

Fearful-Avoidant Journal Prompts: Check Your State, Then Write

Here is why generic prompt lists keep failing you: the person who opens the notebook is not always the same person. Some nights you arrive in the anxious state -- burning to text someone, certain you have wrecked everything -- and an open-ended prompt pours petrol on it. Other nights you arrive in the avoidant state -- everyone exhausting, every attachment a regret -- and a "explore your fear of abandonment" prompt gets a shrug, because tonight you are not afraid of abandonment, you are planning it. These prompts start where your pattern actually starts: with the question of which state is holding the pen.

Who this is for: Anyone with the fearful-avoidant or disorganised pattern whose journal reads like it was written by two people who disagree -- because, functionally, it was.

The five sets

Set 1 -- Anxious state: close it down

Six prompts that end in evidence and counts, for the revved nights.

Tonight's fear as a checkable claim, in one sentence:

Camera-visible evidence for; camera-visible evidence against:

What I want to send or say right now, drafted here instead -- and the send decision deferred to tomorrow, 9am:

Minutes this spike has lasted so far. What has historically ended spikes like it:

What avoidant-state me, three weeks ago, believed about this same person -- written verbatim if I can remember it:

If both of my states have been certain about them, in opposite directions, what does that make tonight's certainty worth?

Set 2 -- Anxious state: after the wave (next day)

Five prompts for the morning after a spike, while the evidence is fresh.

What set it off -- the event, camera-level, and what it touched that is older than yesterday:

Peak intensity 0-10, and total duration in minutes or hours:

What I did during it -- and which action shortened it vs lengthened it, honestly:

What I very nearly did but did not. What not-doing it cost me by morning (usually: nothing):

One line for the spike-map: "When ____ happens, expect a ____-out-of-10 wave lasting about ____, and ____ helps.":

Set 3 -- Avoidant state: open it sideways

Six oblique prompts for the armoured nights, none asking for feelings.

When did the armour come down over me -- the hour, and what happened in the two hours before it:

Tonight, which specific person feels most exhausting? What did they most recently do that pulled me closer?

The plan the armour is drafting (cancel, withdraw, end, move) -- written out flatly, as logistics:

The last three times this state drafted that plan: executed or expired? What is the state's follow-through rate?

One thing in this room I chose because someone I have loved touched, gave or liked it:

A message I received in the last month that clear-day me valued. Copied out here, without commentary:

Set 4 -- Avoidant state: the flip file

Five prompts logging the switches themselves -- your pattern's signature move.

The most recent flip: from what, to what, over how many hours:

What happened just before it -- especially anything involving someone coming closer or pulling back:

What the new state immediately "knew" that the old state had been wrong about:

How long the new certainty lasted:

Flip-file tally so far this month, and the average certainty-lifespan. What is tonight's certainty statistically worth?

Set 5 -- Clear days: lay the keel

Six prompts for the calm days, which are the only days the real writing happens.

Today, without either alarm on: what I actually want in relationships, written plainly:

The people who are genuinely good for me, listed while nothing is distorting the list:

A note to anxious-state me, to be read mid-spike -- what I know today that the spike will hide:

A note to avoidant-state me, to be read mid-armour -- what the flatness will be leaving out:

One thing each state gets RIGHT -- the real signal inside each alarm, worth keeping when the volume comes down:

How I can tell today is actually clear, in body terms -- recorded so the state check gets sharper:

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.