

Small Ways I Begin Again

A Guided Journal for Returning to What Matters after a Setback

THE INNER LISTENER



PUBLICATION DETAILS

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This journal offers prompts for personal reflection. It is not medical, psychological or legal advice.

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READER NOTE

Before you begin

This journal offers prompts for personal reflection. It is not a diagnostic tool, treatment or a substitute for medical or psychological care. It does not promise to prevent, treat or cure depression, anxiety, trauma or any other health condition.

You can write briefly, choose a neutral answer, skip a prompt or stop. You do not need to feel grateful, hopeful, productive or better afterwards. Low energy, difficulty concentrating and missed entries are not personal failures.

Some prompts may bring up difficult feelings or memories. If writing becomes overwhelming or leaves you feeling worse, close the journal and consider support from a qualified healthcare or mental-health professional. If you already receive care, you can discuss whether and how to use this journal with that professional. Do not change prescribed treatment because of anything in these pages.

If low mood or other symptoms persist, worsen or affect daily life, seek professional advice. You can seek help sooner; you do not need to wait for a time limit. If you feel unsafe or think you may harm yourself, seek immediate help through your local emergency services or urgent mental-health service.

Your entries are yours. Share only what you want, with someone you consider safe. Store or dispose of the journal in a way that suits your circumstances.



WELCOME

Welcome

Most of us have something we stopped: a practice, a habit, a project, a routine or a plan. The reasons are often ordinary. Work changed, health changed, other people needed us, or energy ran low. No explanation is owed here.

This journal is a place to consider a return after an interruption. It does not assume that you should return. Changing direction, adjusting the plan or letting something end can be the right decision, and the pages make room for each of them.

Every entry uses four short questions: what interrupted you, whether it still matters, what could become smaller or different, and whether there is a next step you want to choose. In Part 4, the first question asks what might get in the way next. In Part 5, it asks what you have noticed so far. There are no streaks, scores or targets, and no date by which anything must happen.

You do not need to feel motivated, hopeful or ready. You may write one line, or nothing, and pausing is a valid answer at any point.

How the pages work

There is no correct way to use these pages. Here is how they are arranged.

1 **30 entries, five parts**

Each of the five parts holds six entries, numbered Entry 01 to Entry 30. There are no dates and no daily schedule.

2 **Two pages for each entry**

The left-hand page has four short questions and a line to name the practice you have in mind. The right-hand page offers one optional question, with room to write.

3 **Reviews and pauses**

A review follows every six entries. You can complete it alongside the sixth entry, at another time, or skip it. An optional pause page follows each review.

4 **Your own pace**

Complete one entry, skip one, pause or stop. A missed entry is not a failure. You can return to a page later or leave it as it is.

5 **Five small markers**

Within the five parts, five small circles at the bottom of each page show which part you are in.



Example: the second circle is filled while you are in Part 2.

For difficult or low-energy days

Some days, even a short page feels like too much. Any of these is a complete way to use this journal.

Write one word, or a few.

Choose a neutral answer, such as “This happened” or “I am not sure”.

Leave a question blank, or write “nothing today”.

Skip the entry, or skip the whole part.

Close the journal. You may return, or choose another tool, or not return.

None of these is a failure, and none needs to be explained. Stopping, pausing and not returning are all allowed. If writing leaves you feeling worse, please see the reader note, “Before you begin”.

If you would like a single word today, there is room for it here:

WORDS TO BORROW

A bank of words and phrases

Borrow these, change them or ignore them. Plain, neutral wording counts as much as anything else.

WHEN YOU ARE NOT SURE

not sure · nothing today · I would rather skip this · perhaps later · a little · partly

FOR WHAT INTERRUPTED ME

work · illness · a move · caring for someone · a busy season · low energy · a change of plan

FOR WHETHER IT STILL MATTERS

still matters · matters a little · not sure · no longer matters · matters in a different way

FOR MAKING IT SMALLER

one minute · one page · less · a different time · a simpler version · with some help

FOR A NEXT STEP

a first step · wait · pause · change direction · let it end · decide later

Example entry

Illustrative example — not a reader testimonial

1 What interrupted me? No explanation is owed.

I stopped sketching when work became busier.

2 Does this still matter to me? “No” or “not sure” is a valid answer.

I still enjoy drawing, but I do not want another obligation.

3 What could become smaller or different?

One small sketch, using the pen already on my desk.

4 Is there a next step I want to choose? Pausing or stopping may be the answer.

I might draw my cup after lunch. If not, I can reconsider tomorrow.

OPTIONAL QUESTION · EXAMPLE

A practice I stopped

Think of one practice, habit or project you stopped. When did it stop, as far as you can tell, and what was going on around that time? A rough answer is enough, and you do not need to explain.

Illustrative example — not a reader testimonial

I used to sketch most evenings. Then the evenings changed. Writing that down is enough for today. I have not decided anything about it.

OPTIONAL

An optional starting note

A blank answer is allowed. You can return to this page, or never write on it. You can name a different practice at the top of any entry.

The practice I am thinking about first:

What brings me here?

What would make this feel manageable?