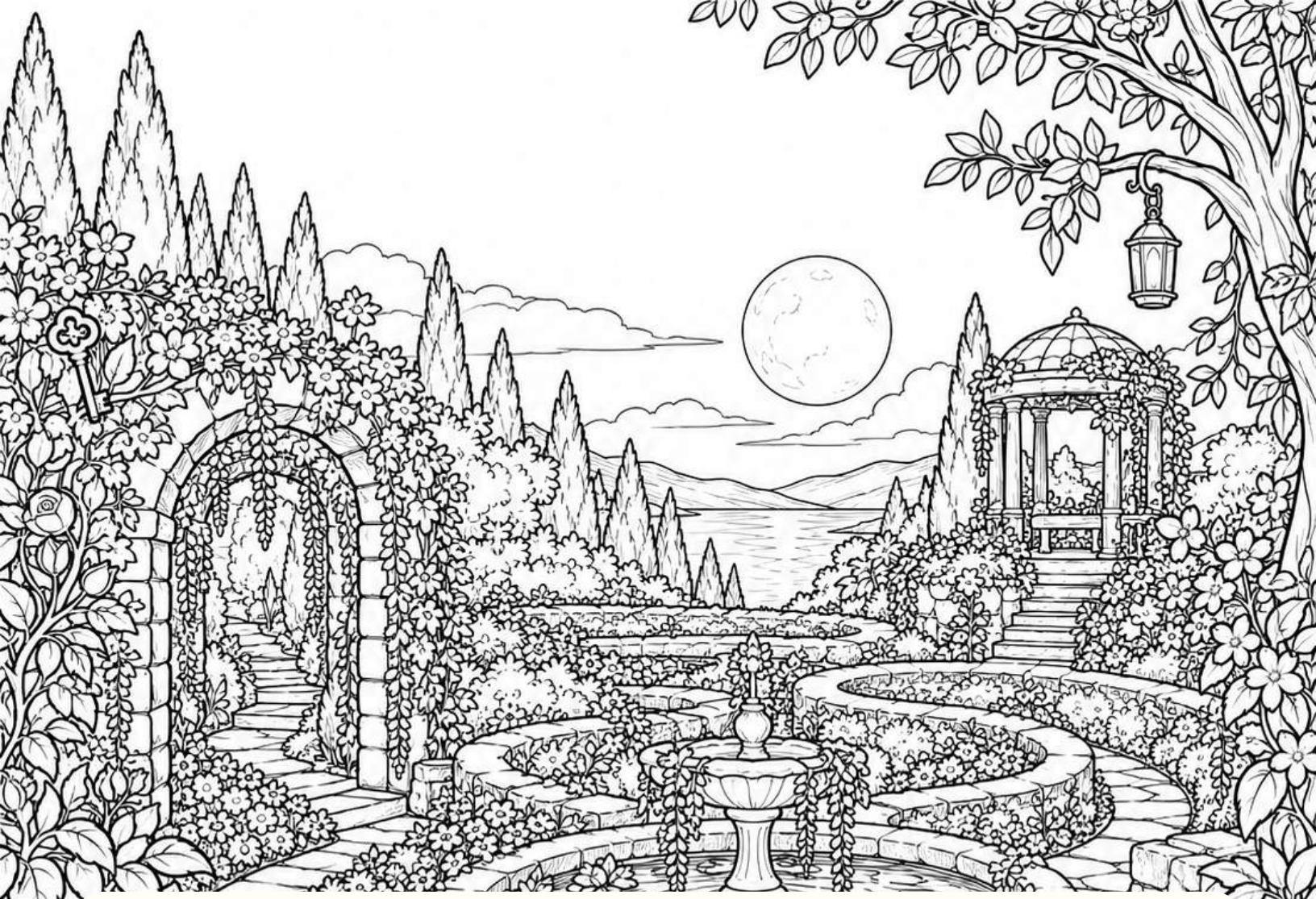


Who Am I Self Discovery And Identity Workbook

A gentle way to use this resource

Begin anywhere. Read one section at a time, choose only what fits, and skip, adapt, pause, or stop as needed. Try one practice before adding another. Reflection is an invitation, not a requirement.

Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC | My Reflective Collective

Educational wellness material. Not therapy, diagnosis, medical advice, crisis care, or a substitute for individualized professional support.



Before you begin

Take a moment to notice where you are starting. There is no correct answer and no requirement to complete every prompt.

What is most present?	What would feel supportive?
[ ] Tension or restlessness [ ] Heavy emotion [ ] Numbness or shutdown [ ] Racing thoughts [ ] Low energy [ ] Something else: _____	[ ] More steadiness [ ] More clarity [ ] Comfort or rest [ ] A practical next step [ ] Connection or support [ ] Something else: _____

A simple rhythm

1. Notice	Name what is happening without judging it.
2. Choose	Select one prompt or practice that fits your energy and circumstances.
3. Try	Use it gently for a clear amount of time. Smaller still counts.
4. Check	Notice whether you feel even slightly steadier, clearer, safer, or less alone.

Low-energy option

Read only the headings. Circle or note one sentence that feels useful. Then choose one action that takes five minutes or less. You can return later; stopping is allowed.

A trauma-informed educational wellness worksheet for reflection, choice, self-care, and support.

Use this at your own pace. Skip, adapt, pause, or stop. You are allowed to choose what fits your body, culture, privacy, energy, safety, access needs, and real-life limits today.

A printable reflection and practice resource MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE WHO AM I? _____ _____

A Trauma-Informed Self-Discovery & Identity Workbook

A gentle place to explore who you are underneath expectations, survival roles, people-pleasing, productivity, relationships, and the pressure to have yourself completely figured out.

Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC

MyReflectiveCollective.com

Pause - Reflect - Learn - Practice

Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC - MyReflectiveCollective.com - Educational wellness resource MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

Before You Begin

Important

This workbook is educational and reflective. It is not psychotherapy, medical care, diagnosis, or a substitute for treatment with a qualified professional.

Some identity questions can bring up grief, trauma memories, shame, confusion, or strong emotions. You are allowed to skip any prompt, change the wording, take a break, come back later, or complete this workbook with support. There is no requirement to disclose anything you do not want to disclose.

Crisis and safety

If you are in immediate danger or believe you may hurt yourself or someone else, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the United States, call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

If you are outside the U.S., use your local emergency or crisis service.

A person-centered reminder

- You are the expert on your own lived experience.
- You do not need a perfect label for yourself.
- Identity can be layered, evolving, contradictory, playful, serious, stable, or changing.
- Not knowing is not failure. Curiosity is enough for today.
- You can build a life from experiments, not just certainty.

Grounding statement

Try this sentence before you begin: "I do not have to solve myself today. I am allowed to notice, explore, and learn." MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

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MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

1. Starting Where I Am

When someone asks "Who am I?" the mind often tries to produce a final answer. This workbook uses a _____ _____ different approach: noticing patterns, preferences, values, needs, and possibilities. Identity is not a test you pass. It is something you can discover and shape over time.

Reframe

Instead of "Who am I supposed to be?" try "What feels true, meaningful, energizing, peaceful, or interesting to me?"

My check-in today

Right now, the question "Who am I?" makes me feel...

The part of myself I understand best is...

The part of myself that feels blurry or confusing is...

Something I want to learn about myself is...

What would make this workbook feel safe and useful?

_____

_____

- Being able to skip questions
- Taking breaks
- Using music or a comfort item
- Working in short sessions
- Talking with someone I trust
- Keeping my answers private
- Drawing instead of writing
- Using voice notes
- Tearing out pages I dislike
- Coming back when I feel ready MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

2. Who I Am vs. What I Learned to Be

Many people learned to survive by becoming agreeable, quiet, helpful, high-achieving, invisible, funny, responsible, tough, or emotionally self-contained. Those strategies can become so familiar that they feel like identity. Sometimes they

are part of you. Sometimes they are adaptations. Often they are both.

Trauma-informed lens

A survival response is not "fake." It was a real strategy that helped you navigate a real

environment. The goal is not to shame it. The goal is to notice whether you still want it running your life.

What I learned I had to be What I may actually prefer

_____

_____

Easygoing Allowed to have opinions

Useful/helpful Helpful by choice

Perfect Human and learning

Quiet Expressive

Strong all the time Supported too

Low-maintenance Allowed to have needs

Responsible for everyone Responsible for myself

Reflection

I learned I was safest when I...

I learned people liked me more when I...

I was criticized or rejected when I...

If nobody were disappointed in me, I might...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE A part of me I want to reclaim is...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

3. Identity Beyond Roles

Roles matter, but they are not the whole person. You may be a parent, partner, employee, caregiver, friend, professional, student, sibling, or helper. This section asks what remains when those titles are temporarily set down.

Roles I carry

List the roles you currently hold:

What each role asks from me

_____

_____ Role What I give / what it asks of me And underneath the roles...

When nobody needs anything from me, I naturally want to...

_____

_____ If I had two free hours with no obligation, I would probably...

I feel most like myself when...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE I forget about time when...

Something I enjoy even if I am not "good" at it is...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

4. Values: What Matters to Me

Values are directions, not achievements. You do not "finish" honesty, creativity, family, learning, freedom, or compassion. Values help you decide what kind of person you want to practice being.

Circle, check, or highlight what pulls at you

- Adventure
- Authenticity
- Belonging
- Calm
- Community
- Compassion
- Connection
- Courage
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Family
- Freedom
- Friendship
- Fun
- Growth
- Health
- Humor
- Independence
- Justice
- Kindness
- Learning
- Loyalty
- Nature
- Peace
- Play

- Purpose
- Security
- Self-respect
- Spirituality
- Stability
- Truth
- Wisdom

My top 10

Choose 10 values that matter most right now:

Narrow to 5

If you had to choose only five, which would you keep?

_____

_____

Make values behavioral

Value What this value looks like in real life Example: Connection Texting a friend, asking a real question, being present MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE Value What this value looks like in real life MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

5. Likes, Dislikes & Preferences

Preferences may seem small, but they are identity data. People who have spent years adapting to others sometimes know everyone else's preferences before their own. This section is intentionally concrete.

What sounds appealing? _____

_____

- Quiet mornings
- Late nights
- Small groups
- Large gatherings
- One-on-one time
- Music in the background
- Silence
- Being outdoors
- Cozy indoor spaces
- Planning ahead
- Spontaneity
- Trying new foods
- Familiar comfort foods
- Working alone
- Collaborating

- Deep conversations
- Light/funny conversations
- Hands-on projects
- Reading/learning
- Movement
- Rest
- Competition
- Cooperation
- Structure
- Flexibility

Rapid-fire preferences

More of this Less of this

Three foods I genuinely enjoy:

Three places I feel good being:

Three sounds/music styles I like:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

Three textures/scents/sensory experiences I like:

Three things I do not enjoy and do not need to force myself to enjoy:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

6. Interests & Curiosity Map

You do not need a "passion." Curiosity is enough. Interests often grow after exposure, repetition, skill- building, or permission to be a beginner.

Interest menu - mark: Love / Curious / Not for me

- Art or drawing
- Photography
- Gardening
- Cooking
- Baking
- Hiking
- Walking
- Birdwatching
- Music
- Singing

- Instruments
- Dance
- Yoga
- Strength training
- Crafts
- Sewing
- Woodworking
- Home projects
- Gaming
- Puzzles
- Reading
- Writing
- Poetry
- History
- Science
- Psychology
- Spirituality
- Volunteering
- Animals
- Travel
- Languages
- Technology
- Coding
- Business
- Fashion
- Beauty
- Interior design
- Collecting
- Sports
- Camping
- Fishing
- Meditation
- Sound healing
- Museums
- Theater

- Comedy
- Community events
- Classes/workshops

Curiosity funnel

1. Choose three things you marked "Curious."
2. For each, identify the smallest possible way to sample it for 10-30 minutes.
3. Notice your experience before, during, and after.
4. Do not ask "Was I good?" Ask "Did I want more?"
5. Repeat what feels alive. Release what does not.

Something I have always wondered about:

Something I used to enjoy but stopped doing:

Something I admire when other people do it:

Something I would try if I knew nobody would judge me:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

7. Strengths, Skills & Natural Tendencies

Strengths are not only achievements. They include how you notice, care, adapt, create, persist, connect, solve, organize, communicate, learn, and recover.

Possible strengths

- Listening
- Empathy
- Humor
- Problem-solving
- Creativity
- Persistence
- Leadership
- Patience
- Advocacy
- Organization
- Adaptability
- Loyalty
- Teaching

- Storytelling
- Planning
- Calming others
- Noticing details
- Big-picture thinking
- Resourcefulness
- Curiosity
- Courage
- Gentleness
- Directness
- Reliability
- Imagination
- Practicality
- Emotional insight
- Boundary-setting
- Making people feel welcome
- Learning quickly

Evidence, not perfection

Strength I may have Evidence from real life People often come to me for help with...

Something difficult I have survived or learned to navigate is...

A compliment I have trouble accepting is...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE If I believed that compliment, what might it say about me? _____ _____ MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

8. Energy, Regulation & Sensory Preferences

Knowing yourself includes knowing your nervous system. Some environments feel energizing; others feel draining. Neither makes you difficult. This information helps you design conditions that fit you better.

I tend to feel better with...

- Lower noise
- Background music
- Dim lighting
- Bright natural light
- Movement breaks
- Predictable plans
- Freedom to improvise

- More alone time
- More social contact
- Weighted blankets / pressure
- Fresh air
- Warmth
- Cool rooms
- Fewer transitions
- More novelty
- Clear instructions
- Open-ended tasks
- Body movement
- Creative activity
- Quiet decompression after people

My energy audit

Usually energizes or settles me Usually drains or overstimulates me Early signs I need a reset What happens in my body, thoughts, behavior, or mood?

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE My 5-minute reset menu

- Water/snack
- Step outside
- Slow exhale breathing
- Stretch
- Shake out tension
- Music
- Silence
- Cold/warm washcloth
- Name 5 things I see
- Text someone safe
- Close my eyes briefly
- Do one small task MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

9. Relationships, Belonging & Boundaries

Identity can become blurry in relationships when belonging has required over-adapting. Healthy connection includes room for two full people.

I feel most myself around people who...

I feel myself shrinking around people who...

Green flags for belonging

- I can say no

- I can disagree
- My feelings are not mocked
- They are curious about me
- I do not have to perform
- Repair is possible
- My boundaries are respected
- They celebrate my growth
- I can be quiet
- I can change my mind
- There is reciprocity
- I am not punished for having needs

Boundary reflection

A boundary that protects the real me is...

A relationship where I want to practice being more honest is...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE One small preference I can voice this week is...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

10. My Life Story Without Reducing Myself to It

Your history matters, but it is not the only category of information about you. Trauma, loss, illness, mistakes, relationships, or difficult chapters can shape you without becoming the complete definition of you.

Narrative practice

Try writing from the stance: "This happened to me / around me, and it affected me. It is part of my story. It is not all of me."

Life chapters

Chapter / season What I learned, lost, developed, or carried forward What survived in me?

A quality I kept even through hard times:

Something I know now that I did not know then:

A part of me that deserves more recognition:

A chapter I am ready to stop rereading every day:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

A chapter I want to begin writing now:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

11. The People-Pleasing Identity

People-pleasing can blur identity because attention is constantly directed outward: What do they want?

Are they upset? Am I acceptable? The practice is not becoming selfish. It is bringing yourself back into the room.

Before I answer someone...

6. Pause for one breath.

7. Notice your first internal reaction before editing it.

8. Ask: Do I want to? Do I have capacity? Is this mine to solve?

9. If unsure, use a delay: "Let me think about that and get back to you."

10. Choose an answer that includes your needs, not only theirs.

My yes / no / maybe cues My body says "yes" like... My body says "no" or "not now" like...

Practice scripts

- "I'm not available for that, but thank you for asking."
- "I need time to think before I commit."
- "That doesn't work for me."
- "I can help for 20 minutes, but I can't take the whole thing on."
- "I hear that you're disappointed. My answer is still no."

Write a boundary in your own natural voice:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

12. The Inner Critic vs. My Voice

Critical messages can become automatic inner narration. The fact that a thought sounds familiar or forceful does not make it true. This exercise helps separate inherited criticism from your own present- day voice.

The critical / inherited voice says... My grounded voice says...

You always mess this up. I am learning. Mistakes are information.

You are lazy. I may be tired, overloaded, or needing structure.

People will judge you. Some people may judge me; I can still choose for myself.

You should know better. Knowing better and doing better take practice.

Whose rule is this?

A "should" I hear often in my head is...

Who taught or reinforced that rule?

What was that rule trying to protect me from?

Does it fit my life now?

What would I rather believe or practice?

13. Joy, Play & Creativity

Play is not childish or unproductive. It helps reveal preference, spontaneity, imagination, and intrinsic motivation - the things you choose because the experience itself feels worthwhile.

Possible forms of play

- Doodling
- Coloring
- Dancing
- Singing badly on purpose
- Board games
- Video games
- Puzzles
- Crafting
- Cooking experiments
- Nature wandering
- Photography walks
- Funny videos
- Dress-up / style play
- Decorating
- Building things
- Playing with pets
- Sports
- Swimming
- Mini adventures
- Trying a new cafe
- Thrifting
- Writing stories
- Making playlists
- Karaoke
- Learning a silly skill As a child, before I worried about being good at things, I liked...

A playful thing I miss is...

Something that makes me laugh is...

A low-cost "mini adventure" I could try is...

What would fun look like if it did not have to be productive?

14. Purpose Without Pressure

Purpose does not have to be one grand calling. It can be a direction made of many small acts: caring, creating, learning, protecting, building, connecting, teaching, noticing beauty, raising a family, making work better, or being present in your community.

Permission

Purpose can be seasonal. The purpose of one chapter may simply be healing, stabilizing, learning, parenting, surviving, resting, or rebuilding.

Purpose clues

What breaks my heart or makes me want to help?

What do I naturally explain, teach, or talk about?

What kind of contribution feels meaningful to me?

What problems do I enjoy solving?

What do I want people to feel after spending time with me?

What would I still care about even if nobody applauded?

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE My current-season purpose sentence Try: "In this season, I want to use my _____ to create more _____ for myself and/or others." MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

15. Lifestyle & Environment Fit

Sometimes "I don't know who I am" is partly "I am living in conditions that do not fit me." This section explores the environment in which you function best.

Choose what feels more like you

- City
- Small town
- Country
- Busy neighborhood
- Quiet neighborhood
- Apartment
- House
- Minimalist space
- Cozy/full space
- Early schedule
- Later schedule

- Routine
- Variety
- Remote work
- In-person work
- Independent work
- Team-based work
- Frequent travel
- Home-centered life
- Lots of social plans
- A few close relationships
- High stimulation
- Low stimulation
- Fast pace
- Slow pace

My ideal ordinary day Do not design a vacation. Imagine a normal Tuesday that fits you.

I wake up around...

My morning feels...

I spend my work/learning time...

I interact with...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE I eat...

My evening includes...

My home feels...

I go to bed feeling...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

16. Trying On Possible Selves

You are allowed to test identities without committing forever. "Possible selves" are versions of you worth exploring, not contracts.

The creative me

If this version of me had 10% more room this month, what might change?

The adventurous me

The peaceful me

The social me

The independent me

The learning me

The playful me

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

The community-minded me

Design your own possible self The _____ me might...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

17. Identity Experiments: 30 Small Ways to Learn About

Yourself

Treat these as experiments, not assignments. Choose 3-5, then notice your reaction.

11. Order something you actually want without asking what everyone else is

getting.

12. Take yourself to a coffee shop, park, bookstore, or museum for 30 minutes.

13. Make a playlist called "This Feels Like Me."

14. Wear something that feels expressive, comfortable, or different.

15. Try one beginner tutorial for a hobby.

16. Spend 20 minutes doing something badly on purpose.

17. Say one low-stakes no without over-explaining.

18. Say one genuine yes before talking yourself out of it.

19. Choose dinner based on your preference.

20. Rearrange one small area of your space to fit you better.

21. Take 10 photos of things your eye naturally notices.

22. Write a one-page "things I am curious about" list.

23. Ask a friend what they see you light up talking about.

24. Revisit a childhood interest.

25. Go somewhere new within 10 miles.

26. Try a class, meetup, or community event.

27. Spend one evening without optimizing productivity.

28. Notice what kind of content you save or rewatch.

29. Write a "not for me" list without guilt.

30. Make something with your hands.

31. Choose a scent, candle, tea, or snack just because you like it.

32. Read about a topic with no career purpose.

33. Move your body in a way that feels enjoyable rather than punishing.

34. Create a tiny ritual for your morning or evening.

35. Ask yourself "What do I want?" three times in one day.

36. Practice stating an opinion before checking others' reactions.

37. Write a paragraph as your 10-year-old self about what adulthood should include.

38. Write a paragraph as your 80-year-old self about what mattered.

39. Spend 15 minutes in silence and notice what your mind reaches for.

40. Repeat one experiment you liked - identity is often found in repetition.

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

18. A 7-Day Self-Discovery Practice

Keep this light: 10-15 minutes per day. The goal is data, not self-analysis marathons.

Day 1 - Preference

Notice 5 tiny preferences today.

What I noticed:

Day 2 - Energy

Track what adds energy and what drains it.

What I noticed:

Day 3 - Voice

Catch one "should" and rewrite it in your own voice.

What I noticed:

Day 4 - Curiosity

Spend 15 minutes exploring one interest.

What I noticed:

Day 5 - Boundary

State one preference, request, or limit.

What I noticed:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

Day 6 - Joy

Do something only because it feels good or playful.

What I noticed:

Day 7 - Meaning

Review the week. What felt most like you?

What I noticed:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

19. A 30-Day Curiosity Challenge

Pick one prompt per day. Skip days. Repeat favorites. There is no falling behind.

1. Listen to a new music genre 2. Cook or taste something new

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

3. Take a different route 4. Read about a random topic

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

5. Visit a local place you have never entered 6. Draw for 10 minutes

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

7. Ask someone about their hobby 8. Try a new movement video

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

9. Make a mood board 10. Write a tiny poem

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

11. Spend time in nature 12. Wear a different color/style

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

13. Make a new playlist 14. Watch a documentary

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

15. Try a simple craft 16. Take 10 interesting photos

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

17. Do a puzzle 18. Learn five words in another language

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

19. Explore a family/cultural recipe 20. Go to a library section you never visit

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

21. Try journaling by voice note 22. Sit somewhere new

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

23. Make something without posting it 24. Create a comfort ritual

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

25. Try a new podcast 26. Learn a practical skill

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

27. Plan a mini adventure 28. Revisit an old interest

What I noticed: _____ What I noticed: _____

29. Do one thing your younger self would enjoy 30. Review the month and circle

what you want What I noticed: _____ more of

What I noticed: _____

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

20. My Personal User Manual

This is not a diagnosis or personality label. It is a practical summary of what helps you function and feel like yourself.

I tend to do my best when...

I get overwhelmed when...

Signs I need space or rest are...

When I am stressed, it helps when people...

When I am stressed, it does NOT help when people...

I feel cared for when...

I feel respected when...

My communication preference is...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE I make decisions best when...

I need more time when...

Things that reliably regulate me include...

Things I want people close to me to understand about me...

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

21. Affirmations & Permission Slips

Choose statements that feel believable enough to practice. If an affirmation feels fake, soften it: "I am learning to..." or "I am open to the possibility that..." Choose 5 that you want to keep

- I am allowed to know myself slowly.
- I can change my mind as I learn.
- My preferences matter even when they
- I do not need to earn rest by suffering first. inconvenience someone.
- I am more than what I produce.
- I am more than what happened to me.
- I can belong without abandoning myself.
- I am allowed to be a beginner.
- I can be kind without being endlessly available.

- Curiosity is a valid direction.
- I do not need one perfect life purpose.
- I can choose what fits me now.
- My needs are information, not character flaws.
- I am allowed to enjoy things without monetizing them.
- I can let other people misunderstand me.
- I can say no and still be caring.
- I can take up space without performing.
- I am allowed to have a private inner life.
- I can build identity through action, not
- I do not have to be the same version of myself overthinking. forever.
- I can keep what fits and release what does not.
- My worth is not determined by usefulness.
- I am learning the sound of my own voice.
- I can make choices without unanimous approval.
- There are many ways to be a whole person.

Write your own permission slips:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

22. Journal Prompts for Deeper Self-Discovery

1. Who am I when I am not trying to impress, rescue, fix, or please anyone?

2. What do I secretly wish I had more time for?

3. What have I outgrown?

4. What do I keep pretending not to care about?

5. Which parts of myself only come out around safe people?

6. What do I envy, and what might that envy be pointing toward?

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

7. What kinds of people make me feel expansive rather than small?

8. What does "home" feel like to me?

9. What do I want my life to contain more of? Less of?

10. What have I mistaken for laziness that might actually be exhaustion, fear,

overload, or lack of fit?

11. What choices would I make if I trusted myself 10% more?

12. What part of my personality did I learn to hide?

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

13. What parts of me deserve an apology from me?

14. What would I try if success were defined as learning?

15. What feels meaningful even when it is hard?

16. What feels empty even when I do it well?

17. What am I proud of that nobody sees?

18. What do I want my relationships to feel like?

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

19. What kind of beauty do I notice?

20. What kind of life feels sustainable, not just impressive?

21. What do I want to be remembered for in the ordinary moments?

22. What might "being myself" look like this week - not someday?

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

23. Resources: Books, Podcasts & Practices

Resources are invitations, not prescriptions. Different voices resonate with different people; keep what is useful and leave the rest.

Books to explore

- Brené Brown - The Gifts of Imperfection (shame, belonging, authenticity).
- James Clear - Atomic Habits (small behavior experiments and identity-based habits).
- Rick Hanson - Resilient (inner strengths and nervous-system-informed resilience).
- Kristin Neff - Self-Compassion (reducing self-criticism and building a kinder inner stance).
- Emily & Amelia Nagoski - Burnout (stress cycles, expectations, and recovery).
- Nedra Glover Tawwab - Set Boundaries, Find Peace (boundaries and self-respect).
- Julia Cameron - The Artist's Way (creativity, curiosity, and recovering a creative life).

Podcasts / audio resources

- Ten Percent Happier - mindfulness, behavior, relationships, and emotional life.
- The Happiness Lab with Dr. Laurie Santos - research-informed well-being and behavior.
- Unlocking Us with Brené Brown - conversations about vulnerability, belonging, courage, and relationships.
- On Being with Krista Tippett - meaning, spirituality, identity, and human life.
- The Mel Robbins Podcast - practical behavior change and self-development topics; use discernment and choose episodes that fit you.
- Hidden Brain - psychology, behavior, relationships, and the forces that shape us.

Practices you can pair with this workbook

- Mindful walking without headphones for 10 minutes.

- A "what did I notice?" voice memo after trying something new.
- Weekly values check-in: Did my week contain what matters to me?
- Creative practice with no requirement to share the result.
- Body scan focused on comfort, tension, energy, and preference - not judgment.
- A "three true things about me today" journal entry.

Keep your agency

If a resource pushes you toward shame, rigid self-labeling, or the idea that there is one correct version of you, it may not be the right resource for you.

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

24. My Identity Snapshot

Complete this after you have worked through some or all of the workbook. Use pencil if you want - this is allowed to change.

Five words that fit me right now:

My top five values:

Things I genuinely enjoy:

Things I am curious about:

Strengths I can acknowledge:

Conditions where I function best:

People/relationships that help me feel like myself:

Boundaries that protect me:

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE

A role I want less defined by:

A part of myself I want more room for:

Something I am ready to release:

Something I want to practice:

My current-season purpose:

One sentence that feels like me:

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25. Closing Reflection & Next Steps

You do not have to emerge from this workbook with a perfectly defined identity. A useful outcome is simply knowing yourself a little more accurately, treating your preferences as valid data, and making one or two choices that fit you better.

What surprised me?

What felt relieving?

What was difficult?

What did I learn about what I like?

What did I learn about what I need?

What do I want to experiment with next?

What is one boundary that supports the person I am becoming?

What is one joyful thing I want to repeat?

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE | PAUSE - REFLECT - LEARN - PRACTICE What sentence do I want to remember when I start overthinking who I am?

My next three small steps

41. _____

42. _____

43. _____

Closing reminder

Identity is not a courtroom where you must prove who you are. It is a relationship with yourself - one you can keep getting to know.

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Use, Sharing & Clinical Disclaimer

Clinicians and helpers may use reflective prompts within their scope of practice and should apply independent clinical judgment, cultural humility, accessibility considerations, and appropriate risk assessment. Individuals are encouraged to stop or modify any exercise that feels overwhelming and seek qualified support when needed.

Crisis support (U.S.): Call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Call 911 or go to an emergency department for immediate danger or life-threatening emergencies.

Visit MyReflectiveCollective.com

Pause - Reflect - Learn - Practice

SAFETY, PRIVACY & EDUCATIONAL USE

MY REFLECTIVE COLLECTIVE - MICHELLE D. ELDER, MSW, LMHC

If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency: Call 911 in the United States or use your local emergency number. For U.S. suicide or mental-health crisis support, call or text 988. For relationship-safety support, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233, text START to 88788, or visit TheHotline.org from a safer device when possible.

Privacy and safer searching If someone may monitor your device, accounts, internet connection, location, downloads, or browser activity, consider using a safer device and a trusted network. Private browsing may reduce locally saved history but does not make activity invisible. Clearing history can also be noticed. A website Quick Exit button changes the page;

it cannot erase browser, download, router, account, employer, school, carrier, or device records. Choose only steps that feel safer in your situation.

Do not store identifying or safety-sensitive answers where another person may find them.

Educational scope and professional limits

This resource provides general psychoeducation, reflection, and wellness support. It is not therapy, counseling, diagnosis, assessment, treatment, medical advice, legal advice, crisis response, forensic evaluation, or an individualized safety plan.

It does not replace care from a licensed clinician, healthcare professional, attorney, trained advocate, emergency service, or other qualified professional. Laws, court procedures, services, and risks vary by location and circumstance.

Choice, pacing, and inclusion You may skip, change, discuss, dictate, draw, pause, or stop any activity. No exercise can determine what you experienced, diagnose a condition, prove a legal claim, guarantee safety, or tell you whether to stay, leave, report, reconcile, forgive, or pursue court action. Adapt language and activities for culture, identity, disability, neurotype, age, literacy, sensory needs, and personal preference. Automatic translation can make mistakes; confirm legal, medical, emergency, and safety-critical wording with a qualified person.

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EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE - NOT THERAPY OR INDIVIDUALIZED CARE

Immediate danger or medical emergency: call 911 | U.S. crisis support: call or text 988 | Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC

Supportive practices and reminders

Trauma-informed choice

You are in charge of pace, privacy, and participation. Keep your eyes open if that feels safer. Change the words, position, movement, or environment. Skip any prompt that increases distress. You never have to describe a traumatic experience to benefit from grounding or reflection.

A one-minute mindfulness pause

Notice one point of support beneath you. Look around and name three neutral things you see. Notice one sound and one body sensation without trying to change either. Ask, 'What would support me in the next few minutes?' Choose the smallest workable response.

Believable affirmations

Choose language your mind can accept. Try: 'I can take one step at a time.' 'My needs and boundaries matter.' 'I am allowed to pause.' 'I can ask for support.' 'This moment is difficult, and it will not always feel exactly like this.' Edit any statement until it feels honest and respectful.

Practical tips

Pair reflection with water, food, movement, rest, medication as prescribed, or contact with a safe person when needed. Save the most helpful page where it is easy to find. Revisit the resource when you are relatively steady so the choices feel familiar during harder moments.

When more support is appropriate

A worksheet cannot provide emergency care, diagnosis, or individualized treatment. Consider a qualified health or mental-health professional when distress is intense, persistent, worsening, affecting daily functioning, or connected with safety concerns. In immediate danger, contact local emergency services or a crisis service available in your country.

Integrate and choose your next step

Pause after reading. More information is not always more helpful; the goal is to leave with one choice you can actually use.

What stood out?

_____

_____

What is one kind, realistic next step?

_____

_____

What support, boundary, or adaptation would help?

_____

_____

If this did not help

You did not fail. Try making the step smaller, changing from a thinking practice to a body or sensory practice, checking basic needs, or involving a safe person. Strong, persistent, or worsening distress may need professional or crisis support beyond a worksheet.