

How to Be Honest with Yourself

Explore this Article ■ [Preparing to Self-Assess](#) ■ [Performing a Self-Assessment](#)
■ [Reviewing and Acting On Your Self-Assessment](#) ■ [Questions & Answers](#) ■ [Tips and Warnings](#)
■ [References](#)

Co-authored by **Trudi Griffin, LPC, MS** and **36 contributors**

Last Updated: May 1, 2020

Have you ever had that niggling feeling in the back of your mind, telling you that you're not being truthful with yourself? Maybe your deceiving yourself into believing your career or relationship is great, when it's not. Or maybe you beat yourself up over your finances, when you're actually doing a great job. Either way, being honest with yourself is a great opportunity to build life skills, rise above challenges, gain self-acceptance, and improve authenticity.

Part
1

Part 1 of 3: Preparing to Self-Assess



1 Get into the right mindset. Be open to doing a self-assessment, which could be a useful problem-solving tool. You should approach it without shame or blame. You don't have to be brutally honest with yourself.^[1] Instead, be gentle and kind while still being honest.

- Think of yourself as a friend providing advice to yourself. This will keep you from being too rough on yourself.



2 Identify an area for self-evaluation. You don't need to evaluate every aspect of your life in order to start being honest with yourself. Think about things that both cause you discomfort and can be changed.^[2] Choices for focus include goals, career, money, family, spirituality, and love.

- You could also examine how you spend your time. For example, who do you spend your time with? What is the quality of the time you spend with others?
- You could look at choices you make about yourself. For example, what are your goals, your exercise, eating, drinking, or work habits?
- You could look at your performance in a role you fulfill, such as a worker, a parent, a child, a partner, etc. Evaluate your goals and progress towards them.



3 Be courageous. A good place to start is with issues you do feel comfortable approaching, then working your way up to the issues that make you feel uncomfortable. As you gain confidence in your ability to be honest with yourself, continue to challenge yourself by approaching topics you feel less comfortable addressing.^[3]

- Be careful not to pick and choose what you assess based only on how comfortable you feel about the topic. If you avoid things that make you uncomfortable, you may be avoiding the most important issues of all.



4 Set some time aside for yourself. Get up earlier or later than your family, or find a quiet space where you can sit and think. Some people think better while doing some other simple task (such as laundry) or while walking. Find out what works for you.



1 Write things down. Putting something in words helps you to be specific. You can write in whatever way you feel comfortable, be it lists, notes, cartoons, drawings, or maps. If you're not a writer, consider talking into a tape recorder or recording your thoughts some other way.



2 Be specific and complete. Instead of vague, broad assessments, come up with specific strengths and areas for improvement. This will help you when the time comes to take action. Don't just focus on areas for improvement, focus on strengths and skills as well.^[4]

- For example, instead of noting that you're "too shy," you can say "I would like to be more assertive to get my point across in meetings at work when I feel strongly about something."



- 3 Start with your strengths.** What are you good at? What do you have a passion for doing? What do others compliment you on or tell you you're good at? Once you have these listed, think about how you can make them even better or use them to your advantage.
- Take 10 minutes and complete the following sentence as many different ways as you can: One of my strengths is that ...



- 4 List your areas for improvement.** What do you dislike? What doesn't work too well for you? Focusing on areas for improvement can put things into perspective. Once you have listed them, you can choose whether to try to improve upon these areas or let them go.
- Take another 10 minutes and complete the following sentence as many different ways as you can: Things don't work well when ...



5 Write down your opportunities. These could be based on how you use your strengths or improve yourself. At a personal level, an opportunity isn't just the potential to make money. Rather, an opportunity might satisfy your own needs or help you improve yourself.

- For example, learning an instrument might not provide you a financial opportunity, but the satisfaction of learning to play could be opportunity enough.



6 List the factors that undermine your success. What could undermine those opportunities, derail your hopes, or sidetrack your success? Identifying these factors will make you more aware and make them less threatening.

- Some risks are beyond our control, but many can be lessened or anticipated.



7 Perform a verbal self-assessment. Place an empty chair across from you and imagine yourself sitting in the chair. Say out loud all of the things you are withholding from yourself. These can be both positive things about yourself.

- If you feel more comfortable talking to someone else, you can imagine them sitting in the chair. You may even want to contact the person and tell them the things you said for real.

Part
3

Part 3 of 3: Reviewing and Acting On Your Self-Assessment

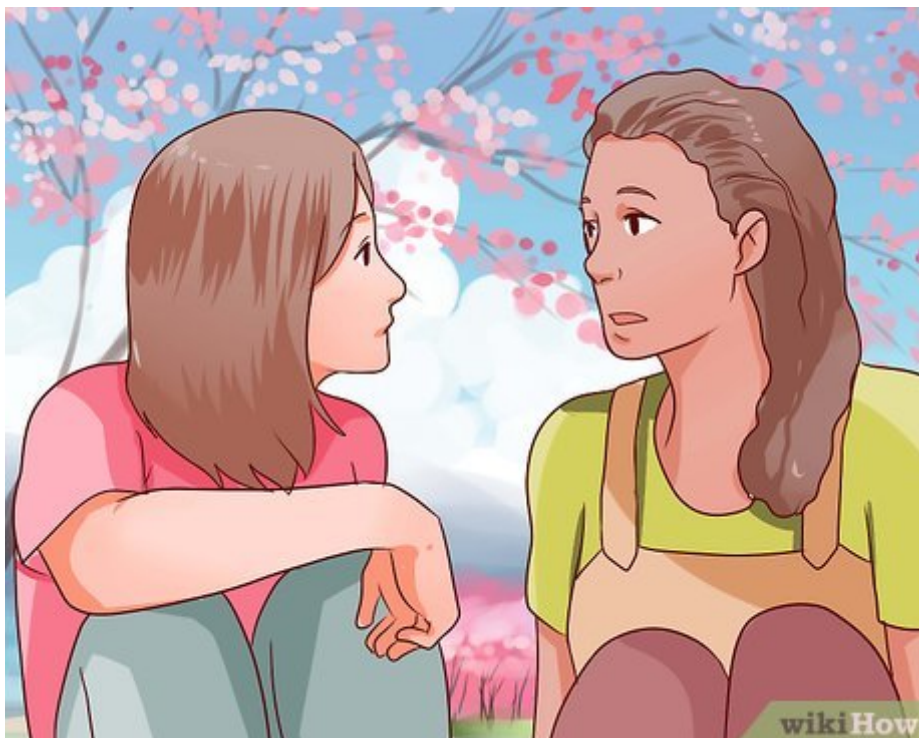


1 Review your lists of strengths, opportunities, and areas for improvement. Cross off things that do not make sense or do not seem quite true after you give them more thought. Replace them with things that you notice are missing. Also, put an asterisk next to things that are really true or strike a chord with you.



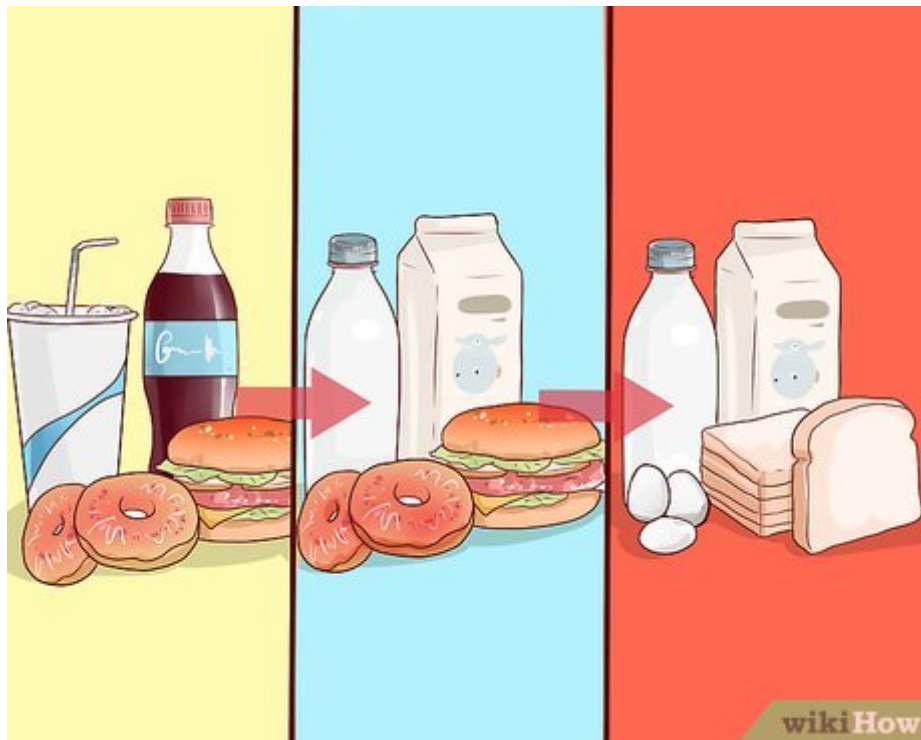
2 Don't give up. Fight against feelings of hopelessness and discouragement as you identify areas of self-improvement. One way to do this is to give yourself small rewards for identifying areas of self-improvement and acting on them. Also, when feelings of hopelessness and discouragement surface, focus on “low hanging fruit” and evaluate something that feels relatively painless and easy to fix.^[5]

- Remember, you are not rating your worthiness as a human being, just trying to identify differences between your actual self and your ideal self.



3 Ask friends you trust how they see you. Seeing yourself objectively is not always easy, and an honest assessment by somebody outside can help you gauge whether your personal assessment is reasonable.

- Keep things in perspective. So you haven't won your Nobel Peace Prize yet. Neither have most of the rest of us. You're only human, and nobody, including yourself, should expect perfection of you.



4 Create an action plan. Take your areas of improvement and create goals for working towards. For goals that seem too audacious, consider breaking them down into sub-goals. Make sure to define success in such a way that you can identify when you have been successful and are likely to be successful.^[6]

- For example, if you think you have a weight problem, take a goal like “Lose 100 pounds” and break it up into smaller steps that will get you to your goal. Think of as many small changes as you can that together can add up to you meeting your audacious goal. For example, the first week cut out all soda and drinks with sugar. Second week, cut out all packaged baked goods, like cookies and doughnuts, and replace them with healthier versions. Keep restructuring your diet until you are eating mostly healthy foods almost all the time.



5 Chart your progress. Keep your lists to remind you of both your strengths and your new goals. When you successfully complete an action or reach a goal, cross it off and add another item to your list. If you get stuck, identify the barriers to progress and focus on how to overcome them.

- For example, if you can't get rid of your gambling addiction, think about how you started the process of quitting and when you have not been successful. Maybe you identified that you turn to gambling on the weekends when you do not have anything else to do, and you can start planning more activities to occupy your time on the weekends.



6 Be gentle on yourself and maintain perspective. Through all of this remember to separate your behaviors from who you are as a person. You are not your actions and your actions do not define your self worth. As you focus on areas of improvement, it can seem like all you are ever doing is “improving” yourself. So, make sure to focus on areas where you do not need improvement.^[7]

- For example, if you are focusing on exercising more, and you have met all your exercise goals over the last month, it's okay to take a day off and go to the movies instead of going for a run. You just have to be careful that you are not backsliding and undoing all of your good work.



Community Q&A

Question

How do I know when my crush has a crush on me, too?



Community Answer

If you catch him looking at you, that's a good sign. Also, if he goes out of his way to be near you or talk to you, that could be an indication. [how to tell that your crush likes you back](#) has some great tips.

Helpful 10 Not Helpful 1

Question

I've made a mistake and I'm not sure if my friend forgave me or not, but he is not like how he used to be and he doesn't want to talk about it. I feel confused, what do I do with him?



Tom De
Backer
Top Answerer

He's your friend, so you can talk to him. Say, "Hey, I feel confused and I would like an answer before we move on and forget it." Alternately, just let it go yourself. People make mistakes, you apologized and made amends. Perhaps he too just wants to forget about it and just enjoy the friendship again without the constant reminders.

Helpful 8 Not Helpful 1

Question

I accidentally blocked the sink up, how shall I tell my parents?



Community Answer

Just say it directly, and do it right away. Everybody makes mistakes. Don't try to make excuses for your actions, just tell them exactly what happened, apologize, and accept your punishment.

Helpful 3 Not Helpful 0



Tips

- Remember, there is no harm in writing something down. You can choose not to share it, destroy it, edit it, or simply keep it a secret.
- If you don't know where to begin, try taking a personality test (see external links). They cannot discover you by themselves, but they can lend some insight about your nature to help get you started.
- You can always seek professional help no matter what progress you are making. Being honest with yourself doesn't mean you have to work alone.

References

1. ↑ Otis, Gray. "Is honesty really the best policy?" The Advocate [American Mental Health Counselors Association] Feb. 2009: 5. Academic OneFile. Web. 28 Jan. 2015.
<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA202014052&v=2.1&u=nat&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=ae116481e61eb201ef1b4df8e3b08643>
2. ↑ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200404/assessing-yourself-honestly>
3. ↑ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200404/assessing-yourself-honestly>
4. ↑ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200404/assessing-yourself-honestly>
5. ↑ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200404/assessing-yourself-honestly>
6. ↑ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200404/assessing-yourself-honestly>
7. ↑ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200404/assessing-yourself-honestly>
8. An online personality test

About This Article



Co-authored by:

Trudi Griffin, LPC, MS

Professional Counselor

This article was co-authored by **Trudi Griffin, LPC, MS**. Trudi Griffin is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Wisconsin specializing in Addictions and Mental Health. She provides therapy to people who struggle with addictions, mental health, and trauma in community health settings and private practice. She received her MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Marquette University in 2011. This article has been viewed 306,295 times.



30 votes - 99%

Co-authors: **36**

Updated: **May 1, 2020**

Views: **306,295**

Categories: **Honesty**

<https://www.wikihow.com/Be-Honest-with-Yourself>

The text and visual content in this PDF is intended only for your personal, non-commercial use. Any commercial reproduction of the contents of this document without the express written permission of wikiHow, Inc., is prohibited.