The seven aspects of self-esteem

The following exercise was taken from a book that was already published in 1995 by the AG-SPAK publishing house titled "Group work with abused women. A handbook". Susana Pendzik, an Argentinian psychologist, wrote it in cooperation with Marcela Sosa Acosta. It is a highly recommended read (available in Spanish and German only).

The seven aspects of self-esteem

after an idea by Angeles Arrien (1988)

Goal:

The participants should estimate the level of their self-esteem according to a few specific aspects that act as the basis for starting to work on their self-esteem.

Material:

Pencil and paper

The seven aspects of self-esteem:

The ability to establish boundaries and to say no. In your everyday life that means: "Here and no further".
Trust in yourself.
The ability to give and take in equal measure.
Being able to defend your own truth and maintain your own integrity.
The ability to express your own feelings and to do so in due time, in an appropriate manner and in an adequate form.
Feeling respect for yourself.
Accepting your own body.

The method:

The participants rate the level of their self-esteem on a scale of 0 to 10 and write this down on a piece of paper.
If necessary, the aspects are explained before doing this part of the exercise. For example, 3 points refers to both the ability to give and the ability to take. If a woman gives herself 10 points for the ability to give and 0 in the ability to take, then the total score in this aspect will be 5. The score picked is nothing more than a random number that roughly expresses where the participant is at the time of the exercise.
Every participant chooses a partner to exchange with and talk about why she gave a certain aspect the score she did.
The exercise is then discussed with the whole group.

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Key questions for an evaluation of the exercise:

What aspect was given the highest score and which one the lowest?
How are the scores for the seven criteria reflected in my behaviour and the way I feel about my everyday life?
Where does my low self-esteem reflected in the lowest scores come from?
What would my scores have been at other points in time or other phases in my life?
What matches and differences did I find in my self-esteem compared to my partner in the group work?
What feelings did my assessment of my self-esteem trigger in me?

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