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THE ENERGY LEDGER STARTER PACK

Four free tools for ADHD burnout recovery

from **The Masking Tax** · by **Dr. Morgan Reed**

Hi — I'm so glad this found you.

If you've been running on empty for longer than you can explain — tired in a way that sleep doesn't fix, performing "fine" at a cost nobody sees — these four tools are where I'd start. They're pulled straight from my 7-week workbook *The Masking Tax*, and they work on their own: print them, scribble on them, do them sloppy. In this house, done sloppy is done.

Be gentle with yourself,

Dr. Morgan Reed

TOOL 1 • THE 7-DAY ENERGY LEDGER™

02 / 06

Your exhaustion isn't a mood — it's an account. Energy goes out (withdrawals), energy comes in (deposits), and for years nobody handed you the statement. This Ledger is the statement. Keep it for seven days and you'll see, in your own handwriting, exactly where the account bleeds and what actually refills it.

It comes in three tiers, and **you may drop to a lower tier any day, without it counting as falling off.** That's the design.

■ TIER 1 — THE FULL LEDGER *(for days with a few minutes)*

Day	Withdrawals (what drained me)	Deposits (what refilled me)	Debt Payment (rest I chose on purpose)
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

■ TIER 2 — THE 30-SECOND VERSION *(two drain emojis, one refill emoji, one number)*

Day _____ • drains: _____ • refill: _____ → tank: _____ /10

Day _____ • drains: _____ • refill: _____ → tank: _____ /10

Day _____ • drains: _____ • refill: _____ → tank: _____ /10

Day _____ • drains: _____ • refill: _____ → tank: _____ /10

Day _____ • drains: _____ • refill: _____ → tank: _____ /10

Day _____ • drains: _____ • refill: _____ → tank: _____ /10

Day _____ • drains: _____ • refill: _____ → tank: _____ /10

■ TIER 3 — THE FLOOR *(worst days: color one box — pick a color for "empty" and a color for "okay")*

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

The rules: A blank day isn't a failed day — the blank is the information. There is no day so bad that the Ledger asks more than you have. And this tool retires itself: seven days to see your pattern, then you get to close the books.

TOOL 2 • THE MASK INVENTORY

03 / 06

Masking is the invisible second job of appearing fine — and it's paid in specific performances worn so long they feel like personality. Check the ones you wear:

- ☐ **The Overachiever** — outrun the shame by being excellent; if I'm the best, no one checks whether I'm okay
- ☐ **The People Pleaser** — earn safety by never being a problem; say yes, absorb the cost
- ☐ **The Comedian** — get the joke in first, before anyone can make you the punchline
- ☐ **The Perfectionist** — if it's flawless, it can't be criticized; nothing ships until it's perfect
- ☐ **The Chaos Embracer** — claim the mess before someone assigns it to you: "I'm just scattered, ha"
- ☐ **The Apologizer** — shrink first; sorry for existing, for the thing that wasn't your fault

My primary mask (the oldest, the default when I'm tired): _____

I first put it on when: _____

■ **THE QUICK AUDIT** — for your primary mask, answer five:

1. Where does it run? (work · home · friends · family · online) _____
2. How many hours a week, honestly? _____
3. What does it cost me? _____
4. What did it once save? _____
5. What is it taking now that it isn't paying back? _____

*Circle one: **still earning its keep** / **overcharging me**. No action required today — an overcharging mask doesn't have to come off this minute. You just needed to see the number.*

TOOL 3 · THREE UNMASKING SCRIPTS

04 / 06

Word-for-word, ready to say or steal. Every script is three moves: the frame (how I work, never what's wrong with me) · one concrete need · an ask that's easy to grant. No apology clause — and notice the diagnosis is optional in all three. You are its only rightful owner, and you get to choose the room.

■ SCRIPT 1 — FOR YOUR BOSS

"I want to tell you something about how I work best, because I think it'll make me easier to manage, not harder. I do my best work in focused blocks, and I lose real time when tasks reach me verbally in passing. Two things would help a lot: if requests could land in writing, and if we could keep our check-ins to a set time. That covers most of it — nothing else needs to change."

Optional add: "If the context is useful: I have ADHD. But the two asks stand on their own either way."

(This is the informal conversation. Formal accommodations are a separate, documented path — usually through HR. And read your workplace first: in a hostile room, this can wait for a better employer.)

■ SCRIPT 2 — FOR YOUR PARTNER

"I need to tell you something I've been doing for our whole relationship without ever naming it. A lot of the time, when I seem fine, I'm performing fine — and it costs me more than I've ever let you see. I'm learning to stop performing at home. Which means you might see more of the real weather: the tired evenings, the scattered days. That's not me getting worse. That's me finally letting you in. The thing that would help most is [your one need — for example: not treating a flat evening as something you caused]."

■ SCRIPT 3 — FOR A FRIEND

"Can I tell you something I don't say out loud much? A lot of my 'together' is a performance, and it's been running so long you've probably never seen me fully without it. I'm trying to drop it with people who feel safe — and you're on that list. So if I cancel sometimes, or go quiet for a stretch, or show up scattered, that's me trusting the friendship enough to show you the real weather. I don't show it to just anyone."

(This one lands best casual — a walk, a car, side by side. Big talks go easier when the eyes have somewhere else to be.)

TOOL 4 • "AM I IN ADHD BURNOUT?" — THE CHECKLIST

05 / 06

Check what's true for you *right now, this month* — not your worst month ever.

■ THE BODY CHARGES

- ☐ I wake up tired even after a full night's sleep
- ☐ My body feels heavy — like moving through water
- ☐ I'm getting sick more often, or small things (headaches, stomach trouble) won't quit

■ THE MIND CHARGES

- ☐ Focus that used to be hard is now nearly impossible
- ☐ Small decisions feel enormous — what to eat, what to answer first
- ☐ I feel flat. Not sad, exactly. Just... nothing where something used to be

■ THE FUNCTION CHARGES

- ☐ Things I could always do now feel like they're underwater
- ☐ I've started dropping balls I never used to drop
- ☐ The mask is slipping — I can't keep performing "fine" the way I used to
- ☐ Rest doesn't seem to refill me the way it should

There's no passing score. Three checks or ten — this isn't a test. The point is that you just read the statement instead of paying it on autopilot. Which section held the most checks — body, mind, or function — is a clue about where the debt runs deepest.

One important line, please read it: ADHD burnout and depression can look like twins from across the room, and telling them apart is a professional's job. If you've noticed more than tiredness — a loss of interest in things that used to reach you, a heaviness that doesn't lift on your good days, or any thought that you'd be better off gone — please bring it to a doctor or therapist right away. And if you're in crisis right now: **call or text 988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, US). That's not a failure. That's the strongest move on the board.

These four pages are Week 1 of a much kinder road.

THE MASKING TAX

Unmasking ADHD — The 7-Week ADHD Burnout Recovery Workbook for Late-Diagnosed Adults

by **Dr. Morgan Reed**

Seven weeks, fifteen minutes a day: read the bill, examine the masks, clear the grief, lower the volume, act unmasked, install systems that fit — and keep it all.

You'll walk it with six people who've been exactly where you are.

*The full workbook is [available now on Amazon](#) — search *The Masking Tax*.*

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