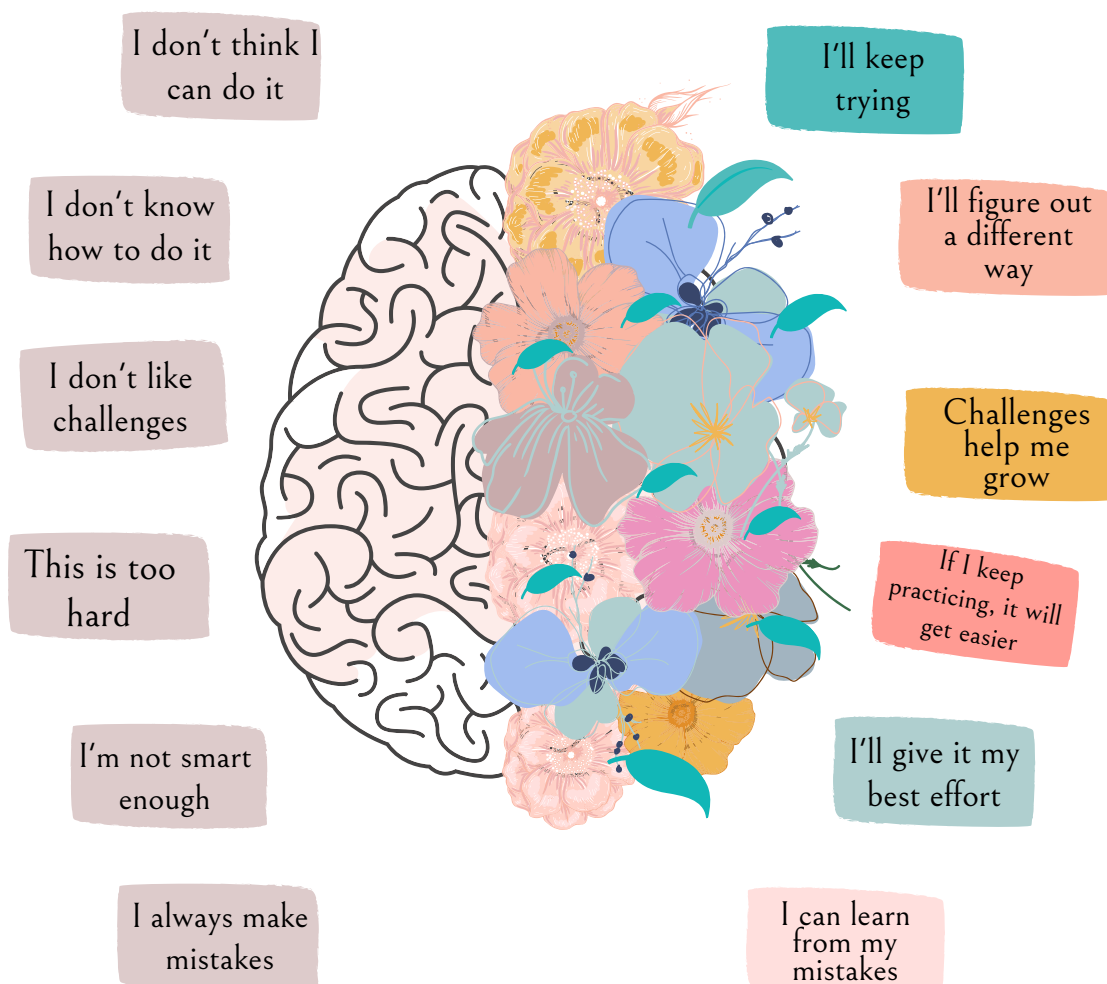
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS	→	YET
	→	YET
	→	YET
	→	YET
	→	YET
	→	YET
	→	YET



CHANGE YOUR MINDSET - CHANGE YOUR LIFE

INNER CRITIC

INNER COACH





Self talk REFLECTION

Negative thoughts

True or False

☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐

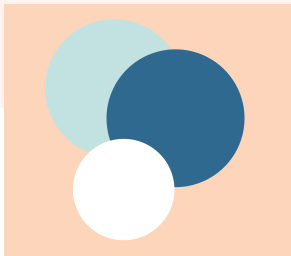
Why are my thoughts true or false?

Reasons why I am worthy.



WHAT IS THE CIRCLE OF CONTROL?

“WORRYING ABOUT SOMETHING OUTSIDE OF YOUR CONTROL IS LIKE SITTING ON A ROCKING CHAIR.... IT GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO DO, BUT IT DOESN'T GET YOU ANYWHERE”



THE CIRCLE OF CONTROL

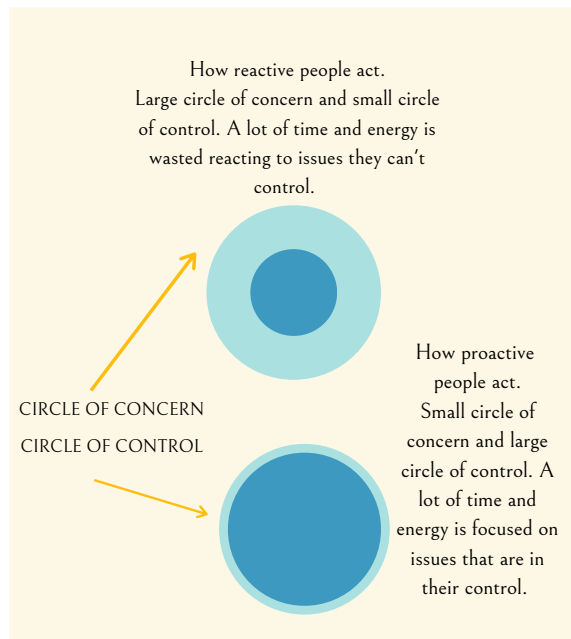
There are many parts of life we have no control over, and sometimes having no control can increase our stress or worries.

To cope well with worries and stress, reflecting on where our fears sit within our circles of control is often helpful.

Referring to the circles of control is helpful as it allows us to take action on the things we can control and not stay focused or waste time and energy on the things that are outside our control.

Using this strategy of thinking is a helpful coping tool when you or someone else is struggling to process their emotions or if they feel too overwhelmed.

Sometimes when we break down our worries and visualize them, we can see that some worries everybody has, some worries belong to over people, some concerns are small and are not worth thinking about, and some concerns are completely out of our control, so worrying about them won't change anything except that they will make us feel worse.







THINGS I CAN NOT CONTROL

- So I can let Go of these things

Things I can
control

- So I will focus on these things



ACTS OF KINDNESS

By completing random acts of kindness you will instantly boost your self-esteem and confidence.

Let someone
go before you
in a line

Hold a door
open for
someone

Smile or give
a wave to a
stranger

Give a
compliment
to someone

Help someone
who has dropped
something

Help someone
before they
ask

Clean up
after someone
else

Bake something
for someone

Pick up
rubbish at your
local park

Donate to
a charity

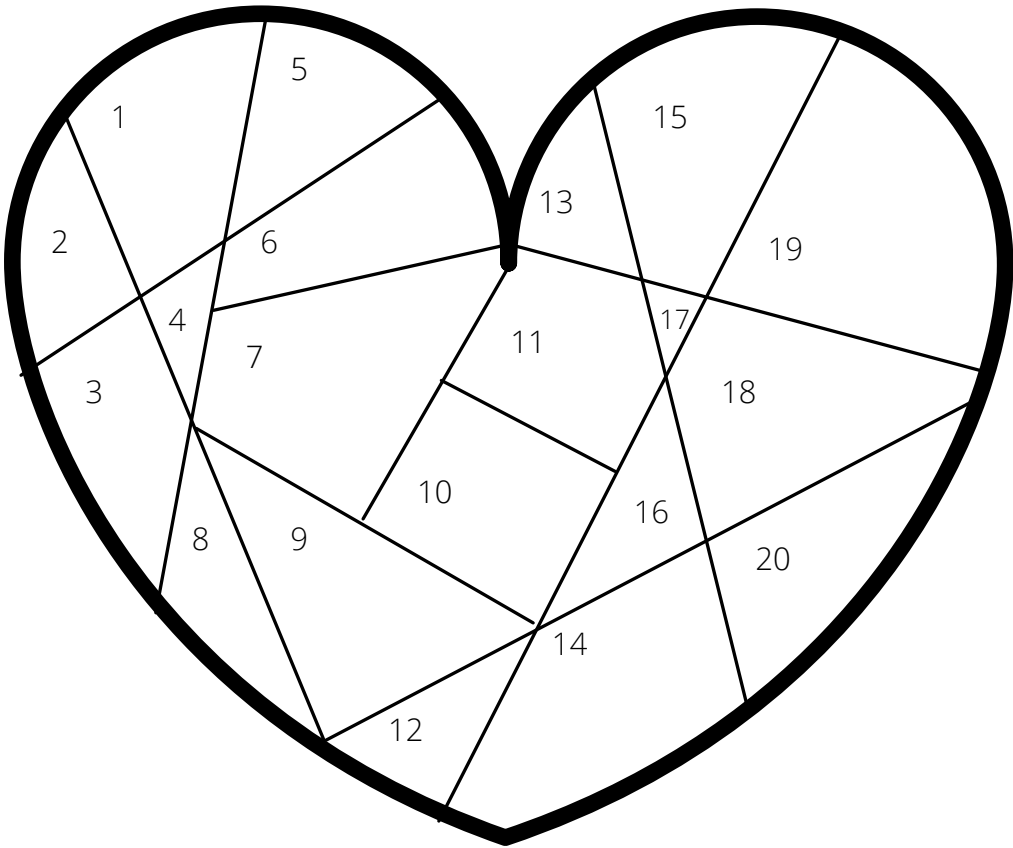
Lend your
favorite book
to a friend

Prepare a meal
for your
family



GRATITUDE HEART

Color each space with a color that feels like a specific person, place, or thing you love and are grateful for. Open your heart to everything big and small.



1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____

6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 _____

11 _____
12 _____
13 _____
14 _____
15 _____

16 _____
17 _____
18 _____
19 _____
20 _____



GRATITUDE

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

MY MOOD TODAY

QUOTE OF THE DAY

6 THINGS I AM GRATEFUL FOR TODAY

REASONS I HAVE TO LAUGH AND SMILE

THINGS I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO TODAY

SELF REFLECTION



MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

An accomplishment is something that you are proud of because it involved lots of hard work and effort.
List your accomplishments and obstacles that you had to overcome in order to achieve that goal.

ACCOMPLISHMENT	OBSTACLES I HAD TO OVERCOME
ACCOMPLISHMENT	OBSTACLES I HAD TO OVERCOME
ACCOMPLISHMENT	OBSTACLES I HAD TO OVERCOME
ACCOMPLISHMENT	OBSTACLES I HAD TO OVERCOME



EXPLORING ME

THINGS I'M GOOD AT

- _____
- _____
- _____

COMPLIMENTS I HAVE
RECIEVED

- _____
- _____
- _____

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT ME

- _____
- _____
- _____

CHALLENGES I HAVE
OVERCOME

- _____
- _____
- _____

I'VE HELPED OTHERS BY

- _____
- _____
- _____

I'M A GOOD FRIEND
BECAUSE

- _____
- _____
- _____

MY BIGGEST
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- _____
- _____
- _____

THINGS THAT MAKE ME
UNIQUE

- _____
- _____
- _____



SELF-CARE CHECKLIST



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | Eat 3 healthy meals |  | Have a social media detox |
|  | 7+ hours of sleep |  | Ask for a hug |
|  | Drink fresh water |  | Spend time with family |
|  | Get fresh air |  | Do a hobby |
|  | Practice mindfulness |  | Write in your journal |
|  | Write down 3 things you are grateful for |  | Say 5 things you love about yourself |
|  | Brush your teeth |  | Do some exercise |
|  | Have a warm shower |  | Wash your hair |
|  | Make your bed |  | Have a cup of tea |
|  | Read a book |  | Do nothing- enjoy the peace |
|  | Listen to music |  | Try something new |
|  | Spend time with friends |  | Do some coloring in |
|  | Declutter a small space |  | Make your favorite food |
|  | |  | |
|  | |  | |
|  | |  | |
|  | |  | |



SELF-CARE

Self-care is an essential survival skill. Self-care refers to things that we practice or engage in on a regular basis to reduce stress and maintain or enhance our physical health and mental well-being. self-care is really, anything you do for yourself that makes yourself feel better or cared for can be considered self-care.

1**PHYSICAL**

Sleep, stretching, physical activity, healthy eating and rest.

2**EMOTIONAL**

Stress management, gratitude, acts of kindness, forgiveness and compassion.

3**SOCIAL**

Personal boundaries, support systems, positive social media and spending time with loved ones.

4**SPIRITUAL**

Time alone, space, yoga, meditation, mindfulness, connection and nature.

5**PERSONAL**

Hobbies, self identity, doing the things that bring you enjoyment.

6**SPACE**

Safety, organization, clean and tidy, security and stability.

7**WORK**

Time management, work boundaries, break time and knowledge.



SELF-CARE

Write down some ways that you could implement more self-care and self love into your life.

1

PHYSICAL

2

EMOTIONAL

3

SOCIAL

4

SPIRITUAL

5

PERSONAL

6

SPACE

7

WORK



AFFIRMATIONS

"I do not
need to
change to
love myself"

"I forgive myself for
making mistakes"

"I accept myself for
who I am"

"I do not have to earn my self-
worth; it is there simply
because I exist"

"I have nothing
to prove"

"I am embracing
myself just as I am"

"I nourish my soul,
spirit, and body
because I deserve
self-care"

"I am kind to
myself just as I
am kind to
others"

"I am enough
because I am me"

"I accept the love I
deserve"

"I celebrate who I
am all the time"

"I give myself
permission to grow
and develop"



AFFIRMATIONS

