

## Assignments

Assignments are optional. However, my invitation is for you to do these self-observations, practices, reflections and journaling on a daily basis in order to build new neural pathways. Your assignments are for your own self-development and are not ‘handed-in’ or shown to others. Sometimes you’ll be asked to share your insights at the sessions.

Individual assignments build on each other. And at each session you’ll be assigned more. So, it is best to start immediately to work on new habits. ‘Mastery’ is our goal and stretching you is part of the process.

The reflection and journaling is most important. Using a pen and paper (yes, it may feel very old-fashioned!) helps to convert a sea of implicit information into something explicit. That makes it manageable. Over time you’ll discover how helpful your insights will be.

There are usually 4 aspects of your assignments and we build on these each time:

- Self-observations – cognitive – dealing with ‘blind spots’
- Practices (repetitive) – to build new neural pathways
- Exercises (you do each only once)
- Reflection and journaling

Enjoy doing the assignments – have Fun!

## Summary of assignments from Session 1

New assignments are allocated each week

	Page	Completed	Current
<b>Self-observations – every day</b>			
Self-observation 1: Energy	12-13		✓
Self-observation 2: VIA character strength #1	14		✓
<b>Practices – every day</b>			
Practice 1: Breathing (vertical)	15-16		✓
<b>Exercises – ‘one off’</b>			
Exercise 1: Observing my life in context	17-19		✓
Exercise 2: Session 1 Members’ section of the website	1, 20		✓
Exercise 3: Session 1 Buddy	20		✓
<b>Reflection and journaling – every day</b>			
On all the above	21		✓

## Session 1

### Assignments

### Self-observations

	Page	Completed	Current
<b>Self-observations – every day</b>			
Self-observation 1: Energy	12-13		✓
Self-observation 2: VIA character strength #1	14		✓

#### Self-observation 1: Energy

Remember to use your rubber ball as a reflective tool.

#### Instructions

1. Divide yourself into two persons, one who carries on life ‘normally’ and one who observes and is passive.
2. The latter is like a video-cameraman who quietly and passively observes the former. However, in addition to observing the outward behaviour, he/she is also aware of the first person’s emotions.
3. Each evening answer the following questions relating to the last 24 hours:
  - When did I feel energised?
  - When did I feel a lack of energy?
  - What did my body feel like at either of those times? - i.e. which noticeable physical manifestations were there in any of these situations? (feeling of lightness, choking feeling, breathing, posture, tone of voice, perspiring, eyes moist, voice higher, pace of speaking etc.)
  - When did I notice others in an energised state?
4. As our programme progresses, you’ll move towards your observing yourself ‘in the moment’ of action, thought, feeling.
5. In the evenings, reflect and capture your insights, preferably in a paper journal using a pen!.

## Frequency and duration

1. Pause and do this self-observation every evening until our next session – 7 days a week, reflecting on the last 24 hours.
2. Ask yourself the four bulleted questions above.
3. At the next session we’ll discuss your progress and adapt the self-observations accordingly. As your coach, I’ll keep ‘stretching’ you!

## Purpose of this self-observation

This self-observation is designed to create greater awareness of your energised states or those lacking energy. And possibly you are more energised than you realised. There may be patterns that will help to identify positive states.

We are also paying attention to ‘the wisdom of the body’.

Recognition, self-correction and self-generation are important in our progress later in the course.

## Support

Consider who could possibly support you in doing these self-observations. A work colleague or member of your family could provide further insights that will assist you?

## Reflection and journaling

1. Each evening, reflect on the questions above and consider what happened and how you reacted or responded over the last 24 hours.
2. Notice if you can see any patterns forming.
3. Please record your thoughts in your journal. The journaling is for your own use.

## Self-observation 2: VIA character strength #1

### Start date:

- As discussed in our session and crafted together, consider yourself as two persons, one who acts/reacts in life in your normal way and one who observes and is passive.
- Allow the observer-you to begin to observe yourself quietly and passively. Be aware of your internal states as well as what you show the world.
- At first, reflect on these two questions just before you journal considering only the last 24 hours:
  1. When have I used character strength #1?
  2. When have I noticed others using this specific strength? Or where have I seen it shown in a movie, article etc.
- As our programme progresses, we'll move towards your observing yourself in the moment of action, thought, feeling.

### Frequency and duration

Choose a time that is best for you to stop and journal each day, for example 8 pm. Before journaling (by hand in your journal!) reflect on your answers to those two questions relevant to the last 24 hours.

From now until our next session, please do the above observations each day, seven days a week. At the next session we'll discuss your progress and adapt the self-observations accordingly.

### Reflection and journaling

Please buy yourself a journal specifically for journaling every day during our coaching programme.

Please see page 21

### Network of support

Consider who could support you in doing these self-observations? If possible, think of some-one from your work-life and some-one from home environment.

### Barriers to doing the observations?

There shouldn't be any barriers but we can discuss at the next session.

I hope this assignment goes well and that you have good insights. But we'll keep referring to this page each week.

## Practices

	Page	Completed	Current
<b>Practices – every day</b>			
Practice 1: Breathing (vertical)	15-16		✓

### Practice 1: Breathing (vertical)

#### Instructions

1. Please stand against a wall or door with your head, shoulders and as much of your body as possible touching the wall. (Chin tucked in.)
2. Do a few shoulder shrugs.
3. Take a deep breath and feel the air going right down to the bottom of your lungs. Try to let your rib-cage expand sideways, like the opera singers do.
4. Hold for the count of three.
5. Add more air to fill the gap at the top of your lungs.
6. Let your breath out slowly, emptying from the top first.
7. If necessary, take one or two ‘normal’ breaths before the next ‘big breath’.
8. Check your posture before taking the next breath.

#### Frequency and duration

Repeat 1 to 7 above. Rest. Do a total of five big breaths.

- Do this practice at 8pm.
- Please do this every day until our next session.

#### Purpose of this practice

1. This practice helps you to remove yourself spatially from your current situation.
2. This posture, standing up straight against the wall, promotes confidence. (Compare this with the way you stand when tired or under stress.)
3. Pausing to do this practice, breaking the flow of what is happening around you, also gives you time to think and you can ‘respond’ rather than ‘react’ to situations you are coping with.
4. Having the extra oxygen in your lungs is beneficial.
5. This practice also creates awareness as we normally breathe without thinking about it.
6. It provides a ‘tool’ which we are cultivating for future use.

## **Support**

You are welcome to include work-colleagues or family in this practice.

## **Reflection and journaling**

Consider this breathing practice. How did it go today? What were the benefits?

## Exercises

	Page	Completed	Current
<b>Exercises – ‘one off’</b>			
Exercise 1: Observing my life in context	17-19		✓
Exercise 2: Session 1 Members’ section of the website	20		✓
Exercise 3: Session 1 Buddy	20		✓

### Exercise 1: Observing my life in context – 7 days

#### Instructions

1. Print out 7 of the ‘**Observing my life in context – one page**’ forms (please see page 19) on A4 paper. (Make sure the whole form fits on one page.)
2. Each evening reflect on your day.
3. Fill in the form. You may make lists or write sentences in the appropriate blocks. Capture only as much information as will fit on the form in the relevant places. But please make sure you have thought about each block and recorded something in each block.
4. You are welcome to extend your answers and include in your general journaling for that evening, if you would like to.
5. At the end of the week, before coming to session 2, skim through all 7 pages, reflect and ask yourself:
  - a. What patterns in my behaviour, ‘way of being’ do I see forming?
  - b. What do I have an excess of?
  - c. What is missing in my life – or what should I have more of?
  - d. How can I integrate my life more – cognitive, emotional, somatic, spiritual and relational?
  - e. What other questions should I be asking each day?
  - f. What else should I be taking note of?
6. At the end of the week, summarise in your journal. Decide whether to continue with the same form for another week or to modify to be of even greater usefulness.

## The purpose of this exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to:

1. Integrate the different aspects of your life.
2. Use this practice/exercise as a stepping stone to specific self-observations, and practice in reflections and journaling.
3. Get into the habit of observing, reflecting and linking to your journaling and looking for patterns.
4. Begin constructively observing your life in context and gathering data as evidence.
5. Be more aware of the different aspects of your daily activities.
6. Provide flexibility in recording either in list form or in sentences (some people are put off by ‘journaling’). If you prefer, you may complete the forms on computer rather than writing by hand.
7. Work within a certain framework (here the headings and the structure of a ‘one page’ questionnaire), yet to ‘do it your way’.
8. Cover a short period (one week) and then monitor and adapt to make it even more useful. (In adapting for the next week, possibly change one of the headings to include a value that you treasure in others, for example, kindness.)

## Support

It is unlikely that you’ll need support in doing this exercise. However, discuss with your assigned buddy.

## Barriers

At the next session we can discuss any barriers preventing you from completing this exercise.

## Reflection and journaling

This exercise is intended as a prelude to journaling. However, you may run both concurrently, in which case, include your reflections on how you have found this exercise in your daily journaling.

**‘Observing my life in context – one page’**

<b>Date</b>		<b>Day</b>
<b>Where I started the day</b>		<b>Where I ended the day</b>
<b>What was different about this day?</b>		
<b>Outline of happenings</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>People I connected with</b>
	<b>Purchases and gifts</b>	
<b>Highlights</b>		
<b>Reminded me of the past</b>		
<b>What was done differently?</b>		
<b>Something I learnt/will change, will do</b>		<b>Action</b>
<b>I’m grateful for:</b>		

## Exercise 2: Session 1 Members’ section of the website

Please see page 1.

Use the ringtone, watch the movies, read the blogs, articles and books, explore the resources and poem. Include your insights in your reflection and journaling.

## Exercise 3: Session 1 Buddy

### Instructions

You were assigned a ‘buddy’. Contact him/her tomorrow as a networking exercise and share ideas on your assignments and find out how you can help them get maximum advantage from the course.

### Reason

1. We are working at high pressure during the course and support is important.
2. This is practice in networking and building relationships.
3. You have only one chance of being this person’s ‘buddy’ during the course.

## Reflection and journaling

	Page	Completed	Current
<b>Reflection and journaling – every day</b>			
On all the above	21		✓

### Instructions

Reflect on your day, remember your symbol, the bouncing ball. Consider carefully as you reflect on:

- Your self-observations including any examples of behaviour related to your top character strength
- Practices
- Exercises
- Any other insights on your course content or other self-development.

Keep adding to your learnings. Look for examples in your daily life. Enter these into your journal and write for at least 5 minutes.

Notice if you can see any patterns forming.

### Frequency and duration

Please reflect on the above every evening and write in your journal.

### Purpose

1. Writing helps to consolidate and clarify your thoughts and thus convert an array of implicit thoughts to explicit thoughts which are easier to articulate and manage.
2. Sitting down to write creates a ‘pause’ in the continuum of life.
3. It is easier to identify patterns over a period of time.
4. Reading after a period of time, it is often fascinating to notice how our thinking or behaviour has changed.
5. By doing an activity on a daily basis we are establishing new neural pathways, creating new habits. (Link to discussion on neuroplasticity.)