

# Picturing Levels of Self-Esteem

**Purpose:** To illustrate areas of positive and low self-esteem.

**Background:** The Mandala is an ancient Buddhist design representing the ebb and flow of life and change. Our Mandala has a structure made up of a center surrounded by the combination of eight parts and six realms. The parts represent eight constant dimensions (for example, physical) of our life experience. The realms refer to the six separate arenas or contexts (for example, social relationships) in which our development as unique persons takes place.

The Mandala depicts the areas of our lives in which we engage in self-evaluation. The "I am" represents global self-esteem. All the other rectangles represent situational self-esteem. Examining the diagram, we are able to note those sections known to us, as well as those unknown to us. We invest some sections with positive or negative self-esteem. This explains how we can have high self-esteem sometimes, but not other times. For example, the demands of our occupation excite us; we function at a high level; and we experience positive self-esteem in that realm of our lives. Otherwise, we may feel our life is going nowhere. We function at a low spiritual level, and rate our self-esteem accordingly. Or, we may feel good about our physical bodies but our intimate relationships are a bust. Or, our body's nutritional needs may be unknown to us, but we may be especially sensitive to our emotional needs in intimate relationships.

**Directions:** Using three differently colored crayons or markers:

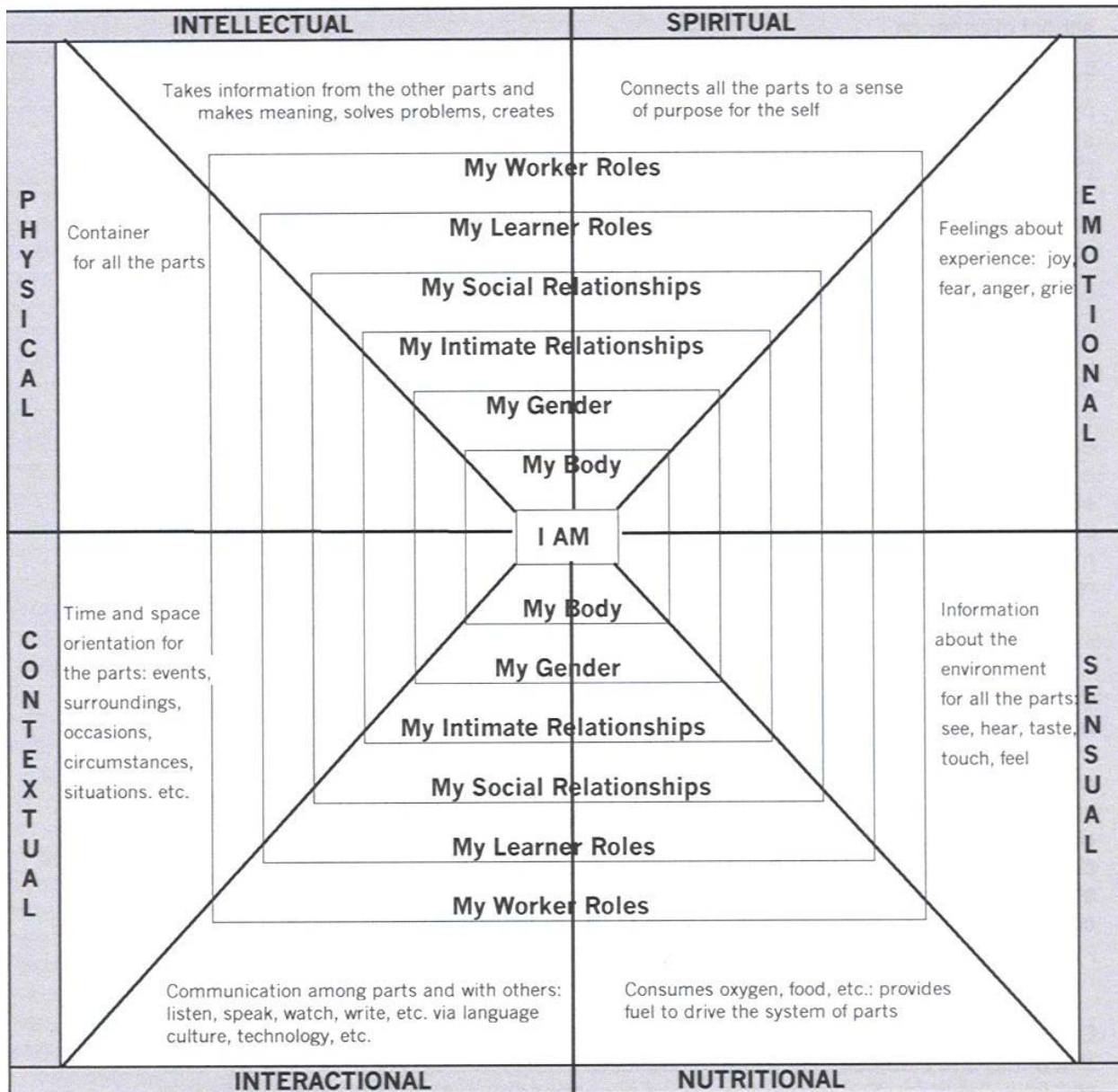
1. Decide which color represents:

Positive self-esteem \_\_\_\_\_

Low self-esteem \_\_\_\_\_

Unaware of self-esteem \_\_\_\_\_

2. Fill in all forty-eight rectangles in the Self-Esteem Mandala on the next page, with the exception of the "I am" square. Use the above three colors to represent positive self-esteem, low self-esteem, or lack of awareness of self-esteem.
3. Write here what you learned by doing this exercise.



\* Derived in part from a concept introduced by Virginia Satir