MY LIFE JOURNEY BOOK

IT STARTS WITH ME



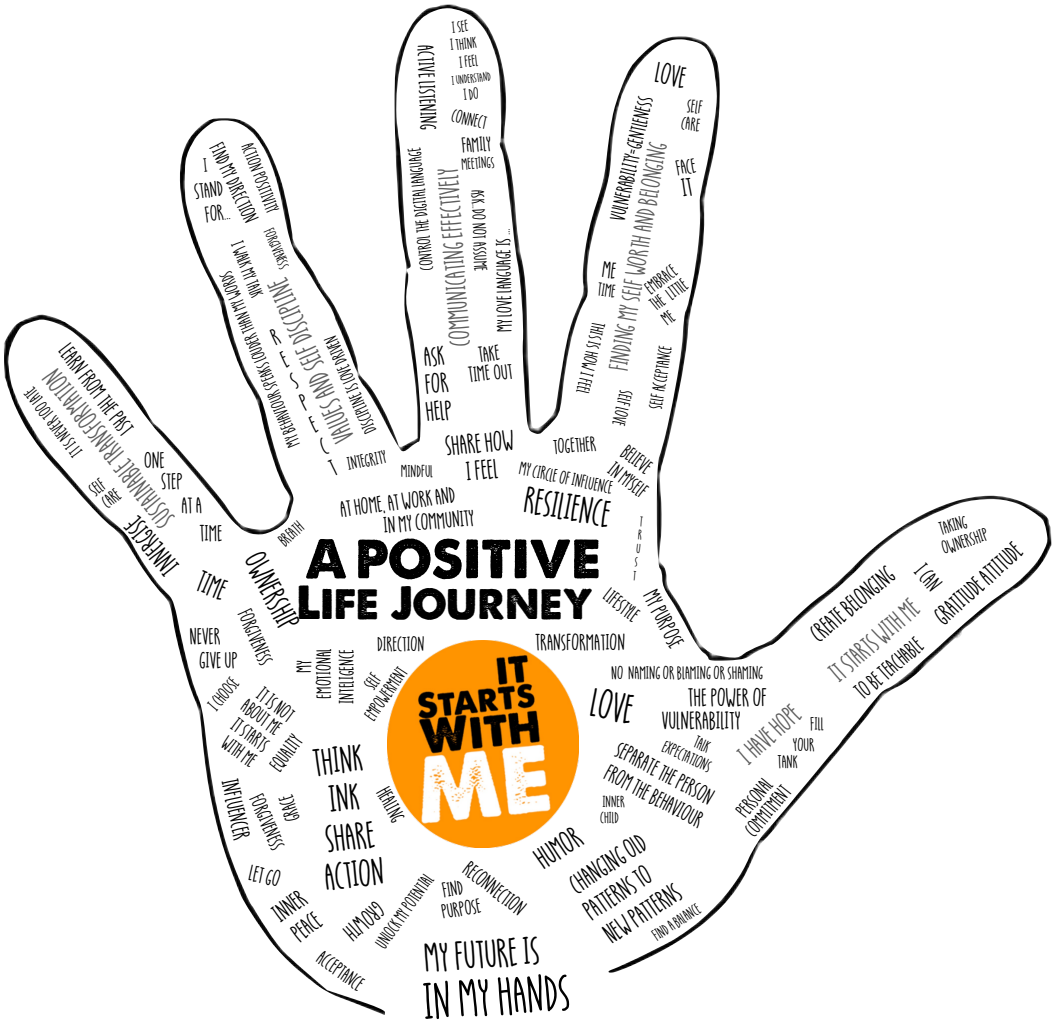
MY NAME: .....

THINK INK SHARE ACTION

GREETINGS!

This ***MY life journey storybook, it starts with ME*** self-help booklet is especially made for young adults who have had to leave their country. In this booklet you can write about your experiences during your journey and presently. Let's also focus on what is ahead and how you see your future.

WE HOPE THAT YOU CAN FIND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE WITHIN THIS BOOKLET



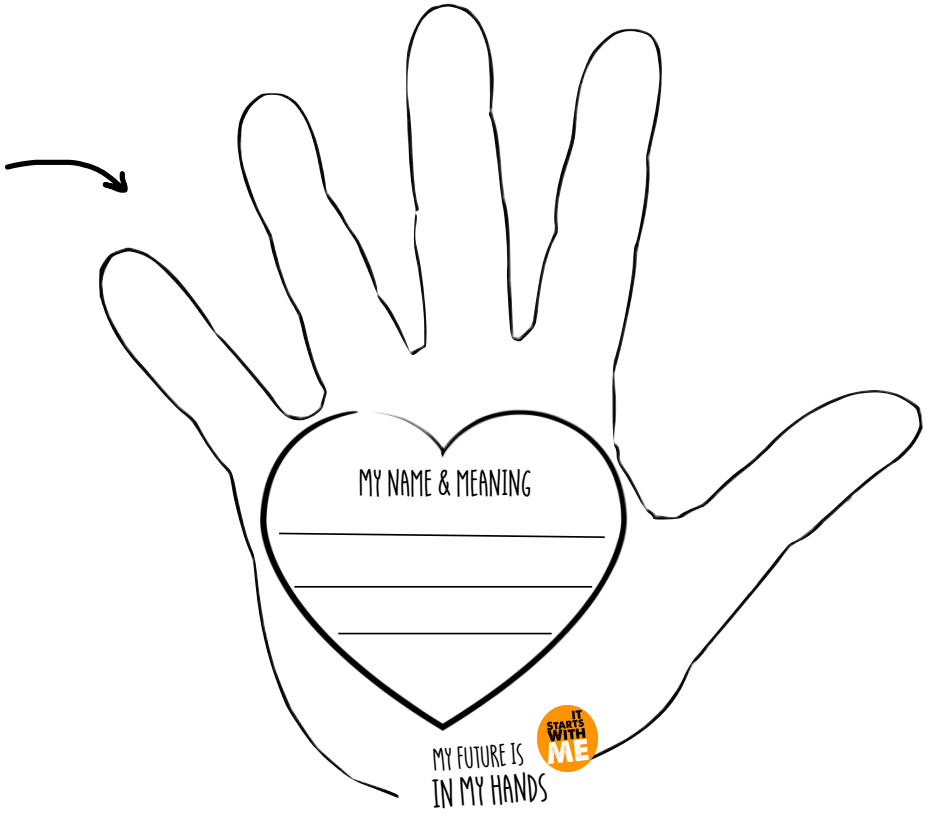
At the end of this book is an empty hand, like this one, in which you can write your own goals, values, hopes, strengths etc.

MY (HIS)STORY

My name

……

WRITE THE MEANING OF
YOUR NAME INSIDE THIS HAND



The country and place where I was born:

……

I lived in these places:

……

……

These are the names of important people in my life, my immediate family members & close friends:

……

……

……

This is what I will never forget about my father or mother:

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……

……

The names of the school(s) I attended:

……

Five memories of my childhood:

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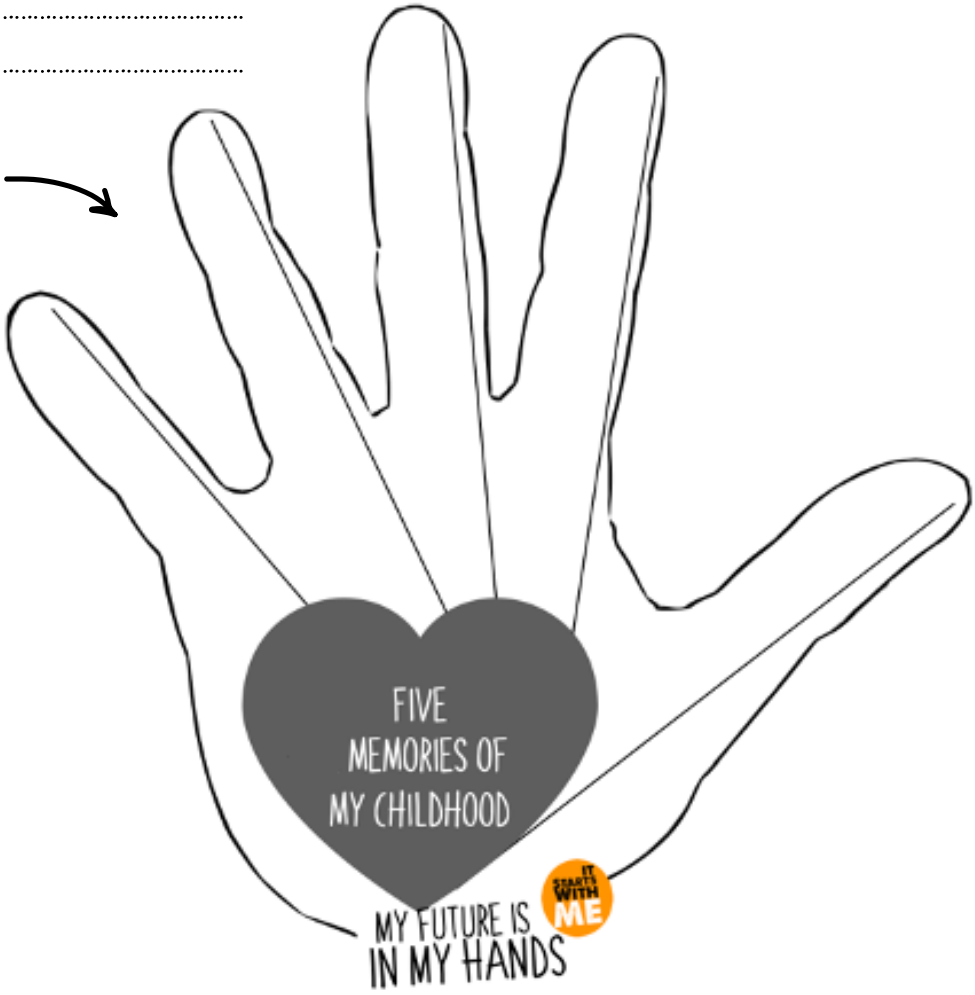
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WRITE THEM IN THIS HAND



MY LIFE BEFORE DEPARTURE

My activities on a normal day:

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Fun things I did in my spare time:

.....

Our house looked like:

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I shared my home with:

.....

I often spend time with:

.....



Five nice things of my country:

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WRITE THEM IN THIS HAND

My favorite place:

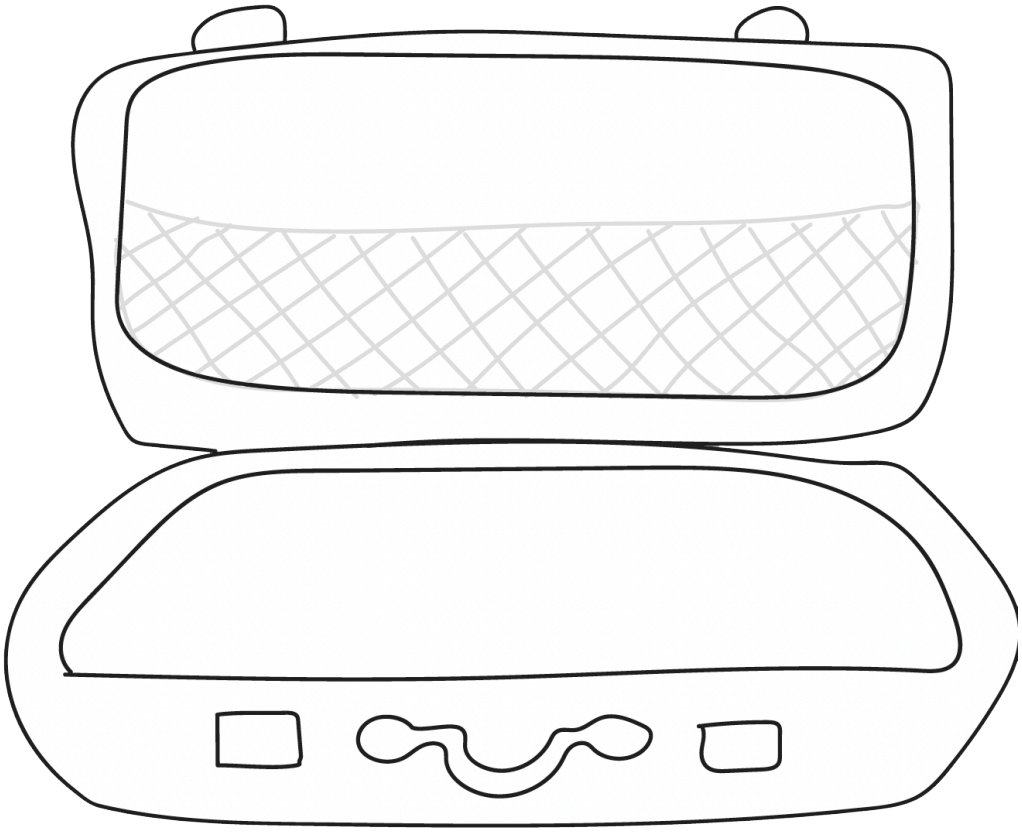
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MY JOURNEY

The date I left my home: .....

These are precious things I was able to bring with me:

WRITE IT IN THE SUITCASE



These are the items I wanted to bring, but couldn't:

.....

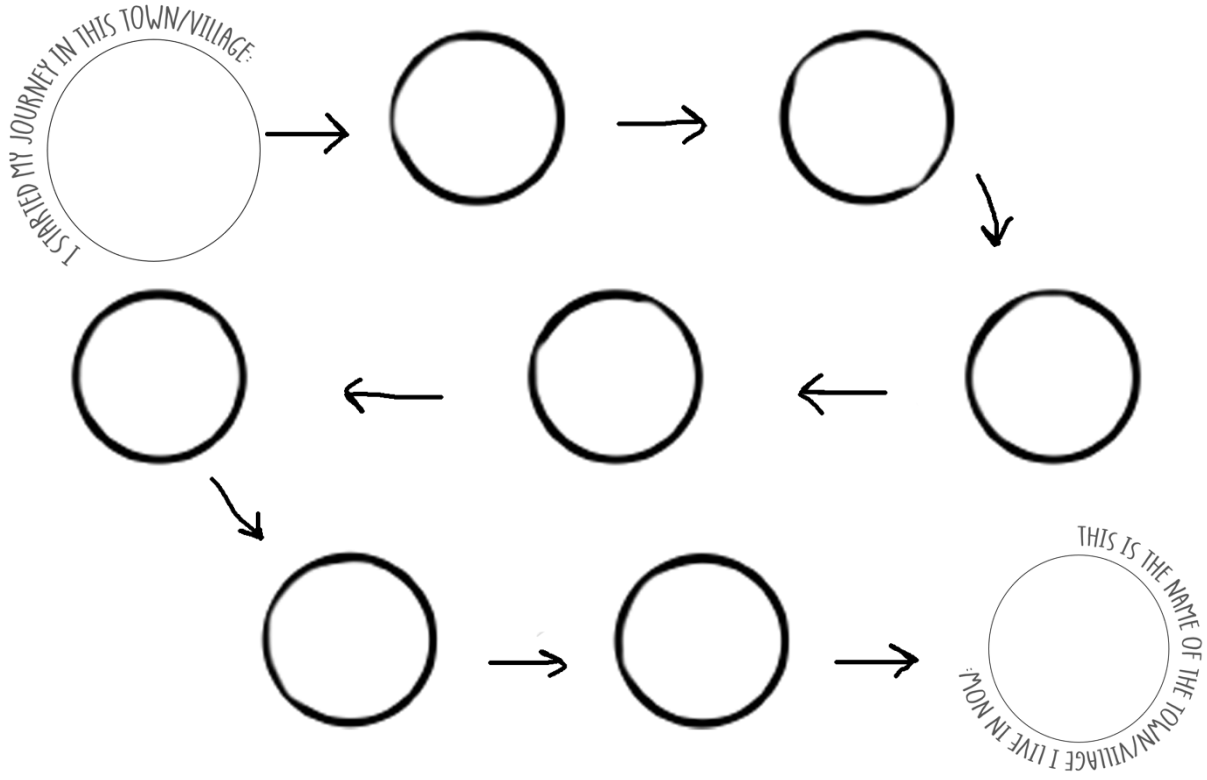
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MY DEPARTURE JOURNEY-MAP LOOKS LIKE THIS

Instruction: Write the name of the village or town you lived in, in the first circle. Then write the name of the town or village you live in now, in the last circle.



Write in the circles in between:

- Places where you stopped along the way
- Where you crossed the border
- Places where you have slept

What modes of transports have you used during your journey?

.....

These are the reasons I left my country:

.....

.....

.....



Five things I remember about my journey:

……

……

……

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……

WRITE THEM IN THIS HAND

Funny or nice things that happened along the way:

……

……

Stupid or bad things that happened along the way:

……

……

This is how I felt during my journey:



……

……



Know that it is normal and human to feel sad, angry, afraid or lonely when you have to deal with a lot of negative experiences for a long time. It is okay to accept these feelings. Share how you feel with the people around you and seek distractions. If you are feeling depressed or angry all the time or if you are afraid that you will harm yourself or others, **ask for help**.

THE PEOPLE I REMEMBER ON MY JOURNEY



I started my journey with these people and this is what I liked about them:

.....

.....

.....

These are the things they do well:

.....

I think these are the things I do that they like about me:

.....

These people helped me or my group along the way:

.....

This is what they did to help me:

.....

Were you able to help someone along the way? If yes, how?

.....

.....

WHERE I AM NOW



Now I live in:

……

First words I learned in the language of the country I am in now and its meaning:

……

The things I like about the area I am living in now:

……

Differences between the country I am in now, compared with my homeland:

……
……
……

Similarities between the country I am in now, compared with my homeland:

……
……
……

I now live with the following people:

……

DAILY ROUTINES / RITUALS



A routine is the usual series of things that you do at a particular time. It is the practice of regularly doing things in a fixed order. A daily routine is having a structured plan and strategy for the day. **As humans we need routine in our daily lives because it creates stability, which helps us to feel safe.**

I usually eat .....

I eat with .....

I eat at (location) .....

My favorite food .....

These are the foods that are different from the food I used to eat:

.....

The food I eat now that I like .....

The food I eat now that I don't like .....

Does it smell different where you are now? What does this smell remind you of?

.....

I go to sleep at .....

I wake up at .....

(Cultural) rituals, traditions or routines which are important to me:

……

……

New routines or rituals I have learned in the country I am in now:

……

1 WEEK IN MY NEW LIFE

This is what I did last week:

Instruction: Write what you did on that day, fun things but also the difficult or sad things.

Monday

……

……

Tuesday

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Wednesday

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Thursday

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Friday

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Saturday

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Sunday

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If I compare the past week with a week in my home country I notice:

……

……

……

MY RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility = things you must do at home, in your family or at school

The biggest difference in responsibilities in my life now compared to life in my home country:

……

……

……

MY REACTION TO STRESS OR FEAR

There are 3 ways to react in an event of stress, fear or anxiety: **FLIGHT, FIGHT or FREEZE**. In a flight reaction, someone wants to run away. In a fight reaction, someone counterattacks. In a freeze reaction, someone doesn't know what to do anymore. We all differ and everyone has a preferred and automatic reaction.

My usual reaction in an event of stress, fear or anxiety is to:

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My specific reaction affects my behaviour in the following way: (what do you do, how does it make you feel and how does it affect others around you?)

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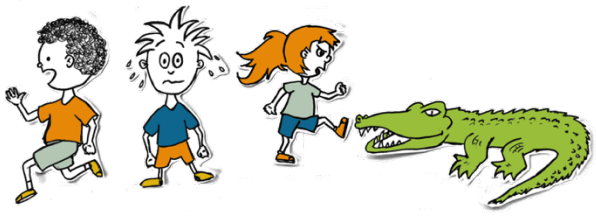
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In future would you sometimes prefer to react differently when in an anxious and or stressful situation?

☐ NO, my reaction is always appropriate in these situations

☐ YES, sometimes I would ....

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.....

My biggest fear and or concern at this moment is:

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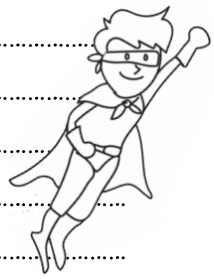
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Think of someone you admire. Who is it? How would your hero react in your situation?



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Also ask people close to you what they would do.

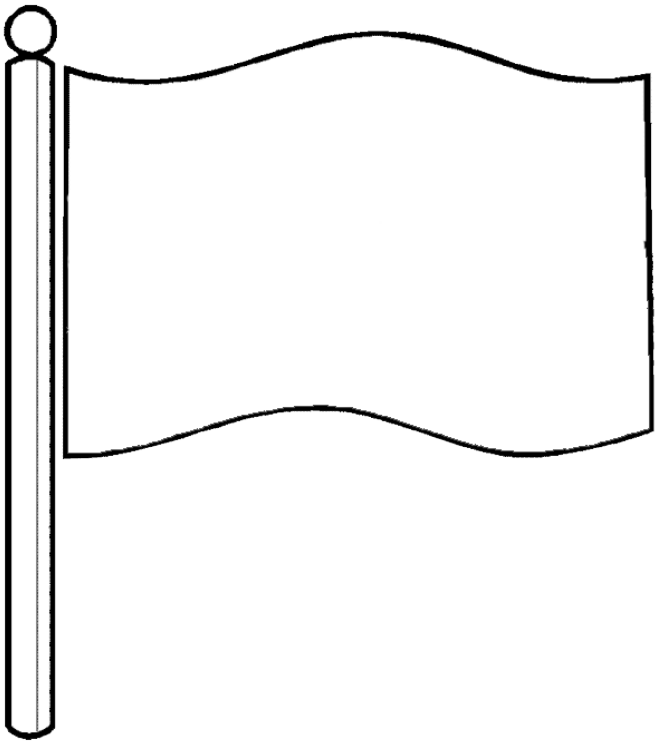


Different situations require different ways of responding. The sooner you recognize that you are feeling stressed and want to react automatically, the better you can adjust your response, if necessary.



MY VALUES

Values are the things you consider important in your life. Our values influence our behaviour. Positive values contribute to positive behaviour and character. If you know what your most important values are, you can be aware of showing others what you think is important.



Write in the flag what you think is important about your country and how its people live together. Think about: trust, honesty, peace, humour, fun, relaxation, responsibility, commitment, love, courage, etc.

My top 5 values are:

.....

.....

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.....

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.....

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WRITE THEM IN THIS HAND



MY PRESENT & MY FUTURE



Memories influence our behavior and the way we think about ourselves. We cannot change what happened to us, however, we can change the way we think about it and respond to it now and in future. **Resilience** is about being able to cope with negative things. There is hope for a better future!

MY PERSONAL GOALS

Write down your goals. Written goals have a way of transforming wishes into wants -> can'ts into cans -> dreams into plans -> and plans into reality. Don't just think it!

THINK IT, INK IT, AND SHARE IT SO THAT YOU CAN ACTION IT!


THINK


INK


SHARE


ACTION

Some of my personal goals:

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WRITE THEM IN THIS HAND



I CHOOSE TO BE A CONQUERER!



Life as a refugee can be a lonely experience, especially if you are mourning family, friends and things you may have lost. Still, you are valuable to others, Start to influence what is in your own circle of influence: your thoughts, your feelings and your behavior. Remember: **A positive lifejourney, a positive future, it starts with ME!**

POSITIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT MYSELF

Positive thinking means that **you approach negative things in a more positive and productive way**. You think the best is going to happen, not the worst. Positive thinking often starts with self-talk and self-talk is the endless stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your head.

Five positive qualities, characteristics and strengths of myself:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

WRITE THEM IN THIS HAND





STRENGTHENING MY STRENGTHS

Your strengths **can be supported through experience**. Identify, renew and expand your strengths, and you will feel the positive motivation within yourself.

I will use these strengths of mine more often:

.....

NEWS [!!]



Try to turn off the 24/7 news channels on your phone and tv and only check the news once or twice a day **with a reputable source**. Watching negative messages and news can effect your mind and actions negatively.

IF I WAS ASKED TO WRITE AN ARTICLE ABOUT MY COUNTRY

The title would be:

.....

The message in my article would be:

.....

.....

.....

THIS IS HOW MY ARTICLE WOULD LOOK LIKE (AD DRAWINGS OR PICTURES IF YOU LIKE)



WRITE THEM IN THIS HAND

Five things I hope that will be done in my country :

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FOCUSING ON MY INNER CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

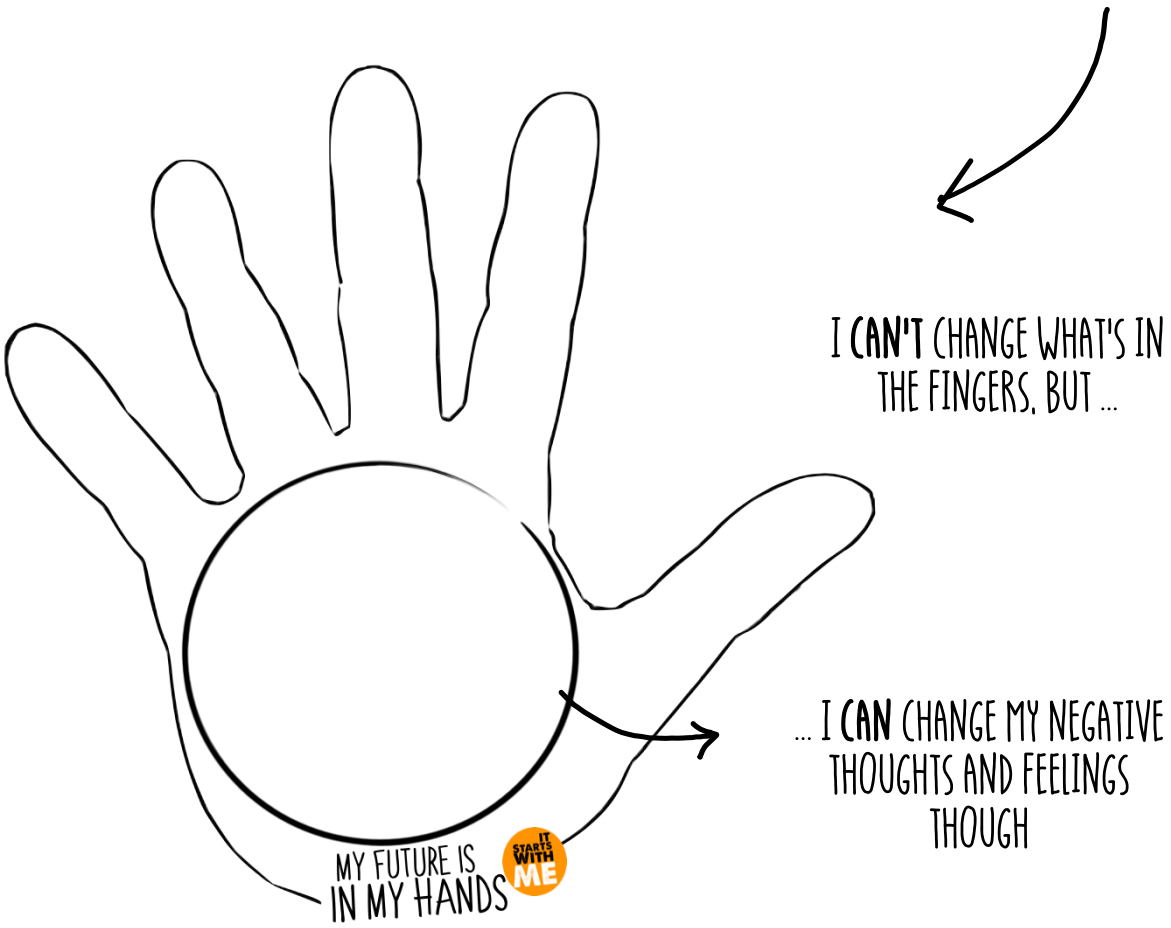
MY INNER CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE →MY THOUGHTS→ MY FEELINGS →MY BEHAVIOR

I have the authority and opportunity to choose what is in my inner circle of influence. **I am in charge of my own thoughts.** This is important to know because whatever is influencing you will influence and guide your thoughts. Your thoughts will influence your feelings and your feelings influences your behaviour.

OUTER CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

There is indeed an outer circle of influence which are things that have an influence on me but I cannot change them i.e. the world, the war, my parents, behavior of others, economy, etc.

Write in the inner circle in your hand your thoughts, feelings and behavior. Write in the fingers of your hand things that has an influence on you.



I AM GOING TO DESTROY THIS PAGE

Use this page to write or draw the things you do not want to think about anymore i.e., events and thoughts that makes you angry and sad. When you are done, cut this page out of your book and destroy it. (Consider: Tearing it up, burning it, or throwing it in the bin)

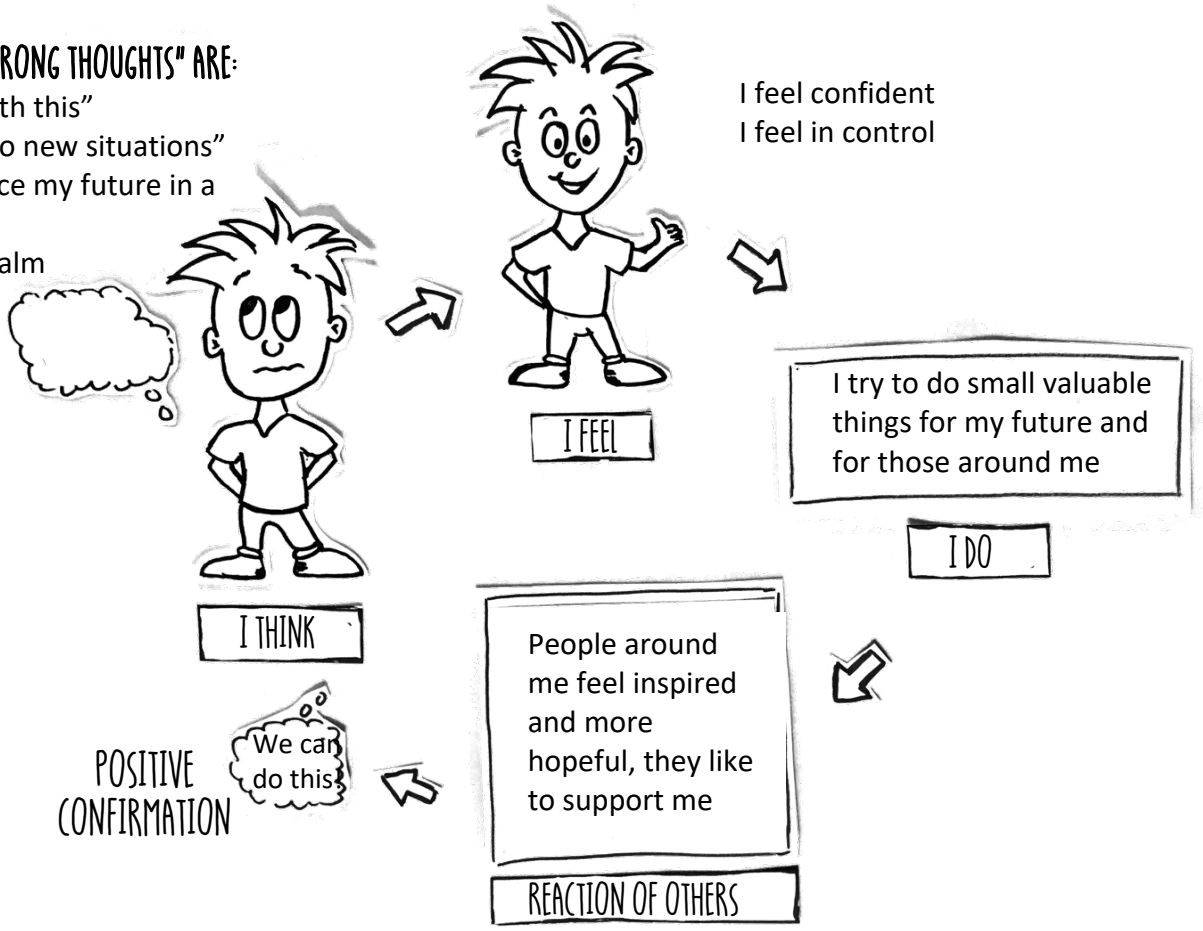
THE POWER OF POSITIVE THOUGHTS



If you start living with positive thoughts, it will give you a positive feeling of self confidence. This feeling will lead to positive behavior and through your behavior you are influencing the people around you. When they experience your positive behaviour you will inspire them to support you and to follow.

EXAMPLES OF "STRONG THOUGHTS" ARE:

"I can deal with this"
"I can adapt to new situations"
"I can influence my future in a positive way"
"I'm able to calm down again"



SMALL STEP FORWARD

Positive thoughts cannot change a negative situation, nor can your fears and worries disappear so easily. Still, positive thoughts can help you take a small step forward, a first step toward a more positive future.

THIS IS MY POSITIVE SPIRAL.

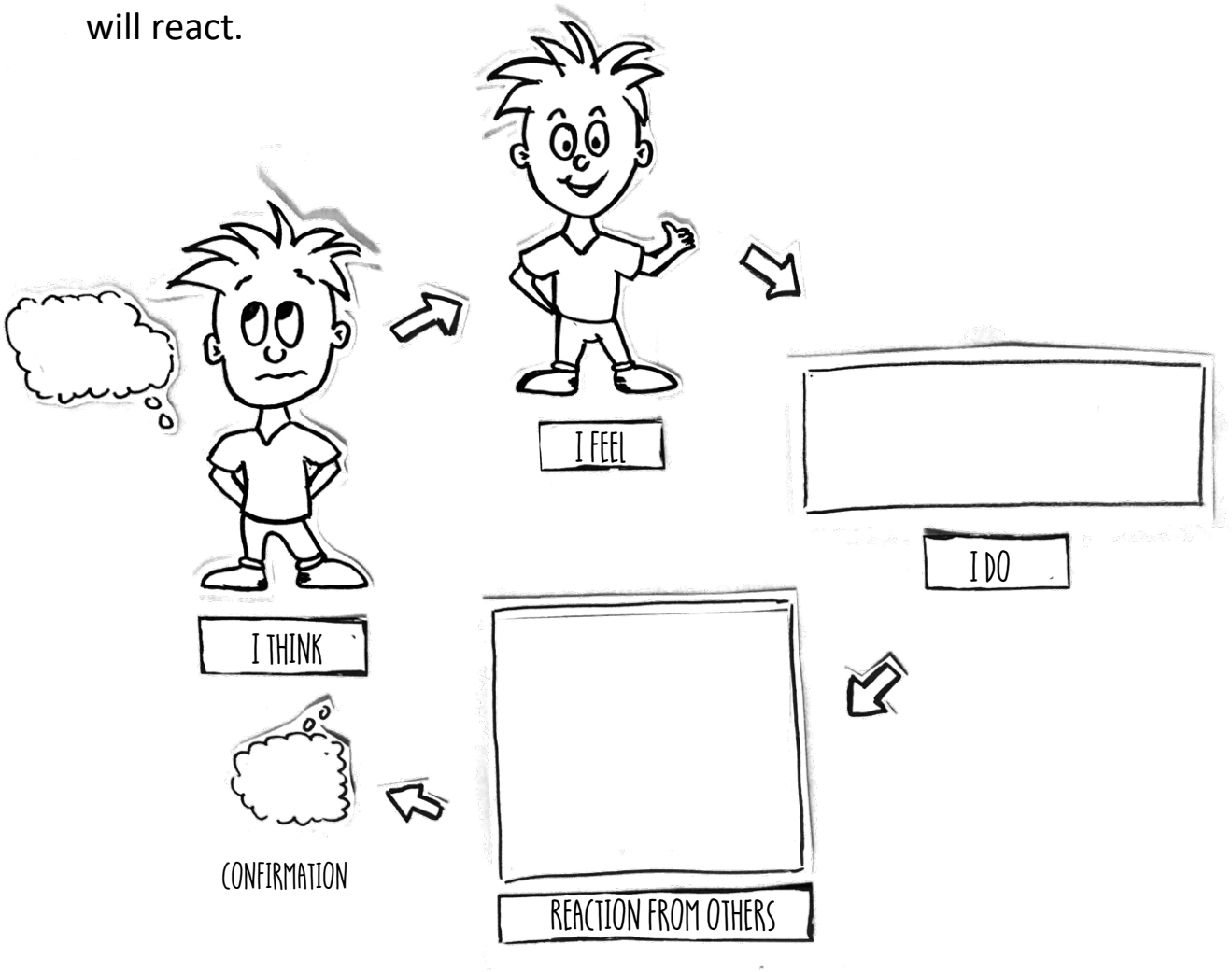
One positive thought I want to start with:

.....

.....

.....

Fill-in below this positive thought and continue to write down the feeling this thought gives you, your action and how you think others will react.





Speak positive thoughts to yourself Instead of saying, “I want to be happy,” say, “I am a happy person.” Instead of saying, “I want to be a survivor not a victim,” say, “I am a survivor and not a victim!” Say it out loud every day.

POSITIVE PEOPLE AROUND ME

If possible, stay in close contact with your family and invest time in building new relationships and an effective and positive network in your new circumstances. Connecting with people who have gone through the same experience can also be very helpful. **Interaction and contact with others is a good investment, in the present and in the future.**

Positive people I want to surround myself with:

.....

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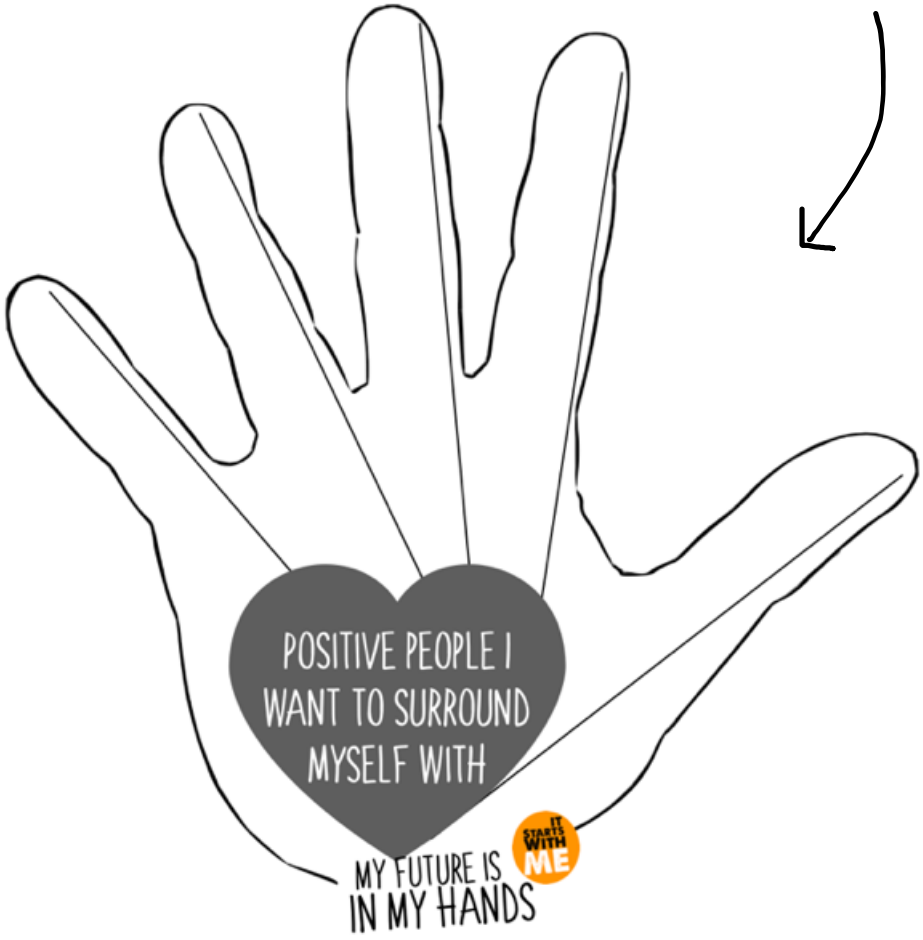
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WRITE THEIR NAMES IN THIS HAND



BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

People show and feel their love and appreciation in different ways. According to author Gary Chapman there are five love languages. Knowing and understanding these five languages empower us to understand one another much better. This allows us to action better communication and to build stronger relationships because we understand and have an appreciation for each other.



BEING HELPFUL I.E. FIXING SOMEONE'S BIKE OR COOKING A SPECIAL DINNER



SURPRISES, WRAPPING PRESENTS BEAUTIFULLY OR GIVING THEM IN A SPECIAL WAY



A CUDDLE OR A FUN WRESTLING GAME.

COMPLIMENTS, WORDS OF AFFECTION AND WARMTH, PRAISE AND ENCOURAGEMENT



YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION. DOING SOMETHING TOGETHER



My preferred love language is:

……

This is what I do when I show my love or appreciation:

……

……

Ask people close to you about their love language

Name + love language ……

Name + love language ……

Name + love language ……

Name + love language ……

Make a commitment to show your love in such a way that it has meaning for the other person, your partner, child, family or friends.

To strengthen my relations I will start to use these love languages:

……

MEASURE YOUR TANK

If you had to compare your positive feelings and energy to that of a fuel tank of a car, how would you gauge your tank?



MY TANK IS ..... % FULL

I refuel my tank by doing these things:

.....

Activities that gives me energy .....

.....

Sports and games I like to play .....

.....

Music I like to listen to .....

.....

Movies I like to watch .....

.....

Books I like to read .....

.....

Outdoor activities I enjoy .....

.....

The last time I refueled my tank was:

.....



The more time you spend doing things you love to do, the better it makes you feel. Engaging in activities we love also helps us recall other times we've done them, and those memories increase our self worth. Our favourite activities are often things we do well, which is a factor in increasing our self-esteem.

DISCUSS YOUR FEELINGS

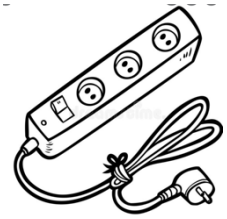


We all want people to understand us and our behaviour. Remember, your thoughts and feelings influence your behaviour, that is why it is important to talk about your feelings. Sharing your thoughts and feelings with others helps them to understand you and your behaviour.



It is not easy to just talk about your feelings but we want to encourage you to use our OBJECT BOX TOOL. Take an object to describe how you feel so that others can objectively, without quick reaction or judgement, understand you better.

Examples



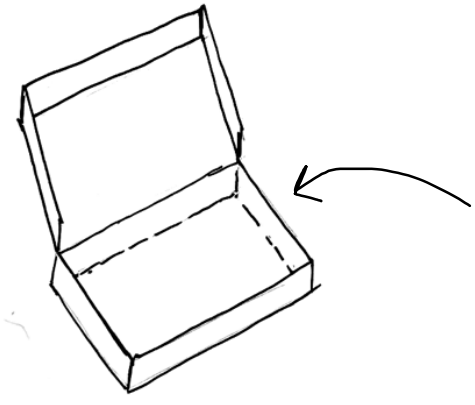
"I feel like an extension lead with a multi plug. Everyone drains energy from me, and I can't recharge myself. I would also like to recharge my own energy somewhere."

"Yesterday I was like a kiwi, hairy and rough on the outside, but beautiful and sweet inside. Unfortunately, I didn't give anyone the chance to see my beautiful inside."

What object can help you describe how you you feel about yourself, your behaviour, your home and your life?

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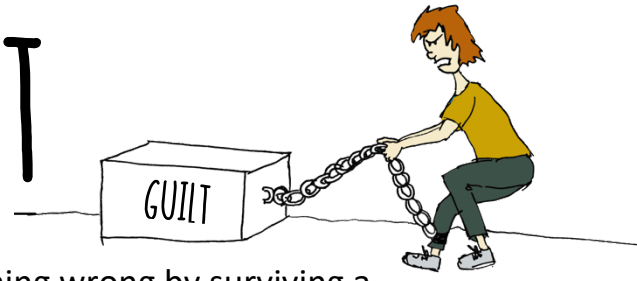
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Put all kind of objects in a box and ask people close to you which object they would compare their feeling with.
You will be surprised how this object box tool helps to start a valuable conversation.

THINK OF OBJECTS LIKE KEYS, AN EMPTY GLASS, A PHONE, SEEDS, AN EGG, FRUIT, A CHARGER, A CAN OF SODA ETC.

FEELINGS OF GUILT



Sometimes people believe they have done something wrong by surviving a traumatic event when others have not experienced something similar. It creates a feeling of self-guilt which holds you back because it makes you feel unhappy and disconnected.

Do you recognize this feeling in yourself or in others around you?

.....



Reality is that sharing these thoughts and feelings with each other will increase mutual understanding and connection and therefor build and strengthen relationships. In the activity below answer these questions and then engage with others around you and encourage them to also THINK, INK and SHARE this activity.

Does anyone important to you blame you for leaving?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Why people who are important to you are happy that you have chosen to leave?

.....

.....

.....

What can you do now that you couldn't have done if you stayed in your country?

.....

.....

.....

SHARING IS A FIRST STEP TO ACTION

In this book you have written about your life journey and your story. Sharing your story with other people will strengthen your relationships and your sense of belonging. Sharing stories, hopes, learned lessons and plans for the future helps to motivate us and gives us momentum to go into positive action.

AFTER THINKING AND WRITING IT IS TIME TO SHARE AND ACTION.

Most important things I have written in this book that I would like to share:

.....

.....

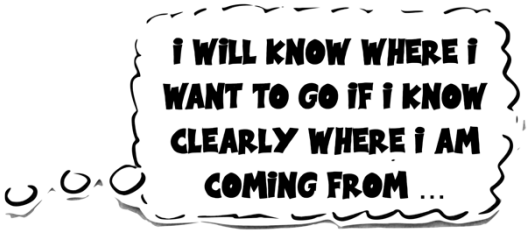
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I am going to share this with:

.....

.....



Encourage people around you to share something about their life, their history or their journey.


THINK


INK


SHARE


ACTION

IT'S IN MY HANDS

THINK about the most important things with regards to your goals, strengths, hopes, feelings, etc., that you have learned in this My Life Journey Book. **INK** it, **SHARE** it so that you can **ACTION** it. [Tip: Go back and read what you have written in the smaller hands throughout the book.]



MY COMMITMENT TO ACTION



After **think**ink, **ink**ing, **shar[e]**ing it is time to **action** your positive life journey and your story. Always remember that IT IS IN YOUR HANDS and even more important, IT STARTS WITH YOU. Put you hand on your heart and say to yourself, "**it starts with ME**.' (take a look at your top 3 values and goals for inspiration)

From today I will stop:

.....

.....

.....

From today I will start:

.....

.....

.....

From today I will continue:

.....

.....

.....

I can get support from:

.....

.....

Date ..... Signature .....

NOTES & PICTURES

This self-help book is the result of much enthusiasm and our desire to empower people dealing with loss and stress. Together with Life Book For Youth, FICE Netherlands and the University of Groningen we developed a life journey book for children from Ukraine. We heard from several parents and organizations that there was also a need for a similar book for parents and young adults.
As Peer3 we therefore decided to create this book. Several professionals and parents have read along and we took their input and advice into account when developing it.

OUR PROGRAMME IT STARTS WITH ME

Developers: Adéle Grosse and Hanne Peerenboom at Peer3
The journey of *It Starts With ME* has its origin in South Afrika. A lot of what we share in this booklet is what Adéle Grosse wrote for her very own victim-to-survivor journey in 2003. In 2014 the path of Adéle crossed the path of Peer3. Since then we've worked on the professionalisation and development of the training It Starts With Me for Dutch parents, children and professionals.

For more information about *It Starts With ME* tools or group trainings, you can contact us by email info@peer3.nl or have a look at www.peer3.nl



SPECIAL THANKS TO

We are grateful that you have all been willing to contribute, read along or translate: Iryna Batyreva, Elianne Zijlstra, Prof. Aala Elkhani, Martine Tobé, Anastasiia Lazarets and Alma Bezemer.

OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED

- **Guide for refugee parents** by psychologists Atle Dyregrov and Magne Raunda len
- **Lifebook for youth** Lifebook is giving children a new and expanded view of the past, drawing strength and confidence for their future. www.lifebookforyouth.com
- **Caring for children through conflict and displacements** developed in 2014 by Aala El-Khani, Rachel Calam and Kim Cartwright, University of Manchester - United Kingdom. It was created after interviewing Syrian refugees living in conflict zones, in refugee camps and in Manchester. March 2022.
- **Self-Help Booklet for Men facing crisis and displacement** by Dr. Tayseer Hassoun International Organization for Migration 2014
- **Self Help Plus (SH+)** Program of the LANCET
- **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People** by Steven Covey (circle of influence)
- **The 5 love languages** by Gary chapman
- **Me in the eyes of**, an essay of Maggie-Schauer about The functions of guilt and shame after psychotrauma https://www.ntvp.nl/wp-content/uploads/Essay-Maggie-Schauer.pdf