# BEFORE THE WORLD TELLS YOU WHO TO BE

Human Becoming Journal™

The Daily Mantra of Becoming: Six Elements for Practicing Self-Governance

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You can wake up in a new morning and immediately begin rehearsing an old life. Before your feet reach the floor, yesterday's resentment may already be speaking. An unfinished argument returns. A disappointment resumes its testimony. Someone who is nowhere near your bedroom has become the first person to influence your day. The question is worth asking: Who gets the first opportunity to direct your conduct this morning?

My Daily Mantra of Becoming begins there. It gives me a deliberate opportunity to examine what I bring into the day, anticipate what I may encounter, and choose something worth practicing. I cannot know everything the day will require. I can prepare to participate in it with greater awareness and responsibility. This is the purpose of SAROTTU™: Small Actions, Repeated Over Time, Transform Us. A morning recitation becomes meaningful through the action that follows it.

The mantra brings together six elements: Human Construction, Human Obstruction, Human Deconstruction, Human Reconstruction, Human Transformation, and Human Becoming. The order begins with the person already formed by experience, recognizes what interferes with movement, examines familiar patterns, develops alternatives, establishes change through practice, and considers the continuing person emerging from that work. These elements can overlap and recur throughout an ordinary day. Their value lies in helping us notice where attention and action are needed.

## Human Construction: Acknowledge the Person Who Arrives

"I acknowledge what has shaped me. My history influences me; today, my choices contribute to my construction."

Every morning, I arrive with a history. Some of it is readily remembered; some of it appears through habits I seldom question. Family life, encouragement, humiliation, responsibilities, disappointments, and repeated choices have helped shape what I expect and how I respond. Human Construction names this formation of patterns through experience and practice.

Acknowledging construction requires honesty without reducing a life to its injuries. Courage was constructed too. So were patience, practical skill, generosity, and the willingness to begin again. A fair examination includes what has strengthened us alongside what continues to complicate our lives.

Consider someone who learned that speaking openly brought punishment. Silence may once have provided protection. Years later, that person may remain quiet even when a respectful conversation could improve a relationship. Understanding the history helps explain the pattern. Present circumstances still deserve their own examination.

“My choices contribute to my construction” places responsibility in the present without claiming complete control over it. Other people, opportunities, material conditions, and unexpected events continue to influence life. Within those conditions, I can ask what my repeated conduct is helping me practice. Each promise kept, question asked, and unnecessary argument declined contributes something to the person I am becoming.

## Human Obstruction: Prepare for Difficulty Without Prejudging the Day

“I anticipate difficulty without surrendering to fear. I will examine what stands in my way, including my own habits.”

An obstruction interferes with a particular purpose. It may be an external barrier, such as unavailable resources, an unfair decision, or another person’s threatening behavior. It may also involve an internal pattern, such as procrastination, pride, or the refusal to consider information that challenges a preferred conclusion. Identifying which kind of obstruction is present helps determine what action is appropriate.

This morning preparation has an affinity with Marcus Aurelius’s reflection in Meditations, Book Two, paragraph 1. He anticipates encountering difficult behavior and reminds himself of his responsibility to cooperate with fellow human beings. Read together, these ideas support preparation that retains an ethical purpose. They do not require treating everyone as an adversary.

Premeditatio malorum, the advance contemplation of possible misfortune, supplies a useful philosophical comparison. For this daily discipline, I apply that principle by anticipating a foreseeable difficulty and preparing a proportionate response. I might expect disagreement in a meeting and decide to ask a clarifying question before answering. I might anticipate pressure to make a commitment and prepare to request time.

Preparation must remain open to evidence. “If someone deceives me, I will examine the facts and respond appropriately” leaves room for an honest encounter. “Everyone intends to deceive me” closes that room before anyone arrives. The purpose is readiness that allows me to meet the actual day.

An obstruction also deserves a question about the goal it impedes. Another person’s boundary may obstruct my preference while protecting their legitimate interests. A criticism may disturb my comfort while improving my work. Self-governance includes recognizing when the appropriate change belongs to me.

## Human Deconstruction: Examine the Meaning Before

# Repeating the Response

“I question my assumptions and familiar reactions. I seek understanding before judgment.”

Human Deconstruction examines the patterns through which I interpret and respond to experience. An assumption is something I treat as true without fully establishing it. A familiar reaction is a response I have practiced enough to recognize, sometimes only after it has begun. Both deserve attention when they repeatedly produce consequences I regret.

Suppose someone fails to return a message. The observable event is that no reply has arrived. “They are deliberately disrespecting me” adds an interpretation. That interpretation may prove accurate, but other possibilities remain. Deconstruction asks what is known, what is inferred, and what further information would help.

This inquiry supports my principle of Investigative Curiosity Before Judgment™. Curiosity can uncover misunderstanding. It can also reveal a genuine pattern of misconduct. Its purpose is to improve judgment so that the response fits the circumstances.

Deconstruction applies to self-description as well. “That is just how I am” can conceal a history of repetition. A more useful inquiry is, “How did I learn this response, what does it accomplish, and what does it cost?” The answer may show that an old protection now needs modification.

Honest examination should preserve dignity. A person can acknowledge a harmful pattern without declaring the entire self worthless. The work requires enough courage to see clearly and enough respect for oneself to attempt something different.

# Human Reconstruction: Give the Next Response a Practical Form

“I choose a more deliberate response. I breathe, consider the consequences, and practice what serves my values.”

Human Reconstruction develops alternatives that can be used in real situations. Understanding a pattern creates an opening; a practiced response helps us use it. “I should behave better” is difficult to enact. “I will allow the other person to finish before I answer” gives attention a specific task.

The reference to breathing is a cue to notice myself before proceeding. It does not promise that one breath will resolve conflict or remove strong emotion. It offers a small occasion to consider what I am about to say or do. I may still feel angry while choosing a measured sentence.

Consequences extend beyond immediate relief. A cutting remark may feel satisfying and damage a relationship I value. Agreement may end an uncomfortable conversation and create a commitment I cannot honor. Reconstruction asks me to consider both the immediate effect and what my response makes more likely afterward.

A practical alternative may be a sentence: “I need time to consider that.” It may be a boundary: “I will discuss the issue when we can speak respectfully.” It may be an environmental change, such as arranging a private conversation, documenting an agreement, or seeking help. External barriers sometimes require resources, institutional action, and assistance from others.

The useful test is whether I have prepared something I can actually practice when the occasion arrives.

## Human Transformation: Give Change Evidence

“I strengthen change through repeated action. Today, I will complete one meaningful act of self-governance.”

Human Transformation describes meaningful change becoming established in life. An intention matters, but its strength becomes clearer through conduct across time. A morning declaration gains credibility when it is followed by decisions that other people can experience.

This is why the mantra asks for one meaningful act of self-governance. Self-governance means directing my conduct with attention to my values, responsibilities, and consequences. Today’s act might be correcting an error, honoring a commitment, listening without interruption, or addressing a problem I have avoided.

The action must be small enough to perform and meaningful enough to matter. Someone working on anger might practice lowering their voice during one difficult exchange. Someone rebuilding reliability might complete one overdue responsibility. Someone who routinely suppresses concerns might express one clearly and respectfully.

Small actions do not erase the need for larger decisions. Their purpose is to make practice concrete. Where harm has occurred, responsible change may also require repair, accountability, and sustained support.

SAROTTU™ gives this practice a memorable expression. It is a guiding principle, rather than a guarantee that any repeated action will produce a desired result. We must examine what we repeat, whether it helps, and what conditions affect the outcome. Repetition deserves direction.

## Human Becoming: Continue With Responsibility and Humility

“I remain responsible for the person I am becoming. I accept my imperfections and continue the work.”

Human Becoming describes the continuing person emerging through these interacting processes. New circumstances reveal strengths and difficulties that earlier circumstances may never have tested. A person can become more capable while still encountering uncertainty, vulnerability, and the need for correction.

Accepting imperfection makes honest examination possible. If admitting an error threatens my entire identity, I may defend the error. If I can acknowledge that I am capable of mistakes, I can examine this one and decide what responsibility requires.

Acceptance must include accountability. “I am imperfect” cannot settle the matter when someone has been harmed. Responsibility may require an apology, restitution, a changed boundary, or a different practice. The meaning of acceptance is that the work can continue without demanding a flawless starting point.

Becoming difficult to control, in the spirit of The Little Black Book, includes recognizing the points at which pressure repeatedly redirects us. Flattery, embarrassment, urgency, and provocation can influence judgment. Examining those points can help us respond more deliberately. People still face real constraints and can suffer harm despite sound judgment. The aim is greater agency within life's actual conditions.

## How I Practice the Mantra

Each morning, I settle myself with three comfortable breaths and recite the six elements slowly. I then finish the sentence: "Today's small action is…" I choose conduct I can recognize when the opportunity arrives. The practice takes about two minutes; carrying it into the day gives those minutes their purpose.

In the evening, I ask, "Did I practice my chosen action, and what did I learn?" If I did, I consider what helped. If I did not, I examine the obstacle and prepare another attempt. Review becomes another opportunity for Construction, Deconstruction, and Reconstruction.

The six elements provide a daily cycle of attention within the formally expanded Architecture Spine of Human Becoming™: Human Construction, Human Obstruction, Human Deconstruction, Human Reconstruction, Human Transformation, and Human Becoming. Obstruction adds a direct inquiry into what impedes us and how we meet it.

## What's the Big Idea?

The world will present demands before I have resolved every difficulty within myself. My morning discipline gives me a place to begin: acknowledge what shaped me, examine what impedes me, question familiar responses, prepare alternatives, practice change, and continue becoming with responsibility.

Tomorrow morning, the task will begin again. Today, one meaningful action is available.

Small Actions, Repeated Over Time, Transform Us.

Source note: The interpretation of Marcus Aurelius refers to Meditations, Book II, section 1, George Long translation: Meditations, Book II, section 1, George Long translation. The six-element practice and its application to SAROTTU™ are the CON360MASTERY™ formulation developed here.