

Embrace Your Confidence

Teenage Girl's Empowerment Workbook With Real-Life
Examples, Action Steps, and Interactive Elements

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
PART 1: EMBRACING YOUR TRUE SELF	3
<i>What Makes You Unique?</i>	5
<i>Be Inspired</i>	6
CHAPTER 2: THE POWER OF SELF-EXPRESSION	7
<i>What is Self-Expression?</i>	7
<i>Overcoming the Fear of Using Your Voice</i>	8
<i>Be Inspired</i>	12
CHAPTER 3: FINDING YOUR VOICE	13
<i>Defining Your Values</i>	13
<i>Expressing Thoughts and Opinions Respectfully</i>	16
<i>Overcoming the Inner Critic</i>	17
<i>Be Inspired</i>	19
PART 2: NAVIGATING SOCIAL CHALLENGES	20
CHAPTER 4: RESISTING NEGATIVE INFLUENCES	23
<i>Recognizing Negative Influences</i>	23
<i>Understanding Boundaries</i>	27
<i>Be Inspired</i>	28
CHAPTER 5: BUILDING HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS	29
<i>Qualities of Healthy Friendships</i>	29
<i>Be Inspired</i>	33
CHAPTER 6: EMPOWERING SOCIAL MEDIA USE	35
<i>Responsible Use of Social Media</i>	35
<i>Dealing With Cyberbullying</i>	36
<i>Balancing Screen Time</i>	37
<i>Be Inspired</i>	38
PART 3: BALANCING YOUR LIFE	40
CHAPTER 7: ORGANIZING YOUR TIME	41
<i>Benefits of Time Management</i>	43
<i>Time Usage Assessment</i>	44
<i>How to Prioritize Tasks</i>	48
<i>Becoming Efficient</i>	50
<i>Be Inspired</i>	50
CHAPTER 8: COPING WITH STRESS	51
<i>Understanding Stress</i>	51
<i>Identifying the Things That Cause Stress for You</i>	51
<i>Coping Methods for Stress</i>	54
<i>Be Inspired</i>	55
CHAPTER 9: PURSUING YOUR PASSIONS	57
<i>Exploring Your Interests</i>	57
<i>My Hobby Schedule</i>	60
<i>Be Inspired</i>	62
PART 4: EMPOWERING YOUR FUTURE	65
CHAPTER 10: GOAL SETTING AND VISION BOARD	67
<i>Defining Your Vision</i>	67
<i>Setting Clear Goals</i>	68

<i>Be Inspired</i>	70
CHAPTER 11: CULTURAL PRIDE AND ASPIRATIONS	71
<i>My Ancestry</i>	71
<i>Cultural Experiences and Exploration</i>	72
<i>Be Inspired</i>	74
CHAPTER 12: GROWING THROUGH CHALLENGES	75
<i>Understanding Resilience</i>	75
<i>Tips to Build Resilience</i>	76
<i>Be Inspired</i>	77
PART 5: CONNECTING WITH OTHERS	78
CHAPTER 13: FINDING ROLE MODELS	81
<i>Identifying Role Models</i>	81
<i>Copying Achievement Models</i>	84
<i>Be Inspired</i>	86
CHAPTER 14: EMPATHY AND COMPASSION	87
<i>Understanding Empathy</i>	87
<i>Practicing Compassion</i>	88
<i>Be Inspired</i>	89
CHAPTER 15: STRENGTHENING SUPPORT SYSTEMS	91
<i>Building Strong Connections</i>	91
<i>Supporting Others</i>	94
<i>Be Inspired</i>	96
CONCLUSION.....	98
REFERENCES	101

Trigger Warning: This book contains themes around self-esteem, confidence, challenges, and fear that may be upsetting to some readers.

Introduction

I remember how difficult it was to navigate through life as a teenage girl because everything around me was changing. I am sure you will realize or have already seen how your teenage years are a time marked with change in every sense of the word. From the transition into high school and feeling like you are all-grown-up, to body changes brought on by puberty, all the way to figuring out friendships and relationships with family—it can be very overwhelming and challenging.

However, the biggest test is to learn how to explore and understand your own mind, and how you see yourself and your place in the world.

This workbook was created with that test in mind—to guide you through the process of growing up to one day become someone you can be proud of. Think of this workbook as your trusted sidekick, your teenage years' tour guide, and your secret treasure map to personal development—all mashed up into one!

You will get to do lots of fun-packed activities, bust some myths about bad thought patterns you may have developed, and get inspired by interesting stories of young people who have successfully gone through this journey and come out on the other side in one piece.

So, buckle up and prepare for the thrilling journey that will leave you feeling like you can dance through any storms you encounter in your teenagehood. Remember, there is no limit to what you can achieve!

PART 1:

Embracing Your True Self

There is so much joy that can be found in being true to yourself. But, what does that mean or look like? It is very easy to get swept up by trends and whatever is popular. There is absolutely nothing wrong with taking inspiration from the world around you as you try to find yourself, but you also need to be intentional about finding your identity and your voice.

We will start this journey by considering the things that make you unique and unlike anybody else. Let's dive right in!

Chapter 1:
Celebrating Your Diversity

What Makes You Unique?

You can find the roots of embracing who you are by first looking at the obvious things that set you apart from other people. One of the things that makes life fun and interesting is diversity, which by definition, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, means simply being made up of different qualities.

Off the top of your head, can you think of outward things that set you apart from others? It could be your height, race, hair color—anything at all!

Let's dig a little deeper. What about your personality? What makes you different from others in that regard? Are you funny, cheerful, kind, or artistic? You can name anything you can think of.

Now, I want you to think about your favorite person in the entire world. This person could be your mother, your brother, a celebrity, or a friend. Think about what it is about them that makes you love them so much, and write it down.

Hopefully, these exercises help you to realize how each person has a unique quality about them that sets them apart. Plus, their uniqueness makes other people love and appreciate them. So, whenever you are tempted to be like someone else, remember that there are many people who love you and will miss the real you. Never hide her away. After all, there is only one of you! You can never be replaced.

Now, let us consider some examples of young women who embrace their diversity and are not afraid to celebrate what makes them different.

Be Inspired

Billie Eilish

Billie is an American singer-songwriter who became popular for her unique sound and style. She is often quoted encouraging her fans to be authentic and their true selves, and she shares openly about her own struggles with her body image and how she learned to accept herself just the way she is (Enjoli, 2021).

Zendaya Maree Stoemer Coleman

Zendaya is an American actress who speaks openly about the importance of self-expression and individuality. She has been candid about her personal struggles with racial stereotypes in the entertainment industry, where she was first only type-casted for roles that portrayed a specific group. She also speaks openly about her challenges with feeling the need to fit into the standard of beauty determined by the public and the criticism and bullying she experiences online because of it. However, throughout her career so far, she has stood firm in being true to herself, speaking on the importance of self-acceptance and self-love (Nast, 2013). She has become an award-winning actress, who was also appointed the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in 2019 using her platform to advocate for children's rights.

Chapter 2: The Power of Self-Expression

What is Self-Expression?




Learning to use your voice is a big part of being a confident person. Using your voice is when you boldly tell the world who you are, what you believe in, your opinions, and your views on different subjects. A fancy way to say this concept is “self-expression.”

Self-expression is a powerful tool when you want to set yourself apart from the crowd as a girl who knows who she is and is not afraid to stand by it. It takes courage and bravery, and, when you learn how to do it, you will feel empowered to live as your true self confidently.

Using your voice can take many different forms, such as fashion, art, music, writing and so much more. The next exercise will help you to consider examples in your own life that show you how different people express themselves.

Exercise: Artistic Expressions

This activity would be fun to do with the help of a sibling, friend, or guardian. All you need to do is look up each artist, write down the name of their art style, and give a brief description of what makes it different. You are more than welcome to use pictures or draw something instead of writing it out. Express yourself in the way that feels most natural to you!

 Artist	 Art style	 Description
Van Gogh		

<p>Takashi Murakami</p>		
<p>Andy Warhol</p>		
<p>Pablo Picasso</p>		



As you have seen in your research, all these artists were extremely talented but had very different ways of expressing their ideas and thoughts on canvas. We, as people, express ourselves differently in real life too. The way we look at life is unique, and that is okay!

You may think that it can be quite scary to stand up for your own thoughts and opinions, especially when they are different from everyone else around you. So, let us look at different ways of overcoming those fears (Morin, 2021):



Overcoming the Fear of Using Your Voice

1. Identify the Monster

The first step in overcoming the fear of self-expression is identifying why that fear exists. Think about what it is about speaking out or being yourself that makes you afraid. I will show you an example first so that you know what to do.

 Fear	 Why it exists
Wearing bright colored clothing to school	Everyone might laugh at me



Now, complete the exercise below, thinking about three things in your life that make you afraid to express yourself.

 Fear to express yourself	 Why it exists

Very good! Feel free to add to this list on a piece of paper if you feel you have more to work through.

2. Challenge the Monster

Now that you are aware of what you are afraid of when it comes to expressing yourself, come up with a plan of how you can start facing those fears. This activity is also a great opportunity to invite your older sibling or parent to help! Trust me, they already have lots of experience dealing with fears—they can definitely help you with these ones.

 Fear (from no. 1)	 Action plan to face the fear

Excellent work! Now, let's move on to the next point.

3. Practice and Repeat

To ensure you have long-lasting success in becoming a girl who isn't afraid to express herself, you need to be mindful about doing it as often as you can! If we use the previous example of someone who is weary of wearing brightly-colored clothes, a solution would be to wear whatever they want each day without worrying about what anyone will say about it. Eventually, the idea is that you will get used to making decisions that are true to who you are without worrying or being afraid.

4. Be Kind to Yourself

It is important to be courageous and face your fears boldly! It's also equally as important to be kind to yourself on days when you don't feel quite as brave. In addition, when you start out, it might be more challenging to get going. Don't be hard on yourself—keep trying! Don't give up on yourself.

Use the space below to write a kind message to yourself that you can read when you feel discouraged or scared to express yourself.

Hyping Myself Up

Now, invite someone else who you trust to also write a kind message for you to read on days when things get tough. Let them know it is a reminder for you to never be afraid to express yourself as who you are.

 *Dear Superstar*

Fantastic! Now you have two powerful messages to keep you encouraged!

5. Pick Good Role Models

Looking for inspiration from those who have already walked the road you are trying to navigate shows you that it can be done. You can also learn from their methods and stories on how they overcame challenges around being authentic in their self-expression, and then try to apply what they taught you to your own life.

This concept leads us perfectly to the next section.

Be Inspired

Taylor Swift

Taylor is an American singer-songwriter who is one of the most successful artists right now. She often uses her personal stories and life experiences as inspiration for her songwriting, which she has been repeatedly ridiculed and bullied for online. However, she has not shied away from expressing herself in her music in a way that is true to who she is. In fact, she even goes the extra mile to use her platform to advocate for social issues she believes in and encourages others to be authentic and true to themselves. She has also faced pressure to act as a character that the music industry wanted her to be but she has openly rebelled against this, deciding instead to create an image that is authentic to who she is as a person (Segarra, 2023). Kudos to you, Taylor! And I'm sure you can learn a lot from her too.

Selena Gomez

Selena is an American singer and was previously a Disney Channel actress. She has openly struggled with the pressures and expectations that came with fame and constantly being under the spotlight with everyone judging and criticizing her choices. She speaks freely on how this negativity affected her mental health and has become very active in speaking for those without a voice to raise awareness on mental health. She has also been under pressure to maintain her child-like persona as a former Disney star, which she has challenged openly. Today, she steps out boldly and embraces her womanhood, being true to who she is and expressing herself in a way that feels authentic to her (America, 2022b). It clearly takes bravery to stand up to so many people telling you who you should be and how you should act—and Selena sets a perfect example showing that it can be done!

Chapter 3:

Finding Your Voice

Now that you have learned about self-expression, you may be wondering how to know what you believe and what you stand for—in other words, your values. This chapter is about discovering what values are important to you as well as how to communicate them effectively and assertively while also being respectful to others and their views.


Using your authentic voice is linked to knowing your values, so let's figure that out.


Defining Your Values


Rank the values below according to their importance to you. Don't feel bad about certain things being more important to you than others. There is no right or wrong answer here.

Value	Ranking
Honesty	
Kindness	
Respect	
Responsibility	
Courage	
Self-respect	
Creativity	
Positivity	
Teamwork	
Justice	

Write down your top three values and briefly explain why each one of them matters to you. Then, express how they are significant in your own life and influence the decisions you make.

 Value 1:.....

 Value 2:.....

 Value 3:.....

Knowing your values is important for the following reasons (Perry, 2023):

- This knowledge helps you to discover who you are and gives you a sense of purpose.
- This knowledge helps with making decisions that are true to what matters most to you.
- This knowledge helps you deal with challenging situations in a way that aligns with your beliefs.
- This knowledge helps you with becoming a more confident person.





Now that you're empowered with this knowledge, it's time to learn how to effectively communicate with others while staying true to who we are.

Expressing Thoughts and Opinions Respectfully


When you have established your values, you may find that many things about your life change. You might prefer to do different things from your current group of friends or have priorities that change your direction in life. Even if everything stays relatively the same, you still need to know how to stand your ground while still being respectful of others. This balance between assertive and respectful is called being an assertive communicator (Gatchpazian, 2023).


Considering what you have just learned, try to pick out the characteristics of an assertive communicator in the exercise below. Then, only look at the answers when you are done (Maria et al., 2011):


Circle the correct answer.


	Option A	Option B	Option C
 An assertive communicator...	Keeps steady eye contact	Stares rudely	Looks down while speaking
 An assertive communicator...	Talks with their loudest possible voice	Speaks very softly you can barely hear them	Speaks in a firm, audible tone
 An assertive communicator...	Cares only about their needs	Cares only about the needs of others	Cares about their needs and also the needs of others
 An assertive communicator...	Is confident	Is arrogant	Is not confident (diffident)

The correct answers that show some of the characteristics of an assertive speaker are listed below (Maria et al., 2011):

 They maintain good eye contact when they speak, without intimidating the other person or shifting their eyes around so much. (Answer: keeps steady eye contact.)


 They speak in a clear, audible voice. They do not yell or raise their voice in order to get a point across. They speak firmly but with respect. (Answer: Speaks in a firm, audible tone.)


 They care about other people's needs, as well as their own. They find a way to strike a healthy balance between the two when making decisions that involve others. (Answer: cares about their needs, and also the needs of others.)


 They are confident and are not afraid to say what is on their mind. However, they do not say it in a rude or unkind manner. (Answer: Is confident.)


Below are some role-playing activities for you to practice assertive communication. Invite a friend or a parent/guardian to help you through it and play the second person.

Role Play Scenarios to Practice Assertive Communication

 Imagine you have a big test coming up, and your best friend asks for your help with an art project. You would love to help them but can't because you need to study. What will you say to them?

 Your cousin has a birthday party coming up, but you were really looking forward to a quiet weekend at home to rest and relax after a busy week. How do you turn down the invitation or make a compromise?

 A group of kids from your class want to visit a local park and jump off a bridge into the lake. The only problem is, this activity is not allowed. How will you say no to them?

 You are working on a group project for your geography class but one of the members is not doing the work assigned to them. How do you ask them to do their part?

Create more scenarios that are unique to your own experiences or that you are currently struggling with right now. Hopefully, this exercise will help to give you some guidance on how to deal with the situation. We also hope you receive some insight from whoever you are practicing with!


Learning how to express yourself to others is one piece of the puzzle. Another side to finding your voice is learning how to deal with the negativity that sometimes comes from your own mind.

Overcoming the Inner Critic

More often than not, hearing your own voice and knowing what you feel intuitively about something will involve blocking out the noise. The noise can take shape in different ways: discouraging words from others, criticism from others and also yourself, other people's projections (when their own fears influence your

decision-making and opinions), and self-sabotage. Notice how big the role *you* play in all this is. And that's a good thing because you can learn how to keep your inner voice positive and supportive.



The inner critic is a part of yourself that tries to protect you by discouraging you from doing things that are unfamiliar. It can stand in the way of you making progress in your personal growth journey, or it can simply stop you from doing hard things or feeling like you can accomplish anything. It is not a bad thing, but you need to learn how to challenge it so that you do not end up standing in your own way.

 Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself when you hear the inner critic telling you why you can't do something:

1. Would I say this to someone I care about?
2. Is this thought based on reality or fear?
3. Is this thought true?
4. What is a different way of looking at the same problem or scenario in a positive way?

Remember, no one is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes. The most important thing is to learn from them and to not let a mistake control how you view yourself, or your life in general. The inner critic can use past mistakes to try and keep you from repeating them, but a more helpful method is to re-frame mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth.

Use the space below to reflect on three mistakes you have made before, and then reflect on what you learned from those mistakes. It can be something like deciding not to study for a test and then failing, teaching you to not leave everything to the last minute.

 Mistake	 Lesson learned

--	--

Now let's consider real-life examples of other young women who found their voice, and are not afraid to use it.

Be Inspired

Greta Thunberg

Greta is a Swedish environmental activist who stands up for what she believes in and also uses her voice to advocate for it. When she was about 14 years old, she began challenging the legislators in her country to make changes by engaging in peaceful protests every Friday in front of the parliament. The protests became known as the Fridays for Future movement, and thousands of people joined in and participated all over the world. One of her most known and impactful appearances was at the UN in 2019, where she addressed the heads of state passionately about her views saying, "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words...We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money, and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!" She has also received her fair share of criticism and bullying online, but that has not dissuaded her from staying true to who she is and using her voice to advocate for it (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023).

Emma Watson

Emma is a British actress who is most known for her role as Hermione in the Harry Potter series. She is also a feminist who is not afraid to use her voice to speak out for the rights of women and equality in society, and she even founded the HeForShe campaign, through which she encourages men to also be involved in advocating for women's rights (UN Women, 2014). She has received much backlash online for her campaign (and her views in general) and criticism for the opportunities she has received to advocate for women's issues with some feeling as though she has an unfair advantage because she is a white, wealthy celebrity (Jean Hannah Edelstein, 2017). However, she continues to use her platform in spite of all the negativity and strives to make impactful changes.

Complete the next exercise, giving an overview of what you have learned and discovered about yourself in Part 1 of this workbook.

**KEY
LEARNINGS**

Embracing Your True self

Fill out the speech bubbles with words and phrases that define who you are. Use color, glitter and anything else that sparks joy!



PART 2:

Navigating Social Challenges

We have now laid a good foundation for you to understand who you are and how you show up in the world. Now, we are moving on to the community and people you surround yourself with. This group includes school and friends, but also social media—as I’m sure you would agree, social media has become one of the cornerstones of teenage social life today.

In this part of the workbook, you will learn techniques to help you stay true to yourself in the face of peer pressure and challenges that come from interacting with other people who have different views in society. You will also learn what to be mindful of when choosing friends and how to maintain healthy friendships.

My goal is to give you the tools to navigate any social challenges you may face with confidence and grace. Plus, I want to teach you how to stay true to your authentic self in the process. Let’s get into it!

Chapter 4:





Resisting Negative Influences

Part of your personal growth journey involves being able to stand firm in what you believe in, in spite of other people's influence, especially when it involves making decisions that can cause you harm or have a negative influence on your life. You will also strengthen your resilience when you learn to say no to things that you know are not good for you. Plus, standing firm in the face of negative influences is empowering and boosts your confidence in being an authentic person.

I understand peer pressure can be a major stumbling block for many teens. I was a teen too, and I struggled with that problem probably just as you do. Peer pressure can be both positive and negative and affects how decisions are made. It can affect the trajectory of your life in a good or bad way. This chapter will help you to develop skills that help you to always make decisions that are in line with your values and personal goals.


Recognizing Negative Influences


This concept may seem like an odd thing to focus on, but often, you may not recognize something as being negative because it is being suggested by someone who you trust, such as a friend, older cousin, or sibling. Some tell-tale signs that something or someone is a negative influence include the following examples (Soleil, 2018):

-  You almost always end up in trouble because of them.
-  The things they suggest or want to do go against rules (whether that is rules set by parents, guardians of the school system, or even breaking the law).
-  You are made to feel bad for refusing to do something bad or wrong.
-  You feel it in your gut that a person or situation is bad news.

That last sign takes time and practice to know and trust. Essentially, you should listen to your own inner guidance that points you in the direction of things that will be good for you. Let's dive into how you can train yourself to hear your intuitive feelings.

Gut Feeling Journaling

 **Think back to a time you were tempted to make a bad decision. Write down what happened.**

 **When the decision was suggested to you, did you feel like it was a good or bad idea? Did you know it was wrong? Try to describe how it made you feel (even if you decided to do it anyway).**

The feeling you just described is your inner guidance system warning you that something is not right. In most cases, when we are tempted to do something wrong, we will feel that it is wrong. This feeling occurs because of our ingrained core values and principles that are often established in childhood, with the influence of our parents and carers who want the best for us.



Did you decide to listen to your gut or ignore it? What was the outcome of your decision?

Now, set the intention to listen to your inner guidance system whenever you are faced with a difficult decision. The biggest problem is that some people will suppress this feeling so much to the point where it seems like it doesn't exist. Making the intention to listen to your intuition will hopefully guide you in a good direction.




My Intention to My Inner Guidance System


Remember, you can use the above exercise to analyze different decisions you have made or need to make. If you take a moment to sit quietly with your thoughts and think through things before acting, you will often see that the values that are ingrained in your mind will guide you.


But what happens when there are outside influences that are trying to persuade you to not listen to this voice? Let's practice with some examples of what an outward voice may say. Think about how you can respond. This


exercise would be great to do with a parent or adult you trust so that they can also give you guidance on how to deal with peer pressure.


Negative Peer Pressure Response Practice

 “It’s only one drink! No one will ever find out and you will be fine by the time you get home.”

 “You are such a prude! Every teenager does it. Your parents probably did it too. What’s the big deal?”

 “If you don’t do it at least once in your life, then you haven’t lived! Do you really want that for yourself?”

 “I was scared too the first time I tried, but I realized it’s no big deal. Trust me!”

 “If you refuse to do it, I will not be your friend anymore! And I will tell everyone that you are no fun at all!”





As a teenager, it can be tough to make and keep friends. Sometimes, you may end up doing something you know is wrong to fit in and be seen as cool. But the truth is, when you go against your own values and beliefs, it does not feel good at all. It is like betraying yourself. Remember, life continues after high school. And, the truth is, there will always be other people who also hold the same values as you do—you just need to be willing to establish good and healthy friendships, which you will learn about in the next chapter.

Resisting negative influences also involves learning to establish clear-cut boundaries that govern your interactions with people, as well as define what you are willing or unwilling to do.


Understanding Boundaries


Personal boundaries are like invisible lines that set limits for what is acceptable and unacceptable for you in various situations. When you set boundaries, you make a clear statement: You respect yourself, you respect your feelings, and you value your authentic self-expression. Setting boundaries also empowers you to protect your emotional and physical well-being.


Spend some time defining boundaries for different aspects of your life. Additionally, draw ideas from things that have happened in the past that felt wrong or made you feel uncomfortable. These can be good indicators of your inner guidance system (intuition) telling you that a boundary needs to be established.


Boundary type	Boundaries
 Physical Think about boundaries around your personal space, physical touch from others, and how you present yourself to others in different situations.	
 Emotional Think about how you show emotions and how you want others to also show their emotions towards you.	
 Social Think about how you interact with your friends, the activities you partake in, how often you meet, and the general expectations of your friendships.	
 Communication Think about how others speak to you, when they call you, how often they expect you to be available for conversations, and figure out what your limits are.	


In case you are struggling with this activity, here are a few pointers that show when a boundary has been crossed, which can help you to determine what your boundaries are (Casabianca, 2022):


 You feel uncomfortable because someone is standing too close to you or touches/hugs you without your permission.

 You feel pressure to share personal information that you would rather have kept private.

 You feel coerced or pressured into doing something you did not want to do, even if it is not something that is bad.

 You feel burnt out and emotionally tired after spending time with certain people or in certain situations, for example, a party or family gathering.

 You feel like you don't have a choice and have to yes to something (it could be going out with friends, joining an extracurricular activity, or participating in a sport).

 You feel like your needs and commitments are ignored or not taken into consideration when decisions involving you are made.

This list could go on, but hopefully, it jogs your memory enough for you to think about more areas in your life where you can be clear on what your boundaries are. Knowing your boundaries is the first step in ensuring they are not crossed.

Next, we'll learn from other young women who have successfully set and communicated their boundaries. They live a life of intentionally fighting against negative influences, choosing instead to focus on things that have built them up into who they are today.

Be Inspired

Maddie Ziegler

Maddie is an American actress who rose to fame in the TV show *Dance Moms*, and she later became very well known for her role in popstar Sia's music videos. Now, in her 20s, she has openly spoken about the challenges she faced as a child star and how much it strained her as a child. As an older person now, she embraces the freedom of making her own choices and setting boundaries around her work and life in a way where she can enjoy her privacy and a healthier lifestyle (Whittaker, 2022).

Demi Lovato

Demi is an American singer who has spoken freely about her struggles with disordered eating, substance abuse, bullying, and conforming to a certain image growing up. She has dealt with challenges that many teens face today and has now dedicated some of her time to helping other teens get through similar struggles, stating that she aims to be a role model to young people. She has completely turned her life around from the negative influences that used to control her (Seemayer, 2018).

Chapter 5:

Building Healthy Friendships

One of the pinnacles of teenage years is friendship. Friends will not only make the journey of physical growth easier and more enjoyable, but they will also give you much insight into who you are. If you are intentional about making good friends, you will also experience strong and supportive lifelong connections—or only a season filled with lessons that will last a lifetime.

Some of the major challenges around friendships that you may face include, well, making friends! You may also struggle with picking the right type of friends who will influence you in a positive way. It can also be challenging to deal with friends who have completely different views on life from yours and have a different approach but are still good company to keep.

In this chapter, you will learn about what to look for in friends, how to build healthy friendships, and how to avoid toxic friends. Through this process, you will also see how friendship can empower you on your personal growth journey.

Qualities of Healthy Friendships

For you to keep a good circle of people around you, you need to have an idea of the qualities that matter in friendships. You must also be mindful to learn to be this type of person for your friends so that your friendships are beneficial for both sides. There is a long list of qualities we can consider, but we will focus on the ones I think are most important and should be non-negotiable (Wool, 2022):

Trust

A healthy friendship is built on trust. “Trust” is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as dependence on an individual’s good nature and honesty. This quality is important in friendships because you have to be able to know that someone has good intentions for you and that you can confide in them and know they will always be there for you.

What are some things you can do to make sure you are a more trustworthy friend? For example, not gossiping.

 **Respect**

Respect in a friendship is when one is considerate about the other’s feelings, values, and beliefs. It also extends to how you treat each other—if you respect someone, you will treat them with kindness and compassion, and you will honor their opinions and boundaries without insisting on doing things your own way all the time, and they will do the same for you.

How can you be more intentional about showing your friends that you respect them?

 ***Supportive***

Having friends who will cheer you on and support you in everything you do will make a huge impact on your experience of life—including your ability to bounce back from challenges. Being supportive includes celebrating each other's achievements, as well as being there for each other when times are tough. Jealousy and resentment have no place in a friendship that is supportive where you want to see each other doing well.

How can you show more support to the friends you currently have? Or to your siblings or parents?


 ***Shared Values***

Finding common ground with a group of people is often what initiates friendship. Healthy friendships often involve common interests and hobbies, as well as shared beliefs and values. It certainly makes life easier if you hold the same opinions. There is a lower likelihood of arguing over small things, and you can generally expect the same things from the friendship. However, it is also good to be friends with people who have different interests and beliefs, as this will allow you to grow in knowledge and have a diverse understanding of society. However, values should never be compromised.


It's important to know which values are important to you in a friendship and that you must never compromise on. Circle the top five values you would like in a friend below. Make sure that they are values you also live by.


Loyalty	Generosity	Intelligent
Empathy	Forgiving	Adventurous
Honesty	Accountability	Creative
Kindness	Reliability	Independent
Humor	Confidence	Quirky

Now, I'd like you to spend some time assessing your current friendships and make an honest judgment on whether or not they are healthy friendships. The point is to ensure that you surround yourself with friends that will build you up as a person, and who you can also pour goodness into. Don't be discouraged if the results are not what you would like them to be; this is all part of the process of becoming the best version of yourself. Feel free to talk through this exercise with a parent or sibling.

 **Do you feel respected and valued in your current friendships? Explain your answer.**

 **Are you able to express your opinions and feelings to your friends without fear or judgment? Give an example for your answer.**

 **Do you trust your friends? Do they keep your secrets or things you tell them in confidence? Are you able to rely on them and do you do the same for them?**

 **Do your friends support you when you go through a challenging time or do they only prefer to be around you when you are happy and in a good mood?**

If you assess your answers and figure out that you may need to make some changes, it's okay! Growing up to be a confident person involves making tough calls on important decisions such as who you spend time with. This doesn't mean you have to automatically stop being friends with certain people. You can first try to communicate your needs in the friendship, and then give them a chance to change. Sometimes, a lack of awareness can stop a person from showing up for you so do show grace.

Let's close off with some examples of women who have strong friendships that have withstood the test of time.

Be Inspired

Oprah Winfrey and Gayle King

Oprah and Gayle are American media personalities who have been friends for more than four decades! They met at a television station when they were young and remained close friends even after Oprah became world-famous. They have spoken about the values that have kept their friendship strong and long-lasting, including trust, open communication, respect for each other's boundaries, and having shared values (Winfrey & King, 2021).

Jennifer Aniston and Courtney Cox

Jennifer and Courtney became lifelong friends after starring in the hit TV show *Friends*. Their friendship has lasted through many highs and lows and personal challenges as they have navigated their careers in Hollywood. They share that their friendship has lasted for decades because they are there for each other whenever one of them needs it. They have publicly supported each other through challenges, and they have a friendship built on trust. Jennifer is actually godmother to Courtney's daughter, which is a testament to how close their friendship is (de Wet, 2023).

Chapter 6:

Empowering Social Media Use

Social media has become the backbone of teens' social lives, as I'm sure you are well aware of. Researchers state that 90% of teens use social media, with 75% having at least one active account and 51% checking their sites at least twice a day (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2018). When having conversations around personal growth today, it is important to also consider social media use, how you use it, and how to protect yourself from dangers that may affect your growth and confidence. It is also good to have a toolkit to deal with the challenges that arise from social media use and to know how to keep yourself safe. Social media, if used well, can be a tool with which to inspire change and spread positivity. My hope is that you approach it with a mindset to add more good to the world.


Responsible Use of Social Media


First things first: safety! Social media presents a unique danger of giving the world insights into very personal information. You should take necessary precautions to make sure you are safe online. Below is a list of things you should never share online:

- ❌ Never share your address.
- ❌ Never share your ID number or social security number.
- ❌ Never share answers to questions that may be used as security questions (avoid “challenges” that prompt you to share such information, such as childhood nickname, mother’s maiden name, name of your first pet, etc. This information can be used to hack your accounts).
- ❌ Never share your real-time locations, for example, where you are traveling to, or plans with friends.
- ❌ Never meet someone from the internet in real life. If you absolutely have to, make sure it is in a public place, and that you go with a trusted adult. **DO NOT GO ALONE.**


I understand that one of the fun aspects of social media is sharing your personal life, but you need to be mindful of what you share and how you do it. You can share a trip you went on after you have returned, for example. Or share hangout plans after the event has already taken place. Think about sharing memories and not plans.

The below exercise would be best to do with a parent, guardian, or older sibling who can give you guidance and tips on social media safety. Discuss each scenario, and brainstorm ideas of how to handle each situation.

 What should you do when you receive a friend request from someone you do not know and have no mutual friends in common with?

 If someone posts an embarrassing photo of you on social media, what can you do about it?

 A close friend shares a personal problem on their page. Do you comment and give your opinion?

 All your friends on Snapchat are sharing their live location. Should you do the same?

Dealing With Cyberbullying

A challenge that has destroyed many lives is cyberbullying. People are able to be completely anonymous online, and so they feel that they can get away with saying or doing anything. Safety online certainly protects you from it a great deal. But what do you do if you are bullied online?

First, let's discuss what qualifies as bullying. Can you give some examples of how people get bullied online? Or, if you have had this experience, feel free to discuss this with someone.

Examples of online bullying:

What to do about it (UNICEF, 2023):

1. Speak up! Don't suffer in silence, and don't watch someone suffering in silence.
2. Report and block accounts that bully.
3. Do not respond to bullies in the comments. This only fuels the fire of their negativity and it must be ignored.
4. In serious cases, it is necessary to report bullying to authorities or ask parents to take legal action against a bully. This is why it is important not to keep it to yourself if you are bullied online.
5. Continue to educate yourself on safety online.
6. Practice healthy boundaries between social media and life. Remember, you can always delete your account and live social media free, if it affects your life in a negative way overall.

Balancing Screen Time

The amount of time you spend on social media can affect your mental health. It has been proven that teens who spend more time online are more likely to feel depressed or have low self-esteem because of the highlight reels they see displayed by hundreds of people. It can also lead to a deep dissatisfaction with one's own life (Withington, 2019). Start by filling out the table below to assess your current social media use. Be honest, even if the results make you feel a little embarrassed.

Check your phone's screen time history. What is the average amount of time you spend on social media per week?

How often do you think you check your social media per day? Whatever answer you get, multiply it by three. There is a higher likelihood that you check it subconsciously more often than you are aware of.





Would you be able to go a month without social media?

Do you have more conversations online than you do in real life?

Do you still have time to practice your hobbies and indulge in your interests or all your time is spent online?

Hopefully, these questions will help you to start seriously assessing your social media habits and identifying where changes need to be made.

Lastly, spend some time thinking about how you can use your social media presence to impact people's lives in a positive way. You don't have to have the desire to be an influencer or content creator to do this exercise—you can simply be intentional about the type of things you share and don't share online. You can also show support for causes that are in line with your beliefs and use your digital voice to advocate.

 Positive content you can share:	 Negative content you can avoid:
 Causes you can support online:	 Social issues you can address online:

You can also draw inspiration from other young people who have built their careers on social media but also share about the importance of using social media wisely.

Be Inspired

Anna Akana

Anna is an American YouTuber, actress, and comedian. Much of her content is dedicated to educating her viewers on mental health and self-care, and she encourages open conversations around these topics. She is one example of a social media influencer who uses her platform to inspire positive change in the lives of

others. Anna speaks openly about the importance of maintaining your privacy when you're online and keeping strict boundaries about what you share with your audience (Belanger, 2018).

Charli D'Amelio

Charli is a TikTok creator who rose to fame with her talent for dancing. She experienced her fair share of bullying online and now uses her platform to openly advocate against cyberbullying because she has first-hand experience of what that feels like. She also encourages her followers to show each other kindness and respect one another in their social media spaces, and with more than 150 million people following her on TikTok alone, her reach for influence is great and can cause positive change in the lives of many people (BBC Newsround, 2020).

Complete the next exercise, giving an overview of what you have learned and discovered about yourself in Part 2 of this workbook.

**KEY
LEARNINGS**

12 horizontal lines for writing key learnings.

Navigating Social Challenges

Write single sentence reminders to yourself on how you will stay true to who you are in these situations.



PART 3:

Balancing Your Life

Learning to balance your life is a skill that you will carry with you until old age, and if done right, can greatly improve and increase your lived experience. As a teenager, you start to learn how to take initiative over your well-being in all sectors of your life, and that takes discipline and commitment. You may often feel stressed and stretched because of the growing number of responsibilities on your plate—expectations from school, friends, home, and maybe even a job. You will also be faced with the challenge of figuring out who you are and what your passions are, which may also inform the career you end up deciding to pursue. In this part of the workbook, the aim is to empower you with knowledge and skills to help you navigate life better and establish a good balance between all your commitments, as well as fun and rest


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Chapter 7:
Organizing Your Time

Time management is one skill that will dramatically improve your life if applied consistently. Often, people feel like there is not enough time. However, I would argue that we have more than enough time—we waste a lot of it without even realizing we are doing it. We will kick off this chapter with an exercise that will give you insight into how you manage (or waste) your own time.


Benefits of Time Management

Below are some benefits of time management (Global Indian International School, 2020). Proceed to use the few lines below each point to think about how this can manifest in your own life through better time management. You may also discuss it with someone for clarity and ideas.

 Stress reduction

 Improved productivity

 Accomplishment of goals

 Improvement in grades and quality of work done



Better relationships



Enhances your confidence

Time Usage Assessment


Pick a day where you will track what you do throughout the day. Add as much detail as possible so that you see where your time goes. Also, choose a symbol you will use every time you check your social media, and, if you want to go a step further, record how long you spend online each time you log on.





6 a.m.





7 a.m.


 8 a.m.


 9 a.m.


 10 a.m.


 11 a.m.


 12 p.m.


 1 p.m.


 2 p.m.

 3 p.m.

 4 p.m.


 5 p.m.

 6 p.m.

 7 p.m.

 8 p.m.

 9 p.m.

 10 p.m. - 5.59 a.m.

If you are able, complete this exercise for a week to fully get insights on your time management.

After you complete the activity, answer the following questions:

How much time do you spend on productive tasks?

How much time do you spend on entertainment or activities that add no value to your life?

How many hours did you sleep? If you slept for less than six hours, can you explain why you are struggling to get enough sleep based on your time usage?

What are major time wasters and distractions according to your time log?

What can you immediately get rid of that you know you don't need to be doing?

Now that you have narrowed down the list of what is important, let us now discuss prioritizing.

How to Prioritize Tasks

Learning to prioritize will ensure that you deal with the most important things first and that you allocate your time evenly between everything you need to do. Plus, learning to prioritize will protect you from burnout, which is extreme fatigue and lack of motivation because of excessive workload and stress, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

At the beginning of each day, there are questions that you can ask yourself to ensure you are planning for success:

1. What is the one task I *have* to ensure I complete?
2. What is the hardest task I have to complete today? (My recommendation is to tackle this task first before any other task.)
3. Which tasks can I realistically do today?

Often, these questions can be difficult to address because you have no awareness of what needs to be done. So let's see how you can determine which tasks should fall under which category on your priority list.

Start by making a list of all the tasks you currently need to complete, in no particular order.

Feel free to use extra paper if needed. This list will help you to have an overview of everything that is on your plate before you can portion it off.

Now you can proceed to group the tasks using the Eisenhower Matrix below. What you need to do is to consider each item on your to-do list and ask the following:

- Is it urgent?
- Is it important?

You will discover that there are some tasks that are important but not urgent, so you can delegate them to someone else who can assist you. Perhaps you need to do some chores but have more important tasks on your to-do list—you can enlist the help of a sibling or a parent.

Remember, urgent tasks are the ones that have more imminent deadlines—they need to be finished before other tasks can be done. For example, studying for a test, finishing an assignment, or looking for a friend’s gift who has a birthday the coming weekend.

Important tasks, on the other hand, are ones that add value to your life in some way. A task can be both important and urgent, or not important and urgent. So, think carefully about which category each task falls under.

	Important	Not important
Urgent	Do first	Do later

Not urgent	Delegate/postpone to later date	Eliminate
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If you apply this simple matrix to your to-do list at the beginning of every week, it will help you to keep your head above the water and actually get more done.

Becoming Efficient

Next, let's discuss how to get the tasks done in the most efficient way possible: deep work. According to Cal Newport, an MIT-trained science professor and author, deep work is when you commit to focused stints of work which helps you to concentrate and accomplish quality work in shorter amounts of time (Newport, 2016). This work can be done by using the Pomodoro Technique, which consists of concentrating for 25-minute sessions and then taking 5-minute breaks in between. After four 25-minute sessions, you can take a longer, 30-minute break. You can commit to doing a specific number of Pomodoro sessions in one sitting to really enjoy the full benefits (Collins, 2020). Try it with some binaural sounds in your headphones and you will enjoy even more focused work.

Lastly, consider these women you can also learn from who have successfully learned how to manage their time using some of these techniques.

Be Inspired

Gretchen Rubin

Gretchen is an American author and podcaster who hosts *Happier With Gretchen Rubin*. In this podcast, she has shared the importance of using productivity techniques such as deep work and how it has helped her accomplish many of her own goals and allows her to manage her time successfully (Rubin, 2023).

Marie Forleo

Marie is an American entrepreneur who is dedicated to helping others succeed at building their own businesses. She often speaks on the importance of time management and has stated that she has used the Pomodoro timer in order to achieve her goals and get things done. She also includes this as part of her business advice she shares, but these techniques clearly apply outside of entrepreneurship too (Forleo, 2018).

Chapter 8: Coping With Stress

As part of your self-awareness and self-growth program, you need to learn how to deal with stress. Stress can make you feel miserable and as if your life is falling apart—when all you need is a few tricks up your sleeve that you can use when things get tough. In this chapter, you will learn how to know what causes stress for you (stress triggers), and how to deal with it. Let’s start by discussing what stress actually is.

Understanding Stress

Stress is the way your mind and body respond to a challenging situation, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. This response can lead to you not acting like yourself, maybe snapping at someone in an unkind manner, or even struggling to get your tasks completed.

Managing stress helps you to keep a positive mindset and leaves you in a better mood. You are also able to maintain good relationships with family and friends and stay productive (Lewis, 2022). Let’s dive into the tools that can help you to manage stress.

Identifying the Things That Cause Stress for You

Knowing your stress triggers is like a map that guides you, letting you know when you need to take a break or step away from others and have some quiet time. It will also help you set boundaries.

Below are some common things that cause stress for teenage girls. Circle the ones you can relate to.

Exams	Body Image	Rejection	Deadlines
Grades	Appearance	Bullying	Exclusion
Homework	Weight loss/gain	Social Media	Family matters
Group projects	Peer pressure	After-school activities	Career Planning
Friendship Drama	Time management	Expectations from parents	College Applications

Pick three of the stress triggers you chose and try explaining why they cause stress. Here is an example:

If you circled “friendship drama,” a reason why that trigger may stress you is that you would have to pick sides between your friends, which can be very difficult as you would not want to make any of them upset or sad.

Do ask for help from a parent or sibling if you struggle to put your thoughts into words.

Trigger 1




Trigger 2

Trigger 3

Now, think about ways that can help you when faced with these stressful situations. Consider the example below:

If exams make you stressed, and the reason is that you feel overwhelmed by all the notes you have to study, a way to deal with this stress would be to better organize your time so that you can learn your work in small chunks so that when exams come around, you do not feel overwhelmed.


I encourage you to do this section with a parent or sibling—they will give you great tips and advice on how to find solutions.


 Trigger 1 solutions	 Trigger 2 solutions	 Trigger 3 solutions


Next, we'll discuss ways you can make yourself feel better when you are already stressed.


Coping Methods for Stress


The best way to find the mechanisms that work for you is to try out different types and see how you feel afterward. Below are some proven methods you can try out:


 Talk to someone.

 Practice mindfulness. Take a few deep breaths to help calm yourself down, and allow yourself to be in the present moment—not worrying about the past or the future.

 Journal your thoughts and feelings as the event unfolds. This practice helps you to have a clear picture of what is going on.

 Get plenty of sleep. Don't let a stressful situation keep you up at night. Staying awake does not provide any solutions, and you need your mind to be sharp if you are to come up with a helpful solution.

 Eat healthy and exercise. Don't neglect your well-being. Do self-care habits that make you feel well looked after.

 Use creativity as a way to de-stress. You can do this by drawing, painting, doodling, writing creative stories, or anything really! Remember, this is not meant to distract you, but rather, to clear your mind and help you relax.

Are there any coping methods you have tried that may not be part of the list above? Write them down! If you can't think of any, discuss them with someone and then brainstorm more ways to let out stress and blow off steam.

In the next section, we'll consider some examples of women who manage to keep their heads above the water in spite of stressful careers and situations.

Be Inspired

Gina Rodriguez

Gina is an American actress who has been candid about her struggles with anxiety and stress, and how that has gotten her into some dark and depressive moments. She is a huge advocate for mental health awareness. In her own words, she claims that "Stress/worry are brought on by your brilliant brain. If you are doing either you aren't being present. Focus on studying, not the outcome" (Chahinian, 2018). From her experience, we can learn that taking time to breathe and be mindful and present is a technique she has used to deal with stress.


Giada De Laurentiis


Giada is an Italian-American chef and entrepreneur who has spoken about her experience dealing with stress and overwhelming anxiety. For her, it can get so bad that she loses her appetite and feels sick! She has also explained that one way she deals with stressful situations is by doing deep-breathing exercises to help herself calm down (Team, 2016). You should try it! Maybe it will also offer a great solution for you.


Chapter 9: Pursuing Your Passions


We all have things in life that bring us great joy and are fun to do. Maintaining a balanced life simply means making sure that you set aside time for the things that bring you joy, even if they are outside of daily tasks. Skills you have learned already, such as time management, will help you out!

Spending time on your hobbies and interests is important in your personal growth journey because:

 It helps you know what your purpose is. When you make time to enjoy your hobbies from childhood and as you grow up, it will be helpful in the future when you are trying to make important decisions, such as which job you would like to have! You will also discover what you are really good at and how you can help others—which gives you the energy to go after your dreams.

 It helps you feel joyful and proud of yourself. Doing your personal interests allows you to feel a deep joy and be proud of yourself for starting or finishing something you may have wanted to do for a long time. For example, if you enjoy art and finish a painting, it will feel good.

 It improves your mood. Doing your hobbies releases special chemicals known as endorphins in your brain, which make you happy and keep you in a good mood.

 It helps build confidence. When you spend time doing something you love, whether it is music, art, or anything else, you become better at it and can inspire others through your work, which makes you feel more confident.

Let's explore what your hobbies are and how you can manage your time to make them part of your daily life!


Exploring Your Interests

Use the space below to write down some activities in each section that have made you happy, either in the past or present. Include activities you already do often, and those that you used to do but can't seem to find time for anymore. Plus, include activities you are interested in but have never tried.

My hobbies

 Creative

 Sport

 Games

 Other

It would be great to have at least one hobby in each section. If you are not a sporty person, perhaps you might enjoy dancing? Think outside the box.

Now, let's look at how much time you dedicate to your hobbies, if any. Answer the following questions:



Have you done any of your hobbies this week in your own time? If you answered yes, when and for how long? If you answered no, do you have any reasons?






Have you done any of your hobbies this week as part of your school or community requirements? For example, playing sports because it is compulsory at school.

In general, what do you spend most of your free time doing? Watching television or TikTok videos, perhaps? Or do you spend it on your hobbies? Write anything else that comes to mind.

Have a closer look at your week based on activities you have to do, for example, school, studying, and compulsory extracurricular activities. You can ask for help to do this exercise if you feel overwhelmed.

When you are done, you can check how much time you can spend on your hobbies every day of the week. State the time frames too. For example, you might write Monday from 6 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Weekly assessment time	Time filled with activities I have to do (e.g. school)	Time I can spend on my hobbies
 17 Monday		
 17 Tuesday		

 17 Wednesday		
 17 Thursday		
 17 Friday		
 17 Saturday		
 17 Sunday		




Remember, you do not have to do your hobbies every day or fill up every second of free time you have with activities. However, this activity gives you an overview of the times that would be best for you to slot in a hobby or new activity.







Next, use the activity below to decide which hobbies you will do and when you will do them. It may also mean researching hobbies that you would like to start doing, in case you need your parents to look for lessons or group sessions you can attend.


Keep it simple and doable. If you have an overwhelming schedule, you are less likely to get anything done.

My Hobby Schedule

Fill the table below with your hobbies and the time you may be able to do them. Use a pencil so that you can erase any changes you would like to make.

	 Morning	 Afternoon	 Evening
--	--	--	--

 17 Monday			
 17 Tuesday			
 17 Wednesday			
 17 Thursday			
 17 Friday			
 17 Saturday			

 17 Sunday			
--	--	--	--

You can always come back to this schedule to remind yourself what you have planned each week and to make changes as your interests adapt over time.

Let's look at some examples of women who followed their interests and eventually did them as a job!

Be Inspired

Simone Biles

Simone is an American artistic gymnast who has won seven Olympic medals in her career so far! She encourages others to follow their dreams with dedication and commitment and has mentioned that this kind of mindset is one of the things that has contributed to her success. She also adds that ensuring that she always puts her best foot forward and gives her pursuits her best effort keeps her going (Bregman, 2020).

Chloe Kim

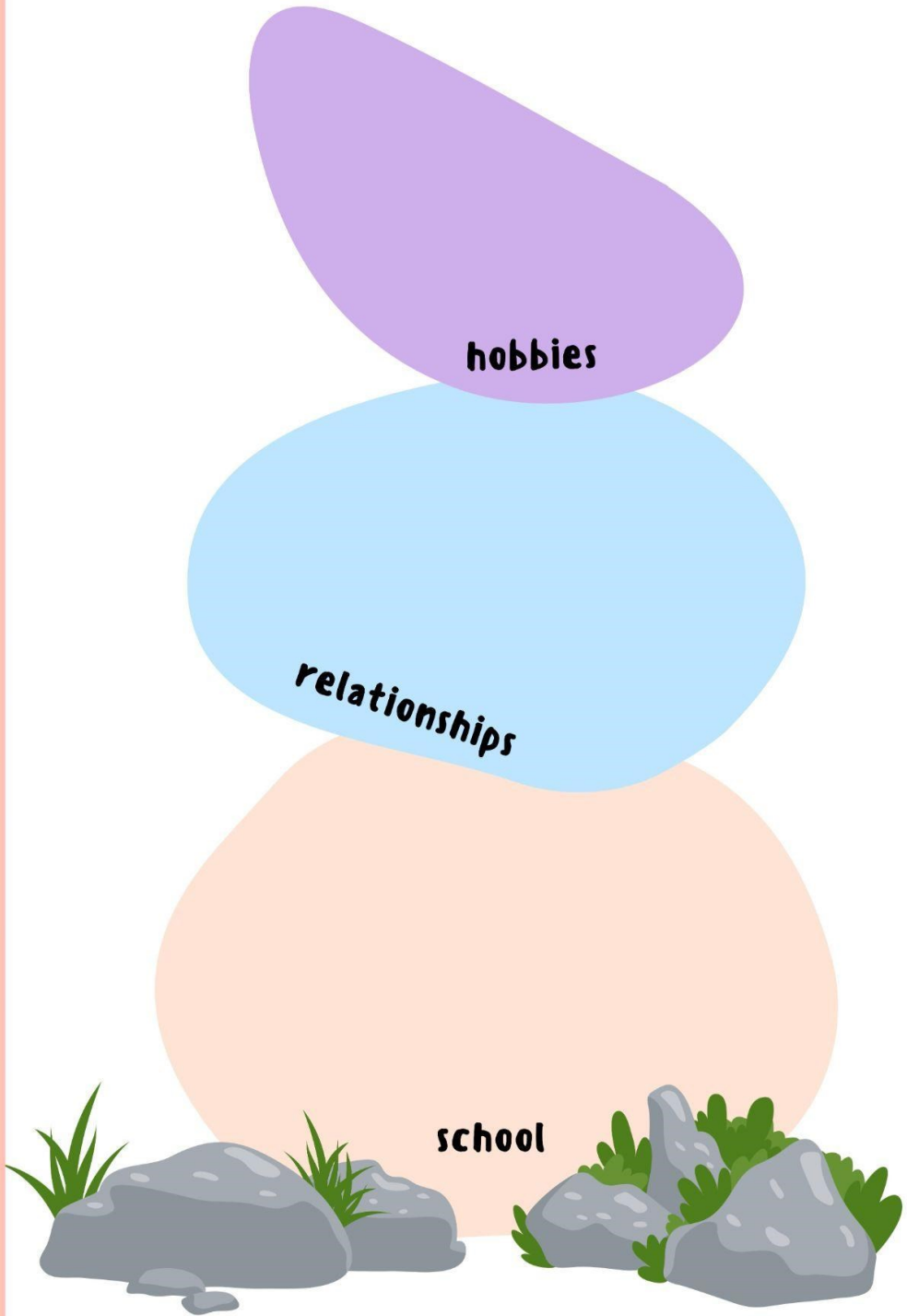
Chloe is an American snowboarder who followed her passion for the sport from a young age and became one of the youngest gold medalists for her gold medal in 2018 when she was 17! In an interview, she stated that she followed her passions and accomplished the dreams she had from when she was only eight years old. She also stated how enjoyable it is to do something you love for a living, which implies the amount of fulfillment she gets from doing it (Moran, 2016).

Complete the next exercise, giving an overview of what you have learned and discovered about yourself in Part 3 of this workbook.

**KEY
LEARNINGS**

Balancing Your Life

Write down what you are committed to do in each facet of life to maintain balance.



PART 4:

Empowering Your Future

Have you ever heard the saying, “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail”? I’m sure if you are someone who always waits until the last minute to get things done, you know exactly what it means! Your journey to becoming the kind of girl you want to be involves learning how to set goals that you can accomplish, how to proudly be yourself, and how to overcome challenges. This part of the workbook dives into all of these topics in more detail.

Chapter 10: Goal Setting and Vision Board

Imagine running a race with no finish line in sight. Would you feel motivated? Would you run with the same energy throughout? How would you even measure your progress or keep track of how far you've run? If you think this would be a bad idea, then you are on the right track! In a similar way, living life with no goals is as silly as running a race without a finish line.

Goal setting plays many roles in our lives. It keeps us focused and shows us the direction we should take even when things get tough.

The vision, on the other hand, is where you are aiming to reach. Goals and your vision go hand in hand. Let's explore that idea further.

Defining Your Vision

Your vision is who you see yourself being in the future. It gives you an idea of who you want to be, the work you want to be doing, and how you want to make a difference in other people's lives.

It's difficult to set goals when you don't have a clear vision in mind. Below, you can begin to map out your ideas for what you would like your future self to be like!

Exercise 1

Imagine how you would like your life to be in the next year.

Think about answering questions such as:

- What would your grades be?
- Which places would you like to go to with your friends or family?
- Is there a new hobby you would like to learn?


Simply focus on what you would like to do without worrying about how to do it. Cut out pictures from a magazine or print some out. Or even draw. Make it fun!

Me in a Year

What you have just created is a vision board. It gives your mind something to focus on, and you can use this to go to the next step: goal setting.

Setting Clear Goals


Remember what we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: Goals and your vision go hand in hand.


 Your vision is the “what,” while your goals are the “how.”


In other words, the vision is what you want to achieve, and the goals are how you will achieve it.


For you to successfully accomplish your goals, there are a few rules you will need to follow (SAMHSA, 2018),


Your goals need to:

 Be very clear.

 Have a plan.

 Have an easy way to check your progress.

 Have a deadline.

 Bonus Tip: Make sure your goals are things that you truly believe you can do.

Let's put this knowledge into practice. I will provide an example for each point, and then you can fill in the exercise with one of your own goals.

Step 1: Pick One of the Points From Your Vision Exercise To Set Your First Clear Goal

Example: I would like to improve my grades from a B to an A.

Step 2: Have a Plan

Example: I will study mathematics for at least an hour every day.

Step 3: Check Your Progress

Example: I will ask my mom or teacher to set practice revision tests for me each week to see how much I am improving.

Step 4: Have a Deadline

Example: My grade should have improved by the time I write exams.

This process of goal setting is simple but effective. It allows you to get into more detail about how you will achieve your goals in a simple and realistic way for you.

Apply it to all your goals and see what happens!

Let us consider some inspirational examples of other women who have enjoyed the benefits of setting goals effectively.

Be Inspired

Marley Dias

Marley is an American activist and writer. When she was 11 years old, she set the ambitious goal to collect 1,000 books featuring Black girls as the main characters, and then she donated them to schools. The campaign was called *#1000BlackGirlBooks* and garnered much support online and from celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey (American talk show host) and Viola Davis (American actress) (McGrath, 2017). Her story shows that it is never too early to set big goals!

Mikaila Ulmer

Mikaila is an American entrepreneur who started a company at only four years old! As she tells her story about how *Me and the Bees* was founded, she describes how being stung by bees twice eventually led her to the idea of creating a *BeeSweet Lemonade*. She continues to set and achieve big goals for her socially conscious business and has seen great success at such a young age (Yates, 2022).

Chapter 11: Cultural Pride and Aspirations

There are life experiences that are unique to you, your family, and your culture. These experiences must be enjoyed and celebrated with pride. Never be ashamed of where you come from. You must celebrate it, and also make an effort to share the beauty of your culture with others.

One of the things that makes life interesting is having people from all over the world showing each other new ways of doing things, and also getting to share with others what you and your family do.

This celebration of our cultures is what we will hopefully achieve by the end of this chapter.

You will definitely need to work closely with your family or guardians on this section of the book to glean as much knowledge as possible.

My Ancestry

Ancestry is basically the culture or people you are descended from, or where your great great great great grandparents were from, including both your father's and mother's sides of your family (Webster, 2019). There are fancy tests that can be done to determine this information, but you can get as much information as you can by asking your family and seeing what you can find out about your heritage.

The next exercise should be done as a group activity with family.

Fill in the table below with the information you can find. All you need to do is fill in which part of the world the people in the first column are/were from—from your mother's side of the family and then from your father's side of the family. You can draw on the maps or print pictures and stick them in.

Country of Origin Exercise

	Mother's side	Father's side
Parents		
Grandparents		
Great grandparents		
Great great grandparents		
Origin roots (where can they be traced back to?)		

I hope this exercise was fun and insightful. All your boxes may have had the same flag, and that is absolutely brilliant too! The point is to know your roots.

Now let's dive into the fun experiences that are unique to your heritage.

Cultural Experiences and Exploration

This exercise will also be fun to do with your family.

Explore the following topics and fill in the table with information on what is unique about your culture. Use words, pictures, and anything else you can think of to represent your culture.

Celebrating My Culture
Food
Music

Art

Cultural Dressing

Hopefully, this exercise has provided an opportunity for you to connect with your family, while also discovering fun things about your cultural heritage.

Can you think of ways you can be more intentional about celebrating your culture in your everyday life? Also, get ideas from others.

Now, let's consider people who have embraced their cultural heritage in a way that enabled them to be sources of inspiration for you and me.

Be Inspired

Liza Koshy

Liza is an American media personality and actress of Indian and German descent. She started out her career on YouTube. She is known for her fun and quirky personality, and she always incorporated her cultural heritage in her content, which made her stand out in a sea of hundreds of creators. She encourages her followers to adopt self-acceptance in their self-expression, which I think is awesome (Saeed, 2019).

Auli'i Cravalho

Auli'i is an American actress and singer who is of Native Hawaiian and Puerto Rican descent. She rose to fame as the voice of the titular character in the Disney film *Moana*. She has spoken about how much joy she received from playing this role as it was a celebration of her culture, which she is proud of (Sacks, 2016). She continues to be an inspiration to her young audiences who have learned that it is a beautiful thing to embrace who you are—as the story of *Moana* teaches too!






Chapter 12: Growing Through Challenges

Challenges are part of life. In fact, they give us a chance to learn how to be resilient, which helps us in many other ways. Let's first consider what it means to be resilient.

Understanding Resilience

Resilience is our ability to overcome challenges and pick ourselves up when things don't go how we want them to. It is also not giving up no matter how much you fail at something, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Being resilient allows us to be the following (Swaim, 2022):

-  Be hopeful in difficult situations.
-  Think of everything that happens to us in a positive way.
-  Be happier with the way your life is (this is also called contentment).
-  Show others more compassion.
-  Be good at finding good solutions for problems we face.


Some common challenges you may face at this stage of your life may have to do with your academic performance, friendships, your social life, and fitting in with your peers.


What is the most recent challenge you faced?


How did you deal with it?


If you didn't know what to write with that second prompt don't worry! We will now consider some tips on how you can become a more resilient young lady.

Tips to Build Resilience

 **Show yourself grace and empathy!** Realize that it is okay to not always get everything right.

 **Talk to others.** You will be surprised how much strength you can draw from simply sharing what is bothering you with your friends or parents. Try it next time you feel down.

 **Keep to a good daily routine.** When it feels like your world is falling apart, having things that remain constant will help you to keep going—even if it is something as simple as doing a facial mask once every week or putting away your phone at 7 p.m. every day and choosing instead to read or do something creative. It will help you feel more at ease and less overwhelmed when things go wrong.

 **Never stop trying!** Just because something does not work out the first time does not mean it will never work out. Never give up trying. Practice does make perfect!

Now consider the challenge you mentioned above. With this new knowledge, how might you deal with something similar in the future?

Draw some inspiration from the examples of resilience below.

Be Inspired

Claire Wineland

Claire was an American activist and writer who suffered from a disease called cystic fibrosis, which damages the lungs and other organs and makes it very difficult to breathe. In spite of her suffering, she followed her dreams and started a YouTube channel. She also founded an organization to educate more people about the illness she had (Ravitz, 2018). She lived a life that taught others what it means to be resilient, which is a remarkable legacy to leave!

Haile Thomas

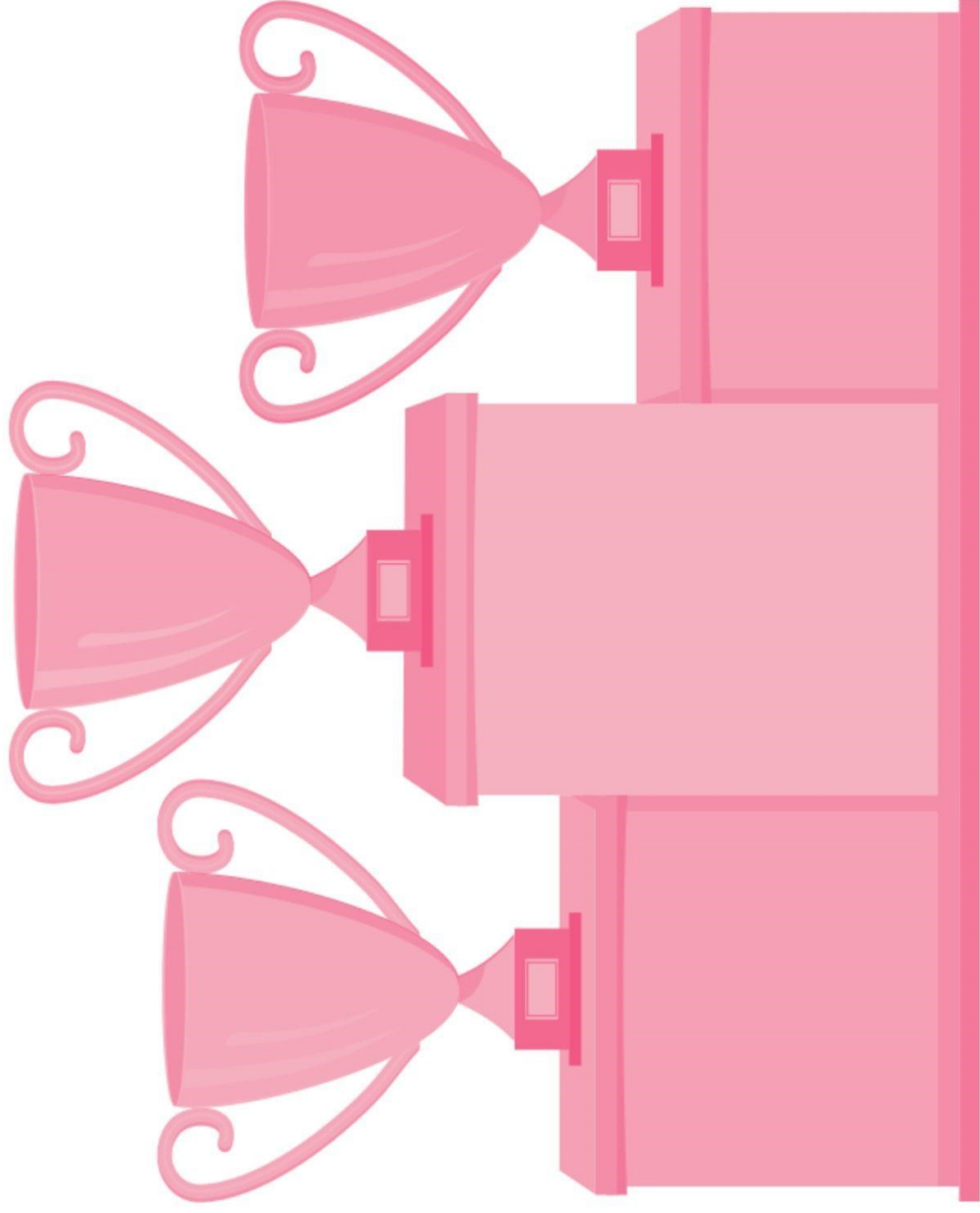
Haile is a young American chef who founded an organization called H.A.P.P.Y meaning Happy, Active, Positive, Purposeful, Youth. She founded it when she was only 12 years old! She uses her platform to advocate and educate young people to eat healthy and take care of themselves while remaining positive in the face of anything that life throws their way. She is the youngest person to have graduated from the Institute of Integrative Nutrition with a coach certification (Harper Collins, 2020).

Complete the next exercise, giving an overview of what you have learned and discovered about yourself in Part 4 of this workbook.

**KEY
LEARNINGS**

Empowering Your Future

Engrave these trophies with your top 3 goals you would like to accomplish before leaving high school.



A series of horizontal lines on a light pink background, intended for writing key learnings.

PART 5:

Connecting With Others

Well done! You have finally reached the final part of this workbook! How does it feel to be such a champion? In this part, we will consider how you can build supportive relationships that will help you to carry on the great work you have started.

You will also spend time thinking about who your own role models are and seeing what you can do to become more like them—but in your own unique way.

You will also learn the importance of approaching your growth journey with compassion. Things that are worth having don't always come easy, and that's okay! This workbook has hopefully laid a foundation that you will continue to build upon.

Let's get into it!

Chapter 13: Finding Role Models

Role models are an important part of personal growth as they give us inspiration for who we want to become and the kind of impact we want to have on the world (Hanger, 2022).

They can be based on a real-life person, a celebrity, or even a character in a book or on a TV show. What is important is to make sure we try to model our lives against people who do good in the world.

It is possible to have bad role models, so be sure to check the reasons behind why you admire the people you look up to. Seek guidance and advice from trusted adults.

This chapter will also help you explore your role models in detail and have a visual reminder of what you find inspiring about them.

Identifying Role Models

Fill the table below with people you think are inspirational. Have at least three individuals in each column.

 Real-life	 Famous people	 Book/TV characters

Next, pick one (your favorite) from each of the categories and explain why you find them inspirational.

Real-Life Role Model

From your descriptions, think about ways you can become like them in your own life: think about how you take care of yourself, how you support others, and the things you choose to spend your time on. You can also use symbols, doodles, and pictures to visualize your thoughts.

Who I Want to Become ✨

Remember, having role models does not mean you want to be exactly like them. You need to stay true to your authentic self. Role models give us inspiration for positive things we can learn to become (Hanger, 2022).

Copying Achievement Models

This next section will require a bit of research on your side.

What kind of a person do you hope to become when you grow up? Your answer can include things like the job you would have, which country you live in, or anything that comes to mind when imagining your life in the future.

Can you think of examples of people who have achieved the goals you have for the future? Name them.

Lastly, with the help of family or friends, do research on how these people accomplished this goal. Get into as much detail as possible.

For example, if you want to be a YouTuber and you use an influencer like Emma Chamberlain as inspiration, you can look into how she started her channel and how often she posted, in addition to anything else she did to achieve success.



Role Model's Strategy

Now, using what your role model did as inspiration, write down in the space below, what you can do to achieve your goal that is similar to what they have accomplished.



My Role-Model Inspired Action Plan

Role models can give us inspiration not only for what we can achieve but also for how we can achieve it. Continue to be inspired by people who have come before you and learn how they have become the inspiration they are to you.

Below are some examples of inspirational young women who would make great role models!

Be Inspired

Marsai Martin

Marsai is an American actress, producer, and entrepreneur. She rose to fame for her role in the film *Black-ish*. She is also known for being the youngest-ever producer in Hollywood for her work producing the movie *Little*. At such a young age, she has managed to accomplish what many dreams to accomplish in a lifetime! Her advice to young people is to follow their dreams, stay authentic, and be confident in who they are and what they have to offer (Staff, 2023). All those attributes are wonderful to aspire to!

Gitanjali Rao

Gitanjali is an American inventor, author, and social activist who inspires people with her passion for science. She was the first person to be named by *Time Magazine* as *Kid of the Year*. She received this title after she invented Tethys, which is a lead detection device used to detect the presence of a metal called lead in water after she realized the problem of water contamination in Flint, Michigan (where she lived). She continues to use her innovative and creative mind to come up with solutions for social problems like cyberbullying and is a great example of what you can accomplish when you set your mind to great things (UNESCO, 2023). I hope her story inspires you to also do amazing things in your own unique way.

Showing compassion can be as simple as showing random acts of kindness, such as the examples below (Healthdirect, 2022):

- ♥ Giving someone a compliment.
- ♥ Encouraging someone and cheering them on when they are doing something difficult.
- ♥ Letting people know what you like about them.
- ♥ Lending a helping hand to someone who needs it.
- ♥ Showing gratitude.

Add your own random acts of kindness to the list:

Both empathy and compassion are important if you are going to build strong relationships because they allow you to be more understanding, less judgemental and more forgiving.

Learn from the great examples below of young women who embrace compassion for themselves and others.

Be Inspired

Rowan Blanchard

Rowan is an American actress who uses her platform to inspire young people—and anyone who reads her writings—to adopt self-acceptance and show compassion. She has been advocating for social issues around these topics since she was only 14 years old. In one popular piece she wrote, she described the importance of loving yourself in order to be content with life, and withstand the emotional rollercoaster that life can sometimes be. She acknowledges that it is important to allow yourself to feel all your feelings, and be kind to yourself (Bowman, 2016). Remember her wisdom the next time you face a low point.






Olivia Rodrigo

Olivia Rodrigo is an American singer-songwriter and actress whose music touches the hearts of so many people. She encourages her fans to show themselves kindness as they go through difficult things in life, such as the loss of a loved one or a break-up. The lyrics to her songs allow people to feel emotions they would rather ignore and find ways to cope in a healthy and productive way that leads to self-compassion and compassion for others (Dissanayake, 2023).

Chapter 15: Strengthening Support Systems

Let's close off this part, and this workbook, by acknowledging one simple fact: You need others in order to be happy with yourself and with your life.

A supportive community that stands by you is important for the following reasons (Wooll, 2021):

-  You are less likely to feel lonely.
-  You can be encouraged and supported when faced with challenges.
-  You have emotional support.
-  You finding solutions for problems quicker.
-  Good company means celebrating happy moments together, which leads to a fulfilling life.

Establishing a good support system depends on your actions. In the following section, we will consider ways you can ensure success in building strong connections.

Building Strong Connections

What are some things you can do to show the people in your life that you value them and care about them deeply?

Connecting With People in Your Life
Parents

Siblings/Cousins/Relatives

Friends

Teachers/Mentors/Coaches

Showing gratitude is one way to maintain good relationships and let people know that the small things they do have a big impact on your life.

Practice gratitude by writing a heartfelt letter to anyone from the above categories, expressing your gratitude for how they support you. When you finish, you can share it with them.

Dear

I am grateful for you because

Lined writing area with 20 horizontal lines.

Importance of Mentorship

A support system also includes having people who mentor or guide you through life: decisions you need to make, advice about different aspects of your life, and basically someone older you can turn to for helpful pointers.

Re-look at your role models and see if there is anyone you can approach to be your mentor. Mentorship is basically being coached to achieve a certain goal. It is not only limited to a physical goal like winning a race but also the more hidden goals like the kind of person you want to become (Koifman, 2023).

Don't be afraid when reaching out to someone you admire and ask them to be your mentor. Most people accept and view it as an honor! Do seek help from your parents before doing this exercise, so that they can also give you guidance on who can be a perfect mentor for you.

List your top three candidates for mentorship.

Now let's see how other young women have expressed the value of solid connections and meaningful friendships and relationships in their lives.

Be Inspired

Camila Cabello

Camila is a Cuban-American singer-songwriter who became popular when she was part of a girl group called Fifth Harmony. She has since found fame in her own right as a solo artist and has cited her family as a strong support unit that has kept her afloat. Having immigrated when she was only six years old, her family played an important role in making sure she got used to the new environment and thrived. She also has public friendships with fellow celebrities who appear healthy and supportive (Stutz, 2017).

Sydney Sweeney

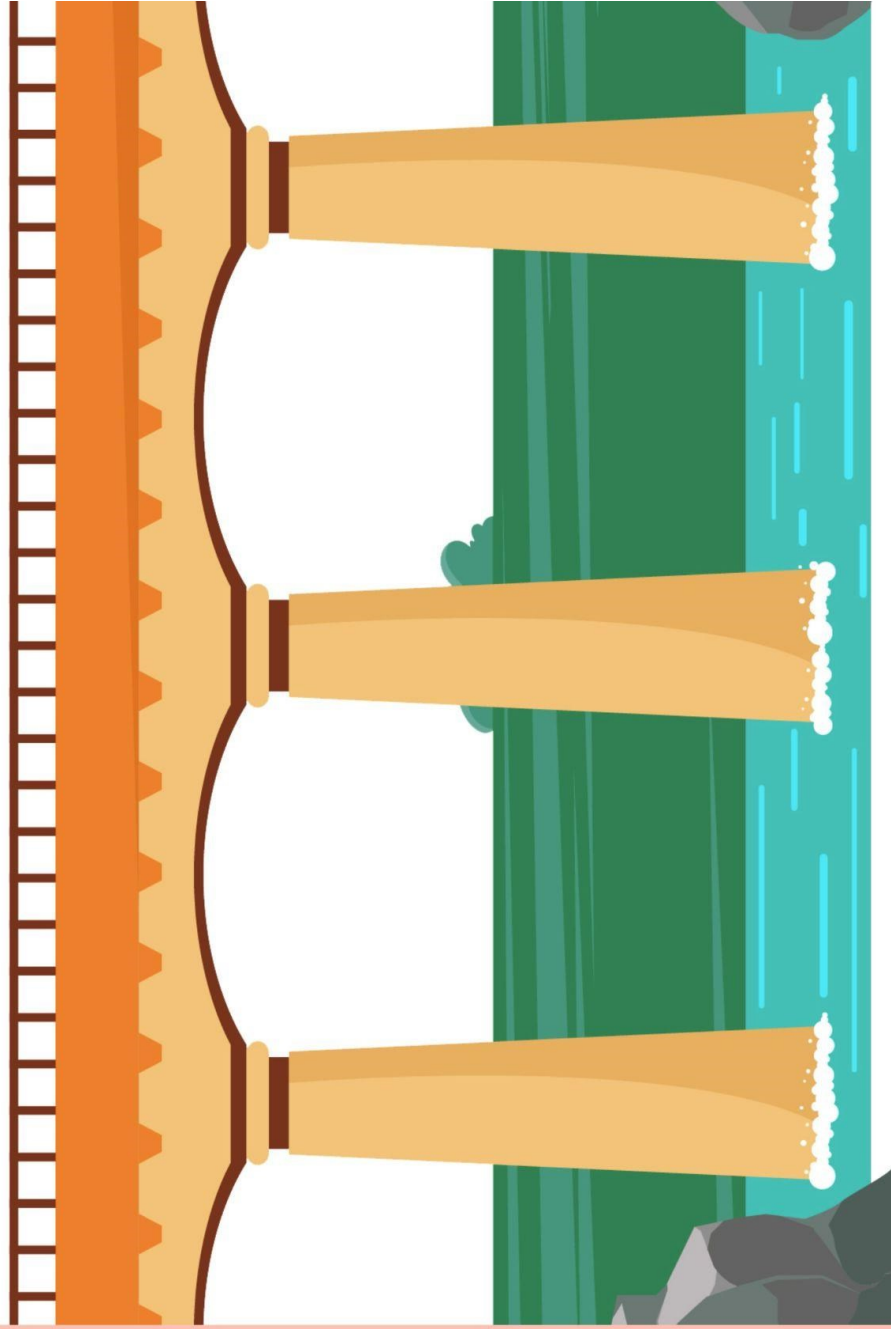
Sydney is an American actress who has opened up about the challenges she has had in her relationships and how she struggled to make friends. This has since changed, and she shows gratitude for the relationships she has built with fellow co-stars and for how the support and love they show her means a lot to her. She has since changed her negative outlook on the idea of friendship into one that recognizes the importance of having a support system backing you up and cheering you on (Artavia, 2022).

Complete the next exercise, giving an overview of what you have learned and discovered about yourself in Part 4 of this workbook.

**KEY
LEARNINGS**

Connecting With Others

Fill the pillars of your bridge of connections with values you will live by to maintain your relationships with your family and friends.



A series of 12 horizontal lines for writing, located in the bottom right section of the page.

Conclusion

This guide is more than just a book. It's a transformative journey designed to empower you to embrace your true self, navigate social challenges, balance various aspects of life, and chart a path toward a successful future. You have hopefully gained the confidence and motivation to overcome obstacles and embrace your unique path. With the inclusion of interactive elements, this book actively engages you as a reader in your personal growth process, making it an invaluable companion on your journey to becoming an empowered young woman.

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