

MAGNOLIA & OPAL

The Post-Layoff Self-Care System

A season, not a setback.

M | O

Losing a job you poured years of your life into is one thing. Losing it when the household runs on your income is another. The routines you relied on go overnight, and the days get longer, quieter, and heavier than they used to be.

Healing after a layoff is not linear. Some days you'll feel productive and hopeful; other days you'll be exhausted or overwhelmed. Both are the same week.

Three days out of seven is a working week.

You are not going to do all of this, and it was never built so that you would. Some weeks you'll use one page and ignore the rest. That's the document working correctly, not you using it wrong.

Nothing here is counted. There's no score at the bottom of any page, and nobody is going to look at it but you.

If it happened in the last two weeks. Use *The floor* and nothing else. The rest will keep.

If it's been a month or two. Start with *Without the title*, then *Today on Mondays*.

If it's been longer than that. Go to *Twelve weeks* first. That's the one you need.

You are not behind.

You are not broken.

You are rebuilding.

Meredith

The floor

Some days the guide doesn't apply. This is the page for those days.

Drink a full glass of water.

Open one window.

Get outside for ten minutes. It counts if you stand in the driveway.

That's the whole list. You are not behind on the rest of it. Nothing on the other pages is owed today.

Tomorrow is a separate day. It does not inherit this one.

Without the title

You were someone before that job and you'll be someone after it.

Write it down now, while you still remember clearly.

Three things you're good at that the job never used.

The last time someone was glad you were there. What was it for?

One thing you want your life to contain a year from now that has nothing to do with being employed.

Not a goal. A Tuesday. What's in it.

What you'll say when someone asks what you do.

Write it now, while nobody's asking. Say it out loud once. It gets easier the second time, and you don't want the first time to be at a party.

You had a whole life running underneath that job. It's still running.

Today

5

THREE ANCHORS

Three out of seven is fine

Every anchor rides on something you already do. Write in what.

The first coffee. Letting the dog out. Locking up at night.

Sunlight on your face within thirty minutes of waking.

I'll do this after I _____

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

One meal you actually made.

I'll do this after I _____

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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One thing finished. Small enough to finish today.

I'll do this after I _____

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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CHOOSE WHAT YOU NEED

No boxes, on purpose

When you're wound up

Five things you can see. Four you can touch. Three you can hear.

Five slow breaths. In four, hold four, out six.

The long exhale is the part that works.

Worry appointment. Twenty minutes, one chair, same time daily.

When you're flat

Ten minutes of movement. Longer if it's going well.

Text one person. You don't have to explain anything.

When the house is closing in

Five minutes on one surface. Not the room. The surface.

Water the plants. Talk to them if you want.

Today, 1 to 10: _____ One word for it: _____

What helped: _____

This line is the point of the page. It's how you find out what actually works for you.

The week

Five things, and one of them is a day off. Write the days in.

Two search blocks. Ninety minutes each.

Day _____ Day _____

Two applications you'd actually take beats ten you wouldn't. When the block ends, close the laptop.

One day with no job search at all.

Day _____

Write it down. Unemployed people work seven days a week and call it discipline.

One money hour.

Day _____ The date the runway ends _____

Look at the real numbers. Write the date down once. Knowing it is worse for an hour and better for a month.

One person, in person.

Who _____ When _____

Not a text. Not a call. In a room.

One thing in the house.

What _____ When _____

Before, 1 to 10 _____ After _____

The drawer that sticks. The room you stopped going into. Not the whole renovation. Just this.

The house getting better is not a distraction from your life getting better. It's the visible part.

The sentence

Print this whenever one sentence starts running on a loop. It works on any of them.

Write the sentence, in the words you actually use.

How much do you believe it right now? 1 to 10: _____

What's the evidence it's true?

What's the evidence it isn't?

This side is harder to write. That's not because there's less of it.

What would you say to a friend who said this about herself?

Write it the way you'd actually say it to her. That's the fair-witness version.

How much do you believe the first sentence now? 1 to 10: _____

You don't have to believe the new sentence yet. Write it anyway.

Look back

Four questions. Five minutes. Whatever this looks like for you, a full page or three words, is the right amount.

What helped this week?

Anything you're doing more of than you were three months ago?

One thing I'm proud of. Small counts.

What I'm keeping next week, and what I'm not.

Nothing on this page has to be interesting. It only has to be true.

Twelve weeks

One line a week, copied off the bottom of your Monday page. This is the only page that shows you the shape of it.

WEEK OF	AVERAGE, 1-10	THE WORD	ONE THING THAT CHANGED

Fill this in on Sunday, from the page you already wrote. It takes forty seconds, and it's the only place you'll ever see four months at once.

A bad week inside twelve weeks is a bad week. It is not the trend.

Ten pages, and most weeks you'll use three of them. That's the design. The rest are there for the days that need them.

Nothing here is fixed. That was never the offer. But you'll know more about what steadies you than you did, and you'll have it written down, which is the part that survives a bad week.

I'm doing the same thing, in a 1959 house, in public.

magnoliaandopal.com

This is a self-care guide, not therapy, and I'm not a therapist. If things get darker than this guide can hold, call or text 988 in the US, any time.
