

# **;MARGINS**



## **SELF-AWARENESS ACTIVITY BOOK**



A Publication by Marginal  
Mind Matters NPC

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## **1. Introduction**

Welcome to the Margins Self-Awareness Activity Book! This activity book was created to help you complete the Margins 8 Steps to Self-Awareness Program. The 8 Steps to Self-Awareness Program is about taking notice of our lives so we can become empowered to change our lives.

Self-awareness is about facing the past, acknowledging the pain, its effect on us, and recognizing the opportunity that exists for us to shape our own identity and circumstances. When we do this, we transcend our internal limitations and the limitations set for us by others. We shift from a state of unintentional to intentional being.

## **2. Step 1 Make an Affirmation**

Before we embark on this journey together, we need to make an affirmation to ourselves. We need to make a mental commitment to take the time to get to know ourselves and to invest in creating our ideal selves and the future that we deserve.

Today I, ----- make this solemn commitment to embark on this journey of self-discovery. I know it will not be easy, but I also know that I am worth it. I know that the time I take for myself is the best way to spend it because if I am my authentic self, I will have so much more to give to myself and others.

As I embark on this journey I will try to:

1. Observe, recognize, and reconcile the bad thoughts arising from my social exclusion.
2. I will try to face my pain, guilt, fear, and shame.
3. I will realize that the worst things that happened in my life are not meant to be forgotten but embraced.
4. I will acknowledge that in the darkness of the past lies the key to my future.
5. I will engage in activities and seek out people who will help me channel my unique experiences into tools to create a better life and a better society.

Signed

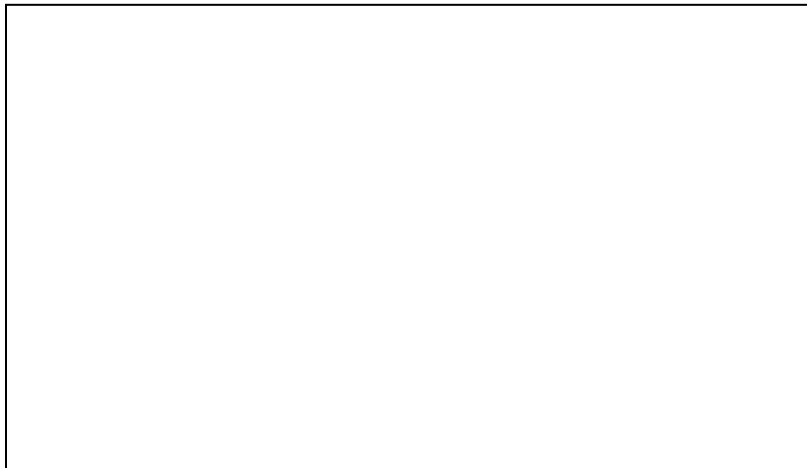
Date.

### 3. Step 2 Observe

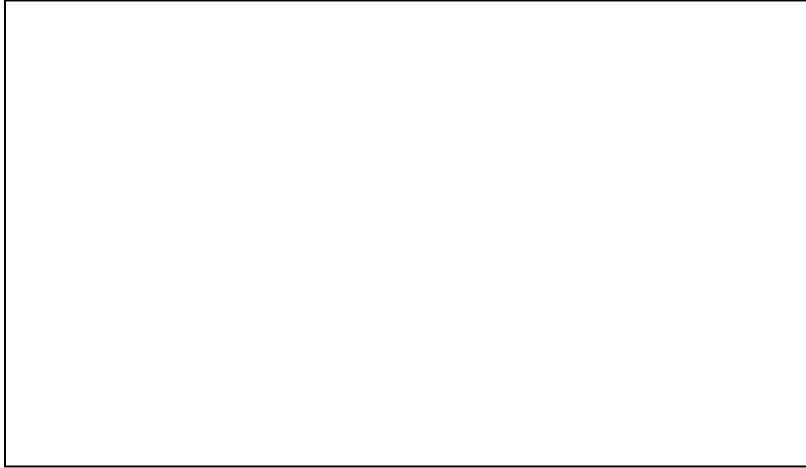
The process of self-awareness starts with ordinary life; the stuff we do every day but fail to take notice of. Take a closer look at yourself. Start with the outer layers of yourself and slowly peel back the deeper, more intimate parts of yourself.

To take a deeper look at ourselves, we will create a photo journal of one day in our lives. Take pictures of your life from the moment you open your eyes in the morning until you go to bed at night. You can take these pictures every hour on the hour and paste them in the boxes below.

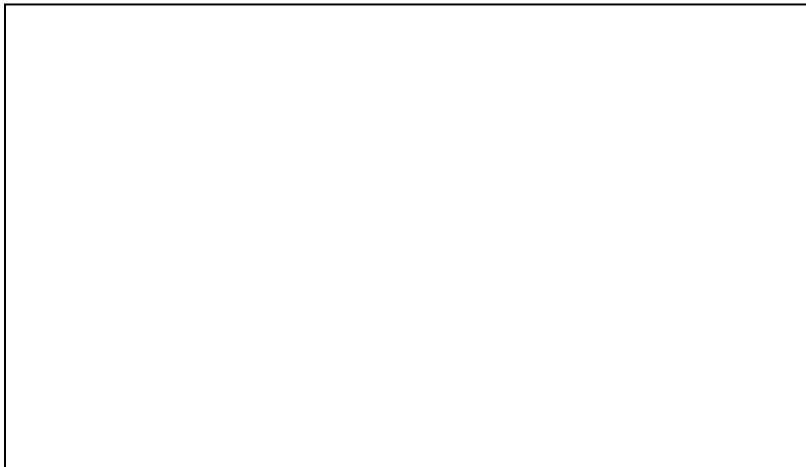
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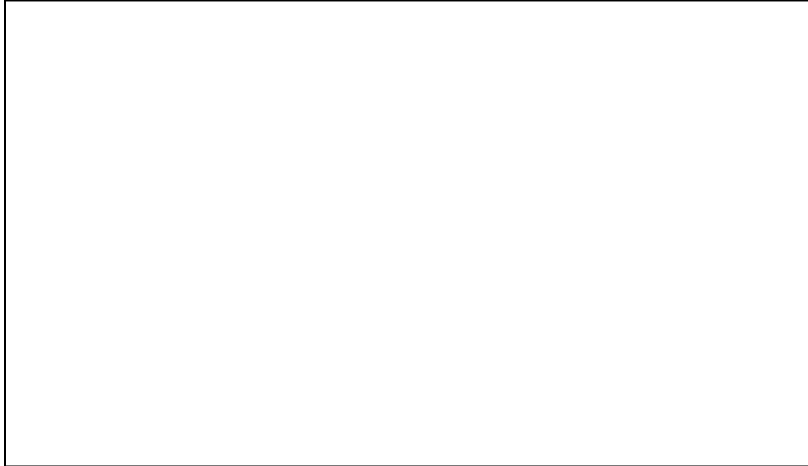
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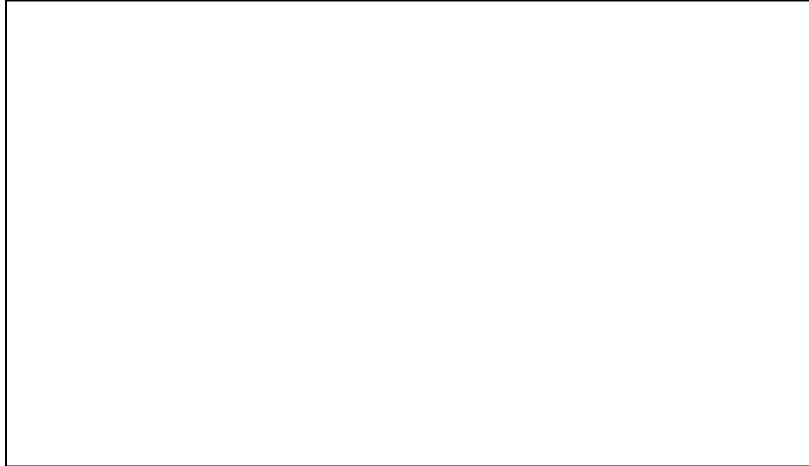
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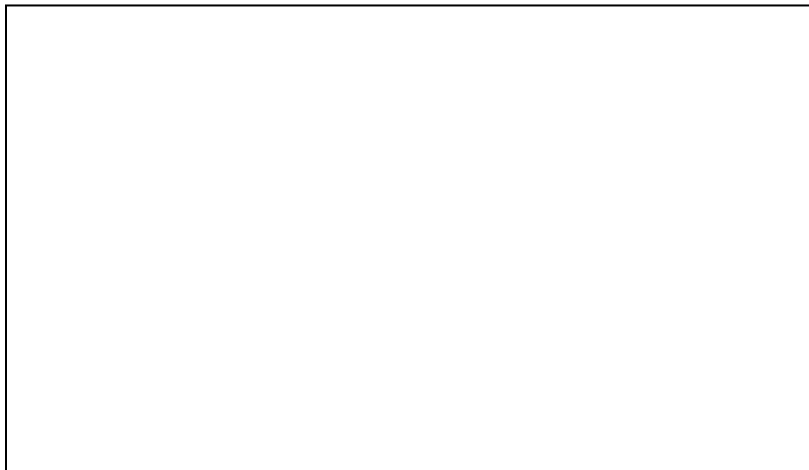
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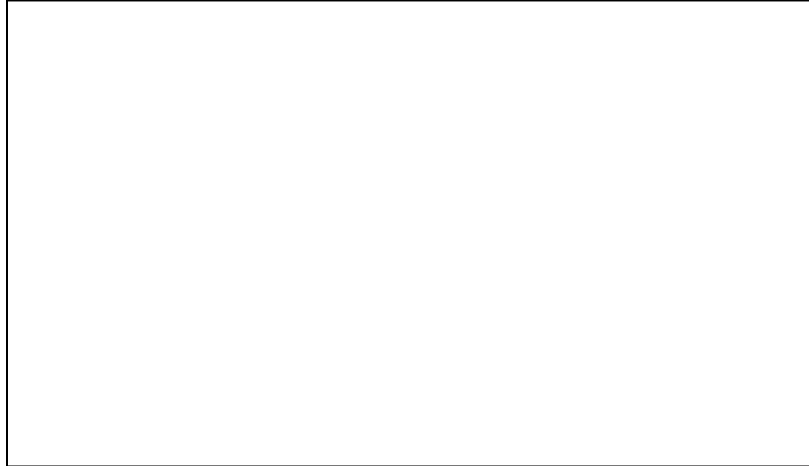


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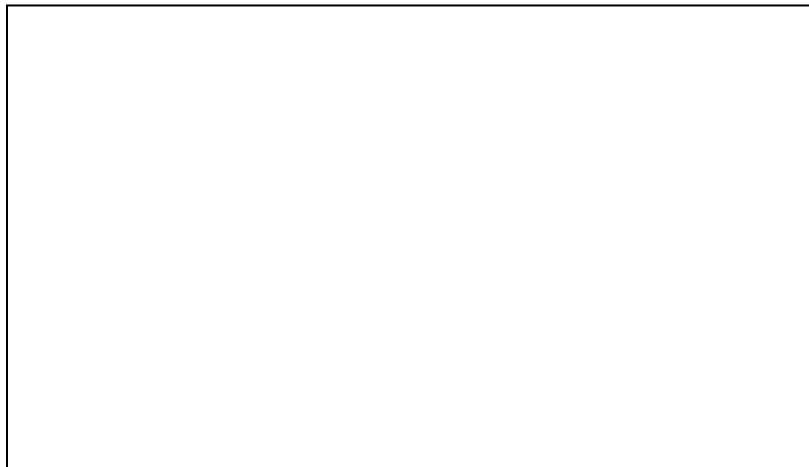




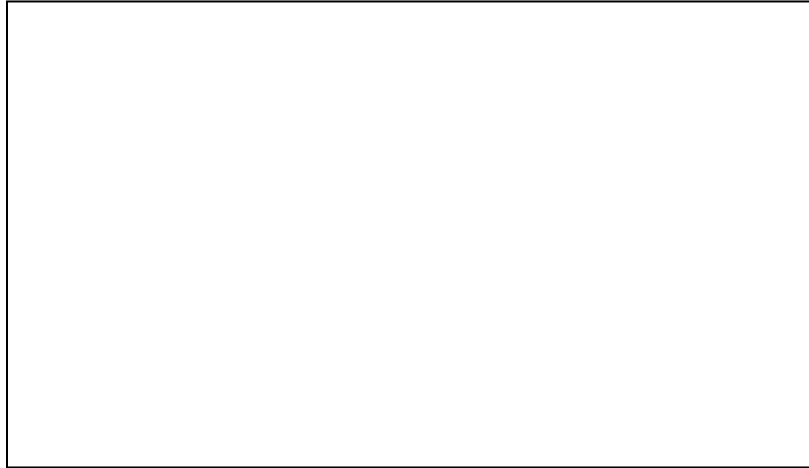
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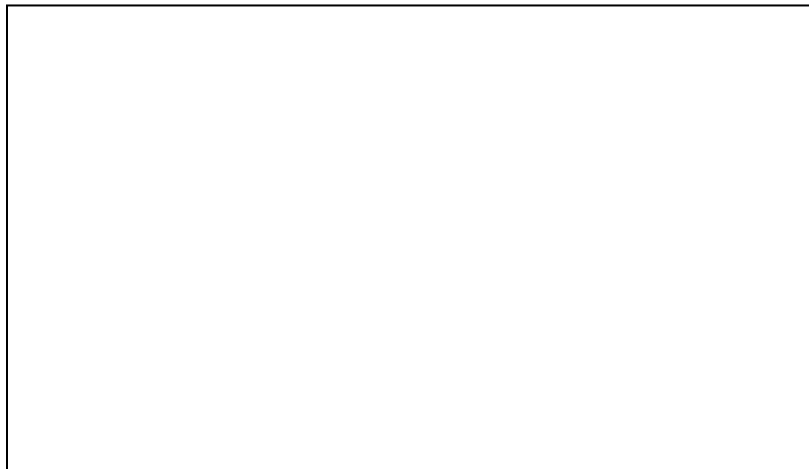
Picture 9:



Picture 10:



Picture 11:



Picture 12:



Now follow these steps:

1. Look at the pictures.
2. Pay attention to the details.
3. Do you take note of these details when you live through your day?

Yes  No

4. How do the pictures make you feel?

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5. Why do you feel this way?

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6. Which parts of your day do you value most?

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7. Which parts of your day do you dread most?

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8. What can you learn from this day?

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9. What can you change to make your day more fulfilling?

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Use the pictures from your photo journal to make a short video and post it to Margins' social media platforms with the #MarginsPushBoundaries. Our URLs can be found on the back of this activity book. Share your experiences of doing the photo journal.

**If you don't want to share your photo journal publicly that's ok but don't discard this video, because we will re-visit it at the end of our self-awareness program to see if anything changed.**

#### **4. Step 3 Acknowledge**

We all have skeletons in our closet that we just do not want to face. Acknowledging the past is one of the hardest things to do especially for the socially excluded but if we deny those parts of ourselves, we create an environment where we allow the past to poison the present. You would have realized this in step 2. Have a look at the things you dread most in your day and the things you value most, and you will see that these things have a root in the past.

There are reasons why we deny the past. First, we feel resentment for the things that were done to us. What we fail to realize is that we will never get the people who wronged us or society to acknowledge that it failed us, but we can accept this simple fact- that the past was only partially our fault, but the future is entirely our responsibility.

Second, we feel guilt and/or shame for the things we did and the things that were done to us. Our social exclusion shaped us. It made us dysfunctional human beings and our actions were informed by that dysfunction. We have to be accountable for our actions but by living in the prison of resentment, guilt, or shame we allow the cycle of dysfunction to continue.

We cannot change the past, but we can make a choice right now to change the present and the future and to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery. We can use the past as the material to build our future by bringing the past into the light of

truth and seeing it for what it was, accepting that things and people failed us, and that we sometimes failed ourselves.

Acknowledgement is knowing that yesterday is gone and there were many things that we had absolutely no control over but today we are empowered people. We have a rich albeit painful past and, because of this experience, we can make better future decisions. Life is a series of tests to see how we perform, and the world is filled with booby traps that hinder us from realizing our complete self.

Everything you do now must come from a place of an empowered person that interacts with the present rather than a powerless person that lets the present happen to them. This means that, while yesterday you were a victim of circumstance today, you are in the driver's seat of your destiny. By acknowledging the past, you take away its power to sabotage your present and you give that power back to yourself.

Use the Margins Self-Awareness Journal to observe your thoughts. It is available for free download on our website [www.marginspushboundaries.com](http://www.marginspushboundaries.com) or from any of our social media platforms. Thoughts drive our intentions, intentions drive our actions, and actions shape our lives. By recording your thoughts in your journal, you become empowered to identify patterns in your thought processes. If we can see patterns, we have the power to break these patterns and change the course of our lives!



## **5. Step 4 Wipe the Slate Clean**

There is a very powerful lie in society that the socially excluded all buy into and that is that we are just numbers. We are taught that we are worthless and can be replaced. It is a powerful lie because, when we believe it, we surrender our personal power. Every human being is incredibly valuable to society because we perform jobs, we support families and communities, we buy goods and services; without us, society would collapse.

Each of us needs to see ourselves as an important resource. For example, if you bought a Ferrari today you would take certain measures to protect it because you know its value. That means that you would store it in an enclosed garage, you would make sure it is insured, and you would drive it responsibly. We need to treat ourselves the same way.

Self-awareness is consciousness away from oppression and towards emancipation. That means opening our eyes to the daily onslaught of oppression. We are bombarded with messages that negate our self-worth 24 hours a day, 365 days a year until we die. Think about how much time you spend watching television or on social media and then you will know what I am talking about.

We are told what to wear, what to think, and how to behave. We dress and speak, and act in ways that we think give us worth. We develop behavior patterns to please society in order to fit in rather than behaving in a way that empowers us as people.

Many of us get into debt so we can wear clothes, or drive a car, or live in a house that makes us feel worthy. Our lives become filled with things that drag us down and suffocate us.

We spend our lives listening to others and letting them define us and tell us what we can and cannot do until we are not quite sure of who we are. So, we need to spend a lifetime trying to re-acquaint ourselves with ourselves. Conscious mind, speech, and action is a process where we are constantly getting rid of ideas, things, and people that are no longer a positive force for us; that is what we mean when we say, 'wipe the slate clean'.

Wiping the slate clean means making a clear distinction between the things that are consistent with our authentic selves and which add value to our lives and those things which we do to please society and 'fit in.' In the table below, record the things and people that add value to your life and allow you to be your true self. On the other side, record the things and people that force you to be something that you are not.

THINGS THAT ADD VALUE TO MY LIFE AND ALLOW ME TO BE <u>ME</u>	THINGS THAT TAKE AWAY FROM MY LIFE AND FORCE ME TO BE SOMETHING I AM NOT

Now, make an affirmation to add more things that add value to your life and discard more things that take away from your life. This process will result in an emptiness. Feelings of loneliness and emptiness are just tools to wipe the slate clean, to bring ourselves back to ourselves, and to understanding that until we

know the value of ourselves, we have no capacity to understand the value of anything.

During times of emptiness there is a compulsion to fill that emptiness with something and to slip back into old and destructive habit patterns and it is in these times of desperation that it is most important to hold firm and strong. When you encounter these feelings of desperation, of emptiness, and of loneliness revisit your list on page 19.

Interrogate all your thoughts, words, and actions and ask why. If you are struggling internally, ask why? If you are in financial debt, ask why? If you are in an abusive relationship, ask why? Keep asking why until you reach the root of the problem and then ask, "Do I need this in my life?"

When we attach value to ourselves, we develop a deep sense of self-respect, and that respect extends to everything. We realize that we are worth something and that our time, our love, and our resources have value and should not be wasted on the wrong things or people. Everything we do from this moment is the gift we give ourselves!

## 6. Step 5 Break Old Habit Patterns

As we wipe the slate clean and take conscious steps towards the lives we want, our conscious self will emerge more strongly and the old self will feel threatened and fight back. What do we mean by this? The conscious self is your true self; the person you were born to be. The old self is the self that was conditioned by social exclusion and by society. When these two selves are in conflict with one another (within you) you develop a compulsion to revert to default mode, i.e., the old self.

### **Don't! Break the cycle of self-destruction.**

Break old habit patterns. Whenever you find negative, destructive thoughts taking up room in your mind and leading you down the path back to the past- observe them. Once they have been found out they tend to disappear. We need to keep reminding ourselves that a better tomorrow means releasing old habit patterns.

**Put a rubber band on your wrist. Every time your old self emerges and tries to throw you off course give yourself a little sting. It will hurt but we are in battle here. Prepare to win!**



## 7. Step 6 Self-Love

All of the steps in this Margins 8 Steps to Self-Awareness Program have been leading us to this point- to loving ourselves. There are three stages to love. The first is tolerance. Most of us merely tolerate ourselves. When you started step 1 and you made your affirmation, you were probably like billions of people around the world who merely tolerate themselves.

Tolerance is about being functional. We don't take the time to understand ourselves. We don't spend time with ourselves. We don't listen to ourselves. We are in autopilot; we move from one day to the next doing what is necessary, doing what is expected of us, and doing what we can to escape that reality.

The second stage of love is acceptance and, if we never achieve self-love, we should all aspire to self-acceptance. Self-acceptance is opening ourselves up to the experience of knowing ourselves. This is what self-awareness is all about. It is about seeing the value of every experience and asking, "What does this mean for me?"

Self-acceptance is also about discerning. It is about being open to all experiences but knowing that we have the power to choose which ones. In society, we use morals and ethics to keep order. People don't know why they should follow these rules and so many don't. Self-acceptance is knowing that we can think, say, and do whatever we want but we choose only those things that are consistent with who we are (i.e., our authentic selves).

Love is the third, and final stage that we are all aspiring for. It is the pinnacle of self-awareness. It is the stage at which the world gets incredibly small before it becomes infinite.



Love starts like a tiny seed being planted in the heart. It is knowing that I can only give love that I have for myself and spending every possible moment nurturing that love. That means healing past hurts, forgiving past mistakes, and promising myself a better tomorrow.

As love grows and becomes a little sapling it is still fragile. At this stage, love is knowing that we are limited people with limited time, money, and energy. Our love is very valuable, and we need to be

selective about who we give it to. If we don't value our love then we don't value ourselves. Love is about knowing that we are worth something and not giving anyone the permission to define our worth or force us to share ourselves with them. If we are not mindful about who we give our love to at this stage, we are easily broken and we find ourselves back at square one- feeling worthless.

When self-love is mastered, it grows into a mighty tree. Its roots reach deep down into the heart and its branches reach further than we can imagine. At this stage, we see the world and everything in it as an extension of ourselves and we feel a compulsion to embrace, nurture, and help. It is natural for a tree to do this. The tree provides shelter, it is a home for insects and birds, it provides fruit and shade for humans. It can give its love freely without there being any repercussions that's because when love has become a mighty tree, it has the wisdom of self-awareness. It knows what it is, it knows what its purpose is, and it knows how to share itself while still loving itself.

Many of us want to jump into caring, loving, nurturing, and helping others before we are ready- before we have learnt to love ourselves. We do this to compensate for our feelings of inadequacy. We do this to feel relevant and gain a sense of validation from the outside world. When we give of ourselves to others before we have learnt to love and nurture ourselves, we get frustrated by feelings of not being appreciated or recognized for our good deeds and intentions. The mighty tree does not need validation, recognition, or compensation because a love that is mighty is destructive to itself



when it is contained. Trees can't hide, they can't keep their fruit to themselves, they can't restrict their shade from people or animals. Until our own love has been nurtured and becomes that mighty we need to discern who we give it to.

In this step, outline how you plan to love yourself by answering the following questions:

**1. What have you been promising yourself but just failed to deliver?**

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**2. What are the things that you can give to yourself that would make you feel more loved?**

(Make sure that these things are consistent with your authentic self. If you are not sure about who your authentic self is, go back to step 2).

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(Think about all the holes that have been caused by your past and by the hurtful things done to you and now think about how you will make yourself more 'complete' through self-love).

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## **8. Step 7 Meet yourself.**

The journey of self-awareness has led you to YOU. Meet yourself and rejoice! The most important thing we will ever do is meet ourselves. Yesterday, things happened- good and bad; you were the product of circumstance. Today, you are liberated from the past and empowered to celebrate your present and anticipate your future.

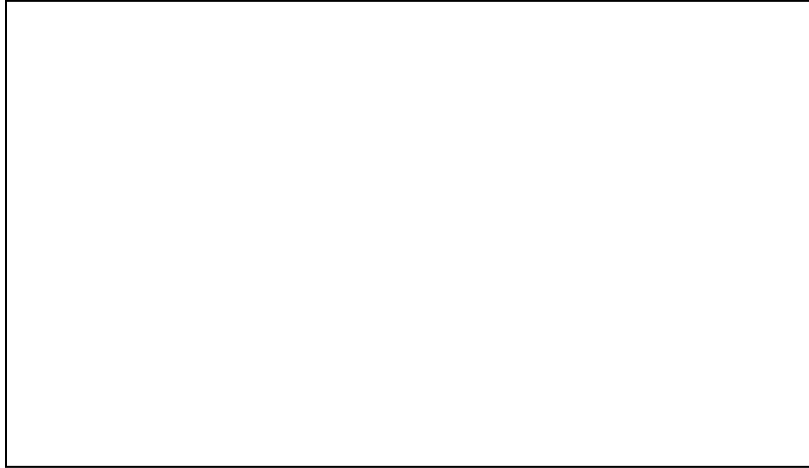
Every day you will train yourself not to be controlled by the things and people outside of yourself. You will train yourself to focus inward. That inward focus makes us strong. It gives us the tools to become the person we want rather than what others expect.

### **What does the new you look like?**

Now that you have made this affirmation to yourself, you have observed yourself, you have acknowledged the buried parts of yourself, you have wiped the slate clean, you have broken the cycle of self-destruction, and you have learnt to love yourself and others, now you can be the person you were always meant to be.

**Do the photo journal again. Ask yourself the same questions. Observe changes in your character and your outlook. The journey doesn't end here!**

Picture 1:



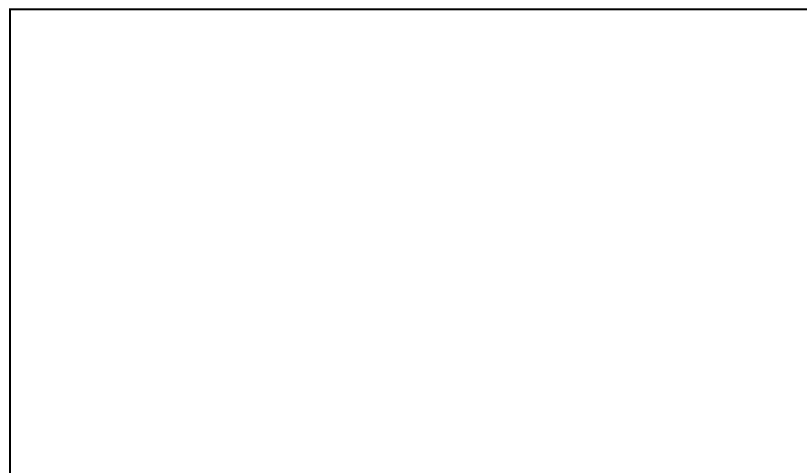
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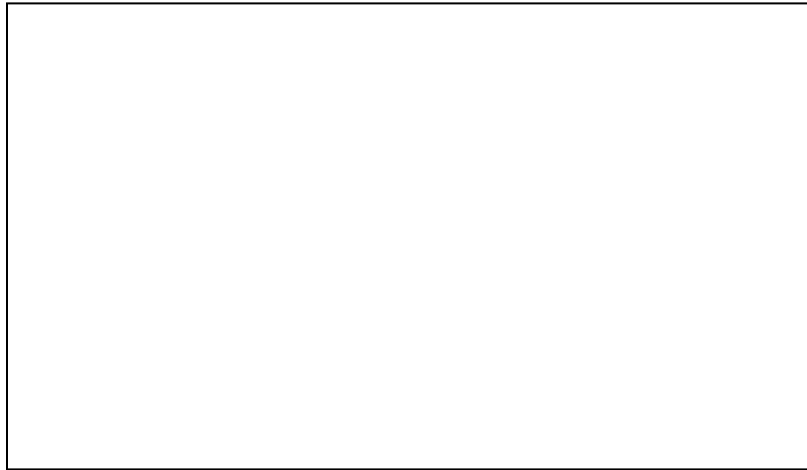
Picture 3:



Picture 4:



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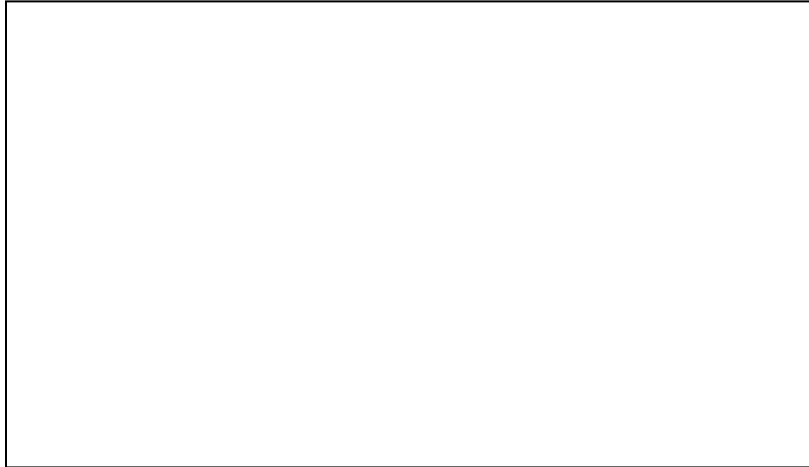


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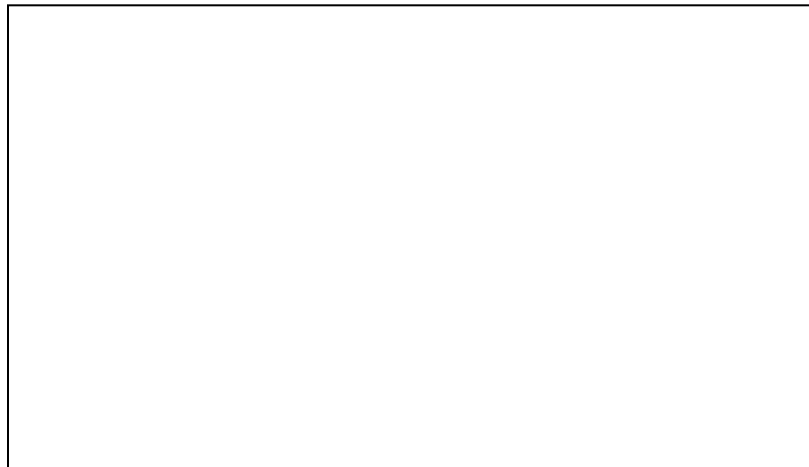




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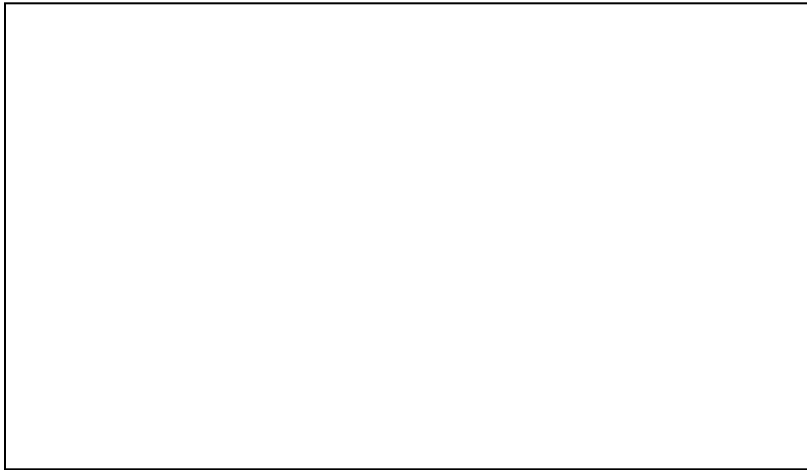
Picture 8:



Picture 9:



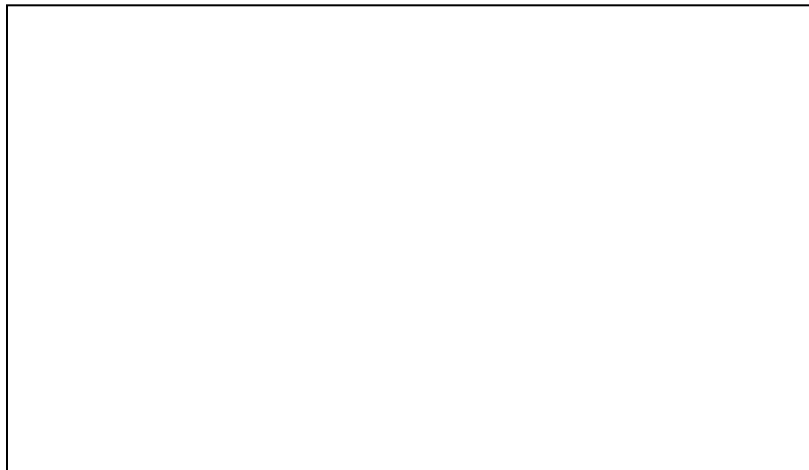
Picture 10:



Picture 11:



Picture 12:



Now follow these steps:

1. Look at the pictures.
2. Pay attention to the details.
3. Do you take note of these details when you live through your day?

Yes  No

4. How do the pictures make you feel?

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5. Why do you feel this way?

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6. Which parts of your day do you value most?

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7. Which parts of your day do you dread most?

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8. What can you learn from this day?

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9. What can you change to make it more fulfilling?

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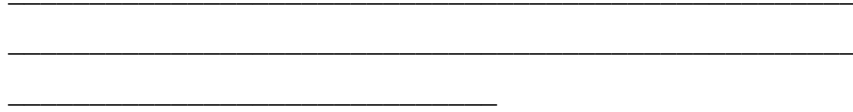
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## **9. Step 8 Planning the future.**

Look in the mirror and ask yourself which passions you have relegated to the dusty corners of your home and your mind. For some, it is the piano that hasn't been played in years, or the business plan that is now a paper weight, or the voice that is longing to sing but has never gotten the chance.

Self-awareness is about being and it is also about becoming. In this step we will build an action plan for our future. Spend an hour on the internet and social media. As you read different articles or look at different images, make a list of things that stir emotions in you and ask yourself why.

For example, a picture of a beautiful home may give you a special feeling. Describe that feeling and then ask yourself what that home stands for. For some it is status, for others it is security. Ask yourself how your life would change if you could achieve whatever you wanted and then (if your desire is consistent with who you are) ask yourself how you will get it.



DESCRIBE THE IMAGE	DESCRIBE HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL	IS THIS GOAL/DREAM CONSISTENT WITH YOUR <u>TRUE</u> SELF?	HOW DO YOU PLAN TO ACHIEVE THIS?

While our program comes to end here, your journey with Margins doesn't. We are with you on your path to self-awareness and to overcoming social exclusion. We have more resources on our website and our social media platforms.

We wish you all the best and don't forget- We are here for you!

## **10. What It Means to Be a Margins Self-Awareness Sponsor**

A Margins Self-Awareness Sponsor should have gone through the 8 Steps to Self-Awareness Program and be familiar with it. Being a sponsor does not mean that you have overcome your problems with.

social exclusion or your inner struggles; it just means that you are ready and able to share your experiences with someone else and, to do that, you need to understand the power of pain and the power you have to use your pain as an instrument to help yourself and others.

The socially excluded understand pain. They saw things they cannot unsee and were hurt in ways they will never be able to forget. They see the world differently from those who have led more normal, included lives. The socially excluded spend their lives looking for answers, wondering why, wondering if they deserved the short stick they drew, wondering if it was their fault. They see everything through the lens of exclusion.

For the socially excluded, pain is as much a part of them as their eyes or nose. Pain is such a distinctive part of their lives and their identity that to forget it, is to strip themselves of the strongest parts of themselves, the part that kept them alive. They make choices according to real or anticipated pain and are driven by survival.

As a result, they either live on the run or they live fighting. Running or fighting, however, do not work forever. At some point, the socially excluded must face themselves and their pain and they must try to live instead of just survive. The way to do that is to recognize the power of pain. Just as pain gave you the courage and resourcefulness to survive, it can also be used to live.

The socially excluded can either resent the world and themselves and make up for their suffering by taking as much as possible even if it comes at the cost of others. They can become isolated, and they can lose their trust and reliance on each other. They can sow insecurities, jealousies, and fear or, they can see their pain as a superpower; something that made them who they are, gave them survival skills beyond measure, and the capacity to understand the suffering of others in a way that those who have not experienced exclusion can't.

They can see themselves in the world and know that what they give to the world they also give to themselves. They can know that, while.

they may not have had a hand to hold, an ear to listen, or a comforting word, they are better able to give these things to others. because they know what it is to walk alone. When they do this, they learn to live, and they live in harmony with themselves and each other.

They can share their time and compassion knowing that because pain digs deep, they have so much more to give. When they work towards a common end- the liberation of all humans from their social exclusion- they work towards their own freedom and that is what being a Margins Sponsor is all about!

## **11. About Margins**

Marginal Mind Matters (Margins) is a registered not-for-profit company working to help the marginalized cope with the inner suffering of social exclusion through self-help and support groups. When we recognize the feelings attached to social exclusion we can translate negative feelings of anger, frustration, and helplessness and the harmful activities we use to express ourselves such as self-harm, substance abuse and violence and, instead, channel our energies into liberating ourselves, pushing the boundary of social exclusion, and escaping marginalization both internally and externally.

If we don't recognize the feelings attached to social exclusion, the external oppression of social exclusion leads to feelings of inferiority, worthlessness, and being trapped. When we experience these feelings, we become paralyzed by fear, and we are unable to escape our social circumstances. The boundary of exclusion becomes entrenched by our own internal suppression. The Margins Self-Awareness Activity Book is a tool to:

- Affirm our commitment to ourselves,
- Observe our daily lives in order to become more mindful,
- Acknowledge our past and its destructive role in sabotaging our present,
- Wipe the slate clean of oppressive social messaging and distinguishing between things that add value to our lives

(and are consistent with our authentic selves) and things that are toxic and take us away from our true selves,

- Break old and destructive habit patterns that keep us trapped and socially excluded,
- Develop self-love and self-respect,
- Acquaint ourselves with ourselves and work to be our best selves,
- Plan for a future that we deserve.

# **;**M**MARGINS**

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Push Boundries

# JOIN OUR FAMILY



[www.marginspushboundaries.com](http://www.marginspushboundaries.com)



[www.facebook.com/marginalminds](http://www.facebook.com/marginalminds)



[www.twitter.com/marginalminds](http://www.twitter.com/marginalminds)



[www.instagram.com/margins\\_pushboundaries](http://www.instagram.com/margins_pushboundaries)



[www.youtube.com/@margins-pushboundaries](http://www.youtube.com/@margins-pushboundaries)



[www.soundcloud.com/margins-pushboundaries](http://www.soundcloud.com/margins-pushboundaries)



[www.mixcloud.com/margins](http://www.mixcloud.com/margins)



[www.tiktok.com/margins\\_pushboundaries](http://www.tiktok.com/margins_pushboundaries)



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