USING COPING SKILLS TO CREATE MEANING AND PURPOSE

Techniques drawn from Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Positive Psychology, and Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families

1. THE MINDSET & EMOTION TRACKER (BEFORE)

Let's check in! Before diving into the strategies, let's take a quick snapshot of where your head is at. Rate the intensity of your current feelings from 0 to 100, and drop a quick note about what thoughts are spinning around in your mind right now and why.

CURRENT VIBE	SCORE (0-100)	WHAT AM I THINKING & WHY?
Anxiety / Stress		
Anger / Friction		
Sadness / Low Energy		
Calm / Focus		

DAILY CHECKLIST
☐ Treated physical health needs
☐ Fueled up with a solid meal
☐ Abstained from addictive drugs and alcohol
☐ Caught enough quality sleep
☐ Got my body moving today

2. DBT STRATEGY — ABC PLEASE (VIBE UP & BUILD MASTERY)

The Game Plan: This strategy is all about changing the things you can control while accepting the things you can't. We lower our emotional stress by doing two simple things every day: collecting positive moments (Accumulating Positives) and practicing cool, satisfying skills (Building Mastery) to give our long-term confidence a major boost!

Action 1: The 5-Minute Mastery Burst

Spend 5 minutes focusing on a specific skill that stretches your brain (e.g., locking down a complex knot, practicing a quick riff on an instrument, or troubleshooting a design step).

Action 2: High-Value Comfort Moment

Lock in one deliberate, uninterrupted comfort moment today (e.g., taking 3 minutes to enjoy a fresh coffee out of your favorite mug by an open window).

Action 3: The "Future Self Sanctuary" Journal Prompt

Free-write about a normal day where your energy, physical health, and focus are firing on all cylinders. What tiny setup step can you do tonight to help bring tomorrow closer to that exact ideal?

3. ACT STRATEGY — MASTERING THE OBSERVING SELF

The Game Plan: This skill uses mindfulness to help you get out of a mental rut. When your sense of self feels a bit messy or confusing, stop trapping yourself in harsh, rigid labels (Self-as-Content). Instead, switch to your steady observing self (Self-as-Context): think of your mind as the vast, open sky, and your random moods or self-doubts as just temporary weather patterns passing through.

Action 1: The Mental Weather Map

Note down your biggest current mental block or frustration. Label it clearly as a passing cloud, and tell yourself: "I am the clear sky watching this drift past."

Action 2: The "Thought Separation" Frame

Take a harsh self-talk line like "I am totally stuck" and rewrite its power away by reframing it: "I notice that I am currently having the thought that I am stuck."

Action 3: The "Architect of the Unchanging Self" Journal Prompt

Think about who you were 5 years ago. List a few major habits, roles, or old perspectives you have completely shed since then. How does it feel to realize that the core observer inside you has stayed completely steady through all that growth?

4. MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING — BREAKING OUT OF THE "MAYBE" FUNK

The Game Plan: This technique completely flips the script on feeling stuck. Being indecisive isn't a flaw—it just means your brain is weighing its choices! To break through the confusion, look at the differences between your daily routines and the big values you care about. Mapping out this balance changes a boring "I have to" into an energized "I choose to!"

The Ultimate Four-Square Decisional Balance Grid

PATH A: KEEPING THINGS EXACTLY THE SAME	PATH B: STEPPING UP & MAKING THE CHANGE
Immediate Perks of Staying the Same:	**Real Wins & Payoffs of Moving Forward:**
Hidden Long-Term Costs of No Change:	**Short-Term Effort / Grind Required:**

Action 2: The Future Blueprint Sentence

Write a high-energy statement summarizing why pushing through the friction to crush this specific goal is entirely worth the hype.

Action 3: The "Two Paths Diverged" Journal Prompt

Envision yourself 5 years from now along two paths: one where things stayed identical, and one where you took the leap. Write a descriptive contrast of those two realities—what is the key value driving your favorite option?

5. POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY — GENERATING SPARK IN THE MOMENT

The Game Plan: This area explores what makes life feel truly rewarding, exciting, and full of purpose. Don't wait around for inspiration to magically strike from the outside! Instead, build your own instant momentum by pairing ordinary chores with your unique strengths, or by setting quick rules to turn a task into a high-focus game (Micro-Flow).

Action 1: Strength-Coding Your Tasks

Before starting a dry assignment, pick one of your top skills (like analytical sorting or clever problem-solving) and use it deliberately to work faster.

Action 2: The 10-Minute Focus Blitz

Put notifications on silent, clear your workspace, kick off a strict 10-minute countdown timer, and race against the clock to smash out a clear piece of work.

Action 3: The "Micro-Flow Inventory" Journal Prompt

Think back to a recent moment when you got so incredibly locked into what you were doing that time completely vanished. Write down the exact conditions (e.g., total quiet, neat visual layout, individual control) that made that level of focus happen.

6. REPARENTING FRAMEWORK — SELF-CARE & SECURE BOUNDARIES

The Game Plan: True emotional balance means actively reparenting yourself by stepping up as your own supportive, calm, and protective adult. If you grew up around chaos or dysfunction, it's easy to overreact or constantly look for external approval. By giving yourself clear structure, kind reassurance, and firm boundaries, you create the exact safety you need.

Action 1: Grounding Self-Talk

Acknowledge your own safety directly: "Mistakes are allowed, you are safe right now, and I am entirely here to back you up."

Action 2: The Protective Boundary Commitment

Name one specific boundary to shield your energy baseline today (e.g., logging off completely on time, or saying a clear, guilt-free 'no' to an exhausting ask).

Action 3: The "Unspoken Needs" Journal Prompt

Recall a recent situation where you felt a strong burst of annoyance or defensive anxiety. Write a quick paragraph from your current, capable adult perspective directly to that vulnerable part of you, mapping out how you will keep things stable today.

7. REVIEW & BREAKTHROUGH INSIGHTS (AFTER)

The Final Check: Now that you've applied these tools, re-evaluate where your head is at. Note any shifts in your clarity or motivation below.

VIBE CHECK	NEW SCORE (0-100)	MAJOR TAKEAWAYS, OBSERVATIONS, OR FRESH INSIGHTS
Clarity & Personal Focus		

8. REFLECTING ON MY LIFE PURPOSE

Values Inventory: Meaning and purpose emerge when daily coping skills align with your core identity. Check off the foundational personal and moral values below that deeply resonate with the person you choose to be.

☐ Autonomy	☐ Benevolence	☐ Achievement	☐ Creativity	☐ Integrity
☐ Security	☐ Self-Direction	☐ Stimulation	☐ Universalism	☐ Tradition
☐ Authenticity	☐ Compassion	☐ Leadership	☐ Growth	☐ Balance
☐ Resiliency	☐ Interconnection	☐ Wisdom	☐ Structure	☐ Spontaneity
☐ Justice	☐ Accountability	☐ Empathy	☐ Knowledge	☐ Sovereignty

The Synthesis Summary & Integration Prompt:

Review your checked values and the baseline changes noted across this tracker. Sum up the core insights you have gained about yourself through this workbook. How are you feeling right now, and how will you translate these coping skills into purposeful, intentional movement today?