

ashRISE

PARTICIPANT TOOLKIT

Guidance for reflection and creative exploration

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ashRISE

Reimagine your story.
Rekindle your light.
Reignite your voice
through creativity & connection

Virtual & Free

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Continuing the Journey

Welcome to ashRISE

Dear Hearthtenders,

I am so glad you joined our ashRISE series, and are exploring your stories with compassion and curiosity. You'll hear me repeat this frequently throughout our time together: **Your story matters**. You deserve space to be heard, support to grow, and compassionate accountability that dares you to do what they said you couldn't: **believe in yourself**.

ashRISE is not therapy; it's not about "fixing" you or any part of your story. It's about recognizing the patterns, the stories of shame and survival. so you can decide with compassion and intention whether to continue to carry those patterns or to release them. You'll hear me refer to you as "**hearthtenders**" because you are keeper of ember, you are the expert of you. You know what's best for you and your journey forward. I am here simply to spark additional curiosity and to remind you of the wild, bold, brave heart you have. Together, we'll tend to the stories that shaped us and rise.

This is your companion throughout our time together. You will receive a new link each week as resources are added after our conversations. Here, you'll have space to reflect, express and create. You decide your pace and what belongs on these pages. May this be a space where remembering becomes honoring, and where what was heavy begins to rise into light. Thank you for your trust and your story.

Our Intentions & Agreements

Safety first, always.

- ☑ You can always pause.
- ☑ You choose what to share and when.
- ☑ You are the expert of you and of what you need.
- ☑ There is no comparison. Every journey is valid.
- ☑ You have permission to feel here. All emotions are welcomed in this space.
- ☑ You do not have to complete any or all of the pages in this toolkit. There are many ways of tending to our hearths: this is just one.
- ☑ Your pain matters. Your successes matter. **You matter.**
- ☑ You deserve time. Self-care is not selfish.

We heal at the speed of safety

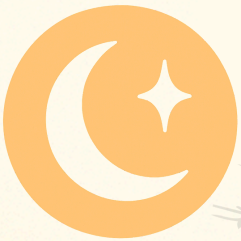
THE RISE FRAMEWORK

REMEMBER IMAGINE SHAPE EMPOWER



R

We remember what we survived and grieve what was lost.



I

We receive the challenge to dare beyond the pain.



S

We recognize survival patterns and choose with gratitude what to keep or release



E

We turn insight into action, recognizing that we are worthy of the life we envision.

THE PROCESS IS CYCLICAL, NOT LINEAR

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Session One Tools

The Tender Work

SESSION REFLECTION

Space for you to journal or reflect on each of our sessions.

What stood out for me?

What my body noticed.

A part of me that spoke up.

One word for how I'm leaving the session

SESSION REFLECTION

Extra space for you to doodle or journal about our sessions.

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Recognizing Smoke Signals

Awareness is not regression. It's the body asking to be met with compassion. Reach out. You deserve support.

Early Smoke (Mild Disconnection)

Leaving window of tolerance.

- Racing thoughts
- Forgetting simple tasks
- Mild Irritability or impatience
- Shallow breathing
- Feeling detached or "foggy"
- Restless scrolling, fidgeting, etc

Smoke Soothers

Sensory Bag
Lengthen exhale
hum softly
Hand to heart: I'm here
Light pressure

Flaring Smoke

System's ringing; protective parts take wheel

- Tears without reason
- Tight chest, headaches
- Snapping or withdrawing
- Feels like it's "too much"
- Urge to fix or control or escape

Orient - say the year
Bilateral movement
Cool body with ice
Journal
Call someone

Full Flame

Body's in emergency mode- survival patterns

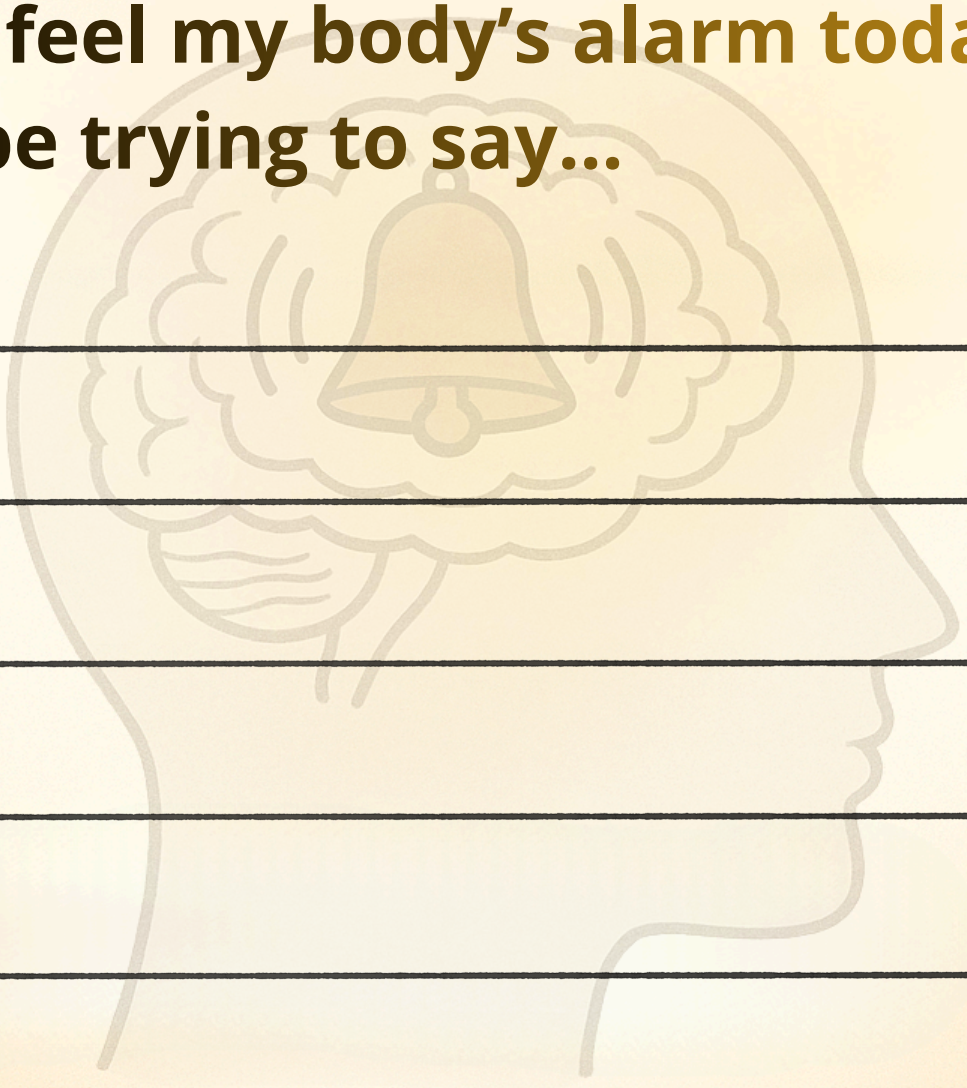
- Panic or racing heart
- Tunnel vision, dizziness, or shaking
- Shutdown or numbness
- Flashbacks or time confusion
- Self-harming urges

Find an anchor & focus
Engage senses with temperature shifts
Repeat grounding word
Tapping
Box breathing
Crisis support

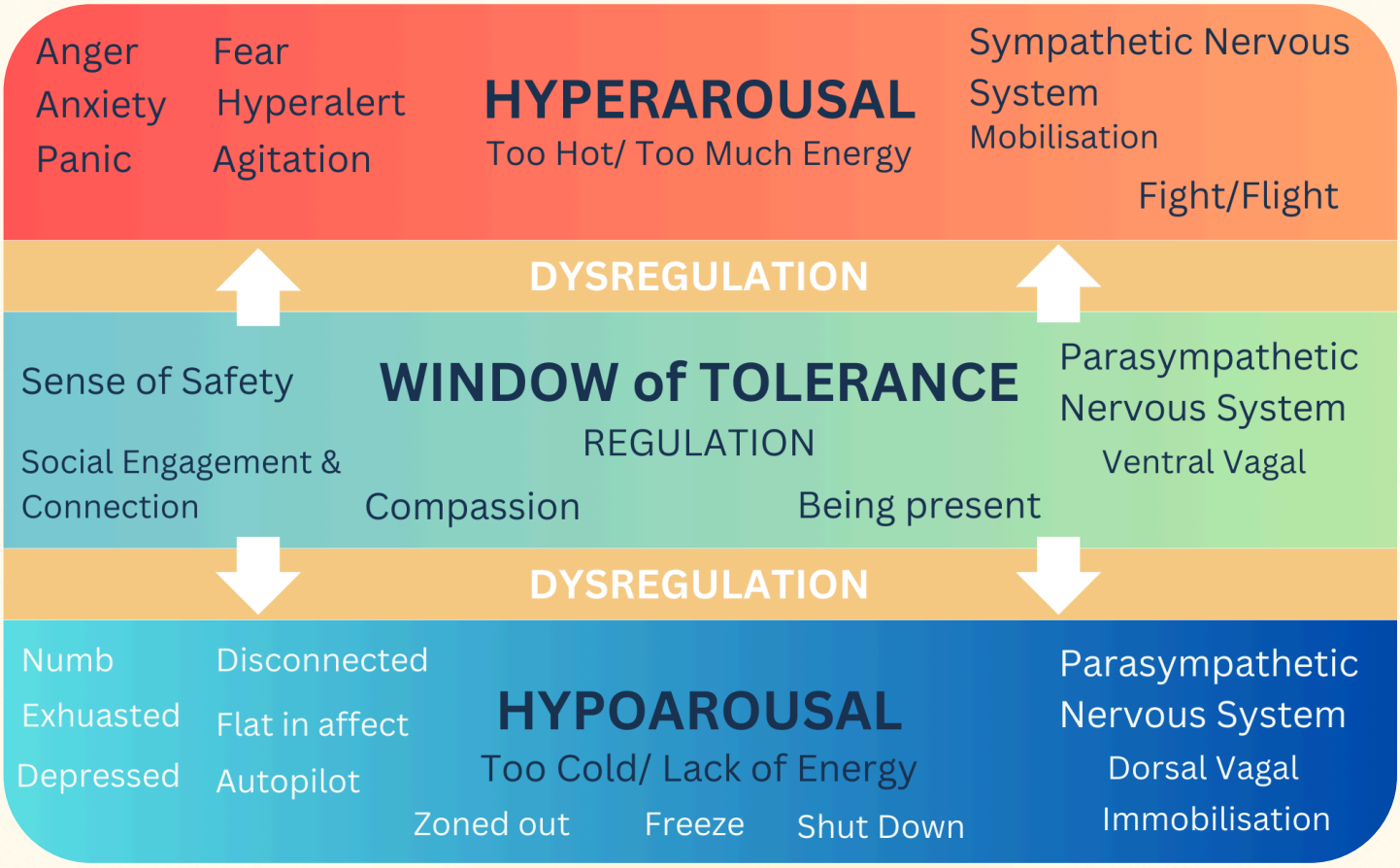
THE BODY'S STORY

Your body remembers experiences long after the mind has named them. When it senses danger, it activates patterns—fight, flight, freeze, or fawn—to keep you safe. These patterns are brilliant adaptations, not failures.

When I feel my body's alarm today, it might be trying to say...



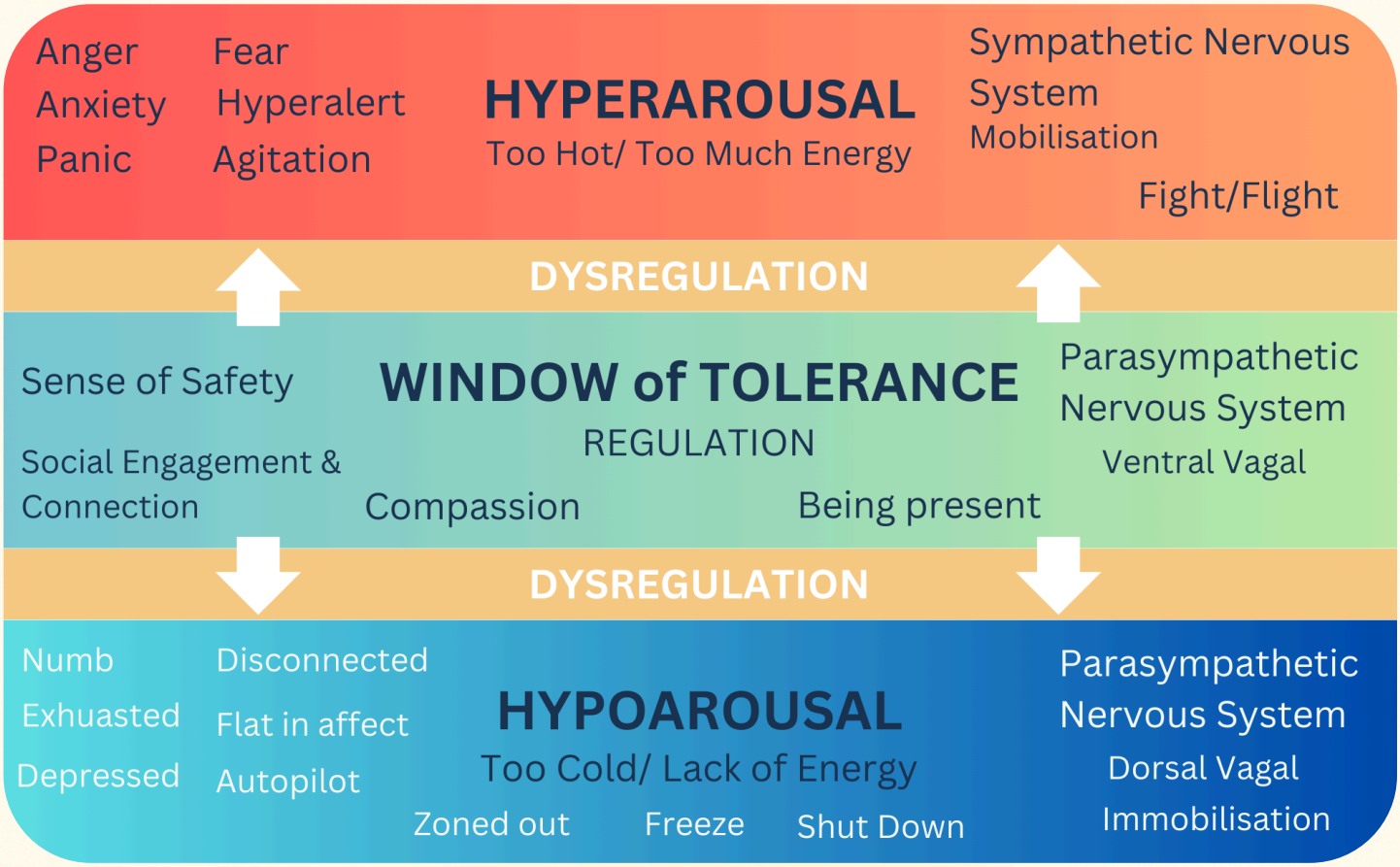
Window of Tolerance



The window is your zone of balance.

What helps widen my window?

Window of Tolerance



What tends to narrow it?

MY CONTAINER

Before we begin, imagine a place to safely store any memories of sensations that feel too heavy to hold all at once.

What does your container look like? Draw or describe it.



Where will you keep the container?

How does having the container feel?

Parts Journal



Parts Journal

Part Name	When it shows up	What it needs
The Protector		
The Inner Child		
The Witness		

Which part of me might need to rest?

Which part(s) have shown up today?

What I Lost, What I Kept

What I Lost

What I Kept



What I am reclaiming

Creative Mapping

Manifesting - what lives within finds its way out



Sketch or note ideas here

Anchors & Grounding

Exercises I can practice to help regulate and return to calm. We will add to this page as we explore different techniques each session.

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Session 5 Tools
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Color Breathing

Session 6 Tools
Mirror Exercise
Butterfly

Which did I find helpful? What other things help me regulate?

My notes...

The Story Shelf

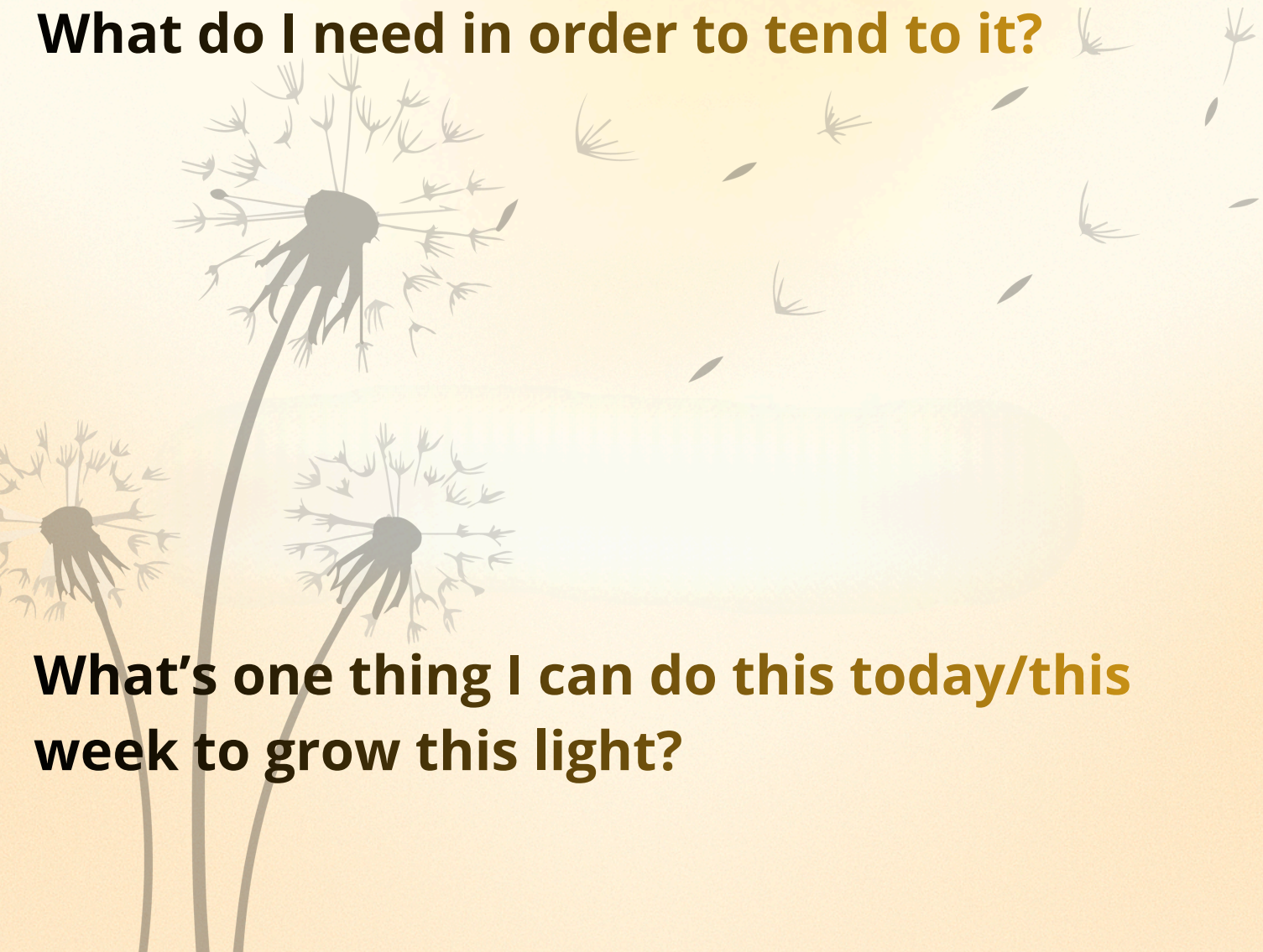
What memory, phrase, or image belongs here for now--something I'm not ready to release but wish to honor / remember?



Gathering Illumination

What light do I wish shone brighter for me?

What do I need in order to tend to it?



What's one thing I can do this today/this week to grow this light?

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Session Two Tools

Shifting the Ashes

SESSION REFLECTION

Space for you to journal or reflect on each of our sessions.

What stood out for me?

What my body noticed.

A part of me that spoke up.

One word for how I'm leaving the session

SESSION REFLECTION

Extra space for you to doodle or journal about our sessions.

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THE STOP METHOD

The STOP method helps you lead your thoughts.

STEP	What it Means	Example
S - STOP	Say "Stop" aloud to interrupt the spiral.	"Stop. I am here."
T- Take a breath	Anchor into one full exhale.	Feel your feet. Release your jaw.
O- Observe	Notice what's happening inside and around you.	"My shoulders are tight. My breath is shallow."
P- Proceed	Choose a grounding action before reacting.	"I'll step outside / tap my chest / hold ice."

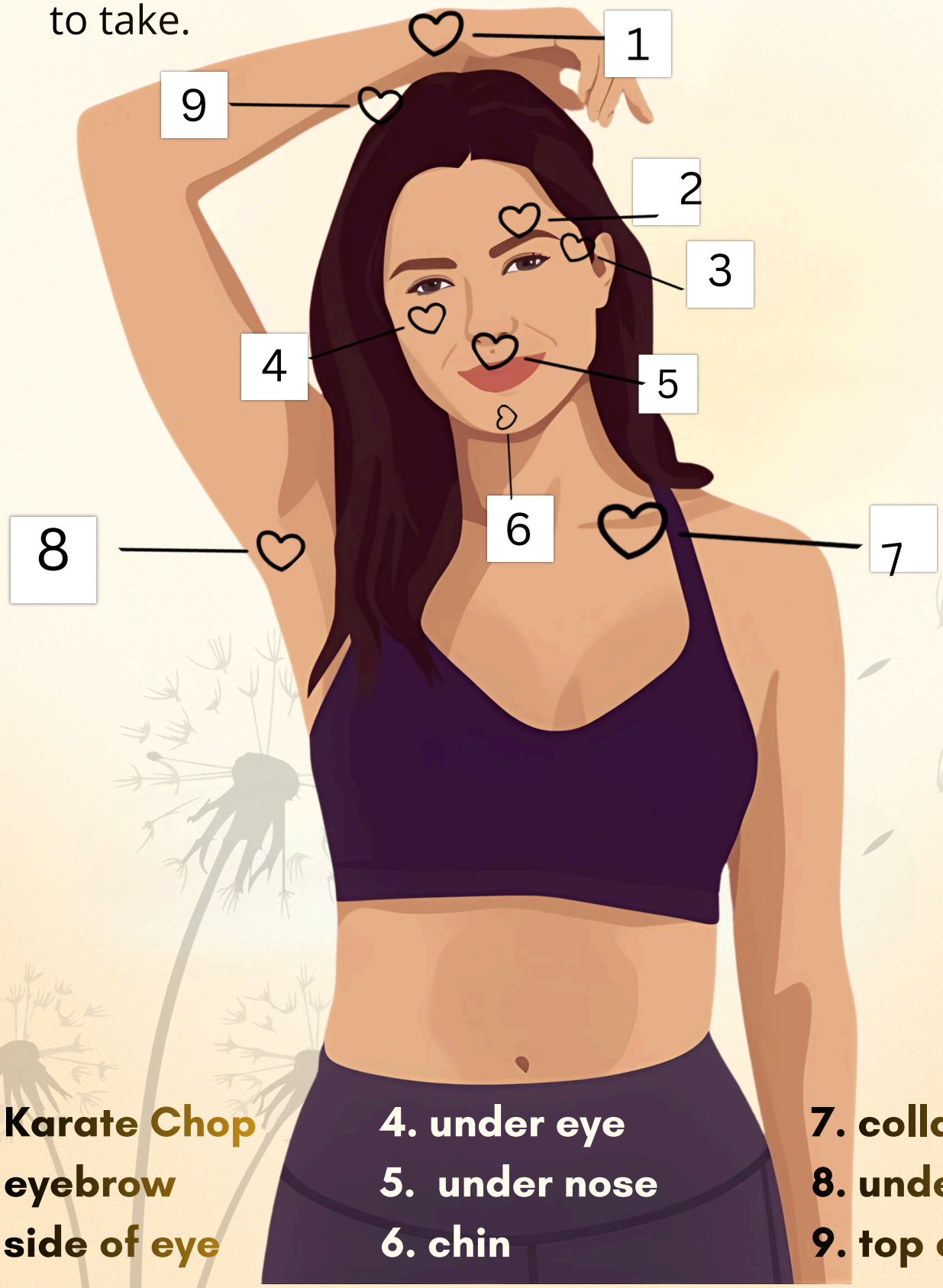
Reflection:

When might I use this technique?

What helps me remember to pause instead of push?

The Protector's Path

Tapping is similar to STOP in that it interrupts your chain of thought and allows you to decide which path to take.



1. **Karate Chop**
2. **eyebrow**
3. **side of eye**
4. **under eye**
5. **under nose**
6. **chin**
7. **collarbone**
8. **under arm**
9. **top of head**

TAPPING REFLECTION

A dialogue you might use when tapping might include

Even though my body feels the need to protect,
I recognize it's trying to help.
I can thank it, and still lead.

Even though I feel _____, I accept myself where I am right now.

Tapping Reflection

What sensations do I notice during tapping?

What words / phrases felt most grounding?

Notes

Anchors & Grounding

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Mirror Exercise
Butterfly

Which did I find helpful? What other things help me regulate?
My notes...

Between last week's tools and this week's tools, which has been my favorite type of grounding technique (breathing, tapping, visualization)? Which is hardest?

MEETING THE PROTECTOR

Where Protection and Innocence Meet

Last week, you met your younger self-the part of you that holds unmet needs, memory and tenderness. This week, you met the Protector - the part that learned how to keep you safe.

Both belong. Both have stories to tell.

Reflect: Hearing Their Voices

You might journal, sketch or simply notice your responses to the following prompts There is room for this on the following page.

What does my protector say when she senses risk?

What does my inner child need?

How do their voices sound different ?

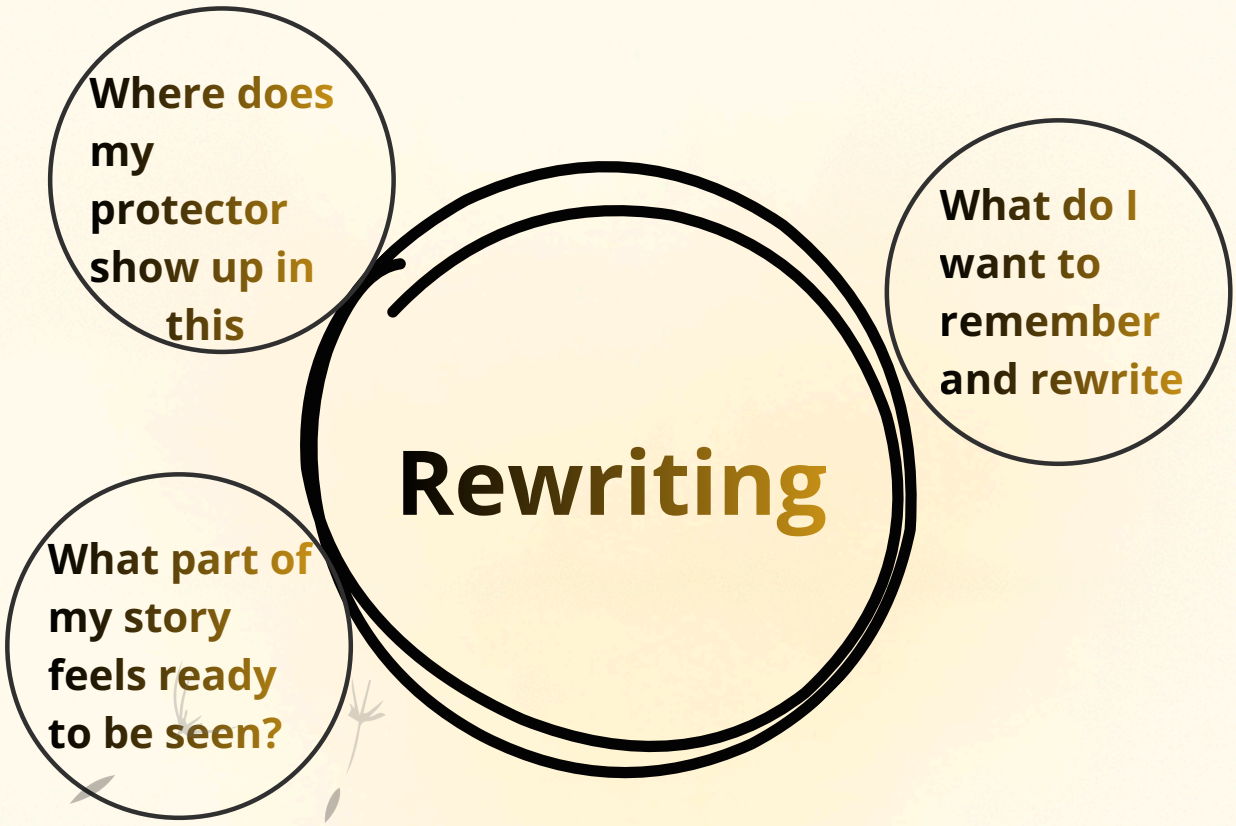
If my protector could rest, what would my younger self finally get to do?

MEETING THE PROTECTOR

What thoughts / images / questions do you have?

Creative Mapping

Evolving the Vessel (Continuing Project Path)



Sketch or build upon existing care vessel. You might add textures, colors or layers that express what protection means today.

Creative Mapping

The Protector Speaks (New Companion Path)

what color, texture, or weight expresses its voice

What would I say back to the protector?

Listening

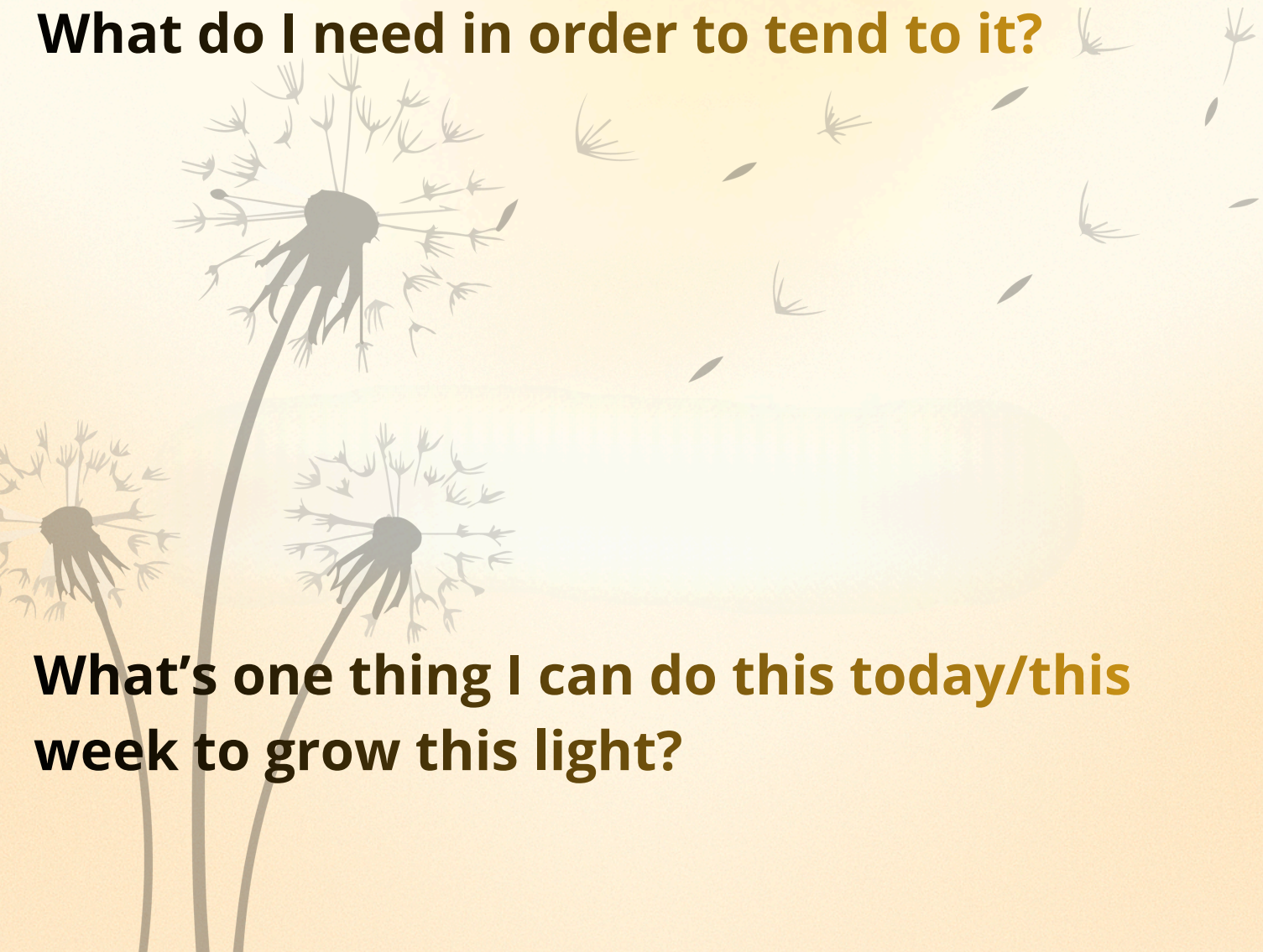
What form might my protector take (symbol, object, image?

Let this be a conversation, not a confrontation. Draw, write, or shape your protector as an ally-in-training.

Gathering Illumination

How did I protect my light today / this week?

What do I need in order to tend to it?



What's one thing I can do this today/this week to grow this light?

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Session Three Tools

The Horizon Within

SESSION REFLECTION

Space for you to journal or reflect on each of our sessions.

Describe your encounter with The Witness, and what it made you feel?

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What did the horizon look like when you saw it? Who was waiting there? Note colors, symbols or sensations that arose.

SESSION REFLECTION

Extra space for you to doodle or journal about our sessions.

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Dear Dreamer Me

Write a letter to yourself from the Witness as s/he lives from the horizon you saw.

Dear ,

I am the you that remembers joy ...



Survivor Stories

You are not the event. You are the one who lived through it. Complete the Venn diagram, allowing and accepting whatever comes up and using grounding techniques to pause or stop whenever needed



Prompts

What belongs to the experience but not to you?
What truth in the overlap do you currently carry?
What do you want to move from the overlap back into your own self?

The Dreamer's Grid

This week, we completed a dreamer's grid. This can help spark an idea for your final project. You can choose to redo this exercise on your own to spark new ideas, or you can continue working on the project you may have already started.

If I could not disappoint anyone – including myself – what would I try?

Use the bubbles below to write down words that "light up" for you - these can be anything, inspired by anything! The purpose is to notice your thoughts, your surroundings, your feelings.

MY WORD SPARK CHOICE IS: _____



The Dreamer's Grid

This week, we completed a dreamer's grid. This can help spark an idea for your final project. You can choose to redo this exercise on your own to spark new ideas, or you can continue working on the project you may have already started.

Now, complete the grid with a sketch, a phrase or a sentence to show how the word shows up in your world. If you need more room, you can recreate the buckets however you wish on a separate sheet. Your dream word is a seed—give it form through language, color, or image.

My WORD SPARK CHOICE IS: _____

PLACE PULSE PEOPLE PROOF PRACTICE PROTECTION

The Three Seeds

Seeds: Place + Pulse

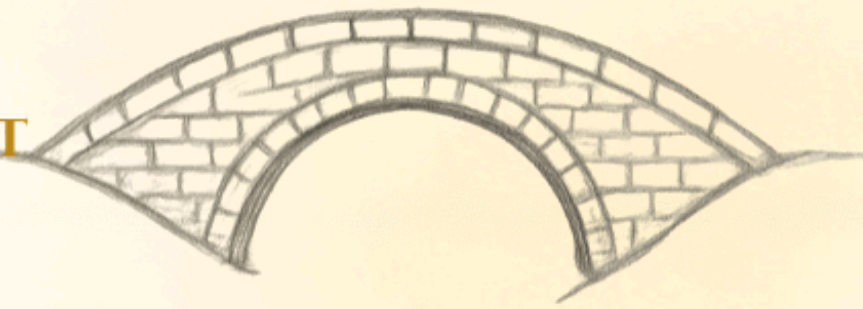
Pulse: People + Practice

Signals: Proof + Protection

The Bridge

What micro-act can you commit to completing within 72 hours that will help you cross the bridge?

Current



Future

Example Bridge: Dance barefoot for one song

Protector clause: If I feel self-conscious, I'll pause and remind myself: movement is freedom.

Joint Tracing

I have all the tools I need to ground myself.

Coming back to the body - one connection at a time.

Try This:

1. Rest one hand on your thigh or over your heart. Feel its weight. Notice what it's touching.
2. With your other hand, trace the outline — around each finger, across, your palm, up your wrist. Move slowly enough that your skin can follow along.
3. As you trace, name what that part of you has done to keep you alive.
   - "These hands held on."
   - "These arms reached out again."
   - "These legs carried me forward."
4. Pause at the wrist. Inhale, letting warmth travel up your arm.
5. Exhale, letting gratitude settle in the traced lines.

Reflect:

What emotion surfaced as you traced?

What memories came up as you thought about how each limb has supported you?



Anchors & Grounding

Exercises I can practice to help regulate and return to calm. We will add to this page as we explore different techniques each session.

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Session 6 Tools

Mirror Exercise
Butterfly

Which did I find helpful? What other things help me regulate?

My notes...

Gathering Illumination

What new word or image from today stayed with me?

How did my body respond when I imagined the horizon?

One act of tenderness I can offer myself this week is...

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Session Four Tools

Rewriting the Patterns

SESSION REFLECTION

Space for you to journal or reflect on each of our sessions.

What stood out for me?

What my body noticed.

A part of me that spoke up.

One word for how I'm leaving the session

SESSION REFLECTION

Extra space for you to doodle or journal about our sessions.

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GROUNDING TOOLS

My Sensory Bag

When stress rises, your senses can help you return to calm. Build a “sensory bag” filled with 1 or 2 grounding tools per sense that you can then pull out whenever you feel yourself slipping outside the window of tolerance. Keep your bag with or near you. When you use it, you’re teaching your nervous system that safety can be chosen, not just waited for.

What container will I use?

Sense	Objects chosen to add to bag
Touch What feels soothing or familiar?	
Scent What scent reminds you of calm?	
Sight What image restores you?	
Taste What flavor reconnects you?	

GROUNDING TOOLS

Weighted Grounding

When the mind feels scattered, weight brings us home. Use gentle pressure or grounding weight to remind your body: *I am here. I am supported.*

If it's comfortable, try this:

1. Sit or lie down. Place a weighted blanket, pillow, or your own hands over your chest, lap, or shoulders. Gently press so that your body feels the weight.
2. Inhale, imagining your breath moving down into the weight.
3. Exhale, letting your body soften under it.
4. Whisper or think: *This is safe weight, not heavy weight.*

Reflect:

What sensations tell you you're settling?

Where in your body resists being still?

Mapping My Genius

Every defense was once a solution. This chart helps you trace how your survival strategy once protected you, and how it can evolve into creative strength.

Trigger	Response	Safety	Cost	Tool

Reflections

- What patterns still work and which ones feel ready to evolve?
- How can you thank the old design while building a new one?

THE ARCHITECT

The part that rebuilds safety into sanctuary

The Architect appears when you're ready to redesign your inner world. It studies what once protected you and asks, *What can I keep? What can I open?* You've met The Witness, the one who sees. Now, the Architect builds from that vision.

Reflections

- What structures in my life feel outdated but safe?
- What would "rebuilding with light" look like for me?
- What kind of world do I want my Architect to create?
- How have the stories I've told myself been rehearsing safety?

THE ARCHITECT

The Architect lives in your hands, your breath, your choices. They are the designer of the life you're ready to inhabit.

Reflections

- What was the experience like meeting The Architect? Describe the setting: colors, clothing, temperature, etc

- What is the Architect building?

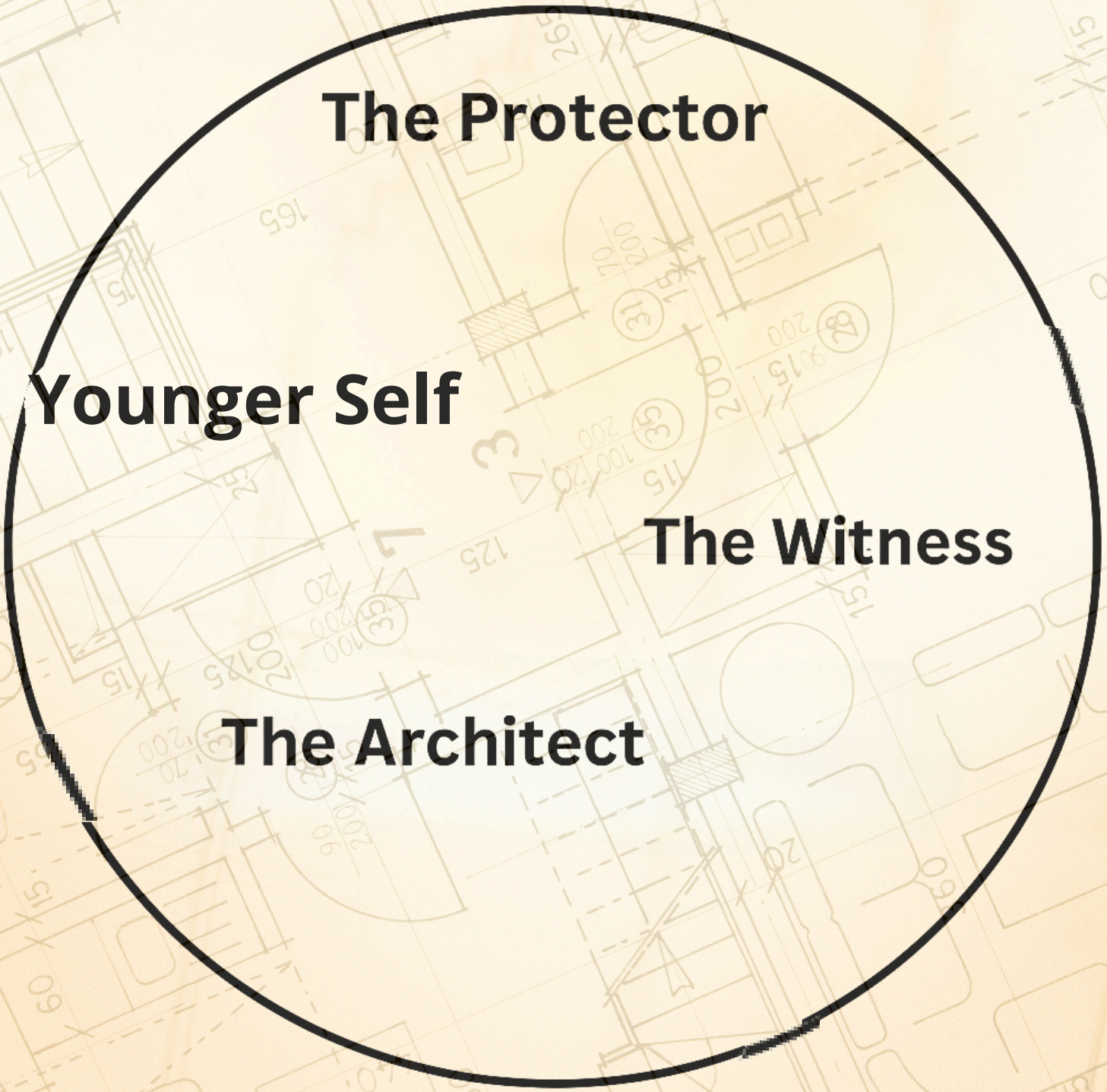
- What questions does s/he ask?

- If they offered you anything, what would it be?

- What do you feel standing beside her/him?

THE ARCHITECT

These are the parts of you that you've met in this program. Section off each part. Sketch colors, add symbols, get to know each part in whatever way feels best for you.



Personal Transformation Project

This week, you are shaping your idea into form. Your project doesn't have to be finished; it just needs your attention. The goal is relationship, not perfection. Use these pages to notice what the process is revealing.

My Project Focus:

Title or theme _____

What stage am I in?

- ☐ Dreaming
- ☐ Drafting
- ☐ Building
- ☐ Refining

What's flowing easily right now?

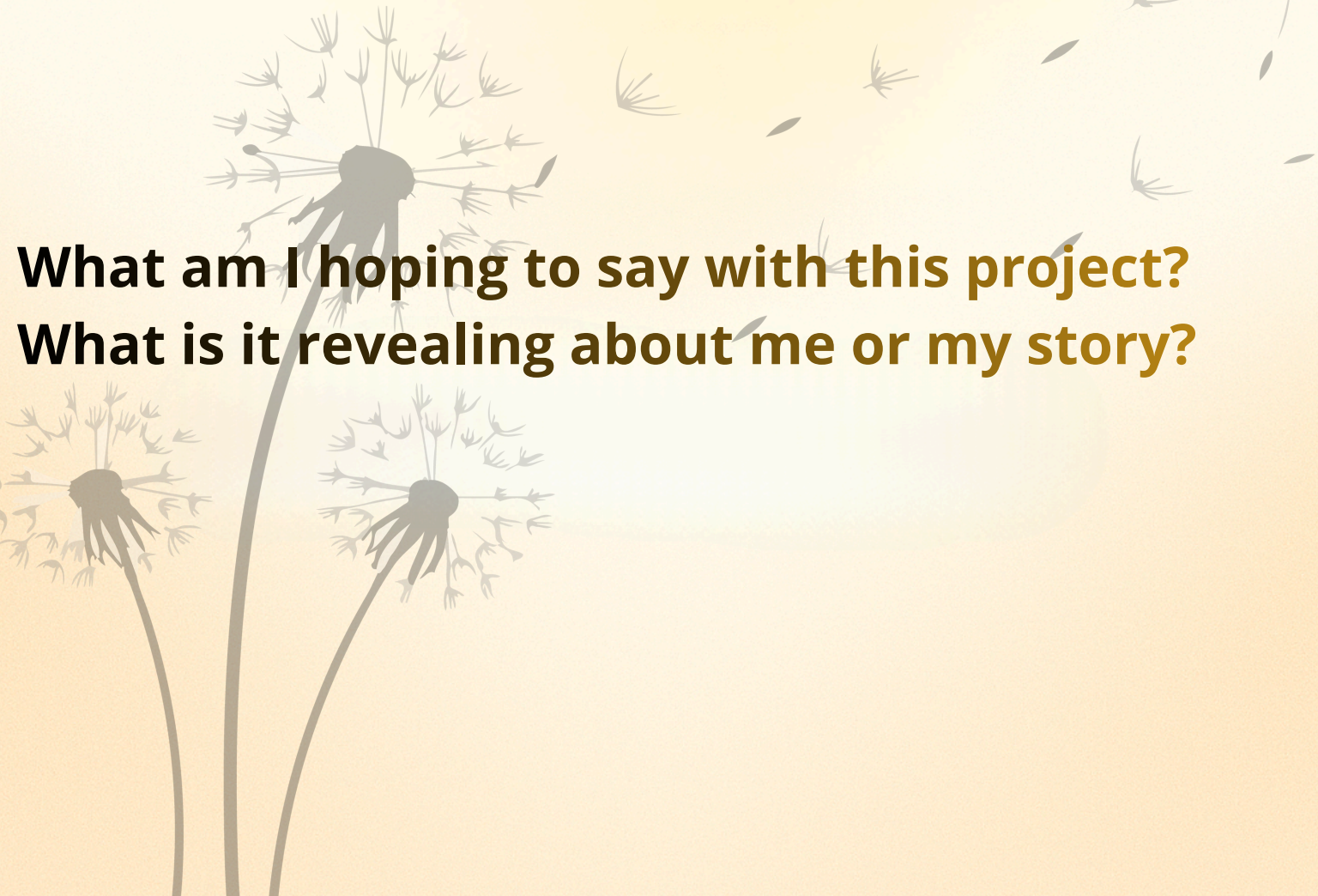
Where do I feel resistance or fear?

Personal Transformation Project

What might help me move one step forward this week?

One action I will take before the next session:

What am I hoping to say with this project?
What is it revealing about me or my story?



Anchors & Grounding

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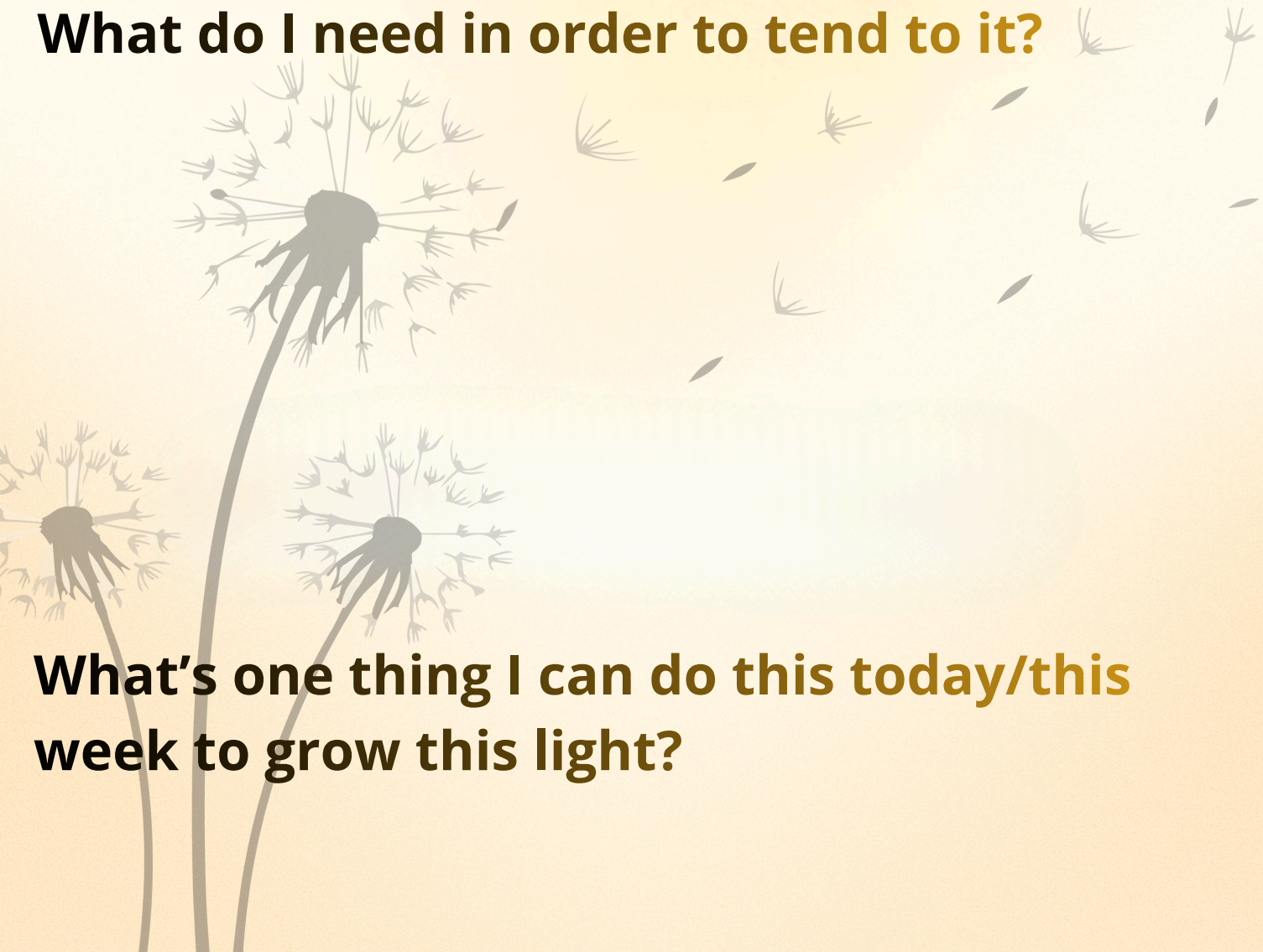

What's one thing I can do this today/this week to grow this light?

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Session Five Tools Rooted in Worth

SESSION REFLECTION

Space for you to journal or reflect on each of our sessions.

What stood out for me?

What my body noticed.

A part of me that spoke up.

One word for how I'm leaving the session

SESSION REFLECTION

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GROUNDING TOOLS

Pressure Breathing

When your body braces, pressure breathing helps anchor you back. This technique signals safety to the vagus nerve and releases held tension.

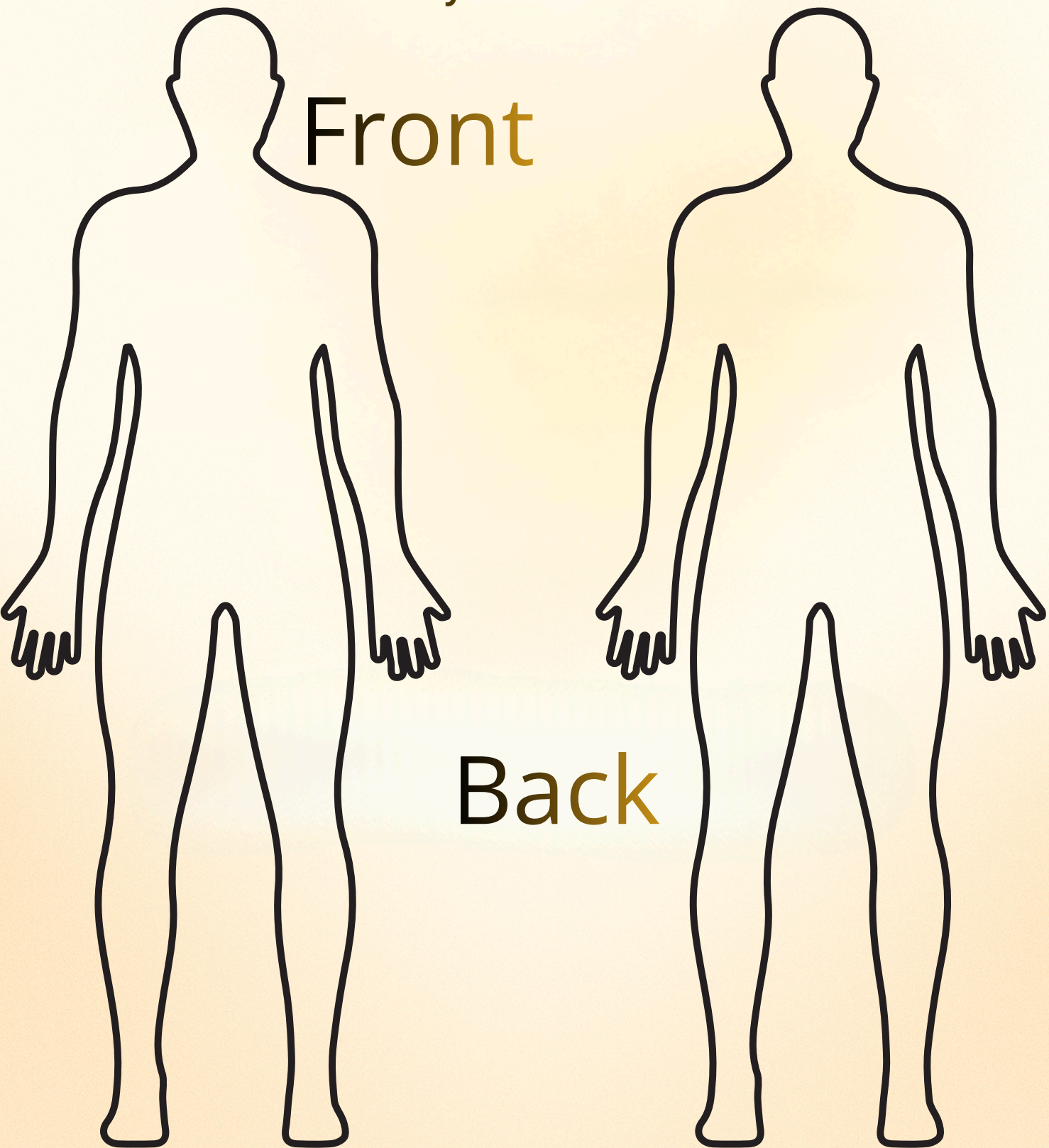
If it's comfortable, try this:

1. Inhale through your nose for 4 counts.
2. Purse your lips as if blowing through a straw. Exhale for 6-8 counts, feeling your ribs draw in.
3. Whisper: "I am here."
4. Repeat 4-6 times.

Reflect:
Where in your body do you feel the release begin?
What thought softens when your body remembers it's safe to breathe?

Story Beneath Skin

Shade, label or color areas where you hold tension, fear or warmth. Mark where you feel strength or peace. Add symbols to show what helps you feel grounded. **What parts of your body carry old stories? Where does safety live now?**



Heartkeeper Tracker

This week you met the one who never stopped believing you were worthy - the part of you who tends what still glows beneath the ash. The Heartkeeper doesn't fix or fight. They remember. They forgive. They stay.

Each day record one moment when you felt triggered, tired, or uncertain. Note how you responded - then circle or describe any sign that compassion showed up (a breath, a pause, a kinder thought). At the end of the week, underline one Heartkeeper moment you want to share or remember.

Moment	I responded by	Heartkeeper signs
Friend canceled plans.	Felt hurt, but then said "rest well"	warmth in chest, softer inner voice



The Inner Bridge

The body sends signals; the mind translates them.
When trauma interrupts, the bridge feels fragile.
This practice helps rebuild that bridge.

If it's comfortable, try this:

1. Close your eyes. Name 3 sensations happening right now (warmth, heartbeat, chair pressure)
2. For each, add a meaning: "Warmth=safety", "Heartbeat=life," "Chair=support."
3. Draw or write a few bridges between what you feel and what you know.

Reflect:
Which sensations are the easiest to trust?
Which ones do you often misread as danger?

The Worthprint

Worth is not an idea - it's an impression your presence leaves. Use this page to trace your worthprint. **What has your worth survived?**

If it's comfortable, try this:

1. Trace your hand or draw a spiral.
2. In each line or curve, write a quality that already lives in you (kindness, persistence, creativity)
3. In the center, write, "I am the keeper of this light."
4. Around the edges, note moments when the light showed itself - small proofs of being.

Noticing the Shift

Each time you notice tension, self-blame, or pressure to manage everything, pause and fill in one row. You're not correcting yourself - you're witnessing the moment your nervous system starts to trust again.

There is no right answer. Sometimes the shift is a thought, a breath or even just the decision not to spiral. At the end of the week, circle one moment where agency surprised you.
That's the body remembering worth

Moment	Control Thought	Reframe	Body Signal
Missed deadline	I failed again.	I can start fresh tomorrow	Shoulders unclench

Personal Transformation Project

This week, you are shaping your idea into form. Your project doesn't have to be finished; it just needs your attention. The goal is relationship, not perfection. Use these pages to notice what the process is revealing.

My Project Focus:

Title or theme _____

What stage am I in?

- ☐ Dreaming
- ☐ Drafting
- ☐ Building
- ☐ Refining

What's flowing easily right now?

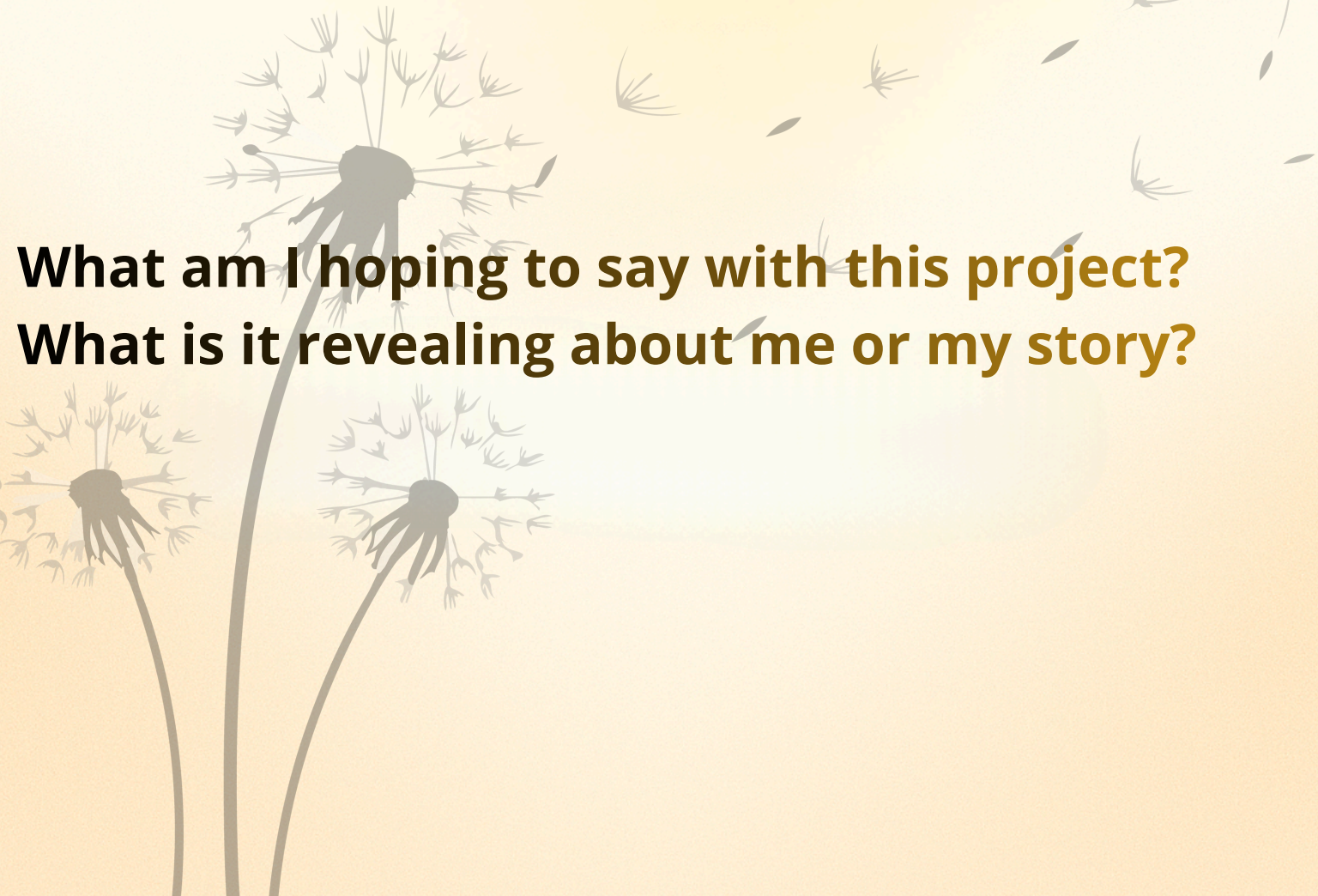
Where do I feel resistance or fear?

Personal Transformation Project

What might help me move one step forward this week?

One action I will take before the next session:

What am I hoping to say with this project?
What is it revealing about me or my story?



Anchors & Grounding

Exercises I can practice to help regulate and return to calm. We will add to this page as we explore different techniques each session.

Session 1 Tools
Orienting
Hand on heart
The Container

Session 2 Tools
STOP
EFT Tapping
Box Breathing

Session 3 Tools
Temperature
Lion's Breathing
Limb Tracing

Session 4 Tools
Conscious humming
Sensory Bag
Weighted Grounding

Session 5 Tools
Pressure Breathing
Body Mapping
Color Breathing

Session 6 Tools
Mirror Exercise
Butterfly

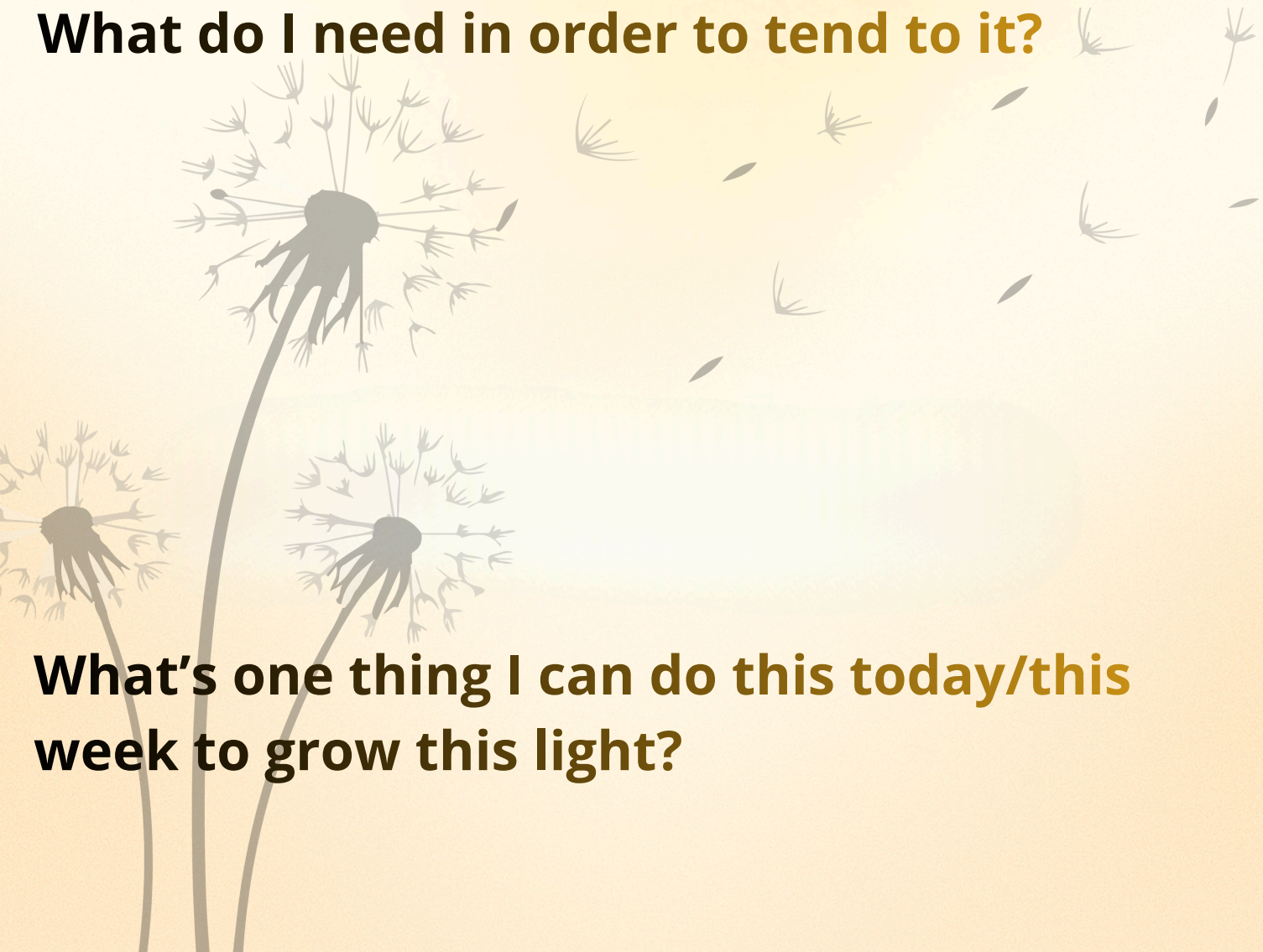
Which did I find helpful? What other things help me regulate?

My notes...

Gathering Illumination

How did I protect my light today / this week?

What do I need in order to tend to it?



What's one thing I can do this today/this week to grow this light?

ashRISE

Session Six Tools

Illuminated Living

SESSION REFLECTION

Space for you to journal or reflect on each of our sessions.

What stood out for me?

What my body noticed.

A part of me that spoke up.

One word for how I'm leaving the session

SESSION REFLECTION

Extra space for you to doodle or journal about our sessions.

ashRISE

The Story that Rose

What part of me feels most changed since the beginning of the program?

What image, tool, phrase stayed with me the most when things got hard?

What have I learned about what safety feels like?

The Story that Rose

How has my body's language (tension, breath, posture) shifted over these weeks?

Which part of me speaks with more gentleness now: the Protector, Child, Architect, Heartkeeper, Witness or Leader?

What truths have I reclaimed from beneath the ash?

The Story that Rose

What practices will I carry to keep my nervous system anchored and open?

Who am I becoming when I choose compassion over control?



I Am Enough

The Mirror Exercise

Becoming comfortable in our skin helps us learn to trust our body. Recognizing that we are not broken starts on the outside, then turns inward. This exercise will help you test unworthiness scripts like, “There’s nothing pretty about me.” Rewiring pathways takes time. **The more you try this, the more you’ll notice a shift.**

If it’s comfortable, try this:

1. Stand before a mirror unclothed.
2. Start at the crown of your head. Ask, “What don’t I like about this part of me?” If nothing comes up, accept that this part of you is good. Move to the next part: forehead, eyebrows, eyes, mouth, nose, chin, ears--all the way down your body.
3. There will be parts you don’t love. State it without judgment or shame. There will be parts you can’t find anything “wrong” with. Welcome that.

Reflect:
What do I feel about being unclothed?
What parts of me surprised me?
What thought softens when your body remembers it’s safe to breathe?

The Leader's Map

The Leader within you acts from trust, not tension. This map helps you translate your values into choices-small, steady steps that align heart, body, and purpose.

Consider:

1. Look back over the past sessions and notice what matters most now.
2. List a value that feels alive in you--compassion, courage, or one that's uniquely yours.
3. Choose one simple daily action that expresses value.
4. Write a short phrase you can return to when you need direction - a reminder of how the Leader moves.

The goal isn't perfection; it's presence.

Value	Daily Action	Reminder
Compassion	Pause before responding	Kindness leads

The Integration Spiral

Wholeness isn't a straight line - it's a spiral. Each turn brings you closer to your center while expanding your understanding of who you are. Follow the spiral outward as it feels right. Along the path, pause to write or sketch your reflections around each prompt.

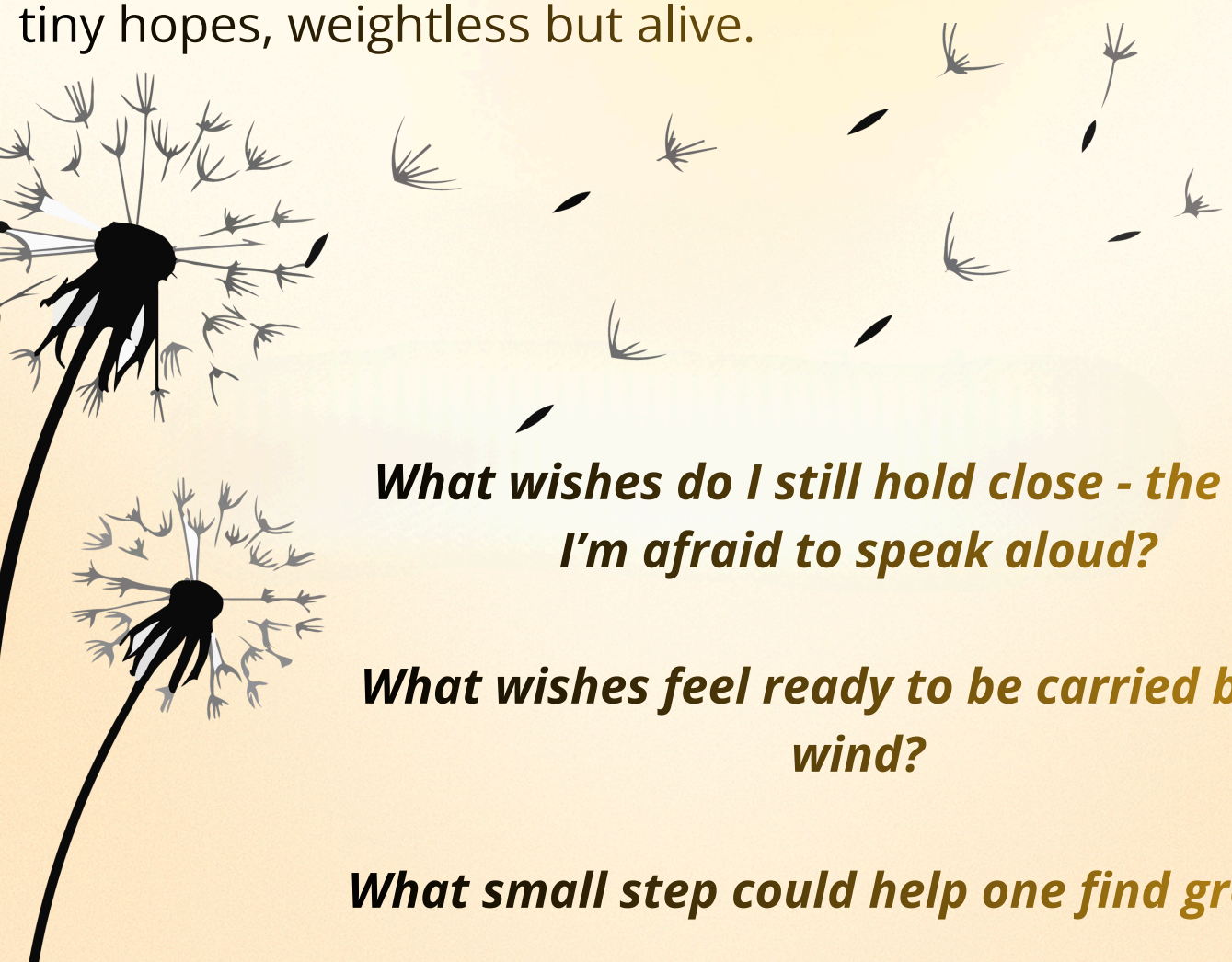


Dandelion Wishes

Every wish is a whisper of what you long for. Some drift softly, waiting to be believed in; others are ready to take root and grow. This page is for the wishes you're still learning to trust.

If it's comfortable, try this using the space provided on the following page after reading the prompts below

Take a moment to slow your breath.
Picture holding a dandelion in your hand-the seeds are tiny hopes, weightless but alive.



What wishes do I still hold close - the ones I'm afraid to speak aloud?

What wishes feel ready to be carried by the wind?

What small step could help one find ground?

Dandelion Wishes



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My notes...

Notes & Doodles

Notes & Doodles

Notes & Doodles

Continuing the Journey

Beyond ashRISE

Workshops & Circles

HERO
Awaken the HERO within you through creative expression and a community of survivors.

The Storynlight Circle
Compassionate and trauma-informed, one-on-one coaching to support and guide you.

Books to Explore

Whisperroot: A Hushwood Tale
Remember the Nightingale
Dance for Me
The Character
Taramul Viselor
Echoes of a Wild Girl's Drum
...and more!

Stay Connected

Learn more, or sign up for upcoming programs at www.tiffinijohnson.com

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