

Exercise: Leaning up against the right wall

Take a few minutes to consider things you pursue to feel good about yourself. These can be any of the building blocks of a positive self-image we explored in Chapter 1—money, fitness, intelligence, honesty, popularity, job advancement, looking good. They can be items from the chart we just completed. First list (in your mind or in the table below) these pursuits.

Next to each one, jot down a word or phrase that identifies how it makes you feel good about yourself. Then reflect on how you might go about working toward the same goal, engaging in the same project, but with a different aim—for a purpose other than feeling better about yourself.

For example, I like to teach workshops for other mental health professionals. And it's definitely true, I get a boost when more people show up to hear me or when they tell me that they liked my presentation (I also reliably get a collapse when fewer people show up or they don't seem engaged). But I can also do the same teaching with a different aim—with the wish to genuinely help participants to help their clients. I both become a better presenter and enjoy the process a lot more when I deliberately try to let go of my self-evaluation concerns and focus on being helpful instead.

See if the same is true for you. Fill in the table below with some of your accomplishments, the boosts you get from them, and the alternative aim that you might work toward (I filled in the first line with my example). For more space, print the table available at giftofbeingordinary.com or guilford.com/siegel4-materials.

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Accomplishment	Self-evaluation boost	Alternative aim
<i>Present at conference</i>	<i>Feel liked, respected, smart</i>	<i>Focus on clinicians' and patients' needs</i>

Accomplishment	Self-evaluation boost	Alternative aim

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