

The Seven-Step Reality Check

A 5–10 minute ritual to check what's really happening

Use when you feel confused, gaslit, pressured, or stuck in a loop · Pen & paper only · Alone or with someone you trust

START HERE — Write your initial thought or claim:

"I always mess up." · "They don't care about me." · "Adulthood killed all the fun."

1 MATERIAL · RAW DATA

What would a camera actually see?

Neutral facts only — no story, no feelings yet. What literally happened? What was said or done?

→ Write 2–3 concrete observations.

2 RELATIONAL · WHOSE VOICE?

Is this thought mine, or is it an echo?

Parent, ex, boss, social media, past trauma, cultural script? Whose energy is behind this claim?

→ Name the source(s) if you can.

3 SYSTEMIC · PATTERN OR MOMENT?

Is this a recurring loop or this week's exhaustion?

Does the same thought spike with lack of sleep, conflict, hunger, certain people? Look at the last 1–4 weeks.

→ Circle: Pattern / This moment's noise / Both

4 SYMBOLIC · THE BIGGER STORY

What larger story am I fitting this into?

What narrative does this event confirm? e.g. "I'm not good enough." "Nothing ever changes."

→ Write the story in one sentence.

5 ASPIRATIONAL · WHAT DO I VALUE?

Does this thought protect what actually matters to me?

Play, friendship, truth, connection, rest, fairness, safety? Does this thought grow or shrink those values? Pure reflection — no action yet.

→ List 1–2 values, then circle: Helps / Hurts / Neutral

6 RESPONSE · WHAT IS YOUR CHOSEN MOVE?

Having seen all of this — what is your chosen response?

It can be action, or deliberate stillness. Choosing not to react is also a move. Send a text. Have a conversation. Or consciously decide to wait and do nothing for now. The question is not what you will do — it is what you are choosing.

→ My chosen response (action or deliberate inaction):

→ When:

7 TRANSCENDENT · BIG-PICTURE WEIGHT

How much does this actually weigh in the long view?

Will it feel this big in a month? A year? Ten years? You've already decided what to do. Now give it its true proportion.

→ Rate it: 1 (barely registers) — 10 (defines everything)

QUICK REFLECTION — One sentence each:

1. What shifted for me in the last few minutes?

2. Do I want to return to this, or is it resolved for now?

3. If I talk to someone about this, who feels safe?

You don't have to fix anything. Just seeing the layers often creates breathing room. Each dated entry is a record of your reality as it happened — not as someone else reframes it later.

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