

Job Search Journal · Starter Pack

Three layers of prompts. Build the longitudinal log the year of the search runs on.

A job search journal is not a mood exercise. It is an accumulating dataset of your own search — one your future self, your coach, or an AI pass can analyze for recurring skills, accomplishments, and growth. Three layers here, from lowest activation cost to highest fidelity: four simple daily prompts, three categorical prompts for the harder days, and a structured daily template when an entry needs to capture more signal.

LAYER 1 · FOUR SIMPLE DAILY PROMPTS

Use these when you just need to show up. Low friction, high consistency.

1 What did I do today that moved my search forward?

2 What energized or drained me?

3 What did I learn about myself or how to brand myself better in the market?

4 What will I do differently next time?

LAYER 2 · THREE CATEGORICAL PROMPTS FOR HARDER DAYS

Frustration + Reality Check

Turns venting into traction.

"What specifically frustrated me today in my job search — and what part of that frustration is within my control?"

Write about the triggering event (rejection, silence, confusing feedback); whether the issue was effort, clarity, timing, or fit; and one concrete adjustment you can make tomorrow, even a small one.

Progress Over Perfection

Combats the belief that only interviews equal progress.

"What did I do today that moved me even one step forward, even if it didn't feel productive?"

Reframe small actions — applications, networking messages, LinkedIn posts, journaling, skill-building — as real momentum.

Gratitude Without Denial

Grounding — not bypassing — reality.

"What am I genuinely grateful for today — even while this process is uncomfortable?"

Skills you now clearly have, supportive people, clarity gained, or lessons from hard environments that now protect you.

LAYER 3 · STRUCTURED DAILY TEMPLATE

Use this on days when an entry needs to capture more signal — before a big interview, after a rough week, during a pivot decision. Trade activation cost for fidelity.

Daily wins & accomplishments

- What did I accomplish in my job search today?
- Any small wins I want to celebrate?

Interviews & follow-up

- Interviews scheduled or completed today
- Key insights from each
- Questions I struggled with

Mindset & motivation

- What motivates me to keep going today?
- Career values & goals check-in
- One thing I am grateful for
- Positive reminder for today

Next steps

- Top three actions for tomorrow
- What might get in the way — and how I will handle it

THE LOAD-BEARING MOVE · AI-ASSISTED ANALYSIS

Template generation. Paste this prompt into ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, or similar: *"Create a job search journal template that focuses on daily wins/accomplishments, challenges, reflections, gratitudes, and next steps."* Compare responses across tools; pick the structure that fits your voice.

Retroactive analysis. After three to six weeks of entries, paste or upload the accumulated log and prompt for: *"What recurring skills and accomplishments show up across these entries? What patterns can you see in what energizes versus drains me? What themes would I not notice reading a single entry at a time?"*

Privacy note. Treat entries as personal data. Use paid tiers that don't train on your inputs, strip identifying details, or keep the analysis inside a tool you trust with personal content.

Originated by **Nicole Marquesa** with **TehShan Lee** for the JobNet 2.0 session 2026 Reset: Goals, Journals, and the Year's First Read, Wednesday, January 21, 2026. Personal use only · All rights reserved.