

# leader6

## ASCEND DISCOVERY PROGRAM

### My Success Journal

This document details the “Success Journal” tool introduced on Day 4 of the ASCEND Discovery program. This tool provides a valuable resource for new leaders facing impostor syndrome, enabling them to objectively document their contributions and establish their legitimacy through concrete evidence.

#### Foundation and Objectives of the Success Journal

Impostor syndrome, which affects nearly 8 out of 10 new leaders, is characterized by a persistent feeling of inadequacy despite clear evidence of competence. This phenomenon intensifies particularly during the transition from expert to leader, due to three main factors:

1. Discontinuity of skills: moving from a mastered domain to developing new competencies
2. Ambiguity of success criteria: results that are often indirect and difficult to measure
3. Increased exposure: amplified visibility and high expectations

In this context, the success journal acts as a cognitive counterweight to the typical negative distortions of impostor syndrome. Its main objective is to create an objective repository of concrete evidence attesting to your value and competencies, in order to rebalance a perception often biased towards failure or incompetence.

#### Recommended Journal Structure

The success journal should be structured to facilitate regular documentation and future reference. We recommend the following organization:

##### Daily Header

- Date and professional context
- State of mind at the beginning of the day (optional, but useful for measuring evolution)
- Intention or main objective for the day

##### Main Body: Documentation of Achievements

For each daily entry, systematically document:

- Three accomplishments of the day
  - Factual description of the accomplishment
  - Concrete impact or result obtained
  - Skills mobilized
- A challenge overcome
  - Nature of the challenge
  - Actions taken to overcome it
  - Learnings drawn from this experience
- A leadership skill practiced
  - Specific skill implemented
  - Context of application
  - Result or feedback obtained

##### Reflection Section

- Subjective evaluation of your progression
- Trends observed in your successes
- Areas to develop or strengthen

## EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

#### Documentation Discipline

The success journal is only effective when used with consistency and rigour. We recommend:

- Daily frequency, ideally at the end of the day
- Dedicated time of 5-10 minutes, without interruption
- An environment conducive to reflection

Research on habit development shows that associating this practice with an existing routine (such as just before leaving the office or after dinner) significantly increases the probability of maintaining this habit over time.

#### Writing Principles

To maximize the impact of your journal, apply these essential principles:

- Specificity and factuality: Favour precise and measurable descriptions rather than generalities
  - Ineffective example: “The meeting went well”
  - Effective example: “I facilitated the 45-minute team meeting, obtained commitment from all participants, and finalized the action plan for Project X”
- Inclusivity of successes: Value both major accomplishments and small daily victories
  - Micro-successes are often overlooked, but constitute significant indicators of progression
- Objectivity in self-evaluation: Document facts before impressions
  - Focus on actions taken and their observable results
  - Avoid excessive value judgments about your performance

#### Concrete Examples to Guide Your Practice

##### Example Entry for an Accomplishment

Recommended format:

- Accomplishment: [Factual description]
- Impact: [Measurable or observable result]
- Skills mobilized: [List of skills]

Concrete example:

- Accomplishment: I led a problem-solving meeting with the technical team and production managers.
- Impact: We identified the root cause of the delivery delay and developed an action plan that will allow us to recover 50% of the delay in the next 10 days.
- Skills mobilized: Meeting facilitation, problem analysis, collaborative decision-making.

### Example Entry for a Challenge Overcome

Recommended format:

- Challenge: [Description of the problematic situation]
- Actions taken: [Steps taken to overcome the challenge]
- Learnings: [Lessons drawn from the experience]

Concrete example:

- Challenge: A team member publicly challenged my decision regarding project prioritization.
- Actions taken: I proposed a private discussion, listened to their concerns, explained my prioritization logic, and found a compromise that respects organizational constraints while taking into account their concerns.
- Learnings: I understood the importance of communicating decision criteria more clearly up front and involving the team more in the prioritization process.

### Example Entry for a Leadership Skill

Recommended format:

- Skill: [Specific skill]
- Application context: [Situation where the skill was used]
- Result: [Observable impact]

Concrete example:

- Skill: Effective delegation
- Application context: I entrusted Marie with the responsibility of leading the communication component of Project X, clearly giving her the necessary autonomy while remaining available for support.
- Result: Marie took the initiative with enthusiasm, proposed three relevant innovations, and demonstrated an increased level of engagement.

### Strategic Use of the Journal as an "Anti-Impostor" Resource

The success journal is not just a documentation tool, but an active resource in your leadership development. To maximize its benefits:

#### Regular and Targeted Consultation

Schedule strategic review times for your journal:

- Before high-stakes moments (important presentation, meeting with management)
- During periods of intense doubt or professional anxiety
- As part of your periodic performance evaluations

#### Trend Analysis

Each month, set aside 30 minutes to analyze emerging trends:

- Which leadership skills appear most frequently?
- What types of challenges were recurring at the beginning and are now absent?
- What new development areas are emerging?

This analysis will allow you to objectively observe your progression and identify areas requiring more attention.

### Cognitive Counter-Argumentation

Use journal entries as an arsenal of factual arguments to counter typical impostor syndrome thoughts:

- Impostor thought: "I don't have the skills for this role"
  - Counter-argumentation based on the journal: "My journal shows that I have effectively practiced 12 different leadership skills over the past month"
- Impostor thought: "It was just luck"
  - Counter-argumentation based on the journal: "I have documented 15 situations where I solved complex problems through methodical analysis, not luck"
- Impostor thought: "They will discover that I'm not up to par"
  - Counter-argumentation based on the journal: "I have overcome 8 major challenges this quarter, demonstrating my ability to manage complex situations"

### Integration with Other Professional Development Practices

The success journal gains power when integrated with other professional development practices:

#### Synergy with Mentoring

Share relevant entries with your mentor to:

- Structure your development discussions
- Obtain external validation of your progress
- Identify additional development opportunities

This approach is particularly aligned with Action 2 of Day 4, which consists of "Initiating a conversation with an experienced leader."

#### Use in Evaluation Interviews

Your journal constitutes a valuable factual basis for:

- Preparing your evaluation interviews with concrete examples
- Demonstrating your progression and impact
- Articulating your future development objectives

#### Contribution to the Development of "Meaningful Leadership"

This practice aligns perfectly with the principles of "Meaningful Leadership," which places meaning at the heart of a leader's action and managerial posture. The journal reinforces two fundamental pillars of this model:

- Self-awareness, by developing "a true capacity for introspection, self-knowledge"
- The ability to "generate meaning even in adversity and difficulties"

#### A Transformational Tool

The success journal is much more than a simple documentation exercise—it is a powerful lever for cognitive and behavioural transformation for the new leader.

As highlighted in the ASCEND Discovery program: "awareness of impostor syndrome is already an important step towards mastering it." The success journal transforms this awareness into concrete and constructive action, allowing you to fully inhabit your role as a leader and unleash your full impact potential.

# My Success Journal

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## Day 1

Date State of mind at the beginning of the day Intention or main objective for the day

Three things I accomplished during the day A challenge I overcame A leadership competency I put into practice

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## Day 2

Date State of mind at the beginning of the day Intention or main objective for the day

Three things I accomplished during the day A challenge I overcame A leadership competency I put into practice

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## Day 3

Date State of mind at the beginning of the day Intention or main objective for the day

Three things I accomplished during the day A challenge I overcame A leadership competency I put into practice

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## Day 4

Date State of mind at the beginning of the day Intention or main objective for the day

Three things I accomplished during the day A challenge I overcame A leadership competency I put into practice

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## Day 5

Date State of mind at the beginning of the day Intention or main objective for the day

Three things I accomplished during the day A challenge I overcame A leadership competency I put into practice

## NOTES AND PERSONAL REFLECTIONS