

ANRO LIBRARY

A Season of Enough

Observe your rhythms, tend what matters, leave room to change

Anro Library · Companion 03 · Original educational workbook

1. The week the calendar no longer fits

The calendar on the refrigerator

At forty-eight, Dev bought the same calendar he had bought for eleven years. There was a square for every day and a small photograph of a mountain above each month. He liked its familiar proportions. In January he wrote the usual birthdays, the annual visit to his sister, and the date when the neighborhood association needed volunteers. Then he started adding the appointments that had recently become part of helping his father. Two workdays had changed. His daughter would leave for a course in another city. The squares were the same size. The life going into them was different.

He responded first by writing smaller. He used initials and arrows. He moved reminders to the margins. From a distance the calendar looked orderly, which briefly made him feel that the problem had been dealt with. On the first Thursday, he found himself promising three people that he would be available at nearly the same time. What he needed was not a finer pen. He needed to admit that the old arrangement no longer described his actual week.

The calendar still belonged to Dev’s old week. So did his habit of saying yes before checking it. Familiar arrangements can outlive the circumstances that made them possible: the afternoon once free, the journey once easy, the pleasure of hosting before it became a standing duty. Description comes before repair here. Dev had to count the new journeys and conversations before he could decide which of the old promises still fitted.

Enough is a relationship

Enough depends on what is being asked, by whom, and under which conditions. Two hours may be enough to visit someone and too little to undertake their entire household administration. One clear conversation may be enough to choose a date and insufficient to repair a long disagreement. A quiet week can feel spacious when it is chosen and painfully empty when contact has disappeared.

There is no quantity of work or rest that would suit both an exhausted host and someone longing for company. Enough has to be worked out between a particular need and the care available. You might reduce a commitment; you might discover that a necessary task deserves more attention than you have given it. The chapters that follow help you make that judgment with a situation in front of you, rather than with an ideal of balance.

You may be reading during a crowded middle part of life. You may also be younger or older and recognize the same collisions. Work, friendship, caregiving, learning, and domestic life do not follow a single timetable. A new friendship can begin while a professional identity is ending. A household can need considerable tending while a private creative practice remains small. You do not have to assign one season to your whole existence.

A book you can enter from several doors

The chapters move from noticing conditions to beginning, tending, gathering, keeping, and finally coordinating those different kinds of care. Read them in order if you want the full progression. If a particular situation is pressing, start there and return to the opening chapters when useful. A gathering chapter can help with a finished project. A keeping chapter can help when something valuable does not need to grow.

Begin with an ordinary event and a question you can consider silently. A notebook is optional throughout: when a later practice describes a page, map, or written agreement, you can imagine one situation and consider the choices instead. There is nothing to fill in or submit. If you choose to make notes, use broad labels for other people. The examples offer possible language, not words you must recite. Shorten or leave aside anything that asks more attention than it returns.

Do not try to complete every practice at once. Choose one live situation: the Tuesday handoff, the friendship you keep postponing, the room that serves four purposes, the activity you want to begin again. A specific situation gives a reflective question somewhere to land. Without it, even sensible advice can become another attractive collection of things you might someday do.

Your first page

You can consider this silently. The page below is an optional way to organize the question; imagining one example is enough.

Write the date and finish this sentence: “The part of life I am trying to understand is…” Describe a situation rather than a personality. “I no longer know how to arrange visits around my changed workdays” is more useful than “I am bad at balance.” Continue with three facts that another person could, in principle, observe. Then add one sentence about what the situation feels like to you.

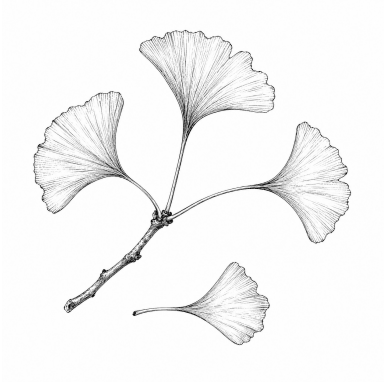
Keep facts and feelings beside each other without asking either to replace the other. Dev's facts include a changed work schedule and new transport commitments. His feeling is that he is letting everyone down. The feeling deserves attention, but it does not yet identify which promise should move. The facts can help with that next question.

Leave the unanswered questions visible. Could another time suit your father? Can the volunteer role rotate? Which commitment really is fixed? Dev's next conversation would depend on those answers. Your page can end with a question mark. At least now there is somewhere to put the question besides the shrinking margins of the calendar.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. The week the calendar no longer fits

A quiet reflection. Nothing to write, draw or complete.



RETURN TO THE CHAPTER

At forty-eight, Dev bought the same calendar he had bought for eleven years. There was a square for every day and a small photograph of a mountain above each month. He liked its familiar proportions. In January he wrote the usual birthdays, the annual visit to his sister, and the date when the neighborhood association needed volunteers.

CONSIDER, WITHOUT RUSHING TO AN ANSWER

Which commitment belongs to circumstances that have changed?

What deserves adjustment before you blame your motivation?

Let one distinction stay with you. You can leave the rest open.