



INSIGHT

52 Therapist-Prescribed Activities
to Help You Overcome Your Problems
and Fulfill Your Dreams

Lawrence E. Shapiro, PhD

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Between Sessions Resources

Norwalk, CT

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Cover by Mike Canavan

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Disclaimer

This book is intended to be used for self-help purposes and not to replace psychotherapy. If you are experiencing serious symptoms or problems in your life, you should seek the help of an experienced mental health professional.

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About the Author

Lawrence E. Shapiro, PhD, is a prolific author of self-help books and the inventor of more than 100 therapeutic games. Dr. Shapiro is known for his practical approach to helping others. He has written workbooks, storybooks, card games, board games, and smartphone apps. His interest and expertise cover a broad range of issues, from providing parents with lifesaving information in *The Baby Emergency Handbook* to reducing the incidence of suicide in the military with the award-winning app *Operation Reach Out*. Dr. Shapiro has also developed a number of websites to supplement traditional therapeutic approaches, including BetweenSessions.com and TalktoAnExpertInc.com. His work has been translated into twenty-nine languages.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	6
Personal Elevator Pitch.....	8
You Decide.....	9
10 Things That Give You Pleasure.....	10
Your Memory Drawer.....	11
Draw a Picture of Something That Make You Mad.....	12
Soothing Yourself When You Are Upset.....	14
Just Scribble.....	16
What Make You Feel That Way?.....	17
Just Three Words.....	18
A Month of Random Kindness.....	19
Brainstorming Solutions to Your Problems.....	20
Write a Letter to Your Problem.....	21
Your Family Tree.....	22
What Life Lessons Did You Learn in Grade School.....	23
12 Things That Make You Smile.....	24
Thinking in Full Color.....	25
Words You Want to Hear.....	27
Increasing Positive Feeling.....	28
Your Most Memorable Dream.....	30
Get Back In Touch.....	31
The Importance of Self-Disclosure.....	32
Make a Movie of Your Life.....	35
What Do You See in Your Future?.....	36
Looking at The Timeline of Your Life.....	37
Break Down Your Fears Into Small Steps.....	39
Put Your Worries In A Box.....	40
Create A Self-Portrait.....	41
Do Something Different.....	42
Draw a Picture of Your Family When You Were A Child.....	43
The Miracle Question.....	44
Take A Break From Stress.....	45
It's Possible.....	46
Your Vision Board.....	47
Building Your Support System	48
Handling Your Stress Buttons	49
Your Greatest Accomplishment.....	50

Relying On Your Character Strengths.....	51
Creating a Personal Mission Statement.....	52
What Are Your Life Goals?.....	56
When Is Your Problem Not A Problem.....	57
Connecting to a Higher Power.....	58
What If You Won the Lottery?.....	60
How Do Others See You?.....	61
Your Earliest Memories.....	63
Your Vision of Your Relationship.....	64
An Attitude of Gratitude.....	65
10 Steps Towards Your Goal.....	66
Understanding Your Moods.....	67
Mindful Meditation: Letting Go of Your Worries.....	68
Draw Your Feelings.....	69
Make an Appointment to Worry.....	71
Tell The World.....	72
Record Your Insights.....	73

Introduction

Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.

—Aristotle

Why You Need *Insight*

When is the last time you can remember taking time to think about your life, your values, your dreams or your purpose in being on this earth? If you have to stop to think about the answer to this question, then you definitely need this book.

We live in an era when self-reflection has become a low priority in our daily lives. Technology has taken over our time like a giant balloon in a small room, a balloon that only expands and never deflates. We binge on Netflix shows or YouTube clips for hours at a time. One recent study found that the average person spends ninety minutes a day using their smartphone and an average of nearly three hours a day on social media. Even standing in line at the drugstore, we check our emails, send out a text, or sneak in a few moments to play some addictive video game. With all of the technology competing for our attention, there isn't much time to just *think* about ourselves, and that's unfortunate. Taking the time to reflect on your life will ultimately help you cope better with life's stresses and will contribute to your sense of happiness and self-worth. Self-reflection is an important way of increasing your emotional intelligence, and the skills you'll learn by doing the exercises in this workbook can not only help you solve your current problems but also control the stresses that create new ones.

Don't worry, I'm not going to ask you to hide your smartphones or your iPads. I confess that I'm as addicted to technology as anyone I know. But I am going to ask you to take just fifteen minutes to a half hour a week to make time for personal insight. As any therapist will tell you, insight is not just an aha moment when you suddenly realize that your current problems are connected to some childhood conflict or trauma. The mind is much more complicated than that. Personal insight involves a deep understanding of yourself and the application of that understanding toward behaviors that will positively affect your life as well as the lives of the people you care about. Insight is ultimately about knowledge that leads to positive change.

Where Does Insight Come From?

Insight can come from anywhere at any time. Some people say they have astounding insights when they wake up from a dream. Others say insights come from taking a long walk or swimming laps in a pool. Scientists tell us that insight is most likely to be stimulated when you combine activities from the creative and the logical parts of your brain, which is why this book includes both techniques that ask you to tap into your imagination and activities that stimulate your problem-solving skills and logical thinking.

It's worth remembering that insight is a process, not a moment. And that process is not a linear one. This workbook will be most useful to you if you use it at least once a week to stimulate self-reflection, but I also recommend keeping it nearby to write down insights whenever they occur. When you're working on a personal problem, the worksheets in this book may give you the insight you need.

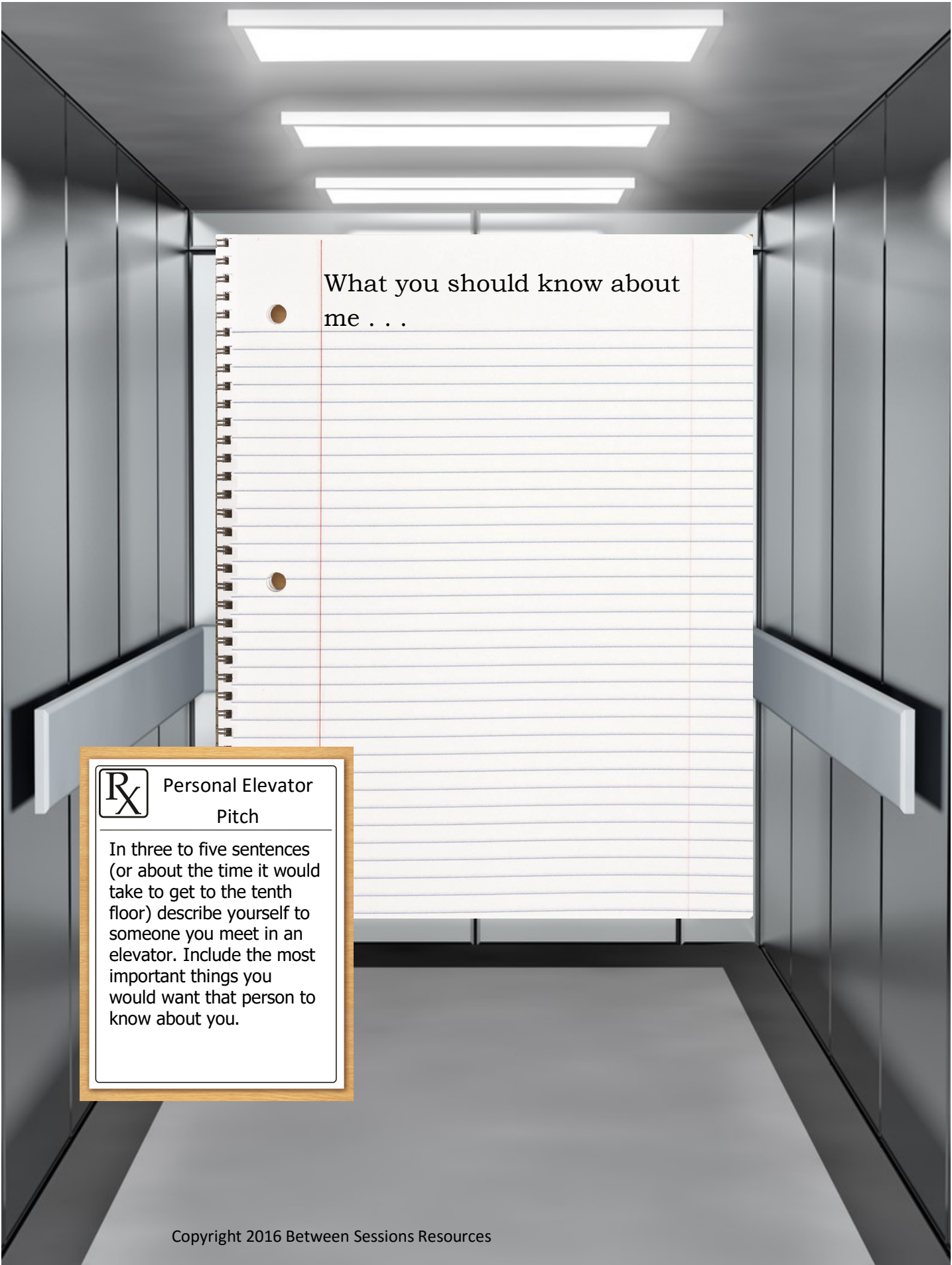
I also encourage you to share your thoughts and feelings with others. In fact, some of the worksheets specifically ask you to communicate with people you care about as well as to get feedback on your perception of yourself. As the early pioneers of psychotherapy knew when they coined the term “talking cure,” there are many benefits to talking openly and honestly to others about your feelings. You could, of course, talk to a therapist, but sharing your insight with a spouse, partner, family member, friend, or support group can be just as effective.

How to Use This Book in PDF Format

This version of the book has been produced in PDF format so it is easy to print. You can print it all out at one time and put it in a binder, or you can read it on your computer and print out just the specific worksheets that interest you. If you’d like help storing the PDF on your tablet or e-reader, see the instructions on your device.

I encourage you to print out multiple copies of the last page of this book to record your insights whenever they occur. Or you may want to keep a separate insight journal. Keeping a written record of your insights is an important part of the process, and you’ll likely want to look back at what you wrote from time to time.

Good luck on your journey



What you should know about
me . . .



Personal Elevator
Pitch

In three to five sentences (or about the time it would take to get to the tenth floor) describe yourself to someone you meet in an elevator. Include the most important things you would want that person to know about you.

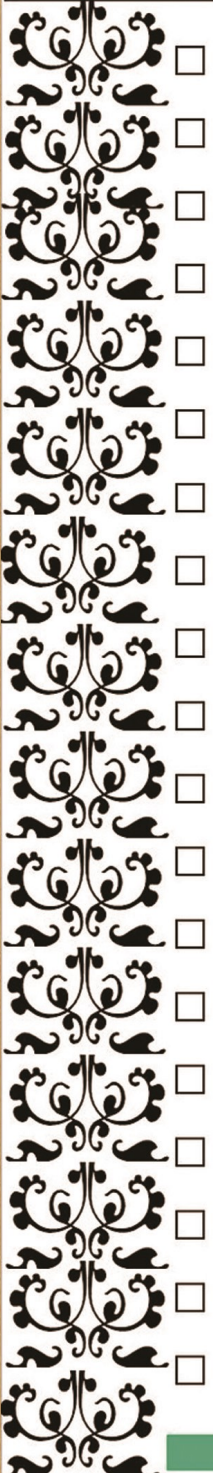
You Decide

Do you have an important decision to make?

Write down your choices on the road signs. List the positive points for each choice.



To Do List



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10 Things That Give You Pleasure

Sometimes life can seem pretty hard. There may be one big thing that has made your life more difficult or perhaps there are many small situations that bother you. Even though you may be facing some hardships, it is important to remember to find things in your life that give you pleasure *every day*. Taking just a few minutes each day to do something you really enjoy will make it easier for you to cope with life's inevitable difficulties.

Dose

Do something pleasurable from this list every day.



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Your Memory Drawer

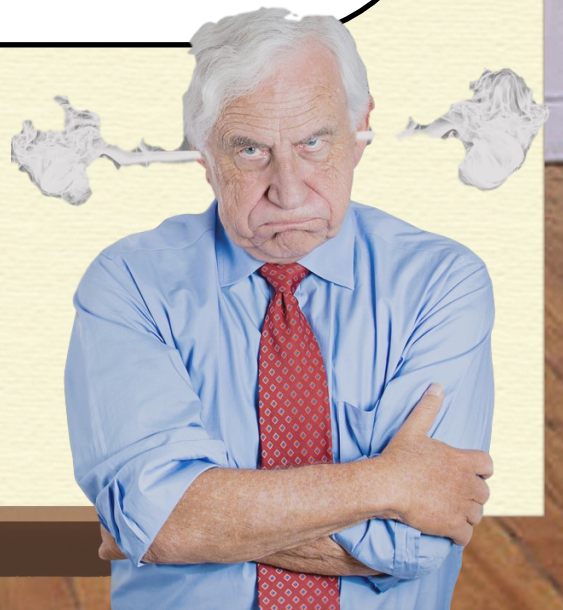
Draw in objects from your past that represent your important memories. When you are done, go back and think about why you chose these items.



Draw a Picture of Someone Who Really Makes You Mad



What *positive* things could you say or do to help resolve the conflict you have with this person?





Soothing Yourself When You Are Upset

Learning to soothe yourself when you are upset is a critical part of mental health. All of the activities pictured below trigger biochemical in the brain that are associated with feelings of calm and contentment. Circle the ones that you feel are most useful in helping you feel better when you are stressed or going through difficult times. Do these activities several times a day when you feel particularly stressed or upset.



Find familiar smells.



Try yoga or stretching.



Chew gum.



Sit near a body of water.



Listen to relaxing music.



Pet a pet.



Meditate.



Take a hike.



Get a massage.



Keep Track of Your Activities and Your Moods

The activities below can provide immediate relief when you are feeling upset, but using calming techniques on a regular basis will always be most effective. Use this sheet to record the dates you use each technique.



Familiar smells are particularly soothing. Certain smells seem to have an immediate influence on our emotions. Vanilla will help elevate your mood and lavender has a calming effect.



Our bodies are meant to move. Any exercise, from simple stretching to a rigorous workout, will improve your mood.



Repetitive muscle movement, like chewing gum, rocking, or knitting, produces serotonin in the brain, which will bring you a sense of calm.



Sitting by a body of water will expose you to the mood-elevating effects of negative ions and the relaxing sounds of the water.



Listening to relaxing music while you breathe deeply can help lower your cortisol, a biochemical associated with stress.



Studies tell us that people with pets tend to be happier, healthier, and more resilient. Just being around animals can lower blood pressure and raise serotonin levels.



Getting a massage triggers the relaxation response in the body. Self-massage can also help reduce stress hormones, improve circulation, and ease muscle pain.



Taking a hike in nature combines the benefits of exercise with the benefits of being in nature. One study showed that looking at photos of nature helped reduce stress hormones.



Just Scribble

Close your eyes and scribble somewhere on this page.


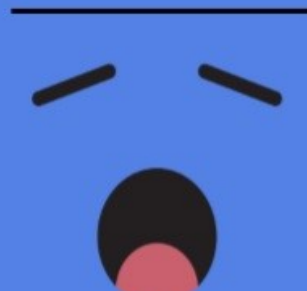


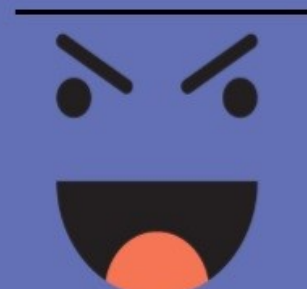
Then turn your scribble into an abstract drawing. Don't worry about what it looks like; just fill the page. When you are done, take colored pencils and color in your drawing.

Breathe slowly and deeply as you draw. What do you see in your picture? Did any thoughts or feelings come up?



What Makes You Feel That Way?

Many things influence your emotions: your thoughts, people you know, a picture, a song, a smell, a memory, the weather, and so much more. Write down something that is likely to trigger each of these nine emotions. Write down the first things that come to mind. Do your answers reveal anything about your emotional life?

 Happy	 Friendly	 Sad
 Joyful	 Bored	 Confused
 Anxious	 Angry	 Proud

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Just Three Words

Sometimes answering questions quickly can help you gain a unique perspective on your thoughts and feelings. The object of this exercise is to write down the first words that come to your mind.

Answer the questions below with just three words. If you can't think of three words after a few seconds, go on to the next question. When you are done, go back and fill in any words that are missing, taking the time to reflect on why some questions were harder for you to answer than others.

What are three words that best describe you?

What are three words that describe your best friend?

What are three words that describe your spouse or significant other?

What are your three most important values?

What are the three emotions you are most likely to have each day?

What are three things that always make you smile?

A Month of Random Kindness

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Give to Others

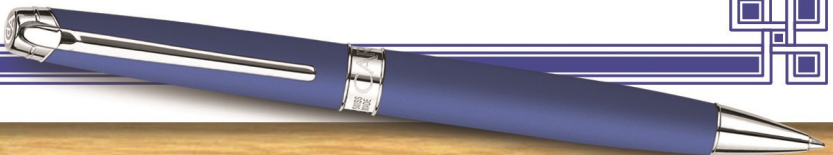
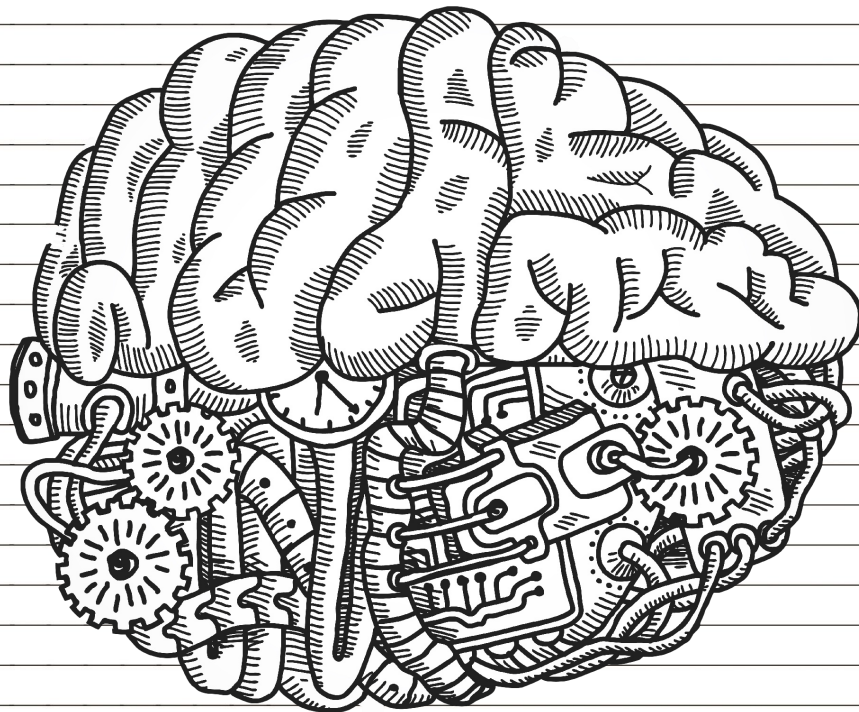
Research tells us that giving to others is one of the best ways to feel better about yourself. Write down a random act of kindness each day for a month and note your mood for each day.

Dose
1 X Day

Brainstorming Solutions to Your Problems

Think of a problem you are trying to solve. Think about it for about five minutes without trying to come up with a solution. Now take some colored pencils and color in the picture below as you think of a solution. Write down any ideas you have without evaluating them as "good" or "bad." See if you can come up with at least ten ideas. Then go back and see if there are any worth exploring. Circle the ideas that you think are possible solutions to your problem.

Write Your Problem Here:





**Write a Letter to
Your Problem**



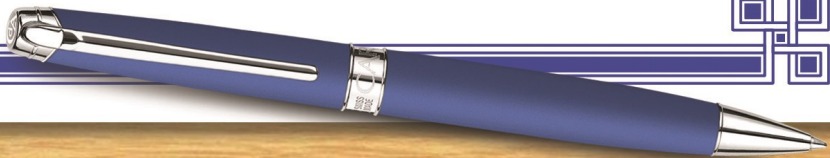
Do you have some internal problem that is holding you back? Anxiety? Depression? Procrastination? A bad habit? Write a letter to your problem and tell it how it is ruining your life. Tell it to go away and to not come back. This technique can help motivate you to make important changes in your life rather than just cope with things the way they are.

Date _____

Dear _____,

Lined writing area with horizontal lines for text.

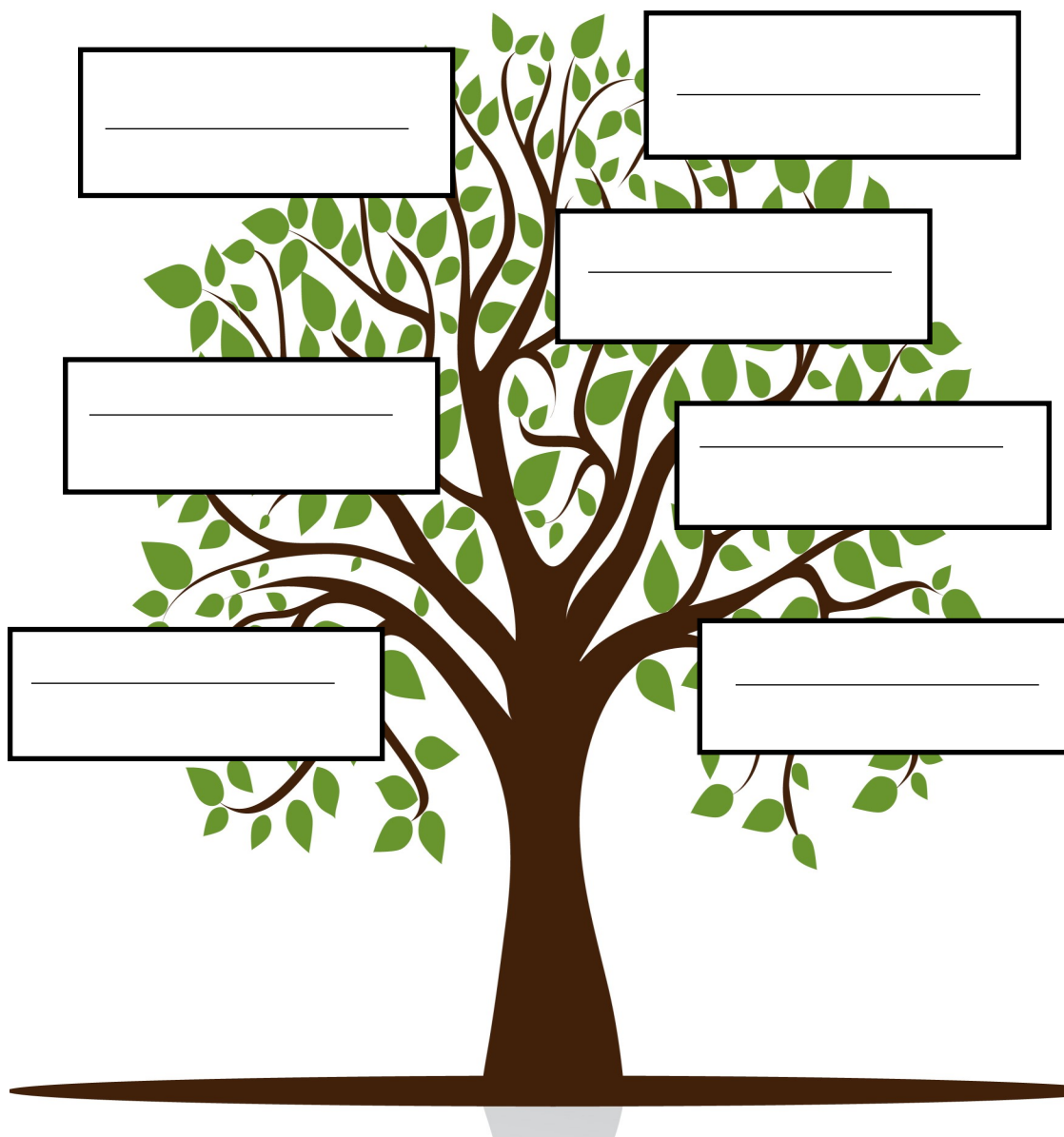
Signed _____





Your Family Tree of Character Strengths

Think of the character strengths you have learned or inherited from your extended family. At the top of each box, write the names of family members who have had a positive influence on you and then list the character strengths you learned from them.





What Life Lessons Did You Learn In Grade School?

A Guiding Life Principle

An Important Rule About Friendship

Something to Avoid

How to Handle Authority

A Key to Success



12 Things That Make You Smile

Write down twelve things that always make you smile. You could also make a collage of pictures of the things that make you smile.

Dose

Look at this list at least once a day.





Thinking In Full Color

Black-and-white thinking, sometimes called “absolute thinking” or “all-or-nothing thinking,” is very common, even though this type of thinking can lead to lots of trouble and unhappiness. When you think in black-and-white terms you substantially limit the possibility for understanding yourself and others, and as you limit your thinking, you limit your choices.

When it comes to our emotional and social lives there are very few things that are black and white. For example, a twenty-five-year-old woman who was left by her boyfriend said to a friend, “I’ll *never* find anyone to love again.” A fifty-five-year-old businessman laid off from his job thought, “My life is ruined. Employers will *only* see me as an old man.” A seventeen-year-old star football player who ended his hopes of getting a college scholarship when he broke his knee told his parents, “If I can’t play football, there is *nothing* I can do really well.”

Can you see the problem with this type of thinking? When you hear yourself say words like “always,” “never,” “every,” “all,” or “no one,” you can know immediately that you are thinking in black-and-white instead of thinking in full color.

So how do you change your thinking? Look at these examples of how thinking in full color opens up possibilities.

Black-and-White Thinking

“I’ll *never* find anyone to love again.”

“My life is ruined. Employers will *only* see me as an old man.”

“If I can’t play football, there is *nothing* I can do really well.”

Full Color Thinking

“I’m having a difficult time being alone, but I’m young and with patience I can find someone else to love.”

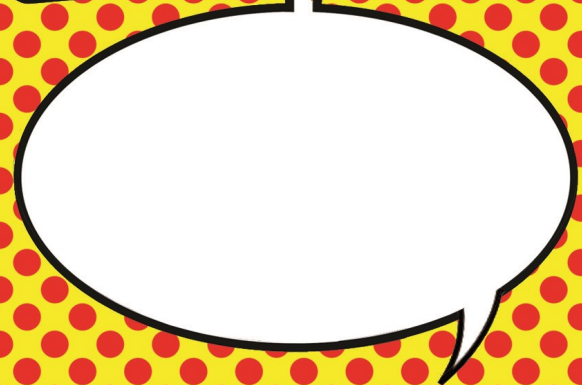
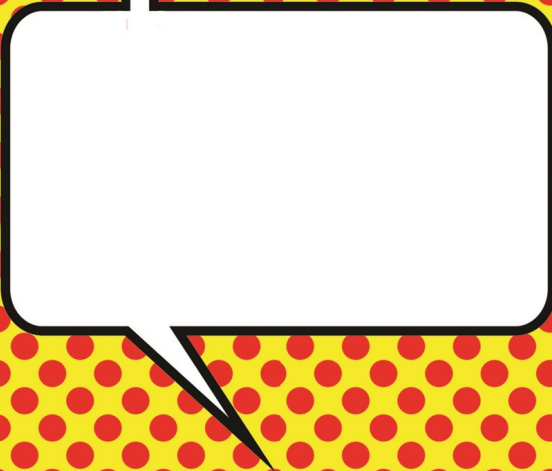
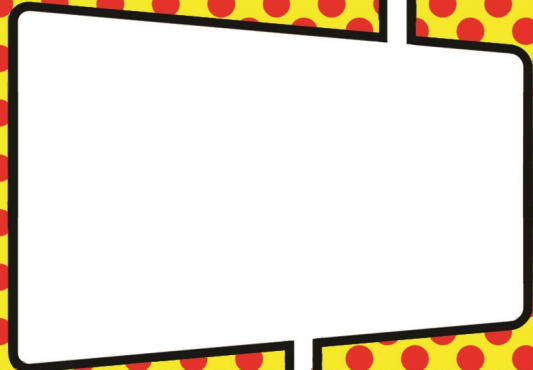
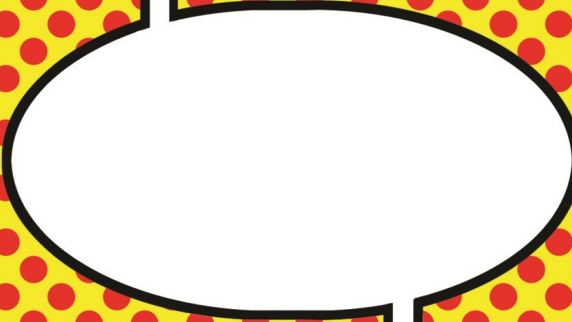
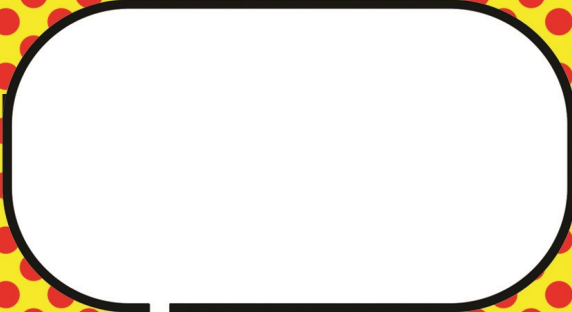
“There are many companies that could benefit from my experience. There are also many resources for people my age to help me find a job. Or I could always start my own business!”

“I became good at football because I worked hard, loved the sport, and practiced all of the time. I can find other things that I love to do, and if I practice hard, I can excel at those things too.”

Write down a problem you are having here. Then on the next page write down black-and-white thoughts and full color thoughts about your problem.

Black & White Thoughts

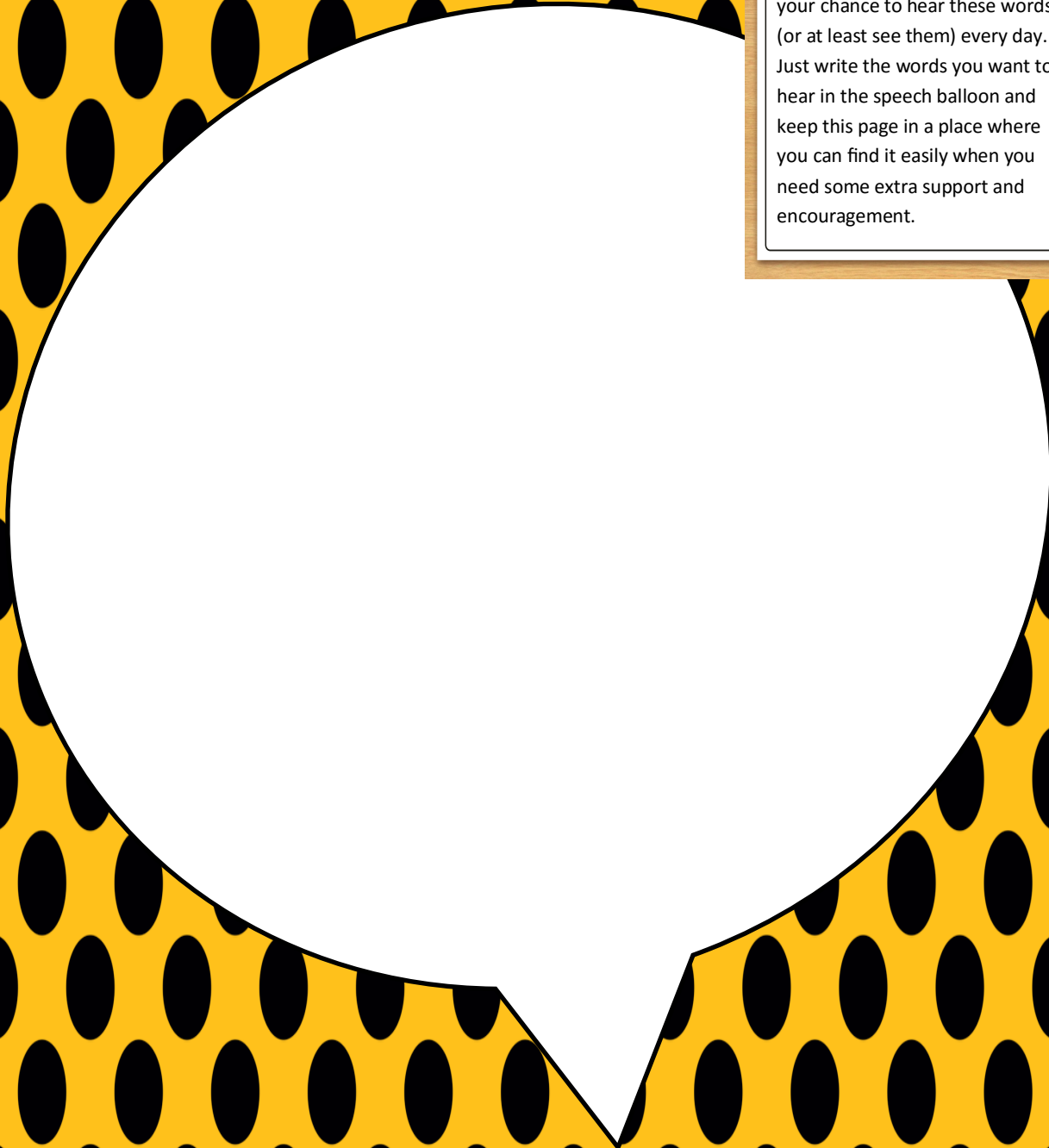
Full Color Thoughts





Words You Want to Hear

Are there some words you long to hear? Are you in need of approval or praise? There's nothing wrong with that! Now's your chance to hear these words (or at least see them) every day. Just write the words you want to hear in the speech balloon and keep this page in a place where you can find it easily when you need some extra support and encouragement.





Increasing Positive Feelings

Many people don't realize how much power they have over their emotions. When you are having a hard day, thinking the things that trigger your positive emotions can really help. Complete this worksheet to focus on positive thoughts, memories, and emotions.

What is one thing that always bring you joy?

Write down a time that you had a wonderful surprise.

What is something you did that you are really proud about?

Write down a time that you achieved a goal because you wouldn't stop trying.

Name a person who always makes you feel confident.

What is something you do that also makes you feel energized?

Write down something that always makes you feel hopeful.

When do you feel most loving?

Name an activity that almost always makes you feel calm and centered.

Think of a person, place, or thing that gives you a sense of belonging.

Think of a book, movie, or song that always gives you a strong sense of optimism.

Name an activity that always give you pleasure.

Write down the names of people who have inspired you.

Think of a time in your life, even if it was just a few hours, when you felt completely content.

Write down three things you are grateful for.

Think of a time when you were completely filled with awe.

Think of something someone did for you that showed they really care about you.

Think of a time when you laughed so hard that tears came to your eyes.

Think of a time when you felt particularly capable.

Think of a time when your efforts were sincerely acknowledged.

Think of a time when you were treated with unexpected kindness.

Your Most Memorable Dream

A large, white, cloud-shaped outline with a black border, containing horizontal lines for writing. The cloud has several rounded lobes and a small circular detail at the bottom left.

Rx

Write down your most memorable dream. It could be a recent dream or a dream from long ago. Think about what was going on in your life at the time that made this dream so memorable.



Get Back in Touch

Most of us have important people we have lost touch with. Think of someone you would like to reconnect with. Write the person a postcard and tell him or her whatever is on your mind. Consider actually getting in touch again!

Dose

As needed

POSTCARD

POSTCARD

POSTCARD

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Address:

Handwriting practice lines for the message area, consisting of 15 horizontal dotted lines.

Handwriting practice lines for the address area, consisting of 8 horizontal dotted lines.





The Importance of Self-Disclosure

You probably have dozens of conversations with people each day, but how often do you have conversations where you share your authentic thoughts and feelings? According to neuroscientists who have studied what happens to people's brains when they are in therapy, when we disclose our inner thoughts and feelings our brains produce serotonin, a biochemical associated with calm and well-being. Other studies tell us that people who self-disclose are seen by others as "friendly," "trustworthy" and generally more likeable.

So start talking! You can use the die on the next page as an easy and fun game to play with your family, a group of friends, or just someone you want to get to know better. Just cut out the die, and fold and paste or tape it together, and you're ready to play. There is no right or wrong way to play; just take turns throwing the die and give each player two minutes to answer each question. If you have already answered a question, roll again. Encourage players to take the full two minutes rather than give just short answers.

Ready to play more? Make copies of the die on the next page and ask each person to write six questions of their own. Then assemble the dice for more ways to talk about your thoughts and feelings and to get to know the people you are playing with.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU DID IN THE PAST YOU ARE REALLY PROUD OF?

PASTE HERE

PASTE HERE

WHAT IS AN IMPORTANT DECISION YOU HAVE TO MAKE SOON?

WHAT IS A MISTAKE YOU MADE IN THE PAST?

WHAT IS A FEAR YOU TRY TO HIDE?

PASTE HERE

WHO IS A ROLE MODEL FOR YOU?

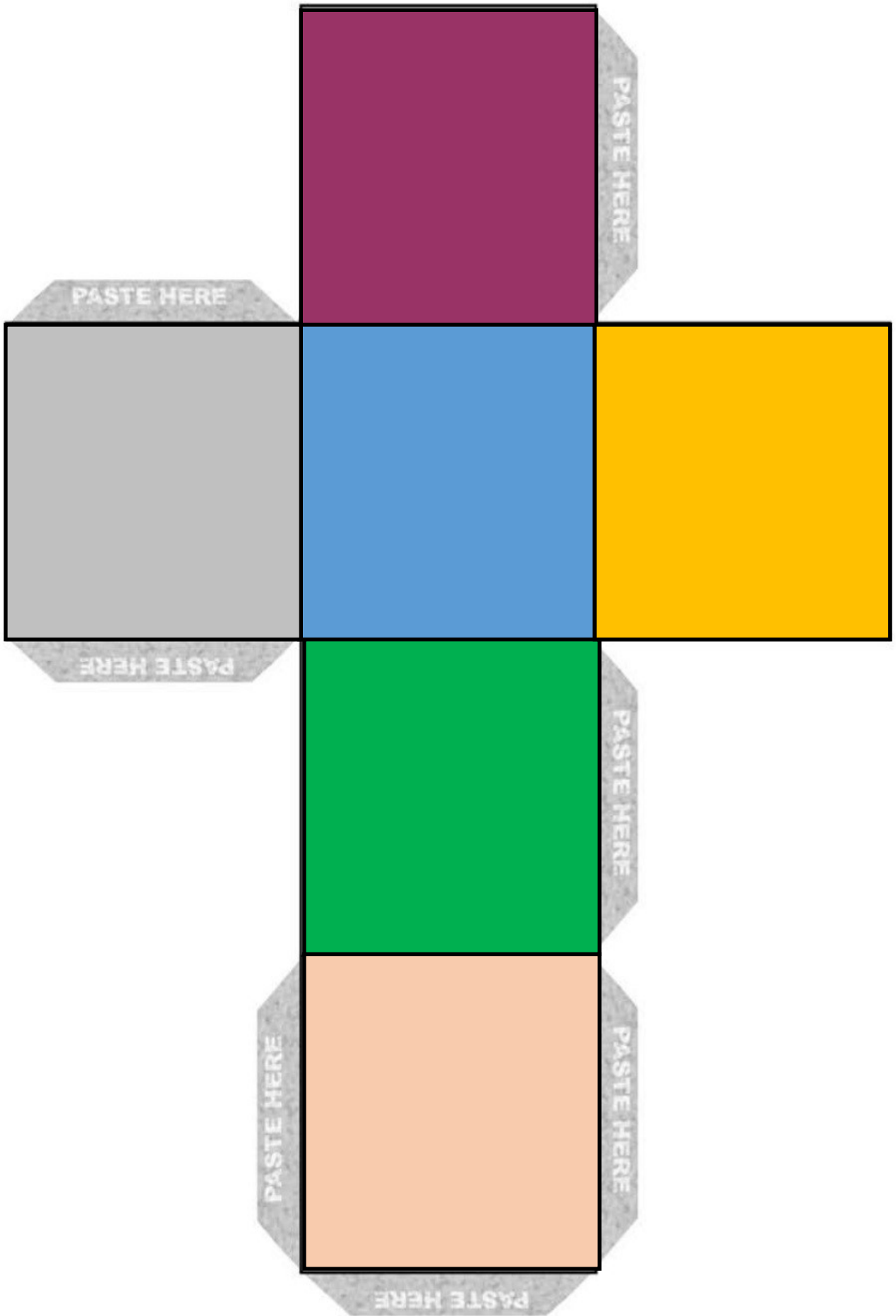
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WHAT IS THE #1 THING ON YOUR BUCKET LIST

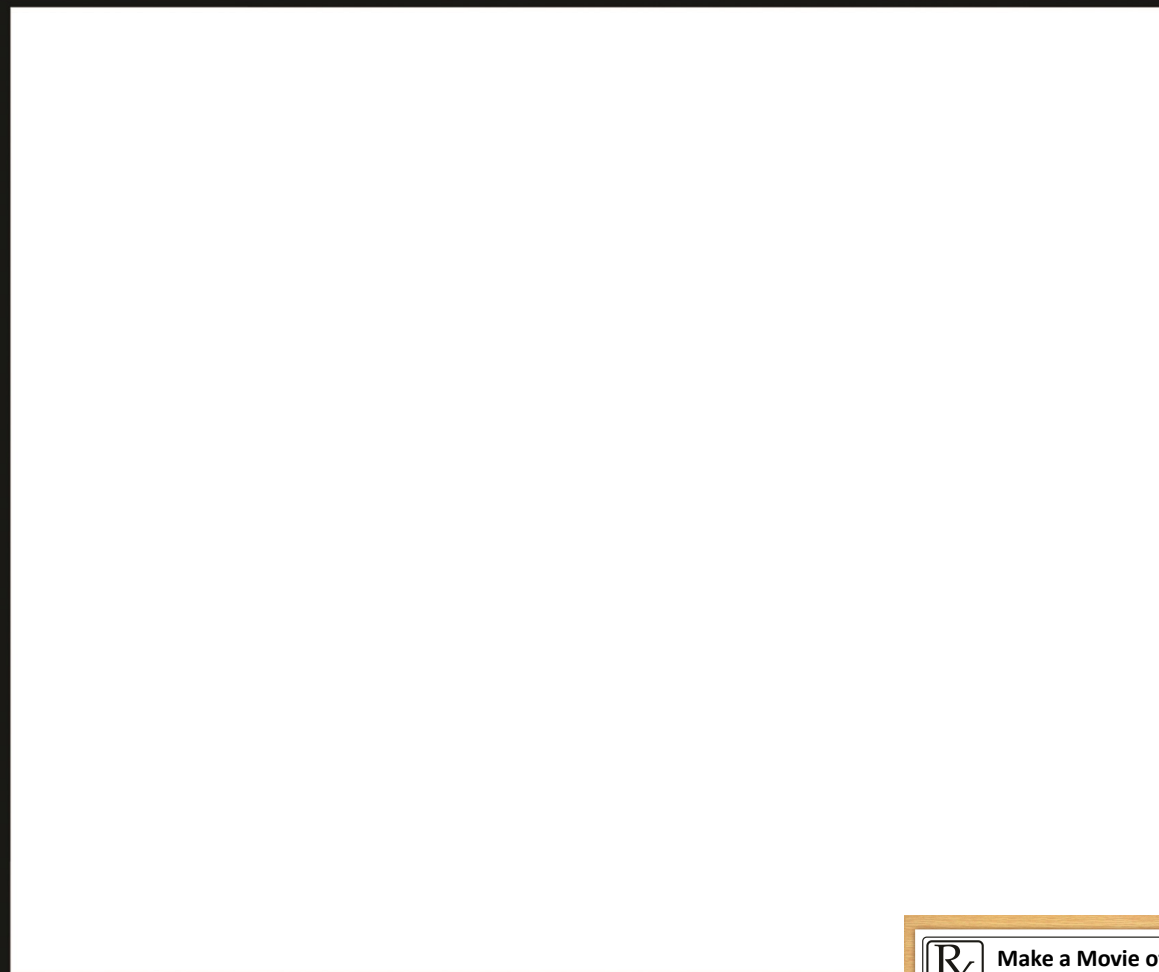
PASTE HERE

PASTE HERE





NOW PLAYING



Make a Movie of Your Life

Imagine that someone wanted to make a movie of your life. What would the title be? Draw a picture of the most important scene.

What Do You See in Your Future?



Creating Your Future

Think of one thing that is missing in your life now that you would like to have in five years. Draw a picture of yourself in five years with this one important thing added.

What can you do today to make this happen?



Looking at the Timeline of Your Life

Most of us are so caught up in day-to-day events that we don't take the time to view our lives as a whole. When we do take a bird's-eye view of our lives, we often discern patterns that were never apparent before, and these patterns can lead us to see new possibilities.

The timeline on the next page can be used in various ways, so you may want to make several copies of this worksheet. Here are some suggestions on how to use the worksheet, but you may also come up with some ideas of your own.

1. Write down the most influential events of your life. See if you see a pattern.
2. Write down important people who influenced you during different periods of your life.
3. Write down positive things that happened in different stages of your life. Think about how these events affected you.
4. Think about a problem you are currently trying to solve. Look back at your life and write down any events that might have contributed to this problem.
5. Take a few minutes to think about what you want to accomplish in the years ahead. Write down significant milestones that you would like to occur in the future.

Other ways to use this timeline:

Timeline Of Your Life

0-5 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 0-5 years period.

6-10 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 6-10 years period.

11-15 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 11-15 years period.

16-20 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 16-20 years period.

21-25 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 21-25 years period.

26-30 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 26-30 years period.

31-35 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 31-35 years period.

36-40 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 36-40 years period.

41-45 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 41-45 years period.

46-50 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 46-50 years period.

51-55 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 51-55 years period.

56-60 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 56-60 years period.

61-65 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 61-65 years period.

66-70 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 66-70 years period.

71-75 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 71-75 years period.

76-80 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 76-80 years period.

81-85 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 81-85 years period.

86-90 years

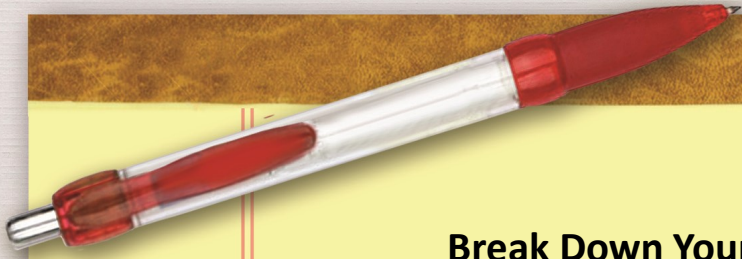
Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 86-90 years period.

91-95 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 91-95 years period.

96-100 years

Blank lined area for notes corresponding to the 96-100 years period.



Break Down Your Fears Into Small Steps

Does fear hold you back from something you'd like to do? Are you afraid to fly? To meet new people? To give a speech? Think of something you avoid because of your fear. Write down twenty small steps you can take to conquer your fear. Cross off each step when it is done.



Put Your Worries in a Box

Some people worry about the same things over and over again. When they can't stop worrying, these worries can become obsessions. One technique you can use to stop worrying is to compartmentalize your worries by imagining you are putting them in a box, sealing it up, and forgetting about it.

When you find yourself worrying about something over and over again, write your worries in the box below, then fold up this piece of paper and put it in a drawer. When you are ready to try to solve some of the problems that are causing you to worry, unfold this page to "pick" one worry to work on. Put the rest back in the drawer.



Create a Self-Portrait

Draw a picture of yourself that emphasizes your most positive qualities.





Do Something Different

Think of a situation in your life where you feel stuck. Now write down three things you do could differently to make the situation better. Sometimes just doing something you haven't tried before can lead you toward a new positive solution.

Draw a Picture of Your Family When You Were a Child

How has your family influenced who you are? Draw a picture of everyone in your family doing something that reflects their personalities at that time. When you are done, add a title to this picture. What does your recollection of your family say about the person you have become?



The Miracle Question

Think about the biggest problem in your life. Now imagine that a miracle took place and that problem no longer existed. In the space below, write about how your life would be different.



Take a Break from Stress

Take one day and dedicate it to relaxation. Meditate. Go for a hike. Take a nap in the afternoon. Read. Relax in a comfortable chair and listen to your favorite music.

Dedicate the entire day to just relaxing and taking a break from the stress in your life.

At the end of the day, write your thoughts and feelings below. Can you do just one thing each day to take a break from your daily stress?



It's Possible

“We know what we are, but know not what we may be.” -William Shakespeare



Use your imagination to write down one thing you could accomplish this month that you have not been able to do before.

IMPOSSIBLE

I can _____



Your Vision Board

The idea of a vision board is to create images for the things that motivate or inspire you. Think about some specific goal that you have and paste in pictures or draw things that will inspire you to achieve that goal. Write your goal here:





Building Your Support System

Few would disagree that it is important to have a reliable emotional support system, but many people find this is a difficult thing to achieve. If you often find yourself feeling alone and that there is no one who understands you, then it is time to find people you can talk to and rely on. This worksheet can help you think about people who can support you in various areas of your life. If you have difficulty thinking of people in a specific area, think of people who could *possibly* fill this role, and then work toward making this happen. Often you'll find you can get the support you need by just asking for it.

Write down people you know who fit into each category.

Someone I can discuss a personal problem with _____

Someone who enjoys similar activities _____

Someone who can help me with a task _____

Someone who can cheer me up when I am down _____

Someone who builds my self-confidence _____

Someone who can give me helpful feedback _____

A good listener I can share my feelings with _____

Someone who can be honest with me when I'm making a mistake _____

Someone who can keep me accountable for my promises _____

Someone who can help me conquer bad habits _____

Someone who can help me solve serious problems _____

Someone I can count on to make me laugh _____

Someone who can comfort me in a time of loss _____

Someone who can care for me when I'm ill _____











Someone who will be proud of my achievements _____





Handling Your Stress Buttons

You can't get rid of all of the stress in your life, but there are many types of stress that can be reduced. Write down all the "hot buttons" that cause you stress and then write down ways to reduce each type of stress.



Your Greatest Accomplishment

What is something you did you are really proud of?
Inscribe this trophy to recognize this achievement.





Relying On Your Character Strengths

When you are going through difficult times, you may forget about the personal strengths you can bring to the problems in your life. Remembering your strengths can help you be more resilient and can guide you toward solutions to your problems that you might have missed. Read the list of adjectives below and circle the personality or character strengths that best describe you. Then go back and look at the strengths you have circled and see if there is *one* strength that will help you solve a problem you are currently having.

Accepting	Inquisitive
Adaptable	Insightful
Adventurous	Intuitive
Agreeable	Kind
Aware	Loving
Balanced	Loyal
Calm	Open-minded
Caring	Optimistic
Centered	Passionate
Charismatic	Patient
Considerate	Persistent
Courageous	Practical
Creative	Proactive
Curious	Rational
Dedicated	Reliable
Diligent	Responsible
Energetic	Self-confident
Enthusiastic	Sociable
Fair-minded	Spiritual
Flexible	Spontaneous
Focused	Sympathetic
Friendly	Thoughtful
Fun	Trustworthy
Imaginative	Versatile
Generous	Warmhearted
Honest	Wise
Humble	Witty

Creating a Personal Mission Statement

If you want to live each day to the fullest you will need to think about what you really want out of your life and the principles and values that will guide your day-to-day decisions. This worksheet is designed to help you create a personal mission statement (sometimes called a purpose statement), which can be a simple road map to help you live a happy and fulfilling life.

A personal mission statement provides clarity and gives you a sense of purpose. It defines who you are and how you will live.

A personal mission statement is different from the goals you have for yourself. In fact it is what your goals are based on. A personal mission statement includes your values, beliefs, and priorities in just a sentence or two. A personal mission statement will not only show you the path to make your decisions each day, it will also give you permission to say no to the things in your life that are not really important to you.

It is important to note that a personal mission statement is not written in stone, but rather it will change over time as your life experiences change. Your personal mission statement is focused on self-discovery as well as purpose.

Here are some personal mission statements from some people you may know:

“To be a teacher. And to be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be.”

Oprah Winfrey

“To have fun in [my] journey through life and learn from [my] mistakes.”

-Sir Richard Branson

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.”

-Maya Angelou

Developing Your Personal Mission Statement

You can use this worksheet to help you think about your personal mission statement.

Think about people you admire and the traits they have that you think are important.

Three people you admire:

Traits these people have that you admire:

Write down five values that define you:

Think about the roles you play in the lives of others—friends, family, co-workers.

Write down all the important roles you have in your life.

Write down the most important things you want to accomplish in your life.

Imagine who you want to become in this world, what you want to be known for, and how you want to be remembered. Write it down below.

Write down some things that you are really good at.

Your Personal Mission Statement

Write down your personal mission statement in one or two sentences. Incorporate your values, your aspirations, your abilities, and what you see as your purpose in life.

Write down ways you can incorporate your mission statement into your daily life.



What Are Your Life Goals?

When you want something important to happen in your life, most successful people advise making goals. This worksheet is intended to help you think about eight important areas of your life and what you want to accomplish in the next five years.

Financial

Business/Professional/Career

Relationships/Family/Friends

Fun Time/Recreation/Hobbies/Travel

Personal Learning

Community Service

Spiritual

Health & Fitness

Other Goals



When Is Your Problem *Not* a Problem?

Many people worry about a specific problem in their lives that seems unsolvable. One school of therapy—Solution Oriented Therapy—suggests that solutions to problems can become more apparent when you look at *exceptions* to the problem. For this worksheet, identify a problem that is currently troubling you and answer the questions below. Then write down any insight you have, keeping in mind that most problems can improve when you see them in a new light.

Describe your problem in specific terms.

When does the problem not occur or not affect you very much?

Is there something that makes the problem better at certain times? _____

What are you doing differently at these times? _____

What else is better at these times? _____

What are some aspects of this problem that seem to change? _____

Connecting to a Higher Power

Many people feel that an important part of feeling good about themselves involves a connection to a higher power. For some people their higher power is God. For others a higher power could be nature, the universe, or some undefinable spirit. A higher power means that you believe there is something bigger and more powerful than yourself; this can make you feel safe and calm and that you don't have to have all the answers to life. When people feel hopeless or powerless, belief in a higher power can get them through these difficult times.

Use the following questions to help you think about your relationship to a higher power.

What are some of your beliefs about a higher power?

What are some ways these beliefs comfort you?

Have you ever had a difficult time in your life when you turned for help to a higher power? What happened?

How do you connect to or acknowledge a higher power in your daily life (for example, pray, go to a house of worship, meditate, do something in nature)?

Is there something you'd like to do differently to connect to a higher power?

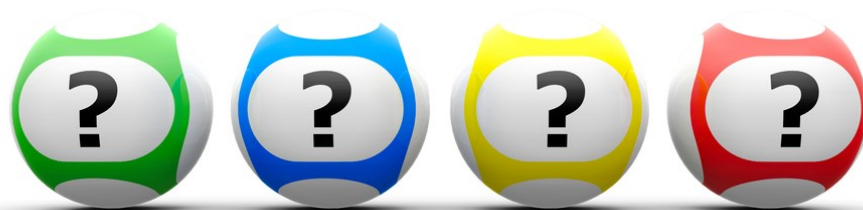
The next time you are upset, can you think of a way to feel in touch with a higher power?

If you could speak to your higher power right now, what would you say?



What If You Won the Lottery?

It's fun to think about what you would do if you won millions of dollars in the lottery, but what if you "won the lottery" (that is, had great fortune) in some other way? Draw a picture of something that might happen in your life that would make you feel like you "won the lottery." Can you think of one way you could increase your chances of being this fortunate?



How Do Others See You?

Do you see yourself as others see you? We all have a certain image we like to project, which may be close to the actual way others see us or may be very different.

On the first page of this worksheet rate how you think others see you. You can give copies of the second sheet to people you know to see how accurate your perceptions are about yourself.

What are your best three physical attributes?

What are three things that make you unique?

What are three character traits you consider your greatest strengths?

What is something you'd like to improve about yourself?

What are three emotions you commonly feel?

What are three words you would use to describe your personality?

What are three words you would use to describe your relationship with other people?

What are three words you would use to describe your attitude toward work or school?



Dear _____

I'm doing an exercise regarding my self-perception and I'd like to compare your perceptions to mine. Would you please answer the questions below as honestly as you can?

Thanks,

What would you say are my best three physical attributes?

What three things would you say make me unique?

What would you say are the three character traits that are my greatest strengths?

What is something you think I could do to improve myself?

What are three emotions you think I commonly express ?

What are three words you would use to describe my personality?

What are three words you would use to describe how I relate to other people?

What are three words you would use to describe my attitude toward work or school?

The image shows a top-down view of a light-colored wooden floor. The floor is framed by a border of colorful wooden blocks. These blocks are scattered around the perimeter, each featuring a different letter of the alphabet or a number. The colors of the blocks include yellow, red, blue, green, and white. The letters and numbers are printed in bold, black or white fonts. The central area of the floor is clear, providing space for text and a drawing prompt.

Your Earliest Memory

Draw a picture of your earliest memory. It could be a toy, a person, or maybe a place. What feelings does this memory evoke?



Your Vision of Your Relationship

Have you ever discussed what you want from your relationship with your partner? Do you and your partner have the same ideas? Make a copy of this worksheet for each of you. Take ten minutes to write down and rate the seven most important things you each want from your relationship. Do this independently and then share what you wrote. Rate the importance of each statement and the degree of difficulty for your partner, on a 1 to 10 scale with 1=Low and 10=High. Be honest, but also be considerate of your partner's feelings.

Things You Want From Your Relationship	Rate Importance	Rate How Difficult You Think This Might Be



An Attitude of Gratitude

Research on what makes people happy consistently shows that keeping a gratitude journal elevates a person's mood and sense of purpose. At least three times a week, use this worksheet to write down what you are grateful for.





10 Steps Toward Your Goal

If you are looking to make changes in your life, begin by setting a realistic goal. Now break that goal into ten smaller steps that are relatively easy for you to achieve. If you find each step is difficult, break the step into smaller steps. Don't forget to get support and encouragement for your efforts.

Your Goal



- 1 _____

- 2 _____

- 3 _____

- 4 _____

- 5 _____

- 6 _____

- 7 _____

- 8 _____

- 9 _____

- 10 _____

Understanding Your Moods

Date _____

Your moods change throughout the day, just like the weather. At the end of the day put a circle around the weather images that best describe your moods that day, noting the time of day and the things that happened to influence your feelings. Make copies of this worksheet and do this exercise for at least seven days.



Time of Day _____

What happened?



Time of Day _____

What happened?



Time of Day _____

What happened?



Time of Day _____

What happened?



Time of Day _____

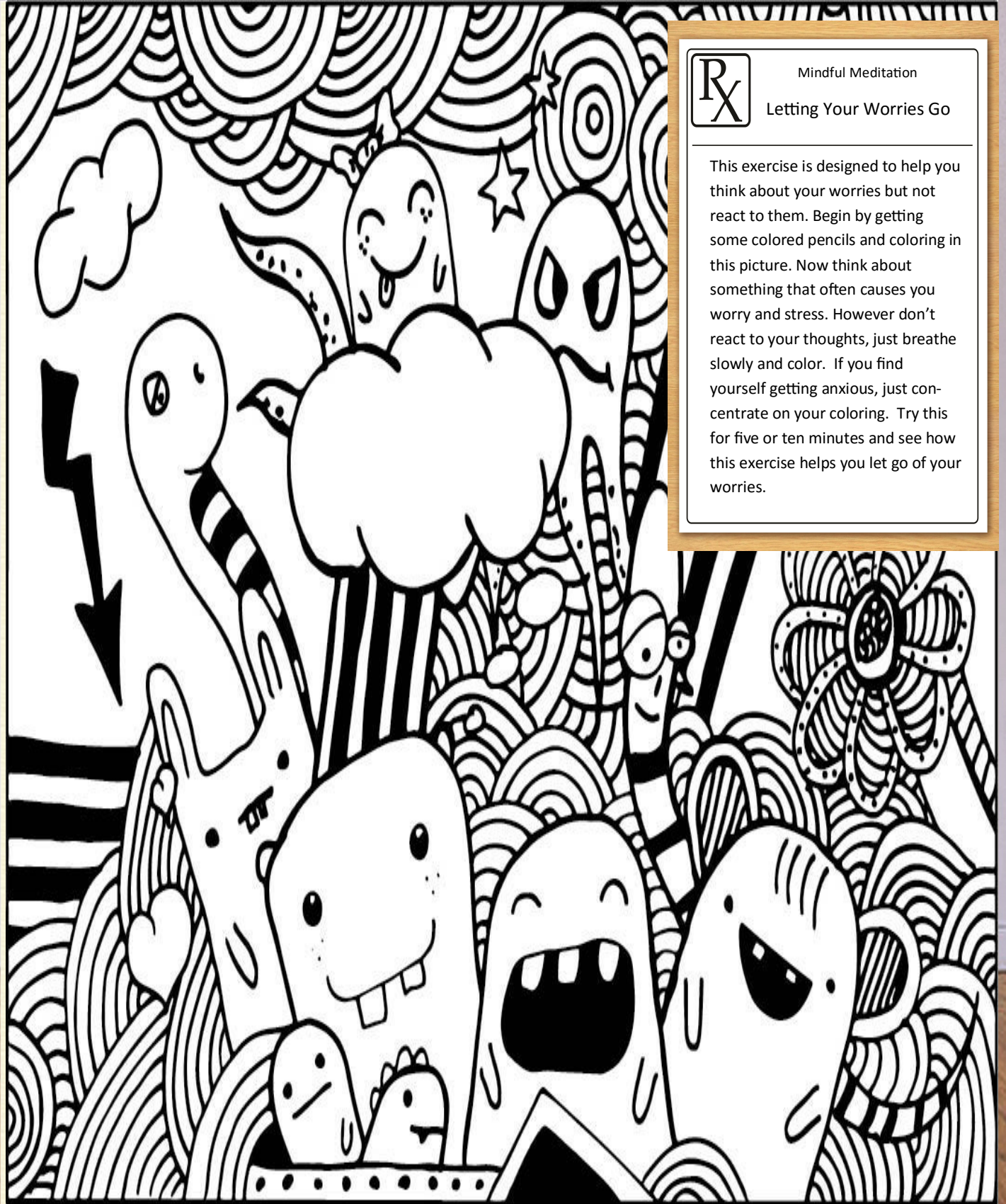
What happened?



Time of Day _____

What happened?

Examine your responses over a week's time. See if there is a "weather pattern." What can you do on a regular basis to bring more "sunshine" into your life?



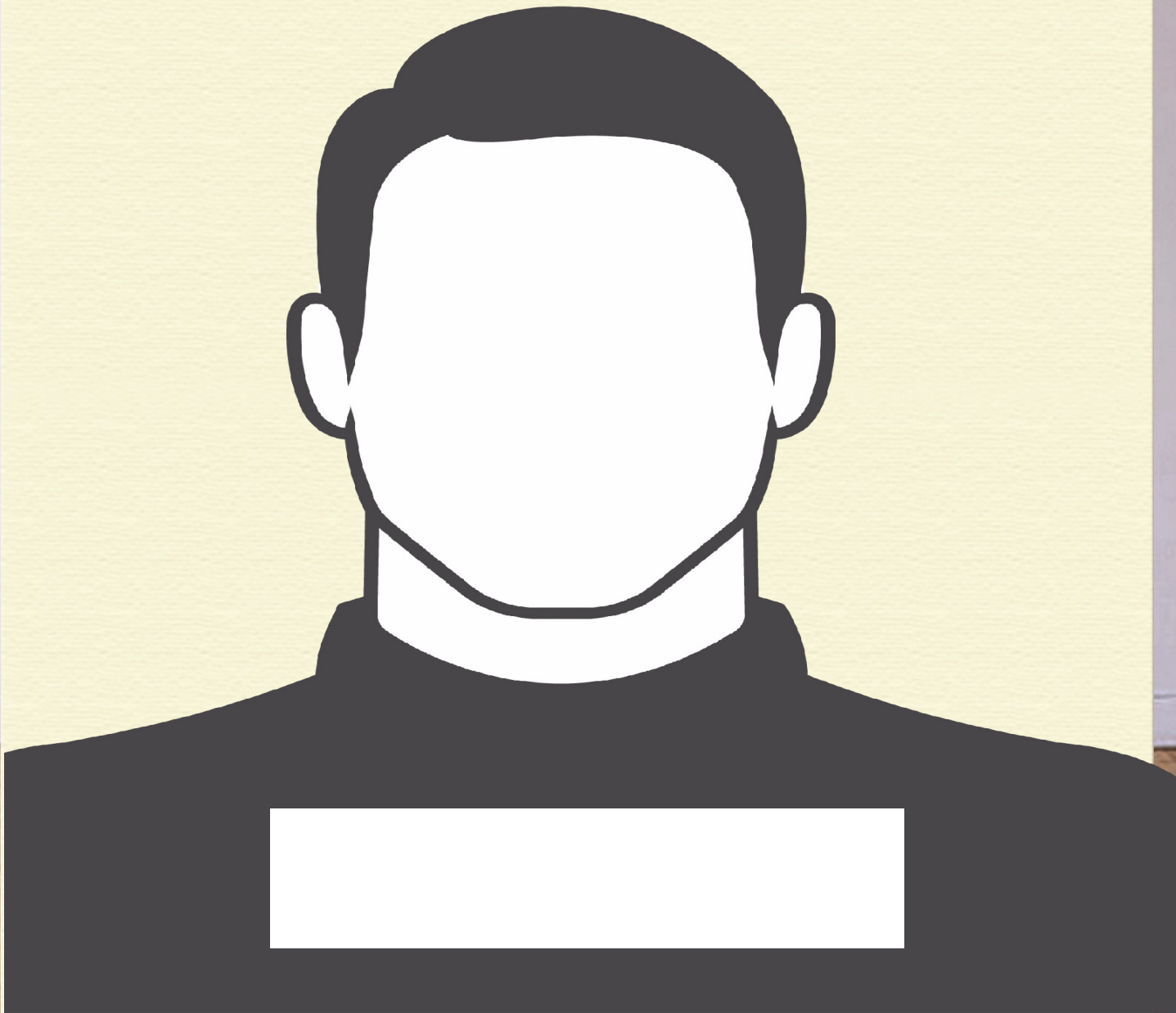
Mindful Meditation
Letting Your Worries Go

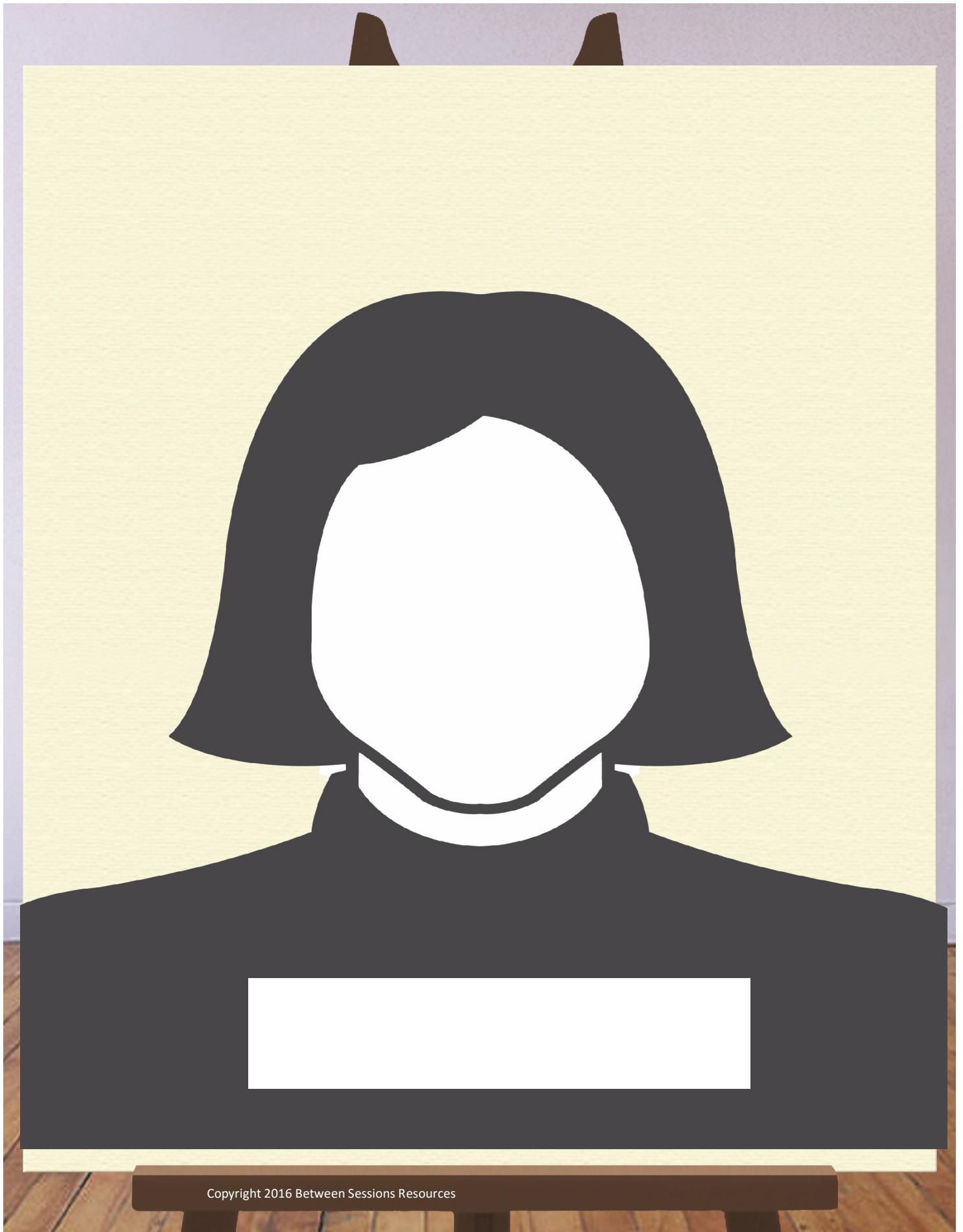
This exercise is designed to help you think about your worries but not react to them. Begin by getting some colored pencils and coloring in this picture. Now think about something that often causes you worry and stress. However don't react to your thoughts, just breathe slowly and color. If you find yourself getting anxious, just concentrate on your coloring. Try this for five or ten minutes and see how this exercise helps you let go of your worries.



Draw Your Daily Feelings

Make copies of this page and draw your predominant feeling each day for two weeks. Write your feelings in the box. Then review all your pictures and think about what you have learned.





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**Make an Appointment
to Worry**

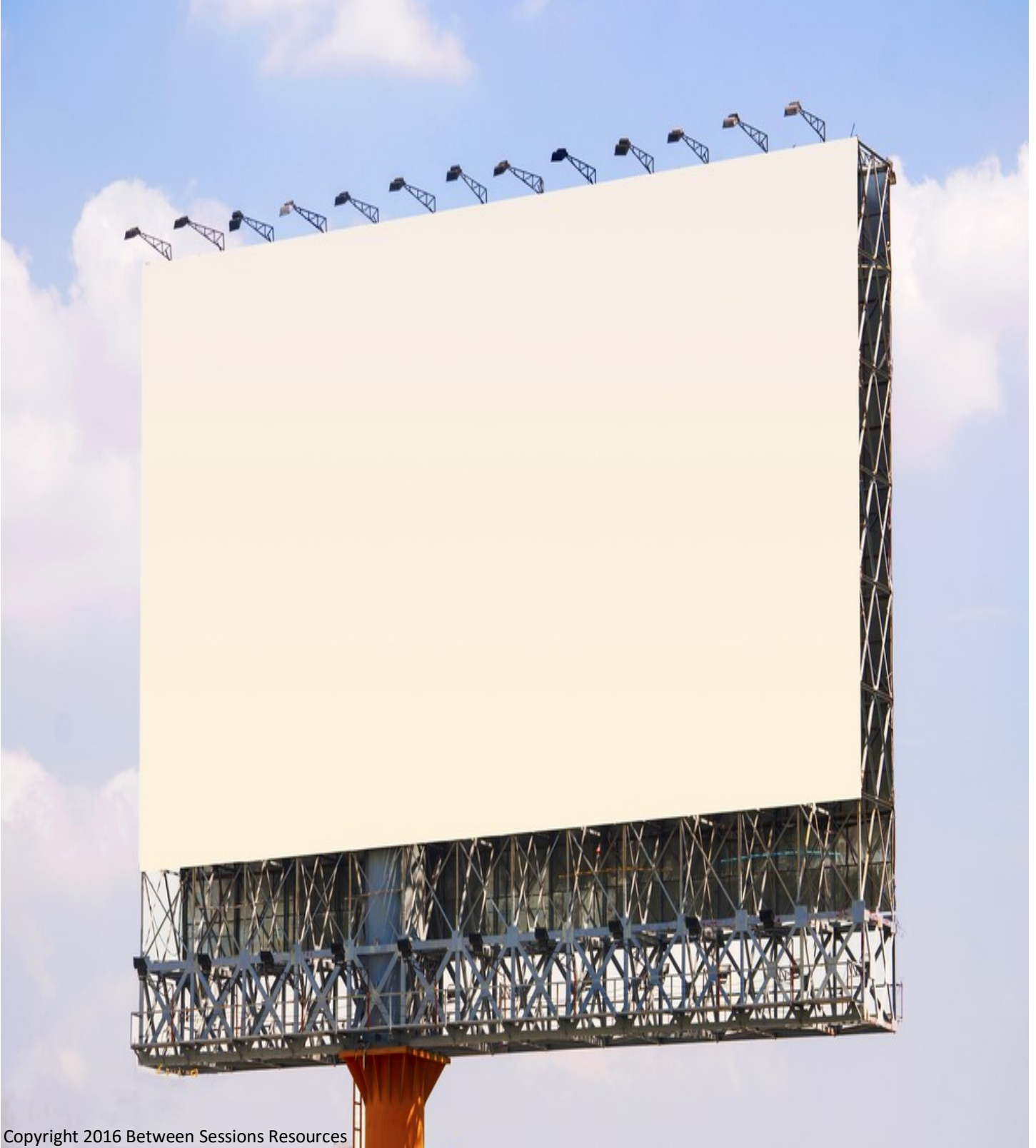
Rather than worry throughout the day, make an appointment to worry for ten minutes later in the day. During this time, devote all your energy to worrying and don't do anything else. Make a list of your worries on this sheet so you know what to worry about.

A large sheet of yellow lined paper with a vertical red margin line on the left side, intended for writing a list of worries.



Tell the World

If you were putting a message on a road sign to tell the world your thoughts, what would you say? Who do you most want to hear this message?



Make copies of this page and write
down your insights as you go
through the exercises in this book.

Insights

