

# Find your footing when the ground keeps moving.

A 9-question practice to update your operating system. Built around the three forces that stabilize a human in any era: Will, Imagination, and Habit.

*"Will chooses direction. Imagination creates pull. Habit sustains motion. When all three align, change becomes structural rather than heroic."*

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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# This is a practice book.

Three forces govern how a human being changes. **Will** chooses your direction. **Imagination** shows you what's possible. **Habit** turns it into something repeatable. When any one is missing, change destabilizes. When all three align, change becomes structural. Predictable rather than heroic.

This workbook walks you through three questions for each force. Nine questions in total. These are the questions a thoughtful person asks themselves when the world is moving faster than the rules they grew up with.

## A few notes before you start

**Take your time.** One section per sitting is plenty. The whole workbook is best done across three days. A single sitting will tempt you to skim.

**Write by hand if you can.** Something happens between the pen and the paper that doesn't happen when you type. The whole point is to slow your thinking down enough to notice it.

**Aim for honest.** No one is reading these answers but you. The most useful answers are usually the ones you don't want to write down.

**Come back to this in 90 days.** Some answers will surprise you. That's the point. The you who finishes this workbook will be a different you than the one who started it.

# Will.

## Choose your direction.

Will is the quiet, deliberate decision about what gets your attention. *What you turn toward. What you turn away from.* Far from gritted-teeth willpower, will is a calm act of pointing yourself somewhere on purpose. In a world built to fragment your focus, will is the most radical thing available to you.

When will is fragmented, attention scatters. When will is coherent, focus becomes possible. Three questions help you find it.

QUESTION ONE

# What is my intention?

*Your intention sits underneath your goals and to-do lists. The why beneath the what. The thing you would still want to do if no one were watching and no one were keeping score.*

**IF YOU'RE STUCK, TRY THIS**

- If I had one more year in this profession, what would I want to be true at the end of it?
- What am I doing because I chose to, and what am I doing because I forgot I had a choice?
- What does the version of me I most respect spend her time on?

**MY INTENTION**

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QUESTION TWO

# Where shall I focus?

*Attention is the rarest resource of this era. AI is making information free. The question is no longer what you can know. The question is what you choose to give your mind to.*

**IF YOU'RE STUCK, TRY THIS**

- What are the three things, in this season of my life, that deserve the most of me?
- What am I currently giving attention to that I would not choose if I were starting from scratch?
- If I removed one thing from my life this week, what would I miss the least?

**WHERE I WILL FOCUS**

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QUESTION THREE

# What is my belief?

*Underneath every action sits a belief. About yourself. About your students. About what's possible. The belief is rarely written down, but it shapes everything. Naming it gives you a chance to choose it on purpose.*

**IF YOU'RE STUCK, TRY THIS**

- What do I believe about my students that they may not yet believe about themselves?
- What story have I been telling myself about my own potential that no longer serves me?
- If I fully believed I was capable of what I'm being called to, what would change tomorrow?

**MY BELIEF**

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# *Imagination.*

## **See it before it exists.**

Imagination is rehearsal. It is the cognitive act of placing yourself, vividly, inside a future that does not yet exist, and using the felt sense of being there to pull you forward. Without imagination, effort becomes mechanical. With it, effort gains meaning.

*The teacher who can imagine the student succeeding is the teacher who builds the bridge.*

QUESTION FOUR

# What do the results look like?

*Be specific. Vague visions don't pull. Concrete pictures do. Describe the result with sensory detail. What you see, what you hear, what changes in the room when it's true.*

**IF YOU'RE STUCK, TRY THIS**

- If my intention came true, what would I notice on a Wednesday morning in November?
- Who would my students become? What would they say about this year ten years from now?
- What would my colleagues notice about me that they don't notice today?

**THE RESULTS, IN DETAIL**

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QUESTION FIVE

# What are the initial steps?

*Imagination without a path forward turns into anxiety. Name the first three steps that move you from where you are toward what you imagined. Small is fine. Small is honest.*

**IF YOU'RE STUCK, TRY THIS**

- What is the smallest action that would prove this is real and not just an idea?
- Who do I need to talk to in the next two weeks?
- What would I do tomorrow morning if I knew this was already on its way?

**THE FIRST THREE STEPS**

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QUESTION SIX

# What is the source?

*Where does this vision come from inside you? Whose voice is in it? What part of your story is asking to be expressed through this work? The source is what makes the imagination yours.*

**IF YOU'RE STUCK, TRY THIS**

- When did I first sense this was important to me?
- Whose life or whose loss is this connected to?
- What would the eight-year-old version of me say if she saw me doing this?

**THE SOURCE**

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# Habit.

## Make it repeatable.

Habits are stabilizers. They reduce cognitive load and preserve energy for higher-order thinking. When habits align with values, progress compounds quietly. *When habits are misaligned, friction multiplies.*

Will points you somewhere. Imagination shows you what to reach for. Habit carries you when motivation is gone, and motivation is always, eventually, gone.

QUESTION SEVEN

# What are the principles?

*Principles are non-negotiables. They are the rules you've decided to live by, before the moment arrives that will test them. Two or three is plenty. Any more and you won't remember them when it counts.*

**IF YOU'RE STUCK, TRY THIS**

- What rule have I broken in the past that cost me, and what would the principle be that prevents that next time?
- What would I want my students to be able to say about how I showed up?
- What am I no longer willing to compromise on?

**MY PRINCIPLES**

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QUESTION EIGHT

# What are the protocols?

*Protocols are how you act on principles when emotions are running the show. The pre-decided sequence. The script you don't have to write at the worst moment. Mode Shift is a protocol. Circuit Breaker is a protocol. What are yours?*

**IF YOU'RE STUCK, TRY THIS**

- When I notice I'm in reactive mode, what is the first thing I will do, every time?
- What is my protocol when a student melts down? When I'm exhausted? When a parent is unkind?
- What would I want a colleague to do if she saw me drifting from my principles?

**MY PROTOCOLS**

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QUESTION NINE

# What are the daily and weekly habits?

*This is where almost every framework fails. The principles are clear. The protocols are written. But the daily practice falls apart by Tuesday. What are the small repeatable actions, daily and weekly, that keep this whole system alive?*

**IF YOU'RE STUCK, TRY THIS**

- What is one thing I will do every morning that takes less than five minutes?
- What is one weekly review I will not skip, even when I'm tired?
- What is the smallest version of this practice that I could keep up for a year?

MY DAILY AND WEEKLY HABITS

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# Question nine is where most frameworks **quietly die.**

Principles are easy to write. Protocols are satisfying to design. But daily and weekly habits? Those need *repetition, reminder, and a little bit of company*. They need someone to nudge you back when life pulls you off the page.

That's what *The Weekly Upgrade* is built for.

## WHAT LANDS IN YOUR INBOX

- One protocol of the week. A small, repeatable action you can practice immediately.
- Field notes from the road. What I'm seeing inside classrooms, boardrooms, and the United Nations.
- The story behind the framework. Where Will, Imagination, and Habit came from, and what they cost me to learn.
- A standing invitation to live sessions, Q&A, and early access to new tools.

## CONTINUE THE PRACTICE

[dwaynematthews.substack.com](https://dwaynematthews.substack.com)

Free. No spam. The good stuff lands on Tuesday morning.

*If you fill out this workbook and never hear from me again, you'll still have something. But if you want company for the practice, the door is open.*

## BEFORE YOU PUT THIS DOWN

## Look at us now.

You came to this convention with a theme. *From where we've come, look at us now.* It was always going to be a celebration. But what you may not have expected is that it was also a question. *Look at us now.* What now? What have we become? What do we choose next?

The nine questions in this workbook are a slow, honest conversation with yourself, in a room with the door closed, while the world outside keeps moving faster than the rules you grew up with.

Twenty years ago, six divisions became one. You stitched together a shared identity across thirty-one thousand square kilometres. You did that with will, imagination, and habit, even if no one called it that out loud. You already know how to do this. The framework is just a name for what you've been doing.

The age of AI is drowning in information. *What it needs is more humans who know where they stand.* That is what this workbook is for. That is what your classrooms are for. That is the work only you can do.

*"The future is something you are building right now, one student at a time."*

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A companion to the keynote *Look at Us Now: Unlocking Stranded Brilliance in the Age of AI*

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