

RECLAIM HOPE
WORKBOOK

Exercises to Empower You

RECLAIM HOPE
WORKBOOK

Exercises to Empower You

the younique FOUNDATION

This book contains the copyrighted and proprietary intellectual property of The Younique Foundation.

The Younique Foundation's *Reclaim Hope Workbook: Exercises to Empower You*, as well as any associated products or those recommended within, are not intended to take the lace of therapy. It is advised that all users of this book consider counseling from a licensed therapist in your local area.

©2016 by The Younique Foundation. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or used in any manner without the written consent of The Younique Foundation.

Second Edition.

I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become.
-Carl Jung-

Reclaim Hope. Defend Innocence.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

About the Younique Foundation

We inspire hope in women who were sexually abused as children or adolescents by hosting them at a retreat where they are uplifted by each other and learn skills that can help them find individual healing.

We educate parents and empower them to protect their children from sexual abuse while leading a public dialogue to bring the epidemic of abuse to light.

The Younique Foundation (TYF) was established as a nonprofit organization in December 2014 in Lehi, Utah. As a public charity, TYF is made possible through the kindness and generosity of many wonderful donors, especially Derek and Shelaine Maxfield who lead with vision and funding to make our goals attainable.

About the Authors

This book is the compilation of many individuals' efforts, both clinical and non-clinical. The Clinical Director of The Younique Foundation, Gordon Bruin, MA, CMHC, was the lead author. Special thanks to him and his team for incorporating many years of diverse clinical experience into this book.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

THE 5 STRATEGIES TO RECLAIM HOPE WORKBOOK

1 Awareness 7
Breathing
Healing Walking
Simple Awareness Exercises
Healing Writing
Coloring

2 Acknowledgement 29
Assertive Communication
Progressive Muscle Relaxation
Self-Care
Healing Writing
Music as a Way of Healing

3 Power Through Surrender 49
What You Can Control
Muay Thai
Forgiveness for YOU
Healing Writing
Letting Go of Anger and Resentment

4 Mindfulness 69
Meditation
Trauma-Sensitive Yoga
Guided Imagery
Healing Writing
Art Journaling

5 Faith 89
Future Vision Statement
Power Poses
Positive Declarations
Healing Writing
Vision Board

Introduction

I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship.

-Louisa May Alcott-

Welcome to the companion workbook to *Reclaim Hope: Empowering Your Life Through the Five Strategies*. The exercises in this workbook will help you put into practice The Five Strategies to Reclaim Hope that you learned about in the book. Those strategies are:

- Awareness
- Acknowledgement
- Power Through Surrender
- Mindfulness
- Faith

These exercises have been designed to help you put the traumatic events of your life in proper perspective. By so doing, you'll allow the two parts of your brain (the prefrontal cortex and the limbic system) to integrate and work together on your healing journey.

As you work to strengthen yourself through practicing the Five Strategies to Reclaim Hope, your capacity to manage your past sexual abuse trauma will increase.

What's in This Book

Each chapter in this workbook follows the same structure. They'll start with a reminder from your *Reclaim Hope* reading about what the strategy is and how it ties into your healing journey. There will be five exercises in each chapter, designed with that specific strategy in mind. They are meant to enhance your relationship with that strategy, strengthen your prefrontal cortex, and allow your prefrontal cortex and limbic system to communicate more effectively. For example, the Strategy 1: Awareness chapter starts with a review of what Awareness is and then includes five exercises intended to deepen your understanding and application of Awareness.

Each exercise will give you an introduction to what you'll be doing, the benefits behind it, and how it will tie into your healing journey. Following that will be a Now You Try section that will allow you to put the exercise into practice. After that you can read the Did It Work? section to see if it was effective.

Healing Writing

Each chapter has an exercise that specifically involves healing writing, or journaling. We've found writing to be an incredibly effective way for survivors to work through their trauma, overwhelming emotions, or as a place to process events. Each Healing Writing exercise will have a different goal in mind, but each will utilize writing and allow you to work through different parts of your trauma.

Physical Movement

Each chapter has an exercise that involves exercising or physically moving (please see our disclaimer at the end of this chapter for any and all physical exercise in this workbook). Too often with sexual abuse trauma, survivors will disconnect from their body. In order to heal you'll need to reconnect with it. Each of these physical exercises will have a different goal in mind, but each will help you focus on connecting with your body once again.

Art

Each chapter ends with an exercise that involves art in some way. Art can be an incredibly effective form of therapy for survivors. The exercises in this workbook are therapeutic, but are not art therapy – which can only be done with a licensed art therapist. You'll benefit from participating in the exercises no matter

what, but if they resonate with you, then you should think of seeking out a licensed art therapist to pursue that form of therapy.



How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is meant to be a resource for you. It can help you set goals, meet them, and continue to grow. We encourage you to go through each exercise and try it at least once. Even if it seems like something you wouldn't normally do, give it a try. It might surprise you.

The benefit of this workbook is that you can do all of these exercises on a daily basis, at your own pace, and (usually) right in your own home. Although this book is not meant to replace work with a licensed therapist, it can augment it or jumpstart your healing as you seek the strength to find professional help.

One important part of growing and developing is setting goals. This can seem overwhelming, but the key is to set yourself up for a successful experience. For example, if you've never exercised before, setting a goal to exercise 2 hours a day, 7 days a week is setting yourself up to fail.

Instead, as you decide what your goal will be, try to pick something that you are 90% sure you will be able to do. You can even scale back a goal in order to make sure you can succeed. For instance, instead of saying that you're going to journal every day for 30 minutes, start with a simple goal of selecting a journal, if you are 90% sure you can do that. The important thing is to give yourself a realistic opportunity for success. As you meet your goals, you'll gain confidence and be able to move on to more difficult goals.

At the end of this chapter there are templates for a Monthly Planning Sheet and a Daily Planning Sheet. These will allow you to write down your goals and think through what worked, what didn't work, and how you can be more successful the next time.

We want you to succeed and meet the goals you set for yourself on your healing journey, but more importantly, we want to give you the tools to heal.

For additional resources, printables, and downloads, look at our website:

www.youniquefoundation.org/resources



Exercise and Instructional Video Disclaimer: Not all exercises are suitable for everyone. If you are concerned about whether the exercises are safe and healthy for you, do not do them unless you have cleared it with your physician. The exercises and instructions included are not a substitute for medical counseling. These exercises can result in injury. If at any point during your workout you begin to feel faint, dizzy, or have physical discomfort, you should stop immediately. You are responsible for exercising within your limits and seeking medical advice and attention as appropriate. The Younique Foundation is not responsible for any injuries that result from participating in the exercises in this workbook.

MONTHLY PLANNING SHEET

Month of: _____

Future Vision Statement:	
Physical:	Mental:
Spiritual:	Relationships:

What are your goals for this month?

DAILY PLANNING SHEET

Date: _____

What do you want to accomplish today?

What did you do well today?

What could you improve?

Strategy 1
Awareness: Be Present

Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come.
We have only today. Let us begin.
-Mother Teresa-

A Brief Reminder from Your Reading

- Awareness is realizing that the only time something can happen is now. Refocus your mind on the present moment instead of the future or past.
- Spending too much time in the future or the past can lead to anxiety or depression. It can also lead to the use of negative coping mechanisms, self-defeating behaviors, and addictions.
- Grounding techniques restore balance and allow your limbic system and prefrontal cortex to talk to one another.
- Awareness puts you in a position to make a conscious choice, allowing you to choose how you'll act and respond in any given situation.
- Becoming aware of the present moment will help you get out of crisis mode so you can move forward in a productive way.

Awareness

Exercise 1: Breathing

Breath is the link between mind and body.
-Dane Brule-

The breath serves as a focus for your attention. Think of your breath as an anchor that holds you to the present moment. Breathing can't happen in the past or the future, it can only happen right now, in this moment. Becoming more aware of your breathing will help ground you. Controlling your breathing may feel like taming a wild horse. Tame it with patience and kindness.

Find a peaceful, comfortable place. You can sit on a chair or on the floor. You can also lean your back against the wall to support your spine. You can leave your eyes opened or closed. Do what feels most comfortable for you. Choose a place where you won't be disturbed for about 5 minutes.



Now You Try

In this exercise pay attention to your heartbeat as you breathe. Pay close attention to your body. Don't become frustrated if this becomes too difficult or if you get it wrong at first, just do your best.

1. Take a moment to get comfortable and focus on your emotions, rest a hand on your chest if it helps you feel calm.
2. Inhale through your nose, counting four heartbeats.
   1 2 3 4
3. Hold your breath, counting two heartbeats.
   1 2
4. Exhale through your nose, counting six heartbeats.
   1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Repeat this for 5 minutes, or, if you are using it to help manage a trigger, repeat this as many times as it takes for you to feel grounded in the present moment. As your heartbeats slow, your breathing will get deeper, continuing to calm you.

Did it Work?

This exercise is meant to help you notice your heartbeat and direct your breathing. If you notice some irritation, that's normal. It can be a bit frustrating to monitor your breathing; try to push through that and realize that it's only for 5 minutes.

The whole point of this exercise is to calm yourself and draw your attention to the present moment. It may take some practice before this works perfectly, but it will be worth the effort.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Awareness

Exercise 2: Healing Walking

Walking is man's best medicine.

-Hippocrates-

Walking can be a powerful part of your healing journey. Walking benefits both physical and mental health. When you incorporate Awareness into your walking, it becomes even more powerful. Healing walking strengthens the mind/body connection through helping both sides of the brain work together, which, in turn, plays a role in trauma recovery.

Before starting a walking program, check with your doctor to see if any medical conditions restrict you from participating. Remember to go at your own pace. Start with walking around the block, if that is as far as you can go. The important part is not the distance or the time, but that you get out there and walk and try the activities below while doing it.

Healing walking gives your brain a break from your worries and any negative thought patterns. Be fully present in your body as you go for a walk. If you are walking with a partner, agree upon a set amount of time that you will be silent and focus on Awareness while walking.

Now You Try

Begin by taking a few deep, cleansing breaths and notice how you feel. Notice your feet on the ground and how they feel in your shoes. Say to yourself, "I am going on a healing walk." While walking, do one of the activities below. Keep in mind that the activities are not intended to be done at the same time. Do one and then move on to another.

1. **Breathing.** Practice Awareness by noticing your breathing as you walk. Think the word "in" as you inhale, and "out" as you exhale. You can also count your breaths with steps such as, "In, two, three, four. Out, two, three, four."
2. **Notice your surroundings.** Expand your Awareness of your surroundings. Pay special attention to each of your five senses: touch, taste, hearing, smell, sight. Pick one sense and find five things that you experience through that sense. Notice the small details that you might otherwise have missed.
3. **Use positive declarations.** Combining positive declarations with walking strengthens and supports your healing process. You can incorporate your daily declarations (as found in Strategy 5: Faith) in your healing walk. Experiment with what works best for you. Say each word as your foot strikes the ground, and repeat the declaration over and over again as you walk. You may notice that you start walking taller and your breathing slows and becomes deeper.



Did it Work?

This exercise is meant to ground you in the present moment as you walk. It will allow you to find ways to draw your focus away from any triggers or anxiety you may be experiencing. This can be used as a way to calm yourself in times of stress, or a way to help build the connection between your limbic system and prefrontal cortex.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Awareness

Exercise 3: Simple Awareness Exercises

Awareness is like the sun.
When it shines on things, they are transformed.

-Thich Nhat Hanh-

The following are simple awareness exercises that can be done without having to plan ahead and they don't need any special supplies. When you have only a few minutes to work on your Awareness, choose one of these. Focus on how it grounds you in the present moment and helps you to live in the now.

Now You Try

- **Mindful eating.** Get a small piece of a food you like and let it slowly dissolve in your mouth. Pay attention to the texture. Move it around in your mouth, but try not to bite it. Notice how difficult it is not to bite it now that you're thinking about it. Slow down and notice the food on a deeper level than you've ever appreciated it before.
- **Focusing on the small things.** Do you know what color eyes your spouse, children, or best friend have? The next time you speak with them, look into their eyes and notice the color. Strive to be fully present with them and expand on the things you notice – the color of their clothes, the way the light shiness on their hair, or the shape of their lips as they smile. You'll begin to see things you've never noticed.
- **Color observation.** When riding in a car, choose a color. Notice all the things around you that are that color. This is a way to proactively choose what you focus on. We don't recommend doing this exercise while driving.

- **Ice challenge.** Hold an ice cube in your hand over the sink and watch it dissolve in your hand. Notice how it feels as it dissolves. This can help you realize that everything is in a constant state of movement and change. Being present with what is happening will increase your capacity to fully take life in.
- **Conscious cooking.** While you fix a meal consciously pay attention to each detail of the process. Slow down and give each portion of the meal the Awareness it deserves. Be grateful for the food you are about to eat. Try not to let one detail of your movements go by without being aware of it.



Did it Work?

This exercise is meant to show you how simple it can be to practice Awareness. You don't need to set aside big chunks of time. Find a way to focus on the present moment and use it as your go-to whenever you need to feel grounded.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Awareness

Exercise 4: Healing Writing with Awareness

Writing is medicine. It is an appropriate antidote to injury.
It is an appropriate companion for any difficult change.

-Julia Cameron-

For many survivors the best place to start dealing with past trauma, and the emotions it evokes, is by keeping a journal. Countless studies have been done on the therapeutic benefits of writing as a way of healing, many are covered in-depth in James Pennebaker's book *Opening Up by Writing It Down*. During the beginning stages of recovery, especially, it can be difficult to vocalize emotions or experiences. Writing is a way to begin addressing these experiences and bringing them to light.

Keeping a journal can be overwhelming for anyone. It can be especially overwhelming if you know that you'll be using it to deal with past trauma. One way to shake off that feeling is to practice something called free writing. Free writing isn't the only way to journal, but it is a great way to journal to increase Awareness.

Free writing means that you don't pick a topic. You don't worry about grammar or sentence structure, you just write. Whatever words, images, or phrases come into your mind, you write or draw them. Don't worry about the past or the future; focus on what is going on right now.

Now You Try

1. **Pick a journal.** Find a journal that fits you. It can be fancy or plain, but it needs to be something you're not intimidated to write in. A notebook or bound book that you can keep with you at all times. You don't have to spend a lot of money; just find something that speaks to you.

2. **Find a place to write.** Choose a place that feels both safe and comforting. A place where there's not too much noise, where you can write uninterrupted.
3. **Write for 15 minutes or 3 pages.** That's all you have to do. Sit down and write, without stopping, for 15 minutes or until you fill 3 pages. If you run out of things to say, you can just write, "Keep writing" over and over again. If you let yourself relax into it, the words will come.
4. **Let go of your internal editor.** Your internal editor will adjust the things you write as if someone else would read them. Write as if you're the only person who will ever see it. If you decide to share it with someone, that's great, but when you do the initial writing, make sure that you write for YOU.
5. **Stop.** If emotions are too raw or you find yourself disconnecting from the moment, stop writing. Step away and ground yourself.



Did it Work?

This exercise is meant to check in with yourself, ground yourself in the moment, and raise your Awareness. Free-writing can be beneficial any time you feel that you need to purge a lot of emotions or need to find your place in the moment.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Awareness

Exercise 5: Coloring

Color is to the eye what music is to the ear.

-Louise Comfort Tiffany-

Coloring works the same part of your brain as meditation (one of our Mindfulness exercises). It can calm you down, get you grounded in the now, and soothe you if you're struggling. Even those who don't think they're creative can benefit from coloring.

Although not technically art therapy (you'll need to work with a licensed art therapist for that), it can be therapeutic for survivors who are still struggling with their past trauma. Coloring allows you to switch your thoughts off and focus in the moment, exactly the type of activity that can help you with Awareness.

Coloring is an incredibly portable way to bring your thoughts back to the NOW without too much work. You can keep paper and pencils in your purse and pull them out anytime you feel overwhelmed to bring you back to the moment.

Now You Try

Choose whatever medium you'd like to color with—crayons, colored pencils, markers, pens, pastels, watercolors—whatever works best for you. Sit somewhere quiet, safe, with plenty of light, and color your way into Awareness.

Did it Work?

This exercise is meant to help you find peace in the present moment. Similar to meditation, it can be a little bit frustrating at first, especially if you are a perfectionist about your coloring. Try to let go of the result and focus on the act of coloring itself. Allow yourself to tap into your creative energy and live in the now.

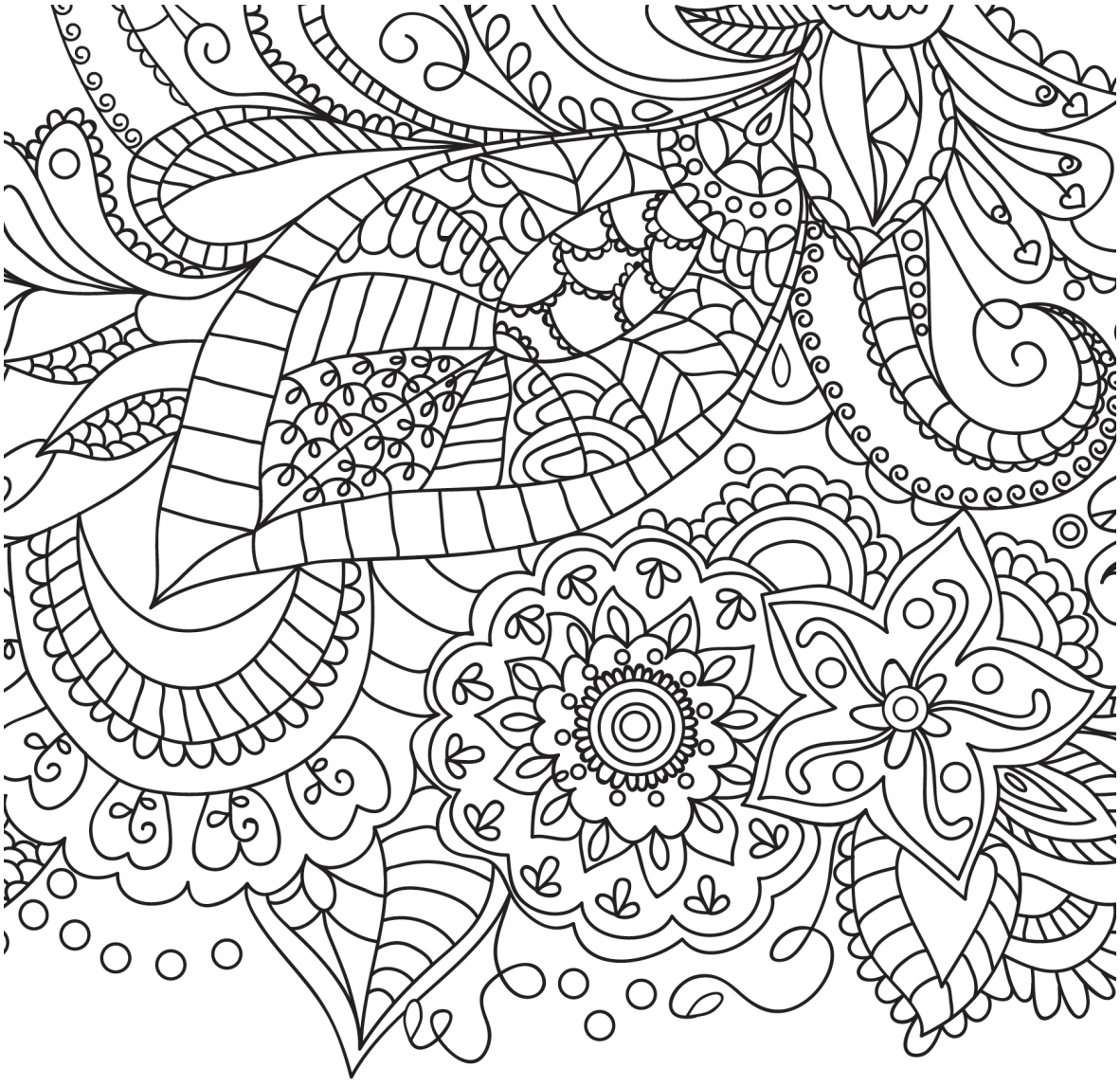
I'M NOT AFRAID OF *storms,* FOR I AM LEARNING HOW TO SAIL MY *ship.*





SHE
believed
SHE COULD,
SO SHE
did!





YOU ARE

beautiful.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Strategy 2
Acknowledgement:
Accept Your Truth

Real life isn't always going to be perfect or go our way,
but the recurring acknowledgement of what is working
in our lives can help us not only to survive
but surmount our difficulties.

-Sarah Ban Breathnach-

A Brief Reminder from Your Reading

- Acknowledgement is accepting truth, whatever it is.
- Acknowledgement is knowing that your abuse happened. It wasn't your fault, but it is within your power to heal, change, and realize where you are and what you need to do to heal.
- Acknowledgement is knowing that you can change.
- Acknowledgement is not a one-time event. You need to continually check in with yourself and see where you are making progress and where you still need help.
- Two helpful strategies are journaling and talking to a therapist.

Acknowledgement

Exercise 1: Assertive Communication

The only healthy communication style is assertive communication.

-Jim Rohn-

What is assertive communication and why is it important for you as a survivor? Assertive communication is the ability to honestly express your opinions, attitudes, and rights without undue anxiety in a way that doesn't infringe on the rights of others. Assertive communication is about setting good boundaries, being firm, delivering messages clearly, and acting with respect, fairness, and empathy. It also allows you to acknowledge that others are responsible for their behavior. Survivors can become very passive or overly aggressive in their relationships with others as a means to cope with their traumatic past. Assertive communication allows you to take your voice back while still respecting others.

The three steps to assertive communication are:

1. **Empathy/Validation**
   Listen and work to understand the other person's feelings.
2. **Use "I" in a problem statement**
   Describe your difficulty/dissatisfaction and tell why you need something to change.
3. **State what you want or what you're willing to negotiate**
   This is a specific request for a specific change in the other person's behavior, including what you're willing to be flexible on. For example: "I know you want me to go the party with your friends. I feel overwhelmed because I have a long workday tomorrow. Instead of going to the party tonight, I would be willing to go out with you on Friday."

Of course in order to follow these steps you must first Acknowledge what isn't working in your relationship. Only after you know why you are upset can you take the above steps to change it. Sometimes this means Acknowledging truths about your own behavior and taking ownership of that before you approach another person. Sometimes it means looking to change what you accept as behaviors from others and finding a new set of boundaries and expectations to protect yourself more fully.

Look at your situation with open eyes and honestly Acknowledge YOUR truth. This includes learning to say NO. Many survivors struggle with saying "No" to the people in their lives. You might feel it is rude or aggressive, that it makes you selfish, or that it might upset the other person and make them feel rejected. The most common reason survivors don't say "No" is thinking that other's needs are more important than their own.

When you practice assertive communication you can say "No" when you need to and still feel respectful and respected.



Now You Try

Think of a situation in your life where you need to say No to someone or something. Go over this following list of reminders to empower yourself to say it without guilt.

- Other people have the right to ask, but I have the right to refuse.
- When I say "No" I am not rejecting that person, only their inquiry.
- When I say "No" to one thing that allows me to say "Yes" to another.

- By honestly expressing my feelings, it makes it safe for others to do the same.
- My needs are important and I need to set healthy boundaries.

Now that you have reviewed the list, create a statement using the steps of assertive communication you can use to say No. Now practice saying it out loud.

Did It Work?

How do you feel? A little guilt is normal at the beginning. You might feel bad about setting these new boundaries, but over time you'll see the difference they can make. You know that you're doing it right when you can feel good both about saying "No" when you need to and saying "Yes" because you want to, not because you feel like you have no other options.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Acknowledgement

Exercise 2: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Tension is who you think you should be, relaxation is who you are.

-Chinese Proverb-

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) is systematically tensing and relaxing muscle groups throughout your body. According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, PMR can help you reduce anxiety by reducing the cortisol levels in your body (a hormone released when you're stressed). It can also help combat insomnia and has been shown to reduce the symptoms of certain types of chronic pain. Try it and see if you recognize any of these benefits in your own life, as you learn to Acknowledge your truth.



Now You Try

Decide whether you want to start at the top with your head or at the bottom with your feet. You'll work your way down or up your body systematically after that. Muscle groups to consider are: head, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, chest, stomach, hips/buttocks, thighs, calves, feet.

To try PMR, follow these simple steps:

- Find a comfortable position, whether sitting or lying down.
- Inhale through your nose and tense a muscle group.
- Hold your breath and the tension in your muscles for a few moments.
- Release the muscle tension as you exhale.
- Relax for 10 seconds.
- Repeat one more time.
- Move on to the next muscle group.
- Continue this process until you've worked through your entire body.
- After you've tensed and released each muscle group twice, count backwards from 5 to 1 to bring your focus back to the present.

For this exercise, we provide an audio guide at:

www.youniquefoundation.org/resources

Did It Work?

Were you able to relax? Did it allow you to let go of thoughts and feelings that were weighing you down? Keep practicing and you'll find that it's easier to focus, relax, and let yourself practice Acknowledgement more effectively.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Acknowledgement

Exercise 3: Self-Care

It all begins with you. If you do not care for yourself, you will not be strong enough to take care of anything in life.

-Leon Brown-

Your healing journey may be a challenging one, but it will be empowering as well. As you continue on your path of healing, you'll need to take time to care for yourself. Too often survivors put everyone else's needs before their own, but, as the saying goes, you can't draw water from an empty well. Taking time for self-care allows you to check in with yourself and Acknowledge what you need to be happy, to be healthy, and to continue to heal.



Now You Try

Choose one of the following activities and do it today:

- Make a conscious effort to eat foods that make you feel good. Instead of giving yourself a "treat" of something unhealthy, find a food that nourishes you.
- Drink more water. Keeping yourself hydrated has a myriad of health benefits, including more energy, less hunger, and more beautiful skin.
- Get moving. Exercise makes you feel better, which you probably already know. Find something that you enjoy that doesn't feel like work. Go running or for a leisurely walk or try roller skating. Do something that gets you on your feet, but that you also find fun.
- Change your beauty routine. Are you the type of person who spends as little time in front of the mirror as possible? Or do you spend hours trying to perfect your eyeliner? Either way, change it up a little bit. Give yourself permission to take a long shower or take time to put on makeup if you never wear any. Conversely, if you feel like you can't leave the house without a full face of makeup, try focusing on something that makes you feel good about yourself without the stress of trying to look perfect.
- Buy yourself a gift. It doesn't have to be anything big or expensive. It may be something as simple as a new pen or a book that you've been wanting to read. Maybe it's a magazine that you used to enjoy, but you never buy anymore. Give yourself permission to spend some money on yourself and buy something that will make you happy.
- Take time to be alone. If you tend to keep your life busy so you don't have time to think, it's especially important to get some time to yourself. Feel your feelings, think your thoughts, and get to know yourself – and your needs – again.

Did It Work?

You'll know it's working for you if you find you have more energy, confidence, or joy in your everyday life. If it's making you feel negatively toward yourself, then you should try a different type of self-care. The goal is to make you feel good. In order to heal you need to Acknowledge that you have to take care of yourself.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Acknowledgement

Exercise 4: Healing Writing with Acknowledgement

Keeping a journal of what's going on in your life is a good way to help you distill what's important and what's not.

-Martina Navratilova-

Gratitude is good for you. There are scientific studies* that have come to the conclusions that gratitude can improve your health, relationships, empathy, and self-esteem. It also helps you to Acknowledge the good things in your life.



Now You Try

Pull out your journal and write three things that you are thankful for TODAY. Be as specific as you can. For example, don't just write: "I'm thankful for my children." Instead, write something like, "I'm grateful that I have two happy and

healthy children. Today my son did the dishes without being asked. My daughter came home from school and gave me a big hug and told me that she loved me."

You may be thankful for the same thing every day, but the reason why will be totally different. If this exercise was helpful for you, keep doing it. Try to go an entire month of writing three things you're thankful for, and why, every single day. Don't worry if you skip a day; just keep going. Over time you'll start seeking out those positive moments of gratitude and consciously Acknowledging them when they come.

Did It Work?

As you go through your day you'll start to see things in a different way. Knowing that you're going to be writing about what you're grateful for will allow you to acknowledge the positive things in your life. You may notice things you didn't see before or you might appreciate old things in a new way.

*Found in the November 2014 Forbes article, "7 Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude That Will Motivate You To Give Thanks Year-Round"

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Acknowledgement

Exercise 5: Music as a Way of Healing

If you're willing to do something that might not work,
you're closer to being an artist.

-Seth Godin-

There is a difference between music therapy and music that is therapeutic. Music therapy involves a licensed music therapist. If you don't have access to a music therapist, you can still find music that is therapeutic for you.

Musical endeavors can have amazing benefits for trauma survivors. When you find the one that works for you – something that you enjoy that alleviates anxiety, stress, and triggers – it can make a huge difference in your life. Expressing your feelings through music or lyrics can be a positive way to Acknowledge your abuse.



Now You Try

- Make a list of all the musical things you currently enjoy doing. Think of instruments you play, types of dancing you enjoy, music that calms or soothes you, etc.
- Make a list of all the musical things you'd like to learn how to do. Is there an instrument you've always wanted to try? Perhaps you've always had an interest in learning more about opera or ballet, etc.
- Pick one from each list and try to make time every day to participate in one of those activities. Whether it's watching a video, listening to that type of music, or reading a book about it, give yourself the time to learn and enjoy it.
- As you continue to engage with music, if you don't feel a certain type is working for you, then try a different one. There will be something that resonates with you, be it a type of music, a specific instrument, or writing your own songs.
- Once you find what you enjoy and what works for you, keep doing it.

Did It Work?

The music you've chosen, in whatever form it takes, should help you deal with emotions in your life as they come. It gives you a healthy outlet to express and Acknowledge your emotions and a way to create something from the potentially negative. Often you will feel a release. If you feel that it isn't helping you, try something else. There are infinite ways that music can benefit you.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Strategy 3
Power Through Surrender: Let IT Be

Surrender to what is. Let go of what was. Have faith in what will be.

-Sonia Ricotti-

A Brief Reminder from Your Reading

- Power Through Surrender is learning how your trauma voice talks to you and learning to let IT [your trauma voice] be.
- With a trigger you can address it with one of four reactions: fight, flight, freeze, or Surrender. Surrender will allow you to strengthen your prefrontal cortex and allow you to manage your triggers more effectively.
- When you have a triggering thought, recognize that it isn't you talking, it's your limbic system.
- Manage your triggers by: 1) Grounding yourself in the present, 2) Recognizing IT, and 3) Letting IT be.

Power Through Surrender

Exercise 1: What You Can Control

Some of us think holding on makes us strong; but sometimes it is letting go.

-Herman Hesse-

The goal behind the Power of Surrender is to help you become more realistic about life. We want you to take an honest look at those things that you really control in life and those things that you don't. Taking an inventory can help. It forces you to take a hard look at how you spend the bulk of your time and where you focus your worries. Once you see clearly what you can and can't control, it can help you know where to use the Power of Surrender.



Now You Try

Let's take a minute to define *control*. Control is something that YOU can change. For instance, you can't control what someone does, but you CAN control your response to it. You can't control whether or not it will rain tomorrow, but you can control how prepared you are for it. Control, in the simplest terms, is about YOU. There is very little you can control besides yourself.

Make two lists: One listing all the things you control in life and the second with the things that you can't control. Think of as much as you can physically, emotionally, spiritually, or relationally.

Read over the lists. Are there things that surprise you? Are there places you can't control where you're spending too much time and effort? Can you let some things go that are creating unnecessary stress?

The next time worry about one of the things you *can't* control — like another person's actions or behavior — take a moment to ground yourself, recognize the need to Surrender, and let it be.

Did It Work?

Are you feeling empowered? This should make it so you're not spending time and energy on things that you can't control or change. When you put those things aside, then you should feel even more capable and confident in the aspect of your life you CAN control.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Power Through Surrender

Exercise 2: Muay Thai

Above all, be the heroine of your life, not the victim.

-Nora Ephron-

Muay Thai is a form of martial arts from Thailand known as "The Art of Eight Limbs." You use your hands, legs, forearms, and knees in varying forms of kicks and punches. This is an incredibly empowering form of self-defense that can teach you how to control your aggression and when to release it. Exercise like this can help you get stress out in a healthy way, as well as allow you to release built up emotions. It combines breathing with movement and allows you to focus on your body. If you have a tendency to disengage from your body, Muay Thai might be a way for you to reconnect with your body.



Now You Try

Find a local gym near you or look for online tutorials. If you can't find a Muay Thai class, you can look for kickboxing or boxing classes – these are similar enough that you'll get the same benefits. Give it a try and see if it's a form of exercise that resonates with you. Here are a few things to consider as you search for a Muay Thai class:

- **An instructor who understands.** Talk to the instructor beforehand and let him or her know your boundaries, reservations, and limits.
- **A gym where you feel safe.** Visit the gym beforehand. How does it make you feel? Some anxiety is normal when you're trying something new, but if the place itself is triggering, look for a different gym.
- **You can stop anytime.** Give yourself permission to stop if it's too much for you – physically or emotionally.
- **Do what's best for YOU.** Keep checking in with yourself. Muay Thai is meant to be empowering for you. Find an instructor and a class that will ultimately help you on your healing journey.

Did It Work?

If you feel grounded in your body and empowered, then Muay Thai is working for you. If you are pushing your limits and getting out of your comfort zone to deal with both emotions and memories, then Muay Thai is working for you.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Power Through Surrender

Exercise 3: Forgiveness for YOU

Life may not be perfect, but you can learn to suffer less. You can learn to forgive, and you can learn to heal.

-Fred Luskin-

Forgiveness is letting go of what you think should be and being at peace with what is. It will help give you back power, control, and choice in your life. You may still experience suffering in your life, but you will suffer with the understanding that there are other options and that you can lead your life with an open and loving heart. Forgiveness improves your physical and mental health. It improves your immune system, lowers blood pressure, improves other relationships, and increases general feelings of kindness and connectedness. For more information about these studies, read Fred Luskin's book *Forgive for Good.*

You may feel some resistance against the idea of forgiveness. It may help you move past your resistance to know what forgiveness is and what it isn't.

Forgiveness is NOT:

- Forgetting or minimizing what happened.
- Excusing, condoning, or rationalizing the behavior of the person or people who hurt you.
- Denying or minimizing your pain.
- Renewing or beginning a relationship with the person or people who hurt you.
- Believing the person or people who hurt you have earned forgiveness.
- Necessarily for the benefit of the person or people who hurt you.

Forgiveness IS:

- For YOU, not for the person or people who hurt you.
- Changing your present and your future, even if it can't change your past.
- Allowing you to let go of the need for revenge (without taking away the option for you to pursue justice or an appropriate resolution).
- Giving yourself the choice about what kind of relationship, if any, you will have with the person or people who hurt you.

Power Through Surrender is about letting go of the thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc. that don't serve you on your healing journey. Forgiveness is an important step to take. Forgiveness requires the completion of three things:

1. **Fully acknowledge your loss and the harm done to you.** This is more than just recognzing that the abuse took place and there is nothing you can do to change the past. This requires that you view the abuse in a way that leaves you ready and open to give the next moments in life a chance without the weight of anger, sadness, or anxiety. This can take time and be incredibly difficult, so go at your own pace.
2. **Feel your feelings.** Remember that trauma is often held in the body. If you feel yourself triggering, ground yourself in the moment or practice an Awareness technique and try again later. Practice Mindfulness daily to help strengthen your prefrontal cortex, allowing you to safely experience your feelings.
3. **Share what happened with a few trustworthy people.** Those who confide in a few caring individuals will have an easier healing process. Consider talking to a therapist if you don't feel comfortable sharing with other people in your life.

Now You Try

- Are you carrying unresolved hurt or anger? If so, where do you feel it in your body? Do a body scan and write down or draw where you feel it in your body. Find a way to access that, be more aware of it, and work toward healing it.
- After learning what forgiveness is and isn't, journal about forgiveness and how it relates to your personal situation. Where are you on your healing journey, and what part will forgiveness play in that?

- For 15 minutes write down your hurt or anger; write what happened and express all your feelings associated with what happened. Include who you direct your hurt or anger toward. When you're finished, go back and read it. Are there actionable things that you can do to heal your hurt or anger? If so, write that down. If not, tear up the page and allow yourself to LET IT BE.



Did It Work?

Forgiveness will lift a weight from you. You'll feel the change in yourself as you work on the above exercises. It may feel a little raw at first, but as you continue the healing process, you'll grow stronger and those emotions will be much more manageable.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Power Through Surrender

Exercise 4: Healing Writing and the Power Through Surrender

Write what disturbs you, what you fear, what you have not been willing to speak about.

-Natalie Goldberg-

Journaling can be a powerful way to deal with the emotions that come up through your healing journey. It can be a great asset on your healing journey.

A big part of the Power of Surrender is learning to *let IT be*. IT refers, of course, to the limbic system. A lot of time the limbic system, in trying to protect you, ends up keeping you stuck in self-defeating behaviors or negative coping behaviors. Write it down, recognize it, and then leave it alone by not focusing on it. Just let IT be.



Now You Try

In the back of your journal create a section reserved for any dark or triggering thoughts that come to mind. Some refer to this as the "prison section" of their journal. Instead of fighting these thoughts, address them and LET THEM BE by placing them in this section of your journal. Use this method consistently as you continue to heal. There is a great power in seeing these thoughts and feelings in writing. This is a way to get them out of your head and let them sit in a safe place. These thoughts can't hurt you anymore. They're in prison. You have the power to put them, and keep them, safely away. Exercise your Power Through Surrender by letting them be.

Did It Work?

This particular exercise should allow you to release some of your negative or triggering thoughts, memories, and feelings. You'll be able to write them out, see them in context, and learn to let IT be.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Power Through Surrender

Exercise 5: Letting Go of Anger and Resentment

Holding on to anger is like drinking poison
and expecting the other person to die.

-Buddha-

When you hold grudges, it drains you of energy. Part of Power Through Surrender is knowing when to hold on to something and when to let go. If the emotion is not serving you, as constant anger does not, then you need to find a way to work through this. Use this object lesson to give your mind permission to let go of your anger, hurt, or resentment.



Now You Try

- Pick an object that easily fits in your hand.
- Label the object with the emotion you feel – anger, resentment, pain, etc.
- Carry the object with you wherever you go. Don't put it down for a single moment. Carry it to the car, to the store, to the gym, to work, and even to the bathroom.
- It won't take you long to realize that even that small object inhibits every aspect of your daily life.
- When you're ready to let go of the emotion, do it with purpose as you release the object.
- Do this any time you need a reminder for how much your unresolved thoughts and emotions can interfere with your daily life.

Did It Work?

Having the physical reminder of your negative emotion and having to constantly juggle it throughout your day should lead to some personal revelations. Now you need to decide how to resolve these negative emotions so you don't have to keep carrying them with you.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Strategy 4
Mindfulness: I Choose

Just slow down. Slow down your speech. Slow down your breathing. Slow down your walking. Slow down your eating. And let this slower, steadier pace perfume your mind. Just slow down…

-Doko-

A Brief Reminder from Your Reading

- Mindfulness is the ability to focus on empowering thoughts and feelings while choosing to coexist with non-productive thoughts and feelings.
- Unlike the Awareness strategy, which is for moments of crisis, Mindfulness can be used every day to strengthen your prefrontal cortex and allow you to appropriately and proactively manage triggers when they happen.
- Practice Mindfulness every day.
- Mindfulness gives you the power to choose what you focus on and how you react to everyday situations.

Mindfulness

Exercise 1: Meditation

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy,
not on fighting the old, but on building the new.
-Socrates-

The purpose behind this type of meditation is to teach your mind how to pay attention to one specific thing. It's part of the mental discipline process. In the beginning, a few minutes may seem like an eternity. Through regular practice, you'll be able to sit for longer periods of time.

Remember that your limbic system would rather avoid effort and take an easier route. It thrives on instant gratification. This is the sort of thing you'll want to look for if your mind wanders while meditating. The limbic system distracts you. The main strategy here is to keep your concentration as much and as long as you can, which may be difficult to do.

Even if you do nothing during your meditation period but bring your mind back to a chosen meditation passage, your time will still be well spent. You're teaching your mind how to respond to your direction. Your mind will learn in time, if you're persistent. The key is to respond to these distractions gently and not with aggression, anger, or frustration. There is only one failure in meditation – the failure not to do it.

Now You Try

- Choose a sacred or meaningful passage, quote or prayer – something that will instill hope, faith, kindness, strength, and other positive virtues. (You can find many ideas for quotes in the *Reclaim Hope* book as well as at the beginning of each exercise in this workbook.)

- Memorize it. This may take some work, but you can do it.
- Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, and pick the time of day that works best for you. Some people prefer mornings, others prefer nights; experiment and find what you prefer.
- Choose a specific amount of time to meditate. You might start with 5 minutes and, over time, work your way up to whatever your desired amount of time would be.
- Relax, with eyes opened or closed, and repeat the words of your passage. Draw the words out so that you can breathe deeply as you say it. Find the speed that works best for you.
- If your mind wanders, bring it back to the words. Don't make yourself feel bad or get frustrated; just re-focus and keep going.



Did It Work?

You should feel peaceful, relaxed, and focused. As you participate in meditation, over time you'll increase your Mindfulness and strengthen your prefrontal cortex. Soon you'll have much more control of where you focus your thoughts.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Mindfulness

Exercise 2: Trauma-Sensitive Yoga

Yoga is part of an ancient system meant precisely to address human suffering – and particularly to address it in the body, where it lives.

-Stephen Cope-

Yoga can help you become more grounded in your body. Practicing yoga can be an effective part of your healing journey. The purpose of yoga is to help you notice your body and get a better feel for what it is trying to teach you.

When you do this type of body work, you are accessing the limbic system and engaging it in the healing process. You're giving it attention. Yoga can help you unfreeze certain emotions that may have kept you stuck for years. It can help integrate the prefrontal cortex and limbic system to create more balance.



Now You Try

Join a class, watch a yoga video, or go to our resources page for a yoga tutorial:

www.youniquefoundation.org/resources

Allow yourself to experience trauma-sensitive yoga. There are ways to find a class that will best suit you:

- **Don't push too hard.** If something hurts you or brings up negative emotions, make a conscious choice whether you will pull back or breathe through it. This may be the opposite of what the instructor says (especially if they are not trained in trauma-sensitive practices). You don't have to push your limits to benefit from yoga. That's the opposite of what you should be doing.
- **You have options.** Some trauma survivors can feel overwhelmed when they feel like they have no choice in a position. If you are uncomfortable you can stop. You can always stop. Put your mental and physical health first and you'll enjoy yoga a lot more than if you do things out of pressure or obligation.
- **Count to yourself if the instructor doesn't.** You might dissociate or lose time if you're in pain or uncomfortable. To prevent this from happening in yoga, you can slowly count to yourself to stay grounded in the moment and in that particular yoga position.
- **Remember that healing is a process.** Yoga is a tool on your healing journey. Make sure you are utilizing it in a way that helps you heal without hindering your progress. If you think your yoga class is not helping, switch to a different one. Do what feels best for you.
- **Talk to the instructor ahead of time.** If you choose to take a class, explain to the instructor that you are a trauma survivor or, if that makes you uncomfortable, explain that you have a few questions or requests to make the class a better experience for you. This will include whether or not you'd like to be touched or physically assisted in class, whether tools like resistance ropes or restraints will be used, and if you are allowed to leave class if you are triggered or become uncomfortable.
- **Arrive a little early.** Give yourself a chance to acclimate to the new environment, especially if this is your first yoga class. Place yourself near

the door in case you need to leave early. Take a few minutes to acclimate yourself before the class starts, allowing you to begin the class on the right note.

Did It Work?

Yoga will teach you to focus on your breathing and body simultaneously. You're given a chance to *feel* because of the slow pace of it. If you feel more peaceful, more grounded, and more Mindful, then yoga is working for you.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Mindfulness

Exercise 3: Guided Imagery

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.

-Carl Jung-

Guided imagery can be a powerful technique. It allows your body and mind to connect and is especially important if you tend to disconnect from your body in high-anxiety situations. When your brain imagines something vividly enough, your body will treat it as though it's real. Your body will literally respond to the detailed imagery you are thinking about, which can help you relax and lower your stress level.

Lastly, it involves all your senses, as well as your whole body, and emotions. In this way, it can help you tap into your inner strength, find hope, and enhance your ability to cope with stressful situations. Practice guided imagery and see if this grounding technique works for you.

Now You Try

On our website: www.youniquefoundation.org/resources we have a Guided Imagery video available to watch. You can find others online as well with a quick search. Once you have experienced a few, you might want to create one for yourself. Record your own voice guiding you to a place where you feel especially safe and loved. Focus on the images created in your head and the feelings associated with it.



Did It Work?

You should feel relaxed and peaceful when you finish guided imagery. It may take a few times to stop your mind from wandering, but that's the whole idea. Bring back your focus and continue. Don't be too hard on yourself and accept the experience for what it can do for you – allow you to have a greater sense of Mindfulness.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Mindfulness

Exercise 4: Healing Writing with Mindfulness

Life is too short for a long story.

-Mary Wortley Montagu-

Sometimes the best way to get at the heart of a matter is to tell it in the simplest way possible. This can take a great deal of Mindfulness because, interestingly enough, it can be more difficult to write something brief than to write something longer.

A story told in ten words can be more powerful than a story told in ten pages. If you only had ten words to use, what story would you tell about yourself, about your day, about your future?



Now You Try

- Start with a list of words that describe you. Who you are today, who you were, who you want to be – it's up to you. Examples would be things like: bright, inspiration, hopeful, sensitive, intelligent, etc.
- Try out a few sentences. See if you can make them ten words or less. Using the words above, one sentence could be something like: "Sensitive, intelligent heroine looking for a hopeful adventure of inspiration."
- Read over the sentences you've created and find your favorites. What are they missing? Do they capture who you are, were, or want to be?
- This doesn't have to be a one-time experiment. Try this frequently and see how your ten-word story changes.

Did It Work?

Journaling can be overwhelming at times. A ten-word story can be the perfect way to make it a little more fun with your personal writing. You may want to combine some of your ten-word stories with Art Journaling (see the next exercise) and see what you can create.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Mindfulness

Exercise 5: Art Journaling

Words are but pictures of our thoughts.

-John Dryden-

Art journaling is combining words and images on paper to help address your feelings, fears, and hopes. There are lots of different types of art journaling, so you have the freedom of knowing that there is no wrong way to do it. It encourages experimentation and may lead to insights as you work. It can also help you work through difficult emotions while promoting healing as you practice Mindfulness while working on it.



Now You Try

- Gather the supplies you want to use. Almost anything can be utilized in art journaling, so don't be afraid to try new things. Consider using paper, magazine cut-outs, paint, stamps, stencils, markers, crayons, glue, "found items" like movie ticket stubs, or other papers you have.
- Start with a word, image, emotion, or color.
- Without thinking too much, start combining images and words to describe what you started with. For example, if you decided to start with the color orange you would write the things that come to mind when you think of that color and find different papers or clippings that use that color. You'll be amazed at what insights you'll find as you work.
- Date your work. This will allow you to look back and see where you were on a certain day or at a certain time. Over time you can see your growth or recognize the things that you keep coming back to – be they particular images, words, or emotions.
- If this particular type of art resonates with you, continue to do it. Look at images online and see what inspires you. Branch out and keep experimenting until you find what works for you.

Did It Work?

If you're a perfectionist, then art journaling may be difficult for you. Try to let go of the idea that it must look exactly like you want it. The end result is not as important as the time spent getting there. If you're able to work through difficult things in your life through art journaling, you know it's working for you.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Strategy 5
Faith: I Believe

And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.

-Anaïs Nin-

A Brief Reminder from Your Reading

- Faith is both planning for the future and connecting with a power greater than yourself.
- Relying on a higher power means drawing strength from a source that is bigger than yourself. It does not necessarily mean a religious deity, but whatever your view of a higher power is.
- Faith will allow you to plan for your future without anxiety or fear. You'll be able to make positive movements every day to reach the future you hope to have.
- Healing takes time. When you become frustrated with where you are in your healing journey, remember the Law of Incubation. You're planting seeds and even though you may not see the progress, it doesn't mean there's no growth occurring.

Faith

Exercise 1: Future Vision Statement

Strategic planning is worthless –
unless there is first a strategic vision.

-John Naisbitt-

Future Vision Statements are meant to encourage you to dream big. This is a way for you to think out, visualize, and write down your future exactly as you want it to look. If you can't visualize where you're going, then how will you know how to get there? With a Future Vision Statement, you'll be able to envision your ideal life.

As you consider what you want your future to look like, consider four key areas:

1. **Physical:** your health, the aura that you give off, how you carry yourself, the type of clothes you wear
2. **Emotional:** your strength, how you deal with triggers, the way you feel in your day-to-day life
3. **Spiritual:** your gratitude to your higher power, your relationship with the natural world around you, your relationship with the spiritual side of yourself
4. **Relationships:** what you're looking for in relationships, what you need from them and what you give to them, whether they are current relationships or ones you hope to have

Now You Try

1. Close your eyes and take some time to visualize what you want your future to look like. See it as if you've already achieved all your dreams. Imagine everything, down to the smallest detail. Don't let that inner critic that we

all have tell you that anything is impossible, or out of reach, or that you're not good enough.

2. When you can see the vision clearly in your mind, write it down. State it in the present tense, as if it's already a reality. Don't say, "I want to be a world-class chef," write down, "I'm a world-class chef at a five-star restaurant."
3. Making statements in the present tense connects you with a powerful force in your brain – Faith – that begins the process of making your vision become a reality. The spark of belief is all your brain needs to start the process of creating the future that you desire. It is what will motivate you to work towards your future.
4. After you've written these down, hang the paper somewhere prominent – a place where you can see it and read it every day. Take time to read a few of the sentences out loud. Hearing the words will be both empowering and motivating.
5. Once you know where you want to go, it will only be a matter of time before you find the right path to your dreams.



Did It Work?

If you are feeling more in control and confident about your future, then this exercise worked. The whole point is to allow you to look forward without anxiety, but with purpose. Even if you aren't sure exactly where you're going, just knowing how you want to feel in the future will allow you to plan that much more.

FUTURE VISION STATEMENT

Write down what your best life will look like in each of the categories below. Then record a 1-2 sentence future vision statement. Rewrite this statement as frequently as you need to as part of your daily and monthly planning.

Physical:	Mental:
Spiritual:	Relationships:

Future Vision Statement:

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Faith

Exercise 2: Power Poses

If you feel yourself beginning to collapse, fight it. Pull your shoulders back, unfurl, and power up.

-Amy Cuddy-

Power poses were thrust into the spotlight when Amy Cuddy presented a Ted Talk in 2012 about body language. Power poses, simply put, are when you stand or sit with confidence, taking up space while doing so. Picture Superman or Wonder Woman in your mind. How are they standing? Probably with their feet shoulder-width apart, with hands on their hips confidently. That is one example of a power pose.

When you focus on the way you hold yourself, do you find that you try to take up as little space as possible? Are your shoulders slumped, your arms and legs pulled in, and your head down? Even if you aren't feeling self-conscious, you may still find yourself returning to this type of posture – folding in as if to protect or cover yourself.

One easy way to empower yourself is to take up more space, to do a few power poses before you go into work, before a difficult meeting, or before a first date. Strong body language tells people about you before you ever say a word. If you're curled up into yourself, it will make a difference in how you're treated and even how you expect to be treated, compared to if you are sitting tall.

Now You Try

- **Take stock of your body language.** Stand in front of the mirror and notice your posture. Do you have a tendency to slouch and hold your arms across your chest? When you sit, do you cross your legs and lean forward as if you're folding up? Pay attention for a few days; just check in

on your body language every once in a while, and really notice how you sit and stand in various situations.

- **Do some power poses.** Take up space. Put your hands behind your head with your elbows out. Spread your feet when you stand. Sit up straight. Raise your chin. Put your hands on your hips. You'll want to do most of these in private (except for the good posture, practice that all the time). As you ride up the elevator to a job interview, tap into your inner Wonder Woman and pose. You'll be amazed what a difference this will make in your confidence levels.
- **Focus on your body.** Renowned psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk champions the idea that trauma is as much physical as it is psychological. Take your body back from your trauma. Live in it. Experience it. Focus on how you use your body and when you don't notice it.
- **Don't collapse.** Once you've felt the difference power poses and positive body language can play in your life, don't let yourself collapse. Any time you are in a situation where you feel yourself closing up, pull your shoulders back, raise your chin, and focus on that feeling of power that you can embody.



Did It Work?

Try this before a meeting, appointment, or conversation that gives you stress or anxiety. You may have felt a little silly. You may have even laughed or rolled your eyes as you put your hands on your hips. But then you should have realized that you DID feel more confident, more positive, and more powerful.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Faith

Exercise 3: Positive Declarations

Choose the words you say to yourself wisely; they are creating your reality.

-Sean Stephenson-

For survivors of childhood sexual trauma, looking to the future can lead to high levels of anxiety. An important part of healing and reclaiming hope is to be able to plan a positive future for yourself and look toward the future with confidence.

One way to do that is through positive declarations. Positive declarations are sentences that you say to yourself to remind you of the positive future you have ahead. You say these as if they're already true, which allows you to believe that they can be true.

Examples of Positive Declarations

- I love myself and I am amazing.
- I am good at my job and am paid what I am worth.
- I am a great mom and my children are fortunate to have me.
- I have the strength to do the right thing.
- I am grateful for this day and the many possibilities it affords.
- I am a powerful and resourceful woman.
- I am attracting positive and healthy people into my life.
- I view challenges as opportunities to increase my wisdom and strength.
- I can manage triggers in a healthy way.
- I behave in ways that promote my health every day.

Now You Try

1. **Start with a list.** Make a list of positive things you want to see happen in your life. Be as vague or specific as you want; just write down the first things that come to mind.
2. **Choose one to represent each aspect of your life.** Think of categories like work, family, personal, physical, spiritual, etc. Find the most important aspects of your life and come up with one sentence from your list for each category. Remember to keep the declarations in the present tense, as if they are already true.
3. **Write your positive declarations down.** Put them somewhere that you'll see them every day.
4. **Say them to yourself.** It may feel a little awkward at first, but say the declarations out loud and with conviction. You'll be surprised how empowering they can be.
5. **Keep them current.** If one of your declarations is "I exercise for 30 minutes every day because my body deserves it" and you've made that a consistent habit, then replace it with a new one that expands on that.

Did It Work?

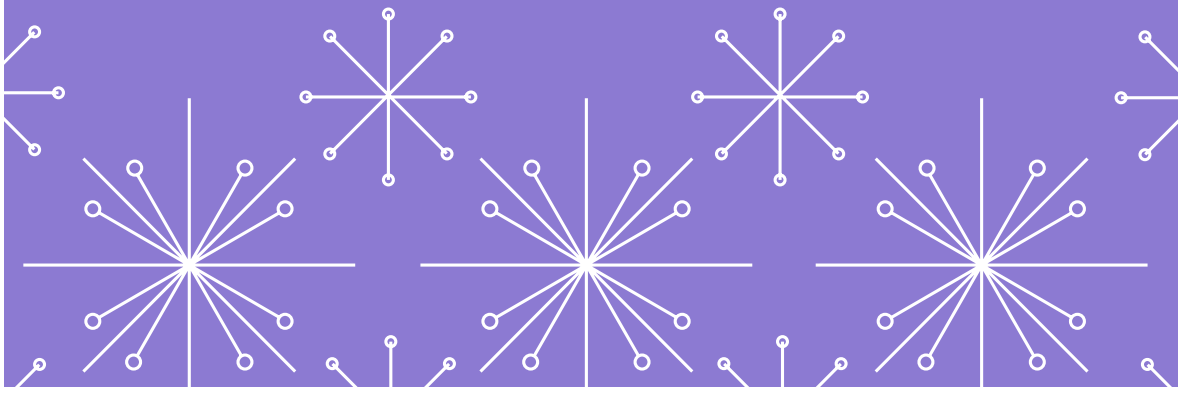
In times of high anxiety, if you remind yourself of your positive declarations, they will help you calm your nerves. They will make it so you can move forward and not feel stuck in the past. The more often you say them, the more likely they are to influence your everyday life.



EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

I am worthy
OF LOVE AND BELONGING.

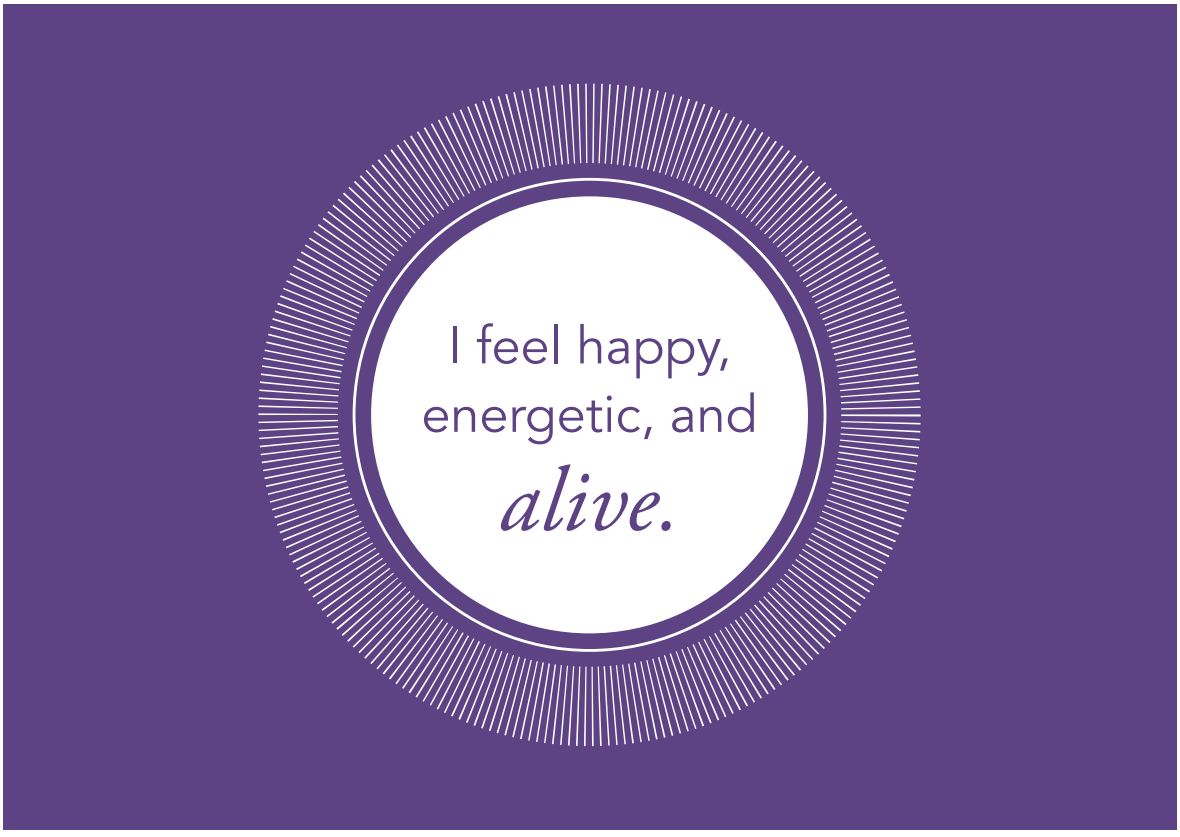




I have *enough.*

I do *enough.*

I am *enough.*



Faith

Exercise 4: Healing Writing with Faith

Writing…is an act of faith: I believe it's also an act of hope, the hope that things can get better than they are.

-Margaret Atwood-

The idea for this exercise came from the classic story by Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol. In the story Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by three different ghosts on Christmas Eve: the Ghost of Christmas Past, who shows Ebenezer how his past actions led to his current situation; the Ghost of Christmas Present, who shows him the reality of what people think of him; and the Ghost of Christmas Future, who shows Scrooge the eventual outcome of his life if he keeps living it in the same manner he was currently living. A powerful moment in the story is when the Ghost of Christmas Future enters the graveyard to show Scrooge his future tombstone. The following dialogue ensues:

> "Before I draw nearer to the stone to which you point," said Scrooge, "answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?"
>
> Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.
>
> "Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they may lead," said Scrooge. "But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!"

What things in your life would you like to work on? What is most important to you? Like Scrooge you need to set the course you want to reach the future you desire.



Now You Try

1. Pull out your journal and picture, in as vivid detail as you possibly can, what you want your life to look like 5 years from now. Write down how old you'll be, where you'll live, what you'll be doing. Go into as much detail as you possibly can.
2. Now do that for 10 years from now.
3. Now 15 years from now.
4. Keep going until you imagine yourself at 80 years old, sitting in a rocking chair, and contemplating the life you've had. What changes do you need to make NOW to create this beautiful life?
5. Answer that question by writing for 15 minutes without stopping.

Did It Work?

Were you surprised at the future you imagined for yourself? Did it give you an idea of what you can do now to create that for yourself? This should also take some of the fear out of planning ahead for you. Even if things don't work out exactly as you planned, you can still look to the future with hope.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

Faith

Exercise 5: Vision Board

Believe you can and you're halfway there.

-Theodore Roosevelt-

A vision board is a collection of images, words, and affirmations that make up your dreams and goals for the future. A vision board can be a powerful tool in setting goals, seeing your future in the most positive way possible, and setting yourself up to succeed. You'll be able to see clearly what you value, and it can help to clarify what you want.

A vision board is a great place to combine your Future Vision Statement and Positive Declarations with any other goals you have for your future. You'll be inspired by what you've already written and see places where you can expand with images for your vision board.



Now You Try

1. Go through magazines and look for any words or images that you're drawn to or that relate to your goals. Don't think too hard about them, just gather whatever you like. You can add in photos, drawings, personal writings, images from the computer – anything that's important to you!
2. Organize the images on the bulletin board or paper that you've chosen. You may need to go back and gather more images or choose which ones are most important to you if you gathered too many to fit.
3. Glue, tape, or pin the images.
4. Add drawings, stickers, words, or mantras with markers or pens.
5. Place this vision board where you'll see it every day to keep all of your goals top-of-mind.
6. Update it anytime you've achieved your goals or your priorities have changed. Don't be afraid to replace images or start from scratch after a few months or a year.

Did It Work?

As you picked the images and placed them on the page, you should feel an excitement about the bright future you want for yourself. Having this everyday reminder of your dreams will help keep you on track and inspire you on a daily basis.

EXERCISE REFLECTION

Reflect on the exercise you just completed. What did you like? How did the exercise make you feel? Record your answers below.

"Nothing will work unless you do."

- MAYA ANGELOU -

the younique FOUNDATION