

What you did, and how it landed

You do not need motivation to start. We do most things on autopilot, without ever waiting to feel like it first.

Depression can also dampen the brain’s reward system, so things that once felt good can feel flat for now. **The aim of this log is not to enjoy; it is simply to do: to start re-engaging with life, one small step at a time.** Working out what to re-engage with is the job of ‘What has drifted, and what still matters’; this log is just about the doing.

i Useful alongside therapy, not a substitute for it. Nothing here is scored, there are no right answers, and a partial week still shows a pattern.

WHY MOTIVATION COMES LAST, NOT FIRST

WAITING TO FEEL LIKE IT

- You wait until you feel motivated to act
- In depression that feeling rarely arrives first
- So little happens, and the waiting feeds the low



ACTING THE WAY YOU ALREADY DO

- You already do most things on autopilot, no motivation needed
- You start one small thing the same way, before you feel ready
- The doing comes first; motivation may follow slowly

Behavioural activation is built in this order: action first, the rest after (Martell et al., 2010). The reward and motivation system can be dampened in depression, so the urge to begin can lag well behind the doing (Frey et al., 2023).

YOU HAVE ALREADY ACTED ON AUTOPILOT TODAY

Got out of bed

Made a drink

Checked your phone

Answered a message

Got dressed, maybe

None of these waited for you to feel motivated, or to enjoy them. **A chosen activity can begin the same way: you act first, and whatever follows, follows after.** That is all this log asks of you.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU DO IT

You probably will not enjoy it, at least not yet, and that is not a sign you did it wrong. Depression can blunt the reward system, so the lift that would normally come with an activity may be muted for now. **Doing it anyway, without the reward, is the whole exercise.** Whatever you notice afterwards, even nothing, is worth writing down.

SMALL WAYS BACK IN

These are ways to re-engage, not ways to feel better on the spot. Pick what fits; none has to be big.

MOVEMENT

The body leads

Even a short walk counts. Exercise is widely studied in relation to low mood (Noetel et al., 2024).

CONNECTION

Not alone

Contact with people, even brief. Withdrawal can feed low mood, so a small contact counts.

A SENSE OF DONE

One finished task

Completing something, not its size. One drawer, one email, one dish all count.

MATTERS TO YOU

Tied to a value

Connected to something you care about, even slightly. See ‘What has drifted, and what still matters’.

HOW TO USE IT

1

Do first, decide later

Pick something small and do it before you feel like it.

2

Record what you did

And how it landed, even if that is flat or nothing. The feeling is data, not the goal.

3

Read down the columns

Over the week, notice which doings shifted anything, especially the surprises.

REMEMBER

You do not need motivation, and you do not need to enjoy it. The aim is simply to do, and then to notice what, if anything, follows.

Your one-week log



One row per day for a week.

A few words per cell, and skip any cell if nothing comes. You are noticing, not writing a report. At the end of the week, read down the columns and notice which things shifted anything, especially the surprises.

WHAT ONE LINE MIGHT LOOK LIKE

DAY & DATE	WHAT I DID	HOW IT LANDED	HOW IT COMPARED	WHAT I NOTICED
EXAMPLE Mon	Walked to the shop and back	Flat, a bit less heavy by the end	I expected nothing; about right	Starting was the hard part. I did it anyway.
Day 1 date:				
Day 2 date:				
Day 3 date:				
Day 4 date:				
Day 5 date:				
Day 6 date:				
Day 7 date:				

WHEN YOU HAVE READ THE PATTERNS

You can bring this to a first conversation, or just keep noticing.

The patterns you notice are useful whether or not you book a session. If you would like to talk them through, the Meet and Greet is a short call to see if we are the right fit.

MEET AND GREET

- Free
- 15 minutes
- Online or in-person
- No obligation