

The background of the slide is a photograph of a sunset. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a bright orange and yellow near the horizon. In the foreground, there is a field of yellow flowers, possibly sunflowers, which are slightly out of focus. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Self-Awareness Handouts

Exploring Your Personality

Self-awareness is having a clear view of your personality, including strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, things that motivate you, and emotions. It allows you to understand how other people see you, your attitude, and your responses.

As you develop self-awareness, you are able to change how you think and have a chance to change your emotions. Having a clear understanding of your thought and behavior patterns helps you understand other people and form better relationships.

Explore the “Laying the Foundation” series by James J. Messina and Constance M. Messina (2007). They are condensed in the following pages of this workbook. Ask yourself how your personality traits affect your mood and behavior. As you read, write down the names of people you know who have the traits described:

- Looking good <http://www.livestrong.com/article/14704-looking-good-personality>
- Acting out <http://www.livestrong.com/article/14715-acting-out-personality>
- Pulling in <http://jamesjmessina.com/lowselfesteemroles/pullingin.html>
- Entertaining <http://jamesjmessina.com/lowselfesteemroles/entertaining.html>
- Troubled person <http://jamesjmessina.com/lowselfesteemroles/troubledperson.html>
- Enabling <http://www.livestrong.com/article/14675-enabling-personality>
- People pleasing <http://www.livestrong.com/article/14669-people-pleasing-personality>
- Rescuing <http://jamesjmessina.com/lowselfesteemroles/rescuing.html>
- Non-feeling <http://jamesjmessina.com/lowselfesteemroles/nonfeeling.html>



“It takes all kinds to make the world go around.” Your personality is not better or worse than other personalities. 

Self-Awareness Handouts: Nine Personality Traits

***Looking good *Acting out *Pulling in *Entertaining *Troubled person**
***Enabling *People Pleasing *Rescuing *Non-feeling**

Looking Good Personality - Very careful about how they appear to others, but they feel bad inside

- On the outside, a “Looking Good” person seems to be:
 - A hero, high achiever, goal oriented, very responsible, positive, helpful
 - Tries to always look confident, and behave “appropriately”
- But on the inside, they are:
 - Fearful of confronting problems or people
 - Troubled by feeling “not good enough”
 - Lonely, fearful of showing affection, secretive
 - Critical of self and others, with low self-worth or guilt
- **Negative Consequences of “Looking Good”**
 - Low self-esteem, fear of rejection
 - Inability to relax or enjoy successes
 - Fear of letting go or taking risks
 - Guilt or anger about not doing enough
 - Inability to face own problems
 - High stress and pressure
 - Trouble with showing affection
 - Anger for giving in to others, not taking care of own needs
 - Perfectionist or workaholic
- **Positive Potential of “Looking Good”**
 - People can learn to:
 - Focus on own needs and accept help when offered
 - Accept both their strengths and weaknesses
 - Let go of guilt, and include fun and relaxation into schedule
 - Set realistic goals for themselves and others
 - Freely choose how to act or look (without feeling a need to be perfect”
 - Realize they are worthy of unconditional love

Acting Out Personality – Seems like a “troublemaker” but feels lonely and hurt

- On the outside, an “Acting Out” person appears to be:
 - A Troublemaker, not willing to abide by rules
 - Self-centered, manipulative, not responsible
 - Someone who often has problems with the law, drugs, alcohol
 - Rebellious, angry, sullen, and uncooperative
 - Self-destructive, or doing high-risk behaviors
- But on the inside they are:
 - Emotionally withdrawn, with an unsatisfied need for belonging
 - Feeling neglected, unwanted, or “not good enough” for love
 - Lonely, angry, and hurt
- Negative Consequences of “Acting Out”
 - Low self-esteem, sense of guilt, self-hatred, loneliness
 - Lack of trust
 - Unable to show love to others
 - Self-destructive consequences in school, job, family, community, accidents or suicide
 - Chemical dependency
 - Peer group becomes more important than family
 - Anger and arguments increase
 - They may be blamed for the problems other people have
- Positive Potential of “Acting Out”
 - Capable of being real leaders in many social settings
 - They are not afraid to speak the truth
 - Their creative mischief may be fun, and their antics can be helpful to reduce stress
 - Able to be sensitive to others who suffer like they do
 - Have good verbal skills for debating
 - Their awareness of injustice may prepare them to be a “change agent” in family, school, job, or community

Pulling In Personality – A quiet and lonely person

- On the outside, a “Pulling In” person is:
 - Quiet, easily forgotten by others
 - Withdrawn, spends time alone, hard to know
 - Escaping into books, TV, music, hobbies, or daydreaming
 - Self-reliant, takes pride in possessions
- On the inside, the person is:
 - Feeling ignored, rejected, unimportant
 - Angry about problems that make them feel isolated
 - Feeling comfortable alone, and stays “out of the way”
 - Lonely, but holds back negative feelings
- Negative Consequences of “Pulling In”
 - Low self-esteem, isolation
 - Escapes to fantasy world
 - Prone to chemical dependency, overweight, and illnesses
 - Fearful of getting help
 - Personal needs are ignored
 - Puts too much value on their belongings
 - Not wanting to take any risks
 - May lack close friendships or relationships
- Positive Potential of “Pulling In”
 - Solves problems independently
 - Development of personal coping strategies
 - Support from others can be found when needed
 - Trustworthy
 - Successful in learning through reading and other useful activities
 - They can be very good listeners
 - Able to learn assertiveness skills and expressiveness

Entertaining Personality – Immature and insecure

- On the outside, an “Entertaining” person seems to be:
 - “Life of the party” or clown, joking, creating fun
 - Hard to ignore, shows off, talks a lot
 - Less mature, not ready to face hard realities of life
 - Needing protection from others to keep from being overwhelmed
 - Not taken seriously, but doesn’t seem bothered by that
- But on the inside, they:
 - Fear danger, but aren’t sure what is wrong. Insecure
 - Feel guilty for not doing enough to reduce tensions
- Negative Consequences of “Entertaining”
 - Low self-esteem, especially when attention is negative
 - Takes spotlight off of problems, and does not solve them
 - Behavior is hard to ignore, and can be manipulative
 - Unable to express own feelings, or control behavior very well
 - Limited behavioral responses – Usually uses humor or agitation
 - Trouble accepting feelings of other people or have close relationships
 - Never learned to cope with stress, so may be at risk for more illness
 - May use chemicals to reduce stress/substance abuse
- Positive Potential of “Entertaining”
 - They can be good public speakers
 - Have quick thinking and creativity
 - Makes people laugh and enjoy life
 - Have attention-getting talents for public relations or sales
 - Perceptive and sensitive
 - Has potential for powerful insight

Troubled Person Personality – Unstable and restless

- On the outside, a “Troubled” person seems to be:
 - Irresponsible, with low motivation and unstable emotions
 - Unable to express feelings well, intolerant, and denying problems
 - In trouble a lot, self-destructive, and having addictive behavior
 - Social, friendly, outgoing when you first meet them
- But on the inside, they have:
 - Fear and anxiety that their problems will be discovered
 - Despair and guilt over negative consequences, but are usually self-centered
 - Little ability to pay attention, restlessness
- Negative Consequences of “Troubled Person”
 - Low self-esteem, strained relationships with others
 - Inability to make decisions or solve problems
 - Caught up in addictive behavior
 - Drifting away from others, shutting out help and support
 - Seeking to control others in their lives
 - May neglect personal appearance and physical needs
 - May deny worsening physical health problems
 - May be unable to keep a job, increasing anger and strain
 - Self-pity may increase suicidal thoughts and hospitalization may be needed
- Positive Potential for “Troubled Person”
 - Steps toward recovery can be complete and correct because they tend to be obsessive
 - Social skills are well-developed for peer support
 - Reduction of guilt is a good motivator for recovery
 - Feelings of depression can be considered a tool for self-awareness of their physical and emotional needs
 - Fear of being found out can help prevent them from being weak or uncommitted toward recovery
 - Can learn to take open and honest critical feedback
 - “Letting anger go” can increase energy and strength

Enabling Personality – Protects others and feels self-pity or guilt

- On the outside, an “Enabling” person seems to:
 - Protect others from consequences of their actions
 - Try to save others from emotional pain or crisis
 - Take on responsibility, with misguided loyalty
 - Be angry, blaming, but develops an emotional “shell”
 - Feel guilt and self-hatred, often doubting themselves
- But on the inside they:
 - Feel powerless, fragile, self-pity, guilt, pain, fear, anger
 - Use manipulation to get their way
 - Blaming self for the troubled person’s problems
- Negative Consequences of “Enabling”
 - Low self-esteem
 - Problems of the troubled person usually becomes worse
 - Becoming discouraged, angry, and resentful about their life or “martyrs” looking for sympathy
 - Becoming enmeshed in the problem behavior
 - Losing friends because of becoming bitter and obsessive
 - After protecting others from truth, suffers anger, bitterness, and hostility when problem becomes known
 - Often denies own illness, refusing to get help themselves
 - May end up depressed, anxious, and looking for revenge
- Positive Potential for “Enabling”
 - Can be taught “tough love” to redirect effort toward changing their own troubled behavior
 - Let the troubled person “face the music” or “hit a brick wall” so they will recognize need for help
 - When recognizing that they are not responsible for the troubled person’s problems, they are able to let go of their sarcasm, nagging, and blaming
 - May be able to see themselves in a healthier, more rational way, and grow to respect themselves

People Pleasing Personality – Works hard to make others happy, but gets stressed out and loses own identity

- On the outside, a “People Pleasing” person seems to be:
 - Very organized, friendly, helpful, generous, loyal
 - Ready to volunteer, and take on any new challenge
 - Popular, talented, skillful, and creative
 - Encouraging and reassuring, warm and caring
 - Working hard to make others happy and satisfied
- But on the inside they are:
 - Fearing rejection, failure, or loss of approval
 - Feeling unappreciated, insecure, and exhausted
 - Wanting to avoid stress of trying to be perfect
- Negative Consequences of “People Pleasing”
 - Low self-esteem, loss of personal identity
 - “Burnout” on the job or at home
 - Guilt over not being pleasing enough for others
 - Being taken advantage of, adding to insecurity
 - Inability to make decisions, being “stuck” by irrational beliefs
 - Not able to have healthy relationships, achieve personal goals or take a leadership role
 - Does not know how to relax or accept kindness from others
- Positive Potential of “People Pleasers”
 - Can be taught to recognize and accept personal strengths and abilities
 - Personal identity can be accepted by learning to be firm in their beliefs without fear of disapproval
 - They can learn to be assertive and to protect their rights
 - Self-affirmations can help them be less dependent on the need for approval from others
 - By recognizing that failures can be turned into growth experiences, they can let go of unrealistic goals
 - Can learn to nurture the inner child in themselves

Rescuing Personality – Helps troubled people instead of taking care of self

- On the outside, a “Rescuing” person seems to be:
 - Overly responsible, motivated to help troubled people
 - Emotionally stable, but can be irrational in loyalty
 - Generous, selfless, a good person who is being used
 - Tolerant of bad behavior from others
 - Unable to consider self first or be assertive
- But on the inside, they are:
 - Angry at the problems, anxious, and exhausted
 - Feeling guilty for not doing enough for the troubled people
 - Not able to focus healthy attention on themselves
- Negative Consequences of “Rescuing”
 - Low self-esteem
 - Rescuing makes it more unlikely that the troubled person’s behavior will change
 - Denial of problems, and strained relationships
 - Other people become resentful of rescuing behavior
 - Rescuer may become overly involved or obsessed with others
 - May ignore own health and become sick themselves
 - Can lose self-confidence from failing to change things
 - May be hurt and disappointed when they are not recognized for their “good deeds”
- Positive Potential for “Rescuing”
 - High motivation to help can be used to find ways to help themselves become healthier
 - By realizing that rescuers are not victims, they can choose not to be “stepped on” by others
 - Rescuers can aim the generosity toward themselves, protecting themselves from abuse
 - Can learn to recognize what is sick behavior in their relationship with the troubled person and react to it in a rational and healthy way

Non-feeling Personality – Calm, unemotional and uncomplaining

- On the outside, a “Non-feeling” person seems to be:
 - Denying problems, and letting nothing bother them
 - Calm, quiet and easy to get along with
 - Organized, determined, and an intense thinker
 - Reliable, loyal, exact in their work, rarely complains
 - Likeable, fitting in with a variety of social situations
- But on the inside they are:
 - Unsure about their right to stand up for themselves
 - Uncomfortable with overly verbal or emotional people
 - Doesn’t like attention, or talking about feelings
- Negative Consequences of “Non-Feeling”
 - Low self-esteem
 - The more unemotional they are, the more they risk rejection
 - May develop illness from unresolved feelings
 - Denial may cause problems to become a crisis or disaster
 - May have addictive behaviors or become controlling and demanding
 - Feels “bad” and has high stress when showing feelings
 - Unlikely to get help because they can’t identify their feelings
 - Lacks affection, caring, and intimacy in relationships
- Positive Potential for “Non-Feeling”
 - Maintaining calmness is good if problems and feeling are identified and dealt with
 - Education and practice can improve sensitivity to feelings
 - Being “easygoing” can be good, if it is authentic and your rights are respected
 - After identifying own negative feelings and rights, respectful complaining can be learned and practiced
 - By talking about feelings easier, the more expressive people in their lives will be less frustrated
 - Decisions made on logic and facts may be even better if feelings and emotions are considered

Steps Toward Behavior Change

Step One toward Change

- Are you trapped in the pattern of an old behavior pattern or “script?”
- What personal problems are you having? What behaviors are you using?
- What new behavior would be more successful?
- How do you feel about resolving the relationship problem? What is stopping you? Which personality self-scripts are you using?

Step Two toward Change

- If you have identified an old personality self-script impacting you, answer the following questions:
- When and how did you get this old self-script? What were the benefits?
- How comfortable are you with this self-script?
- What changes are needed to make it a healthy script? What stops you?

Step Three toward Change

- Alter the old personality self-scripts. What is my old personality self-script?
- What should be changed? How do I overcome what is stopping me?
- What new behavior pattern would help me change?

Step Four toward Change

- If not yet successful, try this activity:
- Take 30 minutes to think about your past life and how you used your old personality self-scripts
- Visualize how in your current life you consistently respond and use the old personality traits
- Take another 30 minutes to think about how it would be if you continued to use the old traits and behaviors in the future

Step Five toward Change

- If you still have problems with old behavior scripts in your life, return to Step 1 and begin again

Messina, J. J. & Messina, C.M. (2007). Re-writing old personality self-scripts. Retrieved from <http://jamesjmessina.com/lowselfesteemroles/changingoldscripts.html>