



## Recovering Lost Aspects Of The Self

There are many times throughout life that we may lose contact with who we are and forget to connect with ourselves! Caregivers often believe that others' needs should come first, thereby forgetting about their own needs and interests. This exercise can help you identify who you are (or who you wish you were) and work to re-connecting with that person.

1. Take a moment to envision the person you used to be and how you lost connection with that person. Was there a specific event that caused this disconnection or did it slowly happen, day by day until you suddenly noticed you lost aspects of who you were?
2. Practice self-compassion about the fact that you lost touch with part of yourself. Resentment and anger don't usually help us re-connect.
3. Make a list of the qualities, characteristics and abilities that you valued about yourself before the events occurred. Were there any activities you remember enjoying before you lost touch with yourself? Aim to add a minimum of 10 items to your list.
4. Look at the list you created in step 3. Which of those items do you feel most disconnected from today?
5. For each of the items on your list, briefly explain why you feel disconnected from that item. What occurred that may have caused you to become disconnected from this aspect of your self? How do you feel when you recognize that there is a disconnect from this aspect of yourself?
6. For each item on the list, describe possible activities, people or ways that you could begin connecting to this quality/characteristics/activity again. You don't need to make it big! If you loved helping others, you don't have to go big and say "Volunteer once a week". For now, maybe you can hold the door for someone when you walk into a building. Small changes are usually more sustainable and comfortable than big ones. Allow yourself to start slowly at reconnecting with yourself. Make sure though that you think of a way that allows you to connect to this lost part of yourself more than you currently do.
7. Looking at the ideas you wrote in step 6, which seem most doable? Consider all aspects of the idea, such as financial aspects, time necessary and emotional energy needed to complete it. Which do you feel most comfortable starting with?
8. Begin working through the list with the most do-able and building your way up to the less do-able ones. Work at a pace that is comfortable for you, while remembering to put yourself first and make it a priority to reconnect to yourself.