PSYCH LIFE

Self-Reflection



JOURNAL

Morning question. Night answer. 30 days.

Juan Carlos Martell, LMHC

Welcome

Top of the morning to you, fellow Psych Lifer.

For a few years now, Psych Life has shared psychology with you on social media. I promised we would go further than information and into practice; this journal is that promise. For the next 30 days you'll answer one question in the morning and one at night. The questions come from psychology ideas I trust, and they are the same kind of questions I have used in my own journal to understand my life a little better.

Here's the thing: awareness only helps when you use it. So before we start, say this with me:

> **"Knowledge is the accumulation of information, but wisdom is the application of information."**
>
> (Say it 3 times, out loud.)

Over these 30 days you'll look at how you see yourself, your relationships, your work and your purpose. Some days will feel light; some will ask more of you. Be honest, go at your own pace, and be kind to the person holding the pen.

Thank you for being here. If you have any questions, reach out through psychlife.org/contact/ or visit psychlife.org.

Enjoy, and remember that your breath is life.

Juan Carlos Martell, LMHC

Before you begin

A few simple rules

- A few minutes each morning and night is plenty; 5 to 15 minutes a day in all.
- Be honest; nobody is grading this.
- This journal is for your eyes only, unless you choose to share it. Keep it somewhere safe.
- Come back to it every day you can; the daily rhythm is where the awareness builds.
- Missed a day? That's okay; pick up where you left off. The pages go by day number, not by date.
- Set two phone reminders, one for the morning and one for the night, so the journal finds you.

Print it or use it on a tablet

Print the pages on US Letter paper (loose pages lie flat and give you room to write), or open the fillable version on a tablet or computer. You can handwrite on any page in a note-taking app, or type into the answer boxes in a PDF app that supports fillable forms.

If a question feels heavy

Some questions ask you to look at hard moments. Go at your own pace. You can skip a question and come back another day, or simply write what you notice. There are no wrong answers here.

Who wrote this, and who sees it

Written by Juan Carlos Martell, LMHC, a licensed mental health counselor

What you write here is yours. Psych Life never sees it.

Please read

Educational content; not a substitute for your own care. If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

How this journal works

Day pages (morning)

Start with a 10 second check-in: circle your mood and energy from 1 to 5, and write one word for how you feel. Then answer the morning question.

Night pages (evening)

Write one good thing from today, then answer the night question. Many night questions circle back to that morning's answer.

Teaching pages

Short explanations of the psychology ideas behind the questions, each with a "Why this works" note and its source.

Weekly reviews

Every 7 days, look back at your check-ins and answers, notice your patterns, and pick one thing to carry forward.

Day 1 and Day 30 self-checks

Rate the same 8 statements at the start and at the end, then compare. Seeing your own answers side by side shows change you might otherwise miss.

Your 30 days at a glance

Days 1 to 7	Notice the good: joy, gratitude and your people
Days 8 to 14	Reach for what you want: goals, wishes and self-love
Days 15 to 21	Know your strengths and your story: strengths, time and your timeline
Days 22 to 28	Understand what drives you: motivation, habits and balance
Days 29 and 30	Become who you already are: your ideal self and love

WHY THIS WORKS

In a 2007 brain imaging study led by Matthew Lieberman at UCLA, putting feelings about negative images into words (psychologists call it affect labeling) lowered the response of the amygdala and other limbic regions, compared with other ways of processing the same images. It's one lab study of brain activity; a good reason to try the one-word check-in, not a promise of how you'll feel.

Source: Lieberman and colleagues, Psychological Science, 2007.

Words for how I feel

When the check-in asks for one word, look here for the one that fits best, or use your own.

Light and easy

calm, content, relaxed, peaceful, safe, comfortable, settled, rested

Warm and close

grateful, loved, connected, supported, caring, tender, accepted, appreciated

Bright and lively

happy, joyful, excited, proud, hopeful, curious, playful, inspired, confident

Low and slow

tired, flat, bored, drained, lonely, sad, disappointed, discouraged, heavy

Tight and uneasy

tense, worried, nervous, restless, unsure, overwhelmed, stressed, scattered

Hot and prickly

frustrated, annoyed, irritated, impatient, hurt, jealous, resentful, angry

My own words: _____

My own words: _____

Why name a feeling at all? See the "Why this works" note on page 4.

Where I'm starting

Before Day 1, take a snapshot of where you are. Rate each statement from 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much). There are no right answers; on Day 30 you'll rate the same 8 statements and compare.

	1 = not at all	10 = very much
I can name what I'm feeling, and usually why	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I notice the good things in my day	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I feel close to the people who matter to me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I'm taking steps toward something I want	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I know my strengths and I use them	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
My time and habits go to what matters to me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I treat myself with kindness, even on hard days	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I feel clear about who I want to become	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

Three words that describe me right now:

What do I hope will feel different by Day 30?

A letter to my Day 30 self

What usually gets in the way when I try to grow or change? (For example: time, energy, doubt, or other people's opinions.)

A letter to the me who finishes Day 30. What do I want them to remember, and what do I want to say to them?

One thing I want to focus on for these 30 days: _____

Why it matters to me: _____

One small step for Week 1: _____

Date I started (optional): _____

☆ **Progress tracker**

Use it all month

My 30 days

Tick the sun when you finish a Day page and the moon when you finish a Night page, then copy your mood number from the morning check-in. Gaps are fine; you're looking for your own pattern, not a perfect streak.

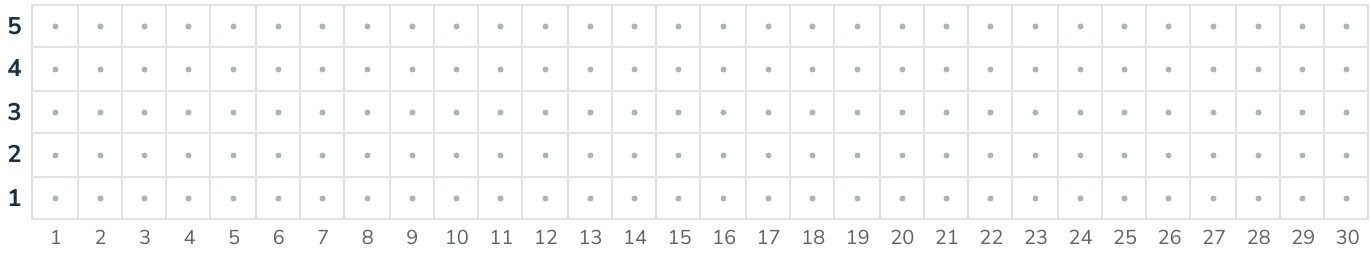
Day 1  Mood _____	**Day 2**  Mood _____	**Day 3**  Mood _____	**Day 4**  Mood _____	**Day 5**  Mood _____	**Day 6**  Mood _____
Day 7  Mood _____	**Day 8**  Mood _____	**Day 9**  Mood _____	**Day 10**  Mood _____	**Day 11**  Mood _____	**Day 12**  Mood _____
Day 13  Mood _____	**Day 14**  Mood _____	**Day 15**  Mood _____	**Day 16**  Mood _____	**Day 17**  Mood _____	**Day 18**  Mood _____
Day 19  Mood _____	**Day 20**  Mood _____	**Day 21**  Mood _____	**Day 22**  Mood _____	**Day 23**  Mood _____ ☐ New loop	**Day 24**  Mood _____ ☐ New loop
Day 25  Mood _____ ☐ New loop	**Day 26**  Mood _____ ☐ New loop	**Day 27**  Mood _____ ☐ New loop	**Day 28**  Mood _____ ☐ New loop	**Day 29**  Mood _____ ☐ New loop	**Day 30**  Mood _____ ☐ New loop

- ☐ **Day 1 self-check**
- ☐ **Week 1 review**
- ☐ **Week 2 review**
- ☐ **Week 3 review**
- ☐ **Week 4 review**
- ☐ **Day 30 self-check**

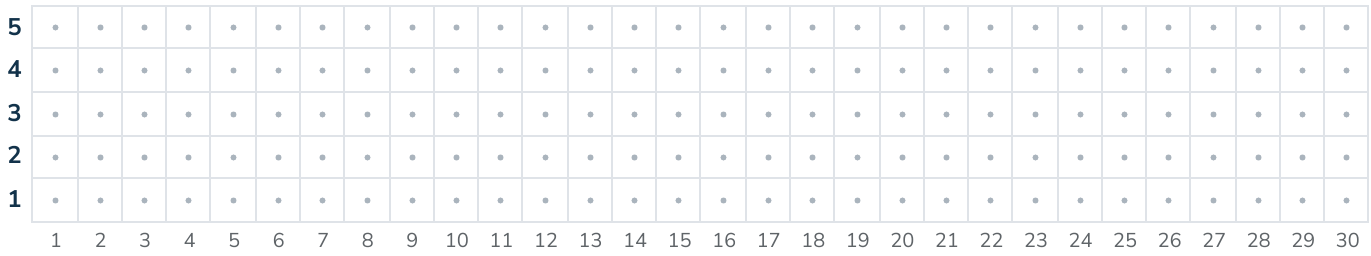
My mood and energy line

Each morning, find today's day number and mark your mood number in the top grid and your energy number in the bottom grid. Connect the dots as the days go by.

Mood (1 to 5)



Energy (1 to 5)



Day 1 to 30

What do I notice when I look at my line?

Milestone badges

Color in or cut out a badge each time you reach a milestone. No streak required; a badge counts whenever you get there.









WEEK 1 • DAYS 1 TO 7

Notice the good



This first week is about noticing what's already good: the joy you can choose, the things you're grateful for, and the people who make your life richer. It sounds simple, and it is; but simple isn't the same as easy. Most of us rush right past the good parts of our day. This week, slow down long enough to see them. You can't build on something you haven't noticed yet.

Day 1

Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

If you had the choice, would you rather have a joyful day or a miserable day?

Whatever you chose, what are 3 things you can do today to make it happen?

1.

2.

3.

Night 1

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Did you get the kind of day you chose this morning?

If not, what got in the way? If you did, what helped?

Day 2

Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

What are 3 things you're grateful for today?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Why does each one matter to you?

(If today gets hard, come back to these 3 things.)

WHY THIS WORKS

In a 2003 set of three studies by psychologists Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough, people randomly assigned to list things they were grateful for showed higher well-being than comparison groups on several, though not all, measures; the clearest effect was on positive mood.

Source: Emmons and McCullough, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2003.

Night 2

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Think of one person you're grateful for. What is it about them? Now write them a letter telling them why you're grateful, and how they've made your life better. (It's for your eyes only; you never have to send it.)

Day 3

Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

What are 3 qualities of yours that you'd like to share with the world today?

How, and with whom, will you share them?

Night 3

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Did you share the 3 qualities you wrote down this morning?

What made it easy, or what made it hard?

Day 4

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

We all have someone we look up to; sometimes it's a person in real life, and sometimes it's a character from a book or a film. Who do you look up to?

What qualities do you admire in them?

How can you live one of those qualities today?

Night 4

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Were you able to use the qualities you admire in the person you look up to?

If so, how did they show up in your day? If not, what got in the way?

Day 5

Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

If 3 wishes could be granted to you today, what would they be?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Look at each wish: is it for you, for the world, or both? What does that tell you about yourself?

Night 5

Tonight One good thing today: _____

What happened today that you're grateful for?

Day 6

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Today, will your joy come from within you, or will it depend on what happens around you?

What will you do today to make your answer true?

Night 6

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Where did you find joy today?

Did it come from within you, or from something that happened around you? (Take a moment to tell yourself the story.)

Day 7

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Name 3 people who are important in your life.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What is one quality you admire in each of them?

Night 7

Tonight One good thing today: _____

If you could take back one moment from today, which would it be?

Why that moment?

If a moment like it comes up again, what would you do differently?

☆ **Week 1 review**

Look back, look ahead

Flip back through this week's pages. Copy your mood and energy numbers below, then answer the questions.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____
Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____

☐ **Badge earned**

Which question this week stayed with me the most, and why?

A moment this week I'm proud of:

Something hard this week, written with kindness: what happened, how did it feel, and what would I say to a good friend who went through the same thing?

One thing I'll carry into next week:

My focus goal this week: ☐ **on track** ☐ **partly** ☐ **not yet** **What's next?** _____

This week's small challenge (about 10 minutes)

Spend 10 minutes on something you used to love doing, or have always wanted to try.

Coming up in Week 2: goals, wishes and what you love about yourself.

WEEK 2 • DAYS 8 TO 14

Reach for what you want



Now that you've noticed what's good, let's talk about what you want. This week you'll name a goal, make a few wishes, picture an adventure, and say out loud what you admire about yourself. Some of it may feel a little uncomfortable; that's okay. Wanting something isn't selfish; it tells you something about who you are. And remember: sometimes forward is forward.

Day 8

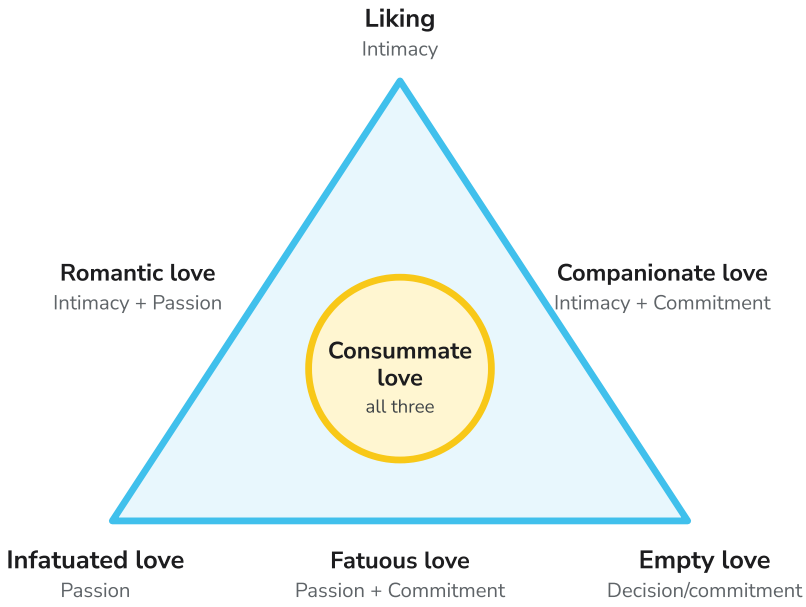
Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Life is full of surprises. Think of a goal you have in your life. What is one thing you can do TODAY to move toward it?

Reminder: Speed isn't the only variable at play; sometimes forward is forward.

Triangular Theory of Love



The image above shows the Triangular Theory of Love, a psychological theory by Robert J. Sternberg (Psychological Review, 1986). The theory says love has three components: **intimacy** (feelings of closeness, connectedness and bondedness), **passion** (the drives that lead to romance and physical attraction), and **decision/commitment** (deciding that you love someone, and over time, committing to maintain that love). Different mixes of the three create different kinds of love; for example, intimacy and commitment without passion is what Sternberg calls companionate love. Consummate, or complete, love comes from all three together; Sternberg also notes that reaching it is no guarantee that it will last.

WHY THIS WORKS

Sternberg writes that the kind of love a person experiences depends on how strong the three components are relative to each other. That gives you three separate words for what feels strong and what may need attention.

Source: Sternberg, Psychological Review, 1986.

We will come back to this diagram on Day 30.

Night 8

Tonight One good thing today: _____

If you woke up tomorrow and one thing in your life were different, what would you want that one thing to be?

How would it change your life for the better?

Day 9

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Describe a life adventure you'd love to have, in 3 sentences or fewer. Put yourself there: what do you see, hear and feel along the way?

Night 9

Tonight One good thing today: _____

List 3 things you learned today, or 3 things you became aware of.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Day 10

Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Name 3 qualities you admire about yourself, in one word each.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Now look in the mirror and say it out loud. (No mirror nearby? Saying it out loud works just as well.)

I'm a _____, _____, and _____ leader.

Night 10

Tonight One good thing today: _____

When did you show the 3 qualities from this morning today? Give one real example.

Day 11

Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

If you could picture yourself anywhere in the world today, where would you be? (Write or draw.)

What is it about that place that draws you there today?

(If you feel overwhelmed or have trouble concentrating today, take a minute and go back to this place in your mind.)

Night 11

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Life is full of surprises when we step outside the limits of our own mind. Take a few moments to replay your day.

What was something new you saw or experienced today?

What's one thing from today you're proud of yourself for?

How can you use that win as momentum for tomorrow?

Day 12

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

The butterfly effect comes from the work of MIT meteorologist Edward Lorenz, who found that small differences in a system like the weather can trigger large and often unexpected results. In life, it is a helpful picture of how one small moment can have a big impact on the future.

Think about your life. Was there a moment, big or small, that changed its course? (For example: a conversation, a move, a class you almost skipped, or a door that closed.)

Night 12

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Think back to the butterfly effect from this morning.

What happened today that could start a butterfly effect toward the good things you want to bring into your life?

Day 13

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Imagine you're traveling in a faraway land and you find an old lamp. You rub it, and a genie appears and grants you 3 wishes! What do you wish for?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Why do these wishes matter to you?

What is one thing you can do today to move toward each of these wishes?

Night 13

Tonight One good thing today: _____

No matter how big or small, what did you do today that moved you toward one of the 3 wishes you made to the genie this morning?

Day 14

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

What do I love about myself?

What are my top priorities today?

How am I going to spend my free time today?

Now do it!

Night 14

Tonight One good thing today: _____

(Think about today.)

Describe a moment today when the quality I love about myself showed up.

Did I get to my top priorities today?

If not, what could I have done differently?

☆ **Week 2 review**

Look back, look ahead

Flip back through this week's pages. Copy your mood and energy numbers below, then answer the questions.

Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____
Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____

Last week's small challenge: ☐ done ☐ not yet ☐ Badge earned

Which question this week stayed with me the most, and why?

A moment this week I'm proud of:

Something hard this week, written with kindness: what happened, how did it feel, and what would I say to a good friend who went through the same thing?

One thing I'll carry into next week:

My focus goal this week: ☐ on track ☐ partly ☐ not yet **What's next?** _____

This week's small challenge (about 10 minutes)

Send one thank-you message to someone who helped shape your story.

Coming up in Week 3: your strengths, your time and the story of your life so far.

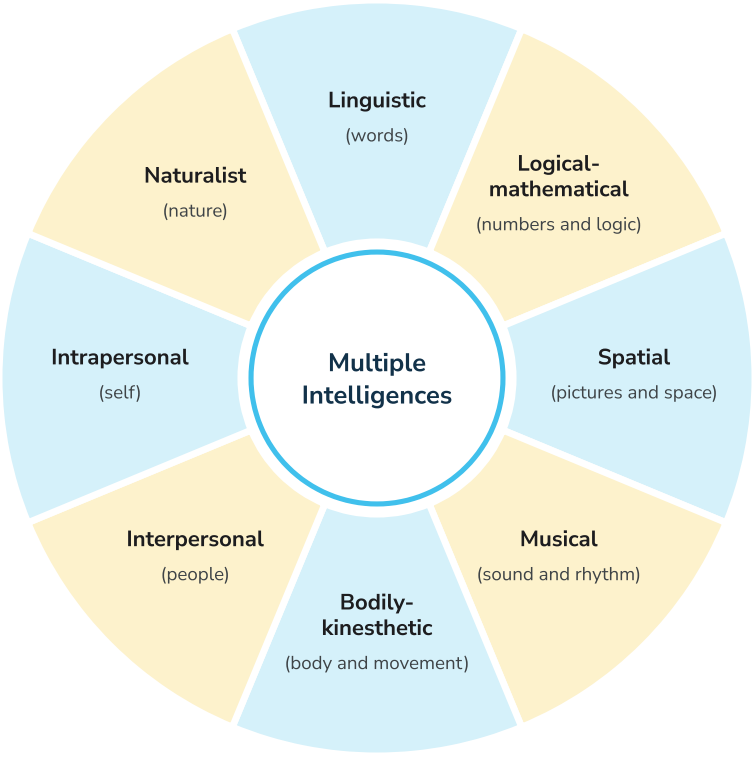
WEEK 3 • DAYS 15 TO 21

Know your strengths and your story



This week turns inward. You'll look at the ways you're smart, the strengths that help you and sometimes trip you up, how you spend your time, and the timeline of your life so far. Your story is yours; nobody else gets to decide which parts mattered. Go gently with the heavier questions, and remember that you can skip any question and come back to it.

Multiple Intelligences Theory



The illustration shows the theory of multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner, a psychologist at Harvard. Gardner first presented the theory in his 1983 book *Frames of Mind*, as a critique of the idea that there is a single intelligence measured by IQ tests. He describes eight intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist. The theory is popular in education, and many psychologists who study intelligence testing disagree with it; use it here as a helpful lens for noticing your strengths, not as a test result.

WHY THIS WORKS

Gardner presented the theory as a critique of the view that a single intelligence, measured by IQ or other short answer tests, captures a person's intellect. In his own words, people in standard psychometrics "are almost always critical of the theory"; that's why this journal uses it as a lens, not a measurement.

Source: Gardner, Multiple Intelligences FAQ, Harvard Project Zero.

We will use this diagram again on Day 17 and Day 28.

Day 15



Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Name one person you're grateful to have in your life today. What is it about them that makes you grateful they're in your life?

Night 15

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Word Association

Rule #1: Set a 5 minute timer, and until it rings, write or draw anything you want on this page.
Rule #2: No rules.

Day 16

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Name one positive moment from today so far.

There's always something I can take away from the day. Something I learned today is

_____.

Night 16

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Pretend you had to live on an island for 3 years, and you could bring only 3 people with you.

Who are your 3 people?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What is it about each of them that makes you want them there?

Day 17

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Howard Gardner is a Harvard psychologist known for the theory of multiple intelligences (see the teaching page before Day 15).

Which two intelligences feel like your strengths? Why? (For example: interpersonal, because friends come to you to talk things through; or spatial, because you can picture how a room will look before you move a thing.)

Night 17

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Most people believe their strengths will carry them through life (courage, love, leadership, money), but there's an old saying: "A person's strength is also a person's weakness."

One of my personal strengths is _____.

How has this strength helped me in my life?

How has this same strength been a double-edged sword in my life? (For example: determination that turns into stubbornness, or generosity that leaves nothing for yourself.)

Day 18

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Many people say time is an illusion, yet our bodies keep aging, and our time here is limited. What is my own definition of time, or my opinion of it?

Based on my own definition, am I using my time well? (Think about the hours that go to people I love, to work that matters, and to things I'd rather let go of.)

If yes, how so? If not, what can I do differently?

Night 18

Tonight One good thing today: _____

(Think about your day.)

Did I use my time well today? Where did most of it go?

Day 19

Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Boundaries help us make sense of life (concepts, paradigms, and dimensions), and they also help us set the rules of our relationships.

What are 5 non-negotiable values in my life or in my relationships? (Need ideas? adventure, balance, community, compassion, courage, creativity, curiosity, fairness, faith, family, freedom, friendship, growth, health, honesty, humor, independence, justice, kindness, learning, loyalty, patience, peace, respect, responsibility, security, service, simplicity; or use your own words. The list is in alphabetical order, not order of importance.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Night 19

Tonight One good thing today: _____

What would you do if you were guaranteed success?

Would you lose your ambition if success were promised? Why or why not?

Day 20

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

What's on my schedule that doesn't need to be there?

What could I drop, or at least cut back?

Night 20

Tonight One good thing today: _____

What part of my day didn't I enjoy?

What part of my day did I love?

How can I shape my schedule to do more of what I love and less of what I don't?

Day 21

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Making a timeline of your own life can help you understand yourself, and why certain things in your life turned out the way they did. Use the line below to mark the events that have been important in your life. Not the events someone else decided were important for you; the ones you know were important. Start at the day you were born and end at today's date.



(Day of birth) (Today's date)

Continue on the next page.

Day 21 (continued)



Look at the events on your timeline, the ones that have shaped how your life has unfolded, and answer these questions.

1. What do you notice in your timeline that you hadn't noticed about your life before?

2. What about your timeline is unique to how you became the person you are today?

3. Which part of your timeline do you want to build on as you write the next chapter of your life?

Night 21

Tonight One good thing today: _____

What is one thing I wish I had done today but didn't because I was afraid? (Tell the whole story.)

The next time a moment like that comes, what could I try?

☆ **Week 3 review**

Look back, look ahead

Flip back through this week's pages. Copy your mood and energy numbers below, then answer the questions.

Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20	Day 21
Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____
Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____

Last week's small challenge: ☐ done ☐ not yet ☐ Badge earned

Which question this week stayed with me the most, and why?

A moment this week I'm proud of:

Something hard this week, written with kindness: what happened, how did it feel, and what would I say to a good friend who went through the same thing?

One thing I'll carry into next week:

My focus goal this week: ☐ on track ☐ partly ☐ not yet **What's next?** _____

This week's small challenge (about 10 minutes)

Notice one habit cue and write it down: where you were, the time, how you felt, who was around, and what came just before.

Coming up in Week 4: what motivates you, the habits that run your days, and balance.

WEEK 4 • DAYS 22 TO 28

Understand what drives you



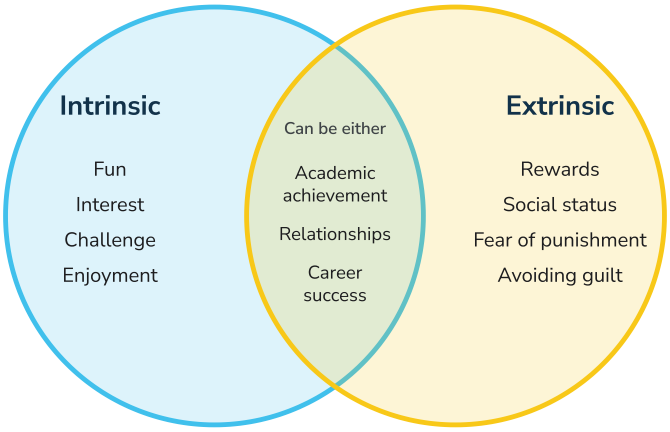
This week is about the engine under the hood: what motivates you, the habits that run your days, and how you keep things in balance. You'll pick one everyday habit, look at how it works, and make a small plan to change it. No big overhauls; just one loop and one step at a time. Awareness first; then application.

Day 22

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Types of Motivators



Psychologists Richard Ryan and Edward Deci describe two basic kinds of motivation. **Intrinsic** motivation means doing something because it is interesting or enjoyable in itself. **Extrinsic** motivation means doing something because it leads to a separate outcome, like a reward, status, or avoiding punishment or guilt. Many goals can be driven by either one.

Which kind of motivation do you tend to lean on?

What do you gain from leaning on that kind? (For example: you love the work itself, or a deadline gets you moving.)

How can you use this to your advantage in your life?

Night 22

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Think about your day.

Who or what do you appreciate in your day-to-day life that tends to go unnoticed?

Why do you appreciate this person or thing? (Don't be shy.)

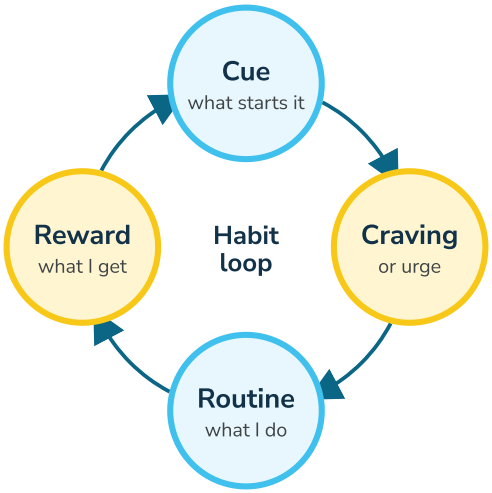
Day 23

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

The Habit Loop

Many everyday habits run on a simple loop. In *The Power of Habit*, Charles Duhigg describes three parts: a **cue**, a **routine** and a **reward**. In *Atomic Habits*, James Clear describes four steps: cue, **craving**, response and reward. This page uses four parts: cue, craving or urge, routine and reward.



Think of one everyday habit you'd like to change (for example: scrolling on your phone in bed, hitting snooze, putting off a task, or snacking when you're bored). Which one did you pick?

Cue: When does it usually start? Notice where you are, what time it is, how you feel, who's around, and what you were doing just before.

Craving or urge: What feeling are you really after? (For example: rest, relief, fun, comfort, connection, or a break.)

Routine and reward: What do you usually do, and what do you get out of it?

Day 23 (continued)



What could you do instead that gives you a similar reward? List a few ideas you'd be willing to try.

My plan: When _____ **(cue), I will** _____ **(new routine), because it gives me** _____ **(reward).**

Remember the butterfly effect from Day 12: one small change can set off a series of bigger ones. What is one small step you can take today to start your new loop?

WHY THIS WORKS

Duhigg describes a habit as a formula the brain follows: "When I see CUE, I will do ROUTINE in order to get a REWARD." He writes that the easiest way to change that formula, "according to study after study, is to have a plan," which psychologists call implementation intentions. He also writes that experiments show almost all habit cues fall into five groups: location, time, emotional state, other people and the action just before.

Source: Duhigg, "A Reader's Guide to Using These Ideas," appendix to The Power of Habit.

Track your new loop on the tracker (page 8): tick the New loop box on each day you try it, Days 23 to 30.

Night 23

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Morning and night are a handoff of light from the sun to the moon. Each one shines when it's their time. There is no competition.

Now think about your day. Sometimes, in trying to shine, we step on others when there's no need. Did that happen today? If so, what happened, and how could it have gone differently? (For example: talking over someone, or taking the credit for shared work.)

If not today, has it happened to you before, on either side?

Day 24

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Imagine you're standing in front of a portal. On the other side is your own version of paradise; call it heaven, a perfect place, or whatever fits what you believe.

What does it look like? (Are there trees? People? What is everyone doing? Write or draw.)

Which parts of that place could you bring into your life now, and how?

Night 24

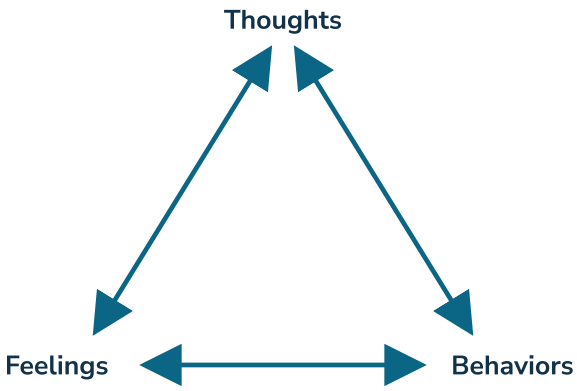
Tonight One good thing today: _____

Think back to your answer this morning. Were you able to bring some of that place into your day? (Tell yourself why or why not.)

Day 25

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.



In cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), what we think, how we feel, and what we do are seen as affecting one another in both directions.

What thoughts come up when you look at this image?

What feelings come up?

Where do you see this triangle in your own life? How could you use it?

WHY THIS WORKS

A clinical review in BJPsych Advances describes CBT's model as "two-way relationships between what people think, how they feel emotionally and physically, and what they do." That's why every arrow in the diagram points both ways.

Source: Colvin and Williams, BJPsych Advances, 2018.

Night 25

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Many people see dreams as a reflection of the deepest part of our psyche (researchers still debate what dreams mean). If you could dream about one thing tonight, what would it be?

Is your answer about a desire for pleasure, or a search for answers to the unknown?

Day 26

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

The identities we form throughout life shape how we see the world; they open us up to some perspectives while quietly closing us off to others.

Think about yourself, and list 3 groups or communities you identify with, in your own words. (For example: your culture or heritage, a language you speak, your faith or beliefs, your gender identity, a family role, your work, a team, a hobby, a music scene, or any other group that matters to you.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

How does belonging to these 3 groups shape the way you see life?

Self-Reflection: The groups we belong to can give us a view that others may not have. At the same time, loyalty to a group can narrow what we let ourselves see, and when that happens, we limit the possibilities in front of us. Today, notice how your choices connect to the picture you have of yourself as part of these groups.

Night 26

Tonight One good thing today: _____

List 3 wins from today.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What will I do better tomorrow?

Day 27

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.



The symbol here is called the yin-yang (also written yin and yang). In Chinese thought, yin and yang are two complementary forces; yin is linked with darkness and valleys, and yang with light and mountains. In the symbol they appear as the dark and light halves of one circle. One way to read it: opposites belong together; there can't be light without darkness, or sound without silence.

Think of something hard in your life right now. What is one good thing that has come with it, or could grow out of it?

Where is the principle of yin and yang showing up in your life? (For example: a loss that made room for something new, or a busy season balanced by a quiet one. This is a chance to notice the harmony among the events, the relationships and the parts of yourself.)

Self-Reflection: We like to think of the parts of our lives as separate. But if 2 of your friends have never met, the simple fact that both of them talk to you connects them. It can be hard to accept that things outside our awareness are shaping our lives; once you do, you understand the yin-yang.

Night 27

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Your body has carried you through every day of your life. Tonight, give it a few quiet moments of attention.

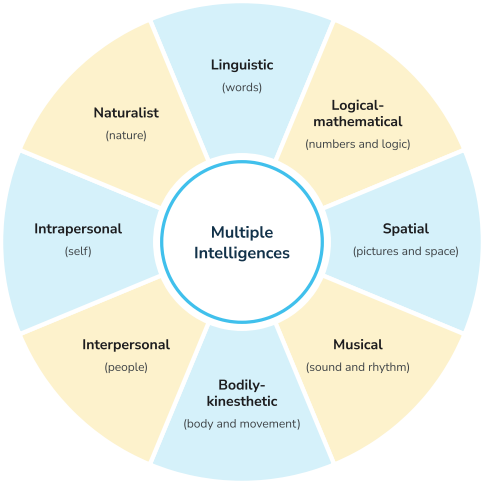
If your body could talk, what would it say? (Take a few deep breaths and notice your body.)

Day 28

Check-in Mood (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Energy (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Imagine judging a monkey by its ability to swim, or a bird by its ability to run. We would miss everything they do well. A single test score can work the same way with people; no one number can show all the ways a person is smart.



Looking at the illustration, which 2 intelligences do you consider your strengths?

How can you use these 2 strengths today, at work, at home, with friends or anywhere in your life?

Night 28

Tonight One good thing today: _____

Write about a moment today when your work felt real, necessary and satisfying; paid or unpaid, professional or at home, physical or mental. What did that satisfaction feel like, and how can you bring more of it into your everyday life?

☆ **Week 4 review**

Look back, look ahead

Flip back through this week's pages. Copy your mood and energy numbers below, then answer the questions.

Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25	Day 26	Day 27	Day 28
Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____	Mood ____
Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____	Energy ____

Last week's small challenge: ☐ **done** ☐ **not yet**

Which question this week stayed with me the most, and why?

A moment this week I'm proud of:

Something hard this week, written with kindness: what happened, how did it feel, and what would I say to a good friend who went through the same thing?

One thing I'll carry into next week:

My focus goal this week: ☐ **on track** ☐ **partly** ☐ **not yet** **What's next?** _____

This week's small challenge (about 10 minutes)

Do one thing your ideal self would do.

Coming up in the final days: your ideal self and the love in your life.

FINAL DAYS • DAYS 29 AND 30

Become who you already are



These last two days bring it all together. You'll meet your ideal self, picture an ordinary day you'd love to live, and look at the love in your life. Then you'll look back at where you started. Here's what I want you to hold on to: the person you're growing into isn't far away. You've been writing them into these pages all month.

Day 29

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.

Imagine you met your ideal self. What would they tell you?

Self-Reflection: The person you imagined came from within you; so in a real way, you're already that person. Go out there and be it.

WHY THIS WORKS

In a 2001 study by psychologist Laura King, 81 undergraduates were randomly assigned to one of four writing topics for 20 minutes a day, four days in a row. Writing about life goals, including their best possible future self, was associated with a significant increase in well-being measured three weeks later.

Source: King, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 2001.

Day 29 (continued)



Describe an ordinary day in your life a year from now that you'd be happy to live again and again: the morning, the afternoon and the evening. (Keep it real; think of a regular Tuesday, not a lottery win.)

Which one piece of that day could you bring into this week?

Night 29

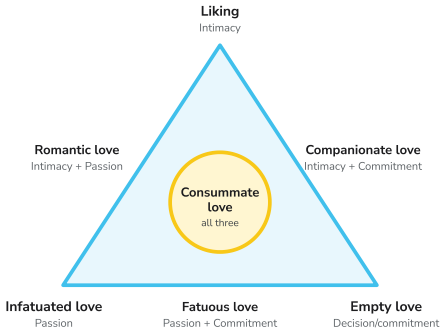
Tonight One good thing today: _____

Write about your first love; a person, a place or a thing. (Sketch it if words don't fit.)

Day 30

Check-in Mood 1 2 3 4 5 Energy 1 2 3 4 5 One word for how I feel: _____

Need a word? See page 5.



Remember the Triangular Theory of Love by Robert J. Sternberg (the teaching page after Day 8): intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Different mixes create different kinds of love, and consummate love comes from all three together.

Think of a close relationship: a partner, a past partner, a friend or family. Which of the 3 parts of the triangle are strong, which one is missing or weak, and how could it grow?

Now think about where that relationship could go next. Which part of the triangle could use more care or exploration?

Night 30

Tonight One good thing today: _____

What always brings tears to your eyes? (Paulo Coelho shares this line: "Tears are words that need to be written.")

My patterns

Take a slow look back at your month. You're the expert on your own life; just notice what you see.

Look at your chart and your tracker. Which days were higher? What was happening on those days?

Which days were lower? What was going on, and what helped, even a little?

One thing I want more of:

One thing I want less of:

Last week's small challenge: ☐ done ☐ not yet

Where I've landed

You made it. Before you look back, rate the same 8 statements you rated before Day 1. Then turn back to that page and compare.

	1 = not at all	10 = very much
I can name what I'm feeling, and usually why	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I notice the good things in my day	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I feel close to the people who matter to me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I'm taking steps toward something I want	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I know my strengths and I use them	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
My time and habits go to what matters to me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I treat myself with kindness, even on hard days	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
I feel clear about who I want to become	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

Three words that describe me now:

Day 1 next to Day 30: which numbers moved, which stayed put, and what do I make of that?

What I'm taking with me

What surprised me most about myself in these 30 days?

Which question or practice do I want to keep using?

Read the letter I wrote to myself before Day 1. Now write back.

☐ Badge earned

Keep going

Reflection works best as a habit, not a one-time event. A few ways to keep it going:

- Print a fresh copy in a few months and start again; then compare your new answers with these.
- Go back to the question that moved you most, and answer it again in a month.
- Keep a one-line habit: each night, write one good thing and one thing you learned.
- Look over your tracker and weekly reviews; notice which days felt easier, and why.

Questions I want to come back to, and when:

> ☆ **Stay in touch**
>
> Join the free Psych Life newsletter at **psychlife.org** for news, books and well-being tips, and follow along on Instagram at **@_psychlife_**.

A letter to me, one year from now

Write to the person you'll be a year from today. Tell them what you learned this month, what you're hoping for, and what you want them to remember. Then tuck this page somewhere you'll find it again.

Want a reminder? Write the date you'll reread this: _____

Until next time

Hello again, fellow Psych Lifer,

We've reached the end of the Self-Reflection Journal, but every ending is also a new beginning. I hope these 30 days helped you build a clearer awareness of yourself, one that reaches beyond our usual day-to-day routines. Our psychological drama is like a bubble we build around ourselves out of limiting beliefs and identities. When we burst that bubble, we feel more connected to the world and the people around us.

The good news is that this won't be the last time you hear from us; I am currently writing my next book. If you'd like to get in touch, don't hesitate to reach out through our website or on Instagram:

Website	**psychlife.org**
Contact	**psychlife.org/contact/**
Instagram	**@_psychlife_**

I also want to give a big thank you to my best friend David Hernandez for inspiring the idea of this journal and helping Psych Life behind the scenes since day one. Your energy and counsel have been invaluable, and I am grateful for our years of brotherhood.

Have a great morning, afternoon or evening, wherever you are in the world. Be safe; I'm sure we will meet again soon.

Sincerely,
Juan Carlos Martell, LMHC

Original 2020 edition designed by Jennifer Jaimes