

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This is a daily journal to record your journey to being Jedi and reflect on your daily progress. Every day starts with a simple quote taken from the Star Wars Universe and a short meditation on a central theme of Jedi Philosophy.

Space for writing is included for you to journal every day for 365 days. The first day is Day 1. You may start any day of the year. The journal progresses through weekly cycles. Each week has a theme which is central to Jedi Philosophy. You may wish to add additional notes and pages to expand on your writings. You may use this book as a primer for a more in-depth personal journal.

You are invited to use the space provided to enter in a simple gratitude. By starting the day with a simple thought of gratitude we acknowledge the day and give it the respect it deserves. There will never be another day like it therefore we should acknowledge it with a moment of gratitude. It could be our last.

A short contemplation may be written in the morning. What do you hope to accomplish during the day? Do you have a specific goal, or do you wish only to demonstrate virtues such as courage, patience, or honesty in dealing with others or expected situations? You may also write down a theme for the day expanding on the quote at the beginning of the page or the results of your own personal meditation.

In the evening sit down and reflect or meditate on the day. How did it go? What went well and what did not? Reflect on where you can improve without berating yourself. Remember that every day is an opportunity to learn from mistakes and tomorrow is a chance to improve. Keep the focus on the present.

At the end of the week, you will undertake a review on the previous week and assess your performance against five primary criteria for being a practicing Jedi. Every Jedi should aspire to

practice meditation, physical exercise, diplomacy, awareness, and self-discipline daily, if possible:

Meditation: Did you meditate daily or as often as you could? How would you rate the practice in your opinion? Most guides recommend a session of meditation of at least 20 minutes a day however even a few minutes of sitting or moving meditation is beneficial. If you are new to meditation seek resources online. There is a plethora of guided meditations on You-Tube to get you started.

Physical Exercise: Did you exercise during the week? A healthy body is as essential as a healthy mind. The frequency and intensity of exercise will depend on the individual. Most texts recommend 30 minutes of light cardiovascular exercise a day. Strength and conditioning exercises should be performed 3-4 times a week for 15-30 minutes. Consider seeking advice from a health and fitness professional before starting a new exercise regimen.

Diplomacy: Reflect on your interactions with people during the week. Were they constructive and positive? How did you handle disagreement and conflict? Were you polite and civil in the face of hostility? What would you do definitely? Remember, even a negative experience can teach something. We can always improve. Set yourself as an example for others.

Awareness: Were you mindful during the week? That is, did you pay attention to your inner as well as your outer world? Were you aware of your emotions and able to moderate your reactions to them? Did you allow emotions such as anger, resentment, jealousy, arrogance, or fear dictate your words and behaviour? Were you able to recognise self-defeating and destructive thoughts and attitudes in yourself and others and not allow them to dictate your decisions and choices?

Self-Discipline: There are many ways to practice self-discipline. Being committed to the daily practices is an example. We may have the intention to eat right and exercise but lack of self-discipline results in intent not being translated into action. Self-discipline is following through and challenging yourself. For example, you can decide to omit a food item from your diet which you enjoy or try fasting one day a week. Resisting the urge to answer an insult in kind is also an example of exercising self-discipline. Thinking about doing something difficult is easy however applying the self-discipline to do it is what makes a Jedi.

Take some time to record and assess your performance in all these areas through the week. You decide how that is done. If you feel you have struggled in one area determine how you plan to address it in the following week. For example, if your meditation practice was a non-starter do not begrudge yourself. Plan short sessions of meditation into your following week. Start slow and build on progress incrementally. Pushing yourself too hard in the beginning will only lead to frustration and possibly lead you to quit before you have found traction.

In addition to the five daily practices above I also incorporate my own personal daily goals. Through application of the daily practices my goals are usually also met in some tangible way. My daily goals are simply:

1. **Meditate:** At least 20 minutes per day I close my eyes and focus on my breath. I try to clear the noise from my mind by allowing thoughts and images to simply pass through like clouds in the sky. This is one of the most basic styles of meditation as is repeating mantras or counting breaths.
2. **Exercise:** 30 minutes or more of exercise a day. This usually includes a variety of bodyweight exercises or a run. You might try anything from Yoga to Bodybuilding.
3. **Study:** I read books daily for at least 30 minutes. Sustained reading is becoming rarer as the internet and particularly social media eats at our time and erodes our attention span.

4. Creativity: the human need to create is hard wired in us. Whether it is a work of art, a culinary dish, a blog article, or some planting and pruning in the garden we are shaping and creating something and fulfilling that human need. Find some outlet which you can practice your creativity.
5. Service: Doing something for someone else. This can include helping around the house, doing voluntary work, charity, or holding a door open for someone. A lot of people also forget that their job is a service. By doing the best job we can for the pay that we get we are being of service to our employer and customer. We are contributing to society through our labour and the taxes that we pay. Service gets us out of self by focussing on others.

Your personal goals may be different. You can use my goals, borrow from the goals of Jedi Philosophy, or create your own list. The important thing is that you demonstrate the daily practices in some tangible way. Please also use this journal to record how you have demonstrated your goals through the week.

I believe that unless we determine what our purpose is life can seem pointless. The mindless pursuit of hedonistic pleasures and distractions may kill time and bring fleeting satisfaction, but they do not bring a sense of enduring fulfilment and happiness. You probably agree with this statement otherwise you would not be here reading this. The idea of journaling would probably not grab those who live only for the sake of the moment.

Journaling is an excellent way to track your progress on the path to self-improvement and self-discovery. Keeping a journal also allows you to express your ideas, thoughts and hopes. The General and Emperor Marcus Aurelius kept a private journal in the tradition of the Ancient Stoics. The writings reveal a personal practice of daily reflection and contemplation in the Stoic tradition. We know this book today as “Meditations”. It remains a leading source of inspiration in people’s lives 1700 years after it was written and serves as an example of how powerful journaling can be. Try it yourself.