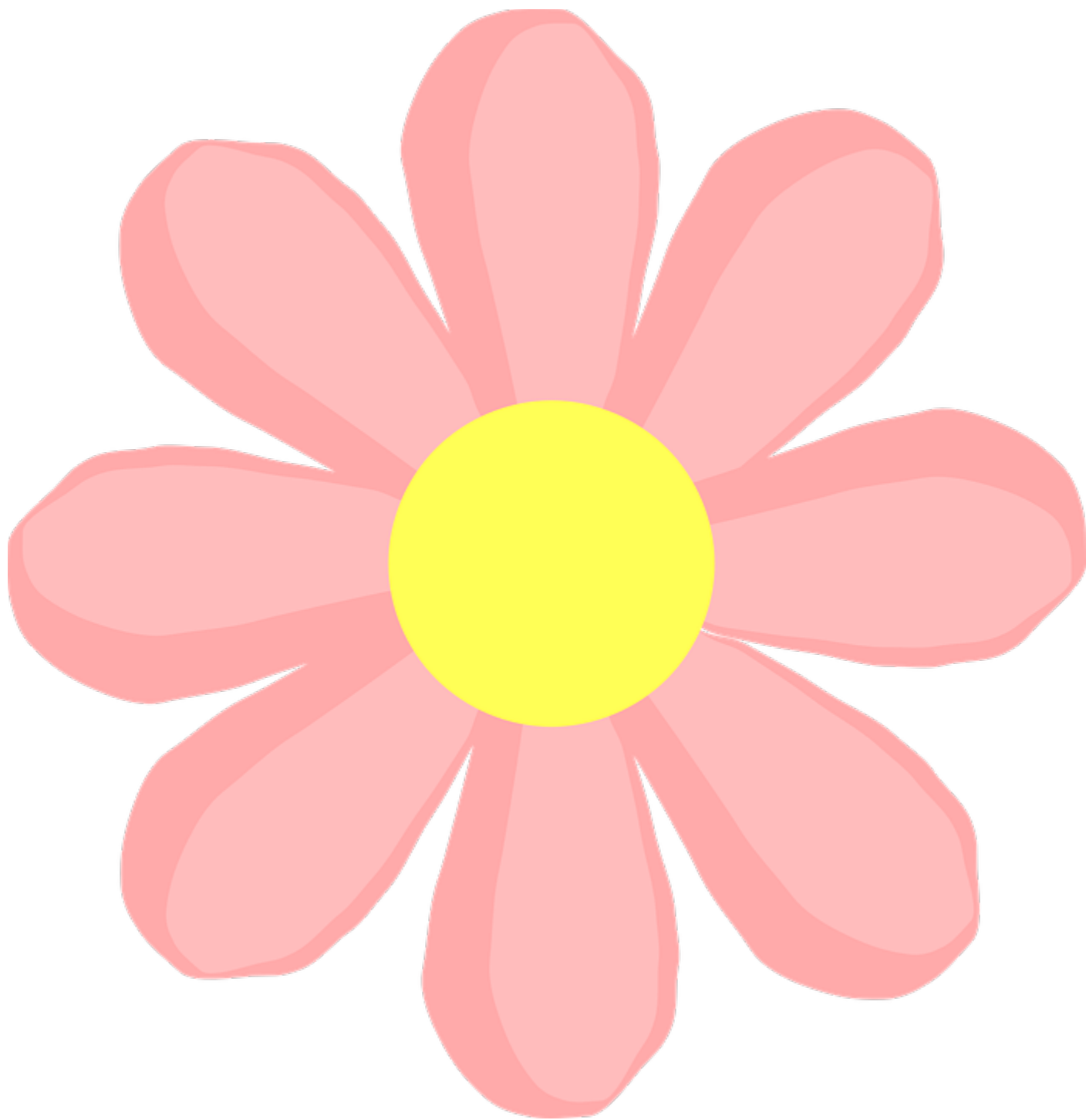


Tranquility du Jour Live





1.

2.

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month's review

monthly checklist

- ☐ craft month's dreams
- ☐ mani/pedi
- ☐ volunteer
- ☐ entertain
- ☐ review budget
- ☐ read two books
- ☐ create something
- ☐ massage

month's dreams



Week 11: Seasonal Reflection

Those of us in the Northern Hemisphere are being led into the spring equinox. After winters filled with snow days, heavy boots, and ice storms, there is deep anticipation for spring blooms.

As barren trees transform to green, tulips push from parched soil, and cherry blossoms pop up along Washington, D.C.'s Tidal Basin, I, too, experience the gentle nudge to move out of hibernation.

During this seasonal shift, I like to sit down with a pen and paper to reflect on how I'm feeling about the activities that populate my days. Set aside at least 30 minutes to consider how you're feeling in each broad category of your life.

Set the stage for your reflection. Light a candle, turn on inspiring tunes (may I recommend Pink Martini?), pour a bubbly libation, grab your journal and writing tools, and settle in for reflection. Make it an experience.

There may be some categories you're drawn to and others that don't fully resonate. Choose an assortment of at least eight to give a holistic big picture.

Consider these categories:

Work
Style
Creativity
Dreams
Giving back
Home
Self-Care
Mindfulness
Spirituality
Finances
Education
Relationships
Romance
Family
Fitness
Self-Love
Health
Parenting

Rate them on overall satisfaction using a scale of 1-10 (1 not at all satisfied, 5 neutral, 10 incredibly satisfied).

When ranking, approach this as you would a multiple-choice test and go with your initial gut reaction. Answers will vary based on what you're currently



experiencing. For example, recent receipt of a large bill may lead to a lower finances score than usual.

Observe your ratings and notice one or two that appear closer to *your* (not society's) definition of a perfect 10. Yes, even a six counts as high! Give yourself kudos and raise a glass in honor of your efforts.

Next, note areas that are lower than you'd like them to be and pen a few action steps for growth.

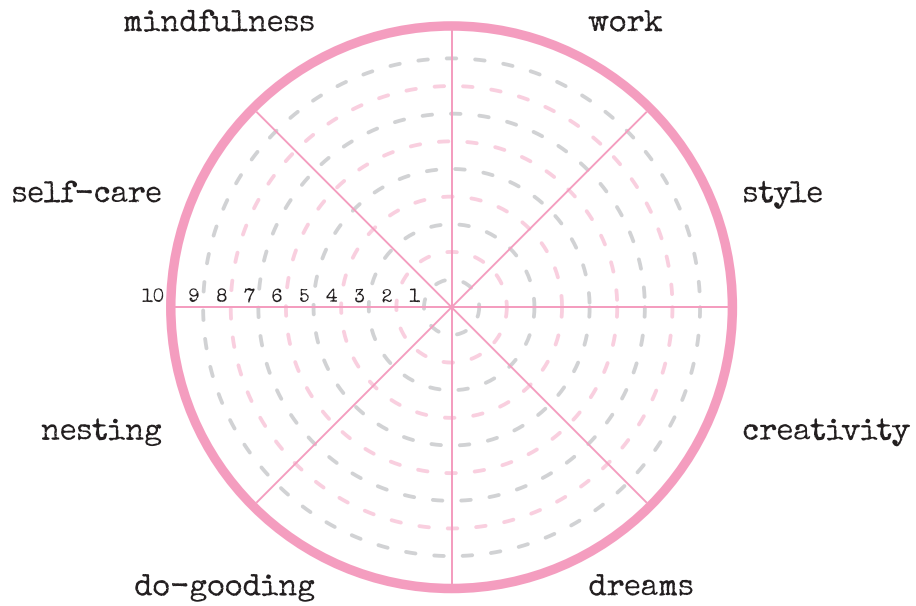
For example, if creativity ranked lower than you'd like, consider ways to infuse more creativity into your daily life. Try a new recipe, take a watercolor class, or walk your dog on a new morning route.

If you'd like to increase do-gooding, look for volunteer opportunities in your community, start a monthly donation to a favorite charity, or make an effort to compliment one person each day.

Use this process every three months as a way to reconnect with your BIG picture. Acknowledge progress while noting where you may have slightly strayed off course.



spring wheel of life



ACTION STEPS TO INCREASE AREAS THAT ARE LOWER THAN I'D LIKE:

date: _____

Week 14: Get Outside

After a fairly tumultuous week, we packed up and headed for a weekend in the hills. Desperately craving tranquility, open schedules, and fresh air, a trip to Shenandoah National Park was the perfect balm.

Both days we hiked with Louis in tow and hit dog-friendly wineries. Sipping a Virginia white wine mid-afternoon felt decadent. And necessary.

On the trail, I took note of the little things. The crackling leaves beneath each step. The smell of pine and nearby campfires. Louis' deep breath and excited gallop. Sweet purple wildflowers growing near an emerald-colored fern. A nearby stream rippling over the rocks.

Considering how cooped up we'd been due to a long, cold Northeast winter, the feel of sunshine on our skin and the crisp mountain air was a welcome dose of nature therapy.

Nature helps put things in perspective. My tiny mishaps and frustrations from the previous week began to lighten.

Albert Einstein said, "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." I've found this to be true.

Studies show that direct contact with nature increases mental health and spiritual development. Benefits include stress reduction, heightened creativity, and a broader sense of interconnectedness.

John Muir said, "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you ... while cares will drop off like autumn leaves." And that, dear reader, is my wish for you.

This week, infuse a dose of vitamin **N** (vitamin Nature) in your day. Get off the Metro one stop away from your destination and savor the walk to work. Stroll through the city during your lunch break. Take your dog for a walk in a nearby park. Bike to your next meeting. Consider a picnic with your beloved or bestie.

