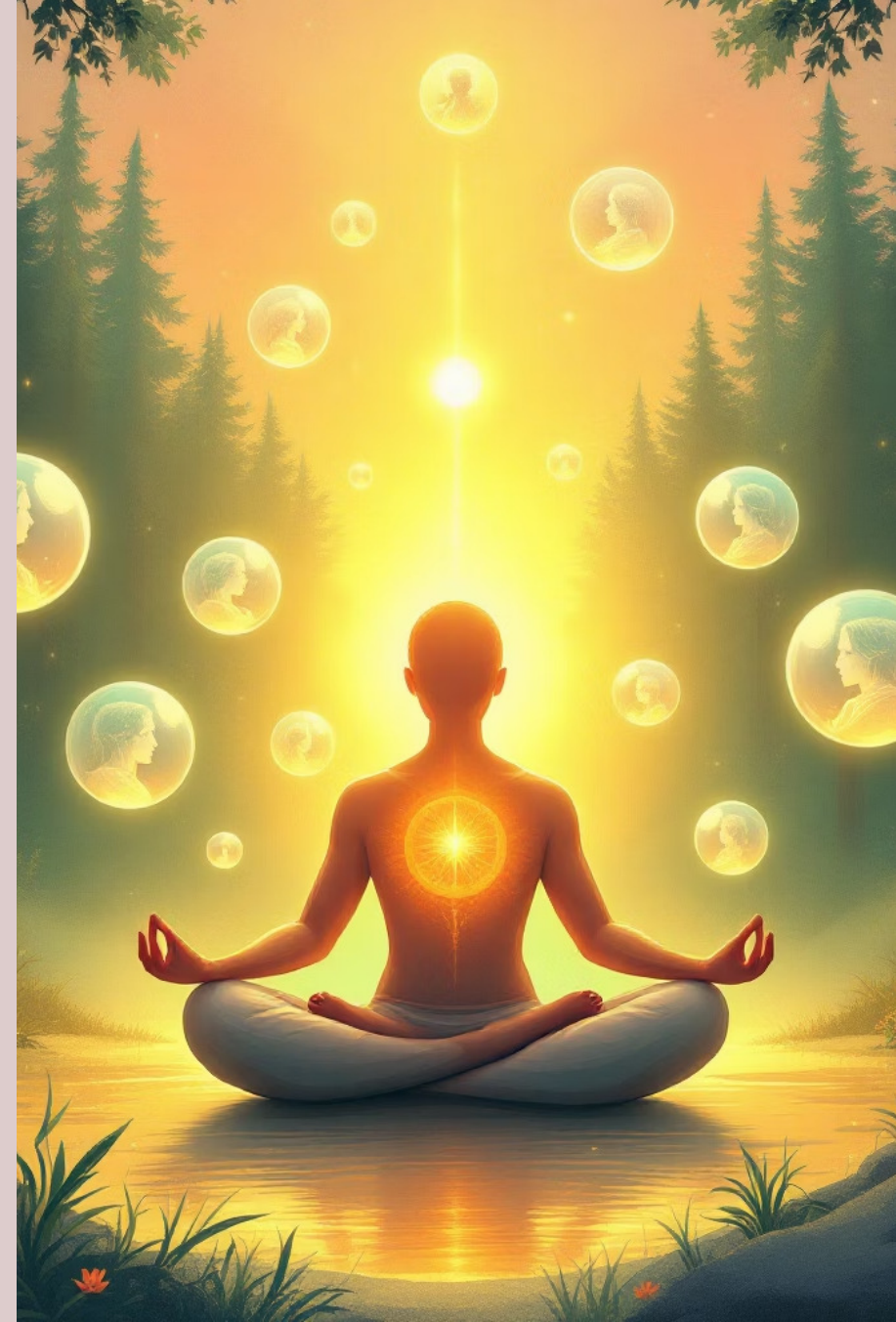


# Finding Your Value

A Practical Guide to Transforming Your Inner Dialogue

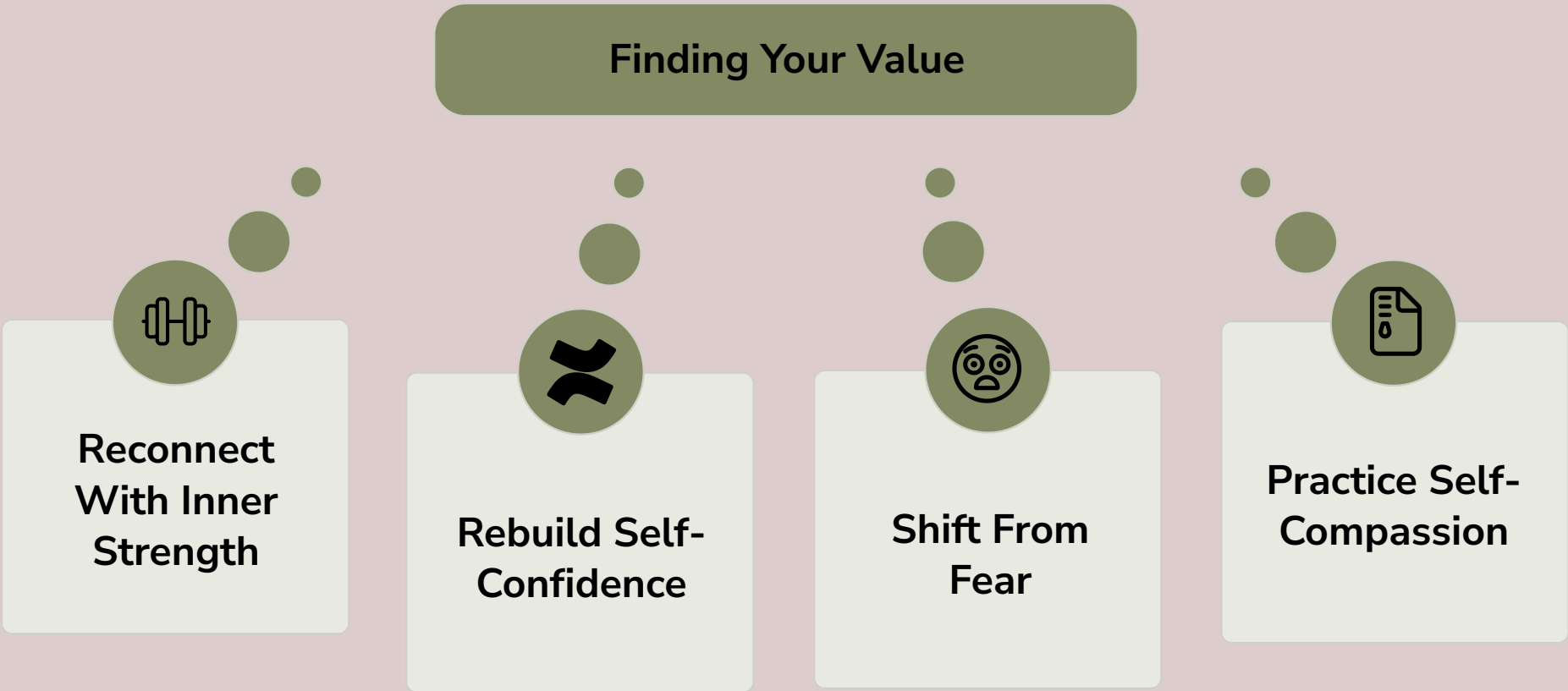
By Sandra Stein, Trauma Counsellor Therapist, Writer and Group  
facilitator.



Hello, I'm **Sandra Stein**, a trauma counsellor, therapist, group facilitator, and writer. Over the years, I've had the privilege of working with people from all walks of life — individuals and groups navigating trauma, addiction, loss, and relationship difficulties.

I am bringing years of witnessing successful stories from my chair of people overcoming their emotional, relationship, professional and mental struggle through improving their self-esteem in this short guide eBook. I have seen how lack and poor self-worth can dim a spirit, and how self-valuing can transform a life, inspired me to create *Finding Your Value*. I wanted to share these insights beyond the therapy room, offering tools to help people reconnect with their inner strength, rebuild confidence, and live from worthiness rather than fear. My hope is that you'll discover new ways to approach yourself with compassion, recognizing your inherent value.

Enjoy the reading and welcome your new found inner power.



## Low-self esteem and mental health,

Studies show that low self-esteem is linked to mental health issues like depression and anxiety. For instance, a review found that self-criticism can lead to significant psychological distress. Negative self-talk can harm mental well-being, reducing motivation and increasing vulnerability to mental health problems. On the other hand, high self-esteem is associated with positive mental health outcomes, resilience, and a proactive approach to life. Therefore, fostering self-esteem and managing the inner critic are crucial for mental health and life performance.

## Procrastination and self-doubt

Procrastination is often misunderstood as laziness or lack of discipline, but beneath it lies something deeper — **self-doubt**. When we question our own capacity, intelligence, or worth, taking action can feel threatening. Each step forward becomes tangled with fears of failure, judgment, or not being good enough. In that sense, procrastination isn't the problem itself, but a *symptom* of how we value ourselves. The more we learn to trust our abilities and treat ourselves with compassion, the less power procrastination holds over us.

## Relationships issues

If we carry an inner narrative that says "*I'm not enough*," we are more likely to gravitate toward partners or friends who echo that message through emotional unavailability, criticism, or control. These dynamics reinforce the negative perception we already hold of ourselves, creating a cycle that can be difficult to see from within.

The truth is, we don't attract what we deserve — we attract what we *believe* we deserve. Until we begin to challenge those old stories and see our worth clearly, we may continue to re-create the same emotional patterns with different faces.

# Your Story Shapes You

We all carry stories—consciously or unconsciously—about who we are and how we function. These narratives, whether self-created or absorbed from others, can become self-limiting beliefs that hold us back.

This guide uses neuroplasticity and clinically proven techniques to help you diffuse limiting ideas and access the fullest version of yourself.

"A positive sense of self can go a long way, from how we treat ourselves to how we handle challenging life events".

Sometimes the most seemingly simple events in our formative years can leave the deepest marks.

They plant the seeds of feeling *small, diminished, unimportant, or less than*.



# The Self-Esteem and loss of ourselves



## The Validation Trap

Our sense of self-worth can become dangerously intertwined with external expectations. When self-expectations are fueled by a need to prove others wrong or constantly seek approval, it creates a persistent void that can never truly be filled from the outside.



## The Eroding Impact

This persistent feeling of unfulfillment often escalates into a damaging internal monologue. It relentlessly erodes genuine self-esteem, frequently manifesting in serious mental health challenges such as depression, addiction, eating disorders, and chronic anxiety.

# Where Low Self-Esteem Shows Up

## Career



Countless people feel trapped in dissatisfying jobs, afraid to pursue their dreams due to fear of failure. This fear stems from deeply embedded beliefs of not being capable or good enough to handle challenges or achieve success. Individuals with low self-esteem often self-sabotage opportunities, declining promotions or avoiding new projects, convinced they will inevitably underperform or be exposed as incompetent.

This internal narrative prevents them from taking calculated risks, exploring their true potential, or advocating for themselves in the workplace. They may settle for less than they deserve, endure unhealthy work environments, or avoid careers that genuinely excite them out of a profound sense of unworthiness.

The psychological impact is significant: a persistent lack of professional fulfillment, chronic stress from constantly trying to meet perceived external standards, and emotional exhaustion. This often leads to depression, chronic anxiety, burnout, and unhealthy coping mechanisms like procrastination or workaholism, as individuals try to compensate for their internal feelings of inadequacy.

## Relationships



Low self-esteem pressures relationships to meet our fundamental needs for validation and worth, primarily because we lack the internal resources to provide these for ourselves. This often manifests as extreme people-pleasing behavior, where an individual consistently prioritizes others' desires over their own, driven by an intense fear of rejection or disapproval.

This psychological dynamic can lead to a cycle of codependency, where one's sense of self-worth becomes entirely contingent on their partner's affection and approval. They may struggle to set healthy boundaries, leading to imbalanced relationships, or constantly seek reassurance, placing an unfair burden on their loved ones. The fear of abandonment is so profound that individuals often neglect their own wants, needs, and identity to accommodate others, inadvertently pushing away the very connection they desperately seek.

In reality, this can result in attracting partners who exploit this need for external validation, or it can create distance as the individual fails to express their authentic self, leading to shallow or unfulfilling connections. The inability to trust one's own judgment or value can also lead to misinterpreting signals, fueling jealousy and insecurity, and ultimately eroding genuine intimacy and trust within the relationship.

## Social Anxiety



That knot of dread in your stomach before a social gathering? It's more than just shyness; it's a visceral reaction to feeling exposed.

Every word feels like a performance, each pause a potential judgment. You meticulously rehearse conversations, second-guessing every utterance and agonizing over what to say next.

Your mind races, constantly analyzing others' expressions, searching for any sign of approval – or worse, disapproval. Will they like you? Will you be enough?

This hyper-vigilance, constantly scanning for body language cues, deciphering unspoken meanings, drains your social battery alarmingly fast. Beneath it all, there's a deep-seated feeling of unsafety, a sense that you are constantly on trial.

These intensely felt experiences, both mental and physical, are powerful indicators. They whisper of profound insecurity, self-doubt, and a deeply ingrained belief that your true self isn't valuable or worthy of unconditional acceptance.



# The Social Media Trap and self-valuing



## Comparison Culture

It's a digital mirror reflecting curated perfections, isn't it? We scroll through endless feeds of flawless lives, picture-perfect holidays, and glittering achievements. This constant exposure can plant insidious seeds of self-doubt.

Suddenly, our own reality feels dull and our progress inadequate, leaving us to silently wonder, "What am I doing wrong?" or "Why isn't my life like that?" It's a relentless comparison trap that can subtly erode our sense of self-worth.



## External Measuring

The digital world often parades seemingly perfect careers and flawless relationships right before our eyes. This constant highlight reel isn't just a distraction; it quietly triggers self-judgment and can sever our connection to what truly gives our own lives meaning.

When we see friends celebrating milestones – having children, climbing the career ladder, or buying their dream home – it can stir a deep sense of inadequacy. Suddenly, we're grappling with the crushing feeling of being 'left behind,' questioning if we're truly 'where we should be' in life. In this swirl of comparison, it's all too easy to forget to celebrate our own unique journey, to acknowledge the quiet victories, and to appreciate the hard-won achievements made at our own pace.



## Existential Crisis

When caught in this cycle, you might find yourself grappling with profound feelings of being utterly lost, deeply isolated, and hopelessly alone. The world can begin to feel utterly bland, leaving you to desperately question: "What's the point of any of it?" This isn't just a fleeting bad mood; it's a truly delicate and vulnerable state, one where dangerous, self-harming thoughts can begin to creep in. In such moments, reaching out for support and openly sharing your innermost thoughts and feelings isn't just advisable—it's absolutely crucial.

# The Path Forward

Low self-esteem can subtly develop into serious emotional and mental crises, impacting crucial layers of life. But there's hope.

These three simple steps, outlined below, are designed to help you quiet the overwhelming internal chatter and sort through the confusing jumble of thoughts that can feel like a noisy crowd in your mind.

The goal of this exercise is to gently pause your thinking, allowing you to truly listen to those voices and uncover the feelings and emotions deeply attached to them. And then, we'll gently challenge them.

What does "challenge" mean? It means honestly asking yourself: Do I truly believe this, deep down? Or is this a belief I've internalized from childhood, from a painful breakup, or from a job loss – experiences that taught me a certain narrative about myself? This isn't about fighting your thoughts, but about understanding their origins and whether they still serve you.

"A self-positive internal sense is a basic human need. Everyone should have access to the tools to develop that."

# Step 1: Self-Awareness Script

We all create scripts about ourselves that make us rigid and limited. Let's challenge them.



## Breathe & Reflect

Begin by gently creating space.

Close your eyes and anchor yourself with deep, mindful breaths – a slow count of 4 seconds in, hold briefly, and then a relaxed 4 seconds out. Repeat a few times until you feel a subtle shift within.

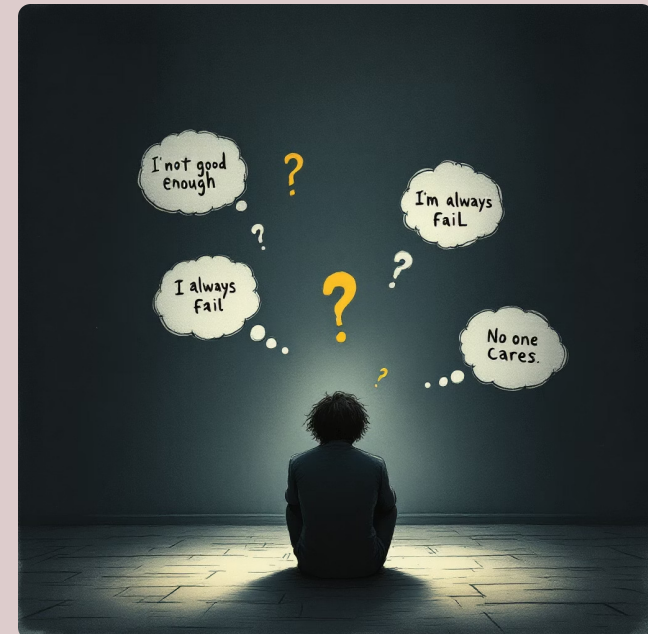
Now, pour your thoughts onto paper without judgment. Let everything surface, no matter how chaotic or trivial it seems. Once it's all out, gently read those words back to yourself.



## Question Your Beliefs

Now, with that quiet awareness, gently turn your gaze inward. Ask yourself these profound questions:

- Does this belief genuinely resonate deep within my core, or is it a familiar whisper that just *feels* true?
- Where did this story about myself truly begin? Was it a repeated phrase from a parent, a painful comment from a peer, or a conclusion drawn from a past failure?
- And here's the crucial part: Does this old narrative still hold power over me? Do I actively choose to carry it forward, or is it a burden I can now gently release?



## Challenge Generalizations

Now, let's tackle those harsh, sweeping generalizations we often make about ourselves. These are the powerful, limiting labels we carry, like "I am stupid," "I'm always a failure," or "I'll never be good enough." The key is to actively catch yourself when these thoughts arise.

When a thought like "*I am stupid*" surfaces, don't just accept it. Gently pause. Then, ask yourself:

- **When do I NOT feel this way?** Can you recall a time, even a fleeting moment, when that feeling of "stupidity" just wasn't present? When did you feel competent, capable, or even just neutral about your intellect?
- **What was different then?** What were you doing? Who were you with? What specific task were you engaged in?
- **How did that feel?** Really connect with the emotions of that moment of clarity or competence.

**Take a deep, grounding breath.**

Acknowledge the incredible nuance and complexity of who you truly are.



# Exercise 2: Confront Your Fears

Negative self-worth often uses the fear of failure to keep us small.

Before we even begin to engage with new ideas, our minds instinctively conjure every possible way things could go wrong. This is the breeding ground for avoidance, crippling procrastination, and the frustrating habit of starting projects only to abandon them.

While these behaviors might appear self-sabotaging from the outside, at their core, they are a profound, albeit misguided, attempt to protect ourselves from the pain of perceived failure.

## Identify the Fantasy

What is my "fantasy" of the worst-case scenario?

## Explore the Feeling

How would I feel about myself if that were so?

## Invite a kind voice in. (Think about someone who is supportive and kind)

What would they say to you and that feeling?

Answering these questions creates awareness of how fear is serving you and opens a compassionate dialogue with it.



## Exercise 3: Reaching from deep down

Let's gently explore a specific area of your life where you might be experiencing challenges – perhaps in your relationships, your career, or even your health.

Take a moment to consider how you truly perceive yourself in that context right now.

Please be aware: this can be a powerful and emotionally intense exercise. Allow yourself ample time and space, and remember that self-care is paramount. You can pause or stop at any point if you feel overwhelmed. As you bring this area to mind, pause and take three slow, deep breaths. Feel your chest gently expanding and contracting with each inhale and exhale.

Now, ask yourself: **"How old do I feel right now when I think about this? What past experience or memory is surfacing that might be influencing this feeling?"**

For instance, you might realize: *"I feel 14 years old. That was a really tough time for me; I felt unpopular, not good-looking, and completely excluded."*

Take a few more deliberate breaths, allowing yourself to fully acknowledge that younger part of you.

Then, gently place a hand over your heart or give yourself a comforting hug, and with compassion, say to that younger self, and to your present self:

**I love you. I want you. I see you...**



# Daily Practices for Self-Love



## Morning Ritual

Wake up with at least one positive thought about yourself. Start your day with self-appreciation.



## Self-Compassion

Imagine yourself as your younger self. What would you say to foster self-love in that child?



## Holistic Care

Review your lifestyle—physical care, relationships, mental care. Engage in daily physical self-care.



## Reflect & Repeat

Write or reflect on parts of yourself you appreciate. Practice morning and evening for best results.

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"We all deserve to experience the freedom to have choices, the strength to feel fear and choose ourselves anyway."



# SANDRA STEIN COUNSELLING

## Discover your own inner self-talk

My hope is that this book has helped you begin that journey — to see your worth more clearly and to treat yourself with the same care and respect you so easily offer others.

If you'd like to dive deeper into your own story and make the meaningful changes you *want*, the ones you *deserve*, and perhaps even the ones you *don't yet know you need*, I'd love to support you personally.

You can reach out for a **one-to-one therapy or mentoring session**, where we'll explore your unique inner world together.

And for more tips, reflections, and insights on how to create the life you deserve and I'm always sharing practical guidance and inspiration to help you reconnect with your true self and live more fully.

Because your value has always been there — waiting for you to see it.

[@s.a.s\\_counselling\\_](#) and <http://www.youtube.com/@SandraStein-in6ty>

Find more tips and inspiration to live fully by following me on Instagram and visiting my website.