

THE SELF-WORTH STOCKTAKE

WELCOME

This stocktake is designed to be done in c. 20 minutes. When people do it for the first time, it may take a little longer. So, you may wish to treat yourself to your favourite drink and enjoy the process :)

INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer the following questions as truthfully as possible. For each question, mark where you feel you are today, on a scale of 1-4. (The statement on the left hand side represents one end of the scale, and the statement on the right hand side represents the opposite end of the scale.)

Please be aware that some of the scales are “forced choices”, so you may find some of the questions rather difficult to answer. Just choose the closest response.

You may wish to print this out, as there are 25 questions to answer.

1)

When I make a mistake, I blame myself for ages and “beat myself up”.	1	2	3	4	When I make a mistake, I acknowledge the error, but this does not affect my friendship with myself. My recovery time is in minutes.

2)

When I see my reflection in the mirror, I frown or get annoyed or depressed.	1	2	3	4	When I see my reflection in the mirror, I smile at myself, with appreciation.

3)

My diet and exercise are fundamental for my self-esteem (or should be).	1	2	3	4	I take care of myself as an expression of self-worth, not as a condition of self-esteem. I can have self-worth even when I skip the gym!

4)

When I embark on something new, it's important that I get it right - in order to enjoy a good reputation with myself.

1 2 3 4

I am willing to "have a go" and to make mistakes: getting things right is not essential to my self-worth.

5)

I do things to make myself feel better.

1 2 3 4

I do things that bring me joy and pleasure.

6)

Professionally, I feel I need to prove myself. So, I am often seeking evaluation and feedback.

1 2 3 4

My work life is about being useful, rather than seeking self-evaluation. I seek feedback about what was useful, not just about me.

7)

I derive my sense of worth from my loved ones and my family life.

1 2 3 4

While family is important to me, I get my sense of worth by living my own life, according to my values.

8)

It's important to be successful: it's an essential part of who I am.

1 2 3 4

I can experience self-worth whether I am successful or not.

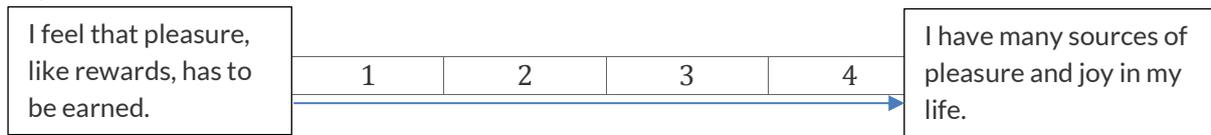
9)

I need to feel proud of my home and environment.

1 2 3 4

I live in a quality environment as an expression of self-worth, but not a condition of self-esteem

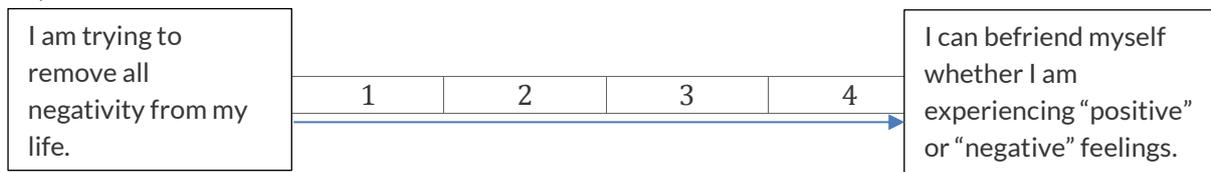
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11)



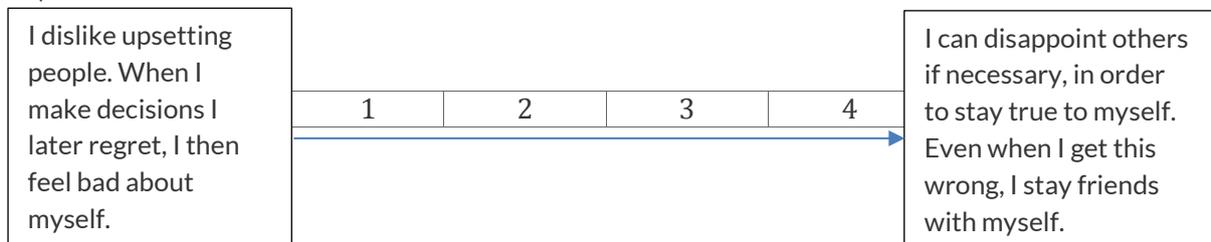
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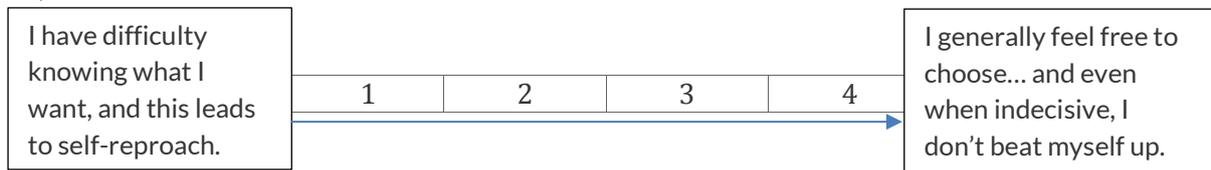
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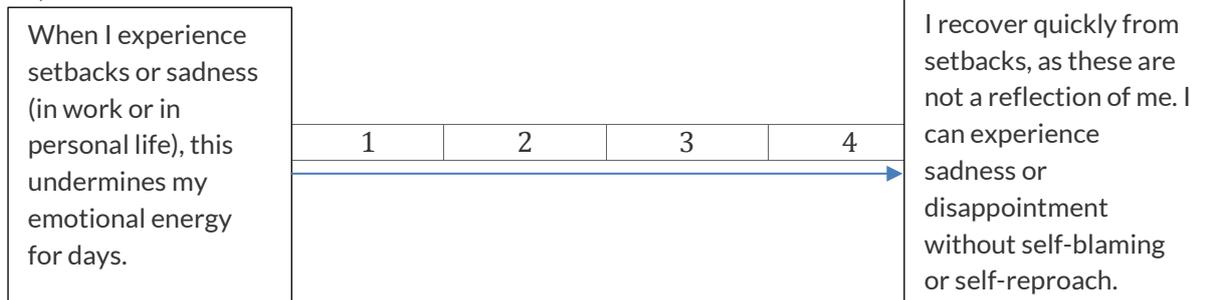
14)



15)



16)



17)

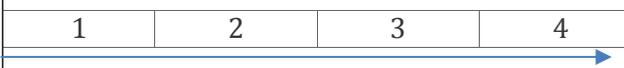
When I get negative feedback, I feel gutted and/or embarrassed.



When I get negative feedback, I feel detached. I'm prepared to consider which elements might be useful, without undermining my sense of self.

18)

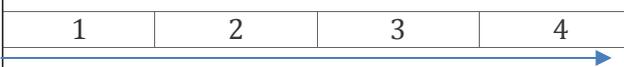
I often feel uncertain or anxious, e.g. that I may be "found out" at any moment.



Though I may experience moments of anxiety, my "home state" is one of quiet confidence and self-belief. I know I am OK

19)

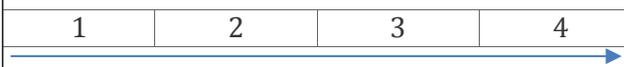
When success comes my way, I tend to dismiss this as good luck, or due to external forces.



By living life according to my values, I use my talents and enjoy success when it comes.

20)

Looking back over the past few months, I feel that life is passing me by.



I am grateful for everything I've lived and experienced.

21)

I worry about the future.



I trust in myself, no matter what happens.

22)

No matter how much I do in a day, it is never enough.



My sense of self comes from who I am; not from what I get done or what I have.

23)

I do not sleep well (due to stress, worry, sadness or depression).	1	2	3	4
	→			

I generally sleep well. Even when I don't, I can lie awake in peace.
--

24)

My life is boring.	1	2	3	4
	→			

I have lots to look forward to. Even on "flat" days, I am at least a friend to myself and can enjoy life in my own company.

25)

I feel unloved, disconnected, insignificant.	1	2	3	4
	→			

I feel thrilled to be part of the human family, a sense of wonder at the mystery of being here.

SCORING

You can use the stocktake in two ways. First, if you wish to get a straight score, then add up your chosen response for each question. As there are 25 questions, the maximum score is 100. However, it's perhaps more useful to look for patterns. For example, is your friendship with yourself dragged down by achievement? By loneliness? By worry about the future?

MORE?

You may wish to redo the stocktake after a few weeks of practicing the Safari shifts. Alternatively, if you would like to talk to someone and get individual coaching, feel free to email me, or any of the Self-Worth Academy associates: John@SelfWorthAcademy.com

THE SELF-WORTH JOURNEY

WELCOME

There are many ways to take the Self-Worth Safari. You can work alone, with a partner or as part of a group. Perhaps you have the good fortune to work with a Self-Worth coach or facilitator (more about that later).

This workbook is intended to help you with that journey. It's created as a Word document, so that you can easily download it and amend it as you wish. But you can easily do the same in a handwritten journal or using a vision board. Each person has their own unique style.

This document is essentially a compilation of the questions from the six terrains of the Self-Worth Safari book, plus a few others added since that book was written. But please don't hesitate to add your own questions.... and to tell us about your adventure, too!

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EXERCISES FOR UNDERSTANDING SELF-WORTH:

In order to better understand the dynamics of self-worth and self-esteem in your life, I invite you to reflect on some or all of the following points, recording your answers in a journal.

1. List some things that you have done to win the approval of others (other-esteem).
2. List some things that you have done to gain a good reputation with yourself (self-esteem). What have these costs you, financially or otherwise?
3. Can you identify some events or external influences in early life that gave you a sense of shame? (For example, poverty, bullying, religious teaching, abuse, trauma, or a chaotic household. Please note that some of these issues may require therapeutic help, which is beyond the scope of this book.)
4. What did you learned by doing the self-worth quiz? Can you identify a belief that you currently hold that might be camouflaging your sense of self-worth (such as the need to sacrifice your well-being for loved ones)?
5. Do you have any recurring patterns of negative self-talk? (For example, "I'm an idiot!" or "How could anyone want me?")
6. Chart a personal life history of where/how you have been brought up on self-esteem rather than self-worth. Consider the influence of teachers, parents, stories, religion, heroes, first experiences of college and/or the workplace, and early relationships. In what key moments did you learn you needed to "prove yourself"?

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EXERCISES FOR THE TERRAIN OF THE BODY

As usual, some exercises will appeal to you more than others. Please choose at least three, and I highly recommend number 5. That mantra may be very important in the weeks ahead.

1. Look in the mirror for thirty seconds. What goes through your mind? How do you feel? Write down the phrases or feelings that come up.

2. What conditions about your appearance do you place on self-esteem? Please identify at least three. (Examples might include weight loss, appearance, style.)
3. What effort have you expended in pursuit of these objectives? What costs (time and/or money) have you incurred?
4. What could you learn to accept about yourself? Take your time with this question. The more you can deeply accept, the more you can change later on. (But please avoid the pitfall of superficial acceptance as a tactic of change. It simply doesn't work!)
5. Please choose your "because I'm worth it" mantra (or use that one). Your mantra is your rallying point when doubts and insecurities arise. As we saw with Pete, the mantra also helps articulate your intent, particularly when practicing Shift #2. Write down your mantra and place it where you can see it regularly.
6. Are there particular times when your (physical) self-worth is vulnerable? When you feel tired or disappointed? When you see beautiful or athletic people? In changing rooms or on the beach? What truth do you wish to hold onto in those vulnerable moments? Record your truth somewhere you'll see it regularly.
7. Create your physical self-worth ritual: drinking a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice, taking a warm bath or a walk, getting into the sunshine, taking a short rest or doing a meditation, anything that accompanies your mantra. What action can you take daily to express your friendship with yourself?
8. Construct a self-worth gratitude list. This is not as easy as it sounds. Most of the time, we list good things that have happened to us or things we are proud of having done. However, that is self-esteem yet again, not self-worth. Try to find the things you unconditionally like about yourself. An example might be "being kind to myself even though I broke my diet."
9. Consciously do the exercise you most enjoy as an expression of self-worth rather than as a condition of self-esteem.

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EXERCISES FOR THE TERRAIN OF RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY

In your journal, record your answers to the questions that follow and play with making assertions of self-worth based on insights you derive from the exercises.

1. What are the ways in which you might be avoiding self-acceptance? Write down at least five (for example, being in denial, striving to change things, focusing on something else such as work, compensation habits, blaming or judging, and so on).
2. How is self-acceptance different from self-pity? What is an example of this distinction in your life?
3. How might you link your self-esteem to your relationship status? Consider how you feel on birthdays, anniversaries, on holidays, or when you see people posting engagements on Facebook. What goes through your mind?
4. How might you outwardly reproach or blame your partner for things that, deep down, you are reproaching yourself for? Write down an example, without beating yourself up!
5. If you are single, how do you feel about that? About yourself?
6. When you next see a beautiful happy couple or person—who exemplifies everything that you long for in life—use that trigger as a reminder to send love to yourself. At first, this may feel a bit forced, even fake. But over time, it works. Note that this does not mean denying any sadness you might have; it means accepting your sadness and loving yourself nonetheless.
7. If you are grieving the loss of a special person, how is that impacting your sense of self-worth? How do you need to be kind to yourself? Could you use some support? Where can you find this?

8. Write a gratitude list, focusing on self-worth (in other words, you), not your relationship status/achievements.
9. If you were coming from a place of freedom, playfulness, and joy, what actions would you dare to take? In this terrain of relationships, what movie theater of the mind do you want to quit? What does stepping out into the sunshine mean to you?
10. Who can you talk to about these experiences?

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EXERCISES FOR THE TERRAIN OF WORK

The following exercises offer opportunities to reflect, by writing down answers to these questions in your journal, and to work with others who may support you in your self-worth journey. You may also find yourself offering the same kind of support in return.

1. How does self-worth affect you at work? Where has it held you back? When has self-worth helped you?
2. In which modes do you tend to get stuck? Review the table on page 113 to consider the possibilities.
3. Choose something you would like to change about your work. If you were absolutely convinced of your value and were not seeking to prove anything to anyone, including yourself, what difference might this make to how you tackle this challenge?
4. Why do you want to make this change (in Q3)? Are you trying to prove something to yourself? If so, what?
5. If you were free of this imperative, how might that influence your objective?
6. If you work in sales or business development, how could you adapt your approach to be more useful? Think about your website, client-review meetings, and proposals, as well as first meetings with prospects. Who might be partners in that quest?
7. Is there a difficult boss or client in your life? How do they represent an opportunity to believe in yourself, to deepen the roots of self-worth?
8. What drives you: purpose, meaning, both? Something else?
9. What would you do if you were not afraid? If you were to be more courageous in your choice of career direction, what would you choose?
10. Ask someone to introduce you to an imaginary ideal customer or employer. How would they describe you? Notice your gut reactions to their description.
11. Who can support you as you work your way through these questions?
12. Can you incorporate ten-minute breaks into your day, when you can just be with you?

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EXERCISES FOR THE TERRAIN OF MONEY AND STATUS

Many of the following exercises involve reflection, and I invite you to record your insights in your journal. Some items below ask for you to shift your money and status habits of thought.

1. What are your imperatives? List at least five, ranging from lifestyle choices to achievements or personal-development aspirations, such as education.
2. Why are your imperatives important to you? What expectation of yourself is driving them?
3. In what areas of your life are you practicing Have, Do, Be? Consider not just material “haves” such as money but also education, relationship status, time, energy, and lifestyle.

4. Why are you waiting for these conditions to be satisfied?
5. Choose an item of spending that you can change. Please don't make this another "should": on the contrary, try to choose something than you "could" do relatively easily, perhaps to shop in a different store or to drop a subscription that you are not using anyway.
6. Review your needs. What are they? Which are needs and which are wants? Which core needs are met, and which are not?
7. Where might you have more freedom in your life, if you were less concerned with proving things to yourself?
8. Do you sometimes sink into a state of powerlessness about money? If so, how can you be compassionate toward yourself at these times?
9. Write your money story, in 100–200 words. Is it a story of survival or of being a victim of circumstance? Is it a story written in the past or in the future tense? What does this tell you?
10. Apart from money or possessions, what else constitutes "status" for you? Educational qualifications? Style? Accent? Achievement? How might these judgments—often applied to others—be subtly ruling your own self-worth?

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EXERCISES FOR THE TERRAIN OF FRIENDSHIP

While a few of the following exercises are reflective, many ask you to develop self-worth in practice.

1. How do you feel about social occasions such as birthday parties, after-work events, or family dinners? How does this link to your self-worth?
2. What judgments do you most frequently make about others (for example, they're loud, uncultured, boring, inauthentic, weird, and so on)? How might these judgments be directly or indirectly linked to your own feelings of self-worth?
3. Reviewing the list of Friendship Saboteurs earlier in this chapter, which ones do you recognize? Any others? For a further checklist, together with more about the behaviors that often unwittingly sabotage friendship, see the Resources page of SelfWorthAcademy.com.
4. List your closest friends. How do they support your selfworth? How do you support theirs?
5. Choose a forthcoming social occasion (or family event) and consciously go there with an attitude of "being interested" (versus trying to be interesting or being tuned out). What difference does that make to your experience of the event?
6. When you keep in touch with others, do you do so when you have something interesting to tell them or when you are genuinely interested in how they are?
7. Do you enjoy your solitude? Or are you lonely? No wrong answers. Is there any self-reproach (or self-blaming) that you could usefully drop?
8. Who can you talk to about any issues of loneliness? Ideally, choose someone who is not affected, so you may wish to avoid having this discussion with siblings or family, at least for now. The objective is to explore your feelings, not that you feel better by obligating anyone else.
9. What boundaries might you need to set? See more on boundaries in chapter 14.
10. From the basis of self-worth, you know you are already okay. On that basis, what actions around friendship, if any, do you want to take?

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EXERCISES FOR THE TERRAIN OF ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

1. How do you feel about going to the gym? Or running or yoga, whatever your "must get to . . ." activity is. Is it a true source of pleasure for you?

2. Write your own list of ten to twenty pleasures, ideally those in which you can indulge regularly.
3. Make a self-worth playlist of music that makes your heart sing and that reinforces an unconditional relationship with yourself.
4. What gets in the way of enjoying your job? Could you have more pleasure at work, even if your present work is not ideal?
5. What minor changes could you make to your daily environment that would bring you joy and remind you of who you are?
6. What would be a useful mantra to support you making these changes as an expression of self-worth?
7. Where do you experience beauty in your life?
8. When you walk through your door upon coming home, what is the first thought that goes through your head? What does that tell you about your self-worth?

THE SELF-WORTH CHECK-IN

Your self-worth Safari may be coming to a close, but the adventure of a new friendship with yourself is just beginning!

Perhaps you can now do the Self-Worth Stocktake again, as a celebration of the journey you have made.

SUPPORTING OTHER PEOPLE

During the course of your self-worth safari, you have probably noticed how many people are still obsessed with proving themselves: striving to achieve and maintain a certain reputation with themselves. It's hard work... and often a waste of energy, too.

If you would like to support others with their journey and become a Self-Worth Facilitator, we would love to hear from you. Please email John@SelfWorthAcademy.com

SELF-WORTH APPROACH TO WEIGHT LOSS

INTRODUCTION

Dieting is one of the world's leading industries. No longer just in the Western world, it seems that the more affluent we become, the more we cannot stop eating. Nor does our capacity to eat healthily seem to depend on education or awareness; usually people are already cognisant of the health risks that their daily diet entails. Even as we place that packet of biscuits in the supermarket trolley, we vaguely sense that this might not be a smart move.

So, what's going on? If we already know all about carbs and sugar and exercise, what's missing?

EMPTINESS WITHIN

The basic thesis of this approach is that the core issue lies not in what we are eating, but in **why** we are eating it. The term "comfort eating" comes close to this core truth: we eat to fulfil emotional (even quasi-physical) needs that are inside of us. For example,

- A feeling of drudgery: food as reward or incentive
- Feeling tired, needing a lift
- Feeling empty or bored: food as diversion or distraction or excitement
- In need of physical affection: food as substitute for love
- Life that lacks sweetness, craving for sugar

These are just examples: you can easily extend the list. Try to find at least three triggers that apply to you.

Conventional diets do sometimes draw attention to these triggers above, but the reflection usually stops there. At this point, the advice usually turns to tactics about being mindful during vulnerable times, or to tips about how to get these needs met elsewhere. We are going to go a level deeper: as this is where the crux of the issue often lies.

THE LINK WITH SELF-WORTH

That sugar craving could be satisfied by an orange.... So why does it need to be a slice of cake? Usually, because cake has become a part of our reward/pleasure system. Even if we have cloaked ourselves with an entire gourmet tradition – or high-quality cuisine culture – we have often made food into something much more than a necessity of survival. For some people, food is literally part of their identity. It's part of what makes life worth living. A day without cake is.... just miserable... in a way that a day without oranges is unlikely ever to be.

Food is literally fulfilment. Not just physically, but at the level of feeling and pleasure. At the level of life itself. It's a celebration of everything that is worthwhile. It's hardly surprising that we head for the kitchen when we need a "fix". In savouring those chips or chocolates, we are affirming our right to be here.

Telling someone that they shouldn't is not only pointless: it's entirely missing the point that takes them into the kitchen (or sweet shop) in the first place. They go there to reconnect to themselves, not just to

the fridge. For a few fleeting moments – until self-reproach kicks in – they savour their self-worth in the pleasurable act of enjoying their fix. And when the self-reproach does come to mind, they finish the packet in order to drive it away.

A BETTER APPROACH

If someone is to break out of an unhealthy cycle of eating, I believe they need to begin with a revised understanding of self-worth, not with more (doomed) resolutions about eating. The food is not the problem. It's the emptiness within needs to be dealt with.

If you can become conscious that each craving is a recall to **you** – not just to the fridge – then you are well on your way towards a new relationship with food. Sometimes, you will indeed enjoy some biscuits (or whatever your “go to” pleasure is). But you can now choose that freely – as an expression of self-worth, and not another condition of self-esteem. Equally, you might also...

- Get a glass of water (as I'm doing now while writing this)
- Go for a 10min walk
- Play some music
- Call a friend

Isn't this just the same as what the diet books say? Not at all, the diet book is all about the food: this approach is all about you! It's not just about switching your **attention** – it's about changing your **intention**.

A self-worth approach to weight-loss is not saying: Lose weight and therefore feel good about you. On the contrary, it challenges you to feel good about you right now, and then (if you still want to, and it's not just another imposed “should” in your life) do something about your eating.

THE DAMAGE DONE BY SELF-ESTEEM

Much of our current obesity is co-related with rising expectations of ourselves. Show me any culture where people are obliged to think well of themselves all the time, and I will guarantee you will find rising levels of obesity. We've seen this for decades in the USA and we are now seeing the same rising levels of obesity in Asia.

It's ironic. The more we are obligated to be slim, ripped, busty, fashionable, successful, sociable, hyper-connected, balanced, even “spiritual” ... then the more the inner cravings seem to be rampant.

I've known from personal experience that trying to chase self-esteem via dieting is a losing game. Though I might sometimes succeed for a few weeks or maybe months, old habits soon returned. Looking back on those years, I can now clearly see why. The more conditional my self-esteem was – in this case, conditional on losing kilos or looking slim or being fit – the more insecure I felt inside. Sooner or later, this emptiness would break through and I would find a reason to comfort-eat.

Society's emphasis on self-esteem is not curing obesity – it's making the problem worse. To break a pattern of comfort-eating, we need to address the hollowness inside i.e. the fundamental issues of self-worth that lead to over-eating in the first place. We are not going to resolve these issues by still more exhortations or “should”s in life.

APPLYING THE SELF-WORTH SHIFTS

The following table sums up the seven Safari shifts, as these apply to issues of food. No diets, no calorie-counting, no starvation! What matters is a new basis for friendship with ourselves.

Shift	Tips
1. From assessing to asserting	<p>Stop using the scales, at least daily</p> <p>Stop all assessments of yourself: even the positive ones that start “At least, I did/didn’t...”</p> <p>Start doing simple things you enjoy</p> <p>Start drinking more water, with a conscious thought of “I am worth it” or similar</p>
2. From condition to expression	<p>Whatever you do (even eating) take conscious pleasure from each bite.</p> <p>Do not multitask while eating: savour your food as an expression of friendship with yourself.</p> <p>Take whatever actions you wish – as an expression of self-worth, rather than a condition of self-esteem. This shift in intention is quite transformative.</p>
3. From self-reproach to self-acceptance	<p>Fully accept your shape, weight, size as it is today. This may change later, but that change will be forever postponed without a basis in self-worth.</p> <p>Notice feelings of guilt or shame when they arise, and start challenging the reality behind these.</p>
4. From self-evaluation to usefulness	<p>Cease looking for gratitude, recognition, visibility in both personal and work relationships.</p> <p>Focus on how your talents may be useful.</p>
5. From “should” to “could”	<p>End the use of the word “should” in anything to do with food or exercise. By all means, imagine what you could do.... And do it if you choose to do so!</p>
6. From “proving oneself” to “valuing oneself”	<p>As you get in touch with self-worth, precisely as you are today, there is nothing you need to prove. So, choose clothes, food and activities with the motive of valuing their person that you are: not proving yourself.</p>
7. From “being interesting” to “being interested”	<p>When meeting friends, practice being interested in them, rather than being aware of how you are “performing” or measuring up in their eyes.</p>

MORE?

You may wish to redo the Self-Worth Stocktake after a few weeks of practicing the Safari shifts. Alternatively, if you would like to talk to someone and get individual coaching, feel free to email me, or any of the Self-Worth Academy associates: John@SelfWorthAcademy.com

If you are a wellness or healthcare practitioner, who would like deepen the dimension of self-worth with your clients, or offer support to others, we are particularly keen to hear from you.

SELF-WORTH SABOTEURS IN RELATIONSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

Our intimate and family relationships are a significant part of our lives. Ideally, these are the people with whom we can be most “at home”, who nurture and support our sense of self.

Therefore, it’s hardly surprising that when problems arise in this terrain, your relationship with yourself is often impacted, too. As you have hopefully learned in the chapter on Relationships in “The Self-Worth Safari”, the key insight here is to detach — as much as possible — your love life from your happiness with yourself. Of course, there will always be some impact. But with some practice, you will soon learn that even if self-esteem is impacted (perhaps by the way you are dealing with a conflict), then your self-worth does not have to be dragged down by that.

COMMON SABOTEURS

Nevertheless, even when we think we have mastered this distinction and Teflon-coated our sense of self-worth; life has a habit of making some scratches on the coating! As a result, we get to see self-worth from some fresh angles.... sometimes rather sharp ones, too!

We start with some of the more common self-worth saboteurs:

1. I have to be right. If I own up to being wrong about something, my self-confidence will collapse. *Of course, it won't, though your self-esteem might take a knock sometimes. So, what? Your self-worth is intact, even if you've made a mistake about something.*
2. I need to know what the other person is doing at all times. *Why? What are you afraid of? Losing control? Being cheated? Being made a fool of? Even if other people hurt you, this does not have to impact your self-worth.*
3. If the other person is unhappy, or their life is unmanageable, this is a reflection on me. *This is an enormous burden, which many people carry. The challenge is how to detach with love, and so to discover a clear boundary between “My Stuff” and “Their Stuff” (see Pages 83-84). Sometimes, this needs expert support. But your self-worth need never depend on whether another human-being is happy or not. That's not love: it's self-centred dependence.*
4. I feel ashamed of the person I am with. *This is a hard one, and definitely impacts self-esteem. Many people will probably tell you that you have to fix that situation in order to get your self-esteem back. Maybe. But self-worth makes no such demand: see “Distinguishing Self from State” on Page 89 of “The Self-Worth Safari”. No matter what the situation, your capacity to resolve it (if a resolution is possible) will be enhanced if you can be a loyal friend to yourself.*
5. I feel guilty for my past actions. *As in the story of Ted (Page 88ff), guilt can undermine your relationship with yourself and hence your relationship with others. For example, guilt for your own past actions (or inaction) may cause you to feel that others cannot be trusted. Regaining a sense of self-worth (as happened with Ted) allows us to make amends and move on.*

SUBTLE SABOTEURS

Some of the self-worth saboteurs in relationships can be subtle ones. Even when romance is in full swing, subtle saboteurs can lurk in the shadows of the rose garden in high summer. Here are some:

6. This is what love should be like - we will never have a bad day. *Many of us have fallen for that one, and usually we felt bad about ourselves when that wintry day arrived. Sometimes, we might even have called into question whether the summer days were ever real or not. Again, love and happiness are independent domains. Your friendship with yourself (self-worth) does not depend on how the game of love is going. Weather is changeable: it's important to stay loyal to you.*
7. Because I am loved by this person, I have self-worth. *Because the associated feeling is so intoxicating, the danger behind this proposition is hard to see. While no kind person wants to darken your day with any painful "what if" projections of loss, there are two confusions here. First, at best what you are experiencing is self-esteem, not self-worth (see Pages 18-22). Second, you are confusing your Self and your State (see Page 89). I recommend you go back over the exercises so far in this book and try to find your roots in yourself, not in any relationship.*
8. What matters is our (happy) relationship, not self-worth. (Or, I live for my family). *While the previous saboteur (No. 7) hides "My Stuff" by bundling it into "Your Stuff", this does something similar... this time by bundling self-worth into "Our Stuff" (See Page 83-84.) Again, I recommend you go back over the exercises so far in this book and try to find your roots in yourself, not in any relationship. Your family life will be happier as a result.*

TRUST-RELATED SABOTEURS

There are a number of other ways in which saboteurs can sneak in, which I'm grouping together here under the general heading of "Trust-related saboteurs". In most cases, notice how mistrust of self creates mistrust of others and visa-versa.

9. It's vital that we are interested in the same things. *Why? Is it not possible to have different interests, such as leisure activities, and still enjoy a great relationship? Or are you really saying that you don't want to let her/him out on their own? Or that their personal interest somehow represents a threat to your identity?*
10. I'm terrified of growing old / being dumped. *Isn't everyone, at some level? The danger is that this fear can undermine self-worth and with it, the relationship. How about reframing your life so that your ultimate friendship (and reliance) is with/on you, no matter what happens? In this way, you are free to enjoy today without the terrors of tomorrow. In other words, you can live as an expression of self-worth rather than a condition of self-esteem (Shift Two, p 65)*
11. I look for signs that he/she loves me. *Well, we all do. No matter what any book says. When we do so, let's at least acknowledge to ourselves that we are seeking validation from them, and perhaps a bit of reassurance for self-esteem too. We would hardly be human if we didn't. But let's not confuse this with self-worth, which is entirely our own responsibility.*

12. There must be something wrong with me, because x keeps happening. Why am I attracting this into my life? etc. *I hope you keep reading "The Self-Worth Safari" and doing the exercises. Each day that I hear of someone freeing themselves from the so-called "Law" of Attraction, I celebrate. One of the joys of discovering an unconditional relationship with yourself is the total certainty that there is nothing wrong with you. Sure, life is life, and sometimes life is hard and unfair. Sure, we may repeat certain patterns of thought or behaviour, which pre-dispose us to meet certain people who perhaps are not so good for us. But there is no weird magnet inside you, attracting these in your direction! By become your own loyal friend, first and foremost, you can make whatever changes are necessary.*

See "Love after Love" by Derek Walcott on Page 103.

SELF-WORTH FOR SINGLE PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

This resource is intended to be read alongside “The Self-Worth Safari”, pp 93-95. In this book, you have already read the central insight: the power of bring a *loyal friend to yourself*, first and foremost, no matter what happens in the domain of love and romance.

The purpose of this resource is twofold:

- a) To highlight how self-worth is often diminished in our cultural thinking about romance – particularly when love is linked with self-esteem;
- b) To show how self-worth can be a gateway to happiness and freedom for single people.

When there is no lover around, the quality of your friendship with yourself is particularly vital. Unlike self-esteem, self-worth does not make demanding expectations, just that you be on your own side. On that basis, you can walk out your door – and return to it – in a state of joy and freedom.

While this may seem obvious, it's **not** how we've been taught to think. Let's start by exploring the extent to which our culture and our society usually makes love a *condition* for self-esteem and for feeling good about ourselves.

“YOU ARE MY EVERYTHING”

The twentieth century put romance squarely at the core of living. Hollywood, the lyrics of the Great American Songbook and popular novels all combined to carry a single core message into our teenage hearts and minds: love conquers all and represents the summit of human experience. So, it's hardly surprising that we may have made finding that Mysterious Other the key to feeling fulfilled about ourselves. Here are some of the common beliefs:

Belief	Problem
My life will be meaningless without him/her	Why create this condition? Even if life might be less happy without someone, it does not have to be meaningless.
I cannot meet / keep a partner: there must be something wrong with me	Now you have two problems: the loss of <i>them</i> , and the loss of <i>yourself</i> . You suffer an additional unnecessary burden: self-reproach (or self-blaming). See Shift 3: p95.
The party's over – it's too late for me	Perhaps. But if you go around in a state of guilt or sad resignation, then you almost certainly prove yourself right. This belief is often a self-fulfilling prophecy.
I'm searching for my other half	The very language of this implies you are less than complete.... possibly even less than 50% complete!
The problem is men/women: they are the ones that need to learn about self-worth.	No doubt many of them do: but how well is this attitude serving you? Blaming another (or same) gender for the state of one's love life can be a classic avoidance of self-worth issues.
It's all in the hands of Destiny	So this belief legitimises you doing nothing? Does this really express your sense of self-worth?

In today's society, I am not what men/women want	You may be statistically correct. However, since when has Love ever obeyed Statistics? More importantly, just how well do you value yourself.... really?
When I've finished working on myself / learning the lessons, then I will meet the perfect partner and be happy.	This is classic "Have - Do - Be" thinking, from the self-esteem school of thought: see Shift 6 on Page 149.
(Please add yours here)	(What is this belief costing you?)

To feel good about ourselves (self-esteem), we've been taught we need the Other. And if that Other is not in our lives, our friends swiftly assure us we are sure to meet Them. Because anything else would be so incomprehensible, so outlandish: this is something that they would never say to their friends! However, self-worth offers a different response: one that stands the test of time.

THE SELF-WORTH OPPORTUNITY

If you are single just now, you have at your disposal an amazing opportunity to establish real self-worth: one that people in a relationship do not necessarily access so easily. Why? Because when the orchestra of romance is playing at full crescendo, it's more difficult to hear the softer voice of self-worth beneath. Let's take an example:

It's Sunday afternoon. You are in a happy relationship, strolling hand in hand through the park. You feel good: appreciative about life, appreciative of your partner and of your life together. Right now, you feel a strong sense of self-esteem: your reputation with yourself is on a high. What about intrinsic self-worth?

The truth is: it's hard to know. Perhaps your self-esteem is indeed rooted in a deep sense of friendship with yourself.... but it is equally possible that it's totally conditional on the happy circumstances of life this Sunday afternoon. If you have a row with your partner when you get home, or they appear remote and distant tomorrow, you may well feel very different about yourself.

On that same Sunday afternoon, the single person gets to examine (and nurture) self-worth with no distractions. They get to walk in that park or sit under the tree in their own company. The quality of their friendship with themselves is laid bare: just as it will be when they go home to cook a solo dinner. Whether welcome or otherwise, this is a self-worth *opportunity*. Now, how can you use it?

GETTING RID OF BAGGAGE

One of the first steps is to get rid of the baggage: those outmoded beliefs that no longer serve you well as a single person. Here are some. Feel free to identify your own:

Belief	Alternative, based in self-worth
My life will be meaningless without him/her	Find your life's meaning where it belongs: with you. And even while you are looking, use the shifts in The Self-Worth Safari to find self-worth on the journey. Self-worth does not

	demand that you have identified your life's purpose, any more than it demands that you have found a partner.
I cannot meet / keep a partner: there must be something wrong with me.	I suggest you pay particular attention to self-acceptance: Shift 3, p95. Self-acceptance is acknowledged by most psychologists as an essential prerequisite for any change to occur. Even if there are aspects of your behaviour or personality that you wish to change, an unconditional friendship with yourself is a precious start point.
The party's over – it's too late	If this is true, then your friendship with yourself is even more important. However, by establishing self-worth, many people have discovered there are other parties to go to!
I'm searching for my other half	Read the entire book, with pen and paper. Your other half will hopefully appear out of the pages, or from the exercises ☺ You are closer to them than you might think.
The problem is men/women: <i>they</i> are the ones that need to learn about self-worth.	To fully step into self-worth, it helps to step <i>out</i> of the stories we tell about other people. However accurate these may be, they are just <i>stories</i> . By living life on the basis of self-worth, people often discover they no longer need these stories, nor the associated assessments of what others are doing.
It's all in the hands of Destiny	While results are often beyond of our control – particularly in the terrain of love – there is usually something we can do today. To make sure these actions don't just take us back onto the hamster-wheel of self-esteem, however, I suggest recap Shift 2 on Page 65.
In today's society, I am not what men/women want	You know best. However, there have always been exceptional people in every society, in every age – people who do not conform to the norm. If you encounter one of those exceptional people one day, you don't want them to meet some embittered, melancholy, resigned person, do you? ☺
When I've finished working on myself / learning the lessons, then I will meet the perfect partner and be happy.	Switch to "Be - Do - Have" thinking: see Shift 6 on Page 149. There is more to life than a series of lessons. This mindset is often a clever disguise for low self-worth. It's time to leave the schoolroom!
(Please add yours here)	(What is an alternative belief. One based on being a loyal friend to yourself... with no conditions, no strings attached?)

THE PROBLEM OF LONELINESS

When I discuss these issues with single people, one of the voices that regularly surfaces runs something like this: "OK, John, I get the significance of self-worth and unconditional friendship with myself. On some days, I can really practice this and enjoy the results. But on other days, I get very lonely. When it comes down to it, I just don't *want* to be single!"

This is perhaps when the response of self-esteem diverges most sharply from that of self-worth. Self-esteem usually sees loneliness as a problem to be *fixed*, and starts exhorting you to start socialising, or

online dating, or joining a club, or improving your looks, or any of a hundred ways to *so/ve* the problem of loneliness.

While self-worth does not stop you doing any of those things, it first invites you to fully embrace loneliness and, in that way, to discover unconditional friendship with yourself as the root of any self-esteem. This was beautifully articulated by the fourteenth-century Persian poet Hafiz:

*Don't surrender your loneliness so quickly.
Let it cut more deep.*

*Let it ferment and season you
As few human or even divine ingredients can.*

*Something missing in my heart tonight
Has made my eyes so soft,
My voice so tender. . .*

It is often in lonely places that you get to plumb the depths of your relationship with yourself. When you stop running away from loneliness and face it—without judging yourself negatively for that experience—then the “seasoning,” as Hafiz names it, can begin. You come home to yourself.

And then... you can join that club, go out dancing or whatever else your heart desires to do. You will be going there to share the abundance of what you have, rather than as a hungry soul searching to assuage your starvation.

DATING WITH A FULL CUP

“Grow a green tree in your heart, and perhaps a singing bird will come” (Chinese Proverb)



The hunger for attention is everywhere. Most of all, it's in that “hungry hug” in the eyes of the desperately-seeking, even when they think they are “totally cool with it”. Just watch the eyes of single people (and some not so single people) in social settings. Listen to their voices. Notice who they are looking at... and even who they are self-consciously not looking at.

Self-worth allows you to approach dating (if you still wish to) from the perspective of having a full cup. There is nothing to be proved. Even if disappointed with the response of another, the recovery time is dramatically short. Your friendship with yourself is intact, no matter whether others pay attention to you or not.

It's hardly surprising that quite a few people have tried to fake this happy state of “full cup” dating. Whether claiming self-love, psychological maturity or spiritual enlightenment, many quickly find that dating can be a bruising experience.



Today's dating marketplace – with its commoditisation of people into profiles – is a harsh climate, leaving a large percentage of people marginalised or resentful.

Real self-worth does not deny the bruises, nor the significant wounds that can be inflicted by the behaviour of other people. Nevertheless, with strong inner roots, we deepen our friendship with ourselves and move on.

SELF-WORTH AS THE GATEWAY TO HAPPINESS

Mark Twain once said that “a man cannot be comfortable without his own approval”. As you now know, the approach of self-worth goes even deeper: our own approval is just too variable and fleeting to provide sustainable roots in all seasons. So, we reach down inside us beyond the layer of all assessments – those of other people and those of our own – in order to find permanent anchorage and affection.

This means reversing some of the outmoded messages accumulated over a lifetime. One of these is about romance. You may *want* a partner – you may *wish* for this with all your heart – but you do not *need* a partner to be happy. Happiness is your affair and only your affair.

At first sight, this may seem a lonely, solipsistic message. But as anyone who has internalised the truth of it can tell you, it's the key to a whole new level of happiness and freedom. On that basis, you are free to take part in any activity or social event, because you are going there with a full cup already. Nothing can be taken away from you. There is nothing to be proved. You are already happy, so anything that happens next can add to your happiness rather than be a condition of it.

20 QUESTIONS TO BOOST YOUR CAREER

INTRODUCTION

This resource is intended to be read alongside the section “Your Future Career” on Page 123 of “The Self-Worth Safari”. In this book, you have already discovered Shift 4: From Self-evaluation to Usefulness. You therefore understand the significance of switching from self-preoccupation and instead focusing on the needs of others. You can do so with no loss of identity or self-care, because you are exploring with an established sense of self-worth, rather than proving yourself in any way (self-esteem)

REVIEWING WORK TO DATE

The following questions will help you with your exploration. Some are questions to ask yourself. Others are questions that you can ask other people: the latter are in speech marks.

Feel free to order them in any sequence that works for you: also, to customise the language to your unique situation. Notice how all of the questions are about usefulness – not self-evaluation!

1. **Looking back over the past few months, in what situations and settings have my talents been most useful?** Please be specific. Think of problems solved, new options created, people inspired, events promoted etc.
2. **What would have happened otherwise?** The value of our work is often most visible when we look at the alternative. If you had not been there, what issues would have resulted?
3. **Who are the people I have most enjoyed working with?** Why did I most enjoy working with these people? What impact does my work have with them (that perhaps is not so evident with others)? You can do the next few questions with them:
4. **“Of all the things we have done together (briefly mention c. 3 of them): what for you has been most useful?”** Notice what they say... which often throws fresh light on your own answer to question 3.
5. **“Why was that important?”** The full value of our work lies in the context other people’s challenges and perceptions: which we often miss by not asking this question.
6. **“What difference did that make?”** Like the previous question, this is about exploring their world, their context. Look for ripple effects: these are often the hidden value of our work.
7. **What does this tell me about my strengths?** When reviewing our strengths, the full value of these will be clearer when we approach the questions from the perspective of usefulness.

REVIEWING YOUR WORK RIGHT NOW

8. **Who are the people I most enjoy working with today?** While the answer may be similar to Q3 above, it may also have evolved.

9. **Which meetings / tasks this week do I look forward to?** And which do I not? That intuitive heart-sink feeling may be telling you something.
10. **How is my energy impacting me and my usefulness to others?** This flows naturally from the previous question.
11. **Who are the people (or problems) that I care about?** Please be as specific as possible. Try to avoid generic terms such as “SMEs, “people in transition” or “exhaustion”. Use the phrase “for example....” to help be more specific. The significance of this will become apparent in the next few questions.
12. **How might I be indulging in “sophisticated procrastination”?** For example, a) wasting time on introspection, b) not getting started on practicing on exploration meetings and c) slipping back into habitual stores about my work life?

LOOKING AHEAD

The following questions are focused on the future. Many are questions that you will have in conversation with others.

13. **How can I research the issues of these specific groups?** Who can I talk to? List at least five names. If you have difficulty, ask colleagues or friends. You can start with Google to help frame the questions (suggestions to follow), but the power to this exploration lies in *conversations*.
14. **“I’m reaching out to explore future career-options. Can you spare me 20mins in the coming weeks?”** This is perhaps the most powerful career question of all. If you struggle with it — as many people do — you may wish to read my book “The Courage to Ask” (co-authored with Kate Daly).
15. **“How will their future be different to the past/present?”** The word “their” refers to the specific group defined in Q11. For careers to thrive, it’s important to play to where the ball is going, not just where it already is.
16. **“What challenges will this create for them?”** The value of your work is directly proportional to your ability to be useful to the challenges of others.
17. **“How can my experience be useful, in that context?”** Now that you have explored the challenges of others, it’s much easier to talk about you!
18. **“Who else should I be having this conversation with? Would you be willing to introduce me?”** If each person you talk to introduces you to someone else, you will never run out of people to talk to! All the opportunities we will ever need are already in the hands of the people we know, or the people to whom they can introduce us.
19. **“What jobs already exist in this space?”** But please note that the best opportunities often come from the jobs that didn’t exist until you had a crucial conversation with the right person.
20. **“If I could help you with that, would you be interested?”** Notice how this is a question about usefulness, not just “pitching”.

CAREER COACHING WITH SELF-WORTH

INTRODUCTION

Not surprisingly, most career-coaching centres on you. Your talents, your strengths, your values, your passion in life... these are the conversations that dominate the career-coaching space. Well, it is your career after all, so this is all to be expected.

However, there are two shadow sides to any approach that focuses solely on you. One of these is personal in nature, and one is marketplace-related. Let's start with the first problem.

FIRST PROBLEM: CREATING A SELF-ESTEEM GAP?

The danger with all conversations about “potential” is that they often create a subtle undertone that we are “not enough” already. The more you tell me about what I could/should be, the more dissatisfied I may feel about my current situation.

Sometimes, this works in our favour. It's often frustration with current jobs (or bosses or life in general) that nudges us out of our comfort-zone and motivates us to look for better things. So far, so good. Dissatisfaction about our situation can be healthy. However, if that dissatisfaction is about who we **are** – not just about our situation – then a more dangerous, disempowering dynamic comes into play.

A wise career coach will hopefully spot this quickly and even anticipate it. They will usually counterbalance this dissatisfaction by drawing attention to our strengths: indeed “awareness of strengths” is one of the core competencies of coaching. However... even here, notice how we can still be making our relationship with oneself (self-worth) contingent on positive adjectives such as “creative” “smart” or “charismatic”. The voice of self-esteem again, entering this time via positive judgements about the self, all the time creating still more expectations to live up to.

SECOND PROBLEM: WHO CARES?

The second issue with the chorus of self-esteem is that we are often just talking to ourselves. Unless our gifts and talents somehow link to the needs of others, then the value of these often lies hidden. The unfortunate reality is that this is often the case.

No amount of introspection or self-analysis will tell you where you are most needed, where your talents have most value. This has to be done via *external*/exploration, not *internal*/introspection. This was one of the reasons for writing “*The Courage to Ask*” back in 2012: to encourage people (particularly introverts) to overcome the resistance towards having those vital opportunity conversations.

CAREER-COACHING FROM A SELF-WORTH PERSPECTIVE

When we are in a season of career-transition, this is one of the times when we most need to befriend ourselves unconditionally, not just for those positive adjectives that might confer self-esteem. The first



three shifts described in “The Self-Worth Safari” will hopefully help to establish the roots of self-worth via assertion, expression and self-acceptance, as already outlined in the book. You saw this illustrated vividly in the story of Pete in Chapter Two.

As we become aware of the possibility of unconditional friendship towards ourselves, we usually feel a new sense of lightness and energy flowing in. In this way, we are now ready to start exploring! (It is a Safari, after all!). Just as Pete did, we can start to have cups of coffee with people about *their* needs, *their* challenges, how *their* future will be different to their past. In that context, we can share a little of our experience.

When people do these meetings, a number of things usually happen at the same time:

- New ideas, new possibilities and new information appears;
- We get introduced to new people, that we didn't know before;
- We see our talents from a fresh perspective;
- We feel energised by these conversations;
- We reflect on the application of our strengths through others' experiences and competencies;
- We learn to better define and communicate our professional needs and wants through listening to others;
- Whether we do so or not, our sense of self-worth grows and develops, through the exercise of curiosity;
- We discover that we can talk to anybody!

For clarity, these conversations are primarily about them; not about you. Please avoid the pitfalls of telling too many war-stories or sharing random opinions. You are there like a journalist, to investigate their story.

GETTING SUPPORT

It is valuable to have a coach to guide you through this process: and to hopefully save you from three common pitfalls:

- a) Wasting too many hours in introspection. While some of this is valuable, the hours spent on self-analysis can (and do) reach the point of diminishing returns. It's the quality of self-reflection that matters, not the quantity.
- b) Practicing and rehearsing for your exploration-meetings, including help to set them up. The most common pitfall here is the difficulty of getting started — a pitfall that grows at times when self-worth is vulnerable.
- c) Slipping back into your habitual narrative, which is often what is keeping us stuck.

If you would like to set up a (no-obligation) Skype or Zoom call, my email is John@SelfWorthAcademy.com

I wish you joy and lightness as you uncover a new relationship with yourself, as well as a new relationship with potential employers ☺

SELF-WORTH IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SALES

INTRODUCTION

Having spent 20 years coaching professionals in business-development and sales, I'm frequently struck by how the way in which they value **themselves** influences every conversation they have with prospects. To cite just one example, many people go into meetings with customers with the overriding motive of being *impressive* and of *proving themselves*. While this approach may at times succeed, more often than not it hampers the development of real trust.

The purpose of this article is to give a short resumé of how a self-worth approach to marketing and sales is fundamentally different from a "proving-ourselves" approach, and brings fresh life and energy to anyone who is involved in business-development. If you would like to know more, I suggest you follow some of the Self-Worth Academy webinars, or get in touch directly.

SALES:

Let's assume you have a meeting with a prospective customer tomorrow. How will you conduct that meeting?

The sales-professional who is driven by self-esteem (as many so often are) will naturally desire to *impress*. He or she will be rehearsing all the features and benefits of the product, or the unique aspects of the methodology or service they are offering. Perhaps there are some impressive materials or presentations being prepared today. Stories are rehearsed, statistics collected, counter-arguments prepared to deal with any objections or awkward questions that may arise tomorrow.

If motivated by self-worth, a sales-professional may still do most or all of these preparatory things. However, as they walk in through the customer's door tomorrow, their motivation is subtly different. Their focus is on having a really *useful* meeting with the customer, rather than a desire to impress. Therefore, they are thinking primarily about the *customer's* situation and issues, not about themselves and their solutions.

Is this just idealistic make-believe, far removed from the tough reality of today's marketplace? Emphatically not. Having worked for years alongside some of the world's top professionals and salespeople, I've noticed one characteristic over and over: the ability to tune in to what is of most **value** to the customer.

You simply cannot do this if you do not have self-worth. If you crave validation or approval too much, this diminishes your capacity to seek out value. Here are some of the behaviours that result:

- Talking too much, too soon;
- Telling stories that have no relevance to the customer;
- Going into one's prepared presentation or story at the earliest possible opportunity;
- Discussing prices before value (or even budget) has been established;
- Building a relationship (and writing a proposal) with the wrong person;
- Generally, behaving more as customer-servant than a customer-partner.

PRICING:

The same pattern plays out when it comes to the question: “How much will this cost?”. The self-esteem based professional will seek to justify the price based on the quality / service / brand / track-record of the product or service been offered. The self-worth based professional has at least five advantages:

- a) They can insist on knowing a bit more, before they are in a position to quote a price or a fee. Even if pushed, they do not behave as customer-servant.
- b) Drawing on their experience of the marketplace, they can fine-tune / tweak the customer’s requirements. In this way, they build credibility – even before price gets discussed.
- c) They can map out options and budget, tailoring these to the customer’s situation, before quoting a fee or doing a proposal/quotation.
- d) When required to justify a price, they do so by reference to the benefits conferred (rather than just quality / service / time / track-record) plus the risks of inadequate investment.
- e) All the time, they use their questioning approach to make sure they are having this dialogue with the right people.

One of the joys of my business-coaching work is watching how self-worth grows via the exercise of these skills. As a professional gets fluent in value-centred selling and pricing, they come to value themselves more deeply, which in turn enhances their capacity for the next prospect meeting. It’s a virtuous circle.

GETTING INTRODUCTIONS AND REFERRALS

So how do these prospect meetings get set up? For a larger company, there may be an entire department whose job it is to generate leads. Even here nevertheless, introductions and referrals often play a large part in lead-generation. For the SME or solo professional, personal introductions are often the foundations upon which a large part of their business is built.

Nevertheless, here lies a paradox. Even when referrals often account for over 80pc of new business leads, very few professionals *proactively* seek referrals. The majority feel awkward doing so. Some believe that a referral should happen spontaneously: that any attempt to initiate referrals will just jinx a natural process. Others feel sickened by how certain sales professionals (like the stereotypical insurance salesman) seek introductions to each of your family members, so they certainly don’t ever want to come across in that way.

With self-worth, several new avenues open up. We don’t just have to seek introductions to “sell”: we can also seek introductions to **explore** changes in the marketplace (of which there are always many), or to find new ways to be of service and bring benefit. Neither of these are *self-centred* motives, they are *value-centred* approaches firmly and genuinely anchored on an attitude of **usefulness**. With that understanding, you can seek a meeting with anybody.

Furthermore, that meeting will be more productive. Naturally, there may be some suspicion at the beginning (e.g. “What are you trying to sell me?”) so you may have to explain your motivation a little. For example, you might be...

- Doing some research about a problem you have encountered at several customer sites
- Researching your own potential change of direction, or adaptations you want to make to current

- 
- offerings in order to be more useful
- Seeking to understand the knock-on effects of a regulation change or a quality issue
 - Trying to anticipate a future trend

Whatever approach is right for you, I notice how a sense of self-worth allows a professional to be more *proactive*. They ask questions that they never asked before. They set up meetings that they would previously not have set up. They discover niches in which their product or service is often more highly valued.

OTHER APPROACHES TO MARKETING

So far, we have focused on just one route to market: referrals and introductions. But there are also many more – in which self-worth is a real game-changer. For example:

- Setting up worthwhile partnerships
- Getting repeat business
- Providing resources of value
- Designing a human-friendly keep-in-touch system
- Value-centred thought leadership

Across each of these, self-worth frees us from self-preoccupation and empowers us to be more creative. We bounce back more quickly from setbacks and discover the confidence that we are developing and growing. We are more productive, because we are not burning up energy day to day trying to “prove ourselves”.

SUPPORTING OTHER PEOPLE

Business-development can become an energy-draining aspect of professional life. It is therefore valuable to have someone who can give you fresh perspective and support you to re-energise your approach to market. You may be able to find that with a partner or another experienced professional. If you would like to set up a (no-obligation) Skype or Zoom call, my email is John@SelfWorthAcademy.com

NEEDS/ WANTS CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about Needs. Maslow defined a hierarchy of them. Countless coaching schools have constructed whole programs about getting your needs met. Our entire economy often seems to depend on us finding ever more needs to fulfil.... because hey.... that’s what keeps the money flowing!

So, what are your (real) needs? Do you know? If you do, please write them here, without reading further. And even if you don’t, perhaps take a moment to think of c. ten: just off the top of your head.

THE LINK TO SELF-WORTH:

If self-worth is problematical, there are some common pitfalls. The first and most obvious pitfall is neglecting our needs.... perhaps not even being aware of them. For example, perhaps you have a need for interaction with others in the morning, in order to kick-start your day? Or a need for structure and accountability in order to perform at your best? Or a need to switch off, at least one day per week? If these needs are not understood, a professional can struggle with a homeworking environment – sometimes for years – without acknowledging their core needs and then doing something about them.

Another common pitfall is losing oneself in service to others. This is discussed more fully in “The Self-Worth Safari” in the chapter “The Desire to Contribute” (p229). It’s all too easy to smokescreen our own needs by losing ourselves in service to others.... Particularly if self-worth is problematical.

Even for a confident professional who manages to eschew these pitfalls, there is always the risk of having so many needs that none of them are properly met. The overriding feeling that often results is frustration: particularly frustration with the self. If this professional is running on self-esteem, this can spell trouble ahead. There is often a nagging sense of not being “enough” which eventually erodes self-worth over time.

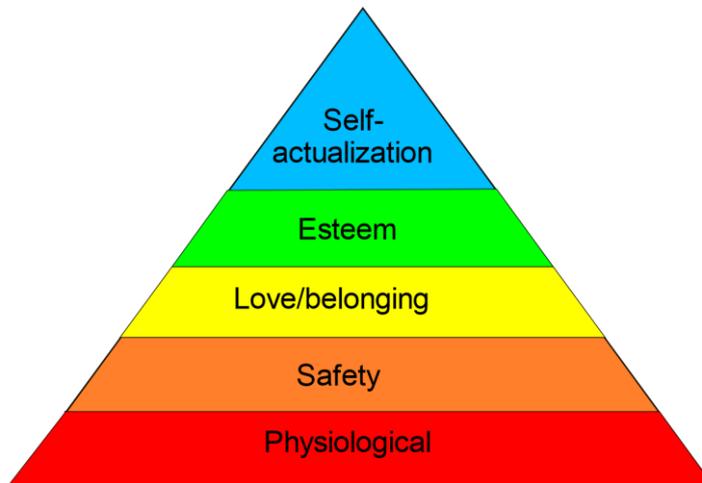
The exercise ahead is designed to achieve several things:

- a) To draw attention to needs that you might be ignoring
- b) To help distinguish *needs* from *wants*
- c) To prioritise core needs, ones that you focus on getting met (or eliminate)
- d) To customise all of this for you, rather than trying out someone else’s “operating model”.

For a full description of the difference between a Need and a Want, you may wish to refer to page 143-145 of “The Self-Worth Safari”.

PART I: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY

We use the key headings from Maslow's oft-quoted Hierarchy, working from the bottom upwards:



Opposite each sentence, is it a Need or a Want? Please note there are no wrong answers. You are free to determine which are needs and wants for you, to add your own statements and also to cross out any of the examples which are not significant for you.

Physiological layer	Need?	Want?
I eat healthily		
I take good care of my sight, hearing and teeth		
I live in a home with adequate and functioning heat, air and light		
My work environment is ideal for my job		
I dress fashionably in order to look good		
I exercise every day		
I drink at least 2L of water		
My hair is the way I like it		
I get a good night's sleep		
(please add your own statements, reflecting as you write)		

Moving up the hierarchy. In terms of safety, you might consider statements such as these.

Safety layer	Need?	Want?
My home is in a neighbourhood where I don't feel threatened		
My commute does not expose me to unwelcome danger		
I feel comfortable with my colleagues, I do not feel threatened at work		
I am not tolerating degrees of touch with which I am uncomfortable		
I am not terrified of losing my job; I have some savings or contingency		
My home is secure		
I have adequate insurance (medical, property, car etc)		
There are no tax or legal clouds on the horizon		
I thrive on stability / variety / order (choose the best word)		
(please add your own statements, reflecting as you write)		

In this next layer, feel particularly free to choose the statements that you feel apply to you, or amend these sentences as appropriate:

Love/Belonging layer	Need?	Want?
I have several good friends, who really "get" me		
There is affection in my life		
I know where I belong (whether defined by geography or otherwise)		
I can express my views without ridicule or sarcasm		
I have people in whom I can confide, that I trust		
I feel supported with life's challenges: not on my own		
There are people to celebrate with		
I enjoy co-creating with others		
For me, it's important to be needed		

I am appreciated		
I am accepted / included / popular		
I enjoy making people laugh / tell stories / entertaining		
(please add your own statements, reflecting as you write)		

This next layer is all about feeling good about ourselves. Yes, indeed this is good old-fashioned self-esteem time ☺ Of course we all want to feel good about ourselves: even if you now know that you can have self-worth even on days you don't. Choose the Needs and Wants that best fit you here:

Esteem layer	Need?	Want?
I feel I am making progress, and achieving		
It's important for me in to be control		
It's important to be right		
I can see the impact I am making		
I am recognised for what I do / am admired / looked-up to		
I speak the truth: I'm not disempowered by "secrets"		
I feel free to make choices about my life		
For me, it's important to excel at what I do		
I can rely on myself: I keep my promises		
I feel I am winning at the game of life		
I get the attention of other people		
Luxury / comfort is important for me		
I can be alone with perfect peace and ease		
I make things happen		
(please add your own statements, reflecting as you write)		

that allow you to operate at your best. How does this compare with the first list you made, at the very beginning of this checklist? Anything missing? Are there needs of yours that simply don't fit into the headings above?

Are there needs that you want to move between layers of the hierarchy? For example, if you wrote "Sex", is that linked (for you) with the Physiological layer, or the Love/Belonging layer? You are the expert on your needs.

Try to conclude the exercise with c 5-7 key words. You may want to come back to this in a few days, because the sub-conscious mind may help you with this prioritisation.

Why the need to prioritise? *Because if we chase too many needs, we may end up satisfying none of them.* This is a widespread problem in today's consumer society, which is very adept at needs-creation but not quite so good at giving us the time and headspace for needs-satisfaction.

PART III: MEET OR ELIMINATE?

There are two ways of dealing with a need: you can get it met, or you can eliminate it. If it's a core need, it may be rather unlikely that you can eliminate it... but it's not impossible. To take an example, I once thought that I needed a certain amount of recognition. But as I grew to understand that that this need was linked more to my self-esteem than to my self-worth, I would no longer classify it as a core need. Today, it's more of a want than a need. It's still there, somewhere, but no longer guides my decisions.

Which needs do you want to get met?
Which needs might be easier to eliminate?

GETTING SUPPORT

You may find it helpful to work with a partner or another experienced professional.
If you would like to set up a (no-obligation) Skype or Zoom call, my email is John@SelfWorthAcademy.com

BE – DO – HAVE CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION

You will have read in “The Self-Worth Safari” the power of inverting the classic “Have – Do – Be” thinking. This resource is meant to be read in conjunction with pages 146-151 of “The Self-Worth Safari”, i.e. Shift No 6: From Proving Yourself to Valuing Yourself.

None of these shifts exclude the influence of environment or circumstances. However, we learn many conditional narratives that it helps to overturn in order to have a happy life. Here are some classic examples of conditional thinking.

CLASSIC “HAVE – DO – BE’S”:

1. When I have more time, I will cook better food and be a healthy person.
2. When I have more clients, I will raise my fees and be a successful professional.
3. When I buy the right kit, I will do more sports and be fitter.
4. If I had more confidence, I would say No to these requests and be happier with myself.
5. If I had a (better) partner, I would socialise more and be prouder of myself.
6. When I have a (better) support team, I can do higher value work and be a greater success.
7. If I had more / the right resources, I would get these things done and be effective / productive.
8. Had I prepared more/better, I would be able to do a better meeting today and be more engaging / impactful.
9. When I have a better job / assignment, I will invest in growth and be a thought-leader in my field.
10. Someday I will have a better house, and then I will take more care of it and be my dream self, living a high-quality life.

Some of yours?

You may notice how some of the clauses above are also forms of “sophisticated procrastination”. By placing conditions, we can avoid doing things that we may be apprehensive about doing.

THE FLIP: BE - DO - HAVE

Sometimes it is as simple as changing the word order. However, we often need to think a bit deeper, to come up with something more pertinent and relevant. Here are the above examples reworked, with some notes to support you make your own “flip”.

(Apart from the flip and the rewording, what else has changed? Answer at the end!)

1. By being a healthy person today (i.e. being a friend to myself), I eat quality/energising food as a result of which I perform better and create more time.
2. By being a successful professional (focused on value), I raise my fees and still have more clients.
3. By bring fitter, I do more sports so I learn what is the essential kit.
4. By bring unconditionally happy with myself (even when I fail to set boundaries), I am learning to say No to some requests and therefore developing more confidence.
5. By being totally OK with myself (beyond all assessments), I socialise freely – either with or without a partner.
6. By committing to my values of excellence and success, I do higher-value work and so I can afford a (better) support team.
7. By making the most of every quarter hour, I get things done and as a result I employ better resources.
8. In every moment I focus on the person(s) in front of me and their needs. As a result, I do better meetings, whether I am prepared or not.
9. By thinking as a thought-leader would, I invest in growth which yields better jobs and assignments.
10. By living a high-quality life, I take care of my surroundings so that my home is the best that it can be.

You may wish to write your “Be - Do - Have’s” here:

So, what else has changed, apart from the “flip” and the rewording. Turn the page to see the answer!

(Answer: the tense. Conditional or future-tense sentences have been turned into present tense assertions. Much more powerful!)

THE ENERGY INVENTORY

CAVEAT: Before We Begin

The purpose of this exercise is to take stock of your energy levels, under six headings. What we are NOT doing is creating new conditions for your relationship with yourself. Let's be aware of that risk, even before we begin. If you think this exercise is just going to create new conditions for valuing yourself, you might be better off just going for a walk instead!

Considering the bullet points underneath each numbered section below, score each section 0-5, where 0=Low (or Not at all True) and 5=High (or Totally True).

FIRST SOURCE: Physical Energy

The basic fuel for our days, physical energy is important for wellbeing. Even if, strictly speaking, it's not essential for self-worth, it sure helps.

1.1 Food

Score (0-5) ____

"Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es." ["Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are"], written by French doctor Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, 1826.

- I eat a healthy balance of carbs, protein and fibre
- I don't abuse sugar, chocolate or comfort-eat
- My weight is stable and reasonable for my age/build
- I take vitamins daily

1.2 Drink

Score (0-5) ____

"If you drink, don't drive. Don't even putt." – Dean Martin

- I drink at least 2L of water per day
- My caffeine intake is limited to breakfast only
- I do not drink sugary drinks e.g. Cola
- My alcohol consumption is within healthy limits

1.3 Exercise and Movement

Score (0-5) ____

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started" – Agatha Christie

- I walk at least 30mins most days
- I take cardiovascular exercise at least twice per week, to a level that suits me
- I enjoy dance, yoga or stretching exercises to keep muscles supple
- I take a physical break at lunchtime, even 10 minutes

1.4 Sleep, Rest & Play

Score (0-5) ____

"A field that is rested gives a beautiful crop" – Ovid

- I rise early, at my ideal time, which is ____
- I relax for at least an hour before bedtime, avoiding work or mental effort
- I don't drink caffeine after 15h
- I go to bed at my agreed time, which is ____ and get a good night's sleep
- I take exercise early v. late, ideally before 4pm
- I have several sources of pleasure in my life: things / activities that I enjoy for their own sake

Physical Energy Subtotal: _____ (max 20)

SECOND SOURCE: Environmental Energy

The energy and confidence that comes from how we interact with the world around us, including how we organise our daily life.

2.1 Self-organisation

Score (0-5) ____

"The nicest thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise, rather than being preceded by a period of worry and depression." – Sir John Harvey-Jones

- I practice an "email-diet" i.e. there is some focus-time in each day when I am not reading emails or being interrupted by messages
- For any one day, my task list does not exceed seven items; I have delegated (or dropped) everything else
- I can work efficiently, in 15-min time blocks (or less)
- I carry a buffer-list of things I can do while waiting for meetings to start, or while stuck in travel
- I consistently plan for the day, week and month ahead. Life doesn't just "happen to me"
- I am usually punctual, with some reserve of time when I can do tasks from my buffer-list

2.2 Physical environment

Score (0-5) ____

"Space-management is even more important than time-management" – Thomas Leonard

- My working area is clean, with adequate space, light and air
- My computer is adequate for the job, i.e. no crashes, or "hanging". IT is reliable
- My car is reliable and clean; insurance and tax is up-to-date
- I feel good in my home / office: I'm happy for anyone to visit now
- My papers and bills are up-to-date and filed away
- There is beauty in my life

2.3 Support

Score (0-5) ____

"None of us is as smart as all of us" – Ken Blanchard

- At work, I/we have in place a reliable form of IT support, accounting, administration, legal, web, etc., so that I can devote myself 100% to my core job
- When I get stuck, I can usually ask for help
- I have a contact-management system that enables me to keep in touch with all the people I need to
- There are no tax-, legal- or residency clouds hanging over me
- I have adequate insurance
- Beyond prudent planning, I am not worrying about money at other times

2.4 Work environment

Score (0-5) ____

"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it" – H E Luccock

- I have considerable autonomy over how I spend my time
- My objectives are reasonable
- When I express my point of view, I am listened to. The culture of the organisation encourages ideas and initiatives
- If I disagree with a course of action, it is safe to express this
- There is flexibility to attend to family and health issues
- I can take my full holiday allowance (If self-employed, I can take at least four weeks holiday per year)
- I am not unduly distracted by office politics
- I enjoy coming to work on a Monday morning
- Rewards: I am reaping high financial or professional rewards
- Recognition: I am recognised by my peers

Environmental Energy Subtotal: ____ (max 20)

THIRD SOURCE: Mental Energy

The energy that comes from mental agility, a sense of mental aliveness and the ability to manage our attention.

3.1 Focus

Score (0-5) ____

"Obstacles are things a person sees when he takes his eyes off his goal" – E Joseph Cossman

- I have short-term goals (for this day, week) that keep me motivated
- I can manage my attention and prevent distractions
- I feel I am making progress
- My goals are realistic and achievable (at least most of them!)
- I feel I have something to look forward to every day, other than just finishing work
- I'm not struggling with decisions that I should already have made

3.2 Learning

Score (0-5) ____

"Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions" – Oliver Wendell Holmes

- I don't create excuses to avoid learning; I can tolerate the imperfections that go with being a student. I'm able to make mistakes as part of a learning process, without embarrassment
- I can place myself in the position of "student": I don't always have to be "teacher"
- I'm learning something now that stretches my understanding, memory or awareness
- My self awareness includes increasing awareness of my levels of personal energy and self-confidence, and the circumstances in which these may fluctuate

3.3 Dealing with Change

Score (0-5) ____

"To improve is to change, to be perfect is to change often" – Winston Churchill

- When plans change, I can deal with that without becoming angry or depressed
- I can support change rather than being critical or resenting it
- There is variety in my life
- I demonstrate flexibility in my day-to-day dealings with people
- I can courteously deal with interruptions, traffic jams and unexpected obstacles

3.4 Influence & Communication skills

Score (0-5) ____

"The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority" – Ken Blanchard

- I am able to say No, when necessary to defend my wellbeing or my plan for the day
- I am not postponing a dreaded conversation
- I can introduce myself with reasonable confidence
- My communication skills are constantly improving, including my ability to influence others
- I am able to make requests: to say what I want or need
- I can deal with refusal or rejection
- I constantly develop problem-solving skills

3.5 Curiosity

Score (0-5) ____

"Variety's the spice of life / That gives it all its flavor" – William Cowper

- I have adequate variety in my life
- My self-care routine is healthy, not boring
- I am constantly learning and discovering new things
- I can see new professional challenges ahead, to which I look forward
- I find my work interesting

Mental Energy Subtotal: _____

FOURTH SOURCE: Emotional Energy

The energy that comes from a sense of feeling good inside, appropriate boundaries with others and a positive outlook on the future.

4.1 Letting Go

Score (0-5) ____

"I found the GOOD in Goodbye" – Beyoncé Knowles

- When I fail to stick to my plan, I can accept the failure and let-go. Yesterday's failure does not cause me to give up today
- I choose my battles: I don't get involved in affairs that don't concern me
- I accept my own imperfections; I don't get discouraged by my own flaws and mistakes
- I can tolerate the fact that others are imperfect, so I don't waste energy on getting angry with people or situations that I cannot change
- I can let go of impossible objectives, without excessive self-reproach
- I don't live life in a constant state of guilt; I don't suffer from self-flagellation or remorse
- I can let go feelings of envy or jealousy

4.2 Optimism

Score (0-5) ____

"Pessimism leads to weakness, optimism leads to power" – William James

- Even in dark times, I can hope for a better future
- I look for the opportunity in every change
- I actively cultivate an attitude of gratitude in the present, even in tough times
- I am usually drawn to positive people

4.3 Awareness of strengths and talents

Score (0-5) ____

"A really great talent finds its happiness in execution" – Goethe

- I can recall times when I have been successful
- I can list at least five positive qualities that have enabled me to be successful
- I can take stock honestly, identifying weaknesses without drifting into negative thinking about myself
- I don't suffer from guilt, nor constantly beating myself up
- I can take feedback – even unfair criticism – without being consumed by anger, bitterness or fear

4.4 Self discipline

Score (0-5) ____

"Because of their size, parents may be difficult to discipline properly" – P. J. O'Rourke

- I can delay gratification until a task is done or it's time e.g. for food
- I don't depend on a deadline to get a job done
- I don't abandon self-care (e.g. exercise) for convenience or just "I don't feel like it" reasons
- I can do things that I don't want to do

4.5 Self care

Score (0-5) ____

"Smile, breathe and go slowly" – Thich Nhat Hanh

- Self-nurturing: In tough times, I take even more care of myself
- I know what my emotional needs are, and I take care of these
- Appearance: I feel confident in how I look (clothes, hair, shoes, accessories)
- I can spend moments with myself, with perfect peace and ease
- I do not comfort-eat, (or drink), as a substitute for emotional "food"
- I do not suffer from addictions (e.g. alcohol, food, sex, gambling, internet, video games etc)

Emotional Energy Subtotal: _____

FIFTH SOURCE: Social Energy

The energy that comes from supportive and stimulating interaction with friends, family and community: particularly people who help us to see ourselves.

5.1 Connection to others

Score (0-5) ____

"A true friend never gets in your way, unless you happen to be going down" – Arnold H. Glasow

- I feel safe with my work colleagues: there is not a culture of gossip, nor cloak-and-dagger politics
- I feel supported and encouraged by close friends and family members
- I have let go of people (or events) that drag me down
- I have people whom I can talk to, that inspire me

5.2 Asking for help

Score (0-5) ____

"Remind yourself that it's OK not to be perfect." - Anon

- I'm able to ask for help, rather than struggle alone
- I can overcome my reluctance to talk about my issues or the decisions I need to make
- I can make requests without obligating, blaming or manipulating other people

5.3 Healthy inter-dependence

Score (0-5) ____

"The victim mindset dilutes the human potential. By not accepting personal responsibility for our circumstances, we greatly reduce our power to change them." – Steve Maraboli

- I take responsibility for my own life, including my energy levels and self-esteem
- I am not overly dependent on a spouse, parent or any other one individual
- When I think about low energy or confidence, I do not find myself blaming others
- I do not regard myself as responsible for the happiness or welfare of another adult
- I am not trying to rescue "problem people" as a means to provide meaning in my own life

5.4 Regular interaction

Score (0-5) ____

"There are no strangers here, only friends you have not yet met" – William Butler Yeats

- Every week, I am meeting and conversing with someone who inspires me
- I have friends whom I trust and whom I interact with regularly
- For relaxation, I am not dependent on video games, TV or solitary leisure activities
- When I'm with friends, I don't feel bored, nor do I need to role-play
- When I come away, I feel energised and not drained

Social Energy Subtotal: _____

SIXTH SOURCE: Purposeful Energy

The energy that comes from a sense of *significance* in one's life, whether than comes from humanistic, spiritual or other sources.

6.1 Purpose

Score (0-5) ____

"Life is without meaning. You bring the meaning to it" – Joseph Campbell

- I know why I come to work; and even on days that this objective is not being fully realised, it's still worth it.
- I can see the value I bring, and I do not define my work-satisfaction simply by how many tasks I get done. I accept that I won't get it all done, and I have come to terms with that
- My personal values (e.g. inspiration, freedom, excellence, etc.) are fully expressed in the work that I do
- There is something that really interests me, that I can always turn to for inspiration

6.2 Integrity

Score (0-5) ____

"Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching." – C. S. Lewis

- I'm not doing anything that is out of integrity with my values
- I do not lie or exaggerate. In particular, I am honest with myself
- I don't have any personal habits that diminish my self-esteem
- My actions are congruent with my words

6.3 Sense of contribution

Score (0-5) ____

"Aim above morality. Be not simply good, be good for something." – Henry David Thoreau

- I'm using my talents in a way that's useful to others
- I have a purpose beyond my own self-interest
- I know that I'm contributing, so I'm not dependent on the applause of others
- My attitude to life includes prioritising self-care as high as my care for others

6.4 Development and Growth

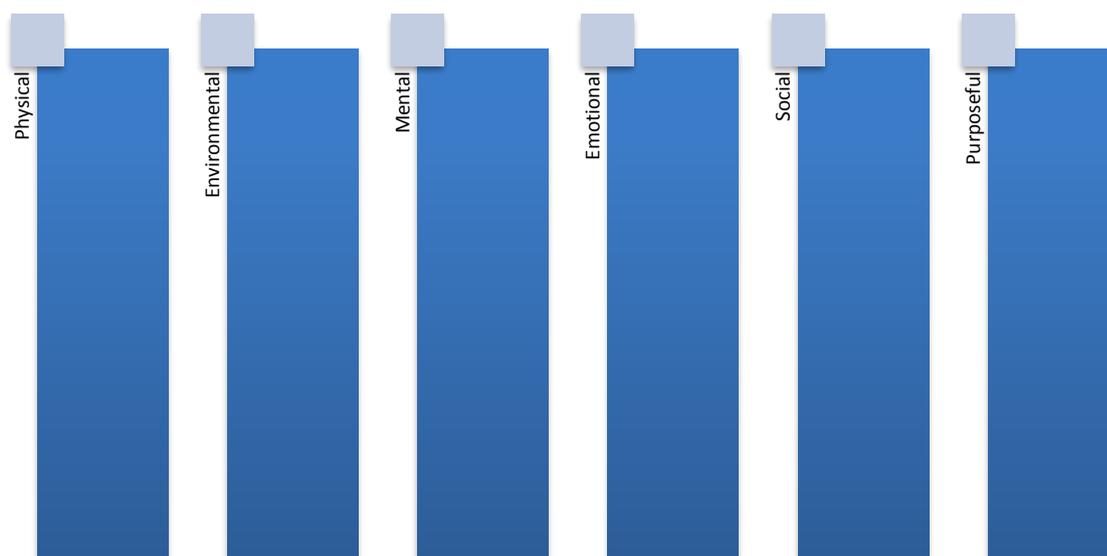
Score (0-5) ____

“Constant development is the law of life, and a man who always tries to maintain his dogmas in order to appear consistent drives himself into a false position.” – Mahatma Gandhi

- I am choosing my path in life/work
- I attend to my spiritual practice
- I am learning from my experience and growing in self-esteem
- I value the contribution of others and I express this regularly to them
- I look forward to the future

Meaningful Energy Subtotal: _____

OVERALL TOTAL: _____



SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

1. Decide to make energy (and self-worth) your core personal project, as opposed to weight-loss, diets or anything else. Create a journal (electronic or paper) as evidence of your decision.
2. Using your self-worth journal, complete each of these sentences 6-10 times. Do so quickly, without thinking, ideally when you are very relaxed e.g. after meditation or in the evening after eating.
 - “If I were to boost my energy level by just 5%...”
 - “If I were 5% more friendly towards myself...”
3. Choose three of the six Energy Sources above that you would enjoy improving, and that would boost your self-worth, too.

FRIENDSHIP SABOTEURS

INTRODUCTION

As you have read in Chapter 7 of “The Self-Worth Safari”, friends play a significant role in developing our sense of self. Friends are often the mirrors by which we see ourselves. However, those mirrors can frequently be distorted by our own inner dialogue. For example:

- A friend’s throw-away remark – which to them seemed harmless, or just a bit of fun – can wound us deeply or make us angry;
- We don’t want to admit something to ourselves, so we don’t tell our closest friends about it;
- You give advice or opinion, meant with love and with the other’s best interests at heart; but the other person just gets annoyed.

In all three cases, your self-worth is implicated. Sure, the other person’s self-worth is probably involved, too; but we are focusing here on *your* self-worth, not the other person’s.

This resource is divided into two parts. The first part attempts to take stock of the **inner voices** that can distort the mirror of friendship – even before any word gets uttered or action taken. The second part looks at typical **behaviours** that cause a person’s self-worth to be triggered or affected.

PART I: INNER VOICES

There are many inner dialogues that may cast a shadow over the experience of friendship. The list that follows is far from exhaustive. However, it identifies some of the most common self-worth voices that impact how we interact with our friends. Notice how the effects can trigger *their* self-worth issues, too! On these occasions, a whole lot of drama can ensue.

Inner voice	Possible effects on friendship
“I am valued as a problem-solver”	Giving advice that was not asked for, interfering; Making assessments or judgements (even positive ones!) that others find irritating
“I must not make mistakes”	Arguing over trifles to prove oneself right; Inability to “move on”; Not sharing problems in case I “get it wrong” or seem diminished or vulnerable
“I cannot trust people”	Checking up / controlling Devising Plan B, C and D Inability to commit or make decisions
“I’m afraid of being laughed at, mocked”	Not showing up Getting angry when others are having fun Becoming silently resentful
“I’m stupid”	Not sharing opinion or experience Allowing others to interrupt or talk over me Exerting power in other ways e.g. money, control
“I’m ugly”	Withdrawal from social events or activities Criticising others for being “dumb” Sarcastic wit

"Things always go wrong"	Not trusting people Being melancholic, resigned to circumstance Not making plans, avoiding responsibility for self
"I am a failure"	Ranting against society, business, establishment Disparaging successful people Gossip (to take others down)
"Life is hard"	Difficulty having fun and letting go Envy or criticism of people who appear carefree Always planning for the worst
"I got a raw deal"	Self-pity, resentment against life Envy or jealousy of others Preoccupied with the past, not living in the present
"The world is dangerous"	Not trying new activities or initiatives Fear of travel Isolating

Are there others that apply to you? What is the effect?

Fortunately, you have the power to reverse these inner narratives, using the shifts described in "The Self-Worth Safari". For example:

Inner voice	Possible effects on friendship
"I am a friend to myself in any situation"	Free to explore new people, activities Dropping assessments and judgements (of self and others) that are unnecessary
"I am interested, vs. trying to be interesting"	Active listening, less advice-giving Curiosity about their experience (and what makes them tick), discovery of new worlds More lightness and joy in social settings
"I am enough"	Ability to drop discussions (and people) that sap my energy No need to prove anything to anyone (even to me!) More energy and freedom

Feel free to add yours here:

PART II: BEHAVIOURS THAT SABOTAGE FRIENDSHIP

As you have already gathered, many of the behaviours that are problematical for friendship stem from an inner voice of “not enough-ness”. This is even true of those people who come across as confident and arrogant; where a haughty, external mask often hides a struggle with self-worth within.

Here is a list of some of the most common sabotaging behaviours. Some of these appeared on Page 172 of “The Self-Worth Safari”. There are many others, which you can add from your own day-to-day experience.

1. Criticising people. (Or even telling them what they could do better, which is often just “sophisticated criticism”.)
2. Gossiping about people not present. How safe do you feel with people like that?
3. Perfectionism: where people see the flaw in everything, without appreciating what’s good about it. (And why do they need to make either assessment?)
4. Envy or jealousy of others.
5. Joy-killing. Telling stories of tragedy or misfortune just when others are having fun.
6. Inability to join-in and let go. Staying aloof, often pointedly so.
7. Needing to dominate the conversation: to comment on everything that has been said (if indeed others can get a word in edgeways, at all!)
8. Need to control, e.g. exerting control by changing plans at the last minute.
9. Flakiness, inability to keep promises and show up. Often linked with...
10. Over-promising, saying Yes to everything and then not able to meet commitments.
11. Fixing other people or interfering in their lives, without being asked.
12. Being indifferent, not being interested, or worse still faking interest in others.
13. Busy-ness: having no time for others, interrupting them and/or hurrying off.
14. Blaming: parents, education, the boss, society, men/women, migrants... resentful ranting in all its forms.

15. Playing the martyr or the victim.
16. Sarcastic wit, carrying an undertone of anger or resentment.
17. Breaking confidences, telling other people's private stories without their permission.
18. Advising others how they should live their lives (career, nutrition, relationships, home etc), without being asked (and without seeking their consent).
19. Flattery, vague praise or compliments: often used as a subtle power game, in order to assert the giver's power to do so.
20. Being physically present, but mentally absent: clearly thinking about something else. (Or of course, paying more attention to one's smartphone.)
21. Seizing every opportunity to bring the conversation back to oneself and/or one's favourite topic(s) of conversation.
22. Talking non-stop.
23. Interrupting others.
24. Bottling up issues and not discussing them.
25. Retaliating for what others have said or done (often for things the other is not aware of).
26. Taking everything personally. It helps to remember that what others say and do usually has more to do with their self-worth.... Do you really have to make this about yours? 😊

As self-worth grows, many of these behaviours naturally disappear. An even greater benefit is the discovery that you do not have to get entangled in the self-worth issues of other people. This creates a real sense of freedom: you can be there for your friends without feeling obligated to get involved in unnecessary drama. When necessary, you can set boundaries – see Chapter 14 of “The Self-Worth Safari”. You can enjoy the beauty of your garden, without feeling compelled to obsess about the weeding!

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS in Sales and Negotiation

INTRODUCTION

As you have already read in Chapter 13 of “The Self-Worth Safari”, it’s hard to negotiate if you do not value yourself. A lot of people struggle with sales for precisely this reason. Of course, some of them will object to this statement: citing other reasons for their distaste for selling. However, everyone needs to “sell” (or influence) on some occasions: for example when going for an interview, or just seeking consensus for a course of action.

Self-worth is a great ally in other ways, too. It’s not just a matter of having confidence or self-belief. The real power of self-worth is that it **frees you from the need to prove yourself**; so that you are now free to **discover the deep needs** of other people. In this way, self-worth is very different from self-esteem.

Sales people with self-esteem often talk a lot about themselves or their services. Those who possess self-worth don’t need to do this: they are free to explore (and share experience) from the world of their clients and their customers.

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Discovery questions are the key to success in sales and negotiation. We have already seen some effective value questions in the resources on career development. In this article, we expand on these, and also add to those already outlined in Chapter 13 of “The Self-Worth Safari”.

Feel free to order them in any sequence that works for you: also, to customise the language to your unique situation. It’s very unlikely that you will use all of these questions! So please choose those questions that are best for you.

Notice how all of the questions are about usefulness – not self-evaluation. As with career questions, we start with the “why?”:

1. What prompted you to reach out for support?
2. What have you established so far, that has been most useful / helpful?
3. Why is that significant?
4. Of all the issues that you are grappling with, which are the most important?
5. Why is that particularly important?
6. Who are the people most impacted by this problem?
7. What risks is that issue creating? Who is most exposed?

REVIEWING THE SITUATION RIGHT NOW

8. What's your current installation / setup / system etc?
9. What's the capacity of that?
10. What other developments are going on, that relate to this project?
11. If the current situation continues, where is the biggest threat today?
12. What impact would that have?
13. Who else would be affected?
14. What would the early results look like?
15. Where would you see tangible evidence for this?
16. Are there additional intangible benefits?
17. Which of these would your boss (or board or shareholders) notice?
18. Who are the key people with a stake in the success of this project?
19. Who will need reassurance? How do we give that to them?
20. How are your competitors dealing with these issues?
21. How's business? (Can often be asked right at the beginning, even before the meeting)
22. What happens if you do nothing?
23. Apart from cost, what else is a key criterion for your decision?

LOOKING AHEAD

The following questions are focused on the future.

24. What does your future setup (or organisation, or operation) look like?
25. How will the future be different from the past? For you? For your customers? What impact(s) will that have? Who will succeed (or not) in that environment?
26. How will you value the impact of this project, in a year from now?
27. What are the key risks that we need to anticipate?
28. How will that impact sales / costs / working capital / marketing / customer feedback etc?

VALUE-CENTRED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Self-worth is about being effective in the world: not just idly contemplating one's navel or selfie. For many people, this means being able to develop business relationships, whether for one's own enterprise or that of a larger organisation.

This document attempts to summarise the key shifts in value-centred selling, as well as presenting **WHY** this approach is important in today's developed markets. We also address how value-centred selling differs from traditional "features-and-benefits" or "solution-centred" sales approaches.

It will come as no surprise that the latter are often straight out of the self-esteem school of thought. When people are selling solutions or technology, they have usually learned from role-models or practices that all about the *solution* being offered. Even traditional SPIN selling – which on the surface claims to be about the customer – in practice zeros in on pain-points in order to set the stage for the solution being sold.

In value-centred selling (and marketing), we consciously build the bridge from the other bank of the river: the bank on which the customer is standing. We begin with a wide-ranging (and genuine) curiosity about the **customer world**: not a self-preoccupied script of "features-and-benefits" or selling points. We can do this because with self-worth, we don't need to prove ourselves: we value ourselves instead. This gives us the freedom to explore.

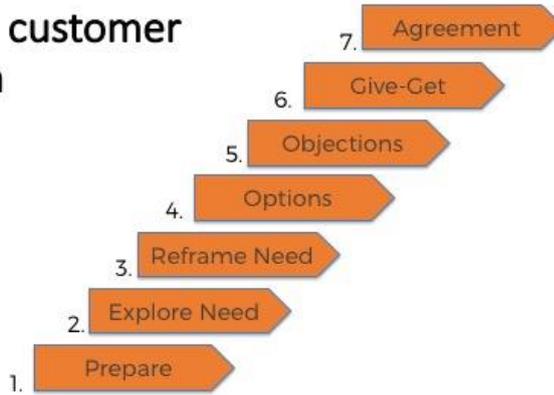
We start with an overview of the value-centred selling approach. The seven steps of value-centred selling are then covered in the remaining sections, one by one.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SALES APPROACH

1. **Why?** Today's markets are characterised by closer competition, globalised supply chains, buyer sophistication, consensus decision-making and general "commoditisation" of all expertise and services. Taken together, these forces make premium-price selling harder (and slower). When suppliers are pitted against each other, often the only response is discounting, which is a losing game for everyone. When it comes to value, there is a downward gravitational pull, that tends to devalue all products and services over time.
2. **How it differs:** Many sales approaches attempt to demonstrate "we are the best". Which we may well be... but it's all too apparent to savvy buyers that this is what we are doing, so they tend to not pay too much attention to these assertions. In value-centred selling, the focus is not on us, at all: it's on the customer's needs and risks, on the **approach** that the customer needs to take to maximise competitive advantage. We campaign not just for us, but for a wise choice of **approach**.
3. **Partner vs Servant:** The relationship with the customer is not one where we (the supplier) get told what we have to do. Right from the first contact, we aim to create a partnership relationship with the customer, not a relationship of servitude. This is self-worth in action.

4. **Evolution of B2B selling:** While relationship-builders still do well at opening opportunities, there is growing evidence that they are NOT always successful at closing sales... particularly larger, complex sales. It's more effective to be able to challenge the customer's thinking, by introducing fresh insights, tailored to their world.

A structured customer conversation



5. Therefore, one of the pivotal skills in value-centred selling is **Step 3: Reframing**. This is the step that introduces fresh thinking, redefines requirements, establishes a real partnership relationship and focuses on the **value** of a solution – not just the cost.
6. **Value** is more than technical superiority, of the optimum solution to a problem. Value is the **result** of this: i.e. the opportunities captured, the risks averted, the operational benefits or the new markets that can now be conquered.
7. In general, our task is to **educate the customer** – without arrogance – in a way that produces an **optimum approach** for everyone: where the value justifies the cost.

The seven steps of value-centred selling are now covered, one by one. As this is an overview from a detailed value-centred sales training program (developed over 20 years, please excuse occasional references to various skills and resources employed during our detailed training work with technology and consulting firms.

Step 1: PREPARATION

The key to a successful meeting is being in control of the agenda. This not only refers to having a written agenda, but it means that you can direct the meeting by knowing the **crucial questions** that need to be asked. More about this in [Resource 13](#), the preparation of essential discovery questions.

Key points in this step:

1. In value-centred selling, the key objective is to bring fresh **insights** to the meeting, that will **differentiate** you and show that you are focused on creating **competitive advantage** for the customer. Self-worth in action.

2. Equally, you want to go to the meeting equipped with key facts **about your history** with that customer: previous purchases, service history, etc.
3. The crucial question is: “**What’s going on in their marketplace?**” This includes evolution of prices, costs, key competitors, how their customers’ buying habits are changing, etc.
4. In this way, you can show that you **know their world**, and ask powerful questions (see next Step of this process: Discovery Questions)
5. How will their **future** be different to today (or the past)? What leaps in quality should they consider, in order to be competitive? What happens if they don’t make these leaps?
6. In each sector, what are the **key differentiators**? For example, is this about capacity? Or better performance? Or protection of customer reputation?
7. Check that your insight really is insightful. Five **tests** to apply:
 - a) Is it about them and their world, not you?
 - b) Does it have specific relevance to their world, vs generic maxims or principles?
 - c) Is it factual vs mere opinion?
 - d) Is this a fresh perspective vs same old story?
 - e) Is there a sense of urgency e.g. a forthcoming regulation change?
8. Good ways to **structure** insights:
 - a) Risks and threats affecting others like them
 - b) Evolution: outlining the stages by which (for example) throughput / yield is gained, or how customer requirements are evolving
 - c) Making a distinction that deepens their understanding. Again, self-worth in action.

Step 2: NEEDS DISCOVERY

Having done your preparation, you are now equipped with some good questions to ask, and also you are already bringing insights of value to the meeting.

Key points in this step:

1. In value-centred selling, we aim not just to find out **what** needs to be done (e.g. deliver a training course), but also **why** that is important (e.g. protect key customer business, or open up new markets). The value lies in the **why**, not just the what. (In our value-centred sales training, we refer to this as “The Big Why”.)
2. In order to do so, the key skill is **context** questioning. We distinguish context-questions from content-questions. Context questions reveal where the value lies. Context questions are about their world, not just the scope of work to be done. We saw some good context questions in the last resource: Discovery questions.

3. Context questions also reveal **who** the key stakeholders are. “Whose support will be vital to the success of this initiative?”
4. In order to get into context questioning, it’s useful to start asking questions **right from the start** of the meeting. In this way, you are in charge of the discussion.
5. Sometimes, we have to **make space for discovery questions**. See the previous resource in this series. Perhaps they come armed to interview us! Or they just want to know the price. Now, your sense of self-worth may well be tested. Can you make space for discovery questions?
6. In this stage, we are also building a **personal connection**. We rehearse four **coloured lenses** through which people see value.
7. We also rehearse the **reveal** questions: “Where would you like to begin?” and “Why is that important?”
8. When called upon to do presentation, we lead with **context**, not content. We rehearse a proven structure for value-centred communication:
 - d) **Situation**: factual data about their world
 - e) **Complications**: risks and threats affecting other people like them
 - f) **Crucial question(s)**: arising from the above
 - g) **Recommended approach** (if you are now ready to present this)

Throughout this process, we behave as the customer’s **partner**, not their **servant**. We show we are interested in **their** world, not just our own. Our questions stem from a desire to make sure they make the best possible purchase.

Step 3: REFRAMING REQUIREMENTS

Having uncovered the real customer needs – via your preparation and needs-discovery questions – you are now in a good position to add value by reframing (e.g. fine-tuning) customer requirements, before you start to meet those requirements.

This is a fundamental step in value-centred selling, that often differentiates you from other suppliers. By reframing, you show the customer that you are a real **expert** in your field, that you are focused on delivering maximum **benefit**, making sure they get full value.

Key points in this step:

1. What is reframing? It’s doing something that helps the customer think differently about the **problem**, before you start presenting any **solution**. You might do this by adding a new option, anticipating an unforeseen risk or highlighting a future opportunity (e.g. capture a new market). You can do this because you value yourself and your work.
2. Why is this important? At this stage the key to success is becoming the customer’s **trusted partner**, so that any solution put forward later is coming from a position of trust. You know there will be objections later on, whether about price or service or something else. So, the time to build trust is **before the proposal**, not after.

3. Reframing is not just a sales technique or a trick: it adds value for everyone involved. A reframe is only a reframe when the customer accepts it... usually signalled by writing it down, often accompanied by thoughtful body language. Sometimes, customers need time to absorb: a good story will help them to do so. Their understanding is crucial: remember they will often have to sell this internally, to their colleagues.
4. This is the most collaborative stage, so take your time! It's always tempting to rush on to write that proposal. Sometimes, it takes a few attempted reframes to get to the right one. If you raise good questions – tailored to the world of the customer – you can do this. Self-worth in action, again.
5. Highlighting unforeseen **risks** and barriers is particularly effective. Doing so shows clearly that you know the world of your customer... more so than those competitors who failed to do so.
6. Once you have finished reframing, and the customer has enthusiastically embraced your (joint) redefinition of the requirement, you have established yourself as a trusted partner. You are now ready to talk Options and Budget (next stage).

Step 4: OPTIONS & BUDGET (Inc. QUOTATIONS)

If you have followed the steps so far and have successfully reframed requirements with the customer, you are now in all probability a trusted advisor. This means you are now in a good position to explore options and budget with the customer, in order to establish a realistic budget-guideline for the project. This means you can then do a quotation that has a much higher chance of success.

Some customers (or their agents) will have been pushing for the quote long before this. By reframing requirements, you have hopefully put yourself in charge of the customer conversation. So try to get an agreed budget guideline **before** sending in a quote.

Key points in this step:

1. If all has gone well so far, this should be the most collaborative stage of the process, so don't rush! You are a trusted advisor. This is a time to be their partner, not their servant. This is when self-worth counts!
2. Before doing a proposal: Is there common ground between you and the customer about WHY they are investing? Do you have a budget guideline?
3. If the customer is pushing you for a price at this stage, you can specify a range from your experience of the market, and what others in a similar situation have invested. It's not unreasonable of a customer to want you to name some numbers first.
4. It is normal for the customer to want to negotiate at this point: even at budget guideline level. So it's important to have established the risks and pitfalls, before this discussion. This is your key weapon: i.e. the penalty of buying too cheap.

5. This is a good time to explore with the customer what other options they are considering, and to evaluate together the Pros and Cons of each. One option to always include is the option of doing nothing, and running with the status-quo. It's important to get the Cons of this as explicit as possible – they will think of it, anyway!
6. When all is discussed as above, you can do a quotation (with the BOSCARD structure)... or at least an executive summary that opens with their requirements.

Step 5: DEALING WITH OBJECTIONS

If you have followed the steps so far and have successfully reframed requirements and agreed budget-guidelines with the customer, you are now a trusted advisor so there should be fewer objections to manage.

However, we can expect any customer to make at least one effort to test the price: it almost expected! At this point, self-worth is all about holding on to your sense of value.

Key points in this step:

1. This is a time to continue to be their partner, not their servant.
2. There will almost be never be justification (for a higher price) by talking about our higher costs.
3. Therefore, the justification must come from the higher **value** delivered.
4. Higher value is the sum of two things a) the **benefits** conferred by our approach, and b) the **risks** of not doing so. Often the latter is more significant than the former.
5. In dealing with objections, our best weapon is usually a story about how someone decided to buy cheap, and suffered negative consequences as a result (e.g. loss of a key customer account). After all, if there are no negative consequences for buying cheap, why shouldn't they do so?
6. It follows that you should prepare and circulate these stories among your team, for each application.
7. When dealing with an objection: it's best to hear it fully. Customers generally want their objection understood, not just interrupted with "Yes, but..." statements from the supplier.
8. The best time to deal with price objections is when discussing budget-guideline, not after.

Step 6 and 7: GIVE/GET and CLOSING THE SALE

The final two steps of the value-centred process are all about harnessing the momentum that you have built up in previous steps, in order to close the sale and secure an agreement with the customer.

Key points in these steps:

1. As already mentioned, most purchasers will make at least one attempt to test the price. This can be welcomed as a buying signal.
2. The key weapon that you now have in your possession is the **value** that you have clarified to date: i.e. the benefits that a high-quality solution will bring PLUS the risks that such a solution will help to reduce.
3. When **giving** a concession, you therefore want to ensure you are **getting** something in return. In this way, you maintain the partner-relationship that you have built to date, rather than becoming their servant.
4. It's not essential that what you get is equal to what you give. You might ask them to be a reference site, for example, just so that you do not giving something for nothing.
5. If you choose to discount, use **single** digits and even decimal places.
6. The trial close: the easiest way to close is on a **minor** point e.g. "to whom do we send the documentation?" If they answer, you know they have bought. Furthermore, this takes us into doing the deal together.
7. Please avoid the trap of sounding too hungry or too desperate. It may be used against you. A simple "scheduling" call, or question, is often sufficient. Your tone should be professional and business-like, not pushy or over-eager. This is another one of these times in which your self-worth counts.
8. Double-closing is important: to prevent buyer-remorse, which is a frequent psychological reaction after making a decision. Double-closing consists of sealing the deal with an unexpected bonus, or extra bit of attentiveness to the customer.
9. Particular care needs to be taken when passing the sale to the people who will fulfil the order. You have spent many months building a relationship: you don't want your customer feeling abandoned now that you have his signature.
10. At all times, the question that prompts us is how do we show that we care? How can we support them to secure the results that they want? This is where the value lies.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Value-centred development is self-worth in action. Without an unconditional sense of value in their own worth, professionals slip into proving themselves, or justifying themselves. If you would like to rehearse these skills in an encouraging, supportive and fun environment, you are welcome to get in touch : john@SelfWorthAcademy.com

In the future, we plan to add further resources about how to get more prospect meetings. Specifically:

- Getting referrals and recommendations
- Worthwhile partnerships
- Keeping in touch in human-friendly ways
- Transforming customers into ambassadors and partners



- Getting others to tell your story

The tangible rewards of value-centred approaches to business-development are easy to measure: higher sales, more compelling value-propositions and less discounting. For example, how much does each one percent of discounting cost your organisation per year today?

But perhaps the intangible rewards are even more significant. When professionals switch towards value-centred selling, this generally transforms their entire relationship with their own careers. They experience a new thrill of discovery with customers and with partners. Free of the need to seek validation, they become more courageous in their negotiation and in their presentations. They find fresh meaning in co-creating positive impact with their customers.