

Filters Self-Assessment

Discovering and Disengaging from Faulty Filters

Note: This resource is solely for educational insight and not intended for deep psychological assessment.

Guidelines:

- Read through this list of filter themes and highlight any statements that you relate to as “often me” or “always me” (4 or 5). Do not judge the “goodness” or “badness” of any statement.
- After reviewing all twelve themes, go back and, using the highlights as a guide, give yourself a rating of 1-5 as to how much each of the twelve themes, with their faults and fruits, is part of your makeup.
- After each faulty filter, we offer a possible mindful reframing. In general, these positive statements are the way that emotionally balanced people without this faulty filter view the world, others and themselves. If you identify easily with most of these reframe statements for any filter, this filter theme is likely **not** about you. If, on the other hand, you feel that the reframe statement is **what you would like to be, feel or do** but are not, then this is one area where a filter may still be controlling your life.
- One very, very important “heads up” on making your assessment: you will probably—up until now—think that almost everyone thinks just like you do about the faulty filter statements that you most relate to. In so doing, you unknowingly convince yourself that your belief and typical emotional reactions are normal and not in need of changing. This resistance is also a clue that this may be one of your faulty filter beliefs.
- Similarly, note how you don’t really relate that strongly to most of the other filter statements listed. Guess what? In general, most others do not have as strong a reaction to your faulty filter as you do.
- Faulty filters are usually completely unknown to you, so think about each one carefully and honestly to discover your filters. Consider what the family motto in your home was when you were growing up. What were several characteristics of your mother and/or father that most affected you, which you liked or hated? What would a vulnerable child learn from these influences, rules, models, and motivations?
- Another clue to help you find your filter: if you get extremely upset or bothered by something someone does or says to you that, objectively, is not really that big of a deal, then you have probably activated a strong filter. For example, if someone excludes you

from a conversation at a party and it really bothers you, you may have a filter around exclusion. Without an exclusion filter, the average person might notice this occurrence (or maybe not), but would shrug it off as no big deal or just honestly forget it.

- Your main theme will also be more accurately assessed after you have considered all twelve filters and determined how many are “Generally Not Me.”
- Research strongly suggests that each of us has a little of most of these themes (both faults or fruits); however, one or two will be most predominant and responsible for most of your positive and negative perceptions, feelings and behaviours with others and about life in general.
- Try to recall real life examples to support your assessment of “often me.”
- Remember that your filters are also responsible for many of your great qualities. All filters have some validity and are useful sometimes; however, when they unknowingly dominate our interpretations and perceptions of situations, they are seriously faulty, even though we don’t realize it.
- Just discovering your faulty filters and being aware of when you are being hijacked by them can bring much freedom and fulfillment to your life and the life of others that you know—particularly the person you are supporting.
- Finally, remember that each of these filters is based in your PFP Programming and is manifested through B-FIT reactions. The sudden tightness in your muscles or the sudden awareness of self-talk about doubts or fears (B-FIT) is how you know that a PFP filter is in play. Working with clarifying and being equanimous with B-FIT is primarily how we change PFP (in addition to new self-talk.) Many of the suggestions on how to reframe a filter redirects you to a mindful awareness of (B-FIT) **Body, Feelings, Image** way of thinking and **Talk** way of thinking.

Remember, the problem isn’t that we have a particular filter: everyone developed filters in their childhood “learning to be a somebody” training. The problem is that the filter stays hidden from us while it drives and distorts negative feelings and behaviours, thereby truly limiting our potential as caregivers and as people. Our task in developing personal and professional emotional self-regulation is to discover and learn to disconnect from the gripping power of these filters through B-FIT Mindfulness and positive reframes—**in the moment**—to prevent harmful or even subtle hijacks from happening over and over and over.

A suggestion: walk lightly and play with the possibilities here; have some fun with them, just as you did as a child discovering something new and wonderful about the mystery of a butterfly.

Faulty Filter #1: Need to be in Control In Order to Feel Normal	Usually not me (1)	Sometimes me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
I must be in control of life's situations in order to feel secure, happy and okay. Life in general is agitating if I don't know or am not in control of what is happening. I really need predictability, order, and structure not to feel anxious.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

The nature of life is that it is ever-changing. I will always work skillfully to influence and change things as appropriate. However, once I have done all that I can, my sense of worth, security and comfort will depend mostly on my awareness and skills to be subjectively allowing of the outcomes and trusting enough to just let things be.

I still get feelings I don't like when my life seems out of control however, I now can mindfully observe my B-FIT reactions and be non-attached to them so that they don't grip, drive and distort my feelings and behaviour as much anymore.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

excellent problem solver

intellectual

good decision maker

well-organized

articulate

Faulty Filter #2: Need to Perceive Myself as <u>not</u> Being Controlled	Usually not me (1)	Sometimes me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
It is critical to my well-being and good feelings that life situations or other people do not control me. If they do, or I perceive they do, I feel irritated, anxious, fearful and somehow restricted. No matter what I accomplish or contribute in life, I still feel inferior to others in position of authority. I can become preoccupied with ‘managing’ them.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

In some circumstances in my life, other people and situations such as health, disability, financial hardships etc. will have significant influence over me. When this is necessary or unavoidable, I can accept this control, knowing that this too shall pass, or this too is necessary for now or maybe even forever. I work skillfully and sensibly to change what should and can be changed. I also know that although my B-FIT is relating to this situation as being trapped, my B-FIT responses are only tools to support my existence, similar to seeing and hearing. They are not me.

As I observe and become non-attached with B-FIT Mindfulness in this situation, I feel more and more happy and satisfied, even though objectively I am still being controlled in this unavoidable situation.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

excellent problem solver

caring

well-organized

thoughtful

decisive

Faulty Filter #3: Need To Get It / Be Right	Usually not me (1)	Sometimes me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
I need to be right. One benefit of this for me is avoiding criticism (which feels awful). My sense of being perfect in several or even most parts of my life is very important. I procrastinate and avoid making decisions in order to avoid making mistakes. “Better to not run in the race than to risk losing it.” In my secret life, I am often highly self-critical. I don’t accept criticism well. Criticism makes me angry or gives me hurt feelings. I sometimes lie to avoid criticism. I have developed an unconscious habit of being critical of others. I am constantly affirming my own rightness to help me feel good, okay and even sometimes self-righteous. It sometimes seems that I am still that child, fearful of not living up to Mom’s or Dad’s or someone else’s expectations of me.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

Being right and doing my best is important, and I will always give my best effort to be skilled and proficient. My self-worth and good feelings, however, do not depend on proving I am right or someone else is wrong. I know that I am no longer a vulnerable child who will be yelled at or punished if I make a mistake or don’t do something just right. I am a mature, self-reliant person capable and willing to learn and grow, especially by trying what I am not good at. Therefore, I expect and accept failing as part of learning something new.

These feelings that I experience when I fail or am criticized are only passing B-FIT responses that I can skillfully be with and allow for as long as they choose to stay. These feelings are not me; they are more like light from a star that burnt out a million years ago. My new mantra is “I would sooner be happy than right.”

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

very high standards, ethics and performance

very fair

excellent verbal and written skills

above normal intuition

well organized or poorly organized (all or nothing)

above normal competence (where I choose to contribute)

Faulty Filter #4: Need For Approval From Others	Usually not me (1)	Sometimes me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
I must have the approval (expressed or self-perceived) of significant others in my life for what I do and say. Being right is one main way I ensure this. Pleasing others can also be an obsessively high priority in my life to achieve this approval. Compliments and <i>kudos</i> are very important to my feeling good, perceived self-worth and security. I find myself exaggerating and embellishing the truth. I even lie about things for no apparent reason. I like impressing people; I may even need to. I am almost obsessive about my appearance to others: for example, hair, clothing, body, intellect. What people will think can be an ongoing preoccupation for me. I sometimes use gossip to buy acceptance or impress.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

It feels great when I receive compliments or acceptance from others; however, my self-worth, self-esteem and feelings of being okay no longer depend on the opinion of others as they did when I was a vulnerable child.

The healing, maturing and transforming person that I am now expects my B-FIT responses to react negatively to criticism due to early conditioning. I now can and do become aware each time these reactions surface and thereby am less and less identified with them. During these mindful moments I repeat, "Ahhh, there is B-FIT reacting to perceived disapproval, and here is the real me watching it all. Far out! Great show!"

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

extremely thoughtful

giving

excellent social skills

non-critical of others

intuitive

considerate

above normal fairness to others

Faulty Filter #5: Need To Be Treated Fairly	Usually not me (1)	Some-times me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
If life treats me unfairly (or I think it does), I have a right to feel irritated, vengeful or un-cooperative. I came from either a home where I was spoiled or a home where I was treated unfairly as my parents' way of controlling my behaviour. Now my judgments about what I am entitled to are often mistaken (but I usually don't realize this). I have genuine anxiety, anger or sadness when I perceive unfairness toward me and others. When I don't get what I think I deserve, I often react powerfully (aggressively or passively) to get or even take it! To get what I want I may also act weak, vulnerable, or sick so that others will come to my service, which I often interpret as the only way I can be loved.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

Life and others often inadvertently treat people unfairly, and I am no exception. Although my childhood B-FIT was conditioned into believing that I am generally entitled to what I want, I now know that I am special and worthy whether I get what I want from others or not. I now do not take it personally if my wishes are not granted.

Feelings of "less than" that come when I don't get what I feel that I deserve are now experienced as passing B-FIT reactions that the real me can become aware of and non-attached to, and therefore not driven and gripped by. When I don't get treated fairly, or don't get acknowledged or served by others, I no longer take it personally.

I know that I am lovable regardless of how I am treated.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

above normal fairness to others	sensitive to others' needs	thoughtful
excellent social skills	advocate for the underdog	
openly appreciative when (perceived to be) treated fairly		

Faulty Filter #6: Need To Feel Self-Righteous	Usually not me (1)	Some- times me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
I need to perceive myself as better than (morally and/or socially), in order to feel self-righteously worthwhile. I therefore often become addicted to an ideology, career or belief with clear and simple do's and don'ts, good or evil, and self-righteously relate to others as good guys or bad guys. Being good or right often elevates my feelings of superiority that I need to feel happy and okay. I often find myself judging others.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

Yes, being a morally good person is very important, and when I violate universally accepted values I need my B-FIT to acknowledge my less-than-optimal thoughts and/or behaviour in order to change or make amends.

I do not need the feelings of self-righteousness that often accompany the judging behaviours that I have used for years to affirm my superiority. I and others behave in moral or immoral ways due to countless PFP conditionings. For some people, these behaviours are beyond their immediate control. This does not make them evil or bad; however, correction is often required to prevent them from doing further harm. I prevent and help them, but now my heart stays open.

I do not judge victims of conditioning, but rather feel authentic compassion for them and look for ways to help them even as I prevent them from doing further harm.

I will be sufficiently mindful in each moment to be authentically good and moral. When mindful, I do not need to feel superior or righteous, but value goodness as the essence of humanness, especially when I see that essence in its many tragic, hurtful, human disguises.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

generally a “good” person	highly confident
above normal awareness of right or wrong	a loyal friend
giving, kind (however conditional)	

Faulty Filter #7: Need To Achieve and Be Busy	Usually not me (1)	Sometimes me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
What I have or have achieved is never enough because my self-esteem is directly attached to what I do or achieve, and this activity therefore must be on-going. I believe that I am known and valued as a “doer.” Possibly my greatest fear is to be bored or have nothing to do. My life is therefore filled with “to-dos,” social events, work, emailing etc. These activities all appear necessary to me, and I can justify them to anyone. At their root, however, may well be a panic that will be triggered if I am not busy. Boredom or having nothing to do, for me, is like being locked in solitary confinement. When asked, I am always “very, very busy.” It would be almost impossible for me to spend a day doing nothing.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

As part of my responsibility to contribute in my family and local and global community I will enjoy doing and achieving whatever I can that is helpful.

My doing will be done consciously and mindfully, not just to get it done or avoid boredom. This awakening consciousness will reduce and eventually eliminate my obsessive attachment to activity or “doing for the sake of doing”.

I mindfully become aware of my B-FIT’s insatiable appetite to do, stay busy, and consume mainly for its own sake or often to avoid the perceived emptiness and isolation of boredom. Now I can experience joy, pleasure and satisfaction from just being as well as doing.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

- a high achiever
- boundless energy
- highly committed to non-profit organizations
- broad range of interests and skills
- the team “doer”

Faulty Filter #8: Need To Be Included	Usually not me (1)	Some- times me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
I must be included and respected in social interactions or else I feel excluded, hurt and unimportant. I unconsciously feel that people who exclude me do it on purpose, so I have a right to be angry with them (which is one way that my mind protects me from deeper hurt). I must be emotionally accepted by most people I know.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

I enjoy being included and respected in social situations however, I feel equally satisfied in my aloneness. I mindfully experience occasions of non-inclusion in group situations as just unskillful communication skills on the part of others. I now do not take it personally. In these moments I observe my conditioned B-FIT reactions gently welcome these “guests” to stay as long as they need. I know that they are not me, as I am the observer of them.

Provided I am well-intended and conscious in my interactions with others, I know, really know, that being rejected or not included has absolutely nothing to do with me but often is merely an indicator of another person’s PFP Brain. I now react from a place of unconditional wisdom and compassion, not dependent on getting their inclusion or acceptance.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

highly sensitive to other’s needs

generous

champion of the underdog

a true and loyal friend

above average ability to see the best in others (unless they exclude me)

Faulty Filter #9: Need For Ongoing Proof of Others' Worthiness of Trust	Usually not me (1)	Sometimes me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
Others must continually prove to me that they can be trusted and that they like me. I often can't be sure. Possibly abandonment, (perceived or real) by my mother, father or other important figure from my childhood taught me not to trust and not to get close to someone special because they will likely just leave and hurt me. Being intimate is a challenge for me. Therefore, I have many friends but guard against getting too close or dependent with one or two due to fear of rejection or betrayal.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

I feel good when I am in a trusting relationship with another even though I know that they will (because of their own faulty filters) let me down sometimes. I do not need ongoing reassurance of their fidelity, devotion or allegiance to me.

I recognize my B-FIT's resistance and reluctance to enter into intimate, trusting relationships due possibly to my hurt in losing or not having a special person in my vulnerable childhood. With mindfulness, however, I also have learned that I can be authentically intimate and trusting, and experience a special kind of joy and closeness.

I know that I am not this reactive, conditioned B-FIT "small self" but more the "big self" who knows that the B-FIT small self is attempting to hijack the real me. Because of this knowing, I am able to risk building unconditional, intimate relationships, with the full knowledge that some of these relationships can prematurely and hurtfully end, as is the case for everyone.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

strong, above average social skills

a broad range of friends

very, very loyal, trustworthy

thoughtful and generous

an achiever and doer in life

Faulty Filter #10: Need For Excitement	Usually not me (1)	Sometimes me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
In order for me to feel good I need excitement, things happening around me. I plan many (more than average) exciting events for months in advance and would feel uneasy and restless without them to look forward to. Obsessive thinking, feelings and behaviour or even regular angry outbursts make me feel calm, good and alive. As illogical as it seems, I know I sometimes “look for trouble,” for example by starting an argument, but I just can’t help myself.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

Doing new and exciting activities is enjoyable. I can, however, be equally content to just be alone with little or no stimulation, reading, listening or sitting in silence. With mindfulness I am experiencing that less really can be more.

When I observe that my B-FIT is driven with anticipation, I can skillfully bring it to a non-driven state and still feel the full excitement. I can just “be” without being driven by a need for excitement.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

- a make-it-happen person
- a fun-loving adventurer
- a visionary and idea person
- a motivator
- an excellent short and long term planner (not necessarily a completer)

Faulty Filter #11: Need To See Myself As A Victim	Usually not me (1)	Some- times me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
Life and others will always let me down or hurt me. Bad things happen to me much more than to others. I am a magnet for trouble. I feel normal, when I am a victim in life. I misbelieve that I am victimized (and have no choice but to be a victim) much more often than others. When my “suffering” serves to make people pay attention to me, I can sometimes have feelings of being okay because of the supportive attention that I now receive. I generally, however, believe that I am not lovable.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

I recognize that I, like everyone else, have difficult or distressing times—sometimes just events and sometimes an ongoing part of my everyday life. I also accept that some people (possibly me) experience much more difficulty in life than others and it is absolutely not fair – it’s just the way it is. I mindfully prepare myself to manage, prevent and change that which can and should be changed.

I often watch my B-FIT “ain’t it awful” or “poor me” responses; however, I recognize that these messages are just conditioned responses to difficulty that at one time served me well to cope or get help when I had no other choices.

For things I can’t or shouldn’t change for now, I consciously and intentionally select appropriate emotional and social responses that include not resisting or pushing away the victimization B-FIT reactions, so they now naturally, quietly and gently leave on their own.

As I become non-attached, more and more I can see the gifts brought to me by difficult circumstances and difficult people. I now know that I have been lovable all of my life.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

sensitive to other’s pain

risk taker in relationships

highly able to express emotions

helpful to others

Faulty Filter #12: Need to and Deserve to Have Comfort	Usually not me (1)	Some- times me (2-3)	Often me (4-5)
Getting and keeping physical, emotional and psychological comfort is my main goal. When life conforms, I am most happy. When it doesn't, I have a right to feel bad or even to take what I need. I like to keep the peace and avoid constructive conflict, as it is very uncomfortable for me. I am skilled at avoiding conflict by making light of conversation that gets too serious or by not making decisions. One of my favourite hobbies is to “veg out.” I try to hide it, but mostly I think of myself first. I like immediate gratification, so I don't tend to plan or think too far ahead. I let others plan and do for me, but they better get it right or I will feel and show my “justifiable” upset—often by becoming moody or sulking. When these comfort goals are met, there is no one more likeable and loveable than me.			

Recall in detail specific examples of how you are unknowingly (in the moment) driven by this filter.

Now consider these more useful, fulfilling and mindful reframings of this faulty filter:

I do like being physically and emotionally comfortable. I feel special when others are thoughtful or kind to me. My feelings of self-worth, however, do not depend on others taking care of me.

Although it is not natural for me, in being thoughtful and mindful I am fulfilled by helping and being kind to others. At these times my B-FIT will sometimes protest, “but what about me,” and I can now laugh at that conditioned response. Now, although I still really enjoy being “comforted,” I do not need or expect it.

Examples of assets that accompany this filter:

gregarious, fun loving, life of the party

strong social skills, liked by many

peace maker, conflict preventer

above average performer at work

positively responsive when needs are being met

Filters' Summary and Early Recollections' Interpreting Guidelines

Note: An early recollection is an actual memory of a childhood event up to age 12. Start the sentence with “One day I remember”.

1. Review all 12 Filters' Themes.
2. Check off the themes where you gave it an 'often me' rating.
3. Read your first early recollection – e.g. “One day when I was about 7 years old, I was playing on our skating pond behind our house. We were having a good time then suddenly the ice broke and I fell in up to my knees. I felt really scared*. My Mom pulled me to safety, but my Dad got mad”.
4. Now become the editor of a newspaper and give this story a caption “Little girl scared of sudden loss of control while skating – helped by mother”.
5. What might this event be telling you about yourself?
 - I believe that I must be (e.g. not out of control)
 - I expect men/women to be (e.g. women to be helpful)
 - I perceive the world to be (e.g. uncertain)
6. Repeat for all 5 Early Recollections.
7. Determine if there are common themes. All early recollections indicate beliefs/filters.
8. These themes will indicate how your early life programming is today determining much of how:
 - you in general see yourself in the world e.g. I must and should beliefs (usually illogical and outdated);
 - how you in general see others – men and women e.g. supportive, a threat;
 - how you in general see the world e.g. scary, benevolent, exciting;
9. All of these beliefs significantly influence how you relate to the individuals whom you support e.g. your preferences and prejudices (and also your personal life as friend, adult child, partner, parent etc.).

*Feelings could have been embarrassment, excitement, anger, helplessness, specialness etc. which further clarifies the filter e.g. scared often refers to loss of control while embarrassment often refers to need for approval etc.

Filters Record

Early Recollections #1

Age _____

I believe that I must be _____

I expect men/women to be _____

I perceive the world to be _____

Early Recollections #2

Age _____

I believe that I must be _____

I expect men/women to be _____

I perceive the world to be _____

Early Recollections #3

Age _____

I believe that I must be _____

I expect men/women to be _____

I perceive the world to be _____

Early Recollections #4

Age _____

I believe that I must be _____

I expect men/women to be _____

I perceive the world to be _____

Early Recollections #5

Age _____

I believe that I must be _____

I expect men/women to be _____

I perceive the world to be _____

Filters Summary Statements

Note: develop these summary statements using a combination of insights from your birth order and other family of origin influences up to the age of approximately 12, your 'often me' filters assessments and your early recollections.

1. I believe that I must be

2. I expect men to be

3. I expect women to be

4. I often perceive my world to be

Summary

Each of us will probably relate to one or two of the filters themes much more than the others. We all have very personal, unique, private (il)logical filters and are driven by them when we are not mindful. The good news is that with practice we can become highly proficient at immediately being aware of faulty filters when they activate. We can skillfully disconnect from them (that is, not be gripped or driven by them). These B-FIT reactions will eventually come much less often, and our recovery time will be much quicker.

We all probably make hundreds of poor or downright harmful decisions regarding partnering, parenting, friendships, work and change, based primarily on our unknown faulty filters. These outdated programs result in unnecessary resistances, greed and attachments to habits such as over-consumption, jealousy, anger or fear—and we don't even know about them! With skill these programs can be brought into awareness and controlled. Only then will we become reliably able to clarify the situations we are confronted with and choose the best response.

The key to developing authentic compassion for all others—even the most difficult and harmful people we know—is always remembering that they have their own faulty filters that are driving and distorting their reality (thoughts, feelings and behaviours). The person you are supporting is being driven by these same illogical filters. The moments in which we recognize the filters controlling our own or someone else's behaviour are the moments when we can best assess our own progress on the path of healing, maturing and transforming.

I have found that people who have developmental/multiple disabilities commonly have one or more of the following filters because they have learned that they bring supporters to help them:

- They are overly pleasing;
- They are demanding because of hurt, pain or sickness;
- They are chronic complainers due to their filter of entitlement; or,
- They have chronic guilt and are too often apologetic.

Recognizing these filters in people supported will help us respond more compassionately to their needs. How soon and how skillfully we compassionately change what we can and should, and how well we simultaneously keep our heart open to their predicament is yet another manifestation of our wisdom and maturity.