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# The Healing Compass Journal Pack: 14 Exercises for Unmasking and Self-Acceptance

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# THE POWER AND PURPOSE OF THERAPEUTIC JOURNALLING.

## Welcome to Your Journal Pack

The pages ahead are not just blank space; they are a safe, sacred container for your deepest self—the one you've spent years hiding. This pack is designed to help you move from insight to action, using the pen as your most trusted tool.

## How to Use This Pack:

- **No Rules, Only Compassion:** There is no "right" way to journal. Don't worry about grammar or neatness. If an exercise feels too difficult today, skip it and come back later.
- **The Power of Consistency:** Even five minutes of writing is better than waiting for the perfect hour. Aim for **consistency, not intensity**.
- **Pick Your Tool:** We've organised these 14 exercises into 7 categories. Choose the category that best matches your immediate need:
  - **Need Clarity?** Use **Challenging Core Beliefs** or **Values & Direction**.
  - **Need Release?** Use **Emotional Inventory & Regulation**.
  - **Need Kindness?** Use **Self-Compassion & Inner Dialogue**.
  - **Need Momentum?** Use **Action, Movement, & Forward Steps**.

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## CHALLENGING CORE BELIEFS:

### Evidence Log.

**Exercise:** To challenge the automatic validity of a negative thought by seeking proof. Thoughts are your core beliefs that are recurring, such as a negative thought you might have, “*I am a failure,*” “*No one understands me.*”

➤ Thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

➤ Evidence 1 (List 3 factual evidence that support this thought):

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Evidence 2 (List 3 factual evidence that contradict this thought):

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Review Findings (Is the thought true or false?):

True

False

➤ Why is it (True/False)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CATASTROPHISING CHECK

**Exercise:** To interrupt the tendency to jump to the worst-case scenario.

1. Describe a recent worry you had about the future (e.g., a meeting, a confrontation, or a possible mistake).

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2. What is the worst-case scenario that could happen? (Write it down, no filter.)

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3. What is the *most likely* scenario that will happen? (Use logical thinking, not fear.)

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4. If the worst-case scenario *did* happen, what is the first, smallest, compassionate step you could take to cope with it?

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## YOUR PATH FORWARD: CONSISTENCY IS COMPASSION

You have taken a profound step forward by choosing to engage with these Exercises. Remember, this is your space—a judgment-free zone where your most authentic self is welcomed and heard.

### The Should-Free Zone.

**Exercise:** To identify and soften rigid, self-imposed rules ("shoulda" and "must") that create anxiety and guilt.

1. What is a major "I should..." or "I must..." statement that has been pressuring you this week? (e.g., "I should be further along in my healing by now," or "I must always be strong for everyone.")

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2. Where did this rule come from? (A parent, culture, a past experience?)

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3. If you changed the "shoulda" or "must" to a gentler word like "**I could...**" or "**I choose to...**," how does that change the feeling of the statement?

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4. Write the statement again, using the softer, kinder language.

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## EMOTIONAL INVENTORY & REGULATION

### Emotional Opposite Action

**Exercise:** To identify when an emotion is leading to an unhelpful action and plan a different response.

1. Describe a situation where a negative emotion (like fear, shame, or loneliness) caused you to act in a way you regretted (e.g., withdrawing, snapping at someone, or overspending).

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2. What was the *unhelpful action* the emotion was urging you to take?

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3. Based on the wise-mind choice, what would be the *opposite action*? (e.g., If the impulse was to withdraw, the opposite is to text one friend.)

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4. Plan to execute that opposite action in the next 48 hours. What, specifically, will you do, and when?

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## VALUES & DIRECTION (ACT FOCUS)

The goal of these exercises is to help you identify what truly matters (your values) and how your actions align with or diverge from them.

### The Eulogy Exercise

**Exercise:** To clarify core values by imagining the legacy you want to leave.

1. Imagine yourself far in the future, and a person you deeply respect is giving a speech about your life at a significant milestone. What three character traits or qualities (e.g., loving, brave, honest, generous) would you want them to highlight above all else?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Now, look at your actions this past week. Which one action best demonstrated one of those three values and why?

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3. Which one value did you neglect this week? What small step could you take tomorrow to put that neglected value back into action?

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## VALUED LIVING COMPASS

**Exercise:** To check if daily actions are pointing you toward or away from your desired direction.

1. List the top three life areas that matter most to you right now (e.g., relationships, health, career, healing/growth).

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_

2. For each area, describe what living *fully* in your values looks like (e.g., *In Relationships: Being present and listening without judgment*).

**Value:** \_\_\_\_\_

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3. In the past 48 hours, what is one action you took that was moving you *away* from your desired direction in one of those areas?

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4. How could you turn that action around in the next 48 hours to move *toward* your values?

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## SELF-COMPASSION & INNER DIALOGUE (CFT/SHADOW FOCUS)

### The Inner Critic's Message

**Exercise:** To separate you from the criticism and help you better understand the critic's intent.

1. What is the harshest, most critical thing your Critic has said to you recently?

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2. If the Critic could speak a more profound truth, what is it truly worried about? What is it trying to *protect* you from? (e.g., It's afraid '*I'll fail again,*' or it's afraid '*I won't be loved.*')

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3. Write a response back to your Critic from the perspective of your Wisest Self. Start with a phrase of acknowledgement, like: "*Thank you for trying to protect me, but...*"

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## THE KINDNESS METER

Exercise: To make self-compassion a tangible, measurable practice.

1. Think about a recent moment of suffering, failure, or overwhelm. On a scale of 1 (Harsh self-criticism) to 10 (Perfect kindness), how did you treat yourself in that moment?

1	3	5	7	9
2	4	6	8	10

2. Now, imagine your best friend, a child you love, or a respected mentor was in that same situation. What comforting words or actions would you offer them?

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3. Write down those kind words and commit to offering those exact words and actions to *yourself* the next time you encounter a similar moment of suffering.

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## THE COMPASSIONATE MEMORY REFRAME

**Exercise:** Revisit a difficult memory and rewrite the narrative with compassion, a core trauma-informed practice.

1. Briefly describe a difficult or painful memory that still carries some sting. (Keep the description focused on facts, not deep emotion, for safety.)

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2. Now, read that description through the lens of compassion. Was your past self doing the best they could with the resources they had?

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3. Write a loving, validating sentence or two to that past self, acknowledging their pain and their strength. (e.g., *"It wasn't your fault, and you survived something truly hard."*)

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## GRATITUDE & POSITIVE FOCUS (MBCT FOCUS)

The goal here is to actively counter the negativity bias that often accompanies anxiety or depression, training the mind to notice and appreciate small joys, which is core to Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy.

### The Five-Sense Check-In

**Exercise:** To anchor you in the present moment through sensory appreciation, cultivating mindfulness and gratitude.

1. List one thing you are grateful for that you could **see** today (e.g., the pattern of the wood grain, the colour of the sky).  

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  2. List one thing you are grateful for that you could **hear** today (e.g., the quiet of the morning, a specific song, the birds).  

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  3. List one thing you are grateful for that you could **smell** today (e.g., coffee, rain, clean laundry).  

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  4. List one thing you are grateful for that you could **taste** today (e.g., a flavour of food, clean water).  

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  5. List one thing you are grateful for that you could **feel/touch** today (e.g., warm socks, soft blanket, the sun on your skin).  

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## DAILY CHECK-IN/TRACKING

The goal of this category is to provide a simple, repeatable structure for tracking basic well-being metrics and emotional states. This is ideal for consistency and identifying patterns over time.

This category should be quick to fill out daily.

### The 3-2-1 Daily Focus

**Exercise:** A focused routine that combines gratitude, action, and insight.

1. **Three Wins:** List three things you accomplished today (big or small).

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Two Challenges:** List two challenges or moments of stress you faced today.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. **One Learning:** What is one thing you learned about yourself or the situation today? (Focus on the lesson, not the failure.)

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## THE INNER CHILD NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Exercise:** A daily check on core emotional needs, especially relevant for trauma-informed healing.

1. On a scale of 1–10, how safe did I feel today?

1	3	5	7	9
2	4	6	8	10

2. On a scale of 1–10, how connected or accepted did I feel today?

1	3	5	7	9
2	4	6	8	10

3. What is one thing my inner child needed today (e.g., rest, permission to play, comfort, validation) that I was able to provide?

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4. If I couldn't meet that need, what is one small way I can show myself kindness right now?

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## ACTION, MOVEMENT, AND FORWARD STEPS (OVERCOMING INERTIA)

### "Consistency, Not Intensity"

**Exercise:** To challenge the "all-or-nothing" thinking often associated with avoidance.

1. What is one valued action (e.g., exercising, meditating, creative pursuit, socialising) that you tend to *overcommit* to and then *avoid* entirely?

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2. Write down the 'Intense' goal you usually set (e.g., *Workout for 60 minutes, 5 days a week*).

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3. Now, write the *Compassionate, Consistent Goal*—the absolute bare minimum you can do without fail. (E.g., *Workout for 10 minutes, 2 days a week*, or *Meditate for 2 minutes every morning*).

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4. Commit to only the *Compassionate, Consistent Goal* for the next two weeks. How does lowering the bar reduce the urge to avoid?

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## NAVIGATING THE CROSSROADS OF CHOICE

**Exercise:** To examine a moment of potential avoidance and plan a valued response.

1. Describe a common crossroads moment where you often choose avoidance or an unhelpful habit (e.g., *when I feel bored, I reach for my phone instead of my book*).

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2. What is the *feeling* that drives the unhelpful choice? (e.g., boredom, anxiety, fatigue).

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3. What is the *valued action* you want to choose instead?

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4. When this crossroads occurs next, what is the *single sentence* you will say to yourself to pause, acknowledge the feeling, and choose the valued action? (E.g., *I feel restless, so I will choose the book for 5 minutes.*)

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## “CONSISTENCY, NOT INTENSITY”

You will miss days, so don't let a missed day turn into a missed week. If you skip a day, pick up the pen the next day without shame or self-criticism.

*Journaling is a practice, not a performance.*

The Power of the Purge is sometimes the most important work: simply getting the ugliest, messiest thoughts out of your head.

*That counts as a win.*

Re-read and reflect on all your entries because healing happens when you look back. Take time to reflect and gradually say goodbye to the old you. You will see the patterns, moments of strength, and evidence of your incredible growth. So be kind to the person holding the pen, Darling. You are the bravest person you know.

Ellie x

## PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT & CRISIS RESOURCES

It is crucial to know where to turn when the work feels too heavy or if you are experiencing a crisis. **If you are ever in immediate danger or fear for your safety, please seek emergency services immediately.**

### How to Find Local, Free Support:

Because "My Healing Compass" is used globally, we cannot list every local resource. However, you can easily find immediate, confidential, and free help by searching for the following services specific to your location:

- **Emergency Services:** Search for the primary emergency number in your country (e.g., 999 in the UK, 911 in the US/Canada, 000 in Australia).
- **National Suicide & Crisis Hotline:** Search for "National Crisis Hotline [Your Country Name]". Most countries have a free, 24/7 text or call service staffed by trained volunteers.
- **Local Mental Health Access:** Search for "Free Mental Health Support [Your City/Region]" or "NHS Mental Health Access" if you are in the UK.

[Find a Helpline](https://findahelpline.com/topics/suicidal-thoughts) - <https://findahelpline.com/topics/suicidal-thoughts>

### General Support Categories to Look For:

When looking for a longer-term therapist or counsellor, seek professionals specialising in the therapeutic approaches we cover:

- **Trauma-Informed Care (EMDR, Sensorimotor Psychotherapy)**
  - **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) & Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)**
  - **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)**
  - **Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT)**
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## BOOKS & RECOMMENDED READING

- **Skill Building: (DBT/CBT) The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Skills Workbook** - Matthew McKay, Jeffrey Wood, Jeffrey Brantley.  
Highly practical worksheets for emotional regulation, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness. A foundational text for skill acquisition.
  - **Cognitive Restructuring: The CBT Handbook** - Pamela Myers.  
A clear, accessible guide to identifying and challenging the negative thought patterns that keep you stuck.
  - **Mindfulness & Presence (ACT): Practising The Power of Now** - Eckhart Tolle.  
An accessible guide to grounding yourself in the present moment, reducing the impact of past rumination and future anxiety.
  - **Trauma Recovery: 8 Keys to Safe Trauma Recovery** - Babette Rothschild.  
Focuses on key concepts for safely navigating healing, emphasizing stabilization, pacing, and self-compassion.
  - **Uncertainty & Fear: The Antidote: Happiness for People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking** - Oliver Burkeman.  
A refreshing look at how embracing negative thinking, failure, and uncertainty can actually lead to greater resilience and peace.
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## ONLINE TOOLS & APPS

- **Online Learning Platform:** Alison (alison.com).

A fantastic resource for learning every day on your healing journey. Alison offers free courses across a huge range of subjects, including Psychology, Health, and Personal Development, allowing you to educate yourself further on therapeutic concepts.

- **Guided Meditation:** Insight Timer or Calm (Example).

While we highly recommend the Five-Sense Check-In journal prompt for grounding, guided meditation apps are a great way to build your mindfulness muscles and practice emotional regulation skills.

- **Mood Tracking:** Moodpath or Daylio (Example).

Simple apps that help you quickly log your emotions and activities. They are excellent companion tools to your journal for spotting patterns, causes, and effects in your mood.

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## PODCASTS & AUDIO RESOURCES

- **Psychoeducation:** Psychology Unplugged.  
Provides accessible, deep dives into various psychological concepts and conditions, fostering a greater understanding of the mind.
- **Self-Improvement:** The Mel Robbins Podcast.  
Known for practical, actionable advice on motivation, breaking bad habits, and making immediate forward steps in your life.
- **Compassion & Awareness:** The Self-Awareness and Self-Compassion Podcast.  
Focuses specifically on the core principles of your healing work: deeply understanding your inner world and treating yourself with kindness.
- **General Learning:** Spotify (Platform).  
Use the search function on Spotify to find experts and topics like Jordan Peterson (for philosophical insights and personal responsibility) and Teal Swan (for deep dives into emotional and spiritual trauma healing).