

# Seeing Yourself as You Are

Many people think they're above average on personal traits that society values—like being friendlier, smarter, more attractive than average. This tendency helps us to feel good about ourselves, but it also can lead us to feel more separate and cut off from others. This exercise is designed to help us see ourselves clearly and accept ourselves exactly as we are. All people have culturally valued traits that might be considered “better” than average, some traits that are just average, and some that are “below” average. Can we accept this reality with kindness and equanimity?

A. List five culturally valued traits for which you're above average:

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

B. List five culturally valued traits for which you're just average:

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

C. List five culturally valued traits for which you're below average:

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

D. Consider the full range of traits listed above.

Can you accept all these facets of yourself? Being human does not mean being better than others. Being human means you encompass the full range of human experience, the positive, the negative, and the neutral. Being human means you are average in many ways. Can you celebrate the experience of being alive on this planet in all your complexity and wonder?