

LIFE FORMS IN MY MARGINS

*This activity adopted from an activity taught by the former nonprofit City-House

PURPOSE: This activity is a self-assessment tool to help us explore and find any learned prejudices and stereotypes we may unconsciously believe. Once identified, these beliefs may be investigated, challenged, seen to be false, and replaced with more truthful, helpful, and life-affirming beliefs that allow us to relate in a wise, loving, compassionate manner with all life forms.

How to Do It: See the picture of rings on the second page. In these rings, or outside of them, write where you place the humans, animals, and life forms based on the descriptions provided. We also ask that you place the different parts of your body-mind (see list below) in the ring too, so you see which parts of yourself you love and which parts you judge.

Tips:

- **Be honest and genuine.** This works best when you are honest and genuine. Don't share your answers with others if that helps you feel safer in doing the activity.
- **Be compassionate to yourself.** You did not ask for your family, culture, and experiences to condition yourself with hurtful prejudices and stereotypes, so if you find them, be compassionate to yourself, as they are not your fault, and do not reflect badly on you.
- **Celebrate your loving intentions.** This activity is done out of love to help you awaken and to create Beloved Community where all life is able to thrive. That is a beautiful and wonderful intention to be celebrated and enjoyed. Way to go!

Possible Groups to Place in the Rings

We list these groups to help stimulate your creativity and so you can reflect on your relationships to all of these life forms. Embrace the freedom to break these groups up if different life forms within a group belong in different rings. For example, within your family members maybe you feel safe with your sister and brother, but uncomfortable around your aunt, and indifferent about your uncle. Simply use this list to help jump-start your creativity in doing this activity.

Your Body/Mind

Notice how you relate to individuals states and groups of thought forms and add them to the rings:
 Mental States (tired, wired, brain fog, etc.)
 Bodily States (exhausted, ill, in pain, cold, hot, etc.)
 Emotional States (anger, hate, crying, fear, etc.)
 Thought Forms (skillful, unskillful, repetitive, judgmental, etc.)
 Body parts (skin, hair, eyes, body shape, etc.)

Humans

Family members ()
 Homeless people
 Poor people
 Rich people
People of other economic classes
 Asian people
 Black people
 White people
 Hispanic people
People of other ethnicities, races, and from other countries
 Women
 Men
 Transgender or nonbinary people
 Gay, lesbian, and bisexual people
People of other gender identities or sexual orientations
 Christians
 Catholics
 Protestants
 Muslims
 Jewish people
 Hinduists
 Taoists
 Buddhists
 Animists
 Atheists
 Agnostics
 Scientists

Philosophers
People of other wisdom traditions
 Urban people
 Rural people
 Educated people
 Uneducated people
 Conventionally beautiful people
 Conventionally ugly people
 Obese people
 Overweight people
 Skinny people
 People with physical disabilities
 People with mental disabilities
 People with invisible disabilities
 Conservatives
 Democrats
 Socialists
 Authoritarians
 Communists
 Anarchists
People who support other political positions
 Politicians
 Lawyers
 Tax Collectors
 Doctors
 Servants
 Wait staff
 Janitors
People who work in other jobs
 White Supremacists, Neo-Nazis, etc.
 Black Lives Matter activists
 Abortion providers
 Pro-Lifers
 Pro-Choicers
 Animal activists
 Vegans/vegetarians
 Occupy activists
 Tea Party activists
 Q Anon activists
Other kinds of activists
 Criminals
 Terrorists
 Rapists
 Murderers

Other people who do harm to people, animals, or the planet

Non-human Animals

Cats
 Dogs (poodles, pit bulls, etc.)
 Fish
 Rabbits
Other individual or species of animal companions
 Deer
 Squirrels
 Rats
 Mice
 Insects
 Spiders
Other species of wildlife
 Monkeys
 Beagles
 Cats
 Rats
 Mice
Animals used in laboratories and cosmetic testing
 Elephants
 Lions
 Tigers
 Bears
 Horses
 Bulls
Animals used to perform in circuses, rodeos, and other acts of entertainment
 Mink
 Bobcat
 Rabbits
 Lynx
 Cows
Animals raised or trapped for their pelts
 Pigs
 Cows
 Chickens
 Sheep
 Turkeys
 Fish

Animals raised to be eaten

Other Life Forms

Backyard
 Neighborhood
 Town
Other lands and ecosystems near you
 Oceans
 Rivers (Mississippi, Crow, etc.)
 Lakes
Other bodies of water
 Prairies
 Mountains
 Forests
 Deserts
Other types of terrain
 Trees
 Shrubs
 Bushes
 Flowers
 Weeds
 Invasive plants
Other types of plants
 Rocks
 Soils
 Minerals
 Global Climate
 Landfills
 Asphalt parking lots
 Mines
 Superfund sites
 Overgrazed fields
 Manure lagoons
 Polluted waterways
 The garbage patches in the ocean
 Bleached coral reefs
 Nuclear power stations that store spent fuel rods
 Nuclear bomb test sites
Other ecosystems and life forms that have been poisoned or harmed by human activity



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Life forms you don't care about or don't know what to do with. You generally would not lift a finger to improve their wellbeing. Your actions may directly or indirectly harm them, but you don't know, and don't care.

Life forms you fear, hate, or think of as evil. You would not lift a finger to improve their wellbeing. Your actions directly or indirectly harm them, and you have no guilt.

Life forms you sometimes appreciate and sometimes don't. At times, you might inconvenience yourself to improve their wellbeing. You may harm them directly or indirectly, with or without guilt.

Life forms you appreciate. You make sacrifices to improve their wellbeing. You strive to not harm them directly or indirectly.

Notes/Observations:



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