

WHAT DESERVES MY YES

**An Eight-Week Practice for
Choosing What You Actually Want
to Carry**



THE INNER LISTENER

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Examining long-held commitments and obligations 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.

Quotations throughout this journal are classic, well-known sayings and proverbs drawn from historical and traditional sources across the centuries. The two quotations on the Why Journal This? page are from Rumi, drawn from E. H. Whinfield's 1898 English translation of the Masnavi-i-Ma'navi, now in the public domain.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Welcome

This is an invitation to notice, on purpose, what is actually asking for your time and energy, before deciding whether it deserves it.

The practice is light. Each day, you name one thing asking for your yes, pause long enough to notice what saying yes would cost, and finish one honest sentence about your real answer. Nothing here needs to be staged. The smaller and more ordinary the ask, the better this practice tends to work.

What will it look like? Eight weeks, each one built around a different place asks tend to gather, work, family and other people's expectations, the shoulds you set for yourself, favours, habits and routines, money, your attention, and finally the future itself. One page a day, a short look-back every six days, and an overview and an answer tracker at the back so the whole pattern, and where each yes landed, shows up in one place.

What changes by the end of the eight weeks? A written, specific, ever-growing record of what you actually chose, one small answer at a time, and a felt sense, not just an idea, of being someone who decides on purpose rather than by default.

If a day or two gets missed within a week, nothing beyond that week is affected, since each week stands entirely on its own.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What You Get From This Journal

Most of us do not decide our yeses. We inherit them, hurry them, or give them to avoid a harder moment. They add up to a full calendar, a tired week, and very little room that is truly yours.

This journal gives you a small way to change that. One page a day. Three short lines. No plan and no drama, just a pause before you answer.

THIS JOURNAL IS FOR YOU IF YOU OFTEN...

- Say yes before you have finished hearing the ask.
- End a week tired from things you do not remember choosing.
- Feel a small flicker of resentment after agreeing.
- Find it easier to agree than to explain.

AFTER EIGHT WEEKS, YOU WILL HAVE...

- **A pause that is yours.** A few seconds between the ask and your answer, where choice lives.
- **Words for your real answer.** Forty-eight honest answers in your own words.
- **A map of where your yeses go.** Eight areas of life, so you can see where the automatic ones gather.
- **More yeses you mean.** Not fewer yeses. Yeses you chose.
- It takes a few minutes a day. There is nothing to prepare.

One page. Three lines. A boundary, chosen.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What You May Notice

Every reader is different, and each week stands on its own.
You may find a pattern a little like this.

WEEKS 1 AND 2

You start to catch the ask. You notice it arriving, and what
it would cost, before you answer.

WEEKS 3 TO 5

You start to see your patterns: the places and the people
your automatic yeses come from, and which ones you are
glad to keep.

WEEKS 6 TO 8

You start to answer on purpose. The pause arrives sooner,
and your honest sentence comes more easily.

***Nothing here is a test. A not yet is still an answer chosen on
purpose.***

WORTH ASKING Why Journal This?

Noticing what is actually being asked of you rarely happens by accident. Writing it down does. It is one thing to feel, vaguely, that a day is full. It is another thing to name the specific, ordinary ask that filled it, and decide honestly whether it earned the time it took.

Written down, an ask loses some of its pull. You can see what it would cost, and you get a moment to choose before habit answers for you. Repeated for eight weeks, that moment becomes easier to find, and the pages show you, in your own handwriting, where your time and energy have really been going.

What is in it for you is simple: more of your yeses are ones you meant.

Rumi wrote, "What thou callest a throne is only a prison." The ask that looks the most flattering, the invitation, the promotion, the favour everyone else would take without thinking, is sometimes the very one worth sitting with longest.

Rumi also wrote, "There is not room for two 'I's' in one house." A day spent answering everyone else's version of you leaves no room for your own. This journal asks for the one honest answer, a few lines at a time.

Naming today's ask is never a small act. Each page is a signal sent ahead of you, training your attention to notice the request before agreeing to it. The more clearly you can see what is actually being asked, the more easily you recognise it the next time it arrives wearing a bigger shape.

This is where it begins, not with the big boundary you are still working up to, but with the small, ordinary yes already sitting on this page.

WORTH KNOWING

The Shape of This Practice

The Ask

The plain, specific thing asking for your time or energy today.

The Cost

Pausing long enough to actually name what saying yes would quietly make harder.

The Answer

Your honest answer, in your own words, without over-explaining it.

HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

The Daily Rhythm

The Ask. Name one specific thing asking for your time or energy today, big or small.

The Cost. Pause for a moment and actually name what saying yes would quietly make harder, rather than skipping straight to a decision.

The Answer. Finish the sentence, “My honest answer, and how I can say it, is...” This is the heart of the page.

Some asks may bring up more than three lines can hold; if that happens, it is fine to write only part of it, or come back another day. There is no wrong way to practise this.

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: Saying no to one thing is not a verdict on the whole relationship or the whole request. If that feeling comes up, 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 practising honesty, but a trusted person or a professional is always a better place for anything heavier than a page is meant to carry.

Stuck Naming What Is Asking for Your Time?

Some days the ask is obvious, a direct request with a deadline. Other days it is quieter, a habit, an expectation, a thing you said yes to so long ago nobody remembers asking. If nothing comes to mind straight away, borrow a word below, or use it to point towards your own.

Asks Worth Noticing

A direct request / A standing commitment / An unspoken expectation / A habit nobody questions any more / A favour you always say yes to / A worry dressed up as a task.

Small things people say yes to without noticing, week after week

Checking a message the moment it arrives / Taking on one more thing because it was easier than saying no / Showing up out of guilt rather than want / Carrying a worry that was never actually yours / Agreeing before hearing the whole ask.

Ways to notice it a little more

Name it specifically / Notice the sentence right before you say yes / Sit with the cost for one extra breath / Write down the real reason, not the polite one.

None of these need to be exact. Naming the shape of today's ask is usually enough to start answering it honestly.

Where Automatic Yeses Like to Hide

An automatic yes rarely announces itself. More often, it is hiding in plain sight, in places like these.

Hiding in habit

A yes said before the question even finished / A task kept long after the reason for it disappeared / A routine nobody actually chose, just inherited.

Hiding in other people's expectations

A role someone else assigned that you never corrected / A silence mistaken for agreement / A yes given to avoid a harder conversation.

Hiding in self-imposed shoulds

A standard nobody else is holding you to / A rule copied from somewhere without checking if it still fits / Guilt mistaken for obligation.

None of this needs to be intense to count. It is simply worth noticing, the same plain way this journal asks you to notice everything else.

BEFORE DAY ONE

How This Works

This journal is not asking you to become someone who says no to everything. Instead, once a day, for eight weeks, it asks you to notice one thing asking for your time, and answer it on purpose rather than by default.

Each week opens with a different place these asks tend to gather:

- Work
- Family and other people's expectations
- The shoulds you set for yourself
- Favours
- Habits and routines
- Money
- Your attention and
- What you are agreeing to for the future.

Six days of noticing, then a short, honest review to see what showed up.

It does not need to be a big decision to count. The smaller and more ordinary the ask, the better this practice tends to work, since the whole point is noticing what is already asking for your yes, before deciding whether it has earned it.

From there, the practice repeats, the same light size and shape, every single week, until answering on purpose starts to happen on its own, without a page prompting it.

BEFORE DAY ONE
Set Your Intention

Before starting Day One, take a moment to name what you are quietly hoping eight weeks of choosing on purpose will protect.

Not a strict goal, just an honest starting point.

The thing I most want more room for, once I stop saying yes to everything, is:

I will know I am getting there when:

A note for the journey:

Come back to this page whenever a day feels like there is no good answer. It is here to remind you what you were actually practising protecting.

HOW CLEAR MY YES FEELS RIGHT NOW?

STILL AUTOMATIC ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ **GENUINELY CHOSEN**

A recent yes I wish I had paused on...

“Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string.”

WEEK 1 - WHAT WORK IS ASKING OF ME

WHAT THIS WEEK IS ABOUT?

This week is about the requests and expectations that arrive through work, the ones that come with a deadline and the ones that just quietly accumulate.

WHY IT MATTERS?

Work asks tend to feel non-negotiable by default, simply because they arrive in a work voice. Naming them one at a time makes room to actually check that.

HOW TO PRACTISE IT?

Each day, name one thing work is asking of you, pause long enough to notice what it would cost, then finish the sentence about your honest answer.

WHAT IT ADDS UP TO?

A week of answering work's asks on purpose, rather than by reflex, is the easiest place to practise this, since the stakes of one day are genuinely small, and the habit it builds is not.

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

Week 1 - DAY 1

DATE:

THE ASK

What did work ask of me today that arrived with real urgency attached?

THE COST

Pause and notice what saying yes to this would quietly push aside.

THE ANSWER

My honest answer, and how I can say it, is..

Week 1 - DAY 2

DATE:

THE ASK

What task did I take on today mostly because it was easier than saying no?

THE COST

Notice the moment right before you agreed, and what you were actually weighing.

THE ANSWER

My honest answer, and how I can say it, is..