



Creating Space to Breathe

Holding space for yourself while
honoring connection this season

6 Prompt Photo Journal

Home

Midlife

FACTOR

Process

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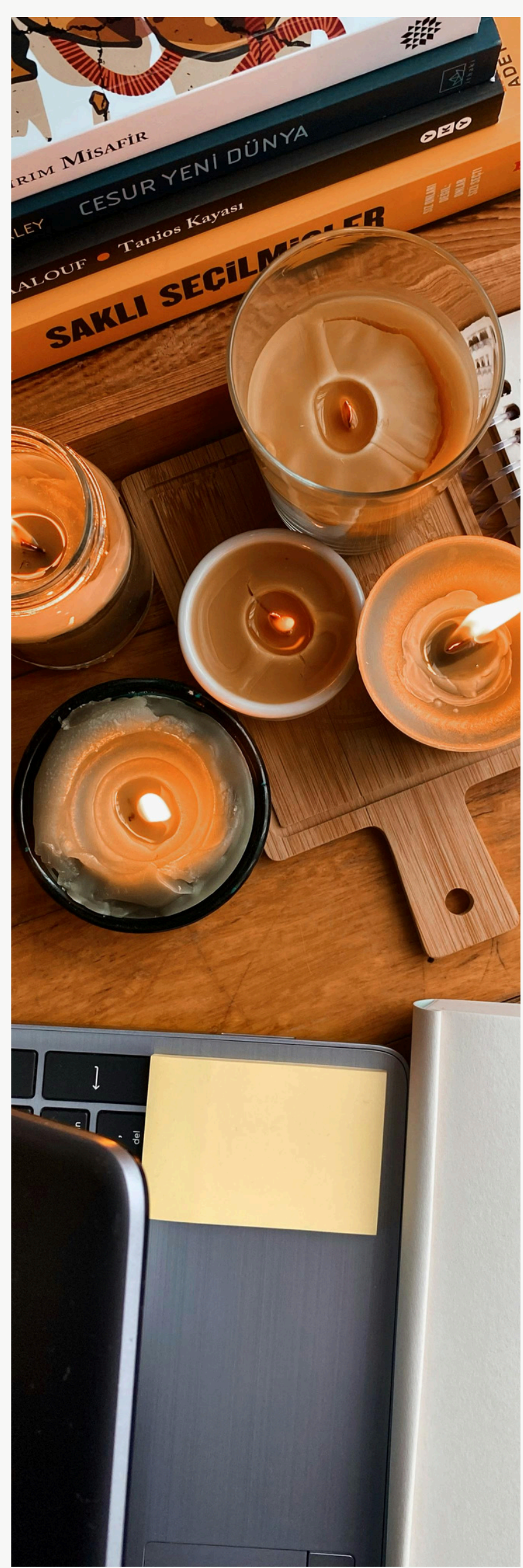
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Master Chronicle

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My Journey

My journey through midlife began at the end. I left my role as a school administrator after many years as an elementary educator; burned out and ready to pursue my dream of university teaching. My doctoral program focused on transformative learning (studying how knowledge could reshape our inner worlds) while I was simultaneously questioning my own path forward.

Starting during the pandemic, I had extra time at home and rediscovered my love of photography and reflective writing. I found in these practices not just creative expression but unexpected healing. Through quiet observation and honest reflection, I started to really see myself and recognize my own value. Each time I selected an image and/or wrote about experience, I learned about my past and present self in a way that helped me build my future.

As a full-time education lecturer, mother of three teenagers, wife, and dog mom, I understand midlife's challenges. But it wasn't until my research led me to adult development that I began to understand the psychology behind my struggle. What I was experiencing wasn't just personal, it was a natural stage that many men and women go through. There is more to the menopause journey for women than body and brain changes. To be right with ourselves, we need to integrate our past, present, and future selves by letting go, building, reconnecting, and exploring. Yes, all while our bodies and brains “upgrade.” We can do this!

The Photo-Journal process emerged from my research methodology. I knew that in order to help participants feel comfortable sharing an experience that required vulnerability, strength, and courage I would need to help them feel in control and clear about the process. Rather than interview alone, I asked participants to curate a series of photos that represented their experience, write about what came up for them in a journal, and only after that process did we sit down and talk together. I'm asking you to try this process, but instead of interview you, I developed an analysis process that helps you hold that conversation with yourself so you can get the most out of the process.

I believe that when we bring creativity, reflection, and community together, we create something stronger and more beautiful than any of us could fashion alone. Thank you for trying this practice for yourself.

Dr. Kerri Fair

Dr. Kerri Fair

Founder of Quiet Alchemy Space

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Midlife Connection



GOAL

This mini journey offers a taste of how creativity can illuminate the path forward during times of change, helping women reconnect with past joys, understand their present circumstances, and open themselves to future possibilities with renewed purpose and clarity.



MIDLIFE CONNECTION

The Quiet Alchemy Photo-Journal process uniquely supports women in midlife by creating intentional space for self-connection and understanding. By combining visual awareness, reflective writing, and analytical insight, it honors the non-linear nature of women's growth while integrating intuition, emotion, and wisdom.

This approach produces not only meaningful insights but also a practical framework that serves as evidence of inner knowing. The process validates women's midlife experiences in a culture that often minimizes them, offering just enough structure to prevent overwhelm while maintaining the creative freedom needed for authentic self-expression.

Through selecting or capturing up to three photos, responding to guided prompts, and extracting key words for ongoing reference, we can navigate transitions with greater awareness, purpose, and connection to our deeper truth.

The FACTOR framework provides the foundation through Feel, Accept, Creativity, Take Action, Optimism, and Reflect/Revise ensuring each photo-journal exercise builds toward sustainable transformation rather than momentary insight alone.



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FACTOR Framework

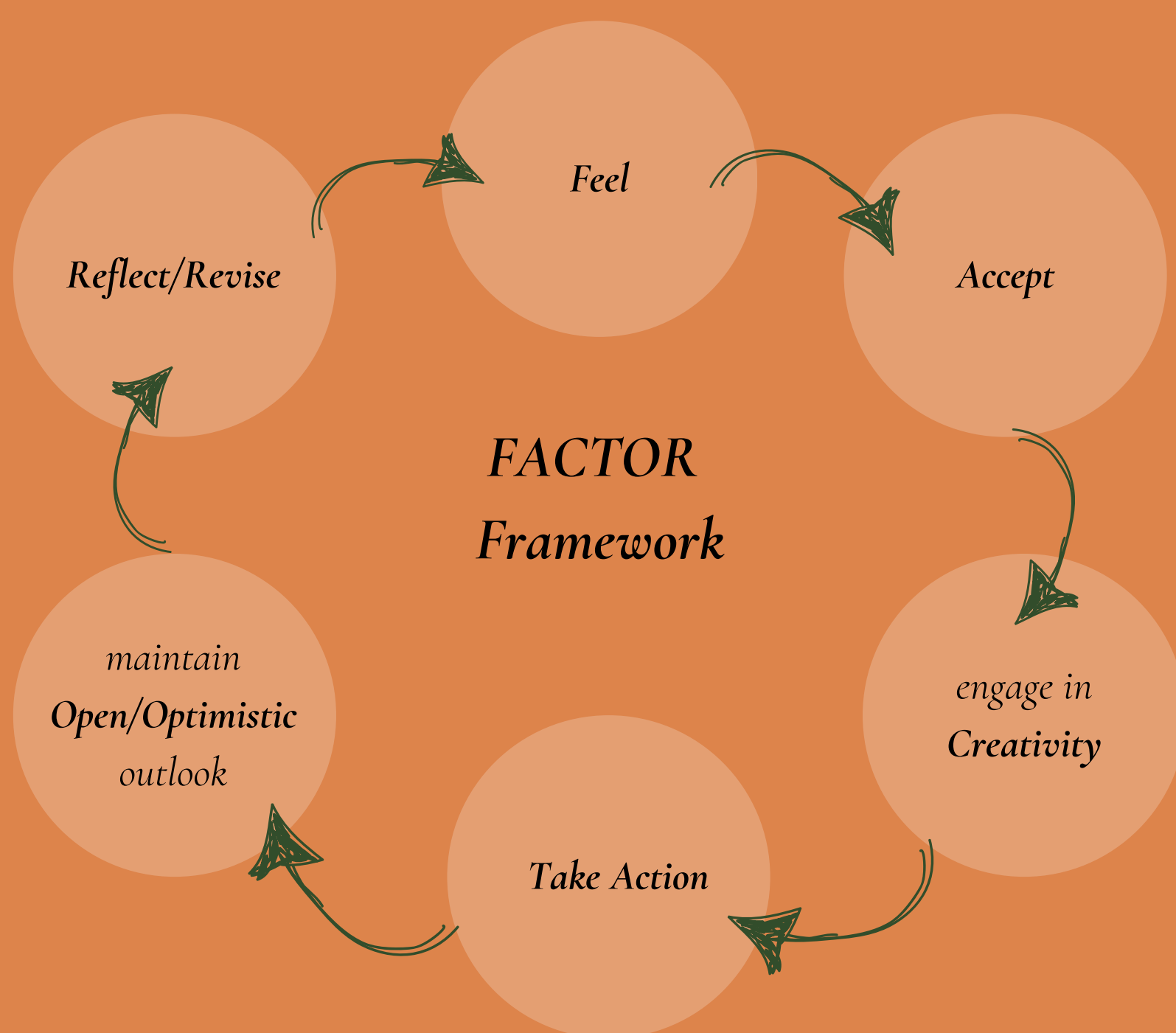


FACTOR Framework for Midlife Transformation

The FACTOR model is a comprehensive framework designed to support women during the midlife transition through six interconnected components:

- Feel - acknowledging emotions that may have been neglected
- Accept - recognizing current reality and what can be controlled
- Create - engaging in creative practices like photography/sketching to gain new insights
- Take Action - moving from contemplation to concrete steps
- Maintain Optimism - cultivating resilience strategically
- Reflect/Revise - structured reflection through journaling and analysis to support positive personal growth

This cyclical process creates an upward spiral of growth, with each component strengthening the others. Feeling provides authentic starting points, acceptance establishes realistic expectations, creativity unlocks innovative solutions, action builds momentum, optimism sustains progress through challenges, and reflection/revision integrates learning for continued growth.





The Process



THE PROCESS

Essential Items

Your phone (camera capability)

A journal or notebook (digital notes app works too)

Quiet time (15-30 minutes per session)

The Three-Step Process

Step 1: Receive the Prompt

Each prompt is designed as an invitation to notice, not a task to complete perfectly. Read it slowly and let it settle. There's no right or wrong response—only your authentic observation.

Step 2: Select Your Images (Choose 1-3).

Option A: Use Photos You Already Have

- Browse your phone's photo gallery
- Look through old albums or digital files

Option B: Find Images Online (Respectfully)

- Use free stock photo sites (Unsplash, Pexels, Pixabay)
- Search museum collections or art databases
- Always note the source for your own reference
- Focus on images that evoke feeling rather than literal interpretation

Option C: Take Fresh Photos

- Step outside with your phone
- Look around your home with new eyes
- Capture moments, objects, light, shadows
- Don't worry about technical quality—focus on what draws you

Step 3: Write and Reflect

Observe (5-10 minutes)

- Look at your chosen image(s) without judgment
- Write what you notice: colors, shapes, feelings, memories
- Let your mind wander—there's no agenda here

Explore (10-15 minutes) Write response to the prompt literally, or just write what came to mind when selecting the photo.

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Phase 1: The Steps

1. Complete Read - Read your journal entry from start to finish without interruption (reading aloud is recommended, followed by an optional silent reading)
2. Word Harvest - Scan through the entry and circle any words that feel significant or resonate with you (no limit on how many words you can circle in this step)
3. Word Distillation - Review all your circled words and narrow them down to just 3-5 key words that feel most meaningful



Phase 2: Pattern Recognition and Documentation

1. Individual Entry Record - For each of your 3-5 key words, write down a brief sentence explaining why that particular word feels significant to you
2. Master Chronicle - Maintain a comprehensive table or spreadsheet (presumably in the workbook) where you'll record these key words and insights

This process helps you extract the most meaningful insights from your journal entries and track patterns in your thoughts and feelings over time as you progress through the mini journey workbook.



Prompt 1

FEEL

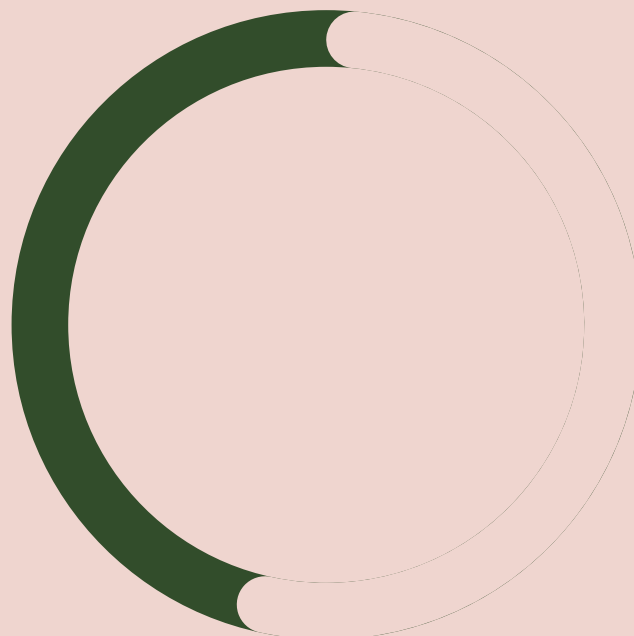
Emotional Awareness

PROMPT 1



Goal: Set an intention for today's work, what do you hope to get out of this process?

Prompt:
Capture a moment or space where you felt
most like yourself this week.



What you think might come up?

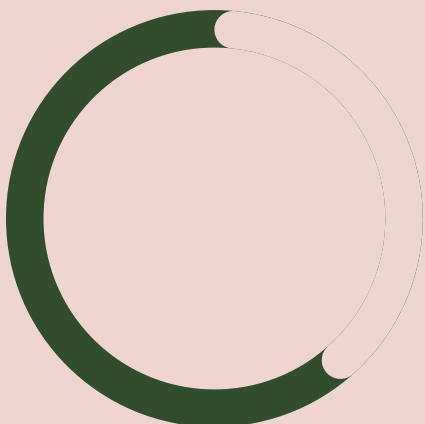


Photo Curation

Insert previously taken photos or take new photos that connect to the prompt and drag or paste into the blank space. If desired, write a few words that come to mind when you observe the photos, or connected to why you chose them for the prompt.

[illegible]

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JOURNAL I

Respond to the prompt in a free thinking journal format:

Let yourself write without censoring. Then, respond to what feelings arose and what they mean to you.

Prompt: What does this image reveal about what you need more of in your life right now?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has rounded corners at the top and bottom edges. The background behind the paper is dark grey.

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01

Complete Read - Read your journal entry from start to finish without interruption (reading aloud is recommended, followed by an optional silent reading)

02

Word Harvest - Scan through the entry and circle any words that feel significant or resonate with you (no limit on how many words you can circle in this step)

03

Word Distillation - Review all your circled words and narrow them down to just 3-5 key words that feel most meaningful

04

Individual Entry Record - For each of your 3-5 key words, write down a brief sentence explaining why that particular word feels significant to you

05

Master Chronicle - Maintain a comprehensive table or spreadsheet (presumably in the workbook) where you'll record these key words and insights.



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Word Distillation

★ Select up to 5 words from your word harvest and list them to the right. Then, write a brief sentence explaining why each feels significant to you.



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Prompt 2

Accept

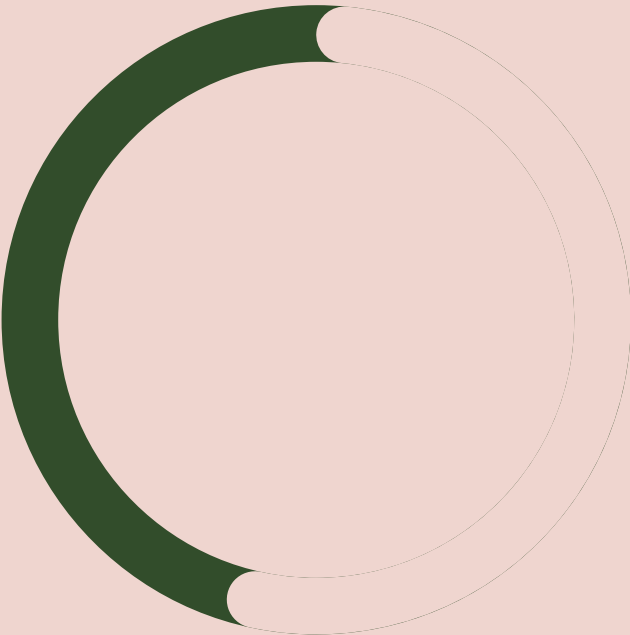
Control & Realistic Expectations

PROMPT 2



Goal: Set an intention for today's work, what do you hope to get out of this process?

Prompt:
Find photos that represent a "should" you're ready to release.



What you think might come up?

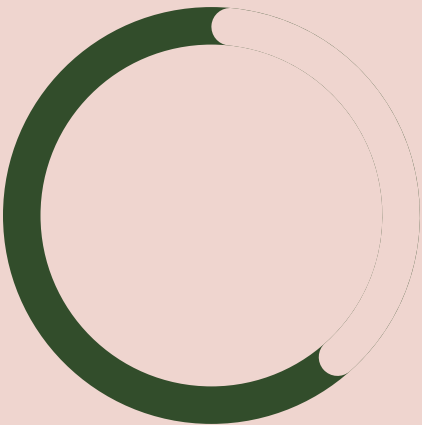


Photo Curation

Insert previously taken photos or take new photos that connect to the prompt and drag or paste into the blank space. If desired, write a few words that come to mind when you observe the photos, or connected to why you chose them for the prompt.

[illegible]

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JOURNAL 2

Respond to the prompt in a free thinking journal format:

Let yourself write without censoring. Then, respond to what feelings arose and what they mean to you.

Prompt: What would it feel like to let this expectation go, and what is actually within your control here?

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JOURNAL ANALYSIS

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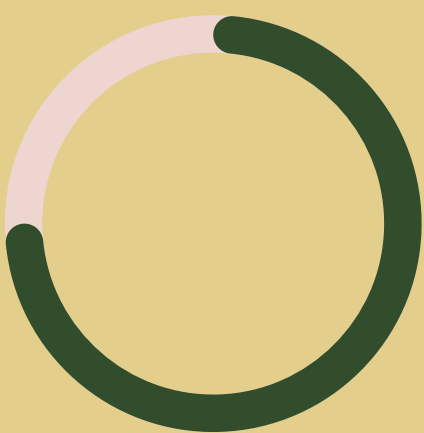
Reflect

Prompt 3

Creativity

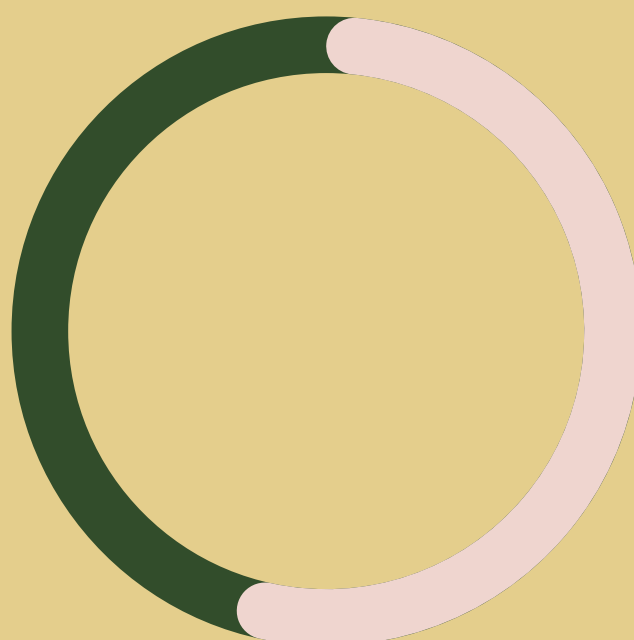
Expanding Possibilities

PROMPT 3

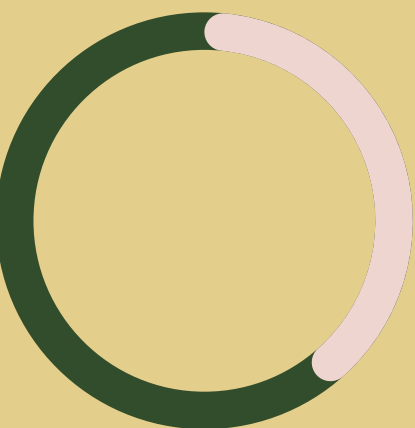


Goal: Set an intention for today's work, what do you hope to get out of this process?

Prompt:
Show what "breathing room" could look like in your daily environment.



What you think might come up?



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Photo Curation

Insert previously taken photos or take new photos that connect to the prompt and drag or paste into the blank space. If desired, write a few words that come to mind when you observe the photos, or connected to why you chose them for the prompt.

[illegible]

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JOURNAL 3

Respond to the prompt in a free thinking journal format:

What small change could create more of this spaciousness in your week?

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JOURNAL ANALYSIS

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04

Individual Entry Record - For each of your 3-5 key words, write down a brief sentence explaining why that particular word feels significant to you

05

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Word Distillation

★ Select up to 5 words from your word harvest and list them to the right. Then, write a brief sentence explaining why each feels significant to you.



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Prompt 4

Take Action

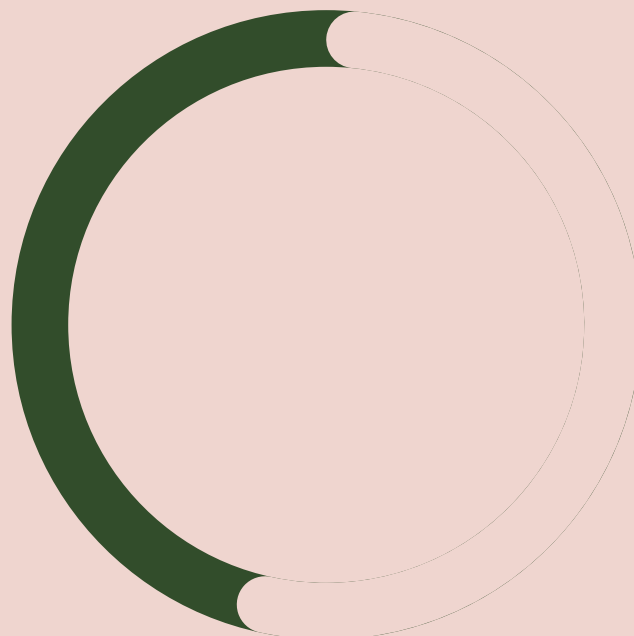
Moving Forward

PROMPT 4



Goal: Set an intention for today's work, what do you hope to get out of this process?

Prompt:
Photograph evidence of one boundary
you've set or space you've claimed for
yourself.



What you think might come up?

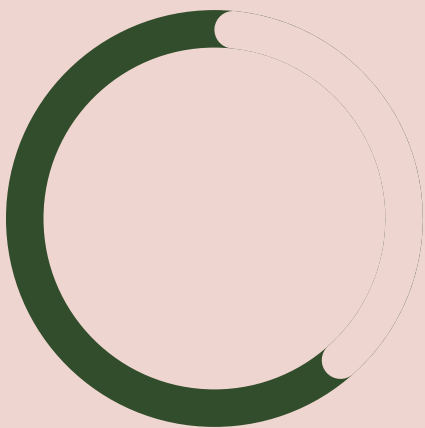


Photo Curation

Insert previously taken photos or take new photos that connect to the prompt and drag or paste into the blank space. If desired, write a few words that come to mind when you observe the photos, or connected to why you chose them for the prompt.

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JOURNAL 4

Respond to the prompt in a free thinking journal format:

Let yourself write without censoring. Then, respond to what feelings arose and what they mean to you.

Prompt: What next step will help you build on this act of self-honoring?

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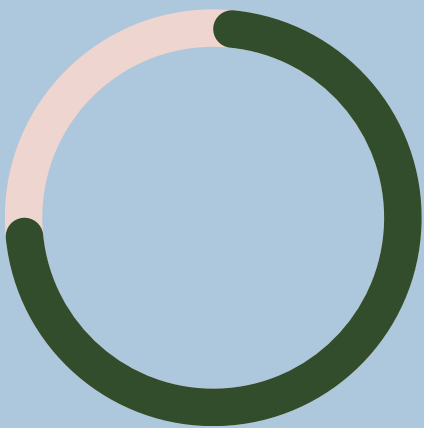
Reflect

Prompt 5

Open/Optimistic

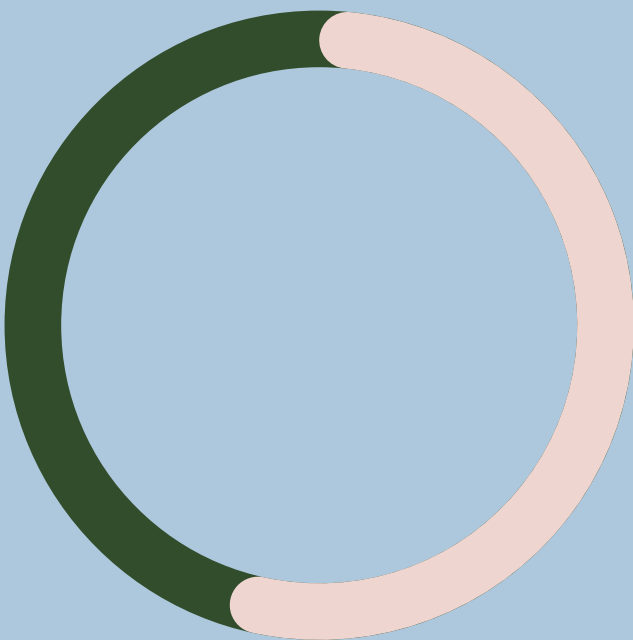
Hope and Resilience

PROMPT 5

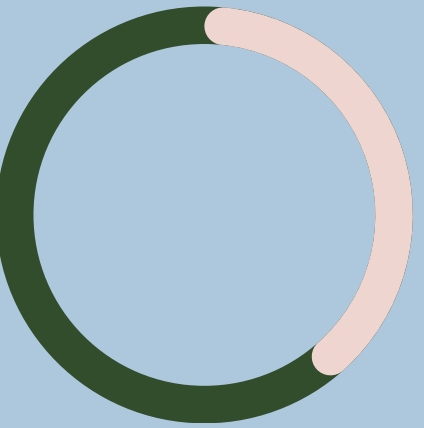


Goal: Set an intention for today's work, what do you hope to get out of this process?

Prompt:
What in your life right now makes you feel hopeful about honoring your own needs?



What you think might come up?



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Photo Curation

Insert previously taken photos or take new photos that connect to the prompt and drag or paste into the blank space. If desired, write a few words that come to mind when you observe the photos, or connected to why you chose them for the prompt.

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JOURNAL 5

Respond to the prompt in a free thinking journal format:

What will this image remind you of when things feel difficult?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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JOURNAL ANALYSIS

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Individual Entry Record - For each of your 3-5 key words, write down a brief sentence explaining why that particular word feels significant to you

05

Master Chronicle - Maintain a comprehensive table or spreadsheet (presumably in the workbook) where you'll record these key words and insights.



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Word Distillation

★ Select up to 5 words from your word harvest and list them to the right. Then, write a brief sentence explaining why each feels significant to you.



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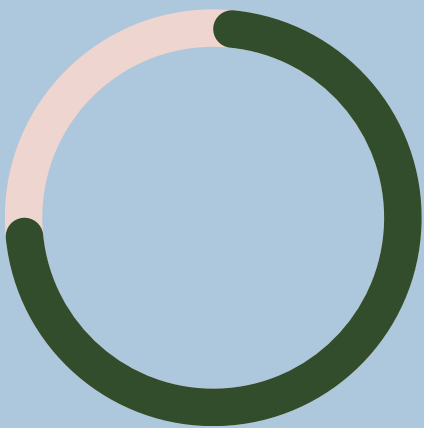
Reflect

Prompt 6

Reflect/Revise

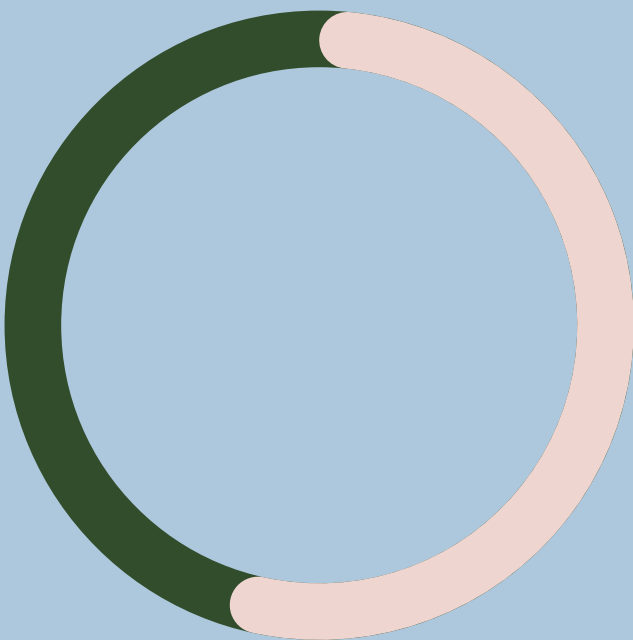
Review and Adaptation

PROMPT 6

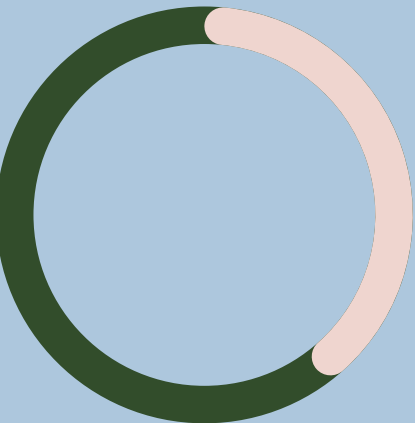


Goal: Set an intention for today's work, what do you hope to get out of this process?

Prompt:
Capture something that shows how you want to feel during this season.



What you think might come up?



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Photo Curation

Insert previously taken photos or take new photos that connect to the prompt and drag or paste into the blank space. If desired, write a few words that come to mind when you observe the photos, or connected to why you chose them for the prompt.

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JOURNAL 6

Respond to the prompt in a free thinking journal format:

Looking back at all six weeks, what is your authentic voice telling you about moving forward?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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JOURNAL ANALYSIS

01

Complete Read - Read your journal entry from start to finish without interruption (reading aloud is recommended, followed by an optional silent reading)

02

Word Harvest - Scan through the entry and circle any words that feel significant or resonate with you (no limit on how many words you can circle in this step)

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Word Distillation - Review all your circled words and narrow them down to just 3-5 key words that feel most meaningful

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Individual Entry Record - For each of your 3-5 key words, write down a brief sentence explaining why that particular word feels significant to you

05

Master Chronicle - Maintain a comprehensive table or spreadsheet (presumably in the workbook) where you'll record these key words and insights.



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Word Distillation

★ Select up to 5 words from your word harvest and list them to the right. Then, write a brief sentence explaining why each feels significant to you.



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Master Chronicle



MASTER CHRONICLE (PG 1)

Comprehensive Word List - A second page for your word list has been included in case you need more space.



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MASTER CHRONICLE (PG 2)

Comprehensive Word List



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REFLECTION

Now that you have worked through the full process. Look back over the words that you curated over the six prompts. Are there repeated words? When you look at the full list, what comes to mind? Record your thoughts here:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

What will you do with this new information or insight? Use this space to create a simple goal. Start with “I will...”





THANK YOU

Photography gives us starting places for deeper exploration, writing creates space where thoughts can settle and emerge, and analysis helps us articulate the wisdom that surfaces in that quiet reflection. I've found there's something grounding in this process of seeing, feeling, and naming our experiences—perhaps because it mirrors the ancient practice of women gathering to share stories and witness each other's truth.

In the coming weeks, I'll be sharing additional prompt series through my YouTube channel and Substack, building toward comprehensive courses where we'll dive deeper into this process over 15 and 30 days. The FACTOR methodology will guide us through sustained practice, helping you develop the skills to navigate any transition with greater clarity and confidence.

Until then, may you continue noticing what captures your attention, honor your natural rhythms, and remain open to the insights waiting to emerge through your own reflective practice.

Walking this journey with you,
Kerri



www.quietalchemy.com



kerrifair@midlifesparkle.net



[@quietalchemyspace](https://www.instagram.com/quietalchemyspace)

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