

THE JOURNAL FOUNDRY CO.

FREE SAMPLE

The Comparison Journal

The opening pages and the first three days, exactly
as they are in the full journal.

Print single-sided on A4 or US Letter, or fill it in on a tablet with
any PDF markup app.

Do the opening page before the first log. It takes five minutes,
and the logs mean very little without it.

If the three days work for you, the full journal carries on from
exactly where this stops.

A self-help record, not medical, psychological or financial advice, and not a diagnosis.
Interior written and laid out with AI assistance and edited by hand. Quotations are public
domain.

Free for personal use. Please share the link rather than the file:
thejournalfoundryco.co.uk/journals/comparison/

How This Journal Works

Comparison is not a character flaw and it is not something you can decide to stop doing. It is the oldest way a social animal works out where it stands, and it ran quietly for most of human history because you could only measure yourself against the forty people you actually knew. That constraint is gone. You now carry, in your pocket, a machine that will show you the best moment of the best day of several thousand strangers, selected because it made you stay and look.

So arguing with the feeling does not work, and neither does the advice to simply stop comparing. What does work is treating each comparison as a piece of evidence with an origin. Something set it off — a person, an account, a room, a number, a version of yourself. This journal writes that origin down, every time, in the same column.

Thirty days of that produces something no amount of reassurance can: a ranked list of the actual sources, in your own handwriting, with a count against each. Not "social media makes me feel bad" but the four specific places it came from, nineteen times, and what you did about them. That list is the output of this journal.

THE SEVEN PARTS

The Standing Position	a signed page: where this is already costing you, and the one measure you choose to run on.
A Worked Day	one filled-in example with both numbers shown, so Day 1 takes two minutes.
30 Day Logs	every comparison written down with its source, marked up or down, usable or not.
The Signal Rate	a number the page computes: the share of comparisons that gave you something to act on.
The Look-Back	a strip on every page that goes back a week and asks whether it still stings.
4 Checkpoints	the source column tallied and ranked, and one rule matched to what the tally says.
Two output pages	the removal list, and thirty days of signal rate plotted on one line.

THE ONE RULE: NAME THE SOURCE BEFORE THE FEELING

When you catch yourself measuring, the first thing on the page is not how it felt. It is where it came from — the account, the name, the room, the number. The feeling goes in the column after. This is deliberately the easier of the two to write, because a source is a fact and a feeling is an argument.

Undated, so a missed day costs nothing — skip the page and take the next one. This is a self-help record, not therapy or treatment.

"Look well into thyself; there is a source of strength which will always spring up if thou wilt always look."

— Marcus Aurelius, Meditations

The Standing Position

Fill this in before the first log. It is the page you read back on Day 30, and the honesty of it is the only thing that makes Day 30 worth anything.

THE THREE PEOPLE, ACCOUNTS OR PLACES I ALREADY KNOW I MEASURE MYSELF AGAINST

write them now, before the evidence arrives — the guess is worth comparing against the count on Day 30

WHAT THIS HAS ALREADY COST ME (the thing not started, the thing not posted, the evening spent scrolling)

THE ONE MEASURE I AM CHOOSING TO RUN ON

Comparison always uses somebody else's axis. Pick yours now and write it in one line — something you can check at the end of a week without asking anyone.

I WILL CHECK IT weekly · at each checkpoint · on Day 30

THE RULE FOR THE NEXT 30 DAYS

Every comparison gets written down with its source, including the ones that made me feel better. A ledger with only the painful entries in it is not a ledger, it is a complaint, and it cannot be counted.

THE ONE THING I WANT TO HAVE BUILT BY DAY 30, IN MY OWN LANE

SIGNED

DATE

"Very little is needed to make a happy life; it is all within yourself, in your way of thinking."

— Marcus Aurelius, Meditations

A Worked Day

One filled-in evening. Up means the person was ahead of you on whatever you were measuring; down means behind. Usable means it gave you something you could actually do this week.

COMPARISONS TODAY

SOURCE	WHAT I COMPARED	UP/DOWN	WHAT IT TOLD ME	USABLE?
Instagram, fitness account	Body, training	up	Nothing. Sponsored, filtered	no
Ben, from my old team	Job title, salary	up	He moved sideways first. So can I yes	
Group chat, house prices	Where I live	up	Two of them had deposits gifted	no
Me, two years ago	How much I wrote	up	I wrote daily then. I stopped	yes
Colleague missing deadlines	Output at work	down	Relief, then nothing	no

THE ARITHMETIC

Comparisons 5 Usable 2 Signal rate $2 \div 5 = 40\%$

Three of the five taught nothing at all. Two of those three came from the same two apps.

AND THE LOOK-BACK, SEVEN DAYS ON

On this day the example also went back a week and re-read that page. Of the four comparisons written there, one still stung — the friend who was further along at work — and three had gone completely, including one that had taken most of an evening at the time. Fade rate: 3 of 4.

That is the number worth having. Not how many comparisons you made, but how few of them survived a single week — which tells you what the feeling is actually worth as evidence.

“Men are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of things.”

— Epictetus, Enchiridion

Day 01

DATE _____

COMPARISONS TODAY

source first, feeling second — including the ones that felt good

SOURCE — WHO OR WHERE	WHAT I COMPARED	UP / DOWN	WHAT IT TOLD ME	USABLE?

TODAY'S COUNT

COMPARISONS

USABLE

UPWARD

SIGNAL RATE

signal rate = usable ÷ comparisons. Write it as a percentage; it goes on The Signal Line.

THE SEVEN-DAY LOOK-BACK — STARTS ON DAY 8

Nothing to review yet. From Day 8 this strip sends you back a week to re-read that page.

FADED

IN MY OWN LANE

1

2

3

4

5

- 1 I spent the day measuring myself against other people and did nothing with any of it
- 2 Mostly measuring; one comparison I managed to look at instead of feel
- 3 Split — some of it turned into information, some of it just hurt
- 4 I noticed the comparisons, named the source, and kept working on my own thing
- 5 I ran my own day. What other people were doing was interesting, not a verdict

THE ONE THAT STAYED WITH ME, AND WHAT IT SAYS I ACTUALLY WANT

“No man was ever wise by chance.”

— Seneca, Letters to Lucilius

Day 02

DATE _____

COMPARISONS TODAY

source first, feeling second — including the ones that felt good

SOURCE — WHO OR WHERE	WHAT I COMPARED	UP / DOWN	WHAT IT TOLD ME	USABLE?

TODAY'S COUNT

COMPARISONS

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THE ONE THAT STAYED WITH ME, AND WHAT IT SAYS I ACTUALLY WANT

“The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled.”

— Plutarch, Moralia

Day 03

DATE _____

COMPARISONS TODAY

source first, feeling second — including the ones that felt good

SOURCE — WHO OR WHERE	WHAT I COMPARED	UP / DOWN	WHAT IT TOLD ME	USABLE?

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COMPARISONS

USABLE

UPWARD

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“No one knows what he can do till he tries.”

— Publilius Syrus, Sentences

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THAT WAS THE FIRST THREE DAYS

The rest of The Comparison Journal

30 days, four weekly checkpoints, the Source Table and the
Signal Line.

A few days of this is a sample. The part that changes anything is keeping it going long enough for the numbers to mean something, and that is what the checkpoints and the verdict are for.

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Paperback

amazon.co.uk/dp/B0HJPH1HM7

How it works, and the method in full

thejournalfoundryco.co.uk/journals/comparison/

Questions, or want it for a team? Write to kzukas@thejournalfoundryco.co.uk. One reply, from a person.