



A mindfulness resource

# KICKBACK

By Auckland Grammar School



This resource is brought to you by the

## Student Services Department

We are within the school library.

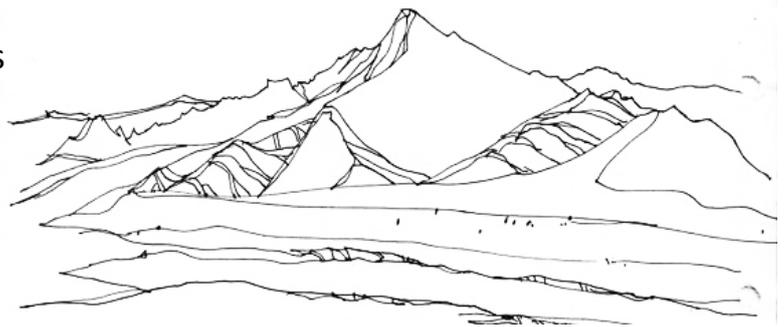
Please see us if you would like to know more about mindfulness, or are seeking extra support with your journey here at Auckland Grammar School.

# Kia ora!

Good on you for taking the time to develop your self-care skills! This little booklet is filled with different ideas and exercises to help you de-stress and stay strong.

**In this little booklet you will find:**

- 1) Relaxing Activities
- 2) Breathing exercises
- 3) Muscle relaxation techniques
- 4) Positive Qualities Exercise
- 5) Self- compassion
- 6) Journal writing ideas
- 7) Mindful Colouring
- 8) Goal Setting



You might find you enjoy some exercises more than others – it is recommended that you try all of them, and record which you would like to learn more about.

I want to learn more about...

CURRENT INVENTORY:

**Activities I know I enjoy:**

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**Activities I want to try:**

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**Friends I can hang out with:**

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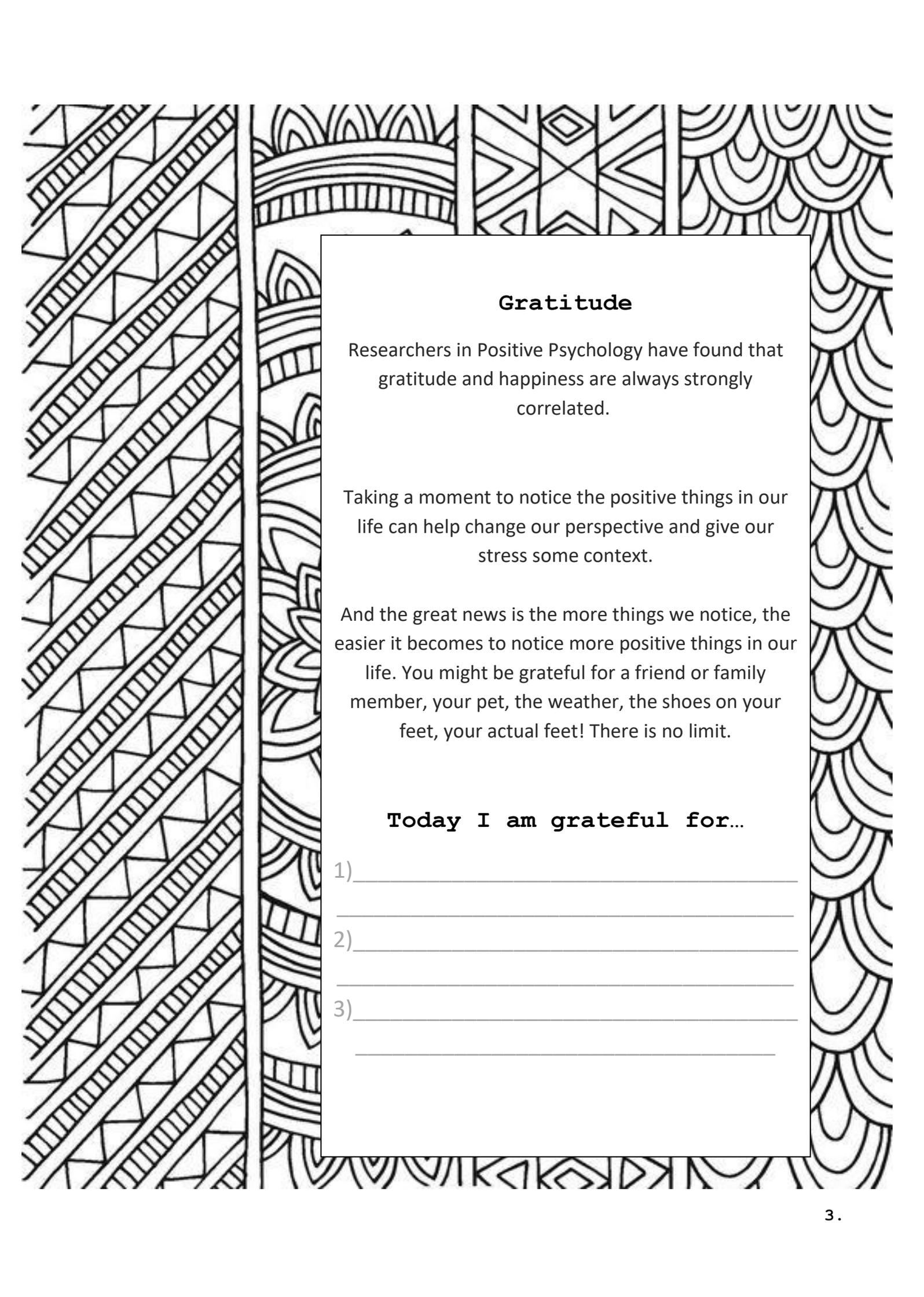
**Friendships I want to develop:**

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## Gratitude

Researchers in Positive Psychology have found that gratitude and happiness are always strongly correlated.

Taking a moment to notice the positive things in our life can help change our perspective and give our stress some context.

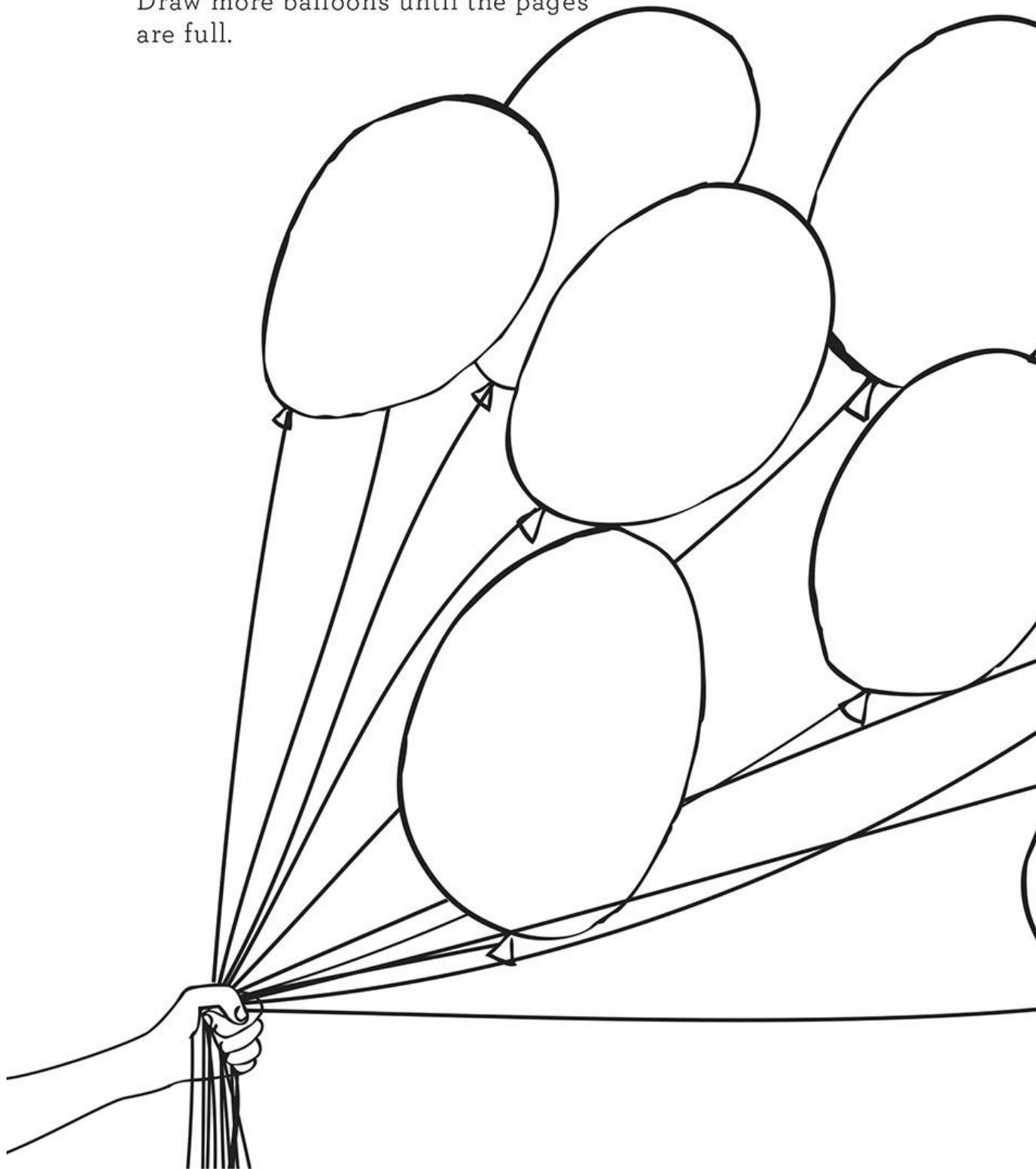
And the great news is the more things we notice, the easier it becomes to notice more positive things in our life. You might be grateful for a friend or family member, your pet, the weather, the shoes on your feet, your actual feet! There is no limit.

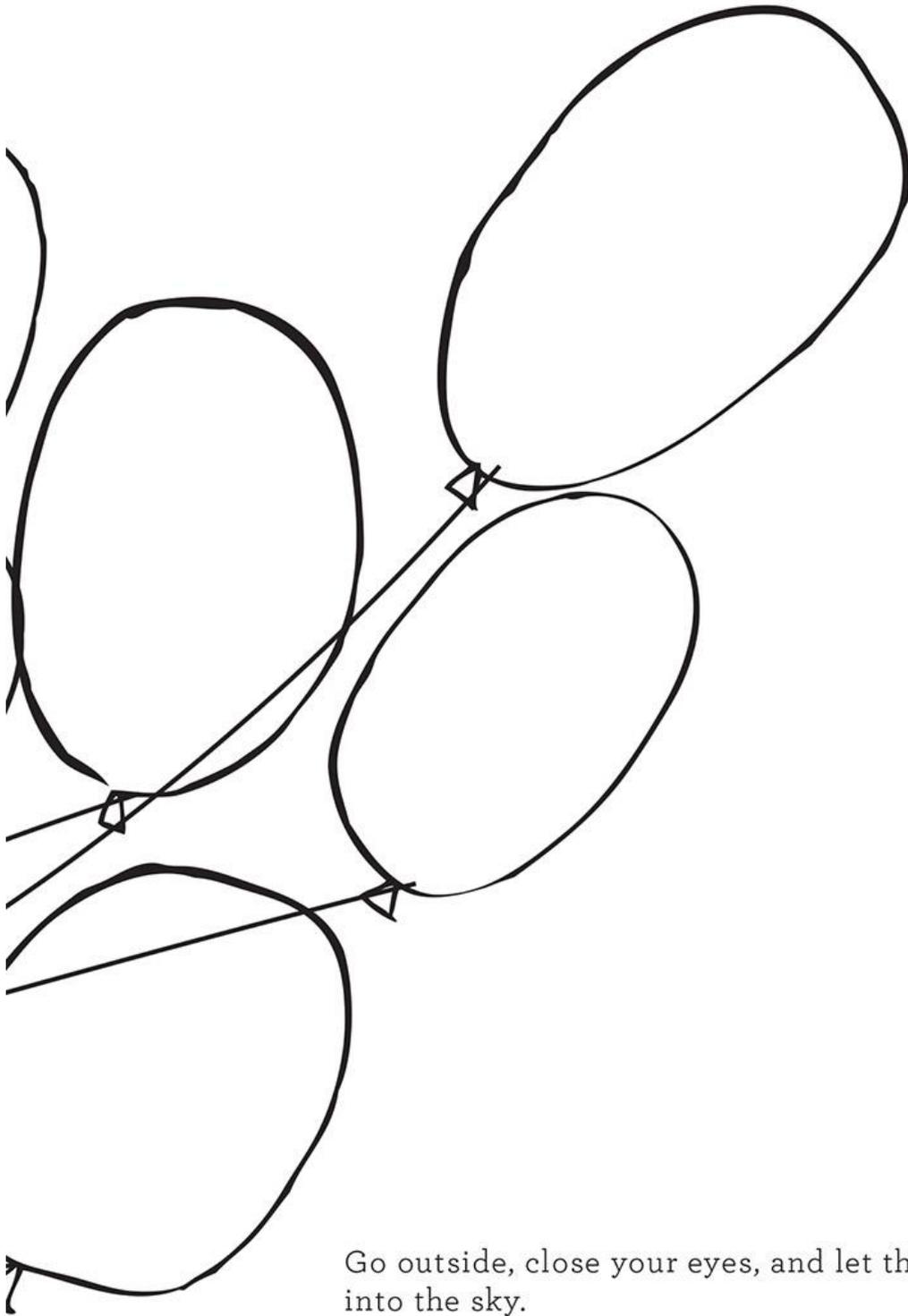
**Today I am grateful for...**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Let go

Write on the balloons all the things you want to let go of.  
Draw more balloons until the pages  
are full.





Go outside, close your eyes, and let them sail off into the sky.

# YEAH Science!

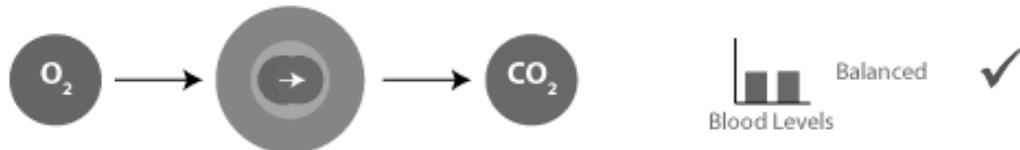
## How Breathing Affects Feelings

The way we breathe is strongly linked to the way we feel. When we are relaxed we breathe slowly, and when we are anxious we breathe more quickly.



### Normal breathing

When we breathe we take in oxygen ( $O_2$ ) that is used by the body. This process creates carbon dioxide ( $CO_2$ ), a waste product that we breathe out. When our breathing is relaxed the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide are balanced - this allows our body to function efficiently.



### Exercise breathing

Our breathing rate increases during exercise to take in more oxygen. The body uses the extra oxygen to fuel the muscles and so produces more carbon dioxide. The increased breathing rate leads to more carbon dioxide being expelled. This means that the balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide levels is maintained.



### Anxious breathing

When we are anxious our breathing rate increases: we take in more oxygen and breathe out more carbon dioxide than usual. However, because the body is not working any harder than normal it is not using up any extra oxygen, and so it is not producing any extra carbon dioxide. Because carbon dioxide is being expelled faster than it is being produced its concentration in the blood goes down (leading to a temporary change in the pH of the blood called respiratory alkalosis). This change in  $CO_2$  blood concentration can lead us to feeling unpleasantly light-headed, tingly in our fingers and toes, clammy, and sweaty.



When our breathing returns to its usual rate the levels of carbon dioxide in the blood return to normal, and the symptoms resolve. You can deliberately relax your breathing to feel better.

### Relaxed breathing instructions

- 1) Sit or lie down comfortably. Close your eyes if you would like to
- 2) Breathe *slowly* and *steadily* in through your nose for a count of 4
- 3) Hold your breath for a count of 2
- 4) Breathe out *slowly* and *steadily* for a count of 4
- 5) Repeat for a few minutes

## Mindful Breathing

Step 1: Equal Breathing

Especially good before bed

Helps Calm and focus

**Technique:** Inhale count to 4 Exhale count to 4.

Five inhales/exhales

Inhale count to 6 Exhale count to 6.

Five inhales/exhales

Step 2: Abdominal Breathing

Especially good before an exam or stressful event!

Lowers heart rate and blood pressure

**Technique:** With one hand on the chest and the other on the belly, take a deep breath in through the nose, ensuring the diaphragm (not the chest) inflates with enough air to create a stretch in the lungs.

Inhale count to 7 Exhale count to 7.

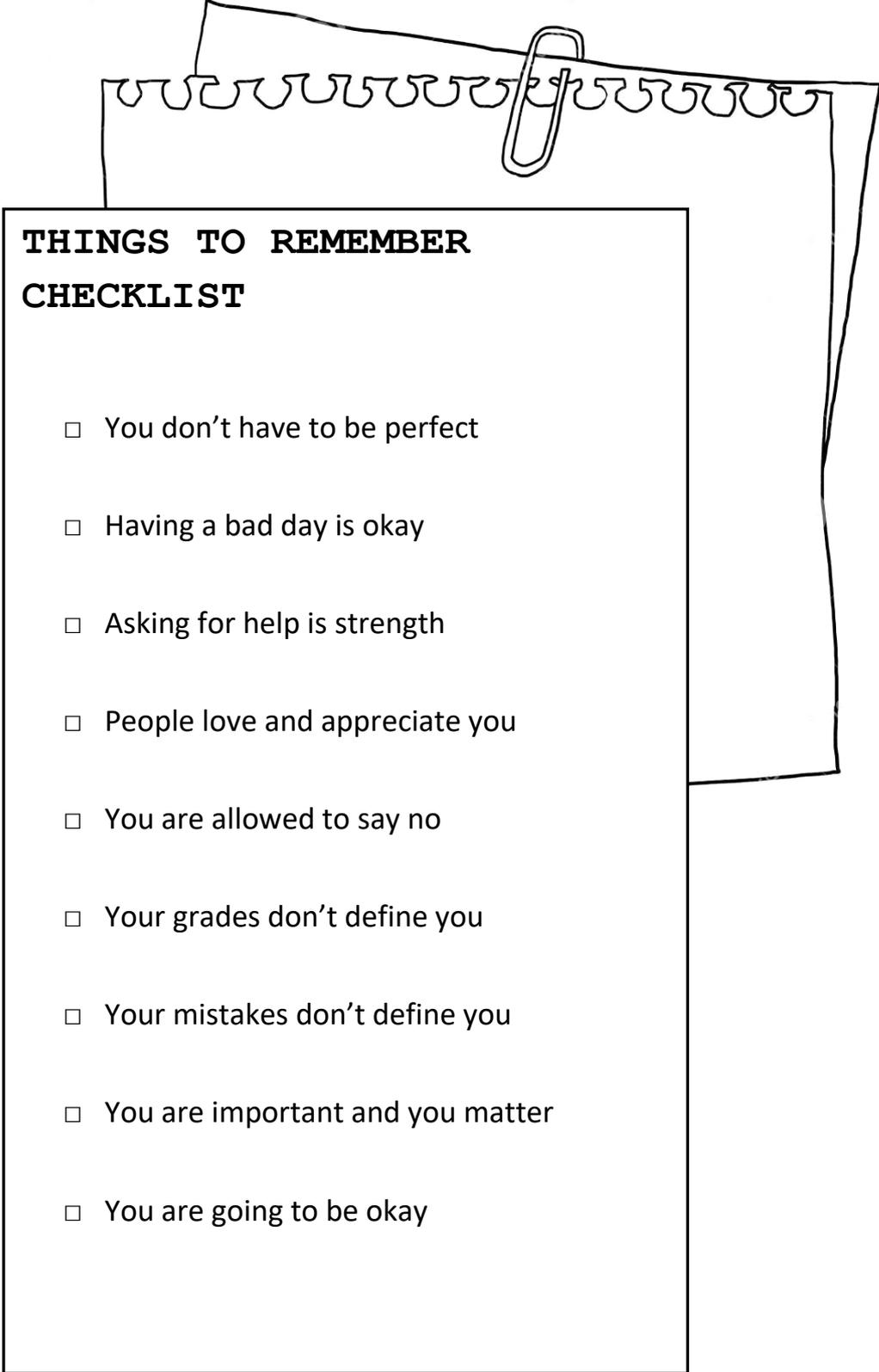
7 inhales/exhales

Step 3: Progressive Relaxation

Relax the muscles throughout your body

**Technique:** Inhale for 6 seconds, hold breath for 3 seconds and visualise your toes and feet relaxing. Breath out and relax your body.

Again, same but this time knees, thighs, glutes, chest, arms, hands, neck, jaw, and eyes—all while maintaining deep, slow breaths



**THINGS TO REMEMBER  
CHECKLIST**

- You don't have to be perfect
- Having a bad day is okay
- Asking for help is strength
- People love and appreciate you
- You are allowed to say no
- Your grades don't define you
- Your mistakes don't define you
- You are important and you matter
- You are going to be okay

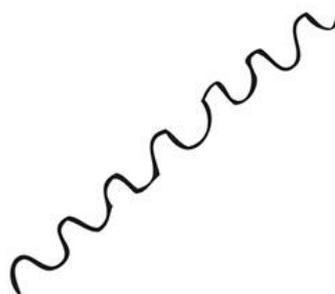
# Hand-washing meditation

Turn on the water and find a temperature  
that is just the right warmth . . .

Take the soap in your hand and lather . . .



feeling your fingers interlace and weave  
back and forth in their intuitive way . . .



Take in the aroma of the soap before  
watching the lather slowly wash away . . .

Dry your hands with care . . .

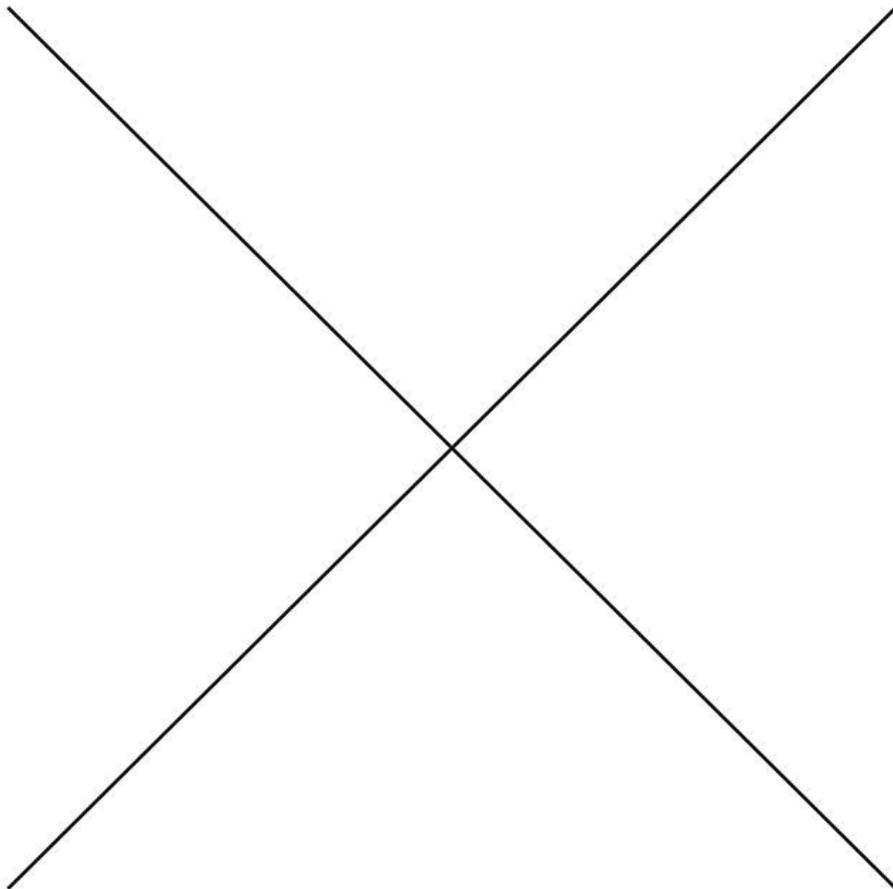


Feel the sensation of warmth and  
aliveness in your fingertips.

# Anchor, man

Keep your attention focused on the intersection of the X for one minute (set your alarm).

When your mind wanders, just gently bring your attention back.



# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

When we are stressed, we tense our bodies. It's a throwback to when the world had physical threats humans needed to fight or run away from.

However, when we are stressed over a long period of time, the resulting muscle tension can cause problems like muscle spasms, headaches, and back aches.

Identify the different muscle groups  
Recognise tension in your body  
Allow yourself to relax and let go of tension

## Relaxation Sequence

Here are a few examples from a full-body relaxation sequence to try – do these after the breathing exercises on the previous page.

Hands and forearms

Make a fist with your right hand. Focus on the tension in your hand and arm. Hold tension for 5 seconds. Release for 10 seconds. Repeat. Notice the difference. Repeat for left hand.

Shoulders

Tense the muscles in your shoulders as you bring your shoulders up towards your ears. Focus on the tightness of your shoulders. Hold for 5 seconds, then release, dropping shoulders back down to to a relaxed position.

Shoulder Blades/Back

Push your shoulder blades back, trying to almost touch them together, so that your chest is pushed forward. Hold the tension in the muscles, feeling the tightness in your upper back and in your shoulder blades. Release tension by dropping shoulders back into resting position

Eyes and Cheeks

Squeeze your eyes tight shut. Focus on the tension around your eyes and cheeks. Notice the tension release as you relax those muscles.



## Personal Qualities

Kind	Helpful	Brave
Intelligent	Insightful	Leader
Hard working	Funny	Enthusiastic
Loyal	Patient	Forgiving
Down to Earth	Realistic	Humble
Goofy	Honest	Sensitive
Creative	Generous	Organised
Accepting	Balanced	Selfless
Strong	Independent	Practical
Friendly	Trusting	Mature
Thoughtful	Resilient	Focused
Confident	Cheerful	Polite
Respectful	Reliable	Open-minded
Positive	Relaxed	Responsible
Determined	Listener	Athletic

**HIGHLIGHT:** between 5-10 Personal Qualities that apply to you.

Remind yourself of these qualities each day.

Choose one.

**WRITE:** down a time that you showed that you had this quality:

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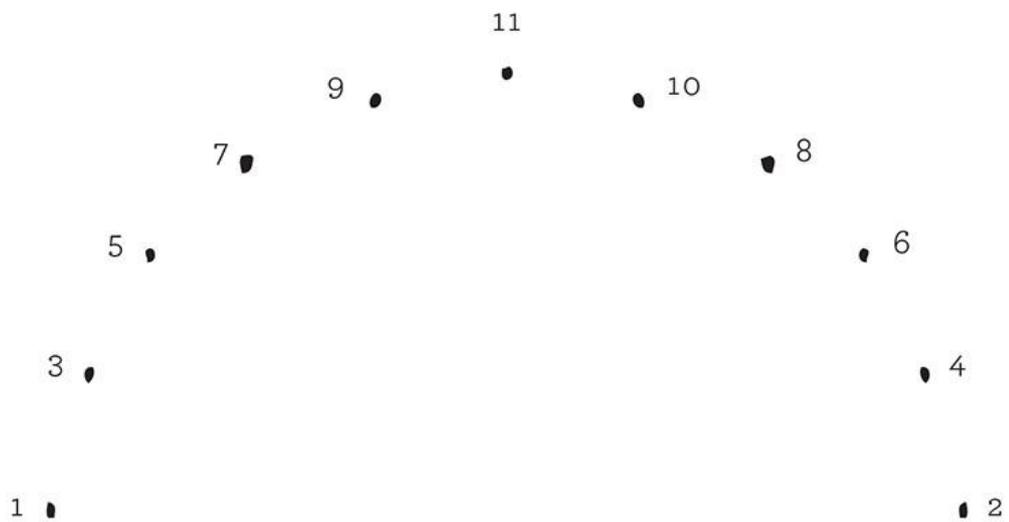
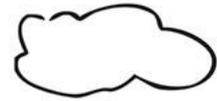


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**THINK:** Where does this quality come from? Home? School? Church?  
Who knows this about you? How can you continue to strengthen this quality?

# Connect the dots

Slowly connect the dots by number.  
One line with each breath.



# Self Compassion

## Compassionate Letter to Myself

- Everybody has something about themselves they don't like; something that causes them to feel shame, insecure, or not "good enough." Please think of an issue you have that tends to make you feel bad about yourself (a mistake you made, your appearance, relationship issues, etc.)
- Now think about an imaginary friend who is unconditionally wise, loving and compassionate. Imagine that this friend can see all your strengths and weaknesses, including what you don't like about yourself. This friend recognizes the limits of human nature, and is kind, accepting, and forgiving.
- Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of this imaginary friend, focusing on the perceived inadequacy you tend to judge yourself for. What would this friend say to you from the perspective of unlimited compassion? And if you think this friend would suggest possible changes you should make, how might these suggestions embody feelings of care, encouragement, and support?
- After writing the letter, put it down for a little while. Then come back to it and read it again, really letting the words sink in. Feel the compassion as it pours into you, soothing and comforting you. Love, connection and acceptance are your birthright. To claim them you need only look within yourself.
- If you prefer, you can also:  
Write a letter *as if you were talking to a dearly loved friend* who was struggling with the same concern that you are. What words of compassion and support would you offer? Then go back and read the letter, applying the words to yourself.







# Journal Writing

Journal writing is great for our mental well-being, as it helps our brain organise itself. However, sometimes it's hard to know what to write about! Here are some ideas to get you started.

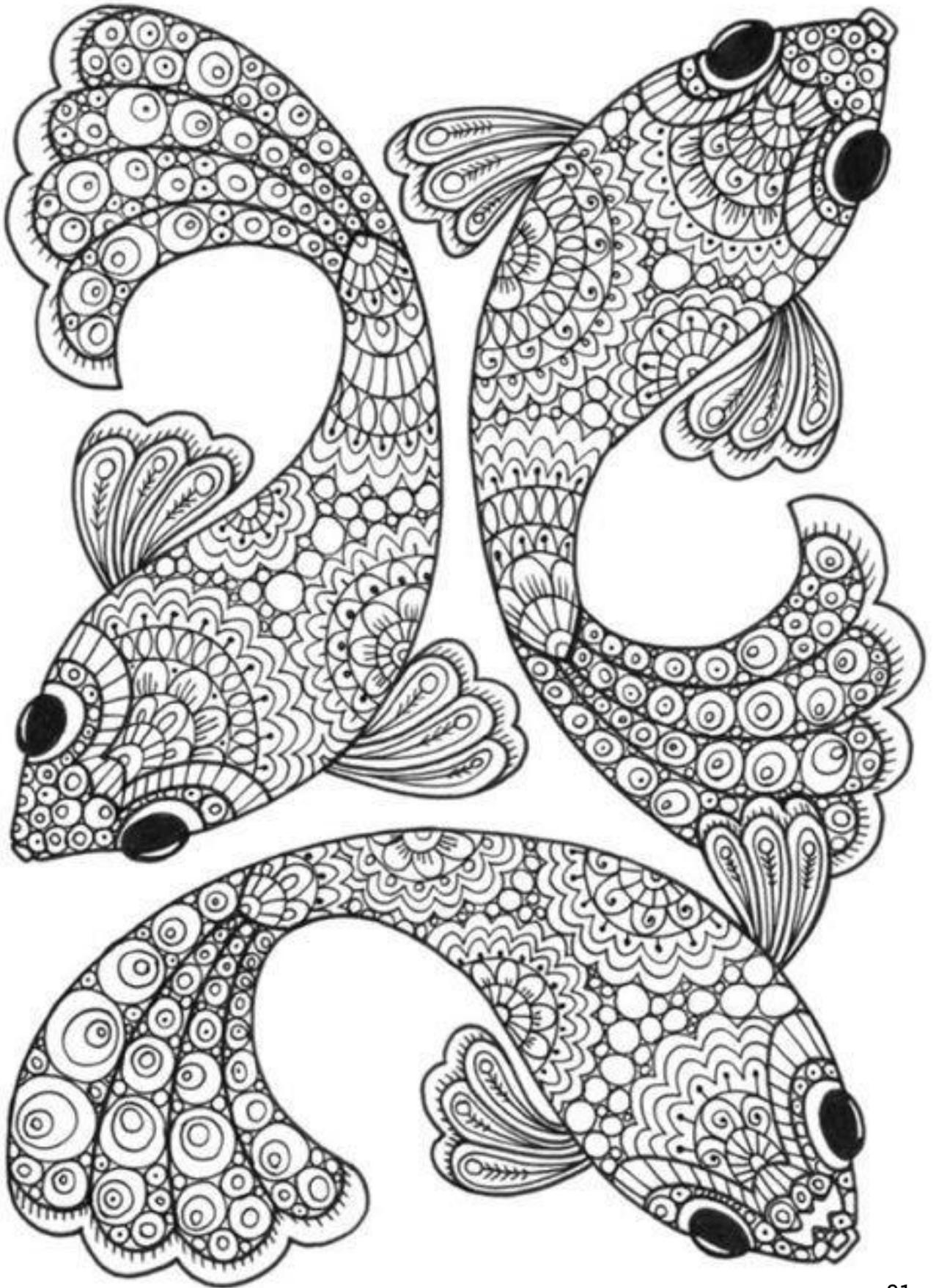
## Journal prompts

1. What kind of day are you having, and why?
2. What's your favourite colour, place, food, book, song, or movie, and why?
3. Where are you happiest? Describe that place.
4. What do you consider to be your culture, and how do you feel about it?
5. What would you change about yourself or your life? Is there a way for you to change it?
6. What is your relationship like with various members of your family?
7. If you have brothers or sisters, how are you similar to them or different from them? What about with your friends?
8. What are your views on religion?
9. Do you have a philosophy of life? If so, what is it? If not, what is your method for making important decisions?
10. In what areas are you optimistic, and in what areas are you pessimistic?
11. What are your most prized possessions?
12. Who is someone you miss?
13. What is a mistake people often make about you?
14. What's something you disagree with about the way you were raised?
15. What's your favorite: season, color, place, or food? Describe it.

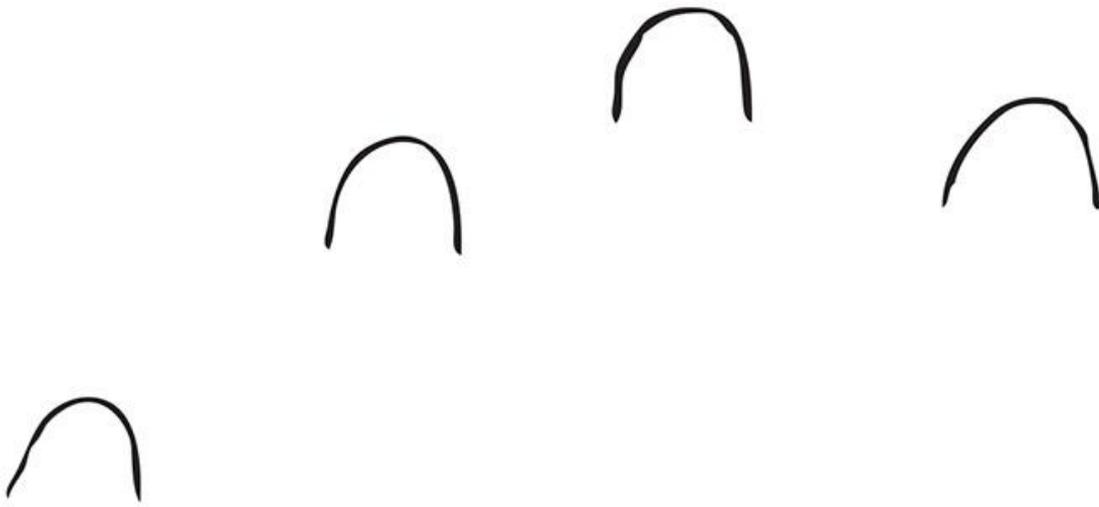
## Journal prompts - daydreams

1. Describe your dream: job, man/woman, house.
2. How would you like your life to be when you're older?
3. What would be the guest list at your dream party? What would the various guests talk about?
4. What magic power would you like to have? How would you use it? What would it feel like?
5. If you won the lottery, what would you do?
6. What's a country you'd like to visit? How do you imagine your time there?

These are all good conversation starters you can ask your friends too!



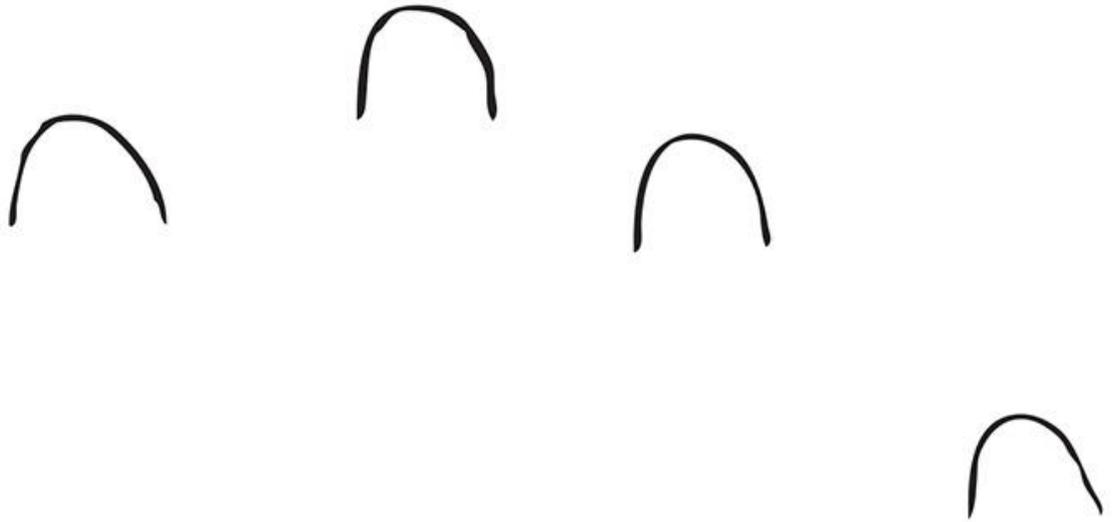
# The hand meditation



Trace your left hand here.



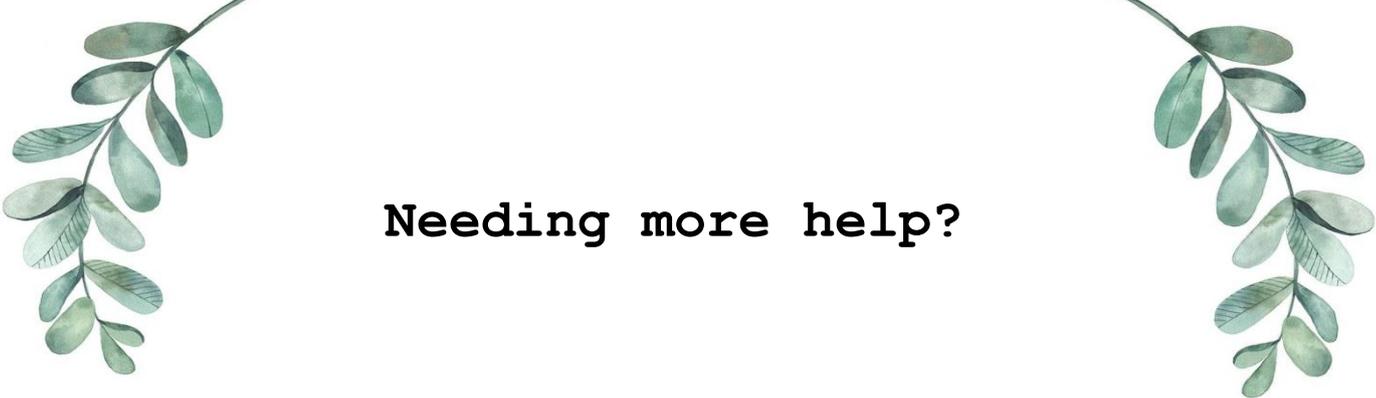
Put both hands in their places on the pages. Close your eyes. Feel the sensation of your skin on the pages; the resistance of the book, wanting to close. Feel the rhythm of your pulse or the tingling of your fingertips?



Trace your right hand here.



Repeat as desired.



## Needing more help?

### SchoolTV

Accesible through Student GrammarNet – full of up to date resources and strategies to help with your school career and personal life.

### Youthline

Free Call: 0800 376 633 Free Text: 234

24 hour free hotline offering counselling support. If you are feeling stressed and need someone to talk to, this is a great number (you can call on behalf of a friend too)

### Alcohol/Drug Helpline

Free Call: 0800 787797 Free Text: 8681

Support and advice if you are trying to kick a vice!

### Websites:

#### CALM

<http://www.calm.auckland.ac.nz/>

Computer Assisted Learning for the Mind

#### The Lowdown

Free Call: 0800 111 757 Free Text: 757

[www.thelowdown.co.nz](http://www.thelowdown.co.nz)

#### Youthline Advice Hub:

<https://www.youthline.co.nz/advice-hub.html>

# FEEDBACK PLEASE

On scale of 1-5 where 1 is terrible, 3 is pretty good, and 5 is excellent, please tick your rating:



	1	2	3	4	5
How useful was this session?					
How useful is this book?					

Would you want to try mindfulness independently?	Yes	No
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What is something you have taken away from this lesson?

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Any other feedback?

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