# Journaling & Self-Inquiry Workbook

Four practical reflections for greater clarity, alignment and self-awareness

**WHAT AM I AVOIDING? • VALUES ALIGNMENT**
**END-OF-DAY AWARENESS • WHO AM I WITHOUT THE STORY?**

*A printable practice companion from Spiritual Awakening Hub*



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

# Write to notice - not to perform

These practices are not tests, productivity exercises or invitations to produce impressive answers. They are structured pauses designed to help you notice what becomes clearer when you stop thinking in circles and give your attention somewhere to land.

**You do not need to complete all four practices in order. Choose the one that best matches what is happening in your life right now.**

## Choose your practice

- What Am I Avoiding? - when you are procrastinating, circling a difficult decision or staying busy around something uncomfortable.
- Values Alignment Journal - when your calendar, commitments or habits no longer seem to match what matters to you.
- End-of-Day Awareness Review - when you want to notice how you actually moved through your day, rather than simply rating it as good or bad.
- Who Am I Without the Story? - when a familiar identity, self-description or personal narrative feels unusually rigid.

## A simple rhythm

- Read the orientation and instructions first.
- Set aside 10-20 minutes without multitasking.
- Write quickly enough that you do not edit every answer into something respectable.
- Underline one sentence that feels especially honest or surprising.
- End by choosing one small action, question or observation to carry into ordinary life.

## A grounded note

Self-inquiry can sometimes bring up grief, fear, trauma or material that feels bigger than a journaling exercise. You do not need to push through distress to make the practice meaningful. Pause, ground yourself, and seek appropriate professional support when needed.

*The purpose is not to excavate everything. It is to become a little more honest about what is already here.*

PRACTICE 1 • 10-15 MINUTES

# The "What Am I Avoiding?" Reflection

Avoidance rarely announces itself as avoidance. It can look like overthinking, researching, reorganizing, waiting for certainty, staying endlessly busy, or telling ourselves we will deal with something "when the timing is better." This practice helps you distinguish genuine preparation from the quieter ways we move around what we already know needs attention.

## Begin with one thing

Choose one situation you have been repeatedly thinking about but not moving toward. Keep the focus narrow: one conversation, decision, task, truth, boundary or feeling.

## Move through the inquiry

- What have I been thinking about repeatedly without taking meaningful action?
- What am I doing instead of facing it?
- What feeling might I have to experience if I stopped avoiding this?
- What am I afraid might happen if I face it directly?
- What am I afraid might happen if I continue not facing it?
- Am I genuinely waiting for more information - or waiting to feel completely comfortable?
- What is the smallest honest action available to me now?

**Closing question: What am I willing to stop pretending I do not already know?**

## Do not confuse honesty with urgency

Recognizing avoidance does not mean you must immediately make a dramatic decision. Sometimes the honest next step is a conversation. Sometimes it is gathering information. Sometimes it is admitting that you are not ready. The aim is to replace vague avoidance with conscious choice.

PRINTABLE REFLECTION PAGE

# What Am I Avoiding?

*1. What situation keeps returning to my attention?*

*2. What am I doing instead of facing it?*

*3. What feeling or consequence am I trying not to experience?*

*4. What is the cost of continuing to avoid this?*

*5. What is the smallest honest next action?*

*One sentence I do not want to lose:*

PRACTICE 2 • 15-20 MINUTES

# Values Alignment Journal

Values become useful when they leave the level of admirable words and begin shaping actual choices. This practice compares what you say matters with what your time, attention and commitments currently demonstrate. The goal is not to shame yourself for inconsistency. It is to notice where your life and your stated values have drifted apart.

## Step 1: Name three values

Choose three qualities or principles you want your life to express. Examples might include honesty, compassion, courage, learning, family, creativity, service, health, freedom, reliability or simplicity. Choose words that matter to you, not words that merely sound virtuous.

## Step 2: Look at the evidence

- What received most of my time during the past seven days?
- What received most of my emotional energy?
- What did I repeatedly postpone?
- Which commitments felt alive and meaningful? Which felt hollow or inherited?
- Where am I living according to expectation rather than conviction?
- What am I maintaining mainly because I have already invested in it?

## Step 3: Close the gap

- Which current commitment is most aligned with my stated values?
- Which is least aligned?
- What one change would bring my calendar, spending, attention or relationships slightly closer to what I say matters?

**Closing question: If someone saw only how I spent my time - not what I said I valued - what would they think mattered most to me?**

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# Values Alignment Journal

*My three values right now:*

*What received most of my time this week?*

*What received most of my emotional energy?*

*Where did my behavior clearly match my values?*

*Where did my behavior and values drift apart?*

*One realistic alignment change I will test:*

PRACTICE 3 • 10 MINUTES

# End-of-Day Awareness Review

This is not a productivity review and it is not the Stoic Evening Review used elsewhere in the Contemplative Practice section. The purpose here is broader: to notice where you were present, where you moved automatically, what your body and emotions were communicating, and which ordinary moments you nearly missed.

## Replay the day lightly

Move through the day from morning to evening without trying to reconstruct every detail. Let a few moments stand out on their own.

## Notice awareness and autopilot

- When today did I feel most present?
- When was I most reactive or automatic?
- What emotion influenced me more than I realized at the time?
- What did my body try to tell me - tension, fatigue, ease, hunger, agitation, openness?
- What did I do automatically that I might choose differently next time?
- What moment deserves a second look?

## Notice what was easy to overlook

- What did I appreciate but almost fail to notice?
- Was there a small moment of connection, beauty, relief or honesty?
- What am I carrying into tomorrow that I could put down tonight?
- What do I want to remember from this day?

**Closing question: Where was I actually present for my own life today?**

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# End-of-Day Awareness Review

| |
|---|
| *A moment when I felt genuinely present:* |
| *A moment when I was reactive or on autopilot:* |
| *What my body or emotions were trying to tell me:* |
| *Something I appreciated but almost overlooked:* |
| *Something I can put down before tomorrow:* |
| *What I want to remember from today:* |

PRACTICE 4 • 15-20 MINUTES

# Who Am I Without the Story?

Much of what we call “me” is carried through stories: what happened to us, what others think of us, what we regret, what we believe we should become, and what we are trying to protect. This inquiry does not ask you to deny your history or conclude that the self is unreal. It simply explores the difference between immediate experience and the story told about experience.

## Start with the familiar story

- What story about myself do I repeat most often?
- When did I begin believing this story?
- What evidence do I repeatedly use to keep it alive?
- What experiences do I minimize because they do not fit the story?

## Temporarily remove the biography

For a moment, do not use your name, age, occupation, relationship status, achievements, failures or personal history to describe yourself.

- Without those facts, what can I honestly say about my experience right now?
- What sensations, emotions or thoughts are present before I explain them?
- Can I notice a thought about myself as a thought rather than a verdict?
- Who might I be if I did not need to defend this identity in every situation?
- What remains when I stop narrating for thirty seconds?

**You do not need to arrive at “I have no self.” The practice is simply to notice the difference between experience and the story built around it.**

**Closing question: Which part of my identity feels more flexible after looking at it rather than from inside it?**

PRINTABLE REFLECTION PAGE

# Who Am I Without the Story?

*The story about myself I repeat most often:*

*What keeps this story convincing?*

*What does not fit the story?*

*What am I experiencing right now before I explain it?*

*What might become possible if this identity were a little less rigid?*

*One sentence I want to carry forward:*

INTEGRATION

# What Did I Learn About Myself?

A useful inquiry does not need to produce a dramatic breakthrough. Often its value lies in noticing one pattern clearly enough that you can no longer pretend you did not see it. Use this page after completing one practice or after working through all four.

*The strongest pattern I noticed:*

*Something I understood intellectually before, but felt more clearly through writing:*

*A story, habit or assumption I want to hold more lightly:*

*One action, conversation or experiment I will try next:*

*What I want to notice over the next seven days:*

*Return to the practice that helps you see more clearly - not necessarily the one that makes you feel the most comfortable.*

## A simple 7-day rotation

If you want to explore the workbook as a short sequence: Day 1 - What Am I Avoiding? • Day 2 - notice the answer in daily life • Day 3 - Values Alignment • Day 4 - End-of-Day Awareness • Day 5 - Who Am I Without the Story? • Day 6 - no formal writing; simply observe • Day 7 - use this integration page.

Keep what proves useful. Revisit what continues to open something. Let the rest remain optional.

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING HUB

*Open-minded enough to explore. Grounded enough to question. Deep enough to matter.*