DEAR DOCTOR

REAL QUESTIONS.
REAL REFLECTION.
REAL GROWTH.

PERSONAL REFLECTION JOURNAL

What matters to me?

What have I learned?



What do I need next?

What kind of work do I want to build?

PAUSE. REFLECT. TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP.

A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This journal accompanies Dear Doctor by Dr Craig Knight and Louise Lavaroni. It is not a test, and there are no perfect answers. It is yours. Use it to explore the questions raised by the book, connect them with your own experiences, and decide what -if anything -you want to do next.

You can write a little or a lot. Skip any prompt that does not fit your experience. Some reflections may be personal; keep your journal somewhere that feels private and comfortable.

A simple way to use each chapter

- Read or revisit the chapter.
- Answer the warm-up question without overthinking it.
- Write down the idea, example, or question that stayed with you.
- Choose one small action; or decide that no action is needed yet.
- Return later and note what changed.

A useful reminder

Reflection is most helpful when it is curious rather than self-critical. You are gathering information about your experience, not judging yourself for having it.

The chapters in this journal follow the ten core questions explored in Dear Doctor, plus space for summary and next steps.

MY STARTING POINT

Before you begin, take a snapshot of what work and communication feel like to you right now.

What drew me to the Dear Doctor book, and what am I hoping to understand better about myself at work?

What work-related question keeps returning, even when I try to ignore it?

When do I feel the most psychologically safe, heard, or genuinely seen at work?

What would make this journal feel worthwhile rather than just being another task?

CHAPTER 01 • WHY AM I SO EXHAUSTED WHEN I AM DOING EVERYTHING RIGHT?

WARM-UP

If your energy had a dashboard warning light, what colour would it be showing right now. And what would the message underneath the light say?

What are the biggest drains on my energy at work: the obvious ones and the ones that hide in plain sight?

Which of these drains sit mostly within my control, and which sit mostly outside it?

What does 'doing everything right' currently cost me in terms of rest, relationships, or recovery?

What is one small boundary or recovery habit I could experiment with this week?

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

NOTES & CONNECTIONS

The idea, passage, or example from this chapter I want to remember:

A connection I made to my own experience:

A question I still have:

One thing I see differently now:

CHAPTER 02 • HOW DO I GET PROMOTED WITHOUT BURNING MYSELF OUT?

WARM-UP

If promotion required only one new skill and one new boundary (e.g., a new team, a new position, a new location), which would you choose?

What does sustainable ambition look like for *me* (not the version other people expect or reward)?

Where am I currently over-investing energy for little return in visibility, growth, or genuine progress?

What strengths or results am I under-claiming or not making visible enough?

What is one high-leverage action I can take that moves me forward without adding to the risk of burnout?

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

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CHAPTER 03 • WHY DOES MY MANAGER HAVE SO MUCH POWER OVER MY HAPPINESS?

WARM-UP
If you could redesign the power dynamic with your manager, what, if anything, would change?

In what specific ways does my manager's behaviour affect my mood, motivation, or sense of safety?

What is mine to own in this relationship, and what sits outside my control?

How might I increase my sense of agency (e.g., through clearer communication, setting boundaries, seeking support, or shifting my perspective)?

What is one, small, useful experiment I could try in the next interaction with my manager?

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

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One thing I see differently now:

CHAPTER 04 • HOW DO I STAY RELEVANT WHEN A.I. IS CHANGING WORK?

WARM-UP

If AI could take one task off your plate tomorrow, which would you happily hand over, and what would you do with the time?

Which parts of my work are most at risk of automation, and which rely on uniquely human judgement, relationships, or creativity?

What skills, judgement, or relationships am I under-developing because they feel less urgent right now?

How do I currently feel about AI at work. For example, do I feel curious, threatened, indifferent, or something else?

What is one concrete step I can take to build lasting relevance rather than simply keep up?

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

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A question I still have:

One thing I see differently now:

CHAPTER 05 • WHY DO I WORK SO HARD AND STILL FEEL STUCK?

WARM-UP
If 'stuck' had a shape, what would it look like in your current role or career?

Where exactly do I feel stuck? For example, in my role, within my skill set, a lack of recognition/progression, or something else?

What stories am I telling myself about why progress is not happening?

What evidence exists that either contradicts those stories, or confirms them?

What is one small experiment that could create some movement, even if the big picture stays the same for now?

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

NOTES & CONNECTIONS

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A question I still have:

One thing I see differently now:

CHAPTER 06 • HOW DO I DEAL WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE AND WORKPLACE POLITICS?

WARM-UP
If the most difficult person at work left a review of you, what would it say (be as accurate as you can)?

Who or what currently drains the most emotional energy from my working relationships?

What patterns do I notice in how I respond to conflict, politics, or difficult behaviour? How well do those patterns serve me?

Where might I be protecting my image and/or status at the cost of clarity?

What is one specific, respectful approach I could try the next time politics or friction appears?

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

NOTES & CONNECTIONS

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A question I still have:

One thing I see differently now:

CHAPTER 07 • HOW DO I BUILD CONFIDENCE WHEN EVERYONE ELSE SEEMS AHEAD?

WARM-UP
If confidence were a muscle, which exercise would strengthen it most for you right now?

In which situations do comparison with others most undermine my confidence?

What evidence of my own competence do I regularly overlook?

What evidence of my own contributions do I regularly overlook?

How do I typically respond when I feel 'behind?' Is that response helpful?

What is one confidence-building action I can take that does not depend on other people's approval?

What might get in the way, and what could help?

NOTES & CONNECTIONS

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A question I still have:

One thing I see differently now:

CHAPTER 08 • HOW DO I FIND PURPOSE IN WORK THAT OFTEN FEELS MEANINGLESS?

WARM-UP

If your work had a "purpose dial" from 1 to 10, where does it sit today—and what would move it one point higher?

What parts of my work currently feel most empty, transactional, or disconnected from what matters to me?

Where do I already find small moments of meaning, usefulness, or genuine connection?

What values matter most to me—and how present or absent are they in my current role?

What is one way I could bring a little more purpose into the work I already do—or into how I do it?

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

NOTES & CONNECTIONS

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A question I still have:

One thing I see differently now:

CHAPTER 09 • SHOULD I STAY, LEAVE, OR REINVENT MY CAREER?

WARM-UP

Imagine you have woken up six months from now having made a clear decision about your career. What would 'clear' feel like in your body?

What is the real question underlying "stay, leave, or reinvent" for me right now?

What am I most afraid of losing if I stay? What am I most afraid of losing if I leave?

What do I stand to gain if I stay? What do I stand to gain if I leave?

What information or experiences would help me to clarify what do to next?

What is one, low risk step I can take to test a direction without burning bridges?

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

NOTES & CONNECTIONS

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CHAPTER 10 • HOW CAN I SUCCEED WITHOUT SACRIFICING MY LIFE?

WARM-UP
If success and a good life were on a set of scales, which side is currently heavier—and by how much?

What does 'success without sacrifice' mean for me in practical terms?

Which parts of my life outside work are currently under-nourished or running on empty?

Where have I accepted trade-offs that no longer feel acceptable to me?

What is one boundary I could set that would better protect what matters most?

What is one conversation I could have that would better protect what matters most?

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

NOTES & CONNECTIONS

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A question I still have:

One thing I see differently now:

CHAPTER 11 • SUMMARY

Pulling the threads together.

WARM-UP

If you had to describe the single most useful insight from Dear Doctor in one sentence, what would it be?

Looking across the ten chapters, which question feels most alive for me?

What patterns do I notice in my answers (e.g., about energy, agency, relationships, or meaning?

Which one idea do I most want to carry forward into the next month?

What would 'progress' look like for me by this time next year?

CHAPTERS 12 & 13 • REFERENCES & ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The full reference list and author biographies appear in the published book Dear Doctor.

If a particular study, idea, or story from the book sparked something for you, note it here so you can return to it later.

References, ideas, or authors I want to follow up:

Something I learned about the authors or their approach that resonated:

A LITTLE DEAR DOCTOR GAME

Use these prompts on your own, with a friend, in a book club, or with colleagues. Keep it kind, make room for different views, and let anyone pass.

1. What is a work rule you would happily rewrite?

2. What is the easiest small act of kindness you can do to change a person's whole workday?

3. Which matters more to you: being liked or being respected?

4. What question should every new team ask itself?

5. What is a professional myth you no longer believe?

6. What makes an apology feel genuine?

7. What is one thing a good manager does that costs nothing?

8. When can silence be helpful? And when can it cause harm?

9. What does respect look like when people disagree?

10. What lesson did you learn the hard way that might help someone else?

MY ACTION PLAN

Turn one useful insight into a realistic next step. Small actions are often easier to sustain than dramatic promises.

The insight I want to act on:

The action I will take (make it small and specific):

When I will take it:

Who or what could support me:

What might hinder progress, and what could help?

How I will know that the action helped:

A CHECK-IN WITH MYSELF

Return to this page after a week. Then in a month.

What did I try?

What happened? What did I notice?

What felt easier than expected?

What would I change next time?

What is my next small step?

OPEN NOTES

Questions, ideas, observations, or moments worth remembering.

OPEN NOTES • 2

Questions, ideas, observations, or moments worth remembering.

OPEN NOTES • 3

Questions, ideas, observations, or moments worth remembering.

BEFORE YOU CLOSE THE JOURNAL

The question I am leaving with:

The answer I am still exploring:

The impact I hope to make:

You do not have to solve everything today.
Keep asking better questions, listen carefully, and choose the next useful step.

DEAR DOCTOR • QUESTIONS • INSIGHTS • ACTIONS

Dr Craig Knight & Louise Lavaroni