International Society for Maladaptive Daydreaming

Daydreaming Minds, Healing Hearts

Self-Monitoring Log and Journal

You are embarking on a transformative journey of self-discovery. As a valued member of the ISMD community, you have support at every step. We walk this path together, ensuring you are never alone in your growth.

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Chapter 1

Maladaptive Daydreaming Self-Monitoring Log

Self-Monitoring Log

Research has found that the very act of logging daydreaming behavior helped MDers to reduce its frequency. You don't need to write deep "dear diary" essays; logging your daydreaming can be as quick and efficient as you'd like.

Here are some tips:

- Prioritize making quick notes. Keep a separate journal if you wish to keep detailed entries.
- Carry your notes with you and add events as they happen.
- Do not focus on exact times and lengths. Close enough is good enough.
- Track whatever is important to you, our headers are only suggestions.
- If your daydreaming is *always on* choose boundaries for what to log (eg. logging only the *worst* times while letting *down times* pass unnoted).
- An abnormal period of suppressed daydreaming if normal once you start journaling, do not be alarmed.

Example of a Daydream Log:

Time of Day	Length	Trigger	Mood	Theme
7:45am	2 hr	waking	tired	death
10:20am	15 m	driving	rushed	fight scene
3p	30m?	??	distracted	romance

Once you have identified that an unwanted daydream is occurring, you can use a mindfulness or grounding skill to refocus on the present. We have common techniques in Chapter 3 of this log.

Print and fill in yours!

Self-Monitoring Log

Time of Day	Location	Duration	Trigger	Emotion	Theme

Tools to help you complete the self-monitoring log

These tools are meant for tracking and understanding how and when you daydream, what may be causing it, and find patterns in what you daydream about.

1. Feelings wheel

The feelings wheel offers a chance to reflect on and familiarize yourself with each level of emotion on the wheel.

The self-monitoring log offers a chance to track your daydreams and find patterns among common maladaptive daydream themes.

2. Common maladaptive daydream themes

The Feelings Wheel

Dr. Gloria Wilcox created the Feelings Wheel,
a tool designed to help people more accurately identify, understand, and express their emotions.

It visually organises emotions into categories, starting from broad, basic feelings and breaking them down into more specific ones.
It is a valuable guide for unravelling the complex network of emotions we experience and how they relate to one another. It helps you **articulate your feelings more precisely**, enabling you to process the emotions you are going through more effectively.

Structure of the Feelings Wheel

Core Emotions (Centre): In the middle of the wheel are primary emotions—broad, fundamental feeling, for example:

- **Joyful**
- **Scared**

Secondary Emotions (Middle Layer): More specific feelings stem from the core emotions. For example:

- **Joyful** could branch into feelings like **excited.**

Tertiary Emotions (Outer Layer): These are even more detailed and nuanced versions of secondary emotions, helping people pinpoint their feelings. For example:

- **Joyful** could develop into **excited,** which could further be described as **delighted.**

The Feelings Wheel

The Feelings Wheel

Print and color yours!

Daydream Common Themes

(add your own at the bottom!)

Celebrity/hero (being one or being in a relationship with one)
Romantic/sexual relationship
The idealised version of self (the main character in the daydream)
Real-life scenarios
Wish fulfillment
Fictional characters taken from another source (i.e. TV show/book/movie/video game)
Imaginary family/friend
Popularity/receiving extra attention
Imaginary world
Death/violence
Negative feelings (revenge/vulnerability)
Life course changes (fixing the past or imagining the future)
Sci-Fi/Futuristic or not in the present time period
Captivity, rescue and escape

Chapter 2

Maladaptive Daydreaming Journal

Maladaptive Daydreaming Journaling Prompts

These journaling prompts invite you to explore the surface-level aspects of your daydreams and their deeper emotional meanings. By understanding what drives your daydreams and showing compassion, you can find more mindful ways to engage with your thoughts and feelings.

1. Understanding Your Daydreams

2. Reflecting on the Impact of Daydreaming

3. Exploring Alternatives and Finding Change

4. Self-Compassion and Understanding

1. Understanding Your Daydreams

When do your daydreams usually begin?

Take a moment to think about the specific moments when your mind starts to wander. Are there particular situations or feelings that lead you to start daydreaming? Perhaps it's when you feel overwhelmed, bored, or disconnected from others. Can you identify any patterns in these triggers?

What emotions are you experiencing before and during your daydreams?

What's going on inside you before you escape into a daydream? Is it anxiety, sadness, boredom, or perhaps a need for comfort or control? How do you feel while you are daydreaming? Does it offer you relief or help you avoid something difficult?

1. Understanding Your Daydreams

Can you describe the themes and scenarios of your daydreams?

What recurring themes or characters often appear? Is there a story or scene that plays repeatedly in your mind? Do you feel like your daydreams are an escape from reality or a reflection of your desires or fears? Take note of the emotions during these daydreams – do they bring joy, excitement, sadness, or frustration?

What needs or desires do your daydreams fulfil for you?

Think about what your daydreams provide you that you might not be getting in your waking life. Do they give you a sense of power, love, acceptance, or excitement? What are you searching for in these daydreams that you feel might be missing from your everyday experiences?

1. Understanding Your Daydreams

How do you feel after you have daydreamed?
After a session of daydreaming, how do you feel? Fulfilled or drained? Do you experience a sense of loss or disappointment when you snap back to reality? How do these feelings influence the way you view your daydreams?

2. Reflecting on the Impact of Daydreaming

How does daydreaming impact your daily life?

Reflect on the times when your daydreaming interferes with your responsibilities or relationships. Has it caused you to neglect tasks, avoid meaningful conversations, or miss out on opportunities? How does it affect your ability to stay engaged with the present moment?

What physical or emotional signs indicate you have been daydreaming for too long?

Do you notice physical symptoms when you snap out of a daydream, like feeling mentally foggy, fatigued, or detached? How do you feel emotionally afterwards? Do you feel more disconnected or anxious once the daydream ends?

2. Reflecting on the Impact of Daydreaming

What have you missed by being lost in your daydreams?
Reflect on moments when you were so absorbed in a daydream that you missed out on something important or meaningful in the real world. It could be a conversation, a task, or simply being present in a moment with someone. How do you feel about those missed opportunities?

3. Exploring Alternatives and Finding Change

What could you try doing instead of daydreaming?
When you feel the urge to retreat into a daydream, think of a few activities or techniques you could try to ground yourself. Could you engage in a hobby, walk, breathe deeply, or practice mindfulness? What would it look like to take a small step toward redirecting your attention to the present moment?
Imagine what your life would be like if you could reduce your daydreaming.
What might change in your life if you were able to manage your daydreams? Would it make you more present in relationships, tasks, or hobbies? How would your mental and emotional state shift if you could feel more connected to the real world and less drawn into a fantasy world?

4. Self-Compassion and Understanding

How can you be kinder to yourself when daydreaming?

It is easy to fall into guilt or frustration when you catch yourself daydreaming, but remember that it is a way of coping with your feelings. How can you approach yourself with more compassion when this happens? What loving words or actions can you take to bring yourself back to the present moment without self-judgement?

If your daydreams had a message for you, what do you think they would say?

Try to imagine your daydreams as a message from your subconscious. What do they want you to understand or recognise about yourself? Can you acknowledge that message and consider how to address it?

Chapter 3

Maladaptive Daydreaming Mindfulness Exercises

Exercises to Help with Mindfulness

1. Grounding Exercise

These exercises can be used to help ground you in the moment when you catch yourself daydreaming at an unwanted time.

2. 4-7-8 Breathing Exercise

3. Body Scan Exercise

Grounding Exercise

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

This exercise is simple yet powerful and works by focusing on the sensory details around you:

5 Things You Can See: Look around and name five things you can visually perceive in your environment. It could be as simple as noticing a lamp, a tree, or a pattern on the wall.

4 Things You Can Touch: Focus on four things you can physically feel. This might be the texture of your clothing, the chair you're sitting on, or the sensation of your feet on the ground.

3 Things You Can Hear: Listen and identify three distinct sounds in your surroundings. This could include distant noises, the hum of a fan, or birds chirping.

2 Things You Can Smell: Focus on two scents, such as coffee, a candle, or the air around you. If you can't immediately smell anything, consider recalling familiar scents.

1 Thing You Can Taste: Focus on one thing you can taste. This taste could be lingering flavors in your mouth, a sip of water, or simply noticing the absence of taste.

Why It Works:

- It draws your attention away from distressing thoughts or emotions and grounds you in the here and now.
- You shift your focus from internal anxiety to external, concrete sensations by engaging your senses.
- It's a simple, flexible exercise you can practice anytime, anywhere.

Breathing Exercise

4-7-8 Breathing Exercise

This exercise helps centre the mind and body, making it especially useful for reducing stress and returning focus to the present moment.

1. Sit comfortably with your back straight and your feet flat on the floor (or cross-legged if you prefer). Rest your hands on your lap.
2. Close your eyes and focus on your breath.
3. Inhale quietly through your nose for 4 seconds. Make sure your breath is deep, allowing your belly to rise.
4. Hold your breath for 7 seconds. Try to stay relaxed during this pause.
5. Exhale fully and completely through your mouth for 8 seconds, making a soft whooshing sound as you breathe.

Repeat this cycle three to four times or as long as it feels comfortable.

Why It Works:

- The 4-7-8 pattern helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which promotes relaxation and reduces anxiety.

Body Scan Exercise

1. **Find a quiet space**: Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so.
2. **Take a few deep breaths**: Breathe slowly through your nose, hold for a moment, and then exhale gently through your mouth. Let your body relax with each breath.
3. **Start at your feet**: Begin by focusing your attention on your feet. Notice how they feel—are they warm, cold, relaxed, or tense? Don't try to change anything; just observe.
4. **Move up your body**: Slowly shift your focus upwards, scanning your body part by part:
   a. **Ankles**: Notice any tension or relaxation.
   b. **Calves and knees**: What sensations do you feel here?
   c. **Thighs**: Are they heavy or light, relaxed or tense?
   d. **Hips and pelvis**: Pay attention to any tightness or comfort.
   e. **Stomach**: Observe the rise and fall of your breath in your abdomen. Is there any tightness here?
   f. **Chest**: Notice the movement of your breath and any tightness or openness.
   g. **Arms**: Focus on your forearms, elbows, and hands. How do they feel?
   h. **Neck and shoulders**: Are your shoulders relaxed or hunched up? Feel for any tension here.
   i. **Face**: Move your awareness to your jaw, eyes, and forehead. Are you holding any tension in your face?
5. **Release tension:** As you focus on each body part, gently allow any tension you notice to soften. Imagine breathing into that area and letting go of any tightness or discomfort.
6. **Finish with your whole body**: Once you've scanned your entire body, take a moment to notice how you feel overall. Are you more relaxed? More grounded? Just observe your overall state without judgment.
7. **End with a deep breath**: Take a deep breath, hold it for a moment, and slowly exhale. When you feel ready, open your eyes.

Why It Works:

- The body scan helps you become more aware of how your body feels in the present moment, breaking the cycle of daydreaming and bringing you back to the present.

You Have Reached the Final Page - But This is Just the Beginning

As you reach the final page of this log and journal, take a moment to acknowledge your effort. By engaging with your thoughts, reflecting on them, and exploring your daydreaming patterns, you have taken a significant step toward enhanced self-awareness and emotional balance.

This journey is not about eliminating maladaptive daydreaming overnight; it is about learning. You have started to understand what influences your inner world, how it shapes your daily life, and what you may need to feel more grounded, present, and in control. That insight is powerful. This journal is not the end; it's a living resource. You can revisit it, revise it, or build on it over time. Track new insights, adapt the prompts, and reflect on how your relationship with maladaptive daydreaming continues to evolve.

You have already begun. Keep going. Your efforts matter, and change is possible - one page, one moment at a time.

For further support and information, visit maladaptivedaydreamingsociety.com