

WORKSHEET 4 · CHAPTER FOUR · WHO AM I NOW?

Rebuilding Your Self-Worth

It's not about what you do. It's about who you are.

When cancer strips away everything you've relied on to define yourself, it can feel as if you're standing in an empty space — unsure of who you are or where to begin.

Over time, I realized I couldn't rebuild my sense of self all at once. I had to start at the foundation — by seeing where I was, accepting it, and slowly choosing a kinder way forward. I didn't rebuild all at once. I rebuilt in layers — slowly, imperfectly, and often with resistance. You can do the same.

As you stand in the “empty lot” of your own life, remember that this process is not destroying you; it is rebuilding you. The Pyramid of Self-Worth is the blueprint for the palace within you.

STEP 1

Self-Awareness — Seeing What Is

This is the first step: being willing to see yourself as you are. Not the version you wish you were. Not the version you used to be. But the version of you that exists right now.

Who am I today?

What feels hardest right now?

What have I been trying not to look at?

If it helps, write a few simple truths:

I feel...

I'm struggling with...

I'm doing my best with...

There is no need to fix or change anything yet. This step is simply about seeing clearly.

Strengths & Weaknesses

A strengths and weaknesses list can help you see whether you're feeling stronger or weaker right now, by forcing you to look for both. Write down your strengths — those you've seen in yourself, and those others have told you about — and then do the same for your weaknesses.

Be honest. We all have the good, the bad, the ugly and the exceptional in us, I always say. So search out the truth of all these qualities.

My strengths

My weaknesses

You can keep adding to this list as you move through treatment, survivorship, and life after cancer.

STEP 2

Self-Acceptance — Ending the Inner Fight

Once you begin to see what's there, the next step is learning to stop fighting it. Acceptance doesn't mean you like what's happening. It doesn't mean you're giving up. It means you stop adding resistance to something that already hurts.

This is where I am. And I still matter.

Notice what comes up when you say that.

What came up?

Then, using your strengths and weaknesses list, sit in front of a mirror and say aloud: "I am ____." Work through the list, one quality at a time.

For both exercises, if there's any pushback — judgment, guilt, frustration — that's normal. That's part of the process. Just note it and move on to the next item.

Which ones did I resist most?

Revisit those when you feel up to it. They're likely the things you find hardest to accept. Keep sitting with each one until you can accept it about yourself. And remember: acceptance often happens in moments, not all at once. It's a lifelong pursuit we engage in over and over, as we change and grow.

STEP 3

Self-Love — Choosing a Kinder Way

Self-love isn't something you suddenly feel. It's something you practice. Often quietly. Often imperfectly. There are four main ways to practice it:

- Self-care
- Self-compassion
- Self-kindness
- Letting love in

Choose one to begin with, and set a goal to practice at least one act of self-love each day. Begin by asking:

What do I need today?

What would feel supportive right now?

That might look like:

- resting instead of pushing through
- saying no to something that's unhealthy for you right now
- speaking to yourself with more patience
- allowing someone to help you

These are small things. But they matter. Over time, these small choices begin to change how you relate to yourself.

Letting Love In

For many of us, this is the hardest part. You may be used to being the one who holds everything together — the one who doesn't need help. But rebuilding often requires letting others come closer.

Is there someone I could allow to support me, even in a small way?

Is there love coming my way that I haven't truly allowed in?

What might I do to reach out in love to someone else?

It doesn't have to be big. Even letting someone check in, or sit with you, is a beginning.

A Gentle Reflection

You are not starting over. You are beginning again — on a different foundation.

This process is not quick or linear. You may find yourself returning to these same steps again and again. That doesn't mean you're failing. It means you're doing the work.

You don't have to rebuild everything today. You just have to take the next small step.

This worksheet accompanies Chapter Four of *Reluctant Warrior: A Memoir & Breast Cancer Emotional Survival Guide* by Dr. Christina Hibbert. It is a reflective exercise, not therapy or medical care. If it brings up more than you expected, that makes sense — please consider bringing it to someone who can sit with you in it.