



# GOOD THINGS TAKE TIME TO GROW

A Self-Growth Prompt Journal

**MONKEY BAR**

How are you  
feeling today?

# Hopeful

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*Today, I am feeling hopeful. Also, there are a few feelings that are trying to counter that or neutralize my hope, attempting thus to make it ineffective or unfruitful. There always seems to be something working against the betterment of me. But, it is the hope I will strive to hold onto.*

*I have a vision. A vision of going on a journey with many women. Of creating a safe place to share our stories with each other. Stories of how our culture or our environment has negatively impacted our self-image and our ability to believe in our capabilities.*

*I wish to dive deeply into self. To journey into self. To better recognize our "self". To know better why we "do", why we "don't", and how to mitigate reacting to emotions in ways that negatively impact our lives and the lives of those around us.*

*Learning ourselves in this way, becoming conscious of our self in this way, can help better facilitate the ability to control one's behavior, emotions, and impulses in order to achieve a desired outcome or goal. It's empowering.*

Empowered--a word that I have heard a lot over the past few years. Almost to the point that it has lost its edge. My mind had become dulled to it until I reminded myself of its meaning. Empowered means having the authority, confidence, and ability to take control of one's own life and make decisions that align with one's values and goals. It involves feeling capable, confident, and in control of one's actions and choices.

Empowered is definitely not the way I would have described myself a few years ago. I definitely felt powerless, ineffective, and lacking confidence. No one should feel that way. No one should feel alone in those types of feelings either. That is why I wanted to create this prompt journal. To help us explore ourselves. To be able to write out and put into words the way that we feel about our experiences and the way we perceive ourselves because of our experiences.

I am hopeful this journal will serve you well. That it will inform you with the knowledge of who you are. I recommend that periodically you read back over previous entries. Being able to read your thoughts, as though they were written by someone else, can provide valuable insights and perspectives.

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*Reading previous entries can be helpful in providing you with the recognition of negative patterns of thinking that you would not be made aware of otherwise. It allows you to better come to know yourself from a different point of view. To become an observer of "self" in this way can help you be more conscious of "self" in the present.*

*I hope that if you have been seeking answers for your life, if you have been asking for more joy, for more understanding, for more authentic experiences, this journal will begin opening the door to some of those things for you. My hope is that you will thrive, that you will cultivate within yourself love, peace, patience, kindness, self-control, and endurance.*

*Hoping for your success,*

*Whitney*

Now, let's talk about what you can expect inside this prompt journal. Each day, you will have either a prompt to answer, such as "How are you feeling?", "Things you are grateful for", or "Your mood today", or you will be provided with an affirmation for the day, or a place to input your own affirmation, according to what you are specifically trying to affirm in your own life.

As a female, you may even find it beneficial to make note of what part of your cycle you are in (i.e. Menstrual, Follicular, Ovulatory, Luteal), along with "how are you feeling?". Over time, you may notice that specific parts of your cycle render specific emotions or feelings. It can be beneficial to know these things about one's body in order to understand ourselves more fully. So, keep that idea in mind as you go about the process of using this journal.

Some days, there may be some light reading, either in the form of a personal story I share, a Bible story, or a fictional story I have provided in order to help better understand whatever concept is introduced for that day's prompt.

As with any pursuit, you get better at things as you experience, learn, and grow throughout the process. The same can be said of observing ourselves, learning ourselves, and trying to apply new concepts to our lives to try to optimize our health--both physical and mental. Just do your best. Trust the process. Trust yourself, and if you find yourself looking at some of these questions saying, "I just don't know", sit with the questions for a while.

*continued...*

Have patience as you wait for answers. Everything that has happened in your life up to this point has made you who you are, and that has been a long process -- a collective of experiences, perceptions, and behaviors learned in response to that process. In the same way, it's going to take time in this process to delve into the "whys," the "hows," and everything in between in order to better understand who we are and why we do the things we do.

You are so very capable of it, though. The fact that you are reading this right now tells me you are ready for change. So, keep pressing in, keep moving forward, and one day you may look back to this very moment and think, "Wow, I have come a long way, and I'm so glad I took this journey."

Next, let's talk about affirmations. They are going to be another great tool in your tool belt. So many of us deal with a negative inner dialogue toward ourselves, an inner critic or accuser, you might say. Affirmations offer us a daily "motto" or replacement for that alternative negative message we might otherwise be playing on repeat within our minds. Below is an example of what these affirmations might look like:

Today's  
affirmation:

*I take daily action on things that matter to me.*

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## **Do Affirmations Really Work?**

Can affirmations truly be effective? While some individuals may have doubts about their effectiveness, there is both anecdotal and empirical evidence to support their power. Consider this: When someone compliments you, it often has a positive impact. Affirmations give you the ability to create positivity within yourself at any given moment.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that affirmations can be a potent tool for personal growth and self-improvement, as many individuals report feeling more confident, motivated, and empowered after incorporating affirmations into their daily routine. For instance, someone who repeatedly affirms "I am capable and deserving of success" may experience increased confidence in their ability to achieve their goals.

Furthermore, empirical evidence also supports the effectiveness of affirmations. Research has demonstrated that affirmations can have a positive impact on mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

The key to the effectiveness of affirmations lies in their ability to shift your mindset and beliefs. By consistently repeating positive statements to yourself, you can gradually replace negative thought patterns with more positive ones. This can lead to enhanced self-esteem, greater resilience, and a stronger sense of self-worth.

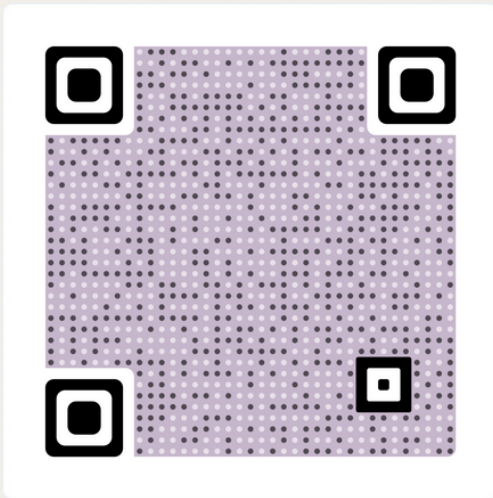
It is important to note, however, that affirmations are not a panacea and should be used in conjunction with other self-improvement strategies. Nevertheless, when employed consistently and with intention, affirmations can be a powerful tool for personal growth and transformation.

## DAY 1

How are you  
*feeling* today? \_\_\_\_\_

My mood today is...

- Calm
- Rested
- Creative
- Happy
- Angry
- Sad
- Anxious
- Playful
- \_\_\_\_\_



Scan the QR code to listen to the Spotify podcast “The Power to Change Your Habits: Identity Drives Behavior” with Craig Groeschel.

*Self-identity refers to the understanding and perception that individuals have of themselves. It encompasses various aspects such as beliefs, values, personality traits, and experiences that shape one's sense of self. It is the recognition and acceptance of one's unique qualities, characteristics, and individuality.*



A strong sense of self-identity is often associated with certain traits.

These traits may include:

1. Self-awareness: Having a clear understanding of one's strengths, weaknesses, and emotions.
2. Authenticity: Being true to oneself and not conforming to societal expectations or pressures.
3. Confidence: Having belief in one's abilities and being secure in one's own worth.
4. Resilience: Being able to bounce back from setbacks and challenges, and maintaining a positive self-image.
5. Independence: Being self-reliant and not overly dependent on others for validation or approval.
6. Open-mindedness: Being receptive to new ideas and perspectives, while still staying true to one's own values.
7. Self-acceptance: Embracing and accepting all aspects of oneself, including flaws and imperfections.
8. Purpose and meaning: Having a clear sense of direction and understanding one's purpose in life.

Developing a strong sense of self-identity involves self-reflection, introspection, and understanding one's values, beliefs, and principles. It is an ongoing process that can be influenced by various factors such as personal experiences, cultural background, and social interactions.

***Today's Thought: Reflect on your core values, beliefs, and principles. How do they shape your identity?***

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Things you are grateful for : 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_



*The ego is a psychological concept that refers to the part of our identity that is concerned with our self-image and self-esteem. It is the part of us that seeks validation, recognition, and protection. The ego plays a significant role in shaping our thoughts, actions, and relationships.*

**Recognizing egoic patterns can be helpful for humans in several ways:**

1. **Self-awareness:** By recognizing egoic patterns, individuals can become more self-aware of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. This self-awareness allows them to understand how their ego influences their actions and relationships.
2. **Personal growth:** Understanding egoic patterns can help individuals identify areas for personal growth and development. By recognizing and addressing these patterns, individuals can work towards overcoming ego-driven behaviors and cultivating healthier thought patterns.

3. Improved relationships: Egoic patterns often contribute to conflicts and misunderstandings in relationships. By recognizing these patterns, individuals can become more empathetic, understanding, and compassionate towards others. This can lead to healthier and more fulfilling relationships.

4. Emotional well-being: Egoic patterns can often lead to negative emotions such as jealousy, anger, and insecurity. By recognizing and understanding these patterns, individuals can learn to manage and regulate their emotions more effectively, leading to improved emotional well-being.

Overall, recognizing egoic patterns allows individuals to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their relationships, leading to personal growth, improved emotional well-being, and more fulfilling connections with others.

### **Some examples of egoic patterns include:**

1. Need for validation: Constantly seeking approval and validation from others to feel worthy or important.

2. Comparison: Constantly comparing oneself to others and feeling either superior or inferior based on external factors.

3. Defensiveness: Reacting defensively to criticism or feedback, taking it personally and feeling the need to protect one's ego.

4. Attachment to outcomes: Being overly attached to specific outcomes or expectations, and feeling disappointed or frustrated when things don't go as planned.

## Examples of egoic patterns continued:

5. Fear of failure: Avoiding risks or challenges due to a fear of failure or looking bad in front of others.
6. Need for control: Trying to control every aspect of one's life and feeling anxious or stressed when things are out of one's control.
7. Self-centeredness: Putting one's own needs and desires above others, and lacking empathy or consideration for others.
8. Perfectionism: Setting unrealistically high standards for oneself and feeling inadequate or unworthy when those standards are not met.
9. Need for superiority: Constantly seeking to be better than others, and feeling threatened or insecure when others succeed.
10. Insecurity: Feeling insecure about one's abilities, appearance, or worthiness, and seeking external validation to feel better about oneself.

*These are just a few examples, and egoic patterns can vary from person to person. It's important to note that everyone has egoic patterns to some extent, as the ego is a natural part of human psychology. The key is to become aware of these patterns and work towards transcending them for personal growth and self-awareness.*



Ego Exploration continued...

Lined writing area with 25 horizontal dashed lines.



How are you  
*feeling* today?

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## **Introducing the False Self**

The concept of the false self refers to the persona or identity that we create in order to fit societal expectations or gain approval from others. It is a mask that we wear, often driven by egoic patterns.

For your writing on False Self: Reflect on instances when you felt pressured to be someone you're not. How did it affect your well-being?", you can start by exploring specific situations where you felt the need to conform or pretend to be someone you're not. Reflect on how this affected your emotional well-being, self-esteem, and overall happiness. Did it create feelings of anxiety, stress, or dissatisfaction? Did it lead to a sense of disconnection from your true self?

You can also delve into the impact on your relationships. Did pretending to be someone else strain your connections with others? Did it hinder authentic communication and intimacy? Reflecting on these instances can help you gain insight into the influence of the false self on your thoughts, actions, and relationships, and ultimately guide you towards a more authentic and fulfilling way of being.

Reflecting on thoughts of false self:

A series of 25 horizontal dashed lines provided for writing or reflection.



How are you  
*feeling* today? \_\_\_\_\_

My mood today is...

- |                               |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Calm    | <input type="radio"/> Rested  | <input type="radio"/> Creative |
| <input type="radio"/> Happy   | <input type="radio"/> Angry   | <input type="radio"/> Sad      |
| <input type="radio"/> Anxious | <input type="radio"/> Playful | <input type="radio"/> _____    |

### Let's Talk about:

**Cognitive Distortions:** Our perception of reality can be influenced by recurring negative thought patterns or cognitive distortions. Take some time to identify any of these distortions that you may experience. Some common examples include:

1. All-or-nothing thinking: Seeing things in black and white, without considering any shades of gray. This can lead to extreme judgments and unrealistic expectations.
2. Overgeneralization: Drawing broad conclusions based on limited evidence or a single negative experience. This can result in a distorted view of reality and unnecessary pessimism.
3. Catastrophizing: Magnifying the importance or consequences of a situation, often assuming the worst possible outcome. This can lead to excessive worry and anxiety.
4. Personalization: Taking things personally and attributing external events or actions to oneself, even when they may have nothing to do with you. This can result in unnecessary self-blame and feelings of inadequacy.



## ONCE UPON A TIME ...

there was a young girl named Marie who found herself trapped in the clutches of a cognitive distortion known as "catastrophizing." This distortion caused her to constantly imagine the worst-case scenarios in every situation, leading to unnecessary anxiety and stress.

One day, Marie's best friend Ruth invited her to a party. As they walked into the vibrant venue, Marie's mind immediately started conjuring up catastrophic thoughts. She imagined embarrassing herself in front of everyone, tripping and falling, or saying something foolish. These thoughts consumed her, making her feel overwhelmed and hesitant to enjoy the party.

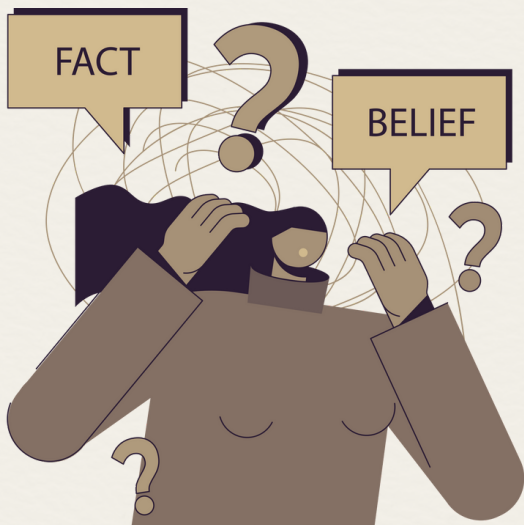
However, as the night went on, Marie began to notice her distorted thinking patterns. She realized that her thoughts were not based on reality but were exaggerated and irrational. This moment of recognition was crucial for Marie, as it allowed her to take a step back and question the validity of her negative thoughts.

With newfound awareness, Marie decided to challenge her cognitive distortion. She started by questioning the evidence behind her catastrophic thoughts. She asked herself, "Is there any real proof that these things will happen?" and "Have I ever experienced such extreme outcomes in the past?" This process helped her realize that her thoughts were merely products of her imagination, not grounded in reality.

As Marie continued to challenge her cognitive distortion, she began to replace her negative thoughts with more realistic and positive ones. She reminded herself that she was capable, confident, and deserving of enjoying herself at the party. Slowly but surely, Marie's anxiety started to fade away, and she found herself fully immersed in the joyous atmosphere.

By recognizing and addressing her cognitive distortion, Marie was able to break free from its grip and regain control over her thoughts and emotions. From that day forward, she became more mindful of her thinking patterns, actively challenging any negative distortions that arose. This newfound awareness not only improved her perception of reality but also enhanced her overall well-being.

In the end, Marie's journey serves as a reminder that recognizing and resolving cognitive distortions can lead to a more balanced and fulfilling life. It empowers individuals to break free from the shackles of irrational thinking and embrace a more positive and realistic perspective.



*I know I can certainly relate to Marie. How about you?*

Reflect on the aforementioned cognitive distortions (pg 20) and how they impact your perception of reality. Are there any recurring negative thought patterns that you notice? How do they influence your thoughts, actions, and relationships? By becoming aware of these distortions, you can begin to challenge and reframe them, leading to a more balanced and accurate perception of reality."

I hope this helps you in your understanding of the ego and its influence on our thoughts, actions, and relationships! Let me know if you have any more questions.

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Reflecting on cognitive distortions continued...

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing.



How are you  
*feeling* today?

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Things you are  
*grateful* for

:

1.

2.

Today's :

Verse Recommendations: Psalms 51:6, Ephesians 4:15, 1 Peter 3:10

My mood today is...

- |                               |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Calm    | <input type="radio"/> Rested  | <input type="radio"/> Creative |
| <input type="radio"/> Happy   | <input type="radio"/> Angry   | <input type="radio"/> Sad      |
| <input type="radio"/> Anxious | <input type="radio"/> Playful | <input type="radio"/> -----    |

*Authenticity refers to being true to oneself and expressing one's true thoughts, feelings, and values. It involves being genuine and not pretending to be someone you're not. When reflecting on moments of authenticity, think about times when you felt completely comfortable being yourself, without any fear of judgment or the need to conform to societal expectations. Consider the values and qualities that you embodied during those moments, such as honesty, integrity, courage, and self-acceptance.*

Authenticity: Reflect on moments when you felt most authentic and true to yourself. What values and qualities did you embody?

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Today's affirmation: *I am growing and I am going at my own pace.*

My mood today is...

- Calm
- Rested
- Creative
- Happy
- Angry
- Sad
- Anxious
- Playful
- \_\_\_\_\_

*Personal values are the principles and beliefs that are important to an individual and guide their behavior and decision-making. They can include things like honesty, integrity, compassion, and perseverance. Take a look at the sample small list of personal values below.*

- 1. Honesty
- 2. Integrity
- 3. Respect
- 4. Compassion
- 5. Empathy
- 6. Responsibility
- 7. Loyalty
- 8. Trustworthiness
- 9. Perseverance
- 10. Courage
- 11. Humility
- 12. Gratitude
- 13. Generosity
- 14. Kindness
- 15. Fairness
- 16. Open-mindedness
- 17. Creativity
- 18. Independence
- 19. Authenticity
- 20. Self-discipline
- 21. Patience
- 22. Optimism
- 23. Determination
- 24. Accountability
- 25. Teamwork
- 26. Balance
- 27. Tolerance
- 28. Environmental consciousness
- 29. Continuous learning
- 30. Spirituality

List and define your personal values. How do they guide your decision-making and behavior?

A series of horizontal dashed lines provided for writing the answer to the prompt above.

