

Aide-Mémoire

Your personal reference sheet

Using the notes you have kept alongside each chapter, complete every section below. Write in the first person and in the present tense. Be specific rather than admirable: this sheet is for the moment when the pattern returns and you need to recognise yourself quickly enough to choose. This is not a finished document. It is a living one. Revise it as the work deepens, and date each revision so you can see how your own account of yourself has changed.

SECTION ONE: THE BRAKE ON MY SUCCESS

What has been limiting you, and how it operates.

Fears and the Needs Beneath Them

List them as pairs. Each fear protects a need. Naming the pair matters more than naming either alone.

My Default Strategy for Success

How you create value as a leader, written honestly enough to include the cost.

My Reaction When the Strategy Does Not Work

What you do when the familiar approach stops producing the familiar result. Describe the behaviour, not the intention.

Limiting Belief Pattern

What must be true for the strategy to appear necessary. If it reads as a virtue, keep working on it.

When I Notice I Am Slipping Back

The early signals in four registers: physical, emotional, linguistic and relational.

SECTION TWO: THE FULFILMENT ENGINE

Who you are becoming, and what you are committed to.

Vessel <i>Who you are being when the function is set down.</i>	
Compass <i>What you are committed to creating through the way you lead.</i>	
Driving Force <i>The fuel you are choosing, and the pull you are overriding. Name both.</i>	
Movement <i>The consistent actions that take you beyond what is comfortable, expressed concretely enough to be observed.</i>	
Fulfilment Engine Statement <i>What the four elements above say together, in your own words.</i>	

SECTION THREE: DAILY REMINDERS

Four questions, written for the moments when you will need them rather than for the page.

Morning <i>A question that sets the intention.</i>	
During the day <i>A question that interrupts the pattern in progress.</i>	
Evening <i>A question that reviews without self-criticism.</i>	

Under pressure

The question that reaches you when the others will not.

SECTION FOUR: SPECIFIC PRACTICES

Between three and six concrete behaviours, not qualities.

Specific Practices

Things a colleague could watch you do or fail to do.

SECTION FIVE: MY COMMITMENT

How often you will return to this sheet, and what you will do when you drift.

My Commitment

Reviewed and revised:

A Completed Aide-Mémoire

A composite example: do not copy it, notice how specific it is

SECTION ONE: THE BRAKE ON MY SUCCESS

Fears and the Needs Beneath Them

Being misunderstood, protecting a need for appreciation. Insignificance, protecting a need for recognition. Rejection, protecting a need for belonging. Loss of control, protecting a need for certainty.

My Default Strategy for Success

I create value by seeing what is coming before others do, staying close to the detail, and being the person who can be relied upon when something matters. I work longer than the role requires and keep a working knowledge of everything my directors are doing. This has built real trust and it has moved the organisation forward. It has also made me the point through which progress passes, rather than someone who multiplies the capability of others.

My Reaction When the Strategy Does Not Work

I move to protect control. I re-enter decisions I have already delegated. I ask questions that are corrections wearing the costume of enquiry. I increase my involvement and call it support. When that fails, I attribute the problem to the structure, the market or the readiness of the team, and each of those explanations contains enough truth to be persuasive.

Limiting Belief Pattern

If I am not close to the decision, standards will fall and my value will not be visible. Delegation, patience and not knowing feel like risks I am taking with my own credibility rather than investments in other people.

When I Notice I Am Slipping Back

Physical: I sit forward. My breathing shortens. I speak faster and interrupt the ends of sentences.

Emotional: impatience that presents itself as clarity, and a low irritation at the pace of other people's thinking.

Linguistic: I begin sentences with "What I would do is". I ask questions I already have the answer to. I say "let me just" before taking something back.

Relational: my directors bring me finished conclusions rather than developing thinking. Disagreement arrives after the meeting rather than during it. My calendar fills with decisions that were not mine to make.

SECTION TWO: MY FULFILMENT ENGINE

Vessel

I am someone who can stay in a conversation without needing to resolve it. My judgement is available to people rather than imposed on them.

Compass

I am committed to building an organisation whose capability does not depend on my presence, and in which difficult information travels quickly and without cost to the person carrying it.

Driving Force

I am fuelled by watching people become capable of things they did not believe were available to them, and by work that is genuinely difficult. I can still access the older fuel, which is the fear of being found insufficient, and it works quickly. I am choosing to notice it rather than obey it.

Movement

I stretch about ten per cent beyond comfort, repeatedly, in small identified places rather than in one large gesture. In practice: I do not speak first in two meetings each week. I let a decision I could make well be made adequately by someone else. I say when I do not know. I ask for help before the situation requires it.

Fulfilment Engine Statement

I lead by building capability rather than by being indispensable. I am committed to an organisation that can think and decide without me, and I accept that getting there will regularly require me to tolerate work being done in a way I would not have chosen.

SECTION THREE: DAILY REMINDERS

Morning: what would trusting look like today, specifically, with a named person?

During the day: am I developing someone here, or am I protecting myself?

Evening: where did I stretch, and where did I take something back?

Under pressure: what am I trying to control, and what would actually happen if I did not?

SECTION FOUR: SPECIFIC PRACTICES

Pause for three seconds before responding when I feel the urge to step in.

Name the feeling privately when it arrives: I am afraid of being seen as not on top of this.

Hand over one decision each week, with the authority attached. Agree proportionate review points in advance, then do not shadow it or take it back.

Ask one genuine question in every leadership meeting, meaning one to which I do not prefer an answer.

Acknowledge one specific contribution by someone else each day, to them rather than about them.

SECTION FIVE: MY COMMITMENT

I will read this sheet every Sunday evening and before any situation I know will test me. When I find I have drifted, which I will, I intend to treat it as information rather than as evidence about my character. The measure of progress is not that the pattern has gone. It is how quickly I notice it, and how much choice I still have when I do.

Reviewed and revised: [date]