

Anxious Attachment Journal Prompts That Don't Feed the Spiral

You have probably already tried journaling -- this pattern usually has. And you may have noticed the dirty secret: an open page can make it worse. "Write about your fears" hands the spiral a microphone; twenty minutes later the worry is not processed, it is rehearsed, with better production values. These thirty prompts are built against that. Every one is closed-form -- it ends in evidence, a count, a comparison or a decision, not in an invitation to elaborate -- and the method rules around them matter as much as the prompts.

Who this is for: Anyone with the anxious pattern whose journaling sessions tend to end with the worry bigger than it started, or who suspects their notebook has become the spiral's co-author.

The thirty prompts, in six sets

Set 1 -- The evidence ledger (after a wobble)

Five prompts that turn yesterday's fear into checkable claims.

Yesterday's fear, stated as a checkable claim ("I was afraid that ____ meant ____"):

Events supporting the claim (camera-visible only):

Events against it (same rule):

The claim, re-rated 0-10 for believability now the columns are filled:

What the last three entries in this set would tell a stranger about my alarm's accuracy:

Set 2 -- The cost accountant (weekly)

Five prompts that price the pattern's week, in numbers.

Times I checked (phone, their activity, old messages) this week -- honest count:

Minutes the longest single spiral lasted, and what finally ended it:

Reassurance I sought, direct or disguised -- count and best example:

One thing I did NOT do that the pattern wanted done. What did not-doing it cost?

This week's numbers vs last week's: the trend, in one sentence:

Set 3 -- The historian (fortnightly)

Five prompts that check the present against the actual record.

A time the alarm was certain someone was leaving, and they did not -- dated:

A time someone DID leave: did the alarm actually predict it, or did it miss while firing at decoys?

The alarm's honest lifetime hit rate, estimated as a percentage, written down:

One relationship the alarm damaged while defending me from it:

If the alarm were an employee with this record, what would the performance review say?

Set 4 -- The translator (after a fight or a hint)

Five prompts that convert indirect moves back into the needs they encoded.

The move I made (described as an observer would see it):

What I actually wanted -- the need, in plain words:

What the move got me, versus what the need required:

The direct sentence that would have asked for it, drafted verbatim:

What stopped me sending the direct version -- named honestly (fear of the answer? no vocabulary? habit?):

Set 5 -- The rest of me (weekly, non-negotiable)

Five prompts about everything that is not the relationship.

The best thirty minutes of my week that involved no relationship thinking at all:

Something I did this week that I would still rate if I were single:

A person outside the relationship who got real attention from me, and what we did:

One thing I am building (skill, project, body, room) and its state this week:

If my week were a house: how many load-bearing walls, honestly? What is the next wall to build?

Set 6 -- The monthly audit (re-reading, licensed)

Five prompts for the one sanctioned look back at the month's entries.

Reading the month as a stranger: what does this person's alarm most reliably get wrong?

The cost-accountant trend across four weeks, in one line:

One entry that embarrasses me slightly now -- and what the gap between then-me and now-me is made of:

The direct sentence from set four I have still not said. Does it still need saying?

Next month's single focus, chosen from the evidence and written as one habit:

This worksheet is free to print, photocopy and share, including with clients. It is self-reflection material, not a diagnosis, an assessment or a substitute for professional support. If a relationship involves fear, control or coercion, or if working through this raises more than feels manageable, please speak to a doctor, a therapist or a domestic abuse service.