

THE THINGS I DON'T SAY

**An Eight-Week Practice for Hearing
What You Have Been Holding Inside**



THE INNER LISTENER

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Noticing patterns that have been held back for a long time can sometimes bring up stronger feelings than expected. If that happens, pause the practice and speak with a qualified professional. There is no benefit to pushing through discomfort here, and the journal can always be picked back up later.

Layout & Design: The Inner Listener

Published by: The Inner Listener

theinnerlistenerhub.com

First Printing: 2026

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Welcome

There is a version of every day that never gets spoken aloud. The word you almost said. The feeling you smiled over instead of showing. The boundary you agreed to cross instead of setting. None of it goes away simply because it stayed quiet. It sits inside, and it adds up. This journal exists because writing it down, even in just three lines is what finally transforms a weight you carry into a sentence you have actually named.

The Practice:

- The practice is simple, and small on purpose:
- Three lines a day. Small enough that you will actually keep doing it.
- Complete privacy. Nobody reads this page unless you choose to show them. Use initials, nicknames, or "someone from work". It keeps the truth intact while keeping your pages safe.
- No pressure. If you miss a day or two, nothing breaks. Each week stands on its own, waiting for you whenever you're ready to pick it back up.

The Journey (8 Weeks): Over the next eight weeks, you will explore the specific shapes that staying quiet tends to take:

- Unsaid Words
- Unshown Feelings
- Unset Boundaries
- Avoided Truths
- Withheld Praise
- Unsaid Apologies
- Unvoiced Needs
- The Things You Wish You Could Say Outright

Each week includes six daily pages and a short look-back. At the very back, an overall overview will help you spot patterns across the entire practice, not just one day at a time. I have also included few blank pages, use it for pouring your thoughts, insights or simply as reflections.

Why You Are Here: Time is finite for everyone. Would it not make sense to live a life where your outside finally matches your inside?

By the last page, you won't just notice more. You will have a clear, specific record of what has been sitting unsaid across your life and at least one thing you feel ready to say out loud, whether to someone else or simply to yourself.

Take a breath. Turn the page. Let's begin one small line at a time.

WORTH ASKING

Why Journal This?

Thinking about what you haven't said rarely releases it. Writing it down does. It is one thing to carry something unspoken in your head; it is another to see it on paper, sitting in front of you instead of staying trapped inside you.

As **Maya Angelou** wrote: "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." This journal is simply a place to give that story somewhere small to go, a few lines at a time.

Audre Lorde put the cost of staying silent even more plainly: "Your silence will not protect you." The good news is that speaking up here does not have to be dramatic to count.

This is a private practice, not a performance. Nobody is reading over your shoulder, and nothing you write needs to sound wise, polished, or fair, even to yourself.

Remember:

- You don't have to fix anything today.
- Writing something down is not a promise to confront someone, nor is it a plan to change your life overnight. It is simply an act of noticing.

A few simple words a day is a steady way to keep things moving rather than letting them settle inside you. The only job of this page is to let you be honest and then let the day close.

WORTH KNOWING

The Shape of This Practice

This journal works through a simple three-part rhythm. Each day, you are simply invited to notice three things:

The Swallow

The word, the feeling, or the boundary that got quietly set aside before it left your mouth. Most days have at least one and that is simply a normal part of being human, not a flaw to be fixed.

The Show

What you displayed instead, the composed face, the automatic "I'm fine", or the agreement you did not truly feel in the moment.

The Release

Naming it here, in a few honest lines, then letting it go for the night. Nothing written within this practice ever needs to be carried any further than the page.

This is not a space for judgment or fixing. It is simply a place to put things down so you don't have to carry them into tomorrow.

HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

The Daily Rhythm

Each day only takes a few minutes. Follow these simple prompts:

I Noticed: Name one small thing you noticed yourself not saying today—a word, a feeling, or a boundary.

What Got In The Way: In a word or two, name what stopped you. No need to overthink it.

If I Had Said It: Imagine it coming out anyway and write the shape it might have taken.

The Daily Check: Choose one - "Worth holding onto" or "I can let this one go." Either answer is a good one. Tick it, read the closing line, and let the day be done.

Three Small Things to Remember:

Protect your privacy: You never need to write full names. Initials, a nickname, or simply "someone from work" hold just as much truth as a real name.

Keep it light: Some moments bring up more than a few lines can hold. If that happens, it is completely fine to write only part of it, skip a day, or come back later.

Know your limits: A journal is a quiet space for awareness, but a trusted person or a professional is always a better place for anything heavier than a page is meant to carry.

STUCK NAMING IT?

Some days the unsaid thing is obvious. Other days it takes a moment to find, and that blank space is usually where the practice stalls. If nothing comes to mind, borrow a word below, or use it to point toward your own.

Words I swallowed (The literal phrases you stopped yourself from saying):

No / That hurt / I disagree / I need help / I don't care / I don't know / That is not fair / I changed my mind / I want to go home / This is too much / Stop / I miss you / I am not okay.

Feelings I hid (The internal state you masked with a neutral or happy face):

Proud / Grateful / Hopeful / Happy / Moved / Hurt / Doubt / Disappointed / Afraid / Relieved / Envy / Overwhelmed / Exhausted / Lonely / Frustrated / Embarrassed / Resentful.

Boundaries I did not set (The lines you let people cross or the space you didn't claim):

Not my job / Not now / Not comfortable / Not without asking first / Enough / Stay away / I need some space / Let me think about it first / I cannot take this on right now / Please do not speak to me that way / That is personal / I am leaving now / No unsolicited advice, please.

Praise I held back (The positive, kind things you kept entirely to yourself):

That was well done / I am so grateful for you / Thank you / I am proud of you / I noticed the effort you put in / That meant a lot to me / You make me feel safe / I love how your mind works / You handled that perfectly / I admire you / You were right.

None of these need to be exact. Naming the shape of today's silence, difficult or kind, is usually enough to start hearing it.

Worth Checking

Signs You Are Swallowing Something

The things you do not say rarely announce themselves loudly. More often, they show up quietly, like this:

A word going unsaid:

- Rehearsing a sentence in your head that you never say out loud.
- Agreeing out loud while strongly thinking the opposite.
- Changing the subject the moment a conversation gets too close to the point.
- Falling silent when you actually have a lot to say.
- Explaining it away to yourself after the moment has passed.

A feeling going unshown:

- Saying "I am fine" or "It's fine" when it really isn't.
- Smiling through a comment or joke that secretly stung.
- Feeling suddenly exhausted or "off" for no clear reason after a conversation.
- Laughing along with something that made you uncomfortable.

A boundary going unset:

- Saying yes out loud while feeling an immediate knot of resentment in your chest.
- Agreeing out of guilt or fear of conflict rather than genuine choice.
- Over-explaining or making up an elaborate excuse just to say no.
- Noticing you tolerated something today that you promised yourself you wouldn't.

Warmth going unshown:

- Noticing something good about someone and staying quiet about it.
- Feeling deeply proud of someone and assuming they already know.
- Thinking a kind, encouraging thought and letting it pass without saying it.

None of these are failures. They are simply clues worth noticing the difficult and the kind alike, the same way this journal asks you to notice everything else.

YOUR DAILY CLOSING RITUAL

A Simple Way to Set It Down

Most of what gets noticed in this journal did not start today. It usually started somewhere much earlier, often in childhood, as a way of staying safe, liked, or approved of. This journal is not trying to unpack that in depth, and it does not need to, for this practice to work.

What it does need is a small, repeatable way to close each day's noticing, so it does not simply pile up. The tool is deliberately tiny: box breathing, slow exhale with a sigh, and a quiet line to yourself, "I see this. I understand it. I choose not to take you to bed with me."

This is not about fully healing anything in one sitting. It is about tending to it every time it shows up, so it stops quietly building up, even before it is fully resolved. Use it at the end of every daily page, whichever box gets ticked.

If something surfaces that feels heavier than a breath and a sentence can hold, a trusted person or a professional is a better place for it than this page.

BEFORE DAY ONE

Set Your Intention

Before starting Day One, take a quiet moment to anchor yourself. Name one thing you have been holding back for a while, whatever shape it takes. This is not a confession or a promise to confront anyone. It is simply your honest starting point.

The thing I have been holding back is:

When did I first notice it?

I will know I am ready to speak it (or let it go) when:

A note for the journey:

Come back to this page whenever a day feels heavy with things unsaid. It is here to remind you of what you were actually trying to hear all along.