

Shadow Work Worksheets

Four sheets. No email required, no logo on every page.

A reaction log, a projection sheet, a cost-and-benefit grid and an experiment tracker — the same four sheets described in full at trueawake.com/shadow-work-worksheets/. The structure is the useful part, not the paper: a worksheet stops you writing four pages about your character, which is what an empty page tends to produce and which is the failure mode of this whole practice.

What each sheet is for

- 1 **The reaction log** Two weeks of incidents, scored twice: how hard you reacted, and what it deserved. The gap is the finding.
- 2 **The projection sheet** Takes the biggest gap and traces the trait back to where holding it was expensive.
- 3 **Cost and benefit** Four boxes that stop the practice turning into a list of faults.
- 4 **The experiment tracker** One small behaviour, predicted before you try it, then compared with what happened.

The sequence

- 1 **Two weeks on Worksheet 1.**
Observation only. No interpretation while logging — interpreting turns it into an argument with yourself.
- 2 **One pass through Worksheets 2 and 3.**
On a single recurring theme, not on six of them.
- 3 **One experiment from Worksheet 4. Then back to the log.**
Integration happens in behaviour, not in insight.

That is roughly a month per theme, which is slower than most material suggests and about right. Doing all four sheets on six traits in one weekend produces a document, not a change.

Two rules that matter more than the sheets

- **Twenty minutes, then stop — even mid-sentence.**
Long unstructured sessions are where this tips from examination into rumination.
- **If you finish feeling worse than when you started twice running, stop.**
Read the page on telling shadow work apart from rumination instead of pushing on.

Before you start

These sheets are a self-reflection tool, not a clinical instrument, and not a substitute for therapy. If what surfaces is more than you want to hold on your own, that is a reason to work with someone qualified rather than a reason to fill in another sheet. If a sheet brings up something big: stop, and do something that puts you back in the room — walk, cold water, ring someone.

The reaction log

The foundational sheet. If you only use one, use this. Run it for two weeks before doing any interpretation at all — one line per incident.

Facts only in column two: no adjectives, no motives, nothing you could not have filmed. The gap between the last two columns is the entire finding — a 9 against a 2 is shadow material, a 4 against a 4 is just Tuesday.

Day	What happened (facts only)	My reaction, 1–10	What it deserved, 1–10
Tue	Sister mentioned the house again on the phone	8	2
Wed	Colleague described their project in the standup	7	1

After a fortnight, the three or four themes that recur:

The projection sheet

Use this on one entry from the log — whichever had the biggest gap between the two numbers. One sheet per trait, not per person.

1 The trait, in one word or phrase.

Not the person. "Talks about their own work", not "Daniel".

2 What I tell myself about people who do this.

Write the actual sentence, in the actual tone. It is usually harsher on the page than it felt.

3 The last time I did something like it.

There is nearly always one. If nothing comes, ask when you wanted to.

4 What would have happened if I did this at fifteen?

← the question carrying the sheet

Who would have reacted, and how?

5 What did not doing it get me?

Safety, approval, being the reliable one. There is a real benefit or it would not have held.

6 What is it costing now?

In specifics: a conversation not had, an opportunity not asked for, a resentment carried.

Question four is the one people skip. Traits are rarely disowned because they are bad — they are disowned because they were expensive in a particular household.

Cost and benefit

Four boxes, done once per trait. It exists to stop the practice becoming a list of faults, which is where solo shadow work usually goes wrong.

The trait: _____

	Keeping it hidden	Letting some of it out
What I gain		
What it costs		

Fill the top-left box honestly and the sheet does its job. Suppression is not irrational — it bought you something, and until you can name what, you will keep doing it while telling yourself you have decided not to.

The top-right box is where people write something implausible, like “total authenticity”. Keep it small and concrete: one honest sentence in one conversation.

The experiment tracker

Integration happens in behaviour, not in insight. This is the sheet that converts the other three into anything.

The prediction column is the important one, and it is missing from every worksheet I have seen elsewhere. Writing down what you expect before you act turns a vague dread into a testable claim — and the disconfirmed prediction, not the insight, is what changes behaviour over time.

The five per cent	When	What I predicted	What happened
Say I disagree, once, in Thursday's meeting	Thu	Awkward silence, seen as difficult	Nobody reacted. One person agreed.

Keep the experiment small enough that failing at it costs nothing. One sentence, one email, one declined request. Then go back to Worksheet 1 and keep logging — the log is what tells you whether anything actually moved.

The wider method these sheets belong to: trueawake.com/shadow-work-worksheets/