

PIVOT

The compass for drift

BREAK-R catches the surge. PIVOT catches the drift: effort pointed confidently in the wrong direction.

P Pause the Pattern

Not a break. A pause. Breaks are for tired. Pauses are for lost. A pause asks where you are pointed.

I Identify the Intent

What am I trying to accomplish right now, not what I told myself this morning?

V Verify the Alignment

Does this action belong in Circle 1? Not where I want it to live. Where does it live today?

O Open a New Option

If Verify revealed a misalignment: one new option. Not five. One that passes the Circle 1 test.

T Take the Next Step

Execute. Now. The gap between deciding and doing is where drift lives.

Hard or wrong

Hard scares you. Wrong bores you. Hard is the right work resisting you: it belongs in Circle 1. Wrong is Circle 3 wearing a Circle 1 mask. PIVOT exists to tell them apart.

Two altitudes

Daily: sixty seconds, before the session.

What is the most important thing this session could produce? Is the task about to begin the thing that produces it? Answer on your feet.

Weekly: one page, fifteen minutes.

Same five steps, one altitude higher. Did the manuscript advance, or did you orbit?

The fifteen-minute test

Before Verify redirects you, ask: how long have I been on the original task?

Under fifteen minutes, you are not recalibrating. You are running.

Hard feels bad in the first ten minutes. Wrong still feels bad after thirty.

*You cannot control whether your brain mistakes motion for progress.
You control whether you check the compass before you move.*

The full handout starts on the next page.

The PIVOT handout

The long version the facilitator handed out in Week 5, reproduced as she wrote it. Read it on the day you are certain you are working and the manuscript has not moved.

P — Pause the Pattern

Stop the motion. Not the work itself, but the momentum that keeps you doing the same thing without examining it. This is not a break. A pause is what you take when you suspect you might be lost. Your brain will try to classify a PIVOT pause as laziness. If you let it, you will skip the step that makes the rest of the framework function.

Set a physical anchor. Stand up. Move to a different chair. The shift in environment signals your nervous system that you are entering evaluation mode, not production mode. You cannot assess the map while you are still driving.

I — Identify the Intent

Ask one question: what am I trying to accomplish right now? Not what you told yourself this morning. Not what your writing plan says. What is the real objective of the action you have been repeating?

This is where honesty earns its keep. The writer with forty-six thousand words of backstory would say her intent was to develop the character. Paused and identified honestly, her intent was to stay in comfortable territory. She knows how to write internal monologue. She does not know how to write the confrontation scene. The backstory was avoidance wearing a productive mask.

Identify the intent behind the pattern, not the intent you wish were behind it.

V — Verify the Alignment

This step separates PIVOT from every other reflection exercise. Verify asks: does this action belong in Circle 1?

Pull out your Three Circles. The action you have been repeating, the effort you have been investing, the pattern you paused in step one: where does it live? Not where you want it to live. Not where it lived when you started. Where does it live today, given what you know?

Verify is the circuit tester at the panel. It catches effort that drifted toward Circle 3, toward outcomes you do not control, while it was dressed as Circle 1 work. Reorganizing notes passes for Circle 1 because you are at the desk, touching the manuscript. But if the story needs a draft of chapter twelve and you are alphabetizing character sheets, your effort has drifted to Circle 3. The effort is real. The alignment is not.

The test is simple. If the action you are verifying disappeared from your day entirely, would the manuscript be worse tomorrow? If the answer is no, or *well, eventually it would matter*, you have your signal. Circle 1 means direct, measurable impact on the outcome you care about most.

O — Open a New Option

If Verify confirmed alignment, return to work. The compass says you are on course. Keep walking.

If Verify revealed a misalignment, recalculate. Open one new option. Not five. Not a brainstorming session. One concrete alternative that passes the Circle 1 test.

The writer buried in backstory opens this option: write the confrontation scene badly. Not well. Not polished. Write it. A bad draft of the right scene moves the manuscript further than a beautiful draft of the wrong one. The new option does not need to feel good. It needs to pass the Verify test.

T — Take the Next Step

Execute. Now, not tomorrow, not after one more round of research. The gap between deciding and doing is where drift lives. PIVOT is worthless if it ends at the planning stage, because planning is drift's favorite disguise.

Write one paragraph. Send the query letter. Draft the difficult email. Size does not matter. Immediacy does.

Taught in full, inside the story, in *Circle 1 for Authors*. · circle1living.com