

Self-esteem and personal fulfilment

Building confidence in our own abilities or in our self-image can help us to become more balanced and cheerful people. If we focus our attention on the positive aspects of ourselves and our surroundings, we will enjoy life more. The way we interpret situations can influence how we feel and behave, and, in turn, our emotions and actions can also influence our thoughts. Certain thoughts can make a situation seem even more difficult than it really is. We can distance ourselves from negative thoughts, for example, by using a sense of humour or by stepping back and asking ourselves if there are other, more realistic or balanced ways of interpreting what is happening.

We suggest a series of exercises to do over the course of a month. With small steps, we can achieve big changes.

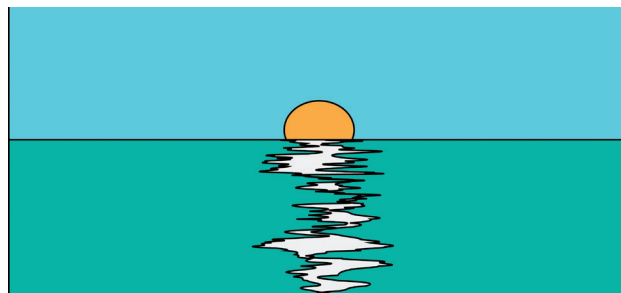
Appreciative thinking

Set aside a few minutes each day – for example, before going to bed – to write down three things you appreciate, choosing different ones each day. Also include one small thing you have done that you feel satisfied with. Give thanks for the everyday things around you that we often overlook (e.g. the sunrise, having hot water, being able to enjoy a meal, etc.).

Discovering your own abilities

Look back at the good moments in your life, when you felt better or did things without worries, enjoying them or maintaining good relationships with others. What moments were they? When? Where? What did you do, say or think? How did you feel? What qualities or abilities of yours contributed to this? Now recall some negative moments that later improved. What moments were they? When? Where? What did you do, say or think? What have you learnt from them?

List the things you believe in and everything you consider truly important in your life (e.g. kindness, hope, love, health, your partner, your children, work, leisure time, nature, spirituality, etc.).



Imagine the day ahead

Imagine tomorrow with a sense of happiness (you feel at ease doing what you want to do, accepting situations as they are). Write down what that ideal day will be like: what you see, what you do, what happens and how you feel. Make a poster where you can draw, paint, write or add photos... to capture your dreams, goals and aspirations from now until 10 years' time.

Every day, before going to bed, think of something you'd like to do the next day that forms part of your previous dreams. Write it down on a piece of paper and look at it when you wake up in the morning.

Treat yourself with respect

Try to speak to yourself with the same respect and understanding that you would show to someone you care about.

When to seek help

It's common to experience low self-esteem from time to time, but if negative thoughts about yourself are persistent, cause you significant distress, interfere with your daily life or are accompanied by sadness, anxiety or a loss of interest, speak to your GP.