

**Figure 41. Overcoming Low Self-esteem: A Map of the Territory**  
**Undermining the negative beliefs that lie at the heart of low self-esteem:**

**(Early) Experience**

What experiences (events, relationships, living conditions) contributed to the development of your negative beliefs about yourself?  
What experiences contributed to keeping them going?  
Are these experiences part of the 'evidence' that supports your low opinion of yourself?

**The Bottom Line**

On the basis of experience, what conclusions did you draw about yourself?  
What were your old, negative beliefs about yourself?  
What perspective on yourself would make better sense?  
What is your New Bottom Line?  
What 'evidence' did you use to support your Old Bottom Line?  
How else could you understand this 'evidence'?  
What experiences (evidence) support your New Bottom Line and contradict the Old one?  
What new information (things you have screened out/discounted) do you need to be alert to?  
What experiments do you need to carry out?

**Changing unhelpful rules:**

**Rules For Living**

What are your Rules for Living? In what ways are they unreasonable and unhelpful?  
What alternatives would be more reasonable and helpful?  
Put them into practice

**Breaking the Vicious Circle:**

**Trigger Situations**

In what situations do you risk breaking your Rules for Living?  
Or feel that you have indeed broken them?

**Activation of the Old Bottom Line**

What thoughts, emotions, body sensations and behaviours tell you your Old Bottom Line is activated?  
What do you need to do to short-circuit activation and bring your New Bottom Line and new Rules for Living into play?

**Depression**

Minimised or nipped in the bud.

**Negative Predictions**

Identify, question and test (experiments).

**Unhelpful Behaviour**

Treat yourself kindly and allow yourself to relax and enjoy life.

**Anxiety**

Minimised or nipped in the bud.

**Self-critical Thinking**

Identify and question.  
Experiment with encouraging and praising yourself.  
Recognise your good points and give yourself credit for your achievements.

**Unhelpful Behaviour**

Face things you avoid, drop unnecessary precautions, give weight to your successes.

**Confirmation of the Bottom Line**

Are you ignoring or discounting the times when things go well?  
Are you giving too much weight to the times when things do not go well, and assuming they say something about you as a person?