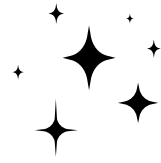
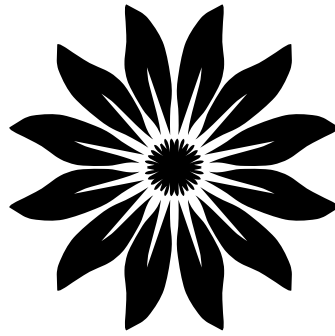


be not afraid

cards for courage



There is much to fear.

But when we are stuck in a fear response, we do not have access to the very traits that can help us navigate situations wisely: curiosity, empathy, compassion, discernment. These cards offer practices to help us face fear, so we can call upon these traits in challenging times.

How to print

- Print pages 3-10 double-sided (ideally on cardstock or heavy paper; alternatively, print single-sided on regular paper and paste the fronts and backs together using a glue stick)
- Print pages 11-12 if you want more blank cards to fill in with your own quotes and practices
- Cut the cards apart

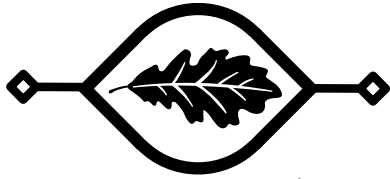
How to use these cards

- Take a deep breath while shuffling the deck.
- Pick a card at random. Trust that this card showed up to provide needed medicine (but remember that sometimes medicine can be bitter).
- Do the practice, or contemplate the wisdom, written on the card. All practices are designed to take 5 minutes or less. Some may feel a bit silly—you might want to move to a private place where you won't be observed. Try to embrace the silliness!
- Repeat often—by practicing regularly, you form new habits and will be able to reach for these tools automatically when they are most needed.
- If any particular practice or quote doesn't do it for you, adapt it or use the blank cards to add your own favorites to the deck.
- These practices come from a range of sources, teachers, and traditions. They are offered with immense gratitude for the lineages from which they came.



About the cards

This deck contains four suits, each with a different theme.



Ground

These practices are grounding activities to soothe your nervous system and bring forth your inner reserves of strength.

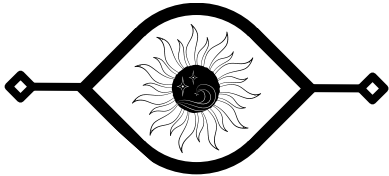
If you find yourself especially frazzled and in need of some support, flip through your cards and look for the oak leaf to pinpoint a calming practice.



Release

Letting go can be *hard*! These techniques help to move difficult emotions through your body so they don't get stuck.

Release cards can be especially potent when you are feeling agitated, or are stuck in rumination and/or worries about the future.



Transform

All Transform cards offer an opportunity to practice your alchemical powers: you begin in one state and transmute it to another. Sometimes this change can be quite subtle, so these cards ask us to pay close attention. After all, even the smallest of changes can completely shift the course of your day.



Inspire

Each Inspire card features a quote for contemplation. Some may be affirming, others challenging. Read it to yourself and let it sink in. Speak it aloud if you'd like. Journal or voice-memo about what it brings up for you. Keep it in the back of your mind and see if it swoops in to offer some perspective when you need it. If these quotes don't resonate, print the blank cards and substitute your own!



Touch the Earth

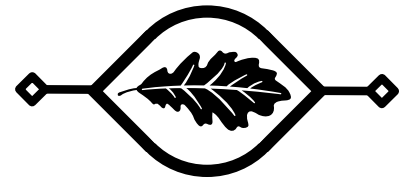
Come into direct contact with the earth in some way.

- Walk barefoot in the mud or the grass
- Hold a smooth stone
- Dig a hole (or wiggle your fingertip into the soil of a potted plant)
- Place your hands on the trunk of a tall tree



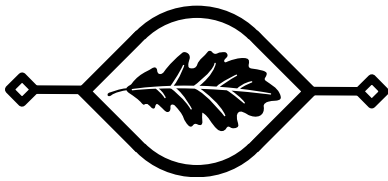
Heart Warmer

- Become aware of your breath.
- Imagine the soles of your feet opening. Let the grounding energy of the earth travel up through your body until it reaches your heart.
- Imagine the crown of your head opening. Let the creative energy of the sky travel down your body until it reaches your heart.
- Take a few deep breaths, enjoying the glow in your heart space.



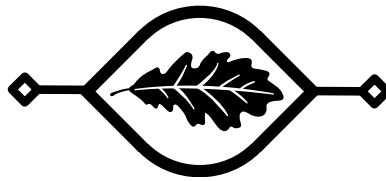
Inner Sanctuary

- Build, in great detail, a sanctuary inside your mind. A place you can retreat to and gain strength from. What does your sanctuary look like? Is it an old-growth forest, a cozy library, a secret garden, a grand palace?
- This card is your invitation to rest in your sanctuary for a few minutes, revisit the details you've already established, and add new ones.



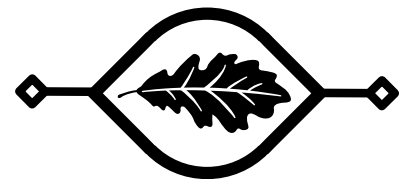
Straw Breathing

- Let your lips form the shape of an "O"—as if you were sipping through a straw.
- Breathing through your mouth, inhale deeply, then exhale slowly. Try to make the exhale longer than the inhale.
- Repeat at least twice more.



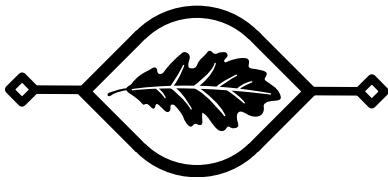
Sway

- Put on a song you love.
- Sway forward & backward, side to side, for the length of the song.
- This can be done while standing, or sitting, or in a rocking chair, or in a swing at the park.
- Repeat as needed!



Hum

- Set a two minute timer, and start humming. Keep going for the entire two minutes.
- You can hum anything you like: a favorite song, random notes, a low *om*, a gentle lullaby.
- When time's up, notice how you feel.



Self-Hug

- Make a "C" shape with your left hand, then bring it under your right arm so that your thumb rests in front of your shoulder.
- Bring your right hand to the top of your left shoulder.
- Lower your left cheek to rest on the top of your right hand.
- Stay here for a minute, enjoying the comfort of your own touch.



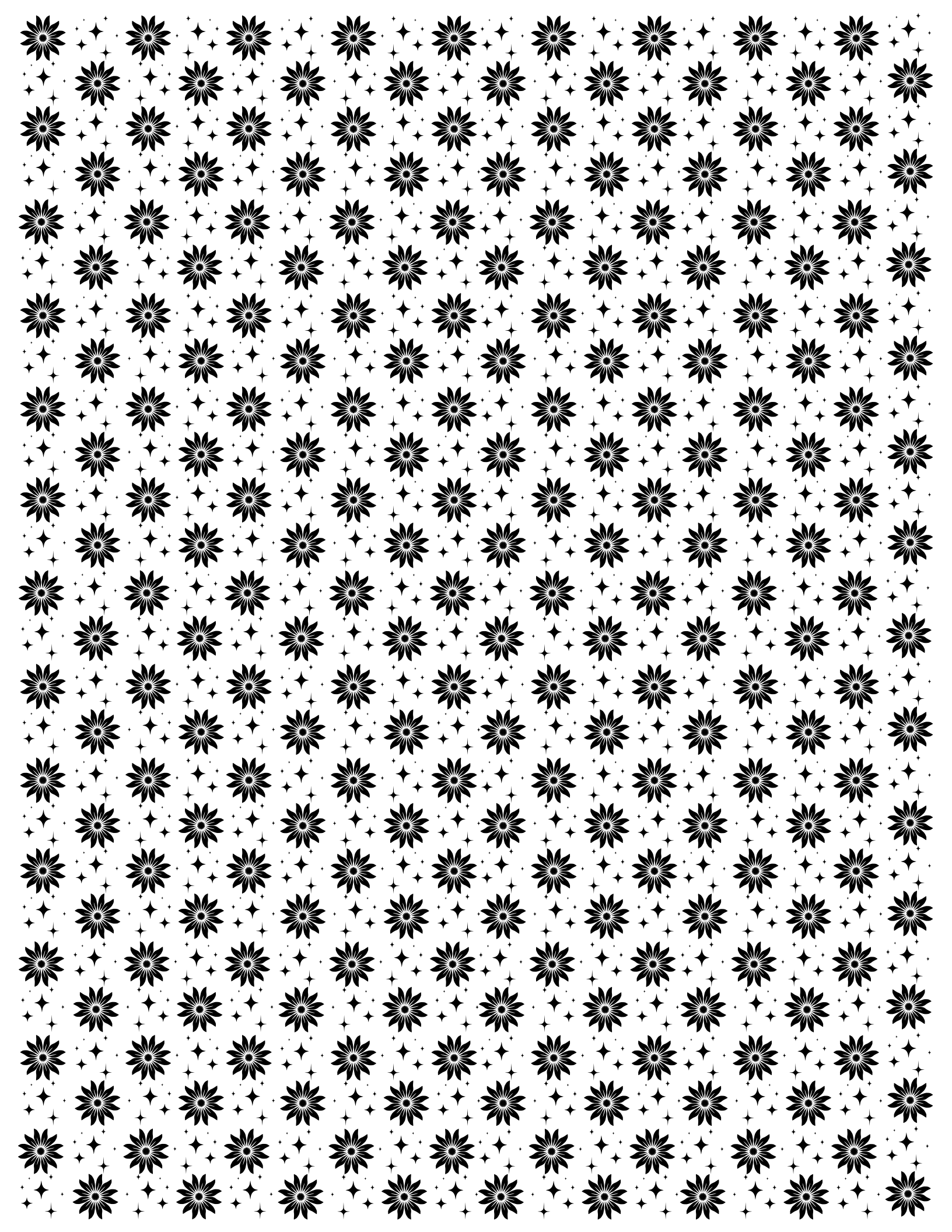
Mini Dance Party

- Play a favorite song and allow your body to move however it wants to. Pay no attention to what others might think. This is not a performance!
- Find gestures to express your emotions. Punch the air if you're angry. Curl into a ball if you're afraid. Discover movement that feels good, and go with it.



Shake It Off

Spend two minutes shaking out all your limbs. Start with your feet, move through your legs, shake your butt, and let that belly and chest wiggle! Continue the movement through your hands, arms, and shoulders, then end with a little headbanging.





Wash It Away

- While in the shower, imagine your worries collecting on the top of your head. Step under the flowing water and visualize them melting away, washing down the drain.
- Optional bonus step: when you're done showering, turn off the hot water and end with an invigorating cold blast.



Vocalize

Use your voice to release pent-up energy in whatever way(s) feel good to you! Some options:

- Sing
- Chant
- Shout
- Howl
- Moan
- Scream into a pillow



Tense & Release

- Take a deep breath in and out.
- On the next inhale, tense all your muscles. Make fists, clench your jaw, squinch up your face. Stay like this for a few seconds while holding your breath.
- Release the tension as you exhale.
- How does it feel to let go?



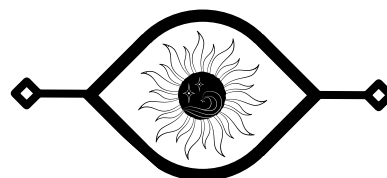
Light a Candle

- Bring to mind something that is weighing on you.
- Light a candle. As you do, imagine that you are giving this heavy thing to the fire.
- Watch the flame flicker for a few minutes.
- When you're ready, extinguish the flame and watch the smoke float away.



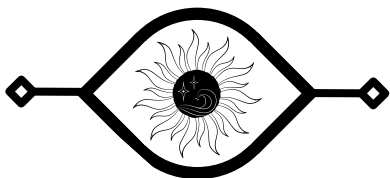
Freewrite

- Set a 5-minute timer and write, voice-memo, or doodle whatever is on your mind. Don't worry about being coherent. Just get it out!
- Once done, discard your creation if that feels right. Or, revisit it later and see if any interesting patterns jump out at you.



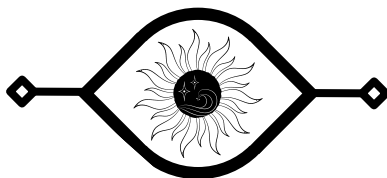
Make an Offering

Show your gratitude to something—a person, a pet, a plant, a place—by giving them a gift. It doesn't have to be fancy! A miniature bouquet, something delicious to eat or drink, a song, a poem, a kind word. Just think of something the recipient might like and present it with love.



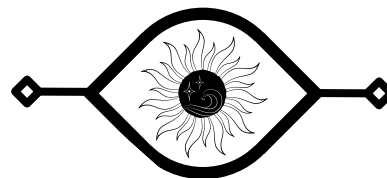
Face a Small Fear

Do one small thing today that scares you. Perhaps there is something on your to-do list you've been avoiding. A person you need to reach out to. A project that is calling to you. Answer the call. Do the thing. Dealing with small fears helps build your capacity to deal with bigger ones.



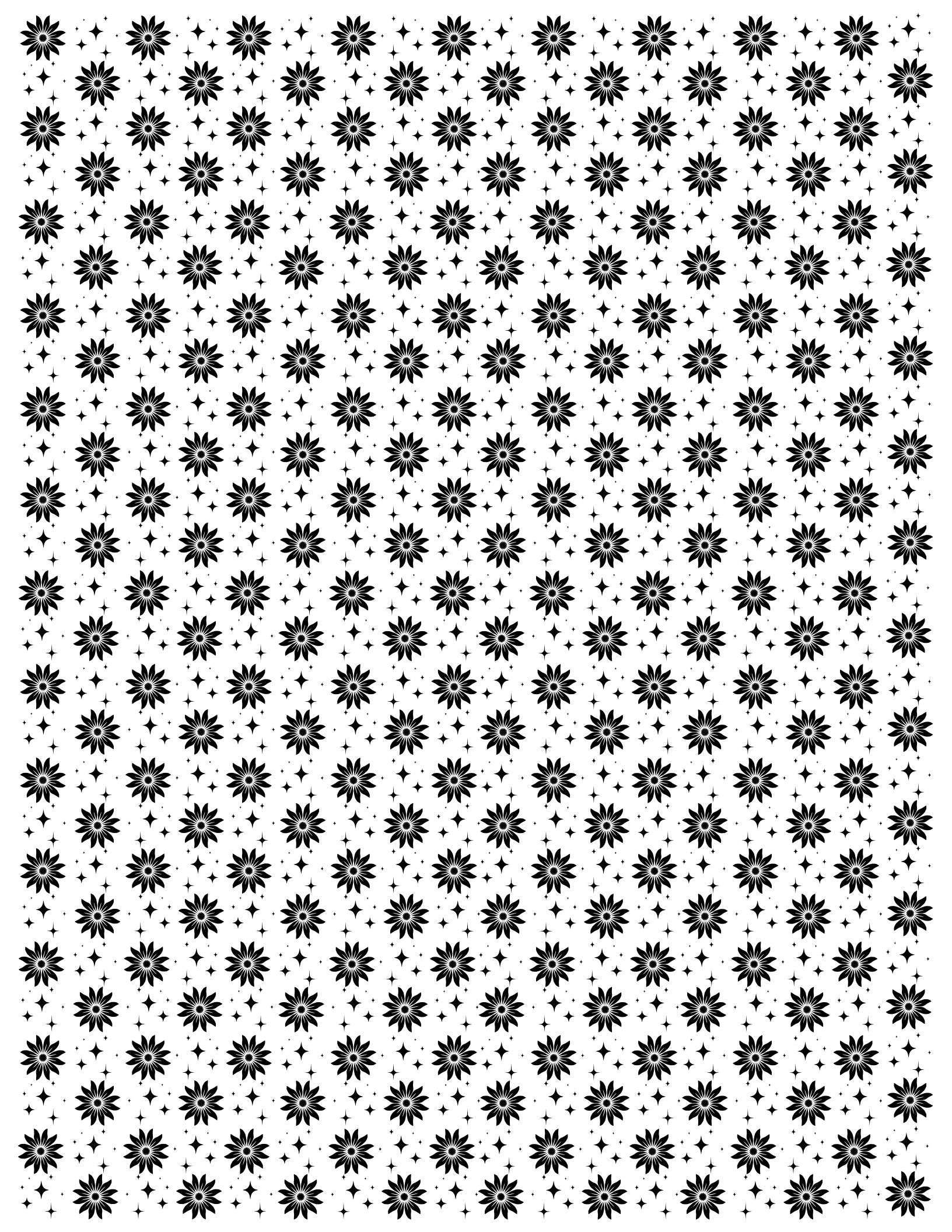
Seek Glimmers

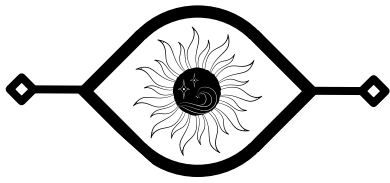
A glimmer is a micro-moment of sweetness, when you feel a sense of connection and ease. Glimmers are small, simple joys: snuggling with a pet, wrapping up in a cozy blanket, turning your face to the sun. As you go about your day, look for glimmers. Whenever you find one, take a moment to notice and relish it.



Storytelling

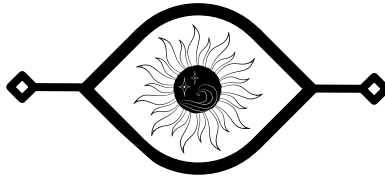
- Notice your surroundings. Let your attention land on a nearby object.
- Start telling a story about it. Preferably out loud. Begin with a memory if you feel stuck.
- Don't worry about whether it makes sense—trust that the story knows where it's going. Keep following the thread for at least a few minutes.
- Did your story show you anything interesting or surprising?





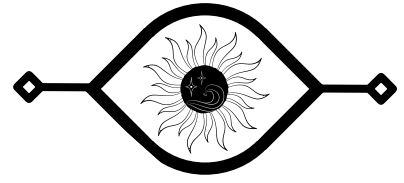
Woolgathering

Spend at least five minutes (or more) away from your devices doing nothing. Stare out the window or at the ceiling. Listen to the sounds around you. Let your mind drift to wherever it wants to go. Move around if you want, or lie still. You don't need to produce or consume anything. Now, you have a few glorious minutes to just be.



Meeting Fear

- Bring to mind something that scares you (but isn't too intense).
- Notice how you feel. Where does Fear live in your body? Does it have a shape? A personality?
- Whenever you feel this sensation arise, notice it. Just the act of noticing helps you separate from it. Fear is but a visitor, a guest in your house. It doesn't have to live there all the time.



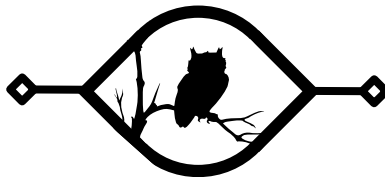
Make Art

Create something that didn't exist before. It doesn't need to be elaborate or "good," just a small thing made with care. Doodle on a napkin. Lay a flower upon a bed of moss. Scribble a poem. Arrange pebbles into a shape that pleases you. And there it is—art!



I must not fear.
Fear is the mind-killer.
Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration.
I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me.
And when it has gone past, I will turn the inner eye to see its path.
Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.

—Frank Herbert, *Dune*



Beware of the stories you read or tell.

Subtly, at night, beneath the waters of consciousness, they are altering your world.

—Ben Okri



Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well.

It is the certainty that something is worth doing, no matter how it turns out.

—Vaclav Havel



I am planting a tree beneath an ominous sky.

On Judgment Day I pass time with my co-gardener, Death.

We notice the clouds and are tending to the cabbage.

—Daniel Foor



If you are free, you need to free someone else.

If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else.

—Toni Morrison

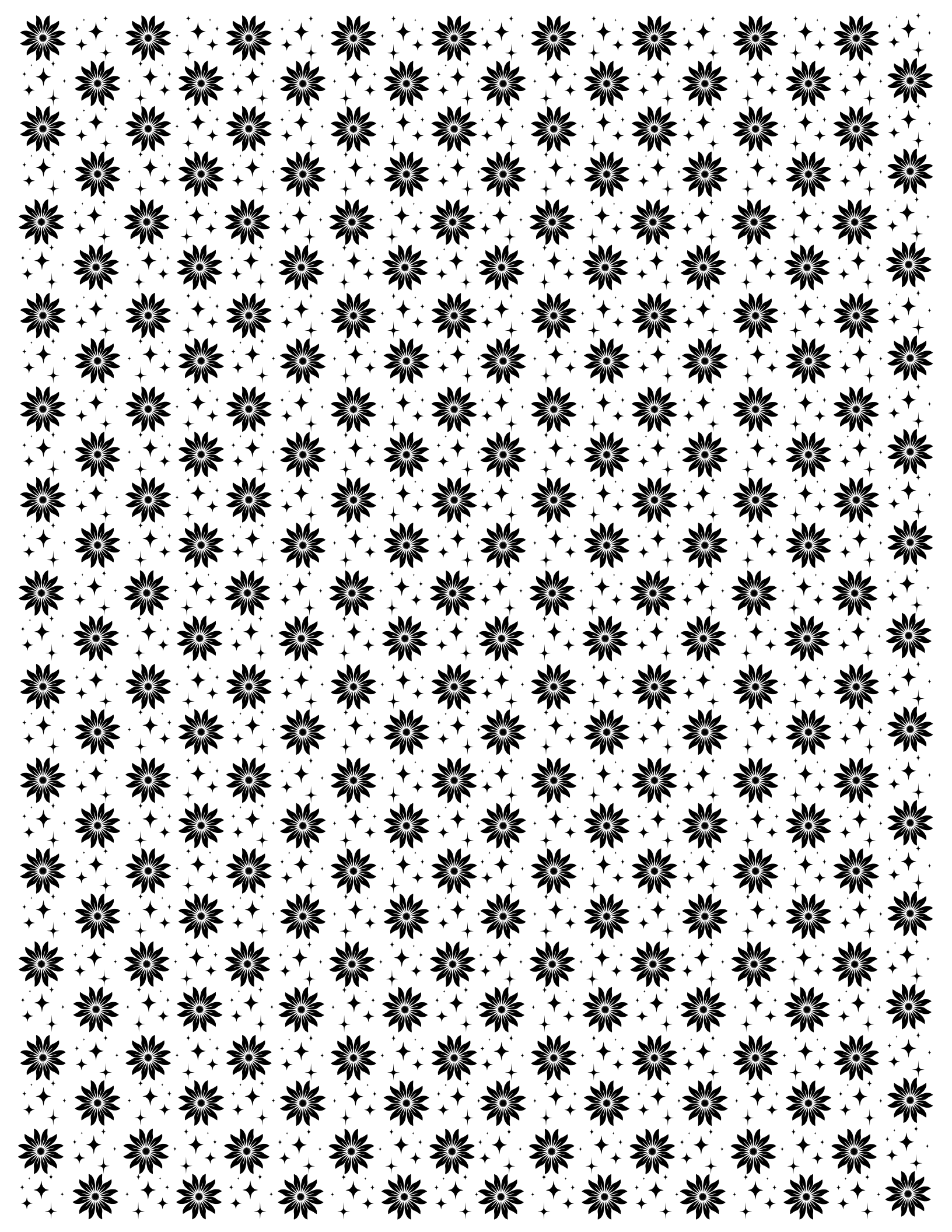


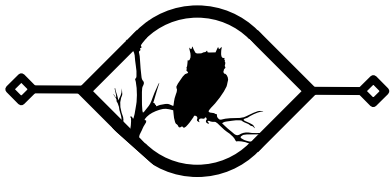
As we discover more joy, we can face suffering in a way that ennobles rather than embitters.

We have hardship without becoming hard.

We have heartbreaks without being broken.

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu





What we avoid
pursues us.

What we face
transforms us.

-David Kessler

