



RECLAIMING THE AUTHENTIC SELF

Toolkit

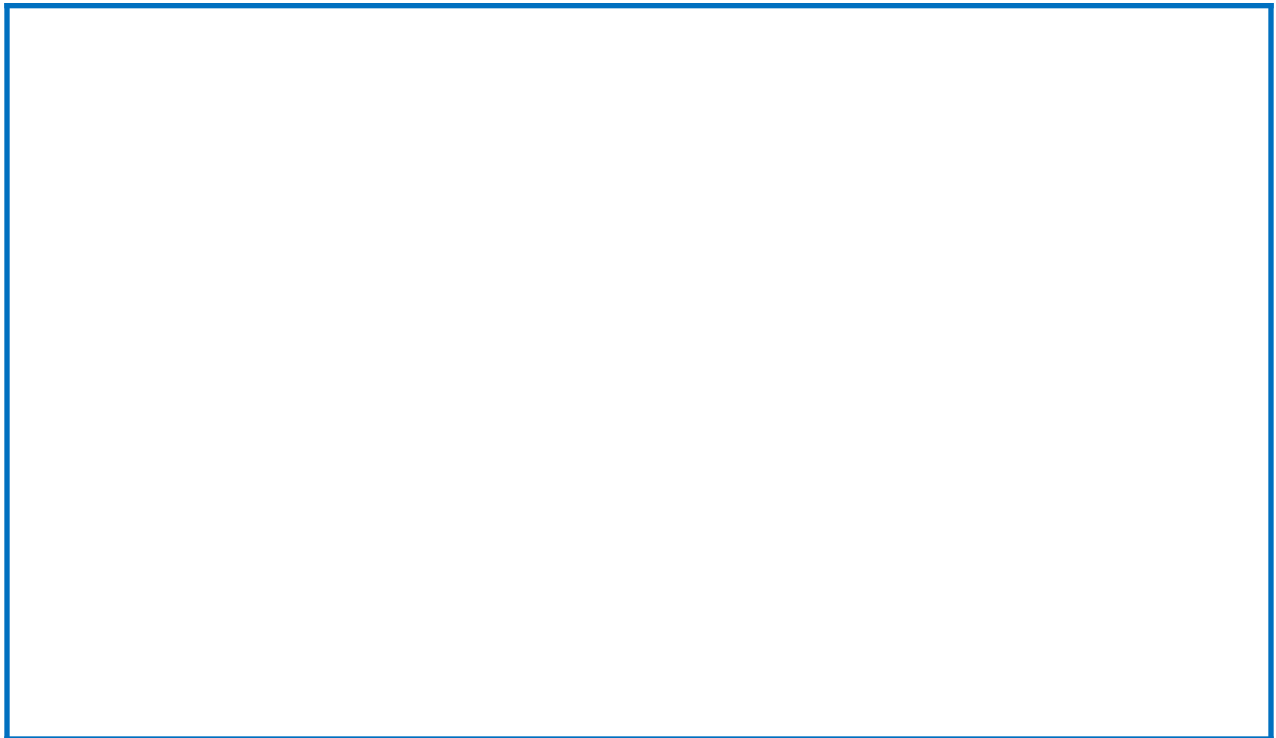
People tend to lose their own identity when they become overly focused on pleasing everyone else, and the longer a person continues with this people pleasing behavior, the more out of touch with their own reality they become.

The exercises in this toolkit will help you to reclaim your authentic self that may have gotten buried under the weight of other people's expectations and demands.

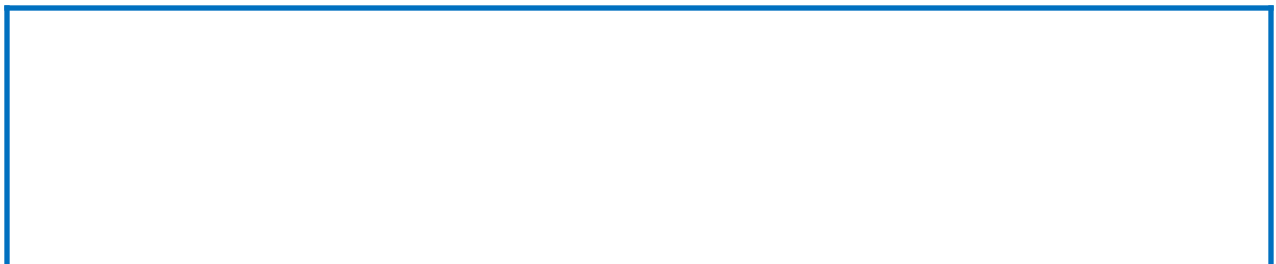
Exercise One: Discover The Origin Of This Need

Here are some questions that you can work through with your therapist:

Q: Where do you think this need for approval came from?



Q: Did you see this sort of people pleasing behavior displayed by anyone growing up?



Q: Do you see any similarities between how you're behaving now and the behaviour of [whoever else displayed people pleasing behavior]?

Q: How is this behaviour showing up in your interactions with others?

Q: How is it affecting your relationships with others?

Q: How is it affecting your relationship with yourself?

Exercise: Shed Your False Self & Claim Your True Self

Start telling the truth of who you are and what you think. Read over this list daily until it starts to feel true.

1. By telling the truth of who you are, you will attract those who genuinely like and appreciate the real you, not those who are impressed by who you are pretending to be. When you are true to

yourself, you will more easily find people you are genuinely compatible with.

2. Attracting people who genuinely like you will raise your self-esteem, being appreciated for who you really are leads you to feeling more accepting and appreciative of yourself.
3. By letting others see your true self and by speaking up when you disagree or don't like something, you are less likely to attract a manipulative, controlling partner.

Meditation and journaling are both powerful tools that can be used for self-discovery and reclaiming your authentic self.

Meditation

Spending time alone (even 15 minutes a day) and getting in touch with your emotions are all tools to help you get in touch with your true, authentic self.

In the beginning, it can be tough to be alone with your thoughts for even a few minutes. You may feel overwhelmed with sadness, anxiety, or anger. If you can, allow those emotions to come to the surface and be released. Cry if you have to. Punch a pillow. Just sit with those uncomfortable emotions and after a while you will see they are no longer there. You'll feel calmer, and soon there will come a time when you look forward to your meditation and your time alone.

Journalling

Journalling is another powerful tool for self-discovery. A journal can be like a silent companion that never judges you.

Through the process of journalling and recording your feelings, innermost thoughts, and dreams, you will start to discover more about yourself than you ever dreamed possible.

You will unearth thoughts & feelings you buried long ago, solutions and alternatives to problem situations, new ways of looking at life-long issues and most importantly, new ways of looking at yourself.

Writing techniques can include:

1. Write with your less dominant hand.
2. Trying a stream-of-consciousness writing. Writing whatever occurs to you without editing or stopping.

Both these techniques will bypass your internal censors and allow thoughts and feelings that are below the surface to emerge.

Exercise: Start Giving Yourself The Validation & Approval You Crave From Others

The more you approve of, and validate yourself, the less likely you are to seek approval and validation from others.

Here's a simple routine you can start each night before bed that will help move you in the right direction.

Each night before you go to bed, pull out your journal and write down all the things you feel proud of accomplishing that day. It doesn't have to be anything extraordinary. Something as simple as "I feel proud of not giving in and eating the chocolate chip cookies at the meeting" or "I feel proud that I worked with my therapist today to take one more step toward becoming empowered."

The more you acknowledge yourself, the less you will seek acknowledgement from others.

