CAPACITY2GROW

MQNA Journal

A five-minute evening practice

M Moment
Q Question
N Nugget
A Affirmation

Clarity is a practice.

Everything you write here stays with you.

MQNA JOURNAL

Reflection is the leadership skill hiding in plain sight.

> The leaders who grow fastest aren't the ones with the most experience. They're the ones who learn most from the experience they already have. Researchers at Harvard Business School found that people who spent a few minutes at the end of the day reflecting on what they'd learned went on to perform better than those who simply kept working.
>
> Reflection turns a busy day into something you can use: you start to notice your patterns, respond rather than react, and walk into tomorrow with one clear intention.
>
> This journal gives you a simple structure for it - five minutes, four steps, most evenings. Keep it by your desk or bed, and come back to it as often as you like.

HOW TO USE IT

1. **Find five quiet minutes**
   Most evenings, before the day blurs into the next one. A cup of tea is optional but recommended.

2. **Fill in one entry page**
   Work through the four steps in order: Moment, Question, Nugget, Affirmation. A few lines each is plenty.

3. **Borrow a question if you need one**
   Pages 4 and 5 have questions to choose from, or write your own.

4. **Look back once a week**
   After every seven entries there is a short review page. Patterns show up over time that you would never spot in a single day.

5. **Print more when you run out**
   Print the entry and review pages again whenever you need them.

THE FOUR STEPS

Moment, Question, Nugget, Affirmation

M

Moment

Name one moment from today that stands out. It might be a tension, a decision, or a conversation that stayed with you. Be specific about what actually happened.

Q

Question

Ask one honest question about it. Not the one that confirms what you already think - the one that opens something up.

N

Nugget

Write down what you are taking from it: an insight, a lesson, or something you noticed about yourself. Page 7 has some insights to spark your own.

A

Affirmation

Set one intention for tomorrow, in words you can genuinely believe. Page 6 explains what makes one work.

AN EXAMPLE

MOMENT	*The meeting drifted off course. I noticed it, but said nothing.*
QUESTION	*What am I avoiding right now, and why?*
NUGGET	*Staying grounded doesn't mean shutting down. It means staying open while staying steady.*
AFFIRMATION	*I am becoming someone who can pause, reflect, and name what is happening in the room.*

QUESTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM

Questions that fit almost any moment

Start here if nothing else comes to mind. They work for good days as well as hard ones.

- What did this moment reveal about what I care about?
- What was I feeling in that moment, and what was it telling me?
- What would I want to do the same, or differently, next time?
- Where did I have a choice in this moment, even a small one?
- What does this moment have in common with others I've had lately?
- What is this moment asking of me tomorrow?
- If I were coaching someone through this exact moment, what would I ask them?

How I'm handling things personally

- What exact emotion am I feeling beneath the surface right now?
- What am I trying to hide or push down right now and what would happen if I acknowledged it?
- What old pattern did I run on today, and what choice can I make next time?
- How would I view this mistake if I treated myself with kindness?
- What option am I quietly avoiding while telling myself I am stuck?
- How can I create a brief pause right now before I respond to this?

My team or relationships

- What risk am I taking by delaying this conversation?
- How well did I listen today without cutting people off?
- Who did I allow to be talked over or left out during our meeting?
- Where is my silence letting something continue that I know is not right?
- Am I responding thoughtfully, or am I reacting out of defensiveness?
- Who on my team might be feeling left out or ignored?

QUESTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM

Questions for particular situations

A decision or direction I'm setting

- Did I make this decision, or did the pressure make it for me?
- What is my gut trying to tell me about this situation?
- Who will have to live with this decision, and have I asked for their view?
- Where am I forcing a false choice between two things that can coexist?
- Am I making this choice out of genuine care, or am I just following a rule?

Helping someone else grow

- Did I encourage them to take charge of the solution, or did I jump in to save the day?
- Did I ask a question that helped them think it through, or did I jump straight in with an answer?
- Did I thank someone for their effort today, or am I waiting for a formal review?
- Do I truly believe this person can handle the challenge in front of them?
- Did I make them feel supported before sharing feedback on their work?

Focus, priorities or what matters

- Where did I direct my focus today and did it go to what actually mattered?
- How well did my actual focus match what I truly care about?
- How does taking on this new task fit with my core priorities?
- What am I avoiding by staying so busy right now?
- What would I regret leaving undone if I looked back on this period of my life?

Trying something new

- Did I test a rough version of this idea today, or am I waiting until the plan looks perfect?
- How might this roadblock force me to find a better approach?
- What am I writing off as impossible when I simply have not learned it yet?
- How can I view our current limits as a helpful creative challenge?
- Did I look outside my usual industry or role today to find a fresh idea?

AFFIRMATIONS

What makes an affirmation work

An affirmation isn't a wish. It's a statement your mind can actually believe, repeated until it becomes automatic. Three things make the difference:

1 **Make it believable, not absolute.**

"I am becoming more confident" lands better than "I am confident". It doesn't ask you to accept something that contradicts how you actually feel right now.

2 **Feel it, don't just say it.**

The words matter less than the sense of it in your body - not just an idea, but something you can actually feel as true.

3 **Tie it to something specific.**

Not a mood, a behaviour - something you'd actually notice yourself doing differently tomorrow.

A FEW WAYS TO START

I am becoming someone who...
Tomorrow, when ... happens, I will...
I can ... even when ...
I choose to ... because it matters to me.

NUGGETS

A few insights to spark your own

Your nugget is whatever you're taking from the moment. If you're stuck, one of these might help you put it into words.

- **Strong emotions pass if you let them**
  A surge of frustration or panic peaks quickly and naturally fades away if you let it run its course instead of feeding it with overthinking.

- **Avoiding issues makes them worse over time**
  Putting off uncomfortable discussions allows frustration to grow. Addressing concerns early prevents minor disagreements from turning into major conflicts.

- **Reversible choices deserve less debate**
  If you can easily undo a decision, make it quickly and move on. Save your energy and time for the rare choices that cannot be turned back.

- **Let people own their own challenges**
  Encouraging others to solve their own problems builds their independence and confidence. Stepping in to rescue them creates reliance on you and stalls their growth.

- **Great ideas require quiet moments**
  Your best problem-solving happens when your brain has time to wander without an immediate task. Packing your schedule with endless meetings leaves no room for creative thinking.

- **Quick tests beat long planning sessions**
  Testing small ideas quickly in the real world teaches you more than weeks of meetings. Trying things and learning shows what works far better than guessing on paper.

- **Being kind to yourself helps you see clearly**
  Harsh self-criticism makes you defensive and hides your mistakes. Being gentle with yourself allows you to face reality and learn from it.

- **Silence is not neutral**
  Keeping quiet when you see something wrong is not staying out of it. It quietly lets the issue continue when you had a chance to act.

- **Commit fully and focus on learning**
  Second-guessing yourself after making a choice wastes time and energy. Pick a direction, go all in, and focus on learning from whatever happens next.

- **Asking questions builds stronger problem solvers**
  Guiding people with thoughtful questions encourages them to own their solutions, whereas giving direct instructions keeps them dependent on you.

- **How you spend your time shows your real priorities**
  What you say you value does not mean much if your schedule reflects something else. Looking at where your time actually goes reveals your true focus.

- **Failing a task does not make you a failure**
  A mistake shows that an approach did not work, not that you are incapable. Treating setbacks as feedback helps you adjust and move forward.

Entry 1

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 2

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 3

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 4

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 5

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 6

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 7

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

WEEK 1 REVIEW

Looking back over the week

Read back through your last seven entries first. Then take five minutes with these.

What kept coming up?

Moments, people or feelings that appeared more than once.

What pattern am I starting to notice in myself?

Which affirmation did I actually live, and which slipped?

One thing I want to carry into next week

Entry 8

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 9

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 10

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 11

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 12

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 13

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

Entry 14

Date _____

M MOMENT

What moment from today stands out? What actually happened?

Q QUESTION

One honest question to sit with. Borrow one from pages 4-5 or write your own.

N NUGGET

What am I taking from this?

A AFFIRMATION

Tomorrow, I will... (believable, felt, specific)

WEEK 2 REVIEW

Looking back over the week

Read back through your last seven entries first. Then take five minutes with these.

What kept coming up?

Moments, people or feelings that appeared more than once.

What pattern am I starting to notice in myself?

Which affirmation did I actually live, and which slipped?

One thing I want to carry into next week

GOING FURTHER

Want to work through it with someone?

A journal builds the habit of noticing. Sometimes the moments that keep coming back are worth working through with support. The MQNA Leadership Clarity Programme is six fortnightly sessions over three months, built around the tensions you're actually facing.

Every programme starts with a free 30-minute call - no pressure, just a conversation about whether it fits.

Book a call: calendly.com/firoozmand/30min

Free MQNA Assessment: capacity2grow.com/mqna-assessment

Email: firooz@capacity2grow.com

Clarity is a practice.