

EMPATHY EXERCISE

True happiness comes from living in alignment with who we really are—where joy, love, creativity, and a natural sense of excitement flow with ease.

Yet one of the greatest obstacles to this alignment is our tendency to self-criticize, especially when it comes to how we feel.

We often judge our emotions—telling ourselves we shouldn't be feeling what we're feeling. These judgments are usually rooted in unrealistic expectations, and they tend to create a ripple effect of guilt, inadequacy, and frustration.

Over time, these reactions build resistance and pull us further away from our inner truth.

The Empathy Exercise is here to gently shift that pattern. It helps you understand the emotional landscape you're in, recognize the feelings beneath the surface, identify the needs connected to them—and begin finding pathways to meet those needs with care and clarity.



LIST OF FEELINGS AND NEEDS

FEELINGS	
Physical Feelings	pain, stiff, empty, small, smothered, short of breath, tense, wretched, sick
Sad	disappointed, dispirited, melancholic, depressed, down, gloomy, desirous, nostalgic
Regret	guilty, repentance
Worried	tense, nervous, anxious
Pain	hurt, lonely, wretched, mourning
Vulnerable	fragile, uncertain, sensitive
Withdrawn	bored, detached, isolated, alienated, apathetic, cold, numb, impatient
Ashamed	guilty, embarrassed, shy
Scared	afraid, suspicious, panic, paralyzed, startled, anxious
Uncomfortable	troubled, nervous, restless, uncertain, insecure
Hate	hostile, aversion, bitter, loathing, contempt
Envious	jealous
Desperate	helpless, hopeless, powerless, uncertain
Skeptical	torn, lost, bewildered, perplexed, confused
Shocked	startled, upset, surprised, disturbed, alert, panic, overwhelmed
Frustrated	irritated, annoyed, impatient, embittered, irritable
Rage	angry, mad, upset, furious, resentful
Tired	defeated, burnt-out, exhausted, sleepy, weary

NEEDS	
Physical Well-being	air, food, water, shelter, protection, health, comfort, warmth, touch, sexual expression
Harmony	peace, tranquility, relaxation, beauty, order, ease, predictability, familiarity, stability, balance, completion, wholeness
Liveliness	to discover, adventure, passion, spontaneity, play
Power	self-esteem, confidence, dignity, inner power, empowerment, competence, effectiveness
Pleasure	to celebrate, to mourn, flow, humor, laughter, vitality, challenge, stimulation
Connection	collaboration, reciprocity, communication, company, to belong, durability, continuity, to give, to receive, to see / to be seen, to hear / to be heard, to understand, to be understood
Autonomy	choice, freedom, time, space, independence
Authenticity	honesty, integrity, transparency, openness, self-expression
Meaning	to learn, growth, to contribute, to enrich life, hope, creativity, inspiration, purpose, clarity, awareness, liberation, transformation, to matter, participate, to be present, simplicity
Love and Attention	love, compassion, care, attention, acceptance, appreciation, reassurance, affection, trust, involvement, respect, support, nearness, intimacy, tenderness, softness, sensitivity, friendliness

STEP 1

Begin by writing down the judgmental thought exactly as it appears in your mind.

Be honest and specific. Don't filter or soften it—this step is about becoming aware of the language your inner critic uses so you can begin to shift it with clarity and compassion.

Judgmental Thought	Observation	Feelings	Needs	Requests
"I should be able to do everything perfectly."				
"My life's work should already be established."				
"I'm not performing on stage enough."				

STEP 2

Write down specific observations—real situations or moments—that could have triggered each self-critical thought.

These observations reflect how everyday experiences can lead to negative self-talk, especially when shaped by unrealistic expectations. Recognizing this helps you see that self-criticism often arises not from truth, but from how we interpret and judge those experiences.

Judgmental Thought	Observation	Feelings	Needs	Requests
"I should be able to do everything perfectly."	Made several errors in a recent project despite effort.			
"My life's work should already be established."	By the time others reach my age, they've accomplished so much.			
"I'm not performing on stage enough."	I haven't been learning new pieces or looking for chances to perform.			

STEP 3

Identify your feelings. Look closely at how the judgmental thought makes you feel. Refer to a list of feelings that commonly arise when needs are unmet—such as pressured, overwhelmed, anxious, discouraged, frustrated, ashamed, or lonely.

Naming your feelings clearly is a powerful step toward understanding your emotional state. It helps you move from vague discomfort to real clarity, allowing you to meet your inner experience with compassion instead of judgment. Recognizing your feelings also reassures you that what you're experiencing is valid and human.

Judgmental Thought	Observation	Feelings	Needs	Requests
"I should be able to do everything perfectly."	Made several errors in a recent project despite effort.	Disappointed, Gloomy, Tense, Uncertain, Annoyed, Frustrated, Defeated		
"My life's work should already be established."	By the time others reach my age, they've accomplished so much.	Small, Lonely, Alienated, Hopeless, Powerless		
"I'm not performing on stage enough."	I haven't been learning new pieces or looking for chances to perform.	Guilty, Nervous, Restless, Self-loathing, Envy, Powerless, Lost, Angry, Irritated		

STEP 4

Identify your needs. Refer to the list of unmet needs and identify which specific need is at the root of your feelings. It might be a need for completion, safety, connection, understanding, rest, support, authenticity, or creativity.

Pinpointing the underlying need behind your emotional response helps make sense of your experience. It's not just about "feeling bad"—it's about recognizing what matters to you that isn't being fully met. This clarity can bring a deep sense of reassurance and emotional validation, allowing you to shift from self-criticism to self-compassion.

Judgmental Thought	Observation	Feelings	Needs	Requests
"I should be able to do everything perfectly."	Made several errors in a recent project despite effort.	Disappointed, Gloomy, Tense, Uncertain, Annoyed, Frustrated, Defeated	Warmth, Order, Ease, Predictability, Balance, Stability, Completion	
"My life's work should already be established."	By the time others reach my age, they've accomplished so much.	Small, Lonely, Alienated, Hopeless, Powerless	Self-esteem, Confidence, Empowerment, Effectiveness, Independence, Reassurance, To Belong, Collaboration	
"I'm not performing on stage enough."	I haven't been learning new pieces or looking for chances to perform.	Guilty, Nervous, Restless, Self-loathing, Envy, Powerless, Lost, Angry, Irritated	Clarity, Stability, To understand, Empowerment, Purpose, Liberation, Transformation, 'Love & Attention' section	

STEP 5

Create requests to meet your needs. Now that you've identified your unmet needs, take time to write down specific, doable requests that could help meet them. These requests can be actions you take for yourself or ways you communicate your needs to others. Use your creativity—there's often more than one way to meet a need. If you're unsure what to ask for, try entering your observations, feelings, and needs into ChatGPT. Ask for a list of possible requests that could support those needs. Reviewing the suggestions can bring clarity or even spark new ideas you hadn't considered. The goal here is not perfection—it's creating options for change and care.

Judgmental Thought	Observation	Feelings	Needs	Requests
"I should be able to do everything perfectly."	Made several errors in a recent project despite effort.	Disappointed, Gloomy, Tense, Uncertain, Annoyed, Frustrated, Defeated	Warmth, Order, Ease, Predictability, Balance, Stability, Completion	It's okay that I've made mistakes—they're just part of the learning process. I've put in a lot of effort, and I should take a moment to appreciate that. I'll break things down into smaller steps and give myself credit for each one. It's not about being perfect, but about making steady progress and finding balance.
"My life's work should already be established."	By the time others reach my age, they've accomplished so much.	Small, Lonely, Alienated, Hopeless, Powerless	Self-esteem, Confidence, Empowerment, Effectiveness, Independence, Reassurance, To Belong, Collaboration	Take time to reflect on and celebrate my achievements. I can focus on small, meaningful steps that align with my own path and values. I'm not alone in this, and seeking support or collaboration will help me feel more empowered and connected.
"I'm not performing on stage enough."	I haven't been learning new pieces or looking for chances to perform.	Guilty, Nervous, Restless, Self-loathing, Envy, Powerless, Lost, Angry, Irritated	Clarity, Stability, To understand, Empowerment, Purpose, Liberation, Transformation, 'Love & Attention' section	Reflect on what's holding me back. Journal or meditate to gain insight into my emotions and goals. Choose new pieces that excite me. Engage with a community of learners or performers who can motivate, support and inspire me.

CORE BELIEFS EXERCISE

Reframing Core Beliefs

When you're aware that a certain path or choice would benefit you—but still feel inner resistance—this signals an opportunity to explore and shift a deeper, underlying belief.

Because beliefs and emotions are intertwined, simply trying to change how you feel through logic often doesn't work.

But when you identify and transform the core belief beneath the resistance, your emotional state naturally follows.

And from there, your thoughts, behaviors, and outcomes begin to shift as well.

This is where belief work becomes powerful.

To support this process, consider listening to the opening theme of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 (2nd movement) while doing the exercise. This piece, especially when played at 432Hz, can help release heavy emotions like regret, grief, anger, or sorrow.

You'll know you've reached the true core belief when you feel a sense of lightness or clarity—when looking at your goals no longer triggers doubt or resistance.

Understanding Your Inner Motivation

This exercise is built on a simple yet powerful truth: all human behavior is driven by an internal motivation system that operates the same way for everyone. At its core, this mechanism is designed to move us toward what we perceive as pleasurable—and away from pain.

The key word here is perceive. What we define as "pleasure" is deeply shaped by our core beliefs.

Many of these beliefs were formed in childhood or absorbed from societal expectations. Over time, they can become so ingrained that we no longer question them—even if they lead us toward choices that no longer serve our well-being.

The goal of this exercise is to gently uncover and question those inherited or outdated beliefs. Once you clearly see that a particular belief isn't truly yours, it becomes much easier to release it. This naturally shifts your internal compass, allowing you to choose what genuinely feels nourishing, fulfilling, and right for you.

To identify these beliefs, look at your actions and thoughts. Because the pattern behind our behavior often follows this simple sequence:

Core beliefs → Emotions → Thoughts → Actions.

By working backward through this pattern, you can uncover the hidden motivations that shape your choices—and begin to transform them from the inside out.

As you move through this exercise, one of the more surprising moments may come when you answer the second question:

“What’s causing the resistance?”

The answer might not come easily, but often, it’s this:

“My fear. My fear of ____.”

At first, this may not feel like the most intuitive or satisfying response. And yet, when we begin to untangle long-standing belief patterns, we often need to lean into ideas that feel uncomfortable—or even contradictory.

You may also feel some internal resistance arise when you reach the third question:

“Why?”

The answer might sound something like:

“Because I choose to believe that I need to.

Somehow, it must feel ‘pleasurable’ or safe for me.”

This may trigger a defensive reaction. You might think, “But I don’t choose this,” or “There’s nothing pleasurable about this.”

That response is valid—and deeply human.

Still, I invite you to try something gentle: consider the possibility that, on a subconscious level, a part of you is seeking safety, familiarity, or even comfort in something that no longer serves your highest good. This doesn’t make you wrong or broken—it simply reflects the way early experiences shape our wiring for pleasure and protection.

Play with this idea lightly, without judgment. Just stay curious.

This kind of reflection may offer the clarity needed to release old beliefs—and open a path toward new, more supportive ones.

Example Scenario

Let’s imagine Amy, who wants to be successful, and outgoing. Yet, despite her desire, something within her can’t fully believe that success is possible for her.

She experiences huge resistance when forcing herself visualizing and feeling that dream.

Here’s how the exercise might look for Amy: ↓

What am I struggling with?	I struggle to <u>succeed</u>
What's causing the resistance to <u>success</u> ?	My fear. My fear of <u>succeeding</u> This response may not be the most immediate or obvious one. However, to break free from negative belief patterns, it's helpful to explore ideas that may initially appear paradoxical.
Why am I afraid to <u>succeed</u> ?	Because I choose to believe that I need to <u>to fail</u>. Somehow, it must feel 'pleasurable' and safe for me. At first, this might seem contradictory, as it implies we're choosing something painful. However, according to Motivational Mechanism, we may believe that feeling this way is necessary for our safety.
Why <u>being afraid of success</u> feels safe for me?	Because it aligns with my comfortable belief <u>in low self-esteem</u> Most common negative beliefs often revolve around feelings of unworthiness and victimhood.

Why is it comforting <u>low self-esteem</u> ?	Because feeling <u>small and unworthy makes my mom love me, and this</u> helps me survive.
What life experience shaped this belief for me?	When I <u>am low and powerless, my mom can control me.</u> <u>It makes her feel needed, and we become codependent.</u> <u>This way, my mother won't feel abandoned.</u>
Why did they/he/she treat me this way?	Because <u>her own mother made her feel abandoned.</u> <u></u> <u></u> <u></u>

Realization	I now realize that my core belief of needing to stay small, powerless, and with low self-worth is based on an outdated survival mechanism. This belief was rooted in my mom's own trauma — passed down from my grandmother This belief was only crucial in my childhood for maintaining connection. I now release this trauma by replacing fear with love.
Forming new core belief centered on love	In my mind's eye, I imagine my grandmother embracing my mom with unconditional love and acceptance. Filled with warmth, my mom passes this love to me, encouraging freedom, independence, and a sense of worthiness. She reassures me that I'm deserving of love, abundance, and fulfilling relationships with myself and others. I created a new core belief where my survival depends on having high value, being independent, and feeling loved

MANIFESTATION EXERCISE

If you continue to feel resistance around specific needs or dreams, return to the Core Beliefs exercise to explore and gently work through those emotions. Once you've completed all the meditations and journaling practices, you'll find that moving into the manifestation exercise happens naturally. By this point, your body, mind, and heart will be more open, grounded, and ready to connect with your inner vision.

It's important that your dreams align closely with your core emotional needs—such as acceptance, safety, protection, warmth, comfort, grounding, peace, and stillness. Let those needs guide your focus. Choose the ones that resonate most deeply with you, and from there, begin writing your vision as an extension of those needs.

This is your first step in shifting from a fear-based mindset into one rooted in love.

Who do I want to be?	
How do I want others to see me?	
What do I want to have?	
Why do I desire it?	