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My Core Beliefs Worksheet

Notice a belief, if one comes up, and keep a small log of what doesn't fit it. You can stop at any point. This sheet never asks where a belief came from. A self-help sheet, not therapy. If you feel worse, stop and see selfgrowth.org/help.

01 Before I start

Check in first. This sheet is for noticing, gently. If any of the first four is true, don't carry on. Look at the support section at the end.

Tick any that are true right now:

- [ ] The belief I have in mind is tied to painful events I don't want to revisit
- [ ] I feel much worse when I think about it
- [ ] Feeling low or hopeless is getting in the way of my life, or I'm worried about how long it has lasted
- [ ] I'm thinking about harming myself or not wanting to be here
- [ ] I'm seeing a therapist and want to take this to them first
- [ ] None of these. I'm ready to notice, gently

If I ticked any of the first five, the person or line I'll turn to first (a friend, my GP, my therapist, Samaritans 116 123, 988 in the US) is:

02 Notice, don't dig

Think of a recent time something went wrong, a small one. Is there a sentence about yourself, other people or the world that sounds like it sits underneath? In Padesky's papers, examples include 'I'm no good', 'I'm inadequate', 'Others can't be trusted' and 'effort does not pay off'. You don't have to find one. A belief about other people can come from things that really happened to you. This sheet is not asking you to talk yourself out of it, and you can skip that line. 'Nothing comes up' is fine.

About me, a sentence that sometimes shows up (or 'nothing'):

About other people, a sentence that sometimes shows up (or 'nothing'):

About the world or my life, a sentence that sometimes shows up (or 'nothing'):

How heavy does it feel to look at this right now? (If it's very heavy, stop here.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Light — Very heavy

03 One belief, kept in view

Pick just one sentence, only if it feels okay. Padesky describes core beliefs as shifting slowly, so the aim is not to argue it away today.

The sentence I'm choosing:

How strongly does it feel true today?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all — Completely

What this belief asks of me day to day (what I do, or avoid, because of it):

04 A small log of what doesn't fit

Padesky describes a 'positive data log': a daily record of small things that fit a kinder belief. She says it is hard at first, and that someone with a long-held belief can look at the evidence and still say 'Yes, I see this evidence, but I am still bad'. That is why this is a log kept over weeks, not a verdict. Skip it if it feels like pressure. Small and ordinary things count.

Date and what happened Small, recent, ordinary	How it doesn't fit the belief Or 'nothing this time'	What I'd say about it to a friend

Something I'd like to keep an eye out for this week:

05 A kinder sentence to try on

You don't have to believe it. A belief about other people can come from things that really happened to you. This sheet is not asking you to talk yourself out of it, and you can skip that line. Try writing a sentence a little fairer than the first, the way you might speak to a friend.

If a friend believed this about themselves, I'd say:

A fairer sentence I could try on, even slightly:

How much do I believe it right now? (Low is fine.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all — Completely

06 Looking after myself afterwards

Do one steadying thing, however small.

- [ ] A walk or some fresh air
- [ ] A drink and something warm to eat
- [ ] A call or message to someone I trust
- [ ] The 5-4-3-2-1 grounding worksheet
- [ ] A few slow breaths, then something I enjoy

07 If this is bringing things up

A worksheet is a small tool. Some beliefs need a person. Tick anything that fits and decide who you'll tell.

- [ ] The belief feels very heavy, or connects to painful events
- [ ] It affects my sleep, work or relationships
- [ ] I'll talk to my GP, or refer myself to a talking therapy (NHS Talking Therapies in England)
- [ ] I'll tell someone I trust this week
- [ ] If I think about harming myself: Samaritans 116 123 (UK and Ireland), call or text 988 (US), findahelpline.com elsewhere

When you're done, a moment to reflect

- What was it like to look at that belief for a few minutes, and was it more or less heavy than I expected?
- Is there a part of this I'd rather talk about with someone than write down?
- What would I want a friend to do if they held this belief?
- What is one small, ordinary thing I did this week that I don't usually count?

Free worksheet from selfgrowth.org. Free self-growth worksheets for real life. Fill it in online and it saves as you go: selfgrowth.org/worksheets/core-beliefs-worksheet

If things feel heavier than a worksheet can hold

These are self-reflection tools, not therapy. If you're struggling, especially if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to someone now. In the US, call or text **988**. In the UK & Ireland, call **116 123** (Samaritans). Elsewhere, find a free helpline at **findahelpline.com**. If you're in immediate danger, call your local emergency number.