



The Journal Project

Journal Prompts For Winter Reflections

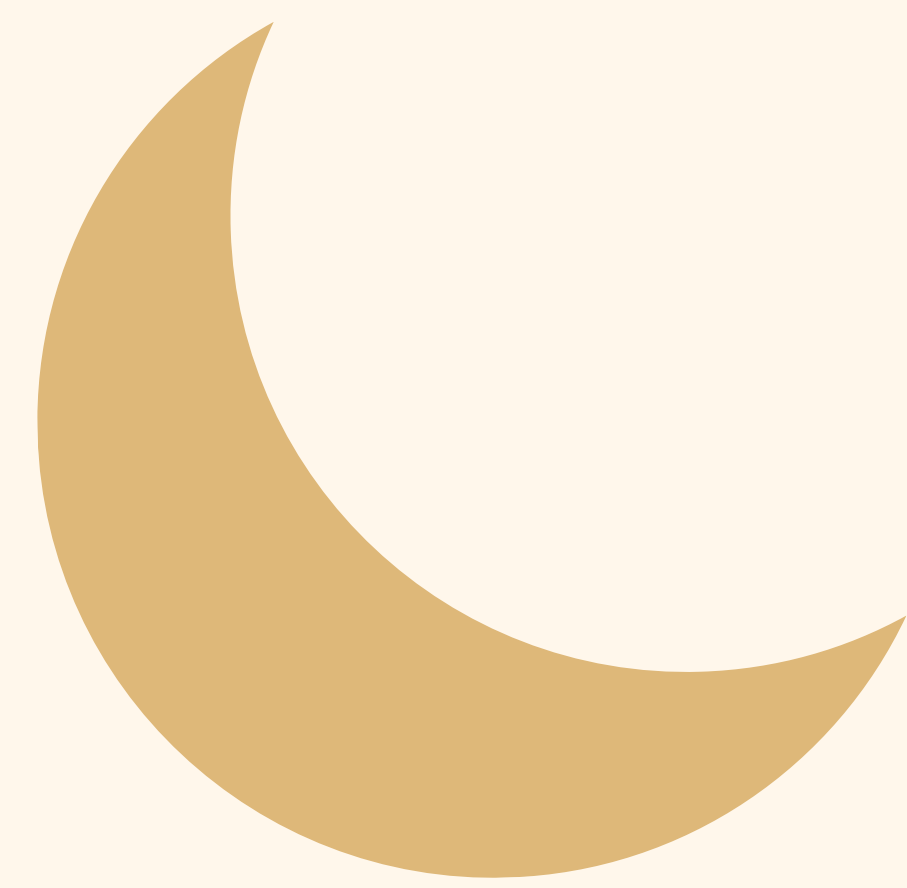


By Erica Zisman,
LCSW



3 Months of Journal
Prompts to
expand your
self-connection,
direction and insight.

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A Love Letter from me to you:

I am so happy you found your way to The Journal Project, welcome! Over the last few years, I've integrated a journaling practice into my daily life but it did not always come easy for me. I often found myself struggling to know what to write, how to start, and how to express myself with words. With the help of my own mentors and guides, journal prompts were my gateway into journaling. Little did I know, this practice would help me feel more connected to myself, one thought-provoking reflection at a time.

Journaling has transformed my personal life and helped me professionally to become a better therapist and advocate for my clients. I've used journaling to manifest exactly what I want out of my business and the clients I called in. I've also led my clients through journaling practices both in therapy sessions and given them reflection exercises to deepen their healing between sessions. The transformation that can take place just with a pen, paper and some guidance is incredible.

My mission is for The Journal Project to become a series with specific themes to focus on and connect with. Whether you use these prompts as a daily journal practice or you pick the prompts that speak to you the most, I invite you to explore your layers deeply and fully with the help of this guide.

In this issue, we'll explore the themes of Vision & Clarity, Grief & Shadow, and Self-Love & Compassion. I invite you to use curiosity and radical acceptance as the pillars of your exploration. You'll rediscover parts of yourself as you explore these prompts at your own tempo.

My hope and intention for you is that you begin to cultivate the life you want and allow yourself to be the most aligned version of yourself as you navigate these reflections. I'm so excited for you to begin your journey!

*With love,
Erica*

How to use this Ebook:

This book was written with you in mind. Each month has 30 journal prompts. Some like to do a daily journal prompt, others like to set a few hours aside once a week to dive into their questions a few at a time.

If you're a daily journaler, set aside at least 20 minutes to journal at a time that works best for you. What journal prompts can and likely will do, is inspire you to write more. Don't stop the free-flow of writing if a journal prompt creates an epiphany that you want to explore.

Some journal prompt writing might be short and sweet, others might fill up pages. There is no right or wrong way to do any of these journal prompts, so trust in whatever comes up and the way you express yourself.

Over the course of a season, you may want to revisit certain prompts that resonated with you. Value can be found in repeating prompts, and deepening your reflections each time. Don't be afraid to revisit a prompt even within the course of the day you're working on it. Often when we work with a prompt, it can set our subconscious to work, and we'll be in the mindset of working through a theme as we go through our days.

Depending on what month you start, there may be a day without a journal prompt provided. Feel free to take this day off reflection, or use this day to free-write your reflections from the entirety of the month.

The Journal Project is yours to use in the way that it best works for you. Week to week may look different and that's okay! We're not aiming for perfection here, doing a journal prompt isn't just something to check off our 'mindfulness' checklist. So be gentle with yourself as you navigate these journal prompts.

Let your intuition guide you and enjoy the practice of self-reflection.

Journaling Tips:

If you find yourself distracted when sitting down to write, minimize distractions. Turn off the TV, find a comfortable place, change into comfy clothes, and mute or turn off your phone. In such a fast moving world, this in itself can feel new, but I promise you, the benefits of spending some quiet moments with yourself far outweigh the short-term discomfort of turning within.

If it's helpful, start each journal practice with a free write, or dump list. Set the timer for 3-5 minutes and get anything out that is on your mind. This liberates us from our day, our to-do list, and running thought patterns, so we can focus on self-reflection.

Journaling can be a catalyst for deep healing and reflection. Like with any healing journey, if you find yourself processing things that feel harder than normal, remember you don't have to do it alone. Reach out to those who you trust in your life, or to a professional therapist or a coach whose mission aligns with your own.

Reflecting can be joyful, overwhelming, exciting, and intense all at once. If you need to take a break, and come back when you're feeling more present, be aware of your edge, and remember, you're your own best teacher. Remember, sometimes journaling reveals the truth of ourselves, but it can also reveal our insecurities, the ways in which we self-sabotage and the untrue inner narratives we tell ourselves.

So, as you journal, I invite you to use discernment between your truth and what you're telling yourself is true. Journaling is just as much about revealing your truths as it is questioning your perspective. Healing is found in the balance between self-reflecting and discerning what these reflections mean to you.

Happy Healing.

Month 1: Vision & Clarity

Let's begin with deepening our connection to our vision for this season of our lives. These journal prompts aim to help us find clarity around what we want to focus on, how we want to feel, who we want to spend time with, and ultimately who we want to grow into.

We often read about manifesting, or creating abundance in our lives, and it can feel like a concept that's hard to grasp. Simply put, manifesting is the action of calling into our minds our deepest desires. Once we are clear on our desires, we work to attain a feeling-state that we would feel if we already had our deepest desires in our lives. Calling in our desires is also most attainable when we reflect and act with gratitude. If we aren't able to feel and express gratitude for what we already have, how can we expect to call in more? So, throughout this month, continue returning to gratitude as the foundation of discovering the ways in which you want to fine-tune your vision for your life.

And lastly, part of creating clearer vision and clarity for our lives is to recognize what aspects of our lives are no longer working. It can be hard to build new dreams for ourselves, or enter new chapters in our lives, if we're holding on to life-phases or patterns that are no longer serving us. Let your life be reactive to these journal prompts. If you discover something about yourself or your life that you know needs an upgrade, bravely take the steps to change.

My hope for you is that each of these questions helps you to get closer to your most authentic self.



Month 1: Vision & Clarity



1. What are you hoping to work through in this journal challenge?
2. What are you currently grateful for?
3. Where in your life do you need to be more forgiving?
4. Where in your life do you need stronger boundaries?
5. How does anxiety play a role in your life?
6. Who are the people in your life that lift you up?
7. What do you need to do more of in your life right now?
8. What do you need to do less of in your life right now?
9. What are people not allowed to think of you?
10. Why do you want people to think of you?
11. When you think of this coming year, what do you hope to achieve?
12. What do you hope to feel this year?
13. Where in your life can you use more guidance?
14. Where in your life are you well-resourced?
15. Where in your life do you lack resources?
16. What areas of your life do you want to stay the same?
17. What areas of your life do you want to change?
18. What is your biggest goal for this winter season?
19. What strengths do you have that will help you to meet your goal?
20. What are you ready to let-go of?
21. What are you ready to let in?
22. What is your favorite part of each day?
23. What truths do you need to embody?
24. What is your deepest inner desire that you don't share with anyone?
25. When do you feel the most in your power?
26. How can you let more love in?
27. What qualities do you have that stand out?
28. Where do you need more clarity?
29. Where do you feel super clear and aligned?
30. What actions do you need to make your vision and clarity a reality?

Month 2: Grief & Shadow

Unless we're actively grieving a loved one or a lost relationship, grief can feel like a far away theme. But when we peel back the layers of our inner selves, we can find that there are still parts of ourselves left to heal, past heartbreaks still need to be processed, or patterns that are no longer serving us.

Grief is a natural process of being human. It is a part of the cycle of getting older: As we grow and evolve, the phases of our lives will evolve. We will out-grow friendships, let go of connections we once cherished, or lose people who we love. We can also grieve over the versions of ourselves that we no longer embody, or hopes for our life that didn't come to fruition. It can feel scary or shameful to look where grief is showing up in our lives, but processing and releasing our grief can be one of the most liberating ways we can heal.

Grief is a way into the shadow parts of ourselves. Our shadow self is also normal - it is literally an unhealed version of ourselves. It's the parts of ourselves that we may want to avoid. When we avoid our shadow, we keep ourselves in patterns that don't serve us, and potentially behave in ways that don't allow us to show up as our most connected selves. When we start the inner dialogue around these topics, we begin to heal and gain insight at the same time, ultimately allowing us to become the person we want to be.

During this month, utilize self-compassion whenever possible. Be gentle with yourself, and act with radical self-love, which means that you lead with acceptance and forgiveness around your feelings, your past self and how you are processing your inner-world. Meet yourself where you are, and trust in the process.

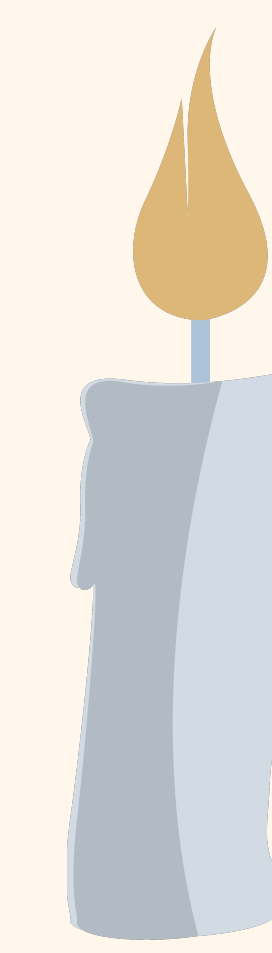


Month 2: Grief & Shadow



1. What are you currently experiencing sadness or grief around?
2. What were you taught about grief?
3. Where have you experienced grief in your life?
4. What are the parts of you that you often avoid?
5. How can you support yourself when you're experiencing sadness?
6. What and/or who brings your comfort?
7. What has felt like a loss at first, but then later became a new phase?
8. How is grief discussed in your family or your relationships?
9. How are loss and grief related?
10. What parts of you can you identify as your shadow self and what are you afraid would happen if you faced your inner demons?
11. What triggers you and where do these triggers stem from?
12. How does grief impact the way you show up in your relationships?
13. How can you tell when you're in your shadow self? What does your internal dialogue say? How do you behave?
14. When you are in your shadow, how do you show up for yourself and others?
15. When do you notice you abandon your inner child?
16. Where can you give your inner child more love and healing?
17. What family patterns do you feel stuck in, and want to release?
18. What in your life hasn't turned out the way you thought it would?
19. What is the biggest obstacle to your healing?
20. What aspects of yourself do you not want people to see or find out about?
21. What is your relationship to rejection?
22. What emotions do you tend to avoid or refuse to feel?
23. In what ways does self-sabotage come into play in your life?
24. What identities did you used to have that no longer serve you? (I.e. the starving artist, the hopeless romantic, the bad boy/girl)
25. Where are you safest to express emotions, and where are you the least safe?
26. How can you honor the parts of you that are unhealed?
27. How have you reacted to loss in the past?
28. What heartbreaks are you still holding on to?
29. How can you actively heal in your grieving process?
30. What does radical self-love and compassion look like for you around grief and your shadow?

Month 3: Self-Love & Compassion



At the root of all our human experience is love, so if we can root ourselves deeper into love and learn to show ourselves more compassion, we can truly achieve anything. Love is the foundation of our connection to others, the universe or our higher power, and our experience within. For some, self-love may feel like a foreign concept, so if self-love feels impossible, try starting with liking aspects of yourself, or even approaching yourself with a neutral point of view. Self love is a practice, it's something we will never master, so be gentle with yourself as you engage with these ideas instead of aiming for perfection.

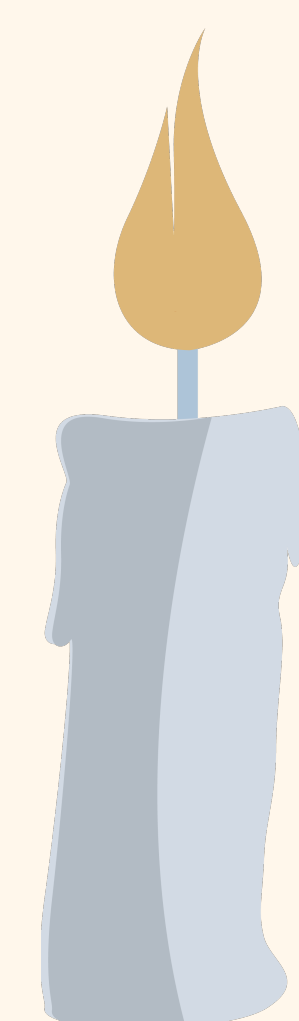
The practice of self-love starts with developing a language around self-compassion. Self-love is the way we show up for ourselves when things are easy and when things are hard. It requires supporting and nourishing ourselves, like our adult selves showing up for our inner child. This can look like noticing what our bodies and minds in a given moment, giving ourselves space and time to heal and process, or setting clear and strong boundaries to protect and keep ourselves safe. Compassionately supporting ourselves allows us to more easily navigate this tricky thing called life.

Compassion is rooted in love. In order to have self-compassion, we must provide ourselves with self-kindness. We are human, so of course we will slip into judgment or negative-self talk. It's about developing an awareness when we have slipped and reconnect with our humanity and empathy. Navigating these topics will help us to not only have a healthier relationship with ourselves, but it will also allow us to experience shifts in our thinking and overall self-confidence.

Let's utilize these journal prompts to show ourselves more love and more compassion.

Month 3: Self-Love & Compassion

1. What comes up for you when you think of self-love?
2. How does it feel to express love for yourself?
3. What are the emotions you desire to feel that you're currently not feeling?
4. What would your ideal day look like?
5. What are some actions or activities that you know make you feel nurtured?
6. What fears hold you back from stepping into your power?
7. What would life look like if you loved yourself more easily?
8. Where in life is it easy to show self-compassion and where does it feel hard?
9. How can you commit to showing compassion for yourself daily?
10. What can you appreciate about yourself physically?
11. What can you appreciate about your personality?
12. What thoughts, or beliefs about yourself can you let go as an act of self-love?
13. What do you need to forgive yourself about?
14. What does bravery mean to you?
15. What areas of your life are you trying to control? What would happen if you stopped?
16. What is a compliment that you have a hard time accepting?
17. What are five ways you know put you in a better mood?
18. What are you currently worrying about? What would you have more time for if you stopped worrying?
19. What does showing up for yourself look like right now?
20. How does it feel to tell yourself "I love you?"
21. What insecurities cloud your mind?
22. What words of advice or encouragement do you need to hear right now?
23. What is your relationship like with your own self-trust?
24. Where do you notice your self-judgment showing up the most?
25. What are you most passionate about in your life right now?
26. When are you the most proud of yourself?
27. What does your body need right now? What does your soul need?
What does your mind need?
28. What sets your soul on fire?
29. What can you do to actionably bring in more peace in the next month?
Take a vacation? Plan more alone time? Plan it out.
30. When are you the most aligned with yourself?



Continuing Your Healing:

This is just the beginning of The Journal Project. If you found the winter reflections to be helpful, stay tuned for more coming down the pipeline in the future. If you are inspired by journal prompts, I encourage you to continue to write and dedicate time to journaling beyond the prompts in this Ebook.

If you are interested in taking a deeper dive into the themes that came up while journaling, I offer coaching to clients internationally, and therapy to those who live in New York state. Working 1-on-1 with a professional can fast-track healing and provide a safe container to what you're processing.

The best way to see if we'd be a good fit is to **schedule an intro call** with me so I can hear about your healing goals, and share about how I work. As a coach and therapist, I tailor sessions to what each client is going through, whether you're discovering more about yourself, finding ways to let go of beliefs that are no longer serving you, or learning to trust yourself and your desires.

I also share affordable resources and workshops on my **Instagram**.

Thank you so much for trusting me to lead you through these prompts.

Happy healing,
Erica

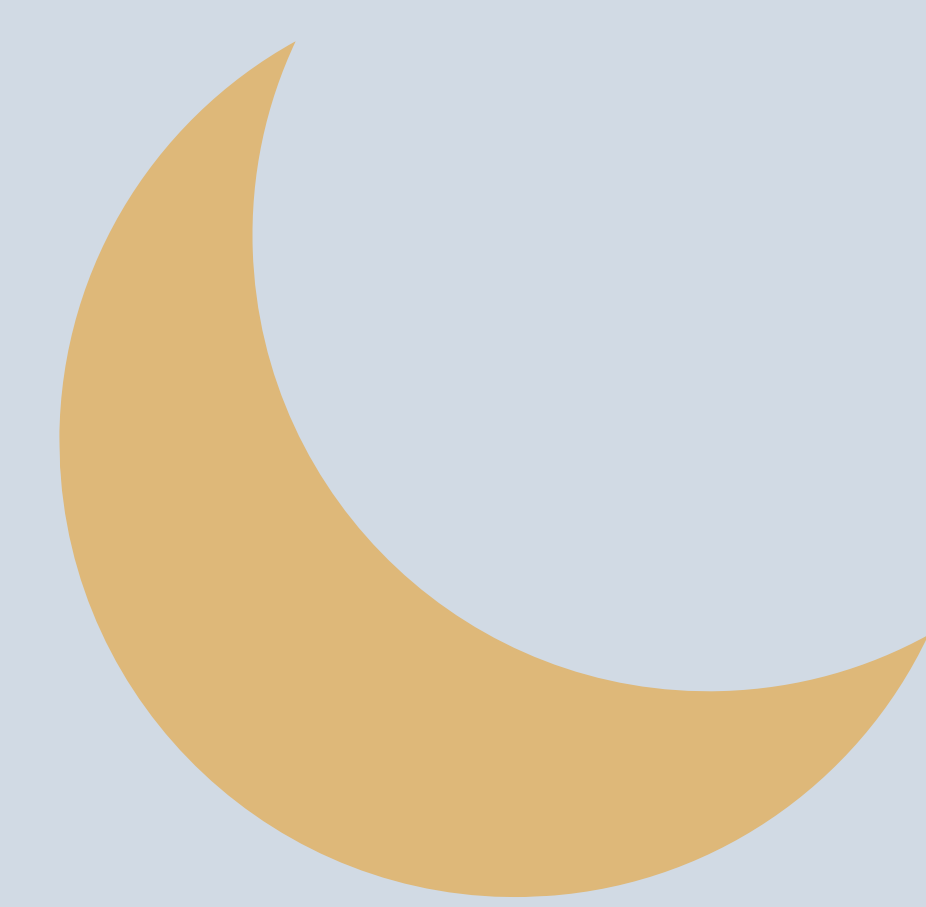


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