

Step 3: Recording: Your 'Positives Portfolio'

The next step is to make this awareness into an everyday event, rather than something you cultivate for short periods from time to time, when you remember. What you need to do here is to begin recording examples of your good points every week. Your objective is to reach the point where you automatically notice examples of your good qualities, without needing a reminder.

One particularly helpful way of enhancing awareness of your good points is by using a Journal. As best you can, record examples of your good points as they occur over a week. The idea is to correct the bias against yourself by focusing on and highlighting your positive qualities, bringing them forward to centre stage instead of leaving them lurking in the wings. Use your list of qualities, skills, strengths and talents as a prompt to help you get started.

For each entry in the notebook, record what you did, and what quality it exemplifies. Here, as an example, are some of the items from Lin's first week of using a 'Positives Portfolio' in her Journal

- Spent several hours completing a large landscape painting (hard-working)
- Went out for the evening with Simon — haven't laughed so much in ages (good drinking companion, funny)
- Bought flowers (creating a welcoming home)
- Tried cooking a Thai curry for the first time — tasted odd, but was edible (adventurous cook)
- Called Mother as it was her birthday (kind)
- Fixed shelving in workroom (practical)

Notice that Lin did not just write 'hard-working', 'funny', 'kind' and so on in her record. She put in enough detail to be able to remember later what had happened. This is important, because your record can then become a resource for you, a store of reminders of your strengths and good qualities. You can use it regularly to reinforce your new, kinder perspective on yourself. And you can

call on these pleasurable and confidence-building memories any time you are feeling stressed, low or bad about yourself.

So, at the end of each week, look over your Portfolio and recreate the memory of what you did in vivid detail, reliving each example. Let it sink in, so that it affects your feelings and your sense of yourself. Every time you sit down to write in your journal, review what you wrote previously. As you do this, step by step, you are learning to appreciate and accept yourself, just as you are. You only need spend 5 minutes a week on this (more if you want to). If you find yourself thinking, "This is so small or unusual that it doesn't count for anything," write it down anyway. The small experiences add up, and you want to make sure that you are not discounting or ignoring any life experiences. Chances are that you are highly aware of small negative events, so it is important for you to become just as aware of small positive events.

