Put positive psychology into practice with proven activities to boost happiness and wellbeing
“I am larger, better than I thought; I did not know I held so much goodness.”

WALT WHITMAN
BEST POSSIBLE SELF

Goal

The goal of this exercise is to increase optimism in terms of expecting favourable outcomes for yourself.

Instructions

TASK #1 - Imagining your best possible self

Set a timer or stopwatch for 10 minutes. In this time you are to think about your best possible future self and write it down. Imagine your life the way you always imagined it would be like, your best possible self. Picture that you have performed to the best of your abilities and you had achieved the things you wanted in life. While writing, don’t worry about grammar or punctuation; focus on writing all your thoughts and emotions in an expressive way. Describe what this future would look like for you.
BEST POSSIBLE SELF
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TASK #2 - Reflecting on your best possible self
After completing the exercise, reflect on your feelings and your answer. Think about the following questions:

• What effects did this exercise have?
• Does this exercise affect you more emotionally or does it affect your current self-image?
• Did it motivate or inspire you?
• Does it make you want to make changes?
• How did this exercise impact you overall?
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Research

The Best Possible Self exercise can increase optimism. This exercise requires people to envision themselves in an imaginary future in which everything has turned out in the most optimal way. Over the past years, writing about and imagining a best possible self has repeatedly been demonstrated to increase people's mood and wellbeing. Studies have shown it can increase optimism in terms of expecting favourable outcomes, an effect that was independent from the mood that was simultaneously increased by the exercise.

Advice

While in most cases, the exercise is used in a written form, it is also possible to draw your best possible self. One of the most powerful ways is to visualise your best possible self on a daily basis. To most people, writing down their fears and troubled has therapeutic results. This exercise takes a more positive approach toward oneself.

Researchers warn that this exercise may backfire if done incorrectly. Some people may compare their current self to their ideal self, causing feelings of disappointment due to the large gaps. To avoid this negative results, or if you find this happening, write about a realistic possible future self.

Further reading


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