

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • START

Start Here



A pocket-sized set of prompts for moments when your mind feels full, stuck, scattered, or overwhelmed.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Notice: choose the card that feels closest to the moment.
- Pause: read the question before reaching for a solution.
- Try: choose one practical step - not all three.
- Check again: notice what shifted, even slightly.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FEELING

Mind Movie



Your mind keeps replaying an imagined situation as if it were already real.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- A future conversation repeats in your head.
- A small worry becomes a detailed scene.
- You react emotionally to an outcome that has not happened.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FEELING

Big Feelings



Emotion rises quickly and feels intense or hard to manage.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- A small event triggers a strong response.
- You feel overwhelmed before you know why.
- Your reaction feels bigger than the situation.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FEELING

Information Overload



Too much information makes it hard to think clearly, prioritize, or act.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Many tabs are open and none feels like the place to begin.
- Details hide the main point.
- You keep gathering information instead of deciding.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.



Mind Movie

PAUSE AND CHECK

What situation keeps replaying?

TRY ONE

- 1 Name it: "This is a mind movie."
- 2 Ground in three physical sensations around you.
- 3 Write the scene down, then name what is fact right now.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Labeling creates distance from the thought; grounding brings attention back to the present.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Start Here

PAUSE AND CHECK

How to use the deck

TRY ONE

- 1 Notice: choose the card that feels closest to the moment.
- 2 Pause: read the question before reaching for a solution.
- 3 Try: choose one practical step - not all three.

WHY IT MAY HELP

The goal is not to fix your brain. It is to understand what it needs and make the next moment more manageable.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Information Overload

PAUSE AND CHECK

Which input is adding the most pressure?

TRY ONE

- 1 Close or mute what is not needed now.
- 2 Write down only the three key points.
- 3 Choose one small action before gathering more information.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Reducing input lowers working-memory demand and makes action easier.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Big Feelings

PAUSE AND CHECK

What emotion feels strongest in your body?

TRY ONE

- 1 Name the emotion without judging it.
- 2 Lengthen your exhale for several breaths.
- 3 Pause before responding, if it is safe to do so.

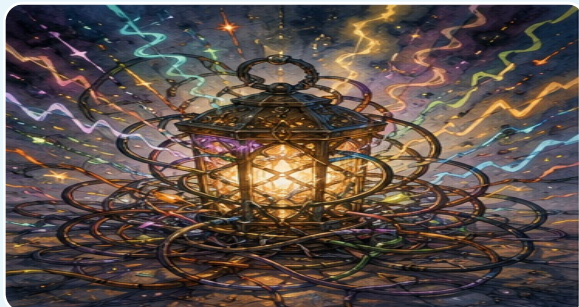
WHY IT MAY HELP

Naming emotion and slowing the breath can reduce arousal and give you more room to choose.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FEELING

Overstimulation



Sensory input makes your body feel tense, irritable, overwhelmed, or desperate to leave.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Noise or bright light makes focus difficult.
- A busy space drains you quickly.
- You feel a sudden need to escape or shut down.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FEELING

Emotional Waves



Feelings rise and fall quickly, sometimes without an obvious reason.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Your mood shifts within a short time.
- You move from calm to overwhelmed quickly.
- The change has no clear external trigger.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ACTION

Decision Freeze



Too many options make choosing feel impossible or unusually costly.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You keep comparing the same options.
- Every choice feels risky or incomplete.
- You delay because you want certainty first.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ACTION

Task Avoidance



You delay starting a task even when it matters to you.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- The task remains on your list without progress.
- You choose easier activities instead.
- Thinking about starting creates discomfort.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.



Emotional Waves

PAUSE AND CHECK

What change in feeling do you notice?

TRY ONE

- 1 Notice the shift without trying to force it away.
- 2 Anchor attention in your breath, feet, or hands.
- 3 Remind yourself: feelings move; this one will change too.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Observing a feeling without immediately acting on it can reduce its grip.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Overstimulation

PAUSE AND CHECK

What part of the environment feels like too much?

TRY ONE

- 1 Lower one source of sound, light, touch, or movement.
- 2 Use supports such as headphones, sunglasses, or a hood.
- 3 Step away briefly before deciding what comes next.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Reducing sensory demand gives the nervous system less to process.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Task Avoidance

PAUSE AND CHECK

Which part feels hardest to begin?

TRY ONE

- 1 Work for only five minutes.
- 2 Shrink the task to one visible action.
- 3 Pair the start with something supportive or enjoyable.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Lowering the cost of starting makes momentum more likely.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Decision Freeze

PAUSE AND CHECK

Which decision is taking up the most space?

TRY ONE

- 1 Reduce the decision to two acceptable options.
- 2 Set a short timer for choosing.
- 3 Pick "good enough" when no perfect answer exists.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Fewer choices reduce mental load and help the brain shift from comparison to action.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ACTION

Blank Start



You want to begin, but the first step is unclear.

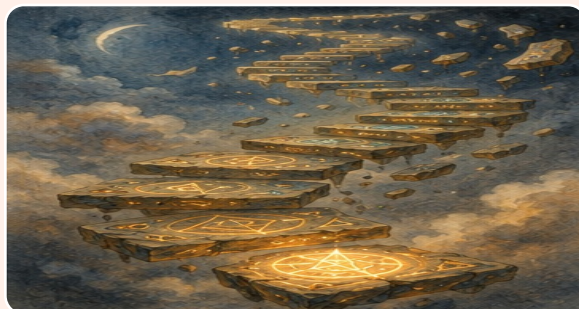
RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You stare at a blank page.
- An open-ended task feels shapeless.
- You feel stuck before you have begun.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ACTION

Too Many Steps



A task feels overwhelming because its steps are numerous, tangled, or hidden.

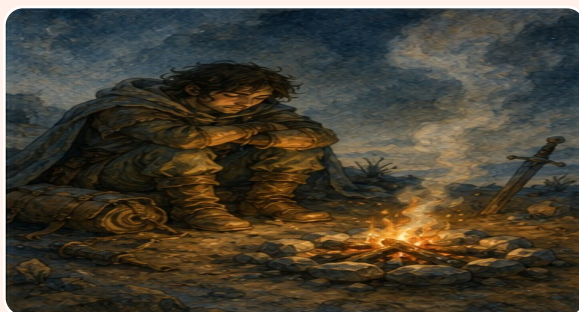
RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You cannot see where to begin.
- The full task feels too large to hold in mind.
- Complexity makes avoidance feel safer.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ACTION

Low Activation



You know what to do, but energy or initiation will not arrive on command.

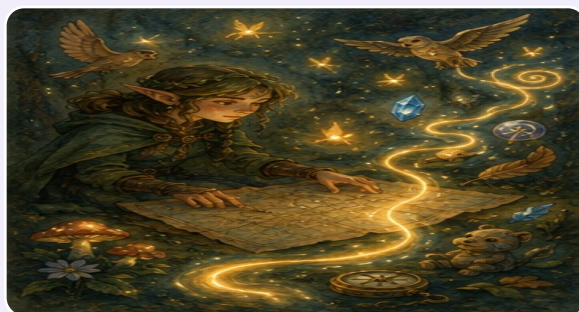
RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Your body feels slow while your mind wants to act.
- Simple tasks feel unusually heavy.
- You are waiting to “feel ready.”

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FOCUS

Attention Drift



Your attention moves away even while you are trying to stay with something.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You switch tabs without finishing.
- A new thought pulls you off task.
- You notice you have been elsewhere mentally.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ACTION

Too Many Steps



PAUSE AND CHECK

Which single step belongs first?

TRY ONE

- 1 Put every step outside your head on paper.
- 2 Circle only the first action.
- 3 Hide or ignore later steps until the first is done.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Externalizing the sequence reduces working-memory demand.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ACTION

Blank Start



PAUSE AND CHECK

What is the easiest possible first step?

TRY ONE

- 1 Borrow a template or example.
- 2 Make a deliberately imperfect first attempt.
- 3 Write one sentence, title, question, or list item.

WHY IT MAY HELP

A concrete entry point reduces uncertainty and gives the brain something to build from.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FOCUS

Attention Drift



PAUSE AND CHECK

Where did your attention go?

TRY ONE

- 1 Keep only one task visible.
- 2 Use a short, defined focus timer.
- 3 Return gently each time you notice the drift.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Structure guides attention without turning every return into a test of willpower.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ACTION

Low Activation



PAUSE AND CHECK

What is the smallest movement available?

TRY ONE

- 1 Stand, stretch, or move one object.
- 2 Lower the goal until beginning feels possible.
- 3 Change rooms, lighting, posture, or sound.

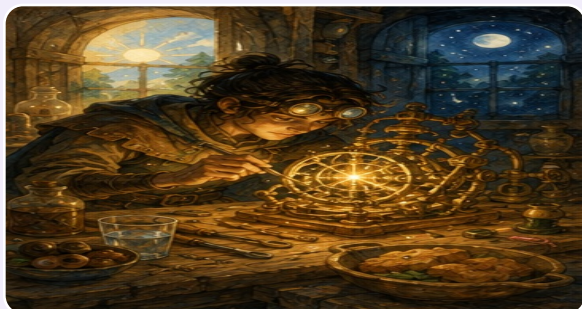
WHY IT MAY HELP

Small physical changes can create enough activation for the next action.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FOCUS

Hyperfocus



You become deeply absorbed and lose track of time, transitions, or body needs.

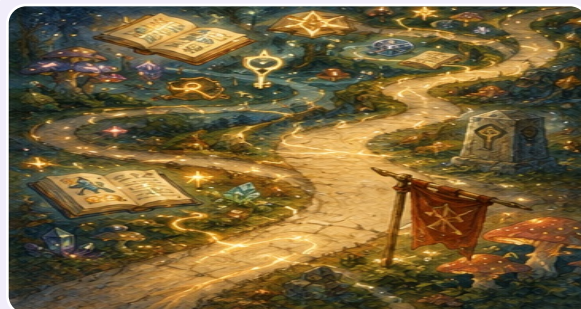
RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Hours pass without notice.
- Eating, drinking, movement, or rest disappears.
- Stopping feels physically difficult.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FOCUS

Curiosity Detour



Interesting information pulls you away from the priority you chose.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Research expands far beyond the original question.
- Each new idea opens another path.
- Curiosity wins, even when time is limited.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FOCUS

Mental Clutter



Too many thoughts compete for attention at the same time.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Your mind feels crowded.
- Thoughts interrupt one another.
- Choosing what matters first feels difficult.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • FOCUS

Forgetting Loop



Tasks or ideas disappear even when they matter to you.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You remember something, then lose it.
- Planned tasks slip out of awareness.
- Missing a cue means missing a step.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.



Curiosity Detour

PAUSE AND CHECK

What pulled you away from the main task?

TRY ONE

- 1 Give exploration a clear time limit.
- 2 Save the idea in a “later” list.
- 3 Restate the current priority before choosing.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Capturing the idea protects curiosity without requiring you to follow it now.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Hyperfocus

PAUSE AND CHECK

What need or commitment might be out of view?

TRY ONE

- 1 Set more than one interruption alarm.
- 2 Place water or transition cues in sight.
- 3 Ask for a check-in when a hard stop matters.

WHY IT MAY HELP

External cues can interrupt deep focus and support attention switching.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Forgetting Loop

PAUSE AND CHECK

What needs an external home right now?

TRY ONE

- 1 Capture it immediately in one trusted place.
- 2 Use visible reminders where the action happens.
- 3 Attach the action to an existing routine.

WHY IT MAY HELP

External systems support working memory; they are tools, not a moral failure.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Mental Clutter

PAUSE AND CHECK

Which thought is taking up the most space?

TRY ONE

- 1 Do a fast, unfiltered brain dump.
- 2 Group similar items together.
- 3 Choose one item; deliberately park the rest.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Externalizing thoughts reduces the amount your brain must hold at once.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ENERGY



Spoons



Your available capacity is limited, and ordinary tasks may use more of it than expected.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- A few tasks leave you depleted.
- You need recovery sooner than others seem to.
- Today's capacity is different from yesterday's.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ENERGY



Burnout Build-Up



Demand keeps exceeding recovery, and your baseline energy is shrinking.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

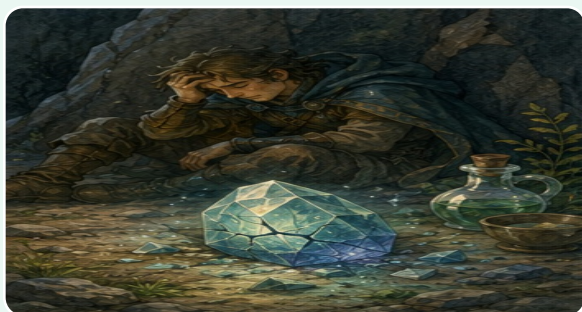
- Tasks feel heavier each day.
- Rest does not fully restore you.
- Tolerance for noise, decisions, or people is lower.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ENERGY



Energy Crash



Your energy drops sharply and continuing becomes difficult.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

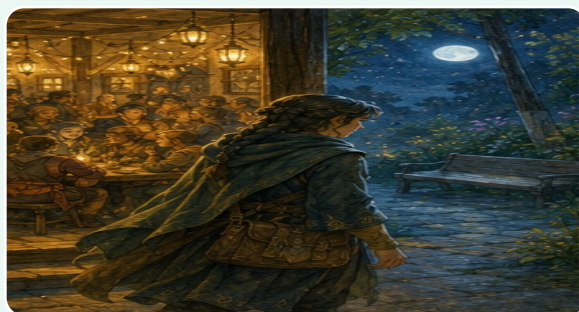
- You felt functional, then suddenly did not.
- Your body becomes heavy or slow.
- A task becomes impossible to continue.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • ENERGY



Social Fatigue



Interaction uses significant mental, sensory, or emotional energy.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Conversation takes more effort than expected.
- You feel drained after being with people.
- Alone time is necessary after social events.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.



Burnout Build-Up

PAUSE AND CHECK

What has been taking more than you can restore?

TRY ONE

- 1 Reduce one demand before reaching crisis.
- 2 Add small recovery periods throughout the day.
- 3 Treat early fatigue as useful information.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Burnout is not solved by trying harder; the demand-recovery balance has to change.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Spoons

PAUSE AND CHECK

What is using most of your energy?

TRY ONE

- 1 Protect capacity for what is essential.
- 2 Place recovery between demanding activities.
- 3 Choose a lower-effort version when needed.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Planning around real capacity reduces overload and protects what matters.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Social Fatigue

PAUSE AND CHECK

How much social energy is available now?

TRY ONE

- 1 Plan recovery after social demand.
- 2 Shorten or structure interactions when possible.
- 3 Choose lower-demand people, spaces, or formats.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Social capacity is real capacity; balancing interaction with recovery protects it.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com



Energy Crash

PAUSE AND CHECK

What signals appeared before the drop?

TRY ONE

- 1 Stop pushing and allow recovery.
- 2 Switch to a genuinely low-demand task.
- 3 Check food, water, medication timing, pain, and rest.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Responding early can shorten recovery and prevent deeper depletion.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

All-or-Nothing



A task feels valid only if it can be done completely or perfectly.

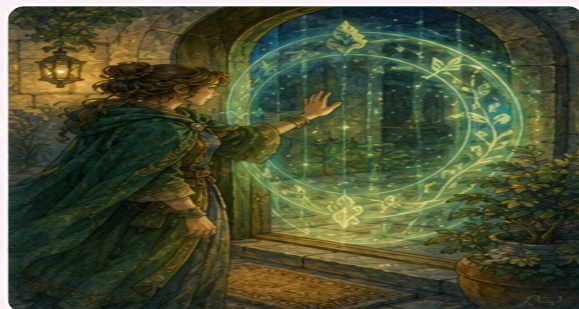
RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You avoid starting because you cannot finish it all.
- Partial progress feels like failure.
- You wait for ideal conditions.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SOCIAL

Soft Boundaries



Saying no or naming a limit feels unsafe, selfish, or unkind.

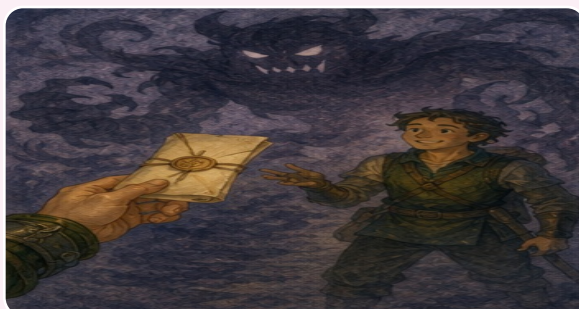
RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You agree while feeling unsure.
- You say yes, then feel resentment or regret.
- Other people's comfort outranks your capacity.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SOCIAL

Rejection Sensitivity



Possible criticism or disapproval lands with intense emotional force.

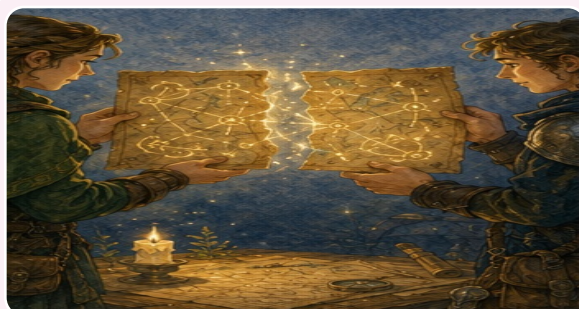
RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- A small comment feels like rejection.
- You replay an interaction for hidden meaning.
- Feedback feels like a verdict on your worth.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SOCIAL

Miscommunication



Meaning, tone, or expectations are not landing clearly between people.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You thought you were clear, but others are confused.
- You are unsure what someone meant.
- Unspoken expectations create frustration.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SOCIAL

Soft Boundaries



PAUSE AND CHECK

Where is a limit needed?

TRY ONE

- 1 Prepare one simple boundary phrase.
- 2 Pause before answering requests.
- 3 Practice first in a lower-pressure situation.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Boundaries can protect connection by making consent and capacity clearer.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

All-or-Nothing



PAUSE AND CHECK

What would a smaller valid version look like?

TRY ONE

- 1 Complete one useful part.
- 2 Define success as movement, not perfection.
- 3 Start before certainty or readiness arrives.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Making partial progress count lowers pressure and supports consistency.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SOCIAL

Miscommunication



PAUSE AND CHECK

Which part of the exchange is unclear?

TRY ONE

- 1 Ask a direct, specific question.
- 2 Reflect back what you heard.
- 3 State the next step, owner, and timing plainly.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Shared understanding grows through clarification, not guessing.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SOCIAL

Rejection Sensitivity



PAUSE AND CHECK

What evidence is available - and what are you guessing?

TRY ONE

- 1 Wait for intensity to settle before responding.
- 2 Name at least one neutral explanation.
- 3 Ask for clarification instead of mind-reading.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Checking evidence helps separate a painful alarm from a confirmed threat.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SOCIAL

Expressing a Need



You know something is wrong, but asking clearly for support feels difficult.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You hope others will infer what you need.
- The words disappear under pressure.
- You avoid asking even when support would help.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SOCIAL

Overcommitment



You agree before checking whether time, energy, or attention is available.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Your calendar fills faster than expected.
- You say yes, then feel trapped.
- Opportunity or connection eclipses capacity.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

Masking



You monitor or alter yourself to meet expectations, fit in, or stay safe.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You act differently around others than alone.
- You hide needs, movement, tone, or interests.
- Social situations leave you exhausted.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

Pattern Loop



The same trigger, response, and outcome keeps repeating.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You react the same way despite wanting change.
- Similar situations end similarly.
- The sequence feels automatic.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.



Overcommitment

PAUSE AND CHECK

What do you realistically have room for?

TRY ONE

- 1 Use a delay phrase: "Let me check and reply."
- 2 Look at your calendar before agreeing.
- 3 If needed, renegotiate early and directly.

WHY IT MAY HELP

A pause gives capacity a vote before commitment becomes pressure.



Expressing a Need

PAUSE AND CHECK

What would make this moment more manageable?

TRY ONE

- 1 Write the need before saying it.
- 2 Use: "I need ____; could you ____?"
- 3 Practice with a safer person or by text first.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Clear requests reduce uncertainty and give others something concrete to respond to.



Pattern Loop

PAUSE AND CHECK

Where does the pattern begin?

TRY ONE

- 1 Pause at the earliest moment you can notice.
- 2 Name the trigger and the usual next step.
- 3 Change one small link in the chain.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Small interruptions create opportunities for the brain to learn another route.



Masking

PAUSE AND CHECK

Where are you working hardest to appear acceptable?

TRY ONE

- 1 Notice masking without blaming yourself.
- 2 Allow one natural behavior in a safe setting.
- 3 Spend time where less performance is required.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Masking may be protective; increasing choice around it can conserve energy and support authenticity.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

Guilt Spiral



Reflection has turned into repeated self-punishment.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- You replay what you did wrong.
- A small error grows into a character judgment.
- Moving forward feels undeserved.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

Internal Conflict



Different needs, values, or parts of you pull in opposing directions.

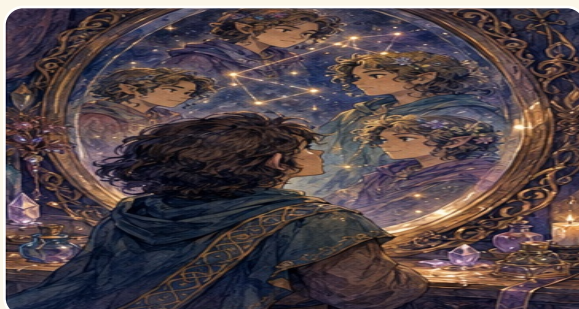
RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- One part wants to act while another resists.
- Both choices feel important.
- Mixed signals make decisions harder.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

Identity



You are exploring what feels authentic and how you experience the world.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- Old labels no longer fit.
- Comparison makes self-understanding harder.
- Your sense of self is changing over time.

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • PLAN

My Reset Plan



A small plan for the moments when words, options, or energy are hard to find.

RECOGNIZE THE MOMENT

- My early signs: _____
- A support that helps: _____
- A phrase I can use: _____

Notice it. Name it. Make the next moment smaller.

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

Internal Conflict



PAUSE AND CHECK

What is each side trying to protect?

TRY ONE

- 1 Name both needs without choosing yet.
- 2 Write what each side fears and wants.
- 3 Look for a next step that honors both partly.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Understanding the protective purpose of each side can reduce internal warfare.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

Guilt Spiral



PAUSE AND CHECK

What repair or learning is actually needed?

TRY ONE

- 1 State the mistake once, without exaggerating it.
- 2 Choose one repair or future adjustment.
- 3 Speak to yourself as you would to someone you respect.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Accountability points toward repair; shame keeps the mind circling the injury.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • PLAN

My Reset Plan



PAUSE AND CHECK

What helps me return to myself?

TRY ONE

- 1 Reduce one demand or source of input.
- 2 Use my chosen phrase, tool, person, or place.
- 3 Wait for regulation before solving everything.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Keep this card somewhere easy to reach. Update it whenever you learn something new about what helps.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com

THE PERCEPTION CHECK • SELF

Identity



PAUSE AND CHECK

What feels most true for you today?

TRY ONE

- 1 Notice what brings energy, ease, or meaning.
- 2 Record patterns without rushing to define them.
- 3 Let understanding evolve; no final answer is required.

WHY IT MAY HELP

Identity can be discovered and revised over time. Change does not make it less real.

Support tool, not medical advice • theperceptioncheck.com