How To Like Your Negative Traits

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We all have traits that we attach negative labels too. These are basically things that we do not like about ourselves and things we wish to change. This worksheet will help guide you to feeling like your 'negative' traits aren't so bad after all. The aim of this worksheet is for you to at least be thankful for them and to see the positives that come out of them. It won't be easy but it can be done if you are willing.

Traits are characteristics that are usually associated with our own unique personality. They make us who we are. We can work on changing them but we can also learn to accept them. By doing this, we accept who we truly are. One important point to note is that we are not defined by our traits. We are so much more than them.

The benefits of this exercise are improved self esteem, self acceptance, confidence and a more positive outlook. It works similar to the way we spin around our weaknesses in a job interview. Are you ready to take a deeper look? See the tables below to understand the basics of the tasks. You will most likely have completely different answers to the examples ones.

It is recommended that you use a journal or notebook to complete this worksheet.

1. Firstly we must **identify** what those traits are that you have a bad association with. Usually, this is a very easy task as humans often focus more on the negative than the positive. This is not your fault - this is your biology. Once upon a time it was necessary to think about these things for survival but in this modern world this is hardly necessary. You shouldn't use this an an excuse though to concentrate on the negative but just to be more understanding of yourself when you do. Come up with as many as you can. Search online for different traits if you are stuck.

2. For each of these traits think of one positive thing that has come out of them in the past **for you**. This might seem impossible at first but there is a positive thing that comes out of every negative thing and you have just got to search for it. Even if it is something really small.

3. For each of these traits, come up with one positive thing that has come out of these traits in the past **for someone else**. You may find this one easier than step two.

4. For each of these traits come up with one potential positive outcome that may happen **in the future.** If you found that you had a lot of blanks for steps 2 and 3, this step may help you fill in a couple. Imagining and visualising is easier as there are more possibilities of things that could occur than thinking of what already has occurred, as the past cannot be changed - only the way we think about it can.

Trait	Positive for you	Positive for someone else	Positive for the future
Suppressing emotions in front of others	Encourages me to find other ways to relax that benefit me in other ways too	They feel less attacked than if I was to reveal them all	Allows space to grow in order to express them in a healthy way
Overly kind	I feel warm whenever I am kind	They feel warm and kindness is passed on to others	Helps to make the world a better place
Shyness	Means that I am conscientious	More compassion towards others that are shy and makes me a good listener	Could attract friends due to my approachable nature

Table 1. Use this table as a guide to steps 1-4

5. Now think of very specific times where these traits were utilised. Try and think of one good thing that came out of that situation, whether it impacted you or someone else. There will be a silver lining, you just have to search for it.

Trait	Event	Positive outcome
Suppressing emotions in front of others	Had to grit my teeth when a colleague said something really stupid.	I didn't let my colleague know that I thought he was stupid.
Overly kind	Allowed someone to get me to do something that I didn't want to do.	Actually enjoyed helping out.
Shyness	I was way too shy to do the presentation so I didn't get a good grade.	Ended up dropping the class and took one that eventually helped me realise what I want to do with my life.

Table 2. Use this table as a guide to step 5

The point of this exercise is to focus all of your attention on the positive aspects of these traits that you consider negative. If you wish you can go into depth on what led you to believe that they are bad and you can challenge those beliefs but I think most answers will be the same. We often feel that some of our traits are negative because of what we have been told by other people, adults when we were young, classmates, the media and society in general. As I said earlier, it is human nature to focus on the bad but we can do this less by shifting our focus.

Of course, some traits that we label as bad are unhealthy and unwanted. Perhaps you were using them to protect yourself - that is something positive that came out of them, even though doesn't excuse them. For ones such as dishonesty, aggressiveness and disloyalty, I encourage you to do some deeper self work to look into who you truly are and see if these traits align with you. If they do not then look into ways to reduce the effects of them.

Hopefully this exercise will also encourage you to look for the positive in all things and not just your personality traits. You will now be able to create abundance out of things that you believed were lacking. Through struggle comes growth.