



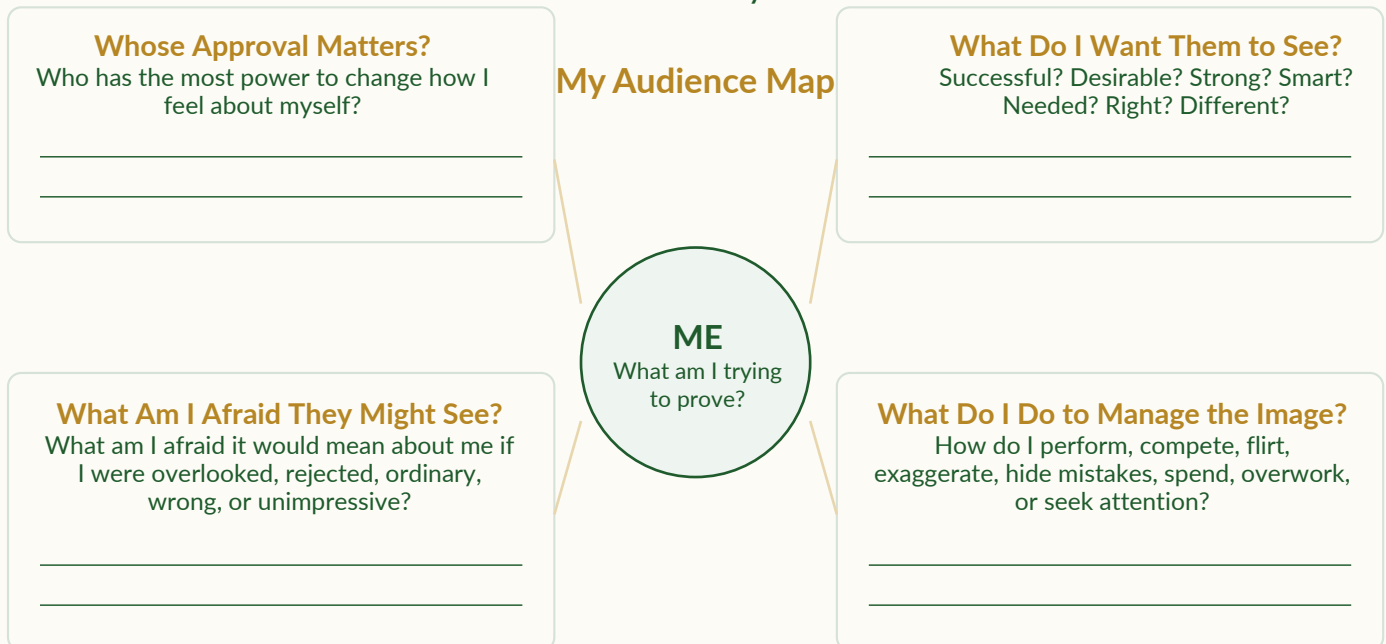
What Am I Trying to Prove?

Looking at who I am performing for and what I need them to see

Wanting to be respected, appreciated, attractive, successful, or understood is human. The problem begins when too much of my behavior becomes organized around proving something to other people.

I may start making choices based less on what matters to me and more on what will make me look impressive, desirable, unaffected, needed, successful, or right. The approval may feel good for a moment, but it can leave me even more dependent on the next reaction.

The question is not whether I enjoy approval. It is whether I am giving other people too much authority over how I see myself.



The Question Underneath the Performance

What am I trying to prove because I am afraid the opposite might be true?



What Am I Trying to Prove?

Seeing what validation gives me for a moment and what it may cost me over time

The need to prove myself can be subtle. It may show up in how I spend money, talk about myself, choose relationships, react to criticism, compete, flirt, overwork, exaggerate, hide mistakes, or compare my life to someone else's.

The behavior may look different from addiction, but the underlying pattern can feel familiar: I am looking outside myself for something that changes how I feel inside.

The Performance Has a Price

What I Am Chasing

Attention, admiration, status, being wanted, being right, looking successful, or something else.

What I Do to Get It

What behavior do I use to get the reaction I want?

What It Costs Me

What does this cost me in honesty, peace, money, time, relationships, or self-respect?

When I Feel Overlooked, Rejected, Criticized, or Unimpressive...

What do I usually do next?

A Useful Distinction

There is a difference between enjoying recognition and needing recognition in order to feel okay. One adds something pleasant. The other begins to control me.



What Am I Trying to Prove?

Building self-respect that does not depend on an audience

If I stop organizing my life around how I am perceived, I still need something to organize it around. That is where values, integrity, and self-respect become important.

Self-respect is quieter than validation. It may not produce the same rush as attention, praise, winning, or being desired. It grows when my choices make sense to me even when nobody notices them.

If Nobody Were Watching

What would I stop doing?

If I no longer needed to impress, convince, compete with, or prove something to anyone, what would I let go of?

What would still matter to me?

If nobody knew about the choice, praised it, envied it, or approved of it, what would I still care about?

What would I choose differently?

Where would I trust my own values more than other people's reactions?

What would I respect myself for?

What choice would make sense to me tomorrow even if nobody else ever noticed it?

A Quieter Measure

Instead of asking, "What will they think of me?" I can ask: "Is this honest? Does this fit the person I want to become? Would I respect this choice tomorrow?"