

## **Cumulative Self-Talk (CST) – Monthly Weave (Beginner Version)**

A gentle monthly check-in for your CST diary.

This worksheet helps you look back over roughly four weeks of audio, video, and text, and turn scattered entries into a clearer sense of direction. You do not need to have been consistent or perfect. A messy month still counts.

It is:

- Non-clinical and DIY
- Grounded in everyday media use
- About gradual accumulation, not self-improvement heroics

Use it on your own, or alongside someone you trust. Move at a humane pace. Pause if things feel too much.

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### **What this worksheet is for**

Short term, this worksheet helps you:

- See what you actually did this month, instead of relying on vague memory
- Notice where your attention went: people, places, activities, body states, screens
- Pick out a few threads that matter, rather than trying to fix everything
- Spot small shifts in meaning and behaviour
- End the month with a simple snapshot you can carry forward

Longer term, done most months, it helps you:

- Build an archive that lets you track patterns over time
- Develop a more grounded sense of who you are and how you live
- Loosen the grip of harsh self-criticism and all-or-nothing thinking
- Treat your media habits as part of your life design, not just background noise

- Grow a craft around diarying: better capture, better storage, better revisiting

You are not trying to become a better person here. You are learning to see your life more clearly, bit by bit.

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## **Skills you are quietly developing**

Working through this worksheet, you will gradually build:

- **Attention and noticing**
  - Tracking where your attention actually goes
  - Naming what stands out without blaming yourself
- **Description before interpretation**
  - Counting entries instead of judging yourself
  - Using snippets and concrete examples instead of vague labels
- **Pattern recognition**
  - Spotting recurring threads in your audio, video, and text
  - Seeing how those threads feel: energising, draining, stuck, emerging
- **Working with defences and biases (non-pathologising)**
  - Recognising psychological defences and cognitive biases in your entries
  - Treating them as information about how you protect and orient yourself
  - Experimenting with small adjustments rather than trying to remove them
- **Media awareness (media ecology in everyday clothes)**
  - Noticing what audio, video, and text each bring out in you
  - Rotating mediums on purpose instead of just by habit
- **Ethics, consent, and privacy**
  - Checking how other people appear in your recordings
  - Keeping some things private and choosing what (if anything) to share
- **Craft and workflow**
  - Tidying file names, folders, and backups so Future-You can actually find things
  - Adjusting mic, framing, and text habits so diarying feels easier and more enjoyable
- **Designing tiny experiments**
  - Turning vague intentions into small, testable experiments
  - Planning safeguards so one wobble does not become giving up

Over time, these skills add up to a quieter confidence: you know how to turn ordinary life and ordinary media into a cumulative record that works in your favour.

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## **1. Setting the frame (10–15 mins)**

### **Why this matters**

CST works best when the session itself becomes a small ritual. Naming the time window, place, and conditions tells your nervous system: ‘For a short while, we are here for reflection.’

This also stops the session drifting into vague chat. You are giving yourself a focused, finite container.

### **1.1 Session window and setting**

Time window for this weave: \_\_\_\_\_ mins

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Distractions off: ☐

Sources ready (tick what you have to hand):

- ☐ Titles
- ☐ One-line takeaways
- ☐ Tags / keywords
- ☐ Any public posts (site / YouTube / podcast / socials)

Materials you are using today:

- ☐ Notepad
- ☐ Notes / iA Writer
- ☐ Headphones
- ☐ Tea / water
- ☐ Calm background audio
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Safety reminder**

If at any point you feel overwhelmed:

- Pause the worksheet
- Ground yourself (breath, body, room, surroundings)
- Use agreed safety contacts or local support before continuing

If this happens more than occasionally, or things feel unmanageable, consider talking with a suitable advisor or support service. CST is a practice, not a replacement for care.

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## **2. The month at a glance (count, do not judge)**

### **Why this matters**

Before interpretation, CST asks for simple counting:

- How many entries?
- In which media?
- How often did you return to them?

This replaces blanket self-criticism such as 'I have done nothing' with concrete data. Gaps are normal. Any accumulation is already work.

### **2.1 Activity overview**

Entries created this month:

- Audio: \_\_\_\_\_
- Video: \_\_\_\_\_
- Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Days with any entry: \_\_\_\_\_ / 30 or 31

Average entry length (rough):

- ☐ < 5 mins

- ☐ 5–10 mins
- ☐ 10–20 mins
- ☐ > 20 mins

## **2.2 Tags and titles**

Top tags or recurring themes (by frequency or feel):

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Three titles you re-read or replayed most:

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## **2.3 One-line description of the month**

In plain words, no theory:

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## **3. Threads and motifs (evidence-based)**

**Why this matters**

CST treats 'themes' as grounded in specific entries, not as vague impressions. Each thread is backed by a small piece of evidence: a quote, detail, or moment.

This shifts you away from big labels (for example, 'I am a failure') towards specific, situated examples you can actually work with.

Keep it concrete: dates, snippets, settings, sensory detail.

### **3.1 Three recurring threads**

#### **Thread 1**

Thread label: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence snippet (short quote or detail):

‘ \_\_\_\_\_ ’

Status:

- ☐ emerging
- ☐ stable
- ☐ stuck

Valence:

- ☐ energising
- ☐ draining
- ☐ mixed

#### **Thread 2**

Thread label: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence snippet:

‘ \_\_\_\_\_ ’

Status:

- ☐ emerging
- ☐ stable
- ☐ stuck

Valence:

- ☐ energising
- ☐ draining
- ☐ mixed

### Thread 3

Thread label: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence snippet:

‘ \_\_\_\_\_ ’

Status:

- ☐ emerging
- ☐ stable
- ☐ stuck

Valence:

- ☐ energising
- ☐ draining
- ☐ mixed

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## 4. Attention map (where attention actually went)

### Why this matters

Media ecology and sociology are both interested in where attention lands in everyday life:

- People
- Places
- Activities
- Screens and media
- Body states

This section gently maps where your noticing clustered, without blaming or idealising.

#### 4.1 What dominated noticing

Tick any that were prominent this month and give one example each.

People ☐

Example:

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Places ☐

Example:

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Activities ☐

Example:

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Media / ideas ☐

Example:

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Body states ☐

Example:

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#### 4.2 Quick energy–meaning sketch

Plot three items against two axes: energy (X) and meaning (Y). No artwork needed; just labels.

- High energy / High meaning: \_\_\_\_\_
- High energy / Low meaning: \_\_\_\_\_
- Low energy / High meaning: \_\_\_\_\_



You will use this later when you design tiny experiments.

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## **5. Change detection (since last month)**

### **Why this matters**

CST is cumulative. We are looking for drift, not drama.

Spotting small shifts in attention, interpretation, and behaviour is often enough to see that something is moving.

### **5.1 Three types of shift**

Attention shift (what you noticed more or less):

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Interpretation shift (what it meant to you):

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Behavioural shift (what you did differently):

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### **5.2 Entries that best show this**

Two entries that capture the shift:

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## **6. Life-affirming inventory (micro is fine)**

### **Why this matters**

Instead of forced positive thinking, CST looks for small, concrete life-affirming details that actually appeared in your media. These are often tiny: textures, glances, bits of humour, a song in the background.

We are not pretending everything is fine. We are noticing where something felt slightly more alive.

### **6.1 Five enlivening details**

List five small details that felt enlivening or opened space:

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### **6.2 Why they matter**

One or two sentences on how these details change the month's texture:

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## **7. Defences, coping, and biases (non-pathologising)**

### **Why this matters**

CST treats psychological defences, coping strategies, and cognitive biases as part of how you protect and orient yourself, not as faults.

The point is to notice patterns, see what they do for you, and then decide what to keep, soften, or adjust.

### **7.1 Defences spotted this month**

Most visible defences:

- ☐ Intellectualising
- ☐ Minimising
- ☐ Rationalising
- ☐ Projection
- ☐ Dissociation
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Net effect this month:

- ☐ mostly helpful
- ☐ mostly unhelpful
- ☐ mixed

One practical adjustment for next month (gentle, realistic):

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### **7.2 Coping strategies**

Coping you actually used:

- ☐ Short walk (5–10 mins)
- ☐ Breath work / slowing down
- ☐ Tea / water break
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Humour
- ☐ Contacting someone
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Keep: \_\_\_\_\_

Retire or replace: \_\_\_\_\_

### 7.3 Cognitive biases

Biases most visible in your entries:

- ☐ Confirmation bias
- ☐ Catastrophising
- ☐ Hindsight bias
- ☐ Fundamental attribution
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

A counter-move that worked at least once:

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## 8. Media-ecology check (what the medium did)

### Why this matters

Different media invite different selves. Audio, video, and text each amplify certain aspects and mute others.

CST names this so you can rotate mediums deliberately, not just by habit.

### 8.1 Modal mix

This month was:

- ☐ mostly audio
- ☐ mostly video
- ☐ mostly text
- ☐ fairly balanced

What your main medium amplified (for example, tone of voice, surroundings, pacing):

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What it muted or made harder to notice:

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### **8.2 Rotation experiment for next month**

One small rotation experiment (specific, lightweight). For example:

- 'Two walking audios per week'
- 'One 3-minute text-only reflection on Fridays'

Your version:

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## **9. Ethics, consent, and privacy (monthly housekeeping)**

### **Why this matters**

CST may involve other people, places, and stories. Ethics is not an extra; it is part of the craft.

Here you check that what is captured and shared still sits well with your values and with basic privacy.

### **9.1 Identifiable others**

People identifiable in entries?

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes → consent:
- ☐ obtained
- ☐ not obtained

Items to redact or blur (names, faces, locations, workplace, etc.):

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Alt-text written for any visuals you may share?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no
- ☐ not applicable

## 9.2 Public-facing candidates

Two entries that might be suitable for careful sharing (if any):

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Disclaimer line ready for any public post (non-clinical, DIY practice)?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

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## 10. Archive and index (so Future-You can find things)

### Why this matters

The ‘cumulative’ in Cumulative Self-Talk depends on being able to find past material.

An hour spent today on structure can save many future hours and protect work that matters.

### 10.1 Where this month lives

Main folder(s) for this month:

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Filename pattern still clean and consistent?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ tweak needed

If tweaking, new pattern:

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## 10.2 Backups and cross-links

Backups done:

- ☐ iCloud / Drive
- ☐ External drive
- ☐ Both
- ☐ Not yet (schedule it)

Cross-links added (for example, from strong entries to each other):

From entry \_\_\_\_\_ → entry \_\_\_\_\_

From entry \_\_\_\_\_ → entry \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly index note created (titles, one-line takeaways, top tags)?

- ☐ yes
  - ☐ no
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## 11. Publishing plan (only if it serves you)

### Why this matters

Publishing is optional. Some work is meant to stay private.

When you do choose to publish, a light plan keeps the craft aligned with the practice, not with algorithms.

### 11.1 Where and how

If you are sharing anything from this month, where?

- ☐ [jaseanton.com](http://jaseanton.com)
- ☐ YouTube

- ☐ Podcast
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Not publishing this month

Series or category (to keep continuity):

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### **11.2 Excerpt and call to action**

150-character plain-language excerpt:

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Gentle, useful call to action (if any):

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## **12. Craft and workflow tune-up**

### **Why this matters**

Tiny adjustments to craft can make CST feel more sustainable and enjoyable.

Here you treat yourself as a media practitioner, not just a diary keeper.

### **12.1 Pacing and capture**

Pacing this month:

- ☐ too fast
- ☐ too slow
- ☐ about right

One tweak:



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Audio notes (mic distance, room tone, levels):

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Video notes (framing, light, steadiness):

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Text notes (length, clarity, sensory detail):

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Template change (one small improvement to your capture process):

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## **13. Friction log → design one nudge**

### **Why this matters**

Where did the practice snag? Instead of blaming yourself, treat frictions as design problems.

The aim is to create one small nudge per friction, not to redesign your entire life.

### **13.1 Top three frictions**

1. Friction:

> \_\_\_\_\_

Nudge:

> \_\_\_\_\_

2. Friction:

> \_\_\_\_\_

Nudge:

> \_\_\_\_\_

3. Friction:

> \_\_\_\_\_

Nudge:

> \_\_\_\_\_

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## **14. Next month: two tiny experiments ( $\leq 10$ mins/day)**

### **Why this matters**

Rather than grand resolutions, CST prefers small, testable experiments.

One short, slightly more intense run; one ultra-light longer run. Both should be good enough, not perfect.

### **14.1 Experiment A (7-day)**

Aim: \_\_\_\_\_

Protocol (what you actually do):

\_\_\_\_\_

Check-in day: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Pre-mortem A**

Why might this fail?

\_\_\_\_\_

Safeguard:

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### **14.2 Experiment B (30-day, ultra-light)**

Aim: \_\_\_\_\_

Protocol (tiny, repeatable):

\_\_\_\_\_

‘Good-enough’ rule (when you count it as done):

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Pre-mortem B**

Why might this fail?

\_\_\_\_\_

Safeguard:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **15. Wellbeing and boundaries**

### **Why this matters**

CST is not a substitute for mental health care.

You remain a person in a body, with limits, sleep needs, and relational boundaries. Keeping an eye on these helps the practice stay grounded and safe.

### **15.1 Baseline this month (0–5)**

Mood: \_\_

Energy: \_\_

Sleep quality: \_\_

Breath / sense of being able to slow down: \_\_

### **15.2 Boundaries and support**

Boundaries to carry forward (time, topics, sharing):

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Support people and numbers (refresh if needed):

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## **16. One-page monthly wrap (tear-off or summary)**

### **Why this matters**

This is the page you can glance at next month before starting the next weave.

It compresses the month into a workable snapshot.

### **16.1 Summary**

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

One-line summary:

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Top three threads:

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Bright spots (three life-affirming details):

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### **16.2 Re-reads, and rotation**

Two entries to re-read next month:

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Experiments to carry forward:

- A) \_\_\_\_\_
- B) \_\_\_\_\_

Rotation (medium): next month I will add / swap:

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### **16.3 Archive and next return**

Archive (where this month is saved + backup):

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Safety check done:

- ☐ yes

Planned return date for the next monthly weave:

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### **Closing notes**

- Keep it short. Keep it regular. Let accumulation do the heavy lifting.
- Treat defences, coping strategies, and biases as information.
- Rotate media occasionally: new medium, new noticing.
- This is a personal practice, not clinical advice.
- If you are struggling, seek appropriate support in your area.

Over months and years, this monthly weave becomes less about fixing yourself and more about steadily inhabiting your own life, with your own media, on your own terms.