

Purpose in Practice

Printable workbook · companion to omnipsyche.org/purposeinpractice · write by hand



Name (optional)

Date

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This workbook stands on three ideas.

- **1. You cannot control most things, but you always choose your next action.** Psychiatrist William Glasser built an entire approach to counseling on this. Feelings are real, but they are mostly passengers; actions and thoughts are the steering wheel.
- **2. A life feels meaningful when it is aimed at something beyond comfort.** Viktor Frankl found that meaning lives in three places: what we give, what we love, and the stance we take toward hardship we cannot avoid.
- **3. Direction beats destination.** “Get promoted by June” can be wrecked by a hiring freeze; “become the kind of person who does excellent, visible work” cannot. Progress gets measured by what you did, not only by what happened.

If a question stirs up something heavy, that is normal; it usually means the question found something real. Go at your own pace. If you work with a treatment provider, bring your answers—they make excellent conversation starters.

HOW THIS WORKBOOK IS BUILT

1. **Part 1** — Five needs check-in and honest time audit
2. **Part 2** — Find your why (give, love, stance)
3. **Part 3** — Choose and rank life directions; face the drift
4. **Part 4** — Deep-dive plan for each ranked direction (use as many as you ranked)

PART 1 · WHY FIVE BASIC NEEDS?

William Glasser taught that behind almost everything we do are a handful of basic needs: to feel connected, capable, free to choose, to enjoy life, and to feel safe and well. When life feels wrong, one of these is usually starving. Part 1 uses these five needs as a diagnostic before you decide where to aim.

TAKING STOCK · FIVE NEEDS

Score how things actually are right now (1 = starving, 10 = deeply satisfied)—not how they look from the outside.

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Connection: how satisfied is this need right now?

Feeling genuinely close to people: known, accepted, and needed by someone.

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Starving

Deeply satisfied
- 2

Capability: how satisfied is this need?

Feeling competent and useful. Your effort matters and someone notices.

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Starving

Deeply satisfied
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Freedom: how satisfied is this need?

Feeling that your life is yours, with real choices about your time, work, and path.

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Starving

Deeply satisfied
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Enjoyment: how satisfied is this need?

Play, laughter, learning for its own sake. Life having flavor, not just function.

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Starving

Deeply satisfied
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Wellbeing: how satisfied is this need?

Health, energy, safety, and enough stability to stand on.

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Starving

Deeply satisfied

6 **Which need scored lowest? What does its hunger feel like in an ordinary week?**

Where do you notice it: the restlessness, the flatness, the loneliness? Name the feeling and where it shows up.

7 **Which need scored highest? What are you already doing that keeps it fed?**

This matters: it is proof you already know how to meet a need on purpose.

8 **Where might you be feeding one need in a way that starves another?**

Overworking feeds Capability while starving Connection; endless scrolling imitates Enjoyment while starving everything.

PART 1 · THE HONEST MIRROR

Your calendar is a confession. Whatever you say you value, your hours tell the truth about what is currently winning. Include the unglamorous parts: scrolling, reruns, hours lost to worry.

9 **A typical weekday, hour by hour, honestly.**

From waking to sleep.

10 **A typical weekend day, honestly.**

11 Look at what you wrote. Which hours are actually chosen, and which are just happening to you?

Mark a few examples if it helps: morning scroll, evening TV, the commute on autopilot, the meeting you never had to attend.

[illegible]

The point of this page: Nothing you wrote here is a character flaw. Unchosen hours are not laziness; they are simply hours no one claimed, so the easiest option claimed them. By the end of this workbook you will have claimed a few of them back.

PART 2 · FINDING YOUR WHY

Frankl liked to quote Nietzsche: the person who has a why to live for can bear almost any how. This part helps you find your why by looking in the three places meaning is actually found: what you give, what you love, and the stance you take toward what you cannot change.

Frankl's reversal: Stop asking "What do I want from life?" and start asking: "What is life asking of me, right now, in this season, given who depends on me and what is in front of me?" Sit with that before the next steps.

WHAT YOU GIVE

The first source of meaning is contribution: work you do, things you build, problems you solve, people you help. Not necessarily your job—anything where your effort leaves the world slightly different.

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Recall two or three moments when you felt genuinely useful. What were you doing? What did it feel like?
- 13

What do people come to you for? What do you do more easily or more carefully than most people around you?
- 14

If you knew your effort would matter, what would you want to build, fix, teach, or contribute over the next few years?

PART 2 · WHAT YOU LOVE

The second source of meaning is love: people first, but also places, experiences, music, ideas, animals, mornings. What we love points at what we are for. And what they need is not money alone—presence, patience, an example.

15 **Who are the people you most love or feel responsible to, and what do they actually need from you over the next few years?**

16 **What experiences make you feel most alive or most yourself? When did you last make room for one?**

17 **Imagine someone who loves you describing you, honestly and warmly, ten years from now. What do you hope they can truthfully say?**

PART 2 · THE STANCE YOU TAKE

The third source of meaning is the hardest and the most powerful. Some hardship cannot be fixed. Frankl found that even there, one freedom remains: the attitude you take toward it. This is not about pretending pain is good. It is about refusing to let it be wasted.

18 **What is the hardest thing you are carrying right now, or have carried? Name it plainly.**

19 **What has carrying it taught you, or built in you, that comfort never could have?**

If the answer is “nothing yet,” that is honest. Write what it could build, if you chose to let it.

20 **Who could your experience someday help? What would it mean if your hardest chapter became the reason you were useful to someone in theirs?**

21 **Your why, in your own words. What are you living for in this season of your life?**

Read back over what you give, what you love, and the stance you have chosen; somewhere in there is a thread. A few sentences at most. Do not aim for poetry—aim for true. A good why statement makes you feel slightly exposed when you read it. You will re-read this every week; it is the flame the rest of the workbook protects.

Example of the shape (write your own, not this): "I am here to raise kids who feel safe, to do work I am not ashamed of, and to stop treating my health as an afterthought."

PART 3 · CHOOSING DIRECTIONS

A direction is a way you are moving—not a wish (“I want to be fit”) and not a deadline (“lose 20 pounds by summer”). It is something you can act on every week for years. You cannot fail a direction on any single day; you can only stop walking it.

Seven areas: Health & Energy · Relationships · Work & Contribution · Growth & Learning · Play & Rest · Money & Stability · Inner Life. Choose **four to six**. Start with “I am becoming...” or “I am building...” Write each so specifically that a stranger could tell, six months from now, whether you were still walking it.

Three fully fleshed examples (write your own; these only show the shape):

Health & Energy: “I am building a body that has energy left at 8 p.m.—consistent sleep, real food most days, and strength training I can keep for decades, not a crash diet or a two-week boot camp.”

Relationships: “I am becoming the kind of partner and parent people can bring hard news to without bracing: I listen first, repair after conflict the same day when I can, and put my phone away at the table.”

Work & Contribution: “I am becoming a craftsperson in my field—someone whose work is honest, finished, and useful, so the people who depend on me can trust what I ship without chasing me.”

22 **Write your directions: four to six sentences, one per line, each with its life area.**

Format: Life area: I am becoming / building... One per line. Use the examples above as models of specificity, not as your answers.

23 **Now rank them in order of importance (1 = best hours).**

Three questions: If you could only make real progress on one this year, which? Which feeds the need that scored lowest in Part 1? Which, if it went well, would make the others easier? Number 1 gets your best hours; the bottom of the list gets maintenance, not guilt.

24 **Why did number 1 earn the top spot? Say it in a sentence or two.**

Ranking is not abandoning. Putting a direction fifth does not mean it stopped mattering; it means you are honest about where your best energy goes first. Seasons change, and the order is allowed to change with them.

25 **One page of honesty. If you changed nothing, where does the current carry you in three years?**

Same habits, same avoidances, same unchosen hours from your honest mirror. Nobody drifts upward. Not a horror story; just the truthful forecast.

26 **What, in what you just wrote, are you not willing to accept?**

The drift picture is fuel, not a home. From here forward, everything faces the other way—toward what you are building. If writing it produced more despair than determination, that is worth bringing to a professional.

Priority deep dives

Now the real construction begins. Everything before this page was design. The rest of this workbook turns each ranked direction into a working plan—one priority at a time, in order.

WHAT YOU WILL DO ON THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW

Take every direction you ranked, one at a time, through the **same seven moves**:

1. Name the direction clearly
2. Picture ninety days of real progress
3. Audit what already helps—and what pulls you away
4. Rate whether your current path will get you there
5. Design a **daily move** (bad-day sized, anchored)
6. Design a **weekly move** (on the calendar)
7. Plan obstacles and decide what counts as progress

TWO RULES OF THE DAILY MOVE

1. Small enough for a bad day. It must be doable when you are tired, discouraged, and busy. “Write one sentence” survives a bad day; “write for an hour” does not. You may always do more; you must never owe more.

2. Anchored to something that already happens. “After I pour my morning coffee, I will...” beats “every day I will...” because the coffee happens no matter what.

How many pages? Rank up to six directions. Each priority gets two pages. Use only as many as you ranked—leave the rest blank or save them for a later season.

Turn the page → begin with Priority 1 (your best hours).

27 **Your number 1 direction (from your ranking). Adjust the wording if you like.**

This deep dive is for the direction that gets your best hours.

28 **The 90-day picture. If this direction went well for just ninety days, what specifically would be different?**

What would someone close to you notice? Which of your five needs does this feed, and how does it serve your why?

29 **The honest audit. What are you doing now that moves you toward this, and what moves you away?**

Both lists, honestly: actions and habits of thought.

30 **The steering question: if you keep doing exactly what you are doing, will you get what you want here?**

If the number is low, the next steps are where that changes.

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No chance

Definitely

31 **Your daily move: one small action, doable on a bad day, anchored to something that already happens.**

Remember the two rules: bad-day sized, and anchored. Format: After I ..., I will ...

32 **Your weekly move: one bigger block (or more than one). What, how many times per week, which days and times, and where?**

This can be once a week, or several times—for example lifting weights Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6 a.m. Write how many times per week and the day(s) and time(s). Put each slot on the calendar like a doctor’s appointment.

33 **When it gets hard. Name the three most likely obstacles and decide now what you will do.**

Obstacles are not surprises; they are schedule items. If ... then I will ...

34 **Signs it is working: what counts as honest evidence of progress at two weeks? At ninety days?**

Measure what you did, not just what happened.

35 **Your number 2 direction (from your ranking). Adjust the wording if you like.**

Same seven moves, next direction down your list.

36 **The 90-day picture. If this direction went well for just ninety days, what specifically would be different?**

What would someone close to you notice? Which of your five needs does this feed, and how does it serve your why?

37 **The honest audit. What are you doing now that moves you toward this, and what moves you away?**

Both lists, honestly: actions and habits of thought.

38 **The steering question: if you keep doing exactly what you are doing, will you get what you want here?**

If the number is low, the next steps are where that changes.

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No chanceDefinitely

39 **Your daily move: one small action, doable on a bad day, anchored to something that already happens.**

Remember the two rules: bad-day sized, and anchored. Format: After I ..., I will ...

40 **Your weekly move: one bigger block (or more than one). What, how many times per week, which days and times, and where?**

This can be once a week, or several times—for example lifting weights Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6 a.m. Write how many times per week and the day(s) and time(s). Put each slot on the calendar like a doctor’s appointment.

41 **When it gets hard. Name the three most likely obstacles and decide now what you will do.**

Obstacles are not surprises; they are schedule items. If ... then I will ...

42 **Signs it is working: what counts as honest evidence of progress at two weeks? At ninety days?**

Measure what you did, not just what happened.

43 **Your number 3 direction (from your ranking). Adjust the wording if you like.**

Same seven moves, next direction down your list.

44 **The 90-day picture. If this direction went well for just ninety days, what specifically would be different?**

What would someone close to you notice? Which of your five needs does this feed, and how does it serve your why?

45 **The honest audit. What are you doing now that moves you toward this, and what moves you away?**

Both lists, honestly: actions and habits of thought.

46 **The steering question: if you keep doing exactly what you are doing, will you get what you want here?**

If the number is low, the next steps are where that changes.

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No chanceDefinitely

47 **Your daily move: one small action, doable on a bad day, anchored to something that already happens.**

Remember the two rules: bad-day sized, and anchored. Format: After I ..., I will ...

48 **Your weekly move: one bigger block (or more than one). What, how many times per week, which days and times, and where?**

This can be once a week, or several times—for example lifting weights Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6 a.m. Write how many times per week and the day(s) and time(s). Put each slot on the calendar like a doctor’s appointment.

49 **When it gets hard. Name the three most likely obstacles and decide now what you will do.**

Obstacles are not surprises; they are schedule items. If ... then I will ...

50 **Signs it is working: what counts as honest evidence of progress at two weeks? At ninety days?**

Measure what you did, not just what happened.

51 **Your number 4 direction (from your ranking). Adjust the wording if you like.**

Same seven moves, next direction down your list.

52 **The 90-day picture. If this direction went well for just ninety days, what specifically would be different?**

What would someone close to you notice? Which of your five needs does this feed, and how does it serve your why?

53 **The honest audit. What are you doing now that moves you toward this, and what moves you away?**

Both lists, honestly: actions and habits of thought.

54 **The steering question: if you keep doing exactly what you are doing, will you get what you want here?**

If the number is low, the next steps are where that changes.

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No chance

Definitely

55 **Your daily move: one small action, doable on a bad day, anchored to something that already happens.**

Remember the two rules: bad-day sized, and anchored. Format: After I ..., I will ...

56 **Your weekly move: one bigger block (or more than one). What, how many times per week, which days and times, and where?**

This can be once a week, or several times—for example lifting weights Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6 a.m. Write how many times per week and the day(s) and time(s). Put each slot on the calendar like a doctor’s appointment.

57 **When it gets hard. Name the three most likely obstacles and decide now what you will do.**

Obstacles are not surprises; they are schedule items. If ... then I will ...

58 **Signs it is working: what counts as honest evidence of progress at two weeks? At ninety days?**

Measure what you did, not just what happened.

59 **Your number 5 direction (from your ranking). Adjust the wording if you like.**

Same seven moves, next direction down your list. If you ranked fewer directions, leave blank or save for a later season.

60 **The 90-day picture. If this direction went well for just ninety days, what specifically would be different?**

What would someone close to you notice? Which of your five needs does this feed, and how does it serve your why?

61 **The honest audit. What are you doing now that moves you toward this, and what moves you away?**

Both lists, honestly: actions and habits of thought.

62 **The steering question: if you keep doing exactly what you are doing, will you get what you want here?**

If the number is low, the next steps are where that changes.

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No chance

Definitely

63 **Your daily move: one small action, doable on a bad day, anchored to something that already happens.**

Remember the two rules: bad-day sized, and anchored. Format: After I ..., I will ...

64 **Your weekly move: one bigger block (or more than one). What, how many times per week, which days and times, and where?**

This can be once a week, or several times—for example lifting weights Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6 a.m. Write how many times per week and the day(s) and time(s). Put each slot on the calendar like a doctor’s appointment.

65 **When it gets hard. Name the three most likely obstacles and decide now what you will do.**

Obstacles are not surprises; they are schedule items. If ... then I will ...

66 **Signs it is working: what counts as honest evidence of progress at two weeks? At ninety days?**

Measure what you did, not just what happened.

67 **Your number 6 direction (from your ranking). Adjust the wording if you like.**

Same seven moves, next direction down your list. If you ranked fewer directions, leave blank or save for a later season.

68 **The 90-day picture. If this direction went well for just ninety days, what specifically would be different?**

What would someone close to you notice? Which of your five needs does this feed, and how does it serve your why?

69 **The honest audit. What are you doing now that moves you toward this, and what moves you away?**

Both lists, honestly: actions and habits of thought.

70 **The steering question: if you keep doing exactly what you are doing, will you get what you want here?**

If the number is low, the next steps are where that changes.

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Definitely

71 **Your daily move: one small action, doable on a bad day, anchored to something that already happens.**

Remember the two rules: bad-day sized, and anchored. Format: After I ..., I will ...

72 **Your weekly move: one bigger block (or more than one). What, how many times per week, which days and times, and where?**

This can be once a week, or several times—for example lifting weights Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6 a.m. Write how many times per week and the day(s) and time(s). Put each slot on the calendar like a doctor’s appointment.

73 **When it gets hard. Name the three most likely obstacles and decide now what you will do.**

Obstacles are not surprises; they are schedule items. If ... then I will ...

74 **Signs it is working: what counts as honest evidence of progress at two weeks? At ninety days?**

Measure what you did, not just what happened.

75 **One person who is in this with you, and what you will tell them.**

We keep promises to others more reliably than promises to ourselves. The right person asking “how is it going?” once a week is worth more than any app. Pick someone who wants you to win; tell them your top direction and its weekly move.

KEEP IT ALIVE

Plans fade without an engine. Once a week, use the free **Weekly Steering Check** (about fifteen minutes, five questions) at omnipsyche.org/homework/weekly-steering. Each season, use the **Quarterly Review** to re-score needs, re-rank directions, and renew your why: omnipsyche.org/homework/quarterly-review.
To rebuild a single direction later without redoing the whole workbook, use the standalone **Purpose Deep Dive** at omnipsyche.org/homework/purpose-deep-dive.

Bring this to your next session. What you wrote here is exactly the kind of material good sessions are made of. Repeat whenever it is useful; the value compounds.

Michael C. Shedrick, M.S., PLPC, NCC. This exercise is for educational and informational purposes only. It is not therapy, not a substitute for professional diagnosis or treatment, and completing it does not create a counselor-client relationship. If it was assigned by your treatment provider, bring it to them. If you are in crisis, call or text 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline). Free mental health education and tools: omnipsyche.org

NOTES & SESSION PREP

Use this page for anything that did not fit, or for notes before you bring the workbook to a counselor.

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