

PRACTICE: WHAT DID YOU LEARN TO BELIEVE ABOUT YOURSELF?

A self-diagnostic worksheet for identifying childhood programs and the messages that shaped your self-image.

How to use this practice. Read through the statements below and mark the ones that feel familiar from your childhood or family environment. You do not need to remember the exact words. Notice the message you repeatedly received - directly through words, or indirectly through reactions, expectations, criticism, silence, comparison, or behavior.

This exercise is designed for self-observation and preparation for deeper therapeutic work. Its purpose is to help you recognize patterns and formulate a clearer request for therapy, rather than to resolve them on your own.

PART 1 - CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Check every message that you recognize in your own childhood experience.

Check	Program	How it may have been communicated
[]	Don't Exist	A sense that your presence, needs, or existence were unwanted.
[]	Don't Be Yourself	Pressure to be different from who you naturally were.
[]	Don't Feel	Emotions were dismissed, punished, mocked, or treated as weakness.
[]	Don't Be Well	Illness, suffering, or fragility became connected with attention or belonging.
[]	Don't Be Important	Your opinions, achievements, needs, or visibility were minimized.
[]	Don't Do	Initiative was discouraged; acting independently felt unsafe or wrong.
[]	Don't Be Close	Emotional closeness, trust, affection, or vulnerability felt unsafe.
[]	Don't Belong	You felt different, excluded, or as though you did not fully belong.
[]	Don't Grow Up	Independence or adulthood was discouraged or made emotionally difficult.
[]	Don't Be a Child	You had to be responsible, mature, or self-controlled too early.
[]	Hurry Up	You were repeatedly rushed or made to feel that your natural pace was unacceptable.
[]	Try Hard	Effort itself became more important than ease, completion, or results.
[]	Please Others	Approval and acceptance depended on keeping other people happy.
[]	Be Perfect	Mistakes felt unacceptable; worth became tied to flawless performance.
[]	Be Strong	You learned to suppress vulnerability and cope without asking for help.

PART 2 - THE WORDS THAT SHAPED MY SELF-IMAGE

Think of phrases, labels, jokes, comparisons, or repeated comments you heard from parents, relatives, teachers, or other important adults. Write them as closely as possible to the way they were actually said to you.

Then notice what conclusion about yourself you may have formed from those words. The examples are only prompts - replace them with your own experience.

Area	Example	What I heard growing up	What I came to believe about myself
Intelligence	"You're so stupid."		
Skills & abilities	"You can't do anything right."		
Appearance & body	"You're fat."		
Speed / processing	"You're so slow."		
Personality / character	"You're selfish."		
Emotions & sensitivity	"You're such a crybaby."		
Potential / success	"You'll never amount to anything."		
Comparison with others	"Why can't you be more like...?"		
Other			
Other			

PART 3 - MY SELF-IMAGE MAP

Review what you marked and wrote. You are looking for repetition. Which messages appear in several areas? Which ones still sound familiar in your inner dialogue today?

#	Reflection	My notes
1.	The childhood programs I recognize most strongly:	
2.	The phrases or labels that still affect me today:	
3.	The areas of my self-image most affected:	
4.	The beliefs about myself I would like to explore in therapy:	

Important: You do not need to change or "correct" everything you found here today. The goal of this worksheet is awareness: to see more clearly which childhood messages may still influence your self-image, choices, relationships, and behavior. If a pattern feels significant, bring it to a qualified therapist and explore it in a safe therapeutic process.