

A Month of Reflections

30 Daily Meditations to Recalibrate Yourself

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Introduction

How to Use This Booklet

A Month of Reflections is a 30-day practice that will recalibrate your inner compass. We live in a world where we are conditioned to listen to everybody but ourselves, which only leads to pain and discontent. This month-long practice will redirect your attention back to your inner world, which will help to heighten the conviction you have in yourself.

A Month of Reflections is a simple practice, as simplicity is the conduit to your unconditioned core. There are just 2 things you'll need to do each day for the next month:

1. Read 1 meditation in the morning, and
2. Write 1 page of unfiltered thoughts right after.

Simply put, you are pairing a reading practice with a journaling practice, and this will only require about 10

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minutes to do. The goal is to honor these 10 minutes each morning for the next 30 days to allow your inner compass to benefit from the magic of compounding.

The meditations in this booklet are categorized into 5 parts:

1. Intuition
2. Agency
3. Hardship
4. Creativity
5. Relationships

Each part represents a section of your inner compass that needs to be tended to, and there are 6 meditations in each that will help with this aim.

After reading your meditation for the day, write out a single page worth of unfiltered thoughts. Longhand is best for this, as there's an intentionality that comes with putting pen to paper and seeing your thoughts come out in physical form.

There are no rules to what you write, but if you need some help getting started, here are 3 questions that can help:

1. How did reading this meditation make you feel?

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2. How might this meditation tie into a specific aspect of your life?
3. Why do you think this meditation was the one you read today?

Once again, you can write whatever you want, but if you're stuck, you can choose one of those questions as a jump-off point. The meditation is just a way to prime your mind so you have a starting point to reflect on. Finally, remember that no one will read this journal entry but you, so if it sounds like a bunch of gibberish, that's perfectly okay (if you want further insight into a healthy journaling practice, read Chapter 9 of *The Inner Compass*).

* * *

That's it.

Like I said, it's simple. The goal is to do this every day for the next 30 days, and to treat this month as a reset for your inner compass. You can revisit this practice as many times as you wish, as there is no endpoint for the journey of reflection.

When you're ready, let's dive right in.

Part One
Intuition

Day 1

Knowledge Is Not Understanding

You can read Seneca a hundred times and think you're now prepared for calamity, but that's just knowledge disguised as understanding. One actual calamity will prove how little those hundred readings did to prepare you for the rush of emotions that strike you upon first contact.

It's no secret that I read a lot, but it's also no secret that I don't take these words too seriously. No matter how much wisdom you gain from the pages of your favorite author, if you haven't experienced the visceral events that led to that wisdom yourself, then it's just knowledge. Sure, you can leverage the hard-earned wisdom of others to help you, but understanding only happens when you earn that wisdom in the tumultuous arena of real life.

Day 2

Trust Your Inner Compass

We live in a world that actively tries to sway you from your intuition. People will use fear to convince you that their belief is greater than yours, or that you should reconsider the path you want to take. This could take the form of something wide like a social norm, or something narrow like a disapproving family member. Regardless of the scale, both are equally effective in getting you to doubt yourself.

Confidence is a commitment to trusting your inner compass, despite how strong the outer winds are. If you do the work to know yourself, then you'll realize that no external voice can convey the inner complexities you embody. And through that awareness, you'll reliably choose your intuition above all else.

Day 3

Clean Up Your Own Home

Envy is an enduring emotion because it lives in the one habit that defines the human condition: our desire for external validation. We will put ourselves through a self-doubting hell just to know that we are seen, and if another person's path to being seen seems a bit easier, we will envy that person's journey. But of course, this constant state of comparison just digs you into a deeper hole.

The only way out is to temporarily break this habit, and to dedicate all your attention inward for a duration of time. To stop gazing into another person's home, and instead work on cleaning up your own. And after you've done that, it's important to stay in it for a while and focus on nothing else. After all, it is only in your own house where your inner judgment is cultivated.

Day 4

Subtract to Know Yourself

The ability to study your own mind is often the result of subtraction. It doesn't happen by reading more books, listening to more podcasts, or having more friends. Rather, it happens by removing the influences that no longer serve you, and allowing the remainder to act as guideposts for the person you know yourself to be.

Day 5

Question Everything. Especially Advice.

Be open to any data point that resonates, but don't let it become your operating system. Learn from the ocean of knowledge available to you, but don't let the water flood your ship. Because in the end, another person's beliefs - no matter how helpful - can only propel you so far.

In an age where opinions are common but truth is rare, a strong mind doesn't take anything in as gospel. It understands that everything is contextual, and you must see if it fits in the context of your own life experiences and goals. And if it does indeed pass that hurdle, the next one is to recognize how ephemeral it is as life evolves.

Day 6

Trust That You'll Figure It Out

There's an intricate balance you have to maintain between intrinsic motivation and external validation. You have to rely upon your personal intuition and drive to create your work, but you also need positive feedback from others to know that your intuition is properly calibrated. The reason it's a balance is because if any pole is taken to its extreme, you are either delusional (thinking your work is great when it's actually terrible) or a panderer (relying on others to dictate what you create).

Of the two poles, I've found that we're much more inclined toward external validation. However, you must remember that no person will ever believe in you more than yourself. Ever. So while it's important to consider external feedback, it's far more important to believe that you'll be able to figure it out yourself in the long-run.

Part Two

Agency

Day 7

A Life of Agency Will Be Rewarded

How do you cultivate the desire to learn? Well, the first thing is to decouple an interest from its practical value. Instead of embarking on something with an end goal in mind, you do it for its own sake. You don't learn because of the career path it'll open up, but because you often wonder about the topic at hand.

The second is to understand that a pursuit driven by curiosity will inevitably lend itself to practical value anyway. The internet has massively widened the scope of possible careers, and it rewards those who exercise agency in what they pursue.

Day 8

Opt Out of the Game

True success is when you can opt out of the status game and treat people with compassion, no matter who they are. The person that has no promotion to offer will receive the same level of presence as the person that does, and this equality of attention can extend out to the greater world.

The immediate effect is that you'll see how unconditional your interactions can be, but the long-term effect - which is even more profound - is that you'll learn how to accept yourself without condition as well.

Day 9

Optimism Is a Superpower

What's fascinating about the awareness of our mortality is the myriad of ways we respond to it. Some respond by doing everything in their power to avoid death, viewing it as something to be defeated. Others view it as something liberating, as the starting point to a new eternity. The responses to the awareness of our mortality is, ironically enough, quite endless.

What this means is something profound. When faced with a biological fact, we can choose how to interpret it. The mind has the power to frame the inevitability of entropy in a way that aligns with one's perceptions. When we call someone an optimist, for example, we're referring to someone that takes the reality of pain and perceives it as an opportunity. The optimist doesn't deny the existence of pain, but instead sees it as a gateway to growth.

Day 10

Everything Flows from a Healthy Body

Everything we value flows downstream from our physical health. Money is desirable only if you have the vitality to pursue it. A career is meaningful only if you have the energy to keep it going. Even time with family can be vibrant only if you're free from pain.

Our desires are often directed outward because that's where we're most aware of what we lack. But all those desires will be leveled to zero if what you lack is access to your physical faculties. So by retaining a strong baseline of health, you are placing yourself in a position where any pursuit is achievable.

Day 11

Learn From Those That Know Themselves

Real education is to break the habit of mimicry and imitation. It's to allow each student to communicate what they're naturally curious about, and to empower them to pursue what they find meaningful.

The beautiful thing about education is that if done right, a virtuous cycle forms. The students that know themselves will become the best teachers, and the people that want to know themselves will become their students. Because in the end, the people that you'll want to learn from are the ones that follow the direction of their inner compass, and nothing else.

Day 12

Don't Search for Meaning. Notice It.

Knowing that life doesn't come with a grander meaning allows us to access the things that really do make life meaningful. This truth helps us realize that the big existential questions of life are not where the answers are; instead, this very moment in our small corner of the world is all we really have.

The questions of "What does it all mean?" and "What is my purpose?" are things we ask when we're not plugged into this very moment. When we're paying close attention to the project we're working on, the book we're enjoying, or the time we're spending with our loved ones, then we're not searching for meaning; we already have it.

Part Three
Hardship

Day 13

Why Hardship Breeds Focus

When you're content with the way things are, your attention is diffuse. You're not exerting energy into any one endeavor because there's no one thing that requires it. Things arise and fade, and contentment is being satisfied with this ebbing and flowing of all things in your periphery.

Hardship, however, directs much (if not all) of your attention toward it. People under financial hardship often cannot think about anything but money. People under physical hardship often cannot think about anything but their health. With hardship, there is something you're fighting for or something you're resisting, which requires you to focus in a way that other states of mind don't require.

Day 14

Close the Door to the Past

When you find yourself gazing into the past, what are you doing it for? Is it to extract the hard-earned lessons that will better orient you today, or is it because you're helplessly opening up the wound of comparison once more? Is there any utility to this, or is it yet another pattern of rumination?

Part of being present is being okay with what is. But the other part is being conscious of what makes you afraid, and understanding that when the doors to the past are closed, fear has no place to wander within the halls of your mind.

Day 15

Fear Is the Tension of Uncertainty

The future is a construct of our imaginations, and nothing more than that. The reality is that no one can truly predict what will happen tomorrow, let alone a year or decade from now. And if anything, the events that *will* truly sculpt the future are the ones that we never thought to predict in the first place. History is simply the cataloging of surprises, which by definition, cannot be anticipated.

Fear creeps in when you refuse to acknowledge this fact, and instead attempt to control the future. It's when you can't accept uncertainty, so you do everything in your power to build up a net of expectations that you hope to actualize. While this may be comforting in the moment, the reality is that this is an anxiety disorder waiting to erupt. That's because the more expectations you develop, the less you can inhabit any given moment, which is all there ever is.

Day 16

The Real Reason for Burnout

Burnout is often associated with working too much, but the real reason it happens is because you have defined yourself by what you produce. It's not just the exertion of energy spent during your working hours, but the exertion of thought spent during the time you're not working.

In a culture so focused on managing time, we have become subservient to it. By scheduling your day down to the last minute, you introduce an anxiety from managing your realtime progress to an imagined vision. Each glance at the clock fires off a thought about whether your day is going like it's supposed to, or if you're falling behind. This is a mind that always views the present through the lens of past and future, and can never be anchored in the "now."

Day 17

Play the Long Game

Self-doubt lives solely in the now; it knows nothing more than what can be seen and experienced at this precise moment. It can't envision any sort of future where results grow over time, where your confidence builds with each thing you make, and where your insecurities soften as you progress onward.

When you're doing meaningful work, you must be able to trade short-term disappointment for long-term progress. While it may seem irrational to continue pursuing this path today, everything will only make sense when enough time has elapsed so you can see how far you've traveled.

Day 18

The Embrace of Uncertainty

Embracing uncertainty doesn't make you unfocused; in reality, it actually sharpens your attention over time. Because you're okay with whatever emerges, you become far more aware of those emergences when they do indeed occur.

Given that the future is never certain, it's important that we embrace that fact instead of fighting it. So much of what we desire is rooted in stability and predictability, but the real fruits of life come from an acceptance of that which we didn't anticipate. Nostalgia is a longing for the events that once gave you delight, and delight is generally birthed through the introduction of surprise.

Part Four
Creativity

Day 19

To Create Is to Accept Yourself

Flow states emerge when you've moved past the friction of the start and entered a domain where you believe in the beauty of what you're creating. You don't judge yourself for what you're making, and you're not questioning the way you're putting things together. You're just doing what you're there to do, and accepting the process each step of the way.

The reason why creativity is one of the great virtues of humankind is that it's the purest form of self-acceptance. With each thing you create, you're casting a vote for your unique perspective, and signal that you embrace it.

You understand that beauty isn't defined by the rigidity of a collective norm, but by the fluidity of interpretation that is localized to each individual mind.

Day 20

Create for Just One Hour Each Day

Here's a reality that's both depressing and empowering: Most people spend far less than an hour a day creating something. The depressing angle to this is quite obvious. The fact that so much potential is left untapped within vast stretches of humanity is a shame. One can only wonder what the world would look like if everyone took an hour each day to work on something that excites them.

The empowering angle, however, takes the flip side of the equation: If you spend just one hour creating something, you're ahead of most people out there. In a world where the current of consumption is all-consuming, even a bit of creative friction goes a long way.

Day 21

The Antidote to Boredom

Running away from boredom results in a desire for excitement, which only leads to more boredom because your threshold for excitement keeps increasing. Instead, if we acknowledge that even the best lives are punctuated with boredom, then we will understand how this slowdown in attention can be interpreted as a welcomed state of mind.

The antidote to boredom is to actively seek it at various moments in your life. By giving yourself the space to do nothing, you cease looking outward for novel experiences, and look inward to uncover the meaning that can be found within the nuances of your mind.

Day 22

Make Art, Not Content

Content is the commodification of creativity. It's the piecemealing and packaging of art so that it can be delivered at regular intervals to satisfy the needs of the attention economy. In an era where media is forever abundant, content is what people create to show and remind others that they exist.

In my view, art and content are not synonymous. The purpose of art is to express oneself deeply, while the purpose of content is to garner attention quickly. Art follows a pace that is set internally, while content adheres to expectations that are set externally.

Day 23

Ambition Breeds Humility

Ambition is critical to the development of a healthy mind. Not only because it allows you to know who you truly are, but it also acts as a gateway to humility. Since ambition is about the putting the bar ahead of you, you'll understand your shortcomings in a visceral way. This will allow you to keep arrogance at arms' length, knowing damn well that your flaws are ever-present throughout the trek.

This is where we get ambition right. It's when we're driven from a point of self-awareness, understanding that we want to do the best we can with this mind and body we've been gifted. While we can be appreciative of everything we have, it's important that we acknowledge how we could better direct our thoughts to solving the problems we care about most.

Day 24

Think In Decades, Not Days.

If you've found something you love working on, chances are you want to stay there for a long, long time. So even if you're not seeing the results you want today, just know that you're slowly building yourself an on-ramp to future progress.

As long as you can view your endeavor through the lens of decades and not days, you'll be able to silence self-doubt and continue working on the things that make your life so meaningful.

Part Five

Relationships

Day 25

Curiosity Is an Infinite Loop

A thoughtful question shows people that you're tuned into what they think, and what they share will reveal something deeply interesting. After all, the more opportunities you have to show interest, the more you'll get back in the form of knowledge and experience.

As long as you remain interested in the lives of others, there will be no shortage of intriguing stories that will inspire you to live a more meaningful existence. This, in turn, will be shared with other curious minds, and the cycle continues.

Day 26

Choose Presence Over Status

Perhaps the most pernicious thing about status is that it changes the way you talk to people. If you believe you hold a higher social position than someone, then that can manifest in a number of ways. Mannerisms, tone of voice, and so on. If you see how your boss talks to her boss, then you'll likely see how different she will seem when she talks to you once again.

One guiding principle I try to uphold is that when I'm talking to someone, I give them my full attention. It doesn't matter who they are or what they've achieved, if we've carved out the space to chat, then I'm fully present. There is no rank-order of social positioning or anything of that nature; there are just two humans exchanging thoughts with one another, and I recognize the privilege of sharing that moment together.

Day 27

The Arrogance of Boredom

Believing that someone is boring is a failure to understand who they are. Boredom is always the result of a lack of curiosity, or the inability to see anything or anyone through the lens of a question.

In many ways, boredom is arrogance. It's believing that nothing is worth your interest because you already know what you need to about yourself, others, and the world. A curious mind is a humble one, as a prerequisite for curiosity is the acceptance that there's more to life than what you think you already know.

Day 28

The Compounding of Trust

Charlie Munger once said that the first rule of compounding is never to interrupt it unnecessarily. The frame he was using was that of money, but it applies just as well to trust.

Every time you take your phone out while a loved one is talking to you, you are interrupting the magic of compounding. Every time you promise to attend an event but fail to show up, you interrupt it yet again.

Wisdom is keeping the little moments in mind, no matter how big the distractions can get.

Day 29

Don't Mistake Respect for Love

When you want to gain respect through success, then it's usually done through quantifiable variables. We respect people that have made a certain amount of money, built a sizable audience, or have won a number of awards.

But when you want to gain love through success, it can't be achieved through anything quantifiable. The people that care about you most aren't doing so because of a number that is tied to your name. They do so because you are a loving partner, a compassionate friend, or a shepherd of kindness.

Respect is the result of what you earn, whereas love is a reflection of what you represent.

Day 30

Love Has No Gain or Loss

The highest form of love is when the flaws you find are no longer seen as flaws, but as indicators of what make your partner unique and beautiful. As long as the flaws can yield fruitful lessons, they can be accepted and even appreciated. And it is through this acceptance where the self has the opportunity to dissolve.

True love is cultivated through equanimity. When it's not contingent upon outcomes or expectations of anyone's needs being satisfied. When you can connect with the other while also retaining your inner compass.

In other words, love is a form of connection where there is no gain or loss. There is only you and the other, and that is enough.