

FROM THINKING ABOUT IT TO BEING IT

A journaling workbook for
future driving instructors

REFLECT | EXPLORE | UNDERSTAND | MOVE FORWARD

More
than tests.
A stronger
you.



The Calm
Instructor

STEVE KING

CALM MINDS. BETTER DECISIONS. SAFER ROADS.

FROM THINKING ABOUT IT TO BEING IT

A journaling workbook for future driving instructors

Write down what you cannot bear to admit or
speak out loud.

~ Anonymous ~



To be, or not to be, that is the question.

~ William Shakespeare ~



Otium Vitae

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This workbook is for you.

Becoming a driving instructor is about more than learning to teach, passing tests and getting qualified. It's a journey that can challenge you in ways you might not have expected.

You might start out excited about a new career, a fresh opportunity or the chance to do something you genuinely care about. Then the reality of training begins.

There are tests to prepare for, skills to develop and assessments that can feel as though they carry the weight of your entire future. You might find yourself waiting weeks or months for an available test date, wondering when you'll get another opportunity to progress.

And waiting isn't always passive. Your mind can fill that time with questions.

Am I good enough? What if I fail again? What if I never get there? What will people think?

If you fail one of the qualifying exams, the disappointment can go much deeper than the result itself. You might question your ability, compare yourself with other trainees or feel embarrassed about having to tell people you've failed. You might start to wonder whether becoming an instructor is really for you.

Perhaps the hardest part is that life carries on around you while you wait. Other people seem to be moving forward, but you feel stuck in the same place, trying to work out what happens next.

The uncertainty, frustration and self-doubt can take their toll. Even when you know that one failed test doesn't define you, it can be difficult to believe that when you're living through it.

And then there's the pressure you put on yourself.

You might expect yourself to get everything right. You might feel you have to prove that you deserve to be there. You might look confident on the outside while privately wondering whether you're cut out for the job.

If any of this sounds familiar, you're not alone.

This workbook isn't here to tell you to think positively, try harder or simply believe in yourself. It isn't going to promise that everything will work out exactly as you hoped.

Instead, it's a place to stop for a moment and work through what's going on in your head.

A place to be honest about the things you might not feel comfortable saying to your trainer, your family, your friends or even other trainees.

A place to explore your doubts without treating every doubt as a fact. To recognise your progress when it's difficult to see. To learn from setbacks without allowing them to become a judgement about your worth or your future.

You don't need to pretend you're coping when you're not. You don't need to have all the answers. And you don't need to feel confident every day to keep learning.

These pages are yours. Nobody is marking them. Nobody needs to read them.

Write honestly. Give yourself time. Come back to a question when you're ready.

You might not be able to control test availability, assessment outcomes or how long the qualification process takes. But you can begin to understand how the experience is affecting you, how you respond to pressure and what you need to keep moving forward.

This isn't just about becoming a driving instructor.

It's about understanding the person you're becoming along the way.

SECTION 1: THE BEGINNING

What first made you think about becoming a driving instructor, and what does that idea mean to you now?

Take your time. Think about what attracted you to the role, what you hoped it might bring into your life, and what becoming an instructor represents to you.

Your space to write

[illegible]

A MOMENT TO REFLECT: WHERE IT BEGAN

Sometimes the reason we start a journey gets lost in the pressure of trying to complete it.

What did I hope becoming a driving instructor would bring into my life, and have I lost sight of that along the way?

Your space to write

SECTION 2: THE PERSON I THINK I NEED TO BE

When you imagine yourself as a driving instructor, what kind of person do you think you need to be?

What do you believe a good instructor looks like, sounds like and acts like?

Where have those expectations come from?

Your space to write

A MOMENT TO REFLECT: EXPECTATIONS

There's a difference between wanting to become a good instructor and expecting yourself to be a perfect one.

Whose expectations am I trying to live up to, and are they actually mine?

Your space to write

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SECTION 3: THE DOUBTS I KEEP TO MYSELF

What worries you most about becoming a driving instructor?

Are there things you find difficult to admit, even to yourself?

What are you afraid might happen if you don't succeed?

Your space to write

A MOMENT TO REFLECT: THE COMPARISON TRAP

You see other people's progress, but you rarely see the doubts and struggles behind it

What am I assuming about other trainees that might not be true?

Your space to write

SECTION 4: WHEN I COMPARE MYSELF WITH OTHERS

How do you feel when you see other trainees progressing, passing their tests or appearing confident?

What do you tell yourself about your own progress?

Are you judging your beginning against somebody else's middle?

Your space to write

A MOMENT TO REFLECT: ONE EXPERIENCE

One difficult lesson doesn't erase everything you've learned. One mistake doesn't define your ability.

Am I using one experience to judge my entire potential as an instructor?

Your space to write

[illegible]

SECTION 5: WHEN THINGS DON'T GO TO PLAN

Think about a lesson, a test or a moment during training that left you feeling disappointed in yourself.

What happened?

What did you tell yourself afterwards?

If someone you cared about had experienced exactly the same thing, what would you say to them?

Your space to write

[illegible]

A MOMENT TO REFLECT: THE FEAR OF BEING FOUND OUT

Making a mistake is part of learning. Hiding from it can make learning much harder.

What am I afraid people will discover about me, and what would happen if I allowed myself to be a learner?

Your space to write

SECTION 6: THE FEAR OF BEING FOUND OUT

Have you ever felt that someone might discover you're not as capable as they think you are?

What do you feel you need to prove, and to whom?

What would change if you no longer felt the need to prove yourself?

Your space to write

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A MOMENT TO REFLECT: IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Feeling incapable and being incapable are not the same thing.

What evidence am I ignoring because it doesn't fit the story I'm telling myself?

Your space to write

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SECTION 7: IMPOSTER SYNDROME: WHAT IF I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH?

There may be times during your training when you feel as though you don't belong here.

You might look at other trainees and wonder why they seem to understand things more quickly. You might pass an assessment and still question whether you deserved to pass. You might receive positive feedback but focus on the one thing you got wrong.

Perhaps you worry that your trainer will eventually realise you're not as capable as they thought you were.

These feelings can be difficult to talk about, particularly when you believe everyone else is coping better than you are.

But feeling like an imposter doesn't automatically mean you are one.

Take a little time to explore what's going on beneath the surface.

When do I feel most like an imposter during my training?

Your space to write

What do I tell myself in those moments?

Your space to write

[illegible]

When something goes well, can I accept that I've done well, or do I immediately find a reason why it doesn't count?

Your space to write

[illegible]

Do I believe other trainees are more capable than me? What evidence do I have for that belief, and what am I assuming?

Your space to write

[illegible]

Am I expecting myself to perform like an experienced instructor while I'm still learning to become one?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What am I afraid people would think if they knew how uncertain I sometimes feel?

Your space to write

[illegible]

Think of something you've achieved during your training that you initially doubted you could do. What does that tell you about your ability to learn?

Your space to write

[illegible]

If I stopped trying to prove that I was good enough and concentrated on becoming better, what might change?

Your space to write

[illegible]

A thought to leave you with

You don't have to feel confident every day to be making progress.

You don't have to know everything to be capable of learning.

And you don't have to eliminate every doubt before you can become a good instructor.

What if the fact that you're still learning isn't evidence that you don't belong here, but evidence that you're exactly where a trainee instructor should be?

Your space to write

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SECTION 8: THE WAITING, THE FAILING AND THE STARTING AGAIN

Becoming a driving instructor isn't always a straightforward journey from one test to the next.

In the current climate, you can spend months preparing for an exam, only to find yourself waiting weeks or even months for another opportunity if things don't go to plan.

You might feel ready to move forward but find yourself stuck waiting for a test date. You might watch other trainees qualify while you're still trying to get through the same stage.

And if you fail an exam, the disappointment can be difficult to put into words.

You might feel embarrassed, frustrated or angry with yourself.

You might question whether you're good enough, whether your trainer has lost confidence in you, or whether you should have chosen a different career.

Perhaps you start worrying about the cost of further training, the time you've already invested or what other people will think.

The longer the process takes, the easier it can become to lose sight of why you started in the first place.

This section is about those moments.

Not about pretending they don't hurt, or telling yourself to stay positive.

It's about understanding what's happening, giving yourself space to process it and finding a way forward that doesn't depend on everything going perfectly.

PART ONE: THE WAITING

When everything feels on hold

Waiting for a test can be harder than people realise.

You might be practising, learning and working hard, but without a confirmed date it can feel as though you're getting nowhere. You might struggle to maintain momentum or find yourself going over every possible outcome in your head.

The uncertainty can take up more space than you expect.

What does waiting do to me?

How do I feel when I'm waiting for a test date or the opportunity to progress?

Your space to write

What thoughts tend to come up when I don't know how long I'll have to wait?

Your space to write

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Do I find it difficult to switch off from my training, even when there's nothing more I can do at that moment?

Your space to write

[illegible]

How does the uncertainty affect my confidence, motivation or mood?

Your space to write

[illegible]

When I see other trainees progressing while I'm waiting, what do I tell myself about my own journey?

Your space to write

[illegible]

Am I confusing a delay in my qualification with a lack of progress in my development?

Your space to write

[illegible]

[illegible]

A Moment to Reflect: The Waiting

You cannot always control when your next opportunity will come along. You can, however, recognise what the waiting is doing to you.

What can I influence during this period, and what do I need to stop blaming myself for?

Your space to write

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PART TWO: THE FAILING

When the result hurts more than you expected

Failing an exam can feel personal.

You might know, logically, that people fail and go on to qualify.

You might even tell other trainees that one result doesn't define them.

But when it's your result, it's often harder to see things clearly.

You may replay the exam in your head, focus on everything you got wrong or wonder whether the examiner saw something in you that you hadn't recognised yourself.

You might feel that you've let people down.

You might feel embarrassed about telling your trainer, family or friends.

You might question whether all the time, effort and money you've invested will be worth it.

Those feelings deserve some space.

But it's important to separate the disappointment of failing from the information the result gives you.

An unsuccessful result may highlight specific skills or areas that need further development. That matters, and it's worth addressing honestly.

What it doesn't automatically tell you is that you're incapable of becoming a good instructor.

What happened, and what am I making it mean?

What was my first reaction when I received the result?

Your space to write

[illegible]

[illegible]

What disappointed me most: the result itself, the time I've lost, the money I've spent, or what I think it says about me?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What am I telling myself about my ability because of this result?

Your space to write

[illegible]

Which parts of my disappointment are based on what actually happened, and which parts are based on what I'm afraid it means?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What feedback or evidence do I have about the areas that need improvement?

Your space to write

[illegible]

Am I willing to recognise those areas honestly without using them as proof that I'm not good enough?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What would I say to another trainee who had received exactly the same result?

Your space to write

[illegible]

A Moment to Reflect: The Result

One failed exam doesn't mean you're a bad instructor. One poor response doesn't mean you're not cut out for the job.

But a setback can give you useful information if you're willing to look at it honestly.

Can I accept that something needs to improve without deciding that I am the problem?

Your space to write

PART THREE: THE STARTING AGAIN

Finding the confidence to have another go

Starting again isn't always as simple as booking another test and carrying on.

You might feel nervous about facing the same situation again. You might worry about repeating the same mistakes or feel that the next attempt has to go perfectly to make up for the last one.

You may even find yourself approaching your next test differently, not because you've forgotten what you learned, but because you're frightened of failing again.

Perhaps you become more cautious, overthink your decisions or put yourself under pressure to prove that the previous result was a one-off.

The challenge is to prepare properly without allowing fear to take over.

You don't need to forget the last attempt. You need to learn from it without letting it dictate what happens next.

What happens when I have to start again?

What worries me most about my next attempt?

Your space to write

Am I preparing to improve my skills, or am I mainly trying to avoid the feeling of failing again?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What did my previous attempt teach me that I can use constructively?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What specific actions will help me address the areas that need improvement?

Your space to write

[illegible]

How can I recognise when I'm ready to move forward without expecting myself to feel completely confident?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What pressure am I putting on my next attempt, and is that pressure helping me prepare?

Your space to write

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If my next attempt doesn't go as planned, what would help me respond constructively rather than turn against myself?

Your space to write

[illegible]

A Moment to Reflect: Starting Again

You don't have to approach your next attempt without fear. You need to be able to recognise the fear without allowing it to make every decision for you.

What would it look like to go into my next attempt focused on what I've learned, rather than everything I'm afraid might happen?

Your space to write

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PART FOUR: REMEMBERING WHY I STARTED

Looking beyond the next test

When you're caught up in the qualification process, it's easy for the next exam to become the whole story.

Your progress starts to feel as though it depends on one date, one assessment or one person's judgement.

But the qualification is only one part of becoming an instructor.

You're also learning how to communicate, how to respond when things don't go to plan, how to manage pressure and how to help another person learn.

Those skills develop over time. They aren't always reflected in a single test result.

This doesn't mean the exams don't matter. They do. It means they aren't the only measure of the person you're becoming.

What do I need to remember?

Why did I want to become a driving instructor in the first place?

Your space to write

Has that reason changed during my training?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What have I learned about myself that has nothing to do with passing an exam?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What progress have I made that I might be overlooking because I'm focused on what I haven't achieved yet?

Your space to write

[illegible]

If I could speak to the person I was when I first started training, what would I want them to know about this journey?

Your space to write

[illegible]

What would help me keep moving forward while still being realistic about the work I need to do?

Your space to write

[illegible]

A Moment to Reflect: The Bigger Picture

You are allowed to be disappointed. You are allowed to be frustrated by delays. You are allowed to question yourself when things get difficult.

You don't have to turn every setback into a positive lesson immediately.

Sometimes you need time to be disappointed before you're ready to decide what comes next.

Can I give myself that time without deciding that my journey is over?

Your space to write

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

The qualification process may take longer than you expected.

You may have to wait, try again or learn things about yourself that you'd rather not have discovered.

Some parts of the process will be within your control. Others won't.

You can take responsibility for your preparation, your development and the decisions you make. You cannot guarantee a particular result or control every delay.

Learning to recognise that difference matters.

So does learning to separate what happened from what you tell yourself about it.

A failed exam may mean you need more practice.

A difficult lesson may show you where your teaching needs work. A long wait may leave you frustrated and uncertain.

None of those things, on their own, decides what kind of instructor you can become.

You don't need to pretend the journey is easy. You don't need to feel positive about every setback.

You just need to keep looking honestly at where you are, what you can learn and what your next step might be.

You can be disappointed in your progress without giving up on your potential.

Take a moment before moving on. What do you need to acknowledge, accept or let go of before you're ready for the next stage of your journey?

Your space to write

[illegible]

A MOMENT TO REFLECT: PROGRESS

You don't have to be the finished article to recognise how far you've come.

What can I do now that I struggled with when I first started?

Your space to write

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SECTION 8: THE INSTRUCTOR I'M BECOMING

Think beyond the qualification.

What kind of instructor do you want your learners to experience?

How do you want them to feel when they're sitting beside you?

What values do you want to bring into your teaching, even on the difficult days?

Your space to write

A MOMENT TO REFLECT: SELF-TRUST

Confidence isn't always knowing you'll get it right. Sometimes it's trusting yourself to deal with things when you don't.

What would trusting myself a little more look like during my next lesson or assessment?

Your space to write

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SECTION 9: WHAT I'M LEARNING ABOUT MYSELF

Looking back at your journey so far, what have you discovered about yourself?

What has challenged you more than you expected?

What are you beginning to understand about the way you respond to pressure, mistakes and uncertainty?

Your space to write

[illegible]

A MOMENT TO REFLECT: BECOMING

The instructor you're becoming is shaped by more than the tests you pass. It's shaped by what you learn about yourself along the way.

What kind of instructor am I becoming through the way I handle the difficult moments?

Your space to write

[illegible]

SECTION 10: WHEN I NEED TO REMIND MYSELF

On the days when confidence is low and progress feels slow, what do you need to remember?

What evidence do you have that you're learning, even when it doesn't feel that way?

What would you like to tell the version of yourself who first started this journey?

Your space to write

SECTION 11: FROM THINKING ABOUT IT TO BEING IT

Imagine you've qualified and are looking back at the person you are today.

What do you hope that person will have learned?

What do you hope they will have stopped worrying about?

What would you want them to know about the journey ahead?

Your space to write

[illegible]

A FINAL REFLECTION

You don't have to finish this journey feeling completely confident.

You don't have to know everything, get everything right or stop having doubts.

You do, however, deserve to recognise the progress you're making and give yourself the same patience you'd offer someone else who was learning something difficult.

Becoming an instructor isn't simply about learning to teach someone to drive. It's also about discovering how you respond when things get uncomfortable, how you learn from mistakes and how you develop the confidence to trust your own judgement.

You can be a work in progress and still be moving forward.

Before you close this workbook, ask yourself one last question.

What do I understand about myself now that I didn't understand when I began?

Your space to write

ONE LAST THING TO REMEMBER

One bad lesson doesn't mean you're a bad instructor.

One poor response doesn't mean you're not cut out for the job.

One failed test doesn't erase the progress you've made.

And one difficult day doesn't define your future.

You are learning a new role, developing new skills and working out what kind of instructor you want to be.

There will be moments when you get things wrong. There will be moments when you question yourself.

What matters is what you do next.

Recognise what happened. Take responsibility for what you can change. Learn from it. Then give yourself permission to move forward.

Don't confuse a moment you need to improve with a person who isn't good enough.

The Calm Instructor

~ Calm minds. Better decisions. Safer roads ~