

The Friday Synthesis.

Four questions, once a week, in your own words.

Why fifteen minutes on Friday are worth keeping, and how to keep them.

WHY KEEP IT

What you have after a term of Fridays.

Most weeks disappear. The assignment is in, the week is gone, and you could not say in one sentence what it taught you. A term of Fridays with dates on them changes that in four ways.

Fri 1

Fri 2

Fri 3

Fri 4

Fri 5

Fri 6

Fri 7

Fri 8

Fri 9

Fri 10

Fri 11

Fri 12

Each entry is four short paragraphs. Together they are a record nobody else has, in your words, with dates.

Thesis material.

Dated paragraphs about real decisions are a chapter you will not have to invent in March.

A better Monday.

The assumption you wrote down last Friday is the one you will not make again on Monday.

An interview answer.

Someone will ask what the degree changed about how you work. A job title is not an answer. Dated paragraphs are.

Proof it built you, not your folder.

The essays an assistant helped with are the program's record. This is yours. It leaves with you.

Four questions.

- 1 What happened this week.
- 2 What assumption did I make that turned out wrong.
- 3 What general principle does this illustrate.
- 4 Where would this principle mislead me.

One short paragraph for each. Fifteen minutes to start. Thirty when you have them. Save it with the date. That is all.

WHAT A FINISHED ONE LOOKS LIKE

One of mine.

Written in a hotel function room, between conference sessions, a day late. Shortened here; the full version is on my site.

FRIDAY SYNTHESIS · SAVED WITH THE DATE · NOT EDITED SINCE

- 1** *Two long meetings about a brand we are repositioning, a difficult conversation with a senior team member, and a decision on Tuesday I am still not sure was right.*
- 2** *I assumed the team would resist the change. They did not. They were quietly relieved, which means I had been carrying a story about them that was not accurate, possibly for months.*
- 3** *Resistance is sometimes a story the leader is telling, not a property of the team.*
- 4** *This would mislead me with the team I worked with three years ago, where the resistance was real, sustained, and rooted in their own correct read of a situation I had misjudged.*

The fourth question.

A principle with no boundary is a slogan. Anyone can write “listen before you decide.” The useful version says where listening would cost you the decision.

Question four names that place. On the previous page, line three is true and useless on its own. Line four is what makes it usable next Tuesday. It is also the one thing no assistant can write for you, because it needs the situations only you have been in.

The tool can write the essay. It cannot be the person on the other side.

A 2025 study gave university students the same coursework with and without ChatGPT. The group with the assistant wrote better essays and learned no more. The planning and the judging had been handed to the tool (Fan et al., 2025).

The Friday Synthesis is built around exactly the part that was handed over. Use the assistant for everything else this week. Keep these fifteen minutes for knowing what you actually decided, and why.

What works, from watching who keeps it.

Name the hour.

Friday evening, Saturday morning, Sunday night. People who choose an hour keep the practice. People who wait for a free moment do not find one.

Write the first one today.

On the week just gone, ten minutes. The first entry is the one most people never write, and the one that shows you what the record is for.

Keep it honest.

Your own words, plain. Save it dated. Do not edit it later; what you thought on Friday is the evidence.

Fifteen, not thirty.

A short entry every week beats a long one that stops in week three. Thirty comes later, on the weeks you have it.

Reply with one line.

Send me one line from what you wrote. I read every reply, and I send your line back with the date on it. That is your record starting.

READ FURTHER

If you want more.

The one shortened on page 4, in full

How a synthesis gets written a day late, in a hotel function room, and what the fourth question does to it.

The leap AI can't make is what graduate programmes don't teach

University World News, August 2026. Why moving from knowing to deciding is a practice, not a gift. For the interview question.

The study on page 6

Fan et al. (2025), British Journal of Educational Technology. Better essays, no more learning. The evidence, if you want to read it yourself.

Graduate programmes have an AI problem they aren't naming

University World News, May 2026. If you use an assistant for coursework and wonder what you kept, start here.

Moving From Skills to Capabilities

AACSB Insights, July 2026. What employers say they want, and why it is not the skills on the syllabus. For the first years after.

The five practices, and the research behind them

drpnguyen.com. The Friday Synthesis is one of five. The other four are there when you want them.

Click any title to open it. None of it is required. The four questions on page 3 are all you need.

THIS FRIDAY

07:00 GMT+7. Fifteen minutes. Reply with one line.

The email arrives before your workday. Most people write at the end of it, or on the weekend. Any time before Sunday night counts. The questions never change. What changes is that Friday comes again.

Bạn có thể viết bằng tiếng Việt. Bốn câu hỏi giống nhau mỗi tuần, mười lăm phút, bằng lời của chính bạn. Tôi đọc mọi câu trả lời.

© 2026 Dr Phuong Nguyen. The Friday Synthesis is part of The Learner's Discerning Practice Model. You may share this guide unchanged. Please do not sell it or alter it.

DR PHUONG NGUYEN · MD MBA PHD · VISITING LECTURER, CFVG · DRPNGUYEN.COM