

This exercise helps to explore the difference between your 'Imagined Life' and your 'Actual Life.' The goal is to face this gap and understand its implications for your present experience.

## PART 1: THE IMAGINED LIFE

Be honest about the internal reference point you are comparing yourself to.

If you look back to an earlier time in your life, what did you assume would be happening by now?

By this stage, I honestly thought I would be:

(e.g., further ahead in my career, settled in a specific place, finished with a certain struggle)

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I thought I would feel more:

(e.g., confident, secure, free, certain)

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*"A gap is not a failure. It is a record of adaptation. Identifying it is the work. The rest comes later."*

*"What looks like a gap is often a change in demands. Notice what shifted before you decide what to fix"*

## PART 2: THE REALITY

Look at where you actually are.

What is true about my life right now?

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What have I gained that was never in the original plan?

(e.g., a resilience I didn't know I had, a relationship I didn't expect, a different kind of quiet)

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What is harder than I expected it to be?

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## PART 3: THE DIFFERENCE

When I look at the gap between Part 1 and Part 2, what comes up?

- Disappointment
- Relief (I'm glad I didn't get what I wanted)
- Grief
- Acceptance
- "Is this it?"

*"Name the shift without judging it; then choose the smallest support that fits the day you're actually having."*

*"What looks like a gap is often a change in demands. Notice what shifted before you decide what to fix"*

## PART 4: HONOURING YOUR PATH

Look at "The Reality" you wrote above. Why did your younger self choose this path?

(e.g., I prioritised my family; I followed a loved one; I wanted more time to myself.)

My past self chose this because at the time, I needed:

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## PART 5: THE GROUNDING QUESTION

Read this once. Answer only if it resonates.

"If nothing changed for the next few months, what would I need most to live this period more honestly or steadily?"

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## PART 6: PERMISSION TO STOP

Sometimes it's best to pause. Stop if you notice these signs:

- I'm going in circles
- I feel more confused, not clearer
- My body feels tense or tired
- I'm starting to judge myself
- I just need to get on with the day

*"Progress is not always keeping to the plan. It's also adjusting your supports when your life changes."*

*"What looks like a gap is often a change in demands. Notice what shifted before you decide what to fix"*