

What Are Your Reasons for Living?

Objective

To identify reasons for living when you have suicidal thoughts.

What to Know

The reasons that drive your will to live are deeply personal and often differ from those of other people. Sometimes it may be challenging to pinpoint even a few reasons. However, if the reasons you identify are not aligned with what you genuinely value, they may seem insincere and lack the power to sustain you during challenging moments.

Your reasons for living might not be obvious to others – or even to you. So, you might require time to reflect and explore your reasons for living. This may require looking inward and thinking carefully about what sustains you and allows you to cope during even the most difficult times. Chances are no one has asked you, “What are your reasons for living?”

This worksheet will help you explore your reasons for living.

What to Do

Have you ever consciously reflected on your reasons for living before? Explain.

Do you believe having specific, personal reasons for living is essential for coping during challenging periods?

How might having reasons for living positively impact your mental and emotional resilience? Be specific.

Recall times in your life when you felt most fulfilled, content, or purposeful. Describe these moments in detail.

What deeply matters to you in life? Describe how these aspects contribute to your sense of purpose or fulfillment.

Reflect on significant relationships, goals, or achievements that give meaning to your life. How do they contribute to your overall well-being?

Are there personal beliefs or principles that guide your decisions and actions? How do these beliefs influence your reasons for living?

Up to this point, what has kept you alive?

What is the most important thing in your life right now?

What is one thing, person, or activity that you could never give up?

What things are important enough to you that you are willing to continue living, even when you are hurting and in pain?

Who—or what—do you care about enough to keep up the fight against suicidal thoughts?

Here are some of the most common reasons for living.

Important Relationships. What relationships are important enough to you?

Future Goals. Your goals for the future can also be reasons for living and might include things you want to do, career goals, things you want to accomplish, or places you want to visit. Goals and dreams give you something to aim for and work toward. Take a few minutes to explore the goals and dreams that make life worth living for you.

Spiritual Beliefs. Spiritual beliefs might be based on your religion or personal beliefs about what is right or wrong, the value of your life, and the importance of coping with difficult times. What do your beliefs say about suicide, self-harm, or having hope for the future?

Things You are Passionate About. Sometimes the things you enjoy can be reasons for living and might include activities that you love doing. This might be a favorite sport, baking, or creating art. Maybe you are passionate about volunteering or helping animals. Are there things you enjoy enough that it would be worth living just to get to do them again?

Hope for the Future. Hope is a belief that no matter how bad things might be right now, they will get better. Hope is trusting that tough times will pass and there will be happier times ahead. A sense of hope can be a source of strength. What brings you hope?

Now, refer to what you wrote above, choose the top ten reasons, and write them down.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

When your list is complete, review the reasons you listed. Do you see any common themes? Are there patterns? Perhaps your reasons for living are centered on important relationships. Explain.

Post the list where you can see it. You might take a picture and store it in your phone, or tape it next to your bed. Remind yourself every day of the reasons why life is worth living.

Reflections on This Exercise

What was challenging about this exercise? Be specific.

Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

Are you now clear about the reasons you have to live after completing this exercise? Why or why not?

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
