

## EXERCISE: Behavioral Experiments to Strengthen New Core Beliefs

At this point, you may be ready to do some behavioral experiments to strengthen some of your new core beliefs. Use Worksheet 12.9 to do the following:

1. Write out two or three new behaviors that are linked to your new core belief. You are likely to feel a bit nervous or hesitant about doing these behaviors. That's a sign that you are probably on the right track.
2. Make predictions about what will happen, based on your old and new core beliefs.
3. If possible, try these behaviors out with strangers first (e.g., shop clerks, people in town you don't know). This can be helpful, because strangers don't expect you to act in any particular way.
4. Once you have done the experiments a number of times with strangers, try out these new behaviors with people you know. If appropriate, you can tell your family and friends what new behaviors you are trying and why this is important for you.
5. Write down the outcome of your experiments and what you learn from them, especially as they relate to your new core beliefs and your predictions (see item 2 above). Do your new behaviors and the outcomes support your new core beliefs even partially?

## WORKSHEET 12.9. Behavioural Experiments to Strengthen New Core Beliefs

Write down the core belief(s) you want to strengthen: ① My needs are also important.

② Conflict is normal in relationships, because different people want different things ③ If I stand up for myself & tolerate my discomfort, I'll feel better in the long-run.

List two or three new behaviours that fit with your new core belief. These might be behaviours you would do if you had confidence in your new core belief. They might be behaviours that you feel reluctant to do and yet they would strengthen your new core belief if you did them:

① I will pay attention to what I want & speak up for myself. ② When I disagree with someone, I will express my point of view. I will tolerate my discomfort & not compromise with someone else just to avoid conflict. ③ I will spend some time everyday doing something for myself that is important to me.

Make predictions about what will happen, based on your old and new core beliefs.

My old core belief prediction:

People will get upset and/or criticize me when I do these things & I will feel worse.

My new core belief prediction:

I might feel discomfort in the short-term, but I will feel better in the long-term.

Results of my experiments with strangers (write down what you did, who you did it with, and what happened):

Spoke up for myself & made it clear what I wanted with strangers, shopkeepers, clerks & new people I met. Results: most of the time, people did not even seem to react when I spoke up for myself & made it clear what I wanted. Some people even responded favourably & said things like: "Oh, I can see what you mean".

Results of my experiments with people I know (write down what you did, who you did it with, and what happened):

Asserted myself with family & friends: Results: I sometimes received positive or neutral responses, but some family members got quite upset with me when I asserted myself. However, as I continued to speak up for myself, I was surprised that even though I felt discomfort at first I sometimes felt a bit better, even when the disagreement continued.

What I learned (do the results support my new core beliefs even partially?): I have realised that it's OK to express my needs, whether all my family members agree with me or not. I also recognize that I can be acceptable & expressing my needs is important, even when others in the family disagree with me. I have come to realize that some family members had come to expect that I will always give in to their opinions & preferences.

Future experiments I want to do:

I am lovable even when I make really big mistakes