



THE
THOUGHT
ACTION
JOURNAL

The background of the page consists of several concentric circles of varying diameters, centered on the text. The circles are light gray and create a ripple effect around the central message.

**THIS JOURNAL IS INTENDED TO
HELP YOU TRAIN YOUR BRAIN.**

**WE ARE CONSUMED BY OUR
TECHNOLOGY AND LIFE
STRESSORS, AND SOMETIMES WE
NEED TO GET A GRASP ON OUR
INTENTION AND OUR ATTENTION.**

JOURNAL: INTENTION

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JOURNAL: ATTENTION

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LEARN

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INTENTION

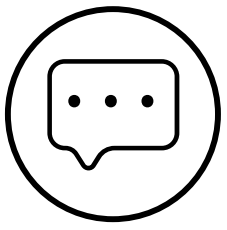
**WRITE DOWN THE WAYS
IN WHICH YOU USE THE
LISTED APPS.**

**ASK YOURSELF WHAT
VALUE THEY ARE ADDING
TO YOUR LIFE...**

IS THERE ANY VALUE AT ALL?

DATE |

TEXT



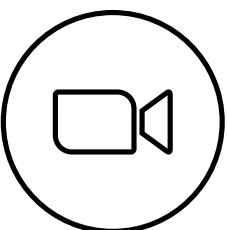
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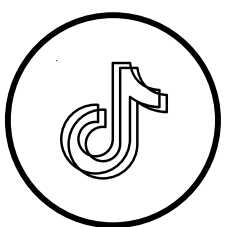
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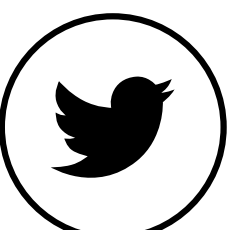
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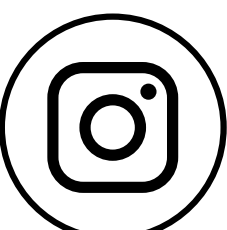
TIKTOK



TWITTER



INSTAGRAM



LINKEDIN



ALL OF THE LISTED SOCIALS GIVE ME VALUE.

YES

NO



**SET FIRM BOUNDARIES
ON YOUR PHONE USAGE.**

DATE |

WHEN DO I ACTUALLY NEED TO USE MY PHONE?

HOW MUCH TIME DO I THINK IS A GOOD AMOUNT
OF TIME TO USE A/MY PHONE?

IS THERE ANYTHING I DO ON MY PHONE THAT I'D
RATHER DO ON THE COMPUTER OR THE TV?

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY PHONE WHEN I AM
NOT USING IT? WHERE SHOULD I PUT IT?

**TURN OFF
NOTIFICATIONS FOR AT
LEAST TWO SOCIAL
MEDIA APPS.**



DATE |

TURNING OFF NOTIFICATIONS OF APPS YOU USE FREQUENTLY WILL DECREASE THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU LOOK AT YOUR PHONE... THUS, DECREASING THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU OPEN AND USE THOSE APPS.

INSTEAD, YOU'LL BEGIN TO USE THOSE APPS WITH MORE CURIOSITY AND INTENTION, RATHER THAN VAGUE INTEREST IN A NOTIFICATION.

NOTE WHICH APPS YOU'RE TURNING NOTIFICATIONS OFF FOR AND WHY...

APP ONE:

BECAUSE...

APP TWO:

BECAUSE...

BONUS APP:

BECAUSE...

ORGANIZE THE SPACE ON YOUR PHONE.

WHAT TO TRY:

CREATE WIDGETS
IDENTIFY THE MOST USED/IMPORTANT APPS
CATEGORIZE APPS INTO FOLDERS

NOTE: MAKE THIS YOUR OWN AND IN YOUR OWN STYLE,
YOU CAN DOWNLOAD APPS THAT MAKE YOUR SCREENS
ENTIRELY CUSTOMIZABLE.

EXAMPLE:

AUTHOR'S IPHONE.

THE FIRST PAGE INCLUDES THE APPS MOST IMPORTANT AND USED, A CALENDAR WIDGET SO I DO NOT NEED TO OPEN THE APP EVERY HOUR, AND A SPOTIFY WIDGET BECAUSE I USE IT SO OFTEN

THE SECOND PAGE INCLUDES MY WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS/ ONGOING TASKS, A PICTURE, A PREVIEW OF MY EMAIL INBOX, AND MY SECOND MOST USED APPS (SCHOOL WORK, MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT, NETWORKING, COMMERCE, ETC.)

THE THIRD PAGE INCLUDES THE APPS I NEVER USE ON A DAILY OR BI-DAILY BASIS ORGANIZED BY COLOR OR PURPOSE, ALONG WITH A WIDGET FOR EMERGENCIES.

THE BOTTOM BAR INCLUDES APPS I USE FOR UTILITY OR RESOURCE.



DO NOT DISTURB.

DATE |

TURNING OFF DO NOT DISTURB ACTS SIMILARLY TO TURNING OFF NOTIFICATIONS. IT MINIMIZES THE WANT OR NEED TO OPEN YOUR PHONE, OPEN AN APP, AND INTERACT WITH THE APP.

ONCE YOU'VE TURNED DO NOT DISTURB ON... FOR THE NEXT FEW HOURS OR FOR THE REMAINDER OF YOUR DAY, TRACK HOW OFTEN YOU LOOKED, OPENED, OR USED YOUR PHONE

TIME TURNED ON:



TIME:

TIME:

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APP:

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU USED YOUR PHONE LESS THAN NORMAL?

YES

UNSURE

NO

REFLECT ON HOW TRACKING YOUR PHONE USE MADE YOU FEEL...

**CREATE A PLAYLIST
FOR ANY OF THE
FOLLOWING REASONS
ON YOUR FAVORITE
MUSIC PLATFORM:**

NEW GENRE PLAYLIST
STUDY/ MEDITATIVE PLAYLIST
SONGS FROM YOUR PAST PLAYLIST

ONCE YOU'RE DONE CREATING
IT, PLAY THE PLAYLIST AND
DO SOME COLORING!

BECAUSE WHEN DO WE GET
TO COLOR ANYMORE?!

DATE |





RECLAIM YOUR TIME.



ATTENTION

**ASK YOURSELF
QUESTIONS.**

DATE |

WHAT DO I VALUE...

ABOUT MYSELF?

ABOUT MY LIFE?

**ABOUT PEOPLE
AROUND ME?**

**ABOUT MY
ENVIRONMENT?**

HOW DO I HONOR...

MYSELF?

MY LIFE?

**THE PEOPLE
AROUND ME?**

**MY
ENVIRONMENT?**

THINK ABOUT THE PAST.

DATE |

**CONSIDER LAST WEEK, BOTH IN AND OUT OF
THIS JOURNAL...**

**WRITE ABOUT 5 MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES
FROM ANY POINT IN TIME...**

**BIG OR SMALL, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, EXCITING OR DULL - ANYTHING.
THE MORE VARIETY THE BETTER!**

1

2

3

4

5

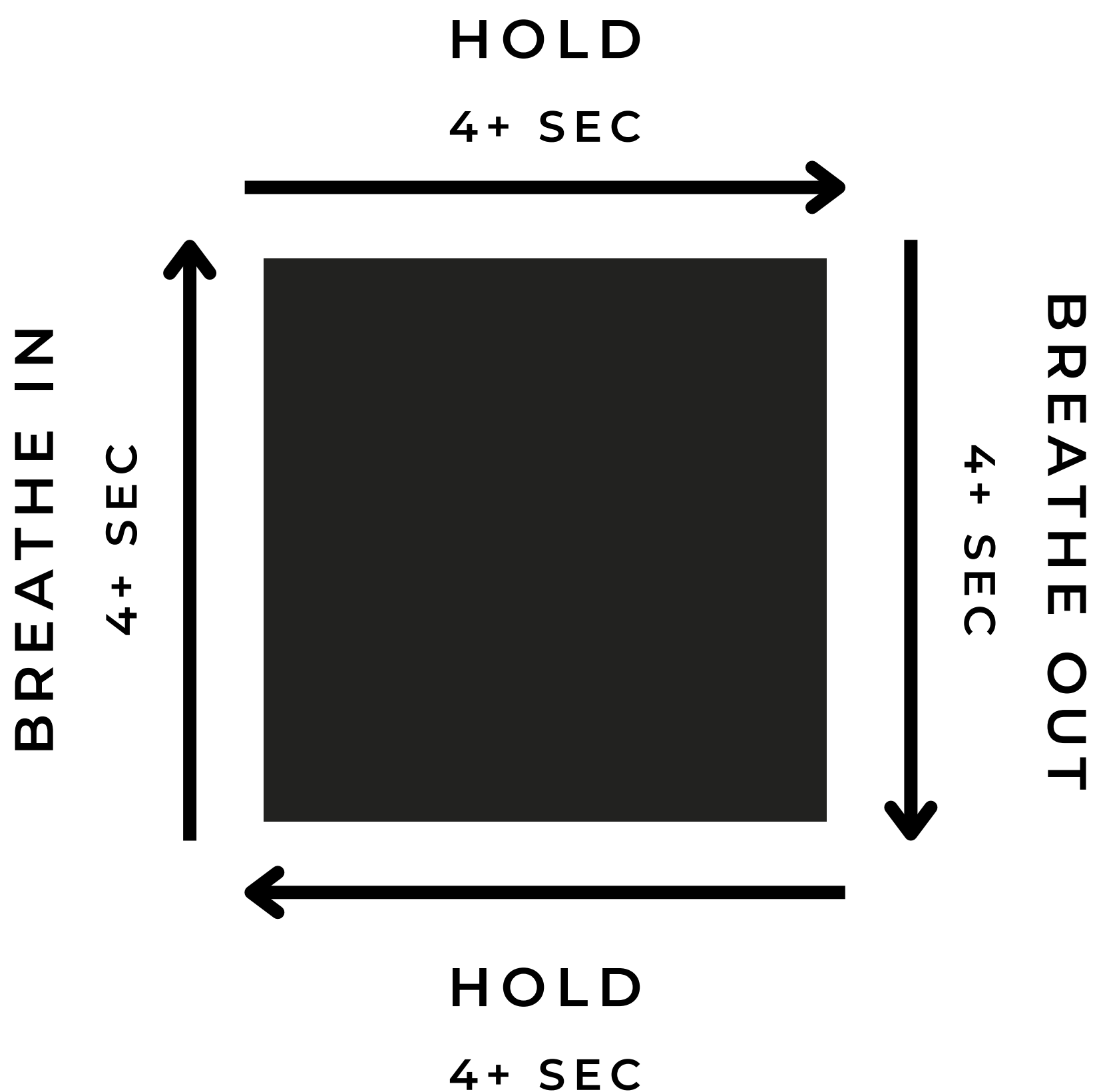


CLEAR YOUR MIND.

EXERCISE: BREATHE & REST

BOX BREATHING

BREATHE IN FOR 4 SECONDS
HOLD YOUR BREATH FOR 4 SECONDS
BREATHE OUT FOR 4 SECONDS
HOLD OUT FOR 4 SECONDS



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR A 20-MINUTE
MEDITATION PLAYLIST.



SIT OR LAY SOMEWHERE
COMFORTABLE, SET A TIMER FOR
YOUR DESIRED TIME OF MEDITATION
(THE PLAYLIST IS 20 MINS), OR JUST
LET THE MUSIC PLAY AND STOP
WHENEVER YOU FEEL GOOD.

TRY BOX BREATHING AND USE THE
METHOD AT LEAST 5 TIMES.

CONSIDER THE FUTURE.



DATE |

CREATE A CHECKLIST OF EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GET DONE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS WEEK

IT CAN BE ASSIGNMENTS THAT NEED TO BE COMPLETED, A GROCERY SHOPPING LIST, REMINDERS TO CHECK IN WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY, ETC.

GET PLANNING!

- _____
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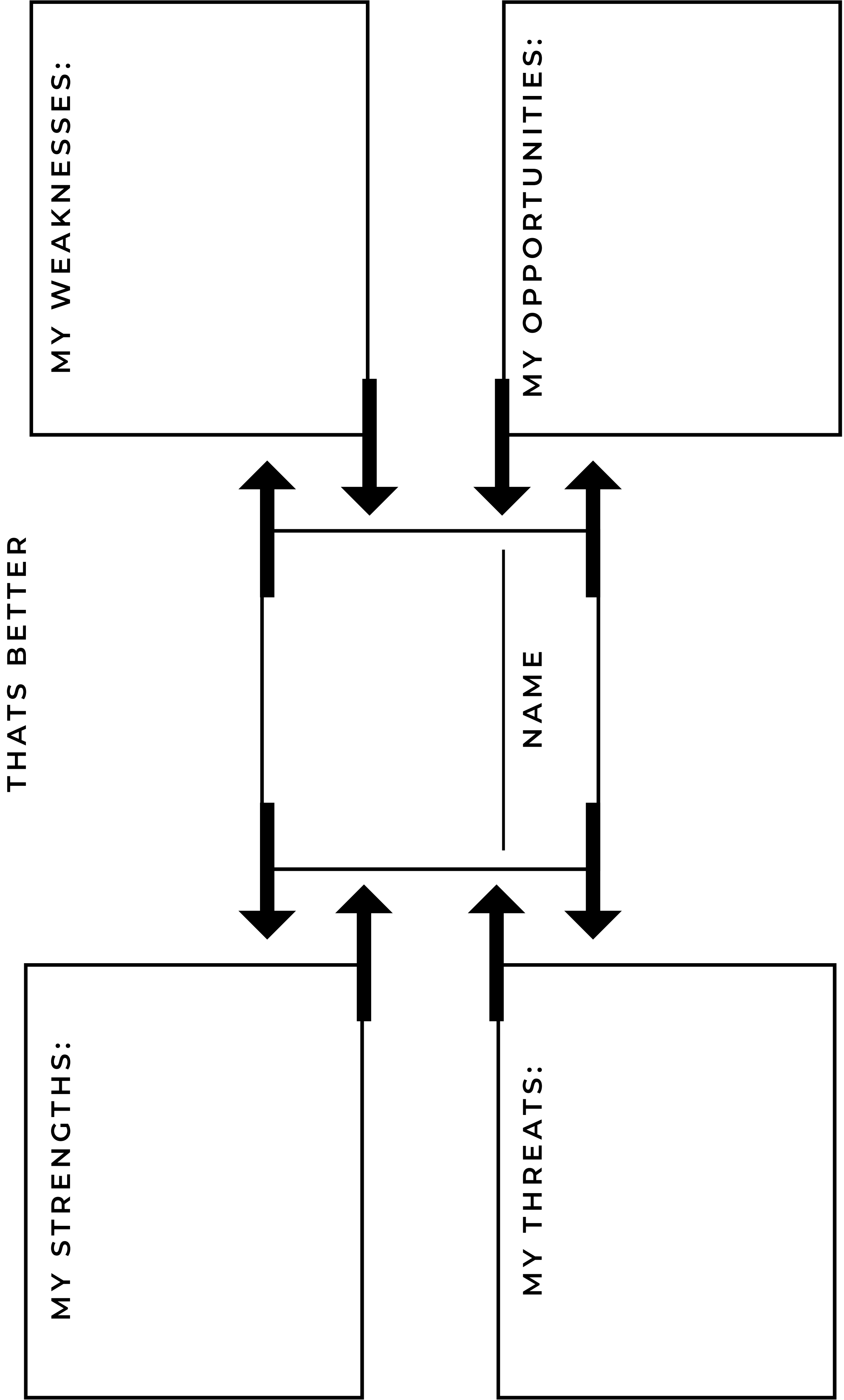
**PLAY A GAME...
FOCUS YOUR FLOW.**


DATE |

Q K B K W E E Q L F O X W V O W J U D W V Z E N P
K Z O M X R U W A S Y X B W D X T O N D P B X U K
X Z W J X A S G R S F Y H B S X C W U P R N A C T
W P W C H N J A R G T R J U I Z S F X R K K N H A
W K P X D J Z O J W W I F Z N Q N K R H N M W M B
T R T J H Y Y I K D I X I T V Y T G X Y X A Y Q J
X O W E L L N E S S V N M E D I T A T I O N L O K
K M M Y U R W M B I Z H E T L K O Q B B E M W P N
D H Y S O X E W K C N S D Z F G J E K N N F P X H
S K W N T N H P J E K C O T X M B L Z R A X D Z X
A R U H Z L T Z U V Z Y K K M B A F V E Z D I J A
Q A P X T B K X L U A N C X E I I W Z C I X G P E
H T G X H P X S L J X R L H M O U I I E P Z I R G
B U M P I B C O W U I R H Z O I O N I T R L T Y C
E R F T R D I F M Y U D P H R Q O B X S K H A M M
L B E A L O X H T R X G C I Y E G V G V V I L T D
W D H A Y J M S M J P Y E O K J M F O E R S C I B
A A D G T N L I J C V K Y S M T D K N C Q K I N L
B F S G S H T M S L H E F P J P W V D H X K X F X
I D F M L Y I B B E Y E H B I P U Z A I F I L X Q
E T F I B H H N S K K R Y F D H M T Q O C M I Y B
U Y Z X R P L T G J P T X U Z O K Y E E D I M M B
V F X W V M Z Z D D Q H T P M N S N Y R E N M O Y
B I P U O K N R Z J X A Z U N E D K K S S D W G M
M W M W L R C Z G H H F U P O K Y L R K K I P F I

-
- MEDITATION
 - BREATHING
 - WELLNESS
 - COMPUTER
 - DIGITAL
 - JOURNAL
 - MEMORY
 - PROMISE
 - AFFIRM
 - PHONE
 - MIND

**STRENGTH.
WEAKNESS.
OPPORTUNITY.
THREAT.**





**WRITE YOUR OWN
AFFIRMATIONS.**

DATE |

WITH AUTHOR AFFIRMATION EXAMPLES

.....

I FEEL EMOTIONAL OFTEN BUT MY EMOTIONS
ARE VALID AND I CAN ACCEPT THEM.

I FEEL _____ ,

BUT _____

I AM RESILIENT. I AM CONFIDENT. I AM LOVED.
I AM PROUD OF MYSELF.

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

I CAN DO WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY.
I HAVE COMPASSION FOR MY FEELINGS.
I WILL SET BOUNDARIES FOR MYSELF.

I CAN _____

I HAVE _____

I WILL _____

CLOSE YOUR EYES AND SAY YOUR
AFFIRMATIONS TO YOURSELF.



**THE
(META)
COGNITIVE
BUILD**

**READ ABOUT HOW YOU EXPLORED THE BUILD
AS YOU WORKED THROUGH THE JOURNAL**

CREATING

USING INFORMATION TO CREATE SOMETHING.

DESIGN | CONSTRUCT | INVENT | BUILD

ANALYZING

EXPLORE RELATIONSHIPS AND TAKE INFORMATION APART.

CRITIQUE | TEST | CRITICIZE | QUESTION

EVALUATING

CRITICALLY EXAMINE AND MAKE JUDGEMENTS.

CRITIQUE | TEST | CRITICIZE | QUESTION

UNDERSTANDING

MAKING SENSE OUT OF INFORMATION.

INTERPRET | DISCUSS | INFER | EXPLAIN

REMEMBERING

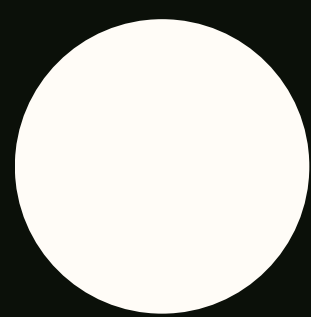
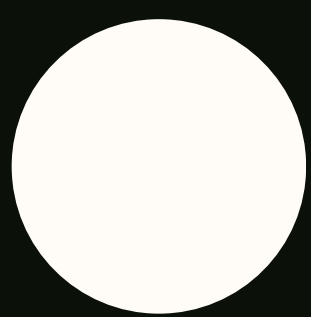
FIND OR REMEMBER INFORMATION THROUGH MEMORY RECOLLECTION.

LIST | FIND | IDENTIFY | DEFINE

APPLYING

USE INFORMATION IN A NEW, BUT SIMILAR, WAY OR SITUATION

DRAW | SOLVE | CALCULATE | CHART



by priscilla hopper

index

WHY? | 01

Journaling and identifying values can help control your symptoms and improve your mood. It helps prioritize problems and concerns, track triggers and how to control them, and provide opportunities for positive self-talk and identify negative thoughts and behaviors.¹ Overall, evaluating values daily can help manage anxiety, reduce stress, and even cope with depression.

WHY? | 02

Setting boundaries in your “in-real-life” life is a form of self-care. Why isn't it more common in our virtual lives? Creating boundaries promotes autonomy, wards off burnout, improves emotional health, improves relationships, increases respect from others and yourself, improves self-care capabilities, decreases stress, creates clear expectations for yourself, and more.² To create boundaries, you must recognize you deserve space and deserve to be treated with respect. So you have to ask yourself: do my social media apps or the ways in which I use them and the people I interact with respect me? Then, you have to define and acknowledge where values lie (01) with respect to your online interactions and activity, general use, etc.

WHY? | 03

Your phone should not be the only source of entertainment; not that it is, but for many of us, including the author, it can be a major attention-sucking activity. And, to no surprise, our phones and even more specifically the myriad of apps you can find on our phones are particularly designed to hold our attention – in fact, the infinite scroll (what you experience on TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and any other popular social media) was built and designed off slot machines and other gambling methods to profit off your inevitable psychological cravings.³ The machines that have proven nothing but addiction. By turning off your notifications, you are limiting the control those platforms have over you. Control is a big word, but consider the following: you get a notification, you've used the app enough to feel quasi-interested in what the notification leads to, and you now open your phone, click on the app, examine what you were notified by... but you don't stop there, your phone doesn't go back into your pocket or on your desk, the app has grasped your attention and you remain scrolling. Turning off your notifications of even a couple of apps, you're letting your phone work as a tool as it should be. You will be less anxious, more organized, in control of your behaviors, productive, and present.⁴

Disorganization in any sense has the potential to wreak havoc on your life. It can even increase your stress and depression. Decluttering your physical spaces can even lower your cortisol levels—your body’s primary stress hormone. Organizing your daily schedules gives your brain the opportunity to concentrate on what needs to be done and how to prioritize tasks.⁵ This exercise is meant to help you declutter your phone, and give intention to areas of your phone. Take the author’s phone as given in the example, I have prioritized apps for different use – some are strictly work or communication-based, and others are a form of entertainment like music, games, e-commerce, or social media. Then after two swipes to the left, I have apps I don’t use on a daily basis, nor do I even use these on a daily basis. Because of this, I often go through those and consider the following question: Do I even really need this? Most of the time the answer is no, but it’s all right to stay on my phone because it is not taking up a fraction of my attention. I encourage you to ask yourself the same question— is this app valuable or do I even need it? If you’ll never use the app again, remove it from your phone! If you think some day, even long into the future you may want to use the app again and the idea of searching through the App Store, finding, downloading, and re-logging in to the app sounds like a major chore, just store the app way in a folder away from your daily view.

Utilizing the ‘Do Not Disturb’ feature is an extension of turning notifications off for your most frequented apps. This stops all incoming notifications regardless of application; these are all calls, messages, notifications from apps, and more. The philosophy behind turning this feature on is structured the same as turning notifications off. I encourage readers to use ‘Do Not Disturb’ to elevate other experiences or interactions like going out to dinner with friends or family, reading, doing homework or some type of studying or work, etc, and I also challenge you to challenge yourself, how long can you go with keeping your phone on ‘Do Not Disturb’?

It is proven that music can affect our emotions in an innumerable amount of ways. In particular, it can influence your mood.⁶ An empirical investigation showed that happy, upbeat music causes our brains to produce dopamine and serotonin, chemicals

WHY? | 06 (CONT.)

attributed to feelings of joy. And calming music can relax your body and your mind. Additionally, music affects mental health, it's why music therapy exists. Because listening to music can release dopamine, it can be considered a natural antidepressant. Music can help everyone elevate their cognitive abilities and needs according to the British Association for Music Therapy. Music therapy can even keep your cardiovascular system in tune.⁷ Lastly, music can reduce your stress levels; listening to music can act as effective stress management, help distract from a stressful situation, and more. If it floats your boat, heavy metal music has been proven to help lower your blood pressure.⁸ Music affects the whole body in a myriad of ways, so this activity is designed for you to identify what music makes you happy and in particular how certain music makes you feel or affects your mood. Additionally, this section is all about using your phone as a tool and a resource, not just as an attention-sucking instrument. So, use your favorite music app and create a playlist that would be best for you right now. Listen to it, and color a little bit! Coloring is proven to reduce stress and benefit your mental health; it embraces the imperfect, calms your brain, and promotes mindfulness.⁹

WHY? | 07

This activity is designed to make you reconsider your values. After going through this week of activities, learning how to use your phone as a tool and not just a source of entertainment, creating boundaries, and balancing the ways in which you utilize your device(s), spend some time acknowledging what you will do with your reclaimed time. How will you spend it? What activities will you institute? How will you change your normal actions online?

WHY? | 08

The purpose of this activity is to raise your awareness of perception. Asking questions has been proven to challenge your brain, even if you are just asking those questions to yourself.¹⁰ Think about your time in school, teachers or professors ask questions to help you retain information and material by putting unarticulated thoughts into words. The motive is the same here. By asking questions about yourself and your personal values, you are stimulating a discussion with yourself; checking in with inner you. This is meant to be a challenge; write intentionally but take some time to consider what

WHY? | 08 (CONT.)

your attention draws you to. This fulfills the evaluating and understanding aspects of the Cognitive Build.

WHY? | 09

When you use memory strategies, you perform mental activities that help improve your encoding and retrieval systems.¹¹ If you task yourself with remembering even the small things, you are more likely to better recall information from similar experiences in your long-term memory.¹² This metacognitive strategy makes you consider what is also important to you and to your brain. This activity fulfills the remembering aspect of the Cognitive Build.

WHY? | 10

Meditation has a wide variety of techniques associated with it. For some, completing this entire journal is meditative, but for others, mediation involves comprehensive breathing. Focusing your mind on a particular thought or activity like the meditation activity included in this journal helps train your attention and awareness; ultimately, with consistency, it can lead to a mentally clear and emotionally calm state. Research shows that awareness is a central component of mindfulness; so once you give yourself the time to detach from the devices controlling so much of your attention, you regain the awareness to improve your metacognitive health.¹³ This fulfills the analyzing aspect of the Cognitive Build.

WHY? | 11

Take all of that mumbo jumbo in your brain that crams up so much of your thought space and put them on paper. Planning your tasks breaks down larger goals into smaller actionable steps that create a nice shiny path toward completion. A well-designed plan outlines the tasks you need to accomplish and makes our brains feel less overwhelmed because we know exactly what needs to happen in order to complete it. It tricks your brain into a state of control and reduces anxiety.¹⁴ Some studies even suggest you can sleep better after executing a plan or even just creating a plan because you worry less about the floating tasks in your brain. This fulfills the creating aspect of the Cognitive Build.

WHY? | 12

The crossword puzzle is here to help you continue your flow state. A

WHY? | 12 (CONT.)

flow state is a mental state in which you are completely focused on a single task or activity. Sometimes though, boredom comes into play.¹⁵ This activity is meant to help you continue your flow state by thinking creatively and analytically to solving a crossword while giving your brain a few minutes to regroup and find its excitement for the major task at hand for you.

WHY? | 13

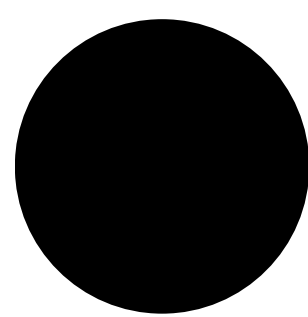
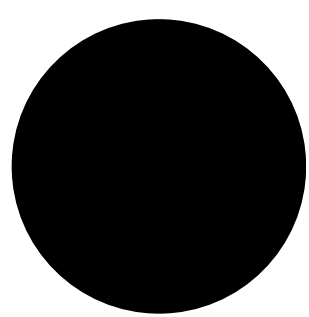
In this SWOT analysis, you are identifying traits about yourself that sometimes go unnoticed. It is important to acknowledge your strengths and your weaknesses. You can use this activity to help achieve your goals. By identifying areas in which you could or want to improve in, you're forcing yourself to face what might be holding you back from improving yourself. One of the major pillars of attentional metacognition is self-awareness, and this activity can help you learn how you can best take care of yourself, how to support your confidence, how to manage your opportunities, and more.¹⁶ By spotlighting your SWOTs, you can work to prevent harm and therefore reduce distress often associated with how our brains manage self-view. This fulfills the applying aspect of the Cognitive Build.

WHY? | 14

Positive affirmations are phrases you can verbally say aloud or in your head to yourself to build yourself up. Affirmations have become a tool that helps to overcome negativity active in your routine.¹⁷ Remember to avoid any inauthentic affirmations, consider the reality of your current situation and call on your ability to thrive. Writing affirmations with positive intentions is a method that gives your brain time to recall and evaluate next steps, goals, and more.

CITATIONS

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thank you for reading