

# PAUSE THE PATTERN:

A GUIDED JOURNAL FOR CONFLICT  
NAVIGATION AND CONNECTION



# Welcome!

I am glad you are here. I want to share this free journal prompting guide with you. This guide is designed to help you embark on a journey of deeper self-discovery, focusing on your communication and conflict management habits. Whether you're looking to enhance your interpersonal skills or gain a better understanding of your own patterns, these prompts will guide you toward greater self-awareness and growth.

This journaling experience was designed to address gaps in modern education. Created by a conflict management scholar, it aims to enhance self-reflection and critical thinking. Traditional curricula often miss personal development, so this initiative integrates emotional intelligence with academic learning.

Part of a broader framework for holistic development, it ensures readers not only learn information but also understand its relevance. By encouraging daily reflections, students explore their thoughts and emotions, improving problem-solving and self-awareness.

Dr. Lowe is passionate about innovative teaching and committed to best preparing for a changing world.

Dr. Nashay Lowe 



## ABOUT ME

With a background in international conflict management, I have dedicated my career to understanding and bridging the divides that separate us. My journeys across multiple countries have enriched my appreciation for how diverse cultures connect across differences, enhancing my skills in fostering dialogue and mutual understanding. Today, I focus on transforming reactive communication patterns into proactive strategies, empowering individuals and organizations to engage more effectively and empathetically.

Quote of the day

✦  
**You Are  
Blooming,  
Even  
When You  
Don't  
Notice It**



Keep growing, one day at a time

# SECTION 1: WHAT IS REACTIVE COMMUNICATION?

## Understanding Reactive Communication

Have you ever said something and then wished you could take it back? Have you ever shut down, walked away, or snapped at someone before you even had time to think? This is reactive communication.

Reactive communication happens when we respond quickly without taking time to think. Most people have experienced this. You may have said something in anger and later wished you could take it back. You may have gone silent when you actually wanted to speak. These reactions do not mean something is wrong with you. They mean your brain is doing its job. Inside your brain is a built-in alarm system designed to keep you safe. When it senses danger, it reacts fast. The problem is that this alarm cannot always tell the difference between real danger and emotional discomfort. A disagreement, criticism, or embarrassing moment can feel like a threat, even when it is not. When the alarm goes off, your heart may beat faster, your muscles may tense, and your voice may change. You react before you reflect.

People tend to fall into common patterns when this happens. Some argue or try to control the situation. Some avoid and walk away. Others freeze and struggle to speak. Some try to please everyone to keep the peace. These reactions are normal protection responses. However, if we let them control our conversations, they can create more conflict. Learning to pause gives the thinking part of your brain time to catch up with the alarm system. The goal is not to never feel upset. The goal is to notice sooner and choose a response that matches your values instead of your fear.



## IRL

Jordan was presenting in class when a classmate laughed quietly. Jordan felt heat rush to his face. Without thinking, he snapped, "At least I'm not failing the class." The room went silent. Later, Jordan realized the student wasn't laughing at him; they were reacting to something on their laptop. But by the time Jordan understood that, the damage was done. His reaction had come from embarrassment, not intention.

The moment wasn't about disrespect. It was about a brain that reacted before it checked the facts.

# FOUR COMMON REACTIVE PATTERNS

## 1. Fight

This looks like:

- Arguing
- Raising your voice
- Trying to win
- Blaming

The brain says: "Push back."

## 2. Flight

This looks like:

- Walking away
- Avoiding the conversation
- Changing the subject
- Pretending nothing happened

The brain says: "Get out."

## 3. Freeze

This looks like:

- Going quiet
- Not knowing what to say
- Feeling stuck
- Shutting down

The brain says: "Stay still."

## 4. Fawn

This looks like:

- Agreeing even when you disagree
- Saying sorry when it's not your fault
- Trying to keep everyone happy

The brain says: "Make them pleased so you stay safe."

---

## Why Pausing Matters

None of these patterns mean something is wrong with you. They mean your brain is trying to protect you.

The problem is not the alarm. The problem is when we let the alarm run the whole conversation.

When we react quickly, we often say or do things that do not match our values.

Maybe you value kindness.

But you snap.

Maybe you value honesty.

But you avoid.

Maybe you value courage.

But you go silent.

A pause gives your thinking brain time to catch up.

It asks:

- Is this really danger?
- Or is this just discomfort?
- Discomfort feels strong.
- But it is not always danger.
- Learning to pause is like learning to check the stove before calling the fire department.

## The Goal Is Not Perfection

You will still react sometimes.

Everyone does.

The goal is not to never feel upset.

The goal is to notice sooner.

When you notice, you have power.

You can choose.

And choice is where growth begins.

---

# GUIDED REFLECTION: SPOTTING REACTIVITY

When was the last time I reacted quickly and later wished I had paused?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Which pattern do I tend toward: fight, flight, freeze, or fawn?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What am I protecting when I react this way?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# SECTION 2: NAMING BEFORE BLAMING

## Feelings Are Information

Emotions are not problems to get rid of. They are signals that tell us something important. When we feel angry, hurt, embarrassed, or left out, those feelings are carrying information. If we ignore them or do not understand them, they often come out sideways. We might blame someone else, raise our voice, or shut down. Emotional intelligence is the skill of recognizing what we feel and understanding why we feel it. When we can name an emotion clearly, it often becomes less overwhelming. Instead of being controlled by it, we can learn from it.

Sometimes the feeling we show on the outside is not the deeper feeling underneath. Anger may be covering hurt. Silence may be covering fear. Sarcasm may be covering embarrassment. Under every strong emotion is usually a need. We may need respect, belonging, fairness, attention, or support. When we understand our needs, we can communicate them more clearly. Instead of attacking someone, we can explain what matters to us. Emotional intelligence does not mean hiding emotions. It means slowing down long enough to understand them before we act on them.



## IRL

Maya felt annoyed every time her friend canceled plans. She told herself, “She’s unreliable.” One day, instead of snapping, Maya paused and asked herself what she was really feeling. She realized she felt unimportant. The deeper feeling wasn’t anger, it was disappointment. When she finally told her friend, “I feel hurt when plans change because I look forward to them,” the conversation shifted. Her friend explained she had been overwhelmed at home and hadn’t known how to say it.

The problem wasn’t the cancellation. It was the unnamed emotion.

# GUIDED REFLECTION: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A SKILL

What emotion have I been feeling most this week? What might be underneath it?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What need might be connected to that feeling?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How could I express that need clearly instead of reacting?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

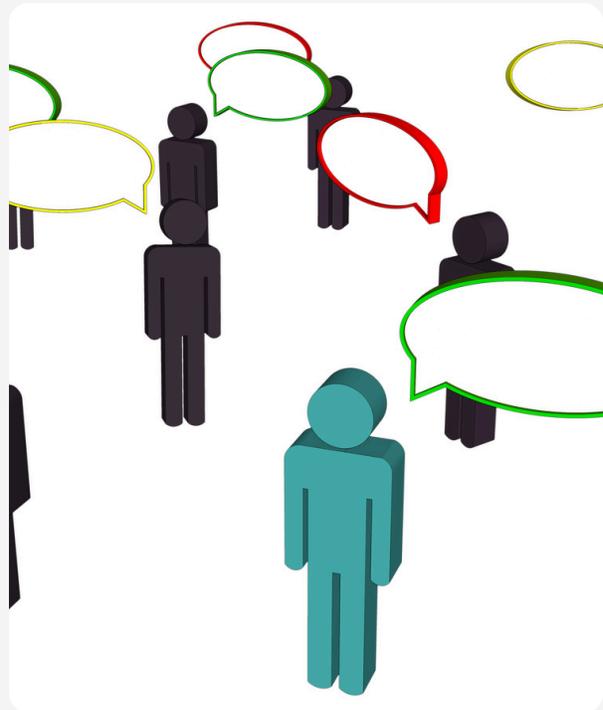
---

# SECTION 3: CONFLICT IS A PATTERN, NOT A MOMENT

**Conflict often feels like one big argument, but most of the time it follows a repeating pattern.**

Many people think conflict is a single event, like one argument or one disagreement. In reality, most conflict follows a pattern. A pattern is something that repeats over time. One person may withdraw while the other pushes harder. One may criticize while the other becomes defensive. Back and forth, the same steps happen again and again. It can feel frustrating because it seems like nothing changes. Conflict often works like a dance. Even if you did not start the music, you are still part of the movement. That does not mean you are to blame, but it does mean you have influence.

Patterns usually begin before the big argument. There are early warning signs. You might feel your body tense. You might stop listening carefully. You might assume the other person's intentions. When we learn to notice these early signals, we create space for choice. Instead of repeating the same step in the dance, we can try something different. Changing a pattern does not require controlling someone else. It begins with adjusting your own response. Even small shifts can change the direction of the entire interaction.



## IRL

Every time Alex forgot to text back, his sister would send multiple follow-up messages. Alex would feel overwhelmed and ignore them longer. She would then accuse him of not caring. The cycle kept repeating. One day, Alex decided to respond quickly even just to say, "I saw this. I'll reply tonight." That small change interrupted the pattern. His sister stopped escalating because she no longer felt ignored.

The conflict wasn't about texting. It was about a repeated dance.

# GUIDED REFLECTION: UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT PATTERNS

What conflict pattern shows up repeatedly in my life?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What role do I usually play in that pattern?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What is one small shift I could experiment with next time?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# SECTION 4: INTENT AND IMPACT

**In communication, intent is what we mean. Impact is how it feels to someone else. Sometimes they match. Often they do not.**

In communication, there are two important parts: intent and impact. Intent is what you meant to do or say. Impact is how it felt to the other person. Sometimes these match, but often they do not. You may have meant to joke, but someone felt embarrassed. You may have meant to help, but someone felt criticized. When misunderstandings happen, people often focus only on their intent. They say they did not mean to cause harm. However, healthy communication also considers impact. A strong relationship allows space for both truths. It is possible to say, "I did not mean to hurt you," and also say, "I understand that it did."

Taking responsibility for impact does not mean you are a bad person. It shows maturity. It builds trust because it communicates care. When we focus only on defending ourselves, conflict grows. When we acknowledge how our words or actions affected someone else, repair becomes possible. Understanding the difference between intent and impact helps us move from defensiveness to growth.



## IRL

Sam teased his friend about tripping in the hallway. He meant it as playful humor. His friend laughed in the moment but later became distant. When Sam asked what was wrong, his friend admitted feeling embarrassed. Sam's first instinct was to say, "It was just a joke." Instead, he paused and said, "I didn't mean to embarrass you, but I understand how that felt." That simple acknowledgment repaired the trust.

Intent explained the action. Impact explained the hurt.

*Words* have  
power. They can  
*make or break* a  
person, a  
relationship, a  
*nation. Choose*  
them wisely.

# GUIDED REFLECTION: INTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION

When have I focused more on my intent than someone else's experience?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How do I usually respond when someone says I hurt them?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What would it look like to care about impact, even if my intent was good?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# SECTION 5: YOU ARE PART OF A BIGGER SYSTEM

**Conflict does not happen alone. It happens inside systems—families, schools, friend groups, workplaces. Each system has rules, spoken or unspoken.**

Conflict does not happen in isolation. It happens inside systems. A system is a group of connected parts that influence one another. Families are systems. Classrooms are systems. Friend groups and workplaces are systems. Every system has spoken and unspoken rules about how people behave. Some behaviors are rewarded. Others are discouraged. Over time, people learn how to act within those systems to stay accepted or safe.

Understanding systems helps us see that behavior is shaped by more than just individual choices. For example, if a family avoids hard conversations, members may learn to stay quiet. If a classroom rewards only loud participation, quieter students may withdraw. These patterns are larger than one person. However, recognizing systems does not remove responsibility. It increases awareness. You are influenced by your environment, but you also influence it. When you choose to pause instead of react, speak clearly instead of blame, or repair instead of defend, you create ripple effects. Small changes in one part of a system can slowly shift the whole. Growth begins when we move from asking, “Who is the problem?” to asking, “What pattern is happening, and how can I respond differently?”



## IRL

In Ava’s family, no one talked about problems. If someone was upset, they pretended everything was fine. Ava carried that habit into her friendships. When she felt hurt, she said nothing. Over time, resentment built. One day, she gently told a friend, “When that happened, I felt left out.” It felt uncomfortable. But the conversation didn’t explode like she expected. Her friend apologized. That small act of honesty slowly changed how Ava approached relationships.

The system taught silence. Ava practiced something different.

# GUIDED REFLECTION: UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT PATTERNS

What "rules" about conflict did I learn growing up?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How might those rules still shape my behavior today?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What small shift could I make that might influence the system around me?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Daily

## MANIFESTING

When I break old patterns, I change the future of my relationships.

I choose clarity over assumption.

I respond from intention, not impulse.

I pause before I react.

When I choose differently, I reshape what's possible.

Every pattern I interrupt rewrites the story of how I relate.

Gratitude grounds me in what is steady, even while I'm still becoming.

@loweinsights

# MONTHLY REFLECTION

*Journal*

DATE:

TIME:

◆ Monthly Wins

---

---

◆ How does it make me feel?

---

---

◆ Challenges

---

---

◆ How can I improve it?

---

---

Accomplished Goals

---

Unaccomplished Goals

---

Goals Next Month

---

Habits Retained

---

Habits Eliminated

---

New Habits Developed

(Good & Bad)

---

Three things that I am most grateful for this month:

---

---

---

Two life lessons I learned this month:

---

One word that best describes this month:

---

How will you rate this month?



Two pink lilies are shown in a close-up, slightly overlapping. The petals are a soft, light pink color with subtle gradients and veins. The centers of the flowers are visible, showing yellowish-green stamens and dark red anthers. The background is plain white.

**Bloom  
where  
you are  
planted**

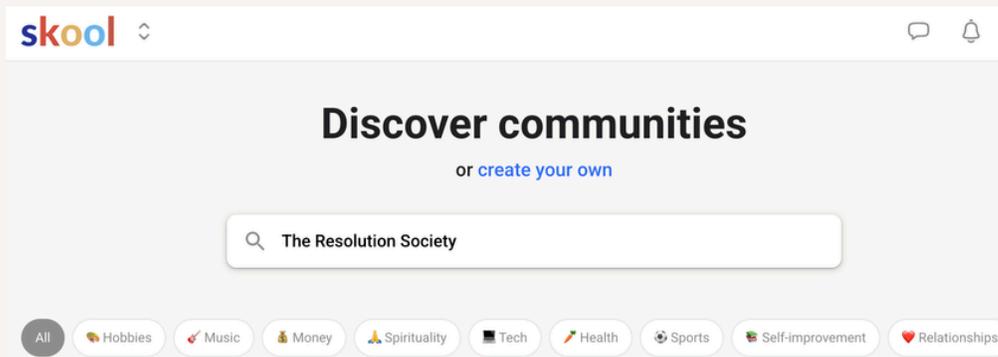
# Inspiring Stickers





# WANNA LEARN MORE?

Join our online Skool community: The Resolution Society



Grow alongside likeminded individuals.

Click on the button below to get started!

[JOIN THE COMMUNITY](#)