

**Integrative activity 2: I can decide who I want to be**

– exploring further

Here is a practical and powerful exercise to help you strengthen a quality in yourself.

Divide a piece of paper/a page in two parts. Write “current situation” and “ideal situation” respectively. You are now going to explore and compare the two by looking at both the advantages and the disadvantages associated with each situation. Let’s look at the example below:

**Example:**

<p><b>Current situation: stuck and unhappy</b> Keeping a low profile; lacking the courage to develop my dream business</p>	<p><b>Ideal situation: courageous and successful</b> Becoming more visible; having the courage to reach out and help more people through my business</p>
<p><b>Advantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I remain in my comfort zone</li> <li>- No extra stress</li> <li>- I have a stable income from my daily job</li> <li>- I can entertain the thought of what could be...without having to put in the hard work to make it happen</li> <li>- I don't run the risk of failure</li> <li>- I fit in with my friends and family</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I get to do new, exciting things, things that stretch me out of my comfort zone but give me joy and inspire others</li> <li>- When I do something I really love I will not feel stressed but, rather, happy and content</li> <li>- I get to create the career I desire and earn money while doing what I love</li> <li>- I will feel so much better when I succeed, even if I accept there will be setbacks along the way. I will respect myself more for trying.</li> <li>- My friends and family will be proud of me and inspired by my courage. I will be able to help them and support them even more!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disadvantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I continue to feel frustrated</li> <li>- I am not happy with my current situation and this actually stresses me more</li> <li>- I resent having to work for someone else/having a 9 to 5 job</li> <li>- I constantly feel that I could and should do more</li> <li>- I already feel like a failure for not creating a better life for myself!</li> <li>- Conforming and feeling frustrated affects my relationships with my friends and family and I tend to even blame them for my lack of courage</li> </ul>	<p><b>Disadvantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a risk I may not succeed. (But who cares!! Just trying feels like a victory!)</li> <li>- It may be tough in the beginning and I could run out of money</li> <li>- My life will change quite a lot...(But that is exciting!!)</li> <li>- With being successful there will be more pressure and more responsibilities!! (Bring it on!!)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Thoughts</b> I now see what keeps me in my current situation. I realise however that the advantages are outweighed by the disadvantages of staying in this situation.</p>	<p><b>Plan of action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start researching what I need to start my business – join a course</li> <li>- Ask for help and guidance from those who have been in the same situation</li> </ul>

## Follow up:

- What did you learn from the example above?
- What shocked you the most?
- Can you think of 3 situations you could apply this technique to?

This exercise can be applied to any possible situation:

Being single/being in a relationship; postponing action/taking on a new hobby; being overweight/losing some weight; staying in the same house, town, country/moving house, town, country, etc. All these decisions are intrinsically related to who you want to be and how you want your life to look like.

It is important to be honest with yourself and recognize that there are always advantages for staying in a situation or being in a certain way – otherwise we would have changed a long time ago.

For example being selfish is often a way of covering up our own insecurities and fear of being unloved. Being shy has the advantage of having others stand up for us or not being given much responsibility. Not being punctual could mean that we avoid the “humiliation” of having to wait for others or we draw more attention to ourselves, or we show defiance, etc.

Conversely, this exercise can also help us realise that there are more advantages for staying in a current situation and improving it rather than changing it. This is often very liberating too, as it helps us truly appreciate what we have.

A note of caution: For more delicate issues it is a good idea to get the help of a professional coach or therapist. Sometimes recognizing, facing and taking responsibility for some of the advantages we get from being stuck in a certain situation can be painful and will require extra support and further introspection. Ultimately, however, it is well worth examining our choices and the motives behind them as this will allow us to take responsibility for who we truly want to be.

<b>Current situation:</b>	<b>Ideal situation:</b>
<b>Advantages:</b>	<b>Advantages:</b>
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	<b>Disadvantages:</b>
<b>Thoughts</b>	<b>Plan of action:</b>



The background of the form features a large, stylized graphic. At the top, the words "BEING YOU" are written in a large, light purple, serif font. Below this, the word "AND" is written in a smaller, grey, serif font. Underneath "AND", the words "Loving You" are written in a large, flowing, light purple cursive font. At the bottom of the graphic is a large heart shape composed of many smaller, overlapping hearts in various colors including purple, teal, pink, and orange. The background is a soft, light purple with a subtle pattern of small white hearts and sparkles.