

10 Reclaiming who you are and writing a 'gratitude journal'



If you are working through *The Warrior Within*, these two exercises and further useful information to help you in your recovery can be found on page 46-47. These two exercises assume you have completed exercise sheet **1 Starting an activity journal**.

 **If an exercise is too difficult or upsetting, STOP. Take a break from it and make a commitment to return to it at a later point.**

Reclaiming who you are

While you cannot undo what the abuser(s) has done to you, you can reclaim who you are and create your present and your future in the absence of abuse.

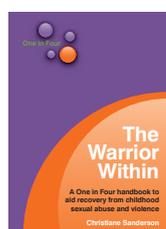
To help you reclaim yourself, list how your life would have been if you hadn't been abused. What were your hopes, dreams, goals, values? Remember these were stolen from you and can be reclaimed. Look at this list and compare it with your goals for recovery and see how they compare. Make a second list, in order of importance, of what you wish to reclaim and the steps needed to achieve these.

Writing a 'gratitude journal'

In reclaiming positive aspects of your life you need to identify all the things that you have in your life for which you are grateful. This will form the basis of your 'gratitude journal'. Research has shown that keeping a 'gratitude journal' can improve happiness and satisfaction. It also enables you to make a conscious effort to 'savour' all the beauty and pleasure in your daily life no matter how small.

Divide a section in your journal, or find a new small notebook in which to record all the things in your life for which you are grateful. This could include your health, your children, your friends, your family, your pet(s) as well as the things you appreciate in life such as nature, to help you try to become more conscious of the good things in your life.

Make time to listen to the sound of birdsong or the rustle of leaves, to notice the shimmer of sunshine or autumn leaves turning into riot of colour, or breathe in the tang in the air. You could also consider writing a gratitude letter to someone important in your life, past or present, even if not alive, that you have never properly thanked.



The content of this exercise sheet is based on *The Warrior Within: A One in Four handbook to aid recovery from childhood sexual abuse and violence* by Christiane Sanderson

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