

THE AWESOME HUMAN JOURNAL

A Tool Kit for the Tough Days, the Good Days,
and All the Days in Between

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 sounds true
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INTRODUCTION

Dear Awesome Human,

Being human can be hard.

We all have tough days. There are constant big and small challenges to contend with.

And then there's your brain, which doesn't make dealing with all these challenges any easier. Oh how it loves to trap you in negative thoughts, bring out your inner critic and self-doubter, and make you feel guilty for doing things that bring you joy.

Are you nodding? I'm nodding because my brain is well-trained in doing this, too.

And that's why I created this journal: to help you make the tough days a little better, savor the good days even more, and learn how to create a more supportive relationship with your thoughts and emotions so you can struggle less and thrive more!

Because that's why you're here, on this amazing, unexpected, sometimes difficult life journey: to live fully, savor the good moments (no matter how fleeting they seem at

times), and discover your own awesomeness so you can share it with people you care about, in your work, your craft, your community.

You're here to embrace your Awesome Human.

You are **AWESOME** because you have something unique and special to share with this world and so much capacity to be a force of good who positively impacts other humans.

You are **HUMAN** because you don't have unlimited energy, you can't do all things perfectly, and your brain can get in the way with all kinds of unhelpful thoughts.

The only way to fully unleash your awesomeness is by honoring your humanness.

And that's what this journal is all about.

Confession: I might sound confident, but I had to learn this lesson the hard way.

For most of my life, I ignored my humanness, my emotions, and my mental health. I basically treated myself like an accomplishment machine.

I thought life was about always doing more and harder things and struggling through them. So I did that, a lot.

Until several years ago, when I completely burned out and almost lost everything that was meaningful to me.

Figuring out how to recover and heal after my burnout was daunting. I was Googling things like “how to feel better when you feel awful.” Like a baby learning to walk and talk, I was learning how to have a more supportive relationship with myself, my thoughts, and my emotions for the very first time.

This is what I call Emotional Fitness: creating a more supportive relationship with yourself, your thoughts, your emotions, and other people.

And throughout this journal, you'll be practicing the **5 Emotional Fitness skills:**

Acceptance: Acknowledging the situation and your feelings with clarity vs. judgment, and using that as your starting point to decide the best way forward.

Gratitude: Making an active choice to notice the small, positive moments in everyday life—even when times are challenging—and actively expressing your appreciation for other people.

Self-Care: Fueling your emotional, mental, and physical energy.

Intentional Kindness: Being intentionally kind toward others without expecting anything in return.

The Bigger Why: Regularly connecting to your sense of purpose by looking at your daily tasks, projects,

and responsibilities through the lens of how they help others, contribute to something bigger than yourself, or help you reach a meaningful long-term goal.

You'll also be learning how to edit your thoughts, treat yourself with compassion, talk back to your brain, say "no" (yes!), and practice your joy (plus a few more skills I'll let you discover as we go).

I handwrote and illustrated this journal—even though I'm not a professional illustrator and my brain threw all possible self-doubt at me—and I want to tell you why:

Every single prompt and practice in this journal I created and tried first myself.

In fact, as I was working on this journal, I looked through many of my own journals where I've jotted down these practices, notes to self, ideas, and words of encouragement for myself.

I'm a science geek—I love understanding how the brain works and then using that understanding to make my brain my friend vs. obstacle creator. And I'll be sharing many Mini Neuroscience Lessons with you throughout this journal because every practice you'll be doing is based on research.

This journal is personal. I'm sharing with you what worked for me and the practices I still use every day to honor my humanness so I can embrace and share my awesomeness. (By the way, it took a lot of practice to quiet my inner critic enough to be able to call myself an Awesome Human, so don't worry if you feel the same way!!)

I've also shared these practices with hundreds of thousands of Awesome Humans through my work and talks and have seen them flourish, savor, and feel more peace within themselves as they practiced (so you don't just have to take my word for it).

OK, I'm going to stop "talking" now because I want you to dive in and begin the beautiful journey of embracing your Awesome Human!

I would love to know how it's going. No, seriously, I would LOVE to see your filled-out practice pages, your Awesome Human Awards, your Notes to Self, and to hear from you directly.

You can always email me at natalyk@happier.com (yes, I read all of the messages, although it takes me a bit of time).

And if you want to inspire other humans to embrace their Awesome Human, share some of your pages on social media and tag [@natalykogan](#) and [#awesomehuman](#).

I am rooting for you.

I believe in you.

I am with you, every step of the way.

With love and gratitude,

Nataly

P.S. This journal is inspired by my book *The Awesome Human Project: Break Free from Daily Burnout, Struggle Less, and Thrive More in Work and Life*. You don't need to read the book to get the most out of this journal, but the book goes deeper into the skills, practices, science, and my personal story. So, I highly recommend getting a copy. Also, I know the author, and she is pretty awesome :)

P.P.S. The art on the cover is a watercolor painting I did called *The Lens of Gratitude*. I began to paint after I burned out as a way to practice my joy, and I fell in love with it. I now share my art in every way I can, including by putting it on the cover of this journal. And I'm telling you this because this is the power of embracing your Awesome Human and practicing your joy: you shine brighter and your joy spreads to so many other people!

Now I'm done talking for real.

Let's dive in!

NOTE TO SELF

Don't do this day
like a chore.

Do it like it's a gift
you're excited to open.

@natalykogan

DAILY PRACTICE PAGES

a brief but

"please-don't-skip-it" tour

DAILY PRACTICE PAGES INTRO

Small actions and mindset shifts can have a huge impact on how you feel, your outlook, and the way you treat yourself . . . when you practice them consistently.

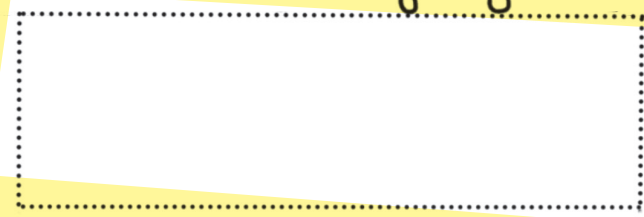
That's what the Daily Practice pages are for, and you'll find many of them in this journal.

Before I walk you through them, a few quick notes:

- There are two pages of prompts and practices in each set of Daily Practice pages.
- If you can do at least the first page in the morning, awesome. The way you begin your day impacts how you feel during the day, so I'd love for you to give yourself a good start. But make it work for you: if your morning is rushed, do it later! I'd much rather you practice when you can breathe and focus.
- If some of the prompts are a bit more challenging at first, that's OK! Don't judge yourself. You're learning new skills, and the many practices in the journal will help you get better.

OK, now let's take a little tour of the prompts in your Daily Practice pages!

How am I feeling today?



This is your **emotional awareness** practice.

It's a chance to check in with yourself (just like you check in with people you care about).

Write down whatever feelings come up. Simply become aware of them, without judging them.

Based on how you feel, you might think of something you could do to support yourself, but don't force it. Awareness alone is really powerful.

Did you know that emotional awareness leads to improved well-being? It does!

What would I say to a friend who felt this way?

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This is your **self-compassion** practice.

Self-compassion is one of the most important skills of Awesome Humans, and you'll be practicing it a LOT in this journal.

One of the best ways to practice self-compassion is to talk to yourself the way you would talk to a friend.

We tend to be kinder toward our friends than ourselves, and I want to help you change that!

Oh, and self-compassion isn't just for times when you're feeling down! If you're having a great day, celebrate and appreciate yourself!

Self-compassion boosts feelings of self-worth, reduces fear of failure, and increases your overall well-being.