

A New Day

Hope and Healing After
Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and
Infant Loss



Miss Olive's 5-Step Hope and Healing Journal

This journal belongs to

Date started

DISCLAIMER: These journals are never intended to treat or cure any serious mental or physical health conditions. If you have symptoms that impact your daily functioning, contact your doctor or mental health care provider.

This journal has been broken down into 5 steps, and each step has a specific goal. There is no timeline for this journal, as it is best for you to take as long as you need. You can complete several prompts in one day, one prompt each day, or focus on one prompt each week. However, it is recommended that you limit journaling practice to no more than 60 minutes each day. Feel free to skip around and complete the pages in any order. Just do what you can and work through the content on your own timeline.

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Step 7:
Processing the Loss

As you work through this journal, you will write about your feelings on a number of occasions. Part of this process is understanding how you feel in the moment, and part of it is watching your feelings change over time. As you near the end of the journal, come back to read through these pages and reflect on this process.

Today, I feel...

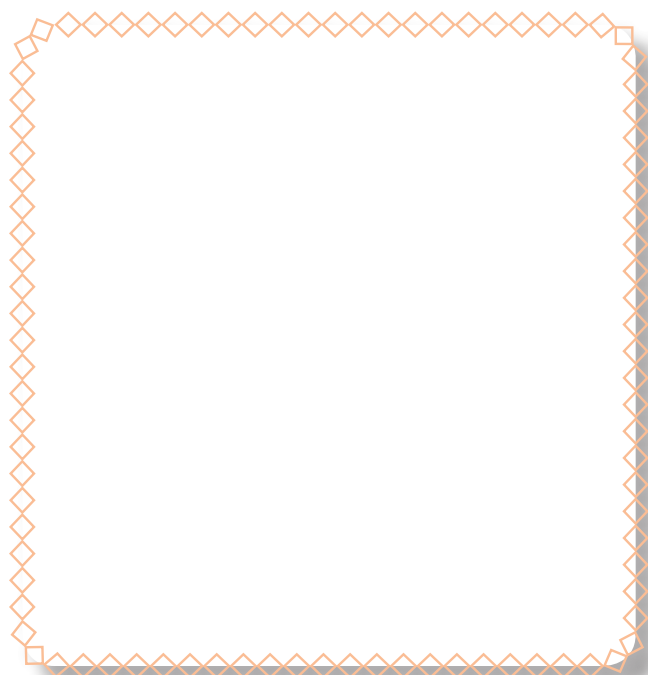
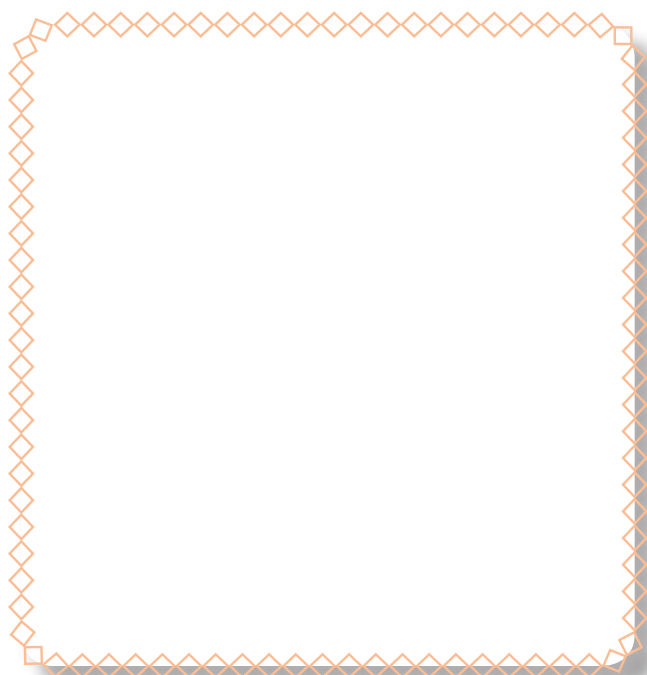
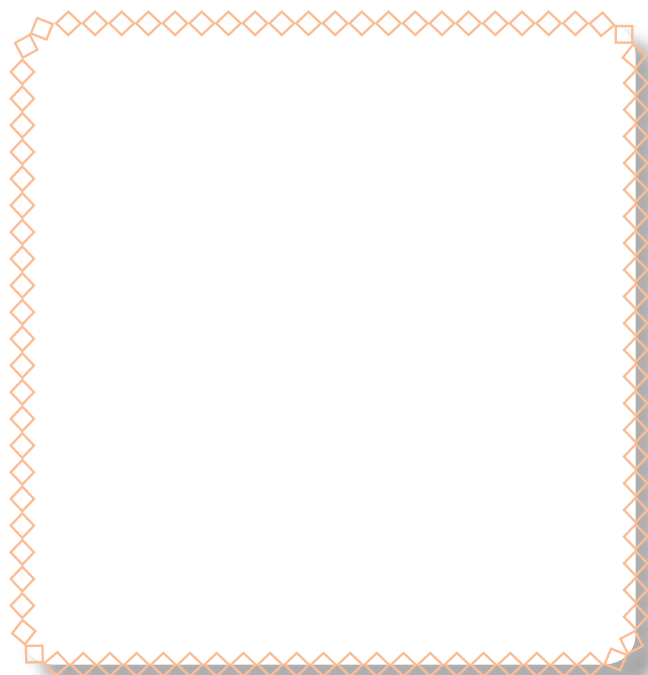
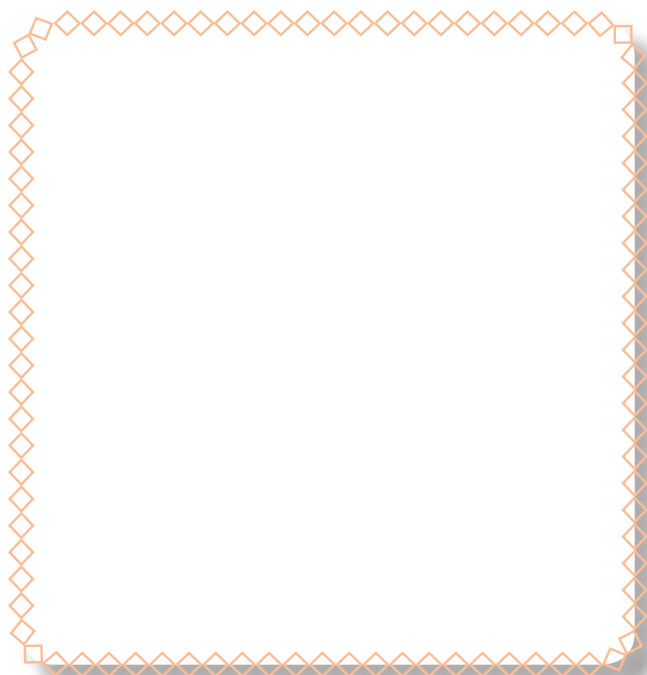


When you tell the story, you keep it alive. When grieving the loss of a loved one, it is never the goal to forget or let go, but rather, to "form an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life" - James Worden, 1996. In other words, the goal here is to connect with your experience. To allow your child to be part of your life.

Write out the story of your child's death on the following pages. You have been given extra space, so include as many details as you are able. What happened? Where were you? Who were you with? What was your initial reaction?_____

Lined writing area with 20 horizontal lines.

Use the spaces below to write out your raw and difficult emotions. We often hold them in because we don't want to be a burden, to protect others, to avoid seeming weak, and so on. Not here. Here you can unload them onto the page.



I feel sad when...

I feel angry when...

Letters to your child:

Letter #1 -

Something I wish I could have told you...

Letter # 2 -

Something I really wanted to know about you...

Letter # 3 -

Today, I miss...

Letter # 4 -

Something that will always make me think of you...

Letter # 5 -

A memory I will always cherish...

Letter # 6 -

When I think about you, I feel...



Step 2:
Coping with Grief

As you grieve, you will go through a number of phases. These phases can come upon you at anytime, and they will not necessarily occur in order.

Each phase can last a few days or a few years.

You can choose to write about each phase as you are in it or after you have passed through it.

Remember, just do what you can and complete the following pages in any order. You can also print extra copies of the pages in this journal if you feel you would like to write about a given topic more than once.

Phase 1: Shock, denial, disbelief, numbness - "this cannot be happening right now"

Phase 2: Anger, heartache, depression, regret, deep and painful emotions

Phase 3: Adjusting, learning to cope, beginning to heal

In this section, we will focus on the first two phases. We will focus on phase 3 later.

Shock. "This cannot be happening right now." Avoiding the situation.

Refusing to accept that the loss has occurred.

Are you going through this phase now? Have you already been through this phase? Write about it on this page. _____

List a few phrases you have said aloud or to yourself in this stage. This might be something like "maybe the doctor is wrong" or "maybe I am dreaming."

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What thoughts do you have right now? What else would you like to say?

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Today, I feel...


1
miserable


2


3


4


5
neutral


6


7


8


9


10
content

Numbness. Complete loss of feeling and/or emotion. Out of body experience (feeling as though you are floating above and watching your body go through the motions of daily life).

Are you experiencing this now? Have you already felt this way? Write about it on this page.

I feel sad when...

I feel angry when...

I am so angry with.... _____

My anger feels like... _____

It is okay for me to feel angry right now because... _____

Sometimes I think..._____

5 things I have been saying to myself a lot lately...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I feel sad when I think about... _____

My sadness feels like... _____

Something I regret.... _____

I regret this because... _____

Something I have been thinking about... _____

5 things I have been saying to myself a lot lately...

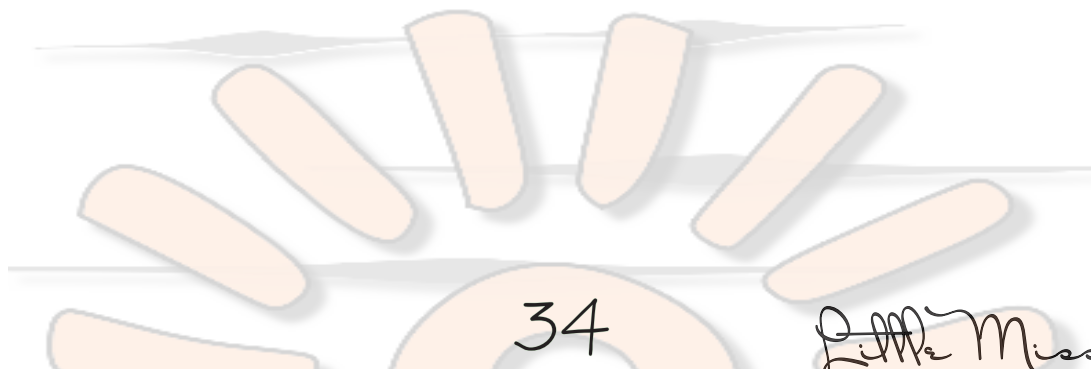
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Step 3:
Practice and Reflection

Art is a powerful form of self-expression which allows you to process what you are feeling without having to say a word. As we grieve, we sometimes don't know what we are feeling, we don't have words for what we are feeling, or our feelings cannot be expressed in conversation.

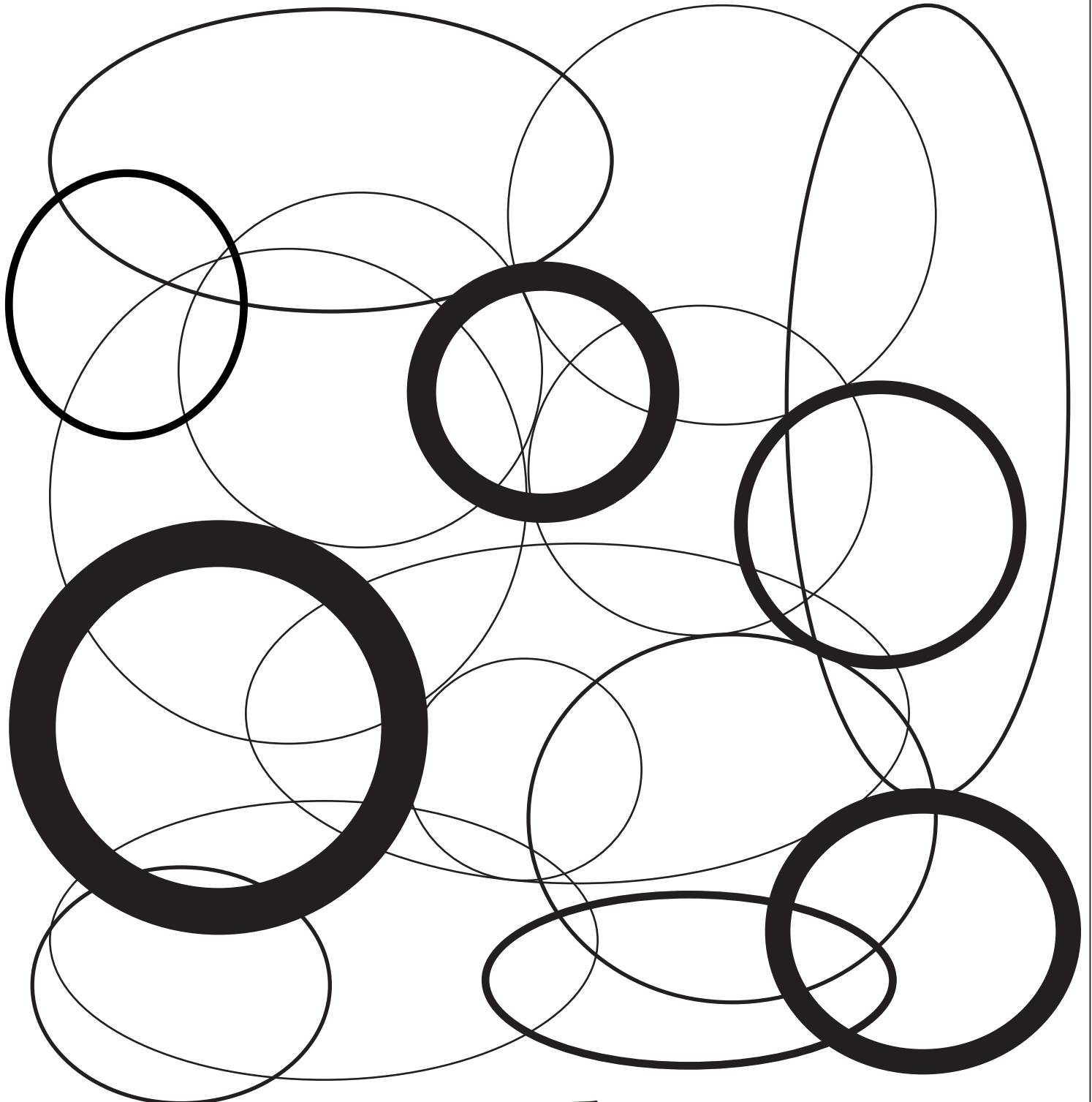
Sometimes, we feel that no one could possibly understand what we are feeling anyway, so why expend the energy to try to explain it? In this section, you will express yourself through art (whether you consider yourself an artist or not) and reflect on this practice.



On this page, draw your feelings. This can be images, shapes, lines on the page, anything that you feel accurately depicts how you are feeling right now.

How did it feel to see your completed drawing? Did you find this activity helpful? What else would you like to say about your drawing?

Use colored pencils, markers, or crayons to color the image below. Take this opportunity to breathe deeply and relax. As you color, allow yourself to relate to the shape. Grief can take any form, can last for any amount of time, and can vary from one day to the next - just as the circles in the image below vary in shape, size, and intensity.



How did it feel to see your completed artwork? Did you find this activity helpful? What else would you like to say about the image you colored?

If you found this practice helpful, you could continue with other art forms. Painting, sculpting, chalk, collage, pottery, etc. can be very therapeutic in difficult times.

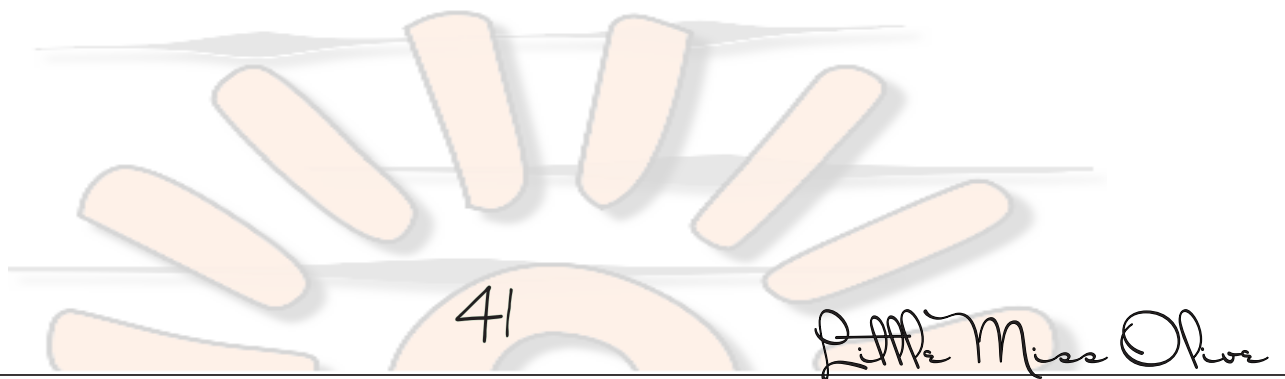
If you would like to continue with this practice, use the spaces below to write about any other forms of art therapy you might like to try.

As you work through this journal, you will write about your feelings on a number of occasions. Part of this process is understanding how you feel in the moment, and part of it is watching your feelings change over time. As you near the end of the journal, come back to read through these pages and reflect on this process.

Today, I feel...

									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
miserable				neutral					content

Prayer, meditation, or positive self-talk can have a profound impact on the healing process. Grief brings along intense and powerful emotions, which can overwhelm or consume you. Spending a few moments in prayer or meditation, or writing about the positives in life can be comforting in the midst of grief. In this section, we will focus on these healing practices.



Take a few moments to consider your hopes for the future. What do you need? What would bring you comfort right now? Take some time to pray, meditate, or consider helpful or comforting phrases that you can repeat to yourself for a few moments. If you would like, you can write your thoughts, prayer, or meditation in the space below.

If you are religious or spiritual, commit to saying a prayer or meditation for hope and healing each day for the next 3 days. After each prayer or meditation, write your reflections on the following pages.

If you are not religious or spiritual, then you have been given a daily positive self-statement on which you can reflect - repeat the statement aloud and write out any evidence that the statement is true. If you are not sure or if you are having trouble believing that the statement is true, then you can ask your spouse, friends, or family members for any evidence they may have. The first statement is completed for you. Finish the second and third statements before you write out your reflections.

If you would like to do both of these activities, then you have been given an extra blank page after each day.

How are you feeling as you prepare to begin this practice?

Day 1: Prayer or meditation reflection

Positive self-statement: "I am strong."

Lined writing area with 20 horizontal lines.

Day 2: Prayer or meditation reflection

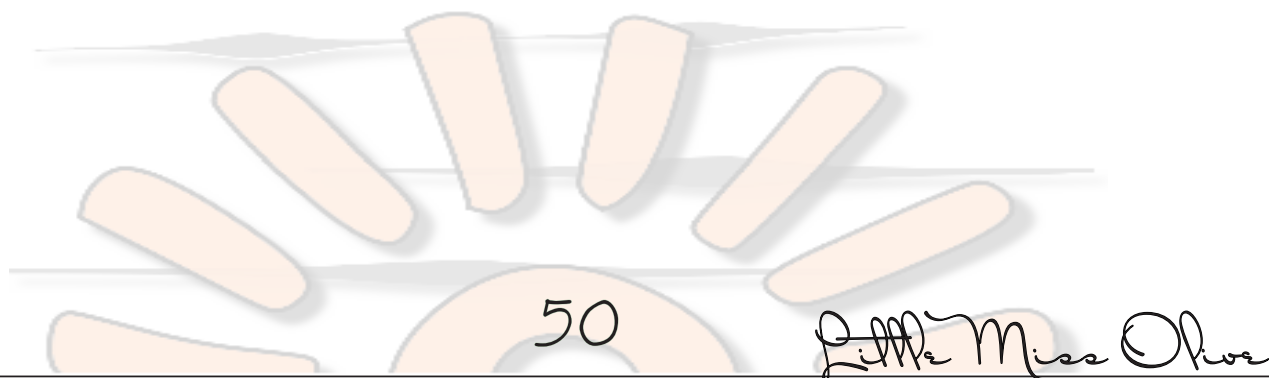
Positive self-statement: "I am worthy of _____"

Lined writing area with 20 horizontal lines.

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Going for a daily walk, whether alone or with someone else, can provide an opportunity to head outdoors, enjoy a change of scenery, spend time with your thoughts, and work through difficult emotions. Over the next couple of days, head out for a walk (you choose the time, location, and distance) and use this time to be present with your thoughts and feelings. After each walk, take a few moments to reflect on your experience. Write out your reflections on the following pages.

NOTE: Always walk in a safe location and clear physical activity with your physician ahead of time.



Walk 1: Reflection

What did you think about while on your walk? What emotions did you feel? Did anything significant happen? How are you feeling now?

Walk 2: Reflection

What did you think about while on your walk? What emotions did you feel? Did anything significant happen? How are you feeling now?

Walk 3: Reflection

What did you think about while on your walk? What emotions did you feel? Did anything significant happen? How are you feeling now?

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Today, I feel...



Retelling the Story

As we discussed at the beginning of this journal, telling the story keeps it alive. When grieving the loss of a loved one, it is never the goal to forget or let go, but rather, to "form an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life."

-James Worden, 1996

In other words, the goal here is to connect with your experience - to continue to allow your child to be part of your life.

How did it feel to retell your story? Did your story change at all from the first time you wrote it?



Step 4: Accepting

NOTE: Only begin this step when you feel you are ready.

I am learning how to... _____

Who or what have you found comforting as you grieve? Why? _____

Is there anything in your life that could use your attention now? If so, write about it on this page.

Caring for yourself:

After losing a child, it is easy to feel responsible. To feel this loss is somehow your fault. You may blame yourself, your body, or feel that if you had done things differently, then this never would have happened. Part of healing after this painful experience involves learning to accept the fact that some things are beyond your control. We cannot always prevent bad things from happening, even to our own children. As you work to rebuild your life after this loss, it is essential that you forgive yourself, learn to love yourself and your body again, and realize that you are still worthy of love and happiness.

Use the space below to list 5 reasons why you deserve love and happiness in your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I am valuable because...

I am worthy of love because...

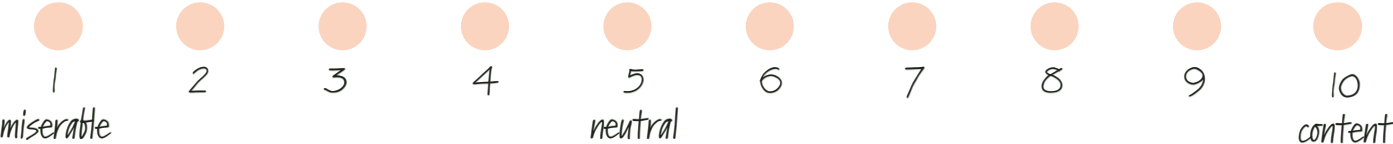
I will forgive myself because...

This week, I plan to do these things that make me happy...

Today, I am ready to...

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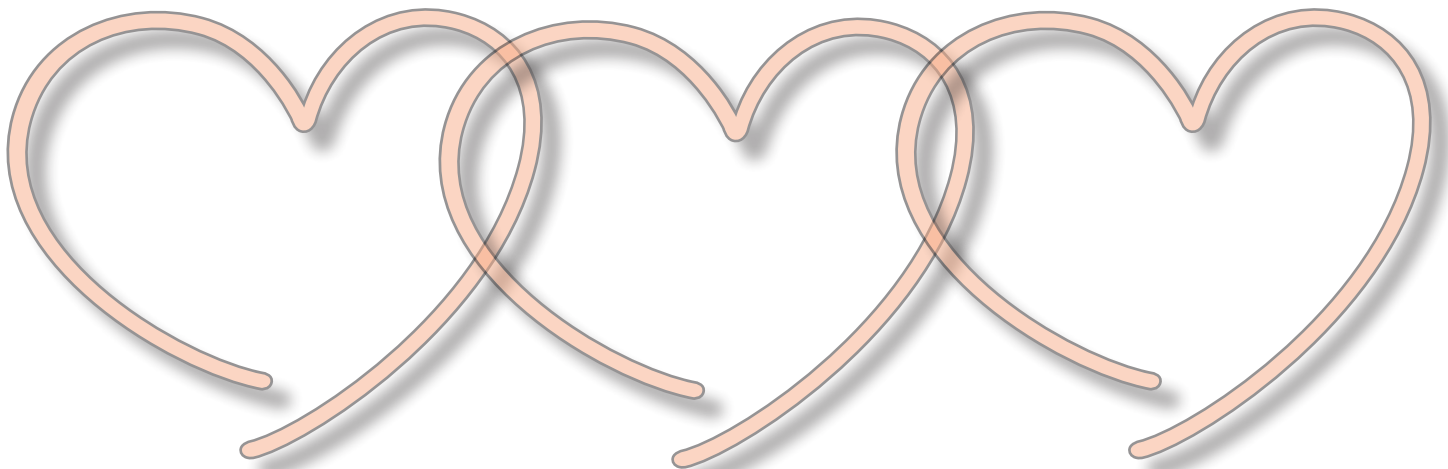
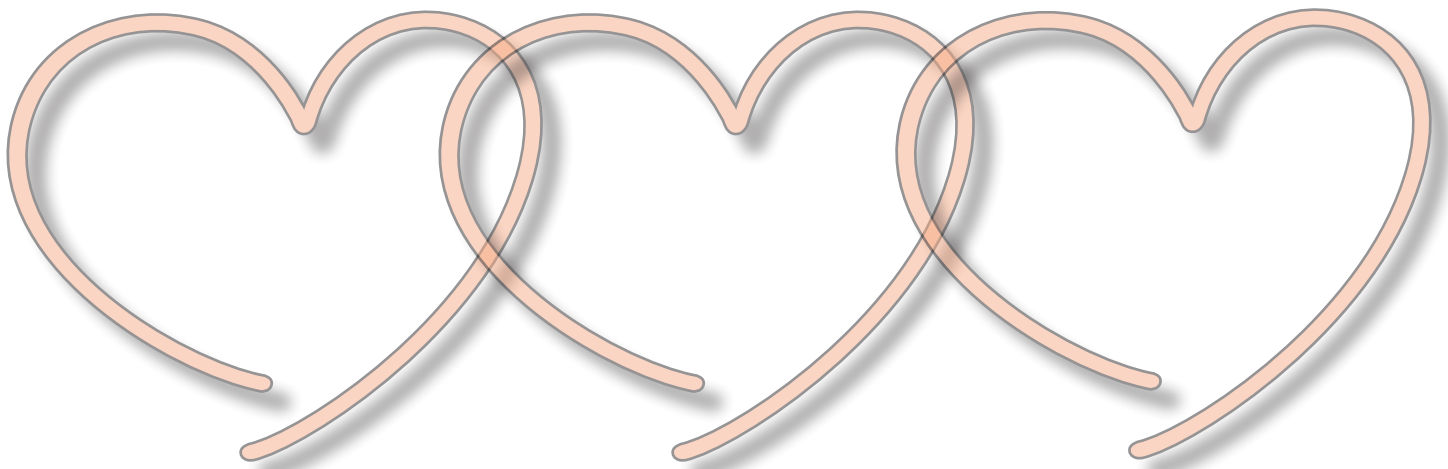
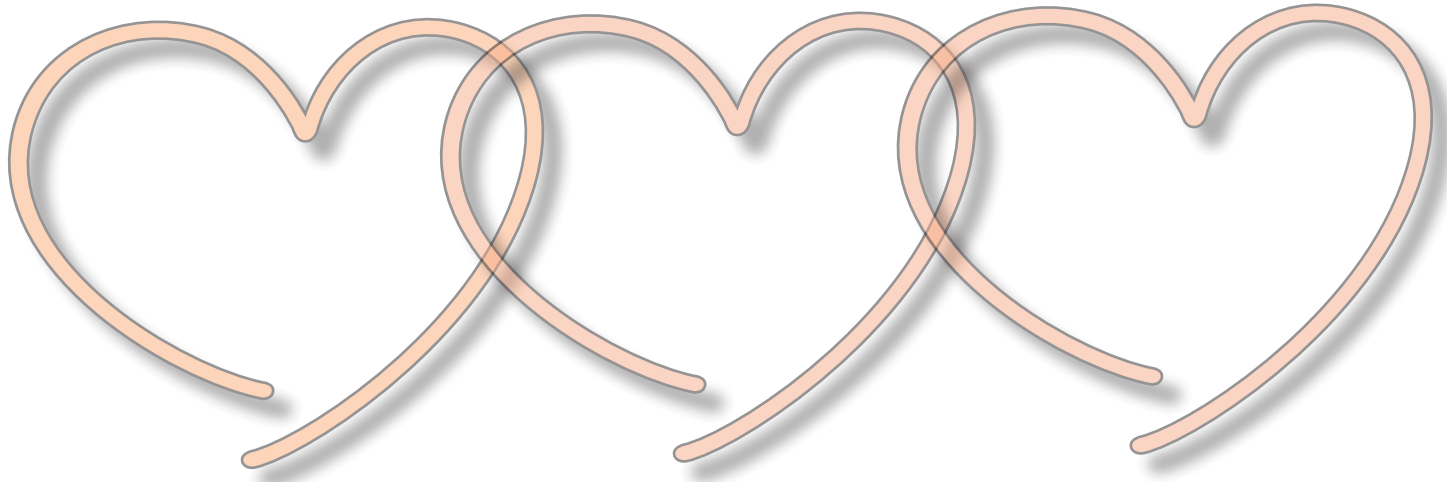


Step 5:
Looking to the Future

NOTE: Only begin this step when you feel you are ready.

What are your hopes and/or plans for the future?

As you plan for the future, what are some ways you can honor your child's life. Fill the hearts below with your thoughts - fill as many of the hearts as you would like.



What will you take away from this experience? What have you learned? How have you grown or changed?

Self-care practices I plan to continue...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

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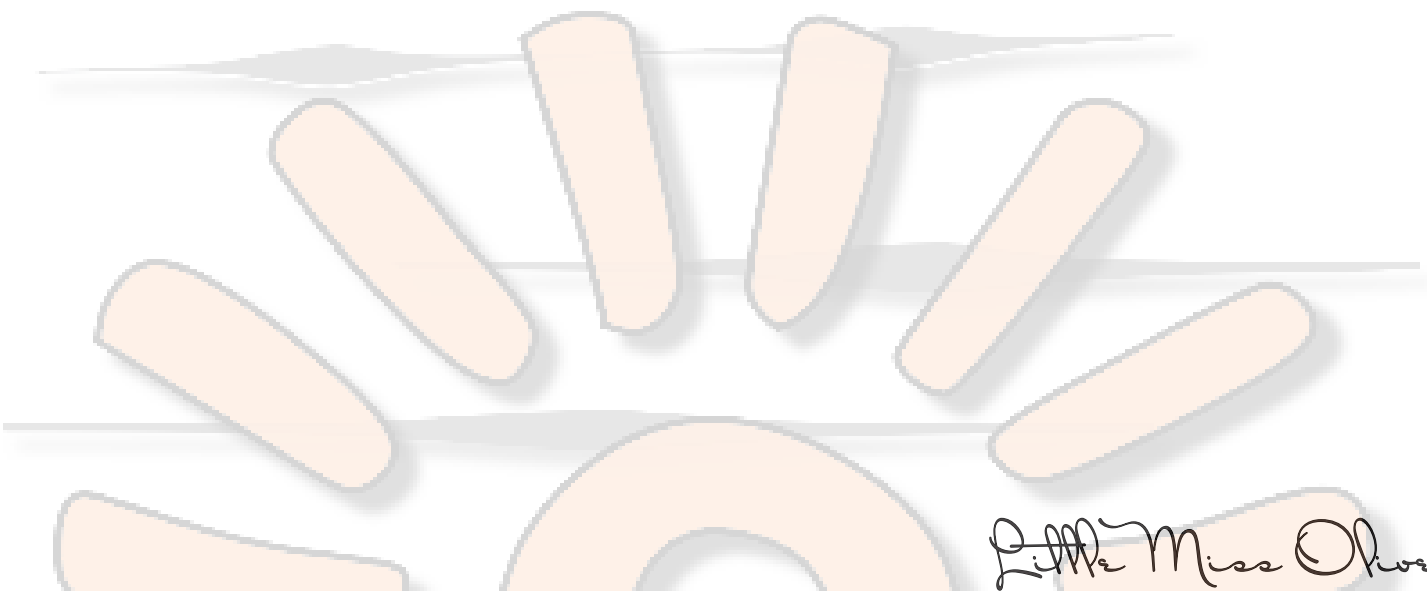
Today, I feel...



I hope you enjoyed this journal,
and I invite you to visit my shop for more
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- XOXO Miss Olive ♡



Little Miss Olive