

WHY DO I ASSUME THE WORST? (UNGA, Your Survival Voice)

The Deep Dive Worksheet: Checking the Rustle in the Grass

This worksheet goes with the blog. It has 7 short activities. Each one tells you exactly what to do, and shows you a filled-in example first, so you always know what your answer should look like.

Take your time. There are no wrong answers here.

1. THE RUSTLE LOG

Instructions: This week, catch the moment UNGA jumps straight to the worst-case, big or small. As soon as you notice it, come back and log it: what happened, the disaster story UNGA told, and the sensation underneath it.

What kind of moments usually trigger the worst-case jump for you? (check all that apply)

- ☐ An ambiguous text or "can we talk" message
- ☐ A call from a doctor's office or unknown number
- ☐ Someone running late with no explanation
- ☐ Silence after I said something vulnerable
- ☐ Other: _____

EXAMPLE ENTRY

What actually happened: My friend texted "hey, can we talk" and then went quiet for twenty minutes.

The disaster story UNGA told: "She's found out something about me and she's about to end the friendship."

The sensation underneath it: Tight chest, restless hands, that specific jittery feeling of bracing.

What it actually turned out to be: She wanted advice about her own relationship and got pulled into a work call.

ENTRY 1 — What actually happened:

The disaster story UNGA told:

The sensation underneath it:

What it actually turned out to be (fill in once you know):

ENTRY 2 — What actually happened:

The disaster story UNGA told:

The sensation underneath it:

What it actually turned out to be (fill in once you know):

ENTRY 3 — What actually happened:

The disaster story UNGA told:

The sensation underneath it:

What it actually turned out to be (fill in once you know):

2. CHECK THE ODDS

Instructions: Pick one worst-case you're currently bracing for. Rate how sure you actually are that it's true, separate what you actually know from what you're filling in, then write two other realistic explanations UNGA skipped past.

VERY SURE — SOMEWHAT SURE — NOT REALLY SURE — NO IDEA, HONESTLY

EXAMPLE

The worst-case I'm bracing for: "My boss wants to meet with me tomorrow because I'm about to get fired."

Circled: Somewhat sure.

What I actually know: The meeting invite said "quick check-in," nothing more.

What I'm filling in myself: The entire firing scenario, including what I'll say when it happens.

Two other realistic explanations: 1) It's a routine project update. 2) She wants to loop me in on a new assignment.

The worst-case you're bracing for:

Circle one above, then write it here:

What you actually know:

What you're filling in yourself:

Two other realistic explanations:

3. WHERE THE ALARM GOT CALIBRATED

Instructions: Nobody assumes the worst by default. This activity traces back the environment where bracing for disaster actually was the smarter bet, so you can see it as something you learned, not a fact about how the world works now.

EXAMPLE

Where the alarm got calibrated: Growing up, good weekends were often followed by a blow-up on Sunday night, so I learned to brace even during the good part.

What I concluded from it: "Relaxing is dangerous. The moment things feel fine is exactly when I should start preparing."

About how old I was: Around 11 or 12.

Where I'm still applying that lesson today: I get uneasy during genuinely good weeks, like I'm waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Where the alarm got calibrated:

What you concluded from it:

About how old you were:

Where you're still applying that lesson today:

4. NAME YOUR MOVE

Instructions: When the worst-case thinking kicks in, you default to one of two moves: riding it all the way down into a full spiral, or slapping a forced affirmation on top without addressing it. Circle the one you reach for most.

I RIDE IT ALL THE WAY DOWN — I PAINT OVER IT WITH FORCED POSITIVITY

EXAMPLE

Circled: I ride it all the way down.

What this move protects me from: The feeling of being blindsided if something bad actually does happen.

What it's actually cost me: An entire afternoon rehearsing a conversation that never happened, when I could have just been living my day.

One thing I might do differently if I dropped it for a day: Wait five minutes before reacting, and write down the worst-case instead of replaying it in my head on a loop.

Circle one above, then write it here:

What this move protects you from:

What it's actually cost you:

One thing you might do differently if you dropped it for a day:

5. THE TRACK RECORD FILE

Instructions: UNGA is convinced her predictions are usually right. This activity builds an actual track record: look back at recent worst-case assumptions and tally up how many of them actually came true, so the real batting average gets to speak for itself.

EXAMPLE

Worst-case I assumed: "He's not answering because he's mad at me."

What actually happened: His phone died on a hike. He wasn't mad at all.

Was UNGA right? No.

1. Worst-case you assumed:

What actually happened:

Was UNGA right? (circle) YES — NO

2. Worst-case you assumed:

What actually happened:

Was UNGA right? (circle) YES — NO

3. Worst-case you assumed:

What actually happened:

Was UNGA right? (circle) YES — NO

Tip: keep a running tally somewhere you'll see it. Most people find their real batting average is a lot lower than it feels in the moment.

6. A LETTER FROM AKO TO UNGA

Instructions: AKO is your Higher Self, the part of you that can tell the difference between an old threat and today's actual evidence. Let AKO write UNGA, your Survival Voice, a short letter, thanking her for trying to keep you safe, and telling her what's changed since she first learned to assume danger first.

EXAMPLE

"Dear UNGA, thank you for trying to keep me one step ahead of disaster. I know that rustle in the grass used to actually matter. But most of what you're bracing for these days really is just the wind. I can handle being surprised sometimes. Let me try."

Dear UNGA,

7. THIS WEEK'S FIVE-MINUTE PAUSE

Instructions: The next time ambiguous news, a text, or silence sets off the worst-case story, wait five minutes before reacting. Predict what you think will happen in those five minutes. Then do it, and come back and write what actually happened.

EXAMPLE

The trigger I'll practice this on: Delayed replies to texts I send.

I predict: The five minutes will feel unbearable and I'll want to send a follow-up text out of anxiety.

What actually happened: The urge faded by minute three, and the reply came in at minute six, completely unremarkable.

The trigger you'll practice this on:

I predict:

What actually happened:

Nothing here proves you're careless for letting your guard down, or that UNGA was wrong to try to protect you before. It proves her calibration is overdue for an update, and every tracked prediction gives her one.

You got this! Nobody is coming to save you... you have to save yourself!

HAPPYISH HUMANS

