

# RESIST - REBEL - RECLAIM:

## Write Your Revolution!

A punk rock self-esteem workbook by Simon Forsyth

### Self-esteem (noun):

Confidence in one's own worth or abilities; self-respect

### Revolution (noun):

A forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favour of a new system; a dramatic and wide-reaching change in conditions, attitudes, or operation

### This workbook is a PUNK

It wants you to identify and assess a status quo in your life that has some kind of hold over you - one that saps your confidence in yourself and keeps you from fully embracing all you are

It wants you to start mobilising your inner capabilities to stand up to this force, whatever form it is taking

It wants you to use your imagination and the power of the pen to conceive a different reality

It wants you to emerge stronger and more at home in yourself as a result of your rebellion - and it knows this takes courage

**An overthrow, a new system, a dramatic change in operation -**  
do these sound like things you would like to explore and  
potentially harness in your life?

Newfound self-confidence usually doesn't just happen - it  
takes guts and persistence and sometimes a bit of trial and  
error. This punky workbook understands this, using targeted  
questions and journal prompts to get you to write about these  
ideas and give voice to your inner protestor - a part of you  
that has perhaps been waiting in the wings for a long time.

All you need to get started is a pen, paper and a willingness  
to ask yourself some rebellious questions. Let's go!

## **- RESIST -**

### **Resist (verb):**

To refrain from doing (something tempting or unwise);  
To struggle or fight back when attacked

### **1. What do you want to RESIST and why?**

#### **Why now?**

These questions have the air of 'Know your enemy' about them.

Perhaps you want to resist continuing to feel like you are  
deep-down no good, too often listening to that inner terrorist  
that mocks you and leads you to self-sabotage.

Perhaps you want to resist an unhelpful dynamic at home, work,  
or in your family that enables certain people in your life to  
treat you poorly.

Perhaps you are resisting that sense that you somehow aren't  
good enough, or that others will always be 'better' than you.

**Whatever it might be, concretely name what it is you are  
resisting and be as clear as you can on your motivations for  
wanting to make a stand at this time. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.**

2. Have ever felt trapped, controlled or enslaved by the thing you are resisting? What's that like?

Can you imagine what it would be like to not feel that?

What specific words, phrases or images come to your mind when you picture an alternate reality? What's different?

Sometimes we get so used to something that we lose sight of the fact that change may well be possible. If you feel like the thing you are resisting has been holding you down or back for a long time, then your capacity to hope for a different reality may be diminished, but that's okay.

Especially if there is part of you saying right now, 'What's the point, it's never going to change,' keep going. This sense of being downtrodden may be one of your enemy's agents, here to defend it.

STAND UP TO IT & VISUALISE WHAT CHANGE MIGHT LOOK LIKE.

### 3. What might your resistance look like?

#### Who or what are your allies in the rebellion?

A rebellion can be a thousand-strong crowd protesting injustice or just one person taking an individual stand. **Use your imagination to design your own protest rally, considering what resources you might draw on to help you.**

You might identify people you know from 'real life' as your allies here, such as a supportive friend, family member, teacher or counsellor. You might also choose a personal heroine/hero, like a favourite musician, writer or artist.

It might be someone you have never met or someone you knew well but is no longer in your life, for whatever reason - it doesn't matter, so long as you can draw some strength from imagining them or their spirit with you at your rally. **How would they encourage you?** And if you have animal friends, don't be afraid to invite them along too.

Speaking of non-human allies - what tools have you seen protestors use at other rallies? Think megaphones, placards, slogan t-shirts, music, speeches, chants - in 1980s Washington D.C., punks organised 'percussion protests,' using the audio clout of drums to stand up against Apartheid in South Africa and leading a disgruntled President Bush to remark, 'Those damned drums are keeping me up all night.' Boohoo!

Picture and describe your rally in detail. **Imagine what it might feel like to be protesting these forces that have worked against you.**

YOUR IMAGINATION IS YOUR FRIEND HERE, TOO.

## - REBEL -

**Rebel (verb) :**

To rise in opposition (to authority/control/convention)

### 4. How will you REBEL?

#### When and where might your protests be staged?

In reality, your protest rally is unlikely to be a one-off event, but you can mobilise yourself to lay some foundations.

Making a concerted decision to dispute your inner critic's assertions or saying no to an unreasonable expectation from someone or pushing yourself to do something that you might previously have shied away from (particularly if it's something you would usually tell yourself you can't or shouldn't do or avoid doing because you get anxious at the idea of 'screwing up,' whatever that might look like)...

If these actions, however small they might seem, run counter to the status quo's habitual way of doing/thinking/being, **then they are a form of protest**. And each time you protest, you are building a precedent - if you did it once, then you can hopefully do it again.

**Concretely identify the various ways you can rebel and advocate for your cause.**

Also consider the times and locations where your protests might take place - it could be when you look in the mirror in the morning or when you interact with a specific person or after you've been at a particular type of social event.

Finally, could you rebel against the idea of you and your inner critic as being on 'different teams' and see are there any ways you could actually work *together*? For all its mean-spiritedness and venom, a critical inner voice can, underneath it all, be like a frightened or confused child lashing out to try and stay safe. If you and it/them (do they have a name?) could collaborate as allies/friends rather than being at loggerheads, might this be a productive union? Are their harsh words perhaps intended, however misguidedly, to protect you? What is it they want/don't want for you? What might they need to hear from you in response? **AGAIN, KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.**

## 5. Who are the gatekeepers and stakeholders?

What do they stand to lose through your protests?

Can you identify times and ways in which you have collaborated or co-operated with these before?

Sometimes if we move to make a change for ourselves, there will be pushback from the status quo. Therefore, identifying its gatekeepers and stakeholders (those with a vested interest in keeping things as they are) and anticipating how/why they may resist your resistance are key strategies here.

These might be something external, like a family member you anticipate will be annoyed or baffled by you asserting your boundaries. Or they might be something internal, like a part of you that coaxes you to remain the victim in a particular relationship because this dynamic, as unhelpful as it might be, has become familiar to you and it fears 'rocking the boat' by acting differently.

If these gatekeepers and stakeholders feel like they are going to lose something they value through your rebellion, then they will probably not welcome your threatening of this - be prepared!

Next, use your knowledge of yourself and your experiences to identify times when you have, for better or worse, played ball with these forces and maybe to some extent have helped them survive.

Try to do this with compassion for yourself, avoiding harsh or judgemental language that chastises you for not doing something about it before - you can't change that and continuously wallowing in self-regret or beating yourself up over it will likely weaken the strength you need now to rebel.

Consider how you might use your knowledge in a constructive way - for example, if you know what cooperating with these forces looks like, then you can also visualise what it might look like to do the opposite.

You might think of this as 'inside information' that you can also use to anticipate how you might react to any resistance or counterattack (in the form of guilt, admonishment, anxiety, self-doubt, and so on), and to firm your resolve to make that stand.

YOU MAY HAVE MORE POWER HERE THAN YOU FIRST REALISED.

## 6. What's in your first aid kit?

The protests we are imagining here are peaceful ones, but resistance may lead to conflict and with it the potential for hurt.

Imagine now what you might put in your protest first aid kit, to help you if things get tricky or overwhelming.

It might be having a friend on standby to vent to after a difficult conversation with someone.

It might be some words or song lyrics or a personal motto that can reassure you after your critical internal voice has tried to put you down again - or reassure *them* that their fears might be unfounded and that you'll be okay.

It might be giving yourself time out to journal, read, walk, run, listen to music (loud and fast, or slow and calming?)... whatever connects you with yourself and can help ground you in a safe, self-compassionate way. Could you make a playlist that you can immerse yourself in when you need it?

If you don't have a personal motto/slogan for your rebellion, now might be a good time to think of one (mine is 'What would Lux do?' - referring to the inspirational don't-give-a-shit attitude of Cramps frontman Lux Interior and reminding me to channel some of his fierce self-confidence when I need it).

CREATE YOUR OWN MANIFESTO.

## - RECLAIM -

### Reclaim (verb):

To retrieve or recover something previously lost/given;  
To bring under cultivation (e.g. waste land)

### 7. What do you hope to claim or RECLAIM through this revolution?

#### What would that mean for you?

It may be the case that at one point in your life you feel you had more confidence in yourself than you have now - that something (or someone) happened that knocked you and your view of yourself to the ground, and you've struggled to get back to that older place ever since.

This can happen in any number of situations, such as when people have been bullied or subjected to controlling and emotionally manipulative relationships; when they have experienced physical/bodily changes; when their circumstances have changed such as through losing a job or dropping out of a course, to name but a few.

In such cases, you may feel like this rebellion will help you reclaim something precious of yours that you were stripped of somehow.

Alternatively, you may feel that you were always lacking in something, for example a sense of self-acceptance or pride in your achievements, and you would like now to be able to claim this as your own - you've lived without it long enough.

Whatever the case, be specific as to what you might get or get *back* for yourself through this rebellion, and the meaning this would carry for you.

CONSIDER THE RIPPLES THAT THIS MIGHT START FOR YOU.

## 8. Write a story of your claiming/reclaiming.

When you were a kid, what were your favourite stories? Are there characters or themes in them that you might be able to draw on now and refashion in your own language to 're-author' part of your narrative and create a story of the claiming/reclaiming we are now talking about?

Perhaps a group of wicked witches stole your sense of self-worth because you were different.

Or your ability to see your inner beauty got put to sleep for a hundred years by a miscast spell.

Or your best friend betrayed you for a pot of riches and you've found it hard to trust people since then.

Use your imagination and see if you can alter the script a little (or a lot) now, to re-write things your way and maybe give this tale the ending you deserved but couldn't get.

Be as spontaneous, silly, extravagant, outlandish as you want - you're holding the pen, so you get to decide what happens. There's no 'right' or 'wrong' way of doing it.

I also enjoy the idea of 'reclaiming' as being like taking land that was previously unable to sustain growth and turning it into your own garden/greenhouse/forest/oasis/whatever image works for you.

This kind of project may take time to reach its full potential but can begin with just a few small seeds. The things that start growing then need to be taken care of, which can seem like a daunting commitment but will hopefully yield long-term positive change.

If this idea resonates with you, perhaps your story might describe the background of this patch of land you wish to reclaim and the plans you have for it now. What do you want it to look like in a few years' time? How will you tend to it? What does it need from you or others to start thriving?

RE-WRITE SOMETHING OF YOUR PAST  
TO HELP LAY CLAIM TO SOMETHING OF YOUR FUTURE.

## 9. Reflect and move forward.

Finally, take some time to read back over what you've written and give yourself some feedback:

What do you notice in your words?

What stands out?

What sounds exciting?

What sounds scary?

What have you learned about yourself?

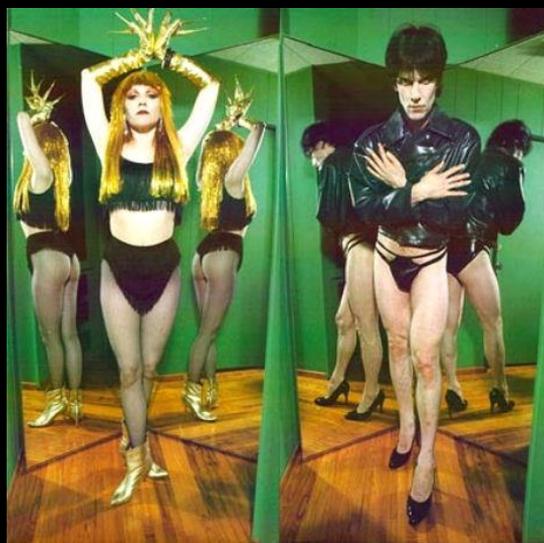
What might you need to un-learn or let go of, even gradually?

There may be many questions but don't sit too long - revolution needs ACTION to get going.

Hopefully this workbook will have helped expand your awareness as to what you are resisting, how you're going to rebel against it and what you're going to (re)claim for yourself through your efforts.

NOW IT'S TIME TO TAKE THAT STEP AND START MAKING IT HAPPEN.

**- YOU'VE GOT THIS -**



**Dedicated to Poison Ivy & Lux Interior**

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