

Strengths Discussion Questions

1

Although some of our strengths are obvious to us, others go unnoticed. You can often spot your “invisible” strengths by noticing the things that energize you. Thinking about this past week, when did you feel most energized? What strengths were you using?

2

Think about a few of your favorite hobbies or activities. What is it about these activities that you enjoy? How do these activities put your strengths to use?

3

Sometimes other people are better at spotting our strengths than we are. Because we are so used to our own strengths, they can start to feel ordinary or unspectacular. What strengths or positive qualities have others shared about you? How did they notice these strengths?

4

In what parts of your life have you had the most success? Don't think of success only in terms of career or income -- think of success as anything you have achieved, such as friendship, knowledge, or happiness. What about yourself has allowed you to be successful in these areas?

5

Imagine a time you felt you were at your best. Describe what you were doing, and what about that situation made you feel confident. Compare this to a time when you felt uneasy, or a time you were not confident. What are the differences?

6

Think of someone whom you admire or respect. What are this person's greatest strengths? How do you know? Do you share any of these strengths?

7

Situations that rely on our weaknesses can leave us feeling drained and exhausted. What sort of situations cause you to feel this way? What weaknesses might be at the root of this?

8

When a person's goals align with their strengths, they tend to put forth more effort, and are more likely to be successful. Think about some of the goals you have for your future. How can you utilize your strengths to achieve each of these goals?

Strengths Exploration

Those who know their strengths and use them frequently tend to have more success in several areas. They feel happier, have better self-esteem, and are more likely to accomplish their goals.

To use your strengths effectively, it's important to have a clear idea of what they are, and how they can be used. Some of your greatest strengths might be easy to recognize, while others go unnoticed because they feel ordinary to you (even if they aren't).

In this worksheet you will identify your strengths and ways in which you are already using them. Additionally, you will explore *new* ways to use your strengths to your advantage.

Circle your strengths from the choices below, or add your own at the bottom.			
Wisdom	Artistic Ability	Curiosity	Leadership
Empathy	Honesty	Open Mindedness	Persistence
Enthusiasm	Kindness	Love	Social Awareness
Fairness	Bravery	Cooperation	Forgiveness
Modesty	Common Sense	Self-Control	Patience
Gratitude	Love of Learning	Humor	Spirituality
Ambition	Creativity	Confidence	Intelligence
Athleticism	Discipline	Assertiveness	Logic
Optimism	Independence	Flexibility	Adventurousness

Strengths Exploration



Relationships

romantic relationships, friendships, and family

List the strengths you possess that help you in your relationships.

Describe a *specific* time your strengths were able to help you in a relationship.

Describe two new ways you could use your strengths in relationships.

1

2

Strengths Exploration



Profession

past or present work, school, or other professional endeavors

List the strengths you possess that help you in your profession.

Describe a *specific* time your strengths were able to help in your profession.

Describe two new ways you could use your strengths in your professional life.

1

2

Strengths Exploration



Personal Fulfillment

hobbies, interests, and pleasurable activities

List the strengths you possess that help you achieve personal fulfillment.

Describe a *specific* time your strengths were able to help you with personal fulfillment.

Describe two new ways you could use your strengths for personal fulfillment.

1

2

Strengths Use Plan

People who know their strengths and use them frequently tend to have higher self-esteem, better moods, and less stress. Learning to use strengths is something anyone can achieve.

In this activity, you will create a plan to use your strengths every day, for one week. You may use your strengths in either new or familiar ways. The key is to use your strengths intentionally and *purposefully*, rather than as part of habit or routine.

Step 1: Circle three of your greatest strengths, or write your own.

Creativity	Curiosity	Love of Learning	Bravery
Honesty	Love	Kindness	Social Awareness
Leadership	Forgiveness	Humility	Self-Control
Optimism	Humor	Spirituality	Flexibility
Persistence	Appreciation of Beauty	Gratitude	Enthusiasm
Teamwork			

Step 2: For the next week, write a brief plan for using your chosen strengths.

Example	Day	Strength	Plan
	1	Kindness	I will bring in breakfast for the office.
	2	Curiosity	After dinner, I will drive to a new part of town and go for a walk.
	3	Curiosity	I will watch a documentary with my friend and discuss it afterward.

Strengths Use Plan

For the next week, write a brief plan for using your strengths.

Day	Strength	Plan
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

My Strengths and Qualities

Things I am good at...

1

2

3

Compliments I have received...

1

2

3

What I like about my appearance...

1

2

3

Challenges I have overcome...

1

2

3

I have helped others by...

1

2

3

Things that make me unique...

1

2

3

What I value the most...

1

2

3

Times I have made others happy...

1

2

3

Sentence Completion

My family is _____

A fond memory of mine is when _____

I admire _____

Right now, I feel _____

I have been struggling with _____

I am proud of myself because _____

I hope to someday _____

Today, I will _____

My best friend _____

I am afraid of _____

The future seems _____

Best Possible Self

Visualization Exercise

What would your life look like in a perfect future? How would you spend your time? Who would be by your side? In this exercise, you will imagine your best possible self in a future where things have gone as well as possible, and you have accomplished all your goals.



Instructions

1 Write. On the following pages, you will imagine and describe your best possible self in three domains: personal, professional, and social. Once completed, continue to step 2.

2 Visualize. For the next week, spend 5 minutes visualizing your best possible self each day. Focus on one domain per day, cycling through each of the domains throughout the week. Record your practice in the chart below.

To perform visualization, picture your best possible self in as much detail as possible. Think of a scene that your best possible self might find themselves in, and imagine the sights, sounds, and feelings you would experience.

Tip: It's common to feel distracted during visualization. If you notice your mind wandering, that's okay. Simply return your thoughts to the exercise once you become aware.




Visualization Log


	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Personal							
Professional							
Social							

Best Possible Self

Personal Domain

Personal Domain: skills, hobbies, personality, health, accomplishments, etc.


 Imagine your best possible self in the **personal** domain for 1 minute.


 Write about your best possible self in the **personal** domain for 5 minutes. Continue writing for the entire time, using as much detail as possible.

Best Possible Self

Professional Domain

Professional Domain: job, sense of purpose, education, skills, retirement, income, etc.

 Imagine your best possible self in the **professional** domain for 1 minute.

 Write about your best possible self in the **professional** domain for 5 minutes.
Continue writing for the entire time, using as much detail as possible.

Best Possible Self

Social Domain

Social Domain: romantic relationship, friends, family, social activities, etc.



Imagine your best possible self in the **social** domain for 1 minute.



Write about your best possible self in the **social** domain for 5 minutes. Continue writing for the entire time, using as much detail as possible.

Positive Experiences

Write briefly about times when you have displayed each of the following qualities.

❖ **Courage**

❖ **Kindness**

❖ **Selflessness**

❖ **Love**

❖ **Sacrifice**

❖ **Wisdom**

❖ **Happiness**

❖ **Determination**

Positive Traits

Kind	Insightful	Sensitive
Intelligent	Funny	Organized
Hardworking	Patient	Selfless
Loyal	Realistic	Practical
Attractive	Honest	Mature
Down-to-Earth	Generous	Focused
Goofy	Modest	Courteous
Creative	Serious	Grateful
Accepting	Independent	Open-Minded
Strong	Trusting	Positive
Friendly	Resilient	Responsible
Flexible	Cheerful	Cooperative
Nurturing	Self-Directed	Frugal
Thoughtful	Reliable	Tolerant
Confident	Relaxed	Innovative
Optimistic	Listener	Balanced
Respectful	Brave	
Determined	Decisive	
Skilled	Enthusiastic	
Helpful	Forgiving	
Motivated	Humble	



CREATING CONFIDENCE: DEVELOPING SELF ACCEPTANCE

The following are a number of statements to promote self acceptance and with increased self acceptance comes increased confidence.

Consider each statement carefully.

Think about each statement in relation to developing your own self acceptance.

Remind yourself regularly of these statements.

Choose your favourite statements, write them out and pin them up as a reminder. You may like to create some new positive self-statements and add them to the ones below:

I can accept I am a fallible (less than perfect) human being.	I can accept that others and the world are fallible (less than perfect).
Because I demand a thing or person is a certain way does not follow that it or they must be that way.	I am capable of making mistakes and I can learn from these experiences to help me in the future.
I can regret mistakes I have made and choose not to condemn myself or others through guilt or blame.	Because I make a mistake or do something 'wrong' does not mean I am a failure or stupid – it may mean I have acted or behaved in a way that I regret or am not happy with and I can regret this without condemning myself 100% AS A FAILURE OR A 100% STUPID PERSON

<p>I, like others, have a mix of qualities, skills, experiences etc. as a human being which can be 'good, bad and ugly' – this means no one 'bad thing' (or 'few bad things') are the total sum of who I am.</p>	<p>I do not have to listen and believe the 'critical' part of myself. It is part of me, not all of me. I can start to listen and be open to believe a new 'supportive' part of me, the voice that says I can do it.</p>
<p>If someone has better skills than me this does not make them a better person. If I have better skills than others, this does not make me a better person than others.</p>	<p>I can look for the evidence to support or refute my unhelpful thoughts and learn to develop new ways of thinking.</p>
<p>Confidence is not a commodity I can buy at the shops, neither is it something we are born with or without –confidence is about accepting ourselves and others, even when 'bad things' happen.</p>	<p>Facing our fears and challenges in life provides us with a learning opportunity to make changes we want to make in the future, and to do things differently step by step.</p>
<p>I can endure and survive things, even when I don't like them or feel uncomfortable, as these experiences can help me to identify what I want to change in my future.</p>	<p>Putting myself or others down ("I'm crap" "They're crap") is an unhelpful habit that can be changed with practice.</p>
<p>The more I tell myself 'I should...they should...it should' or 'I must...they must...it must...' the more I will disturb myself. I can choose not to disturb myself by challenging my thinking and by thinking more preferentially by using statements like 'I want... I wish... I desire...'</p>	<p>Thinking differently about myself, Others, and the world, takes practice – remember I only have to achieve 'good enough' as perfection does not exist!</p>



Developing my self acceptance means I am ready to face challenges and learn and grow from these.	I can ask myself This question: `does my thinking help or hinder me in accepting myself?' If it hinders me then I can learn to think differently.
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NOW try and think of some of your own which help you to think helpfully, calm down and stay in control. Fill in the empty spaces:

- Practice this exercise on a daily basis for a week.
- Use this when you notice you are feeling anxious or stressed or you are entering a situation in which you want to be more confident.

Self-Esteem Journal

MON.	Something I did well today...	
	Today I had fun when...	
	I felt proud when...	
TUE.	Today I accomplished...	
	I had a positive experience with...	
	Something I did for someone...	
WED.	I felt good about myself when...	
	I was proud of someone else...	
	Today was interesting because...	
THUR.	I felt proud when...	
	A positive thing I witnessed...	
	Today I accomplished...	
FRI.	Something I did well today...	
	I had a positive experience with (a person, place, or thing)...	
	I was proud of someone when...	
SAT.	Today I had fun when...	
	Something I did for someone...	
	I felt good about myself when...	
SUN.	A positive thing I witnessed...	
	Today was interesting because...	
	I felt proud when...	

Habit Plan

Developing new healthy habits is an important part of working toward long-term goals. For example, the goal of improving your health can't be achieved without habits such as eating healthy or exercising. Creating a habit plan will help you get started.

instructions

Step 1: Connect your new habit to an existing habit.

Tying new habits to things you already do is an effective way to make them part of your routine. Instead of planning to "go for a walk later", plan to "go for a walk right after dinner every evening".

After existing habit, I will new habit.

Step 2: Reward success.

When you are successful, treat yourself to a small reward. Rewards should not contradict your habit (e.g. a big dessert for eating a healthy meal), and they should be something you can do regularly. Even small rewards will reinforce a new habit.

After new habit, I will reward.

examples

Step 1: After I brush my teeth at night, I will do 10 push-ups.

Step 2: After I do 10 push-ups, I will relax for 30 minutes.

Step 1: After I get on the bus to work, I will practice deep breathing for 10 minutes.

Step 2: After I practice deep breathing, I will listen to music.

practice

Step 1: Connect your new habit to an existing habit.

After _____, I will _____.

Step 2: Reward success.

After _____, I will _____.

Positive Steps to Wellbeing

Be kind to yourself



Our culture, genes, religion, upbringing, education, gender, sexuality, beliefs, and life experiences make us who we are. We all have bad days.

Be kind to yourself. Encourage rather than criticise yourself. Treat yourself the way you would treat a friend in the same situation.

Exercise regularly



Being active helps lift our mood, reduces stress and anxiety, improves physical health, and gives us more energy.

Get outside, preferably in a green space or near water.

Find an activity you enjoy doing, and just do it.

Take up a hobby and/or learn a new skill

Increase your confidence and interest, meet others, or prepare for finding work.



Have some fun and/or be creative

Having fun or being creative helps us feel better and increases our confidence.

Enjoy yourself!



Help others



Get involved with a community project, charity work, or simply help out someone you know.

As well as benefiting others, you'll be doing something worthwhile which will help you feel better about yourself.

Relax



Make time for yourself. Allow yourself to chill out and relax. Find something that suits you – different things work for different people.

Breathe... (imagine a balloon in your belly, inflating and deflating as you breathe in and out)

Eat healthily

Eat regularly, eat breakfast, eat healthily, eat fruit and vegetables, drink water.



Balance sleep

Get into a healthy sleep routine – including going to bed and getting up at the same time each day.



Connect with others



Stay in touch with family and friends - make regular and frequent contact with them.

Beware drink and drugs



Avoid using alcohol (or non-prescribed drugs) to help you cope – it will only add to your problems.

See the bigger picture

We all give different meanings to situations and see things from our point of view. Broaden out your perspective and consider the bigger picture ('the helicopter view')



What meaning am I giving this? Is this fact or opinion? How would others see it? Is there another way of looking at this? How important is it, or will it be in a year's time? What can I do right now that will help most?

Accepting: 'It is as it is'

We tend to fight against distressing thoughts and feelings, but we can learn to just notice them and give up that struggle.



Some situations we just can't change. We can surf those waves rather than try to stop them.

Allow those thoughts and sensations just to be – they will pass.