

A Picture of You

By

You

Using a Journal as Tool of Self Understanding and Change

WARNING

Journaling is a powerful tool and should not be undertaken without the help of someone who has some expertise in the area. This is particularly true for those with a history of trauma where journaling about feelings can lead to intensification of such feelings.

Don't go blindly stumbling around your mind without a guide.

Welcome to your journal. This is the best tool to begin to understand yourself and implement emotional change. Just try to write a little something every day.

Refer to this introduction frequently.

We all have a dialogue that we carry on with ourselves. Most of us just don't have a lot of conscious awareness of it. This journal is going to show you how you talk to yourself and how to change it when it's appropriate.

There are times in our lives when it is appropriate to be hard on ourselves and say,

"C'mon! You can do better! Get off your butt and do it!"

And there are times when it is more adaptive to be supportive and say,

"It's okay. Don't get discouraged. Just keep doing what you can."

This journal should show you how you are talking to yourself and, hopefully, shows you when to be your own drill sergeant and when to be your own cheerleader.

I know it is repetitive but the truth is that change requires a lot of repetition. I know that you will see a lot of the same patterns as you journal and you will find it hard to change those patterns if they are destructive.

BUT KEEP TRYING.

Change is very slow and the product of a million small steps.

Don't read ahead in the journal. But you can read back. But mostly focus more on the single message of the day and your feelings that day. We spend too much of our lives focusing on the next message as opposed to understanding and internalizing the current one.

Don't use this book the way you want to.

Use it the way it's designed.

Components of the Journal

MOOD BAR: The bottom of each page is equipped with a MOOD BAR. All you have to do is put a dash along the bottom denoting how you feel each day. Put the dash near the left if you feel down, put a dash near the right if you feel good. Put a dash in the middle if you feel neither happy or sad.

Circadian Integrity: Nearly every aspect of your health is impacted by your ability to get consistent and restful sleep. You should be doing everything within your power to sleep well.

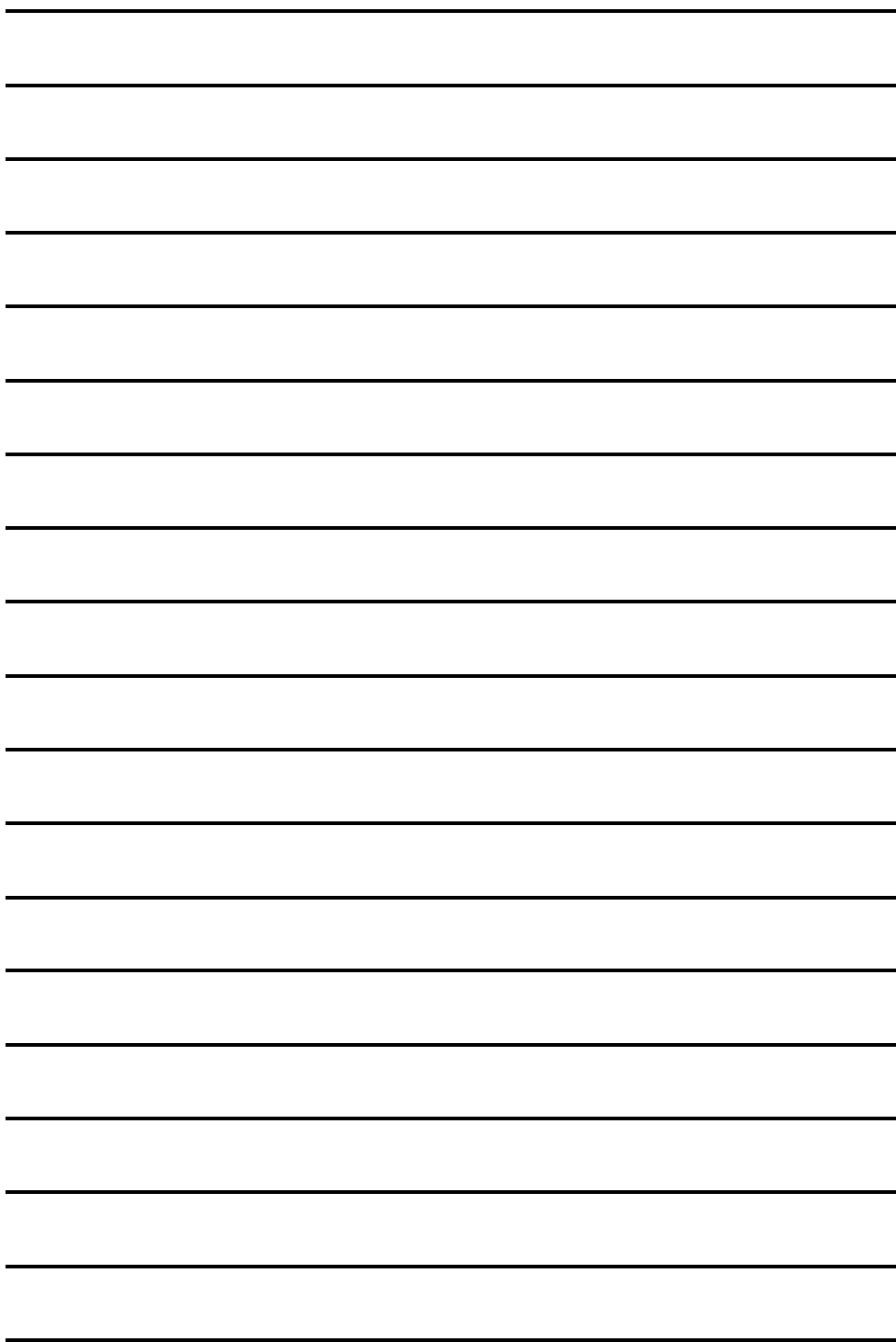
Sleep is a period in our day and we all have an internal clock that tells us when it is time to sleep. We all will sleep better if we keep good circadian integrity. What that means is that we stay active in the day and shut our bodies down at night. That means exposure to light, exercise and food early in the morning and into the afternoon and shutting down in activity and light exposure (even television) in the evening. Your internal clock is a vital contributor to your health. Take care of it. And we ask you to acknowledge if you're taking care of it every day.

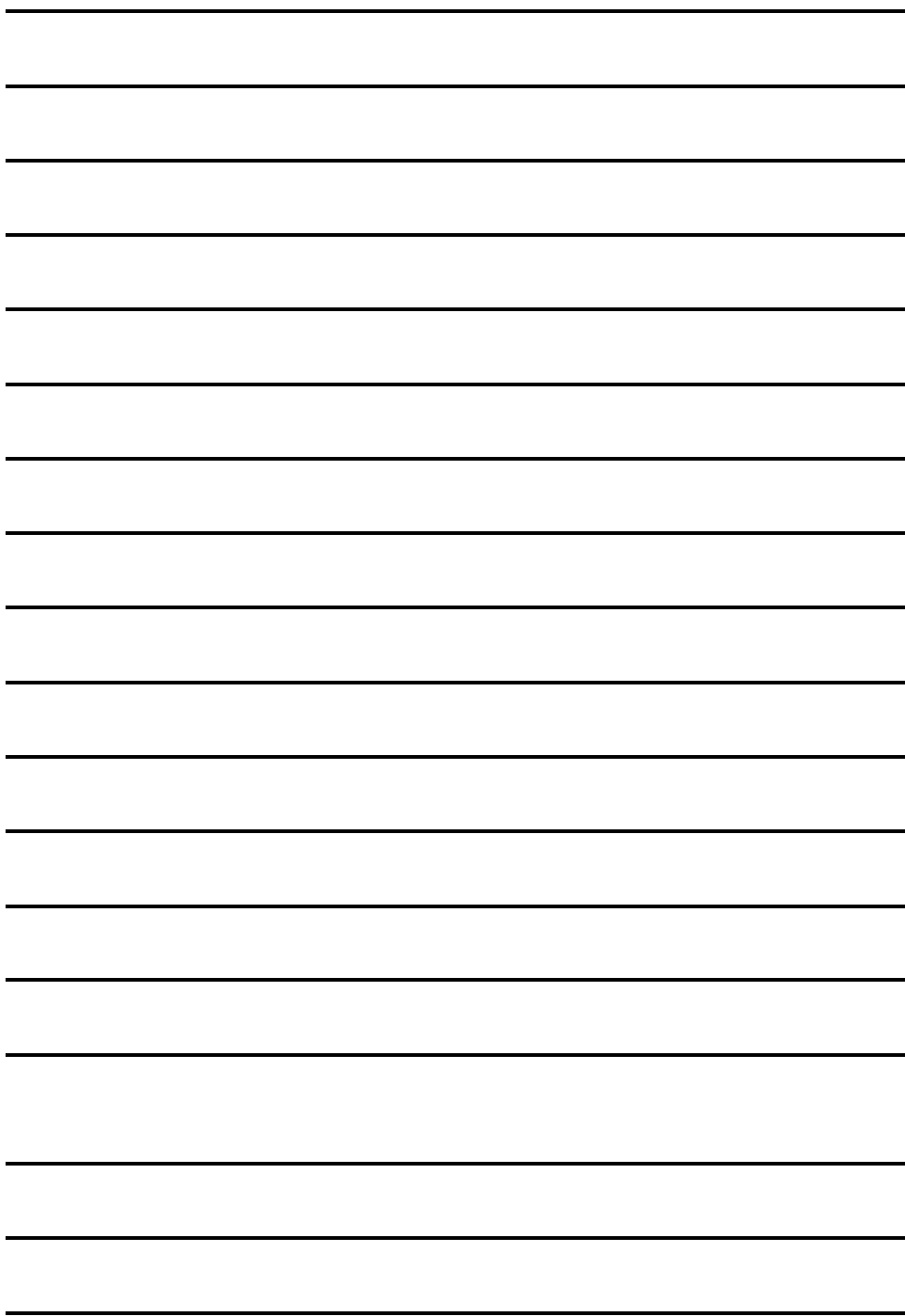
Self Image Rating Scale: Just a number 1-10 on what you think of yourself. 1 is that you are the worst person who ever lived. 10 is that you are the best person who ever lived. Remember, write down the number you actually feel not the number you're supposed to feel.

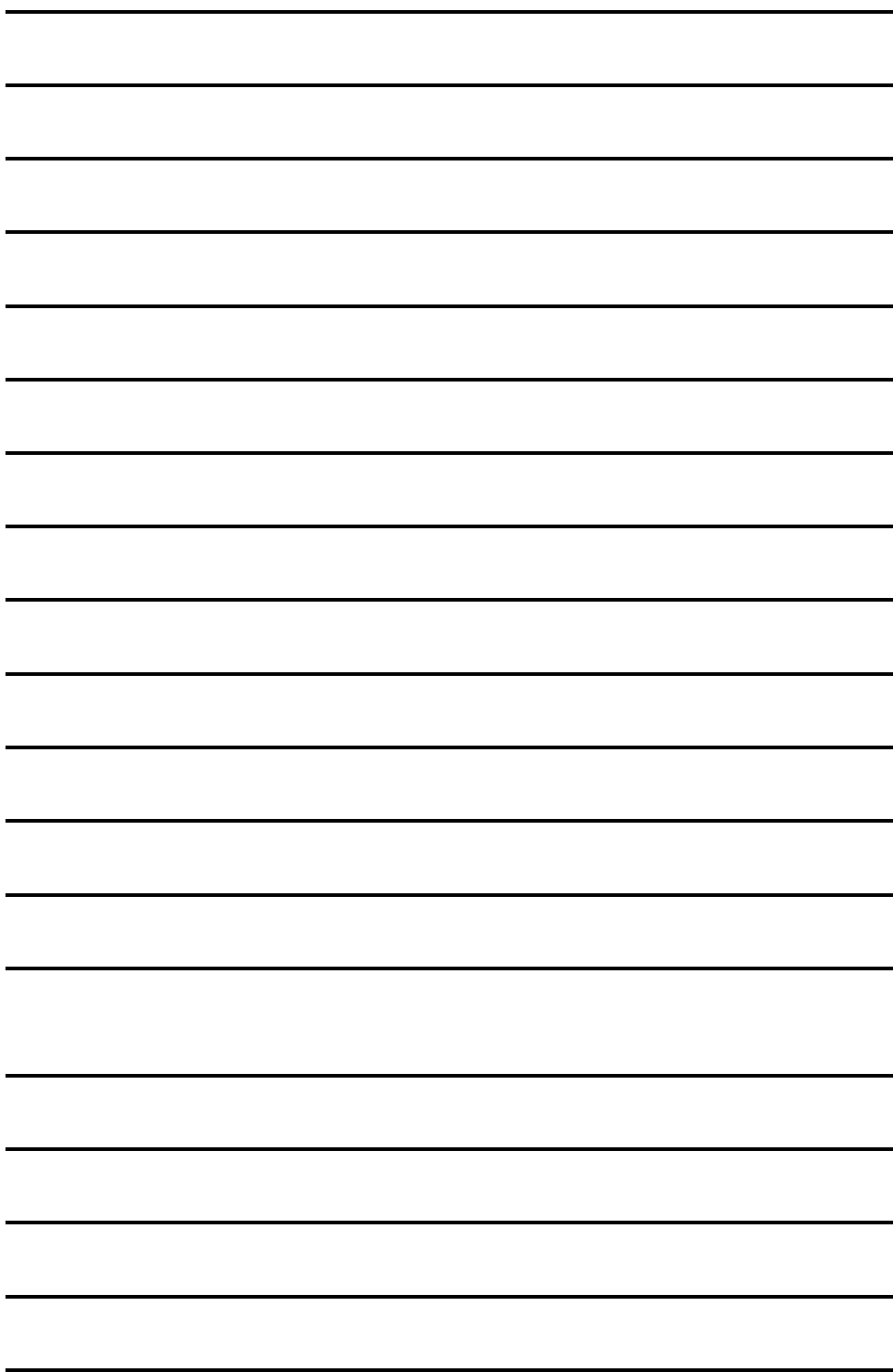
Positive Self Comments: Even if you don't feel like giving yourself positive comments, particularly if you don't feel like it...you should do it. And while giving them if it is hard keep asking yourself, "Why is it so hard for me to give myself support?"

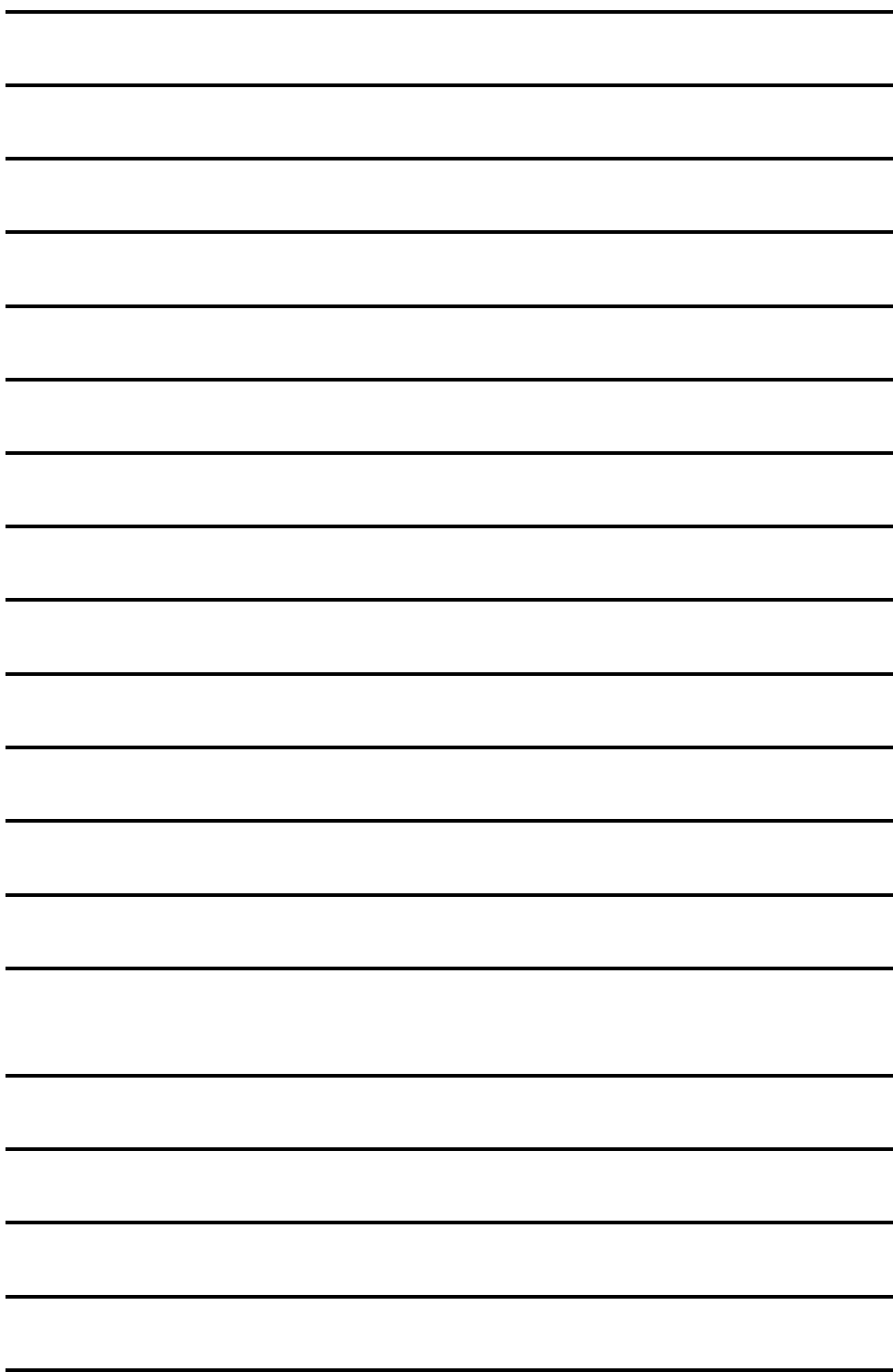
Relaxation Training: Some people are naturally calm and relaxed. (Jimmy Buffet and Bob Marley come to mind). But most of us need to work at it to control stress. The ability to relax yourself is a skill, a skill that takes time to develop. It is individualized. What relaxes you might not relax me. Therefore you need to make a commitment to relaxation training. One to two times a day, take three to five minutes, and practice relaxation.

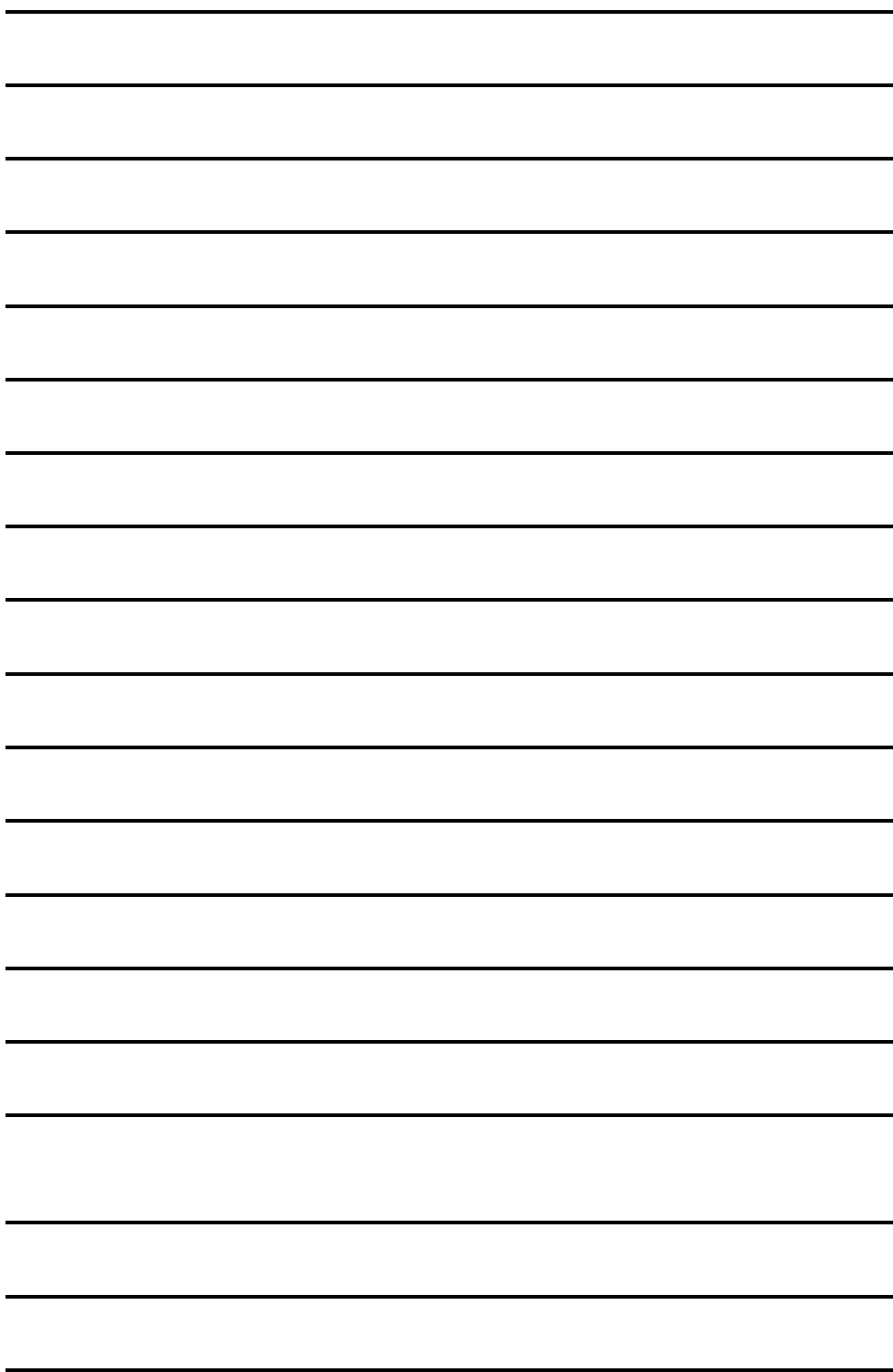
Try to practice it when you are already calm and try to make yourself calmer. You should NEVER try new relaxation techniques expecting them to work the first time. It takes practice. It is a skill.

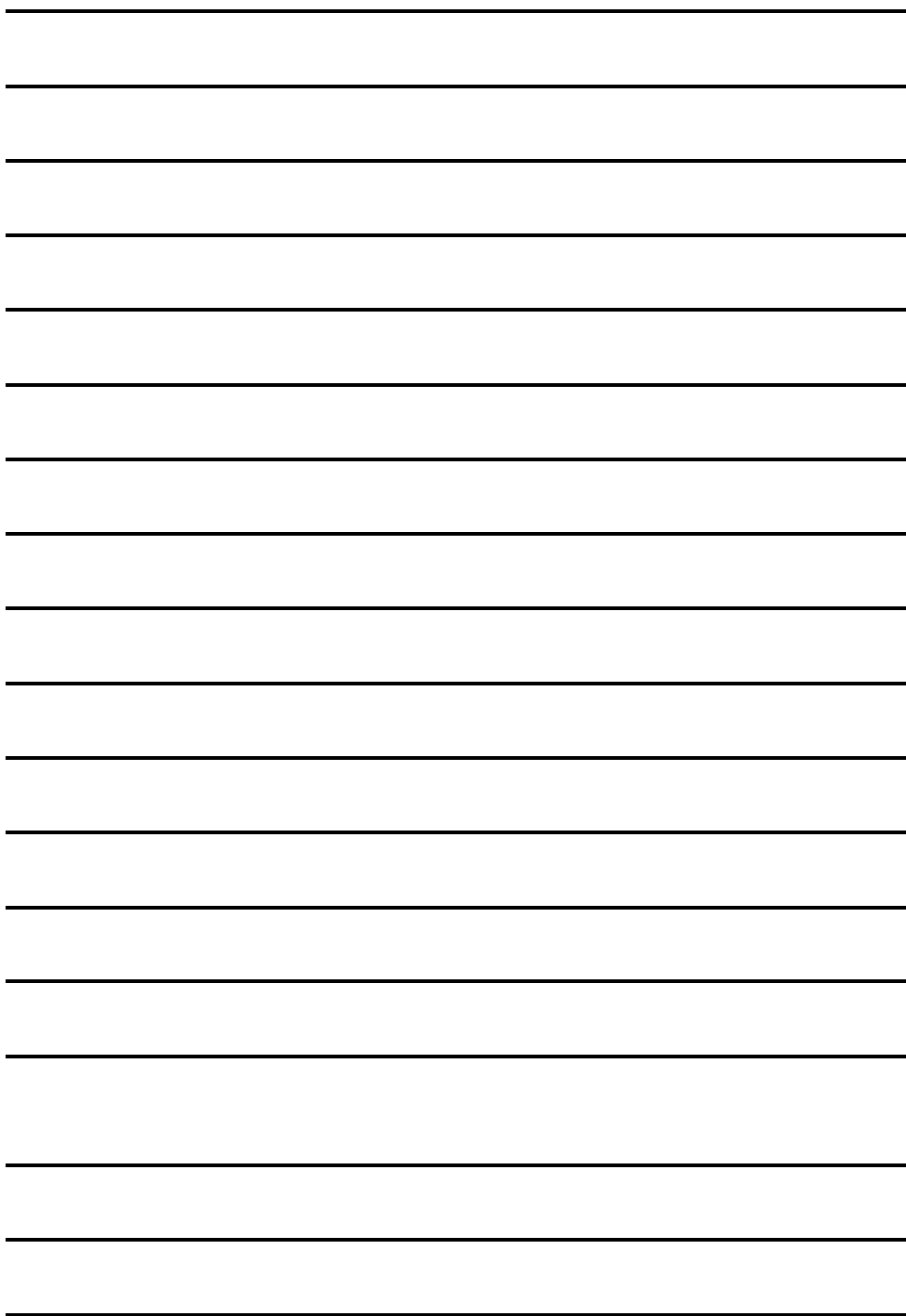












Date:

Hours Slept:

Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N):

Self Image (1-10)

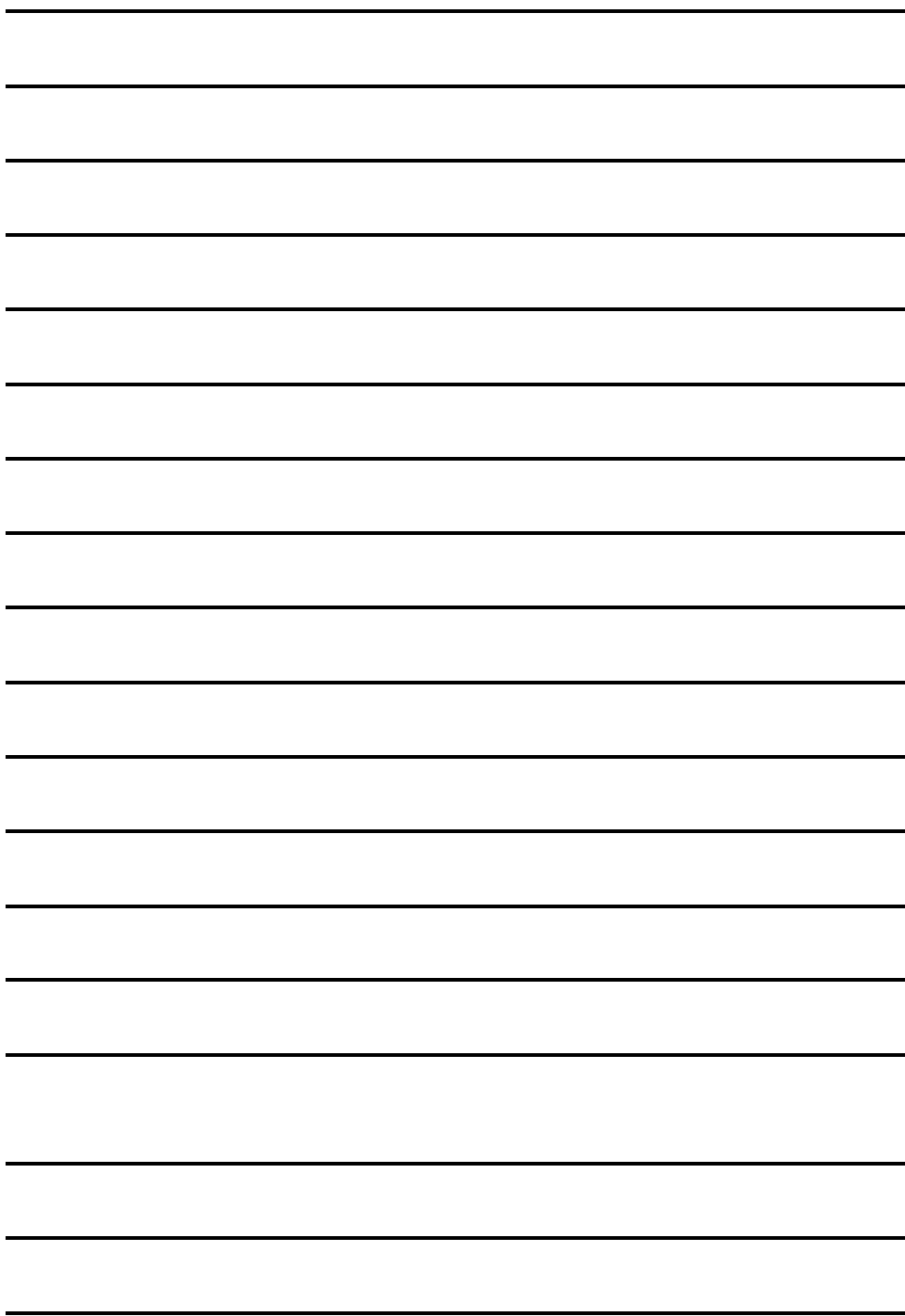
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

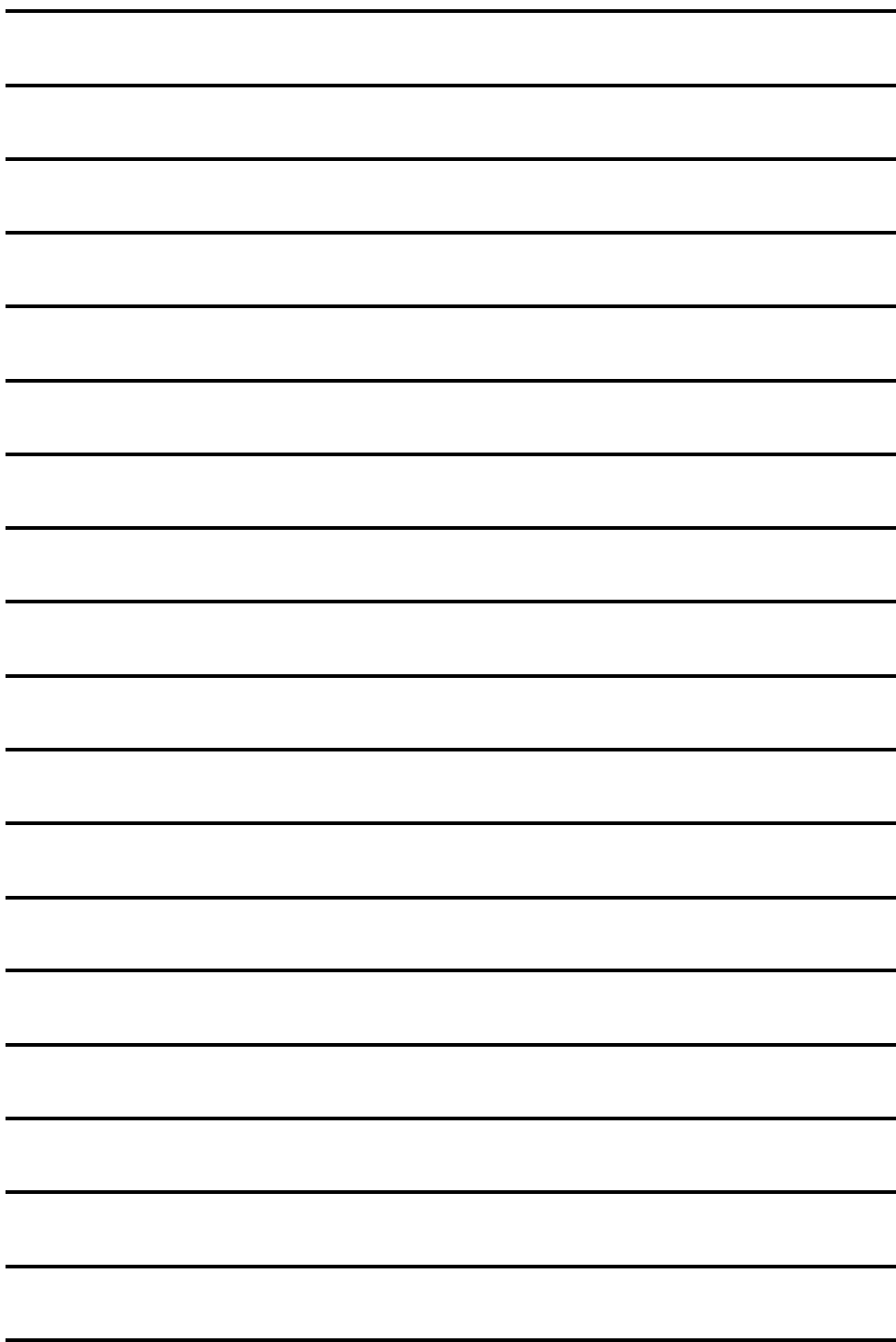
Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

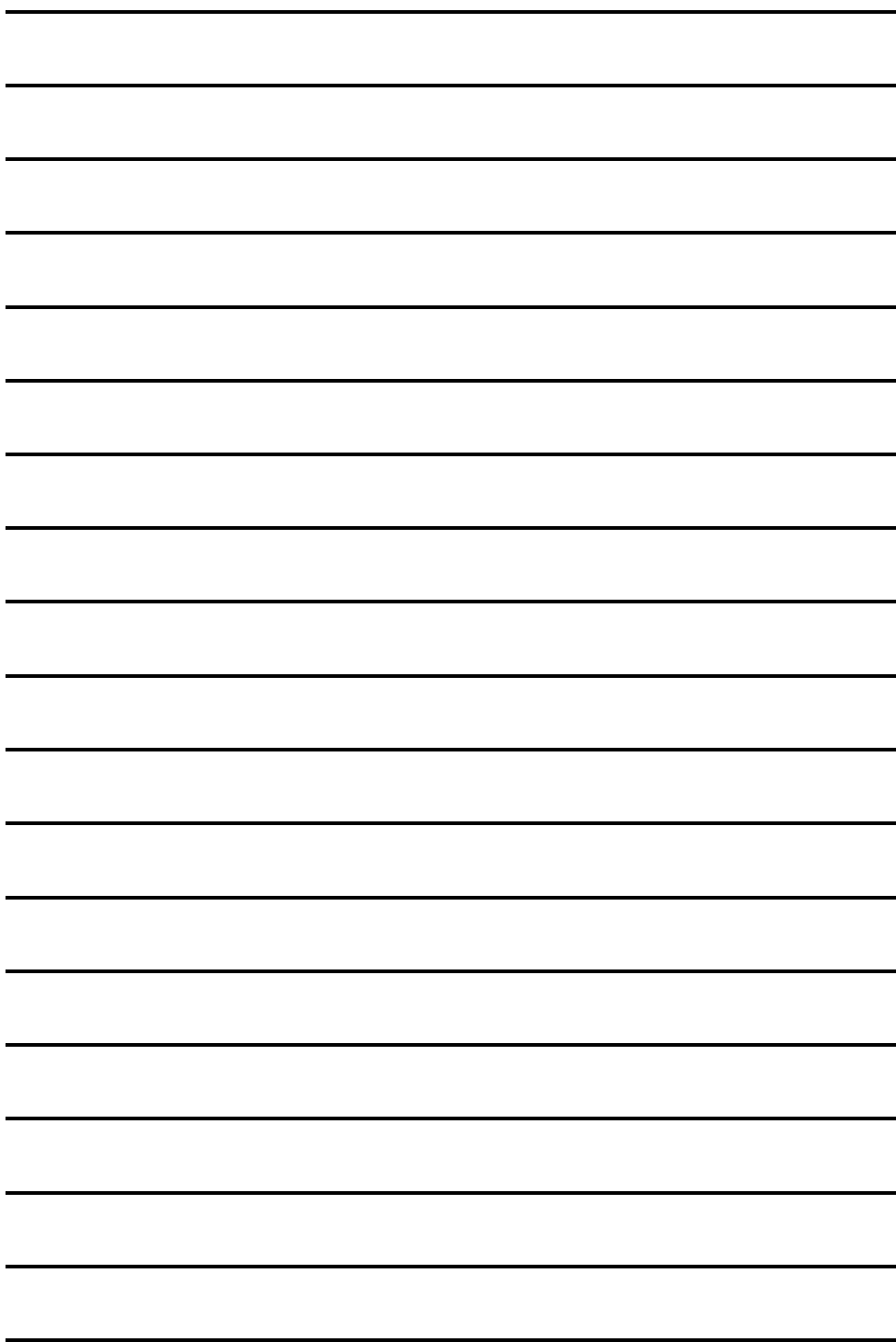
Are you enjoying the gifts that life is giving you or spending all of your time trying to fix things out of your control?

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR







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Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N): _____ Positive Self Comments (Y / N) _____

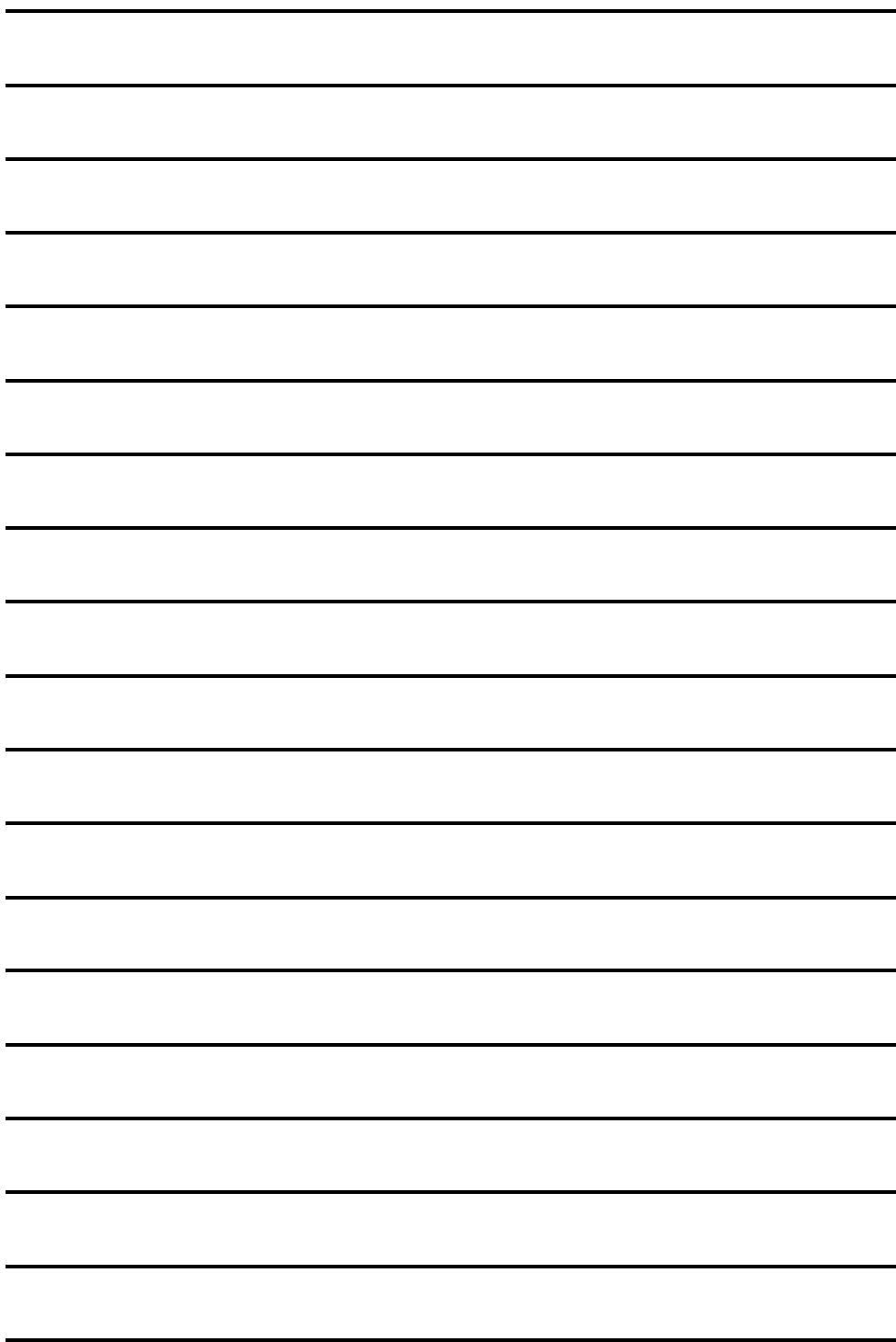
Try thinking of yourself in the third person.

Would you be more sympathetic to someone else in your same situation?

If so, doesn't that mean you're being too hard on yourself using YOUR OWN standards?

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



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We all would like to have one or two relationships that met ALL of our needs ALL of the time.

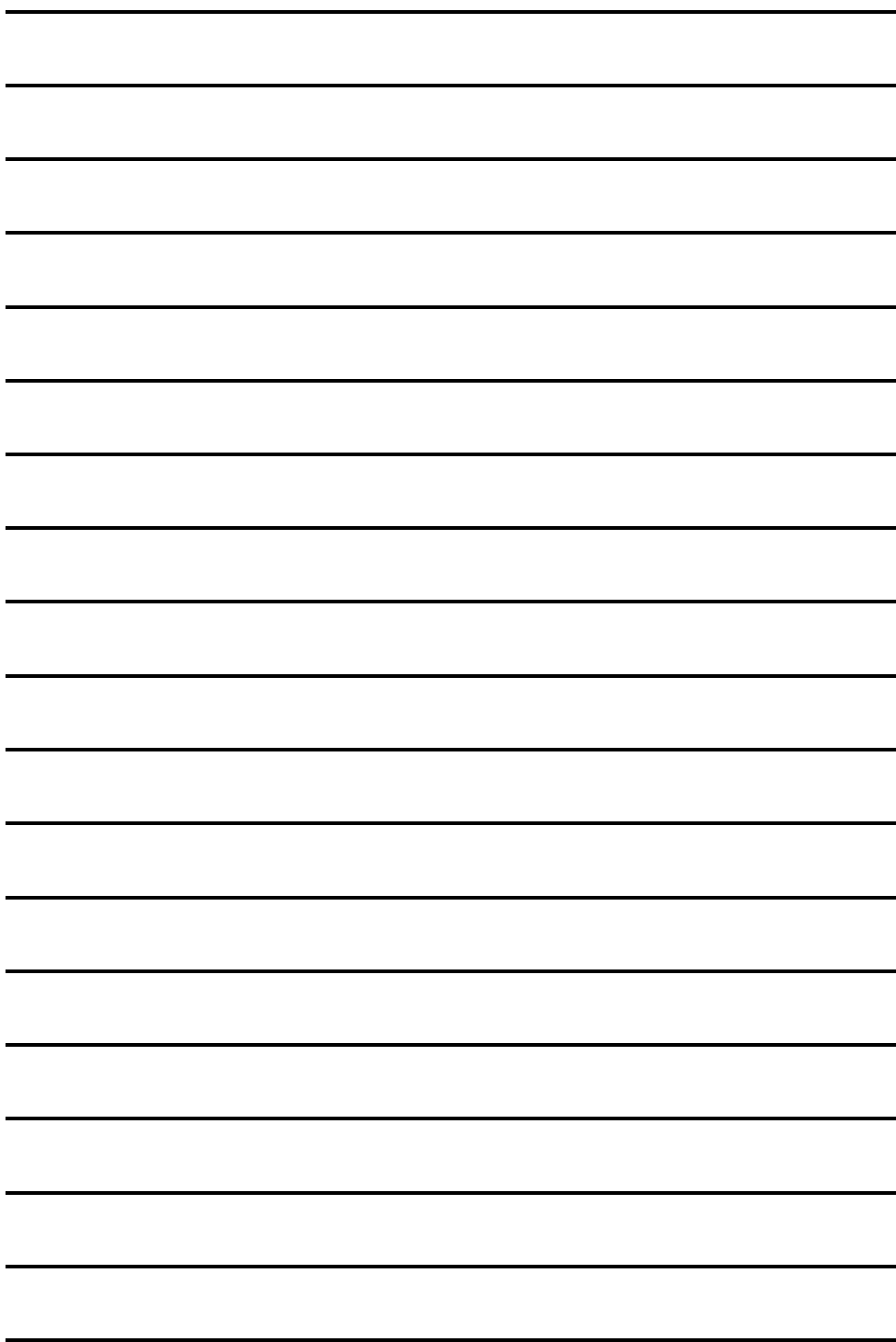
Nobody can live up to this outlandish expectation.

Humans do best when they have a fair amount of people meeting some of their needs some of the time.

That way we have other access to support when one road closes down for a while.

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



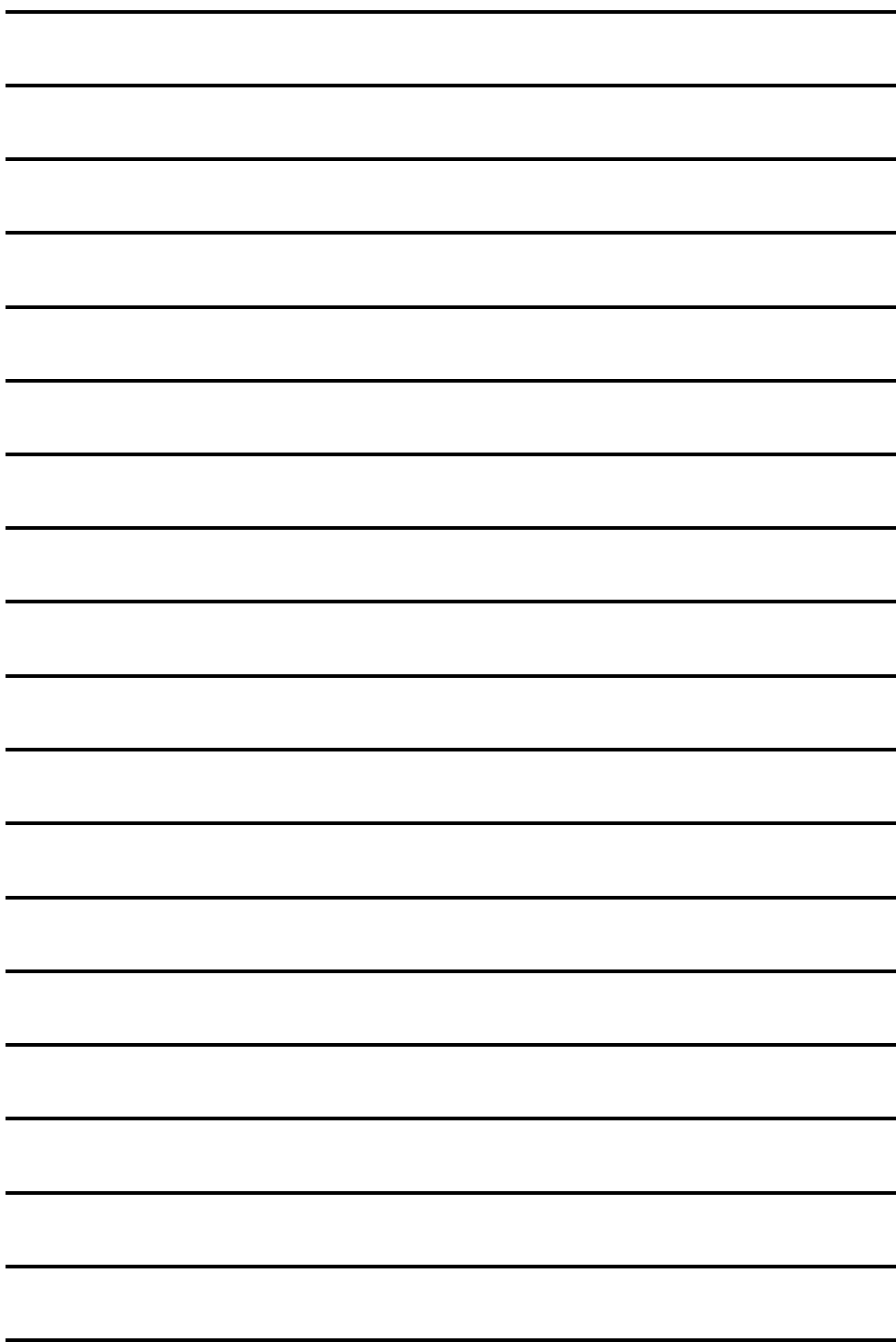
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If you have a lot of tasks organize them into how well you need to do them.

Make sure you aren't trying to doing things really well that just need to get done.

Terrible!-----Great!

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Self Image (1-10)

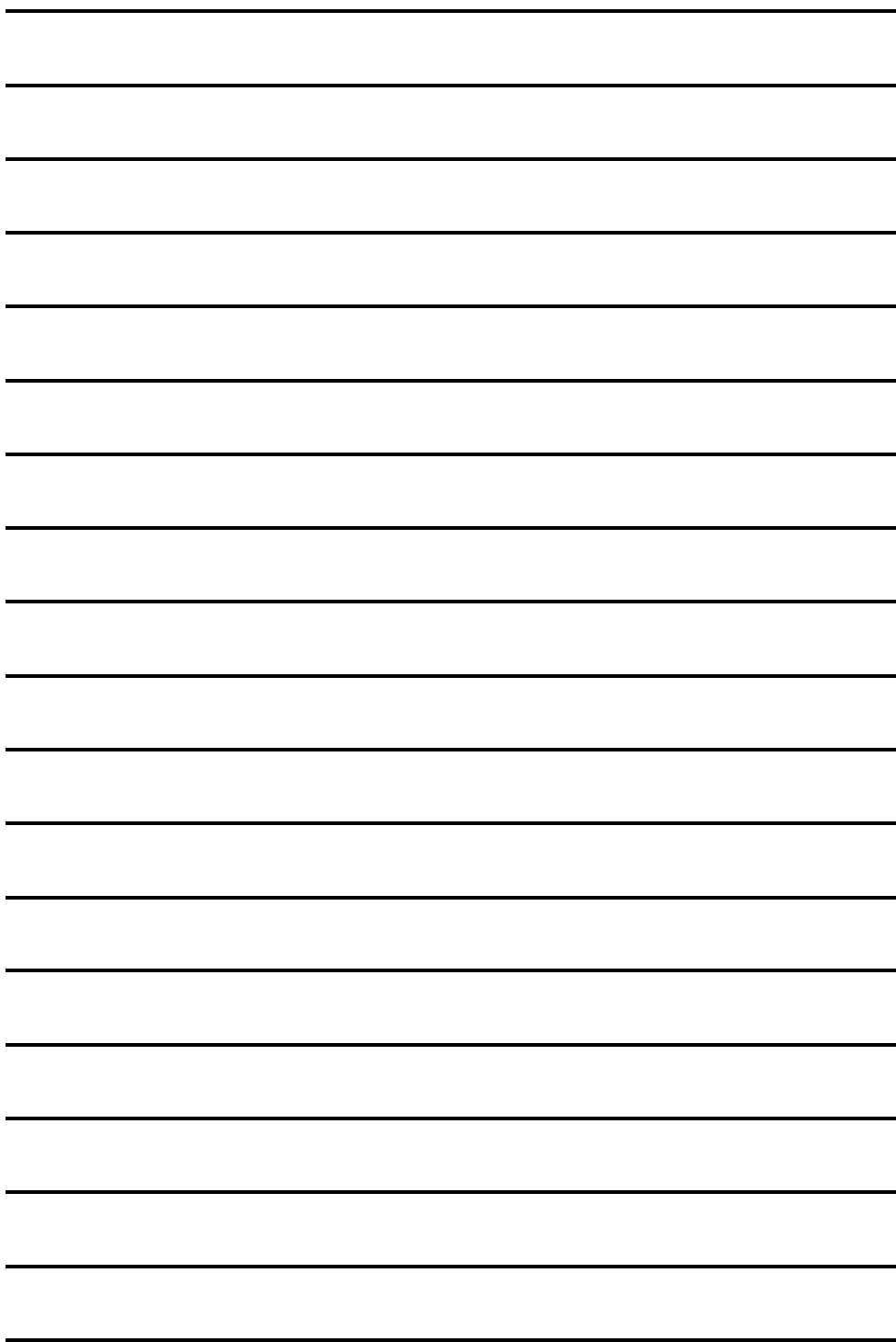
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

Are you feeling TOO guilty when you tell people, "No." Why?

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



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Self Image (1-10)

Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

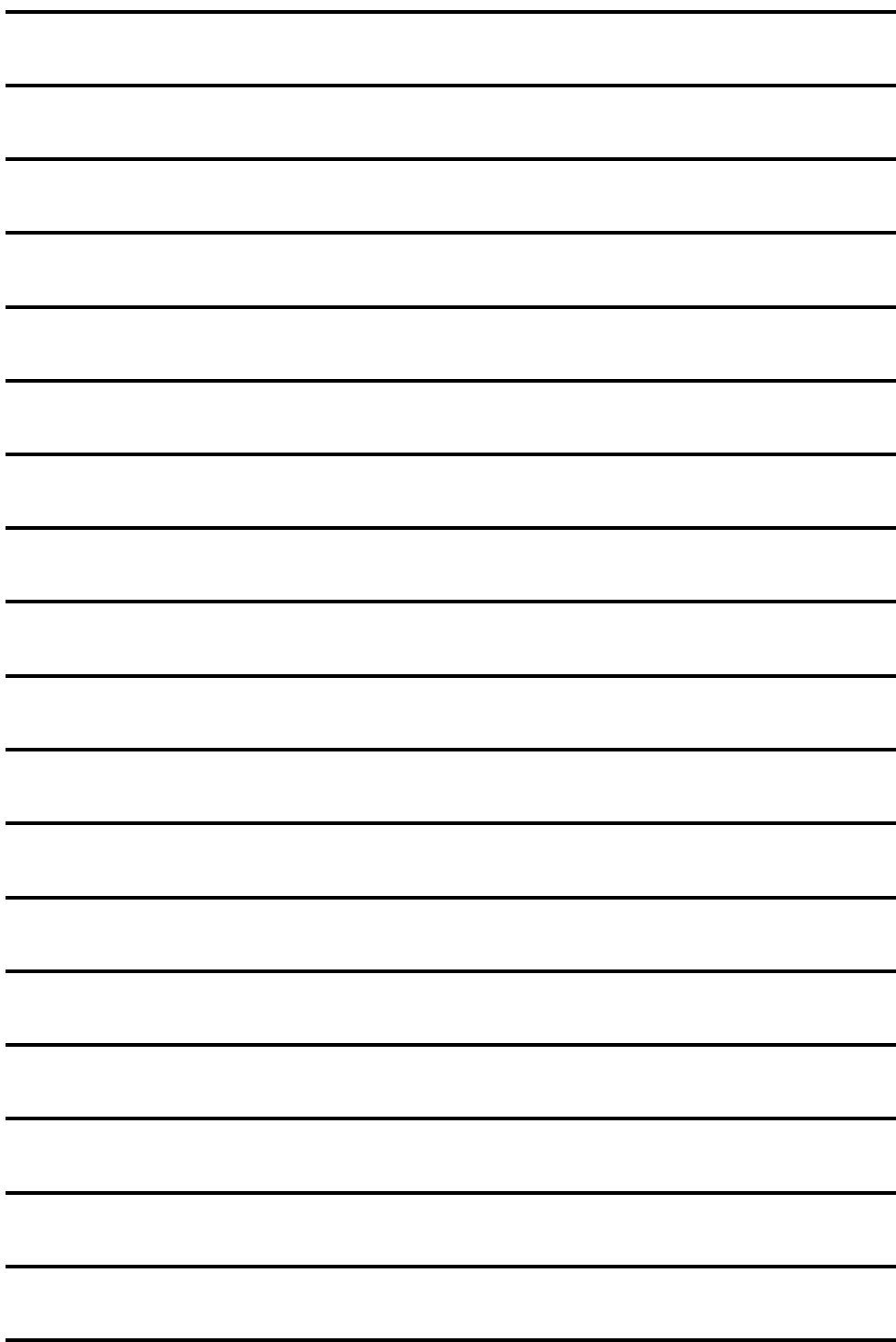
Connect to the people that think the most of you in the past and present.

Remember the people that have treated you the best most often.

Are you just going over and over the worst parts of relationships in your memories? Why?

Terrible!-----Great!

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Follow your emotions in the moment.

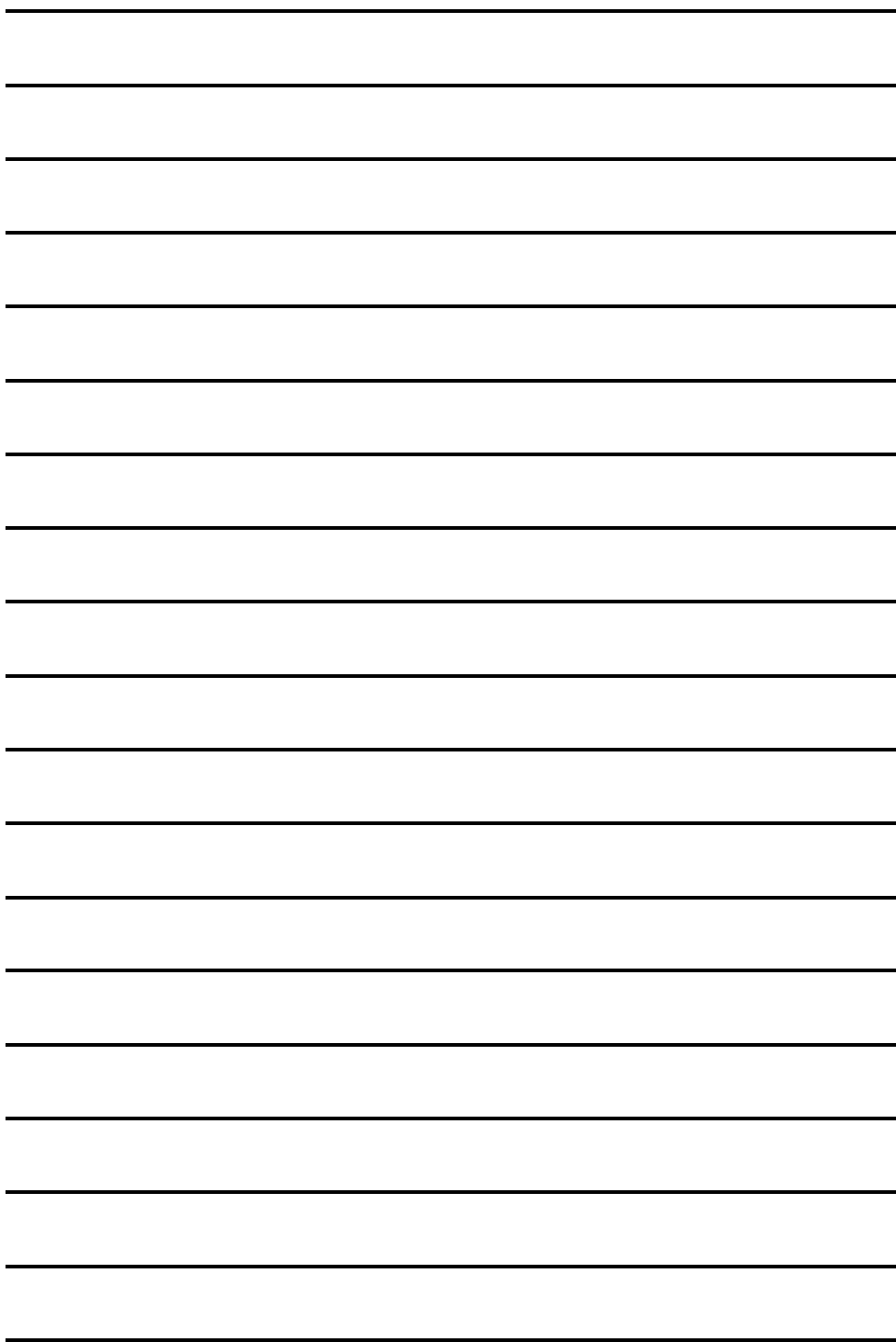
What are you feeling the moment you write?

The ability to know EXACTLY how you feel at any given moment doesn't come easy. Few people have any idea how they feel at any given time. Even FEWER have any idea why.

This journal, performed correctly, will teach you both.

Terrible!-----Great!

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If you're a parent always remember that modeling is the most important teaching tool.

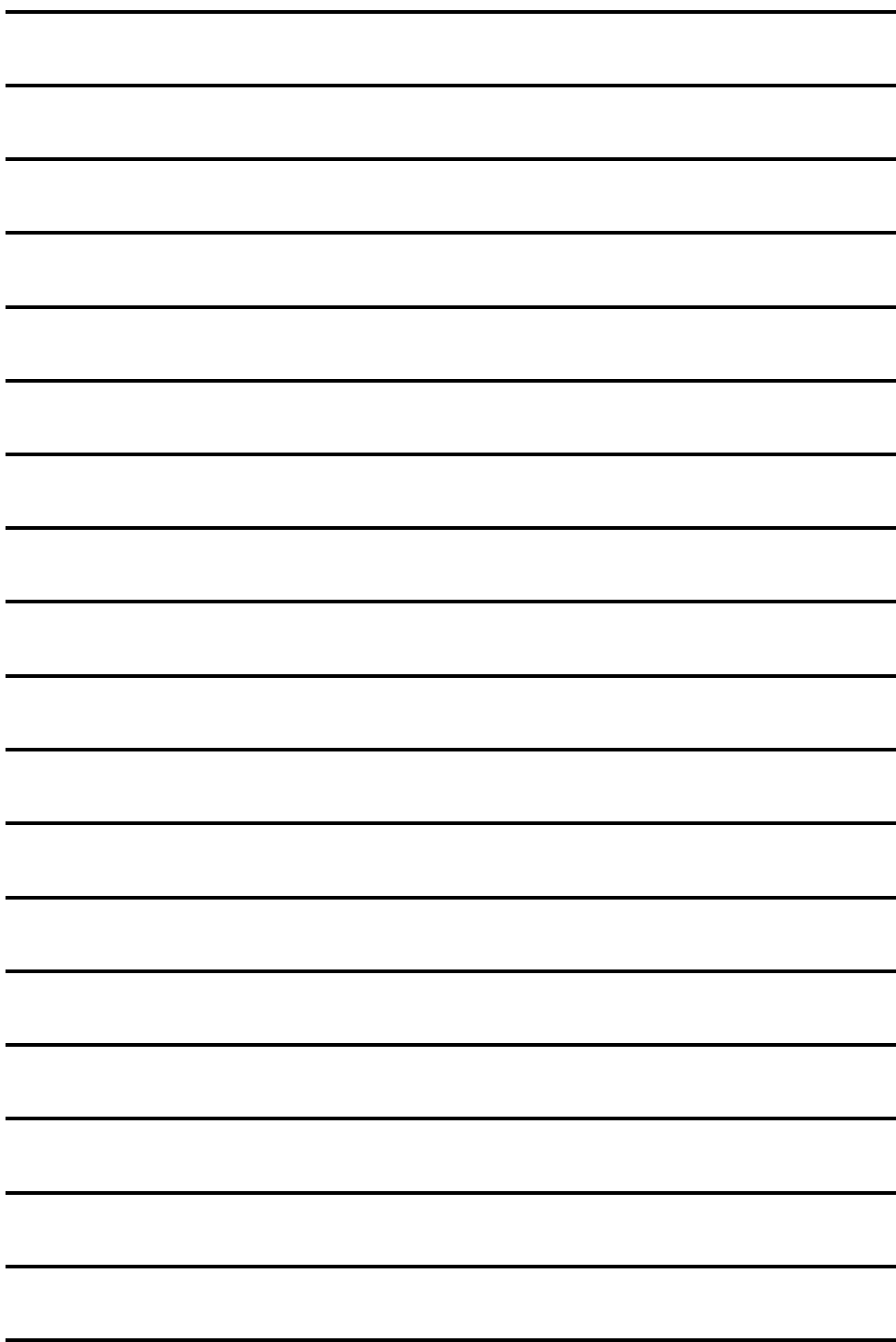
How you treat yourself is likely how your children will treat themselves.

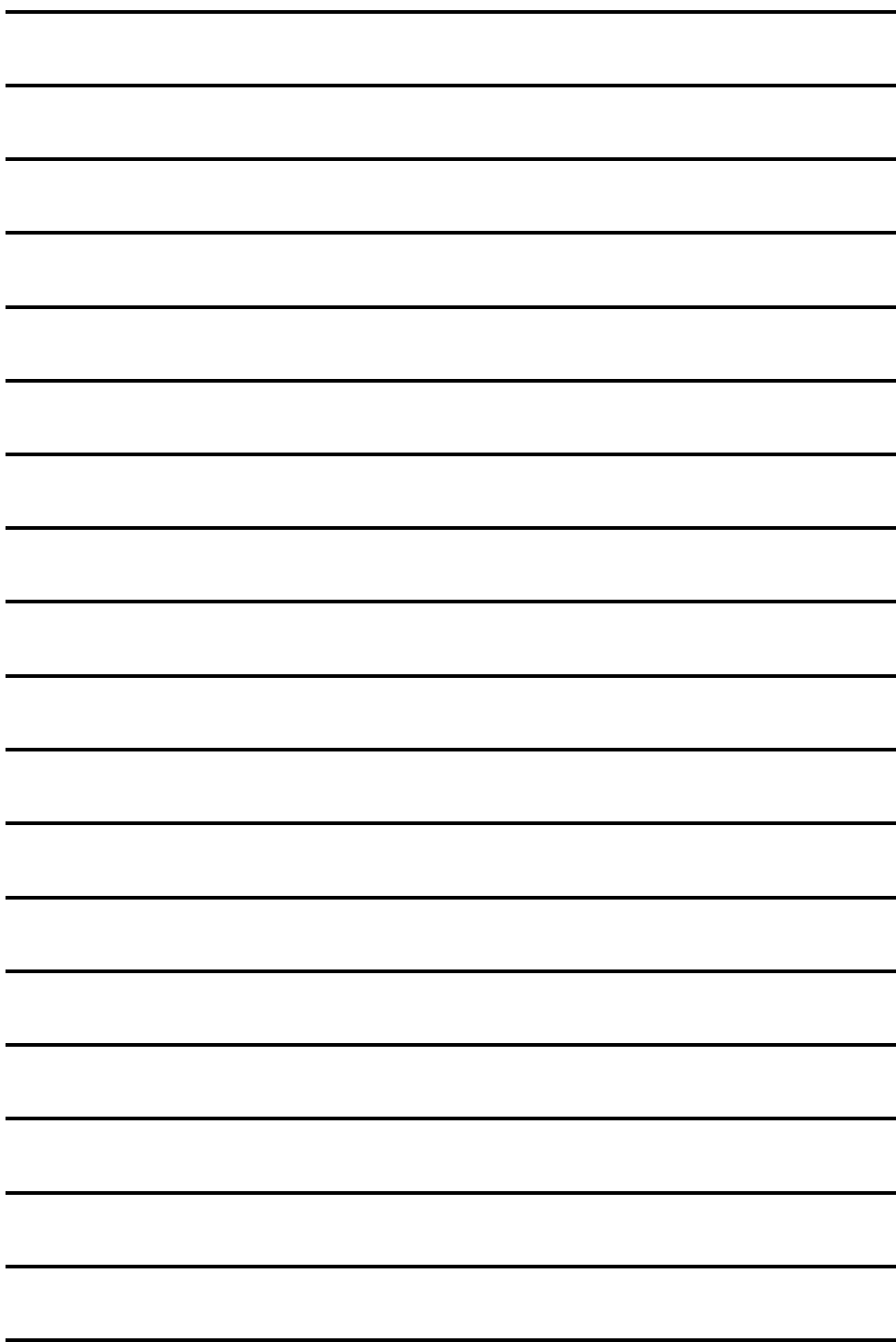
How are you teaching them to treat themselves right now?

Are you living your life, including how you treat yourself, exactly how you want your children to live their lives?

Terrible!-----Great!

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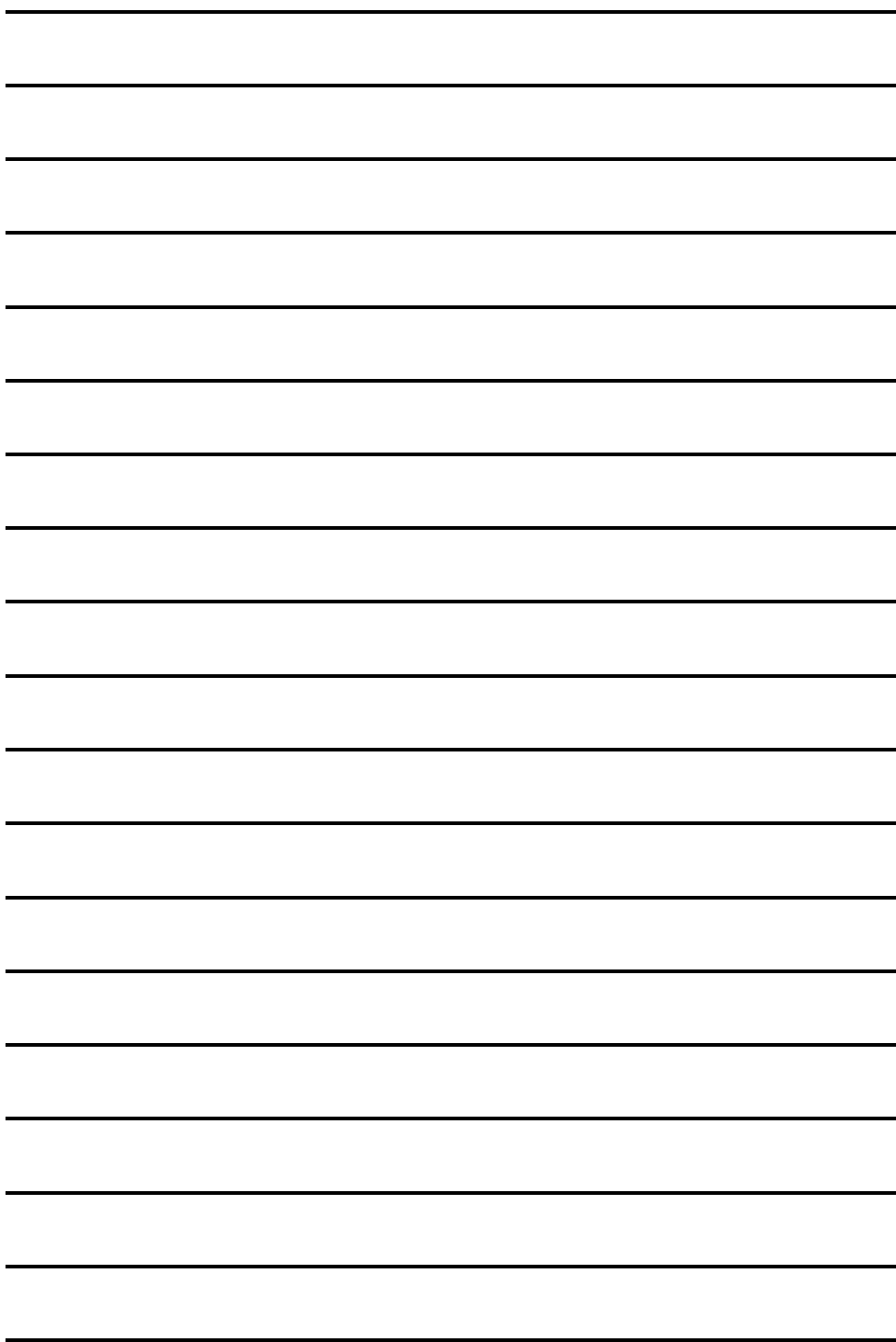
Are you TRYING to smile each day? If not...why not?

Force yourself to smile this minute. Doesn't that FEEL a little better?

Fight negative emotions. It isn't easy but you can gain control of your feelings.

Terrible!-----Great!

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 Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N): _____ Self Image (1-10) _____
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***Your personality is like a car that you drive through life.
 Some people have a sports car.
 Some people have a station wagon.
 Some people have a jeep.***

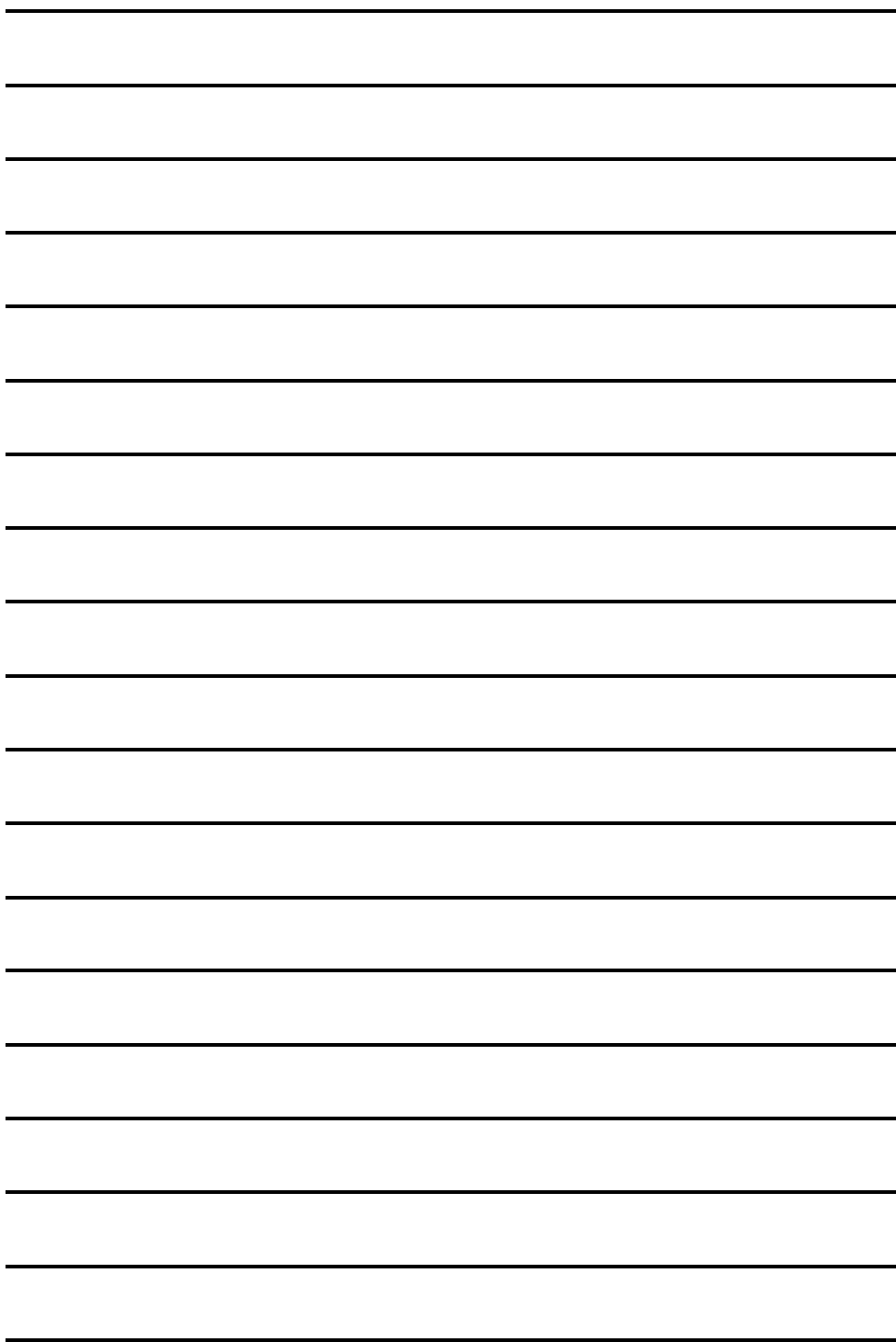
Understanding yourself means understanding the type of car you are driving so that you know what type of terrain and situations you will perform best in.

Learn about you. What types of situations and people are you vulnerable in?

That's what this journal is for.

Terrible!-----Great!

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Pat yourself on the head.

Softly rub your arm.

Tell yourself, "It's okay."

Be nice to yourself for a few moments.

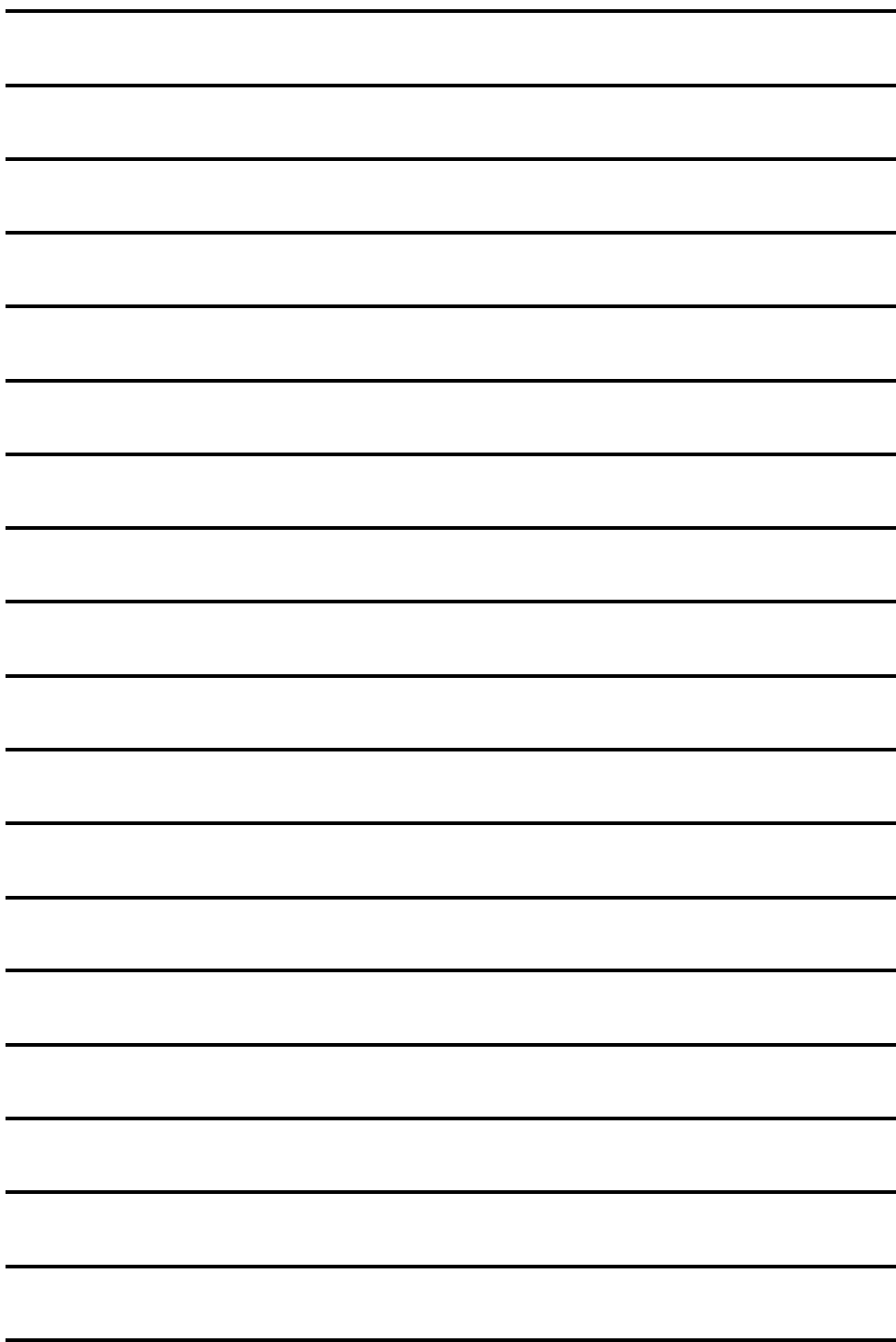
Is it hard to be nice to you?

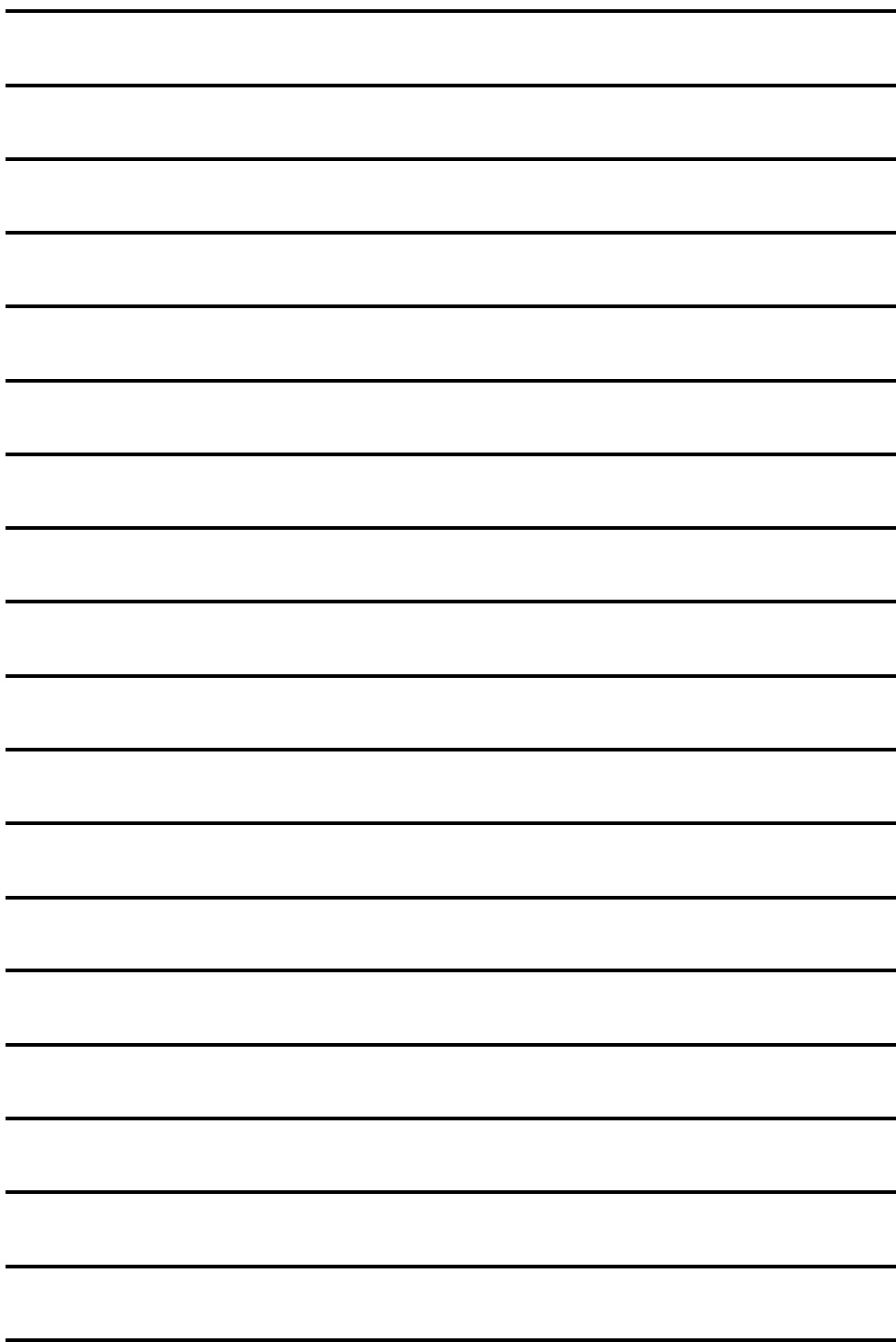
Would you rather scratch your arm? Grind your teeth? You're your lip?

Why?

Terrible!-----Great!

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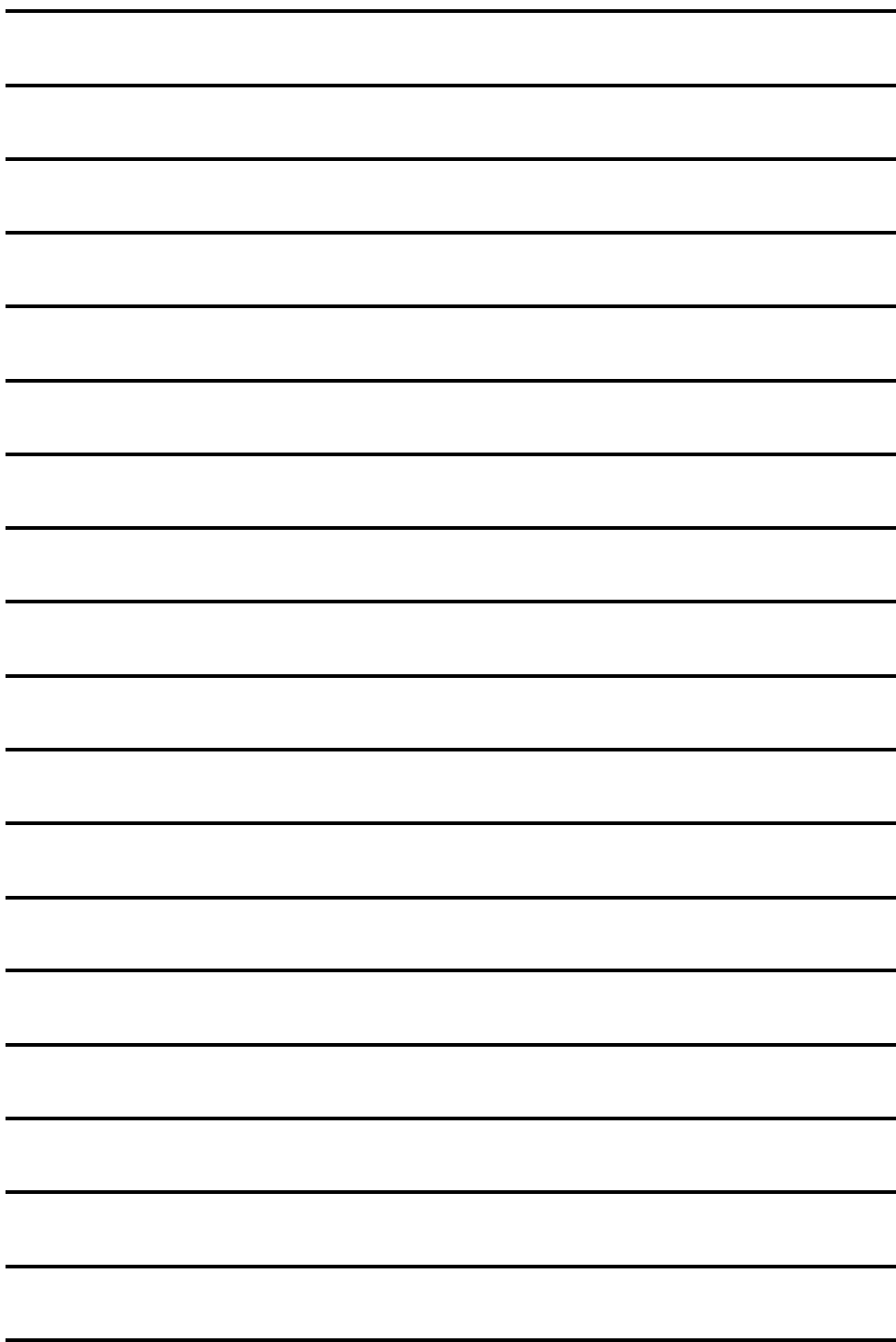
What are your buttons?

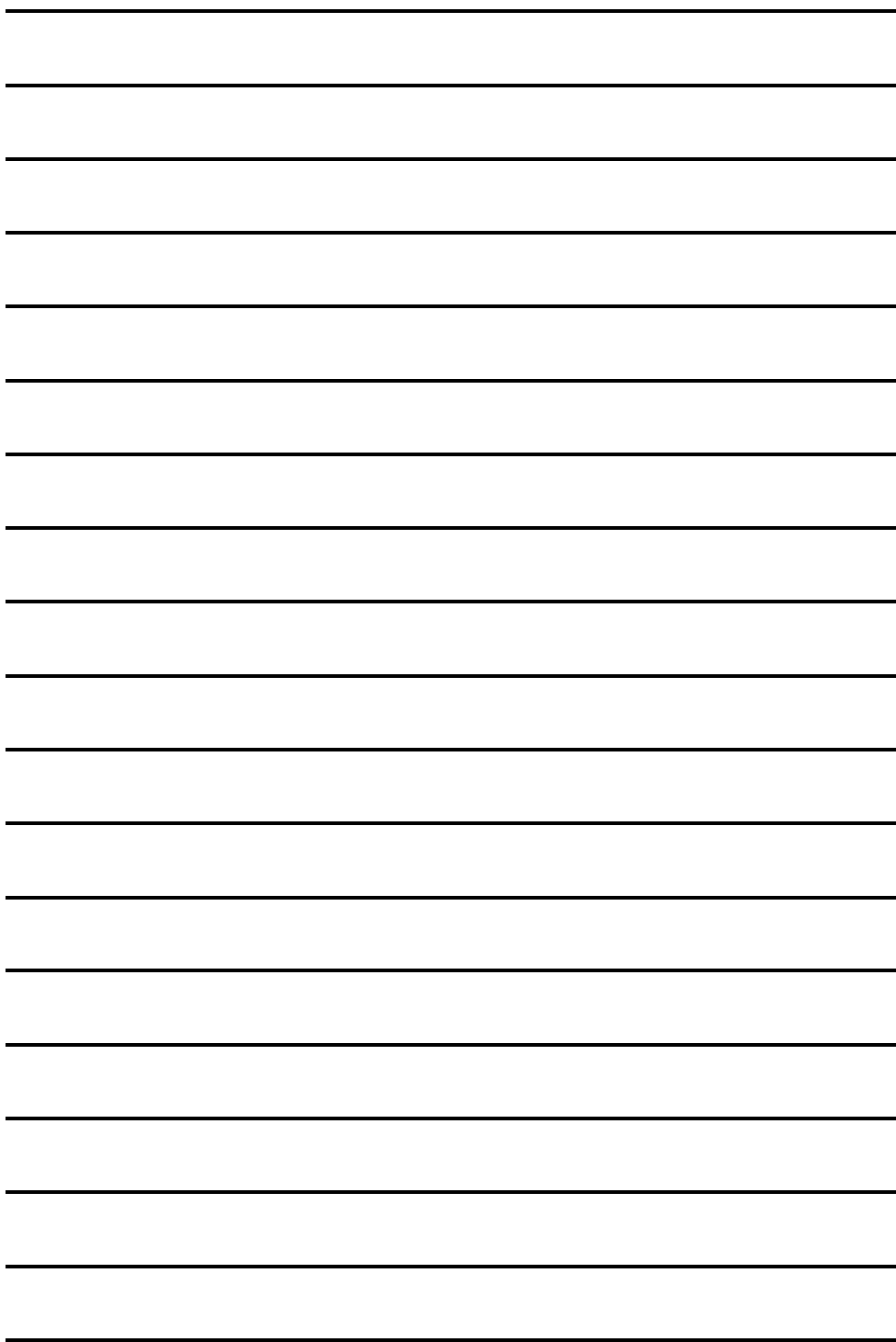
Who pushes them?

How do they push them?

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



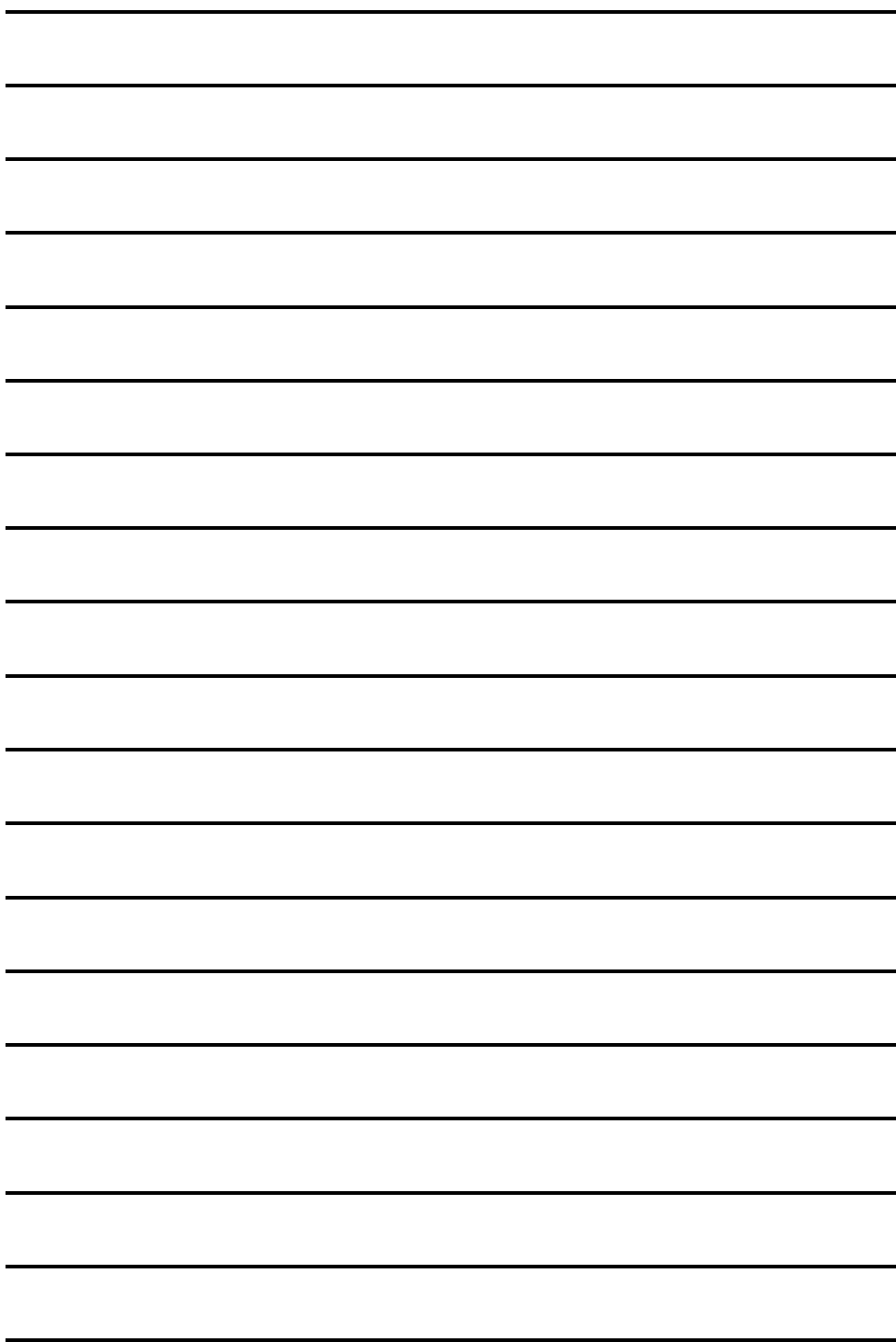


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Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N): Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

*Look at your self-image scale.
How do you feel other people would rate you?
Ask them too.
Is your view of yourself accurate? Is it consistent?*

Terrible!-----Great!

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Is this journal teaching you about yourself? Are you letting it?

Who are you?

Who do you want to be?

How do you want to feel about yourself?

What if I told you that your relationship with yourself needs to be independent of your daily actions?

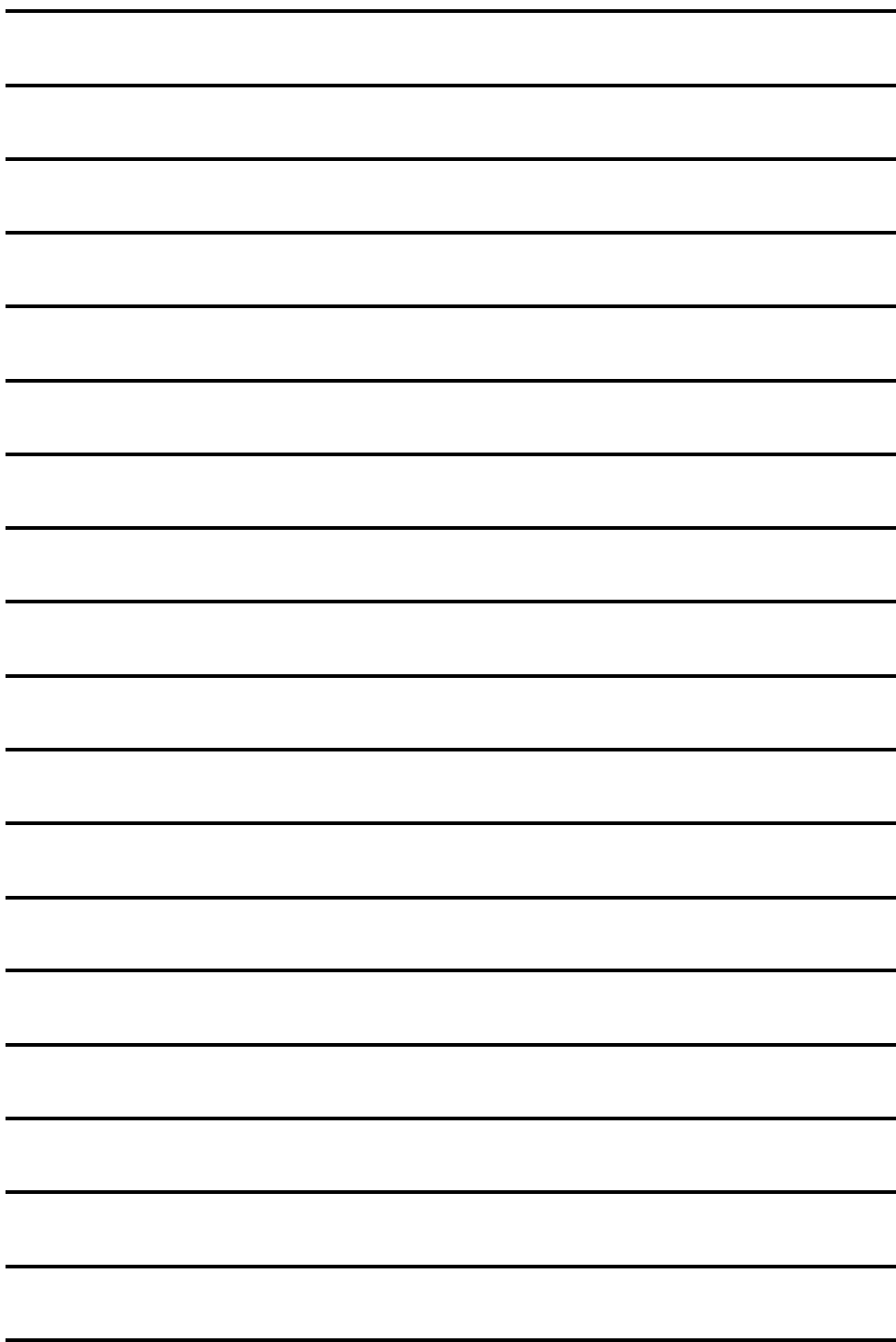
Should you really be weighing your value as a human being on every little interaction, every moment of every day?. That's too much pressure.

There should be a core sense of stability independent of your actions in the moment.

I'm not talking about what you say. I'm talking about what you feel.

Terrible!-----Great!

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Expectation affects perception.

If you go to a Shakespearean Tragedy and end up seeing an episode of The Three Stooges you will be disappointed.

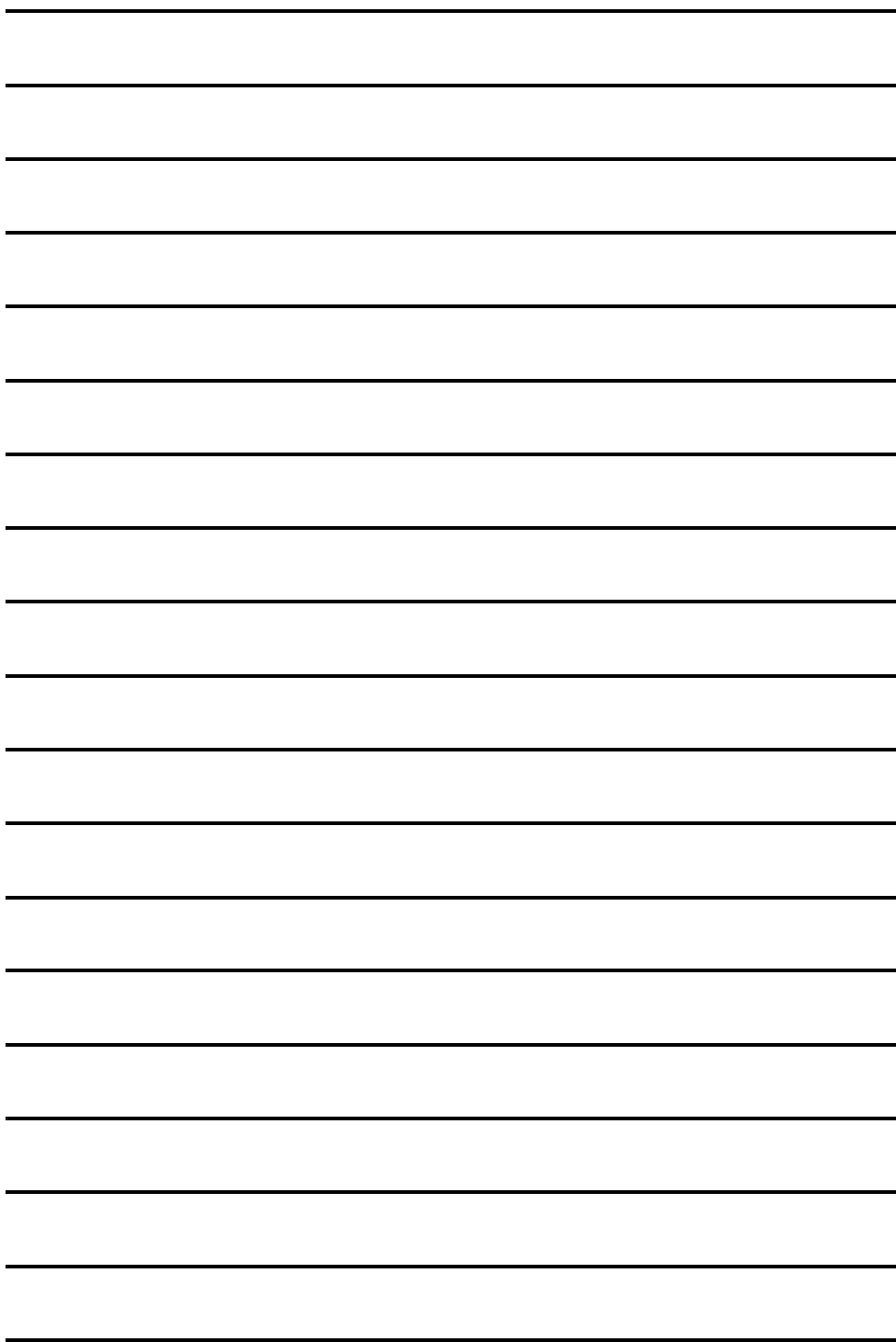
If you are disappointed in yourself, it might be your expectations for yourself that are wrong.

Most of our lives are better seen as comedies rather than dramas.

Watch your life as a sitcom. Laugh at it. It's probably a better sitcom than drama

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



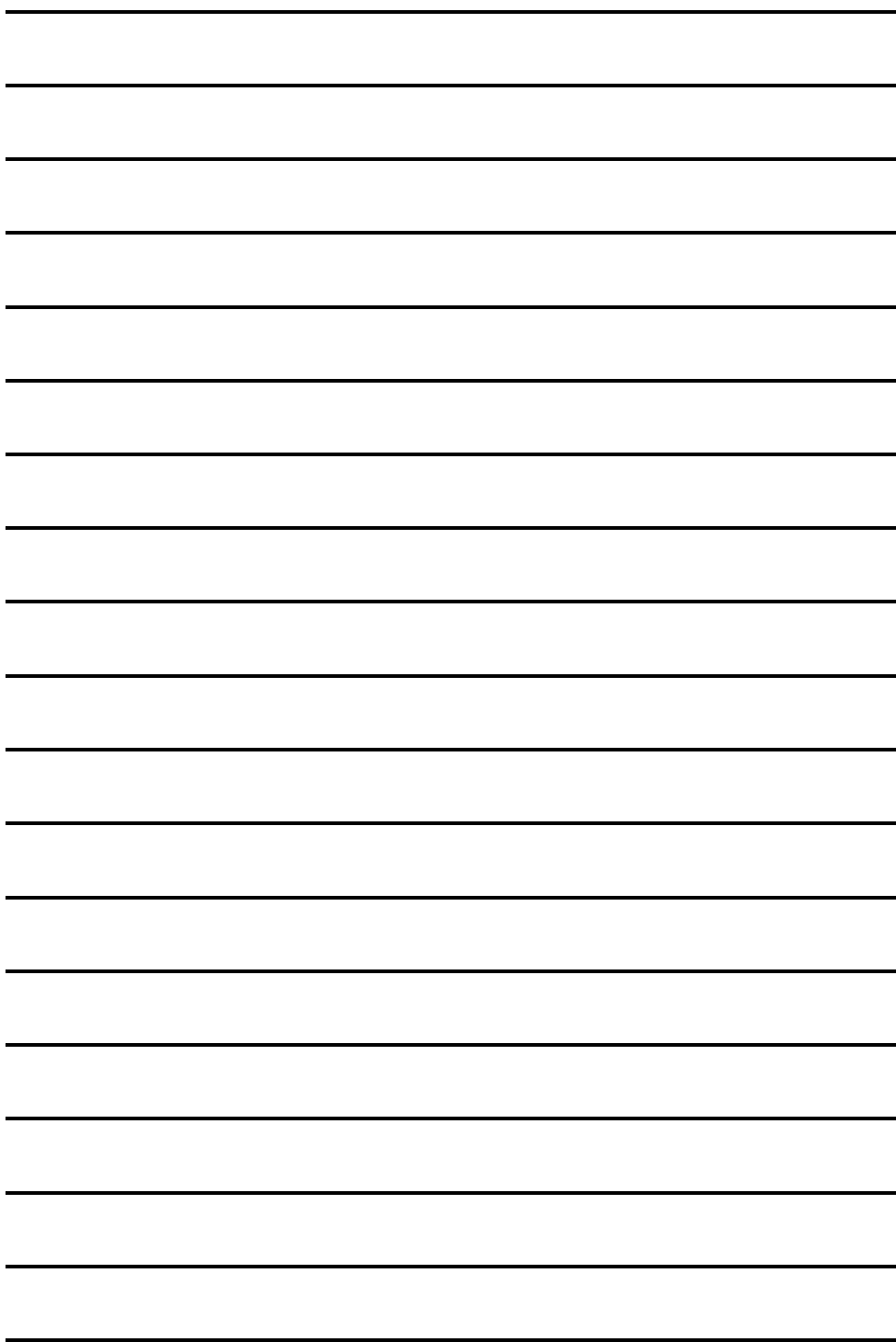
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Remember, your ability to make your life worse is much superior to your ability to make it better.

Often the most important thing is to avoid self-destructive behavior...you are too good at it. Ride out those bad days and try to not make them worse.

Terrible!-----Great!

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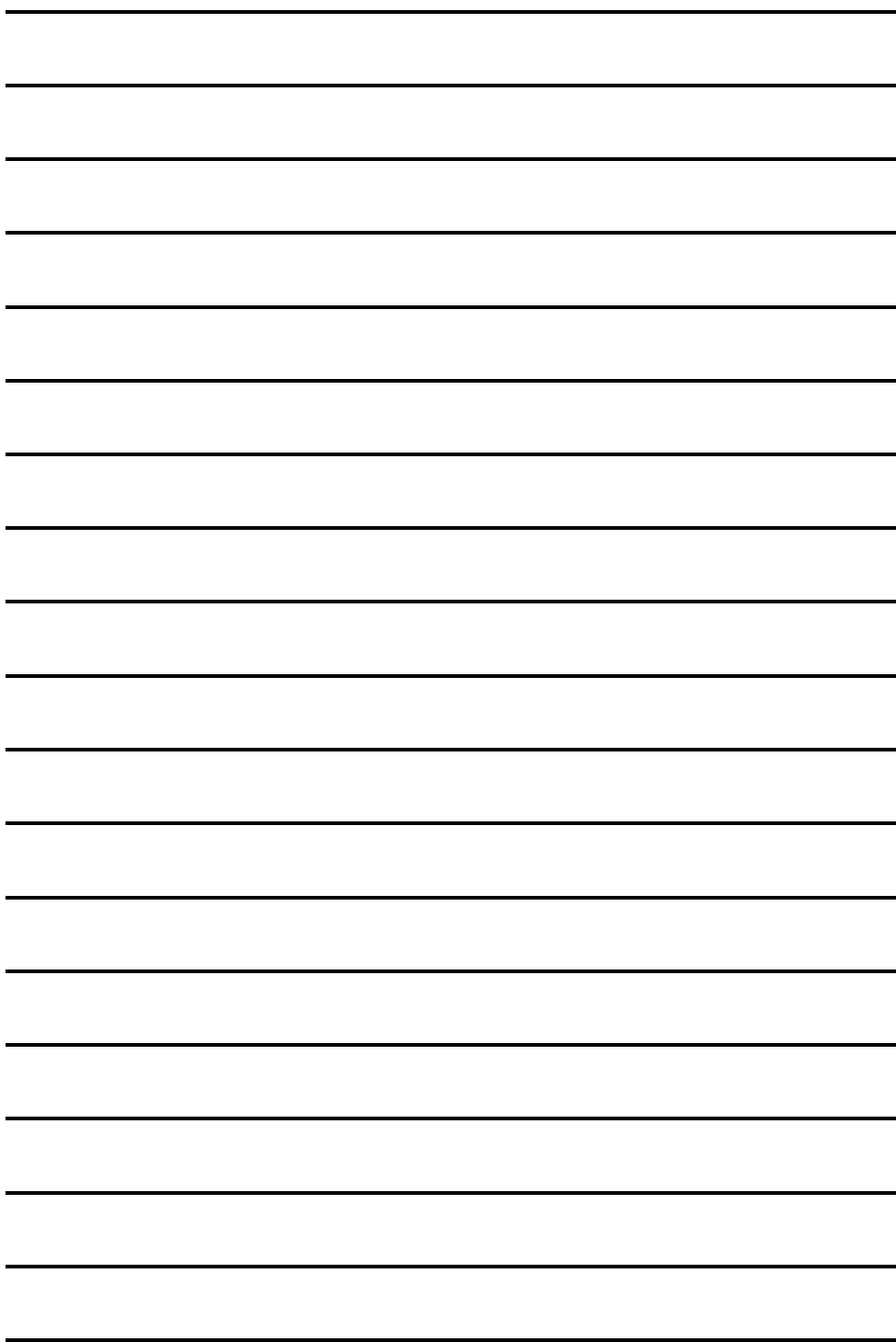
Are you comfortable focusing on your weaknesses?

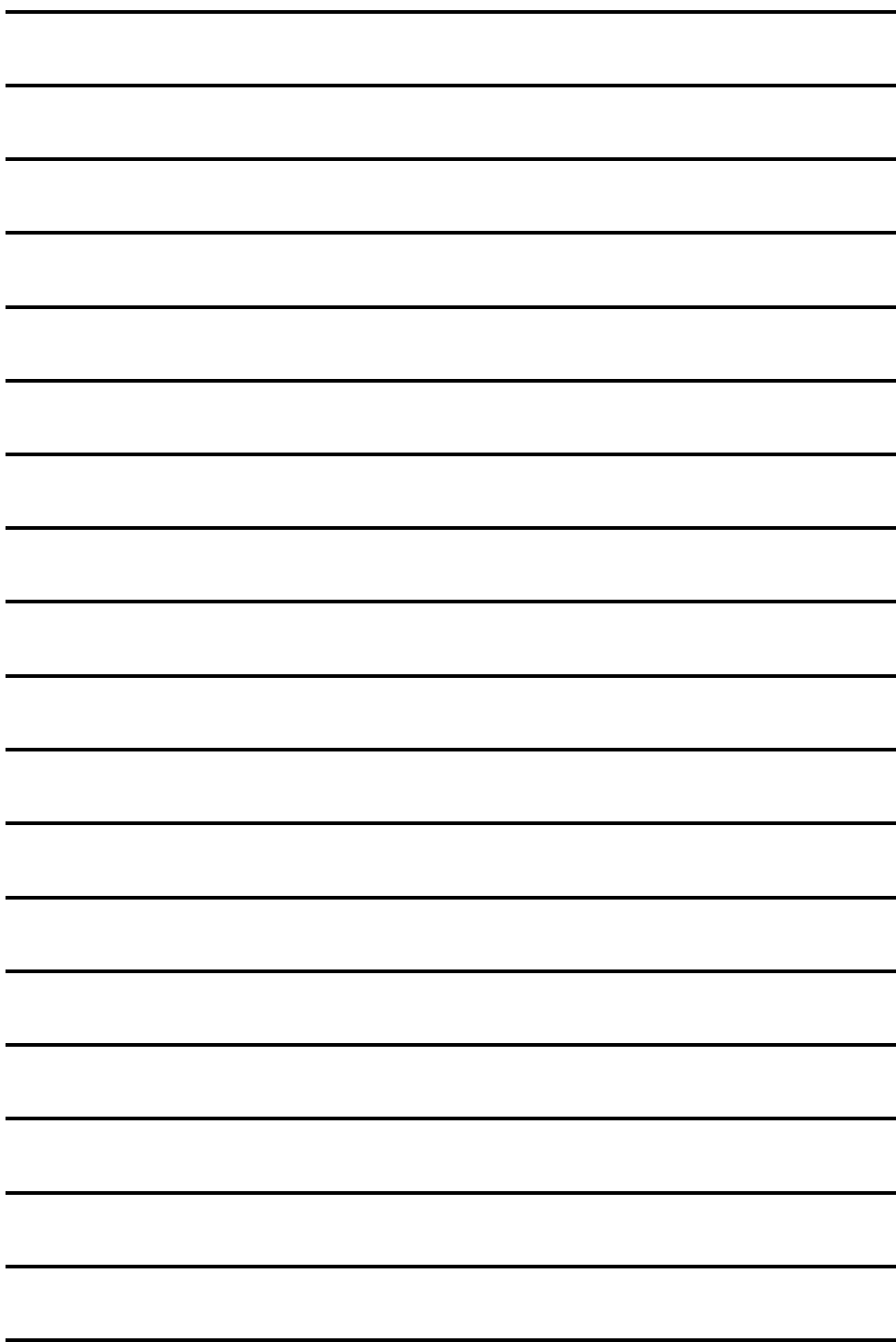
Would you rather focus on strengths?

Most of us would rather focus on what we do well but get more benefit from focusing on what we poorly.

Terrible!-----Great!

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Be kind to yourself.

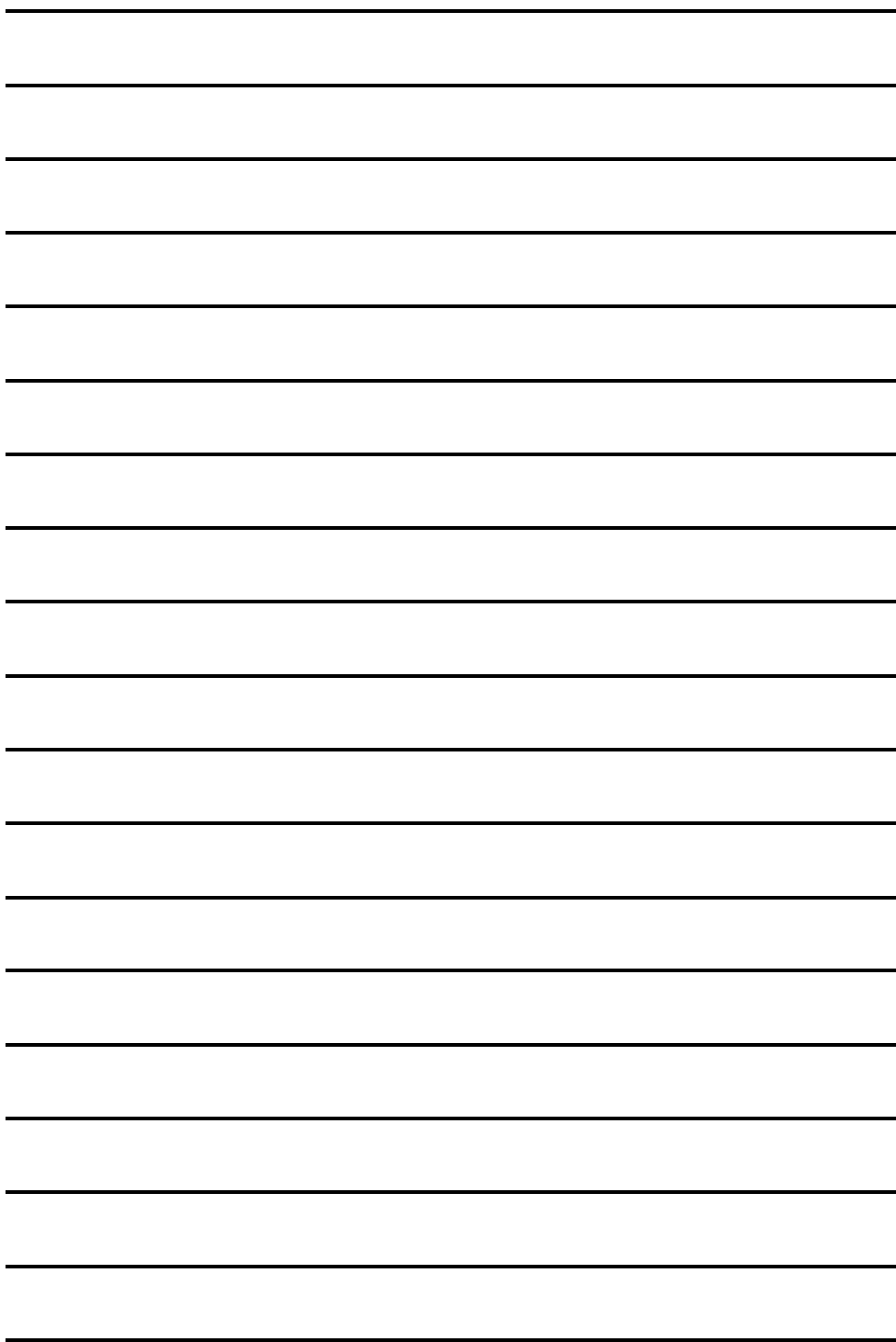
Although you are given the same messages in this journal again and again, look at them sincerely because they will feel different each time you see them.

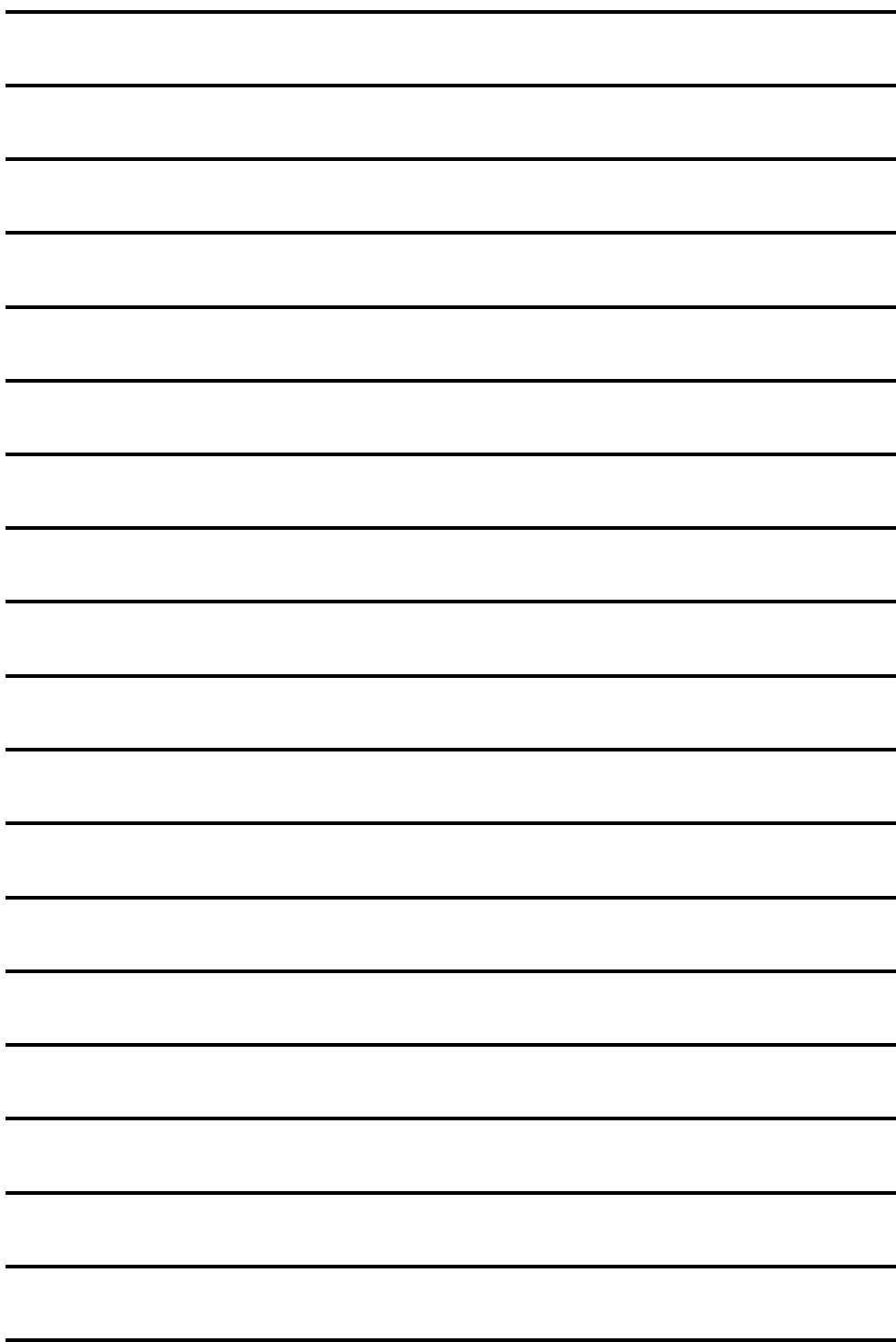
That is because your internal state is in flux and you can use how similar messages feel on different days as a guide to teaching you how you feel about yourself.

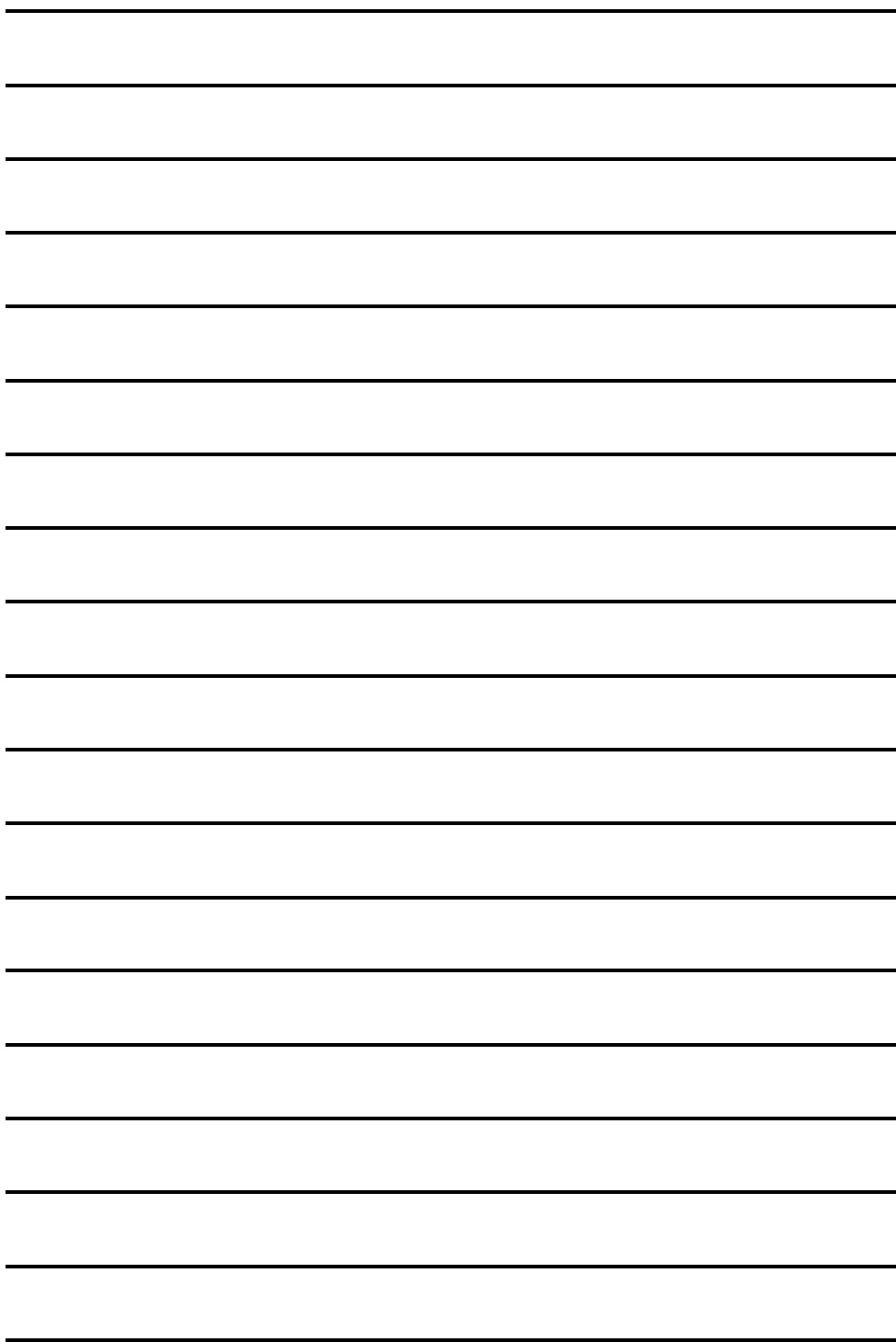
Some days it's easier to be nice to yourself. Why?

Terrible!-----Great!

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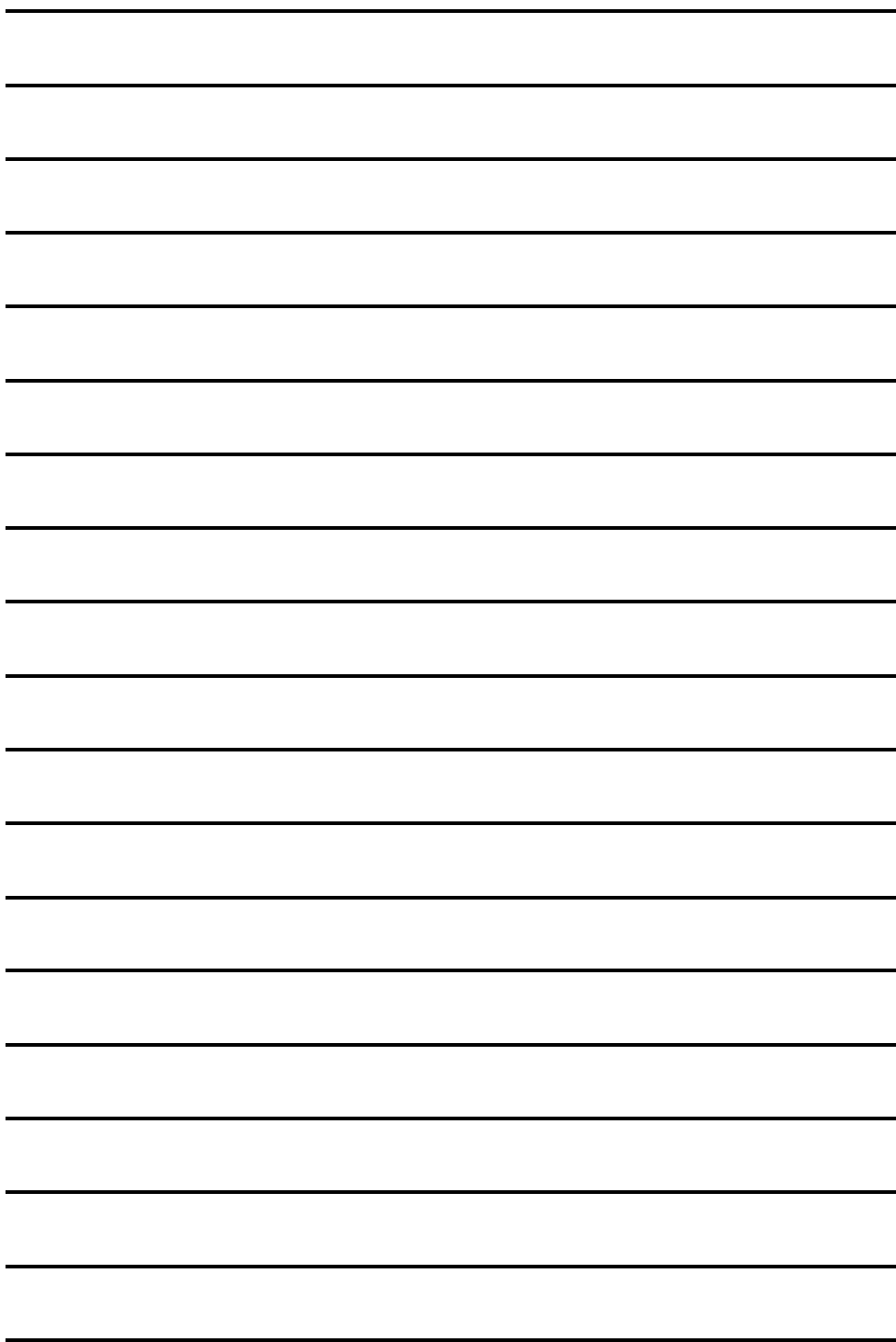
When you get frustrated do you relax before you act?

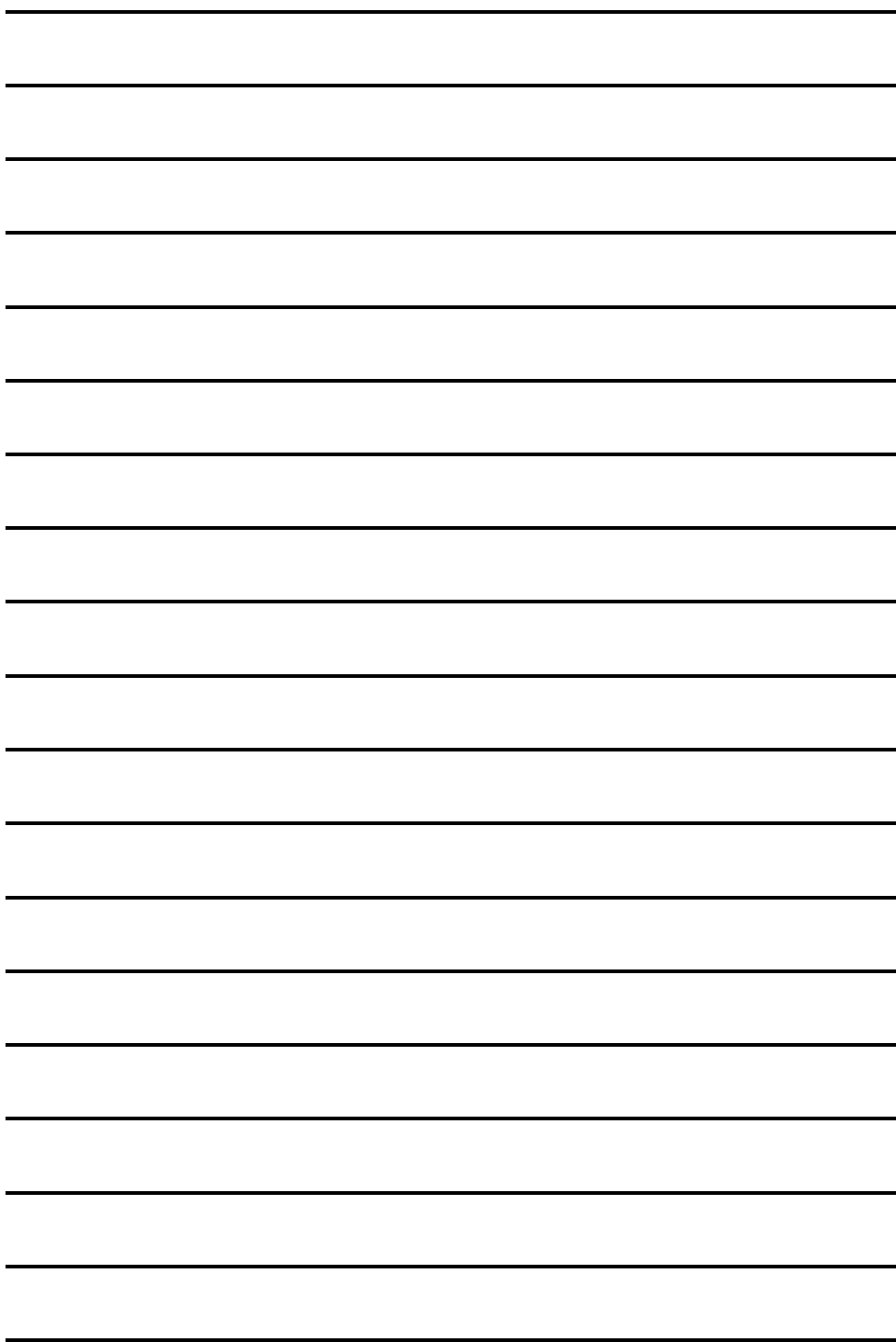
You should.

Acting on frustration is rarely productive.

Terrible!-----Great!

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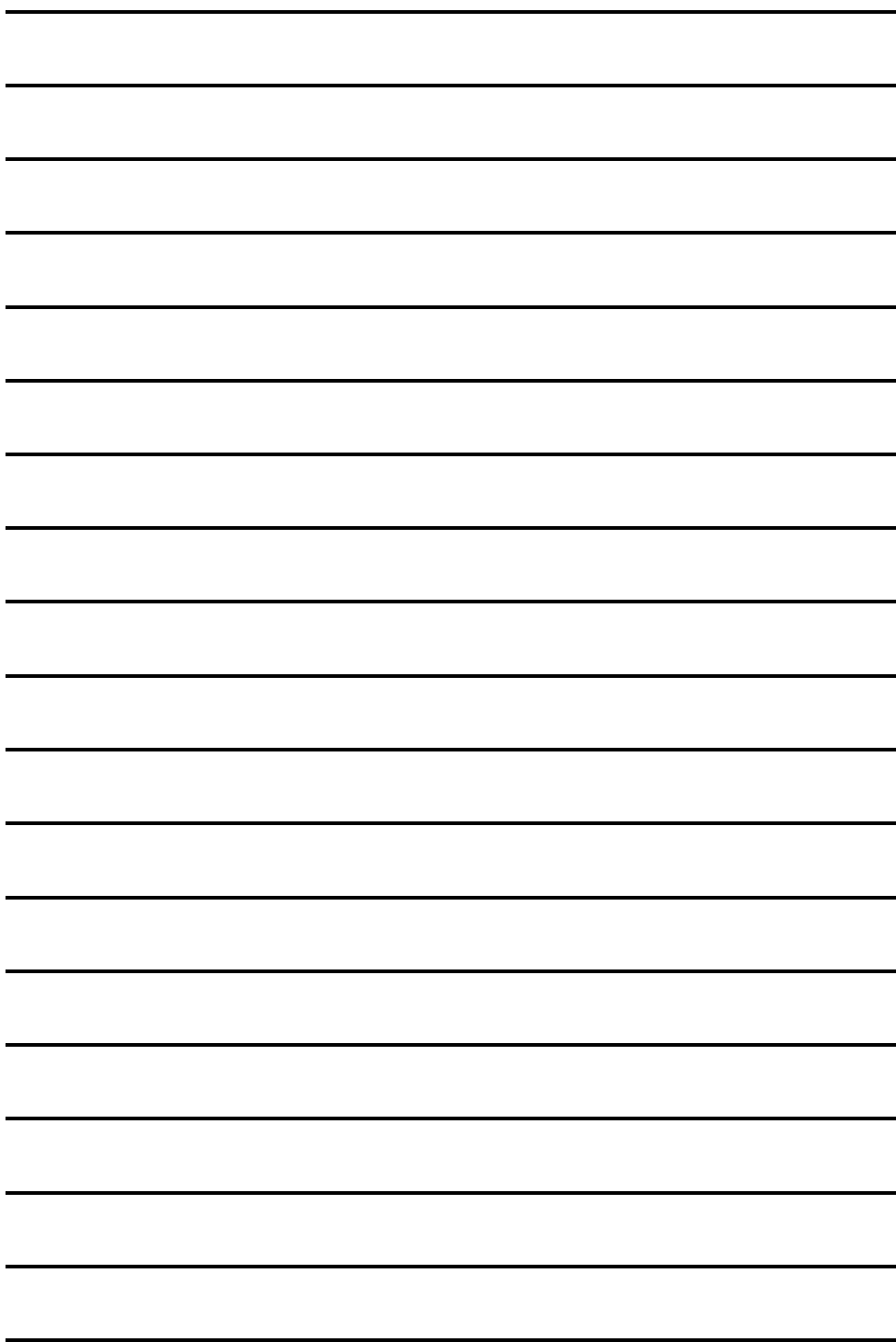
Everyone tries to get involved with groups that work their minds (book clubs) or bodies (exercise clubs).

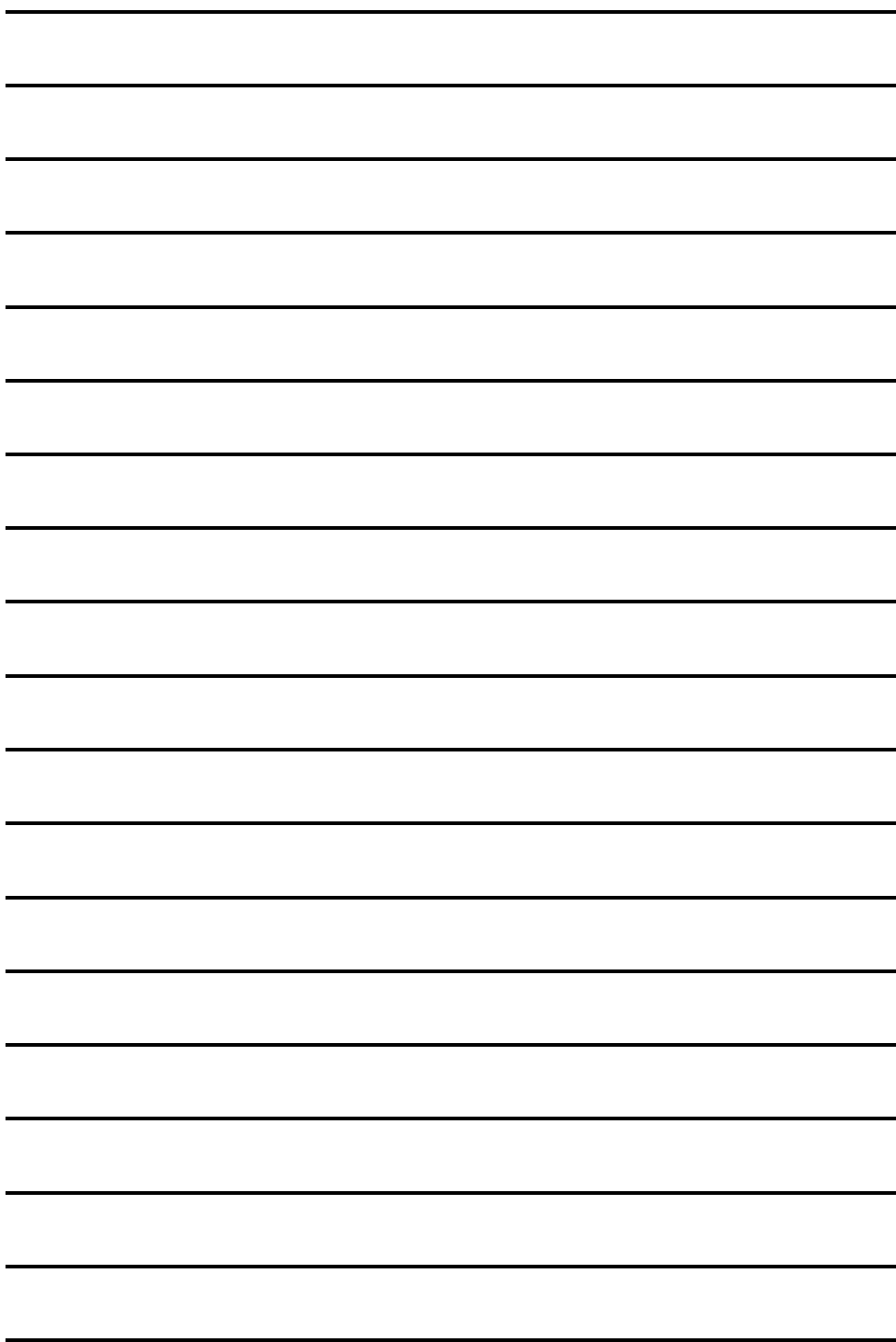
Look for groups and people that cultivate your heart too.

Try to get involved with groups that make you FEEL.

Terrible!-----Great!

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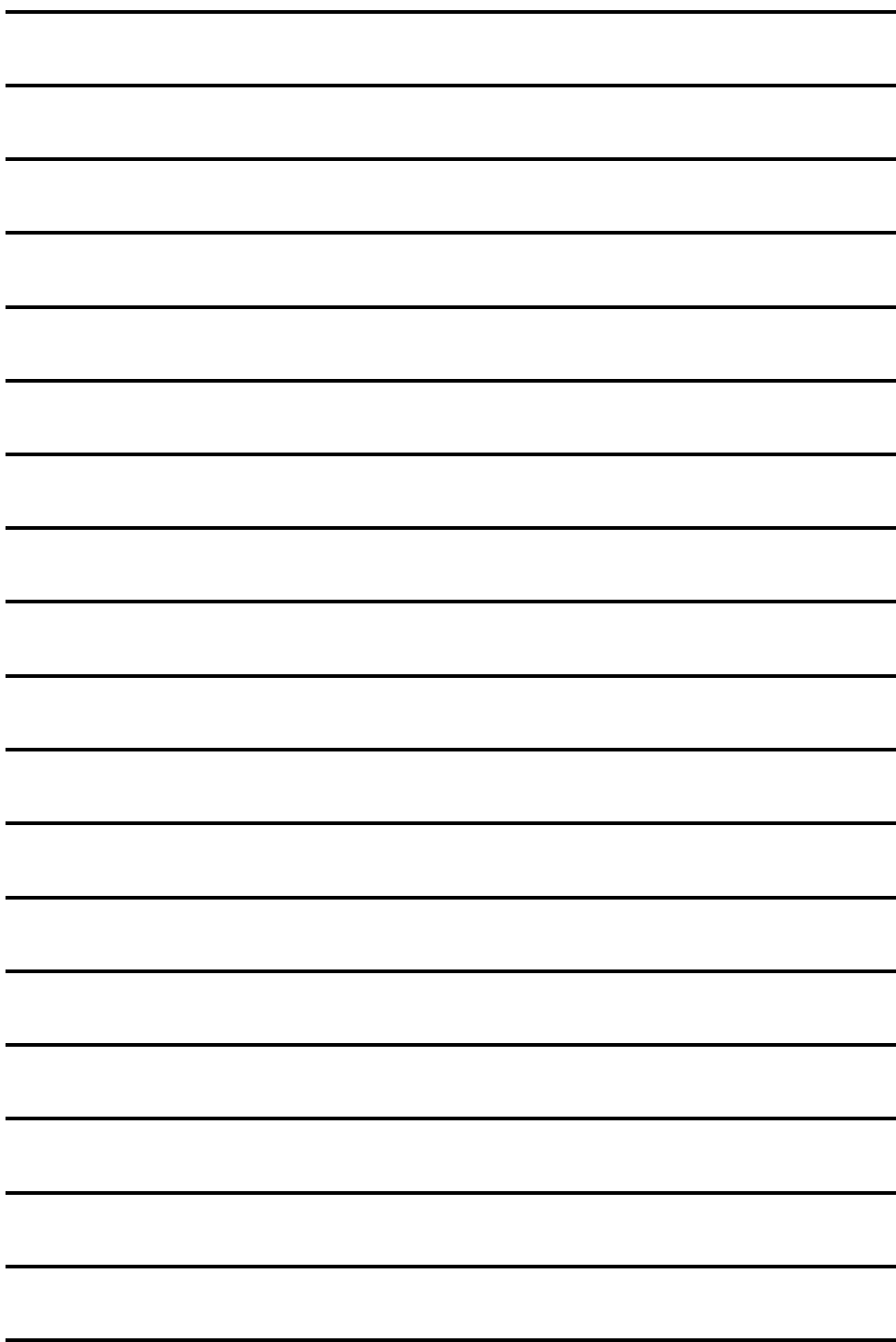
Whenever your trying to start a new behavior, establish it before you modify it.

In other words start a ridiculously easy exercise program, make it a consistent part of your life...

THEN improve it.

Terrible!-----Great!

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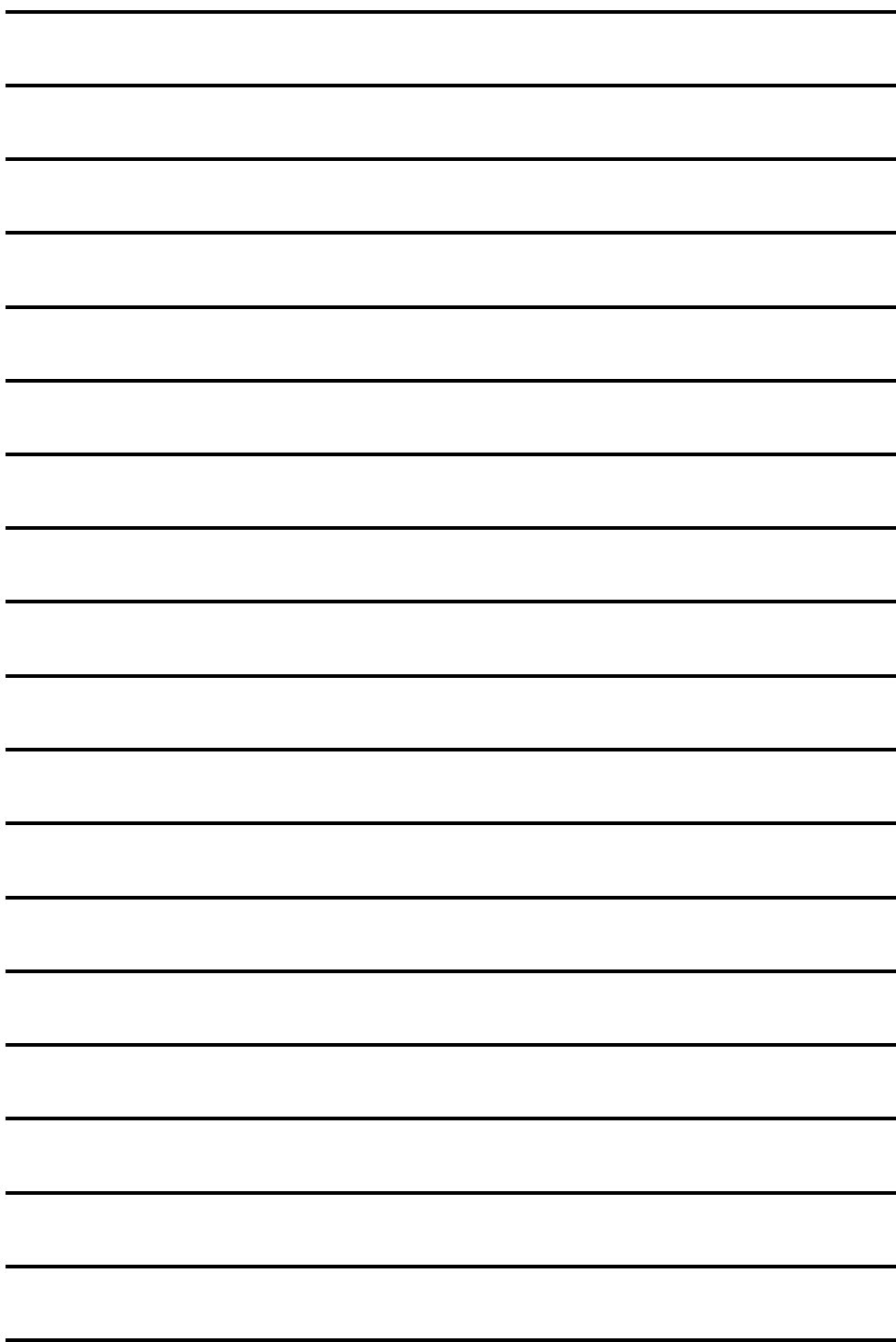
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

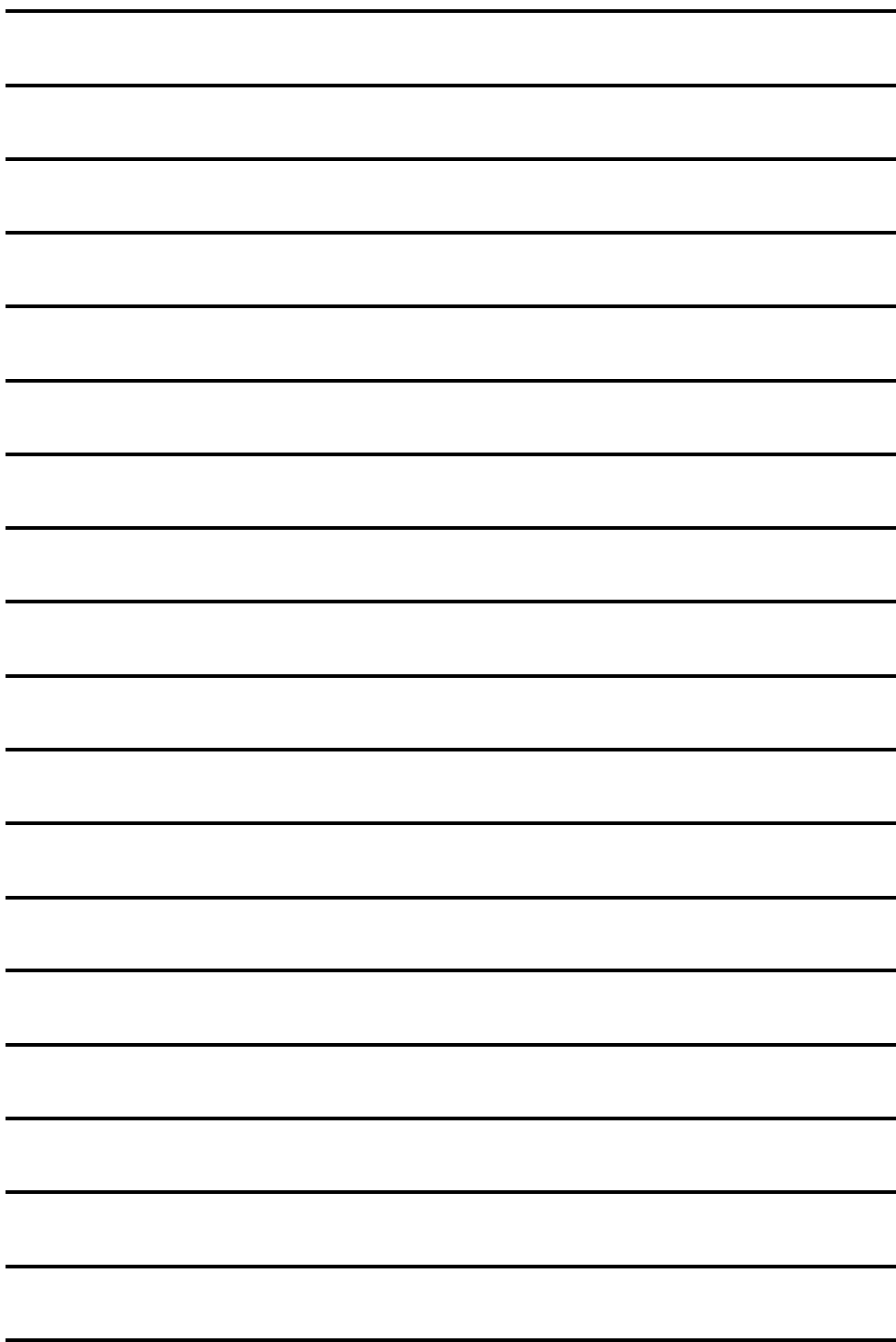
Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

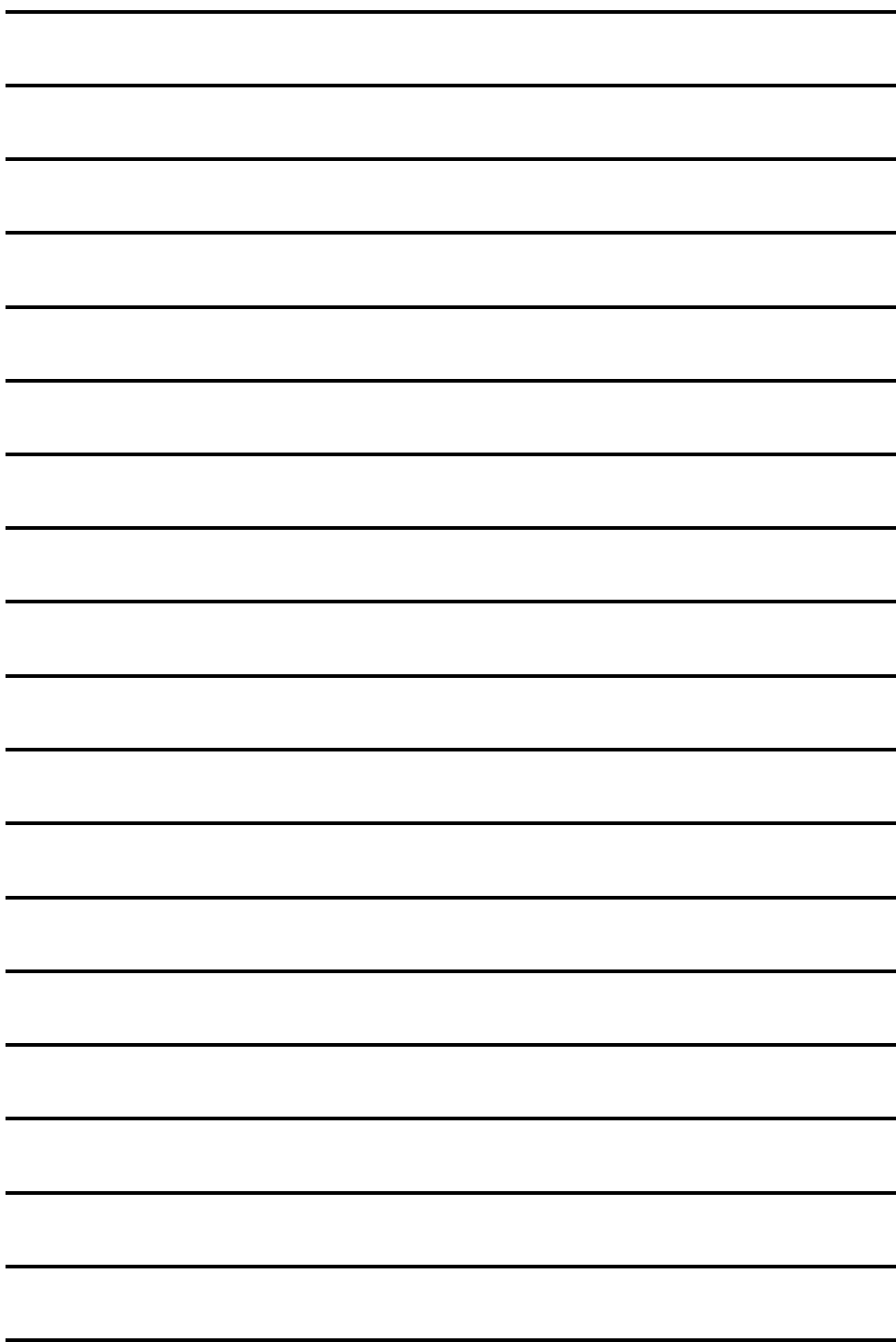
Do you treat the people best who treat you the best in life?

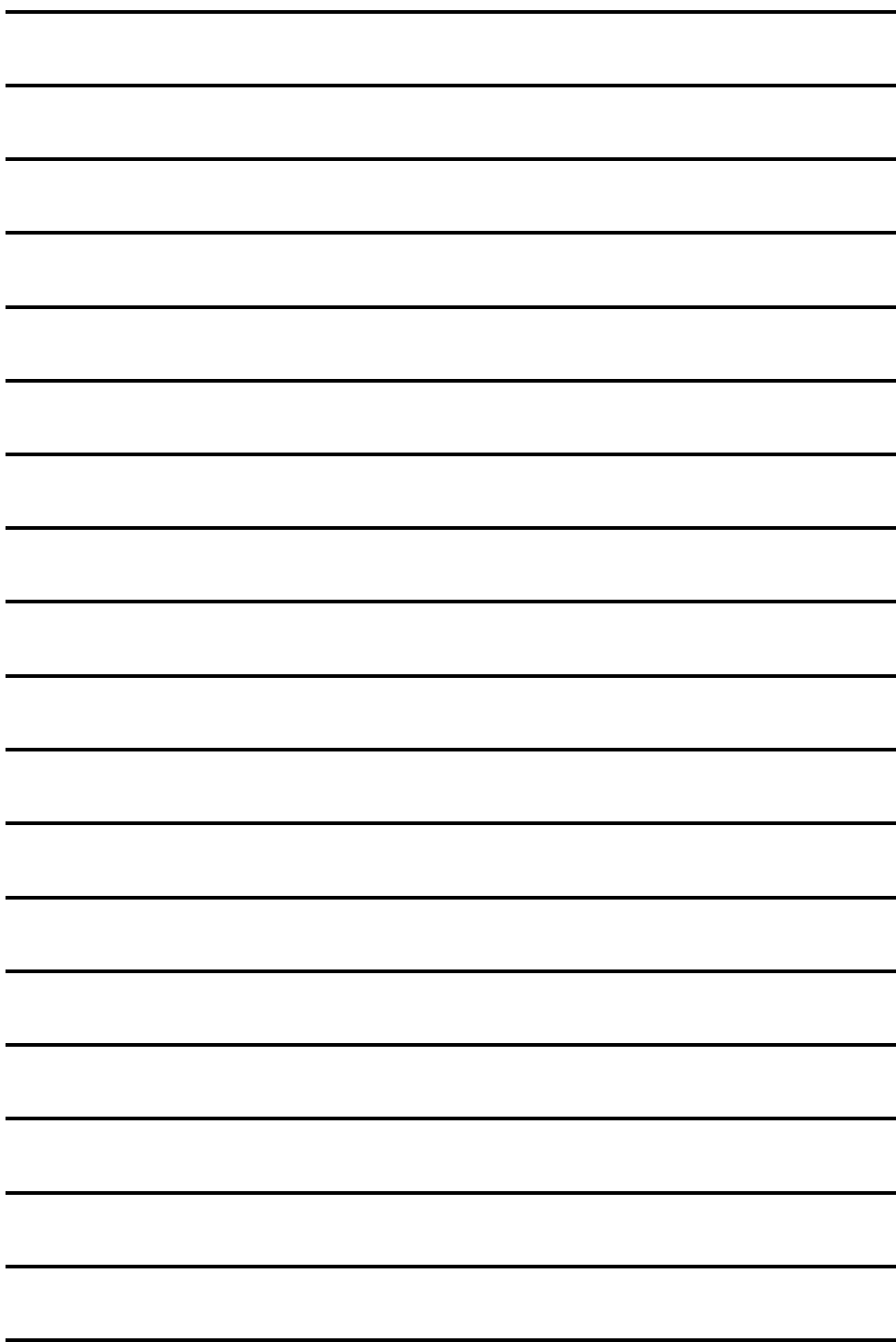
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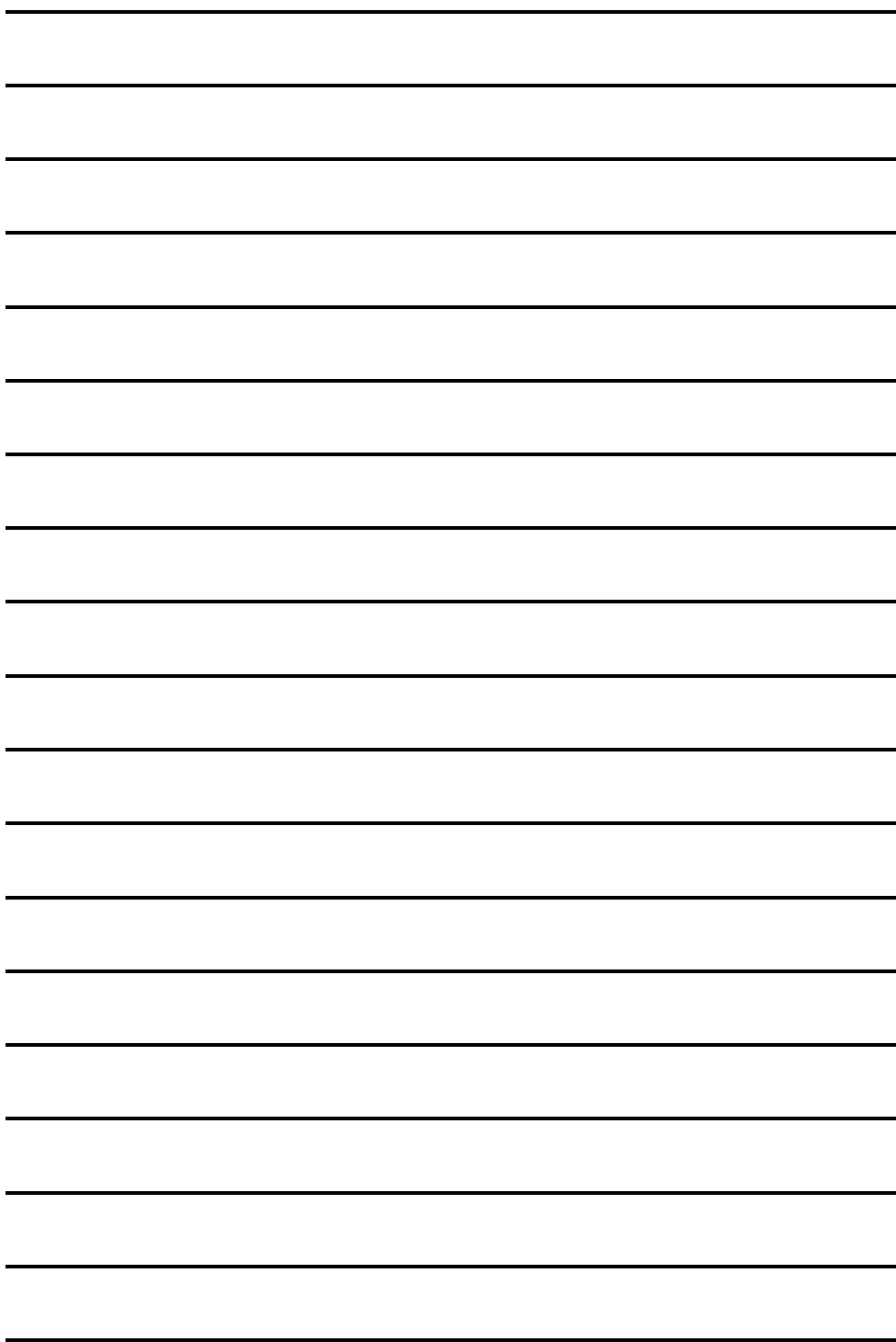
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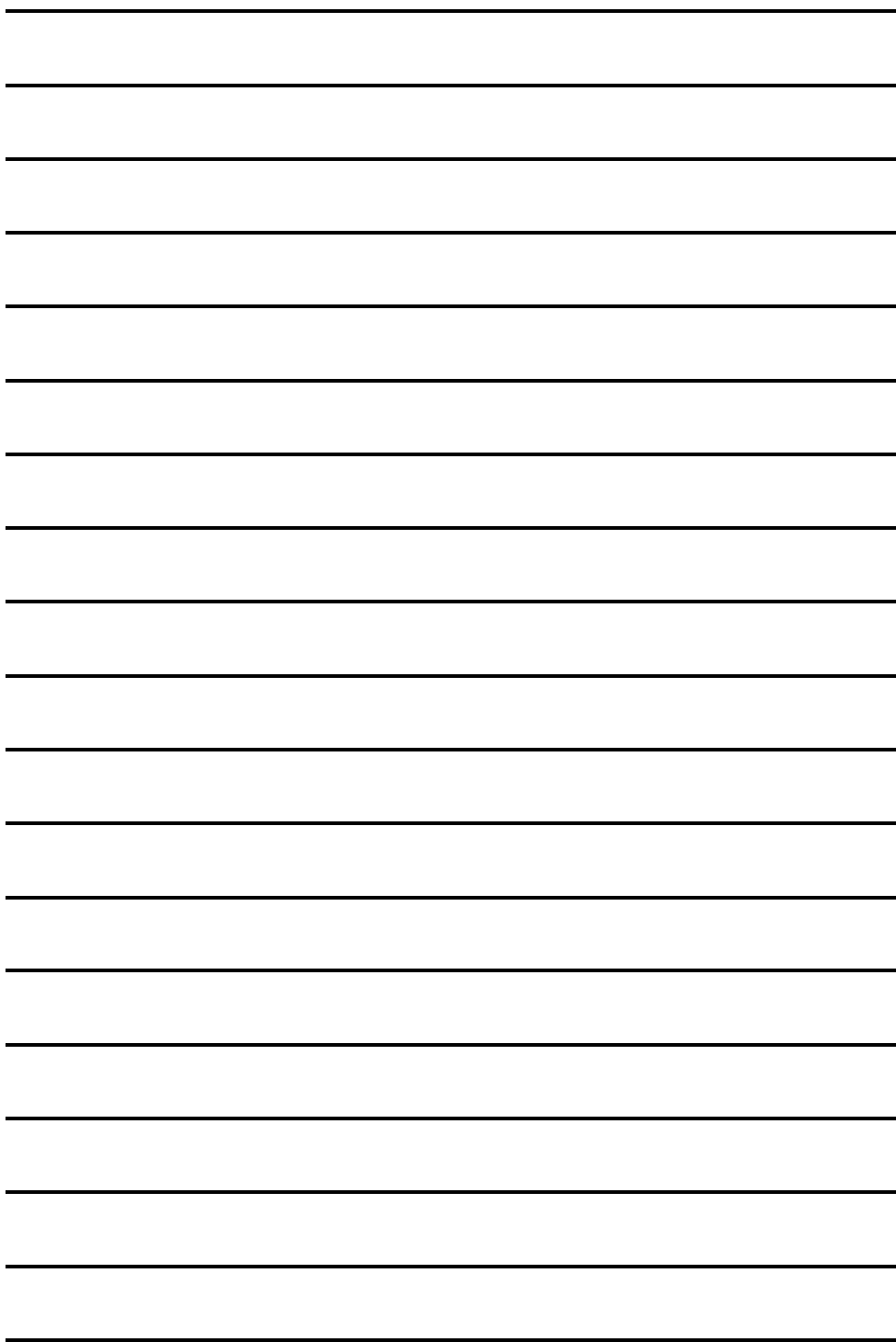


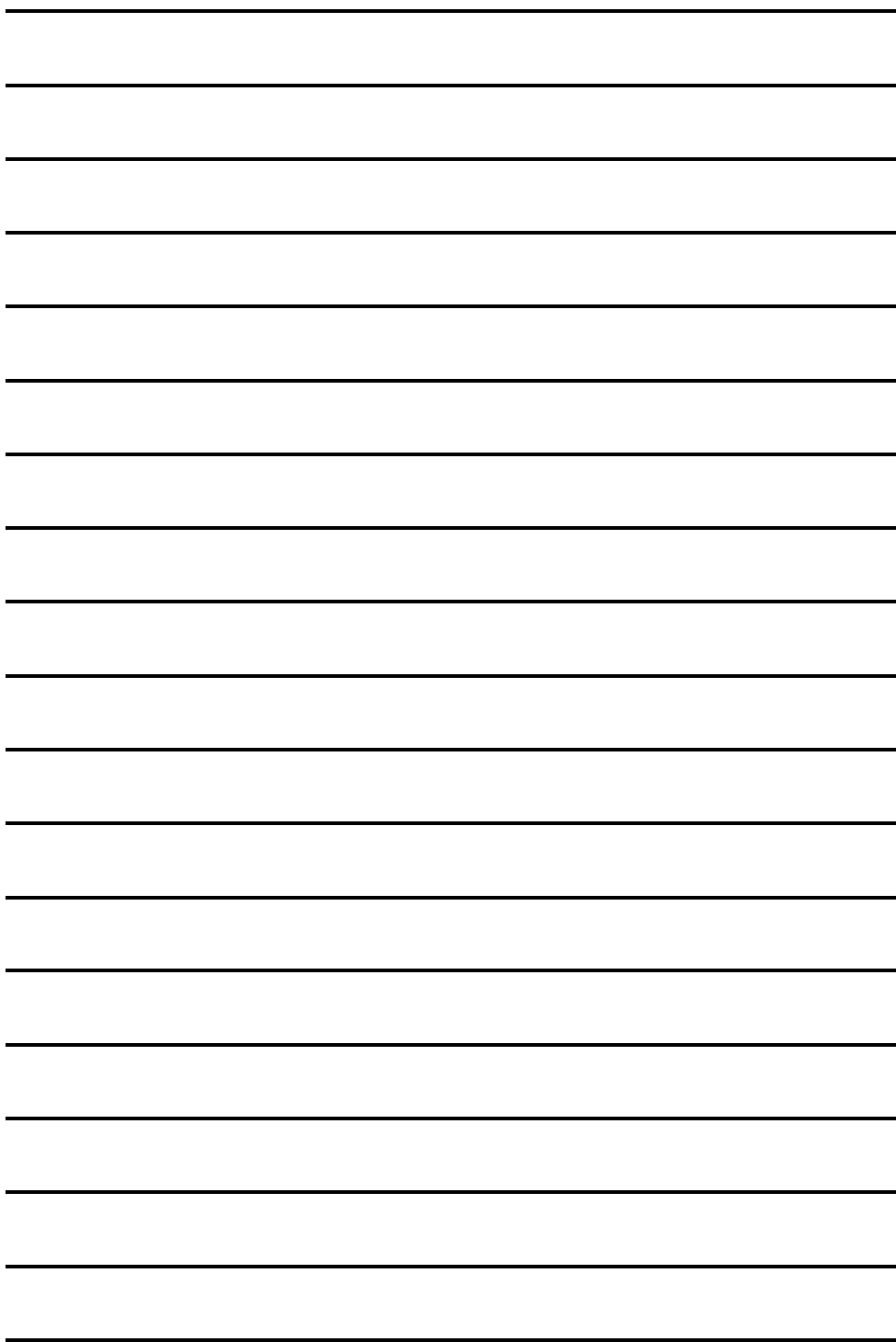


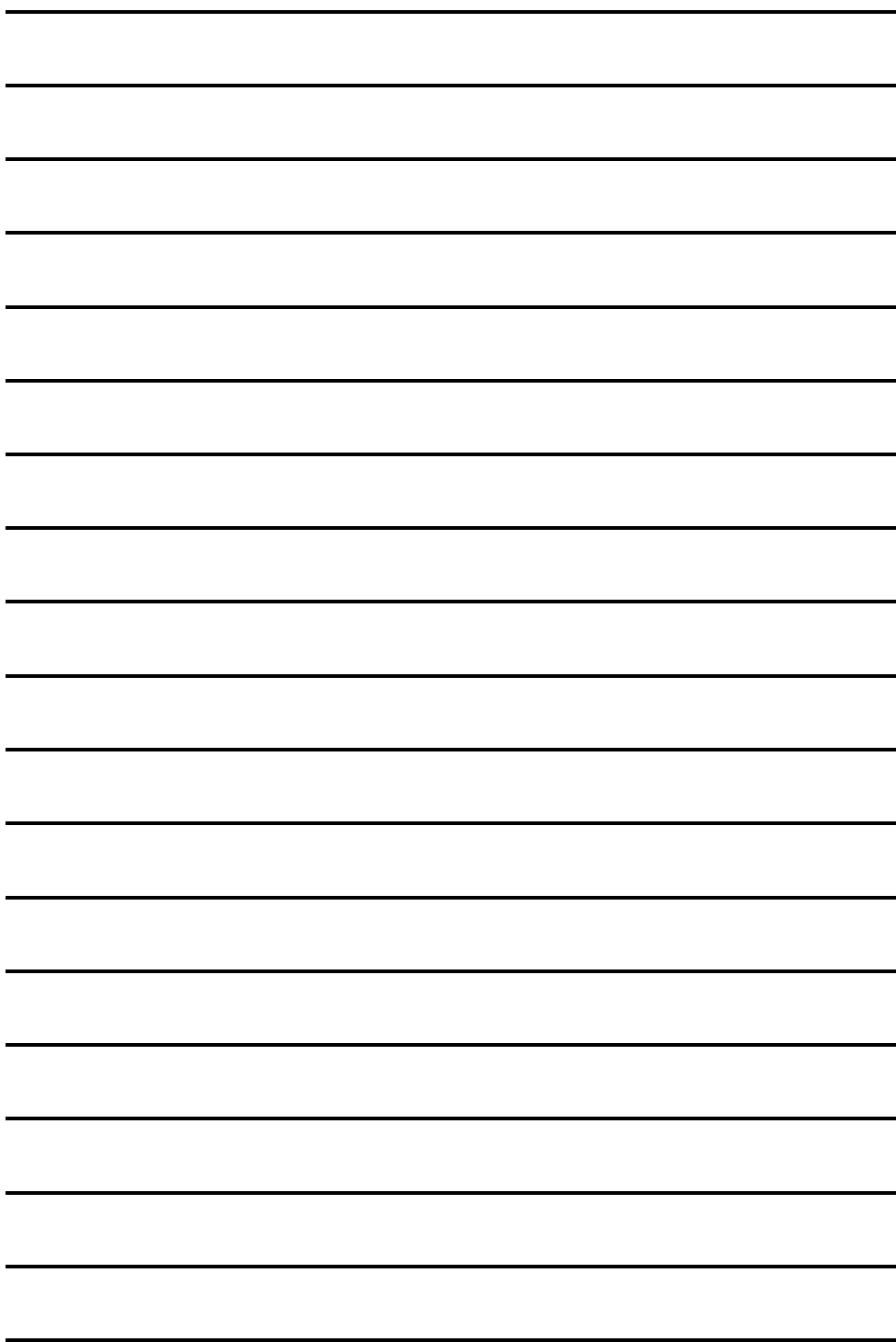


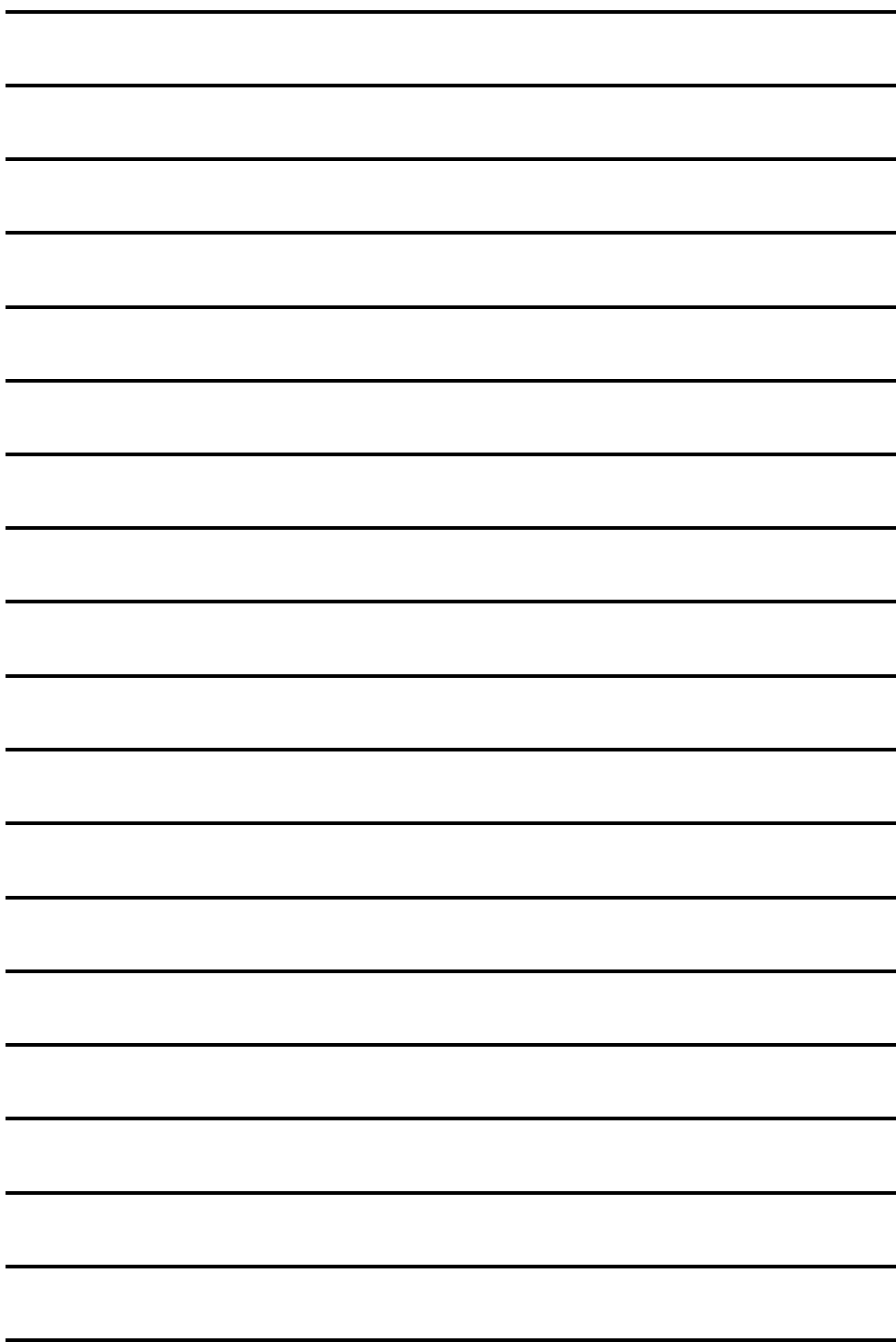


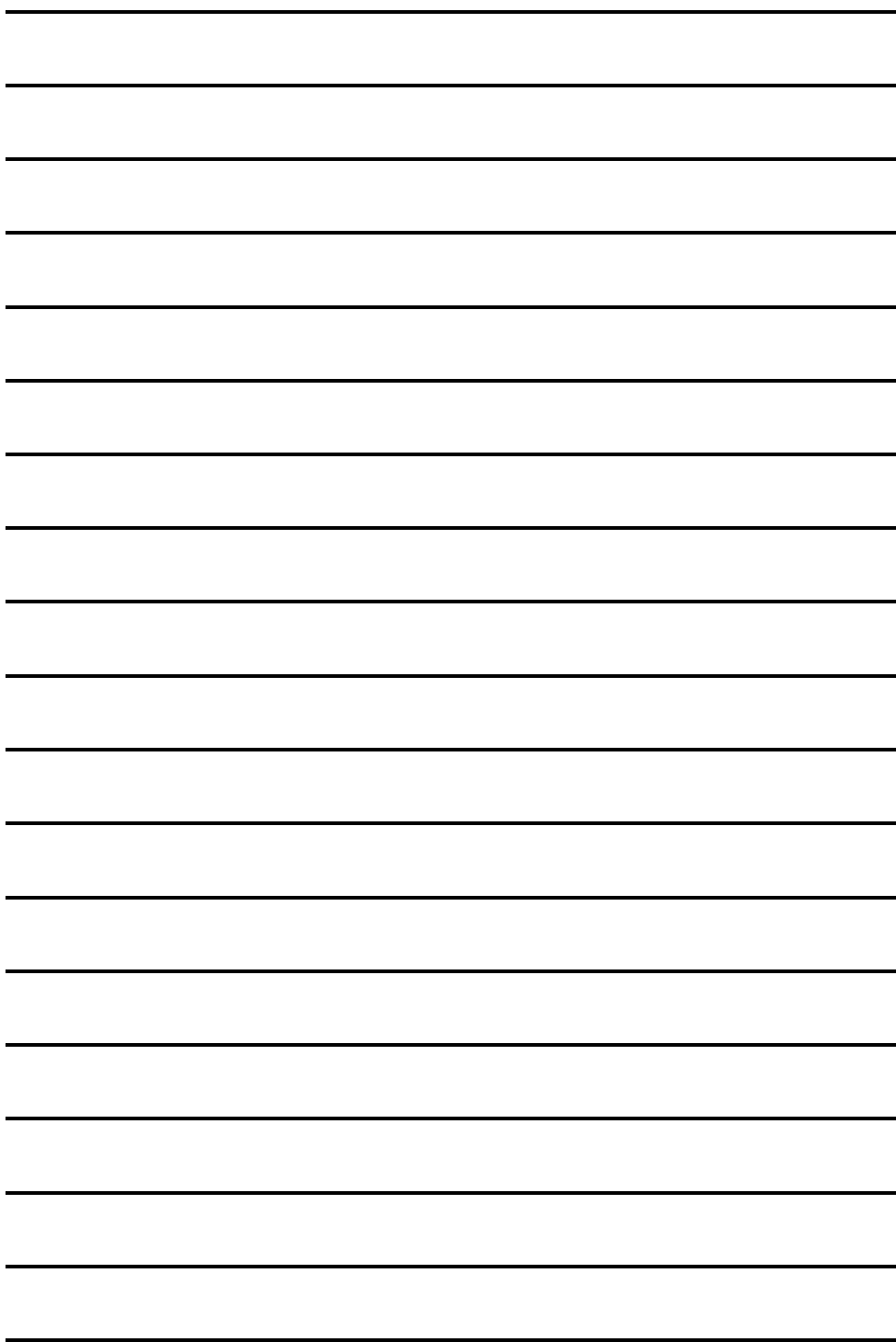


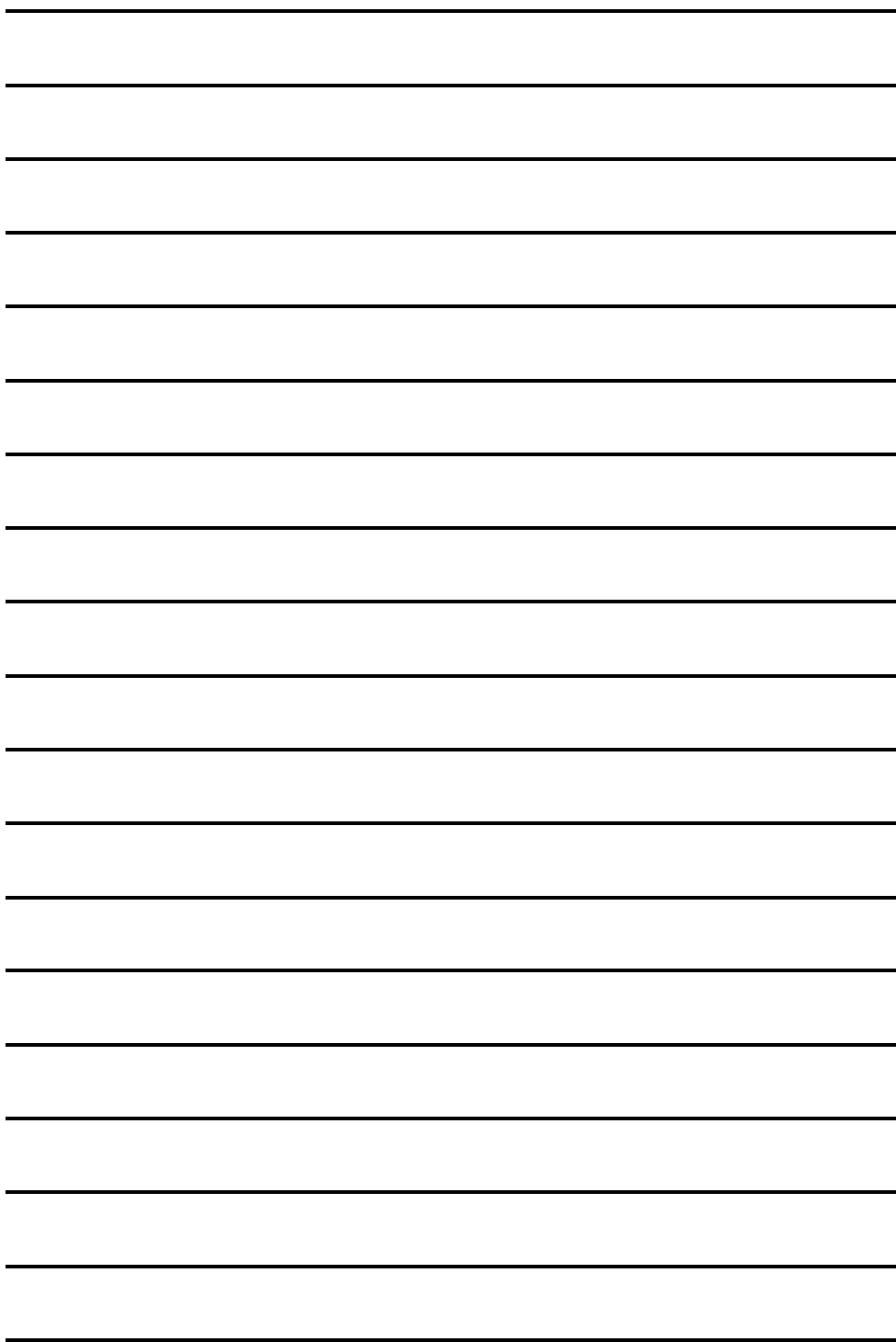


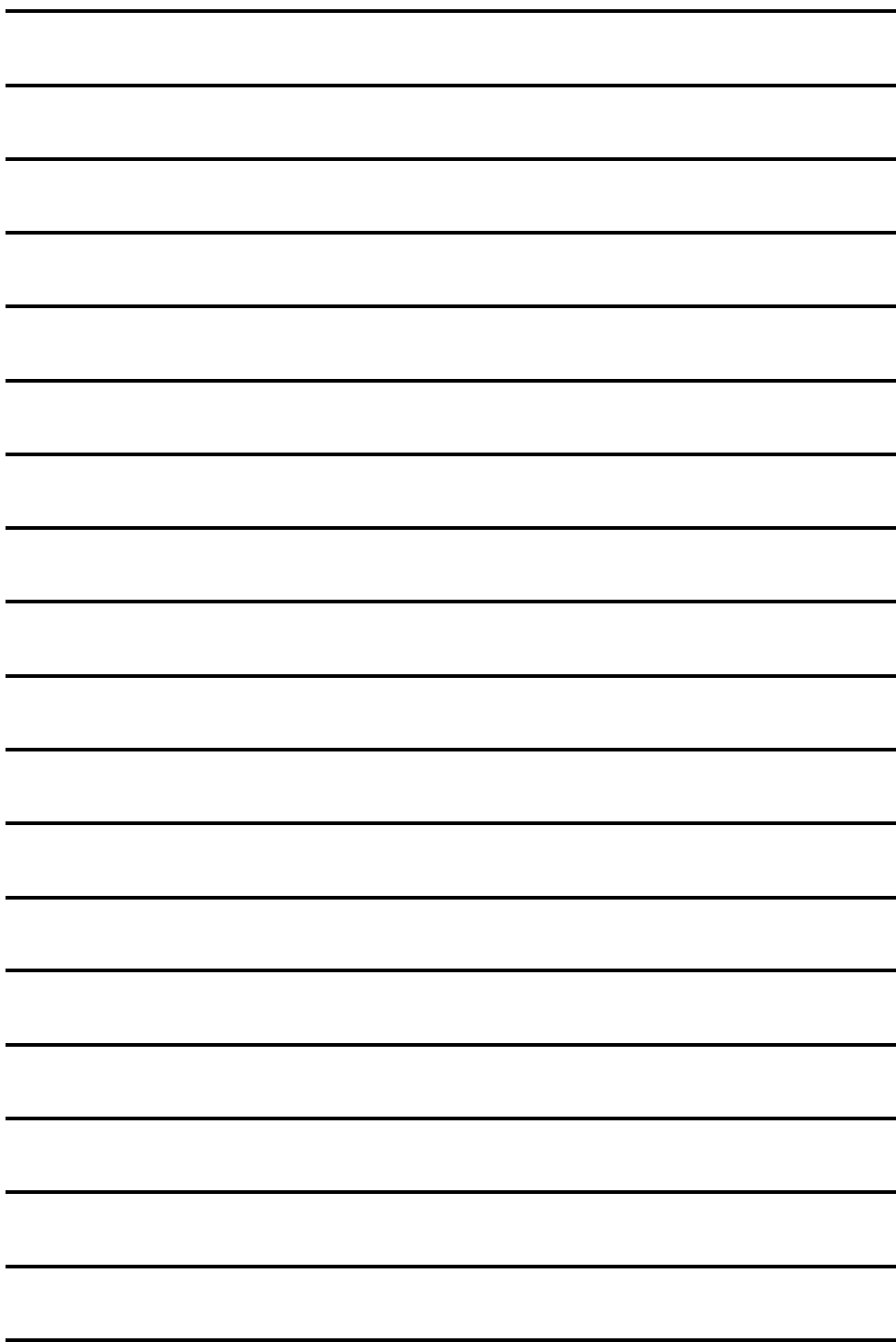


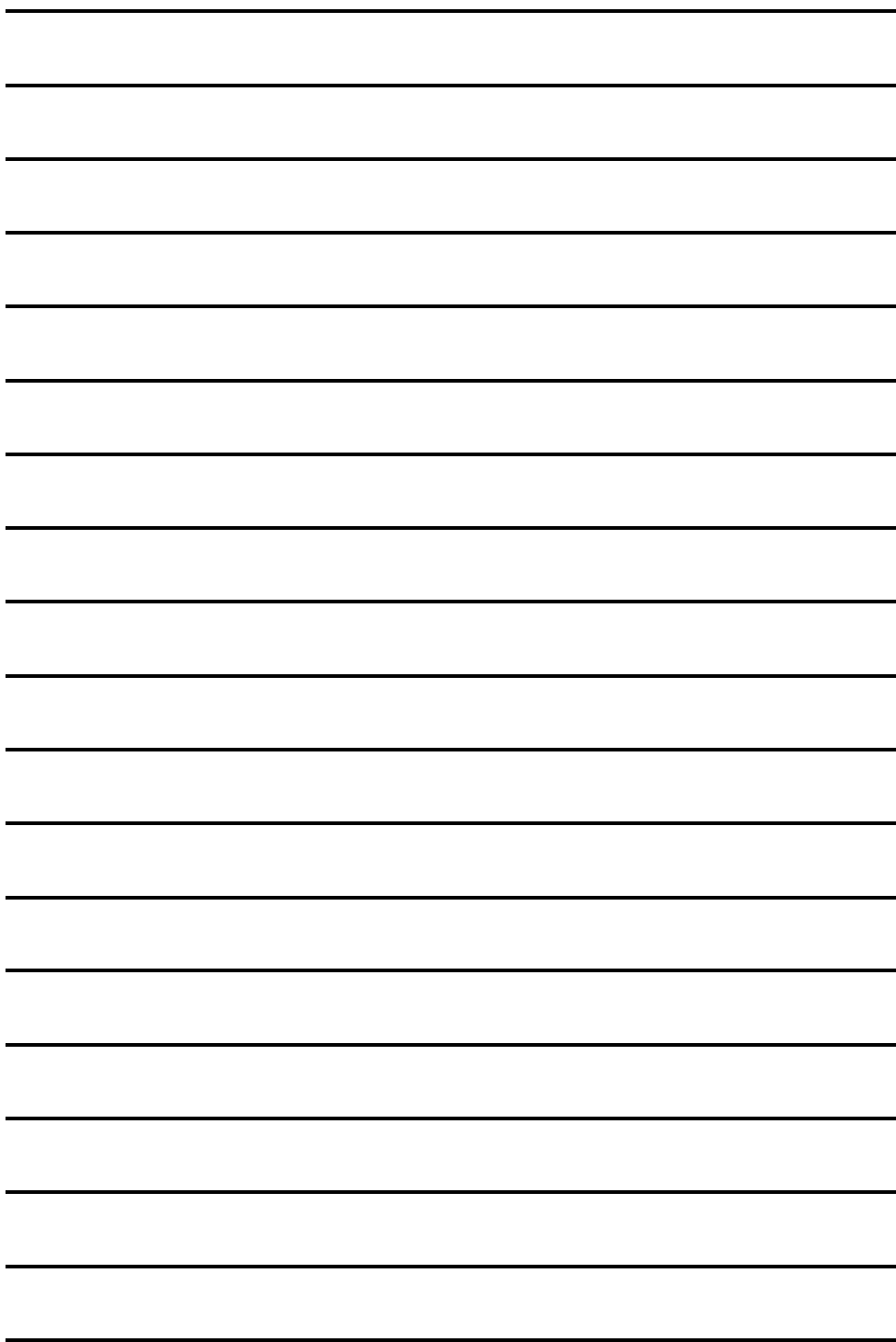


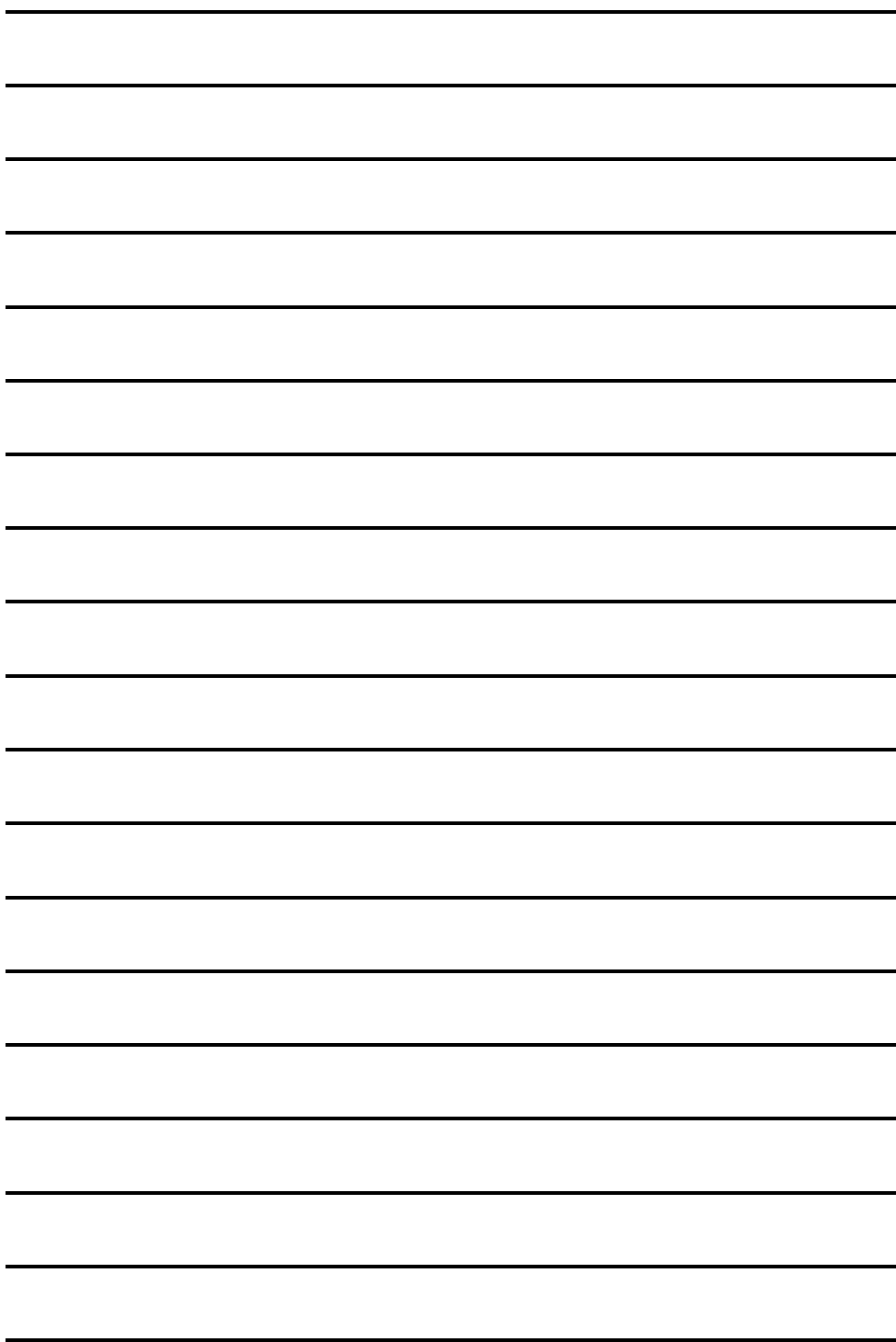


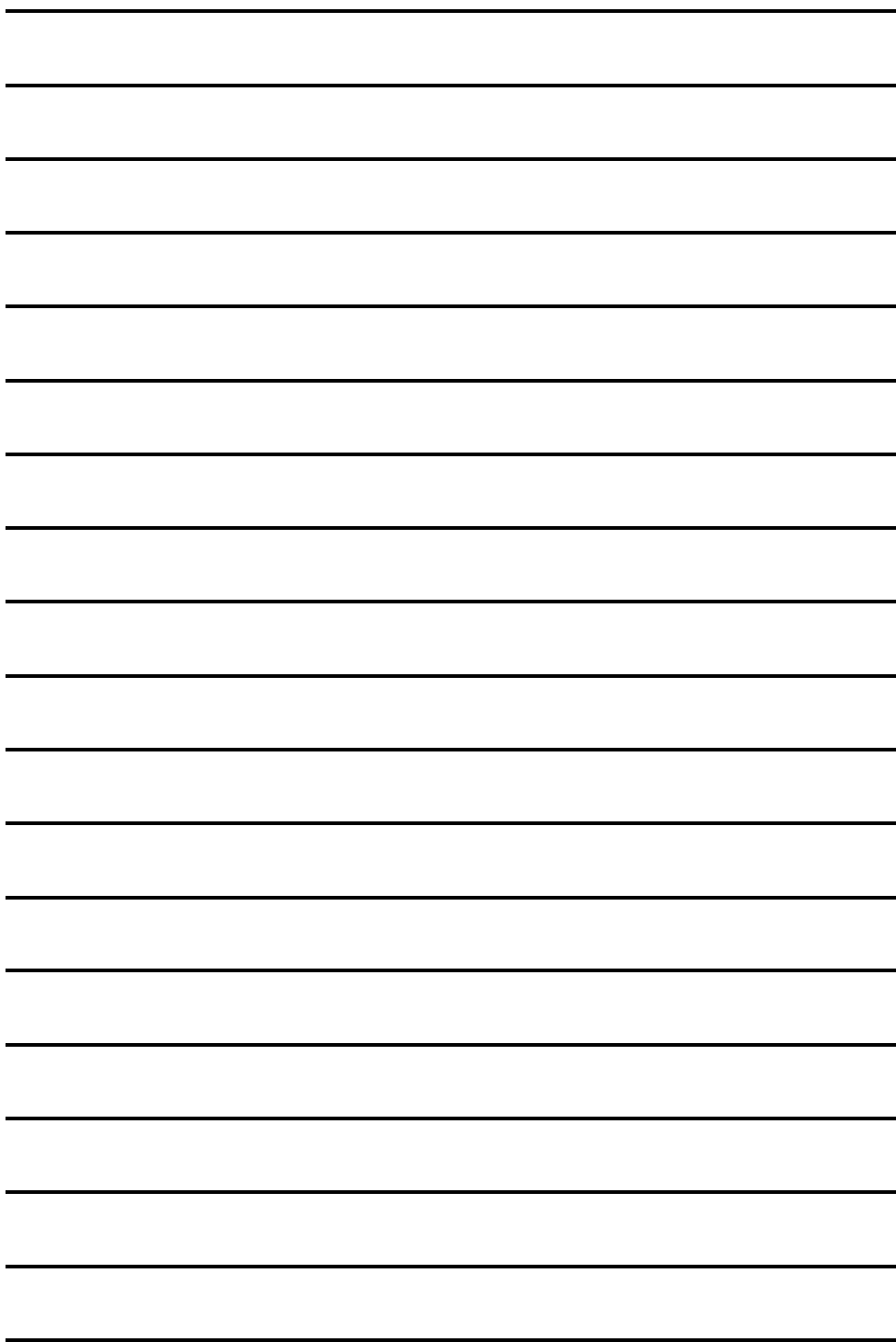


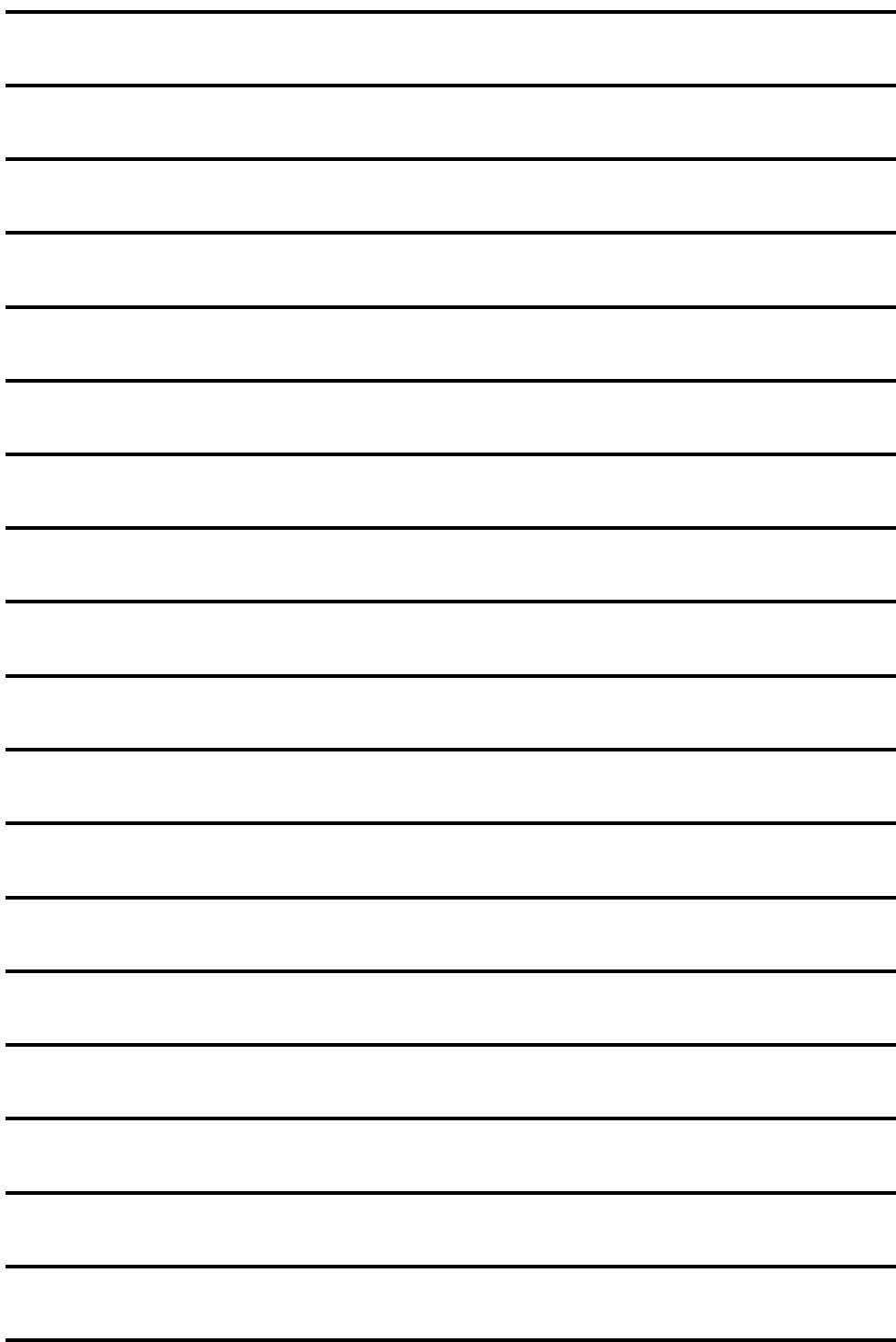


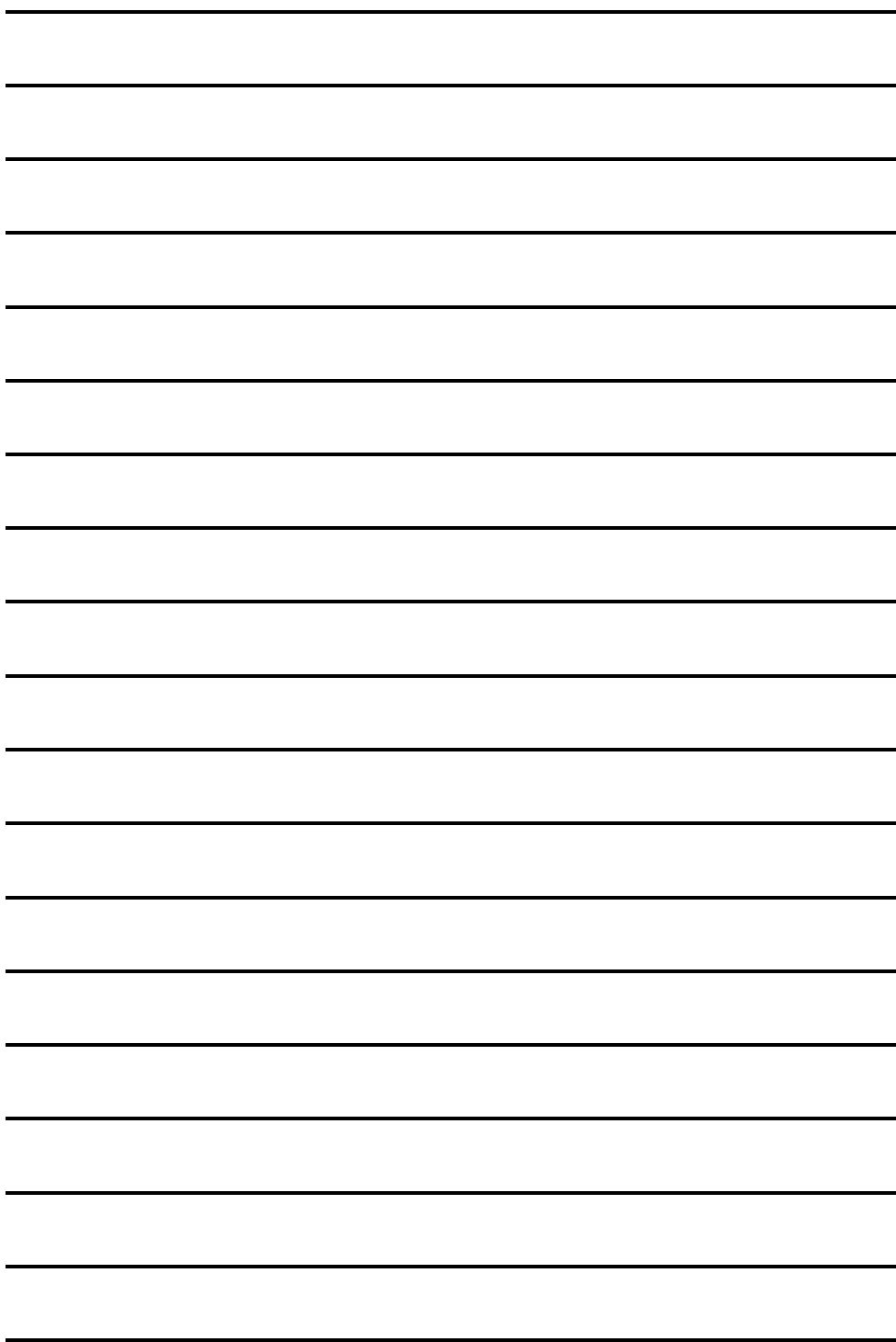


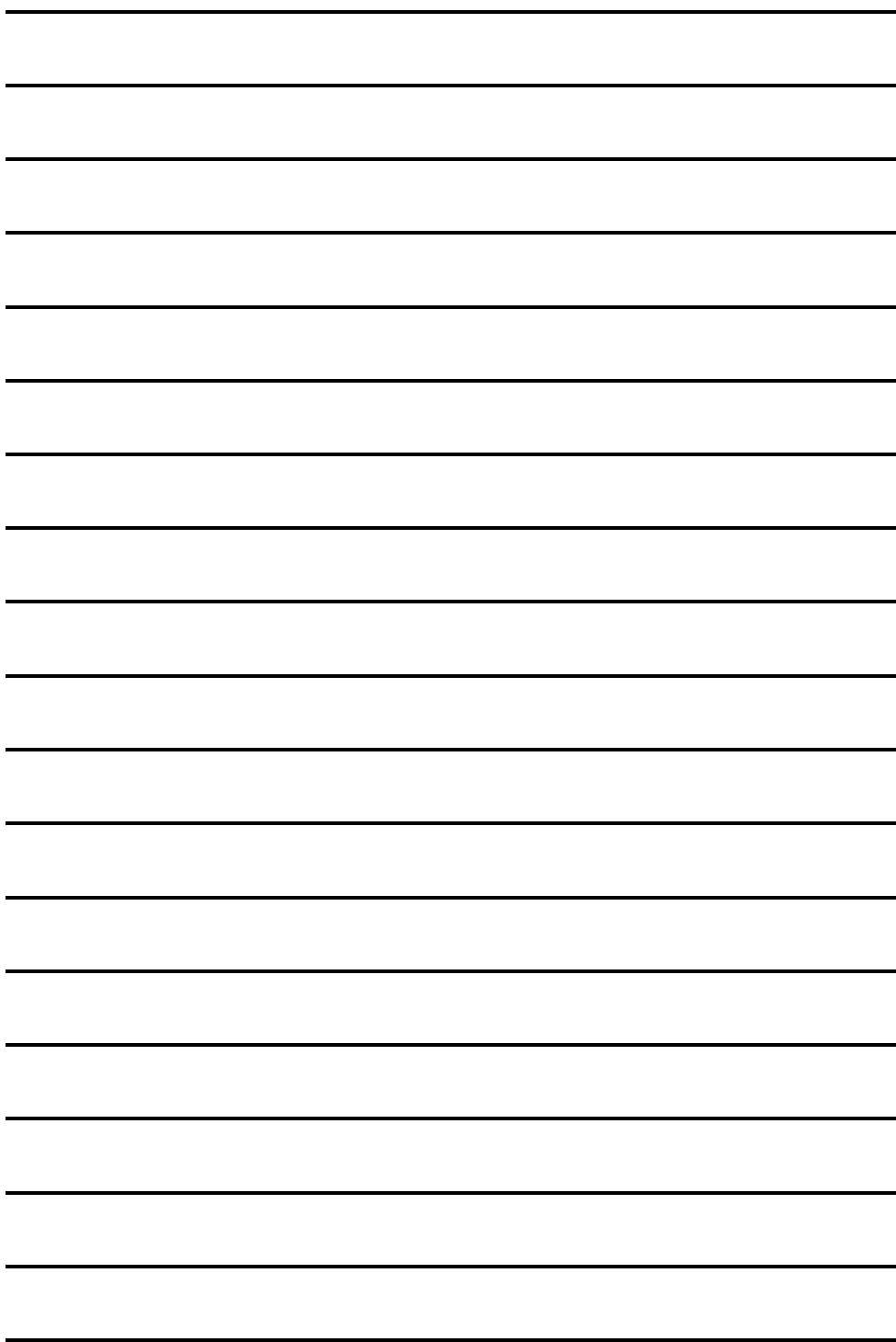


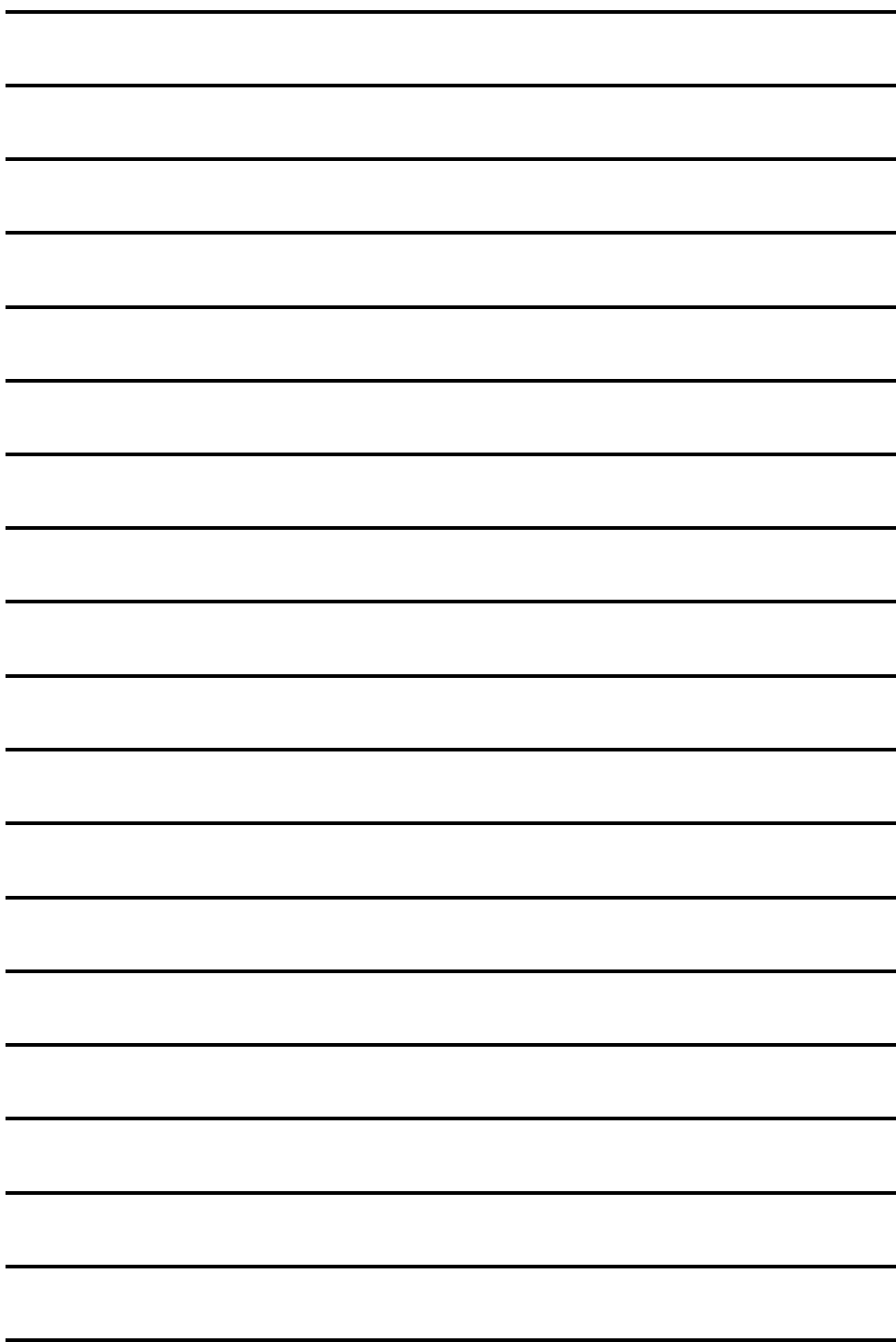


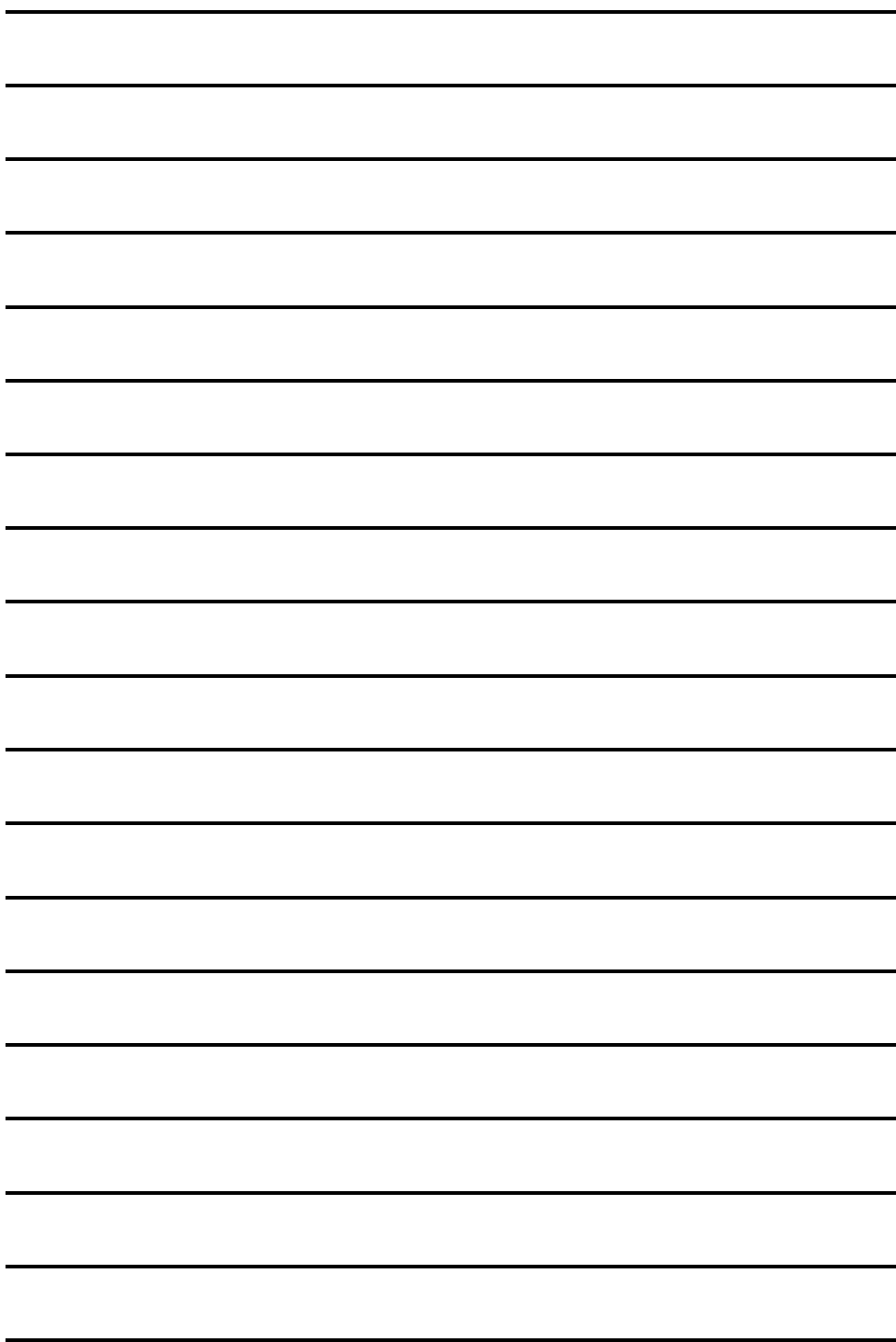


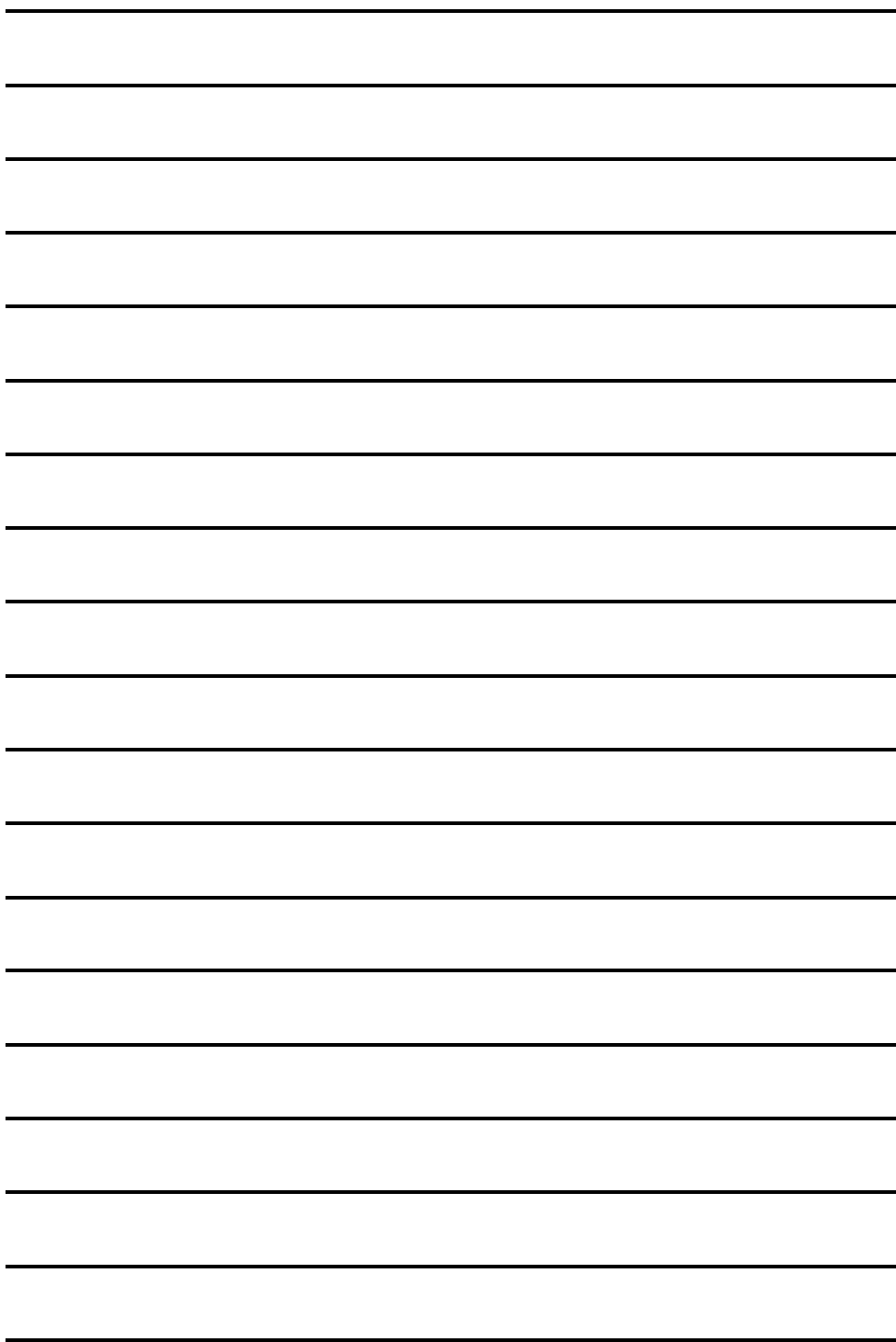


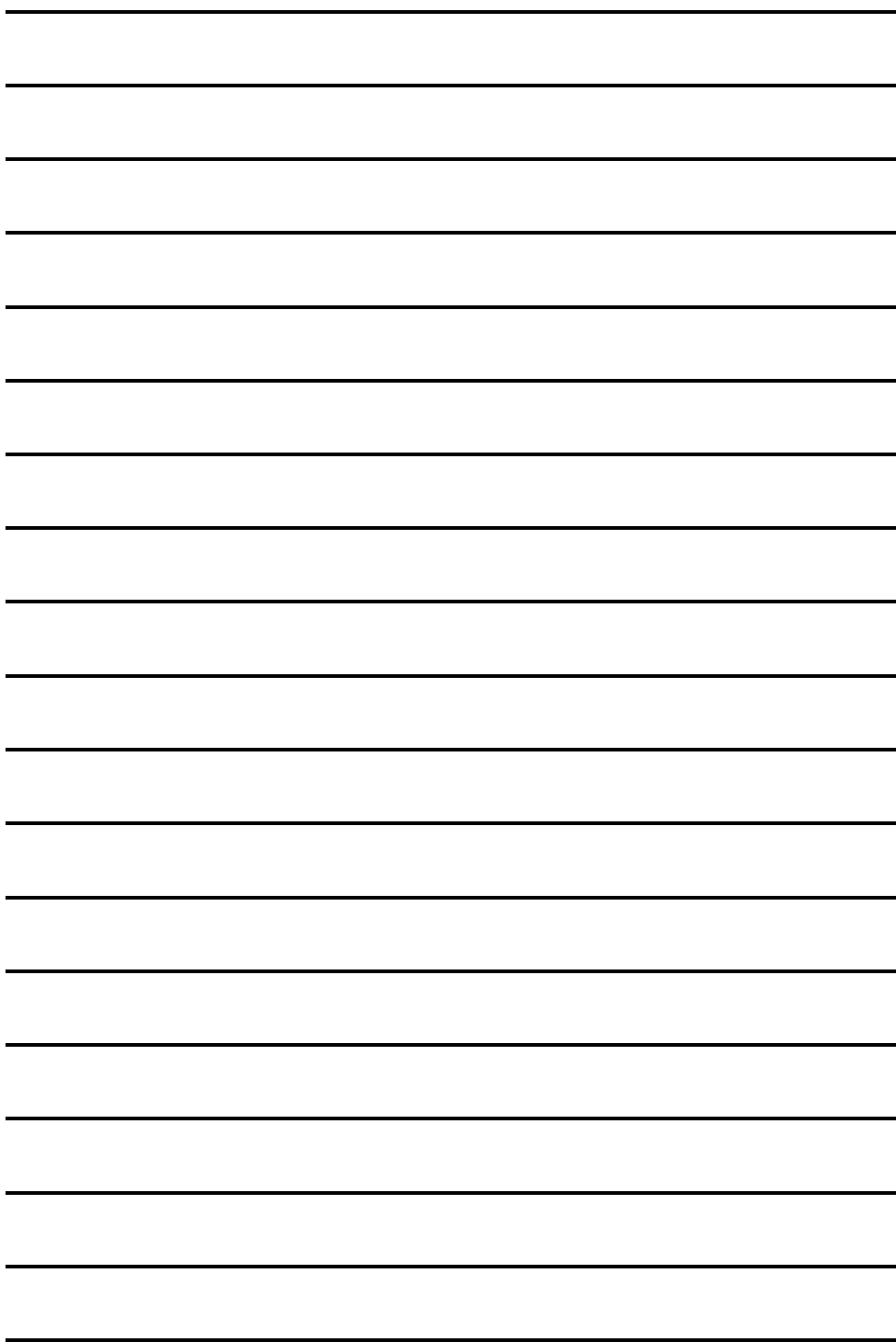


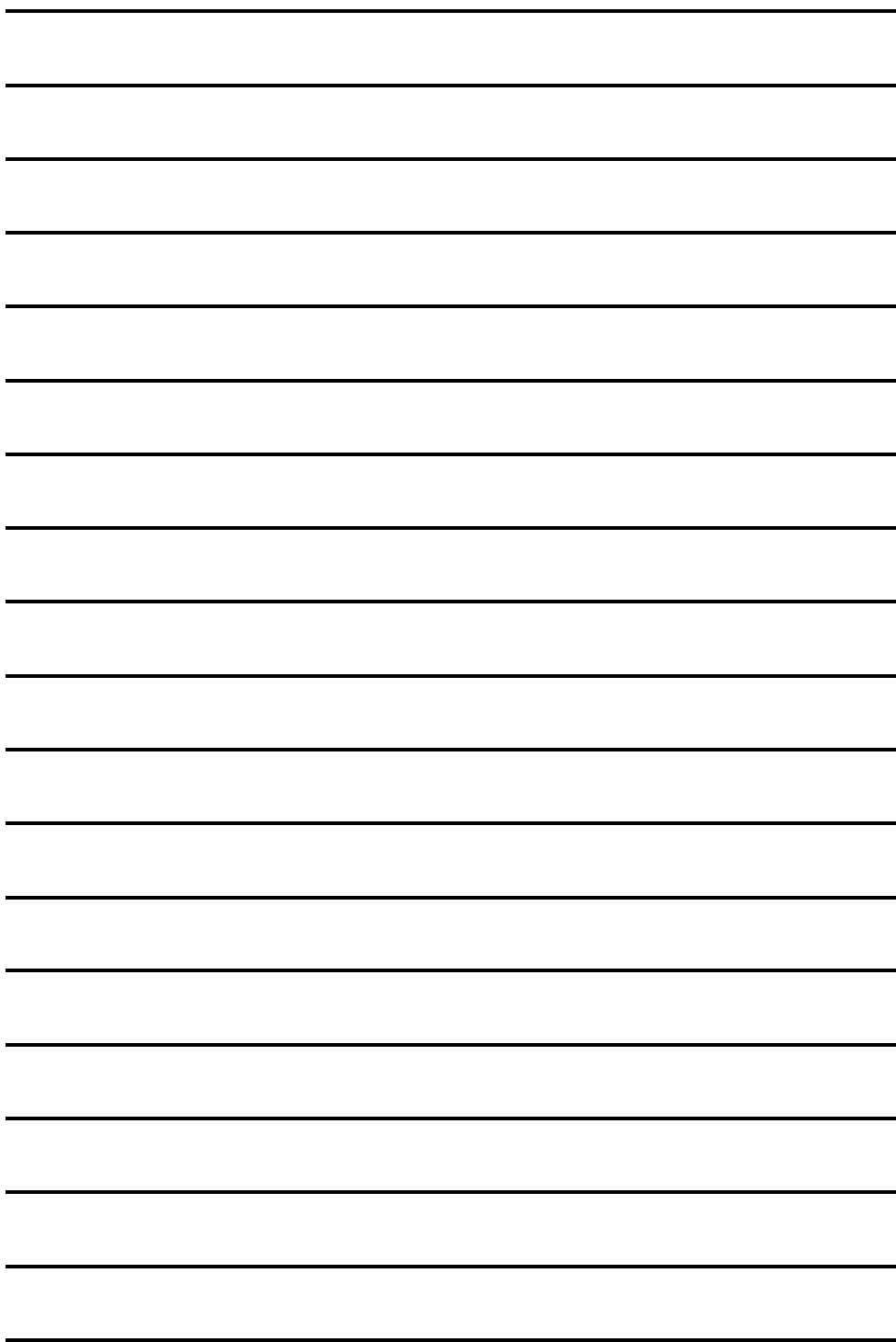


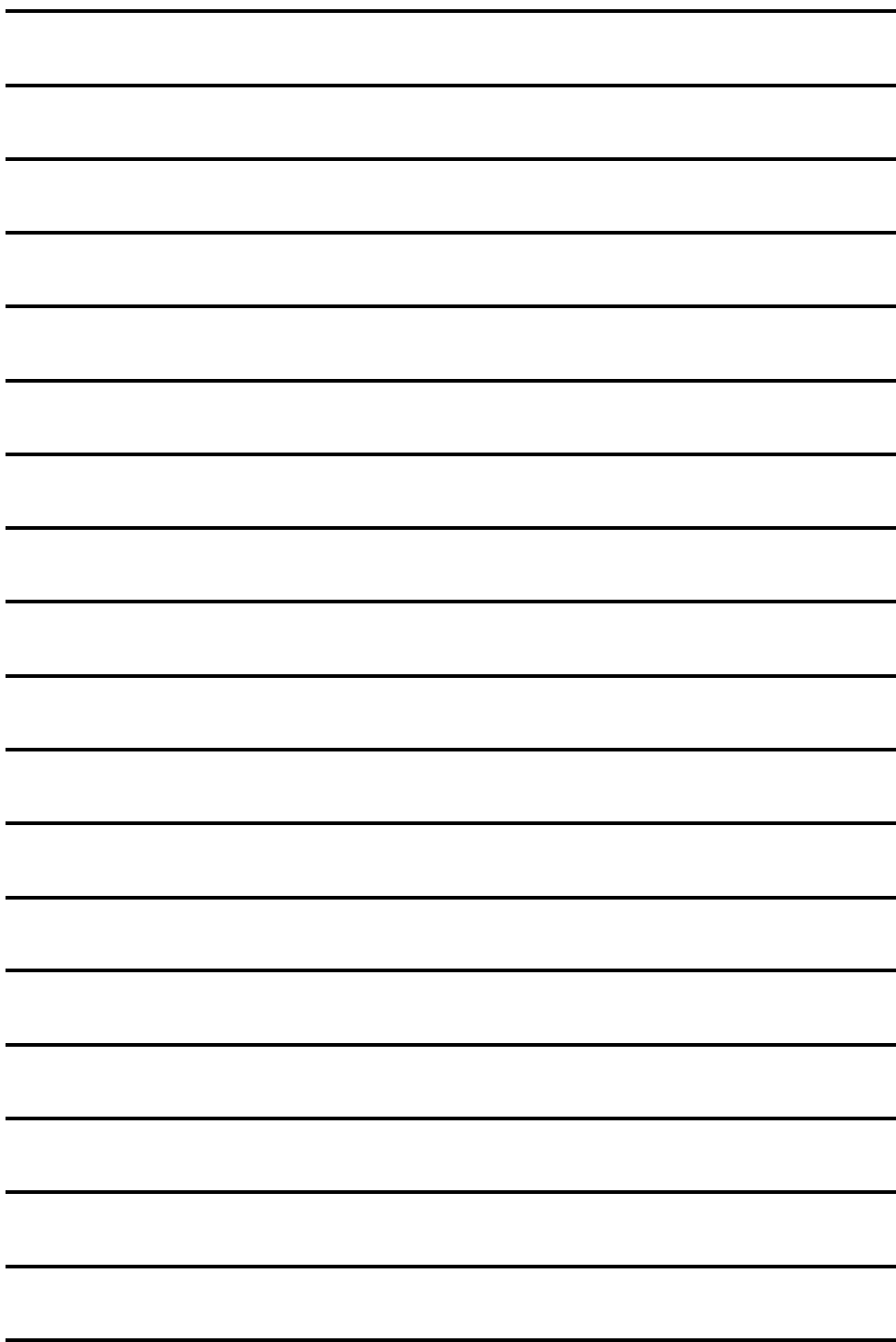


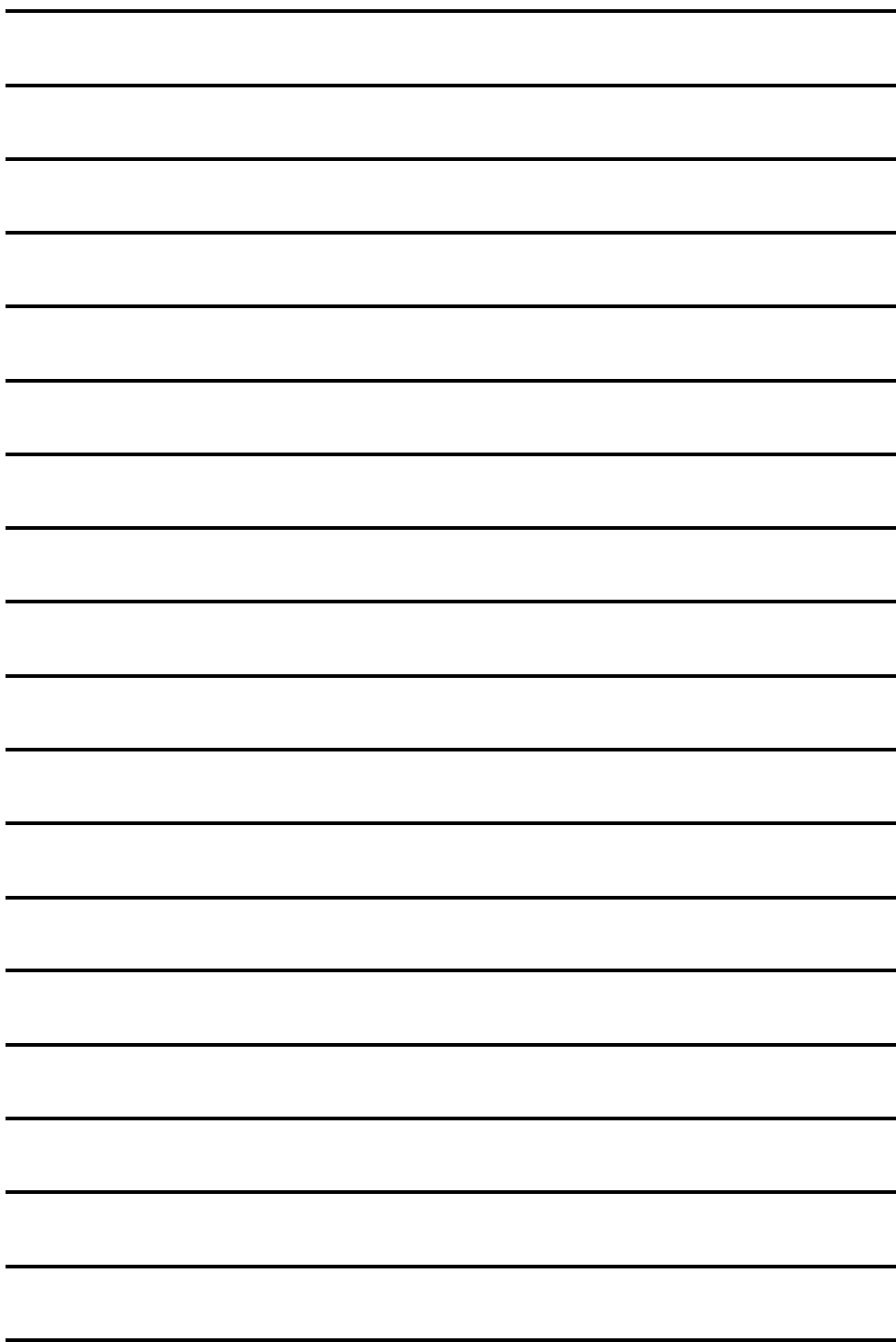












Date:

Hours Slept:

Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N):

Self Image (1-10)

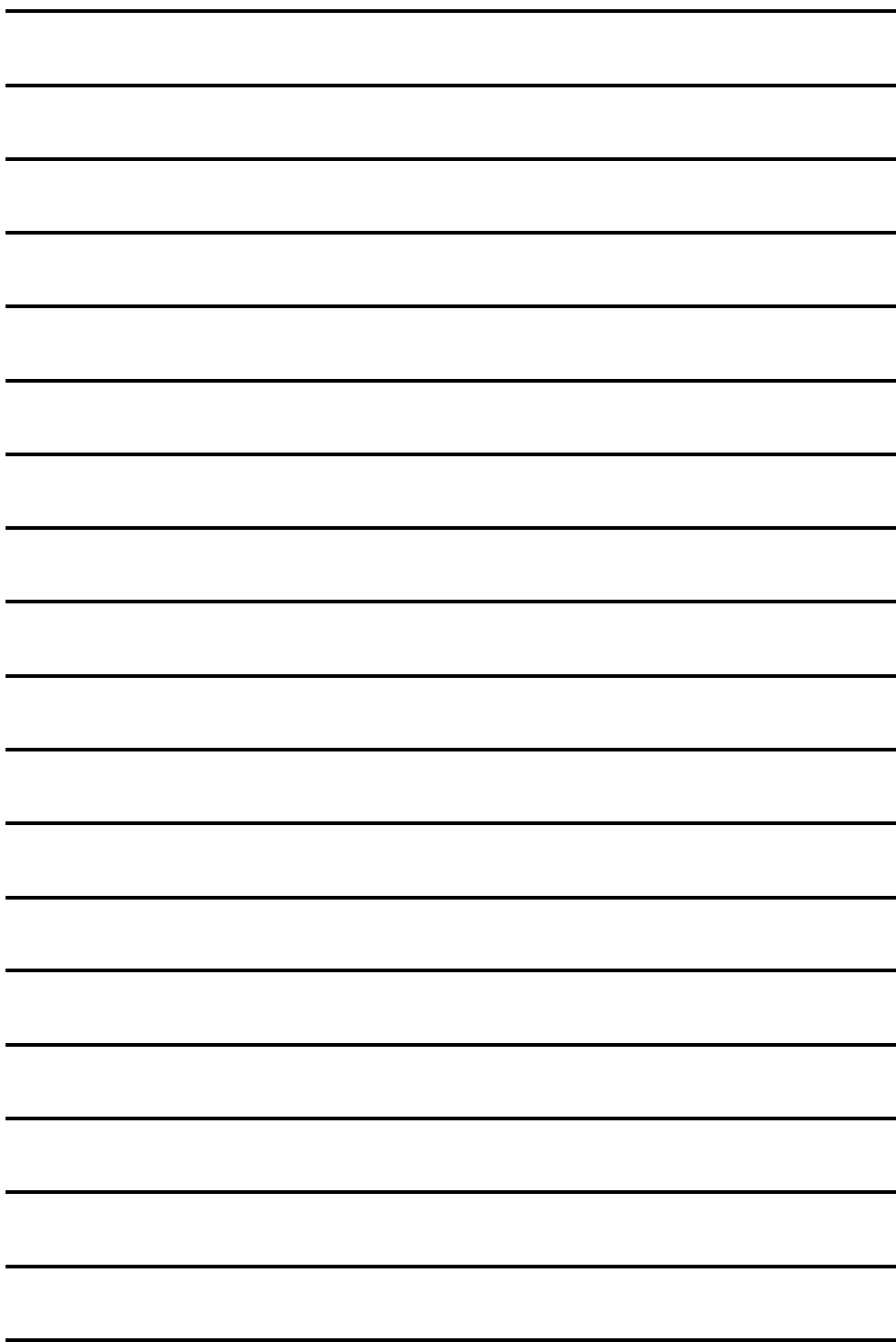
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

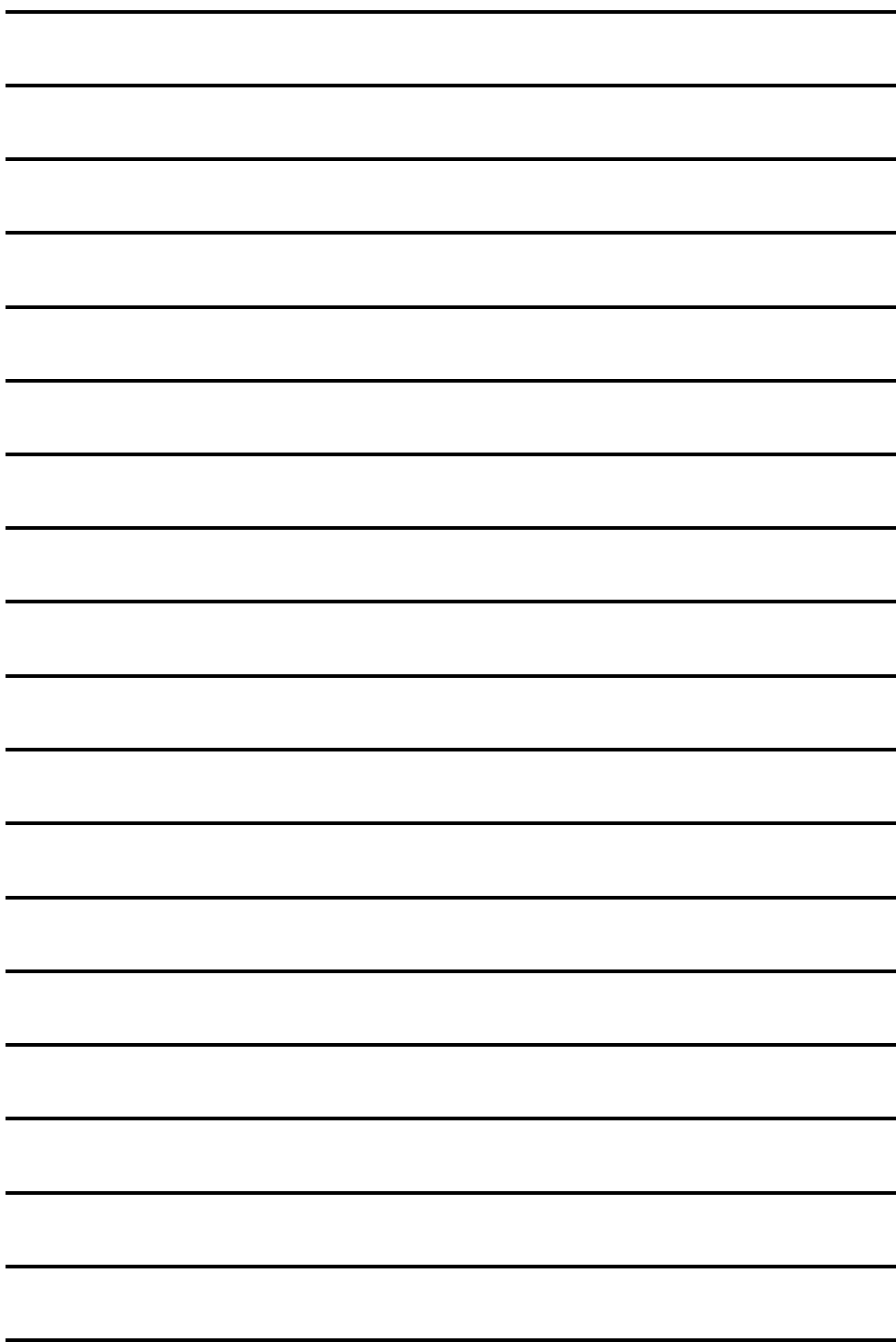
Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

If you never have enough time in the day then you are probably trying to do too much

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR





Date:

Hours Slept:

Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N):

Self Image (1-10)

Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

Did you ever think you just might be brainwashed into believing you aren't good enough?

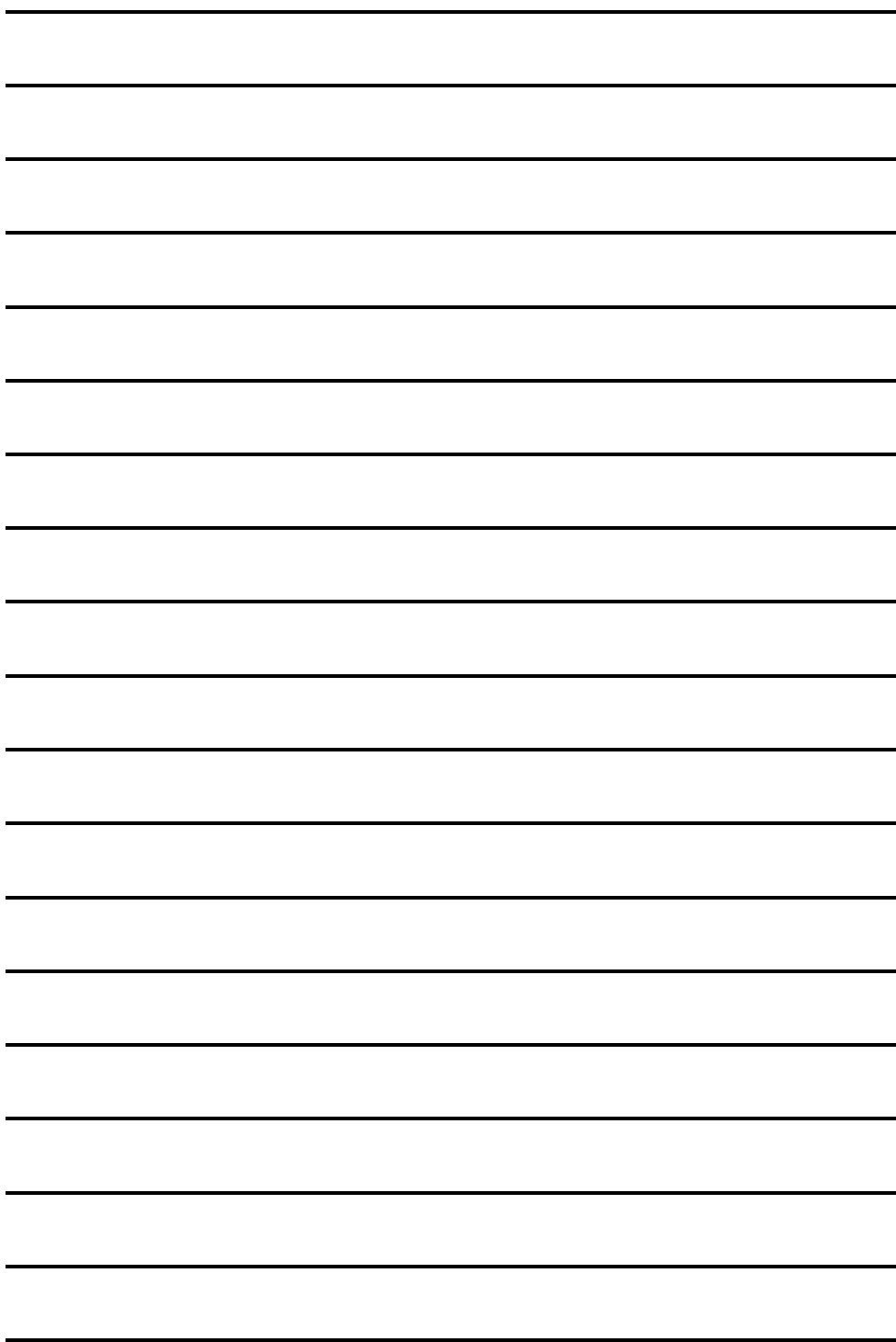
What if human beings were "programmed" for poor self-esteem and insecurity?

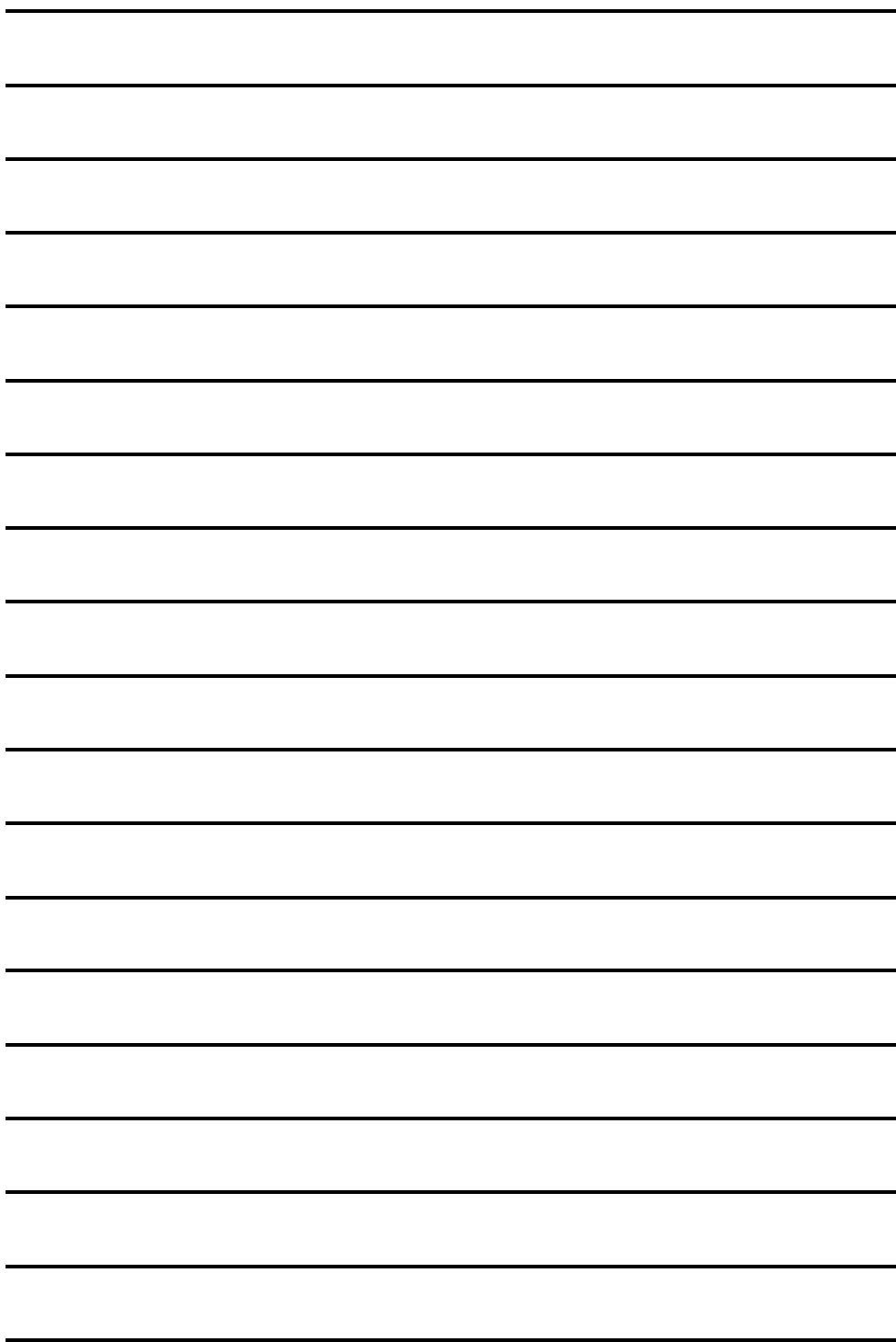
Breaking that brainwashing is not easy.

Society reinforces our insecurity? And if we don't have family or friends that try to tell us different we can easily get a very skewed vision of ourselves.

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



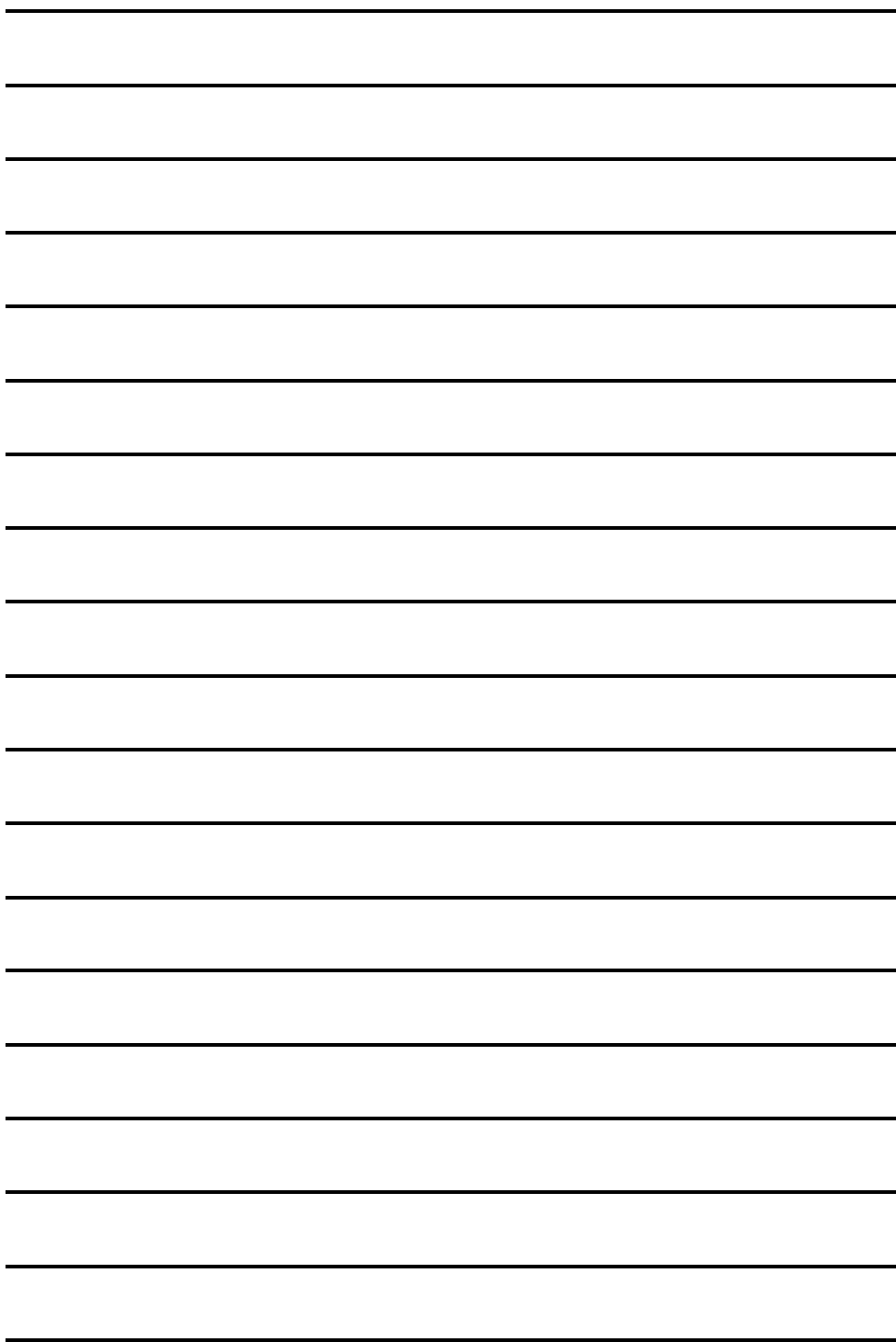


Date: Hours Slept:
Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N): Self Image (1-10)
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N): Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

***Madness is never the option.
Every once in awhile the world turns sane for a few moments.
Be ready for the world to make sense.
Then you can take advantage of it when it happens.***

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



Date:

Hours Slept:

Exercise and Relaxation (Y / N):

Self Image (1-10)

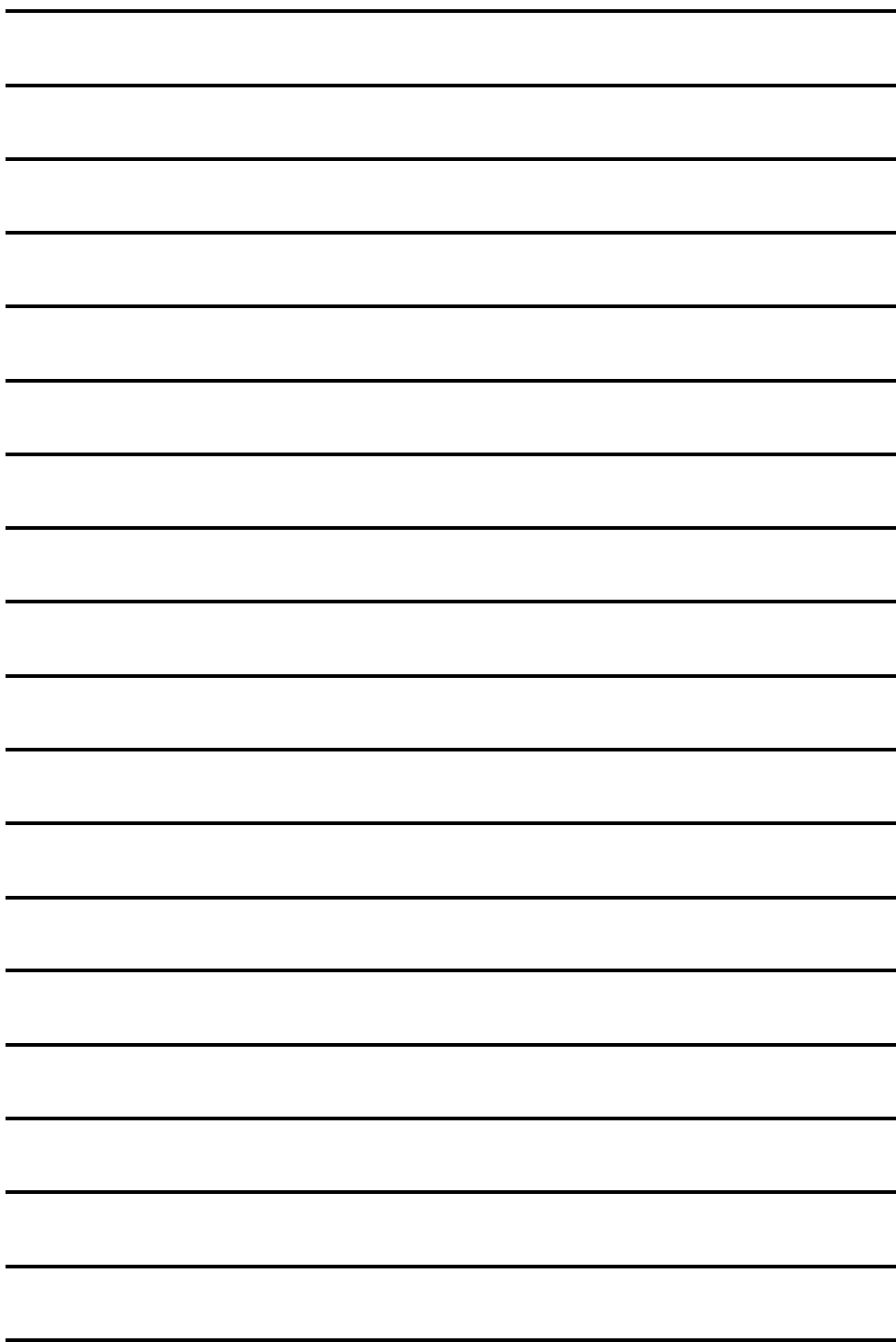
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

Brainwash yourself that you are worthwhile and you just might be telling yourself the truth.

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



Date: _____ Hours Slept: _____
 Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N): _____ Self Image (1-10) _____
 Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N): _____ Positive Self Comments (Y / N) _____

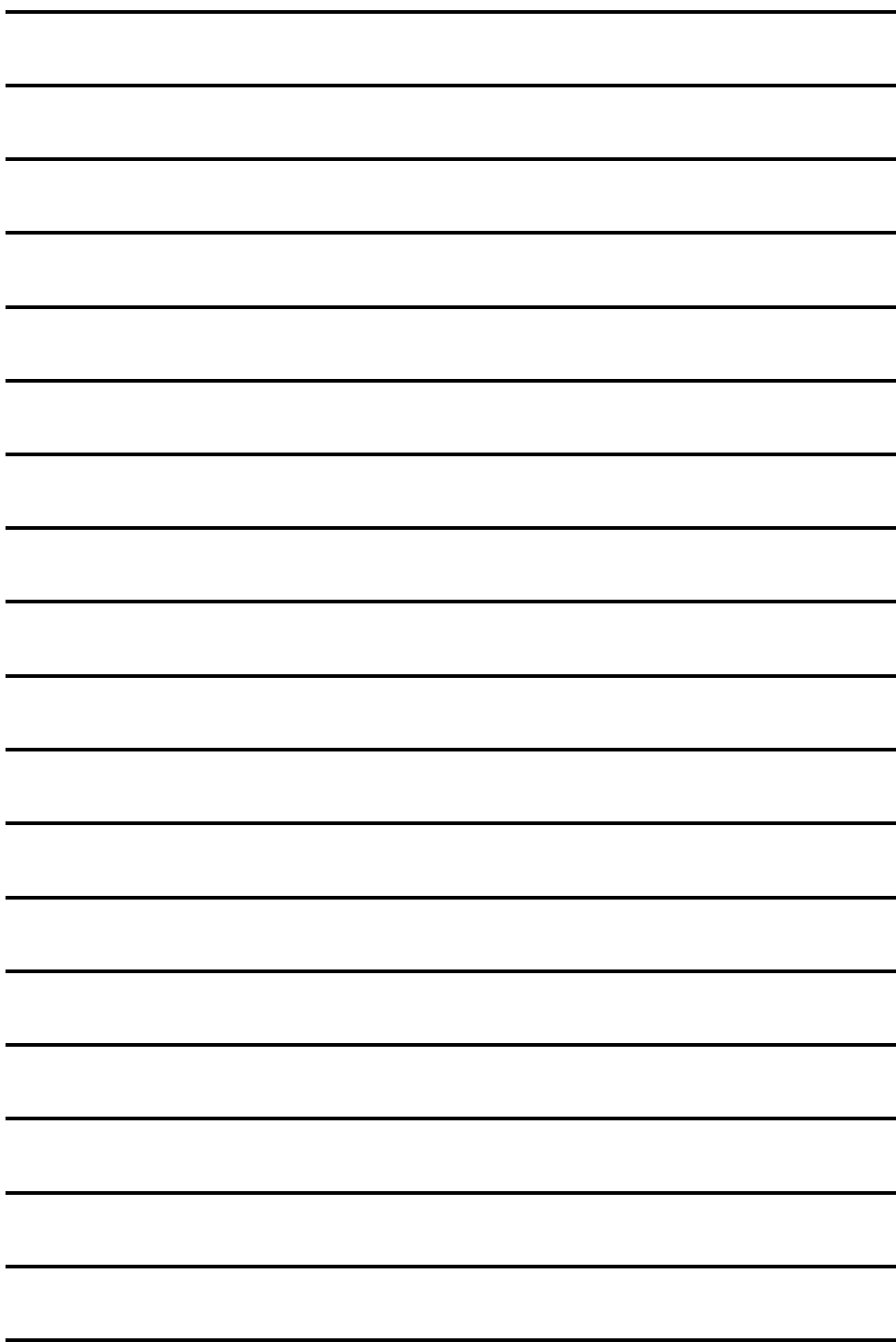
***Much of the pain comes from grieving in our life.
 In grief we often try to forget painful memories or losses.
 What tends to be more effective is active and at times selective***

memory.
***Trying to remember the good things. Even if you were treated
 badly in a relationship aren't there things you can be proud of: your
 loyalty, your commitment, etc?***

Work hard to remember good things.

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



Date: _____ Hours Slept: _____
Exercise and Relaxation (Y / N): _____ Self Image (1-10) _____
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N): _____ Positive Self Comments (Y / N) _____

Apply the things you talk about in therapy.

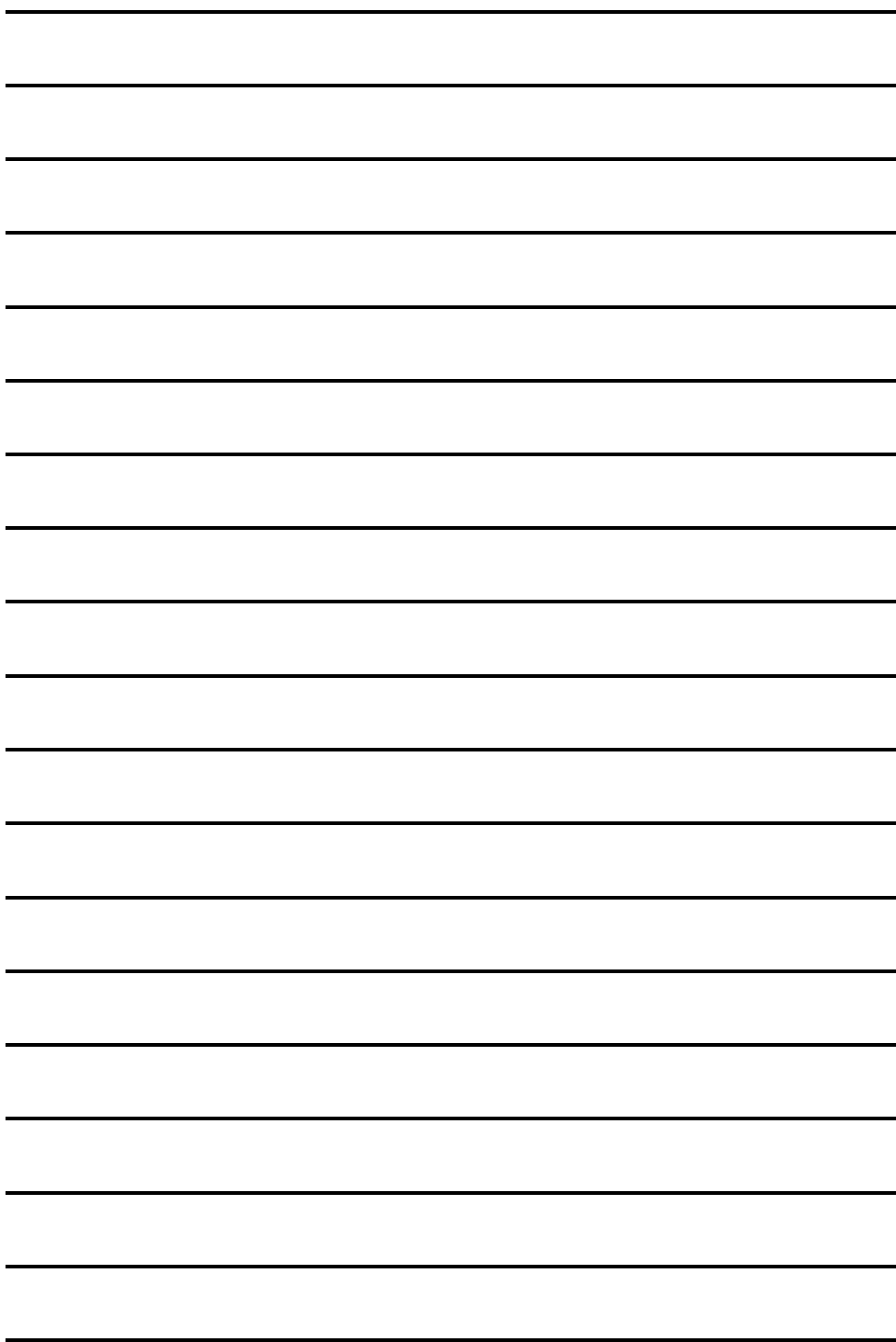
The therapy room is a practice room where you try to anticipate what you will face in the world.

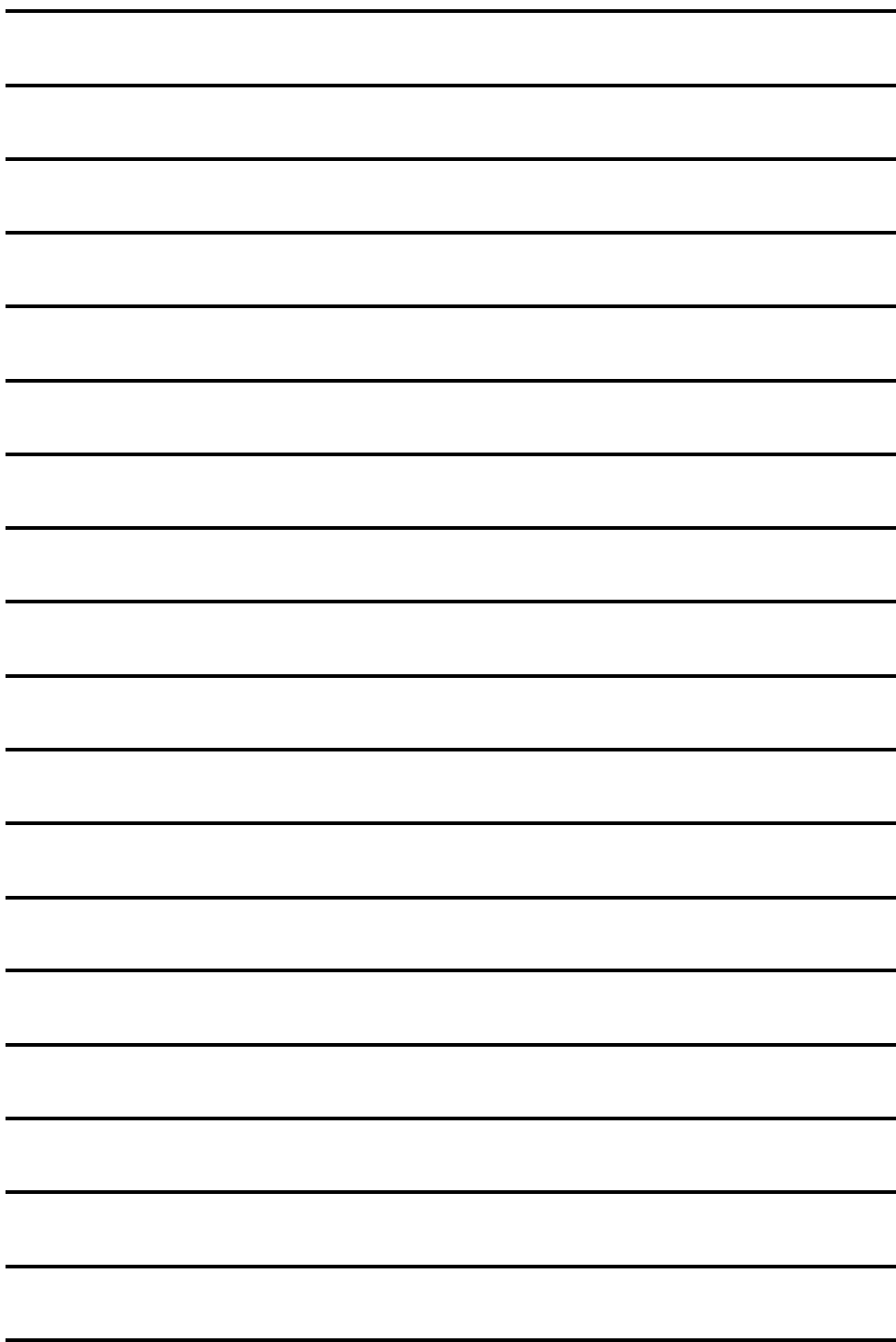
If you are seeing a therapist then you need to bring what you practice in the therapy room into the real world. Write about it in here. Practice what your learning in therapy with yourself in here.

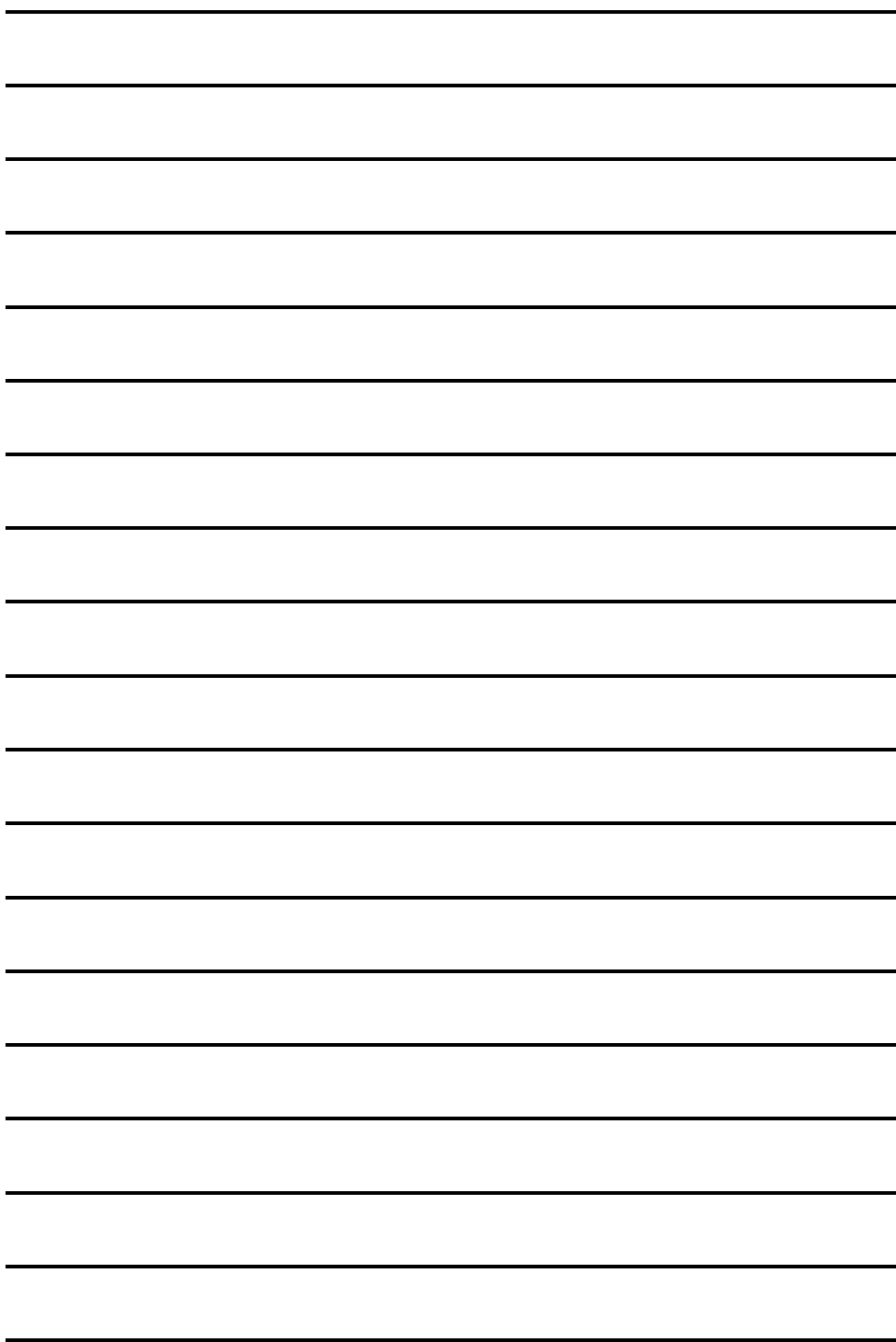
Work on changing feelings in here just like you do in the therapy room.

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR







Date: _____ Hours Slept: _____
Exercise and Relaxation (Y / N): _____ Self Image (1-10) _____
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N): _____ Positive Self Comments (Y / N) _____

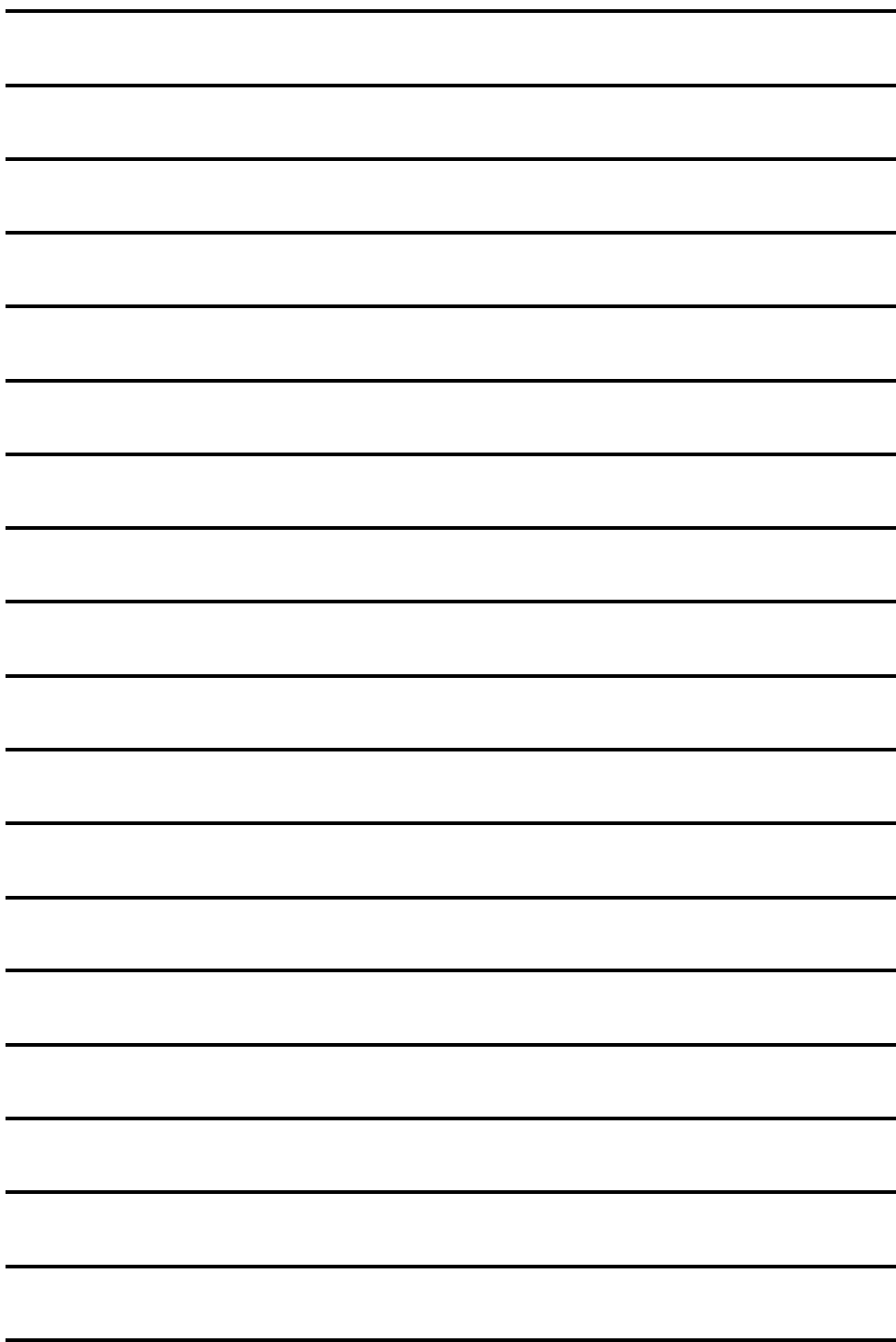
***Stop thinking far enough in the future to find something wrong.
Start thinking more in the present to find something right.***

Example:

“I may not have enough money twenty years from now but this ham sandwich REALLY tastes good.”

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



Date:

Hours Slept:

Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N):

Self Image (1-10)

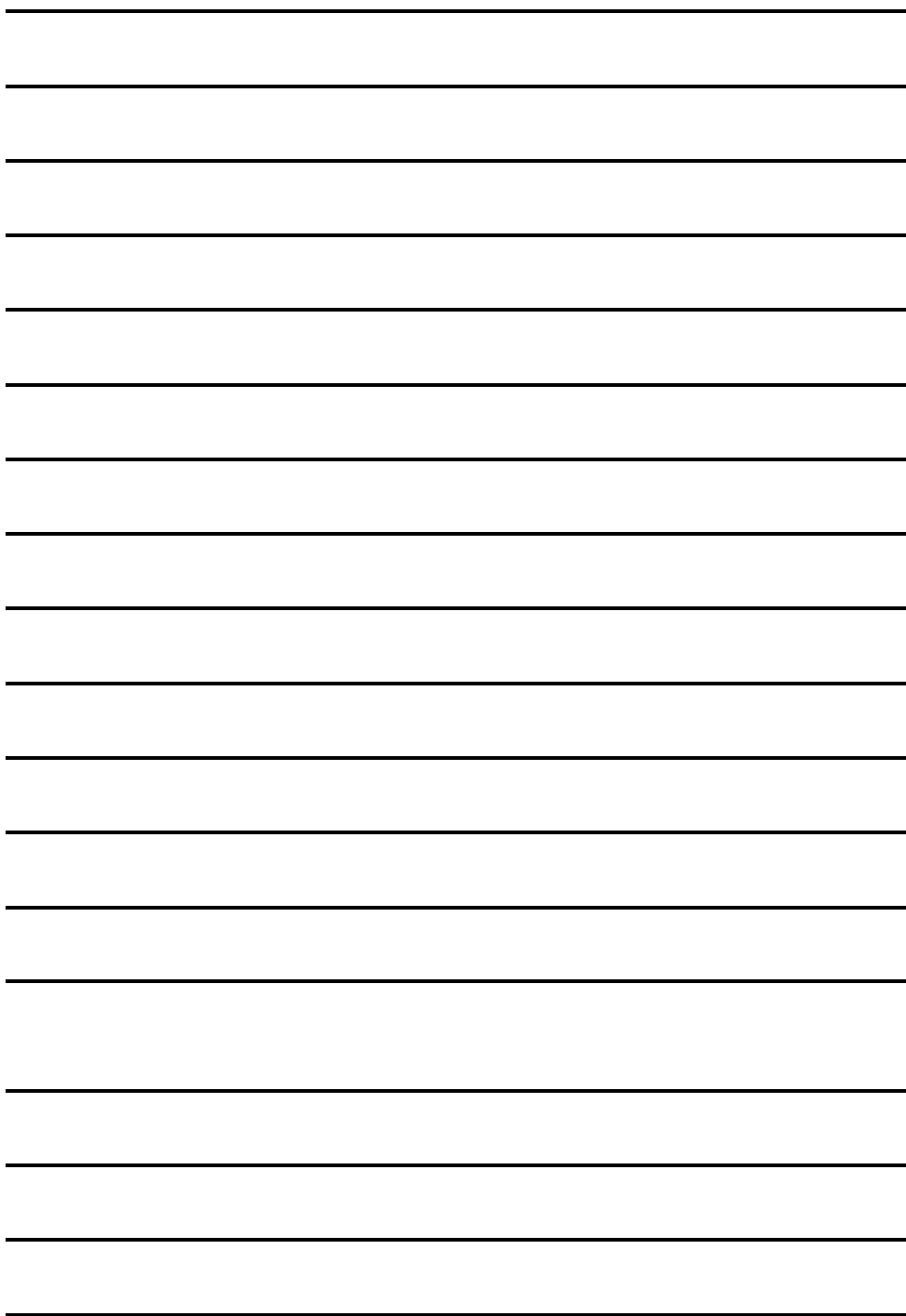
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

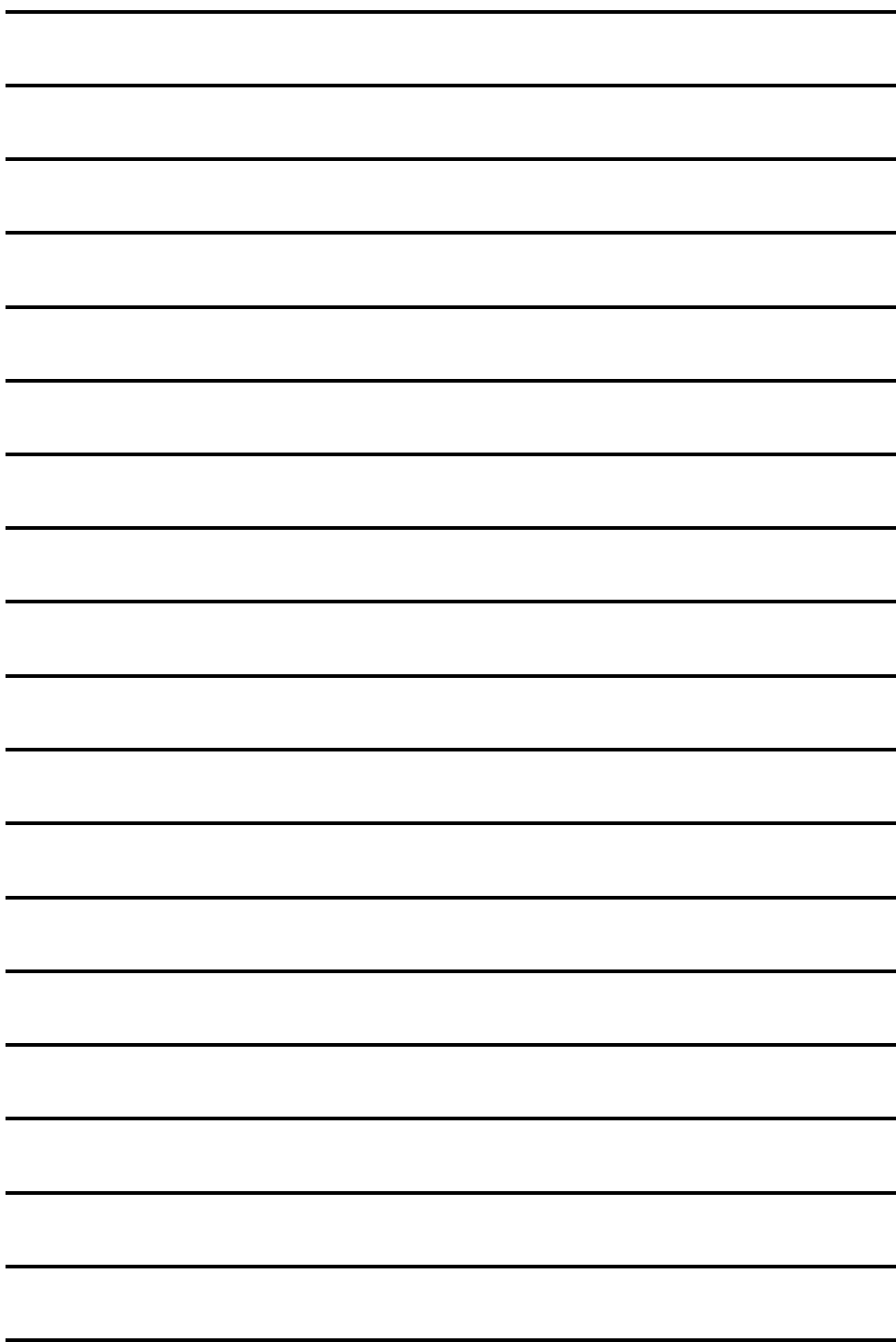
Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

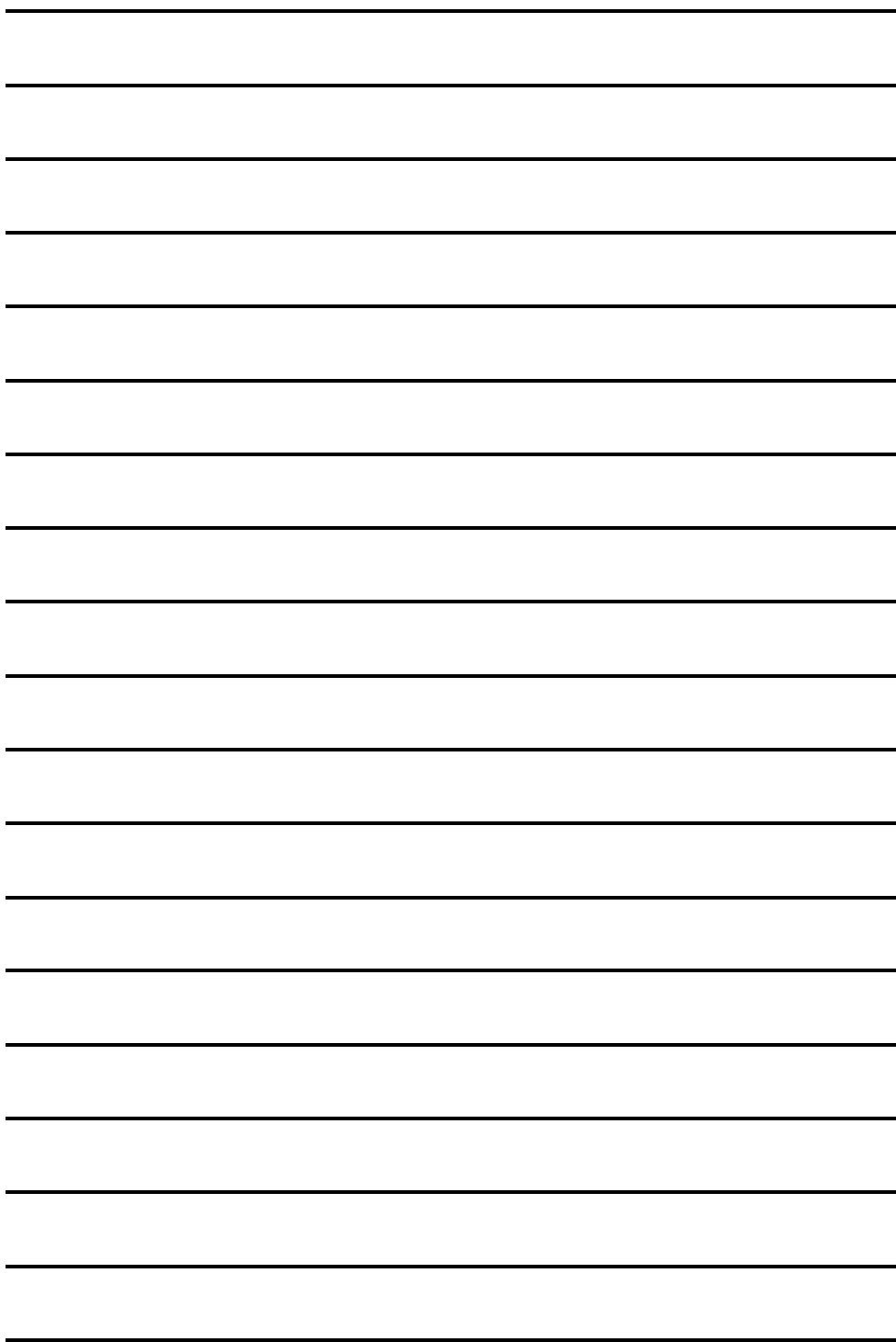
*The world really is a terrible place when compared to perfection.
But it's gotten slightly better.*

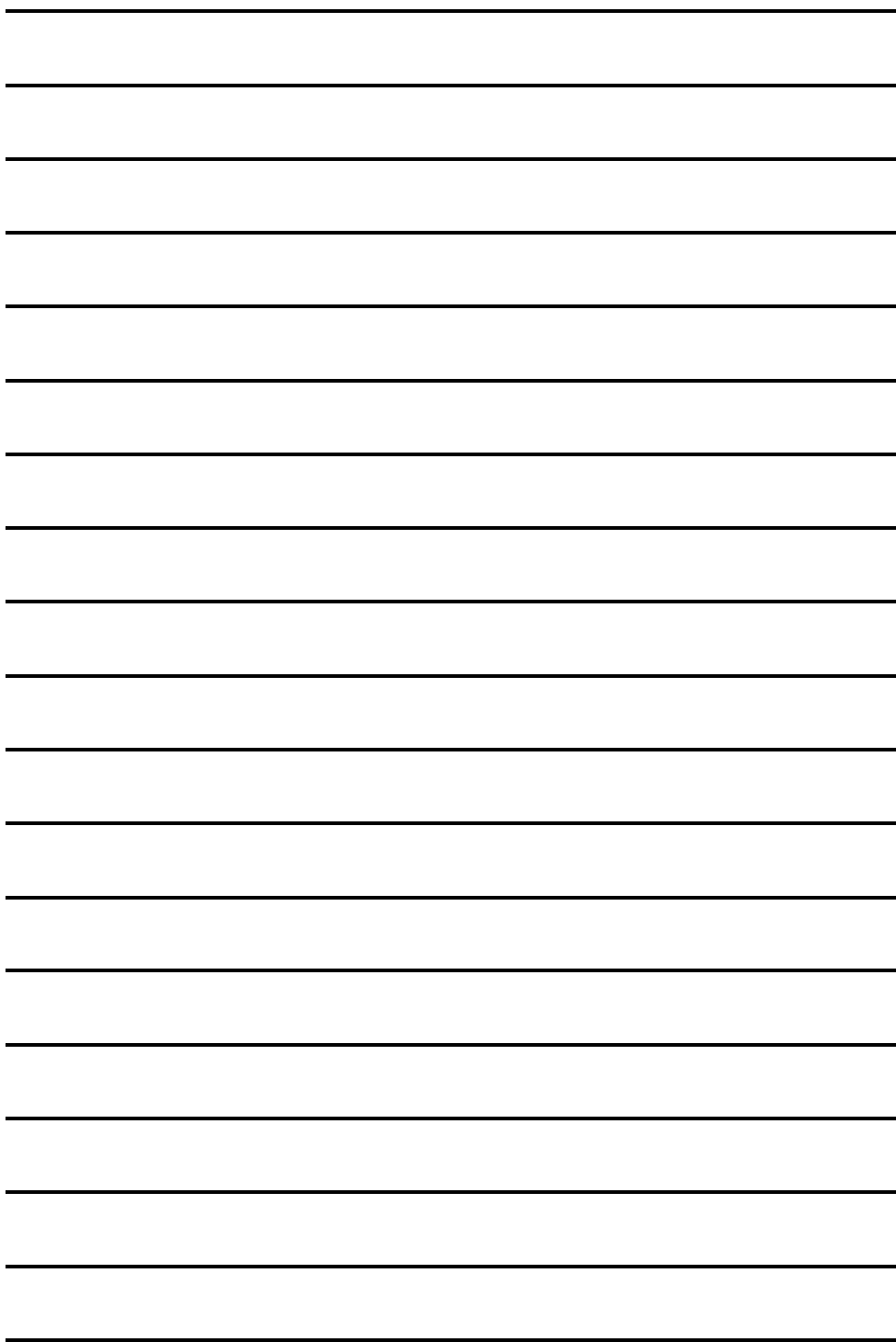
Terrible!-----Great!

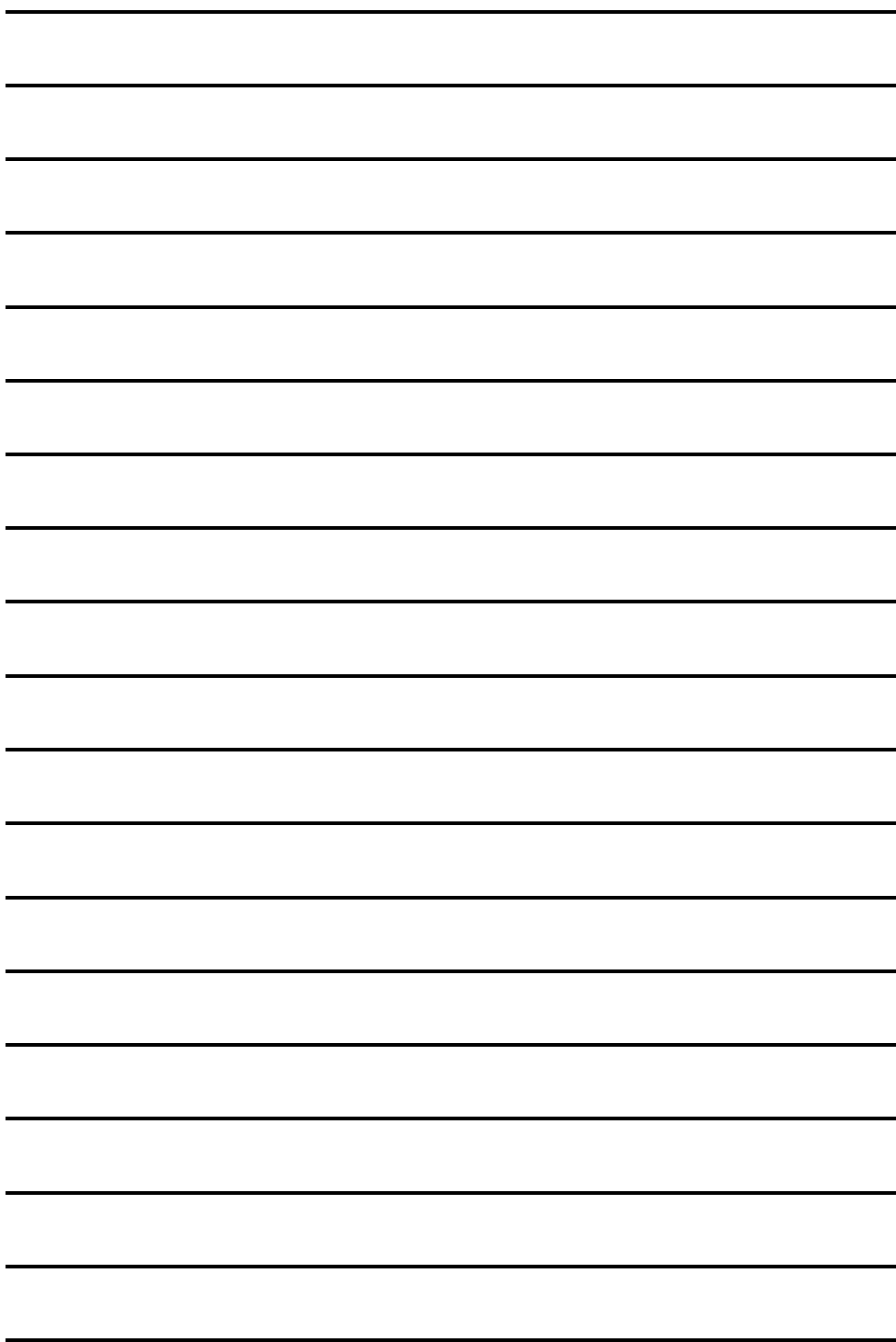
MOOD BAR

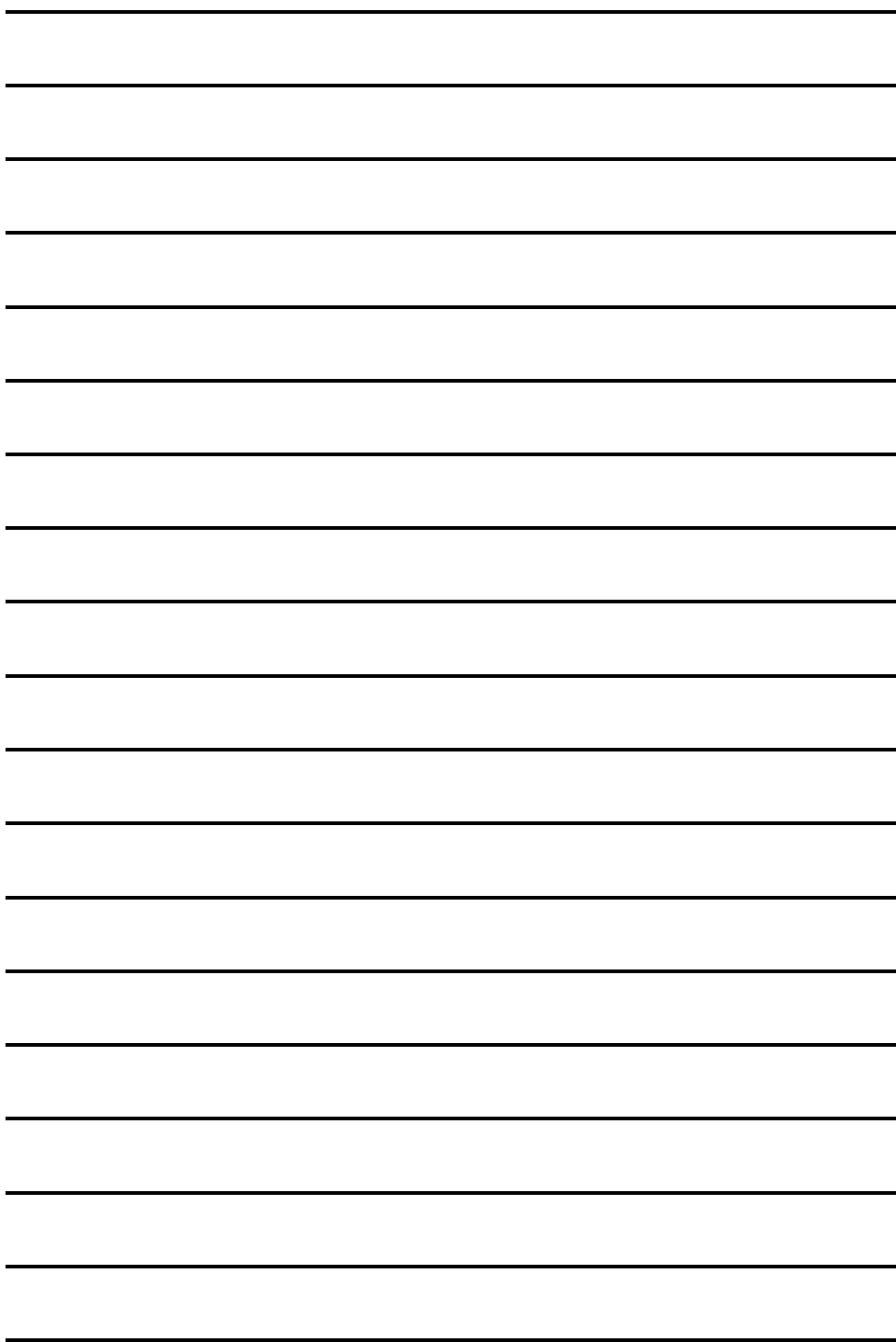


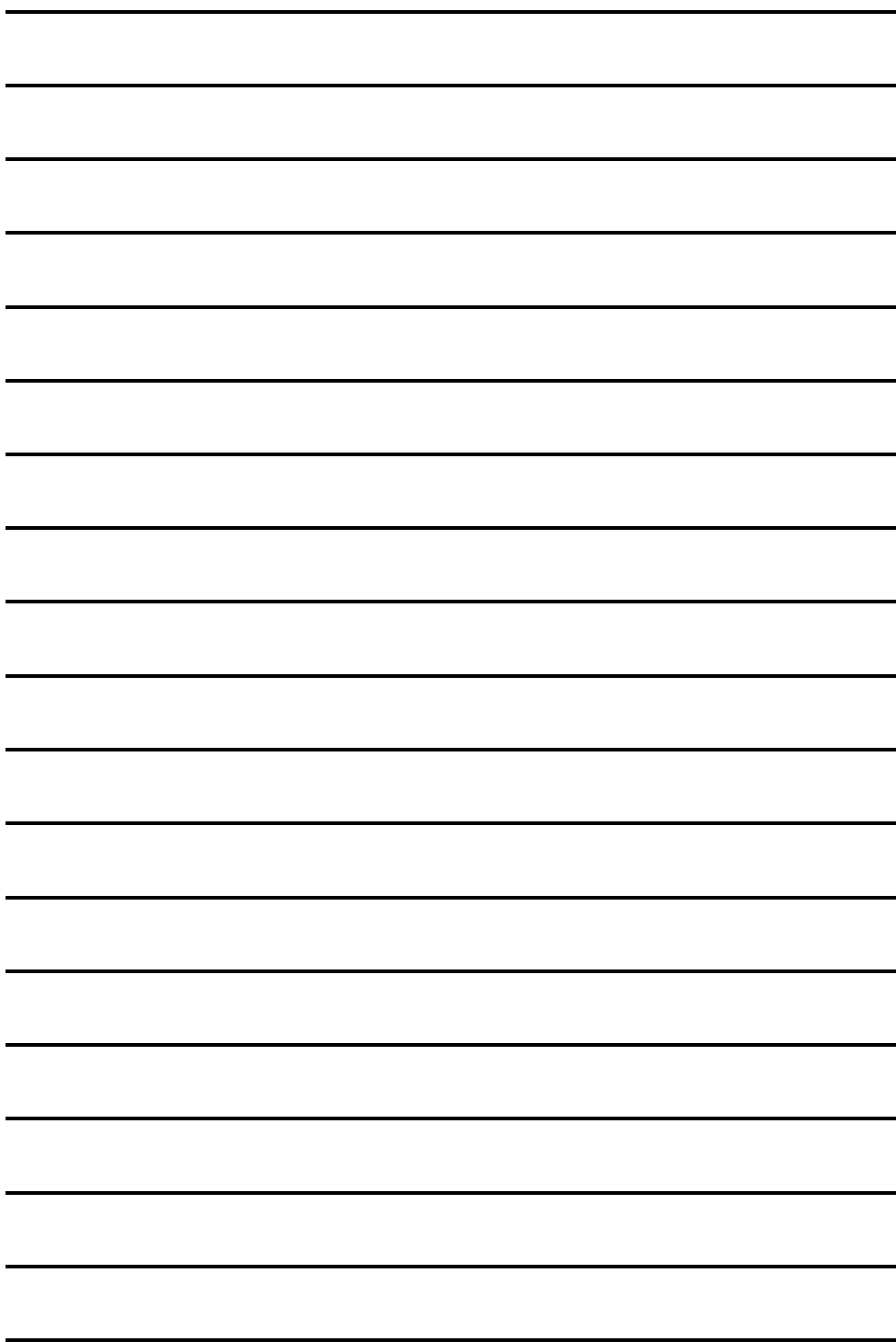












Date:

Hours Slept:

Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N):

Self Image (1-10)

Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

I'm gonna love myself.

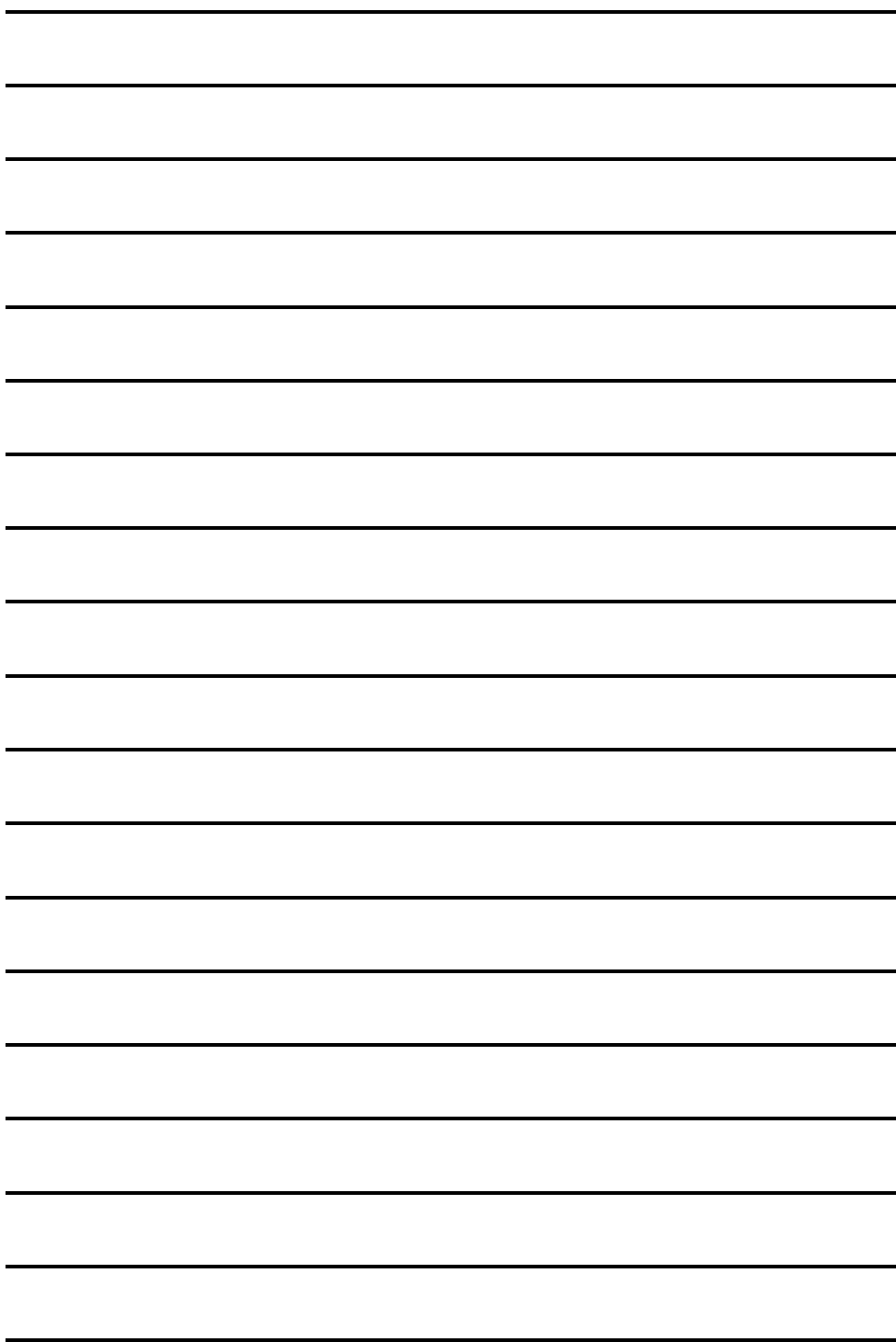
I'm gonna love myself.

I'm gonna love myself.

Even though I'm a big screw up.

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



Date:

Hours Slept:

Exercise and Relaxation (Y / N):

Self Image (1-10)

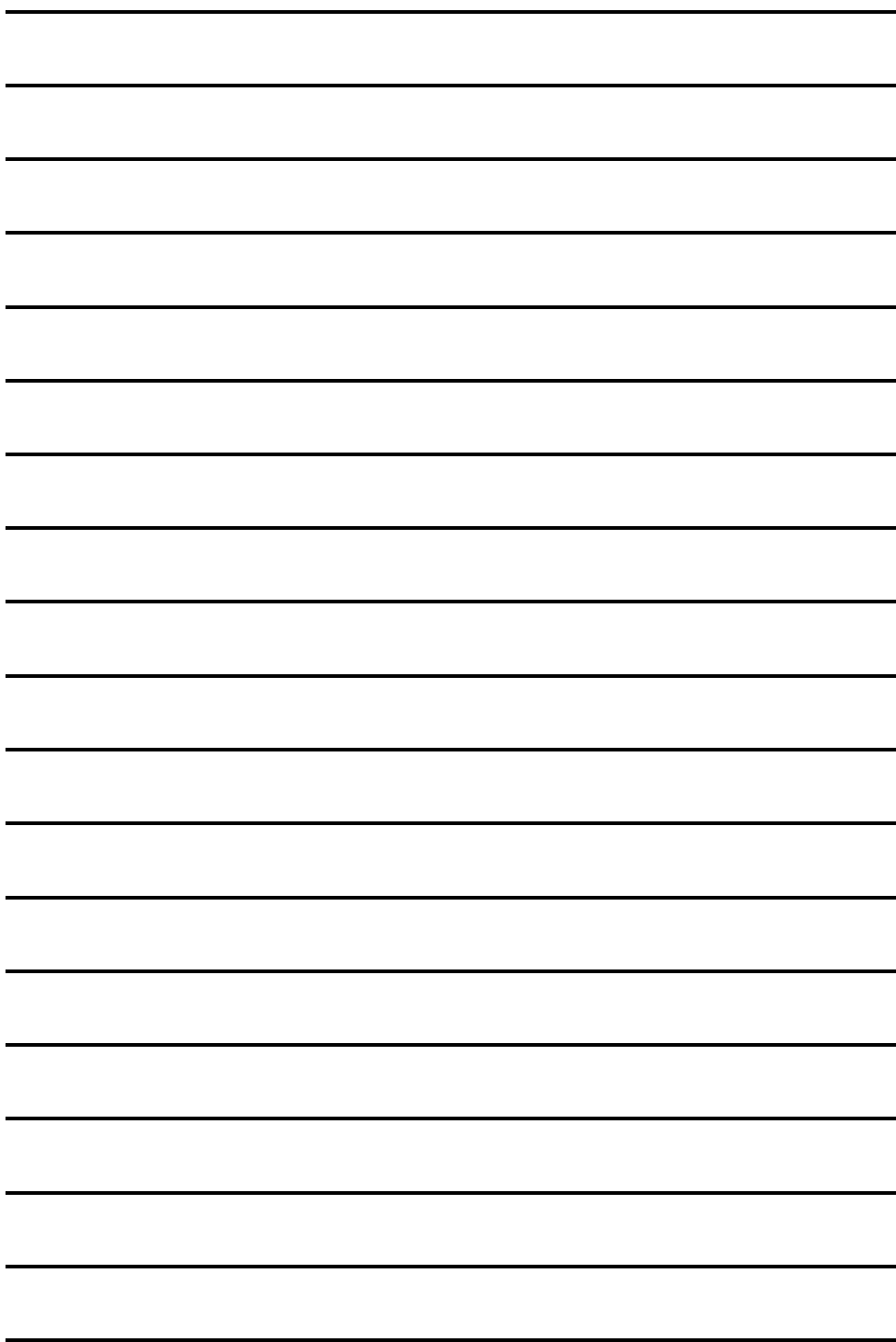
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

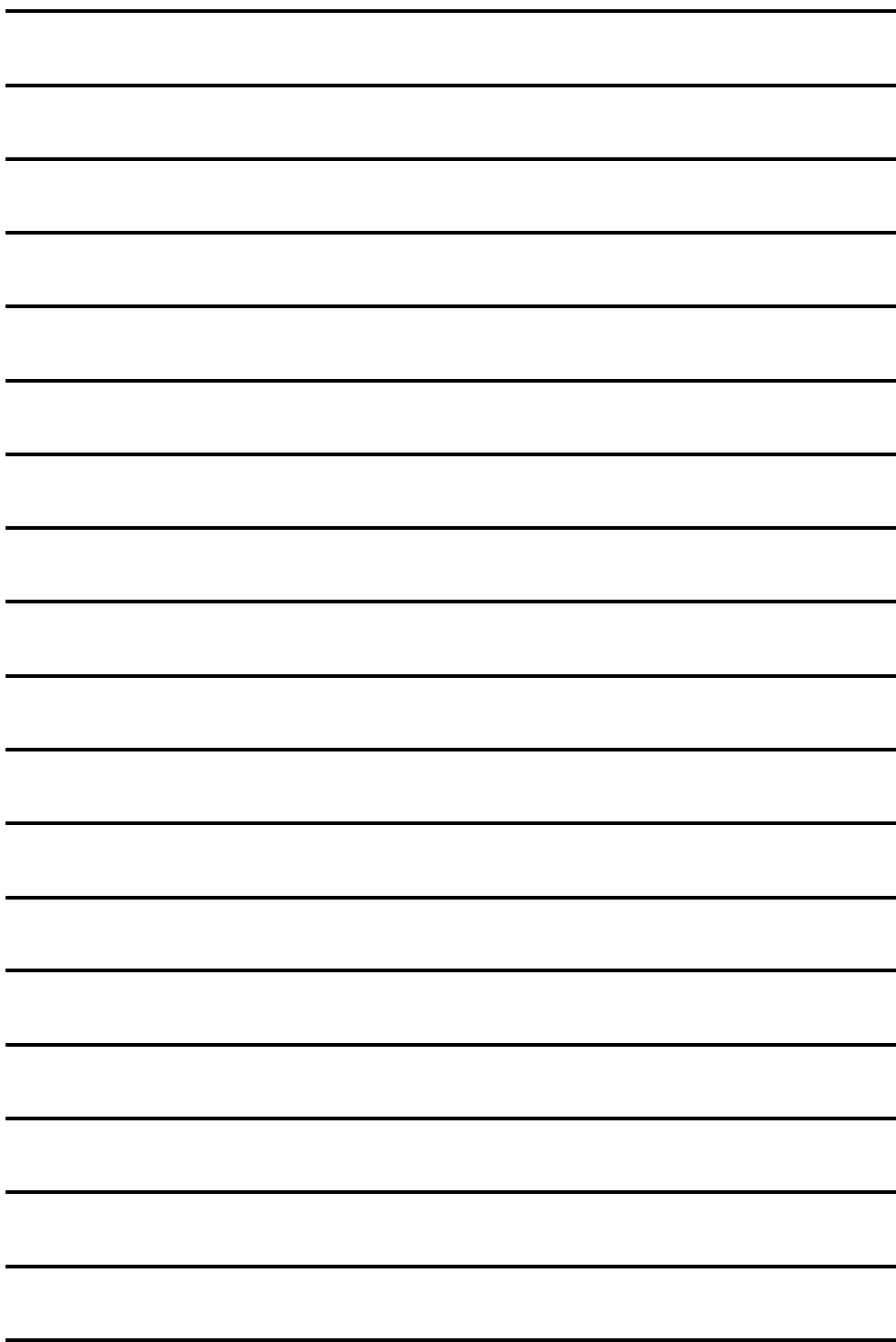
Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

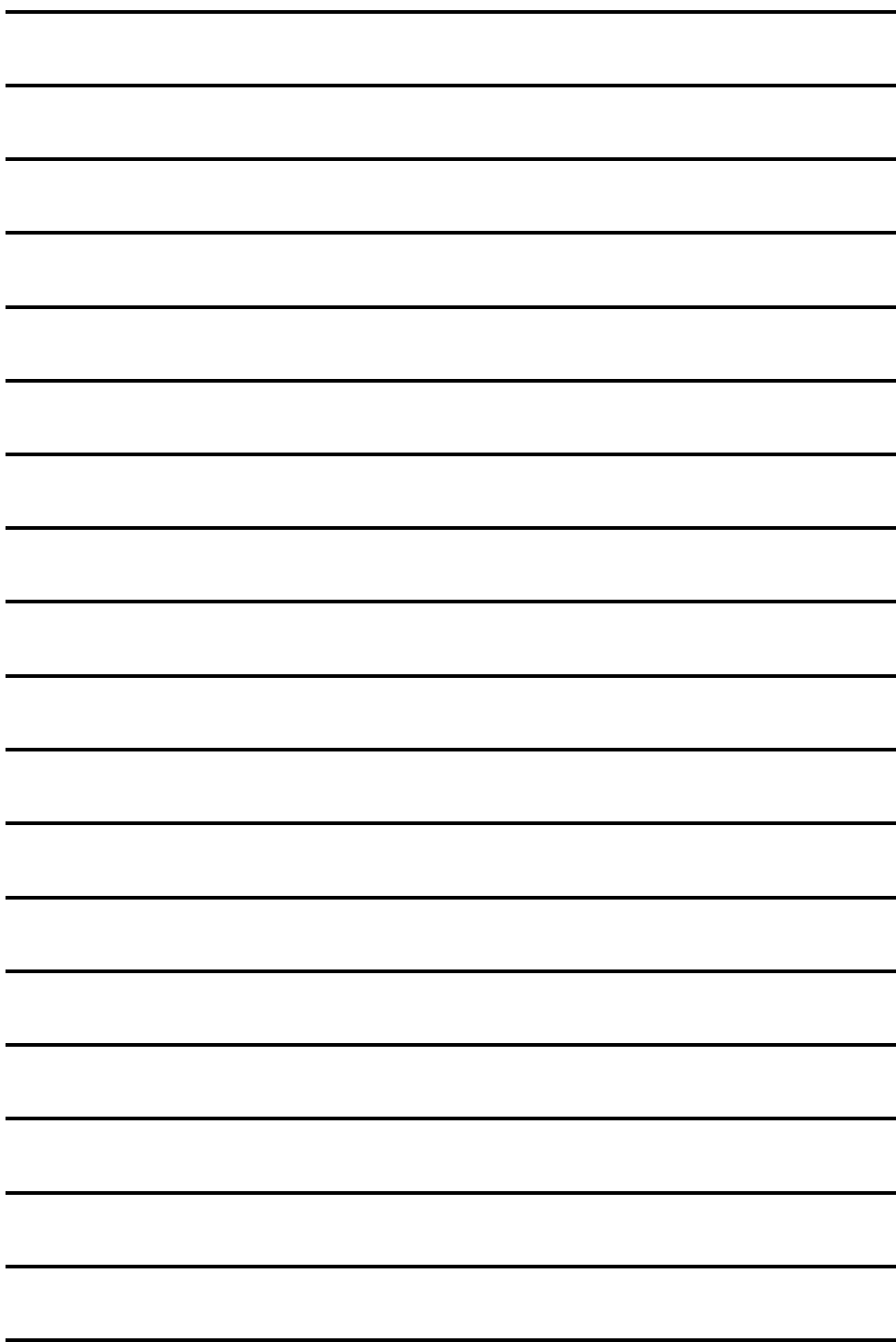
*Dr. Grace isn't being nice to me.
I'm being cruel to myself.*

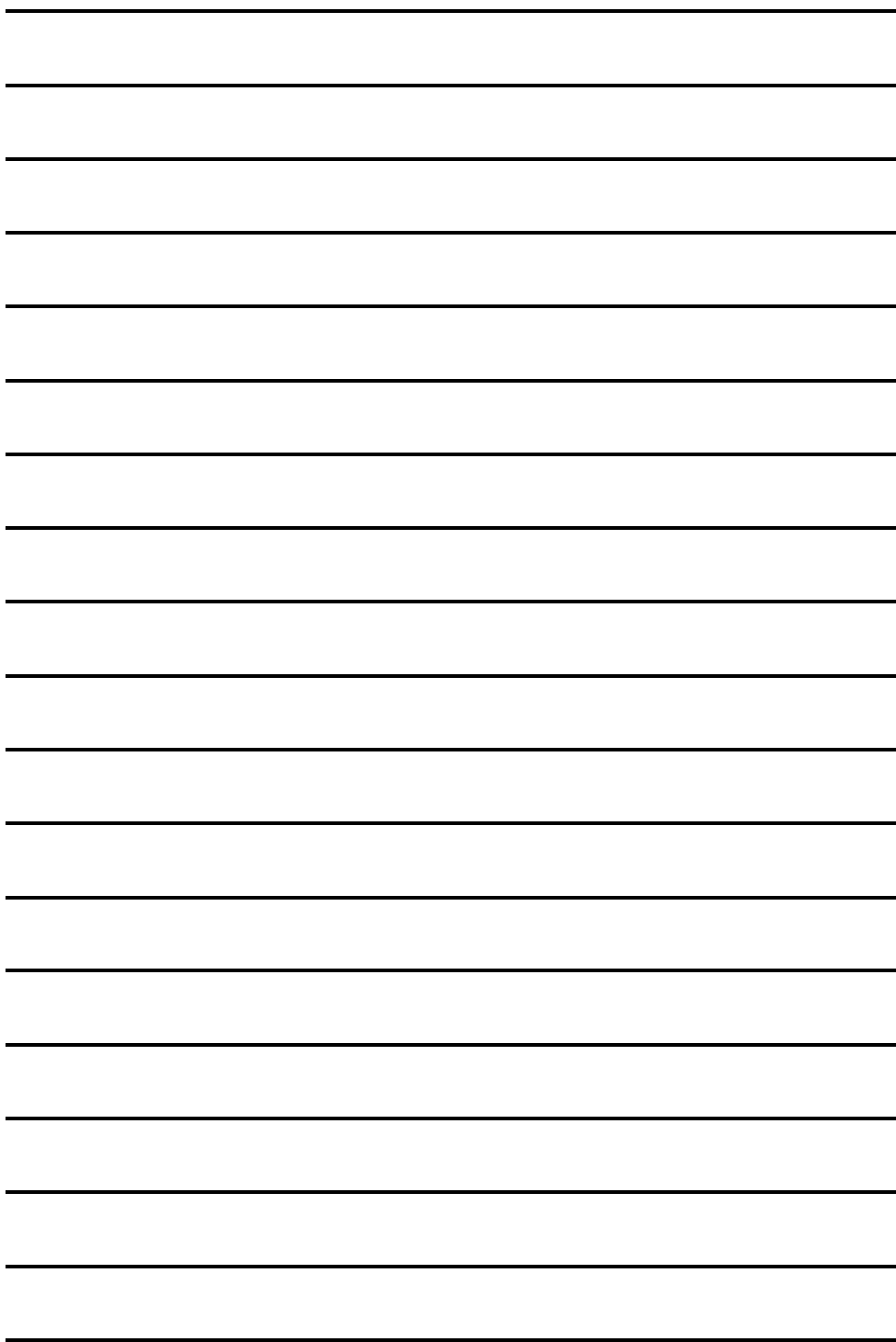
Terrible!-----Great!

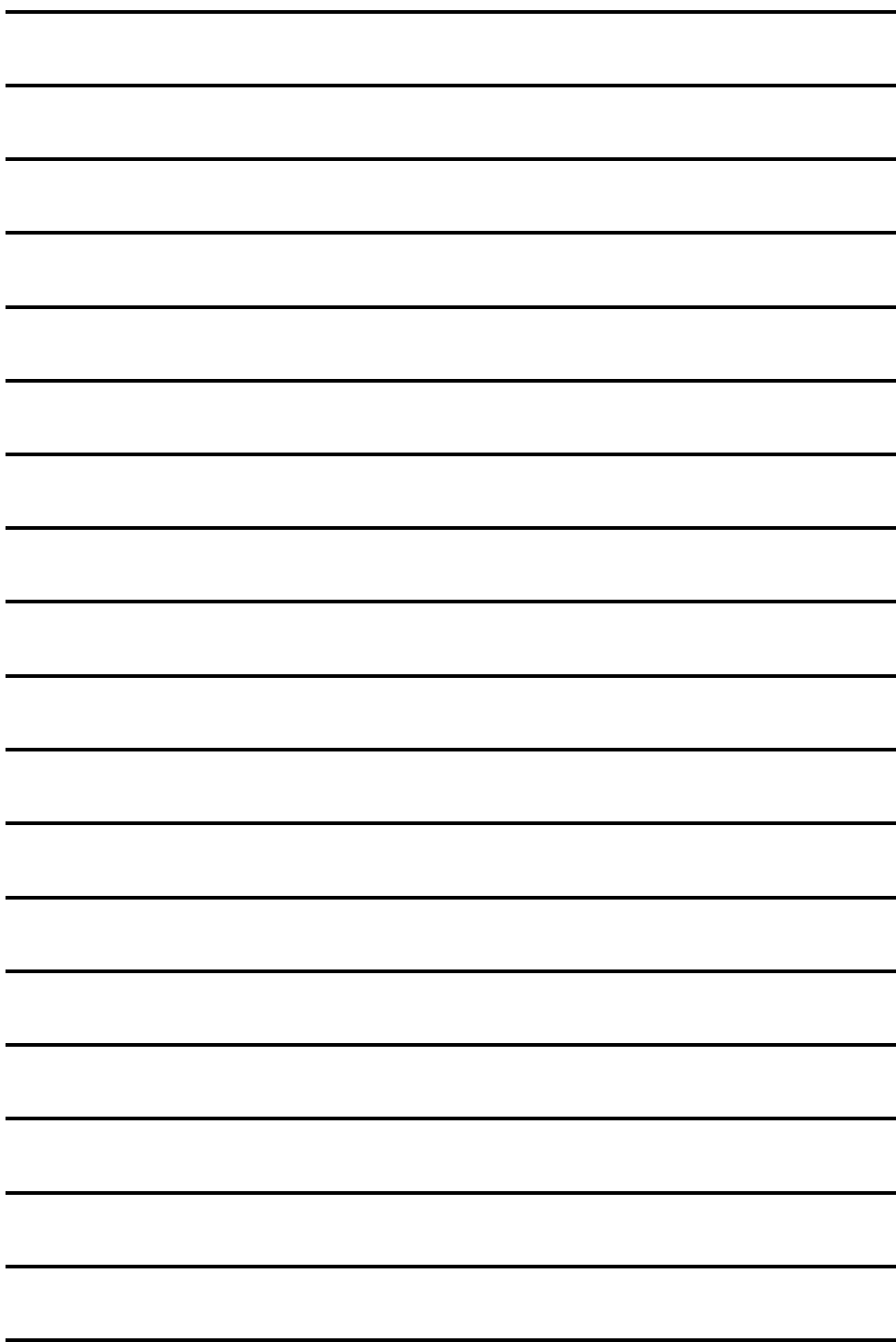
MOOD BAR











Date:

Hours Slept:

Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N):

Self Image (1-10)

Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N):

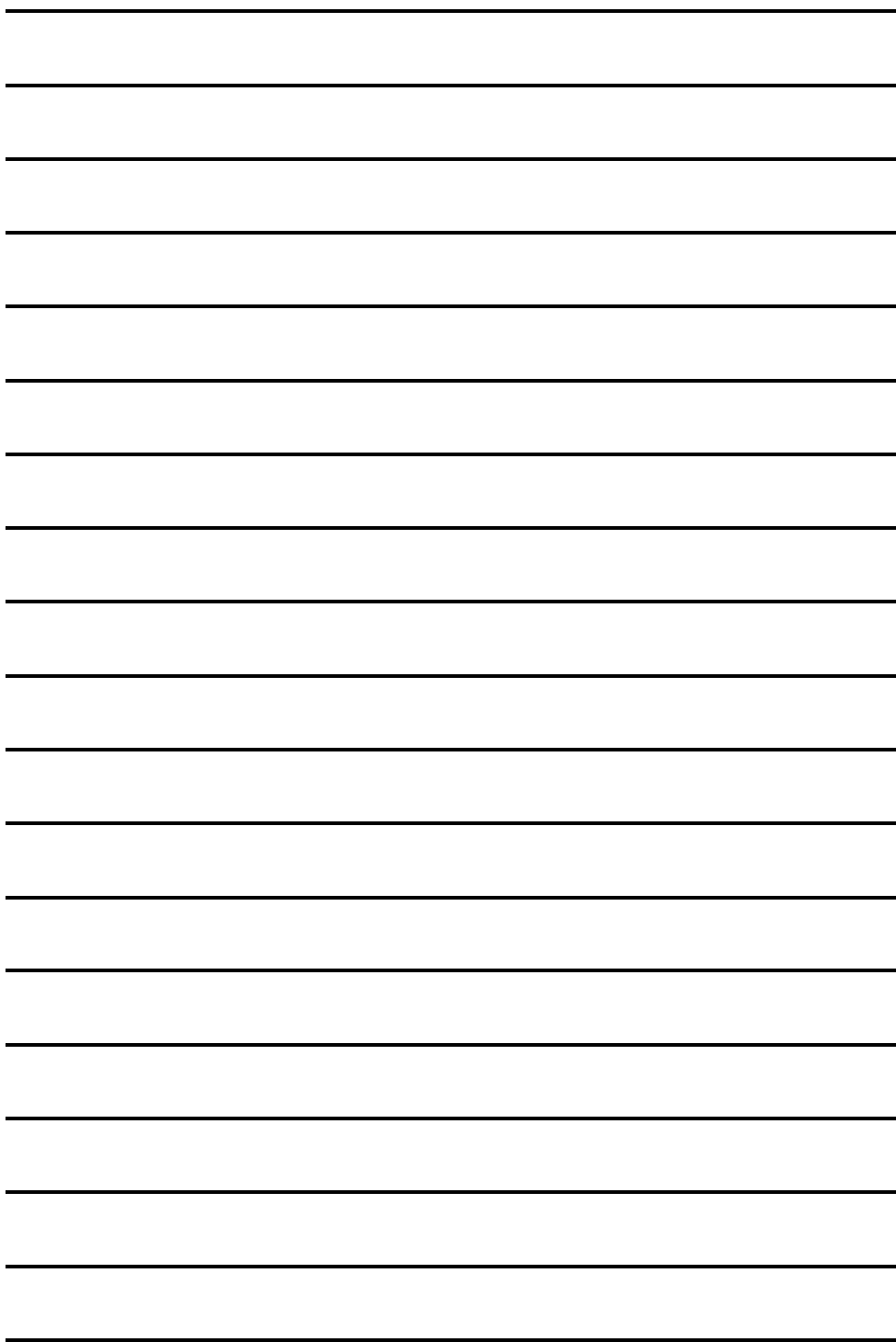
Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

Stop talking big plans and start doing little plans.

Be happy with doing the little plans not angry that you're not doing the big plans. The second part is the MOST important.

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



Date: Hours Slept:
Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N): Self Image (1-10)
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N): Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

It's never good enough.

Life that is...is never...ever...good enough.

Enough is really, really far away.

*So far in fact that we spend all of our time looking toward it, neglecting
this infinite distance we've traveled.*

*It's hard to imagine taking infinity for granted but we are extraordinarily
adept at it.*

*Like the deft skill with which we deny everything that everyone we ever
knew, ourselves included, has accomplished when we say, "Look at how
screwed up everything is."*

That's a lot of progress that we somehow manage to ignore.

Being a bad pessimist doesn't make you an optimist.

Being a bad fool doesn't make you wise.

Being bad at being bad doesn't make you good,

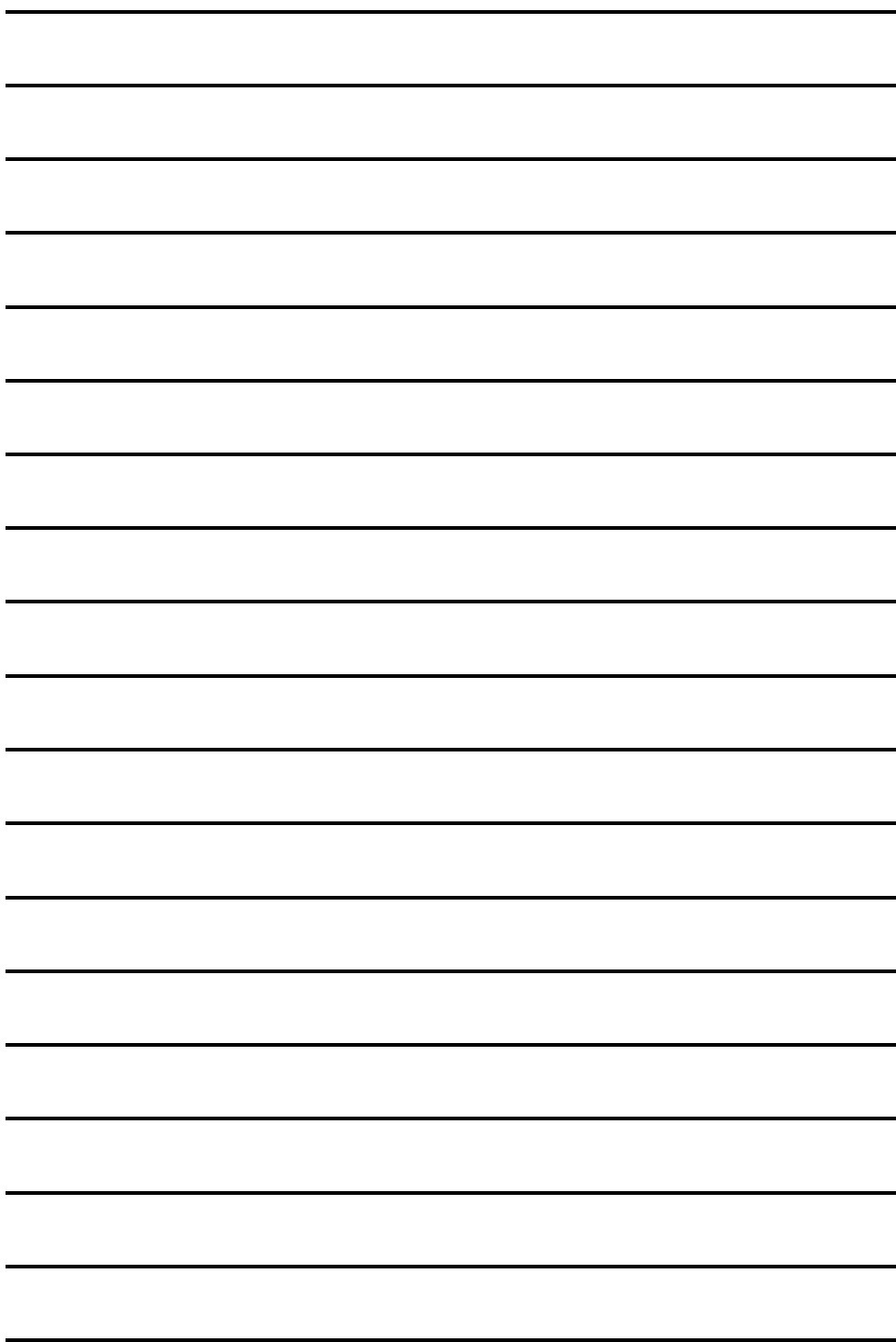
And being bad at being sad doesn't make you smile.

We don't even meet the expectations of our failures.

*And that fact should clarify that the drama of our existence...
is an illusion that the beauty of our substance hides behind.*

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR



Date: Hours Slept:
Exercise and Relaxation(Y / N): Self Image (1-10)
Good Circadian Rhythm (Y / N): Positive Self Comments (Y / N)

Well it has been about a hundred days of writing in this thing. And while I bet you have not changed much in that time (it usually takes a lot longer than a hundred days). I do imagine that you're awareness of your strengths and weaknesses has improved immensely.

THAT IS PROGRESS.

THAT IS WHAT REALLY MATTERS.

If you can keep that process going, change will follow. If you improve your awareness and insight, you improve your ability to respond appropriately.

Keep up this process.

Do it for another 500 days or so.

By the time you're done you'll have a clearer understanding of you and your feelings and how to change them.

When you started this journey, you imagined that you knew how you felt at any moment and why.

Hopefully it is clear now that is not an easy thing to know.

Terrible!-----Great!

MOOD BAR