A Journal for Highly Sensitive People

A Companion to
Wired to Feel More



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ZEN BOOKS

A Journal for Highly Sensitive People

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Published by Zen Books, 2026

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This Journal Belongs To

I started writing it on

If you find it, please return it to

How to Use This Journal

This journal is the companion to Wired to Feel More. It does not repeat the book. It gives you a place to put what the book sets in motion, one week at a time, in your own handwriting.

How it pairs with the book. Weeks 1 to 26 go alongside the book, one chapter per week. A few chapters get two weeks, the reset, boundaries, work, love, because one was not enough. Each of those weeks opens exactly where the chapter's "Try This Week" leaves off, so the order is simple: read the chapter, do the exercise at the end of it, then open this journal. Weeks 27 to 52 are on your own. By then the book is finished and the vocabulary is yours, and the pages take up what the book did not cover, or covered quickly. Reviews at weeks 13, 26, 39 and 52 ask you to reread what you wrote and notice what has changed.

The weekly routine. Every week has the same shape, so you never have to decide how to begin. A short opening that connects the week to the chapter. A thermometer: two numbers, energy and overload, each from 1 to 10, written on the first day. An exercise whose format changes from week to week: a list, a map, a plan, a letter, a diagram. A guiding question and a second, deeper one,

each with room to write. Then the close: one thing you will do this week, and, each day, one thing you are grateful for, Monday through Sunday. Count on ten to fifteen minutes the first day and two minutes on each of the others. If you miss a day, do not catch up. Start again where you are.

The scales. Three weeks (2, 26 and 52) include a short self-observation scale, and a few others ask you to rate something from 0 to 10. Those numbers are for you, to compare with yourself over the year. They are not a diagnosis of anything, and neither is the Sensitivity Test in Chapter 2 of the book.

A note on care. This journal is a tool for self-observation. It is not therapy, and it does not replace a therapist, a physician or any treatment you are receiving. Some weeks ask about hard things. If a page stirs up more than you can hold, stop, and take it to someone trained to help; Chapter 20 of the book explains how to find that person. If you are in crisis in the United States, you can call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, at any hour.

Part One

What You Are

The Boy Who Drew Cats



A retired teacher told me this one on a train, years ago, and I have told it since to more than one worried parent.

It happens in the mountains of Japan, long ago, in one of those villages with thatched roofs where winter lasts half the year. A farmer with more children than land had one, the youngest, who was no use in the fields: small, with fine hands and eyes that were always somewhere else. So the father took him down to the town below and left him with a painter of screens, an old man with a thin beard and ink-stained fingers.

The boy learned quickly to grind the ink and hold the brush. But whenever the master turned his back, he drew cats. Cats in the margins of the practice sheets. Small cats on the sliding door, tail curled, back arched. The old man scolded, the boy promised, and the next morning there was another cat.

One evening the master had had enough. He told the boy he would never be a painter, because a painter paints what he is asked to paint, and he sent him away. But at the door, with the boy's bundle already on his shoulder, he gave him a piece of advice the boy did not understand: "At night, avoid large places. Keep to small ones."

The boy did not dare go home. He walked until dark caught him in another village, where he saw a big house with a light inside. It was an abandoned house. The neighbors left a lamp burning there out of habit, and nobody went near it since something enormous had begun to prowl there at night. He went in, found forgotten ink and brushes, and spent the evening drawing cats on the white screens of the main room. Then, remembering the advice, he climbed into a small cupboard to sleep and slid the door shut.

At midnight he woke to the sound of claws, of furniture going over, of screaming that was not human, and he did not move. I like to picture him there, curled into a ball, holding his breath.

At dawn he came out. In the middle of the floor lay a rat the size of a calf, dead. And on the screens his cats were where he had painted them, but their muzzles were wet and red.

I think of that boy when a sensitive person lists for me everything they have been asked to stop doing: noticing everything, stopping where nobody else stops. What they were told was no use is almost always the thing that has saved them some night.

What have you been drawing since you were a child, even though they told you it was no use?

Source: Japanese folk tale, recorded by Lafcadio Hearn in "The Boy Who Drew Cats" (1898), public domain; retold by the author.

Week 1

You Were Always This Way

Chapter 1 ended with the "Too Sensitive" Ledger: the sentence in one column, what you actually noticed in the other. If you kept it for a week, you now own something most highly sensitive people never get to see, the gap between what you were told you were doing and what your nervous system was doing. Keep the note on your phone. You will want it again in Week 2, and in Week 4.

This week we are not adding anything new. We are looking back, because nothing in that ledger started this year. The child who covered their ears at the Fourth of July fireworks, the one who cried at a commercial, the kid who could tell from the driveway what mood the house was in: they were there long before anyone had a word for it. The trait came with you. What came later was the sentence.

So for seven days you are going to look for the early evidence in your own history, one memory a day. Not the big ones. A smell, a tag in a shirt, a corner you hid in, the way you knew before your parents did that the babysitter was tired. Write them down the way you wrote the ledger: without arguing with any of them.



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LIST: SEVEN SIGNS FROM BACK THEN

Each day this week, write down one memory from your childhood or teens in which you can see your sensitivity today. It does not have to be important: a smell counts, a reaction, a place you hid. Put your approximate age, what happened in one sentence, and one word for what you felt then. At the end of the week, circle the memory that surprised you most.

Memory 1 - Age: ____ What happened:

What I felt then: _____

Memory 2 - Age: ____ What happened:

What I felt then: _____

Memory 3 - Age: ____ What happened:

What I felt then: _____

Memory 4 - Age: ____ What happened:

What I felt then: _____

Memory 5 - Age: ____ What happened:

What I felt then: _____

Memory 6 - Age: ____ What happened:

What I felt then: _____

Memory 7 - Age: ____ What happened:

What I felt then: _____

The one that surprised me most, and why:

* * *

What memory from your childhood tells you now that you were always this way?

Who in your house noticed it, and what did they do with what they saw?

Start small. Something that fits in an afternoon.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 2

What You Notice

Chapter 2 asked you to take the test twice: once today, once in seven days, on a day that had gone differently, without looking at your first answers. The first score has a box waiting for it on this page. The second one goes in at the end of the week. And the questions that moved by two points are the ones to watch, because from now on they will tell you that your system is running too high before you have consciously noticed.

A test speaks about you in general. This journal wants to talk about your week. So you are going to do two things. First, a short scale of your own, ten statements about the last seven days, to take a picture of where you are now. You will take the same picture in Week 26 and in Week 52, and then you will compare. It is for self-observation only, the way the book's test is a guide and not a diagnosis.

Second, for seven days, you are going to pay attention to what you notice and other people do not. The tone that changed on a call. The coworker who said "I'm fine" and was not. The light in the conference room that nobody else seems to see flicker. Three

moments are enough. Write down where you were, what you noticed, and whether you said it.

Chapter 2 of Wired to Feel More: Are You Wired This Way? The Sensitivity Test



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

STARTING SCALE FOR SELF-OBSERVATION, AND A LIST OF THREE MOMENTS

First the scale. Read each statement and rate it from 1 (almost never happened to me this week) to 5 (happened almost every day). Add up the total and write the date. This scale is for self-observation: it helps you watch yourself and compare with yourself in Weeks 26 and 52. It is not a diagnosis of anything.

Date: ____ / ____ / _____

1. I came out of a meeting, a call or a family dinner knowing how each person was doing without anyone telling me.



2. I had trouble falling asleep after a day with a lot of new things in it.



3. I needed to turn down the volume, dim a light or step outside before the people I was with did.



4. A scene from a show, a song or a news story stayed with me for hours.



5. I got to the end of a day feeling as if I had lived two days in one.



6. I noticed a detail at work or at home that later turned out to matter.



7. Before a small decision (what to order, which route, how to reply) I ran through more options than the people around me.



8. I preferred a plan with one or two people over a group.



9. A comment made in passing was still turning in my head at bedtime.



10. Arriving somewhere new, I needed a few minutes to get my bearings before joining in.



Total (10 to 50): _____

Box - The Sensitivity Test, Chapter 2 of Wired to Feel More: first score _____ out of 120, date _____. Second score, seven days later _____ out of 120, date _____. Questions that moved by two points or more: _____

Note: this scale is for self-observation. It helps you compare with yourself in Weeks 26 and 52. It is not a diagnosis.

List: three moments this week when I noticed something the people around me missed

Moment 1 - Where and with whom: _____ What I noticed:

Did I say it? Yes / No

Moment 2 - Where and with whom: _____ What I noticed:

Did I say it? Yes / No

Moment 3 - Where and with whom: _____ What I noticed:

Did I say it? Yes / No

* * *

When did you notice something this week that everyone else missed?

Of those three moments, in which one did you keep what you noticed to yourself, and what would have happened if you had said it?

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 3

Where It Came From

Chapter 3 sent you to the phone with three questions for whoever raised you: how you reacted to new things as a baby, how you slept and what woke you, what surprised them about you compared with other children. Maybe you got a long answer. Maybe you got "you were an easy baby" and a change of subject. Maybe there was nobody left to ask. All three are information, and all three go on this week's page.

The chapter also gave you the proportion: roughly half wiring, half weather. Your reactivity was there at birth. Your regulation, the brake, the pause to check, has been growing ever since, and it grew faster in some rooms than in others. This week you are going to lay that out on a single line, from before you can remember to today, so you can see where the trait showed up and where someone, or nobody, taught you what to do with it.

This is not a search for someone to blame. It is a map. Whoever notices everything gets tired first; knowing when you learned that, and from whom, is the first step to doing something about it now.



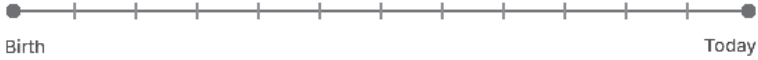
Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DIAGRAM: YOUR LIFELINE

Draw a horizontal line across the page. Birth is at the left end, today at the right. Above the line, mark the moments when your sensitivity showed; below it, the people, places or routines that helped you settle. Fill in one or two stretches a day, in short phrases. If you had nobody to ask, write what you know and, in a different color, what you would guess.



Before I can remember (what they told me about new things, sleep, and what surprised them):

Ages 3 to 6, my first memory of noticing more than the others:

Elementary school:

Teens:

Twenties onward:

Today, in one sentence:

Below the line - who or what taught me to pause and settle (a person, a place, a routine):

Who else in the family has the pattern, on either side:

* * *

What did the people who raised you say about you as a small child?

Looking at the line, where did someone teach you to pause and check, and where did you have to learn it alone?

Something the child on the left end of the line would have liked.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 4

A Better Name

Chapter 4 ended with the Label Audit. You picked the word you use most on yourself, shy, anxious or distracted, and every time you caught it you wrote down what was in the room, what you were thinking, and how you felt an hour after leaving. On Sunday you read the column about the room. If the label showed up mostly in loud, bright, crowded places and dissolved in quiet ones, you learned something about load. If it showed up in quiet rooms too, you learned something worth taking to a professional, and the chapter means that.

This week we widen the audit from one label to all of them. The words other people gave you, over the years, in report cards, performance reviews, at the dinner table: too intense, overthinking it, dramatic, spacey, thin-skinned. Each one was a cord with a knot in it, tied honestly by someone measuring you from the outside and in a hurry. Most of them described a nervous system past the peak of its curve, not a flaw.

Your job is to collect them, one row a day, and write across from each one what you would call the same thing today, knowing what you know. Not a slogan. A description: “full, not afraid.”

"Pausing to check." "Processing a loud room." On the seventh day, read only the right-hand column, out loud.

Chapter 4 of Wired to Feel More: Sensitive, Not Shy. Not Anxious. Not ADHD.



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DOUBLE LIST: WHAT THEY CALLED IT, WHAT I CALL IT

Two columns. On the left, the words or phrases someone used to describe your sensitivity as a problem, as you remember them, with who said it and what was in the room if you can recall. On the right, across from each one, how you would describe the same trait today, specific and in plain words. One rule: the right-hand name has to be true in a quiet room too. If a label from the left fits you in quiet rooms as well, leave it

where it is and note it at the bottom, for a conversation with a professional.

What they called it (who, and what was in the room)	What I call it today

The row I find hardest to move to the right:

A label that fits in quiet rooms too, and that I want to ask a professional about, if any:

* * *

Which label have you been given, and what would you call it today?

Which word from the left column do you still use on yourself when nobody is listening?

Choose something that brings you closer to the right-hand column.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 5

What Goes Right

Chapter 5 ended with the Environment Ledger: the five settings where you spend the most hours, a number from one to five for how each one leaves you after an hour, and a circle around the lowest. That circle is where differential susceptibility is working against you, and where the smallest change will pay the most. You do not have to fix it this week. You have to know which one it is, and now you do.

This week we look at the other half of the same idea, the half nobody told you about. The chapter called it vantage sensitivity: you are more affected for worse and for better. A good night's sleep, a kind manager, a well-run meeting, an afternoon outdoors pay you more than they pay the person next to you. And the same noticing that costs you at the cookout is the reason you moved the candle before the dog knocked it over.

So for seven days you are going to write down what went well because you feel more. One thing a day. The conversation you knew to end early. The email you read twice and caught. The friend who did not have to explain. Note who benefited, even when it was you, and which of your five settings it happened in.



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LIST: SEVEN THINGS THAT WENT RIGHT BECAUSE YOU FEEL MORE

Each day, write down one thing that went well this week, or recently, because of how you take things in: because you noticed, because you saw it coming, because you took care of a detail, because you said what nobody else was seeing. Write what happened, which part of the trait did it (noticing, depth, feeling, foresight), who benefited, and in which of your five settings it happened, with that setting's number from the ledger. At the end of the week mark the two you would repeat tomorrow.

1. What went right: _____ Which part of me did it: _____ Who benefited: _____ Setting and its number:

2. What went right: _____ Which part of me did it: _____ Who benefited: _____ Setting and its number:

3. What went right: _____ Which part of me did it: _____ Who benefited: _____ Setting and its number:

4. What went right: _____ Which part of me did it: _____ Who benefited: _____ Setting and its number:

5. What went right: _____ Which part of me did it: _____ Who benefited: _____ Setting and its number:

6. What went right: _____ Which part of me did it: _____ Who benefited: _____ Setting and its number:

7. What went right: _____ Which part of me did it: _____ Who benefited: _____ Setting and its number:

The two I would repeat tomorrow: _____ and _____

Something from my highest-rated setting that I could bring to the one I circled:

* * *

What has gone well this week because you feel more?

How many of those seven things did someone acknowledge out loud? And how many did you acknowledge yourself?

Make it something that celebrates, not something that corrects.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Part Two

Living on Overload

The Gardener They Called Camel



I am going to tell you something I read a long time ago in a

borrowed book and have never, for whatever reason, been able to forget.

It takes place on the outskirts of Chang'an, the old Chinese capital, more than a thousand years ago, when the nobles competed to have the lushest gardens in the city. A man lived there whom everyone called Camel, for the hump that bent his back and kept his eyes on the ground. He accepted the name without arguing; they say he even introduced himself that way. Camel planted trees, and that was all. But every tree he planted took root, and grew sooner, and gave more fruit, and the gardeners of the city copied him and never got the same result.

One day one of the nobles, a man with soft hands and many rings, came down to his plot and asked him his secret. Camel was sitting in the shade of a persimmon tree, bare feet on the dark soil, a clay teapot beside him, and he was quiet for a while before he answered.

He said he had no secret. He did not make the trees grow, and could not. All he did was let each tree follow its nature. When he planted one he spread the roots well, used the soil it had come from, pressed it down the way it was used to, and then walked away. He did not come back to look, and he did not touch it.

Here the noble laughed, and I think any of us would have laughed too.

Then Camel told him about the other gardeners. They loved their trees so much that they could not leave them alone. They went to see them in the morning and came back to touch them in the afternoon. They scratched the bark to check whether the tree was still alive, shook the trunk to see whether the roots had taken, and every little while changed the soil or the spot. They said it was out of love. And the trees, from so much love, dried up.

The noble went away thoughtful, and Camel went back to his trees, which needed nothing from him.

I have thought about that man many times while listening to sensitive people who have spent years scratching their own bark to check whether they are all right, changing soil to look more like other people, and shaking their own roots every time someone doubts them.

What does your nature need in order to take root, and what could it do without, of everything you do to it every day?

Source: Based on a Tang-dynasty story by Liu Zongyuan (ninth century), public domain; retold by the author.

Week 6

Your Early Warnings

Chapter 6 ended with the Overload Log: seven days, four columns. Time. Place. What was in the room. How long it took to feel normal again. If you kept it, you have a map of where your curve actually peaks, instead of a story about where it should. Read the fourth column first. That is your recovery time, and the chapter was clear that recovery is the variable that decides whether today's load becomes next year's damage.

Now go one step earlier. Before the 4:40 moment, before "can we please turn that off," before the straw, the body sent a note. The jaw. The shoulders up around the ears. Vision narrowing. Rereading the same sentence three times. The sudden urge to check your phone. Those are the alarm beginning to climb, and they arrive minutes, sometimes an hour, before the snap. Most highly sensitive people know them well and have never written them down.

This week you are going to put them on a body. Three signs is enough. Where they live, what they feel like, how far ahead of the snap they show up, and what was usually in the room. Once you

can see the first one coming, the twenty-minute reset in Chapter 11 has somewhere to start.

Chapter 6 of Wired to Feel More: What Overload Actually Is



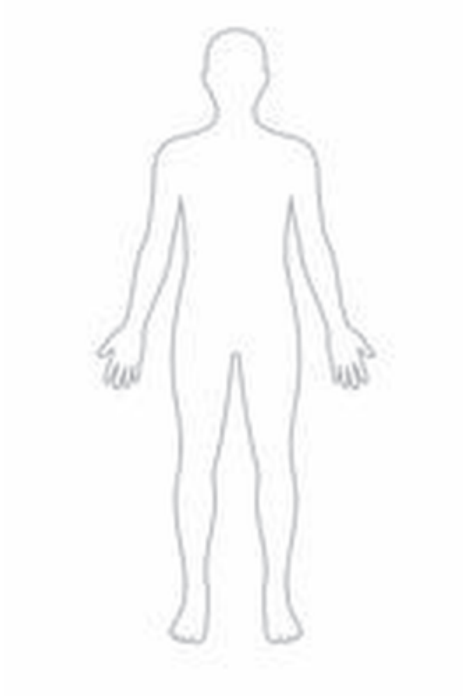
Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

BODY MAP: THE FIRST THREE SIGNS

Draw a simple full-length outline of a body, front view, taking up half the page. Each time this week you catch yourself running too high, mark a cross on the spot where you felt it first and write in the margin what it felt like, how long before the snap it showed up, and what was in the room. By Sunday, pick the three that came earliest and most often. Those are your early warnings.



Reference zones: head and temples - jaw - throat - chest - stomach - hands - legs and feet

Right margin, one entry per cross:

Cross 1 - Where: _____ What it felt like: _____ How long before the snap: _____ What was in the room:

Cross 2 - Where: _____ What it felt like: _____ How long before the snap: _____ What was in the room:

Cross 3 - Where: _____ What it felt like: _____ How long before the snap: _____ What was in the room:

Cross 4 - Where: _____ What it felt like: _____ How long before the snap: _____ What was in the room:

Cross 5 - Where: _____ What it felt like: _____ How long before the snap: _____ What was in the room:

My three early warnings, from earliest to latest:

Sign 1: _____ Shows up about _____ minutes before I snap

Sign 2: _____ Shows up about _____ minutes before I snap

Sign 3: _____ Shows up about _____ minutes before I snap

What I did this week the first time I caught Sign 1 in time:

* * *

What are the first three signs that you are running too high?

Looking at your log, which place or which hour shows up most, and what would it take to leave it ten minutes earlier?

Something that shortens the fourth column.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 7

Your Sensory Map

Chapter 7 ended with the Volume Audit: a decibel app on your phone and, every time you turned irritable, tired or foggy, four readings, sound, light, smell, and whatever was touching you that you did not choose. The chapter promised two findings by Sunday. One sense is doing most of the damage, and it may not be the one you expected. And one place keeps showing up. Write both at the bottom of this week's map before you do anything else.

The audit measured what unsettles you. A map needs the other half too: what calms you, sense by sense. The sound of rain on the car roof. A lamp instead of the overhead light. The smell of coffee at 6:30 before anyone is up. A heavy blanket. Cold water. Because your senses are not sharper, your processing is deeper, the strategy is not to toughen up. It is to manage input and timing, and that means knowing where the volume knob turns down as well as where it turns up.

Fill the map through the week, whenever you notice a clear shift either way. With smell, remember the chapter's rule: subtract rather than add. And give nature its two hours; it is the one place where more input seems to cost less.



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

MAP: WHAT UNSETTLES ME, WHAT CALMS ME

Divide the page in two with a vertical line: “Unsettles me” on the left, “Calms me” on the right. Cross it with five horizontal bands, one per sense. Fill in the ten zones as the week goes on. Next to each entry, add an arrow up or down for how strong the effect is. On Sunday, count both halves.

UNSETTLES ME	CALMS ME
Sound	
Light	
Smell	
Touch and temperature	
Taste, food and drink (and when I have my last coffee)	

From the Volume Audit - The sense doing most of the damage: _____ The place that kept showing up: _____

Sunday count: unsettles me ____ things, calms me ____ things

The one input in that place that I could cut by half without asking anyone:

Two hours outdoors this week - where and when: _____ Done [ ]

* * *

Which sounds, lights or smells unsettle you, and which ones calm you?

Which item from the right-hand column is already in your house and you almost never use?

Pick one thing from the "Calms me" column and schedule it.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 8

Borrowed Feelings

Chapter 8 ended with the Exit Line. You chose one conversation in which someone brought you their trouble. You went in fully, listened the way you listen, and then said the sentence out loud: "I'm glad you told me. I'm going to head out now, and I'll check in on you on Thursday." Then the walk, the door, three slow breaths. And on Thursday, the check-in. The chapter asked you to notice two things afterward: whether the person felt less cared for (they did not), and how much of their furniture you brought home.

This week is about the furniture. Empathy, the chapter said, is at least two things: concern, which turns toward the other person and sustains you, and distress, which turns toward your own escape and depletes you. You cannot put earplugs in against other people. But you can learn to tell, by evening, which of the feelings in your chest walked in with you and which ones you picked up in the break room, on a call, in the car line at school pickup.

So each day, before bed, two columns. Mine. Theirs, and whose. Then one line on how you knew the difference. By Sunday you will see whose house you visit most, and whether you have been leaving it on time.



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DOUBLE LIST: MINE, AND OTHER PEOPLE'S

Each evening this week, write down what you were feeling at the end of the day and sort it into two columns: what was yours, and what belonged to someone else, with their name. Then, on the same row, note how you noticed it was not yours (it arrived after a conversation, it did not match your day, you felt it in a place where you do not usually feel your own) and whether you said an exit line that day. On Sunday, read the right-hand column alone.

MINE	OTHER PEOPLE'S (whose)	How I knew	Exit line said? (yes / no)
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

The person whose furniture came home with me most often this week: _____

The exit line that worked best, in my own words:

What I did with the feeling once I knew it was not mine (the walk, the door, three breaths, something else):

* * *

Whose feelings did you carry home this week?

Which person's feelings do you carry home every week, and what would change if you left their house on time?

Visit the house. Then go home.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 9

Turning It Over

Chapter 9 ended with Four Evenings, Fifteen Minutes: four nights of writing without stopping about something that has been on your mind, and on the fifth day, one read-through, and one sentence underlined, the one that surprised you. That sentence is where the story is, the chapter said. It is also where this week starts. Copy it onto the page before anything else.

Depth of processing is the core of the trait. It is why you read a room before anyone speaks, and why the reading does not stop when the room empties. The chapter also gave you the test for when depth has turned into something else: have I had this thought before? If yes, you are looping, and the loop is processing that produces nothing new. The difference between the two is not how long you think. It is whether the thinking goes anywhere.

This week you put the subject in the middle of the page and take it apart into branches: what you know for sure, what the thinking has actually given you, where it starts repeating, and when and where the loop likes to run. Not to solve it. To see which branches are alive and which are the same four seconds replayed.



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DIAGRAM: THE SUBJECT I KEEP TURNING OVER

In the center of the page, inside a circle, write the subject you have been turning over most lately, in five words at most. Draw seven branches and fill in one a day, in short phrases. Do not try to resolve the subject. Try to see which part of your thinking leads somewhere and which part retraces the same path.

Center: the subject (five words at most): _____

Branch 1 - What I know for sure about it:

Branch 2 - The sentence I underlined on day five:

Branch 3 - What thinking this deeply has actually given me, something I did not have before:

Branch 4 - The thought I have had before, word for word (the loop):

Branch 5 - The time of day and the place where the loop usually starts:

Branch 6 - The container: when I will decide, and where I will do the thinking until then:

Branch 7 - How I will know I have thought enough:

* * *

What keeps circling in your head, and what does thinking deeply give you?

If you watched this subject from across the room, as the chapter suggests, what would you say to the person sitting in the middle of it?

Something done with your hands, so your head can rest.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 10

Running on Empty

Chapter 10 ended with the Half-Life Test. Friday at 6 p.m., a number from 0 to 10. Again Saturday at noon, Sunday at noon, Sunday at 8 p.m. Two weekends. The chapter gave you three readings: if the number recovers by Saturday and holds through Sunday, you are overloaded, and Part III is for you. If it recovers and then slides back by Sunday evening, you are on the edge, and the eight-week plan is for you. If it barely moves, make the appointment. This week. Not next month.

This page widens the test to the whole week, morning and evening, because the clearest early sign of burnout is that weekends stop working, and you cannot see that from Friday alone. You will see it from the shape of the line: whether the tank refills overnight, whether it refills on Saturday, and whether Sunday evening gives back what Saturday put in.

One thing before you start, in the book's own words: burnout is not depression, though they overlap. If the exhaustion comes with hopelessness that follows you everywhere, with changes in appetite or sleep, or with thoughts of not wanting to be here, that is a conversation for a therapist or your primary care doctor this

week, not a page in a journal. In the United States you can also call or text 988, at any hour.

Chapter 10 of Wired to Feel More: Signs You've Been Overloaded Too Long: HSP Burnout



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

SCALE: HOW FULL IS THE TANK

Twice a day this week, rate how full your tank is from 0 (empty) to 10 (full). Morning, before the day has asked anything of you; evening, before bed. On the weekend, add the Half-Life readings: Friday 6 p.m., Saturday noon, Sunday noon, Sunday 8 p.m. On Sunday night, look at the shape and answer the three questions below. This scale is for self-observation, to compare with yourself in Weeks 26 and 52. It is not a diagnosis.

Starting date: ____ / ____ / _____

Monday: Morning ____ / 10 Evening ____ / 10

Tuesday: Morning ____ / 10 Evening ____ / 10

Wednesday: Morning ____ / 10 Evening ____ / 10

Thursday: Morning ____ / 10 Evening ____ / 10

Friday: Morning ____ / 10 6 p.m. ____ / 10

Saturday: Morning ____ / 10 Noon ____ / 10 Evening ____ / 10

Sunday: Morning ____ / 10 Noon ____ / 10 8 p.m. ____ / 10

Does the tank refill overnight during the week? (yes / partly / no): _____

Does it refill on Saturday? (yes / partly / no): _____

Is Sunday at 8 p.m. higher or lower than Saturday at noon? _____

My reading, in the chapter's terms (overloaded / on the edge / barely moves): _____

Of the three dimensions the chapter describes, exhaustion, distance from people you used to care about, doubting you are any good at this, which have I noticed in myself lately, if any:

If the number barely moves: appointment made with _____ for ____ / ____. Done [ ]

* * *

How full is your tank on Friday night, and how full on Sunday?

What did you used to do on weekends that refilled you, and when did it quietly drop off the list?

One commitment off next week's calendar, chosen by what it costs.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Part Three

Getting Your Life Back

The Old Woodcutter and His Bundle



I remembered this fable last winter, on an afternoon when I was

carrying too many things at once and did not know which one to put down first.

It happens in the hills of Castile, about a hundred years ago, in the short days of December when the sun is gone by five and the frost never quite melts. An old woodcutter, his back bent at the same angle as the bundle he carried, in a wool cap he no longer took off even to sleep, was coming down the mountain with the day's firewood on his shoulders. He had cut too much. He had known it since the morning, when he tied the bundle and it took everything he had to lift it, but he figured he would manage, as always.

Halfway down, his legs said no. He let the bundle drop at the edge of the path and sat on a rock, cracked hands on his knees, his breath coming out in clouds, and he looked at the mountain, at the village below with smoke rising from the chimneys, and at the bundle lying there, which he was not going to lift again on his own. And he said out loud, without thinking much about it, that he had had enough, and that Death might as well come and take him and be done with it.

Death came. In a fable that is allowed: she was a tall woman in a gray wool coat, with the face of someone who has heard that sentence many times. She stood in front of him on the path and asked him, in no hurry, what he wanted from her, since he had called.

Here I like to imagine the pause. The old man looking at her, looking at the bundle and the slope, his mouth open.

He asked her to help him get the wood back up onto his shoulder. Nothing more. If she would give him a hand with the bundle, he could make it to the village.

Death, they say, bent down, helped him load it, and went back the way she had come, and the old man walked down to the village with his firewood, slowly, and that night he lit the fire the way he did every night.

I think of him when a sensitive person tells me they cannot go on, and then, if I ask what they need, it turns out to be something small: a shoulder for the bundle, or half an hour. They have spent the whole day coming down the mountain alone because they did not know, that morning, whom to ask.

How much more do you have to carry before you ask someone to help you with the bundle?

Source: Aesop, "The Old Man and Death" (Perry 60; also in Babrius and in La Fontaine, 1668), public domain; retold by the author.

Week 11

Your Reset Kit

Chapter 11 ended with Build the Kit: four things in the bag or coat you carry most days, foam earplugs, sunglasses, a small bottle of water, and a phone note with the seven steps. Then one event in the next seven days, anything with people and noise, and before you went, an exit plan in three parts: a marker, a method, a sentence. You did not have to use it. You had to have it.

This week is about making the kit yours, because a list in a book is not yet a habit in a hallway. The seven steps in your own words, short enough to read when the part of your brain that reads is offline. The kit in the place you will actually have it, which for most of us means three pairs of earplugs: one in the car, one in the coat, one in the bag. And the exit plan for one real event, written by the right committee, before you walk in.

Then, afterward, the honest part. Did you use it? Which steps? How long until you were back on the right side of the curve? Needing the reset is not weakness. Needing it every half hour is a sign about the room, and the only way to know which one you are in is to write it down.



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

PLAN: MY KIT, MY EVENT, MY EXIT

Fill in the first block on day one and the second before your event. Leave the third for afterward. If the week goes by without an event, that is also information: write what you avoided, and why.

The kit - Foam earplugs [ ] Sunglasses [ ] Small bottle of water [ ] Phone note with the seven steps [ ]

Two things of my own that lower the input (a hat, a playlist of nothing, a mint, a photo): _____ and _____

Where the kit lives (which bag, which coat, which car door): _____

Spare earplugs: car [ ] coat [ ] bag [ ]

The seven steps in my own words, one short line each:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

The event this week - What, when, where, and roughly how many people:

Exit plan - Marker (the cake, the toast, 9:30 p.m.): _____

Exit plan - Method (my own car, a rideshare, a walk): _____

Exit plan - Sentence, agreed in advance with whoever I am going with:

Afterward - Did I use the reset? [ ] yes [ ] no Steps I used: _____
Minutes until I was back on the right side of the curve: _____

Afterward - Did I use the exit? [ ] yes [ ] no Did anyone ask for an explanation? _____

What I would change in the plan next time:

* * *

What goes in your kit, and where will you use it first?

What stops you from leaving the room when you know you should, and whose voice is it?

Photograph the reset page in the book. Then put the earplugs in the car.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 12

Ten Minutes for You

Last week you built the kit. This week you practice the part of the reset that works best before you need it. The reset is first aid: twenty minutes that bring you back to the right side of the curve once you are over it. It does not change how fast you climb. The chapter said the breathing, four in and six out, earns its keep in a hallway at 2:20 p.m., and that a few minutes of it every morning is a good habit. The same is true of the glass of water, the dim room, the thirty seconds of attention on your senses. They are easier to reach for at the party if your hands already know them from the kitchen.

So: ten minutes a day, seven days, input down, nothing asked of you. Not a podcast. Not a scroll. Not "relaxing productively," which highly sensitive people are very good at and which is not rest. Two minutes of slow breathing and then sitting with the coffee. A walk around the block without headphones. Two minutes in the parked car before you go in. A chair by the window with the overhead light off.

Pick one each morning, write down when and where, and check it off. By Sunday you will know which one you would keep, and at what hour of the day it fits. That is the one that stays.



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

PLAN: TEN MINUTES A DAY, SEVEN DAYS

Each morning, choose what your ten minutes will be, and fix a time and a place. In the evening, check it off and write one line about what you noticed, in your body or in the hours after. If you missed it, write what took its place; that is useful too. On Sunday, fill in the last two lines.

A short menu, if you want one: four in, six out for two minutes, then sit. A glass of cold water at the window. A walk around the

block, no headphones. Two minutes in the car, engine off, before the door. The forearm squeeze, then five things you can see, four you can touch, three you can hear, two you can smell, one you can taste. A bench outside with the phone in the bag.

Monday - What: _____ When: _____ Where: _____ Done [ ] What I noticed:

Tuesday - What: _____ When: _____ Where: _____ Done [ ] What I noticed:

Wednesday - What: _____ When: _____ Where: _____ Done [ ] What I noticed:

Thursday - What: _____ When: _____ Where: _____ Done [ ] What I noticed:

Friday - What: _____ When: _____ Where: _____ Done [ ] What I noticed:

Saturday - What: _____ When: _____ Where: _____ Done [ ] What I noticed:

Sunday - What: _____ When: _____ Where: _____ Done [ ] What I noticed:

The one I will keep:

The time of day it fits, and what it has to replace:

---

* * *

What ten-minute act of care can you repeat every day?

Who would you have to tell that these ten minutes are not negotiable, and what sentence would you use?

Make it the ten minutes. Nothing bigger.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 13

A Week with Room to Breathe

Chapter 12 ended with the Low-Stimulation Day Plan: five weekday mornings, ten minutes each, one tool. List what has to happen, cost it in load and not in time, mark the two that matter, decide what you will not do and draft the sentence, put in the pauses as appointments, put in the transitions, find the predictable wall, and at night, two minutes, move one thing off tomorrow. By Friday you had five days of data on where your load actually comes from. Most people find it was not the tasks. It was the spaces between them.

This week you plan the whole week with that data, including the weekend, which is where most of us stop planning and start paying. The rules are the chapter's. Your day is a budget, not a to-do list. Transitions are where the load hides. A pause counts only if it lowers the input; a pause with a screen in it is a cheaper version of the task. The quality of your no depends on when you say it. And on a day that starts on the wrong side of the curve, low-power mode is maintenance, not failure.

One more thing to practice this week, on a day you do not need it: the sentence. "I'm at about forty percent today, so I'm keeping to

essentials." Say it once, out loud, to someone reasonable. You will want it in the bank.

Chapter 12 of Wired to Feel More: Designing a Low-Stimulation Day



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

WEEKLY PLAN: THE SAME WEEK, WITH THE PAUSES IN IT

Fill in each day the morning of, in ten minutes, with the tool you chose in Chapter 12. The two that matter. One pause with the input down, with a start and an end. One transition you will protect. The predictable wall and what happens there instead. The sentence you may need. At night, two minutes: what cost more than planned, and the one thing you are moving off tomorrow.

Monday

The two that matter: _____ and _____

One pause, input down - from _____ to _____ What: _____ Kept [ ]

One transition I will protect (the car, the walk in, the three minutes between calls): _____

The predictable wall - When: _____ What happens there instead: _____

The sentence I may need today:

Night - What cost more than planned: _____ Moving off tomorrow: _____

Tuesday

The two that matter: _____ and _____

One pause, input down - from _____ to _____ What: _____ Kept [ ]

One transition I will protect (the car, the walk in, the three minutes between calls): _____

The predictable wall - When: _____ What happens there instead: _____

The sentence I may need today:

Night - What cost more than planned: _____ Moving off tomorrow: _____

Wednesday

The two that matter: _____ and _____

One pause, input down - from _____ to _____ What: _____ Kept [ ]

One transition I will protect (the car, the walk in, the three minutes between calls): _____

The predictable wall - When: _____ What happens there instead: _____

The sentence I may need today:

Night - What cost more than planned: _____ Moving off tomorrow: _____

Thursday

The two that matter: _____ and _____

One pause, input down - from _____ to _____ What: _____ Kept [ ]

One transition I will protect (the car, the walk in, the three minutes between calls): _____

The predictable wall - When: _____ What happens there instead: _____

The sentence I may need today:

Night - What cost more than planned: _____ Moving off tomorrow: _____

Friday

The two that matter: _____ and _____

One pause, input down - from _____ to _____ What: _____ Kept [ ]

One transition I will protect (the car, the walk in, the three minutes between calls): _____

The predictable wall - When: _____ What happens there instead: _____

The sentence I may need today:

Night - What cost more than planned: _____ Moving off tomorrow: _____

Saturday and Sunday

One real pause of an hour, input down, with a start and an end: _____ Day and time: _____ Kept [ ]

The errand I am moving to a quieter hour or to curbside pickup: _____

Lights down to lamps from _____ p.m. Phone charging outside the bedroom [ ]

Practice - The low-power sentence, said out loud on a day I did not need it, to _____. Done [ ]

Sunday night - The pause I planned and skipped most often, and what took its place:

---

* * *

What would your week look like with real pauses in it?

Which pause did you plan and skip, and what did you give that time to instead?

Book the pause before you book anything else.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Review 1

The First Quarter

Thirteen weeks have gone by. Before you go on, set aside one quiet afternoon to reread the journal from Week 1, pencil in hand, correcting nothing. Mark what surprises you, what repeats, and what you would no longer say the same way. Then answer these questions slowly; two afternoons are fine. There are no right answers. There is one person looking at their own path.

Rereading the thirteen weeks, what three things about yourself can you say now that you could not have said when you started?

Copy here the thermometers of the thirteen weeks, energy and overload, week by week. Which weeks ran highest, and what was going on in your life then?

Week	Energy	Overload
Week 1		
Week 2		
Week 3		
Week 4		
Week 5		
Week 6		
Week 7		
Week 8		
Week 9		
Week 10		
Week 11		
Week 12		
Week 13		

Is there a relationship between the weeks of most overload and the weeks of least energy, or do they move separately? What does that tell you?

Look at the left column of Week 4. Which label has lost force in these three months? Which one is still there?

Look at your early warnings in Week 6 and your sensory map in Week 7. Which first sign have you caught in time at least once since then? Which input have you actually cut?

Look at the tank in Week 10. Have the weekends started working again? If the number barely moved, did you make the appointment, and how did it go?

Your reset kit, from Week 11: where is it right now? How many times have you used the reset since, and how many times did you need it and not use it?

Which "one thing I'll do this week" did you actually do, and what happened? Which one did you write down more than once without doing it?

Reread your thirteen weeks of gratitude, day by day. What repeats? What is there that you would not have been grateful for a year ago?

What are you leaving behind in this quarter: an idea about yourself, a habit, an explanation that no longer serves?

What are you taking with you into the next one: a sentence, a signal from the body, a place, a person?

The rest of Part III is about sleep, your home, crowded places and boundaries. Which of those four is asking for your attention most right now, and why?

Write one sentence for yourself, the one you would like to read thirteen weeks from now, in Review 2.

Week 14

When the Light Goes Off

Chapter 13 ended with the Sleep Diary: seven mornings, the time you got into bed, how long it took to fall asleep, how many times you woke, and how rested you felt from 1 to 5. Then four notes about the day before, the last of them the biggest thing you were still processing when the light went off. If you kept it, you have what the chapter promised. For most highly sensitive people the good mornings are not predicted by the hours in bed. They are predicted by what came in during the two hours before them.

This week we work on those two hours, and on the moment itself: the light goes off, the house is finally quiet, and the day comes back for a second pass in higher resolution. The chapter called switching off a skill, not a mood, and gave you two routes with trials behind them: a few minutes of practiced attention to the breath or the body, and ten minutes with a notebook, writing down what is still running so your brain knows it is stored somewhere.

So the plan has two parts. A wind-down you design once and run seven nights: lamps from two hours before bed, the last coffee six hours before, the phone outside the room, and the

breathing or the notebook. And a short entry each night, written before the light goes off, of what you are taking to bed with you. Not to solve it. To put it down on paper instead of on the pillow.

Chapter 13 of Wired to Feel More: Sleep and Recovery



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

PLAN: THE TWO HOURS BEFORE, AND WHAT I TAKE TO BED

Fill in the wind-down on the first day and keep it the same all week; the point is to test one version, not seven. Each night, before the light goes off, write in one line what is still awake in your head. Each morning, your rested score from 1 to 5, as in the diary. On Sunday, read the two columns side by side.

My bedtime: _____ So the last caffeine is at: _____ (six hours before) Lamps on, overhead lights off from: _____ (two hours before)

Where the phone charges tonight: _____ Last screen at: _____

My switch-off, chosen once (circle one): two minutes of four in, six out / ten minutes with the notebook / a slow walk after dinner / something else: _____

What is in the bedroom that is input (a light, a hum, a pile, a screen), and what I am doing about it:

Monday - Wind-down kept [ ] What I took to bed (one line): _____ Morning: rested ____ / 5

Tuesday - Wind-down kept [ ] What I took to bed (one line): _____ Morning: rested ____ / 5

Wednesday - Wind-down kept [ ] What I took to bed (one line): _____ Morning: rested ____ / 5

Thursday - Wind-down kept [ ] What I took to bed (one line): _____ Morning: rested ____ / 5

Friday - Wind-down kept [ ] What I took to bed (one line): _____ Morning: rested ____ / 5

Saturday - Wind-down kept [ ] What I took to bed (one line): _____ Morning: rested ____ / 5

Sunday - Wind-down kept [ ] What I took to bed (one line): _____ Morning: rested ____ / 5

Sunday night - The thing that came to bed with me most often this week:

What the rested scores say about the nights I kept the wind-down and the nights I did not:

If I have not slept well most nights for three months or more: appointment with my primary care doctor to ask about CBT-I, date ____ / ____. Done [ ]

* * *

What happens in your head when you switch off the light?

Of everything that comes back for a second pass at night,

what belongs to today, and what has been coming to bed with you for years?

Something that happens before 9 p.m.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 15

Your Corner

Chapter 14 ended with Design One Space: one spot no larger than a chair and its surroundings, twenty minutes on a timer, everything that is a task, a screen or noise out of view, one light you can dim, one soft surface, one thing you find beautiful. The NIOSH app gave you a number. Then ten minutes a day, same time, seven days. On Sunday you noted whether the number dropped, and whether you did.

This week the corner becomes yours for good, and that takes two things the chapter was clear about. The first is subtraction. Your home is the one environment you can control, and clutter is visual input you process more thoroughly than the people you live with; so the question is not what the corner needs but what it does not. The second is the household. "When I am in that chair, I am not available for ten minutes" is a boundary, said once, in terms of load and not preference, and Chapter 16 will give you the rest of the sentence.

So you draw it, on this page, as it is and as it will be, measure the sound once more, and list what leaves. Then you use it before you need it, ten minutes at the end of the workday, every day, because ten minutes there daily does more than an hour there once a

month after a meltdown. And you give nature its two hours, in whatever pieces fit.

Chapter 14 of Wired to Feel More: Your Home, Your Spaces



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

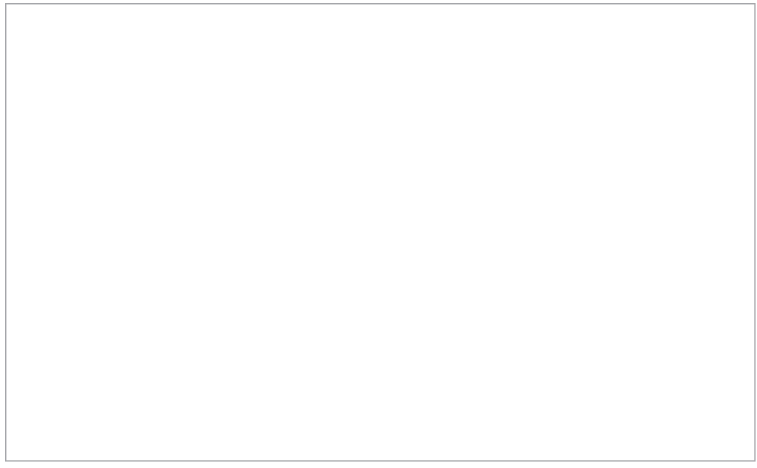
Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

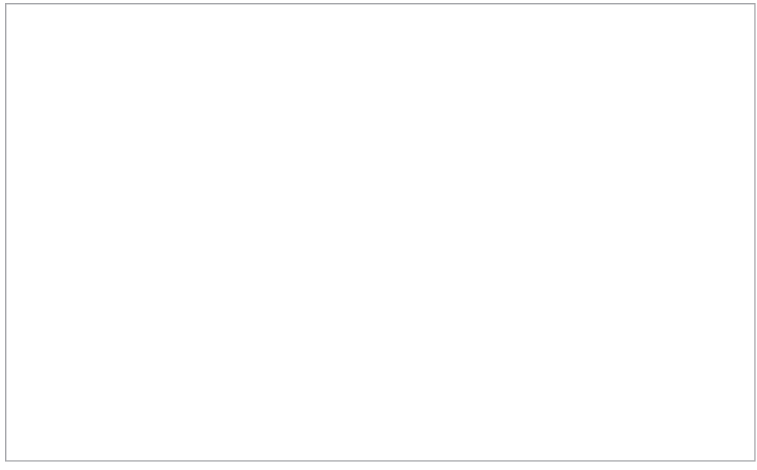
DRAWING AND PLAN: MY CORNER, AND WHAT LEAVES IT

Draw the corner twice, in simple lines: the top half of the page as it is today, with every object you can see from the chair; the bottom half as it will be on Sunday. Between the two, the list of what leaves and where it goes. Then the plan: when you sit there, what you say to the household, and the week's checks.

Drawing 1 - As it is now. Circle everything in view that is a task, a screen or a source of noise.



Drawing 2 - As it will be. Mark the chair, the direction it faces, the lamp, the soft surface and the one beautiful thing.



Sound there, with the NIOSH app - Last week: _____ dB Today: _____ dB The loudest source I can hear from the chair: _____

What leaves, and where it goes:

1. _____ -> _____

2. _____ -> _____

3. _____ -> _____

4. _____ -> _____

5. _____ -> _____

What stays (the lamp, the soft thing, the beautiful thing, a plant, headphones): _____

What the corner does not need, and I was about to add: _____

My ten minutes there: from _____ to _____, every day. What usually happens at that hour that will have to wait: _____

The sentence for the household, in terms of load, not preference:

Who I said it to, and what they said:

Monday: Ten minutes in the corner [ ] Outdoors _____ min

Tuesday: Ten minutes in the corner [ ] Outdoors _____ min

Wednesday: Ten minutes in the corner [ ] Outdoors _____ min

Thursday: Ten minutes in the corner [ ] Outdoors _____ min

Friday: Ten minutes in the corner [ ] Outdoors _____ min

Saturday: Ten minutes in the corner [ ] Outdoors _____ min

Sunday: Ten minutes in the corner [ ] Outdoors _____ min

Sunday - Outdoor minutes this week: _____ of 120. Did the corner work before I needed it, or only after?

* * *

Which spot at home calms you, and what does it not need?

Who in your house would have to agree for the corner to hold, and what have they heard from you so far: a complaint, or a plain explanation?

Something you take out of the house, not something you bring in.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 16

The Place You Avoid

Chapter 15 ended with My Plan for a Crowded Place: somewhere you had to go anyway, the hour with the fewest people, how long you would stay, the kit, the refuge, the time you would leave even if you were not done, and the recovery on the calendar afterward. The chapter asked for three visits, after which you would have your own plan, written by the only researcher who has ever studied you in a crowd.

This week the plan goes to the place that matters most: the one you avoid. Almost every highly sensitive person has one. The warehouse store on a Saturday. The arena. The long table at Thanksgiving, which you can already see coming. A relative's house with the TV on in every room. Avoiding it is sometimes the right call, and the chapter said as much about bars and clubs. But when avoiding it costs you something you want, a friendship, a job, your own family's celebration, it deserves the five steps rather than a dread you renew every year.

Two days of observation first, because you need to know what, exactly, goes over there: the light, the noise, the bodies, the hours, or what is expected of you once you are inside. Then the plan, step by step, with a date and a short first visit. Half an hour

counts. Leaving on time with two of three things is a success. Staying until you are hollowed out, with all three, is not.

Chapter 15 of Wired to Feel More: Crowded Places, Holidays, and Travel



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

PLAN: GOING BACK TO THE PLACE I AVOID

Days one and two, observation only. Days three to five, the five steps, one box at a time. Put a date on the first visit, this week or next, and keep it short. Afterward, write what worked and what you will change for the second visit. If the place is a holiday you cannot leave early, use the chapter's version of the

steps for long tables: one ally, a break every ninety minutes, a separate car, food before you arrive, and the day after protected.

The place I avoid: _____ Since when: _____

What avoiding it costs me (what I miss, who I stop seeing, what I stop doing):

What exactly goes over there (light, sound, bodies, smells, duration, what is expected of me):

Which of those I can remove or reduce, and which I cannot:

Step 1 - The place, and the version of it I will practice on first (the medium one, not the hardest): _____

Step 2 - Day and hour with the fewest people (check "popular times" on the map): _____ How long I will stay: _____

Step 3 - The kit: headphones or earplugs [ ] sunglasses [ ] water [ ]

a snack [ ] a paper list [ ] something to hold [ ] Mine to add: _____

Step 4 - My refuge there: _____ The time I leave even if I am not done: _____ My sentence for leaving, if anyone asks: _____

Step 5 - The recovery, on the calendar with the errand: what _____ when _____ Kept [ ]

If it is a gathering - One ally who knows: _____ Separate car [ ] Ate before [ ] Break every ninety minutes (the dog, the dishes, the porch): _____

Date of the first visit: ____ / ____ Done [ ] Minutes until I felt normal afterward: _____

Afterward - What worked, what did not, and what I change for the second visit:

* * *

Which place do you avoid, and what would make it easier?

How much of what goes over in that place is the place itself, and how much is what you believe is expected of you once you are inside?

The visit, or the first step toward it.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 17

The Yes That Meant No

Chapter 16 ended with the Boundary Ledger: seven evenings, three columns. A moment when you said yes, or stayed silent, and meant no. What it cost, not in the abstract: the skipped walk, dinner at nine, lying awake rehearsing. And the sentence you would use next time, under twenty words: state what you can do, offer what you can offer, stop. On day four you used the lowest-stakes sentence; on day seven, one step higher. No affirmations. The ledger made the argument.

This week the ledger becomes a double list, because the chapter said something about the yes that is worth seeing in your own handwriting: you did not agree because you are weak. You agreed because the other person's disappointment arrived in your body before your own exhaustion did, and agreeing was the fastest way to make that feeling stop. That is people-pleasing, and it is a strategy, not a personality. Strategies can be seen, and what can be seen can be changed.

So on the left, each yes, and what you felt in the second before you gave it. On the right, what it cost afterward, in hours, sleep and feathers. The chapter also named something you will recognize: selective assertiveness, clear with the two or three people you trust

most and folding with everyone else. Mark which side of your life each yes came from. By Sunday you will see where the no is already available to you, and where it is not yet.

Chapter 16 of Wired to Feel More: Boundaries Without Guilt



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DOUBLE LIST: THE YES I GAVE, WHAT IT COST

Two columns, one row per yes, filled in the evening it happened. On the left, what you were asked, who asked, and what you felt in your body in the second before you answered: the drop in the stomach, the heat in the face, the other person's face. On the right, what it actually cost you, in time, sleep or energy, and whether the person was someone close or someone you barely know. On Sunday, count the rows by who asked.

What I said yes to, who asked, and what I felt before I answered	What it cost, and close / not close

Rows where the asker was someone close: ____ Someone I barely know: ____

The yes I gave most easily this week, and what it would have cost me to say the sentence instead:

The sentence from the ledger that I actually used, and how long the guilt lasted:

A yes from the left column that was the right call, and why:

* * *

When did you say yes this week and mean no?

Whose disappointment reaches your body fastest, and what

did you learn, early on, would happen if you let it sit there a moment longer?

Pick the lowest-stakes row. Use the sentence.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 18

Your Boundary Sentence

Last week you watched the yes. This week you write the no, for one boundary only: the one you have been putting off longest. The chapter gave you the structure: state what you can do, offer what you can offer, stop talking. No reason, because a reason opens a negotiation about whether the reason is good enough. And then the hardest part, the silence after you finish, which your instinct will want to fill with apology. Count to five.

A script also needs the second line, because boundaries almost never fall at the first reply. They fall at the second, when the other person pushes and we give in so it will end. The chapter was clear about the pushback: when one person changes a long-standing pattern, the rest of the system pushes to restore it. Expect it. It is not a sign that you did it wrong. It is a sign that you did it. Your second line is the same words, the same tone, not louder.

And the guilt afterward is an alarm wired to an old rule, not a verdict. Three tools shorten it, all from the chapter: the step back, saying what happened in the third person; the reappraisal, "saying no to this protects the version of me that can show up for the next thing"; and the ordinary kindness you would offer a friend.

Rehearse the two lines out loud for three days, and if the moment comes this week, say them.

Chapter 16 of Wired to Feel More: Boundaries Without Guilt (second week)



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

SCRIPT: MY BOUNDARY IN TWO LINES

Days one and two, the top boxes: which boundary, with whom, since when. Day three, your first line, short and warm, in the first person, no reasons. Day four, the most likely reply, and your second line, the one that keeps the boundary without entering the argument. Then three days of saying both lines out loud, to a

mirror, to the steering wheel, to someone who knows. Fill in the last boxes when it happens, or when you decide when it will.

The boundary I have been putting off:

With whom, and in which situation it usually comes up (family, work, friends):

Since when, and what putting it off has already cost me, in feathers:

Where this sits on the ladder, from the barista to my mother: lowest stakes / middle / highest. If highest, the lower rung I will practice on first: _____

Line 1 - What I can do, what I can offer, and then nothing:

What they will most likely say:

Line 2 - The same boundary, the same tone, no argument:

What I will do if it is not respected (what I do, not what they should do):

Rehearsed out loud: day ____ day ____ day ____

For the guilt afterward - In the third person: "_____ said no to _____, and _____ is disappointed." My reappraisal, in my own words:

The date I said it, or the date I will: ____ / ____ What happened, and how long the guilt lasted (an hour, ten minutes, a flicker):

* * *

Which boundary are you putting off, and what sentence would set it?

What frightens you more: that they will be angry, that they will love you less, or finding out that nothing happens and you could have said it years ago?

Say the two lines once. That is the whole task.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Part Four

Living It with Others

Guan Zhong and Bao Shuya



What follows is not a fable. It happened, more than twenty-six

hundred years ago, and a historian wrote it down so that it would not be lost.

It took place in the state of Qi, in eastern China, in a time when princes made war on one another from horse-drawn chariots and educated men went from one court to the next looking for someone to serve. Guan Zhong was poor, quick, and sharp-tongued, in hemp clothes patched at the elbows. Bao Shuya came from a family with land, said little, and looked at people for a while before deciding what he thought of them. They had been friends since they were young.

Together they set up a small trade in the market at Linzi, the capital, among stalls of millet, cloth and salt. When they split the profit, Guan always kept more, and people told Bao so. Bao answered that his friend was poor and he was not, and that this was not greed. Later Guan advised him on a venture and the venture failed, and Bao said the times had been bad, not the advice. Guan served three lords and all three dismissed him; Bao said his moment had not come yet. And Guan went to war three times, and three times he ran when things turned ugly. The soldiers called him a coward to his face. Bao said he had an aged mother, and that if he died, no one would look after her.

Then the two friends ended up serving rival princes, two brothers fighting over the throne of Qi. Bao's prince won. Guan, on the losing side, ended up in chains, waiting to be executed.

This is where I, the first time, stopped reading for a moment.

Bao Shuya went to see the new duke and told him that if he wanted to govern Qi he needed that prisoner, who was worth more than Bao himself. And he convinced him. Guan Zhong walked out of prison to become prime minister, and under him Qi became the strongest state of its time. Years later, as an old man, Guan summed up his life in a sentence that is still repeated

in China: "My parents gave me life. The one who knows me is Bao."

I think of Bao Shuya when a sensitive person tells me how hard it is to explain themselves, and how much effort they spend every day on not being misunderstood. Then I ask whether there is anyone in front of whom they do not have to explain, and it almost always takes them a while, but they find a name.

Who can you be with without a filter, without rehearsing what you are going to say?

Source: Historical episode from Sima Qian's Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji, c. 100 BC), chapter 62, public domain; retold by the author.

Week 19

What the Job Costs You

Chapter 17 ended with the Work Inventory: one page, three columns. Everything about your job that drains you, one item per entry. For each, who can change it: you, your manager, or nobody. For the ones that can be changed, the smallest specific request. Then you counted the rows in the second column, made one request before Friday, and watched your energy over the following week, not your job title.

This week the inventory goes one level deeper, into what each drain actually costs, because the chapter's central finding is that the same job costs you more, and that the part of the trait doing the damage is ease of overstimulation, not sensitivity as a whole. You are the person who catches the error in the contract and the person who is wiped out by Thursday. The goal is not to be less sensitive at work. It is to be less overstimulated, so the noticing has room to operate.

So on the left, the drain, sorted by kind: the room, the people, the feedback, the hours, the work itself. On the right, what it costs you by evening and by Friday, and whether it is a cost a reasonable manager could lower. If you are not employed right now, the list is for school, for caregiving, or for whatever keeps your household

running. That is work too. Next week we do the other half of the ledger, the half nobody mentions at 6 p.m. in the parking garage.

Chapter 17 of Wired to Feel More: Sensitivity at Work



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DOUBLE LIST: WHAT DRAINS ME, WHAT IT COSTS

Two columns, one row a day, taken from the inventory or new. On the left, the drain and its kind: room (noise, light, the open plan, the video calls), people (a manager, a client, the group text), feedback (one-on-ones, reviews, the tone around the words), hours (the commute, the 5:40 p.m. message, the PTO you do not take), or the work itself. On the right, what it costs you by the

end of that day and by Friday, and whether it is fixable, structural, or something you have not asked about yet. On Sunday, count.

The drain, and its kind (room / people / feedback / hours / the work)	What it costs me, and fixable / structural / not asked yet

Count: fixable ____ structural ____ not asked yet ____

The request I made before Friday after reading the chapter, and what happened to my energy, not my title, the week after:

The one drain that costs the most for the least reason, and the smallest request that would lower it:

My shutdown signal at the end of the day (the laptop closed and out of sight, the walk around the block, the radio off in the car): _____ Kept ____ of 5 days

Days of paid time off I have left this year: ____ The first one I will book: ____ / ____

* * *

What part of your work drains you most?

If most of your rows are structural, how long have you known, and what have you been telling yourself about why you stay?

Make it a request, not a resolution.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 20

What You Bring

Last week the ledger had one column that was easy to fill. This week the other one, which the chapter left for the end because that is where the research is thinnest and the experience is thickest. You notice what others miss: the tone that does not match the sentence, the clause in the contract, the number off by a decimal. In a negotiation you register what the other side is not saying. In a project where everyone is looking at next quarter, you are the one asking what happens in five years.

None of this is on the org chart, and much of it has been filed under the stereotypes you know: too emotional, too slow to decide. The chapter gave you the reframe for each, and it is not a defense. Emotional means you read the room, which is why you spotted the client's hesitation first. Slow to decide means you do not ship the first idea, which is why your work rarely has to be redone.

So for seven days, one thing a day that you did at work because of how you take things in, with the stereotype it would have been filed under and what actually happened. Who benefited. Whether anyone saw it. The chapter would not give you a list of recommended professions, and neither will this page. What it will give

you is the beginning of a case for fit, in your own words, for the next one-on-one or the next job.

Chapter 17 of Wired to Feel More: Sensitivity at Work (second week)



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LIST: SEVEN THINGS I BRING THAT THE ORG CHART DOES NOT SHOW

Each day, one thing you did, this week or recently, that came from noticing, from depth, from reading people, from foresight, or from the care you take with details. Write what happened in one sentence, which part of the trait did it, who benefited, whether anyone noticed, and, if the same thing has ever been held against you, the stereotype it was filed under and the reframe in plain

words. On day seven, choose the two you would say out loud in a review.

1. What I did: _____ Which part of me did it (noticing / depth / reading people / foresight / care): _____ Who benefited: _____ Did anyone see it? _____ The stereotype and the reframe, if any:

2. What I did: _____ Which part of me did it (noticing / depth / reading people / foresight / care): _____ Who benefited: _____ Did anyone see it? _____ The stereotype and the reframe, if any:

3. What I did: _____ Which part of me did it (noticing / depth / reading people / foresight / care): _____ Who benefited: _____ Did anyone see it? _____ The stereotype and the reframe, if any:

4. What I did: _____ Which part of me did it (noticing / depth / reading people / foresight / care): _____ Who benefited:

_____ Did anyone see it? _____ The stereotype and the reframe, if any:

5. What I did: _____ Which part of me did it (noticing / depth / reading people / foresight / care): _____ Who benefited: _____ Did anyone see it? _____ The stereotype and the reframe, if any:

6. What I did: _____ Which part of me did it (noticing / depth / reading people / foresight / care): _____ Who benefited: _____ Did anyone see it? _____ The stereotype and the reframe, if any:

7. What I did: _____ Which part of me did it (noticing / depth / reading people / foresight / care): _____ Who benefited: _____ Did anyone see it? _____ The stereotype and the reframe, if any:

The two I would say out loud in a one-on-one, in terms of output, not of the trait:

The sentence I would use to ask for the conditions that let this happen more often (a quiet block, a window, feedback in writing):

From the inventory, the rows that were structural: ____ of ____. Looking at this week's list, is the job a fit, a fixable mismatch, or a question of how long to stay? _____

* * *

What do you bring to work that the org chart does not show?

Who at work has already seen it, and what would change if you stopped waiting for them to say so and said it yourself?

Something that shows the right-hand column to one person.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 21

No Filter

Chapter 18 ended with the Ten-Minute Conversation: one you had been avoiding with a partner or a close friend, not the biggest one, in a quiet place with the phones out of reach. Ten minutes for you, what you think and then what you feel, no interrupting. Ten for them. Then each of you said back what you heard, not what you thought about it. And afterward, one number: how long it took your body to settle. That number, the chapter said, is what it was all about.

This week the question widens from one conversation to everyone you are close to. The chapter put it plainly: "you never want to do anything" is almost always wrong. You want closeness more than most; what you cannot afford is the format. And the format that costs least is the one where you spend nothing on the filter: no measuring your tone, no hiding that you are full, no translating what you feel into something smaller so it fits.

So you draw three circles with yourself in the middle and, over the week, place names. Inside, the people with whom you can say "I'm full" and be understood. In the middle ring, the ones who get almost all of you, with something held back. Outside, the ones who get a version. The inner circle will probably be smaller than

you thought. That is not a problem. It is the budget, and the chapter's advice was to spend it on depth.

Chapter 18 of Wired to Feel More: Love and Friendship When You Feel More



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

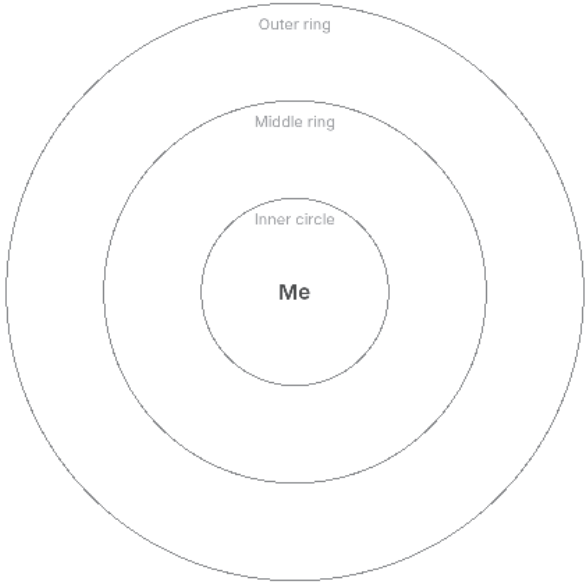
Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

RELATIONSHIP MAP: THREE CIRCLES

Three concentric circles filling most of the page, you in the center. Over the week, write names where they belong today, not where you wish they were. Next to each name in the outer ring, one word for what you hold back with that person. Next to each name in the inner circle, the format in which you usually see them: a walk, a kitchen table, a long

phone call, a loud restaurant. On Sunday, count, and fill in the end.



Inner circle - No filter, "I'm full" lands complete: _____ (names, and the format I see them in)

Middle ring - Almost all of me, something held back: _____ (names)

Outer ring - A version of me: _____ (names, and one word each for what I hold back)

How many in each: inner ____ / middle ____ / outer ____

The person from the Ten-Minute Conversation: which circle, and how many minutes it took my body to settle afterward: _____

Someone in the middle ring who could move inward, and the first thing I would tell them, plainly, with an example from both sides:

Someone in the inner circle I have not seen or called in too long: _____ The format I will propose, and when: _____

What the people in the inner circle have in common:

A relationship after which, over the last six months, I am consistently less myself, if there is one: _____ The format I will reduce first: _____

* * *

With whom can you be yourself without a filter?

Who is in the outer ring who, by their place in your life,

should be much closer, and what happened there, and when?

One inner-circle person, in a format you can afford.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 22

What You Have Never Asked For

Last week you drew the circles. This week you write to one person in them. The chapter said intimacy is built in exchanges, not speeches: you disclose something that matters, the other person responds in a way that shows they heard it, and the closeness comes from the response as much as from the disclosure. And it said the explanation of the trait is not a license; the goal is two people who say what things cost them, not one whose costs are now the only ones on the table.

There is one disclosure most highly sensitive people never make, and it is the one the chapter's couple in Portland took three years to reach: not "I'm angry," but "I'm full," and after it, what would help. We are very good at guessing what the people close to us need, and we quietly expect the same back, and it hurts when it does not come. Nobody is guessing. They have not been told, in a way their brain can follow.

So this week a letter, written across seven days, to a partner, a friend, a parent, someone you live with. Concrete: when, how, how much, because a vague request cannot be met. No reproach: not what they do wrong, what would help you. And at the end, the chapter's turn: "what is it like on your side?" You decide on

the last day whether to send it, read it aloud, or keep it. Any of the three counts.

Chapter 18 of Wired to Feel More: Love and Friendship When You Feel More (second week)



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LETTER: WHAT I NEED FROM YOU AND HAVE NOT ASKED FOR

Choose one real person. One section a day, in your own voice, in the present tense when you speak about now. Be specific in what you ask: "save me a seat at the end of the table," "ten minutes with the radio off when I get home," "tell me on Tuesday if Friday's plan is going to be loud." On the last day, decide what you do

with the letter and mark it. If you read it to them, set the clock: ten minutes each.

To:

What I value in how you are with me, and rarely say:

What a full day costs me, in a scene you were there for, told plainly and from both sides (what I noticed, what I needed after):

What I need from you and have never asked for, concretely (when, how, how much):

Why I have not asked until now:

What would change between us if I had it:

What I offer, or already give and want to keep giving:

What is it like on your side? (the question I will ask, and what I imagine the answer is):

Closing and decision: I send it / I read it aloud / I keep it for later [ ] If I read it: ten minutes each, phones away, date ____ / ____

Afterward, if I shared it - What they actually said, and how it differed from what I had written for them:

* * *

What do you need from the people close to you and have not asked for yet?

What do you imagine this person would answer, and how much of that answer did you write for them, without asking?

Ask for one small thing, out loud, this week.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 23

What You Learned to Hide

Chapter 19 ended with One Sentence, One Man, and if you are not a man, the exercise still has your name on it. One person you trust, one ordinary moment, a drive, a walk, the parking lot after something loud, and one true sentence about how your nervous system works: "I need the radio off after work." Then two notes: what it cost you to say it, and what the other person did with it; most people find the second more surprising.

The chapter was written about men, and its mechanism is not. Every child learns an audience, and learns where feeling is safe and where it is not. The differences the research measured between boys and girls were small, and they grew in front of strangers and peers, not parents: that is learning, not wiring. Whatever rulebook you were handed, be tough, be nice, do not make a fuss, you were taught to hide something about feeling more, and hiding has a bill. Keeping a straight face is work for the body.

This week you write a letter to the child who learned the rule, or to whoever taught it, or to the rule itself. Not to send: to separate what was true then from what is true now, and to say what you would tell that child today. If what you learned to hide has ever

included not wanting to be here, that goes to a person, not a page: call or text 988, at any hour.

Chapter 19 of Wired to Feel More: The Sensitive Man



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LETTER: TO THE ONE WHO LEARNED TO HIDE IT

Write it across the week, one section a day. Address it to the child you were, to the person who taught the rule, or to the rule itself. First person; present tense for today, past tense for then. If a section stirs up more than you can hold, leave it for tomorrow, or take it to someone trained to help; Chapter 20 explains how to find them. On the last day, decide what to do with the letter.

To:

The rule I learned, in the words I heard it:

Where I learned it, from whom, and the earliest scene I remember:

What I learned to hide, exactly (the tears, the need to leave, the noticing, the fear, the tenderness, the overwhelm):

What hiding it has cost me, in my body and in the people around me:

From the chapter's six questions, the one I reach for automatically when something is new, loud or heavy (avoid it / control it / endure it / seek support / withdraw / go into it): _____ Who chose that one, and at what age:

What I know now about feeling more that the child did not:

What I would say to that child today, the way a decent parent speaks to a distressed child: no mocking, no "it's nothing," no leaving them there:

The one sentence I said this week, to whom, what it cost, and what they did with it:

Closing and decision: I keep it / I tear it up / I read it to someone [ ]

* * *

What were you taught to hide about feeling more, and what has it cost you?

Who, in your life today, has never once seen the thing you hide, and what do you think would actually happen if they did?

One true sentence, to one person.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 24

Watching the Alarm

Chapter 20 ended with Focused Mindfulness on the Fear Response: ten minutes a day, sitting. Two minutes of four in, six out. One recent situation that set off your alarm, a medium one. The body watched, not fixed, each sensation named: tight, fast, warm. Then one question, asked once: "what would I tell a friend who felt exactly this?" The point, the chapter said, is not calm. It is practice at watching the alarm without obeying it.

This week we put the alarm on paper, as a sequence, because the chapter's account of therapy rests on one observation: the situation does not decide how you feel; what you think about the situation does. Between the room and the feeling there is a thought, usually an old one, and it is easier to catch once you have seen it written down. Where the sequence ends depends on which thought is in the middle. "Everyone noticed I left early" and "I noticed I was running out and I left" describe the same evening.

So the diagram runs left to right: the trigger, the first thing the body did, the thought, what you did, and how long it took to settle. Under it, the friend's version. One more line, said calmly. Sensitive is not sick; overloaded can still need help, and asking is

not a verdict. If the alarm has ever gone past overload into not wanting to be here, call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, at any hour.

Chapter 20 of Wired to Feel More: Help That Works: Therapy, Medication, Mindfulness



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DIAGRAM: THE ALARM, FROM TRIGGER TO SETTLING

Draw a horizontal chain of five boxes, left to right, and fill in one chain a day from a real moment that day, a medium-sized one. Trigger, body, thought, what I did, minutes to settle. Below each chain, the friend's line: what you would tell a friend who felt exactly that. On Sunday, read the middle boxes only, top to bottom. The thought that repeats is the one worth

taking to someone trained to help, or to the next ten minutes of practice.

Monday - Trigger: _____ -> Body (named, not fixed): _____ -> The thought: _____ -> What I did: _____ -> Minutes to settle: ____

Friend's line:

Tuesday - Trigger: _____ -> Body (named, not fixed): _____ -> The thought: _____ -> What I did: _____ -> Minutes to settle: ____

Friend's line:

Wednesday - Trigger: _____ -> Body (named, not fixed): _____ -> The thought: _____ -> What I did: _____ -> Minutes to settle: ____

Friend's line:

Thursday - Trigger: _____ -> Body (named, not fixed): _____ -> The thought: _____ -> What I did: _____ -> Minutes to settle: ____

Friend's line:

Friday - Trigger: _____ -> Body (named, not fixed): _____ -> The thought: _____ -> What I did: _____ -> Minutes to settle: ____

Friend's line:

Saturday - Trigger: _____ -> Body (named, not fixed): _____ -> The thought: _____ -> What I did: _____ -> Minutes to settle: ____

Friend's line:

Sunday - Trigger: _____ -> Body (named, not fixed): _____ -> The thought: _____ -> What I did: _____ -> Minutes to settle: ____

Friend's line:

Sunday - The thought that repeats, word for word:

A thought from the chain that I could check against what actually happened, and what the evidence says:

Days I did the ten minutes: ____ of 7. What was different on the days I did:

Help, as an engineering decision - What years of overload have done that the strategies in Part III have not fixed, if anything:

If I decide to look: the Psychology Today directory filtered by _____, the therapist list at hsperson.com, or the SAMHSA helpline, 1-800-662-4357, if cost is the wall. Three questions for the first call: do they know the research on high sensitivity, what approach and why, what the first three sessions look like. Call made [ ] My shoulders afterward: down / up

If it has ever gone further than overload: 988, call or text, any hour.

* * *

What does your body do when the alarm goes off, and what would you tell a friend?

Which of the chapter's two groups are you in, the one that will not go until they know exactly what is wrong, or the one that will not go until they are sure nothing is, and what are the feathers you are still asking about?

Ten minutes, sitting, on a day you do not need it.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 25

The People in Your Care

Chapter 21 ended with the Fifteen-Minute Handoff: a time that happens every day, the other adult told, or a timer and a show if there is no other adult, and a room alone. Door shut, lights low, no phone, fifteen minutes. Five days out of seven, and on Sunday, how you felt at 6:50 p.m. and how the children behaved in the hour after. The chapter was written for parents. This week is for anyone whose day is organized around someone else's needs: a child, an aging parent, a partner who is ill, a classroom.

The chapter's argument is one sentence: the person who responds to every signal all day is the person who most needs an hour in which nobody sends any. Caregiving is overload without an exit plan. The input is continuous, and much of it is someone's distress, which you register as your own. What you do automatically, noticing the signal early and answering it, is what the research calls responsive, and it helps.

So the plan this week is a map of who depends on you and when, with the window drawn in first and defended like an appointment. A sentence for the people in your care: "my ears are full; five quiet minutes and then I'm all yours." And one thing you will say

no to this season. A caregiver on overload is, on the bad days, part of the environment. Protecting your recovery is how the people in your care get a steady one.

Chapter 21 of Wired to Feel More: When the Overloaded Person Is a Parent



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

PLAN: WHO DEPENDS ON ME, AND MY FIFTEEN MINUTES

First the map: everyone who depends on you this week, what they need from you and at what hours, and who else could cover any of it. Then draw in the window, fifteen minutes at a fixed time, before you fill in anything else. Then the sentence and the hand-

off. Each day, mark whether the window held and what happened in the hour after. On Sunday, the third thing.

Who depends on me - Name	What they need from me	At what hours	Who else could cover it
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

The hour of the day when all of it arrives at once: _____ What I notice in my body there: _____

My window - From _____ to _____, every day. Where: _____ Door shut [ ] Lights low [ ] Phone elsewhere [ ]

Who takes everything during the window: _____ If nobody: timer set, show on, or window moved to after bedtime, before the dishes [ ]

My sentence, in words the people in my care can use:

Monday - Window kept [ ] How I felt at the hardest hour: ____ / 10 The hour after, with them: _____

Tuesday - Window kept [ ] How I felt at the hardest hour: ____ / 10 The hour after, with them: _____

Wednesday - Window kept [ ] How I felt at the hardest hour: ____ / 10 The hour after, with them: _____

Thursday - Window kept [ ] How I felt at the hardest hour: ____ / 10 The hour after, with them: _____

Friday - Window kept [ ] How I felt at the hardest hour: ____ / 10 The hour after, with them: _____

Saturday - Window kept [ ] How I felt at the hardest hour: ____ / 10 The hour after, with them: _____

Sunday - Window kept [ ] How I felt at the hardest hour: ____ / 10 The hour after, with them: _____

Windows kept: ____ of 7. What ate the ones that did not hold:

The third thing I am saying no to this season (the extra activity, the party at the trampoline park, the enrichment the weekend did not need): _____ Said to: _____ Done [ ]

If someone in my care shares the trait - The one thing from the chapter I will give them this week (a quiet corner of their own,

warning before transitions, their reactions taken seriously without being treated as fragile):

If the overload has gone past tired into what Chapter 10 describes: who I will tell this week, and when: _____

* * *

Who depends on you, and when do you get fifteen minutes alone?

What do the people in your care learn from the way you carry your day when you walk back in the door, and what would you rather they learned?

The window. Nothing else.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 26

Tell It Once

Chapter 22 ended with Tell It Once: one episode from your life as a sensitive person, the day you first understood it or a moment this month when the load won, written in fifteen minutes, facts and feelings, with a beginning, a cause and an end. Read back once, with every sentence underlined in which you were the one who decided something. Then told out loud, to one person, in under three minutes, watching what their face did around the middle. The chapter called that coupling. It is understanding, built rather than waited for.

This week the telling becomes a letter, because a letter lets you choose the scene, put yourself at the wheel, give the reader one thing to do, and stop, which is the order the chapter gave. Tell a scene, not a label: a brain can couple to "by nine the playlist and the fourteen voices had used up everything I had," and not to "highly sensitive person." You do not owe anyone the whole of Part I.

And because this is the middle of the year, you take the same picture you took in Week 2: the ten statements, the same scale, a total and a date, next to the first one. Not to see improvement. To see what has changed, and what twenty-six weeks of pages have to

say about it. Then Review 2 waits on the next page, and after it the book is finished and the journal is yours alone.

Chapter 22 of Wired to Feel More: Finding Your People, Telling Your Story



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LETTER AND MID-YEAR SCALE

First the letter, across five days: one scene, you at the wheel, one request, then stop. On day six, read it once and underline the sentences where you were the one acting. Then decide whom it goes to, and how. On day seven, the scale: rate each statement from 1 (almost never happened to me this week) to 5 (happened almost every day), add up the total, write the date, and copy your Week 2 total next to it. The scale is for self-observation, to compare with yourself. It is not a diagnosis.

Letter - To: _____ (one person who already loves me, or one I would like to understand)

The scene, with a timeline: where I was, what came in, and when I noticed I was running out:

The cause, in plain words and without the label: a nervous system that takes in more, reaches overload sooner, and recovers more slowly:

What I decided, and did (not what I could not handle):

One thing you could do next time (a seat at the end of the table, a text before the loud plan, ten minutes of nothing when I get home):

Sentences underlined in which I was the one acting: ____

Decision: I send it / I read it aloud in under three minutes / I keep it [ ] What their face did around the middle: _____

Where my people are, if I want more of them: one place online I will read for a month before saying a word, or one search for a group in my city: _____

Mid-year scale for self-observation

Read each statement and rate it from 1 (almost never happened to me this week) to 5 (happened almost every day). These are the same ten statements as in Week 2, so the two pictures can be compared. Add up the total and write the date.

Date: ____ / ____ / _____

1. I came out of a meeting, a call or a family dinner knowing how each person was doing without anyone telling me.



2. I had trouble falling asleep after a day with a lot of new things in it.



3. I needed to turn down the volume, dim a light or step outside before the people I was with did.



4. A scene from a show, a song or a news story stayed with me for hours.



5. I got to the end of a day feeling as if I had lived two days in one.



6. I noticed a detail at work or at home that later turned out to matter.



7. Before a small decision (what to order, which route, how to reply) I ran through more options than the people around me.



8. I preferred a plan with one or two people over a group.



9. A comment made in passing was still turning in my head at bedtime.



10. Arriving somewhere new, I needed a few minutes to get my bearings before joining in.



Total (10 to 50): _____

Week 2 total: _____ Date of Week 2: ____ / ____ Difference: _____

Statements that moved by two points or more, up or down (write the numbers): _____

What has changed between the two pictures, in one sentence:

Note: this scale is for self-observation. It helps you compare with yourself in Weeks 2 and 52. It is not a diagnosis.

* * *

What moment of your story as a sensitive person are you ready to tell?

Who is sitting across from you at the table, and who have

you been waiting to be understood by without their ever having heard the story?

Tell it once, to one person.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Review 2

The Middle of the Year

Twenty-six weeks have gone by, half the road. Before you go on, set aside one quiet afternoon, or two, to reread the journal from Week 14, and then leaf through the first thirteen weeks again with what you know now. Pencil in hand, correcting nothing. Mark what surprises you, what repeats, and what you would no longer say the same way. Then answer these questions slowly. There are no right answers. There is one person looking at half a year of their own path.

Rereading Weeks 14 to 26, what three things about yourself can you say now that you could not have said in Review 1?

Copy here the thermometers of Weeks 14 to 26, energy and over-

load, week by week. Which weeks ran highest, and what was going on in your life then?

Week	Energy	Overload
Week 14		
Week 15		
Week 16		
Week 17		
Week 18		
Week 19		
Week 20		
Week 21		
Week 22		
Week 23		
Week 24		
Week 25		
Week 26		

Compare these thirteen thermometers with the first quarter's. Has the relationship between overload and energy changed, or is it the same? What does that tell you?

Put the Week 2 scale and the Week 26 scale side by side. Which statements went up, and which went down? What explains the ones that moved most?

Look at Week 14. Are the nights different? Which part of the wind-down survived, and what still comes to bed with you?

Your corner, from Week 15: is it still there? Do you use it before you need it, or after?

The place you avoided, from Week 16: did you go back? What happened, and what did it cost the day after?

The boundary sentence from Week 18: did you say it? If yes, what happened afterward, in that relationship and in you, and how long did the guilt last? If not, what got in the way?

Look at the two columns from Weeks 19 and 20. What has changed at work since then, in the room, in the conversation, or in how long you plan to stay?

Look at the three circles from Week 21 and the letter from Week 22. Who has moved, and what did you ask for, out loud?

Which "one thing I'll do this week" did you actually do this quarter, and what happened? Which one did you write down more than once without doing it?

Reread your twenty-six weeks of gratitude, day by day. What repeats? Is there something in the last thirteen that was not in the first thirteen?

What are you leaving behind in this first half of the year: an idea about yourself, a habit, an explanation that no longer serves? And what are you taking into the second: a sentence, a signal from the body, a place, a person?

The book is finished. From Week 27 on, the journal is on its own. Which chapter of Wired to Feel More will you reread first, and why that one?

Reread the sentence you wrote for yourself at the end of Review 1. Did it come true, partly, or not at all? Now write another, the one you would like to read thirteen weeks from now, in Review 3.

Part Five

On Your Own

The Treasure Under the Fountain



I read this one on a night I could not sleep, in an old volume of the Arabian Nights, and it made me laugh first and then go quiet.

It happens in Baghdad, many centuries ago, when a man could lose everything in a year without anyone finding it strange. Ours had been rich and had lost it all except his father's house: a house with a courtyard, an orange tree, and a stone fountain that no longer ran. His beard was grayer than his age accounted for, and his sandals had been stitched twice. One night he dreamed that someone told him his fortune was in Cairo, and that he should go and find it.

He went. He sold the little he had left and was on the road for weeks. He reached Cairo after dark, with nowhere to sleep, and lay down in the doorway of a big house with his head on his bundle. That same night, thieves broke into the house next door. The watch came running with torches, and the thieves got away over the rooftops. The only one still there was him, asleep in the doorway. They beat him and locked him up.

Three days later they brought him before the captain of the watch, a heavy man who laughed with his whole body, who asked him where he was from and what he had been doing in that doorway. The man told him the truth: that he had come from Baghdad because of a dream that promised him a fortune in Cairo.

I like to picture the captain's face as he listened, and the roar that came after.

He told the man he had never met anyone with so little sense. He had dreams too, he said. Three times he had dreamed of a house in Baghdad, in such and such a neighborhood, with a courtyard, an orange tree and a dry stone fountain, and a treasure buried under the fountain, and it had never once crossed his mind to walk a single step on account of a dream. He gave the man a few coins for the road and had him put out of the city.

The man walked back to Baghdad, and not for the coins. The

house in the captain's dream was his own. He dug under the dry fountain, and there it was.

I think of him when someone finishes a book like this one, or a season of going to talk to somebody, and asks me what comes next, where to go now. They have half a year of pages at home, in their own hand, and they are looking toward Cairo.

What have you been looking for somewhere else that is already under your own fountain?

Source: The Arabian Nights, "The Ruined Man Who Became Rich Again Through a Dream" (night 351 in Burton's numbering), a medieval Arabic folk tale in the public domain; retold by the author.

* * *

From this week on, the journal continues without the book. You finished Wired to Feel More at Week 26, and the line at the top of each week that pointed you to a chapter is gone. Nothing else changes. The shape is the one you know: a short opening, the thermometer, an exercise, two questions, the close. What changes is the reference. Until now the book set the subject and these pages asked you to live it for a week. From here, the subject comes from what shows up when someone has been watching themselves for half a year: rest that arrives with guilt, the phone that never stops, the criticism that stays, the worry that runs ahead, the small decisions that cost a whole afternoon, the music, the silence, the child you were. You have twenty-six weeks in your own handwriting. They are your material now, and the weeks ahead will send you back to them often. One week at a time, the way you have been doing it.

Week 27

What Has Changed

Last week, in Review 2, you reread half a year of your own handwriting. This week you do something narrower with it. You put Week 1 next to today and look at the distance between them, one area of your life at a time. Not the distance you hoped for. The one that is there.

Most highly sensitive people are very good at seeing what has not changed, and very bad at seeing what has, because real change in this territory is small and specific. A pause that was not in your Wednesday in January. A sentence you now say at 3:30 instead of thinking it at 11:40. A person you no longer explain yourself to. The Chapter 1 ledger, with its two columns, was the first time you wrote down the gap between what you were told you were doing and what your system was doing. Twenty-six weeks later, the gap has a history, and you are the only one who has it on paper.

So, six rows, one a day: your body, your rest, your people, your work, the words you use about yourself, and what you ask for. Left, how it was in Week 1. Right, how it is now. In the middle, in three or four words, what moved it. If a row has not moved, write that in plain words. It is information, and it tells you where the rest of this year wants to go.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DIAGRAM: THEN AND NOW, IN SIX ROWS

Reread Week 1 and Review 1 before you begin. Draw three columns, the middle one narrower, and six rows. Fill in one row a day: on the left, how that area was in Week 1; on the right, how it is today; in the middle, what changed it, in three or four words (a habit, a person, a chapter, a sentence). On the seventh day write the paragraph at the bottom and decide who you will tell.

THEN (Week 1)	What changed it	NOW (Week 27)
My body (early warnings, tension, tiredness)		
My rest (pauses, sleep, weekends)		
My people (who I see, who I tell)		
My work, or whatever fills my days		
What I say about myself (the words I use for my sensitivity)		
What I ask for (boundaries, help, time)		

The row where I have changed most: _____ The row where nothing has moved: _____

My half year, told in one paragraph, the way I would tell it to someone I trust:

Who I will tell this week: _____ Told [ ]

* * *

What do you do differently now than in week 1?

Which change in the right-hand column has someone around you noticed without being told? And which one do only you know about?

Make it telling someone. One row is enough.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 28

Three Sentences

In Week 26 you told one scene from your story out loud, to one person, in under three minutes, the way Chapter 22 asked. You may have noticed what happened around the middle, when their face changed. A scene does that. An explanation usually does not, and that is the problem this week takes on.

When someone you love asks what this sensitivity thing actually is, one of two things tends to happen. You go long, through Chapter 3 and the brain scans and the percentages, until you can see them drifting. Or you wave it off with a joke, because the long version has failed before. Neither reaches them. What reaches people is three short sentences in your own words, said without looking at anything: what it is, what it is not, and what changes between the two of you if they keep it in mind.

This week you write a letter to that one person, and the three sentences sit at its center. The rest of the letter is the road to finding them: what you think they believe now, a recent scene where the trait showed and you could not explain it, what you do not need from them, and what they already give you without knowing. Days five and six, say the three sentences out loud until

they come on their own. Day seven, decide what to do with the letter. The sentences you keep either way.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LETTER: THE TRAIT IN THREE SENTENCES

Choose one person you love who does not quite get it yet: a partner, a grown child, a parent, a sibling, a friend of many years. Write the letter over the week, one section a day. The three sentences at the center must be short, in your own words, with no technical terms and no numbers. On days five and six, read them aloud until you no longer need the page. On the last day, decide.

Who I am writing to, and why this person:

What I think they believe today about my sensitivity, in their words:

A recent scene between us where it showed and I could not explain it:

Sentence 1 - What it is:

Sentence 2 - What it is not:

Sentence 3 - What changes between us if you keep it in mind:

What I do not need you to do, so you never feel you owe me anything:

What you already give me without knowing it:

Said out loud, from memory: day ____ day ____

Closing and decision: I read it to them / I send it / I keep it and say the three sentences when the subject comes up [ ]

* * *

How would you explain the trait to someone you love?

Which of the three sentences was hardest to write? Is it because you are not clear on it yet, or because you are afraid of how it will land?

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 29

Rest Without Guilt

Stopping is not the hard part. The hard part is what starts talking the moment you stop. In Week 13 you put real pauses into a week, with a start and an end, and counted which ones survived. Some were eaten by the calendar. Others were eaten by a voice: you should be doing something, nobody else needs this much, you will pay for it later. Chapter 10 was clear that recovery is the variable that decides whether this year's load becomes next year's damage, and that highly sensitive people need more of it than average. They are also, in my experience, the people who allow themselves the least.

This week you measure the voice. Not to argue with it; to hear its exact words. Each time you stop in one of the situations on the page, you rate how heavy the guilt was, from 0 to 10, and you write down the sentence that showed up, verbatim. By Sunday you will know where the voice is loudest, where it is quiet, and, if you listen closely, whose voice it was before it was yours.

Then the second half, with care. You write the sentence you would like to hear instead. Not a slogan. A sentence you can believe at 2:00 p.m. on a Tuesday with the dishes undone. Copy it onto a card and put it where you usually stop. This scale is for

self-observation, to compare with yourself later in the year. It is not a diagnosis of anything.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

SCALE: HOW HEAVY THE GUILT IS WHEN I STOP

Through the week, each time you stop in one of the situations below, rate from 0 (I rested without thinking about anything else) to 10 (I could not rest for what I was telling myself) how heavy the guilt was, and write next to it the sentence that appeared, word for word. On Sunday fill in the summary and write the new sentence, the one you would like to tell yourself. This scale is for self-observation, to watch yourself and compare with yourself

later. It does not measure anything clinical and it is not a diagnosis.

Starting date: ____ / ____ / _____

Situation	How heavy the guilt was (0-10)	What I told myself
Sitting for ten minutes doing nothing		
Taking a nap, or staying in bed a little longer		
Saying no to plans in order to stay home		
Leaving a task half done until tomorrow		
Asking someone to do something I could do myself		
A whole day with nothing productive in it		
Resting while people around me keep working		
Being sick and actually stopping		
Other:		

Sunday summary - Where the guilt weighs most: _____ Where it weighs least: _____

The sentence that came up most often, and whose voice it sounds like:

What I would like to tell myself when I stop, in one sentence I can believe:

Note: this scale is for self-observation. It is not a diagnosis.

* * *

What do you tell yourself when you stop, and what would you like to hear?

What would actually happen if you rested when you needed to, without that voice? Write the first thing that comes, then check whether it is true.

Rest once this week with the card in sight.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 30

Screens and Switching Off

Chapter 12 opened with a Wednesday whose first event was a phone on the nightstand showing eleven notifications at 6:15 a.m. If you kept the sleep diary in Week 14, you wrote down your last screen of the night for seven nights, and you probably learned that the problem was not only the light. It was the content, which Chapter 13 called the one thing you cannot help processing.

Every alert that sounds, buzzes or lights up is a small stimulus that demands a decision: look, or do not look. For most people it is background. For a nervous system that processes everything deeply, it is a complete interruption, with its peak of attention and its slide back down, and there can be forty of them in a day. Together they are a steady leak, and you are the only one who can see the drip.

This week you take the smallest action there is. On day one, an inventory: everything on your phone, your computer and your watch, if you wear one, that is allowed to reach you with sound, vibration or light. Then, one a day, you turn one off, after writing down what it does to you when it fires, in your body and in your mood. Before the next one, a line about what happened without

the last: whether you missed it, lost anything real, or noticed nothing. Seven in a week. Whatever comes back on afterward comes back on because you decided.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LIST: SEVEN ALERTS I TURN OFF

Day one, the inventory. Days two through seven, one alert a day: name it, write what it does to you when it goes off, turn it off, and mark the day. Before the next one, write what happened without the previous one. On Sunday, decide which stay off, and write down the hours when the phone is out of sight and where you leave it.

Day 1 inventory - Everything that reaches me with sound, vibration or light:

Alert 1 - What it is: _____ What it does to me when it fires: _____ Turned off on day ____ What happened without it: _____

Alert 2 - What it is: _____ What it does to me when it fires: _____ Turned off on day ____ What happened without it: _____

Alert 3 - What it is: _____ What it does to me when it fires: _____ Turned off on day ____ What happened without it: _____

Alert 4 - What it is: _____ What it does to me when it fires: _____ Turned off on day ____ What happened without it: _____

Alert 5 - What it is: _____ What it does to me when it fires: _____ Turned off on day ____ What happened without it: _____

Alert 6 - What it is: _____ What it does to me when it fires: _____ Turned off on day ____ What happened without it: _____

Alert 7 - What it is: _____ What it does to me when it fires: _____ Turned off on day ____ What happened without it: _____

The ones that stay off: _____ The ones I turn back on, and why: _____

Hours of the day when the phone is out of my sight, and where I leave it: _____

Phone charging outside the bedroom, as in Week 14 [ ]

What I did with the attention I got back:

* * *

Which notifications could you turn off tomorrow?

Which alert do you not dare to turn off, and who are you telling, by leaving it on, that they may enter your day at any hour?

Turn off one more than you planned.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 31

Criticism and Rejection

Chapter 8 gave you the potter and the dish: you cannot decide not to feel criticism, because your brain processes it as deeply as everything else, but you can decide whether to pick the dish up and carry it home. It also gave you the rules that hold up: separate the work from the worth, get it in writing, because on a page it is a list and a list can be worked, turn it into actions within the hour. And a comment made years ago can still be deciding what you do not do today.

In Week 4 you looked at the words people used for what you are. This week the double list looks at something else: the criticism of what you do, and the rejection, the no that came back when you asked. They hurt; that is not the question. The question is which part is true. Almost no criticism is entirely true or entirely false, and what keeps you up at night is usually trying to swallow or spit out the whole thing.

So, one a day, the comment or rejection that still turns up, with who said it and when. Underneath, two columns. Left, the part you recognize as true, however small, and what you could do with it. Right, the part that is not yours: the tone, the timing, what that person was carrying that day. If a criticism falls entirely into one

column, look again. On the seventh day, read only the left column.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DOUBLE LIST: THE PART THAT IS TRUE, THE PART THAT IS NOT MINE

Each day, write at the top the criticism or rejection that still circles, as you remember it, with who said it and when. Below it, two columns: on the left, the part you recognize as true and what you can do with it, in one line each; on the right, the part that is not yours and whose kitchen the dish belongs in. Keep it to one line per column, as the chapter suggests: a list, not a night.

The part that is true, and what I do with it	The part that is not mine, and whose it is

Criticism 1 - What was said, by whom, and when: _____

Criticism 2 - What was said, by whom, and when: _____

Criticism 3 - What was said, by whom, and when: _____

Criticism 4 - What was said, by whom, and when: _____

Criticism 5 - What was said, by whom, and when: _____

Criticism 6 - What was said, by whom, and when: _____

The one that was hardest to split in two: _____

What the left column adds up to, in one sentence I can use:

What I will do so that the right column does not come back at 2:00 a.m. (write it down, ask for it in writing, the walk, the door, three breaths):

* * *

Which criticism is still on your mind, and which part of it is true?

Is there a criticism nobody has ever made to you that you make to yourself every week? Which column would you put it in if someone else had said it?

Do something with one line from the left column.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 32

The Worry That Runs Ahead

In Week 9 you put the subject you keep turning over in the middle of a page and drew its branches. If you look back at it, there is a fair chance that most of the branches pointed forward, toward something that had not happened yet. Chapter 8 said it in one line about a nine-word text from a manager: the criticism may never arrive; the processing of its possibility already has.

Imagining in detail is one of the real strengths of this trait. It is why you see the problem coming. It is also why Friday's conversation already has four endings on Tuesday, and why the trip has gone wrong three times before you have packed. That rehearsal costs almost as much as the event. Chapter 9 gave you the test for when depth has stopped producing anything, have I had this thought before?, and the remedy for a decision, which works just as well for a worry: a deadline and a container.

This week the container is an appointment. Ten minutes a day, same hour, notebook open, for the worry and nothing else. Outside that hour, when it shows up, one word on the page and back to what you were doing. Before that, on day one, you separate what you know from what you are telling yourself, and you

find the one step that is actually in your hands. On Sunday you check how much of what you imagined has happened.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

PLAN: A DAILY APPOINTMENT WITH THE WORRY

Day one: write the worry, when what you fear would happen, and the ending you are imagining, in detail, so you can see it written. Then sort it into two boxes: what you know for sure, and what you are telling yourself. Day two: set the hour of your daily appointment, ten minutes with the notebook, and one small preparation that is in your hands. Days three through seven: keep the appointment and, outside it, when the subject arrives, write

one word and leave it for the hour. Sunday: look at what actually happened.

What I am worried about that has not happened yet:

When it would happen, if it happens: _____ How many times I have already lived it this week: _____

The ending I am imagining, in detail, to see it written down:

What I know for sure about this situation:

What I am telling myself and do not know:

What is in my hands and I can prepare this week, one step only: _____ Done [ ]

What is not in my hands, written here to leave it here:

My daily appointment with the worry: at _____, ten minutes, notebook open

Wednesday: Appointment kept [ ] Times I left it for the hour: ____

Thursday: Appointment kept [ ] Times I left it for the hour: ____

Friday: Appointment kept [ ] Times I left it for the hour: ____

Saturday: Appointment kept [ ] Times I left it for the hour: ____

Sunday: Appointment kept [ ] Times I left it for the hour: ____

What I noticed, in my body and my mood, when I left it for the hour instead of following it:

Sunday - Of what I imagined, what has actually happened so far:

---

* * *

What are you worried about that has not happened yet?

Of the times something worried you in advance this year, how many turned out the way you imagined? What did your sensitivity do when the real moment came, and what did it do while it waited?

Something that belongs to the step in your hands, not to the ending in your head.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 33

Deciding Without Draining

Choosing a gift. Answering a text. Deciding whether to go to the dinner. Decisions that take most people a minute can take you an afternoon, and Chapter 9 explained why: from the outside it looks like indecision, and from the inside it is a thorough analysis that has not been allowed to finish. You are not weighing two options. You are weighing what each one does to your evening, to the other person, to next month. That depth is what makes you right about the big things. Applied to the small ones, it is a cost nobody sees, including you.

The chapter also gave you three habits. Give the decision a deadline and a container. Sort by reversibility, because a decision that can be undone does not deserve a week. Write the analysis down once, so the mind can stop holding the tabs open. And it said something about your stomach: it has an opinion, and the opinion is data, not a verdict.

This week you take one small decision that is costing you too much and put it through six boxes. Each box is filled once, in one sentence, with no going back to improve it. On day three you set the deadline, inside this week, and you tell someone. You decide on that day whether or not you feel ready. The last box is filled

afterward, with what actually happened, which is almost always less than it looked like.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DIAGRAM: ONE SMALL DECISION IN SIX BOXES AND A DEADLINE

Write the small decision at the top, and how long it has been open. Fill in the six boxes over two days, one sentence per box, without going back. On day three set the deadline, inside this week, and say it out loud to someone. Decide that day. Fill in the last box afterward.

The small decision that is costing me too much:

How long it has been open: _____

Box 1 - The real options, no more than three:

Box 2 - What is actually at stake, in one sentence without exaggerating:

Box 3 - Can it be undone? (yes / partly / no) If yes, how long would undoing it take: _____

Box 4 - What my stomach prefers before I think about it, the data and not the verdict:

Box 5 - What someone from my inner circle, from the Week 21 map, would say if I told them in two minutes:

Box 6 - What is really holding me back, which is usually not on the list of options:

Deadline, inside this week: ____ / ____ Who I told: _____

What I decided:

How long it took, from filling the boxes to deciding: _____

Last box - What happened afterward, and how much of what I feared occurred:

One rule for my small decisions from now on (a deadline, a person, a box):

* * *

Which small decision is costing you too much?

Which big decision in your life did you make quickly and well? What did you have then that you are missing when you get stuck on the small ones?

Make it deciding, not thinking about it better.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 34

Your Soundtrack

Being deeply moved by music was one of the items on the Arons' original questionnaire, Chapter 7 reminded you, so if a song can undo you in a parking lot, you are in the group the trait was built around. Chapter 1 added the other half: the part of sensitivity that responds to music, art and beauty is the part that goes with higher well-being. The same system that makes a loud restaurant unbearable makes good music almost unbearably good.

Not every song takes you to the same place, though, and after thirty-three weeks of watching yourself you can probably tell them apart. There is music that keeps you company when you are low. Music that gets you out the door. And one or two songs, very few, that bring you back to center when you have lost track of where center is. Most of us have never written down which is which.

This week you make the soundtrack. Seven pieces, one a day, each with the job it does. Title, who plays it, when you reach for it, and what it does to you, in one line. Listen to it all the way through that day, doing nothing else. One of the seven may be silence; the chapter said that for a highly sensitive person the most useful

music is sometimes none, and twenty minutes of quiet after a loud day earns a place on the list. On day seven, reread the seven and find the one that centers you.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LIST: MY SOUNDTRACK IN SEVEN PIECES

Each day, write down one song or piece you actually use, not one that would look good on a list. Title and who performs it, when you put it on, and what it does to you, in one line. Listen to it in full that day, doing nothing else. Silence counts as one of the seven if it is the thing you reach for. On the seventh day, reread and

choose the one that brings you back to center. Then put it where you can find it fast.

Piece 1 - Title and performer: _____ When I put it on: _____ What it does to me:

Piece 2 - Title and performer: _____ When I put it on: _____ What it does to me:

Piece 3 - Title and performer: _____ When I put it on: _____ What it does to me:

Piece 4 - Title and performer: _____ When I put it on: _____ What it does to me:

Piece 5 - Title and performer: _____ When I put it on: _____ What it does to me:

Piece 6 - Title and performer: _____ When I put it on: _____ What it does to me:

Piece 7 - Title and performer: _____ When I put it on: _____ What it does to me:

The one that brings me back to center, and why:

Where I keep it so it is always within reach (a playlist, a note, the car): _____

Twenty minutes of silence after a loud day this week - Day: _____ Done [ ] Compared with the playlist: _____

* * *

Which song brings you back to center, and why?

Is there a song you stopped listening to because it takes you somewhere you do not want to go back to? What is that song keeping that you have not looked at yet?

Play the one that centers you, on purpose, on a day that needs it.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 35

What You Made When No One Was Watching

Part I of this journal opened with a boy who drew cats in the margins when his master's back was turned. Most highly sensitive people have a version of that boy: something they made as a child, when nobody was watching, that nobody asked for. Drawings on the back of homework. Cities built from couch cushions. Stories told to a younger sibling at night. A collection, sorted and re-sorted. Then someone looked, and said something, and the making moved somewhere quieter, or stopped.

Chapter 3 gave creativity a careful paragraph, not a chapter, and that is the right size. Sensitivity goes with openness to experience and with creative interests, and if it helps, the likeliest route is the mundane one: a brain that takes in more and processes it more deeply has more material to recombine. The chapter also said good creative work alternates between generating freely and judging strictly. Many of us learned the judging first, from the outside, and never got back to the generating.

So this week you go back. First you draw, badly if necessary, the thing you made as a child, from memory. Then you list what you made and who saw it. Then, on one day, twenty minutes: you

make something small with your hands, door closed, no plan to show it. The point is not a product. It is to find out what your system does when it is allowed to generate without a judge in the room.

On your own



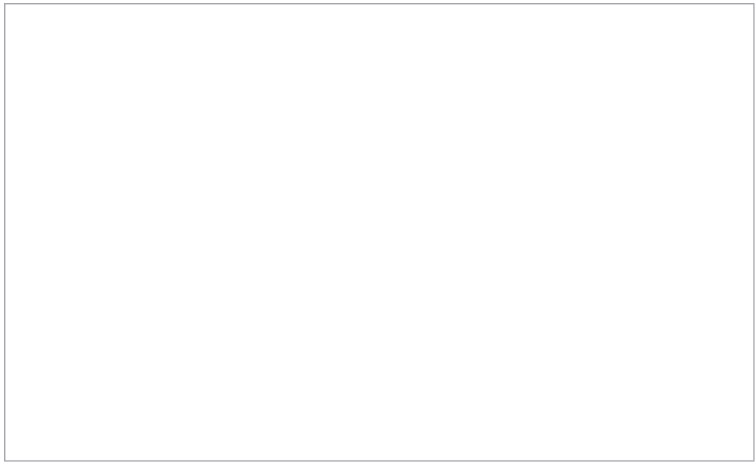
Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DRAWING: WHAT I MADE THEN, AND WHAT I COULD MAKE NOW

Fill the top half of the page on day one with a drawing, however rough, of the thing you made as a child: the object, the page, the hideout, the stage. Below it, over the week, fill in the lines. On one day of your choosing, set aside twenty minutes to make something small, alone, with the input down. Note what you made and what you noticed, not whether it was good.



What it was, roughly how old I was, and where I made it:

Who saw it, and what they said or did:

What I understood then about making things, from what they said:

Other things I made when no one was watching, through the years (a list, as many as come):

What I still make today, even if I do not call it that (cooking, a garden, fixing, arranging, playlists, a notebook):

Twenty minutes this week - Day: _____ What I made: _____ Door closed, phone away [ ]

What my body and my head did during those twenty minutes, before any judgment:

What I could make now, if nobody ever had to see it:

* * *

What did you create as a child, and what could you make now?

Who was the first person to judge what you made, and what did you do with their verdict? Is it still the voice that speaks before you start?

Twenty minutes of making. No one sees it.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 36

The Child You Were

In Week 1 you collected seven signs from back then, one memory a day, and you wrote down who in your house noticed and what they did with what they saw. In Week 3 you drew your lifeline and marked who taught you to pause and settle, and where you had to learn it alone. Chapter 3 put the proportion on it: roughly half wiring, half weather. The child's reactivity came with them. The regulation grew in the rooms they were in, faster in some than in others.

This week you write to that child. Not to the memory of them, to them: the one who covered their ears at the fireworks, who knew from the driveway what mood the house was in, who was told to stop crying. You know things now that nobody in that house knew, and you have half a year of practice at doing with the trait what they were never shown.

Write it a section a day, in plain words, the way you would talk to a child you were responsible for. What they needed and did not get. What did hold them, or they would not be writing this. What you would tell them about the room, and about the sentence. If a section stirs up more than you can hold, leave it for another day or

leave it blank; the note on care at the front of this journal applies here. On the last day, decide what to do with the letter.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LETTER: TO THE SENSITIVE CHILD I WAS

Address the letter to the child by the name they were called at home, at the age that comes to you first. Write one or two sections a day. When you remember scenes, describe them before you interpret them. When you remember sentences, copy them as they were said. If a section is too much for today, leave it for tomorrow. On the last day, decide what to do with the letter.

To _____, age ____, in (the place and the year):

What I remember you noticing that nobody else in the house seemed to notice:

What you needed then and did not get, as plainly as I can say it:

Who or what did hold you, even partly (a person, a place, an animal, a routine, a book):

What you decided about yourself back then, from what was said and done, and that you carried into adulthood:

What I know now about the way your system works that I wish someone had told you:

What I already give you today, without having noticed (from Week 12, from Week 13, from the kit):

What I still deny you, and one small thing I will do about it this week:

Closing, and decision: I keep it in the journal / I read it aloud somewhere quiet / I show it to someone I trust [ ]

* * *

What did the sensitive child you were need and not get?

What do you still give that child today without noticing? And what do you still deny them, in the same words that were used back then?

Something that child would have liked. Small enough to fit in an afternoon, as in Week 1.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 37

Chosen Solitude and Silence

There are two kinds of solitude that look alike from the outside and have nothing in common from the inside: the one you choose and the one that falls on you. The first feeds a highly sensitive person. The second weighs. Silence works the same way. It is not the absence of something; it is what lets everything you took in during the day find its place. Chapter 7 said it in passing about music: the twenty minutes of quiet after a loud day do more than a playlist. Chapter 9 explained why: the processing goes on after the input stops, and it needs room.

In Week 29 you measured the voice that speaks when you stop. This week you measure something simpler, and almost nobody has ever counted it: how many minutes of real silence you get in a day, no voices, no screen with sound, no music, and how many of those minutes you chose. Then how you ended the day, from 0 to 10, and one word for your mood at bedtime.

By Sunday you add it up, find the best day and ask what it had that the others did not. Then you write your number: the hours of silence a week you think you need to be well. It is a guess, and it is yours. This scale is for self-observation, to compare with your-

self later. It is not a diagnosis of anything, and the number is allowed to change.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

SCALE: HOW MUCH SILENCE I HAVE, AND HOW MUCH I NEED

Each night, write down roughly how many minutes of real silence you had that day: no voices, no screen with sound, no music. Mark whether you chose them or they fell on you, and rate from 0 (I lacked silence all day) to 10 (I had what I needed) how you ended the day. Add one word for your mood. On Sunday add up the minutes, find the best day and write your number for the week. This scale is for self-

observation, to watch yourself and compare with yourself later. It does not measure anything clinical and it is not a diagnosis.

Starting date: ____ / ____ / _____

Day	Minutes of real silence	Chosen / fell on me	How I ended the day (0-10)	My mood in one word
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Sunday summary - Minutes of silence this week: _____ The best day, and what was different about it: _____

Where and at what hour silence is easiest for me to find: _____ What usually breaks it: _____

My number: the silence I think I need in a week to be well, roughly: _____ hours

The difference between the solitude I choose and the one that falls on me, in one sentence that helps me tell them apart:

Note: this scale is for self-observation. It is not a diagnosis.

* * *

How much silence do you need in a week?

When does silence stop being rest and start being a hiding place? What signal tells you, and who was the last person who pulled you out of it and whom you thanked afterward?

Put a stretch of silence on the calendar, with a time.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 38

"You're Too Sensitive"

Chapter 1 began with that sentence, and so did this journal. You heard it at six, when the tag in your shirt made you cry. At fourteen, when a joke stayed with you for a week. You hear it now in the adult versions: don't take it personally, you're overthinking this. The ledger in Week 1 put the sentence in one column and what you actually noticed in the other. In Week 4 you gave the labels a better name. In Week 31 you split a criticism in two. This week you point those tools at the sentence itself.

Because it still lands. Said with love, in a hurry or with contempt, it tends to fall in the same spot, and for many highly sensitive people it sets off the same reaction it did the first time, however much they know. That is not a failure of knowledge. It is depth of processing doing what it does with a sentence heard a hundred times.

So a double list, one row a day. On the left, the sentence as it was said: who, when, in what tone, and what you understood about yourself when you heard it. On the right, what your nervous system was actually doing in that moment, now that you know, and the answer you would give today, calmly, in two

sentences, the one that never comes in time. On the seventh day, read only the right-hand column, out loud, the way you did in Week 4.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DOUBLE LIST: WHAT THEY SAID, WHAT WAS ACTUALLY HAPPENING

One row a day. On the left, the sentence as you remember it, with who said it, roughly when, the tone, and what you understood about yourself on hearing it. On the right, what was actually going on in your system, in the chapter's terms if they help (input, processing, the curve, borrowed feelings), and the two-sentence

answer you would give today. Row seven is for the last time you said the sentence to yourself.

What was said, by whom, in what tone, and what I took it to mean	What was actually happening in me, and what I would answer today
The last time I said it to myself, and in what tone	

The row that still stings most, and where I feel it in my body:

My answer, in two sentences, for the next time (said out loud on day seven):

What I know now about my sensitivity that I did not know when the oldest row was written:

* * *

What still stings when someone says that sentence?

When was the last time you said that sentence to yourself, with nobody else in the room? What tone did you use, and whose tone was it?

Something that answers the sentence without a word.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 39

The Nature That Settles You

Chapter 7 ended its tour of the senses outdoors, because the outdoors is the one environment where more input seems to cost less. Two hours a week in natural settings, in one visit or many short ones, went with better health and well-being in a survey of nearly twenty thousand people, and the chapter's reading of why is what matters here: the input in a forest changes slowly and carries no demands. In Week 7 you scheduled those two hours and, very likely, something green or wet or open turned up in the right-hand column of your sensory map.

You do not need a mountain or a weekend. You need to know where the nearest piece of it is and how long it takes to get there, because the time you will actually use is ten minutes on a Tuesday, when the day has gone over the curve. A tree on the sidewalk. A bench with sky over it. A creek behind the parking lot. A small park. The window at work that looks at something other than a wall.

This week you inventory what you have within ten minutes on foot of home or work, then go, one place a day, phone in the pocket, and stay ten minutes. You write down what changes in you, and how long it takes. On day seven you choose the one that

brings you down fastest and give it a fixed day and hour next week, before anything else is booked.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LIST: SEVEN NATURAL PLACES WITHIN TEN MINUTES

Days one and two, the list: everything natural within ten minutes on foot of home or work, however small, including what you can see from a window. Days three through six, go to a different one each day, stay ten minutes without the phone, and write down what changed in you and how fast. If you cannot get out one day, use the window. Day seven, choose the one that works fastest and put it on next week's calendar.

Place 1: _____ From where, and how long it takes: _____ Best hour: _____ Went on day ____ What changed in me, and in how many minutes: _____

Place 2: _____ From where, and how long it takes: _____ Best hour: _____ Went on day ____ What changed in me, and in how many minutes: _____

Place 3: _____ From where, and how long it takes: _____ Best hour: _____ Went on day ____ What changed in me, and in how many minutes: _____

Place 4: _____ From where, and how long it takes: _____ Best hour: _____ Went on day ____ What changed in me, and in how many minutes: _____

Place 5: _____ From where, and how long it takes: _____ Best hour: _____ Went on day ____ What changed in me, and in how many minutes: _____

Place 6: _____ From where, and how long it takes: _____ Best hour: _____ Went on day ____ What changed in me, and in how many minutes: _____

Place 7 (the one I can see from a window without going out): _____ Which window: _____ What changed: _____

The one that brings me down fastest: _____ In roughly how many minutes: _____

What I look at, hear or touch there, the specific detail that does the work:

Its fixed place in my week: day _____ hour _____ And the signal that tells me to go even when it is not that day: _____

Two hours this week, in total, in one visit or several: _____ Done [ ]

What I bring back from there to home or work (a stone, a branch, a photo, a window I now look through): _____

* * *

Which natural place calms you in under ten minutes?

How many hours a week do you spend under a roof with artificial light, and how many under the sky? If the difference surprises you, what has been narrowing it without your noticing, and since when?

Go to the place. Ten minutes. Leave the phone in your pocket.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Review 3

The Third Quarter

Thirty-nine weeks have gone by, and the last thirteen you have done without the book. Before you go on, set aside one quiet afternoon, or two, to reread the journal from Week 27, pencil in hand, correcting nothing, and then leaf through Reviews 1 and 2 with what you know now. Mark what surprises you, what repeats, and what you would no longer say the same way. Then answer these questions slowly. There are no right answers. There is one person looking at three quarters of their own path, and at the first stretch they have walked on their own.

Rereading Weeks 27 to 39, what three things about yourself can you say now that you could not have said in Review 2?

Copy here the thermometers of Weeks 27 to 39, energy and overload, week by week. Which weeks ran highest, and what was going on in your life then?

Week	Energy	Overload
Week 27		
Week 28		
Week 29		
Week 30		
Week 31		
Week 32		
Week 33		
Week 34		
Week 35		
Week 36		
Week 37		
Week 38		
Week 39		

Compare these thirteen thermometers with the two quarters before them. Has the relationship between overload and energy shifted? And did you notice any difference, sitting down to write, now that no chapter opened the week: did you miss it, were you relieved, or did you notice nothing at all?

Look at the diagram in Week 27. Which row has moved again in these twelve weeks? And did you tell someone, as the page asked? What did they say?

The three sentences from Week 28: have you said them out loud to the person you wrote them for, or to anyone? What did their face do? If not yet, what is in the way?

Look at the guilt scale in Week 29 and the silence scale in Week 37. Do you rest differently than you did three months ago? Where is the card you wrote, and how many hours of silence did you actually get last week?

The alerts from Week 30: which are still off, and which came back on? Where does your phone sleep now?

Weeks 31 and 38, the criticism and the sentence: what did you do with the one line from the left column? Has anyone said "you're too sensitive" since, and what did you answer?

Week 32: did the thing you were worried about happen, and how? Week 33: have you used your rule for small decisions again, and did it hold?

Your soundtrack from Week 34, the twenty minutes of making from Week 35, the place from Week 39: which of the three has found a fixed spot in your week, and which one did you do once and not again?

Reread the letter in Week 36. What did you decide to do with it, and did you do the small thing you promised that child?

Which "one thing I'll do this week" did you actually do this quarter, and what happened? Which one did you write down more than once without doing it?

Reread your thirteen weeks of gratitude, day by day. Is there something there you are grateful to yourself for, and not to another person or to luck?

What are you leaving behind in this quarter, and what are you taking into the last one?

Reread the sentence you wrote for yourself at the end of Review 2. Did it come true, partly, or not at all?

The last quarter is about beauty, play, friendship, room of your own, the price of empathy, the body, pace, forgiving yourself, transitions, endings, and your owner's manual. Which of those is asking for your attention most right now, and why?

Write one sentence for yourself, the one you would like to read thirteen weeks from now, in Review 4.

Week 40

Beauty and Wonder

In Week 2 you wrote down three moments when you noticed something the people around you missed, and most were probably about people: a tone, a pause, a face that did not match the words. But your attention does not stop there. The same depth that reads a coworker reads the light on a brick wall at six in the evening, the bark of the tree outside the office, a shadow crossing the floor of the bus. Almost nobody stops for those. You do, and then you keep walking.

The book was careful about this part of the trait. When researchers take the sensitivity scale apart, the piece that measures being easily overstimulated goes with the costs. The piece that measures being moved by beauty and subtlety goes the other way, toward well-being, and in one study of burnout it looked protective. Chapter 10 put it in a sentence: the same trait carries the fuse and the extinguisher. This week is for the extinguisher.

In Week 35 you drew what you used to make when no one was watching. This week you draw again, and this time it is not about the past. Seven small notes, one detail a day that stopped you, with where and when. Then one of them goes on the page, drawn with whatever care you have. The result does not matter. What

matters is that you saw it, and gave it two minutes instead of none.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DRAWING: THE DETAIL I SAW THAT NOBODY ELSE LOOKED AT

Leave most of the page blank, with a frame drawn by hand. Through the week, keep the seven lines below open and write down each day one beautiful detail that stopped you, even for a second, with where you were and what time it was. It does not have to be anything special; what is special is that you saw it. On the sixth day choose one and draw it inside the frame, as carefully

as you can and without caring how it comes out. On the seventh, fill in the last lines and show it to someone.

Day 1 - What I saw: _____ Where and what time: _____

Day 2 - What I saw: _____ Where and what time: _____

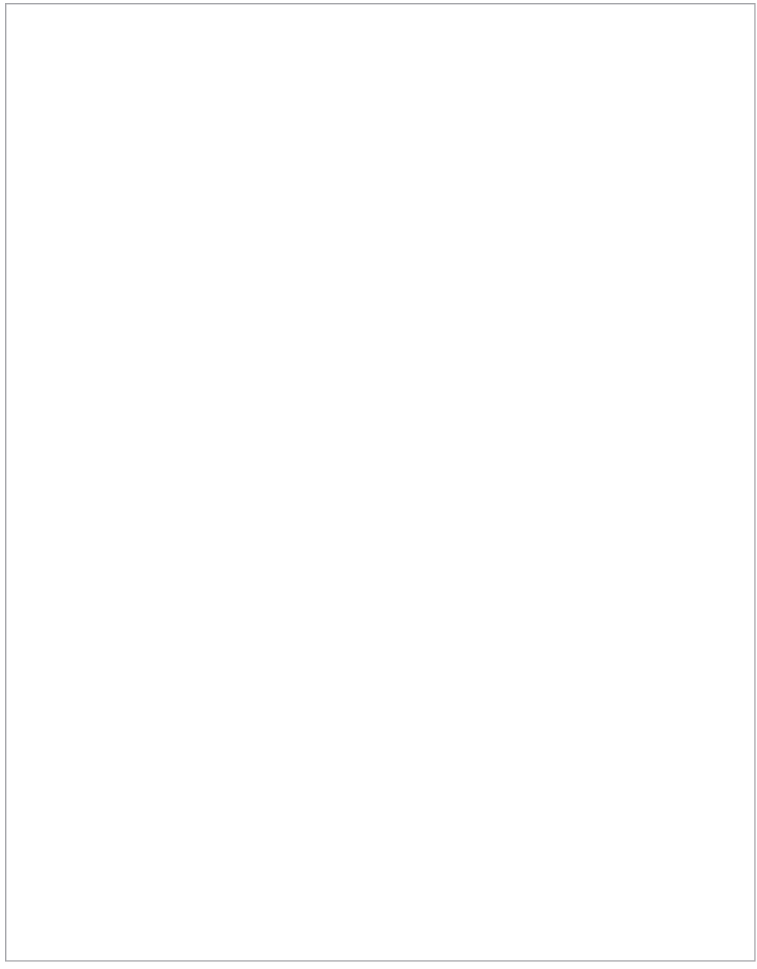
Day 3 - What I saw: _____ Where and what time: _____

Day 4 - What I saw: _____ Where and what time: _____

Day 5 - What I saw: _____ Where and what time: _____

Day 6 - What I saw: _____ Where and what time: _____

Day 7 - What I saw: _____ Where and what time: _____



Why this one and not another:

Who was with me when I saw it, and what that person was looking at:

What stopped me, in the body, and how long it lasted:

Who I showed it to or told about it, and what their face did: _____

* * *

What beautiful detail did you see this week that others missed?

How many times a day do you stop for something beautiful, and how many times do you keep walking because you are late? What do you lose in each one you skip, and who taught you that stopping was a waste of time?

Show the detail to someone, without explaining why it stopped you.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 41

Joy and Play

So much of this year has been about what feeling more costs that it is easy to forget the other half. Chapter 5 called it vantage sensitivity: you are more affected for worse and for better. A highly sensitive person does not only get overloaded faster. They are also moved sooner by good news, feel a good song in the chest, and, when they let themselves, laugh until it hurts. The problem is the letting. Over the years, the caution that protects you from the noise starts protecting you from looking foolish too, and play quietly becomes something other people do.

You can see it in how you describe yourself. Careful. Thoughtful. A good listener. All true, and all words for someone at the edge of the room. The last time you laughed without checking who was looking was probably with a particular person, in a particular place, at an hour when nobody was evaluating you. That is information, and it is more precise than any advice about lightening up.

In Week 35 you remembered what you made with your hands as a kid, and in Week 40 you stopped for something beautiful. This week the list is of laughs, the kind that come out on their own.

Not polite laughs, not the ones you give a screen alone at midnight unless they were real. Seven of them, from this week or from memory, to see where and with whom it happens, and to go back there on purpose.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LIST: SEVEN TIMES I LAUGHED WITHOUT THINKING

Each day, write down one time you laughed without thinking: from this week if there is one, and if not, the most recent one you can find in memory. Write what happened, who you were with, where, and what kind of laugh it was. Laughs out of politeness do

not count, and neither do the ones you give your phone alone, unless they were real. On the fifth day, look for what repeats across the seven; it is usually the same people, the same place, or the same hour when you stop watching yourself. On the sixth, make a date with play. On the seventh, keep it.

Laugh 1 - What happened: _____ Who with: _____ Where: _____ What kind (the giggle, the one that hurts your stomach, the one that got out before you could stop it): _____

Laugh 2 - What happened: _____ Who with: _____ Where: _____ What kind: _____

Laugh 3 - What happened: _____ Who with: _____ Where: _____ What kind: _____

Laugh 4 - What happened: _____ Who with: _____ Where: _____ What kind: _____

Laugh 5 - What happened: _____ Who with: _____ Where: _____ What kind: _____

Laugh 6 - What happened: _____ Who with: _____ Where: _____ What kind: _____

Laugh 7 - What happened: _____ Who with: _____ Where: _____ What kind: _____

The last time I laughed until it hurt, roughly when: _____ If it has been a long time, what has happened since:

What repeats across the seven (the people, the place, the hour, that nobody was grading me):

A game from when I was small that I would still enjoy, without fixing it up for adults (a board game, a bike with no destination, throwing a ball against a wall, a pool on a hot day): _____

What stops me from playing as an adult (looking foolish, time, tiredness, that it is not serious):

My date with play this week - What: _____ When: _____ Who with: _____ Done [ ] How I felt afterward, in one word: _____

* * *

When did you last laugh without thinking?

Who do you laugh with most, and who do you never laugh with? What changes between those two places: the people in

them, or how much of yourself you let show when you are there?

Keep the date with play. It counts as rest.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 42

Friendships That Add

In Week 21 you put the people in your life on a map by how much filter each one needs, and in Week 26 you told one of them a piece of your story and watched their face around the middle. This week the question is simpler and harder: who do you leave feeling better than when you arrived? Not the oldest friendships, not the most fun ones. The ones that leave you with your shoulders down and your head clear, even when you talked about hard things.

Chapter 22 gave you the research name for what those people do: buffering. Support does not remove the stressor. It changes what the stressor does to your body, from cortisol to blood pressure, and the effect is well established in the general population. Chapter 18 said it more bluntly: who you let close is not a detail; for a nervous system like yours it may be the main variable. You have spent this year lowering the input in your rooms. The people in those rooms are input too.

Highly sensitive people tend to take great care of their friends and rarely check whether they are being taken care of back. That is why this list is written down, one name a day, with what happens in you on the drive home. Some names will not belong on it.

Write them anyway, in their own box at the bottom. Then, on the seventh day, look for the pattern, and send one message.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LIST: THE FRIENDSHIPS THAT LEAVE ME BETTER

Each day write down one friendship, in whatever order they come to you, without choosing the ones that would look good. For each one, write how you leave that person in one word, what exactly it is they do that leaves you better, how long it has been since you saw each other, and what you give them. If one day the name that comes is someone who does not leave you better, write it in the box below; that counts too. On the seventh day, reread the seven

and look for the pattern: what the ones who add actually do with you. Then write to one of them.

Friendship 1 - Name: _____ How I leave that person (one word): _____ What exactly leaves me better: _____ How long since we saw each other: _____ What I give them: _____

Friendship 2 - Name: _____ How I leave (one word): _____ What leaves me better: _____ How long since: _____ What I give them: _____

Friendship 3 - Name: _____ How I leave (one word): _____ What leaves me better: _____ How long since: _____ What I give them: _____

Friendship 4 - Name: _____ How I leave (one word): _____ What leaves me better: _____ How long since: _____ What I give them: _____

Friendship 5 - Name: _____ How I leave (one word): _____ What leaves me better: _____ How long since: _____ What I give them: _____

Friendship 6 - Name: _____ How I leave (one word): _____ What leaves me better: _____ How long since: _____ What I give them: _____

Friendship 7 - Name: _____ How I leave (one word): _____ What leaves me better: _____ How long since: _____ What I give them: _____

The pattern, what the ones who add do with me (listen without fixing, go at my pace, sit quietly with me, laugh, never ask for a version of me):

A friendship that leaves me worse and that I keep up out of habit, and what it costs me each time:

One that fell away, through distance or time, and that I would like back: _____

Who I am writing to this week, what I am saying, and when: _____ Done [ ]

* * *

Which friendships leave you better than they found you?

For whom are you one of the friends who leave people better, and how do you know? And with whom, without meaning to, are you one of the ones who subtract, and what happens between you that makes it so?

One message, to one name on the list, before Wednesday.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 43

Room of Your Own

In Week 15 you designed your quiet corner, the chair facing away from the room, the lamp, the rule the household knows. In Week 22 you wrote down what you need from the people close to you and have never asked for, and in Week 18 you built a boundary sentence. This week those three come together in the place where they cost the most: at home, with the person or people you share your days with. A partner, a roommate, a parent, your kids, or, if you live alone, whoever has the most claim on your evenings.

Highly sensitive people need more time alone than most, and they tend to ask for it badly: with a sigh, with a door closed a little harder than necessary, with a silence the other person reads as anger. Chapter 18 gave the alternative. Describe it plainly, like a biologist: a nervous system that reaches overload sooner, recovers more slowly, and needs an hour alone after the party. Give both sides. And the explanation is not a license; the goal is two people who say what things cost them, not one whose costs are the only ones on the table.

So this week you draw a diagram with three columns: what space you need, how much of it, and the sentence you will use to ask for

it, with the time you will be back. Space of your own, asked for well, does not create distance. It is what lets you come back.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DIAGRAM: MY OWN SPACE, IN THREE COLUMNS

Draw three columns. On the left, what space you need; in the middle, how much, with hours, days and place; on the right, the sentence you ask for it with. Fill in one or two rows a day, and in the right-hand column write sentences you would actually say: short, saying what you need and when you will be back. If today you ask for a row with a gesture instead of words, write that down as it is. On the sixth day fill in the boxes below, looking also at

what the other person needs. On the seventh, choose one row and ask.

What space I need	How much (hours, days, where)	How I ask (short sentence, with the time I'll be back)
Time alone at home		
Time out of the house, on my own		
The first ten minutes after I walk in, before anyone needs anything from me		
After being with people (the recovery from Week 16)		
Shared silence, being together without talking		
A spot in the house that is mine (the quiet corner from Week 15)		
Knowing the plans ahead of time, no last-minute surprises		
Other		

What I ask for today with a gesture instead of words (a sigh, a door, a silence), and how it reads from outside:

The space the other person needs, as far as I know, and whether I give it:

What we do together that fills me up, so that the space does not read as distance:

The row I am asking for this week: _____ Day: ____ How it went:

* * *

How much space of your own do you need, and how do you ask for it?

When the other person is the one who asks for space, what happens in you? If you feel it as rejection, why do you expect them to feel it any other way when the request comes from you?

Ask for one row, with the time you'll be back.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 44

The Price of Empathy

In Week 8 you learned to sort the feelings in your chest at the end of a day into two columns, yours and other people's, and you practiced the exit line. Chapter 8 gave you the distinction underneath that page: empathy is at least two things. Concern turns toward the other person and sustains you. Distress turns toward your own escape and depletes you. Both feel like empathy from the inside, and the research says it is concern, not distress, that actually gets people helped.

By now, thirty-some weeks later, you probably see your empathy as more of a strength than you did in January. It is one. But every strength has a cost when it is not measured, and the empathy of a highly sensitive person is paid in time, in energy, and in nights spent at 1 a.m. in a house that is not yours. The coworker whose problem you solved on your own lunch hour. The relative whose calls you take every Sunday and feel for two days. The friend who texts at midnight because you always answer.

This week you put both on the same page, in two columns. When your empathy helped, you or someone else, and when it cost too much, and in what currency you paid. Both columns are true.

Seeing them side by side is what makes it possible to choose, which is the difference between a trait and a reflex.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

DOUBLE LIST: WHEN IT HELPED, WHEN IT COST TOO MUCH

Draw two columns. On the left, moments, recent or long ago, when your empathy helped: someone else, a group, or you. On the right, moments when it cost too much, and what you paid with: sleep, an evening, a weekend, your own problem left unattended. Fill in one row a day, in whichever column that day calls for; they do not have to come in pairs. On the seventh day, look

for what the right-hand entries have in common. It is usually the same person, the same place, or the same hour.

When it helped (and whom)	When it cost too much (and what I paid with)

What the right-hand entries have in common (who, where, when):

For each right-hand entry, was it concern or distress, in the chapter's terms? Concern ____ rows Distress ____ rows

One right-hand entry that would move to the left if one thing changed, and what that thing is (an exit line, a time limit, a question asked before I started solving):

* * *

When did your empathy help, and when did it cost too much?

Is there someone who receives your empathy every week and never returns it? What do you tell yourself in order to keep giving it, and whose voice is that sentence in?

Leave one house on time this week.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 45

The Body Keeps Count

You drew a body once already in this journal, in Week 6, to find the first three signs that you were running too high: the jaw, the shoulders, the narrowing vision that show up minutes before the snap. Those were alarms. This week's outline is about something slower, the tension that builds when nothing in particular is happening. The jaw you clench while reading an email. The shoulders that rise when you hear keys in the door. The stomach that closes before an easy call.

Chapter 6 explained why this matters more for you than for the person at the next desk. Recovery is the variable that decides whether today's load becomes next year's damage, and a body held on guard for ten hours does not recover during those hours; it bills you at night, or on Friday, or in your lower back in March. Highly sensitive people keep the guard up longer than most and notice it less, because it has been there so long it feels like posture.

So this time you check at fixed hours instead of waiting for a snap. Three alarms a day, ten seconds each, head to feet, and a different mark for each hour. In the margin, what was happening just before. By Sunday you will see where the marks pile up, at what time, and what tends to come right before them. Then one

gesture, one minute long, for every time the alarm goes off next week.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

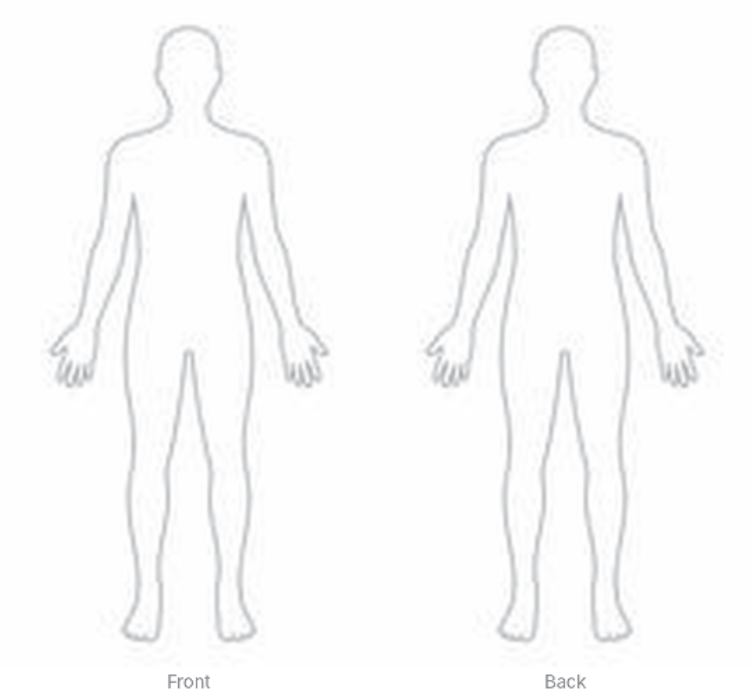
Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

BODY MAP: WHERE THE TENSION BUILDS

Draw a simple full-length outline of a body taking up half the page, front view and, if it fits, back view. Set three alarms a day: mid-morning, mid-afternoon, and before dinner. When one goes off, stop for ten seconds, scan from head to feet, and mark the areas that feel tight with a different symbol for each hour: a circle, a cross, a triangle. In the margin, write what you were doing or who you were with

just before. On Sunday, look at where the symbols pile up, and when.



Reference zones: forehead and eyes - jaw - neck - shoulders and upper back - chest - stomach - hands - lower back - legs and feet

Symbols: circle = mid-morning, cross = mid-afternoon, triangle = before dinner

Margin, one entry per mark: time, zone, and what was happening just before

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

Saturday:

Sunday:

Sunday summary - The zone with the most symbols: _____ The hour I clench most: _____

What usually happens right before that zone tightens (a person, a task, a place, a thought):

What I do today to release it, if anything, and how long the effect lasts:

A one-minute gesture for every time the alarm goes off (unclench the jaw, drop the shoulders, feet flat on the floor, four in and six out):

A zone I did not know I was clenching until this week: _____

* * *

Where does tension build up in your body, and what sets it off?

The zone where you clench most: what are you asking it to hold for you? What would happen if you said that out loud instead of holding it there?

Set the three alarms before you close the journal.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 46

When the World Moves Too Fast

Chapter 3 gave you the mechanism: a nervous system that pauses to check before it acts, and that keeps processing the first thing while the second is already arriving. Chapter 9 gave you the gift inside it, the depth that reads a room before anyone speaks. Neither chapter promised that the world would wait. Meetings where everyone talks at once. A group text with forty messages since lunch. A decision made in the hallway in ninety seconds. A Friday afternoon with three last-minute changes.

What is underneath all of those is a feeling that your pace is surplus. That everyone else runs at one speed and you arrive late, or too deep, or with a question nobody wants to hear anymore. In Week 33 you looked at the small decisions that cost you too much, and in Week 38 at the sentence other people say. This week is about the sentence you say to yourself in those rooms, because that sentence weighs more than the room does.

So, a short scale of your own: situation by situation, how much your pace did not fit, from 0 to 10, and next to it, word for word, what you told yourself. It is for self-observation, to compare with yourself in Review 4, not a diagnosis. By Sunday you will know

where your pace is most out of place, and whether the sentence you repeat there is one you would say to someone you love.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

SCALE: SOCIAL PACE

During the week, each time you go through one of the situations on the list, rate from 0 (I go at my own pace and that is fine) to 10 (I feel surplus, or late to everything) how much you noticed your pace did not fit. Next to it, write down, exactly as it came, what you told yourself in that moment. On Sunday, fill in the summary. This scale is for self-observation, to compare with yourself later; it measures nothing clinical and is not a diagnosis.

Starting date: ____ / ____ / _____

Situation	How much my pace felt surplus (0-10)	What I told myself
A meeting or class with many people talking at once		
A fast group conversation (lunch, a hallway, a group text with dozens of messages)		
Deciding something quickly with other people		
News, social media and screens through the day		
Shopping, errands and traffic at rush hour		
Celebrations and social events		
Work or school with short deadlines and last-minute changes		
Other:		

Sunday summary - Where my pace feels most surplus: _____
Where least: _____

The sentence I repeated most to myself this week:

A different sentence I want to try in that situation:

Note: this scale is for self-observation. It is not a diagnosis.

* * *

Where does your sensitivity feel out of place, and what do you tell yourself then?

That sentence you repeat to yourself: who did you learn it from? Would you say it to someone you love, in the same situation?

Choose something that gets done at your pace, even if it takes longer.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 47

Forgiving Yourself

In Week 31 a question came up that may have stayed with you: is there a criticism nobody has ever made of you that you make of yourself every week? There almost always is, and it is usually attached to something specific. A decision. A sentence said, or not said. A day when you were not the person you wanted to be, with your kid, with a parent in the hospital. Highly sensitive people keep those for years, with the same memory they use for other people's details, and go over them with a hardness they would never use on anyone else.

The book came back to this more than once. Chapter 10, on burnout, said the highly sensitive people the author knows are extraordinarily kind to everyone except themselves, and that recovery is where that asymmetry has to end. Chapter 16 said it again about the guilt after a boundary. The research behind both is the same: treating yourself with the ordinary kindness you would offer a friend goes with better well-being and steadier self-worth, and it is not the same as letting yourself off the hook.

So this week you use the oldest trick for that, which works because you are so good at the first half. You write a letter to a friend who did exactly what you did. Then you cross out their name, write

your own, and read it out loud. Notice where your voice catches. That is the place the letter was for.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LETTER: TO A FRIEND IN MY PLACE, AND THEN TO ME

On the first day, write the reproach exactly as you say it to yourself, with the approximate date of what happened, and separate what you knew then from what you know now. On the second and third day, write the letter to a friend who told you this same story as their own, with the warmth you would have for them. On the fourth, replace their name with yours, read it out loud, and note where your voice catches. On the following days, fill in what

you keep from it and what you give back. If you get to the end without forgiving yourself completely, that is all right; write that down too. On the last day, decide what to do with the letter.

What I still blame myself for, exactly as I say it to myself, and roughly when it happened:

What I knew then	What I know now and could not have known then

What I needed at that moment and did not have (time, information, help, sleep, someone):

Dear _____ (a friend who told me this as their own): what I would say, written exactly as I would say it:

Now with my own name, read out loud: Dear _____. Where my voice caught:

What changes between reading it to them and reading it to me, and why I think it changes:

What I keep from it, because it taught me something:

What I give back: to the age I was, to what I did not know, to the other people who were there:

What I will do the next time the reproach comes back, in a gesture that takes one minute:

Sign-off and signature, with today's date

Decision: I reread it when the reproach returns / I keep it sealed / I read it to that real friend [ ]

* * *

What do you still blame yourself for, and what would you tell a friend?

What does that reproach still give you, that you have kept it this long: the idea that next time you will be in control, or a

punishment you think you deserve? And what would you actually lose if you let it go this week?

Do for yourself what you would do for that friend: a gesture, not an idea.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 48

Changes and Transitions

A trip, a move, a new job, a shift change, a week at your in-laws' for Thanksgiving. What is novelty for other people is, for you, also the loss of every anchor at once: your pillow, the hour of your coffee, the silence of the first hour of the day, the route you drive without thinking. Item 10 on your scale in Week 2 said it: arriving somewhere new, you need a few minutes to get your bearings. Chapter 12 explained why: transitions are where the load hides. A move is a transition that lasts a month.

Chapter 15 gave you the travel rules, and they hold for every other change too. Plan it as a sequence of exposures with rest between them. The first evening anywhere has nothing in it. Set up the room in the first five minutes: curtains, thermostat, lights down, white noise on the phone, the quiet corner from Chapter 14 built in a place that does not know you yet.

This week you make the list of what you take with you in order to be at home away from home. Two kinds of things: objects small enough for a carry-on, and habits that fit in any city and any guest room. Look at your sensory map from Week 7 and your song from Week 34 before you start; the clues are there. By Sunday you

will know what goes in the next bag, and what you can stop packing.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LIST: WHAT I TAKE WITH ME TO BE AT HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Each day, write down one thing, up to seven. Make sure there are both kinds: small objects, the kind that fit in a carry-on, and habits you can keep in any city and anyone else's house. For each one, write what exactly it gives you, in the body or in the mood, and mark whether it is an object or a habit. On the sixth day fill in

the boxes about the first day away and the return. On the seventh, look at the calendar and decide what goes in the next bag.

1 - What I take: _____ Object / habit What it gives me: _____

2 - What I take: _____ Object / habit What it gives me: _____

3 - What I take: _____ Object / habit What it gives me: _____

4 - What I take: _____ Object / habit What it gives me: _____

5 - What I take: _____ Object / habit What it gives me: _____

6 - What I take: _____ Object / habit What it gives me: _____

7 - What I take: _____ Object / habit What it gives me: _____

What I miss most away from home, in one word: _____ And what, surprisingly, I do not: _____

The first day away: what I do as soon as I arrive to get my bearings, before anything else (unpack the bag, a short walk around the block, a shower, set up the room, play the song from Week 34):

What I will not try to do on the first day, and who I tell if I am traveling with someone:

Coming back: how long it usually takes me to find my rhythm again, and what speeds it up:

The next trip or change of routine: _____ Date: ____ / ____
What from this list goes with me: _____

* * *

What do you need to carry with you to feel at home anywhere?

Of your routine, which part is care and which part is fear of the new? How do you tell them apart when you are away, and which of the two has made you say no to a trip you wanted to take?

Pack one thing from the list now, in the bag you use most.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 49

Endings and Goodbyes

Three weeks of journal are left, and the year is ending too. Highly sensitive people are not good with endings: they see them coming first, feel them more, and either stretch them out so as not to hurt anyone or cut them short so as not to feel them. Chapter 18 was honest about this when it talked about stepping back from a relationship that costs more than it gives: grieve, because you will, even when the ending is right, and treat yourself the way you would treat a friend going through it.

But some endings were never closed at all. A friendship that stopped without anyone saying so. A job you left on a Friday with a cardboard box and no goodbye. A house, a city, a church, a team. A version of yourself that nobody held a service for. On the lifeline you drew in Week 3 there is almost certainly something that is no longer there and that you never said goodbye to.

This week you write that goodbye. One section a day, starting with the good part, because a fair farewell starts with what it was and not with what went wrong. And at the end, a gesture, small and real, so that the goodbye happens outside the page too: a box, a returned object, a number deleted, a drive past the old house, a

piece of furniture moved. Closed endings stop asking for your attention. Open ones keep the bill running.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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FAREWELL LETTER: THE ENDING I NEVER CLOSED

On the first day, choose what or whom the letter is for: a person, a stage of life, a place, a habit, a version of you. If there are several, choose the one that has been open the longest. Write one section a day, starting with the good, because a fair goodbye starts with what it was and not with what failed. On the sixth day, choose a small, real gesture that closes it: put something in a box, return an

object, go back to a place once, delete a number, move a piece of furniture. On the seventh, do it, or set a date for it, and sign.

What or whom I am saying goodbye to, and how long it has been waiting:

What it was, at the beginning, when it was good, with one concrete scene:

When it started to end, and the sign that announced it that I did not want to see:

What it gave me and what I take with me:

What it cost me and what I leave here, on this page:

What I did not get to say then, and say now:

How I want to remember it years from now, in a single image:

The small gesture that truly closes it: _____ Date: ____ / ____ Done [ ]

Sign-off and signature

* * *

What ending from this year do you need to close?

How do you usually say goodbye: all at once, little by little, or without saying anything? Who said goodbye to you in that same way, and how long did it take you to understand it?

Make it the gesture, with a date on it.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 50

Your Owner's Manual

You have spent forty-nine weeks collecting parts. The three early warnings from Week 6. The reset kit from Week 11 and the ten minutes from Week 12. The song from Week 34. The boundary sentence from Week 18, the space you asked for in Week 43, the plan for the place you avoid from Week 16. You know all of it. The people who love you have been guessing at it in pieces, sometimes right and sometimes badly wrong, because they have never seen it in one place.

Chapter 18 told you how to explain the trait in a conversation: plainly, like a biologist, with examples from your own life and both sides of the ledger, and short, because depth of processing tempts you to explain everything at once. The ten-minute conversation was the spoken version. This week you write the version they can keep: one page, the way a manual comes with anything that matters. How you work best. What overloads you. What to do then and what not to do. How you recharge, and what you give in return.

This is not asking too much. It is saving the people you love years of guessing. Write it in the first person, in sentences someone can read in five minutes. Do not think any of it from scratch; find the

week that already answered each box and copy the essential part. Then decide who gets it, and how, and hand it over.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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DIAGRAM: MY OWNER'S MANUAL, ON ONE PAGE

Write the manual in the first person, in short sentences someone can read in five minutes. Before each box, find the week of the journal that answers it and copy the essential part from there; do not think it through again from scratch. Fill in two or three boxes a day. The "what to do" and "what not to do" boxes are the most useful ones for whoever reads it: make them concrete, with

gestures, not ideas. On the last day decide who you are giving it to and how, and do it.

To begin - The first thing to know about me, in two sentences:

I work best when (hours, places, pace, company):

I get overloaded when:

Signs that I am getting overloaded, in order (Week 6): 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

What to do then (Weeks 11, 12 and 39)	What not to do (ask a lot of questions, push, take it personally)

How I recharge (Weeks 7, 34, 37 and 39):

How I prefer to be asked for things and given news (ahead of time, in writing, without an audience, with no rush to answer):

How I ask for things, in my own sentences (Weeks 18, 22 and 43):

What it does not mean: if I go quiet _____ if I leave early _____ if I do not answer right away _____

What I give in return, which is not nothing (Weeks 5 and 20):

Frequently asked questions - The one I get most: _____ My answer: _____ Another: _____ My answer: _____

Who I am giving the manual to this week, and how (read it together, copy it by hand, put it on the fridge, text them a photo): _____ Done [ ]

* * *

What should the people who love you know about you?

Which box of the manual embarrassed you to write, as if asking for that were too much? Who taught you that coming with instructions was a flaw, and what would happen if the people who love you finally had them?

Hand the manual to one person, the whole page or a single box.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 51

A Year from Now

In Week 27 you drew what you do differently now than in Week 1, and since then you have added another twenty-four weeks of evidence. Next week you take the last picture of the year with the same ten statements from Week 2. Before that, one more letter, and this one is not for anyone you know yet. It is for the person you will be a year from now, when this journal has been closed for months and most of what you wrote in it has either become a habit or quietly fallen away.

Do not write them wishes. Wishes are cheap and your future self will know it. Write them how you want to be living your sensitivity, concretely, with what fifty weeks have taught you: how you want to be resting, who you want around you, how you want your work to treat you, what you hope you have put down and what you refuse to lose on the way. Reread your thermometers and the diagram from Week 27 first, so you can tell them where you are writing from.

Then close the letter for real. An envelope, sealed, with the opening date on the front, one year from today, and a note on this page about where it lives. Next week you will write that place on

the last page of the journal. A year from now you will be glad you wrote it this way, and not as a list of resolutions on a phone.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

LETTER: TO THE PERSON I WILL BE A YEAR FROM NOW

Write the letter over the week, one or two sections a day, in the second person, talking to yourself the way you would talk to someone you love and trust. Date the letter today, and before you start, look back at the diagram from Week 27 and your thermometers; they will help you describe where you are writing from. On the seventh day, reread, sign, put the letter in an envelope, write

the opening date on it, one year from today, and note here where you are keeping it. Next week you will only confirm that it is there.

Today's date: ____ / ____ / _____ Opening date: ____ / ____ / _____

Where I am writing from: how I am today, in three sentences:

What I have learned about my sensitivity in fifty weeks and do not want you to forget:

How I want you to be resting a year from now:

How I want you to be with your people:

How I want your work, or whatever fills your days, to be treating you:

What I hope you have put down:

What I do not want you to lose on the way:

A question I am asking you, to answer when you open the envelope:

Sign-off and signature

Where I am keeping the envelope: _____

* * *

How do you want to live your sensitivity a year from now?

Of everything you are asking of your future self, what could you start giving them this very week? And what are you assigning to them because you do not dare to do it yet?

Seal the envelope. Put the date on the front.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Week 52

Looking Back on the Year

Last week. A year ago, or whenever you started, you took a picture of yourself with ten statements, and you took it again in Week 26. This week you take the third and set all three side by side. Do not look for a lower number. Sensitivity does not go down and does not have to; the book spent twenty-two chapters saying so. What changes is what you do with it, and that is written in the rest of this journal, not in the total.

There are also three things you left for today. The letter from Week 36, to the child you were, to be reread once. The envelope from Week 51, only to confirm it is where you said and to copy its opening date onto the last page. And the sentence you wrote for yourself at the end of Review 3, to see how much of it came true. Give each of them a different day; they are not errands.

Then the two questions, the same as every week, except that this time they are about the whole year. What you take with you, in three concrete things. What you want to plant, small, with a first step and a date. And what you leave in these pages because you no longer need to carry it. After that comes Review 4, and a last page from me. There is no hurry. You have been doing this for a year. You know the pace.

On your own



Weekly thermometer: energy (1-10) and overload (1-10)

Energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

* * *

FINAL SCALE, AND THE THREE THINGS I LEFT FOR TODAY

On the first day, take the scale: rate each statement from 1 (almost never happened to me this week) to 5 (happened almost every day), add up the total, write the date, and fill in the table with the totals from Weeks 2, 26 and 52. Look at which statements moved most since Week 2 and write, in one sentence, what has changed between the three pictures. In the middle of the week, reread the letter from Week 36 and check where the envelope from Week 51 is, without opening it. On the last day, fill in what you take with you and what you want to plant. This scale is for self-observation, to watch yourself and compare with yourself. It is not a diagnosis.

Final scale

Date: ____ / ____ / _____

1. I came out of a meeting, a call or a family dinner knowing how each person was doing without anyone telling me.



2. I had trouble falling asleep after a day with a lot of new things in it.



3. I needed to turn down the volume, dim a light or step outside before the people I was with did.



4. A scene from a show, a song or a news story stayed with me for hours.



5. I got to the end of a day feeling as if I had lived two days in one.



6. I noticed a detail at work or at home that later turned out to matter.



7. Before a small decision (what to order, which route, how to reply) I ran through more options than the people around me.



8. I preferred a plan with one or two people over a group.



9. A comment made in passing was still turning in my head at bedtime.



10. Arriving somewhere new, I needed a few minutes to get my bearings before joining in.



Total (10 to 50): _____

Table of totals

Week 2	Week 26	Week 52

Statement by statement, the three pictures side by side (Week 2 / Week 26 / Week 52):

Statement 1: ____ / ____ / ____

Statement 2: ____ / ____ / ____

Statement 3: ____ / ____ / ____

Statement 4: ____ / ____ / ____

Statement 5: ____ / ____ / ____

Statement 6: ____ / ____ / ____

Statement 7: ____ / ____ / ____

Statement 8: ____ / ____ / ____

Statement 9: ____ / ____ / ____

Statement 10: ____ / ____ / ____

The statements that went down most since Week 2: _____ The ones that went up most: _____

What has changed between the three pictures, in one sentence:

Note: this scale is for self-observation. It helps you compare with yourself across the year. It is not a diagnosis.

The three things I left for today

I have reread the letter from Week 36 [ ] What I would say to that child today, in one line:

The envelope from Week 51 is still in _____ [ ] Opening date: ____ / ____ / _____ I am not opening it yet [ ]

My sentence from Review 3: _____ Came true / halfway / not at all

What I take from this year, in three concrete things (a habit, a sentence, a person):

What I want to plant next year, small, and the first step with a date: _____ ____ / ____

What I leave in these pages, because I no longer need to carry it:

* * *

What are you taking from this year, and what do you want to plant?

If someone who loves you read only Week 1 and Week 52, with nothing in between, what would they think had happened? And what part of what happened can only be understood by reading the middle?

Something small, that you could still be doing in Week 52 of next year.

One thing I'll do this week

Each day, something I'm grateful for

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Review 4

The Whole Year

Fifty-two weeks have gone by. This review is different from the three before it: it does not prepare the next quarter, it looks at the whole year. Set aside more than one afternoon, because there is a lot to reread. Start with Weeks 40 to 52, then the three earlier reviews, and finally leaf through the journal from the first page to the last, quickly, looking only for what repeats in your own handwriting. Read with a pencil, correcting nothing. Mark what surprises you, what you would no longer say the same way, and what you would say exactly the same. Then answer slowly, over as many days as it takes. There are no right answers. There is one person looking at a year of their own path, the first one they have ever written down like this.

Rereading Weeks 40 to 52, what three things about yourself can you say now that you could not have said at Review 3?

Copy here the thermometers of Weeks 40 to 52, energy and overload, week by week. Which weeks ran highest, and what was going on in your life then?

Week	Energy	Overload
Week 40		
Week 41		
Week 42		
Week 43		
Week 44		
Week 45		
Week 46		
Week 47		
Week 48		
Week 49		
Week 50		
Week 51		
Week 52		

Now put all fifty-two thermometers on a single line, even as small dots. Is there a time of year when overload always climbs? One when energy comes back? What would you do with that information next year?

Look at the table in Week 52 with the totals from Weeks 2, 26 and 52, and set beside it the other scales of the year: the tank in Week 10, rest in Week 29, silence in Week 37, pace in Week 46. Which statement or which situation moved most over the year, and what moved it? Which one did not move at all, and are you at peace with that?

Reread the five stories that open the parts of this journal: the boy who drew cats, the gardener they called Camel, the old woodcutter and his bundle, Guan Zhong and Bao Shuya, the treasure under the fountain. Which one kept you company most during the year, and at what specific moment did it come to mind without your looking for it?

The letters of the year: to the people close to you (Week 22), about what you learned to hide (Week 23), your story told once (Week 26), the three sentences (Week 28), to the child you were (Week 36), to a friend in your place (Week 47), the farewell (Week 49), and to your future self (Week 51). Which ones did you send, or read to someone, and what happened? Which one is still put away, and why?

From Weeks 40 to 44: what did you show someone that stopped you? Did you keep the date with play? Whom did you write to? Which row of your own space did you ask for, and how did it go? Which house did you leave on time?

From Weeks 45 to 51: did the one-minute gesture survive past the week? Did you change the sentence you tell yourself when the world moves too fast? Did the farewell gesture happen? Who got your owner's manual, the whole page or a box, and what did they say?

The book gave you a vocabulary: the curve, the fourth column, the furniture, the exit line, the quiet corner, the low-power sentence. Which of those words do you now use without thinking, and which one have you still not needed?

Reread your fifty-two "one thing I'll do this week." Roughly how many did you do? Which one came back most often without

getting done, and what does that tell you about what you really want and what you think you should want?

Reread your fifty-two weeks of gratitude, day by day. Choose the three you like best and copy them here. What were you grateful for in the first weeks that you now take for granted, and what are you grateful for now that you could not even see at the start?

What you leave in this year and what you take into the next: an idea about yourself, a habit, a person, a sentence. Will you start the journal again, reread it, or put it away unopened for a while? Any of the three is fine; write which one, and why.

A Last Page

The journal ends here. The year does not, and that is not bad news. What you are holding is no longer a notebook with exercises in it. It is a year of your life, told by the only person who could tell it. Every thermometer, every list left half finished and every letter you never sent is yours. So are the blank weeks, if there are any. They say, in their own way, what was going on then.

Wired to Feel More gave you the vocabulary. When something in your life changes, a job, a house, a person, go back to the chapter that covers it, and then to the week of this journal where you first wrote about it. You will find you already left yourself instructions.

Some people start again, with a new notebook and the same questions, to see what they answer now. Some reread this one slowly, on a Sunday, and meet the person they were in Week 9. Some put it in a drawer for years, until they find it one afternoon and take it to the kitchen table. All three are fine.

One more thing. Somewhere in your home there is an envelope with a date on it. When the date comes, open it in a quiet hour

and answer the question you left yourself. What you write then will be the first page of whatever comes next.

Thank you for looking this closely. That is all, for now.