The Sovereign Attitude Assessment™: What the Research Says

Nov 4, 2026 · @Melissa

How the Sovereign Attitude Assessment™ works

The Sovereign Attitude Assessment™ is a quick evening check-in in the journal. In under two minutes, you name how you showed up today across five areas, turning a vague sense of "good day" or "bad day" into a clear, written record.

1. **Response to challenges.** Did you complain, feel frustrated, create a solution, or "feel it all and still keep going"?
2. **Body language.** Were you engaged, approachable and relaxed, or withdrawn, guarded and tense?
3. **Inner dialogue.** Was your self-talk positive, optimistic and grateful, or negative, pessimistic and focused on scarcity?
4. **Communication.** Did you listen actively and stay open-minded and respectful, or were you closed-minded, dismissive or avoidant?
5. **Motivation.** How engaged were you at work, in your personal life and in life overall?

Each item is grounded in research: tracking yourself daily, naming what you feel, noticing your posture, guiding your self-talk, practicing gratitude, caring for your relationships and accepting hard emotions all have peer-reviewed support.

Bottom line

Writing down how you showed up each day is a proven strategy for change: a meta-analysis of 138 experiments found that monitoring progress helps people reach their goals, especially when it is physically recorded. Each part of the Sovereign Attitude Assessment™ reflects a research-backed skill. Naming feelings reduced activity in the brain's alarm center in an imaging study, upright posture helped protect mood and self-esteem under stress in a randomized trial, guided self-talk improves performance, gratitude boosts wellbeing, strong relationships are linked to a 50% greater likelihood of survival, and accepting hard emotions supports long-term mental health. The assessment itself is a reflection tool rather than a validated clinical test.

What the research shows

Daily tracking drives change

A meta-analysis of 138 randomized studies with 19,951 participants found that interventions prompting people to monitor their progress helped them reach their goals (Harkin et al., 2016). The effect was larger when progress was physically recorded, exactly what a written daily check-in does.

Naming a feeling quiets the brain's alarm response

In a brain-imaging study, putting feelings into words reduced activity in the amygdala, the brain's emotional alarm center, and increased activity in a prefrontal region involved in regulation (Lieberman et al., 2007). Each checkbox in the assessment is a simple act of naming.

Upright posture is linked to better mood under stress (Body Language)

In a randomized trial, 74 people were held in either an upright or slumped seated posture during a stressful speech task (Nair et al., 2015). Upright participants reported higher self-esteem, better mood and lower fear. The authors suggest sitting upright as a simple strategy to build resilience to stress.

Feeling it all and still keeping going (Response to Challenges)

Across laboratory, daily-diary and 6-month studies with more than 1,300 adults, people who accepted their negative emotions rather than judging them experienced less negative emotion during stress and had better psychological health (Ford et al., 2018). This supports the assessment's "felt it all and still kept going" option as a healthy response, not a failure.

Self-talk improves performance (Inner Dialogue)

A meta-analysis of 32 studies found that self-talk strategies improved task performance with a moderate effect (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2011). Self-talk worked best when people practiced it deliberately.

Gratitude over scarcity (Inner Dialogue)

In experiments where people regularly recorded what they were grateful for, they showed greater wellbeing on several measures than those who recorded hassles or neutral events, with the clearest gains in positive mood (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

Relationships are a health factor (Communication)

A meta-analysis of 148 studies with 308,849 participants found that people with stronger social relationships had a 50% greater likelihood of survival over the study periods (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). The authors found the effect comparable to well-established risk factors for mortality. How we listen and communicate shapes the quality of those relationships.

What the research cannot yet show

The Sovereign Attitude Assessment™ has not itself been tested in a study; it applies the findings above. Its answers are self-reported, so they reflect how you saw your day. The posture finding comes from a single laboratory trial, and most self-talk research involves athletes. The assessment is a tool for reflection, not a mental health screening; anyone struggling persistently should talk with a healthcare provider.

Disclaimer

This summary is for educational purposes only and is not medical or mental health advice. It describes published research on the principles behind the journal; the Sovereign Attitude Assessment™ itself has not been tested in a clinical study and is not a diagnostic or screening tool. If you are struggling, talk with a qualified healthcare provider.

References

All sources are peer-reviewed and indexed in PubMed.

1. Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(2), 377–389. View on PubMed
2. Ford, B. Q., Lam, P., John, O. P., & Mauss, I. B. (2018). The psychological health benefits of accepting negative emotions and thoughts: Laboratory, diary, and longitudinal evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 115*(6), 1075–1092. PMID:

28703602

3. Harkin, B., Webb, T. L., Chang, B. P. I., Prestwich, A., Conner, M., Kellar, I., Benn, Y., & Sheeran, P. (2016). Does monitoring goal progress promote goal attainment? A meta-analysis of the experimental evidence. *Psychological Bulletin, 142*(2), 198–229. View on PubMed
4. Hatzigeorgiadis, A., Zourbanos, N., Galanis, E., & Theodorakis, Y. (2011). Self-talk and sports performance: A meta-analysis. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*(4), 348–356. View on PubMed
5. Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, J. B. (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. *PLoS Medicine, 7*(7), e1000316. PMID: 20668659
6. Lieberman, M. D., Eisenberger, N. I., Crockett, M. J., Tom, S. M., Pfeifer, J. H., & Way, B. M. (2007). Putting feelings into words: Affect labeling disrupts amygdala activity in response to affective stimuli. *Psychological Science, 18*(5), 421–428. PMID: 17576282
7. Nair, S., Sagar, M., Sollers, J., Consedine, N., & Broadbent, E. (2015). Do slumped and upright postures affect stress responses? A randomized trial. *Health Psychology, 34*(6), 632–641. PMID: 25222091