

The Gospel According to Pip the Lentil

Gentle, Unseriously Serious Companion Notes

A short set of reflections on listening, energy, steady functioning, and self-discipline without taking oneself too seriously :)

Preface

How to Read This Guide

This guide is not meant to be rushed.

The ideas within it relate to signals that appear within the body and mind.

Signals that are often subtle, easily missed, or quickly covered over by the speed of everyday life.

For this reason, it can help to read slowly.

Allow the sentences to form a steady rhythm.

Many readers find it helpful to read aloud, or to follow the rhythm quietly as they read.

Some people also enjoy noticing the cadence and then following the prosody gently in the body as the sentences move.

Some people naturally emphasise the rhythm with a small movement — a nod of the head, the tapping of a finger, the gentle pacing of breath.

This is not unusual.

Human understanding has long been supported by rhythm.

If one thing is certain while reading, it is that the mind will drift.

The mind does what minds naturally do.

Thoughts will appear, memories may surface, and distractions will come and go.

When attention wanders, this is not a problem to correct.

It is simply something to notice.

From there, it can be helpful to return gently to the words again.

Occasionally a word may feel unfamiliar. When this happens, it can be quietly interesting to pause for a moment and learn its function. New words, and new ways of seeing familiar words, can quietly expand our understanding.

Some readers find it useful to reread a sentence or passage, listening again for the cadence and rhythm.

Catching attention as it drifts and gently returning to the rhythm is not a failure of concentration.

It is the foundation of real concentration.

Over time, this simple practice strengthens the ability to remain steady with what is being read, felt, or experienced.

That steadiness is useful not only for understanding these pages, but also for moving through everyday life — including moments that are calm, ordinary, difficult, or demanding.

The aim is not perfect focus.

The aim is patience.

Allow the body to remain part of the reading.

Notice breathing.

Notice posture.

Notice any sensations that arise as ideas are encountered.

Understanding often grows gradually.

Some passages may feel obvious at first and become clearer only after returning to them later. For that reason, it can be helpful to revisit sections from time to time.

This guide is not trying to persuade or correct the reader.

It simply offers a way of noticing signals that already exist within human systems.

When those signals can be heard clearly, people often discover that steadier ways of living become possible..

And that process rarely happens in a hurry.

Introduction: On Collaborative Writing

These companion notes were written through a collaboration between Murray and an AI assistant.

The ideas and observations originate from Murray's lived experience of systems, energy regulation, and recovery from long periods of strain. However, Murray recognised that writing certain reflections directly in his own voice could unintentionally carry the emotional distortions that come from personal experience within difficult systems.

For this reason, parts of the text were drafted externally through collaboration with an AI assistant.

This allowed the ideas to be expressed in language that is:

- calmer
- more neutral
- universally applicable
- less likely to feel accusatory or personally directed

The aim of this collaboration is not to replace human reflection, but to help translate lived understanding into language that can be encountered gently by others.

These notes are therefore best read not as instructions, but as quiet observations about how human systems often function.

They are offered simply as companions for reflection.

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Chapter 1

Note 1

Listening Before Doing

Many people carry a strong desire to improve things — to do more, correct more, and become better.

When that instinct appears, the first impulse is often to act quickly.

But the first aim is not to do more.

The first aim is to listen better.

Modern life places heavy emphasis on calming the mind, while the body is quietly drained in the background — often in service of necessity, and sometimes in service of comforts that offer brief relief from ongoing strain.

Begin by listening.

Not for dramatic insight.

Not for immediate change.

Simply notice.

The body often signals what is needed long before the mind can organise it clearly.

When you learn to listen to the body, energy begins to stabilise. From that stability, the mind can later be guided and constrained appropriately — not through force, but through timing.

Doing comes after listening.

Note 2

Small Rhythms of Care

When life feels busy or overwhelming, there is often a rush to fix everything at once. But a steady system needs steady nourishment.

Taking time to prepare something simple and regular — like a pot of lentils — is not just about food. It is a small act of care. It builds rhythm. It builds patience. It gently reminds your body that it is safe to slow down.

Simple meals teach you what your body actually needs.

They help you notice your real energy levels, instead of pushing through exhaustion simply because something feels urgent.

When exhaustion is ignored repeatedly, the small deficits begin to compound.

The opposite pattern is also possible.

Small acts of care accumulate quietly, creating a sequence of sustainable generativity.

This begins to protect future you.

With practice, things that at first can seem like chores — especially if already exhausted to begin with — often become second nature.

Small, steady choices compound over time: financially, physically, and emotionally.

You do not need anything extreme.

Just something warm, regular, and kind.

And when possible, try to enjoy it — one thing at a time.

Start there.

Note 3

Listening to Signals, Not Fighting Them

Many people learn to treat discomfort as something to defeat.

When the body signals exhaustion, tension, frustration, hunger, loneliness, or overload, the instinct is often to ask:

“How do I combat this?”

Modern life quietly trains us to believe that, with enough discipline or determination, we should be able to decide what is best for ourselves — even when the body is clearly signalling strain.

But these signals are not enemies.

They are information.

They are the body’s way of reporting the current condition of the system.

Exhaustion may be reporting depleted energy, or that recovery has been delayed for too long.

Tension may be reporting sustained pressure, or that the system is holding itself in readiness without release.

Frustration may be reporting blocked movement, or that demands are arriving out of sequence with available capacity.

Loneliness may be reporting the absence of somewhere to place the self, or that the system is operating without a shared horizon.

Overload may be reporting that incoming demands exceed what the system can currently sustain, or that boundaries protecting internal capacity have weakened.

When these signals appear, it is natural to want to push them away. Many people have been taught that the responsible response is to override them — to push harder, to distract, or to control the feeling itself.

But signals are not problems to defeat.

They are **diagnostics**.

Just as a dashboard light in a machine tells you something about the condition of the engine, bodily signals quietly report the condition of the human system.

Listening to them does not mean reacting immediately or dramatically. It simply means allowing them to be noticed without rushing to override them.

Often, when signals are listened to rather than fought, small adjustments begin to emerge naturally. Energy stabilises. Attention clarifies. The body gradually shifts from constant correction toward steadier functioning.

From that steadiness, clearer choices become possible.

Not because the mind has forced control — but because the system itself has been allowed to rebalance.

Listening comes before correcting.

And sometimes, listening alone is the first step toward restoring balance.

Note 4

Energy Before Mindset

In many areas of modern life, people are encouraged to protect their mindset.

Advice often focuses on thinking positively, managing emotions, or strengthening resilience. These efforts can be helpful. But they sometimes overlook a quieter question:

What condition is the body in while the mind is being asked to stay steady?

The body is the system that generates the energy required for thinking, regulating emotion, and maintaining attention. When that system is repeatedly drained — through lack of rest, sustained pressure, irregular nourishment, or constant demand — the mind may be asked to operate with less energy than it needs.

In these moments, people may feel that they should simply think differently or try harder to stay calm. But the difficulty often comes from a deeper condition: the energy available to the system has fallen below what is required for regular functioning.

This does not mean that anyone has failed. It simply means the system is under strain.

Energy depletion can come from many places. Work demands, family responsibilities, financial pressure, digital stimulation, and the effort required to maintain daily life can all draw from the same shared energy pool.

When energy becomes too depleted, the mind's ability to regulate itself becomes harder to sustain.

For this reason, it can sometimes help to pause before trying to correct thoughts or emotions and instead gently ask:

What is the current condition of the system?

Rest, nourishment, and steady rhythms do not solve every challenge. But they can restore enough energy for the mind to regain its natural capacity to regulate.

From there, clearer thinking and more balanced choices often follow.

Energy is not separate from the mind.

It is the condition that allows the mind to function well.

Closing Note

These companion notes describe simple observations about how human systems often behave under strain.

They begin with listening, noticing signals, and restoring energy because those conditions are the foundations of stable functioning.

In more formal work, these foundations can be understood structurally. Human systems tend to function through a sequence of conditions: regulation first, then safety, then honesty, then capacity, and only then responsibility and outcomes.

The reflections in these notes therefore sit at the beginning of a larger framework.

They are not instructions, and they are not solutions. They are simply the first quiet step: noticing how a system feels before trying to change what it produces.

Chapter 2

Note 1

Living With the Signal

When people begin to change their lives, there is often a quiet hope that certain feelings will disappear.

Nervousness.

Unease.

The quiet tension that comes with not knowing what happens next.

Many imagine that with enough growth, enough discipline, or enough clarity, these feelings will eventually fade away.

But this is rarely how human systems work.

Signals do not vanish simply because a person has learned from them.

More often, the signal remains.

What changes is the relationship to it.

At first, nervousness can feel overwhelming. It fills the system, pushing thought and action into reactive patterns. The mind tries to escape it, suppress it, or outthink it.

Over time, something quieter can happen.

The signal is still there, but it no longer runs the system.

Instead of an explosion, it becomes a current — something that can be noticed, held, and directed.

The body still registers uncertainty.

The future is still unknown.

But the system learns how to remain steady while that signal is present.

This is not the disappearance of nervousness.

It is the development of control.

Control not through force, but through familiarity.

When the signal is recognised rather than feared, it becomes part of the system's information rather than its command.

In this way, growth is rarely the removal of difficult feelings.

More often, it is the quiet development of the capacity to carry them without losing direction.

And when that capacity grows, something subtle changes.

The energy that once scattered the system begins to organise it.

What once felt like a warning becomes a guide.

Not because the future has become certain.

But because the system has learned how to move forward.

Note 2

Clearing the Noise

Living with a signal is only possible if the signal can be heard clearly.

For many people, this is the hardest step.

Human life is full of voices that lean on us.

Family expectations.

Relationship dynamics.

Work demands.

Friendship obligations.

Cultural pressures about what a "good" life should look like.

Most of these influences are not malicious.

Many come from care, habit, or shared survival.

But when a person begins trying to listen carefully to their own system, these outside pressures can make the signals difficult to read.

A person may feel exhaustion but hear someone else's voice saying they should push harder.

A person may feel uncertainty but hear a demand to decide immediately.

A person may feel the need to pause but hear the fear that stopping will mean failure.

When many voices are present at once, the system cannot easily distinguish what is truly being signalled.

For this reason, a period of **quieting external pressures** is often necessary.

This does not mean rejecting people permanently.

It does not mean becoming isolated or hostile.

It simply means temporarily **closing unnecessary horizons** so the system can stabilise and listen.

Some conversations may need to pause.

Some obligations may need to be reduced.

Some environments may need to be stepped away from.

Not because they are wrong, but because they are loud.

Fear often appears at this stage.

People may worry that if they stop responding to every demand, they will lose their place in the world.

In reality, the opposite is often true.

When the system has space to read its own signals clearly, regulation begins to stabilise.

From that stability, clearer decisions become possible.

Closing noise is not withdrawal from reality.

It is the preparation required to see reality clearly.

Only when the signal can be heard without interference can the next steps in the sequence begin.

Note 3

Learning to Decipher the Signal

Once external noise begins to quieten, people often discover a second difficulty.

The signal may be clearer, but the **language used to describe it is not**.

Human culture contains many ways of speaking about feelings, needs, and internal states.

Some of these words are helpful.

Others are vague, exaggerated, or shaped by social expectations rather than by the body's actual condition.

For example, a person might say they are “burnt out,” when what they are actually feeling is simple exhaustion.

Someone might say they are “fine,” when the body is quietly signalling strain.

Another person might describe themselves as “lazy,” when the signal is actually depleted energy.

Language can easily become **polluted by judgement, habit, or cultural shorthand.**

When this happens, the signal becomes harder to read again.

The aim is not to eliminate language.

It is to **use it more carefully.**

Instead of immediately reaching for familiar labels, it can help to pause and ask simpler questions.

Is the signal coming from energy, pressure, or uncertainty?

Is the body asking for rest, nourishment, movement, or quiet?

Is the difficulty about capacity, or about the conditions surrounding the task?

These questions allow the signal to be described **without attaching blame or identity** to it.

When language becomes more precise and less judgemental, the system can interpret its signals more accurately.

From there, the next step becomes possible.

Signals that are heard clearly and named carefully can begin to guide action.

Not dramatic action.

Just the next small adjustment needed to restore balance.

Note 4

Feeling Before Naming

Many people have been taught to respond to emotions with immediate judgement.

A feeling appears, and almost instantly it is given a label.

“I should feel guilty.”

“I’m ashamed of myself.”

“I’m wrong for feeling this way.”

These responses are often learned very early in life.

They come from families, schools, cultures, and systems that try to organise behaviour through moral language.

The intention is often to guide people toward responsibility.

But when labels arrive too quickly, something important can be lost.

The body's original signal.

Emotions are not always moral instructions.

Very often they are simply **signals about the condition of the system.**

A feeling of heaviness may be reporting exhaustion.

A tightening in the chest may be reporting pressure or uncertainty.

A wave of discomfort may be reporting that a boundary has been crossed.

If these signals are immediately labelled as guilt, shame, failure, or weakness, the system begins reacting to the **judgement**, rather than listening to the signal itself.

Over time, this can make emotions harder to interpret.

One way to begin restoring clarity is surprisingly simple.

Instead of immediately naming the feeling, allow it to be felt first.

Notice where it appears in the body.

Notice whether it grows, fades, moves, or settles.

No analysis is required at this stage.

No explanation is needed.

Just feeling.

With daily practice, many signals begin to pass through the system more naturally.

Some disappear once the body has been allowed to register them.

Others remain long enough to be understood more clearly.

Only then does language become useful.

Labels can help us communicate and reflect, but they are most helpful **after the signal has been felt**, not before.

In this way, **emotional understanding begins to grow from experience rather than judgement.**

And when signals can move through the system without immediate condemnation, people often discover something unexpected.

Clarity appears where confusion once lived.

Note 5

Holding the Signal

When a signal first appears in the body or mind, the instinct is often to move away from it quickly.

People may try to fix it, explain it, distract from it, or replace it with something more comfortable.

This reaction is understandable. Many systems learn early that discomfort must be corrected immediately.

But signals do not always appear so that they can be solved straight away.

Sometimes they appear so that they can be noticed.

If the signal is pushed away too quickly, the information it carries may never become clear.

For a short time, it can help to simply allow the signal to remain present.

Not as something to fight, and not as something that must be explained immediately.

Just as something that is there.

The aim is not to analyse the feeling straight away.

It is to let the system experience the signal without rushing to label it or remove it.

When the signal is given a little space, its shape often becomes clearer on its own.

Intensity may soften.

Context may emerge.

The body may begin to show what it needs next.

This does not require perfect patience.

It only requires a brief pause before action.

Over time, this small pause becomes one of the most important skills in maintaining a steady system.

It allows signals to be heard before the system moves forward again.

Training instinct in this way daily allows for the system to continue through difficult but necessary conditions

Note 6

Words as Tone Signals

After spending time with our own signals, another layer often becomes visible.

Words do not arrive as neutral objects.

They arrive carrying tone.

From the very first voices we hear in childhood, tone begins shaping how language enters the system. A gentle word spoken harshly can feel like pressure. A difficult truth spoken calmly can feel steady and safe.

Over time, the body learns these patterns.

It remembers the tone of voices that surrounded it — family, teachers, workplaces, institutions, and the wider world. Long after the moment has passed, the tone attached to certain words may still affect how the body responds.

For people who have lived through strain or trauma, this can become especially noticeable.

Simple words that should feel calm may still cause unease.

Not because the word itself is dangerous, but because the tone historically attached to it carried pressure, judgement, or fear.

This is one reason why temporarily closing horizons can be so helpful.

When fewer outside voices are present, the system has space to listen again.

Words can be encountered more slowly.

Tone can be noticed more clearly.

During this quieter period, something subtle begins to happen.

A person starts hearing their own tone.

Not only in speech to others, but in the quiet language used inside the mind.

When the system learns to regulate this inner tone first, the relationship between words and signals begins to stabilise.

A word becomes just a word again.

Its effect depends less on past pressure and more on how it is spoken in the present.

This does not mean difficult memories disappear.

It simply means the system gradually learns that tone can change.

From there, another awareness often appears.

Just as tone affects our own signals, it also affects the signals of others.

A calm tone can steady a conversation.

A harsh tone can destabilise even simple words.

For this reason, **learning to notice tone is not only an internal skill.**

It is also a form of care.

The words we speak carry signals into the systems around us.

Note 7

Disciplined Self-Kindness

Once tone becomes visible, another pattern often appears.

Many people discover that the harshest tone in their environment is sometimes the one inside their own mind.

This usually developed for understandable reasons.

Harsh environments often teach people to motivate themselves through pressure, criticism, or fear. Over time the mind learns to reproduce these tones automatically.

At first this can seem useful.

It may even feel responsible or disciplined.

But sustained harshness tends to produce the opposite of steadiness.

Signals become distorted.

Energy drains more quickly.

Simple tasks begin to feel heavier than they should.

Learning to change this tone does not require rejecting the past or pretending that difficult experiences did not happen.

It simply requires practice.

A person begins to notice the tone they use toward themselves.

When it becomes unnecessarily harsh, they experiment with something different — a tone that is both gentle and firm.

Not indulgent.

Not dismissive.

Simply steady.

This can feel unusual at first.

Many people worry they will become lazy or careless if they stop criticising themselves.

In practice the opposite often happens.

A steady internal tone allows clearer thinking, calmer effort, and more reliable action.

Over time this becomes a form of quiet discipline.

A person learns to do what needs to be done, but without unnecessary hostility toward themselves.

This also tends to change how they speak to others.

The same tone that stabilises the inner system often creates steadier signals in the systems around them.

Like many things in this guide, the change happens gradually.

Not through force.

But through small repetitions that slowly retrain the system

Closing Note

Quiet Echoes

None of the observations in these notes are entirely new.

Across different times and cultures, people have noticed similar patterns in different ways. Some explored them through philosophy. Others through religious traditions, contemplative practices, or simple habits of daily life.

Writers such as Gurdjieff, and many others before and after him, observed that human beings often live with divided attention and unstable inner tone. They suggested that small acts of awareness and discipline could gradually bring greater steadiness to the system.

This guide does not belong to any particular tradition, and it does not ask anyone to join anything.

It simply shares a small set of observations that have proven useful in lived experience.

If readers notice echoes of ideas they have encountered elsewhere, that is not surprising.

Many people, in many places, have been quietly studying the same human signals for a long time.

These notes are only one small attempt to describe them in ordinary language.

Nothing more is required.

Just attention, patience, and a little kindness toward the systems we inhabit.

Chapter 3

Note 1

Modern Tools for Quiet Observation

Earlier traditions often relied on memory and careful personal notebooks. Today, many simple tools exist that make this kind of observation easier.

Journalling is one of the most useful.

Writing a few notes each day allows patterns to become visible over time. Energy levels, emotional signals, and habits of thought can be seen more clearly when they are recorded rather than remembered.

The purpose is not confession or judgement.

It is simply observation.

With time, a person begins to recognise their own patterns and take responsibility for adjusting them.

The process does not require hierarchy or external approval.

It simply requires honesty, patience, and the willingness to notice what is actually happening.

Note 2

Noticing Feedback Loops

When people begin listening to their signals more carefully, another pattern often becomes visible.

Not every thought appearing in the mind is a new thought.

Many are simply loops.

A feeling appears.

The mind responds with a familiar interpretation.

That interpretation produces another feeling.

Which produces the same interpretation again.

Over time this cycle can repeat so often that it begins to feel like thinking.

In reality it is often just noise replaying itself.

When the system becomes quieter, people sometimes notice that genuine thoughts feel different.

They often begin as sensations.

A small warmth.

A brief shock of recognition.

A moment of curiosity.

A smile.

Sometimes even a discomfort that asks to be understood.

These signals can later be examined with care.

Over time a person begins to see which feelings lead into helpful patterns of action, and which ones lead only into repetition.

Some loops quietly drain energy.

They pull attention back to the same questions without offering new understanding.

Others can be more constructive.

A hopeful idea may return repeatedly because the system senses that it contains something worth exploring.

Even these helpful loops require patience.

Excitement can easily run ahead of capacity if it is not held steadily.

Discernment develops gradually.

The aim is not to eliminate every repeating thought.

The aim is to notice which patterns nourish the system, and which ones quietly exhaust it.

With practice, attention begins to move more deliberately.

Energy is no longer captured by every loop that appears.

Instead it can be directed toward signals that genuinely support steadier functioning.

Note 3

Letting Some Thoughts Pass

Once people begin noticing feedback loops in the mind, another skill gradually becomes possible.

Not every thought requires a response.

At first this can feel unusual.

Many people have learned to treat every thought as something that must be examined, solved, or corrected.

But when the system becomes quieter, it becomes easier to notice that some thoughts carry very little useful information.

They are simply echoes.

Fragments of earlier conversations.

Old criticisms.

Imagined arguments.

Repetitions of worries that have already been considered many times.

When these appear, the instinct is often to engage them again.

The mind begins explaining, defending, or analysing the thought as if it were new.

But once a loop has been recognised, another option becomes available.

It can simply be allowed to pass.

This does not mean suppressing the thought.

It means noticing it clearly, recognising the pattern, and allowing attention to return to the present moment.

At first this may only last a few seconds.

The loop may return again.

That is normal.

Over time, as the system becomes more familiar with its own patterns, the loops begin to lose their urgency.

They appear, but they no longer demand the same level of attention.

This quiet shift frees energy.

Attention can begin to move toward signals that genuinely matter.

Thought becomes less crowded.

The system becomes steadier.

And from that steadiness, clearer thinking becomes possible.

Note 4

Returning to the Signal

Once people begin recognising loops in the mind, another small skill becomes useful.

Learning how to return.

Attention naturally drifts.

Thoughts wander.

Old loops appear again.

This is not failure.

It is simply how the mind behaves.

For many people the difficult moment is not the drifting itself, but the reaction that follows. When attention moves away from what matters, the mind often adds a second layer of judgement.

“I’m distracted again.”

“I should be able to focus better.”

“Why can’t I stay on track?”

These reactions create another loop.

Instead, it can help to practise something much simpler.

Notice the drift.

Then return.

Sometimes it helps to return to something steady.

The rhythm of breathing.

The pace of walking.

The movement of a simple task.

Some people also return to the cadence of words. Reading a few lines slowly can re-establish the rhythm of attention.

Focus does not always feel dramatic.

In fact, it often feels quiet.

At first this quiet can feel strangely empty. The mind has grown used to constant commentary, and may interpret silence as a lack of thinking.

But steady attention rarely feels like thinking.

It feels more like listening.

When the system returns to this quieter state, something interesting often happens.

Insights appear more easily.

Not because the mind has forced an answer, but because the noise surrounding the signal has settled.

Holding attention perfectly is impossible.

Returning to it is the real skill.

Each time the drift is noticed and attention returns, the system strengthens its ability to remain steady.

Over time this simple movement — drift, notice, return — becomes one of the most reliable ways to maintain clarity.

Note 5

The Gap Between Feeling and Reaction

After learning to return to the signal, another understanding often begins to appear.

Many people who have lived through trauma or long periods of strain need time to recover. During that time, the body may remain sensitive to tone — both from the outside world and from the voice of the mind itself.

This sensitivity is not a flaw.

It is simply the system remembering how tone once affected it.

External voices may still influence the body's signals. A harsh tone from another person can still create tension. Pressure in the environment can still produce unease.

But something begins to change when a person learns to distinguish the signal itself from the noise surrounding it.

The signal belongs to the body.

The noise often belongs to the mind.

Once this distinction becomes visible, another realisation appears.

A person may not always control the tone of the world around them. But they can gradually learn to influence the tone they use toward their own system.

And just like the outside world, the tone of the mind also carries images, expectations, and pressures.

When that tone becomes harsh or negative, the body often reacts in the same way it would react to external criticism.

This is why another small skill becomes important.

The space between feeling and reaction.

When a signal appears, the mind often rushes to respond. It may criticise the feeling, explain it away, or react defensively.

But when a person learns to pause — even briefly — something new becomes possible.

The signal can be felt.

The reaction can wait.

This small gap allows the system to interpret what is actually happening before responding to it.

Over time, practising this pause becomes one of the most important forms of reflection.

Reflection is not simply thinking about a feeling.

It is the quiet discipline of allowing the signal to be present before the mind decides what to do with it.

In that small space between feeling and reaction, the system begins to regain its freedom to choose.