WRITE YOUR OWN STORY

THE EVERYDAY HOW. LIVE IT YOUR WAY.

Honesty. Open-mindedness. Willingness.

Not just the words. An ordinary action. A practical guide to being truthful with yourself, considering something useful and taking one workable step.

> **Original exercises. Familiar recovery values.** Mark's recovery includes AA and CA. This independent guide does not speak for either fellowship and is not treatment or a detox plan. Asking for support is action too.

01 / YOUR NEXT SMALL STEP

H / Name what is true.

Name what is true. You do not have to tell the whole world.

Honesty begins with noticing your own experience without polishing it. It can be a sentence in a notebook, a truthful conversation with a clinician or a quiet message to someone you trust. It is not a demand to confess online, disclose trauma or tell unsafe people private details.

An ordinary example: “I told everyone I was fine. Actually, I am anxious and tempted to shut people out.”

Try it in a couple of minutes

Finish these three lines with simple, factual words. Leave out names and details you do not want on paper.

What is happening for me?

What am I feeling?

What do I need next?

A sentence I could use: “I do not have all the words yet, but I could use some company.”

Take it into today: Where would a little more honesty help me ask for the right support? My next safe conversation can be with one trusted person. Public posting is not proof of honesty.

02 / YOUR NEXT SMALL STEP

O / Consider something useful.

Consider a useful possibility. Keep your judgement and your boundaries.

Open-mindedness means making room to listen, ask questions or try a suitable idea. It does not mean agreeing with everybody, accepting pressure, stopping prescribed treatment or ignoring medical advice. An idea can be new to you without being right for you.

An ordinary example: “Talking in a group is not for me today. I could ask whether I can attend and just listen, then decide how it felt.”

Try it in a couple of minutes

Choose one possibility: a different routine, an accessible activity, a support option or a conversation. Do not deliberately expose yourself to substance-use triggers as a test.

One possibility I could consider:

Something that might help — and a concern I want to check:

One question or boundary I can bring with me:

A sentence I could use: “Can you explain how that works? I would like to understand before I decide.”

Take it into today: A respectful “no,” “not yet” or “I need professional advice first” can sit alongside an open mind. Curiosity is not consent.

03 / YOUR NEXT SMALL STEP

W / Choose one workable step.

Choose one workable step. You do not need to feel perfectly motivated.

Willingness is making room for a helpful action, including asking for help or resting when that is what you need. It is not a willpower cure, punishment, compulsory sharing or a promise never to struggle again. Barriers and hard days are real; they are not evidence of bad character.

An ordinary example: "I cannot face a long call. I can send: 'Rough day. Could you check in when you can?'"

Try it in a couple of minutes

Pick a safe action that fits your circumstances: ask for company, prepare a question for an appointment, make room for food or rest, or put a notebook where you will see it. Time is a suggestion, not a stopwatch.

The action I choose:

A smaller version for a difficult day:

Who or what could help me take it?

A sentence I could use: "I am willing to start smaller than I planned."

Take it into today: If the step is not workable, change the step or seek support. You do not have to force it. A return to use deserves care, not shame.

04 / YOUR NEXT SMALL STEP

My daily HOW.

Date, if I want to add it: _____

H — One thing that is true for me today:

O — One useful option or support I can consider safely:

W — One small action I am willing to take:

Later, without scoring myself: What helped? What should be smaller or different next time?

When even three lines feel like too much

Try one sentence: “Today is hard, and I can ask for support.” If possible, contact a trusted person or appropriate service. Blank boxes are not failure. No public post, streak or perfect day is required.

Keep support in the picture

If you may be physically dependent on alcohol, get clinical advice before reducing or stopping; sudden withdrawal can be dangerous. If someone is unresponsive, struggling to breathe, having a seizure or in immediate danger, call **999**. For someone to listen in the UK, Samaritans are available on **116 123**. Your own care plan and professional advice come first.

Sources: NHS alcohol support and withdrawal advice · Contact Samaritans. The exercises are original Mark The Diary reflections, not quotations from fellowship literature or a clinically validated assessment.