

| A SELF-DISCOVERY TOOL

YOUR MIND IS  
FULL OF  
SHIFT

# Self Confidence You Weren't Born Without It...

CARI MAE  
CREATOR

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YOUR MIND IS FULL OF SHIFT

# You Weren't Born Without It.

## A Self-Confidence System

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What's in these pages is the actual work that gets your brain to stop running the same BS story it's been running since you were four. Neuroscience-backed, no BS, and built for people who are done being afraid of their own potential.

CREATED BY

Your Mind Is Full Of Shift™

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# What Self-Confidence Actually Is

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## Here's what it's not.

It's not arrogance. It's not certainty. It's not the absence of doubt or fear. And it sure as hell isn't something you either have or you don't. That's the version they sold us, and it kept a lot of us waiting for a confidence that was never going to show up on its own.

## So what is it?

Self-confidence, at its core, is trust. Specifically, it's your brain's accumulated evidence that you can handle what's in front of you. That's it. Not that you'll be perfect. Not that it won't be hard. Just that you can handle it.

## The neuroscience word for this is self-efficacy.

Psychologist Albert Bandura spent decades studying it. What he found was that the single biggest predictor of whether someone takes action isn't their skill level. It's whether they believe their actions will produce results. Skill without belief gets you nowhere. Belief with imperfect skill gets you started. Your brain is a prediction machine. It constantly asks: 'Based on the evidence I have, how likely is it that I can succeed here?' When the evidence file is thin, or worse, when it's full of the wrong data, your brain predicts failure. And your nervous system responds accordingly. You hold back. You play small. Self-efficacy is your belief in your ability to influence outcomes. When that belief is low, your brain will try to protect you from failure by pushing you to avoid challenges altogether. Unfortunately, avoidance only reinforces the belief that you are not capable (yeah, I see you, procrastinators and perfectionists). But when you take action, when you try, fail, learn, and adapt, your brain updates its predictions. In this book, you'll learn that confidence is not a switch. It is a pattern your brain learns through repetition.

## The neuroscience process you are creating

The good news (and it's genuinely good) is that your brain is actually changeable through a process known as Neuroplasticity. Often called "brain plasticity", this is your brain's ability to rewire, reshape, and adapt itself throughout your entire life. While it doesn't happen as fast as it did when you were little, you're still able to change things, which is exciting! So, instead of being a hardwired, fixed organ that stops developing after childhood like most of our organs, our brain is more like "plastic" or "playdough," which means it's moldable by new experiences, learning, and memories. It rewires based on new evidence/experiences (and consistency). Every time you do the thing you were afraid to do, every time you handle something you didn't think you could, you add a new file to the evidence cabinet. Over time, the brain's prediction changes, hesitation shrinks, and the action gets easier.

## Myths Your Brain Is Still Running

**MYTH: Confident people don't feel afraid.**

TRUTH: They feel afraid and do it anyway. The fear doesn't disqualify you.

**MYTH: If I fail, it proves I'm not confident.**

TRUTH: Failure is evidence collection. Every miss teaches your brain something real.

**MYTH: I'll feel confident once I succeed.**

TRUTH: That's backwards. You build confidence by acting first, before the guarantee.

**MYTH: Some people are just naturally confident.**

TRUTH: Some people got better early evidence. That's it. You can build your own.

# What Self-Confidence Actually Is

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Your brain didn't start out thinking you were incapable. It learned that. You now know that somewhere along the way, it collected evidence: a moment of failure, a comment from someone, an experience where you tried and got shut down, and it filed it. Then it started using that file to predict your future so it could avoid future moments of potential pain. It does this by viewing every new challenge through a lens of “I’m not good enough” or some other BS mantra that leaves you feeling a lack of confidence. So if you automatically view everything through that lens, how in the world do you think you’ll just wake up one day believing you ARE good enough? You won’t. Your brain won’t let you because it doesn’t see that option as a “safe” option.

This is called confirmation bias (with a neurological twist). Your reticular activating system (RAS), the filter between all incoming information and your conscious awareness is literally programmed to seek and find evidence that confirms what you already believe. Believe you're capable? It highlights proof. Believe you're not? It deletes the wins and amplifies the misses. It makes it *feel* like you lack confidence, but what you really lack is a background of positive experiences and certainty that what you want to do will end in success, because your brain is reminding you that in the past, when something went wrong, it was a painful outcome, and it's doing its best to help you avoid that pain.

According to Bandura's research, confidence is built through four specific inputs: mastery experiences (doing things), vicarious learning (watching others succeed), social persuasion (being told you can), and physiological states (how your body feels when you act). Most people have been getting terrible data in all four. The exercises in this workbook help your brain to look at the actual evidence: the kind it's been filtering out, through these four specific inputs.

Your mind got you here because of repetition. Something kept happening that increased your brain's confidence in what it now believes. To “undo” that, you'll need the same kind of repetition focused on what you *do* want to believe. Consistency for any brain rewiring is key. So no, a one-time pass through this system for most people won't (usually) turn on that lightbulb or provide a life-changing aha moment.

A last note on the how: your brain is the biggest consumer of your energy and the cheapest user. It will 1,000% take the easiest and fastest route or shortcut to a solution whenever it can. Right now, because it's established, the belief/lens that it believes is keeping you safe, and you perceive as lacking confidence, is the easiest route. It's well established because you've been running it and reaffirming it for years (maybe even decades). We can use that knowledge and your brain's addiction to shortcuts to our advantage in this endeavor, though. Consider this analogy. If you have a path you walk in the woods every day, using that path regularly eventually wears down the ground and the vegetation around it, so the path is easier to walk. If you want to make a new path, it's harder at first to navigate, but the more you use it, the faster it becomes worn and easier to travel. The old path you used to walk will eventually go back to what it was and be hard to navigate, so you'll opt for the newer path because it's easier. Your brain is no different. Right now, it's using the easiest path, but what you'll do here is learn to create the one you want to use. When you do it consistently enough, the old path will eventually become too complicated for the brain to use, and it'll begin using the one you created.

# What Self-Confidence Actually Is

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## The theory expanded

Self-confidence is not about walking into a room as if you own it and being a cocky ass that, quite frankly, no one really wants to be around. It's more like you're able to walk in and not shrink into the background when a cocky person actually does walk in. It is a grounded sense of self-trust, which is not a feeling that many are familiar with. It's a belief, not that everything will go perfectly, but that whatever happens, you can handle it. And when you know you can handle it, it's not because you "know so much" or "are so smart", it's because you believe you're resourceful and capable. It's not bravado because it's not arrogance. Simply put, and as ground level as possible (which is TOTALLY attainable) self-confidence is the ability to move through uncertainty without unraveling or losing your mind. Stress, sure - but totally losing your shit? No. Not with true self-trust and self-confidence.

As an expanded view, it's a reflection of how you view your own capabilities. If we're being totally honest, the view you have of yourself, of your capabilities - it's not really yours. After all, you didn't create it, shape it, or even agree to accept it. It's basically how your life experiences shaped the brain's learned prediction about whether or not you have what it takes. If something in your past led you to believe that you didn't have what it takes, you developed a belief, and now that "thing" is off limits because of the potential pain from failure, rejection, etc. And if that prediction is based on years of criticism, perfectionism, comparison, or fear, then, guess what? It is not confidence that is running the show. It is self-doubt...and potentially a shit-ton of it.

## The confidence process

This isn't about becoming someone new. It's not about changing. Ever. You change a baby's diaper. You change hair color and clothes. You don't *change* who you are. You reconnect to it. I know that sounds corny, but hear me out. You weren't born broken, lacking confidence, or feeling like you aren't enough. This work is about figuring out who you were before the world taught you to doubt yourself. We want to move forward with tools that make it easier to keep showing up for your goals, your growth, and yourself, so you can start building the belief that you're capable and start seeing the world through that lens/pattern (instead of the one you're currently using).

But before you can create that new pattern, you have to deal with the loudest voice in your head: the inner critic. That voice that doubts your every move, highlights every flaw, and drags out every mistake like a greatest hits album whenever you are faced with something new. But all it is is fear from your childhood, walking around like the nastiest and most critical little bastard you've ever met. And the only way to rewrite it is to stop treating it like a fact and start treating it like background noise you no longer need to obey (because you don't).

The tools in this workbook are designed to help you do exactly that.

# How to Use This Workbook

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There's no right order, but there is a recommended one. Start with the Excavation exercises. Don't skip them. They're the actual work. The prompts, trackers, and planners are only useful once you've done the digging.

## **Don't edit yourself.**

Write the honest thing, not the thing that sounds good. Your brain knows the difference and will use it against you if you lie. It's your brain - lying your way through it isn't going to work. It CREATED the lie, right?

## **You don't have to finish it in one sitting.**

This isn't a race. Do one exercise. Sit with it. Come back.

## **The discomfort is the point.**

If an exercise makes you want to close the book, that's exactly where the work is. Stay with it.

## **You'll probably resist some of this.**

Great. Resistance is just your brain trying to protect the story it knows. Notice it. Do the exercise anyway.

## **This isn't therapy.**

If something surfaces that feels bigger than a workbook can hold, get support. There's no prize for white-knuckling it alone. Get a licensed mental health care provider.

## **Show up when you can.**

Missing a day doesn't erase progress. Showing up as often as you can creates progress.

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## SECTION 1

# The Excavation

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- Exercise 23: The Dopamine Deck

## EXERCISE 1

# The Origin Story

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### The Why

Your self-confidence (or lack of it) is a story you started writing at some point in your life, usually when you were too young to know you were the one writing it. This exercise finds the first chapter.

### The Neuroscience

Early experiences create neural pathways that become the default. When a belief forms in childhood or adolescence, it gets encoded during a period of high neuroplasticity, meaning it sticks harder and runs deeper than beliefs formed later. The brain treats these early conclusions as established facts rather than interpretations. But they're interpretations. Made by a kid with limited information and life experience about a moment that wasn't the whole story.

### How To Do The Worksheet:

1. Think of a specific moment or make one up, ideally your earliest memory, where you first felt 'not good enough,' incapable, or like you shouldn't take up space. Not a general feeling. A specific scene.
2. Picture it clearly: where were you, how old, who was there, what happened.
3. Identify the conclusion you drew from it. Not the event itself, the belief you built from the event. ('That means I'm...', 'People think I...')
4. Now ask: who authored that conclusion? You? An adult who was struggling themselves? A peer who was also figuring it out? A system that was broken?
5. Write it out on the worksheet. Be specific. Vague answers stay vague.

## EXERCISE 1

# The Origin Story Worksheet

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Describe or imagine the earliest memory where you might have felt not capable, not worthy, or not enough. Where were you? How old? What happened?

What conclusion did that younger version of you draw from that moment? Finish this sentence: 'That moment made me believe that I...'

Who authored that conclusion? (Be honest, it probably wasn't you alone.)

Was that person qualified to make that call about who you are? Why or why not?

What would you tell that kid now, knowing what you know?

## EXERCISE 2

# The Confidence Thief Lineup

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### The Why

Most people carry around a running commentary in their heads that sounds suspiciously like specific people from their past. A parent. A teacher. A caregiver. Someone who had no business deciding your lifetime belief of worth. This exercise gets them out of your head and onto paper, where you can actually look at them.

### The Neuroscience

Internalized voices from significant others create what psychologists call 'introjected regulation'; you've absorbed their judgments so completely that you now deliver them yourself, without needing them in the room or your life. The prefrontal cortex can't distinguish between a real threat and a remembered or imagined one. Your body responds to that critical inner voice the same way it would to the actual person. Getting it externalized is the first step to making it lose its grip and volume.

### How To Do The Worksheet:

1. Think of 3-5 people whose words or actions chipped away at your confidence over the years. They don't have to be villains. They just have to have left a mark.
2. For each person, write their name (or a label if that feels safer), what they said or did, and the belief it planted.
3. Then, and this is an important part, write one sentence about what you believe was going on with THEM at the time. Their limitations, fears, and issues, and what THEIR past may have put on them.
4. Ask yourself: if a stranger came to you with the same story about the same type of person, would you believe it defines them? Or would you see it as someone else's projection?
5. Don't bypass the anger. If it's there, let it land. Then put it where it belongs, on the person it came from. Write it out. Say it out loud. Whatever you do, let it land and don't bypass it. Part of where you are now is because your mind has chosen to ignore this.

## EXERCISE 2

# The Confidence Thief Lineup Worksheet

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### Person 1

Who they were:

What may have been going on with THEM:

What they said or did:

The belief it planted:

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### Person 2

Who they were:

What may have been going on with THEM:

What they said or did:

The belief it planted:

---

### Person 3

Who they were:

What may have been going on with THEM:

What they said or did:

The belief it planted:

---

### Person 4

Who they were:

What may have been going on with THEM:

What they said or did:

The belief it planted:

---

### Person 5

Who they were:

What may have been going on with THEM:

What they said or did:

The belief it planted:

# The Evidence File

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## The Why

Your brain is actively deleting proof that you're capable. Confirmation bias means it filters incoming data to match what it already believes. If the current belief is 'I'm not that capable,' every win gets minimized, every compliment gets dismissed, every success gets attributed to luck. This exercise forces you to go back and start building the actual case.

## The Neuroscience

The hippocampus encodes memory, but what gets encoded strongly is emotional salience. Unfortunately for us, in most circumstances, our brain experiences negative events as typically generating more emotional charge than positive ones (negativity bias). Because of that, negative memories are generally easier to remember and feel. They're also the basis for a lot of our belief systems.

We are wired this way because when we were cavemen, we had to look first for the threats to stay alive (smelling the roses wasn't an option when we were cavemen). So we scanned our environment for something bad, so we were prepared to deal with it. While we no longer have to be on the lookout for saber-tooth tigers, our brains react in a similar way to present-day threats. Did the boss ask you to present in front of 500 people at the sales convention? May as well be a giant cave bear chasing you as far as your brain is concerned. Fight or flight it is! So, basically, to "stay alive" during present-day experiences, your brain has learned how to have a better-maintained file on your failures than your successes. Successes weren't a threat to your survival - failure was. The deliberate act of retrieving and naming positive evidence creates new encoding, literally building new neural pathways that support a different prediction.

## How To Do The Worksheet:

1. You're going to build a case file. Think of yourself as your own defense attorney. List every time you did something hard, scared, or new, and got through it. Include small things.
2. Your brain doesn't know the difference between a big win and a small one when it comes to building evidence. List times people have expressed trust in you, a promotion, a referral, someone asking your advice, or someone who showed up for you.
3. List skills you have that took time and effort to build.
4. No dismissing. No, "but that doesn't count." Everything counts.

### EXERCISE 3

# The Evidence File Worksheet

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List hard things you did, even when afraid. (List as many as you can.)

Make a list of all the times people expressed trust in your judgment, skills, or character.

Create an exhaustive list of skills and abilities you've built that took real effort.

Create a list as long as you can of all the hard things you survived that you weren't sure you could handle.

Looking at these lists. Examine them. On a separate sheet of paper, detail what the **actual** evidence says about you. If you can't be honest yet about it and give yourself credit - imagine that a friend showed you this list about themselves, what would you say to them? What would their actual evidence prove?

## EXERCISE 4

# The Identity Audit

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### The Why

You're not an unconfident person or a person lacking capabilities. You're a person living with a brain that has practiced, for a long time, the habit of acting in ways that don't reflect confidence because your experiences didn't provide you with an alternative. That's a fundamentally different problem, because habits can be changed and identities are a bit stickier, but they can be shifted too. This exercise helps you figure out which one you've actually been living, and who you'd be without it.

### The Neuroscience

Identity-based behavior change, as outlined in research on self-concept theory, works differently from willpower-based change. When you consistently work to shift the identity label ('I'm not confident' vs. 'I'm building confidence'), the brain starts filtering for evidence that matches the new label instead. The anterior cingulate cortex monitors for identity-congruent behavior and flags violations, which is why acting against your self-concept feels uncomfortable and usually doesn't last long. Rewriting the concept changes what feels 'wrong.'

### How To Do The Worksheet

1. Describe in detail how a 'not confident' version of you shows up. What do they say, avoid, minimize, over-explain, or hide? Get specific.
2. Now describe what you might do with baseline confidence. Describe what you'd do, say, and stop doing in your actual life, not a fantasy version, reality. If you had some confidence today, how would that play out?
3. Identify three behaviors the 'confident you' would do in the next two weeks that the current you is avoiding.
4. Identify three things the 'not confident' version says regularly that the confident version would just... not say.
5. Write a two-sentence identity statement, not a wish, a declaration: 'I am someone who...' Focus on process, not outcome.

#### EXERCISE 4

# The Identity Audit Worksheet

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When did you first decide you were "not a confident person"? What specifically happened, and how old were you? Pretend if you need to. Your brain will find the truth in it regardless.

What has performing the unconfident version of yourself protected you from? What's the payoff of staying there?

Think of one moment -- even brief -- where you showed up with total confidence. What was different? What did that version of you know that the current version forgets?

What would the people who know you best say you're capable of that you consistently argue them out of?

What's one specific situation coming up in the next two weeks where you're going to show up as the identity you're building instead of the one you inherited? Describe exactly what that looks like.

## EXERCISE 5

# The Competence Map

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### The Why

Self-confidence isn't a single switch. It's domain-specific. You might be highly competent and know it in one area of your life, while feeling completely useless or inept in another. The problem is that when we feel unconfident, we tend to paint the whole canvas with one brush. This exercise maps the actual terrain.

### The Neuroscience

Research on self-efficacy shows that it operates differently across domains. A person can have high self-efficacy in professional performance and low self-efficacy in interpersonal relationships, and vice versa, and the two don't necessarily transfer. However, deliberately mapping your areas of competence activates the same neural reward circuits as experiencing new success; your brain responds to the recognition of existing evidence similarly to new evidence.

### How To Do The Worksheet

1. Across the categories listed below (work, relationships, physical, creative, intellectual, and emotional), rate your actual competence, not your confidence, from 1-10.
2. For each area where you scored 6+, list two specific things you're genuinely good at.
3. For each area below 5, ask: is this actually low competence, or low confidence in existing competence? Be honest.
4. Identify the area where your competence is highest. What has that area taught you that could transfer elsewhere?
5. Note where confidence and competence are most misaligned (that gap is your clearest growth edge).

EXERCISE 5

# The Competence Map Worksheet

| AREA            | COMPETENCE (1-10)    | AREA            | CONFIDENCE (1-10)    |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Work / Career   | <input type="text"/> | Work / Career   | <input type="text"/> |
| Relationships   | <input type="text"/> | Relationships   | <input type="text"/> |
| Physical / Body | <input type="text"/> | Physical / Body | <input type="text"/> |
| Creative        | <input type="text"/> | Creative        | <input type="text"/> |
| Intellectual    | <input type="text"/> | Intellectual    | <input type="text"/> |
| Emotional       | <input type="text"/> | Emotional       | <input type="text"/> |

Where are competence and confidence most misaligned? That gap gives you an idea of where you need to focus first.

What has your highest-competence area taught you?

## EXERCISE 6

# The Body Inventory

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### The Why

Confidence isn't only in your head. It lives in your body; in your posture, your breath, the tension in your jaw, the way you walk into a room or shrink in one. Most people are completely disconnected from the physical signature of their own self-doubt. This exercise gives you steps to start becoming aware of it and learn how to shift it.

### The Neuroscience

When you see “somatic,” you may think of woo stuff, but it’s really not. It’s actually science, and there are valid and potentially psychology-changing studies on it. The *Somatic Marker Hypothesis*, developed by neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, shows that bodily states directly influence decision-making and emotional experience. Amy Cuddy's work on embodied cognition demonstrates that body posture influences hormonal states, specifically testosterone and cortisol ratios linked to confidence. More fundamentally, the vagus nerve creates a constant two-way conversation between your gut, your heart, and your brain. Changing the body changes the brain's prediction. It really is wild how totally connected body and mind REALLY are!

### How To Do The Worksheet

1. Sit quietly for two minutes and do a full body scan. Start at the top of your head and work down. Note any tension, tightness, numbness, or holding.
2. Think about a situation where you feel most unconfident. Notice what happens in your body. Where does it land?
3. Now think about a moment when you felt genuinely capable and sure. What's different in your body? What does that feel like?
4. Answer the worksheet questions about how your body holds your self-doubt, and what physical shifts might interrupt the pattern.
5. The final prompt asks you to design a '30-second reset; a physical practice you can use before high-pressure situations.

## EXERCISE 6

# The Body Inventory — Worksheet

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During your body scan, where did you notice the most tension or holding? Describe specifically, don't just say 'shoulders.' What does it feel like? Sharp? Hot? Dull? Achey? Tight?

When you picture your most unconfident moment, where does it land in your body? What does it feel like physically?

When you picture a moment of genuine capability, what's different in your body? Describe the physical sensation of confidence.

What does your posture, voice, or breathing do in situations where you feel small? Be specific.

Design your 30-second physical reset: a specific sequence of breath, posture, or movement that shifts your state before high-pressure situations.

# The Inner Critic Deposition

## The Why

Your inner critic is a voice of fear, but it comes across as reason and truth. It sounds authoritative because it was most likely developed by or because of an authority figure, plus, you've been listening to it so long, you stopped questioning it. This exercise doesn't silence it, that doesn't work anyway. It cross-examines it. You're putting your inner critic on the stand, and you're not letting it off easy. The more proof you can bring forward to disprove its stance, the less volume and validity it has.

## The Neuroscience

The inner critic operates out of your brain's threat-detection system. When the amygdala perceives potential rejection, failure, or humiliation, it generates warnings, and your mind translates those warnings into a narrative that sounds like self-awareness but is actually self-protection. The problem is that the threat system is catastrophically bad at calibrating real risk. It treats "someone might judge me for this" the same way it treats "I might get eaten." Externalizing the critic and interrogating its logic activates the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain capable of actual rational evaluation. You're essentially forcing the emotional brain to go through security.

## How To Do The Worksheet

1. Write down the five most frequent things your inner critic says to you. Not the polished version, the actual words. The brutal ones you'd be embarrassed to say out loud in a room full of people. Those ones.
2. For each statement, identify what specific outcome the critic is trying to prevent. What is it protecting you from? Rejection? Humiliation? Being seen as not enough? Get specific. "It's protecting me from failure" isn't specific. "It's protecting me from my father finding out I tried and didn't make it" is specific.
3. Ask for the credentials. What makes this voice qualified to make this call? What evidence is it drawing on? How old is that evidence? Is it drawing on something that happened when you were eleven? Because eleven-year-olds have notoriously bad data.
4. Run the accuracy test. For each statement, ask: if I showed this claim to an objective judge and presented all the actual evidence of my life, would they rule in its favor? What would they throw out?
5. Identify who the voice sounds like. Most inner critics are borrowed. They sound like a parent, a sibling, an early teacher, a first boss, an ex. Whose voice is this, actually?
6. Write a formal rebuttal. Not a positive affirmation -- those don't work on a skeptical brain. A rebuttal. Evidence-based, specific, and honest. The kind a good lawyer would make.
7. Determine the verdict. What does this critic get to have jurisdiction over going forward, if anything? What cases are you throwing out?

## EXERCISE 7

# The Inner Critic Deposition - Worksheet

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Write the five most brutal things your inner critic says. (Don't soften them.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

For each one: what outcome is it trying to prevent? Be specific.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Whose voice does it most sound like? if it's not someone you recognize, what would the voice sound like?

What was going on with that person when they decided to have opinions about you?

Pick the one statement that has the most power over you. Run the full accuracy test: what is the actual evidence, and what would an objective judge rule on that evidence?

Write your formal rebuttal to that statement. Evidence only. No wishful thinking, just facts.

What does this critic get to weigh in on going forward? What's no longer its call?

# The Borrowed Identity

## The Why

At some point, usually when you were young, scared, or trying to belong somewhere, you started performing a version of yourself that worked in that environment. Maybe you made yourself smaller to avoid conflict. Maybe you stopped being curious because your curiosity got you shut down. That performance became so habitual that somewhere along the way, you forgot it was a performance. This exercise finds where you borrowed your identity from and asks whether you want to keep it.

## The Neuroscience

Identity formation during childhood and adolescence is heavily shaped by social feedback. The brain's reward system releases dopamine in response to belonging and acceptance, and withdraws it in response to rejection and exclusion. This creates a powerful incentive to adopt whatever version of yourself is most accepted in your primary environment, school, family, and peer group. Over time, these adaptations become encoded as the default self-concept. The anterior insula and medial prefrontal cortex, which process self-referential thought, begin to treat the adapted self as the authentic self. Distinguishing between whom you adapted to survive and who you actually are requires deliberate examination, because the brain genuinely can't tell the difference without being asked.

## How To Do The Worksheet

1. Map your primary environments from childhood to now. Family home, school, first social group, first job, first serious relationship, current life. List them out. These are the rooms where your identity got shaped.
2. For each environment, ask: what version of me was rewarded here? What got approved of, praised, included, or kept safe? Write that version down.
3. For each environment, ask: what version of me got punished, excluded, mocked, or ignored? What did I have to hide, minimize, or shut down to survive in this room?
4. Look across the full list. What qualities keep showing up in the "hide this" column? Those are likely the parts of you that got most suppressed.
5. Look at what's in your "rewarded" column. How many of those things actually belong to you versus how many were you performing to stay safe? Which ones feel genuinely like you versus like a costume that stopped coming off?
6. Ask the hard question: which parts of your current personality exist because you chose them, and which exist because some room you used to be in required them?
7. Write a description of the version of you that never had to adapt to survive. The one that existed before the performance started. You probably have flashes of this person -- in moments of genuine connection, creative flow, total honesty, or when you're alone with no audience. Describe them.
8. Identify three qualities of that unperformed self that you want to actively bring back.

## EXERCISE 7

# The Borrowed Identity - Worksheet

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List your primary environments. For each one, what version of you was rewarded? What had to be hidden?

What qualities appear most often in your "hide this" column across all environments?

Which parts of your current personality feel genuinely like you versus like adaptations that outlasted their usefulness?

Describe the version of you that existed before the performance started. Use specific details -- not abstract concepts.

What three qualities of that unperformed self are you reclaiming? What would that actually look like in your daily life?

What room are you still performing for that you're no longer even in?

# The Permission Audit

## The Why

Most people are waiting for something before they start. Permission to take up space. Permission to call themselves an expert. Permission to want what they want. Permission to be difficult. Permission to change. Permission to rest. Permission to try. And they're waiting for it from someone who either isn't coming or who doesn't actually have the authority to give it. This exercise figures out exactly what you've been waiting for and from whom, and then takes it off their hands.

## The Neuroscience

Waiting for external validation before acting is a conditioned response. When children require adult permission to act safely in the world, the brain develops a pattern of seeking approval before proceeding- especially in unfamiliar or ambiguous circumstances. In adulthood, this pattern gets transferred to authority figures, social groups, and cultural norms. The dorsal anterior cingulate cortex monitors for social approval signals, and when those signals are absent, it registers the gap as risk. The result is behavioral inhibition. You stop before you start. Interrupting this pattern requires making the approval internal and deliberate rather than external and conditional.

## How To Do The Worksheet

1. Make a list of everything you're waiting to feel or receive before acting. Ready. Confident. More experienced. Thinner. Richer. Graduated. Validated. Healed. Make the list thorough and honest.
2. For each item, identify who or what you're waiting for that permission from. Your parents? A credentialing body? A particular person whose opinion has too much weight? Some future version of yourself who has it more together? Society in general?
3. Examine the authority of each source. Does this person or entity actually have the right to decide whether you're allowed to proceed? On what basis? Did you hand them that authority consciously, or did it just happen?
4. Identify what specifically the permission would give you. If you had it, if the source said yes, what would change? What would you do that you're not doing now? Ask whether you've ever gotten permission and still didn't do what you wanted to do. If yes, what does that tell you about where the real block actually is?
5. Write out the exact wording of the permission you're waiting for. What do you need to hear? Make it specific. Not "I need permission to be successful" what does success mean, in what area, and what specific action does the permission unlock?
6. Now write yourself that permission. In writing. In the first person. As specifically as possible. Not as a motivational poster, as a formal grant of authority. "I give myself permission to..." followed by the exact thing. Or imagine being the person or entity you need permission from, write the letter from their perspective saying what you need them to say.
7. Identify the first action that permission unlocks. Not the whole plan, the first action. And put a date on it.

# The Permission Audit - Worksheet

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List everything you're waiting to feel or receive before you take the action. Be thorough.

For each item, who or what are you waiting for it from? Be specific.

Does each source actually have the authority to grant this? On what basis did you give them that power?

If you received every permission on this list tomorrow, what would you do differently? What does that tell you about what's actually stopping you?

Write your formal permission statement. First person. Specific. The exact thing you've been waiting for someone else to say.

What's the first action this permission unlocks? What date are you doing it?

# The Shame Inventory

## The Why

Shame is the thing underneath most of this. Not guilt. Guilt says "I *did* something bad." Shame says "I *am* something bad." And it keeps its mouth shut. It hides. It avoids. It people-pleases and overachieves and under-shows-up and stays very, very small. You can't build confidence on top of hidden shame. It seeps through. This exercise doesn't ask you to perform vulnerability. It asks you to look at what you're carrying and decide whether you actually want to keep carrying it.

## The Neuroscience

Shame activates the same neural circuits as physical pain. Research by social neuroscientist Naomi Eisenberger has shown that social rejection and humiliation light up the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex and anterior insula, the regions associated with the sensation of physical hurt. This is why shame is so powerful: your brain registers it as actual damage. The instinct to hide shame is an automatic protection response. It happens under the surface, so you don't know it's happening. But concealment maintains the emotional charge, so what's hidden doesn't get processed; it just stays activated. Brené Brown's research adds to this: shame thrives on secrecy and loses power in honest acknowledgment. Not public confession, acknowledgment.

## How To Do The Worksheet

1. Write down what you're most ashamed of. Not what you're embarrassed about, actual shame. The things you've never said out loud, the things you've built elaborate systems to keep hidden, the things you're convinced would change how people see you if they knew.
2. For each item, identify when the shame was installed. Most shame doesn't start as our own, it was applied by someone else, and we adopted it. Who handed you this shame? In what moment?
3. Distinguish between shame that carries real information and shame that was applied incorrectly. Some shame points to a genuine values violation, something you did that actually hurt someone, that doesn't align with who you want to be. Other shame is someone else's cruelty or projection stuck to you. Separate them.
4. For the shame that carries real information: what would it take to address it? Not erase it, address it. Do you need to apologize to someone? Make amends? Change a behavior? Do what you've been avoiding?
5. For the shame that was applied incorrectly: name the person or system that put it there. Name what was actually going on with them. Name what they got wrong about you.
6. Ask: how is this shame currently running your life? What decisions is it making for you? What are you not doing, not saying, not going for because of it?
7. Write the most honest, non-dramatized version of each shame item you listed. Not a confessional spiral -- just the plain facts of what happened, what it was, and what it actually means and doesn't mean about who you are.
8. Decide what you're keeping and what you're putting down. You don't have to be done with something in one exercise. But you can decide to stop letting it vote.

# The Shame Inventory - Worksheet

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What are you most ashamed of? (You don't have to share this with anyone. Be honest.)

For each item: who installed this shame, and when? Were they qualified to make that call about you?

Which shame carries real information about a values violation? What would genuinely addressing it look like?  
Which shame was applied incorrectly? Write the plain facts of what it was -- stripped of the meaning someone else attached to it.

How is this shame currently making decisions in your life? What is it costing you right now?

What are you putting down? Write it out as a decision, not a wish.

# The Counterfactual

## The Why

You're still punishing yourself for something. Maybe several things. A decision you made that went badly. A path you didn't take. Something you said or didn't say. You've been carrying it as evidence that you can't be trusted with your own choices, your own judgment, your own life. This exercise doesn't let you off the hook for genuine mistakes. But it does ask you to stop using a decision you made with the information you had at the time as proof of permanent incompetence.

## The Neuroscience

Counterfactual thinking, the "what if I had done differently" loop, activates the medial prefrontal cortex and is driven by the brain's error-correction system. In small doses, it's useful: it helps us learn and calibrate. In sustained doses, it becomes rumination, which is associated with increased activity in the default mode network and decreased activity in regions that support forward-focused planning. The brain essentially gets stuck in a loop that feels like problem-solving but produces no solutions, just increasingly refined versions of the same regret. Interrupting this loop requires completing the error-correction process: extracting the actual lesson and closing the file.

## How To Do The Worksheet

1. Name the decision, action, or inaction you're still punishing yourself for. Be specific, what exactly happened, what did you do or not do, when was it?
2. Describe what you were working with at the time. What information did you have? What emotional state were you in? What did you understand about yourself, the situation, and the other people involved? What did you not know that you know now?
3. Make the honest assessment: given what you knew and what you were dealing with at the time, was the decision you made genuinely unreasonable? Or does it only look unreasonable from where you're standing now, with information you didn't have?
4. Identify what the decision has cost you. Not to marinate in it, to complete the accounting. What has this thing actually cost you, and is the ongoing punishment you're applying to yourself proportionate to the actual harm?
5. Extract the real lesson. Not the punishing version ("I'm an idiot who can't be trusted"), the useful version. What do you actually know now that you didn't know then? What would you do with that information going forward?
6. Determine what, if anything, still needs to be addressed. Is there someone to apologize to? Something to repair? An action to take that you've been avoiding? Or has the punishment just been an internal one with no external action required?
7. Write the final verdict on this decision. Not forgiveness as a performance -- a realistic, honest assessment of what happened, why, what it cost, what it taught you, and what it does and doesn't say about your judgment now. Close the file. Write explicitly what you're no longer using this decision as evidence for.

EXERCISE 11

# The Counterfactual - Worksheet

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Name the decision you're still punishing yourself for. Describe it plainly.

What were you working with at the time, information, emotional state, understanding? What did you not know?

Given all of that: was the decision genuinely unreasonable, or does it only look that way now?

What has this cost you? Is the punishment you've been applying proportionate?

What's the actual lesson, the useful version, not the punishing one?

What does this decision no longer get to be used as evidence for? Write the verdict.

# The Values Collision

## The Why

A significant portion of low self-confidence is actually unresolved cognitive dissonance. You say you value honesty, and then you don't say the true thing. You say you value your health, and then you don't make the choices. You say you value your relationships, and then you stay too busy to show up for them. Every time your behavior doesn't match your stated values, your brain registers the inconsistency and interprets it as evidence that you can't be trusted. By yourself. This exercise maps the collisions and figures out what to do with them.

## The Neuroscience

Cognitive dissonance, the discomfort of holding conflicting beliefs or behaving in ways that contradict your self-concept, activates the anterior cingulate cortex and creates a sustained low-grade stress response. The brain is motivated to resolve dissonance, and it typically does so in one of three ways: change the behavior, change the belief, or rationalize. Most people choose rationalization because it requires the least immediate effort. But the rationalization doesn't fully stick, the dissonance remains active underneath, contributing to a persistent sense of self-distrust. Resolving it requires honest confrontation, not more sophisticated explanations.

## How To Do The Worksheet

1. List your top five stated values. Not aspirational values, the ones you'd tell someone in the first five minutes if they asked you what you stand for. Honesty. Family. Creativity. Freedom. Growth. Whatever they genuinely are.
2. For each value, describe specifically how you're living it. What behaviors, decisions, and choices in your actual daily life reflect this value? Be concrete.
3. For each value, describe specifically where you're not living it. Where is the gap between what you say matters and what you're actually doing? Don't be cruel, but don't be soft either.
4. For each gap, identify the real reason it exists. Not the surface reason ("I'm too busy"), the actual reason. Fear of conflict? Fear of failure? Prioritizing short-term comfort over long-term integrity? Not fully believing you deserve the thing you claim to value?
5. Rate the impact of each collision on your self-trust. On a scale of 1-10, how much is this specific gap eroding your confidence in yourself?
6. For each significant collision (6+), identify one concrete action that would close or reduce the gap.
7. Ask the harder question: are any of these actually your values, or are they values you inherited or perform? Is there anything on your list that you don't actually care about, but you've been pretending to because of who you think you're supposed to be?
8. Write a revised, honest list of your actual values, the ones your behavior already partially reflects, the ones you're willing to take real action to honor. Those are yours.

# The Values Collision - Worksheet

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List your top five stated values. Be honest, not aspirational.

For each value: where are you living it? Where are you not?

For each gap: what's the real reason it exists? Not the easy answer.

Which collision is doing the most damage to your self-trust? Why?

What one action would close or reduce your highest-impact gap?

Are any of these actually your values? Or did you inherit or perform them? Write your real list.

# The Projection Inventory

## The Why

The qualities that bother you most in other people and the qualities you most admire in other people are both maps to something going on inside you. What you can't stand in someone else is often something you've rejected in yourself, or something you're afraid of becoming. What you most admire is often something you want but don't believe you're allowed to have.

## The Neuroscience

Projection is a psychological mechanism in which emotions, traits, or impulses that the individual finds unacceptable in themselves are attributed to others. Neurologically, this involves suppression of self-referential processing in the medial prefrontal cortex and over-attribution of those same qualities to external targets. Research in social cognition shows that the traits we are most reactive to in others, both positively and negatively, correlate with our own self-concept conflicts. Admiration research further shows that the qualities we most admire track closely with our internalized ideal self, the person we want to be but don't believe we currently are.

## How To Do The Worksheet

1. List five or more people who genuinely irritate, frustrate, or bother you. These can be people you know, public figures, or even composite types ("the kind of person who...").
2. For each person, write the specific qualities that bother you, and be specific. Arrogant. Needy. Loud. Lazy. Self-promotional. Reckless. Dishonest. Get precise.
3. For each trait, ask the uncomfortable question: where does this show up in me? Not necessarily in the same way or to the same degree, but where is there a version of this in your own behavior or inner life? Include the suppressed version: the trait you've shut down in yourself, the one you're afraid of or that you'd never let out.
4. Now list five or more people you deeply admire. People whose lives, qualities, or ways of being make you feel something. Inspired, envious, motivated.
5. For each person, write the specific qualities you admire (be specific). Courageous. Unapologetically themselves. Brilliant. Generous. Boundary-setting. Creative without apology. Get specific.
6. For each admired quality, ask: do I believe I'm capable of this? If not, why not? What's the story you're running about why this is available to them but not to you?
7. Identify which admired qualities you've already started to develop, even partially, even in small moments. Your brain has been editing those out. Find them.
8. Write a paragraph about what this inventory reveals about what you're actually hungry for. Not in a theoretical way, specifically, what do you want that you've been pretending you don't want or don't deserve?

# The Projection Inventory - Worksheet

---

List five (or more) people who bother you and the specific traits that bother you about them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

For each trait: where does a version of this exist in you? (Include the suppressed version)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List five (or more) people you admire and the specific qualities that draw you to them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

For each admired quality: do you believe you're capable of it? If not, what's the story?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Which admired qualities have you already started to develop, even partially? (FYI, just being aware that you want them, counts)

What does this inventory reveal about what you actually want? Write it without filtering.

# The Future Self Deposition

## The Why

You have a future version of yourself who figured some of this out. Who built the confidence, took the risks, made the calls, showed up in the ways you currently can't seem to. That person exists as a logical endpoint of the work you're doing right now. This exercise puts that future self on the stand and asks them what they know. It sounds strange. It works anyway, because your brain doesn't care that much about the difference between a vividly imagined future and a real one when it comes to learning from it.

## The Neuroscience

Mental time travel: the brain's ability to project itself into the future, activates the same neural network as autobiographical memory. Research by Hal Hershfield has shown that the degree to which people feel psychologically connected to their future self predicts their willingness to make current sacrifices for long-term gain. When the future self feels like a stranger, the brain deprioritizes their well-being. Vivid, specific future-self visualization increases neural overlap between self-representation and future-self representation, making it easier to act on their behalf now. The more often and vividly it is made, the faster the brain sees it as familiar and the more willing it is to accept it as "truth."

## How To Do The Worksheet

1. Set a specific time frame: five years from now (enough time for significant change, close enough to feel real).
2. Describe where your five-years-out self is living, what they're doing, who's around them, what a typical day looks like. Make it specific and sensory. The more specific you are, the more neurologically useful this is.
3. Describe how that version of you carries themselves. How do they walk into a room? How do they handle conflict? What do they no longer worry about? What relationship do they have with their own opinion of themselves?
4. Now shift into first person as that future version. Write from their perspective, looking back at where you are right now. What do they see? What were the turning points? What were the things that looked like obstacles but turned out to be the whole point?
5. Ask your future self: what do I need to stop doing right now? What am I holding onto that they had to let go of to get where they are?
6. Ask your future self: what do I need to start doing? What was the first actual move that started the chain?
7. Ask your future self what they wish you'd trusted earlier. What did you know but dismiss? What did you sense but override?
8. Come back to the present. Write one sentence about what you're going to do differently this week based on that conversation. Make it specific and time-bound. Not "I'm going to be more confident," an actual action.

# The Future Self Deposition

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Describe your five-years-out self in specific, sensory detail. Where are they, what does an average day look like, who's around them?

Describe how that version of you carries themselves. Who are they, not just what have they done?

Write from your future self looking back: what were the turning points? What were the things that looked like setbacks but weren't?

What does your future self say you need to stop doing right now?

What was the first actual move, not the strategy, just the first step?

What did you know but kept dismissing? What do you need to trust?

What are you doing differently this week? Specific. Time-bound. Write it down.

# Secretly, I Think...

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I'm an expert at....

I consider myself pretty good at....

My best character trait is...

I have a natural talent for...

I feel good when I...

I've been successful at...

I'd be proud of myself if...

People compliment me for/about...

My friends would say I am...

I've been told I have/can...

# Visualizing

By now, you know that imagining your success has real psychological impacts. Give yourself 5 minutes to chill out and use that tool to help make progress. You don't have to close your eyes - you can do this while you're doing the dishes, sitting in traffic, mowing the lawn, or lying in bed. You can make it a meditative experience if you want to, but it's not required.

Remember, the brain doesn't know the difference between fact & fantasy. So FEEL what this is like. Let your brain get used to that feeling of success and confidence. Let your mind imagine (or even start off by pretending to imagine) yourself not far into the future. You've achieved the level of self-confidence that you are looking for. What is that experience like? Incorporate all of your senses and let the scene play out. Here are some ideas of things to imagine to help get you started. You can let it play out in your imagination, or write it out in a detailed way. Whatever works best for you in the moment - do that, and do it consistently.

What are you doing for fun that you didn't do in the past? Who are you with?

What is going on around you? Is it quiet? Loud? Dark? Still? Are there other people? If so, what are they doing? Are people rowdy? Silent? Laughing? Studying? Take in the environment.

Who/what is there? Are there children? Adults? Couples? Cats? Dogs? Mountains? Rain?

How are you interacting with them? Sitting with them in an audience? Talking one-on-one? Lecturing at a podium? Climbing a mountain? Watching a movie or concert?

Where are you? At work? A home office? Sitting in your living room in your pjs? Walking a dog? Driving a car? Hugging your child? Kissing your spouse? At the gym? On a beach?

Pay attention to the details. What else do you notice? Feelings? Smells? Sounds? Sights? Tastes?

Write or imagine all the words, descriptions, feelings, or senses that come to mind when you think about this scene. Any words at all, feelings, observations - take it all in. Doodle. Write. Feel. Do whatever you need to do for it to start to stick, and seriously consider writing it out at some point to really help your brain experience it. Make a vision board. Meditate. Record it and listen to it. Do whatever you need to do to have it really start to settle in.

# Your Creation

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On a separate piece of paper (so you have room) or in a journal, use the questions and prompts below to reflect or whatever word you want to use - to feel closer to the version of the life you WANT, not the one that was created/doled-out/dictated or expected. What do YOU want? What feels most like YOU? Then - go friggin get MORE of that!

## CLARITY: What Do You Actually Want?

- When do I feel most like myself?
- What does “a life I love” actually look and feel like, in the small, daily moments?
- If I could design my ideal day from wake-up to sleep, what would it include?
- What am I craving more of right now, and why?

## ALIGNMENT: What Matters Most to You?

- What are the 3 values I want my life to reflect? (Examples: freedom, creativity, connection, peace, growth, purpose)
- Who or what drains me, and what would it feel like to release that?
- What do I want to stop settling for, and what would I choose instead?

## MOMENTUM: Start Creating It Now

- What's one small change I can make this week to move closer to that life?
- (A shift in schedule, energy, habits, boundaries, joy, etc.)
- If I made decisions from my future self (the one who already lives this life) what would I do next?
- What's one thing I've been waiting to start that I could take imperfect action on today?

## INTEGRATION: Future-Focused Visualization

- Close your eyes and picture a version of your life that feels aligned, joyful, and powerful.
  - What do you see?
  - What are you doing, wearing, surrounded by?
  - Who's with you?
  - What are you proud of?
- What would it take emotionally or practically to start building even 10% of that life right now?

## For Clarity And Action

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Clarity without action just creates frustration..and screaming..and swearing. Here's where your insights can begin to turn into some momentum.

What's one thing I feel pulled to explore further this week?

What's one small, no-pressure step I could take toward improved confidence? (Just something that might make you feel good about yourself - nothing earth-moving)

What's one belief I'm letting go of, to make space for my confidence? Think about the stuff in your head that you say to beat yourself down - what ONE could you consider challenging and shifting because you know, deep down, it's not true? (even if you wouldn't admit that to anyone yet)

What's something I want to say "yes" to more often from now on?

Who could support me, cheer me on, or explore this with me? Even better, who would hear (or would you like to have hear) that you're doing this and would say "hell yes, it's about time!"

# Train Your Brain To Find Happy

Studies show that gratitude can bring JUST as much peace to your spiraling mind as something that makes you smile. FYI - it also trains your brain on how to FIND things that make you happy. So there's that. Find whatever name you want to call it. Things you appreciate, maybe? Whatever it is that resonates with you - USE it.

| The things I'm grateful for - past, present & future, big or little, material or not. | People I'm grateful for and why |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                                                                                       |                                 |
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# If It Scares You, It Grows You

You know by now that your fears are trying to keep you safe, but they’re really holding you back. What can you do today that might scare you but would also “grow” you?

| Fear I’m Feeling | What might this fear be trying to protect? | What I’ll do anyway & what it’ll move me closer towards |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
|                  |                                            |                                                         |
|                  |                                            |                                                         |
|                  |                                            |                                                         |
|                  |                                            |                                                         |
|                  |                                            |                                                         |
|                  |                                            |                                                         |
|                  |                                            |                                                         |

# Daily Confidence Builders

Confidence comes from one thing: a track record of competence. Every time you do something that requires even a tiny bit of courage, skill, or follow-through, your brain logs it. Do it enough times and your brain stops questioning whether you can handle things. It knows you can because you've got proof. This list is about collecting that proof - REGULARLY! These are pattern-building actions that rewire your self-concept through repetition and evidence accumulation.

How to use this: Pick 3-5 actions daily. Mix it up. The goal is consistency. Your brain learns from volume. (this will also be found in the daily section of this system.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Complete one thing you've been avoiding (even if it's tiny)
- ☐ Notice three moments today when you handled something well
- ☐ Say what you actually think in one conversation (not what sounds nice)
- ☐ Do something slightly uncomfortable on purpose
- ☐ Finish something instead of leaving it 90% done
- ☐ Make one decision without asking for validation first
- ☐ Catch yourself mid-negative thought and actively redirect it
- ☐ Handle one thing you'd normally outsource or avoid
- ☐ Set one boundary without apologizing for it
- ☐ Try one thing you're not already good at
- ☐ Ask for what you want directly (no hinting, no softening)
- ☐ Own one mistake without over-explaining or deflecting
- ☐ Do one thing that would feel easier if you were "more confident" (fake it works)
- ☐ Solve one problem yourself before asking someone else
- ☐ Take credit for something you did well (out loud, to someone)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total actions checked off today!

My goal tomorrow is to check off \_\_\_\_\_ actions, and to set myself up for success, I will need to be sure I \_\_\_\_\_,

Rewards I can give myself for being consistent & putting in real effort:  
(This keeps the dopamine pumping & motivation peaked!)

1-5 ✓ = reward of \_\_\_\_\_

6-11 ✓ = reward of \_\_\_\_\_

12-15 ✓ = reward of \_\_\_\_\_

More than 5 ✓ every day for a week = \_\_\_\_\_

More than 10 ✓ every day for a week = \_\_\_\_\_

# The 5-Minute Ignition

Your brain avoids starting tasks that feel big, vague, or loaded with potential failure. The problem? Once you're stuck in avoidance mode, you stay stuck. Your brain treats "not starting" as the safe option, which means you're now in a standoff with a task that's probably not even that hard.

The fix is stupid simple: make starting so small that your brain doesn't register it as a threat. Write the subject line. Open the file. print the copies. That's it. Less than 30 seconds and voila - done. Once you're in motion, the activation energy drops and your brain shifts gears. Momentum mode kicks in, so you'll stop needing motivation to keep going because you're already going. These are less-than-5-minute actions (some are less than 30 seconds) designed to trick your resistance. They're about breaking the seal. And here's the kicker: that "I actually did the thing" hit you get? That's not just relief. That's evidence. Your brain logs it. Do enough of these, and you start looking back at your day, seeing proof that you follow through. That proof becomes pride. Pride becomes confidence. Confidence makes the next start easier.

How to use this: When you're procrastinating on something, find the tiniest version of that task on this list. Do it. Then stop if you want. Usually, you won't want to. (This is also located in the daily section of this system)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Write just the subject line and greeting for the email, save to drafts, setup a reminder to write the first line.
- ☐ Open the document, type one sentence, save it, and set a reminder to spend another 60 seconds later.
- ☐ Pull up your calendar and block 15 minutes for focus time. Read a blog, watch a podcast. Take the break.
- ☐ Draft the text/message you've been avoiding, but don't send it. Set up a reminder to send it later.
- ☐ Make the phone call, leave the voicemail, hang up and let it go. Set up a reminder to call back if you need to.
- ☐ Write down the first three steps of the project - that's it. Just three. Set up a reminder for later for steps 3-6.
- ☐ Gather the materials you need in one place - nothing more. Once they're in 1 spot - check this as done.
- ☐ Set up your workspace for the task (get a pomodoro timer and use it! they make phone & desktop apps)
- ☐ Send one quick message to get the ball rolling and ask for clear next steps if you'll have action items
- ☐ Fill in just the basic info on that form out of the info you know off the top of your head.
- ☐ Reply to one email you've been ignoring - no more than 3 sentences. Not enough? Finish it tomorrow.
- ☐ Make the appointment (don't prep for it, just book it and get it on the calendar)
- ☐ Write the outline (skip the actual writing. Use AI to help speed things up (but check for accuracy)
- ☐ Do the first 5 minutes of research and mark where you stopped (put a reminder to do more tomorrow)
- ☐ Ask one clarifying question so you can move forward & write down that 1 single task that comes from it.
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Want a reward? Hell yeah you do (well, your brain does at least) - so, what will you reward yourself if you get:

3 done \_\_\_\_\_ 5 done \_\_\_\_\_

10 done \_\_\_\_\_ All done \_\_\_\_\_

# The Dopamine Checks

Dopamine drives motivation. It fires when your brain predicts a reward is coming, which pushes you toward action. The mechanism works like this: you do something, you get a reward, your brain logs the connection. Next time you face that same task, your brain anticipates the reward - and that anticipation releases dopamine before you even start. Your dopamine system learns. If you flood it with easy, instant hits (scrolling, sugar, notifications), it recalibrates. Normal activities start feeling flat because your baseline is jacked. Strategic dopamine use means you control the pattern. You pair effort with intentional rewards. Your brain learns that doing hard things predicts good things. Next time, the dopamine fires earlier - when you're deciding whether to start - and that's what gets you moving. Dopamine hits follow effort. You do something, then reward yourself. Your brain builds a prediction: effort → reward. That prediction fuels future motivation. Dopamine traps are passive. They deliver the hit without requiring anything from you first. Your brain learns that effort is optional, which kills motivation for anything that actually requires work.

How to use this list: Pick 2-3 dopamine hits below. Wanna' bigger boost?!? Do them AFTER you've done something on your Evidence Vault or 5-Minute Ignition lists. Use them as fuel (not as escape).

- ☐ Listen to one song that makes you feel like a badass or gets you pumped up
- ☐ Text someone with good news about what you just did or something in the past you hadn't shared with them
- ☐ Take a 5-minute walk outside and let yourself feel the air going into your nostrils
- ☐ Make your favorite coffee/tea exactly how you like it & enjoy it in your favorite place
- ☐ Spend 10 minutes on something creative (draw, write, play music)
- ☐ Watch one episode of a show you're into
- ☐ Eat something you've been craving
- ☐ Do 2 minutes of movement you actually enjoy doing
- ☐ Call someone who makes you laugh
- ☐ Buy yourself something small you've been wanting
- ☐ Spend 15 minutes on a hobby
- ☐ Take a photo of something that looks cool and play with your picture editor to make it look really different
- ☐ Journal for 5 minutes about what went well today and what you're looking forward to tomorrow
- ☐ Reorganize one small space that you see regularly to make it feel brand new or fresh
- ☐ Look at pictures that make you happy of friends, family, memories, vacations, or places you want to go
- ☐ Add your dream purchases to your Amazon cart, but don't hit "buy now."
- ☐ Make a vision board that perfectly depicts your goals and add 1 thing to it every day

Make your own personalized list - what works best for YOUR brain to boost its levels?

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

## SECTION 2

# The Reckoning

- Exercise 1: Stop Lying to Yourself
- Exercise 2: The Stories You're Still Running
- Exercise 3: The Uncomfortable Ones
- Exercise 4: Calling Out Your Patterns
- Exercise 5: The Identity Questions
- Exercise 6: No More Excuses
- Exercise 7: Comfort Zone Assessment

# Stop Lying to Yourself

---

What's the thing you keep telling yourself you'll do "when the time is right" that you know, if you're being honest, you've been avoiding for at least a year? More than one? List them all in detail.

What specifically would have to be *true* for the time to actually be right? And has any version of that ever been true before, when you still didn't do it?

What does that tell you about whether timing is actually the problem?

What would you do this week if you knew you couldn't be judged for it?

# The Stories You're Still Running

---

Finish this sentence without editing yourself: "I'm the kind of person who can't..." Do it a bunch of different times.

I'm the kind of person who can't \_\_\_\_\_

I'm the kind of person who can't \_\_\_\_\_

I'm the kind of person who can't \_\_\_\_\_

I'm the kind of person who can't \_\_\_\_\_

I'm the kind of person who can't \_\_\_\_\_

Who said it first? Not the feeling, the actual words, or the moment that created them. Where did it come from?

Is that source qualified to make that call about you? What might they have been dealing with when they made it?

If a friend answered as you have above and asked for your opinion, what would you say?

# The Uncomfortable Ones

---

What do you keep waiting to feel before you start? What if that feeling never comes?

What does 'playing it safe' actually cost you, realistically?

What have you talked yourself out of in the last six months that you kinda' regret?

What do you get out of keeping this? Not what it costs you, what does it give you? Safety? An excuse? A reason not to try? Proof that you were right about yourself?

What would you have to take responsibility for if you gave that up? If it's hard to do that, what is running through your mind that says it's hard? Where did that come from?

## Calling Out Your Patterns

---

What would you tell a close friend who came to you with your exact situation, your fears, your self-doubt, your reasons for holding back? Write that out. Specifically. The way you'd actually say it to them.

Now read it back as if someone just said it to you. What's the difference between the advice you'd give and the way you're treating yourself? Why does that gap exist?

How do you self-sabotage? Be specific. Not 'I get in my own way,' but the actual behaviors you use to do it.

When you get a compliment or recognition, what's your first instinct? What does that tell you?

What would change tomorrow if you decided you were already enough?

# The Identity Questions

---

Pick the belief about yourself that does the most damage. Write it down exactly as your brain delivers it.

What kind of person do you want to be known as, and what would have to change for that to actually be true?

Who are you when nobody's watching and nothing's at stake? Describe that person with specifics and then ask yourself if that person proud of the version of you that shows up when things are hard or public or high-stakes? What's different between those two versions?

What fear has shaped your identity more than your actual choices have?

# No More Excuses

---

What resources, support, or information would you need to start? Do you actually not have those things, or is that the excuse?

What's one thing you've been overthinking that you could just...decide on today?

What are you waiting for before you make that change? And is whatever you're waiting for actually coming, or is it another version of "when the time is right"?

# Comfort Zone Assessment

---

Describe your comfort zone. Not in an abstract way - describe it with the specific behaviors, the specific avoidances, the specific situations where you reliably shrink or retreat.

What has staying there protected you from?

What has it cost you that you haven't fully let yourself look at?

If you stayed exactly here for another five years with the same patterns, same avoidances, same story, what does that version of your life look like? Describe it specifically.

Is that acceptable to you?

## SECTION 3

# The Reflection

Exercise 1: The Gap Map

Exercise 2: The Comparison Trap

Exercise 3: The Fear Translator

## The Gap Map

---

This is about the gap between how you see yourself and how you actually show up. Those two things are often different, and the space between them is where the work and the start of your shift, lives.

How I see myself in my head:

How I actually show up in the world (ask people who know you if you're not sure):

Where are those two things most different? What does that tell you?

What's one story you're telling yourself about who you are that your actual behavior contradicts? (Example: 'I'm not a leader' but three people called you when they needed direction this month.)

## The Comparison Trap

---

Comparison is your brain's attempt to benchmark your position in the hierarchy. It was useful when 'not as strong as the guy next to me' meant getting eaten. Now it mostly just keeps you stuck feeling like you're behind in a race you didn't sign up for.

Who do you compare yourself to most? (Be specific. Not 'successful people,' but actual people, real or online.)

What specifically do you compare? (Looks, status, skills, relationship, money, attention — get honest.)

What information do you NOT have about their life that you're leaving out when you make the comparison?

What does the comparison feel like in your body? And what does it make you do, or stop doing?

What would you do differently if you stopped tracking where they were and only tracked where YOU were six months ago?

## The Fear Translator

---

Fear doesn't usually show up as fear. It shows up as procrastination, perfectionism, over-preparation, sudden tiredness, picking a fight, deciding the timing isn't right. This exercise translates the code.

Pick one thing you keep not doing. Describe it without judgment, it just what it is.

How does the avoidance show up? What do you do instead? What's the story you tell yourself about why you're not ready yet?

If you strip away every excuse, what is the actual fear underneath? (Go deeper than the first answer; that one's usually not the real one.)

What is the absolute worst realistic outcome if you do the thing and it goes badly? Not a catastrophic fantasy, be realistic.

What's the cost of continuing to not do it?

## SECTION 4.

# The Daily Work

Tool 1: 30 Day Challenge

Tool 2: Daily Confidence Builder

Tool 3: The 5-Minute Ignition

Tool 4: Today's Reflection

Tool 5: Sh\*t Talk to Truth

Tool 6: My Wins Log

Tool 7: Fear Inventory

Tool 8: Fear Inventory Deep Dive

Tool 9: One-Month Habit Tracker

Tool 10: Mood Tracker

Tool 11: People & Resources

Tool 12: Reward Plan

Closing

## 30-Day Challenge - Days 1 to 15

---

Each day is a small, specific action. Not a vibe. Not an intention. An action. Check it off. This helps enforce consistency.

☐ DAY 1

Write down one thing you did this week that you didn't think you could.

☐ DAY 8

Write down the 3 things you're most competent at. Own them fully.

☐ DAY 2

Say no to one thing that drains you without over-explaining.

☐ DAY 9

Identify one habit that feeds your self-doubt and skip it today.

☐ DAY 3

Do one thing today that puts you in slight discomfort on purpose.

☐ DAY 10

Send a message to someone whose opinion you value — for no reason.

☐ DAY 4

Tell someone something true about yourself that you usually keep private.

☐ DAY 11

Do the thing from your Fear Inventory. The small one.

☐ DAY 5

Add 5 entries to your Evidence File. No dismissing.

☐ DAY 12

Write your identity statement. Read it out loud. Twice.

☐ DAY 6

Stand differently for one hour. Posture changes state. Test it.

☐ DAY 13

Go somewhere or do something alone that you'd normally need company for.

☐ DAY 7

Ask for something you want without apologizing for asking.

☐ DAY 14

Disagree with someone out loud. Respectfully. Without caving.

☐ DAY 15

Write one paragraph about who you're becoming.

## 30-Day Challenge - Days 16 to 30

---

☐ **DAY 16**

Do a body scan. Notice where you carry your self-doubt. Breathe into it.

☐ **DAY 17**

Give someone a direct, specific compliment. Receive one without deflecting.

☐ **DAY 18**

Make a decision today without asking for outside validation first.

☐ **DAY 19**

Do one thing that feels 'above your station.' You belong there.

☐ **DAY 20**

Look at your Wins Log. Add three things you'd normally dismiss.

☐ **DAY 21**

Set a boundary and hold it, even if it's uncomfortable.

☐ **DAY 22**

Stop apologizing for 24 hours. Every apology, catch and rephrase it.

☐ **DAY 23**

Try something you know you're not good at. Don't attach to the outcome.

☐ **DAY 24**

Tell your inner critic one honest, evidence-based rebuttal. Out loud.

☐ **DAY 25**

Write a letter to who you'll be a year from now. Burn it or keep it.

☐ **DAY 26**

Show up fully in one conversation today, no half-presence, no hedging.

☐ **DAY 27**

Revisit Exercise 1. Has anything shifted? What do you see differently?

☐ **DAY 28**

Identify one pattern you've broken this month. Name it. That's evidence.

☐ **DAY 29**

Do something kind for yourself with no productivity justification.

☐ **DAY 30**

Write about what's different. Not perfect; different. That's kinda' the whole point...

# Daily Confidence Builder

Confidence comes from one thing: a track record of competence. Every time you do something that requires even a tiny bit of courage, skill, or follow-through, your brain logs it. Do it enough times and your brain stops questioning whether you can handle things. It knows you can because you've got proof. This list is about collecting that proof - REGULARLY! These are pattern-building actions that rewire your self-concept through repetition and evidence accumulation.

How to use this: Pick 3-5 actions daily. Mix it up. The goal is consistency. Your brain learns from volume. (this will also be found in the daily section of this system.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Complete one thing you've been avoiding (even if it's tiny)
- ☐ Notice three moments today when you handled something well
- ☐ Say what you actually think in one conversation (not what sounds nice)
- ☐ Do something slightly uncomfortable on purpose
- ☐ Finish something instead of leaving it 90% done
- ☐ Make one decision without asking for validation first
- ☐ Catch yourself mid-negative thought and actively redirect it
- ☐ Handle one thing you'd normally outsource or avoid
- ☐ Set one boundary without apologizing for it
- ☐ Try one thing you're not already good at
- ☐ Ask for what you want directly (no hinting, no softening)
- ☐ Own one mistake without over-explaining or deflecting
- ☐ Do one thing that would feel easier if you were "more confident" (fake it works)
- ☐ Solve one problem yourself before asking someone else
- ☐ Take credit for something you did well (out loud, to someone)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total actions checked off today!

My goal tomorrow is to check off \_\_\_\_\_ actions, and to set myself up for success, I will need to be sure I \_\_\_\_\_,

Rewards I can give myself for being consistent & putting in real effort:  
(This keeps the dopamine pumping & motivation peaked!)

1-5 ✓ = reward of \_\_\_\_\_

6-11 ✓ = reward of \_\_\_\_\_

12-15 ✓ = reward of \_\_\_\_\_

More than 5 ✓ every day for a week = \_\_\_\_\_

More than 10 ✓ every day for a week = \_\_\_\_\_

# The 5-Minute Ignition

Your brain avoids starting tasks that feel big, vague, or loaded with potential failure. The problem? Once you're stuck in avoidance mode, you stay stuck. Your brain treats "not starting" as the safe option, which means you're now in a standoff with a task that's probably not even that hard.

The fix is stupid simple: make starting so small that your brain doesn't register it as a threat. Write the subject line. Open the file. print the copies. That's it. Less than 30 seconds and voila - done. Once you're in motion, the activation energy drops and your brain shifts gears. Momentum mode kicks in, so you'll stop needing motivation to keep going because you're already going. These are less-than-5-minute actions (some are less than 30 seconds) designed to trick your resistance. They're about breaking the seal. And here's the kicker: that "I actually did the thing" hit you get? That's not just relief. That's evidence. Your brain logs it. Do enough of these, and you start looking back at your day, seeing proof that you follow through. That proof becomes pride. Pride becomes confidence. Confidence makes the next start easier.

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- ☐ Fill in just the basic info on that form out of the info you know off the top of your head.
- ☐ Reply to one email you've been ignoring - no more than 3 sentences. Not enough? Finish it tomorrow.
- ☐ Make the appointment (don't prep for it, just book it and get it on the calendar)
- ☐ Write the outline (skip the actual writing. Use AI to help speed things up (but check for accuracy)
- ☐ Do the first 5 minutes of research and mark where you stopped (put a reminder to do more tomorrow)
- ☐ Ask one clarifying question so you can move forward & write down that 1 single task that comes from it.
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Want a reward? Hell yeah you do (well, your brain does at least) - so, what will you reward yourself if you get:

3 done \_\_\_\_\_ 5 done \_\_\_\_\_

10 done \_\_\_\_\_ All done \_\_\_\_\_

## Today's Reflection

---

Today I accomplished...

Today, I had fun because/with/when...

Something I kicked ass at today...

I felt proud when...

Today challenged me to learn about myself. One thing was...

I felt good about myself when...

Something I did for someone (and not because I wanted the accolades)

I had a positive experience with (person) because...

Other observations for the day...

# Sh\*t Talk to Truth

Your inner critic isn't trying to destroy you. It's trying to protect you from pain, rejection, failure, humiliation. It just does it badly, using old data, and it hits way harder than the situation calls for. This grid cross-examines it.

How it works:

- In the left column, write the sh\*t your inner critic actually says. Not the polished version. The brutal one.
- In the middle column, rate how true it is on the actual evidence (0–10).
- In the right column, write the most accurate statement you can make, not the opposite, not a positive spin, just the truth.

EXAMPLE:

| Sh*t Talk                         | Evidence<br>(0-10) | The Truth                                                 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| I'm terrible at everything I try. | 2                  | I struggle with some things and have succeeded at others. |
| Nobody takes me seriously.        | 3                  | Some people don't. Others genuinely do and have shown it. |

SH\*T TALK TO TRUTH

| Sh*t Talk | Evidence (0-10) | The Truth |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|

# My Wins Log

Every win goes here. Big ones, small ones, ones nobody else would understand. Your brain needs receipts. Give it receipts.

| Date | The Win | What It Proves |
|------|---------|----------------|
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |
|      |         |                |

## Fear Inventory Deep Dive

---

Pick the fear that has the most control over your life right now. Describe it in full, not just the surface fear, but the one underneath it.

What specifically do you do (or not do) because of this fear? List the real behaviors.

What has this fear cost you so far?

What would change if you stopped letting it make decisions for you?

What is one thing ( not the whole mountain), one small thing, you could do this week to show this fear it doesn't have final say?

[illegible]

# One-Month Habit Tracker

Track the habits that build confidence, not just any habits. What you do daily is evidence.

| Week 1                | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Morning intention     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Evidence file entry   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| One brave action      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Body Movement         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| No self-trash-talk    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Boundary held         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Wins log entry        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Quality sleep         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Meaningful connection |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Learning              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

| Week 2                | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Morning intention     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Evidence file entry   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| One brave action      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Body Movement         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| No self-trash-talk    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Boundary held         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Wins log entry        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Quality sleep         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Meaningful connection |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Learning              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

Observations / Notes:

# One-Month Habit Tracker

Track the habits that build confidence, not just any habits. What you do daily is evidence.

| Week 3                | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Morning intention     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Evidence file entry   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| One brave action      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Body Movement         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| No self-trash-talk    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Boundary held         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Wins log entry        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Quality sleep         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Meaningful connection |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Learning              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

| Week 4                | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Morning intention     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Evidence file entry   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| One brave action      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Body Movement         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| No self-trash-talk    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Boundary held         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Wins log entry        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Quality sleep         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Meaningful connection |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Learning              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

Observations / Notes:

# Mood Tracker

Rate your overall state each day 1–5. Notice patterns, but don't judge them. Use the notes column for what drove it.

1= Rough    2= Low    3= Okay    4= Solid    5= Fired Up

| Date | Positivity Level | Energy Level | Confidence Level | Notes |
|------|------------------|--------------|------------------|-------|
|      |                  |              |                  |       |
|      |                  |              |                  |       |
|      |                  |              |                  |       |
|      |                  |              |                  |       |
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|      |                  |              |                  |       |
|      |                  |              |                  |       |
|      |                  |              |                  |       |

# People & Resources

---

Who you surround yourself with is not totally a conscious choice. It's a neurological one. Your mirror neurons are always on. Choose your inputs.

## People who expand me

Name / Who they are

What they give me / Why they matter

## People I need to limit

Name / relationship

What I need to protect

## Resources, tools, or practices I'm committing to

Resource

How I'll use it

## Reward Plan

---

Your brain runs on a lot of chemicals. One of the important ones is dopamine. If you only notice when you screw up, you're reinforcing the wrong circuits. Build in deliberate rewards for showing up, doing the work, and taking the risks. Your brain rewards you with that “good” feeling, which is a dopamine boost.

What am I working toward? (The big goal underneath the confidence work.)

My 7-day reward if I do the daily work this week:

My 30-day reward when I complete the challenge:

My end-of-workbook reward for finishing this thing:

### Permission slip

Write yourself a one-sentence permission slip. Something you've been waiting for someone else to give you. Nobody's coming. Write it yourself.

## Notes

[illegible]

# You did the work.

You're allowed to be proud of that!

Most people will buy something like this, open it once, and promise themselves to get back to it, and they never do. You didn't do that. Whatever pages you completed, whatever exercises cracked something open, whatever moments of real honesty you allowed, that's a step in the right direction, and it's evidence. Add it to your file.

There's no version of you that wakes up one day cured, certain, or fearless. What you're building is something more useful: a track record, because that track record will build new neurons, and the new neurons give you a new daily experience. It's a growing file of proof that when things were hard, you handled them anyway.

Keep going!



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## Bonus Section

# BONUS TOOLS

The Identity Snap  
The Brutal Truth Audit  
The Micro Courage Ladder  
The “Then What?” Loop Breaker  
The Proof Stack  
The Decision Lock  
The Self-Trust Contract  
The Recovery Reframe

## BONUS TOOLS

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Confidence develops through consistent, observable action. It strengthens when your behavior reflects follow-through, adaptability, and the ability to move forward in the presence of discomfort. Many of the patterns that influence confidence happen quickly and automatically. Hesitation, overthinking, and avoidance can shape decisions in a matter of seconds. When those responses repeat, they reinforce a familiar way of operating. These tools are designed for use within those moments and they focus on:

- Interrupting automatic responses as they occur
- Redirecting attention toward intentional action
- Creating small, repeatable experiences of follow-through
- Strengthening self-trust through direct evidence

Each use provides your brain with updated information about how you respond under pressure, uncertainty, or discomfort. Over time, these repeated experiences contribute to a more stable and accurate sense of confidence. Use these tools when you notice:

- A delay in taking action on something that matters
- Thought patterns looping or escalating
- Repeated second-guessing
- A shift toward avoidance or withdrawal

These tools are designed to be used in real time, allowing insight to translate directly into behavior.

### How to Use These Tools

- Select one or two tools that feel most relevant to your current patterns or situations.
- Apply them consistently in real-life moments rather than attempting to work through all of them at once.
- Confidence develops through repetition and reinforcement. Returning to the same tools allows the response to become more familiar and more automatic over time.

### Tools included in the Bonus Section:

- **The Identity Snap:** Reinforces a more confident identity through immediate action.
- **The Brutal Truth Audit:** Strengthens self-trust through clear, honest self-assessment.
- **The Micro Courage Ladder:** Builds confidence through consistent, small actions.
- **The “Then What?” Loop Breaker:** Reduces fear by increasing tolerance for uncertainty.
- **The Proof Stack:** Strengthens confidence through evidence of capability and follow-through.
- **The Decision Lock:** Builds trust in your decisions by reinforcing follow-through.
- **The Self-Trust Contract:** Increases confidence through consistent self-follow-through.
- **The Recovery Reframe:** Maintains confidence by strengthening recovery after setbacks.

# The Identity Snap

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- Builds confidence by reinforcing a self-concept based on intentional action rather than automatic patterns.
- Goal: Interrupt hesitation and shift into a more confident, self-directed version of yourself in real time.
- What this works with: Moments of overthinking, second-guessing, shrinking, or delaying action.
- Why it works: Your brain builds identity through repeated behavior. When you act differently, even briefly, you introduce new data that challenges your current self-concept. This creates a gap between “who you’ve been” and “who you’re becoming.”
- How it works: Instead of trying to feel confident first, you act from a version of yourself that already is.

When you catch yourself, take a second to pause and ask yourself:

- Who am I being right now?
- What patterns or behaviors am I repeating in this moment?
- Who would I be if I trusted myself here?
- What would that version of me do differently right now?

Now identify one immediate action:

- What is one small, specific action that version of me would take in the next 60 seconds? (Take the action. Immediately. No negotiation)

Integration Prompt: What did I do differently? What did I learn about myself from taking that action?

# The Brutal Truth Audit

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- Builds confidence by increasing self-honesty, which strengthens alignment between what you know and how you act.
- Goal: Expose avoidance, denial, and misalignment by confronting what you already know but haven't admitted.
- What this works with: Stagnation, procrastination, self-sabotage, and repeated patterns that "don't make sense."
- Why it works: Your brain protects you by avoiding discomfort, often through distraction, justification, or blame. Direct honesty disrupts that protection and creates clarity, which is required for change.
- How it works: You remove the filter of being "nice" or "reasonable" and respond with accuracy instead.

Answer each prompt without softening your response (in other words, go with your gut and be honest)  
Where am I being dishonest with myself?

What am I pretending not to know?

What am I avoiding that actually matters?

Where am I waiting instead of acting?

What am I blaming that I could take ownership of?

Complete this statement: If I were being completely honest with myself, I'd admit that...

Then ask yourself:

What is the real cost of continuing this pattern?

What would change if I took full responsibility for this?

Integration Prompt: What truth felt the most uncomfortable to admit, and why?

# The Micro Courage Ladder

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- Builds confidence by creating repeated, observable evidence of follow-through in the presence of discomfort.
- Goal: Build confidence through consistent, evidence-based action rather than waiting for motivation or certainty.
- What this works with: Avoidance, fear of failure, perfectionism, and hesitation around taking action.
- Why it works: Confidence is built through repeated proof. Each completed action reduces perceived threat and increases self-trust.
- How it works: You break down intimidating actions into manageable steps and systematically face them.

Step 1: Identify - Write down 10 things you've been avoiding, delaying, or overthinking.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9
- 10.

Step 2: Rank - Order them from least uncomfortable → most uncomfortable.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9
- 10.

Step 3: Start small - Begin with the least uncomfortable item

Step 4: Take action - Complete one action per day.

Guidelines: The action must be specific and observable. It must be small enough to complete without resistance. No skipping ahead.

Reflection Prompt: What did I expect would happen vs. what actually happened?

Integration Prompt: What evidence do I now have that I can handle discomfort?

# The “Then What?” Loop Breaker

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- Builds confidence by reducing perceived threat and increasing your sense of ability to respond to uncertainty.
- Goal: Reduce anxiety by fully exploring feared outcomes until they lose intensity and control.
- What this works with: Catastrophizing, overthinking, fear-based decision-making, and mental spirals.
- Why it works: Your brain treats uncertainty as threat. By walking through feared scenarios to their logical end, you reduce ambiguity and show your brain that outcomes are either manageable or unlikely.
- How it works: You repeatedly follow the fear forward instead of stopping at the initial reaction.

Write down your current fear:

What am I afraid will happen?

Then ask: If that happens, then what? Continue asking “then what?” for each answer and go at least 5–7 layers deep, or until the outcome becomes logically unrealistic OR you reach a point where you would adapt, respond, or recover

Okay, so then what?

Okay, so then what?

Okay, so then what?

Okay, so then what?

Okay, so then what?

Okay, so then what?

Okay, so then what?

Then ask: If this actually happened, how would I handle it, and what resources, skills, or support would I use?

Integration Prompt: At what point did the fear lose intensity or feel more manageable?

# The Proof Stack

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- Builds confidence by organizing and reinforcing evidence of capability, resilience, and past follow-through.
- Goal: Create a reliable, evidence-based reference for self-trust and capability.
- What this works with: Self-doubt, imposter feelings, minimizing achievements, and negative self-perception.
- Why it works: The brain has a bias toward remembering negative experiences. Actively collecting evidence of competence counteracts this bias and strengthens a more accurate self-assessment.
- How it works: You intentionally document proof of resilience, capability, and follow-through.

Create a running list. Add to it consistently.

Include:

- Situations I handled, even if imperfectly
- Challenges I got through
- Times I followed through when I didn't want to
- Risks I took
- Problems I solved
- Things I learned or improved at

Then review:

- What patterns do I notice in how I handle difficulty?
- What does this list suggest about my actual capability?

When self-doubt shows up, read through your list slowly and identify at least 3 entries that directly contradict your current thought

Integration Prompt: What would I believe about myself if I fully trusted this evidence?

# The Decision Lock

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- Builds confidence by reinforcing trust in your ability to make and stand by decisions without constant re-evaluation.
- Goal: Strengthen decision-making and reduce second-guessing after a choice has been made.
- What this works with: Indecision, overanalyzing, reopening decisions, and mental back-and-forth after committing.
- Why it works: Confidence is reinforced when your brain experiences consistency between decision and action. Repeatedly revisiting decisions signals uncertainty, while following through strengthens self-trust.
- How it works: You make a clear decision, define a boundary around it, and follow through without re-entering the evaluation loop.

When you notice yourself questioning a decision you've already made, pause and ask yourself:  
Did I make this decision with the information I had at the time?

Am I trying to solve something new, or rework the same decision?

What outcome am I trying to control right now?

Now lock it in - state the decision clearly (out loud or in writing) - "I have decided to \_\_\_\_\_."

Set a boundary - "For the next \_\_\_\_\_ (set a timeframe), I will not revisit this decision."

Redirect your focus - What is the next action that follows this decision? (Take that action)

Integration Prompt: What changed when I stopped re-evaluating and focused on follow-through?

# The Self-Trust Contract

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- Builds confidence by strengthening the relationship between intention and follow-through.
- Goal: Increase consistency by treating your commitments to yourself as binding agreements.
- What this works with: Inconsistency, procrastination, breaking promises to yourself, and difficulty maintaining momentum.
- Why it works: Confidence grows when your brain registers that your words and actions align. Each completed commitment reinforces reliability and internal trust.
- How it works: You define a clear, realistic commitment and follow through on it as agreed, without renegotiation.

Define one commitment - What is one specific action I will complete?

When will I complete it?

Where will I be when I do it?

Write it clearly - "I commit to \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (time/place)."

Set the standard - What does "done" look like? (Be specific and observable)

Remove negotiation - Am I willing to follow through on this regardless of mood or motivation?

Complete the action as defined.

Integration Prompt: What does completing this commitment suggest about my ability to rely on myself?

# The Recovery Reframe

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- Builds confidence by reinforcing your ability to recover, adjust, and continue after mistakes.
- Goal: Maintain momentum and self-trust after setbacks, errors, or missed expectations.
- What this works with: Mistakes, perceived failure, shame spirals, and the tendency to stop after things don't go as planned.
- Why it works: Confidence is shaped not only by success, but by how you respond to disruption. When recovery becomes consistent, setbacks lose their impact on self-perception.
- How it works: You interrupt the emotional reaction to a mistake, extract useful information, and re-engage with a clear next step.

After a mistake or setback, pause and identify:

What happened? (Stick to observable facts)

What was my immediate reaction?

Separate interpretation from reality:

What story am I telling myself about this?

What are the actual facts?

Extract value:

What can I learn from this?

What would I do differently next time?

Re-engage - What is the next available action I can take right now? (Take that action)

Integration Prompt: How did I respond differently than I would have in the past?

## Notes

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# Thank you!

I hope you enjoyed the content and have found some different perspectives and new tools to help you in your movement forward.

Small businesses benefit tremendously from reviews. Please take a moment to send me your honest review so I can anonymously add it to the product page. It would be so appreciated and ensure future customers will know if this is the tool for them.

If you're interested in other topics, or would like to get in touch, please reach out.

With Grit & Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cari Mae" followed by a heart symbol.

Cari Mae

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