

PEOPLE PLEASING

JOURNAL PROMPTS



People pleasing is an automatic pattern which involves going out of your way, often diminishing your needs, in an attempt to keep others "happy". This learned response can be so deeply ingrained that it is often considered a positive quality or a badge to wear with honour. The paradox of people pleasing is that the more one strives to please, the further they drift from a genuine connection with their true desires. The implicit message, reinforced by pleasing patterns, is: "I am valued for my 'pleasing' deeds," eclipsing the opportunity to bask in genuine love and appreciation for the unique individual within.

How does people-pleasing show up for me?

What am I missing out on by people pleasing and ignoring myself?

What does some part of me see as the benefit of the people pleasing?

Notice how people pleasing shows up for you.

Some examples are:

1. **Deferring to others.** Leaving decisions up to others, so that they can have their preference, and not be put out if they don't like what you decide or prefer.
2. **Doing for others.** Doing favours or volunteering for tasks in an attempt to be liked or to get others to see you favourably.
3. **Saying "Yes"** or going along with things that you don't really want to do.

Write down all the ways in which you notice people pleasing showing up for you.

2. Build on your self-awareness by asking yourself what you are missing out on by people pleasing. Each instance of people pleasing involves an instance of ignoring yourself, or putting your needs and wants second. For each example, ask yourself: "If I hadn't become "pleasing", what would I have done instead? If it was just up to me, what would I have liked to do or not do?"

If you don't know what it is that you want or need, bring to mind what you might be missing out on as a consequence of not being able to consider what you truly want or need.

3. The flip side of people pleasing is self-neglect. However, it is a learned response which means at some point you developed a belief that people pleasing has benefits. Some examples of perceived benefits of pleasing:

- that it makes you more likeable
- that others see you as useful, and therefore want to be around you
- as something to hide behind - you feel you don't have much to offer in and of yourself, but believe that if you can be seen as helpful, useful, or pleasing, then this is a way to control how others see you

The imagined benefits of people pleasing are that it is a way to be included, accepted, and to avoid rejection. However, the way that this pattern operates means people pleasers never get to feel genuinely included or accepted. Instead, they are always looking for what more they can do to prove their worth. People pleasing depletes self-esteem, as it takes away opportunities to be shown love and appreciation for exactly who you are.

