

FRICTION

INTERNAL

Order What You (Actually) Want

The Experiment: From Avoidance to Intention

Duration: 7 days

Time required: 10–15 minutes per day

Goal: This experiment is designed not to make you more optimistic, but to make you more aware—and then more deliberate. It works in two phases.

Phase One: The Audit (Days 1–3)

The practice: This phase is not about rewriting the story of who you are—that's the work of separating self from event. This is simpler and more forward-facing. Before the day begins, write your answers to two questions:

- What do I actually want from today, specifically?
- What would it look and feel like if that happened?

Write without filtering. These might be outcomes you were dreading, impressions you were afraid of making, failures you were trying not to repeat, or conversations you were bracing for. Be specific.

Now, for each item, ask:

- Did focusing on this help me, or did it keep me circling the same ground?

What you are looking for: You are not trying to fix anything in this phase. You are auditing the inputs. Most people are surprised to discover how much of their mental bandwidth is organized around avoidance rather than intention. Notice patterns. Notice which areas of life—relationships, work, health, self-image—tend to produce the most avoidance-based thinking.

Phase Two: Reordering (Days 4–7)

The practice: Each morning, before the day begins, write your answers to two questions:

- What do I actually want from today, specifically?
- What would it look and feel like if that happened?

This is your order at the counter. Be concrete. Not “I want the meeting to go well” but “I want to communicate my idea clearly and leave the room having genuinely heard the other person’s concerns.” Not “I don’t want to feel overwhelmed” but “I want to finish the day having focused on the two things that matter most.”

Each evening, return to what you wrote and reflect briefly:

- Where did my thinking drift back into avoidance mode today?

- What triggered it?

- When I stayed oriented toward what I wanted, what did I notice about how I showed up?

By day seven, most people notice one of two things:

1. Either the exercise feels labored and forced, which is itself useful information, a signal of how deeply habitual avoidance-thinking has become, or
2. They begin to notice a subtle but real shift in how they enter situations because the dominant signal they were sending themselves changed.

You are not trying to eliminate pessimistic thinking. You are trying to catch it earlier, name it clearly, and replace it with something more specific and more useful. The white bear does not disappear because you demand it leave. It quiets when you give your mind something else to move toward, something vivid, concrete, and genuinely desired.