

20 Minutes of Honesty

A journal you won't finish — and that's fine.

This isn't a worksheet. It's not self-improvement homework. It's a set of questions for the days when you need to get something out of your head and onto paper.

Before you start — check in with yourself:

Energy right now: Empty / Low / Medium / High / Wired

Emotional state: Numb / Heavy / Restless / Raw / Okay

If you're empty or numb, start with Section 2 (Energy Audit).

If you're raw or heavy, Section 3 (Shame Inventory) might be too much today. That's self-awareness, not avoidance.

If you're restless, try Section 4 (The Real Version).

How to use this: Pick one section. Set a timer for 5 minutes. Write without editing. Stop when the timer goes off.

Section 1: The Masking Inventory

What parts of your ADHD are you working hardest to hide right now?

How much energy are you spending — today, specifically — trying to appear normal?

What would change if you stopped performing in one specific area of your life? Name that area.

Who in your life might actually benefit from knowing how your brain works — and what's stopped you from telling them?

What you might notice: If this section felt heavy, that weight has a name — it's the gap between who you are and who you've been performing as.

If this section hit hard, Experiment 10 in Small Experiments gives you a way to close that gap.

Section 2: The Energy Audit

What drains you more than it should? Be specific — not 'work' but which part of work.

When do you feel most alive — not productive, alive? When was the last time?

What's one thing about your daily routine that actively fights against how your brain works?

If you could change one thing about your environment tomorrow, what would make the biggest difference?

What you might notice: Most people's answers to 'what drains you' and 'what fights your brain' are the same thing said two different ways.

Experiment 1 in Small Experiments turns this into actual data — 2 minutes a day for one week.

Section 3: The Shame Inventory

What are you carrying that you've never said out loud?

What do you judge yourself for that's actually just your wiring?

When's the last time you gave yourself credit for something instead of focusing on what you didn't do?

What would you say to a friend who described your exact experience?

What you might notice: Notice the gap between what you'd say to a friend and how you talk to yourself. That gap is where the real work is.

Connects to 7 Things Nobody Told You, #7 — Masking.

Section 4: The Real Version

What would your life look like if it was designed for your brain instead of against it?

How would you spend your days if you stopped trying to earn the right to exist as you are?

What have you been calling a weakness that might just be a difference?

What would you tell someone who was just diagnosed?

What you might notice: Whatever you'd tell someone newly diagnosed? That's the thing you still need to hear yourself.

Is This Your Brain Too? might help you name the specific patterns you're designing around.

After you write

You don't need to do anything with what you wrote. You don't need to make a plan. Sometimes getting it out of your head is the whole point.

But if you wrote something that surprised you — something that felt true in a way that caught you off guard — circle it. That's your brain trying to tell you something.

You gave your brain 5 minutes of honesty. That's braver than most people manage in a year.

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The ADHD Diary Project