Self-Acceptance Exercise

Instructions: This exercise is designed to help you challenge your belief that you are a totally hopeless failure because you've failed at something, or because someone has criticized or rejected you.

To overcome the irrational(unhelpful) thinking that leads to low self-acceptance, use the diagram below to itemize your skills and weaknesses.

Complete the top half of the circle by listing the things that you do well at work or at school in the sections labeled with a plus sign (+). List the things that you don't do so well at work or at school in the sections labeled with a minus sign (-). Complete the bottom half of the circle by writing in the things from the rest of your life that you do well or that you like about yourself in the sections labeled with a plus sign. List the things in the rest of your life that you don't do so well or don't like about yourself in the sections labeled with a minus sign.

To counter the tendency to put yourself down when things aren't going so well, ask yourself the following questions: Does this bad situation (mistake, failure, rejection, criticism) take away my good qualities?

Does it make sense to conclude that "I am totally hopeless" because of one or more negative things that have happened?

Thoughts to Help Increase Self-Acceptance

1. I'm not a bad person when I act badly; I am a person who has acted badly.
2. I'm not a good person when I act well and accomplish things; I am a person who has acted well and accomplished things.
3. I can accept myself whether I win, lose, or draw.
4. I would better not define myself entirely by my behavior, by others' opinions, or by anything else under the sun.
5. I can be myself without trying to prove myself.
6. I am not a fool for acting foolishly. If I were a fool, I could never learn from my mistakes.
7. I am not an ass for acting asininely.
8. I have many faults and can work on correcting them without blaming, condemning, or damning myself for having them.
9. Correction, yes! Condemnation, no!
10. I can neither prove myself to be a good nor a bad person. The wisest thing I can do is simply to accept myself.
11. I am not a worm for acting wormily.
12. I cannot "prove" human worth or worthlessness; it's better that I not try to do the impossible.
13. Accepting myself as being human is better than trying to prove myself superhuman or rating myself as subhuman.
14. I can itemize my weaknesses, disadvantages, and failures without judging or defining myself by them.

15. Seeking self-esteem or self-worth leads to self-judgments and eventually to self-blame. Self-acceptance avoids these self-ratings.
16. I am not stupid for acting stupidly. Rather, I am a non-stupid person who sometimes produces stupid behavior.
17. I can reprimand my behavior without reprimanding myself.
18. I can praise my behavior without praising myself.
19. Get after your behavior! Don't get after yourself.
20. I can acknowledge my mistakes and hold myself accountable for making them -but without berating myself for creating them.
21. It's silly to favorably judge myself by how well I'm able to impress others, gain their approval, perform, or achieve.
22. It's equally silly to unfavorably judge myself by how well I'm able to impress others, gain their approval, perform, or achieve.
23. I am not an ignoramus for acting ignorantly.
24. When I foolishly put myself down, I don't have to put myself down for putting myself down.
25. I do not have to let my acceptance of myself be at the mercy of my circumstances.
26. I am not the plaything of others' reviews, and can accept myself apart from others' evaluations of me.
27. I may at times need to depend on others to do practical things for me, but I don't have to emotionally depend on anyone in order to accept myself. Practical dependence is a fact! Emotional dependence is a fiction!

28. I am beholden to nothing or no one in order to accept myself.
29. It may be better to succeed, but success does not make me a better person.
30. It may be worse to fail, but failure does not make me a worse person.