

LEARNING TO *Process and Release*

Emotional pain has a way of piling up when it isn't given a place to go. Hurtful words, unresolved moments, and heavy memories can stay stuck inside, quietly affecting how we think, feel, and respond to the world. Carrying this weight for too long can leave you feeling overwhelmed, tense, or emotionally exhausted.

The Unburdening Jar is a gentle practice designed to help you externalize what you've been holding inside. By writing down painful thoughts, experiences, or emotions and placing them into the jar, you give yourself permission to set them down—even if only for a moment. This exercise isn't about forcing forgiveness or "moving on." It's about acknowledging what hurts and choosing not to carry it all alone.

Over time, this practice can help create emotional space, reduce internal pressure, and remind you that you are allowed to release what no longer serves your healing.

Identifying
WHAT I'M FEELING

Date _____

Emotions that I think I might be feeling:

Color where you are feeling these sensations

Colors:

Notes:

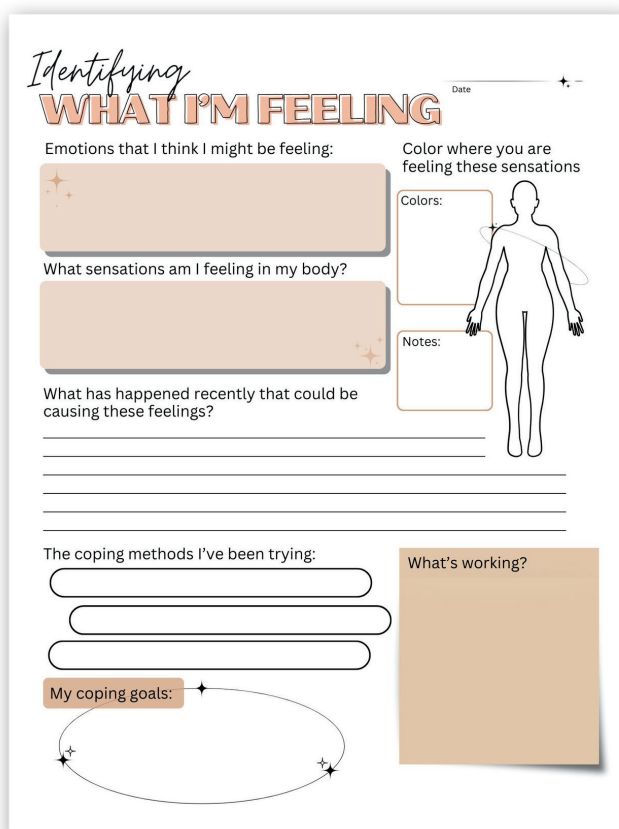
What sensations am I feeling in my body?

What has happened recently that could be causing these feelings?

The coping methods I've been trying:

My coping goals:

What's working?



THE UNBURDENING JAR EXERCISE

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Decorate Your Jar

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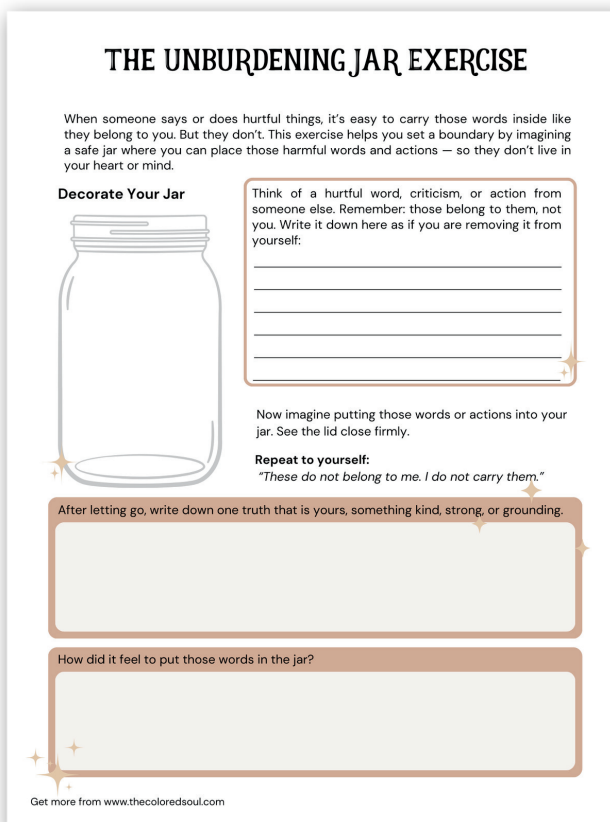
Now imagine putting those words or actions into your jar. See the lid close firmly.

Repeat to yourself:
"These do not belong to me. I do not carry them."

After letting go, write down one truth that is yours, something kind, strong, or grounding.

How did it feel to put those words in the jar?

Get more from www.thecoloredsoul.com



LEARNING TO FORGIVE YOURSELF

It's important to understand that it was not your fault that you were abused. In many abusive relationships, the victim of abuse is made to be responsible for many things that were/are not their fault. So it is common for victims to feel responsible for the abuse that was done to them, especially if their abuser constantly accuses the victim of being responsible for the abuse being done to them.

Sometimes, you might blame yourself or feel like you should have done something differently. But the truth is, the person who hurt you is the one responsible, not you. Forgiving yourself helps you let go of those heavy feelings of guilt and shame. It's a way of telling yourself that you deserve kindness and compassion, just like anyone else. When you forgive yourself, you can start to heal and move forward, focusing on building a brighter future instead of being held back by the past. Remember, you are strong and deserving of a life free from blame and self-judgment.

This activity will help you work out your feelings of guilt and process where they might be coming from and to help you release the guilt you've been holding onto.

FORGIVING MYSELF

I'm feel guilty for

Why am I feeling guilty for this?

Is it possible that this is not my responsibility?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Am I holding onto responsibility that I shouldn't be?
☐ Yes ☐ No

How does this makes me feel?

What would self-forgiveness look like for me?

How can I show myself kindness today?

How will my life improve by releasing this guilt?

Holding onto guilt can keep your body in a constant state of stress, keeping you from healing and having many adverse reactions. That stress of holding onto guilt can weaken your immune system, cause sleeping issues, and make you sick more often. Learning to let go of misplaced guilt can help you mentally and physically.

It is not your fault for the abuse that was done to you, regardless of how prepared or educated you were about toxic relationships, we sometimes buy into lies and manipulation when we are expecting the best out of a person, and that is not our fault.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

When we've been held responsible for far more than what was ours to look after, many of us tend to continue this unhealthy habit well on into our adult lives, it's exhausting to hold our own burdens, let alone someone else's. When we've been trained to pick up every responsibility to protect ourselves, to make sure things get done, or even just to survive, it becomes difficult to recognize what is really *not ours*.

Being able to recognize where you end and another begins is the foundation for being able to set healthy boundaries.

This exercise helps you separate true accountability from false responsibility; learning to let go of the burdens that were never yours. It's a gentle way to understand that forgiveness doesn't mean taking the blame; it means freeing yourself from it. Think about a situation that still causes you guilt, shame, or emotional weight.

WHAT'S MINE TO CARRY

My responsibility

What belongs to me?

Their responsibility

What belongs back in their hands?

Shared Space

Have I mistaken survival responses (like freezing, fawning, or people-pleasing) for "bad behavior"?

Repeat this mantra:
"I release what isn't mine to carry. I take responsibility for what's truly mine, and that is enough."

Take your time. Honesty here brings freedom, not judgment.

Write examples in each section:

Their Responsibility: Choices they made, words they said, actions they took that caused harm.

My Responsibility: Your choices, reactions, or boundaries that you can take ownership of — without self-blame.

Shared Space: Mutual misunderstandings, moments where both people contributed unintentionally.

Journaling is important for victims of abuse because it offers a safe space to express your feelings and thoughts. When you've been through abuse, you might feel like you can't talk about what happened or how you feel. Writing in a journal lets you let out all those feelings without fear of judgment. It can help you make sense of your experiences and understand your emotions better. Journaling can also be a way to track your healing journey, showing you how far you've come over time. It's a tool that empowers you to reclaim your voice and your story, which can be very healing when you've been through abuse.

in everyday situations can help you move toward a more positive and more vibrant life.

Print as many
copies as
needed

FORGIVING SOMEONE ELSE

Forgiveness is when you decide to let go of anger or revenge towards someone who hurt you. It's not about saying what they did is okay, but it's about freeing yourself from negative feelings. Forgiving is more for your own peace and health than for the other person. It can make you feel better emotionally, help your body stay healthier, and improve your relationships. To forgive, you need to recognize and analyze your feelings, decide you want to forgive, try to understand the other person's side, and then let go of the grudge. Moving on helps you focus on the present and future instead of the past. There are many benefits for your mental health to forgiving someone, and there is a high stigma to do it. However, forgiving takes time, and it's okay to do it at your own pace, it is also okay to never be able to forgive someone.

Forgiveness is...

- ✔ **Forgiveness is...** letting go of resentment, anger, and hostility toward someone who treated you poorly, even though you are justified in having these feelings.
- ✔ **Forgiveness is...** recognizing the wrongdoer as a person and treating them respectfully despite what they did.
- ✔ **Forgiveness is...** a chance to amend a relationship that was damaged if you choose to do so.
- ✔ **Forgiveness is...** an opportunity to free yourself from past hurt and pain, and to grow from past mistakes.
- ✔ **Forgiveness is...** a process that can start at any time. You can even forgive a person who is no longer in your life.
- ✔ **Forgiveness is...** an opportunity to heal. Forgiveness can reduce symptoms of trauma, anger, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, it can increase hope and self-esteem.
- ✔ **Forgiveness is...** a personal decision that only you can make for yourself. No one can make you forgive another person.

Forgiveness is not...

- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** condoning, approving of, or excusing what happened.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** forgetting how you were wronged, or pretending like nothing happened.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** an agreement to continue a relationship as it was. After forgiving someone, you can choose to resume, modify, or end the relationship.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** simply saying "I forgive you" without meaning it. You can forgive without ever saying so.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** something you do for the other person. Forgiveness is for you.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** getting even or getting revenge, which might feel good at the moment, but unlike forgiveness, it does not resolve anger and resentment.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** something that can be forced. Just because you want to forgive doesn't mean that forgiveness has been achieved.

LEARNING TO *Let Go*

This exercise, which we'll call the "Letter of Release," provides a safe space for you to express your feelings, thoughts, and words that you wish you could say to your abuser. It's a step towards reclaiming your power and voice, even if the letter is never sent.

Letter of Release Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is not to communicate with your abuser but to help you process your emotions, find closure, and take a significant step forward in your healing journey. It's about letting go of the pain and reclaiming your inner strength.

How to Do It:

Find a Safe and Comfortable Space: Choose a place where you feel secure and undisturbed. Ensure you have enough time and privacy for this process.

Write the Letter: Address the letter to your abuser, but remember, you won't be sending it. Allow yourself to express all the things you've wanted to say. You can talk about how their actions affected you, what you wish they knew, and how you are moving beyond the hurt. This is your moment to voice everything, unfiltered and unapologetically.

Embrace Your Emotions: It's natural to experience a range of emotions during this process. Allow yourself to feel them fully; this is part of the healing.

Letting Go Ritual: Once you've finished writing, prepare to let go of the letter. You might want to read it aloud in a private setting as a form of acknowledgment of your feelings and experiences. Then, when you're ready, tear the letter into pieces and safely burn it. As you watch the letter burn, envision the hold your abuser has had on you diminishing, making room for peace, healing, and renewal.

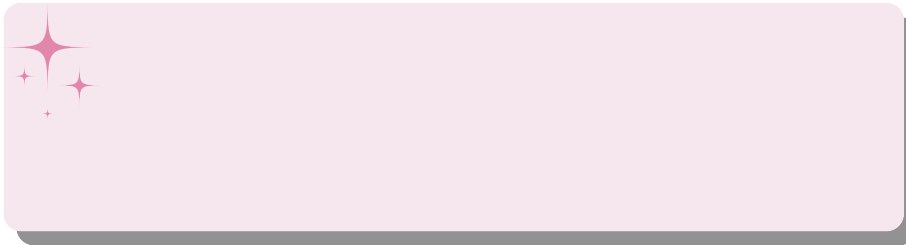
Reflect and Comfort Yourself: After the ritual, take some time to reflect on the experience. You might feel a mixture of emotions, from relief to sadness, which is entirely normal. Consider engaging in a self-care activity afterward to comfort and take care of yourself.

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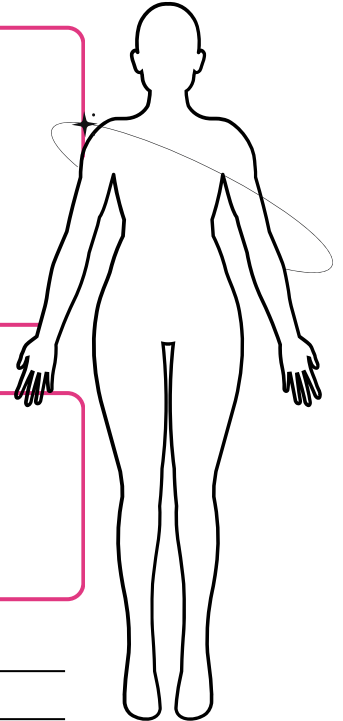
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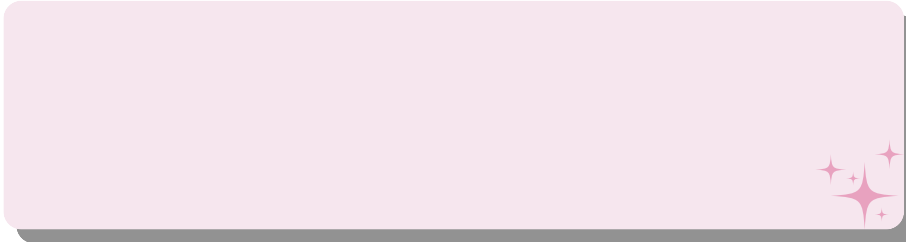
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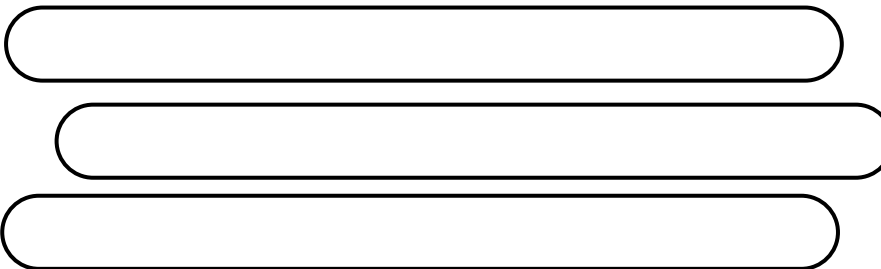


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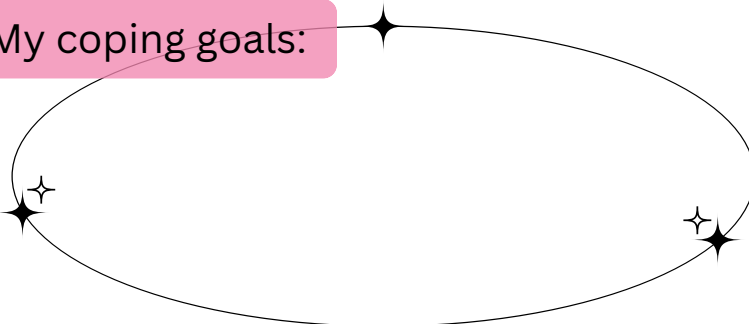


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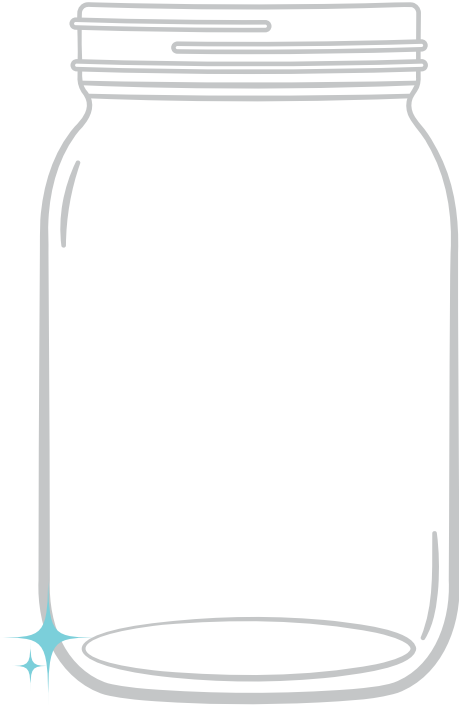
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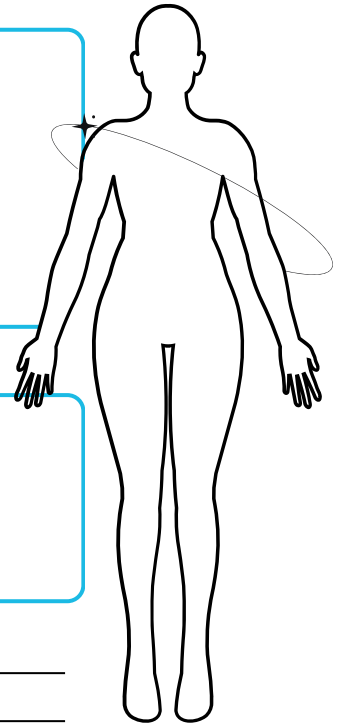
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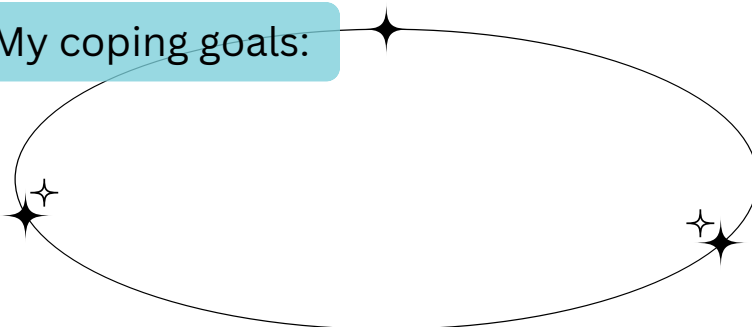
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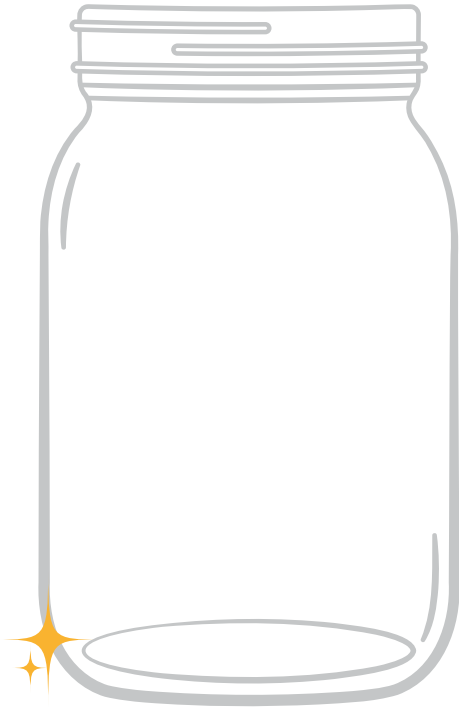


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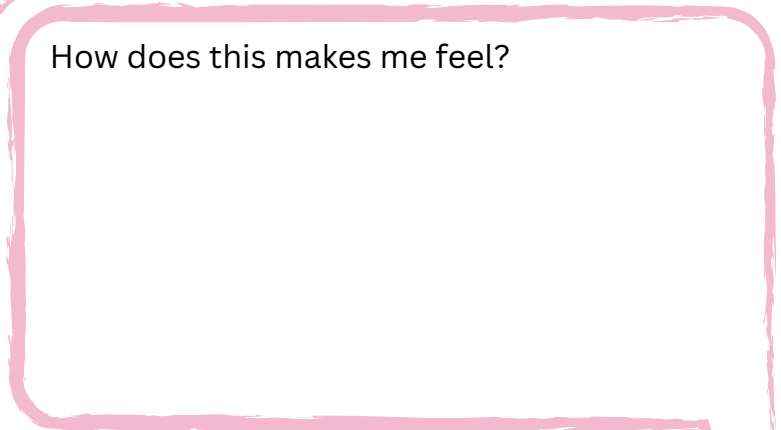
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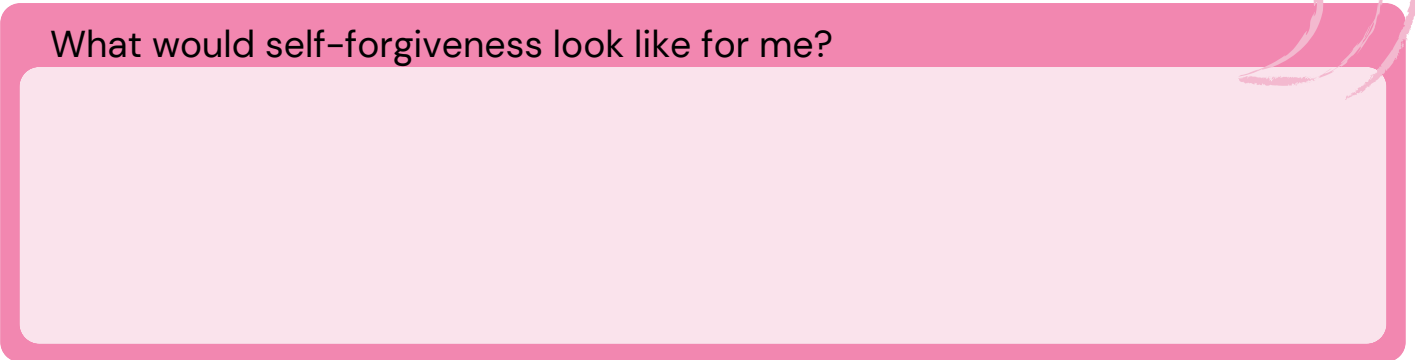
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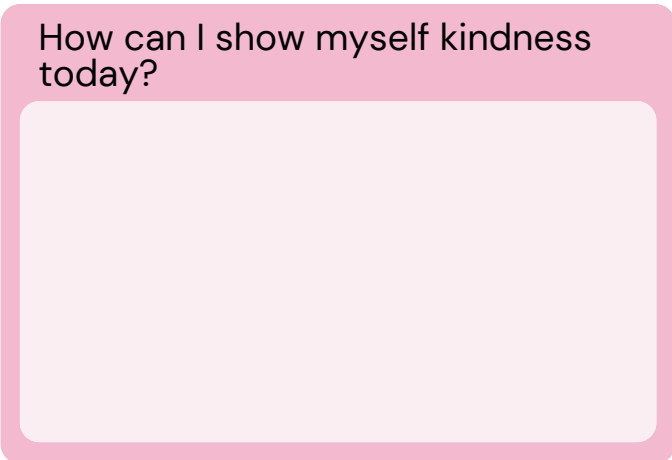
How does this makes me feel?



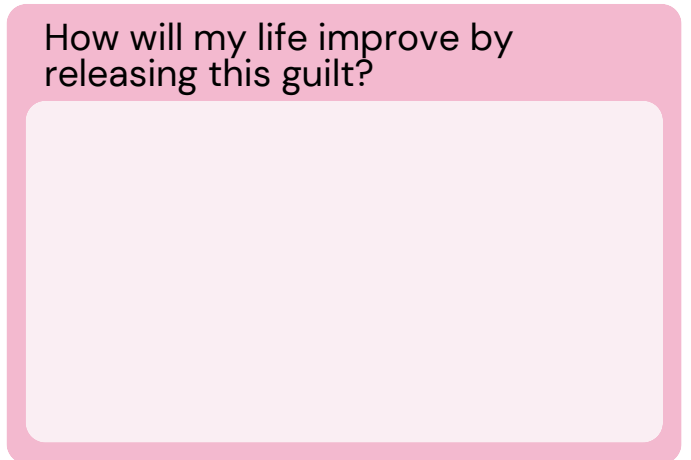
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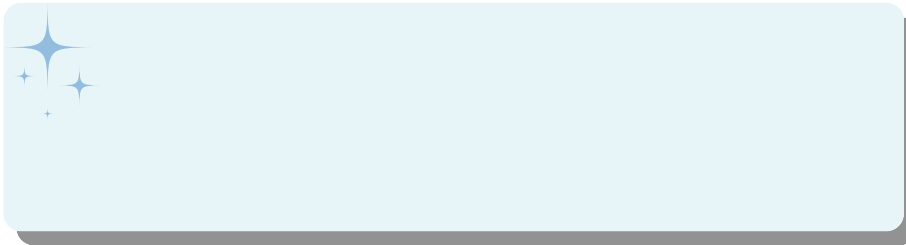
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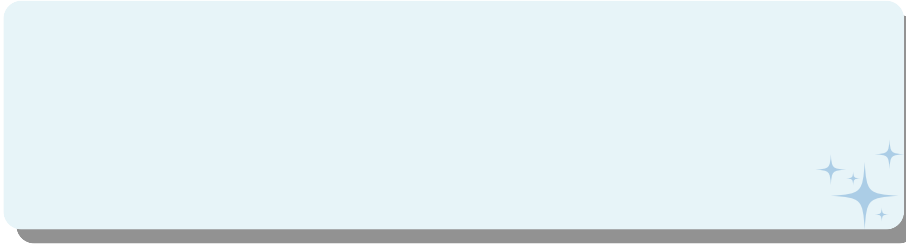
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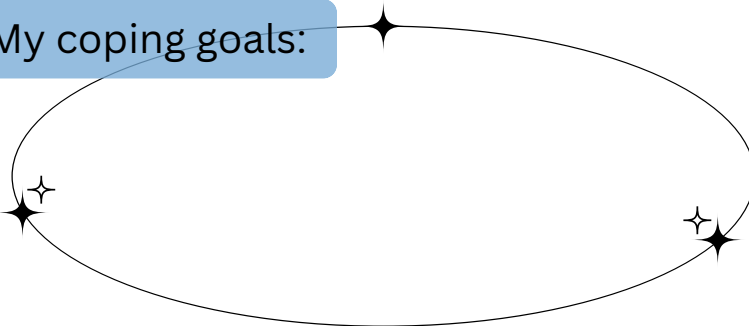
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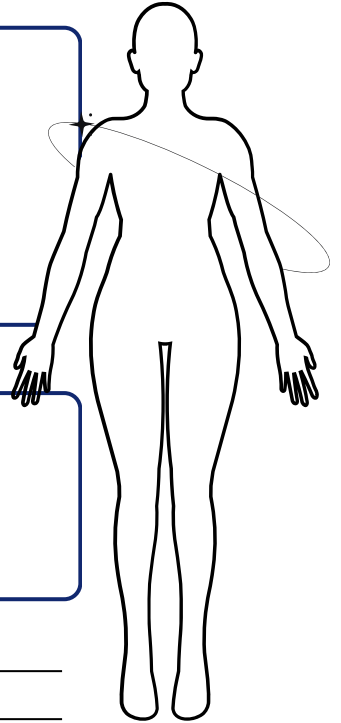
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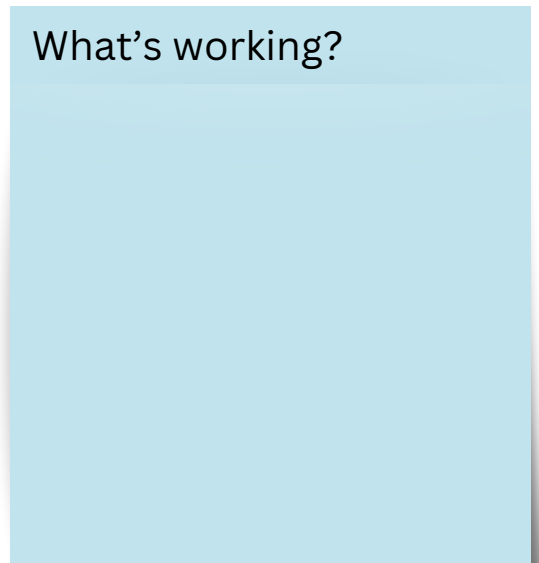
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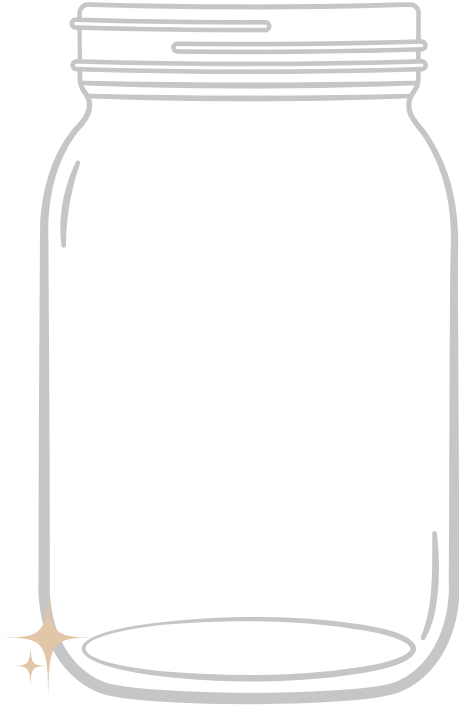
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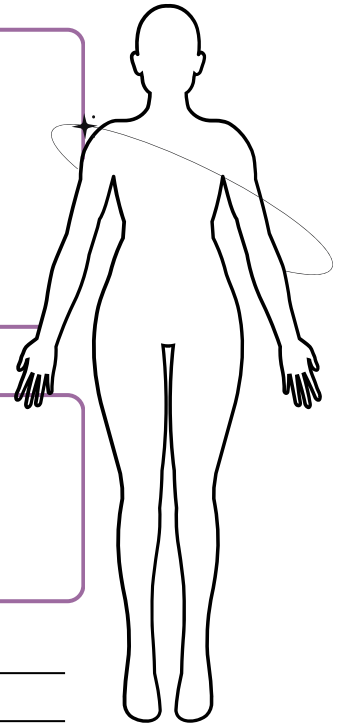


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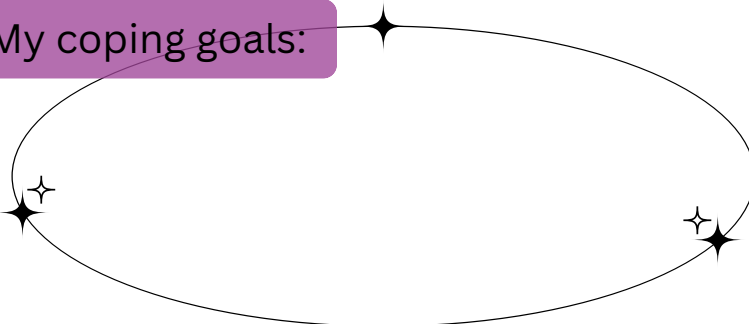


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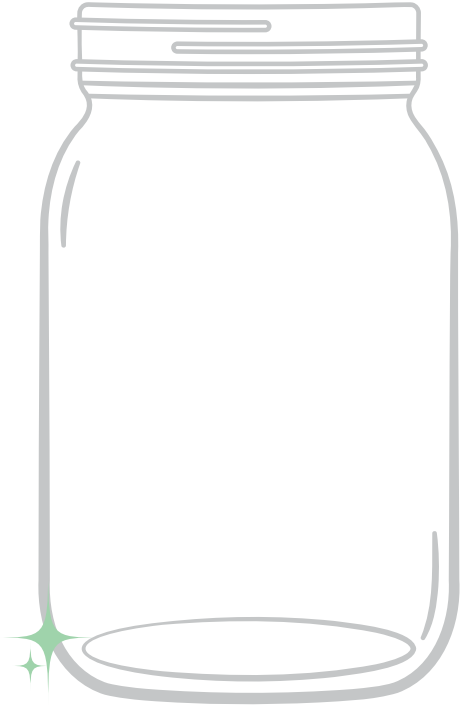


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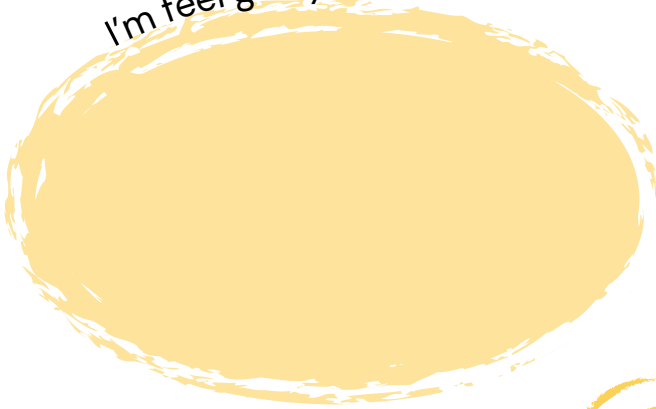
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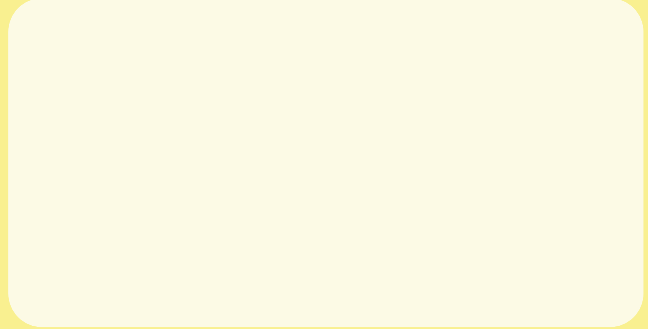
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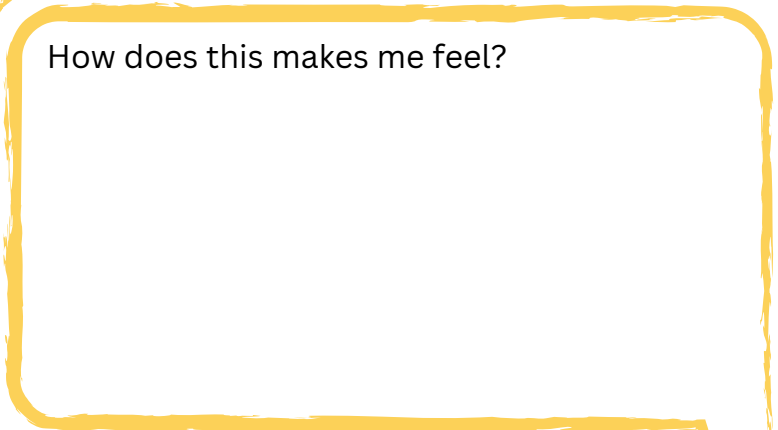
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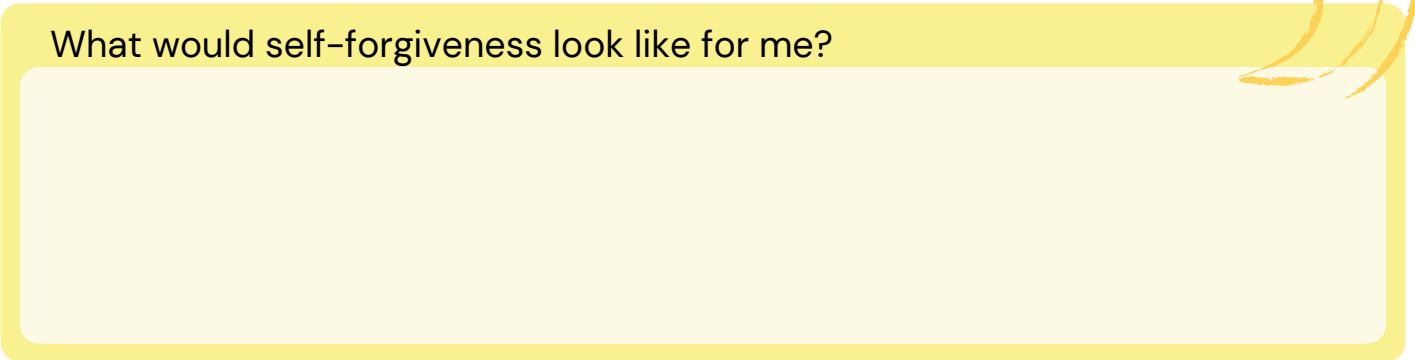
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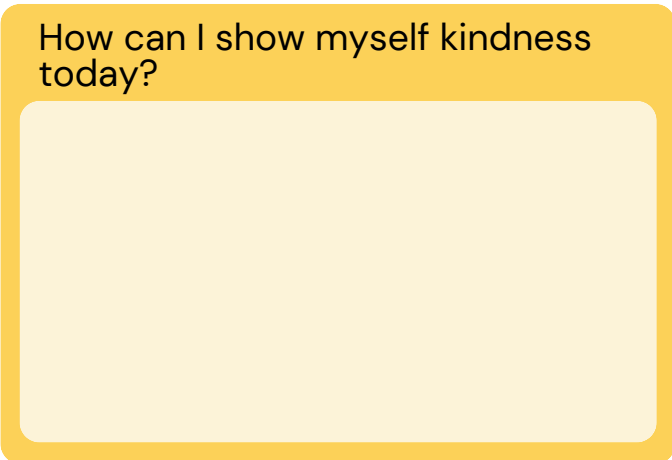
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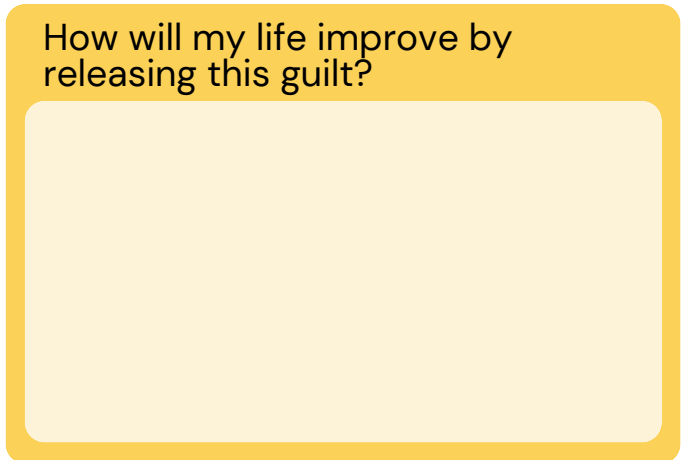
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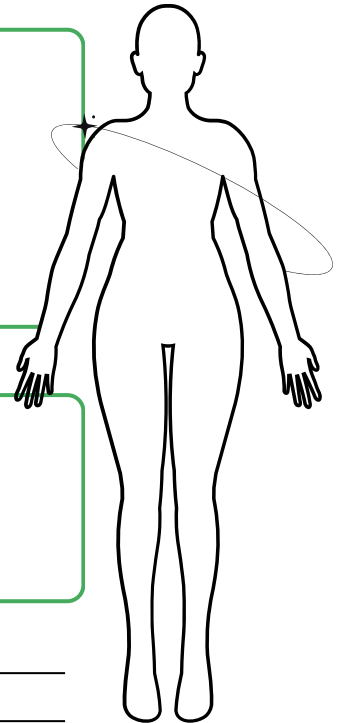


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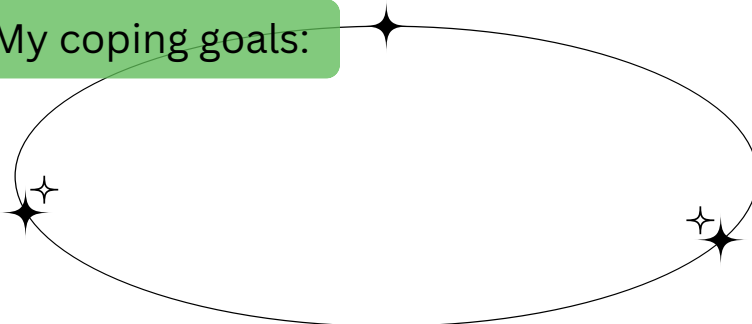


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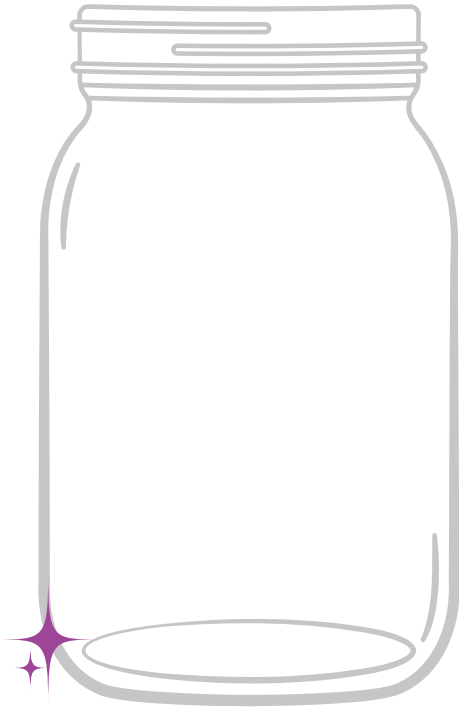


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WHAT I'M FEELING

Date _____

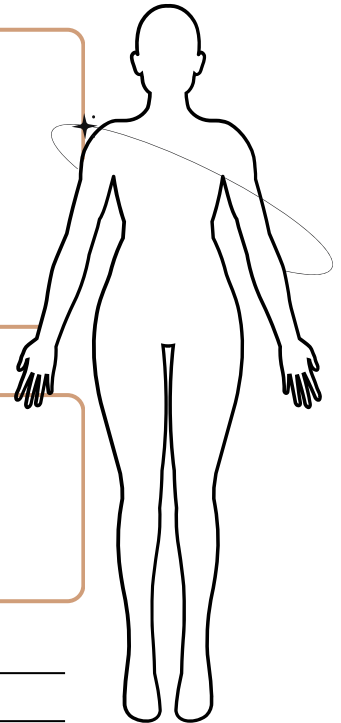


Emotions that I think I might be feeling:

Color where you are feeling these sensations

Colors:

Notes:

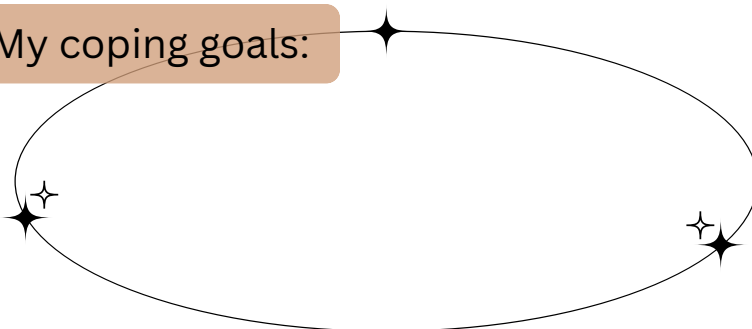


What sensations am I feeling in my body?

What has happened recently that could be causing these feelings?

The coping methods I've been trying:

My coping goals:

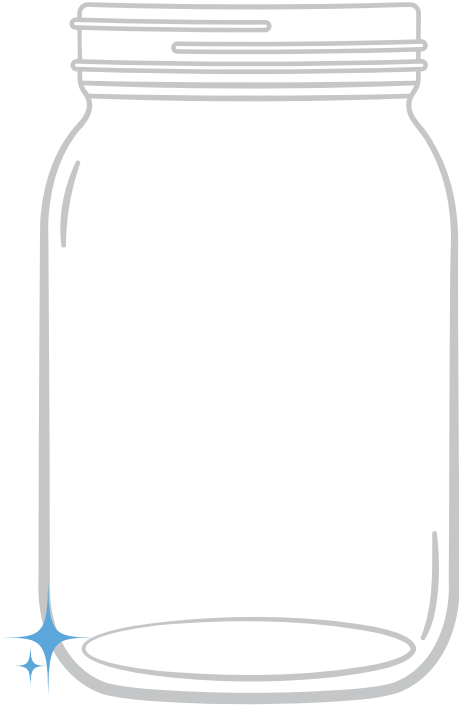


What's working?

THE UNBURDENING JAR EXERCISE

When someone says or does hurtful things, it's easy to carry those words inside like they belong to you. But they don't. This exercise helps you set a boundary by imagining a safe jar where you can place those harmful words and actions — so they don't live in your heart or mind.

Decorate Your Jar



Think of a hurtful word, criticism, or action from someone else. Remember: those belong to them, not you. Write it down here as if you are removing it from yourself:

Now imagine putting those words or actions into your jar. See the lid close firmly.

Repeat to yourself:

"These do not belong to me. I do not carry them."

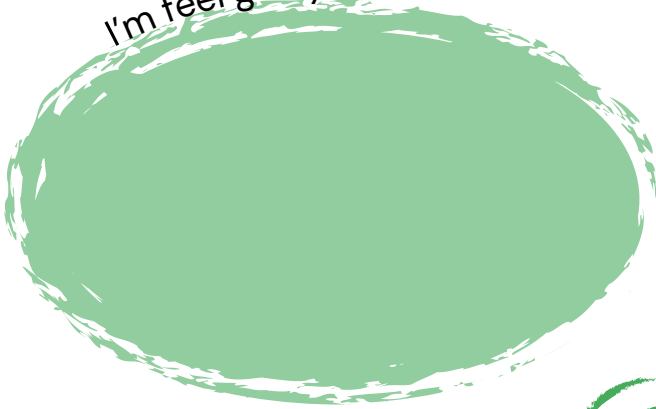
After letting go, write down one truth that is yours, something kind, strong, or grounding.

How did it feel to put those words in the jar?

FORGIVING MYSELF

___/___/___

I'm feel guilty for



Why am I feeling guilty for this?

Is it possible that this is not my responsibility?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Am I holding onto responsibility that I shouldn't be?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How does this makes me feel?

What would self-forgiveness look like for me?

How can I show myself kindness today?

How will my life improve by releasing this guilt?

WHAT'S MINE TO CARRY

___/___/___

My responsibility

Their responsibility

Shared
Space

What belongs to me?

What belongs back in their hands?

Have I mistaken survival responses (like freezing, fawning, or people-pleasing) for "bad behavior"?

Repeat this mantra:

"I release what isn't mine to carry. I take responsibility for what's truly mine, and that is enough."

Identifying

WHAT I'M FEELING

Date _____

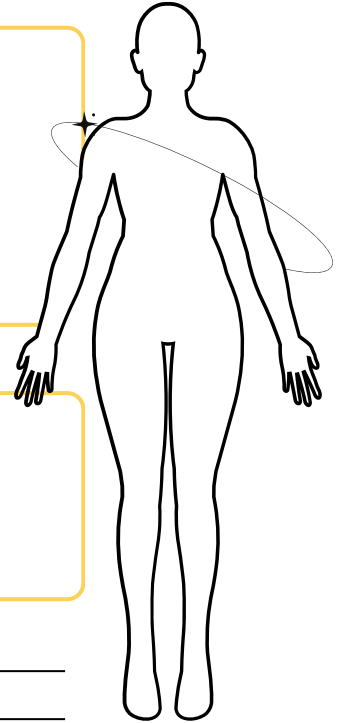


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Colors:

Notes:

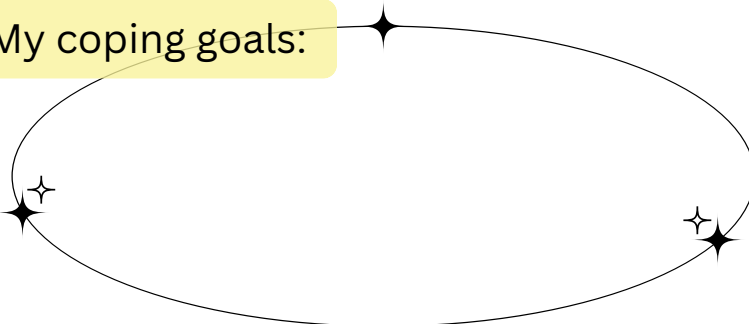


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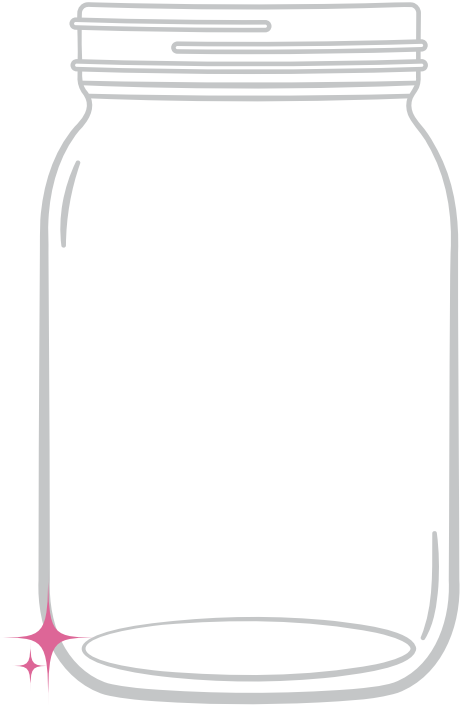


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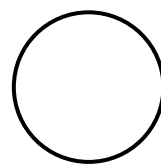
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How did it feel to put those words in the jar?

Draw how
you feel
today

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.

Draw the
weather



___/___/___

What positive things came from what happened or what can I learn from what happened?

I have learned or am learning to let go of_____

I am looking forward to_____

I am grateful for_____

I am manifesting_____

I am currently working on_____

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