



Working Out Loud Circle Guide

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Week 12: Reflect and celebrate

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What to expect this week

This final week marks the end of a process, and maybe a kind of beginning. You'll reflect on what has changed for you and what might come. You'll make some additional contributions, including several for yourself.

Consider holding this final meeting over lunch or dinner if you can. (If you're meeting via video, you might each sip your favorite beverage.) It's a nice way to celebrate your time together, and provides a good environment for reflecting on your progress and discussing possible next steps.

Suggested agenda

Thing to do	Approx. time
1. Check-in	10 mins
2. Group exercise: Your One Thing	15
3. Exercise: Time capsules	15
4. Exercise: Pay it forward	15
5. Final checkout	5

1. Check-in (10 minutes)

How are you feeling coming into this last week? Are you sad that it's coming to an end? Excited about what's next?

2. Group Exercise: Your One Thing (15 minutes)

Think back for a moment to your original idea for a goal in Week One, and your early attempts to describe it or visualize it in the later sessions. What has changed - about your goal and about you - since then? Think about your approach to making progress. Think about the relationships you've built, and about your habits and your mindset. What's different? How do you feel about those changes? More empowered? More hopeful? Something else?

Write down one way you think or act differently as a result of your Circle by finishing this sentence: "Since I joined my Circle, I..." Here are some examples:

- *...am more comfortable reaching out to people.*
- *...am more confident about sharing my work in progress.*
- *...am even more convinced that setbacks and failures are a natural part of experimentation and learning.*
- *...discovered there's more out there related to my work/ideas than I thought.*

Since I joined my Circle, I...

Now write down one thing you might do next by finishing this sentence: "Next time, I will/won't..." Here are some examples:

- *I will be more proactive about finding people related to my work.*
- *I won't be so reluctant to ask a question or reach out to someone.*
- *I will share more of my work, including ideas and work in progress.*
- *I won't worry so much about a mistake or setback, but will simply learn from it and try not to repeat the same one!*
- *I will practice making more contributions, including offering recognition and appreciation for other people's work.*

Next time, I...

Share your answers to these two questions with your Circle. Try to give each person a full three to five minutes without interruption to talk about their experience, and use any remaining time for discussion.

3. Exercise: Time capsules (15 minutes)

A time capsule is “a container storing a selection of objects chosen as being typical of the present time, buried for discovery in the future.” You can use what you just wrote as the basis for your own time capsule. The purpose is to capture what you’re feeling and thinking now and deliver it later, when your future self may need a boost in motivation or a reminder of what you thought was important.

Pick a time in the not-too-distant future - somewhere between three and twelve months. What do you want your future self to be like then? What do you want to have accomplished? Try and write as if you’re encouraging your future self to keep taking steps towards the vision you articulated. There are links to sample letters at the end of this Guide. Here’s a sample of the kinds of reminders you might include.

*“Do you remember Your One Thing? Did you keep practicing what you learned?
Did you take the next step you said you would take?”*

Remember the advice when you wrote your letter from your future self: “engage your emotions.” Try to capture feelings in addition to activity or accomplishments. For example, you can also include encouragements.

“I bet you’re busy. But even small steps, practiced over time, can make a huge difference. Please don’t give up on investing in yourself!”

Take the full 15 minutes and quietly write your letter below.

- ❑ *Celebrate out loud!* Do you remember in Week 2 there was a bonus exercise to announce your circle (“*I’m in a Working Out Loud Circle! Hello @johnstepper*”)? You can do something similar to celebrate your final week, and that might nudge others to take a step and form their own Circle..
- ❑ *Make WOL better.* Is there something you liked or didn’t like about the process? What’s one thing that could make it better? Send me email at john.stepper@workingoutloud.com with your ideas - or let me know Your One Thing - and I’ll use your feedback to improve the Circle Guides.
- ❑ *Join another Circle.* You could also form another WOL Circle with the same people or with new members. (The diversity of perspectives and experiences that comes from including new people can be quite helpful.) The structure, shared accountability, and support help you make progress towards your goals and feel good while you do it. For some people, they feel their first Circle helped them better understand their goals and how this practice works, and now they’re ready to go further.
- ❑ *Spread Circles at work.* If you want to spread Working Out Loud across your organization, send me an email at john.stepper@workingoutloud.com and I’ll help you. There are links to examples at the end of this guide.

You can think of Working Out Loud as a practice, one that you get better at - and more comfortable with - over time, even as you discover new aspects of it. Whatever you choose to do next, remember that any progress is good. By “paying yourself first,” you’re making an investment that’s good for you and good for everyone in your network.

5. Final checkout (5 minutes)

This is your final checkout, and you’ve already set aside time to continue investing in yourself. All that’s left is to offer each other gratitude for the attention and support you received throughout this process.

To read, listen to, or watch

Time Capsule: A letter to your future self

- “How to write a letter to your future self” - Link: www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Letter-to-Your-Future-Self
- “Write a letter to your future self” by Tré Wee - Link: medium.com/personal-growth/join-me-and-write-a-letter-to-your-future-self-514fa62c0beb#.ctil1w1k5
- “Writing a letter to your future self” by Celestine Chua - Link: personalexcellence.co/blog/letter-to-future-self/

Making work better by spreading WOL Circles

- On-boarding for new joiners - Link: workingoutloud.com/blog//a-better-way-to-welcome-people-to-your-organization

- For a more innovative culture - Link: workingoutloud.com/blog//if-your-innovation-program-isnt-producing-much-innovation
- Mentoring & digital literacy - Link: workingoutloud.com/blog//a-better-approach-to-mentoring-at-work
- Employee engagement - Link: workingoutloud.com/blog//when-the-employee-survey-results-arent-good
- Digital Leadership - Link: workingoutloud.com/blog//the-manager-who-works-out-loud

On taking a next step

- “Put your cape on” - Link: workingoutloud.com/blog//put-your-cape-on
- “Are you in or are you out?” - Link: workingoutloud.com/blog//are-you-in-or-are-you-out
- “The permission you’ve been waiting for” - workingoutloud.com/blog//the-permission-youve-been-waiting-for