

Human, Being.

A Hopefully Helpful Handy
Handbook for Happiness with a
Hint of Humor

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A Love Letter To You From Us

It is our sincerest hope that you feel the love in this journal, this group, and in your life. We had you in mind as we wrote each page.

Sometimes we have to deal with hard stuff. Sometimes our hearts get heavy, and sometimes we have a hard time being nice to ourselves. This hopefully helpful handy handbook was designed to be used as a tool to help you get through those rough days, and trudge ahead to find your happiness.

You were beautifully and wonderfully made. There is nothing wrong with you, even if some people have told you there is. Those people are dumb. You are not. Even though we may not know you yet we already love you. No matter where you are in your journey, or where you are headed, we want you to know that you are valuable and worthy of love.

These pages are safe places to be completely honest with yourself. No one else ever has to explore them, but we want you to know you are not alone. If you are a trans*, gender variant, LGBT* person in the upstate of SC and you need support please feel free to email us at info@genderbenders.org any time.

Life is better when you do it together. We love you, and we hope you find something just for you in this hopefully helpful handy handbook for happiness with a hint of humor.

Hugs,
Ivy Hill & HP Page

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Use this page to record the time, date, and pages you've completed.

GROUP WORK PAGE

Name: _____

We all know you are awesome, but sometimes we have a hard time remembering that we are awesome. Use the next two pages to let people you love, and respect leave a couple sentences about why they love you.

When you're having a hard day, or struggling with negative self talk, flip back to these pages and read the words of people you trust. Be gentle with yourself. You really are awesome.

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Sometimes it's really easy to feel like we're all alone. Use this page to write down names and phone numbers of people you can reach out to when you are having a rough day.

The Crisis Line - (864) 271-8888

Trans LifeLine - (877) 565-8860

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We could always be more grateful for the people, places, things, and abilities in our lives. Fill this page with things you are grateful for.

TWO PAGE ENTRY

"To escape fear, you have to go through it, not around."
-Richie Norton

Take this page to write down things you are really afraid of. When you're done take a deep breath, rip this page out, and burn it. Then, complete part two of this entry.

PART TWO

Often our fears stem from a place of feeling like we aren't good enough. You are enough exactly the way you are. Fill this page with at least three things you can do when you're being driven by fear, and five positive things you know are true about yourself.

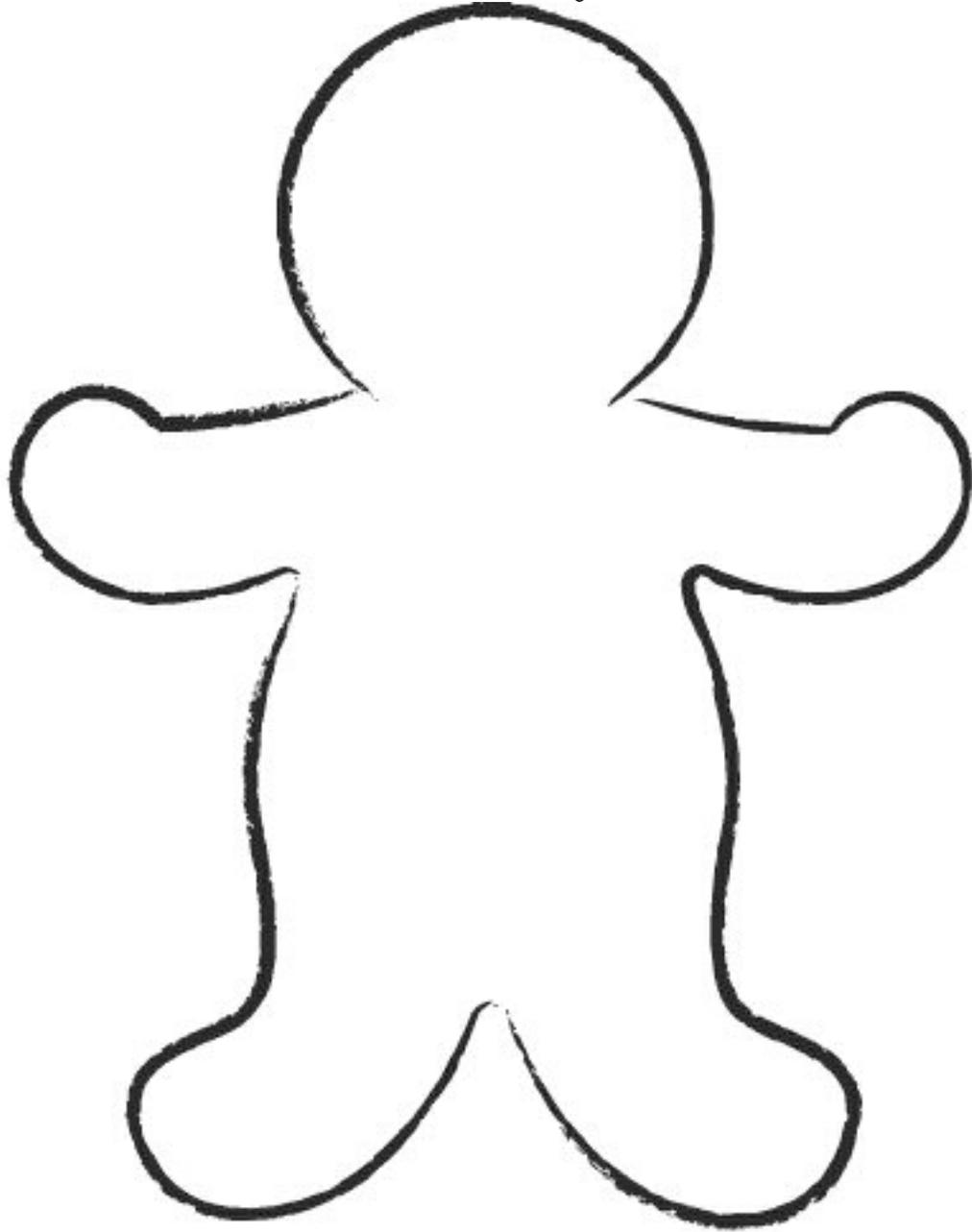
When I feel like doing something destructive, I could
_____ instead. Fill this page with answers.

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*Reserve this page for a time when you are feeling
angry.*

Fill this page with all the things that make you angry.
Then, rip this page out, and stomp on it until you can't
read it anymore.

Sometimes people's perceptions of us can hurt. On the outside of the person write people's false perceptions about who you are. On the inside of the person, write positive things about who you actually are. When you're finished cut away the stuff on the outside and burn it. What you're left with is YOU.



Fill this page with every four letter word you can.

Let's talk about you!

Fill this page with at least five favorite things about yourself, and five of your biggest strengths.

Take this page to write a letter to your 10 year old self. What advice would you give? What would you tell you then about who you are now?

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Take this page to write about a time you felt completely at peace. Where were you? Who were you with? What was happening? Can you find that peace without those same circumstances?

How do gender stereotypes affect you negatively? What are some ways you can overcome those obstacles?

Use this page to write or draw what makes you feel heard or seen.

Fill this page with affirmations about your gender that have nothing to do with your body.

TWO PAGE ENTRY

When I feel like I'm not good enough, some of the things
I think are _____. Fill this page with answers.
Then, scribble the fudge out of this page until you can't
read it anymore. See next page.

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PART TWO

I know I am good enough because _____. Fill
this page with answers. Read it often.

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"If you are depressed you are living in the past.
If you are anxious you are living in the future.
If you are at peace you are living in the present."
- Lao Tzu

An exercise that can help us stay present is focusing on all five of our senses. Take this page to write or draw what you see, feel, hear, taste, and smell right now. This can also be helpful when you're feeling anxious.

TWO PAGE ENTRY

Resentment is like poison, but the only person it hurts is the person holding on to it. Take this page to write about anything or anyone causing you a resentment. Be brutally honest; and get it out. Then, when you are ready to let go, burn this page and complete part 2 of this entry.

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PART TWO

Fill this page with ways you are free because you let go
of that resentment.

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Make yourself laugh out loud for thirty seconds even if nothing seems funny. Laugh hard, and loud. Use this page to write or draw how that made you feel. Is this something you could do the next time you're having a hard day?

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Use this page to write or draw what everyone would see if
they could see the real you.

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Fill this page with things you can do to take care of
yourself.

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Fill this page with things you love.

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Write what day it is, and what the best part of your day
is so far.

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Find five beautiful things around you. What are they? Why are they beautiful?

Tell us something funny on this page. Use the hashtag #HumanBeing if you want to share it on social media.

Take this page to write about at least three things you are proud to have accomplished.

Sometimes we all feel a little "crazy". What are some positive ways we can channel those feelings?

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Fill this page with things that make you happy.

Write a freestyle poem. Here's a suggested first line:

I love myself even when I'm feeling down

It is important to identify the people on whom we can depend. This is our support network. If you feel like you don't have one, we want you to know you are not alone.

You can email us at info@genderbenders.org anytime.

Take this page to identify and draw your support network.

Use this page to write the first things that come to your mind. It doesn't need to make sense. Just free write on this page.

Has anything in this hopefully helpful handy handbook for happiness been helpful to you? Take this page to write about what has been helpful, even if it's not this handbook.

Meditation

Inspiration

There is no right or wrong way to meditate. It can be a great tool for coping with life when it feels a little overwhelming. It's also a great way to center yourself and your thoughts.

Take a few deep breaths. Breathe in for 3 seconds, hold it for 3 seconds, breathe out for 3 seconds, rest for 3 seconds. Repeat this process until you feel yourself begin to slow down.

Try to clear your mind, but if random thoughts enter your mind it is OK. Pick one of the following meditation inspiration pages. Read it twice out loud. Then, try to focus on the words you just read and how they relate to you, or what's going on in your life.

You may want to start out with just a couple minutes of silent meditation. Gradually you will be able to increase the length of your practice. Meditation is an exercise in internal deep listening. It is good for your heart, mind, and soul. We hope you find some inspiration in the following pages.

Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may
be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons.
Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the
dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.
If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter;
for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your career, however humble; it is a real possession
in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of
trickery.

But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive
for high ideals;
and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself.

Especially, do not feign affection.

Neither be critical about love; for in the face of all aridity and
disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things
of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do
not distress yourself with imaginings.

Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome
discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is
unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be,
and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life
keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful
world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

Francis of Assisi

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Body Positive

Dysphoria is hard, icky, and sometimes all we can think about. This meditation will hopefully be helpful on those day. It comes from www.bodypositive.com.

Now listen to all the ways that you may have experienced a gift from your body lately. As you listen, let your mind create pictures of the recent past, pictures that fade in and out, creating a kaleidoscope of images.

Perhaps your body has:

Fought off an infection

Taken you to the top of a hill

Stayed awake so you could drive home safely

Learned a new physical skill

Rewarded you with the sight of a sunset

Healed a bruise

Given you a new sensual sensation

Gotten stronger

Kept working despite being in pain

Expressed a strong emotion through your face or body language

Created another human being

Defended you from an attack, or healed from an attack

Grown into its current form from two cells: a sperm and an egg

Given you sexual pleasure

Let you know through pain that something needs your attention

Released you from pain

Given you the sound of children laughing

Rejuvenated during sleep

Allowed you to feel the exquisite touch of another person

Notice any feelings you are having as you let these images come and go. Perhaps you are feeling some positive feelings toward your body, and perhaps there are also some angry or frustrated feelings too. Let all of your feelings be present and just notice them.

Think of one thing in particular that you appreciate. It may be hard, but try to let a focus happen.

Let yourself feel the specialness of this gift from your body, the awe and wonder of it. What would you like to say to your "body self"? Create a phrase that expresses your appreciation. What phrase captures your sense of appreciation for this gift? Take some time to let this phrase form in your mind.

Now say your phrase to your body self. Notice how you feel saying it, and how you feel hearing it.

Maybe this is something you could make time to say more often.

Think of a time during your day when you want to be aware of this body appreciation. It could be any time of your day, but pick a situation that usually happens as a matter of your daily routine already. Whatever this time and place is, it only needs to allow you a few moments of reflection.

What is happening at this time of day? Visualize the environment in as much detail as possible - sights, sounds, smells, sensations of touch, temperature, texture, etc. Now visualize yourself saying your body appreciation phrase. Imagine yourself having feelings about saying it, and hearing yourself say it.

Resolve to let this situation trigger the thought of your body appreciation phrase so that you can feel this appreciation for your body, sincerely and deeply, every day.

Notice any thoughts or feelings you are having before you allow your awareness to return to your surroundings.

The following self-worth meditation comes from
www.innerhealthstudio.com.

Imagine that all of the following affirmations are true for you, right now in this moment, and enjoy the self-esteem relaxation you experience. Repeat each affirmation in your mind, or out loud, with conviction. Use your imagination to fully believe each self-esteem relaxation affirmation.

I am at peace with myself.

I appreciate who I am.

I value myself as a person.

All people have value, and I am a valuable human being.

I deserve to relax.

I deserve to be happy.

I embrace my happy feelings, and enjoy being content.

I imagine and believe that all of these affirmations are true for me, right now in this moment, and enjoy the self-esteem relaxation I am experiencing.

When my mood is low, I accept my emotions and recognize that the low mood will pass, and I will be happy again. I look forward to the good times. My future is bright and positive.

I look forward to the future, and I enjoy the present.

I look fondly upon many memories from my past.

I forgive myself for my mistakes. All people make mistakes. I used to feel regret about some of my mistakes because I am a good person and want to do the best that I can, and now, I am still a good person and I release the feelings of regret because I have learned and moved on. I forgive myself for errors I have made, because I have felt bad about them long enough. I have suffered enough, and now it is time to be free. By freeing myself from past mistakes, I can move on and do good things. I forgive myself.

I imagine and believe that all of these affirmations are true for me, right now in this moment, and enjoy the self-esteem relaxation I am experiencing.

I feel good about who I am today.

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I accept the person that I am. I accept my flaws, and accept my strengths.

I view my shortcomings as strengths not yet developed, rather than as weaknesses.

I eagerly develop new strengths.

I imagine and believe that all of these affirmations are true for me, right now in this moment, and enjoy the self-esteem relaxation I am experiencing.

I approach challenges with strength.

I do the best that I can at the time. I give 100% effort when I am able and when I choose to put full effort toward the things that are important. I accept my imperfections and the imperfections in what I do. My efforts are good enough, and they're okay.

I do not have to be perfect to be okay as a person.

I am a human being with flaws. I enjoy being who I am, and love myself as I am.

I nurture the child within me.

I feel secure in who I am, and do not need to compare myself to others.

All of the strengths I have ever had are present in me today. I still have the same positive character, even if not all of my strengths are shown right now. I have all of those strengths of character, and will use those strengths again.

I imagine and believe that all of these affirmations are true for me, right now in this moment, and enjoy the self-esteem relaxation I am experiencing.

I accept myself.

I care for myself.

I take time for myself, and enjoy it. I deserve time for myself, and I feel good about taking this time regularly.

I handle difficulties with grace.

I allow myself to experience and express emotions, both negative and positive.

I accept myself.

I am perfectly alright just the way I am.

I accept myself.

I am a valuable human being.

I accept myself.

I feel confident.

I accept myself.

I feel secure.

I accept myself.

I accept myself.

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This exercise in self compassion comes from www.self-compassion.org.

Think of a situation in your life that is difficult, that is causing you stress. Call the situation to mind, and see if you can actually feel the stress and emotional discomfort in your body.

Now, say to yourself:

1. This is a moment of suffering

That's mindfulness. Other options include:

This hurts.

Ouch.

This is stress.

2. Suffering is a part of life

That's common humanity. Other options include:

Other people feel this way.

I'm not alone.

We all struggle in our lives.

Now, put your hands over your heart, feel the warmth of your hands and the gentle touch of your hands on your chest. Or adopt the soothing touch you discovered felt right for you.

Say to yourself:

3. May I be kind to myself

You can also ask yourself, "What do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself?" Is there a phrase that speaks to you in your particular situation, such as:

May I give myself the compassion that I need

May I learn to accept myself as I am

May I forgive myself

May I be strong.

May I be patient

You can do this exercise any time you need it.

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Credit

Desiderata, Max Ehrmann, 1927

Peace Prayer of St. Francis, Francis of Assisi, 1915

Body positive meditation, www.bodypositive.com, 2013

Self worth meditation, www.innerhealthstudio.com, 2014

Self love meditation, www.self-compassion.org, 2014

A tremendous amount of inspirations for these pages comes from the years spent in Gender Benders meetings, and Alateen meetings. If you are a transgender or gender nonconforming person looking for support in the upstate of South Carolina please feel free to reach us by email at info@genderbenders.org. You are not alone.