

I N E F F A B L E L I V I N G

Inner Child Healing

Worksheets



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Note to the reader: This material is intended as an informational guide. It does not constitute medical, legal, or other professional advice, and does not replace, therapy or medical treatment.

While these worksheets can help you work through traumas that are causing you low to moderate levels of distress, it is best to do these worksheets along with professional help. I recommend seeking the help of a qualified traumatologist, preferably one certified by the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists (ATSS).

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Who Is The Inner Child?

The inner child is the part of your subconscious that has been picking up messages and beliefs way before it was able to fully process what was going on.

Psychiatrist Carl Jung, linked the internal child to past experiences and memories of innocence, playfulness, and hope for the future.

However, other experts describe the inner child as any younger version of yourself.

Become Your Own Best Parent

The author Marion Woodman said, “Children who are not loved in their very beingness do not know how to love themselves. As adults, they have to learn to nourish, to mother their own lost child.”

Learning how parent your inner child happens in stages. In other words, we grow into the job through instinct and increased awareness.

Day 1. Describe The Inner Child

Become curious about your child part by asking yourself the following questions:

How old is he or she?

What does he or she look like?

What expression is there on that little face?

How is he/she feeling? stressed? Anxious? Angry? lonely?

Then, you want to ask the inner child: how can I validate and reassure you?

Describing your inner child helps you feel empathy and compassion toward the child, while validating his or her experience, as you “see” the child as innocent.

Make sure you don’t ask the child part “What happened to you at this age?”, instead ask him/her “What kinds of things has *this child* experienced?” as to not trigger implicit reliving.

Day 2. Affirm the Inner Child

The purpose of this exercise is to Affirm and love your Inner Child.

1. Write down names of your most cherished friends, family members, and loved ones. These are people who make you feel safe and loved.

2. Find a place to sit quietly where you won't be disturbed for about fifteen minutes and take a few relaxing, deep breaths.

3. Imagine yourself as a child, surrounded by these loving people. You can imagine having parents, as you would have liked your parents to ideally be.

As a child you needed to hear the words that follow. Imagine yourself hearing the following statements alternately from a male voice and a female voice:

- I'm happy that you're here
- I see you
- You are special to me
- I respect you
- I love you
- Your needs are important to me. You can turn to me for help
- I am here for you
- You can rest in ME
- I'll keep you safe
- I enjoy you

You can also create your own affirmative messages by asking your inner child what messages he/she wants to hear.

Day 3. Uncover Your Inner Child's Beliefs

1. Think of a least one experience from your childhood with one of your parents where you felt hurt or neglected.
2. Brainstorm keywords based on this experience. How did you parent treat you?

The following are some examples:

Mean, cold, indifferent, domineering, overprotective, very strict, inconsistent, unpredictable, self-centered, moody, pretentious, arrogant, not very empathetic, loud, aggressive, sadistic.

3. Consider some of the things your parents would usually say, like “It’s your fault I’m so overwhelmed,” or, “Just wait till Dad gets home,” or, “Why can’t you be like your cousin Jack,” or, “You’ll never amount to anything.”

4. Consider the relationship your parents had and what the more difficult aspects of their relationship were, like “They fought a lot,” or, “Mom was weak, and Dad made every major decision by himself.”

5. Once finished, try to establish contact with your inner child by examining what negative beliefs your parents’ behaviors stir up in you.

A parent who acts overwhelmed may give the child the feeling that they’re a burden.

To uncover your negative beliefs you can use the following formula:

- “I am _____” or “I’m not _____,”
- “I can _____” or “I can’t _____,”
- “I’m allowed to _____” or “I’m not allowed to _____.”

What follows are some examples of beliefs

- I’m worthless
- I’m not important
- I’m unwanted
- I’m unlovable
- I’m inadequate
- I’m always to blame
- I’m powerless

- I'm so small
- I'm so dumb
- I can't do anything
- I'm not allowed to feel
- I'm a burden
- I'm inferior
- I need to look after you
- I'm not allowed to defend myself
- I have to do everything right
- I can't show any weakness

As you examine your negative beliefs, try to create a distance between the belief and yourself.

Instead of saying, "I'm afraid of being rejected," say to yourself, "The wounded child within me is afraid of being rejected." Notice the thought without labeling it as right or wrong, good or bad.

This will prevent you from giving yourself a false identity and convincing yourself that your thoughts or beliefs are facts.

Day 4. Accept the Wounded Inner Child

There is a psychological law that states that the more we fight against ourselves, the more suffering we experience.

But self-acceptance doesn't mean you have to like everything about yourself. Self-acceptance means acknowledging what's there—the good and the bad, the strengths and the limitations.

It's only when you acknowledge these limitations that you can work on them, if you choose to do so.

1. Close your eyes and try to recite your negative beliefs or it may be easier to recall an incident where your inner child was very reactive.
2. Allow yourself to feel whatever comes up (fear, rage, insecurity, or sorrow.)
3. Take a deep breath and say to yourself “Yes, that’s my dear wounded child. You’re allowed to be here, just as you are. I welcome you.”

Allowing yourself to feel the feelings is a form of self-soothing and it will reduce the intensity of the emotions.

The more your wounded child feels seen, accepted, and understood, the calmer he/she will become.

Self-Reflection: _____

Day 5. Understand Your Wounded Child's Perspective

Understanding your wounded child's perspective will help you separate your inner adult from the wounded child's perception, allowing you more freedom in your decisions and actions.

1. Choose a problem you're struggling with. Place two chairs facing each other. Sit down on one chair and try to channel your wounded child. Allow it to describe the problem and express its feelings and thoughts about this problem.

2. Then sit down on the other chair to summon your inner adult and try to analyze the problem using your own critical, rational mind.

If you have a problem saying no to someone, you may discover that you're not trying to be polite and that it's the wounded child's fear of rejection that's preventing you from asserting yourself.

You can do this exercise in writing, using different pens for the wounded child and the inner adult.

Day 6. Non Dominant Hand Exercise

In this exercise, you're going to communicate with your inner child using both hands.

Here is how to do it:

1. Find a place where you won't be interrupted and allow yourself to relax and clear your mind by taking a few deep breaths.
2. Take an exercise book. Use your usual writing hand to write as the inner parent part of you on the page that matches that hand. (i.e. right hand – use right page)

Then change your pen over to the opposite hand and write your response on the opposite page.

If you're left-handed, simply reverse all the above directions.

Guidelines:

1. Begin with your usual writing hand and try writing something positive about your inner child 'You are
2. Then change your pen over to the opposite hand and let the pen do whatever it wants to do, be it writing, drawing, or even doodling.

Keep a non-judgmental, compassionate attitude as you do this and allow yourself to take as much time as you need.

3. Change your pen over to your dominant hand and respond to whatever the other hand said or drew on its page. Then try asking an easy question in the way you would for a child.

Avoid logical or “why” questions that would distress a small child.

4. Keep going backwards and forwards from one side to the other and for as long as you or your inner child wants to.

5. When you end the sessions, close with reassuring, soothing statement from your dominant hand, especially if the Inner child has expressed fear or vulnerable feelings.

Day 7. Use Art therapy

Expressive art therapy is incredibly healing because it can go to the parts of the brain in the limbic system that words don't.

This is mainly because language is connected to the left side of the brain, whereas emotions are stored in the right side of the brain.

1. Get a piece of paper and crayons and try to relax by taking a few deep breaths.
2. Close your eyes and see your inner child in your mind. Notice the color of his/her hair, posture, clothing and demeanor.

If the inner child is angry, sad or frightened, withhold judgment and welcome him/her and his/her authentic feelings.

3. Draw a picture of the inner child using your non-dominant hand as to allow the inner child to express himself or herself.
4. Use crayons to color the areas of the body where the child feels pain and discomfort using colors associated with that sensation.

For example, you may use the color red or orange to show burning sensation.

5. Thank the child for sharing with you.

Day 8. Strengthen Your Adult-Self

To heal your wounded child, you'll need a strong, resilient inner adult who understands that the negative beliefs are simply the result of childhood influences and who can challenge those negative beliefs.

Here is a list of arguments or facts that you can use along the way:

- No child is born bad. Children can be exhausting, but this doesn't affect their value. It is the parents' responsibility to consider whether they want to take on the stress of parenthood before deciding to become parents.
- Children are more or less powerless. If parents are overwhelmed by the task of fulfilling their children's needs, they should seek assistance.
- Children have the right to have their emotional and physical needs met and it is the parents' duty to understand their children's needs and fulfill them.
- It is the parents' responsibility to love their children and make them feel welcome and accepted. Children should not feel they have to behave in a certain way to earn that love and acceptance.

Choose a negative belief from the list you uncovered previously and try challenging that belief.

The belief I want to examine is _____

Challenging the belief _____

You may find it helpful to answer the following questions as you challenge your beliefs:

- What evidence do I have that what I believe is not true?

- Am I blaming myself for something which is not really my fault?

- Am I taking something personally which has little or nothing to do with me?

- What would I tell a friend if he/she had the same belief?

Day 9. Nurture Your Inner Child

Allow yourself to feel compassion towards the inner child:

1. Look at your childhood pictures of yourself or imagine you are speaking to a scared little kid. Imagine how you'd comfort him/her.

2. Explain to the wounded inner child how things were back then at home, using details from your own childhood.

For example, you might say “Mom was always stressed. You tried not to be a burden on her. You thought ‘I am not good enough,’ ‘I am a burden.’ But you could never, nor was it your responsibility to make Mom happy.”

Addressing your wounded child, try using a child's vocabulary, as if you're talking to a real child. Words like “depressed” could be replaced with words like “sad,” or, “upset.”

3. Explain to the wounded child that none of this was its fault and things would have been so different had Mom and Dad not been so overwhelmed.

You can say something like “Mom and Dad had made mistakes and had they not been so stressed, you have realized that you’re enough and loved just the way you are. It is okay if you were a burden sometimes – it’s the way children are. It’s the parents’ responsibility to take care of their children’s needs.”

Day 10. Mirror exercise

Mirror exercise helps you directly connect with and talk to your inner child. It's also a powerful way to affirm your inner child.

1. Stand in front of a mirror, place your hand on your heart or hug yourself and gaze softly at yourself.
2. Feel the presence of your inner child in your eyes and observe the inner child inside of you.
3. Allow yourself to feel love and compassion towards your inner child and let him/her know that you're there for him/her.
4. Try saying something loving or comforting, such as "I see you", "I'm here now", "I'm so proud of you", "I think you're brave".

Other things you can say are:

"It's okay sweetheart, I'm here"

"I care about you"

"I hear you"

"Your emotions are valid"

"Your emotions are welcomed here"

"It's okay to feel what you're feeling"

"What is on your mind? I'm here to listen".

Day 11. Allow The Inner Adult To Take Control

When a child is afraid to go to the doctor, the adult won't let the child cancel the appointment and will instead hold their hand and help them through the visit.

You can approach your inner child in the same way: allow it to express itself, but ultimately, you're the one making the rational decisions.

When you catch yourself governed by your wounded child, believing everything you think and feel, try to switch back to your adult self and work on comforting the wounded child with soothing words and touch.

Return to your current reality, in which you are an independent adult dealing with people who are not your mom and dad.

The more you practice being attentive to yourself, the faster you'll become at catching yourself when you retreat to your wounded inner child.

Day 12. Amplify The Positive, Bonding Moments

You can use your imagination to amplify the positive, bonding ones.

Recall memories from your childhood that were really nice, close, and loving – moments you experienced with your parents.

Allow yourself to feel that sense of connection and security.

If you can't think of positive moments you've shared with your parents, you can pick out imaginary parents.

Imagine the parents you wished you had, whether they are real people or imaginary figures. Close your eyes and visualize the child you were back then being cared for and loved.

Allow yourself to feel the happiness and security with your new parents.

Day 13. Discover Your Positive Beliefs

Try to think of positive beliefs you adopted from your parents.

Write down positive traits they had and things they did right.

If you'd rather not include your parents because your relationship with them is or was difficult, you may skip this part of the exercise.

You can also think of other adults in your life: a loving grandma, a kind teacher or neighbor who showed you understanding and support as a child.

Here's a list of some positive beliefs:

- I am welcome
- I'm allowed to be me
- I am loved
- I am valuable
- I have a right to be happy
- I'm allowed to feel
- I'm allowed to defend myself
- I'm allowed to have my own opinions
- I'm allowed to make mistakes
- I'm allowed to be a burden sometimes
- I'm allowed to set boundaries

Once you identified a set of positive beliefs, go back to your list of negative beliefs and try to turn these into positives.

For example, the belief that “I’m a burden,” can become, “I’m allowed to be a burden sometimes.” The belief that “I’m worthless,” becomes, “I’m valuable.”

Make sure you don’t include a negative like “not,” in your positive beliefs.

This is mainly because our subconscious isn’t able to tell the difference between “I’m worthless,” and “I’m not worthless,” for example.

It is hard not to think of something. When I say, “Please don’t think of a pink elephant,” you’ll automatically start thinking of one.

Also, make sure your positive beliefs are formulated in a reasonable way by adding words like “enough” or narrowing the belief down:

A belief like “I’m ugly,” is better turned into, “I’m attractive *enough*,” or, “I’m good *enough*.”

A belief like “I’m not important,” is better turned into, “I’m important to my partner/children.”

Negative Belief: _____

Alternative Positive Belief: _____

Negative Belief: _____

Alternative Positive Belief: _____

Day 14. Rewrite Old Memories

Our early childhood memories can deeply affect our lives.

All it takes is a small trigger to quickly and repeatedly fall back into old patterns.

The good news is that our mind does not differentiate clearly between reality and imagination.

For instance, imagining a fearful situation, such as an upcoming interview can be as anxiety-provoking as going for the real interview.

You can use imagination to rewrite painful memories.

1. Think of an incident from your childhood that reflects the beliefs of your wounded child. Try to remember an incident that doesn't trigger debilitating feelings, or try not to immerse yourself fully in it.

For example, if your father abused you physically, it's enough to imagine them raising their hand, without replaying the entire scene.

2. Try to experience the memory through the eyes of the child you were at the time, rather than viewing it from the outside. Feel what the child you were felt, but don't fully immerse yourself in the feelings.

Use an anchor to help you stay present, such as your breath, or simply leave your eyes open and focus on an object in front of you while you recall the memory.

3. Imagine being rescued from that scene. Imagine a helper who shows up to intervene in the situation. It can be a real person or a fictional character.

Day 15. Write Your Wounded Child a Letter

Imagine the child you were back then, standing in front of you and think about all the loving things you wish to tell him or her. You might find it helpful to look at a childhood picture of yourself.

Trauma Resources

ONLINE PTSD TEST

While only a medical professional can accurately give a diagnosis, the internet has made it easy to take **online screenings** that can help give you a better idea of whether or not you have PTSD. (<https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/ptsd/>)

HELPLINES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-TALK (8255).

Available any time of day or night, 365 days a year, this toll-free PTSD helpline has trained volunteers standing by to provide crisis intervention, to offer support for people in distress, and to give information and referrals to people with PTSD and their loved ones.

Veterans Crisis Line: (800) 273-TALK (8255) and press “1”.

This toll-free hotline is available for veterans and their loved ones. You can also send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential, free support and referrals.

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741. This service is available 24/7 and provides free crisis support and information via text.

National Hopeline Network: (800) 442-HOPE (4673).

Available 365 days a year, volunteers who staff this toll-free hotline are specially trained in crisis intervention to provide support, information, and referrals to people in need. You can also access services via chat by pressing the “Chat Now” button on its website.

PTSD Foundation of America, Veteran Line: (877) 717-PTSD (7873).

Providing referrals, information, and helpful resources to veterans and their families, this toll-free hotline is available 24/7.

Lifeline for Vets: (888) 777-4443.

Also geared toward veterans and their families, this toll-free PTSD helpline provides crisis intervention, referrals, and information.

TREATMENT & THERAPY SERVICES

Psychology Today: A directory that helps you sort treatment providers by specialty, insurance, and location. (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl>)

Counselling Directory – A UK directory connecting you to local counsellors and psychotherapists. (<https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/>)

INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

PTSD Foundation of America: The foundation has a variety of programs designed to promote healing and offers a wealth of resources on peer mentoring, group meetings, and other forms of counseling. (<https://ptsdusa.org/>)

PTSD United: The site features forums and support groups that allow survivors to share their personal stories or to read the stories of others. (<https://www.ptsdunited.org/>)

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health provides training, support and consultation to advocates, mental health and substance abuse treatment providers, legal professionals and policymakers as they work to improve agency and systems-level responses to survivors and their children. (<http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/>)

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) assists in the improvement of access to care, treatment and services for children and adolescents exposed to traumatic events. They have multiple resources on integrating trauma-informed care for children and adolescents in the child welfare system. (<https://www.nctsn.org/>)

NOTES

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S M T W T F S

My Notes

"Let's start doing the best"

Notes



A series of ten horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.



My Notes

"Let's start doing the best."



My Notes
