



Keep What Helps

A no-pressure skills journal
for steadier seasons



Start anywhere.

No dates, and no wrong way to use these pages. Breaks of any length are okay.

Some pages are quick check-ins. Others walk you through skills drawn from cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Open pages hold everything else.

The kindness you'd offer someone else belongs to you too.

Belongs to: _____

If found, please return to: _____

Both lines are optional.

Three ways in

Pages with questions offer three ways to take part. Pick whichever fits your energy that day. All three count as done. So does skipping a page.

- **A little**
Tick or circle something. No writing needed.
 - **Some**
Write a line or two.
 - **Plenty**
Keep going as long as you like.
-

A few notes

- Skills get easier with practice. Trying one on a calm day is a fine way to start.
- Writing about hard things can stir up feelings. That's common, and it usually passes. You can stop any time.
- Messy is welcome. Spelling, neatness, crossing out, and blank pages are all fine.
- Green tabs on the edge show what kind of page you're on, and Kinds of Pages explains each one. To find a page again, fill in its corner circle. Filled circles stand out when you flip through.

What's Inside

Journal pages are mixed, so each kind repeats.

A Gentle Note and Support Lines

Kinds of Pages

Journal Pages, Mixed Together

Check-in, with extra room

Question pages

Open pages

A look back

Skills pages

Thought check

Sizing up a feeling

Doing the opposite of an urge

Riding out an urge

Small experiment

Values in action

Breaking down a goal

Planning a hard conversation

When emotions run hot

Finishing This Journal

Good to Know

The Research Behind These Pages

Sources

About This Journal

Try Your Pens Here

A Gentle Note

This journal is for everyday life. The pages are not medical or mental health advice. Nothing here replaces care from a doctor, therapist, or counselor.

Some pages may bring up big feelings. You can always pause, skip a page, or close the journal.

Every feeling, even anger or sadness, is a normal part of being human. Extra support may help when feelings last a long time, get in the way of daily life, or feel like too much to carry alone. That support can come from a trusted person, a professional, or the lines below and on the next page, whichever feels possible.

Need support right now?

In the US: call or text **988**
or chat at 988lifeline.org

Free, any time, for any kind of emotional distress, including thoughts of suicide or self-harm, or worries about alcohol or drug use.

In an emergency: call **911**

If someone may have overdosed on opioids:

Naloxone (Narcan) can reverse the overdose while you wait for responders. In the US, no prescription is needed.

More Support Lines

Free lines in the US, unless noted. Texting may use standard message rates.

- **Español:** call 988 and press 2, or text AYUDA to 988.
- **ASL:** call 988 from a videophone. **TTY:** dial 711, then 988.
- **Veterans, service members, and loved ones:** call 988 and press 1, or text 838255.
- **LGBTQ+ young people:** call 988 and press 3. Or reach The Trevor Project at 1-866-488-7386, or text START to 678-678.
- **Worried about alcohol or drug use?** The SAMHSA National Helpline is open any time, in English and Spanish: 1-800-662-4357. If your body depends on alcohol or certain other drugs, stopping all at once can be dangerous, so ask about a safer plan.
- **Outside the US:** findahelpline.com lists free helplines by country.

If the first line or service you try isn't a good fit, it's okay to try another.

Kinds of Pages

The journal pages that follow are mixed together. The green tab on each page's edge shows its kind. Use them in any order, and skip anything.

Check-In

A quick check on how you're doing, with a page of extra room beside it.

Question

One question and room to answer. Answer it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Open

Lines, dots, boxes, and other layouts for writing, drawing, lists, or anything you like.

Look Back

Four times through the journal, two pages to look over recent pages and adjust course. Skipping ahead works too.

Skills

Step-by-step pages drawn from CBT, DBT, and related approaches: checking a thought, sizing up a feeling, riding out urges, small experiments, values, goals, hard conversations, and cooling down. Going through a harder season? The gentler companion journal, *Any Amount Counts*, may suit you better.

After the journal pages come *Finishing This Journal*, *Good to Know*, and the research behind these pages, in that order.

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

On your mind right now:

☒ Plenty

One small thing you'd like to do, and when:

Anything else:

Worth finding again ○

Thought check

Thoughts aren't always facts. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

● A little

Picture a recent moment that upset you. Which thinking traps showed up?
Circle any:

all-or-nothing mind reading fortune telling catastrophizing
labeling discounting the good rigid rules emotional reasoning
other: _____

● Some

The situation and the thought:

Feeling strength: mild ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ strong

● Plenty

Facts that support the thought:

Facts that don't:

A fairer way to see it:

Feeling strength now: mild ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ strong

Worth finding again ○

Open page. Anything goes.

Open

Worth finding again ○

Sizing up a feeling

Feelings carry useful information, but sometimes it's a little off. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

☒ A little

Bring to mind a recent strong feeling. Which one was it? Circle any:

angry anxious sad guilty ashamed jealous
embarrassed other: _____

Does the feeling fit what happened?

☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No ☐ Not sure

☒ Some

What happened, just the facts:

☒ Plenty

Other ways to read it, including someone else's view:

If the feeling fits, a helpful next step. If not, a way to let it ease:

Open page. Doodles, lists, maps, anything.



Open

A habit loop: the cue, the action, and the payoff.

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ☐

Open

Riding out an urge

One helpful picture: urges rise, peak, and fade, like a wave. Riding one out counts, and so does just noticing it.

☒ A little

☐ Noticed the urge, whatever happened next.

Urge strength: mild ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ strong

☒ Some

Where you feel the urge in your body:

☒ Plenty

Weighing both sides:

	Acting on the urge	Riding it out
Pros		
Cons		

After 10 minutes: mild ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ strong

If an urge involves hurting yourself or someone else, please reach out. In the US, call or text 988, or call 911 if anyone is in danger right now. Cutting back on alcohol or drugs? Stopping all at once can be dangerous, so ask about a safer plan. [More lines at the front.](#)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

A thought that showed up a lot lately:

☒ Plenty

Is it a fact, a guess, or a feeling talking?

Anything else:

[illegible]

Check-In

Worth finding again ○

Doing the opposite of an urge

When it's safe, acting opposite to an unhelpful urge can shift the feeling. For anger, try "When emotions run hot."

● A little

Think of an urge you've had lately. What kind was it? Circle any:

avoid snap withdraw scroll overspend give up
overwork put off drink or use other: _____

Would acting on the urge help you in the long run?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

● Some

What doing the opposite could look like:

● Plenty

How did it go?

What changed, if anything:

Open page. One thought, list, or doodle per box, or ignore the boxes.

Open

Signs you're stretched too thin, and early ways to ease off.

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

[illegible]

Open

Worth finding again ○

Small experiment

Predictions can feel certain. A small, safe test can show what really happens.

☒ A little

Choose something coming up that worries you. What do you predict?

Circle any:

things will go badly

others will judge

the task will be too hard

nothing will change

other: _____

How true it feels: a little ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ completely

☒ Some

What you'll try, when, and where:

☒ Plenty

What actually happened:

What you learned:

Open page. Draw, write, or stick things here.

Open

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

Something that went better than expected:

☒ Plenty

What helped, if anything:

Anything else:

Extra room, if you want it. Blank is fine too.

Check-In

A time you changed your mind, and what changed it.

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Values in action

Values are directions, not finish lines. Small steps count.

☐ A little

Which values matter most to you right now? Circle any:

honesty kindness health learning creativity connection

fairness adventure rest community faith growth

other: _____

☒ Some

One value to act on soon:

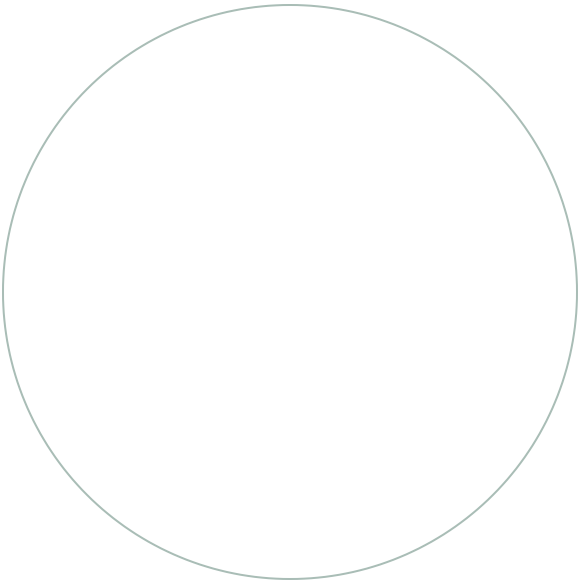
☒ Plenty

A small action that fits that value, and when:

How did it go?

Worth finding again ☐

Open page. A word in the middle with ideas around it, or anything else.



Open

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

A look back

A chance to look over your recent pages and adjust. Skipping ahead works too. Support: call or text 988 (US).

☒ A little

How have things felt lately? Circle any:

steady busy stretched thin up and down good flat
hard to say other: _____

☒ Some

Something that went well, and what helped:

Something that didn't go well, and what came next:

☒ Plenty

A pattern you've noticed in your thoughts, feelings, or actions:

Look Back

Adjusting course

• A little

What would you like more room for? Circle any:

rest focus movement connection fun quiet learning
time outside other: _____

● Some

A habit you'd like to keep:

A habit you'd like to change, at your own pace:

● Plenty

Something to try next, as a when-then plan:

When _____

then _____

Anything else:

Worth finding again ○

[illegible]

Open

Worth finding again ○

Breaking down a goal

Small steps make a big goal easier to start, and each one done can build confidence. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

☒ A little

Pick a goal, big or small. What area is it in? Circle any:

health work or school people learning creativity money
rest fun other: _____

☒ Some

The goal, and why it matters to you:

☒ Plenty

Smaller steps, easiest first. Split any that feel too big:

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

The first step, as a when-then plan:

When _____
then _____

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

An urge you noticed, whatever happened next:

☒ Plenty

What might help next time:

Anything else:

Check-In

Worth finding again ○

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Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Open page. Doodles, lists, maps, anything.



Open

Planning a hard conversation

Planning ahead can help a hard talk feel calmer and clearer.

☒ A little

What's your main goal? Circle any:

asking for something saying no staying on good terms
staying true to yourself other: _____

☒ Some

The facts, without blame:

What you're asking for, or saying no to:

☒ Plenty

A calm way to open:

Possible pushback, and a steady reply:

Open

Strengths you use without thinking about it.

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ☐

When emotions run hot

Anger is a feeling too, as real as sadness or fear. Cooling down first can make a good choice easier.

● A little

Before you respond, tick any to try:

- ☐ A slow breath out, longer than the breath in.
- ☐ A change of room or scenery.
- ☐ A few minutes of slow, calming movement, like stretching.
- ☐ Naming the feeling, aloud or in your head.
- ☐ Waiting a while before replying.

● Some

What set off the reaction:

● Plenty

A response that fits your long-term goals:

How did it go?

Thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else? In the US, call or text 988, or call 911 if anyone is in danger right now.

Worth finding again ☐

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

A value you acted on, in any small way:

☒ Plenty

A small next step for that value:

Anything else:

[illegible]

Check-In

Worth finding again ○

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Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Open page. One thought, list, or doodle per box, or ignore the boxes.

Open

Thought check

Thoughts aren't always facts. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

● A little

Picture a recent moment that upset you. Which thinking traps showed up?
Circle any:

all-or-nothing mind reading fortune telling catastrophizing
labeling discounting the good rigid rules emotional reasoning
other: _____

● Some

The situation and the thought:

Feeling strength: mild ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ strong

● Plenty

Facts that support the thought:

Facts that don't:

A fairer way to see it:

Feeling strength now: mild ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ strong

Worth finding again ○

[illegible]

Open

Worth finding again ○

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Sizing up a feeling

Feelings carry useful information, but sometimes it's a little off. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

☒ A little

Bring to mind a recent strong feeling. Which one was it? Circle any:

angry anxious sad guilty ashamed jealous
embarrassed other: _____

Does the feeling fit what happened?

☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No ☐ Not sure

☒ Some

What happened, just the facts:

☒ Plenty

Other ways to read it, including someone else's view:

If the feeling fits, a helpful next step. If not, a way to let it ease:

Worth finding again ☐

Open page. Draw, write, or stick things here.

Open

Riding out an urge

One helpful picture: urges rise, peak, and fade, like a wave. Riding one out counts, and so does just noticing it.

☒ A little

☐ Noticed the urge, whatever happened next.

Urge strength: mild ☐☐☐☐☐ strong

☒ Some

Where you feel the urge in your body:

☒ Plenty

Weighing both sides:

	Acting on the urge	Riding it out
Pros		
Cons		

After 10 minutes: mild ☐☐☐☐☐ strong

If an urge involves hurting yourself or someone else, please reach out. In the US, call or text 988, or call 911 if anyone is in danger right now. Cutting back on alcohol or drugs? Stopping all at once can be dangerous, so ask about a safer plan. [More lines at the front.](#)

Skills

Worth finding again ☐

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

Something stressful coming up:

☒ Plenty

One part you can prepare for:

Anything else:

Extra room, if you want it. Blank is fine too.

Check-In

Worth finding again ☐

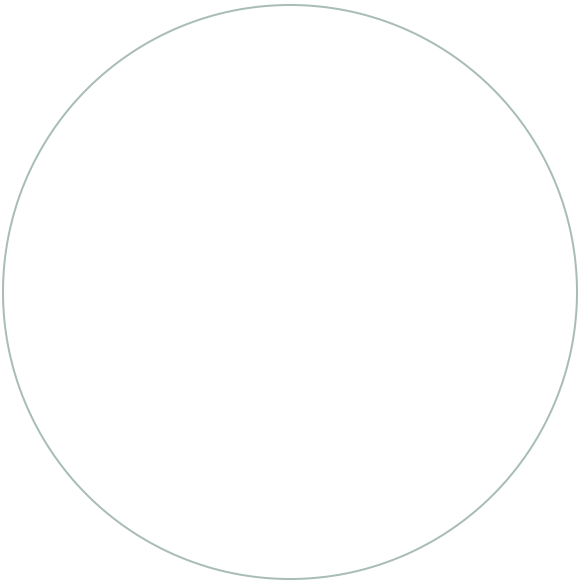
[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Open page. A word in the middle with ideas around it, or anything else.



Open

Doing the opposite of an urge

When it's safe, acting opposite to an unhelpful urge can shift the feeling. For anger, try "When emotions run hot."

☒ A little

Think of an urge you've had lately. What kind was it? Circle any:

avoid snap withdraw scroll overspend give up
overwork put off drink or use other: _____

Would acting on the urge help you in the long run?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

☒ Some

What doing the opposite could look like:

☒ Plenty

How did it go?

What changed, if anything:

[illegible]

Open

Worth finding again ○

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Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Open page. Doodles, lists, maps, anything.



Open

A look back

A chance to look over your recent pages and adjust. Skipping ahead works too. Support: call or text 988 (US).

☒ A little

How have things felt lately? Circle any:

steady busy stretched thin up and down good flat
hard to say other: _____

☒ Some

A skill that’s getting easier:

☒ Plenty

Where that skill could fit into an ordinary week:

Look Back

Adjusting course

• A little

What would you like more room for? Circle any:

rest focus movement connection fun quiet learning
time outside other: _____

● Some

A boundary that's working:

A boundary that needs adjusting:

● Plenty

Something to try next, as a when-then plan:

When _____

then _____

Anything else:

Worth finding again ○

Small experiment

Predictions can feel certain. A small, safe test can show what really happens.

● A little

Choose something coming up that worries you. What do you predict?

Circle any:

things will go badly

others will judge

the task will be too hard

nothing will change

other: _____

How true it feels: a little ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ completely

● Some

What you'll try, when, and where:

● Plenty

What actually happened:

What you learned:

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

A feeling that fit the situation well:

☒ Plenty

A feeling that seemed bigger than what happened:

Anything else:

Worth finding again ○

Values in action

Values are directions, not finish lines. Small steps count.

☐ A little

Which values matter most to you right now? Circle any:

honesty kindness health learning creativity connection

fairness adventure rest community faith growth

other: _____

☒ Some

One value to act on soon:

☒ Plenty

A small action that fits that value, and when:

How did it go?

Skills

Worth finding again ☐

Open

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Open page. One thought, list, or doodle per box, or ignore the boxes.

Open

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

Something you’ve been avoiding:

☒ Plenty

A small, safe step toward it:

Anything else:

[illegible]

Check-In

Worth finding again ○

Breaking down a goal

Small steps make a big goal easier to start, and each one done can build confidence. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

☐ A little

Pick a goal, big or small. What area is it in? Circle any:

health work or school people learning creativity money
rest fun other: _____

☒ Some

The goal, and why it matters to you:

☒ Plenty

Smaller steps, easiest first. Split any that feel too big:

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

The first step, as a when-then plan:

When _____
then _____

Open page. Two lists side by side, or anything else.

[illegible]

Open

Things that help you reset after a hard moment.

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Planning a hard conversation

Planning ahead can help a hard talk feel calmer and clearer.

☒ A little

What's your main goal? Circle any:

asking for something saying no staying on good terms

staying true to yourself other: _____

☒ Some

The facts, without blame:

What you're asking for, or saying no to:

☒ Plenty

A calm way to open:

Possible pushback, and a steady reply:

Open page. Draw, write, or stick things here.

Open

Worth finding again ☐

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Question

Worth finding again ○

Check-in

☒ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

A conversation on your mind:

☒ Plenty

What you'd like to say, in plain words:

Anything else:

Extra room, if you want it. Blank is fine too.

Check-In

When emotions run hot

Anger is a feeling too, as real as sadness or fear. Cooling down first can make a good choice easier.

● A little

Before you respond, tick any to try:

- ☐ A slow breath out, longer than the breath in.
- ☐ A change of room or scenery.
- ☐ A few minutes of slow, calming movement, like stretching.
- ☐ Naming the feeling, aloud or in your head.
- ☐ Waiting a while before replying.

● Some

What set off the reaction:

● Plenty

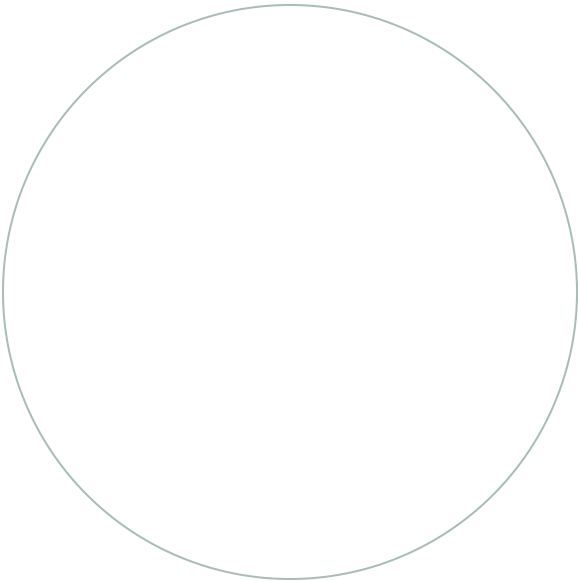
A response that fits your long-term goals:

How did it go?

Thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else? In the US, call or text 988, or call 911 if anyone is in danger right now.

Worth finding again ☐

Open page. A word in the middle with ideas around it, or anything else.



Open

What a good-enough day looks like.

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

[illegible]

Open

Worth finding again ○

Thought check

Thoughts aren't always facts. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

● A little

Picture a recent moment that upset you. Which thinking traps showed up?
Circle any:

all-or-nothing mind reading fortune telling catastrophizing
labeling discounting the good rigid rules emotional reasoning
other: _____

● Some

The situation and the thought:

Feeling strength: mild ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ strong

● Plenty

Facts that support the thought:

Facts that don't:

A fairer way to see it:

Feeling strength now: mild ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ strong

Worth finding again ○

Open page. Doodles, lists, maps, anything.



Open

Things that are going okay, even a little.

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ☐

Sizing up a feeling

Feelings carry useful information, but sometimes it's a little off. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

☒ A little

Bring to mind a recent strong feeling. Which one was it? Circle any:

angry anxious sad guilty ashamed jealous
embarrassed other: _____

Does the feeling fit what happened?

☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No ☐ Not sure

☒ Some

What happened, just the facts:

☒ Plenty

Other ways to read it, including someone else's view:

If the feeling fits, a helpful next step. If not, a way to let it ease:

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

A goal on your mind:

☒ Plenty

The next small step, and when:

Anything else:

Check-In

Worth finding again 

An old story you tell about yourself. Is it still true?

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Open

A look back

A chance to look over your recent pages and adjust. Skipping ahead works too. Support: call or text 988 (US).

☒ A little

How have things felt lately? Circle any:

steady busy stretched thin up and down good flat
hard to say other: _____

☒ Some

A thinking trap that showed up a lot:

A fairer way to see it:

☒ Plenty

What helps you catch it sooner:

Look Back

Adjusting course

• A little

What would you like more room for? Circle any:

rest focus movement connection fun quiet learning
time outside other: _____

● Some

Something to do more of:

Something to do less of:

● Plenty

Something to try next, as a when-then plan:

When _____

then _____

Anything else:

Worth finding again ○

Riding out an urge

One helpful picture: urges rise, peak, and fade, like a wave. Riding one out counts, and so does just noticing it.

☒ A little

☐ Noticed the urge, whatever happened next.

Urge strength: mild ☐☐☐☐☐ strong

☒ Some

Where you feel the urge in your body:

☒ Plenty

Weighing both sides:

	Acting on the urge	Riding it out
Pros		
Cons		

After 10 minutes: mild ☐☐☐☐☐ strong

If an urge involves hurting yourself or someone else, please reach out. In the US, call or text 988, or call 911 if anyone is in danger right now. Cutting back on alcohol or drugs? Stopping all at once can be dangerous, so ask about a safer plan. More lines at the front.

Skills

Worth finding again ☐

Open page. One thought, list, or doodle per box, or ignore the boxes.

Open

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

A habit worth keeping:

☒ Plenty

What makes it easier to keep:

Anything else:

[illegible]

Check-In

Worth finding again ○

[illegible]

Question

Worth finding again

Doing the opposite of an urge

When it's safe, acting opposite to an unhelpful urge can shift the feeling. For anger, try "When emotions run hot."

● A little

Think of an urge you've had lately. What kind was it? Circle any:

avoid snap withdraw scroll overspend give up
overwork put off drink or use other: _____

Would acting on the urge help you in the long run?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

● Some

What doing the opposite could look like:

● Plenty

How did it go?

What changed, if anything:

Open page. Two lists side by side, or anything else.

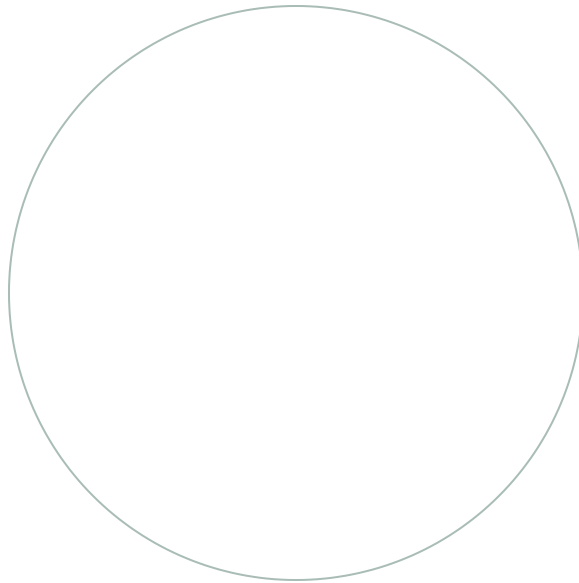
[illegible]

Open

Worth finding again ○

What helps you feel connected to people, places, or things.

Question



Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ☐

Small experiment

Predictions can feel certain. A small, safe test can show what really happens.

☒ A little

Choose something coming up that worries you. What do you predict?

Circle any:

things will go badly

others will judge

the task will be too hard

nothing will change

other: _____

How true it feels: a little ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ completely

☒ Some

What you'll try, when, and where:

☒ Plenty

What actually happened:

What you learned:

Open page. Draw, write, or stick things here.

Open

Values in action

Values are directions, not finish lines. Small steps count.

☐ A little

Which values matter most to you right now? Circle any:

honesty kindness health learning creativity connection

fairness adventure rest community faith growth

other: _____

☒ Some

One value to act on soon:

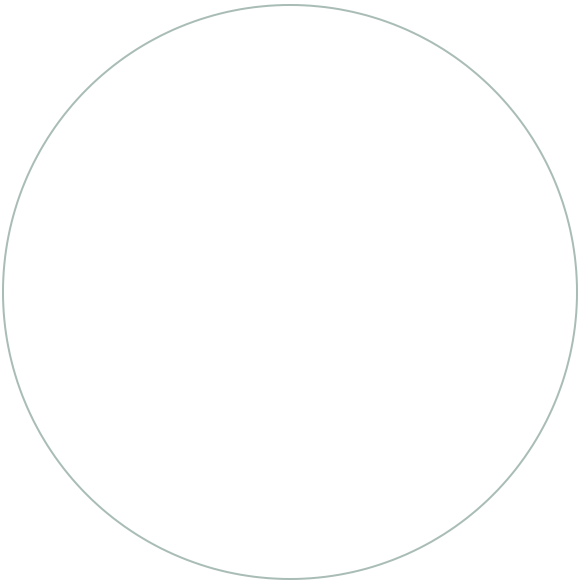
☒ Plenty

A small action that fits that value, and when:

How did it go?

Worth finding again ☐

Open page. A word in the middle with ideas around it, or anything else.



Open

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

Something that drained you:

☒ Plenty

Something that refilled you:

Anything else:

Extra room, if you want it. Blank is fine too.

Check-In

Worth finding again ☐

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

[illegible]

Open

Worth finding again ○

Breaking down a goal

Small steps make a big goal easier to start, and each one done can build confidence. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

☒ A little

Pick a goal, big or small. What area is it in? Circle any:

health work or school people learning creativity money
rest fun other: _____

☒ Some

The goal, and why it matters to you:

☒ Plenty

Smaller steps, easiest first. Split any that feel too big:

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

The first step, as a when-then plan:

When _____
then _____

Skills

Worth finding again ☐

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Open page. Doodles, lists, maps, anything.



Open

Planning a hard conversation

Planning ahead can help a hard talk feel calmer and clearer.

☒ A little

What's your main goal? Circle any:

asking for something saying no staying on good terms

staying true to yourself other: _____

☒ Some

The facts, without blame:

What you're asking for, or saying no to:

☒ Plenty

A calm way to open:

Possible pushback, and a steady reply:

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

Something you'd like to get better at:

☒ Plenty

One small way to practice:

Anything else:

Worth finding again ○

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Open

A look back

A chance to look over your recent pages and adjust. Skipping ahead works too. Support: call or text 988 (US).

☒ A little

How have things felt lately? Circle any:

steady busy stretched thin up and down good flat
hard to say other: _____

☒ Some

Something you're doing more of that you like:

A value that got less room than you wanted:

☒ Plenty

What steadier could look like over the next stretch of pages:

Look Back

Adjusting course

• A little

What would you like more room for? Circle any:

rest focus movement connection fun quiet learning
time outside other: _____

● Some

A support or tool worth keeping:

Something you're ready to let go of:

● Plenty

Something to try next, as a when-then plan:

When _____

then _____

Anything else:

Worth finding again ○

When emotions run hot

Anger is a feeling too, as real as sadness or fear. Cooling down first can make a good choice easier.

● A little

Before you respond, tick any to try:

- ☐ A slow breath out, longer than the breath in.
- ☐ A change of room or scenery.
- ☐ A few minutes of slow, calming movement, like stretching.
- ☐ Naming the feeling, aloud or in your head.
- ☐ Waiting a while before replying.

● Some

What set off the reaction:

● Plenty

A response that fits your long-term goals:

How did it go?

Thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else? In the US, call or text 988, or call 911 if anyone is in danger right now.

Worth finding again ☐

Open page. One thought, list, or doodle per box, or ignore the boxes.

Open

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Thought check

Thoughts aren't always facts. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

● A little

Picture a recent moment that upset you. Which thinking traps showed up?
Circle any:

all-or-nothing mind reading fortune telling catastrophizing
labeling discounting the good rigid rules emotional reasoning
other: _____

● Some

The situation and the thought:

Feeling strength: mild ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ strong

● Plenty

Facts that support the thought:

Facts that don't:

A fairer way to see it:

Feeling strength now: mild ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ strong

Worth finding again ○

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

A prediction you made:

☒ Plenty

What actually happened:

Anything else:

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Check-In

Worth finding again ○

A worry, written down once, then set aside.

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ☐

Open page. Two lists side by side, or anything else.

Open

Worth finding again ○

Sizing up a feeling

Feelings carry useful information, but sometimes it's a little off. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

☒ A little

Bring to mind a recent strong feeling. Which one was it? Circle any:

angry anxious sad guilty ashamed jealous
embarrassed other: _____

Does the feeling fit what happened?

☐ Yes ☐ Partly ☐ No ☐ Not sure

☒ Some

What happened, just the facts:

☒ Plenty

Other ways to read it, including someone else's view:

If the feeling fits, a helpful next step. If not, a way to let it ease:

Open page. Draw, write, or stick things here.

Open

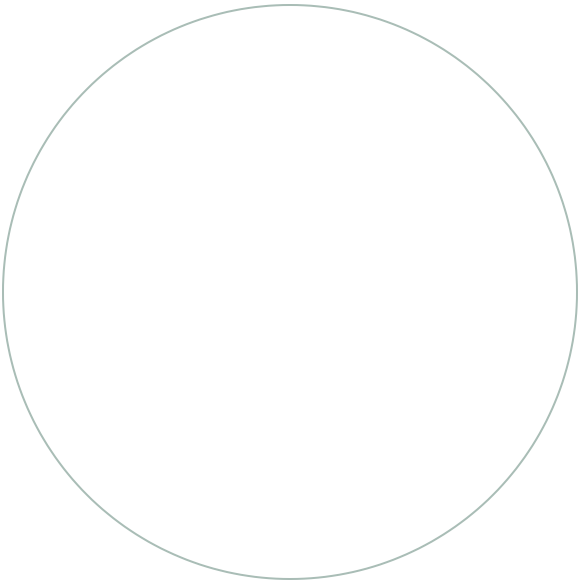
This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Open page. A word in the middle with ideas around it, or anything else.



Open

Check-in

☐ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

A small win, any size:

☒ Plenty

What made it possible:

Anything else:

Extra room, if you want it. Blank is fine too.

A large rectangular area filled with a light gray dot grid pattern, intended for writing or drawing.

Check-In

Riding out an urge

One helpful picture: urges rise, peak, and fade, like a wave. Riding one out counts, and so does just noticing it.

☒ A little

☐ Noticed the urge, whatever happened next.

Urge strength: mild ☐☐☐☐☐ strong

☒ Some

Where you feel the urge in your body:

☒ Plenty

Weighing both sides:

	Acting on the urge	Riding it out
Pros		
Cons		

After 10 minutes: mild ☐☐☐☐☐ strong

If an urge involves hurting yourself or someone else, please reach out. In the US, call or text 988, or call 911 if anyone is in danger right now. Cutting back on alcohol or drugs? Stopping all at once can be dangerous, so ask about a safer plan. More lines at the front.

Skills

Worth finding again ☐

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

[illegible]

Open

Worth finding again ○

Doing the opposite of an urge

When it's safe, acting opposite to an unhelpful urge can shift the feeling. For anger, try "When emotions run hot."

● A little

Think of an urge you've had lately. What kind was it? Circle any:

avoid snap withdraw scroll overspend give up
overwork put off drink or use other: _____

Would acting on the urge help you in the long run?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

● Some

What doing the opposite could look like:

● Plenty

How did it go?

What changed, if anything:

Open page. Doodles, lists, maps, anything.



Open

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Small experiment

Predictions can feel certain. A small, safe test can show what really happens.

● A little

Choose something coming up that worries you. What do you predict?

Circle any:

things will go badly

others will judge

the task will be too hard

nothing will change

other: _____

How true it feels: a little ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ completely

● Some

What you'll try, when, and where:

● Plenty

What actually happened:

What you learned:

Open

Check-in

☒ A little

How are you feeling right now? Circle any:

calm focused content scattered irritable tired
energized down mixed not sure other: _____

Stress level: low ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ high

☒ Some

What you need more of right now:

☒ Plenty

One way to make a little room for it:

Anything else:

Check-In

Worth finding again ○

A small risk worth taking.

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

Breaking down a goal

Small steps make a big goal easier to start, and each one done can build confidence. [Learn more in Good to Know.](#)

☒ A little

Pick a goal, big or small. What area is it in? Circle any:

health work or school people learning creativity money
rest fun other: _____

☒ Some

The goal, and why it matters to you:

☒ Plenty

Smaller steps, easiest first. Split any that feel too big:

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

The first step, as a when-then plan:

When _____
then _____

Skills

Worth finding again ☐

Open page. One thought, list, or doodle per box, or ignore the boxes.

Open

[illegible]

Question

Skip it, answer sideways, or use the page for anything else.

Worth finding again ○

When emotions run hot

Anger is a feeling too, as real as sadness or fear. Cooling down first can make a good choice easier.

☒ A little

Before you respond, tick any to try:

- ☐ A slow breath out, longer than the breath in.
- ☐ A change of room or scenery.
- ☐ A few minutes of slow, calming movement, like stretching.
- ☐ Naming the feeling, aloud or in your head.
- ☐ Waiting a while before replying.

☒ Some

What set off the reaction:

☒ Plenty

A response that fits your long-term goals:

How did it go?

Thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else? In the US, call or text 988, or call 911 if anyone is in danger right now.

Worth finding again ☐

Open page. Two lists side by side, or anything else.

[illegible]

Open

Worth finding again ○

Finishing This Journal

For whenever this journal feels finished, full or not.

- **A little**

Which skills helped you most? Circle any:

thought check sizing up feelings doing the opposite
riding out urges experiments values breaking down goals
hard conversations cooling down hard to say other: _____

- **Some**

A change you've noticed since starting, if any:



Plenty

What you'd like to keep practicing, and how:

[illegible]

Worth finding again 



Good to Know

Short, plain explainers if you're curious. You don't need to read any of this to use the journal.

What helps is different for everyone, and the first thing you try may not fit. That isn't a failure. Trying something new, or a different person or service for support, is part of finding what works for you.

Thoughts, feelings, and actions

Common thinking traps

After you spot a trap

Feelings and facts

Urges, habits, and choices

Goals and small steps

Reading in a way that fits you

Paper, screens, and sleep

Thoughts, feelings, and actions

Pairs with: Thought check and Small experiment, on the Skills pages.

Cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, starts from a simple idea: thoughts, feelings, and actions affect each other. A thought like “this will go badly” can bring worry. Worry can lead you to avoid the situation, which keeps the worry going.

Changing any one part can shift the others. A more balanced thought can ease a feeling. A small action can change a thought. Neither has to be perfect to help.

Ways to use this idea

- Noticing which came first: the thought, the feeling, or the action.
- Treating thoughts as guesses to check, not facts to obey.
- Noticing a thought without arguing with it, then letting it pass.
- Testing a worried prediction with a small, safe experiment.

(Bennett-Levy, 2003; Larsson et al., 2016)

Common thinking traps

Pairs with: Thought check, on the Skills pages.

Thinking traps are common. Spotting one is a skill, not a judgment.

- **All-or-nothing:** seeing only extremes, like total success or total failure.
- **Mind reading:** assuming what others think without checking.
- **Fortune telling:** treating a guess about the future as certain.
- **Catastrophizing:** jumping to the worst possible outcome.
- **Labeling:** summing up a whole person, including yourself, with one harsh word.
- **Discounting the good:** brushing off what went well as luck or no big deal.
- **Rigid rules:** strict ideas about how things have to be.
- **Emotional reasoning:** treating a feeling as proof, like deciding something is wrong just because you feel anxious.

(Bathina et al., 2021; Whalley, 2019)

After you spot a trap

Pairs with: Thought check, on the Skills pages.

Naming a trap, like “that’s fortune telling,” may help interrupt the spiral. It gives you a moment to step back before the thought takes over.

From there, check the thought against the facts. Pushing a thought away tends to bring it back, so checking it usually works better than fighting it. Seeing the situation from a new angle can ease the feeling, even a little.

Questions to try

- What supports this thought? What doesn’t?
- Is there another way to see this?
- What would you say to someone else who thought this?
- What’s one helpful next step?

(Larsson et al., 2016; Webb et al., 2012; Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000)

Feelings and facts

Pairs with: Sizing up a feeling, on the Skills pages.

Every feeling is a normal part of being human, and that includes anger. Some people don't think of anger as a feeling, but it is one. Feelings are also signals. Fear often points to danger, anger to being wronged, and sadness to loss. Sometimes a feeling fits the situation well. Other times it's louder than the facts call for, or it's reacting to a guess instead of what happened.

Sorting facts from story means separating what happened from the meaning added to it. When a feeling fits, it can guide a helpful next step. When it doesn't, a calmer read of the situation can help it ease.

Ways to use this idea

- Describing what happened the way a camera would record the scene.
- Listing two or three other ways to read the situation, including how someone else might see it.
- Asking what action would help most in the long run.

(Lazarus, 1991; Linehan, 2015; Webb et al., 2012)

Urges, habits, and choices

Pairs with: Doing the opposite of an urge and Riding out an urge, on the Skills pages.

Urges are strong pulls toward an action, like snapping at someone or avoiding a task. One helpful picture: urges rise, peak, and fade, like a wave. Even if an urge doesn't shrink, riding it out counts, and so does just noticing it. That includes urges to drink or use. Stopping alcohol or certain other drugs all at once can be dangerous if your body depends on them, so ask a doctor or helpline about a safer plan. Support lines are at the front.

Habits form when an action is repeated in the same setting, often because it brings a quick reward, like relief. Changing the setting and practicing a different response can loosen a habit over time.

Ways to use this idea

- Naming the urge and rating its strength, then rating it again a few minutes later.
- Doing the opposite of an unhelpful urge, on purpose and in a small way.
- Writing down the pros and cons of acting on the urge and of riding it out.

(Bowen & Marlatt, 2009; Miller & Rose, 2015; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, n.d.; Sauer-Zavala et al., 2019; Wood & Rünger, 2016)

Goals and small steps

Pairs with: **Breaking down a goal** and **Values in action**, on the **Skills** pages.

A big goal can feel far away, which makes it hard to start. Breaking it into smaller steps gives you a clear place to begin. In a classic study, children working toward small, short-term goals built more confidence and interest than children aiming only for a distant one.

Each finished step is a bit of proof that progress is possible, and that can build momentum. Specific goals tend to work better than vague aims like “do your best,” especially goals that stretch you a little. Keeping a record of progress, like a tick for each step, can help too.

Ways to use this idea

- Making the first step small enough to start.
- Choosing goals that matter to you, not only ones others expect.
- Planning when and where each step will happen.
- Splitting a step again if it feels too big. A step that doesn’t happen is information, not failure.

(Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006; Harkin et al., 2016; Locke & Latham, 2002; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999)

Reading in a way that fits you

These pages use Lexend, a free font with wide spaces between letters, meant to make reading easier. Its makers found faster reading in a small test with 20 children, but outside studies are few. OpenDyslexic is another free font, though tests haven't found faster or more accurate reading with it. Try a few fonts and keep whichever feels easiest.

In one study, sans serif fonts (the plain kind, without little “feet”) were easier for readers with dyslexia, and slanted italics were harder. Extra space between letters or words helped in some studies but not all.

Try this on an e-reader or app

- Tap the page and look for “Aa” or a text button. Menus differ.
- Bigger text, and more space between lines or letters.
- A sans serif font, or OpenDyslexic on Kindle, Kobo, or Libby.
- A warm or dark page if the light feels too bright.
- Most PDF apps don't have these settings, but zooming in works.

(British Dyslexia Association, 2023; Galliussi et al., 2020; Lexend, n.d.; Rello & Baeza-Yates, 2013; Rello et al., 2013; Wery & Diliberto, 2017; Zorzi et al., 2012)

Paper, screens, and sleep

Reading may help some people relax, but studies are few and small. Studies haven't shown that paper is calmer than a screen.

Paper may make fact-heavy reading a little easier to follow, especially when time is short. For stories, paper and screens worked about the same.

Bright, glowing screens late at night can push sleep later and leave you groggier the next morning. A paper book doesn't glow, so it may suit bedtime.

What may help

- Reading what you enjoy, in whatever form works for you, including listening.
- Paper for reading you need to follow closely, when that's possible.
- A paper book near bedtime, or a dimmer screen.
- Stopping whenever reading starts to feel like a chore.

(Chang et al., 2015; Delgado et al., 2018; Rizzolo et al., 2009)

The Research Behind These Pages

Most pages here draw on research about skills from CBT, DBT, and related approaches. On average, the benefits in studies were small to moderate. No study has tested this journal, and it isn't therapy. None of this is a promise.

Skills like these. Programs built on CBT and similar approaches raised well-being a small to moderate amount, on average. Online self-help programs lowered stress, and helped more when someone guided them. DBT skills taught on their own show early promise in studies of people in mental health care. (Heber et al., 2017; Valentine et al., 2015; van Agteren et al., 2021; Weiss et al., 2016)

Thought check. In lab studies, rethinking a situation eased feelings, and seeing it as an outsider would helped most. In one small study, stepping back from a thought, without arguing with it, helped more than reworking it. (Larsson et al., 2016; Webb et al., 2012)

Thinking traps. These thinking habits are common and normal. In one large study of tweets, words tied to several of them showed up more often in posts by people who said they had depression. (Bathina et al., 2021; Whalley, 2019)

Small experiment. In one study, people learning CBT rated real-life experiments as changing their beliefs more than written thought records. (Bennett-Levy, 2003)

Sizing up a feeling. This idea comes from DBT, and no study found so far has tested it on its own. It's closest to rethinking what a situation means, which eased feelings in lab studies. (Linehan, 2015; Webb et al., 2012)

Doing the opposite. This skill comes from DBT. In a small lab study of 16 adults with borderline personality disorder, acting opposite to an urge eased sadness and guilt or shame more than acting on it. It didn't do better for anxiety or anger. (Linehan, 2015; Sauer-Zavala et al., 2019)

Riding out an urge. In one trial with college students who smoked, riding out urges didn't make the urges smaller, but these students smoked less over the next week than students who weren't taught it. (Bowen & Marlatt, 2009)

Weighing both sides. DBT uses a pros-and-cons list for urges. Listing pros and cons may help once someone has already decided to change. For people still undecided, it can backfire, so skip it if you're unsure. (Linehan, 2015; Miller & Rose, 2015)

Values in action. Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), which includes acting on values, raised well-being a little in college students. In clinical trials, it helped with many health problems. (A-Tjak et al., 2015; Howell & Passmore, 2019)

Breaking down a goal. In a classic study with children, small, short-term goals built more confidence and interest than one distant goal. In many studies, specific, challenging goals led to better results than vague goals like "do your best," and keeping track of progress helped people reach their goals. (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Harkin et al., 2016; Locke & Latham, 2002)

When emotions run hot. In a review of 154 studies, calming activities like slow breathing and relaxation eased anger, while activities that rev the body up, like jogging, didn't, on average. Breathing exercises also lowered stress a modest amount in 12 small trials. Anger counts as a feeling, and depression can sometimes show up as anger or irritability instead of sadness. (Fincham et al., 2023; Kjærvik & Bushman, 2024; National Institute of Mental Health, 2024)

Planning a hard conversation. The goals on this page echo DBT's skills for dealing with people. DBT skills taught on their own show early promise. (Linehan, 2015; Valentine et al., 2015)

Kind wording throughout. The gentle wording is a design choice inspired by research on self-compassion. In 27 trials, self-compassion programs lowered stress, depression, and self-criticism. (Ferrari et al., 2019)

Check-ins. In one study, when young adults with more depressive symptoms rated their happiness up to six times a day, happiness dropped. So check-ins here stay short, and skipping them is fine. (Conner & Reid, 2012)

Open pages. In studies, writing about stressful events helped a little, on average. Feelings often felt stronger right after writing, but that didn't last long. (Baikie & Wilhelm, 2005; Frattaroli, 2006; Smyth, 1998)

Paper and pen. Studies haven't shown that paper is calmer than a screen. In a study of 168 college students, writing about feelings by hand or by typing had similar effects. In a smaller study, handwriting about something stressful brought more negative feelings right afterward, and people felt they opened up more. Neither tested a pen on a tablet, and this journal counts both. (Brewin & Lennard, 1999; Sharp & Hargrove, 2004)

Safe to try alone? In a large analysis of online self-help CBT for depression, fewer people got worse with the program than without it. Some people do feel worse, so stopping and reaching out are always okay. (Karyotaki et al., 2018; Rozentel et al., 2014)

The look of the pages. The design follows ideas from the British Dyslexia Association's style guide: a clear font, wide line spacing, text lined up on the left, and bold instead of slanted italics. (British Dyslexia Association, 2023)

Sources

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