Recovery - Unconventional

Reinventing you-Staying True to You

Defining Yourself

We tend to look at ourselves and other people in two ways: Who we are and who we are not. The list seems always to be longer when we define who we are not; it is definitely easier to talk about the negative rather than the positive.

This exercise focus is on the positive. The negative aspects of our addiction and alcoholism are in the past. *We do not have to act or think under the influence anymore.* Let’s discover you!

Attributes: An attribute is defined as a quality or characteristic of a person. Real life individuals possess various attributes. Below is a list of positive attributes and three blank spaces. Fill in your own in these spaces. Circle all that apply to you, ones people have told you that you possess, ones you displayed before alcohol and addiction invaded you. And even, ones you hope to possess.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achiever</th>
<th>Exciting</th>
<th>Meditative</th>
<th>Personable</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Mediator</td>
<td>Pleasant</td>
<td>Sensible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>Modest</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic</td>
<td>Forgiving</td>
<td>Motivated</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Sincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>Generous</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheerful</td>
<td>Genuine</td>
<td>Original</td>
<td>Productive</td>
<td>Solid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Outgoing</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Sporty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Humble</td>
<td>Particular</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Thoughtful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courageous</td>
<td>Insightful</td>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curious</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>Racy</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependable</td>
<td>Inventive</td>
<td>Perceptive</td>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>Warm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devoted</td>
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</tbody>
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1. Now, use these attributes in sentences about yourself. Act like you are introducing yourself in an interview-remember-this is not boasting. This is who you are!

Example:
Hello, my name is Tina. I am responsible, compassionate and genuine.

1. __________________________________
2. __________________________________
3. __________________________________
4. __________________________________
5. __________________________________

2. When you look at these, do you believe them? Are they accurate about you? Why or why not?

3. Many people define their life in the episodes of life-single, married, divorced, have kids, don’t have kids, grandparents. These are not definitions of you-they are simply stages of your journey, like addiction.
   Addiction does not define you either, any more than the term mother or father, or cancer survivor or diabetic. These are factors that shape you, but not who you are. They are circumstances of your life, which can change or be changed by other circumstances or events.
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Definitions of who you are are found in how you are -how you respond to life. Your attributes are on display through your behaviors in response to circumstances in your life. Look back on your attributes-do you see yourself there in your response to life events? (Hint-try not to count the behaviors of addictive addiction- That is not who you are!)

a. How do I respond to others who try to belittle me? Do I get angry or sarcastic? Do I walk away?

b. How do I respond when life gets difficult? Do I give up?

c. Do I support other people's growth or try to bring them down?

d. How do I love people? Do I wait for them to love me first? Do I decide if people deserve my love or if I deserve theirs?

e. Do I inspire hope and encouragement?

f. Do I feel defeated by circumstances or accept them as part of my journey?
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g.  Do I seek to understand?

h.  Do I excuse mistakes or condemn them?

i.  Am I capable of forgiveness?

Hint: Forgiving does not mean saying that the hurtful behavior was OK and lets forget it. Forgiving means accepting that the behavior happened, accepting that it cannot be changed, and accepting what is done is done. It means that you are done reliving it and thinking about it. You will not be held hostage by the thoughts of it. That’s it. Sometimes the hurts are so terrible this seems impossible. But it is possible, and vital to you.

4. Look back at your answers from a - i; do you like your answers? Why or why not?

5. Did you know you can change these? That anything you don’t like about how you respond to life is in your power to change?

This is how you reinvent yourself-you take what life throws at you and you learn from it. You think back at the end of the day and reflect on what happened, what you liked, loved or didn’t feel proud about, and you learn from them, and make changes. It is a journey. It is your journey. And it is not conventional-you are unique and beautiful and are just exactly where you are supposed to be on your journey through this life.

What are your thoughts about this?
Final Thoughts
In your recovery journey and reinventing yourself, avoid traps of thoughts that try to undermine you and your recovery. Do Not let yourself begin to regress and believe lies about you. Write a positive thought about each one of these affirmations.

1. Your past does not define you!

2. You are Not your mistakes!

3. Do not let others label you and do not label yourself!

4. Your job does not define you! Jobs come and go-there is only one you!

5. What you drive, your house, apartment, or stuff does not define you!

6. Money does not define you!

7. What you accomplish does not define you!

8. Where you come from does not define you!

9. How old or how young you are does not define you!

10. Your height, weight, gender, color, nationality, or race do not define you!