

Self-esteem Toolkit (by G. Weinberg)

The Wisdom Box represents the ability to know what's right and what's not right for me. Without a Wisdom Box, I would find myself forever trying to write things that violated my principles, or for which I had no energy.

Without my wisdom box to guide me, I would be swamped doing things I didn't really want to do—and my writing would never happen.



The Golden Key stands for the ability to open new areas for learning and practicing, and to close them if they don't fit for me at a particular time. Without this Golden Key, my writing would become narrowly focused, or focused on areas in which I was no longer interested.



the golden key

The Courage Stick symbolizes my courage to try new things and to risk failure. The Golden Key makes me aware of new doors to open, but I also need the courage to enter those doors once opened.

Without my Courage Stick, my writing turns to safe grape jelly, smooth and sweet, but not terribly exciting.



courage stick

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The Wishing Wand personifies my ability to ask for what I want and to live with not getting it. Without the ability to ask for what I want, I would fall prey to publishers' boiler-plate contracts.



detective hat

The Detective Hat is sometimes teamed with **The Magnifying Glass**, creating the ability to examine data and to reason about those data. Without analytical abilities, I would become a vendor of off-the-shelf, portion-controlled writings—rather than an original writer responding to my readers' real needs.

The Yes/No Medallion illustrates my ability to say yes, the ability to say no (thank you), and the ability to mean what I say. Without a yes that means yes and a no that means no, I would pander to my editors' prejudices and allow my writing to become someone else's.



REF: Gerald M. Weinberg, Oct 6, 2010

Virginia Satirs-self-esteem-tool-kit-for-writers

<http://tinyurl.com/self-esteem-toolkit>

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The Heart stands for my ability and willingness to put my heart into my work. I often need to be reminded of the hopes, wishes, fears, and sensitivities of others. The Heart gives me that nudge when I need it.



The Mirror symbolizes my ability to see myself, my writing, and to seek and use feedback, which is important for personal growth. Feedback is the mirror by which I can see myself and my work and monitor how my work affects those around me—but it only works if I remember to look in that mirror.

The Telescope stands for my ability to see others and to bring them closer to my understanding than my naked eye and brain can manage. In many ways, the mirror is the hardest tool for writers to use. Whom among us can accurately critique our own work? My Telescope complements the function of my Mirror, allowing me to see my work brought up for close examination.



telescope

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The Fish-Eye Lens symbolizes my ability to see the big picture, the context that surrounds me and others and influences , us as we work together. It reminds me to use the many observational and analytical tools I already have. Together, The Mirror, The Telescope, and The Fish-Eye Lens equip me with the Self, Other, and Context from Virginia's model of congruence—the ingredients that must be balanced if I am to write congruently.

The Gyroscope is my ability to be balanced, to use all of my tools, and to be congruent or centered. To this day, I remain fascinated by its ability to restore its balance when disturbed. Sometimes, I think that the Gyroscope is too complex a tool for my kit, but then I remember that restoring balance to my life is complex and that it is something that I must always try to do. Watching other writers, I see how easily they are knocked off balance, causing their writing to suffer—or to cease altogether. Any writer who knows how to use the gyroscope will never be caught up by the myth of “writers’ block.”



Also see: **Weinberg on Writing: the Fieldstone Method:** <http://tinyurl.com/weinberg-on-writing> and <http://www.geraldweinberg.com>

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The Egg stands for my ability to grow, develop, and learn, using all the parts of myself to become a complete writer. Virginia Satir has a Seed Model—each of us comes into the world with all the tools we need to be complete human beings. When I'm stuck, in my writing or elsewhere, my Egg reminds me of the many tools I don't realize I have—and of my ability to choose or create my own tools.



The Carabiner represents my ability to ensure my safety and to avert unnecessary risks—so I *can* take risks when necessary. The carabiner is used to prevent climbers from falling. It gives me a moment to double-check my actions, so I can write with confidence.

The Feather—the ability to tickle myself and others, and not to take things, or myself, too seriously. The Feather reminds me that, as Oscar Wilde said, “Life is too important to be taken seriously,” and the same is true of writing: “Writing is too important to be done without at least occasional humor.”



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The Hourglass—the ability to make time for what's good and to make good use of time. The Hourglass is one of my most important tools because it's one I tend to forget. When I'm writing, I can forget to eat, or sleep, or simply take care of my body. Nowadays, I use a timer on my computer—and not just to stop writing. Sometimes, I need to *start* writing when I've been preoccupied with life's other matters.



The Oxygen Mask—the ability to revive my capacity to help others. I like to help other writers—critiquing their work, leading them to useful resources, supporting them when they're feeling stuck. Eileen Strider reminded me of the safety instructions given on planes: “Before helping others with their oxygen mask, be sure your own mask is securely in place and operating properly.” My Oxygen Mask reminds me to operate from a healthy place, the place from which I'm most able to help others. It reminds me to use all of my other tools and to keep myself healthy and sane.



Also see: Gerald Weinberg's **More Secrets of Consulting: The Consultant's Tool Kit**
<http://tinyurl.com/more-secrets-of-consulting>