

acknowledging your positives



Low Self-Esteem: Ignoring the Positives

If you were asked to list some positive qualities about yourself, how would you respond? If you suffer from low self-esteem, you might struggle to bring things to mind.

Other people might not have trouble recalling positive qualities, but may still feel uncomfortable thinking about, talking about, or writing about the positive qualities they have. Many people might consider it as conceited, arrogant, or stuck up to think about such things.

But in order to promote a balanced evaluation of yourself, it is ok to notice and acknowledge your positive aspects, and to behave like someone who has positive qualities and who is deserving of happiness and fun.

Many people who suffer from low self-esteem have a tendency to only pay attention to things which confirm their negative view of themselves. If you struggle with low self-esteem, you probably rarely pay attention to the positive things you do, your positive qualities, positive outcomes or positive comments from others. Most of the time all you pay attention to are your negative qualities and you feel comfortable dwelling on these negatives. Ask yourself how fair is that? By getting you to begin acknowledging your positives, you are really tipping the scales of self-evaluation back into balance. These scales have been pretty off balance (towards the side of negativity) for some time now.



Keeping a 'Positive You Journal' is one way to practice taking more notice of the positive qualities you do have.

Start with a 'Positive Qualities' Record

When we notice something and it's really important for us to remember it, what is it that we do to help us remember? We write things down, make a note of it, or make a list if there are many items. The same approach applies here. To start acknowledging your positives, you need to write them down.

Before you start on the Positive You Journal, you need to make a Positive Qualities Record - list down all the positive qualities you can think of, no matter how small, insignificant, modest, or unimportant you think they are.

If you get stuck, ask yourself questions like:

- What do I like about who I am?
- What positive characteristics do I have?
- What are some of my achievements?
- What are some challenges I have overcome?
- What are some skills or talents that I have?
- What do others say they like about me?
- What are some attributes I like in others that I also have in common with?
- If someone shared my identical characteristics, what would I admire in them?
- How might someone who cared about me describe me?
- What do I think are bad qualities? What bad qualities do I not have?



I Don't Have ANY Positive Qualities

As you start your *Positive Qualities Record*, you need to listen out for negative self-evaluations coming through, and the tendency you may have to discount or minimise anything positive about yourself. Remember that this is a nasty habit that may rear its head when you try to do this exercise. Should this happen, just acknowledge it and try to move on with the task.

Remember, you don't have to do these positive things absolutely perfectly or 100% of the time – that is impossible. So be realistic about what you write down. For example, if you tend to be 'hardworking,' but recall the one time you took a sick day after a big weekend, you might say to yourself "I can't write that down because I haven't done it 100%." If you take that attitude, you are not being fair and realistic with yourself.

You may want to enlist the help of a trusted friend or family member who will support you in this task –two heads are better than one and an outsider might have a different perspective of you, than you do of yourself.

Some Ideas to Get You Started

There is an endless list of possibilities when listing positive qualities - each of us is different. Here are just a few suggestions of things which may apply to some of us:

Considerate	Reliable	Health-conscious
Resourceful	Avid Reader	Artistic
Organised	Good listener	Good-humoured
Strong	Well-travelled	Able to enjoy nature
Adventurous	Creative	Friendly
Appreciative	Diligent	Animal-lover
Funny	Good cook	Charitable
Loved	Active	Praise others
Responsible	House-proud	A good friend
Movie buff	Determined	Outdoors person

The 'Positive You' Journal

Using the *Positive You Journal*, recall specific examples of how you have demonstrated each of the positive attributes you have listed in the Positive Qualities Record. For example:

Considerate

I took my friend some flowers and a book when they were sick.
I offered a listening ear to my colleague who was going through some difficult times.
I lent my brother some money when he was down on his luck.

Once you have listed some past examples like the one above, use the journal to start noticing your positive qualities on a daily basis. Each day, set out to record three examples from your day, which illustrate certain positive qualities you have. Write exactly what you did and identify what positive attribute it shows in you. For example, on one day you may note down that you mopped the floors (house-proud), finished writing out a budget (diligent), and played with your children (fun to be with).

Doing this will take some time, but is well worth the effort. Noting down the specific incidents that illustrate your positive qualities will allow the list to have an impact on your view of yourself, making it real.