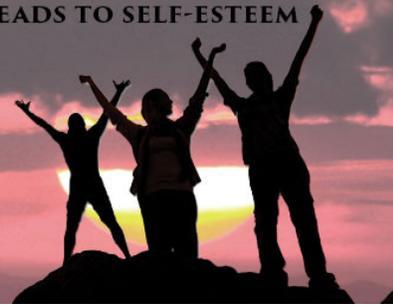


FEELING GOOD ABOUT YOU

THE JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY
THAT LEADS TO SELF-ESTEEM



Module 3 – Worksheet 2

“Shoulds”

***“Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.”
Chinese Proverb***

A "should" is something you think you are supposed to do or believe. They are values that you learned from others when you were a small child, and you may not know why or agree with the reasoning. However, you believe that if you don't follow these "shoulds" it will create problems for you and those around you.

As a child you were probably taught to be quiet, cooperative and selfless, and you quickly learned these behaviors in order to gain love and acceptance from the adults in your life. Unfortunately, these behaviors, learned for survival as a child, are what keep you from being an assertive adult with strong self-esteem.

Following is a list of traditional "shoulds" that may or may not have been part of your family values, but are commonly accepted in current American society and violate your rights as an independent adult. Many of them may have worked in your childhood to aid in meeting your needs, but might no longer fit the adult you have become. Awareness of your childhood "shoulds" allows you to free yourself from the ones that are no longer effective for you as an adult.

Exercise: “Shoulds” and Your Legitimate Rights

Read through the list of "shoulds" on the left side of the following pages and put check mark by each "should" you were taught, or have accepted as part of your life.

Next, put a star by the ones that you feel may be causing you frustration or discomfort today. *You have a right to change these!*

Read your Legitimate Rights on the right side of the page, and circle the ones you would like to incorporate into your current way of living. On the following blank pages jot down ways you have begun to integrate these rights into your life. Date these writings and keep them as a personal progress record. Then, on the blank page entitled "My Legitimate Rights" write four or five rights you are working on incorporating into your life. Tear the page out and hang it on your bathroom mirror, your refrigerator, or someplace where you will read it daily.

By incorporating Your Legitimate Rights into your daily life, you are giving yourself permission to take care of yourself and *meet your own needs*, instead of waiting for and expecting others to do it for you. You are taking back your own personal power!

“SHOULD”

YOUR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS

1) It is selfish to put your needs before those of others.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO PUT YOURSELF FIRST AND ALWAYS BE THE FINAL JUDGE OF YOURSELF.

2) It is shameful to make mistakes.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO MAKE MISTAKES – AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM.

3) If you can't convince others that your feelings are reasonable, then you must be wrong and your feelings are invalid..

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE THE FINAL JUDGE OF YOUR FEELINGS AND ACCEPT THEM AS LEGITIMATE.

4) Others are always right, especially if they are in a position of authority. Keep your opinions to yourself if you don't agree with them.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO YOUR OWN OPINIONS OR CONVICTIONS; AND TO BE LISTENED TO AND TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

5) You should always be logical, consistent, and explain your reasoning for what you do. If asked a question you have to give an answer.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO CHANGE YOUR MIND OR DECIDE ON A DIFFERENT COURSE OF ACTION WITHOUT HAVING TO JUSTIFY YOUR DECISION.

6) You should be flexible and adjust. Others have good reasons for their actions and it's not polite to question them.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO STICK TO WHAT YOU FEEL IS RIGHT, ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT, AND GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR.

7) You should never disagree or ask questions. Asking questions reveals your stupidity to others.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO ASK FOR CLARIFICATION, SAY "I DON'T KNOW", "I DON'T UNDERSTAND", OR "I DON'T AGREE."

- 8) Things could get worse; don't rock the boat. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE HEARD AND NEGOTIATE FOR CHANGE.
- 9) You shouldn't take others' valuable time with your problems. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO ASK FOR HELP, INFORMATION, OR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT.
- 10) People don't want to hear your feelings, so keep them to yourself! YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPRESS WHAT YOU FEEL.
- 11) When someone takes the time to give you advice you have to follow it. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO IGNORE THE ADVICE OF OTHERS.
- 12) Knowing that you did something well is its own reward. Be modest and don't share your success. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE RECOGNITION AND REWARD FOR YOUR WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS.
- 13) You should always try to accommodate others. If you don't they won't like or love you. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO SAY "NO" WITHOUT FEELING GUILTY. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO NOT MAKE IT YOUR PROBLEM.
- 14) Don't be antisocial. When people ask you to join them it would be rude to say no. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE ALONE EVEN IF OTHERS WOULD PREFER YOUR COMPANY.
- 15) You should always have a good reason for what you feel and do. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO YOUR FEELINGS AND ACTIONS WITHOUT HAVING TO JUSTIFY OR EXPLAIN TO ANYONE.
- 16) When someone wants your help you should always be there for him or her. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO NOT SOLVE SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEMS OR BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR FEELINGS.
- 17) You should be sensitive to the needs and wishes of others, even if they don't tell you what they are. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO NOT MIND READ OR FEEL REQUIRED TO ANTICIPATE OTHERS' NEEDS OR WANTS.

18) You should always stay on a person's good side. If they become angry with you they may not like/love you anymore.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO NOT WORRY ABOUT STAYING ON THE GOOD SIDE OF OTHERS. YOU ARE ALWAYS LOVEABLE.

19) It's not nice to put people off. If questioned you must always give an answer or explanation.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE IF AND WHEN YOU WISH TO RESPOND TO A SITUATION. YOU DON'T OWE AN EXPLANATION TO ANYONE.

20) You should not feel anger, rage, self-pity, jealousy, hate, or any other "negative" emotion. Nice people don't feel such things.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL ANY WAY YOU WISH AT ANY TIME.YOUR FEELINGS NEED NO REASON OR JUSTIFICATION.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE THE FINAL JUDGE OF YOURSELF IN EVERY WAY. (This is the Prime Assertive Right, which allows you to be in control of yourself and allows no one to manipulate you).

*"Shoulds and Rights List" from The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook by Davis, Eshelman & McKay. Third Edition. New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, CA., 1988.

My Legitimate Rights