

THINGS TO DO!

Next Step:

Use a double page in your notebook.

- Write a list of all the things you don't like about yourself on the left-hand page.
- On the right, list all the things you like and love about yourself.

Are they equal? If not, what does this say about how you think and feel about yourself?

- Examine the negatives carefully. Cross out any that are obviously not true about you.

To take this exercise further –

- Look at the negative statements you didn't cross out. Are any of them repeated? Do any still have a lot of charge (a strong emotional reaction)? Write them down again on the left-hand page now.
- On the opposite page, change all these statements into ones that make you feel better about yourself.

Like this –

Nobody likes me – I am lovable just as I am.
I'm useless – I am good at everything I do.
I don't like my legs – My body is just perfect the way it is.

- For statements that had the most **charge**, write a sentence or two that includes an affirmation – that is, a positive statement about yourself.
- Make sure that everything you have now written is positive.

For example – I love myself. My body is vibrant, healthy and beautiful.

- Read your new list out loud. You could look in the mirror while doing that. How does that make you feel?
- You can draw a picture that reflects that feeling, write your affirmation on it and put it on your bedroom wall. Everything helps. See page 88 for more on Affirmations.

What pictures have others painted of you?

Turn to the next double page:

- Think about what your parents, teachers and friends say about you.
- Write down all the not very nice and negative things on the left-hand page.
- On the right-hand page write all the positive things. Examine them and consider what these verbal messages are doing for your self-esteem.

You can do this exercise again after you have read the rest of the book and see how your self-concept changes.

Projecting Negative Feelings

Sometimes people may say things to you that are more about them, than about you. For example - "Are you all right? You don't look too good..." when the person speaking does not feel well. "When she threatened us, you were afraid weren't you?" When it was him who didn't own up to his own fear.

OR, "He's always so angry, it really pisses me off!" When in fact the person speaking is angry. Not seeing her own anger, she blames or labels the other as the angry one.

When people are projecting their feelings onto others, they are seeing aspects of their personality they do not recognise. They may have a blind spot. It is their disowned shadow reflected back at them. They may not be seeing the YOU that you are. This is called projection.

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Another Step:

- Go back to your list of negative statements and ask yourself: Is this really true about me? Am I believing the messages I'm getting from other people, or is it true about the person who says it to me? Cross out all the statements on the left-hand page if you don't believe they are true of you now.
- Ask yourself about the ones that are left:
 - Is this how I appear?
 - Is this how I choose to be?
 - Am I creating supportive relationships by behaving or being this way?
 - Is this working for me or is it alienating people?

An example: You are a person that shouts a lot. People shy away from your overbearing approach. As the shouter you may decide to talk more softly so that people enjoy being with you.

- Examine yourself: You can change your behaviour at any time. To do this you can change any of the statements you have written down about yourself. Make them into statements you would like people to be making about you.

When your perception of yourself changes, other people see you differently.

Projecting Thoughts

Sometimes we think we know what other people are thinking OR we imagine all kinds of things they may be thinking about us. The only way to truly know what others are thinking is to ask them. Make sure you are not projecting your thoughts onto them. When you ask what is going on for them, check in with your body to see if what they say feels right to you. Don't presume you know what others are thinking. It causes a lot of conflict. You are not a mind reader and neither are they.