

WORDS I HELD BACK: AN INTERACTIVE JOURNAL BOOK ON EMOTIONAL RELEASE

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Abstract

The phenomenon of emotional suppression in today's society has led many to believe that suppressing emotions is beneficial for managing relationships and emotions. However, excessive suppression can have detrimental effects on mental health, often going unnoticed until long-term problems arise. Therefore, I intend to create an interactive journal book focused on emotional release, providing readers with a tool to acknowledge and address their suppressed emotions. Through a combination of my graphic poems and engaging prompts and activities, this project aims to highlight the importance of emotional release and its transformative impact on individuals' lives.

Keywords: suppression, catharsis, emotional release, graphic design, poetry

Introduction

In today's world, bottling up emotions has become a phenomenon, recurring as a normalized behavior for many people. Many individuals find themselves in environments where the expression of emotions is discouraged or overlooked. People often suppress their emotions due to societal norms, culture, or personal reasons.

As a result, a belief emerged that suppressing emotions is beneficial or desirable behavior in managing emotions and relationships. Many believe this coping strategy is beneficial for protecting themselves from harm, maintaining relationships, and avoiding judgment by others. Although suppression is a normal and common behavior among humans, overly suppressing emotions significantly negatively impacts people. Persistent emotional suppression can lead to depression and other mental health issues. Emotional suppression has effects on social, emotional, and health-related, such as anxiety and depression, other stress-related illnesses, and even to substance abuse and suicide (Gross & Cassidy, 2019).

Hence, the significance of an outlet to release these suppressed emotions is crucial for maintaining mental and emotional well-being (J. Patel & P. Patel, 2019). Releasing emotions through listening to music, talking to a friend, exercise, therapy approaches, creating or viewing art, expressive writing, journaling, or having a healthy means of expression can prevent emotional turmoil from negatively impacting our mental health and relationships (Cherry, 2023).

I grew up in a family setting where vulnerability and openness regarding our

emotions and personal lives are not taught or used to. As a result, my siblings and I grew accustomed to handling our issues individually or sharing them with friends and acquaintances rather than turning to family members. The idea of discussing our feelings or problems within the family felt strange and uncomfortable. Consequently, this upbringing has made it difficult for me to be open about my feelings or discuss my problems with anyone, family included. I tended to intellectualize my emotions and tackle my issues alone, believing this was the most effective way to resolve them. This approach left me anxious about being vulnerable and fearing that I would just receive judgment or rejection from those close to me. Often, suppression left me stuck to my emotions and past, which made moving forward and emotional regulation hard.

Since expressing emotions is difficult for me, I seek alternative ways to release the bottled-up emotions within me. I channel my feelings through writing and art, which serve as my means of self-expression. Writing allows me to articulate thoughts and emotions I find difficult to vocalize. Additionally, as an art student, I have discovered the power of graphic design to transform my words into visually impactful expressions.

This issue, combined with my own personal experiences, sparked the idea for my project. As an artist, I was motivated to help people struggling with emotional suppression and create a tool that could help them release their emotions while also releasing my own.

My “Words I Held Back” project is an interactive journal book on emotional release. It offers a collection of thought-provoking prompts, where readers are encouraged to reflect on their own emotional struggles and embark on a journey of healing and self-discovery. Words I Held Back served as an outlet for emotional suppression.

In this project, the creative aspect of releasing emotions is explored. Interactive prompts or questionnaires served as a tool for readers to answer and reflect on their own lives and experiences. These prompts are carefully written and chosen with the guidance of two Psychology professors/professionals at Asia Pacific College, Ms. Ayessa A. Guilar and Ms. Kamille Salvana. Additionally, various activities related to emotional release are incorporated to capture the reader's attention while continuously working toward the goal of releasing and managing their emotions. These activities are research-based and follow a structured approach.

In the book, poetry will serve as an important tool to represent the themes of every emotion that the book will tackle. These poems will also serve as a guide to support the book's interactive prompts. These poems are inspired by my personal experiences with suppressing emotions.

As the title suggests, "Words I Held Back" is a unique concept that conveys the idea that readers are not just holding the author's words but their own as well. The "I" in the title symbolizes the reader who holds the book, as they have already poured their hearts out through answering the prompts. It creates a feeling that the book belongs to them, not just the author alone. Holding the book, readers may feel as though they are holding their own words, making it a deeply personal and meaningful experience.

This project aims to convey the significance of emotional release and how it can

profoundly enhance one's life. I aim to show readers that excessive emotional suppression can have negative impacts and to provide them with a transformative tool for navigating and releasing their suppressed emotions. Through the book, individuals will begin a journey of healing and self-discovery.

The book is a A5 sized, produced in a physical format, offering readers a more intimate connection due to the sensory experience it provides. The tangible aspect of the book offers a more satisfying and immersive reading experience, allowing readers to engage with the content on a personal and emotional level.

Words I Held Back is more than just an artistic endeavor; it is a lifeline for me, who seeks an outlet for emotions, a means to confront my inner struggles and a pathway toward healing. More importantly, its significance extends to how I will be able to help people who have the same struggles as I do by providing readers an outlet for their own journey of self-expression. This empowers them to explore their emotions, find their voice, and embark on a path of self-discovery alongside me.

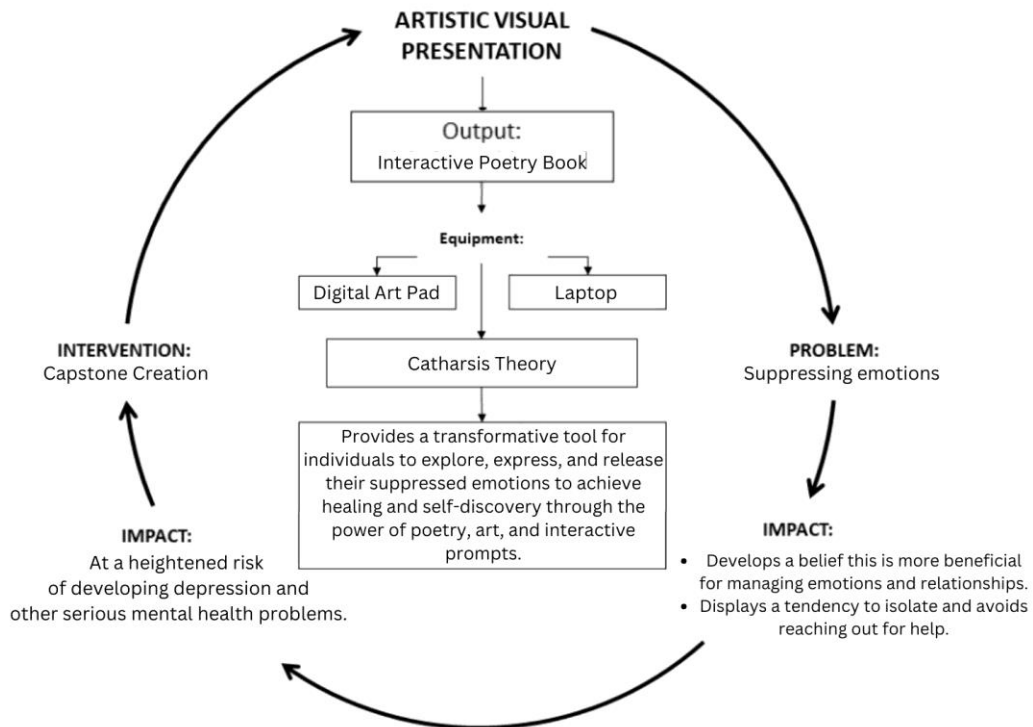


Figure 1 Framework Visual Representation of Overall Concept and Methods of Thesis Project: Interactive Journal Book

The creative framework that I used visualizes the process of producing the output by providing a visual representation of the impact of suppressing emotions. This section provides an in-depth illustrated information summary regarding the project output, resources, theory, problem, impacts, purpose, and solution. The creative framework and the research design for the project are further discussed in the sentences that follow.

My project idea began with my experience of growing up in a family setting where suppressing emotions became normalized. As I went through the process of conceptualization, I realized that suppressing emotions in today's world is prevalent and unmanageable. As research suggests, this coping mechanism has become a phenomenon in which many individuals do it for complex reasons, often rooted in individual experiences, cultural norms, and personal coping mechanisms. However, this normal human behavior presents challenges, as individuals may come to believe that suppressing emotions is beneficial for managing their emotions, leading to potential negative impacts on mental health in the long term.

With these, I conceptualize creating a project that will enable both the readers and I to express our emotions. My goal was to create a tool that would allow me to convey my suppressed emotions through poetry and provide readers with an opportunity to engage with the material on a deeper level by responding to prompts and activities. Through this process, I aimed to emphasize the significance of emotional expression while offering guidance for managing and understanding emotions.

With these, I decided to make a journal book to express emotions, struggles, and stories. By combining graphic design, I want to show that emotions, although hard to put into words, can always be visualized. Each design will bring words to life, showing how our thoughts and feelings can be messy and complex but also be transformed into visual art.

Thus, "Words I Held Back" include poems that solely focus on my teenage years up to the present, when most of my greatest and most distressing life experiences happened. Here, I went through the process of writing original poems about suppressed thoughts, then conceptualize and create visuals in connection to the poem's themes.

Additionally, research-based and Psychology-aligned prompts and activities are created to gauge the reader's attention and encourage them to express their own suppressed emotions.

I utilized the Catharsis Theory by Sigmund Freud and Josef Bruer, which states that the process of emotional release can help create cognitive insight and positive change in an individual's mental health (Bukar et al., 2019). I would like to create a project that would allow both me, as the creator, and the readers to experience emotional release and purification through the expression and exploration of suppressed emotions.

In contemporary psychology, the term "catharsis" has evolved to a broader concept, which includes any way of expressing and letting out emotions. Some examples of catharsis may include speaking with a friend, engaging in music, pursuing creative activities like art, engaging in expressive writing, participating in physical exercise, and more (Nickerson, 2023). Catharsis helps individuals manage challenging or distressing emotions. This process of emotional release can also be a valuable therapeutic method for dealing with fear, sadness, and anxious feelings (Cherry, 2023).

However, catharsis isn't always positive. Some individuals may express their

emotions in harmful ways, such as through self-harm or aggressive behavior. According to Ms. Ayessa Aguilar, RPm is not the only method of healthy emotional expression, and some may cause harm immediately or in the long term, which is why a healthy or positive method of expression is important.

In art, catharsis theory is used to express emotions through creative mediums such as writing, painting, and more. Catharsis theory suggests that experiencing strong emotions through art can provide emotional relief. Utilizing art as a healthy and positive way to express emotions will help individuals promote and express themselves. In my project, I promote writing or journaling as a self-expression and emotional release method, providing a safe and constructive outlet for processing emotions. Additionally, incorporating interactive prompts and activities encourages readers to delve into self-reflection and cultivate emotional well-being and personal growth.

Research Design

In my project, I utilized **qualitative exploratory research design**, as this approach aims to delve into a topic or issue in-depth to gain insights and deeper understanding (George, 2021). Since the prompts for the readers had to be carefully written, as they may elicit various emotions that I can't control, I had to seek expert advice and guidance. This also allowed me to gain deeper insight into suppression and how emotions should be taken seriously.

In addition, I used **purposive sampling technique** to select the interviewees. According to McCombes, purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics or expertise that are relevant to the research question. Hence, two Psychology professionals/professors at Asia Pacific College, Ms. Ayessa A. Guilar, RPm, and Ms. Kamille Salvana were chosen to be my project interviewees and help guide me through the process of adjusting and aligning the prompts. I intentionally chose individuals with expertise in psychology and emotional expression to validate and seek guidance about the prompts I have created. This sampling technique allowed me to gather insights and recommendations from individuals who have relevant knowledge and experience in the subject matter, thus enhancing the credibility and relevance of my research findings.

Most importantly, I conducted a second part interview with the readers or my target audience after the book was created. This was to seek feedback from them and ask if the book achieved its goal of helping the readers express their emotions. In this interview, I also used a purposive sampling technique and chose the target audience as part of the respondents.

By selecting a diverse group of participants through purposive sampling, I ensured that the feedback was representative of various perspectives within the target audience. This approach allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the book's effectiveness and its ability to engage readers in meaningful emotional reflection and expression.

Data Gathering

I utilized **semi-structured interview** to gain deeper insight into the concept and to

seek advice regarding my written prompts. This approach provided flexibility during the interviews with the professors as it allowed adaptable discussion where new questions were asked based on the topic, the interviewee's responses, or to address any specific concerns I had.

The main goal of the interviews was to seek advice on how the prompts align with suppressed emotions and assess whether they were triggering or appropriate. The focus is on gathering information and perspectives from experts to inform the development and refinement of the prompts. Additionally, I sought advice on the poems I personally wrote and opinions about them.

Moreover, the interview covered questions that explored suppression, aiming to better understand the concept. Answers to these questions also helped me validate information gathered from various sources and shed light on aspects I hadn't previously encountered. The interview results sparked new ideas for my project, and the insights gathered significantly contributed to enhancing and improving the book's content.

For the second interview, I asked a series of open-ended questions to gather in-depth insights into their experiences with the book. The feedback collected was instrumental in understanding the impact of the book on their emotional expression and overall experience. Additionally, this feedback helped identify areas for improvement and provided valuable suggestions for future editions.

Target Audience

The intended audience for my project are **young adults (aged 18-26)** as the primary target, with a secondary focus on individuals aged 27 and above who may also benefit, both who are navigating various life transitions and may be experiencing challenges with emotional expression. Both males and females are included, as emotional struggles can affect individuals of any gender. This demographic will likely be interested in exploring methods for managing emotions, particularly through creative outlets like poetry. The project aims to provide valuable tools and resources for self-expression and emotional growth by catering to this audience.

Design Process

This section provides an in-depth design process, covering aspects such as the creation of poems, graphic designs, and the physical book itself. It details the meticulous planning, execution, and refinement involved in crafting each component to ensure cohesion and visual impact throughout the project. Most importantly, this section tackles the meaning or reasons behind each approach or element incorporated into the book.

Poems

I began the creative process by carefully outlining the themes of the poems. During this stage, I considered how to seamlessly integrate graphic design to create a cohesive

synergy alongside poems. Recognizing that suppressed emotions encompass various aspects of human experience, I decided to name these emotions and use them as themes for the poems. This approach aims to convey to readers that identifying, labeling, and addressing our emotions is the initial step toward self-expression and healing.

The themes for the poems, inspired by the most commonly suppressed thoughts, are as follows:

1. Random Musings
2. Loss and Grief
3. Mental Health
4. Hate/Love
5. Family Dynamics
6. Personal Growth

The poems are written in prose and free verse styles in the project. Prose poetry is a form of poetry written in paragraph or sentence form and does not rely on rhymes or strict meter. It sticks to normal grammar rules and forms sentences and paragraphs with words just like regular conversation or a story in a book (Masterclass, 2021). Meanwhile, free verse poetry, although still comprised of stanzas, does not adhere to any specific rhyme scheme or meter, allowing for greater flexibility and creativity in expression (Free Verse | Poetry Foundation, n.d.). This freedom in form allows me to convey feelings more effectively by focusing on the content and depth of the emotions I wish to express without being constrained by the rules of traditional poetry.

Additionally, the language used aims to give emphasis on the content. This means that I used Filipino language on few poems to emphasize the meaning intended.

Color Direction

The poetry are arranged according to the colors associated with the emotions the poems try to convey. This means that since the book tackles life experiences in general, from happy to sad ones, I maximized all the colors in the color wheel and used them to flow to the overall color progression of the book. This means the colors in the designs progressed from green to yellow, creating a rainbow-like appearance for the entire book. The “rainbow” idea came from a personal belief that life is as colorful as rainbows. Each emotion we experience is associated with a corresponding color.



Figure 2 Color Direction

To explicitly follow the flow of colors, I used analogous and monochromatic colors as the overall color scheme in the book to enhance its aesthetic and emotional

impact. Analogous colors, closely related on the color wheel, created visual harmony, while monochromatic schemes intensify emotions by utilizing various shades of a single color. This approach mirrors the emotional flow of the poems, enhancing the reader's experience while continuously connecting with them emotionally.

The colors are associative, meaning blue symbolizes sadness and the weight of “what ifs,” evoking a sense of melancholy. Meanwhile, red conveys both the fiery passion of love and the intensity of anger, while yellow radiates the warmth of happiness and the optimism of hope, and so on. These colors aim to evoke the true definition of feelings in the poetry, adding a visual layer of emotion to the words on the page.

Here are the corresponding colors for each topic:

1. Random Musings - Green
2. Loss and Grief - Blue
3. Mental Health - Purple
4. Hate/Love - Red
5. Family Dynamics - Orange
6. Personal Growth – Yellow



Graphic Design

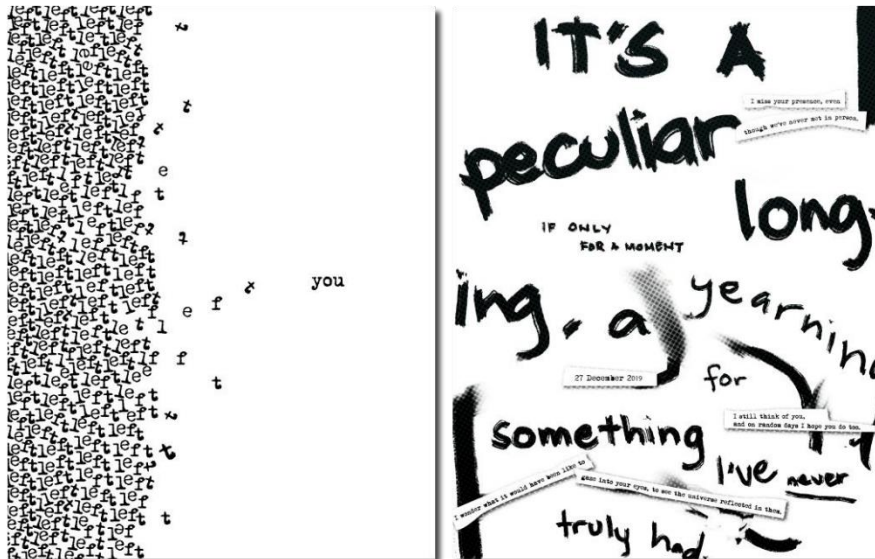


Figure 3 *Graphic Design using Typography*

I mainly focus on playing with the text and layout rather than illustrations in my designs. This means that the way the words look—the typefaces and fonts—played a

crucial role in conveying the message of the poems. The figures shown above are my sample works of using typography in the design.

Here, experimental typography is utilized in the designs. This aims to give emphasis on using different fonts, text styles, and design choices that may obscure the text and align with typographic experimentation. According to "The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909-1923" by Johanna Drucker, experimental typography refers to a mode of typographic design that breaks away from traditional conventions and explores new forms of expression. Instead of focusing solely on legibility and readability, experimental typography prioritizes visual experimentation, innovation, and creativity. It involves pushing the boundaries of typographic design by incorporating unconventional layouts, abstract shapes, fragmented text, and the integration of text and image in novel ways.

With this, in some of my designs, the text may not be immediately clear or understandable due to my design choices. However, this is intentional because my main goal with this project is to express and release emotions, and not necessarily to make every aspect easily understandable. This aims to convey the idea that our emotions cannot always be understood, yet they can be felt and translated visually. So, even if readers do not fully grasp the meaning of the text in some designs, it is perfectly fine because I have achieved my primary objective, which is to convey my emotions through both words and design.



Figure 4 *Graphic design using photographs*

Additionally, I incorporated photographs into some of the designs. I manipulated photos and enhanced them using graphic elements like gradients and textures to create visual effects that enhance the overall impact and meaning of the poems. The figure shown above is my sample work using this technique.

In this context, experimental graphic design is employed. This art style gave me the freedom to design based on the emotional essence of the poetry without being limited by any restrictions. This style demonstrates a willingness to experiment with visual elements and push the boundaries of graphic design principles.

Design Textures



Figure 5 *Glued paper overlays*

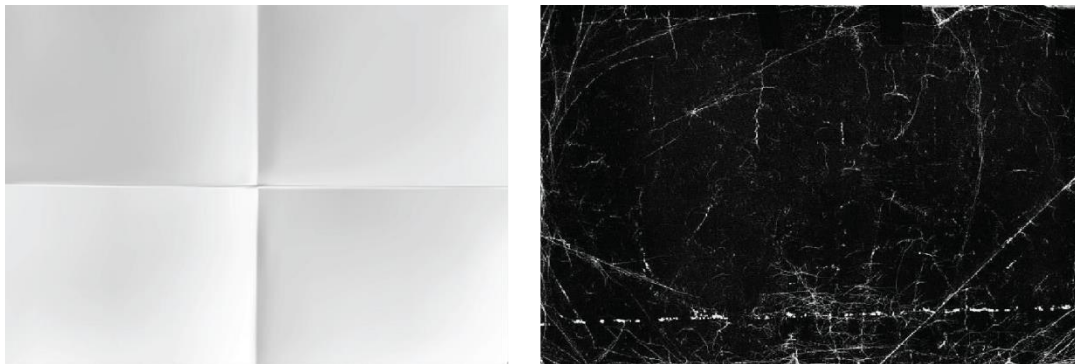


Figure 6 *Paper folds overlays*



Figure 7 *Crumpled paper overlays*

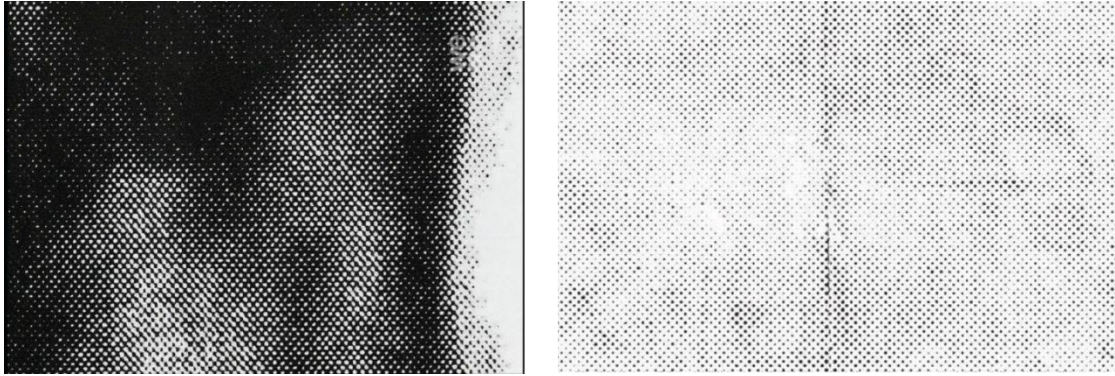


Figure 8 *Pointillism halftoning overlays*

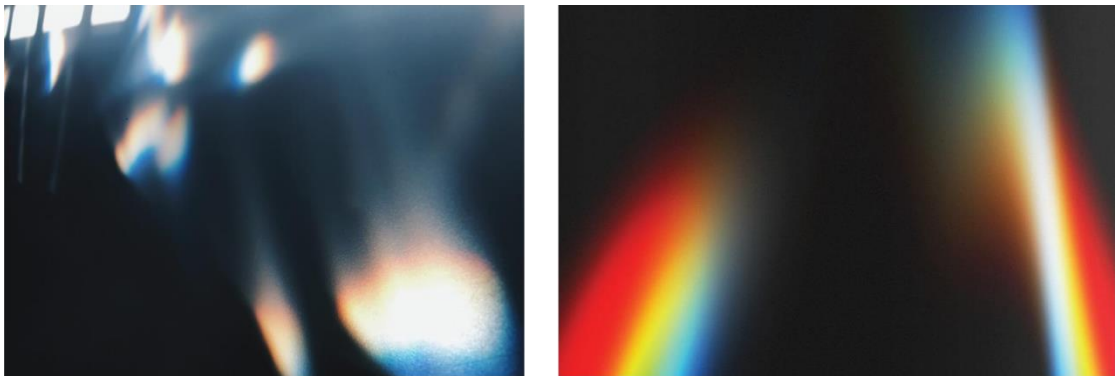


Figure 9 *Light leaks overlays*

Different textures are be applied to each design. Textures evoke different emotions, introduce a sense of depth, and enhance the overall visual appeal of designs. In my project, I used texture overlays such as glued, grunge, crumpled, paper folds, halftoning, and light leaks overlays to enhance the overall look of the designs and evoke a wide range of emotions such as nostalgia and melancholy. I decided to utilize textures to make every design look old and vintage to make the readers feel that the emotions conveyed in the poetry are from memories. This technique creates a sense of nostalgia, inviting the audience to connect with the past and to feel every emotion more effectively. Incorporating texture overlays into the graphic design is not put in vain even though the book is be printed as a physical copy since the book will maintain a captivating and multi-dimensional appearance, enhancing the reader's visual experience.

Font

All the designs shared a common element: the use of a typewriter font. This choice is intentional, as it aims to give the designs a vintage and nostalgic quality, evoking a sense of nostalgia and triggering strong emotions. The typewriter font's classic and slightly aged appearance serves as a visual connection to the past, inviting viewers to reminisce and emotionally engage with earlier times. Additionally, I used a typewriter font in my poems to give the impression of technicality or careful writing. This style is intentional since upon writing my poems, I realized that I was carefully selecting and filtering my words, knowing that there would be readers. I had to do this because simply dumping my thoughts without caution might trigger negative emotions or unpleasant memories for the readers.

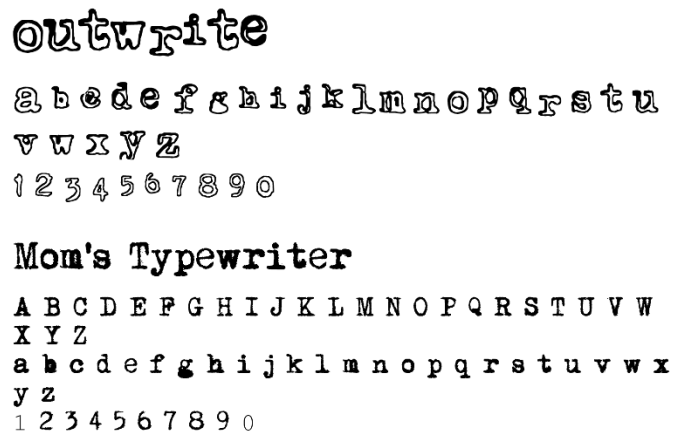


Figure 10 *Font Titles*

The Book

I have many ideas for the physical copy of the book. Since my project's goal is to connect, I planned to make it as engaging and interactive as possible. Here are the inspirations for the book.

Packaging

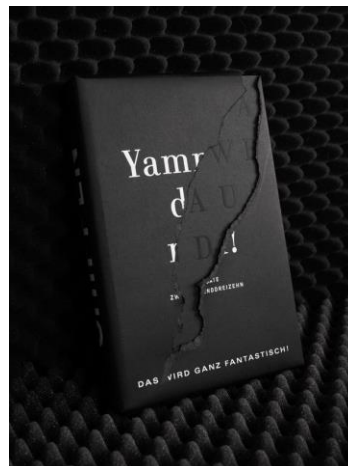


Figure 11 *Peel off the packaging.*

For the packaging, I wanted it to be like *Das Wird Gansz Fantastischi*'s book, where the reader has to peel it and actually ruin it. I wanted to give the impression to the readers that this is just like our emotions—covered, but then when we try to peel it, it actually uncovers us, making us feel naked. I also wanted to give the readers the idea that even from the very start, they have the freedom to ruin and tear the book so that when they reach the inside pages, where tearing is allowed, they won't be scared to do so.

Book Cover

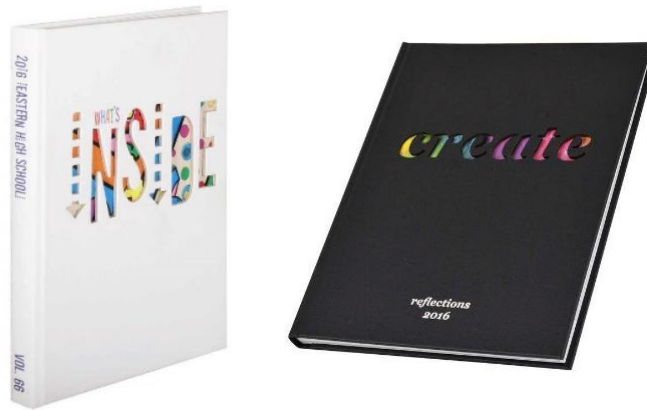


Figure 12 *Die Cut Covers Reference*

For the book cover, incorporated this unique idea where the title is die-cut. My references are from Talon, Eastern High School, in Kentucky (left) and Walsworth Yearbooks Cover (right). As this project is very personal to me, I wanted to produce it to the fullest extent and pull off different and unique things it might offer. A die-cut cover added to the overall aesthetic of the book but also resonate with the idea that we are like the covers; our emotions inside can be seen, and they are actually wonderful, we just have to look closely.

Interactive Elements

Here are some of my inspirations for the interactive elements. Since the book tackles emotions, which can be dragging and serious, I wanted to make the interactive element as engaging and fun as possible. This will create a balance within the project and make it effective.

Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release

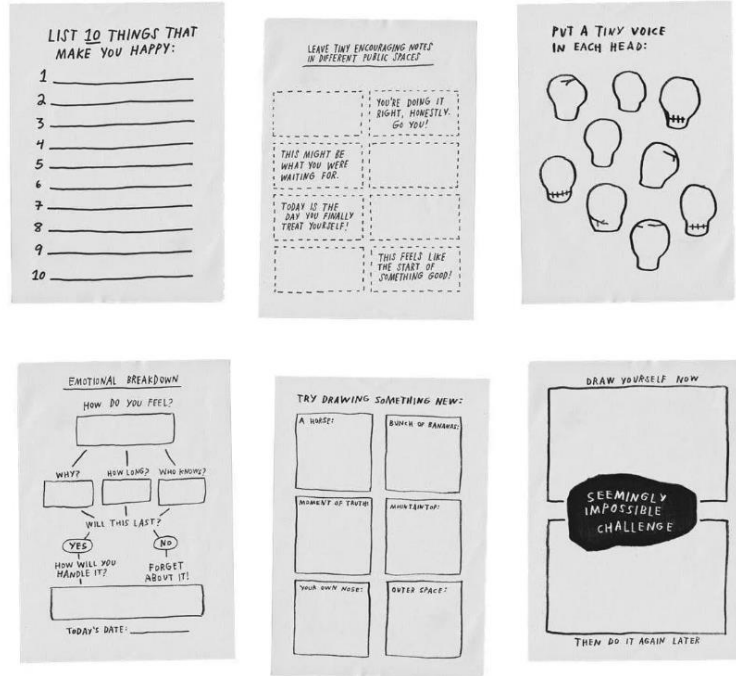


Figure 13 *Journaling Reference*

Pick Me Up Journal: A Pep Talk for Now & Later" by Adam J. Kurtz is an excellent example of how interactive elements can be seamlessly integrated into a book. Kurtz's journal encourages readers to actively engage with the content through prompts, activities, and spaces for personal reflection. In my book, by incorporating interactive elements like fill-in-the-blank sections and tear-out pages, I invite readers to participate in the creative process and make the journal their own. This will also allow them to self-reflect and go through emotional healing. The following photos are my sample works using this technique:

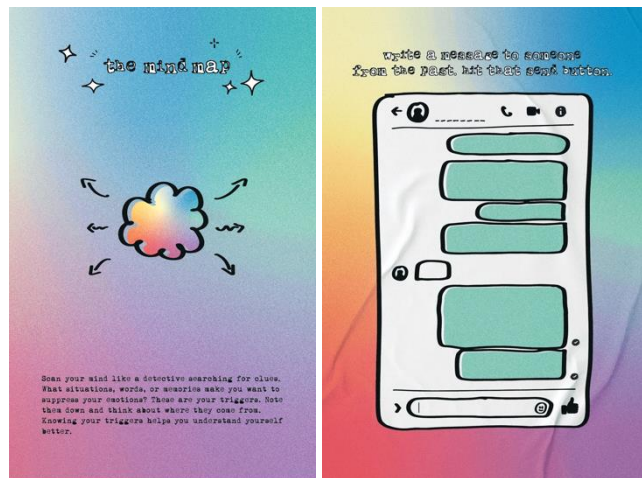


Figure 14 *Journaling Sample Work*

Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release



Figure 15 Pick / insert interactive element

In the book, there are interactive elements where readers can pick or insert pieces of paper into the design. Keri Smith's work (left) is a reference for this interactive element. This interactive idea are connected to the poem's themes and the topic, suppressed emotions. Readers are encouraged to actively participate in the creative process. By integrating this interactive idea, the book aims to gain a deeper connection between readers and the material, empowering them to explore their emotional journey through hands-on interaction. The following photo is my sample work using this technique:

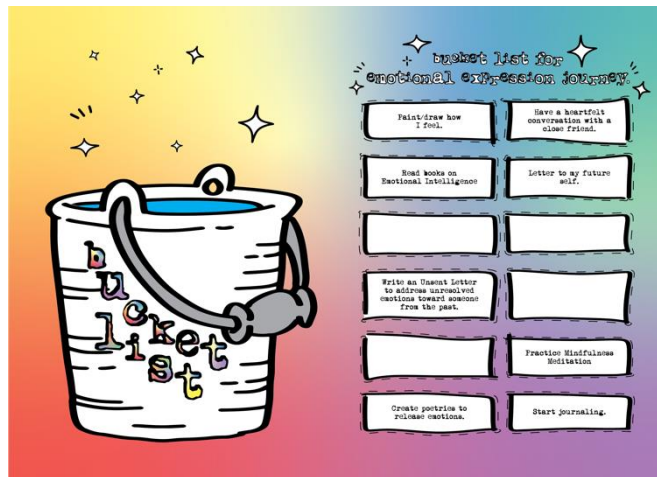


Figure 16 interactive element Sample Work

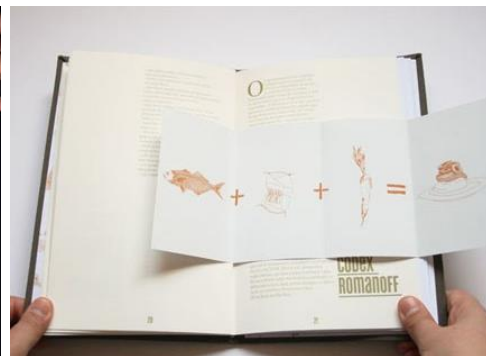
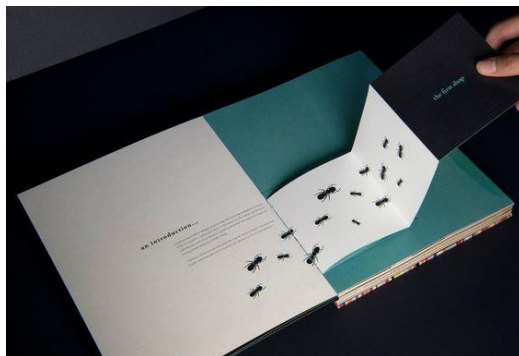


Figure 17 *Small pages element*

Cristiana Gouveia's Leonardo Da Vinci and John Szetho designs inspire this interactive element in the book. Here, small pages are inserted within the book, where the designs connect with each other. In my book, I used this idea and made a booklet inside the book, with different designs per page. This booklet contains 15 pages in total.



Figure 18 *Souvenirs*

There are pages where elements can be cut out or inserted inside the book to serve as a remembrance for the readers. These tangible keepsakes serve as reminders of the insights gained and emotions explored within the book, gaining a deeper connection to its content. Berlin-based graphic designers Sean Yendrys and Elias Hanzer are the artists for the second photo reference. The following photo is a sample of my work using this technique:

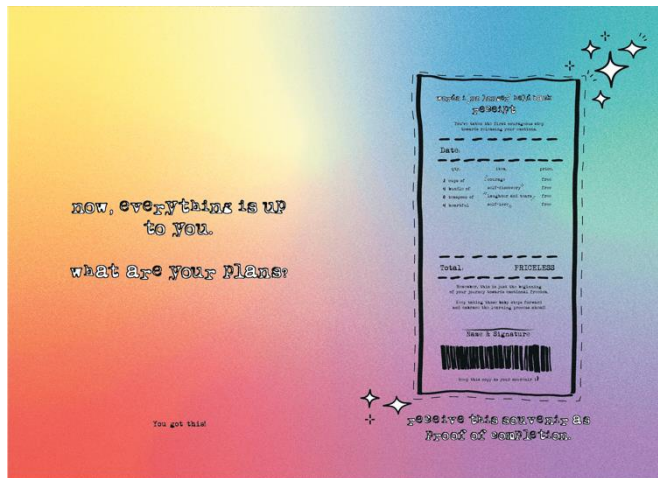


Figure 19 *Souvenir Sample Work*

Pre-Production Stage

In my pre-production stage, I worked through the process of planning and finalizing my project's main idea and concept. First, I brainstormed and developed ideas to give shape and meaning to the book, ensuring the overall concept aligns with my artistic vision. All the data I have gathered are thoroughly outlined to absolutely fit the main goal—for the

Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release

readers to find their own ways of releasing their emotions to find healing and attain personal growth. Additionally, this is the stage where I created a Gantt chart to manage and schedule my process and tasks to systematically finish on time. Collection of design references and writing of poems were done during this stage.

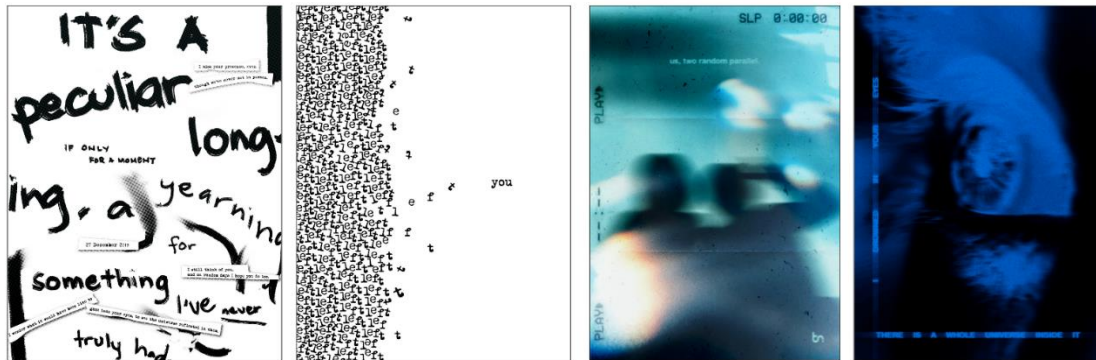
During this phase, I started collecting art references and creating my original versions of designs to figure out the art style that I would use for the project. The following are some of the designs I have created to explore the art style.



SMUDGE ILLUSTRATIONS



COMIC STYLE



EXPERIMENTAL TYPOGRAPHY

PHOTO BASED ART

Figure 20 *Art style exploration*

After extensive exploration of various art styles, I have chosen two that resonate with me and align with the goals of my project: experimental typography and photo-based art or exploratory graphic design. These styles reflect my personal preferences and offer effective means of conveying emotions. Through experimental typography, I can manipulate text creatively to evoke specific feelings. At the same time, photo-based art or exploratory graphic design allows me to incorporate visual elements that enhance the emotional impact of my work. By combining these art styles, I aim to create a cohesive

and expressive body of work that resonates deeply with the audience.

I have also collected all the poems I have written in the past and chosen the ones that I can revise and use in the book.

Based on my interview with Ms. Aguilar, RPh, and Ms. Salvana, I outlined the prompts. After conducting two separate interviews, the advice from the two professionals differs. According to Ms. Salvana, she was initially hesitant about the prompts in my project, expressing concern that they could potentially evoke negative emotions in the readers. She emphasized that I must be careful with my prompts and strictly write them positively to reduce the likelihood of triggering or eliciting negative emotions. Upon reviewing the prompts I had written, she suggested they should be worded differently, either more generally or specifically. This approach would prioritize the readers' well-being by minimizing the risk of drawing out unwanted emotions and memories and allowing them to interpret the prompts in a comfortable way.

According to Ms. Aguilar, RPh, there shouldn't be a concern about writing prompts that may be negative or trigger unwanted thoughts for readers, as the primary goal of your project is reflection. In her professional opinion, triggering thoughts can be a necessary part of the reflection process. She also emphasized that since your project is creative, it doesn't necessarily need to adhere strictly to the guidelines of her profession. Instead, the focus should be on the creative process, with the understanding that professionals can provide support if needed. While she did recommend keeping prompts light when possible, she acknowledged that sometimes more challenging prompts may be unavoidable. In such cases, it's important to strategically place prompts so that if one is triggering, the subsequent prompts focus on reflection or healing, helping to guide readers through the process in a supportive manner.

With both Ms. Aguilar's and Ms. Salvana's perspectives in mind, I aimed to integrate their feedback without compromising the goal and quality of my project. Before the interview, my prompts tended to lean towards the negative, prompting me to reframe them with a focus on the positive aspects. However, recognizing that some negativity may still arise, I included activities and prompts enabling readers to reflect and create balance within the overall experience. This approach allows for exploring emotions while providing support and guidance for readers throughout their journey of self-discovery and healing.

Moreover, I have searched and visited book printing shops to obtain quotations for the physical copy of the book. I have also made sample prints of the designs to test and choose the most suitable and perfect type of paper for the book.

Production Phase

The main focus of this phase is the writing and design process involved in creating all the assets for the book. Here, writing and design are given equal importance in the same way as the design. After gathering a minimal number of poems from my previous works, I immediately began conceptualizing and writing more to reflect suppressed emotions.

During this stage, finding the right words and state to write effectively is crucial, as the words have the power to stir emotions and connect with readers. I struggled with this process, as I found it challenging to write consistently since I am not always in the right state of mind. I didn't want to push myself to write when I wasn't feeling inspired, as this would only result in poorly written poems.

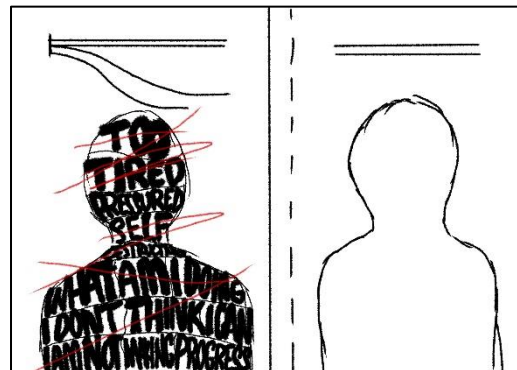
In this phase, I have completed 21 poems and 24 prompts and activities to be included in the book, resulting in 45 written pieces. Additionally, all poems and prompts are laid out on a spreadsheet.

After the writing process, the design process commenced immediately. The design begins with analyzing the poem and conceptualizing a visual representation based on the text. Next, I created a layout sketch that served as the foundation of the design.

Then, I began designing in Adobe Illustrator to lay out the texts and placements and use Adobe Photoshop for the final touches. This process involves carefully formatting and seamlessly blending the text with images and designs, ensuring they work harmoniously. As the designer, I paid close attention to details such as layout, font styles, and sizes to ensure they complemented the poetry and enhanced its overall impact. Also, the colors used in each design were thoroughly studied to ensure they were connected to the poetry.

I have finished 20 spreads in total, including poems, prompts, activities, and other important parts of the book.

Here is a sample of my design process:



1st step: Procreate

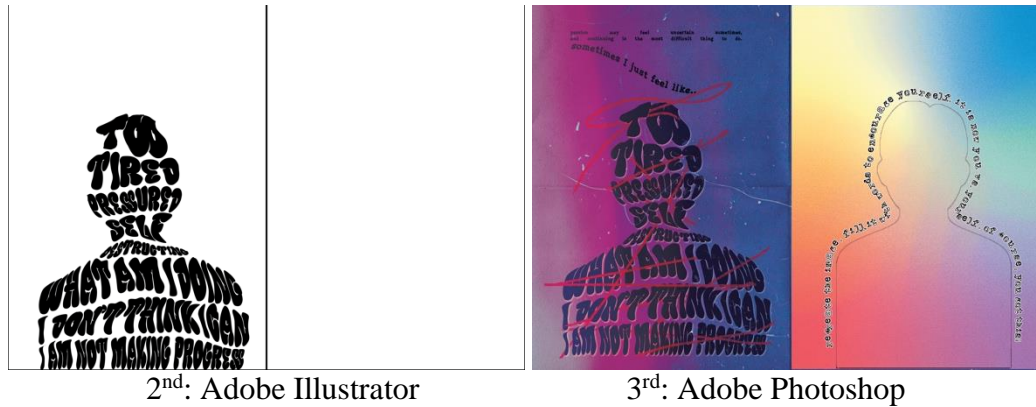


Figure 21 *Design Process*

Also, I continued searching for a print shop that provided quality work and looked for shops that offered die-cutting services for the book cover. I visited Recto and Taft and searched online shops. However, I am still weighing my options on how I can get what I want for a lesser price while maintaining quality work.

Post-Production Phase

In this phase, the design process continued and was finalized. 34 more spread were done and were layout properly. Words I Held Back sums up 94 pages, plus an additional 15 pages for the booklet inside.

Since my book has a lot of specialties inside and is very customized, it was crucial for me to send instructions properly to the printshop for my needs to be executed properly. After this, I was able to continue planning and executing the exhibition for my book by June.

Review of Related Literature

This chapter reviews related literature, articles, studies, and discussions regarding suppressed emotions and emotional release. The information included in this chapter helped create a foundation for the project and added a more comprehensive understanding for its execution.

Suppressed Emotions

Unspoken words and unexpressed emotions result from a deeply ingrained human tendency: the suppression of emotions. Suppression is the conscious act of pushing unwanted thoughts, emotions, memories, fantasies, and more out of conscious awareness with the hope the thoughts and emotions will fade away and cease to affect us (Davis, n.d.). Sigmund Freud proposed in 1892 that suppression is a voluntary form of repression.

Suppression is influenced and shaped by various factors, such as societal norms, personal upbringing, and individual coping mechanisms. These factors are also the different reasons people suppress their emotions. (1) Societal norms shape how people feel

pressured to hide their emotions based on cultural standards. (2) Personal upbringing influences an individual's emotional tendencies, in which individuals tend to suppress emotions if raised in an environment that discourages their expression, such as dysfunctional family environments. (3) Individual coping mechanisms are strategies that individuals develop to manage their emotions, including suppressing emotions to manage overwhelming feelings. In addition to this, self-protection is an important factor in suppressing emotions. Since some people think they can protect themselves from future harm or pain, they refuse to acknowledge their emotions (“What Does it Mean to Suppress Emotions?”, 2023).

In other words, we suppress our feelings to cope, fit in, and survive because we are instructed to, embarrassed, or simply because processing trauma is too difficult (Elsig, 2022).

Impacts of Emotional Suppression

Today's society expects people to suppress their emotions to survive and give peace (Elsig, 2022). Evidence suggests that suppressing emotional expressions is common in adults and children and that doing so is frequently important for societal functioning and maintaining relationships (Gross & Cassidy, 2019).

However, suppressing emotions to forget and stop affecting people seems ineffective. Unwanted thoughts occur even more once people try to suppress them. This technically means that suppression has paradoxical effects—the more people try to suppress, the more emotions occur frequently and get stronger (Davis, 2021). Hence, people get trapped into their own bubble of suppressed emotions and never attain the ability to move forward or heal.

Moreover, suppression may lead to more serious health-related problems as it continues to worsen negative emotions and diminish positive ones (Ruan et al., 2019). Emotional suppression has effects on social, emotional, and health-related, such as anxiety and depression, other stress-related illnesses, and even to substance abuse and suicide (Gross & Cassidy, 2019).

Emotional Release

Technically, expression is the opposite of suppression. Here, expression is the healthier way to handle emotions by recognizing them, validating them, and giving them a solution and a chance to be released. Expression is one way to address emotions in real-time scenarios. However, emotional release should be performed if emotions have been suppressed for a long period.

Emotional release, or catharsis, was first introduced by Aristotle and later developed by Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer in the 1960s. According to Freud and Breuer, catharsis is the process of emotional release, in which psychological complexes are recalled to conscious awareness and enabling it to be expressed, which can help create a cognitive insight and positive change in the mental health of an individual (Bukar et al., 2019). Some examples of catharsis may include speaking with a friend, engaging in music,

pursuing creative activities like art, engaging in expressive writing, participating in physical exercise, and more (Nickerson, 2023).

In my project, I perform the creative aspect of catharsis. Specifically, I create a book that delves into my suppressed emotions. This book served as a medium for me to express and release the feelings I have kept hidden.

Writing as a Form of Emotional Release

In an article entitled "The Art of Words: Expressive Writing as Reflective Practice in Art Therapy," written by PhD Sherry L. Beaumont in 2018, the advantages of using expressive writing in art therapy were highlighted. The article emphasizes the benefits of combining art making and writing, often referred to as visual or art journaling, as it allows individuals to harness the advantages of both visual and verbal modes of expression. According to the article, engaging in reflective practice and expressive writing cultivates self-awareness and observation skills, enabling individuals to uncover and embrace their true selves.

In connection with this, I used a creative and expressive writing approach in my book's poems. By choosing this writing style, I aim to evoke a strong emotional response from readers, helping them connect with the depth of my feelings and experiences.

Prose poetry

Prose poetry is written in paragraph or sentence form and does not rely on rhymes or strict meter. It sticks to normal grammar rules and forms sentences and paragraphs with words like a regular conversation or a story in a book. It is the kind of writing we use most of the time. There are four common types of Prose: nonfictional, fictional, heroic, and prose poetry (Masterclass, 2021).

Prose can still be considered poetry even if it lacks traditional poetic elements if it captures the essence of poetic expression in its language and themes. Poetry is not solely defined by its form but by its ability to evoke emotions and convey meaning distinctively and artistically.

In my project, I used nonfictional prose poetry. In nonfictional prose poetry, writers often convey their personal thoughts, observations, and reflections in a way that engages the reader's emotions and imagination (Masterclass, 2021). Prose poetry have let me express my emotions without being limited to the rules compared to a traditional poem.

Color in Design

Color psychology is a fascinating field that explores how color can profoundly influence people's emotions and behaviors. According to Cherry, MSED, in an article titled "Color Psychology: Does It Affect How You Feel?", colors are powerful tools that signal action, influence mood, and even impact our physical reactions. This means that simply being surrounded by certain colors can make us feel a certain way. Additionally, color theory teaches us that the meaning of colors can change depending on the culture and situation (Alnasuan, 2016). For example, while red might represent love in one place, it could mean danger in another. Our age and the space around us can also affect how we see colors.

Moreover, it's not just individual colors that affect us – different combinations of colors can also change our mood (Wang, 2021). Whether it's the calming effect of soft blues and greens or the energizing feeling of bright yellows and oranges, colors work together to influence how we feel. Understanding these color dynamics can be useful in many areas, like design, marketing, and therapy. Using colors intentionally can create environments that promote certain emotions, improve how people perceive brands, and even help with emotional healing. In short, exploring how colors and emotions connect can lead to exciting possibilities for improving our experiences and interactions.

In my project, colors represent the emotions expressed in the poems. They help readers visualize and resonate with the poems. With just a glance, they would know what emotions they are experiencing. Colors are also used to name these emotions and serve as themes for the poems. This approach aims to convey to readers that identifying, labeling, and addressing our emotions is the initial step toward self-expression and healing.

Graphic Design

Graphic design is a profound medium for evoking emotions and connecting with audiences on a deeper level. According to the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA®), graphic design is "the art and practice of organizing and expressing ideas and experiences using visual and written elements" (Flavin, 2023). In simpler terms, graphic design is a skill where experts use visuals to convey specific messages ("Graphic Design," n.d.). In graphic design, various elements, including colors, typography, images, shapes, and layout, are employed to create visually appealing and effective communication.

Similarly, psychologist Robert Plutchik's wheel of emotions theory states that visual stimuli, including design elements, can trigger emotions such as joy, sadness, anger, and fear. In essence, graphic design is a powerful means of communication, evoking a wide range of emotions and shaping perceptions through visual storytelling.

In my project, I used graphic design to transform the hidden and intangible emotions within me into visible and tangible representations. It is a way to give life to these inner thoughts and make them something we can see with our eyes.

Through my design, I wanted to make readers feel something when they look at the designs. I aim to make them stop and think, maybe even see things differently. Adding layers of meaning and emotion to my work, I hope to create a deep connection between the viewer and the art, inviting them to explore their feelings. This also means that, at times, the designs may appear messy, reflecting the chaotic nature of our emotions and how they can be challenging to comprehend. However, the designs are not intended to be fully understood; their purpose is to translate emotions into visuals, allowing viewers to experience and interpret them in their own unique way.

Review of Related Works

In line with the creative output, artworks that delve into the theme of suppressed emotions, books where graphic design plays a significant role, and works of writers who have effectively used prose poems are being reviewed. These existing works served as a basis and reference for the entire creative project.

Prose Poetry



Figure 22 *Maybe You'll Love Me When I'm Gone* by Jed Castro

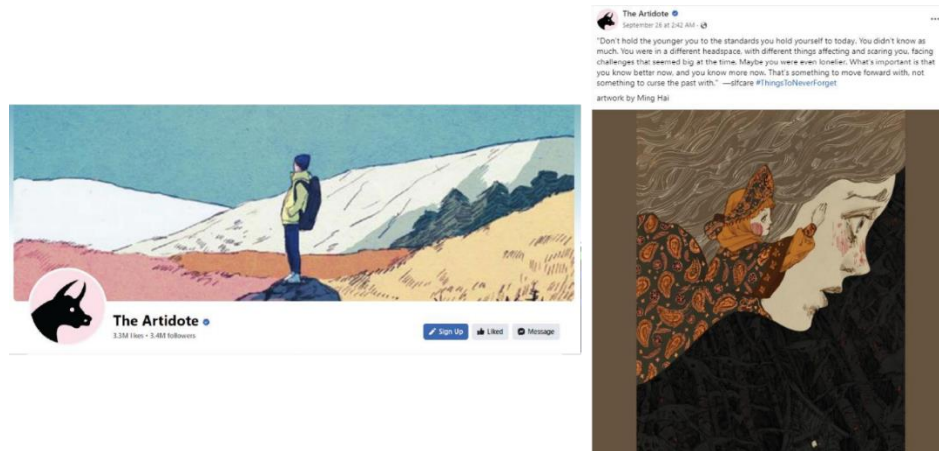


Figure 23 *The Artidote*

Neil Jed Castro's 'Maybe You'll Love Me When I'm Gone,' published in 2018, is a collection of stories, letters, and insights on love, life, family, and mental health. It explores a girl's journey to trust again and heal after a painful heartbreak (*Maybe You'll Love Me When I'm Gone*, 2023). On the other hand, The Artidote, established by Jovanny Ferreyra in 2015, is a social media platform. According to Ferreyra, The Artidote serves as a digital space to feel, bond & heal through the medium of art (Pandya, 2022). Ferreyra writes about mental health and art, and this blend has cultivated a five million-strong community across various online platforms.

Castro and Ferreyra's work bears similarities in their writing styles. Both authors use prose writing to convey their narratives in a straightforward and basic manner. This approach allows them to connect with their readers deeper, creating a sense of intimacy that enables the audience to relate to their stories and experiences.

About my project, I mainly utilized prose writing in my poems. With this, my poems do not follow any structure of rhyming or meter and are mostly in the form of sentences or paragraphs. This technique allowed me to write freely and express my emotions more effectively without limiting myself to adhering to any rules in writing. In addition, my poems resembled musings from my emotions and past, making it look like an

open letter addressed to someone.

A book about unexpressed emotions



Figure 24 *Things You Wanted to Say But Never Did: A Photographic Journal to Process Your Feelings*

Geloy Concepcion is a Filipino photographer, videographer, and street artist who released his photo journal "Things You Wanted To Say But Never Did" in June 2023. Concepcion's project allowed his followers to express their thoughts by submitting their confessions, stories, and thoughts using his provided submission link. He used his book to highlight the unspoken thoughts and suppressed emotions that people hold inside, starting with his thought-provoking question: "What are the things you wanted to say but never did?" (Grana, 2023).

Similarly, I also used my project as a medium for releasing the emotions and words I kept bottled up. Just as Geloy Concepcion gave his followers a voice, I aim to create a space where I can freely express and share the thoughts and feelings that have remained unspoken. This project will be a creative outlet to connect with others through shared experiences and emotions, fostering a sense of understanding and catharsis. In addition, the photographs featured in Geloy's book are remarkably similar to the visuals I am incorporating into my project. The key distinction, however, lies in my choice to use graphic design rather than photographs; this is to express my thoughts and emotions creatively.

Self-help Journal Books

Self-help journal books are interactive guides that encourage personal growth and well-being. Filled with prompts and activities, they help readers explore thoughts, set goals, and foster positive habits through structured self-reflection. These journals serve as tools for individuals seeking a more intentional and proactive approach to their personal development journey.

The following books served as my guide and inspiration for my project. Drawing

Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release

from their methodologies for crafting prompts, book content, and the wealth of knowledge they imparted, I gained invaluable tools to enrich my project. Additionally, their innovative approaches to emotional exploration and healing inspired me, shaping the direction and depth of my work.

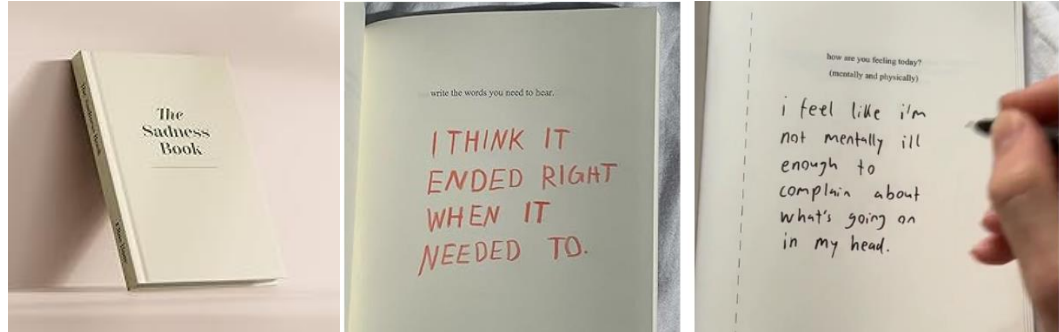


Figure 25 *The Sadness Book*

The Sadness Book, written by Elias Baar, is a compassionate and empowering guide designed to help individuals liberate themselves from the grip of negativity. Filled with thought-provoking questions, this book encourages people to delve deep and reflect on themselves. It is a poignant reminder of past triumphs, urging readers to grant themselves more compassion and understanding. This guided journal is not just a self-help book; it's a transformative journey through emotions.

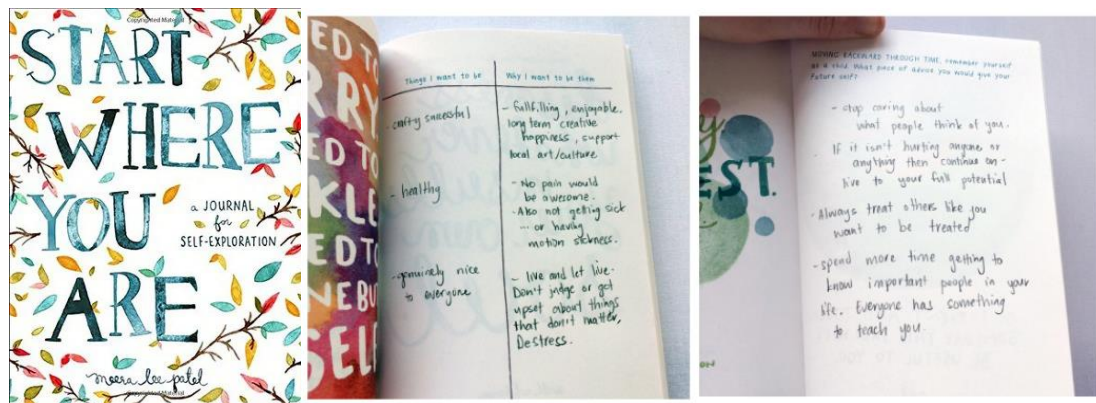


Figure 26 *Start Where You Are: A Journal for Self-Exploration*

"Start Where You Are: A Journal for Self-Exploration" by Meera Lee Patel is a visually stunning and interactive journal that aims to inspire self-reflection and creativity. The book is filled with intricate illustrations and thought-provoking prompts, creating an engaging and visually appealing space for individuals to explore their thoughts and emotions.

The journal encourages users to start their self-exploration journey with acceptance and understanding of their current circumstances. The prompts cover many topics, from personal aspirations and fears to gratitude and mindfulness. Each page is carefully crafted to balance guided prompts and open space for personal expression.

Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release



Figure 27 *This is not a book.*

"This Is Not a Book" by Keri Smith is an interactive and unconventional book that challenges traditional notions of reading. Instead of a linear narrative, it invites readers to engage with the content hands-on, creatively. Instead of a regular read, it prompts readers to actively engage in creative activities, from drawing to unconventional tasks. It's all about breaking free from traditional book norms, encouraging personalization, and turning the book into a canvas for self-expression. Keri Smith's approach invites readers to embrace creativity beyond the usual boundaries.

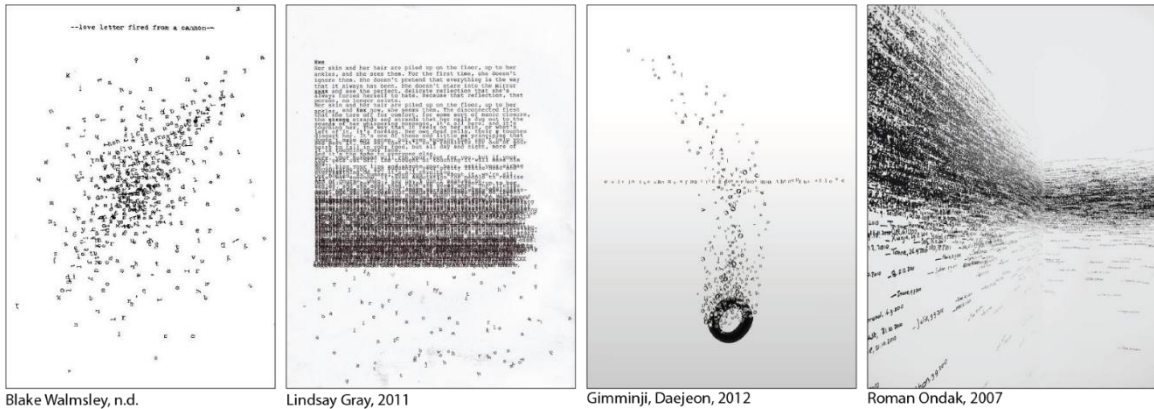
Exploratory Poems / Experimental Typography



Figure 28 *"Um Poema Errante / A Wandering Poem"*
by Christian Marques and Angharad Hengyu Owen

“Um, Poema Errante / A Wandering Poem” by Christian Marques and Angharad Hengyu Owen is an insightful poetry book combining graphic design and literature. A Wandering Poem is a groundbreaking literary project that combines discipline and re-exploration in an eight-month journey through seven countries of the author. This resulted in a bilingual collection of emotional imprints, where each poem's free-verse form complements its unique visualization, offering a multi-layered voyage through printed words (Milner, 2018).

In my project, typography are be applied to the designs. Here, "experimental typography" refers to the creative and artistic manipulation of typefaces, fonts, and text elements to convey a particular message, evoke emotions, or enhance the overall design of a piece of text or graphic. It involves experimenting with various fonts, sizes, spacing, colors, and arrangements to achieve the desired visual effect. This technique will enhance the visual appeal and convey the emotions from the poem. Additionally, this style gave my book a specific identity by consistently using it.



Blake Walmsley, n.d.

Lindsay Gray, 2011

Gimminji, Daejeon, 2012

Roman Ondak, 2007

Figure 29 *Designs using typography play*

Here are some designs from different artists who even won an award using these pieces and used the experimental typography technique. I draw inspiration from these pieces in crafting my designs because they showcase typography's creative and expressive potential. I aim to apply the same artistic techniques to enhance my design projects and convey compelling stories through text and visuals. Furthermore, these are my inspirations for crafting designs that might appear chaotic and disorganized. This means the text may not be immediately clear to the readers. However, as long as this approach aligns with the poem's message, which is intended to be disorderly or deliberately hard to understand, it is acceptable because my project's main purpose is to express emotions.

Graphic Design using Photographs



Figure 30 Arts by Antoine Paikert

Antoine Paikert is a self-taught creative from France, currently based in Helsinki. He draws inspiration from seemingly insignificant human emotions (“Meet Antoine Paikert | Artist & Creative,” 2022). In his graphic designs, he uses photographs, giving them an aged and nostalgic appearance to evoke the sensation of memories from the past. This effect is achieved through dreamy and blurred designs, creating an atmosphere reminiscent of old, sad recollections.

In my project, I followed a similar path by incorporating photographs into my designs. I modified the photos and used different techniques and effects, such as gradient and texture overlays, to make the designs more vivid, relatable, and emotionally captivating.

Results and Discussion

This study consists of two phases in the interview process. The first phase, conducted **before** the book is finished, involves interviewing two psychologists to align prompts and questions. The second phase, conducted **after** the book is completed, involves interviewing readers to seek feedback.

Interview Phase I:

For this study, I interviewed two Psychology professionals/professors at Asia Pacific College, Ms. Ayessa A. Guilar, Rpm (Respondent 1), and Ms. Kamille Salvana (Respondent 2), to seek advice to validate and receive guidance about the prompts and poems I have created. Additionally, I aimed to seek advice on how to properly write prompts. The results of my interviews allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of emotional suppression and provided clarity on the direction of my writing and designs. This sparked new ideas that I used in creating prompts by their advice.

1. What is suppression?

Respond 1	<p>You're suppressing your emotions, behaviors, or reactions, not just emotions. Psychologically, that's the mere definition of suppression. Sometimes suppression can be, according to Sigmund Freud, a defense mechanism for us to feel safe. We are trying to suppress our own emotions. That's different from repression because repression is unconsciously hiding your emotions. But with suppression, you are deliberately "sinadya mo," and you are consciously aware that you are suppressing your emotions. So, that's suppression.</p> <p>Some psychologists believe that suppression is a safeguarding tendency, not just a defense mechanism, because in defense mechanisms, experiences are negative, which is why you're suppressing.</p> <p>But sometimes, it's a safeguarding tendency. This is the safest thing you think you can do in a situation, whether it is positive or negative.</p> <p>So, there are different opinions among suppression. As of this moment, evidence-based debates are still the same regarding suppression. But one thing is for sure, this is a technique people use to be safe or defend themselves.</p>
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Figure 1 Respondent's explanation

Miss Ayessa explains suppression as a conscious act of restraining emotions, behaviors, or reactions, distinct from repression. She highlights its role as both a defense mechanism and a safeguarding tendency for safety and self-protection. Here, it is confirmed by a psychologist that many believe this coping strategy is beneficial for protecting oneself from harm, maintaining relationships, and avoiding judgment by others. Suppression is recognized as a normal and common behavior among humans.

<p>2. Do you agree that there is a stereotype in suppression, where people think that it is better to suppress their emotions since it will protect them from future harm or rejection, help maintain relationships, and shield them from potential judgment by others?</p>	
Respond 1	<p>I'm not sure if this is just a stereotype. Please make research about it. I believe more that this is a phenomenon, that most people do this because they feel safe. So, this is not a stereotype, because when you say "stereotype," it's wrong, but suppressing isn't wrong, because this is where we feel safe. What's wrong is overly suppressing things. Nothing is wrong with doing anything at all, what's wrong is overly doing it. "Lahat ng bagay okay lang, pero hindi lahat ng bagay tama." Everything is normal but not every normal is right, just like here, it's normal to suppress, but overly suppressing is not right at all. And you, suppressing emotions doesn't mean you are right; however, it is okay.</p> <p>So, I don't know if it is stereotype, because stereotype automatically means it's wrong. So, make further research about it.</p>

Figure 2 Respondent's explanation

Miss Ayessa suggested that suppression as a stereotype may not accurately capture its complexity. She sees it more as a common human behavior driven by our need for safety. She explained that there is a difference between moderate and excessive suppression, with the latter being a problem. She believes that suppressing emotions isn't necessarily wrong; it's all about finding a balance. However, she suggested further research to better understand suppression and its societal perceptions.

3. Will someone be aware while they are suppressing their emotions?	
Respond 1	They have to (suppress their emotions), that's why they suppress their emotions. If they are not aware; that is repression.
Respond 2	Yes.

Figure 3 Respondent's explanation

Both respondents agreed that individuals are aware when they are suppressing their emotions. This suggests that awareness plays a crucial role in the process of suppressing emotions.

4. What are the effects of suppression?	
Respond 1	It depends. Most of the effects of suppression involve compartmentalizing your emotions; you are setting them aside. And how does that affect us? Immediately, we feel heavy because we suppress our emotions. In the long term, it might be problematic.
Respond 2	Could also be a form of coping.

Figure 4 Respondent's explanation

As illustrated in Figure 4, the effects of suppression can vary depending on individual circumstances. Psychologists suggest that it can serve as a coping mechanism, offering short-term relief but potentially leading to long-term issues. Their responses collectively indicate that suppression can have a detrimental impact on emotional health.

5. What are the ways to stop suppressing emotions?	
Respond 1	Letting it go. There are no other ways to fix this aside from letting it go.
Respond 2	By consciously dealing with the situation that needs to be addressed.

Figure 5 Respondent's explanation

Both respondents provided concise strategies for dealing with suppressed emotions. Miss Ayessa advised "letting it go," emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and releasing emotions. In contrast, Miss Kamille recommends addressing underlying issues directly. These responses are just two different strategies for dealing with and expressing suppressed emotions.

6. Do the prompts I wrote to fit the concept of "releasing emotions"? Feel free to suggest a revision.	
Respond 1	It definitely does.
Respond 2	Yes!

Figure 6 Respondent's explanation

After seeking advice for my initial prompts, both professionals agreed that my prompts fit the concept of releasing emotions.

7. Do you have any prompt suggestions for the project?

<p>Respondent 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can add a prompt like guided meditation/focus attention. • For prompt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"What is your advice to your 17-year-old-self?"</i>, change it to: "What would you like to say to your 17-year-old self?" ○ <i>"Write a closing chapter to someone."</i>: Make it clearer; someone you love, you don't talk to now; someone you have hatred about. ○ <i>"Go outside and focus on the clouds, trees, or breeze."</i> Instead of "go outside", make it "find someplace wherever you are that makes you feel safe." ○ <i>"How do you handle sadness?"</i> Instead of this, make it: "Think of a time that you were lonely. Who are the people involved? What did you do? What did others do to you? What are the things you would like to change?" ○ <i>"What will your past/ child self say to your future self?"</i> Make it: "What would you like to say to your future self?" is a more powerful question. ○ <i>"Make a list of things you most enjoy about being here."</i> Change it to: "Write the three happiest moments in your life (and make them your souvenirs)."
<p>Respondent 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For prompt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"Write a letter for your parents about the things they did wrong."</i> Make it "Write a letter for your parents". So that it is the reader's choice on how they will interpret it. ○ <i>"Write a letter for someone who is no longer in your life."</i> Change it to: Write a closing chapter to someone. ○ <i>"Think of something that is currently troubling you."</i> Change it to: "Write a difficult situation you are currently in; don't try to solve it yet." ○ <i>"How do you handle sadness?"</i> Change it to: How do you handle yourself in a difficult situation? • You should ask questions like: "Are you aware that sometimes you are holding back how you feel?" to make it more align to suppression.

Figure Respondent explanation

In Figure 7, Miss Ayessa suggested tweaking existing prompts to make them more specific and impactful. She proposed changes that prompt deeper reflection and target specific emotions or experiences. Miss Kamille recommended making prompts more open-ended, allowing readers to interpret them based on their own experiences. They also suggest adding questions related to emotional suppression to align with the project's theme.

<p>8. Do you have any suggestions, comments, improvements for the whole project?</p>	
<p>Respondent 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't have a problem if this is going to be triggering or whatsoever since the purpose of this one (the project/prompt) is for them to reflect. And there are many journal books with similar questions like these, and that this is just fan fiction, so it doesn't really have to be aligned to our profession, but I do appreciate that you reached out to

Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release

	<p>us.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You're not a psych student, so I'm not expecting a lot (any technical or structured data relating to Psychology) from your project, but I'm happy that artists are giving importance to our field. <p>It's okay to be triggering because it's our job to help; it's not your job (artists), so go lang. I don't want to limit you, so include your personality in your project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your prompts should be aligned to your poetry topic. Add more activities for the readers.
Respondent 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put a disclaimer at the start and end of the book. Erase the prompts that are similar. Find other terms for prompts that look negative. <p>Due to many prompts that tackle different emotions, your goal for the readers to release their suppressed emotions is not being met. (My journal prompts don't align with how someone could release their suppressed emotions.) But if it's their emotions in general, yes.</p> <p>So, instead of suppression, if your goal is to express emotions, then go directly with that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change suppression to emotional expression (emotions in general, not just suppressed emotions).

Figure 8 Respondent's explanation

In this figure, the responses of the two psychology professionals are differentiated. Miss Ayessa stated that she appreciated the reflective aspect of the project, encouraging the inclusion of triggering content for deeper introspection. She valued the artistic perspective and suggested aligning prompts with the poetry topic while adding more reader activities.

On the other hand, Miss Kamille recommended adding disclaimers and eliminating similar prompts for clarity. She suggested using alternative terms for negative prompts and emphasized the need to focus on emotional expression rather than suppression to meet the project's goals.

Follow-up questions:

9. How does catharsis theory relate to my project?	
Respond 1	<p>Catharsis or cathartic behaviors are when we release our emotions deliberately, like punching a punching bag, crying, or dancing. (For example) Dancing is cathartic for me when I have problems, or computer games are cathartic for me, or reading books.</p> <p>So cathartic is a form of releasing emotions. So, reading books for me is cathartic, answering prompts is cathartic.</p> <p>This is one of the theories of Freud, even though I may somewhat slightly agree; however, not all the methods are right. Yes, it is okay, like punching a punching bag is okay, but it can make you violent, so it's not okay in the long run. So, everything that is immediate is okay, like when suppressing emotions, it's okay,</p>

	but when you make suppression your own personality, that's when problems occur.
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Figure 9 Respondent's explanation

In this figure, Miss Ayessa explained the concept of catharsis theory in relation to the project. She explained how cathartic behaviors, like crying or dancing, serve as deliberate emotional releases. According to her, activities such as reading books or answering prompts can also provide cathartic relief. However, she warned against relying too heavily on certain methods, advocating for moderation to prevent potential negative consequences.

10. Do I need to reach out to mental health hotlines to include in my book?	
Respond 1	No need, only the national mental health hotlines like NCMH and DOH, and 24/7 health lines, since they are the ones that offer it.
Respond 2	It's not necessary, since they do provide their hotlines for anyone to use. So, if you're going to be using it to raise awareness and such, it's okay. But if you want to personally ask them since you are going to be publishing, that would be better. Ask if they have new options on their hotlines other than telephone, cellphone numbers, and email.

Figure 10 Respondent's explanation

Both respondents agreed that including national mental health hotlines, such as those provided by the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) and the Department of Health (DOH), is sufficient, as they offer readily available support. In addition, it is best to put these hotlines in the book to create support for the readers.

11. Is it okay if my prompts may be triggering for the readers?	
Respond 1	Hopefully, it's just light. However, you can't catch your readers' attention if your prompts/stories don't cut through. But also, let's be safe since we would like to help them, since this is a self-help book. Create a balance; if you included a triggering prompt on one page, make the next page about healing. I understand when others say to be careful when something is triggering; however, us in the profession, our jobs will become useless if no one would be triggered. In other words, if they won't be triggered, and we are not there to help them, then nothing will happen. That's why we're helping because there are people who got triggered. So, it's okay if there will be people who will be triggered, but you have to cleanse them afterward. Be smart in placing your prompts.
Respond 2	Yes, since it can be quite triggering for the readers. If you noticed, some of the items I have checked are average questions you can ask, but not as sensitive as compared to the ones that I have crossed out. If there are better phrases for the items that I have listed out that you can use, maybe we can consider using them.

	So, does it have to be in a positive way? Could be, since other items are positively written. Not necessarily positive, but at least it is worded in accordance with the general (make it more general) or specific.
--	--

Figure 11 Respondent's explanation

In this figure, once again, the thoughts and suggestions of the two professionals differ from one another. Miss Ayessa stated that she doesn't have a problem with potentially triggering prompts, as she believes they are necessary for growth. However, she emphasized the importance of creating a balance by providing support afterward. On the other hand, Miss Kamille suggested sticking to creating positive prompts and avoiding negative ones altogether.

12. Through my prompts, will I reach my goal for the readers to express themselves as well?	
Respond 1	Of course, but make sure to include in your title that it is an "interactive self-help poetry book."

Figure 12 Respondent explanation

Miss Ayessa believed that my goal of encouraging readers to express themselves through prompts will be achieved. She also suggested emphasizing the interactive nature of the book in the title to ensure readers understand its purpose as an "interactive self-help poetry book."

13. Is it okay if my poems are "outbursts" or maybe triggering for the readers?	
Respond 1	I haven't read your poems yet, so I don't know if it's really an outburst, but give me an example, then I can somehow give my opinion on that. But if that's your technique, just like what you said, is that your message is positive, but your poem is negative, then that's okay since it's about healing. But make sure to minimize the negative ones.
Respond 2	It is fine if it is a poem and you use some perplexed words, and it's not in paragraph form. If it can be seen as art, go for it.

Figure 13 Respondent explanation

In this Figure, both respondents agree that using poems with potentially triggering content is acceptable, provided it serves a purpose in conveying a positive message or artistic expression. They also suggested minimizing negative elements while focusing on healing and using perplexing language.

Interview Phase II:

After the finalized book, I conducted interviews with 10 individuals from my target audience to gather their feedback and insights. Using a series of open-ended questions, I aimed to gain deeper insights into their experiences with the book, focusing on its impact on emotional expression and overall effectiveness. This feedback proved invaluable in understanding how the book resonated with readers, identifying areas for improvement, and receiving suggestions for future editions.

Two of the respondents were Psychology professionals and professors, Ms. Ayessa A. Guilar, RPM, and Ms. Kamille Salvana, whom I initially interviewed in the first phase. I conducted a follow-up interview with them in the second phase to obtain guidance and feedback on my work from experts in the field.

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1. Was it confusing for you as the reader that the book includes poetry and interactive prompts at the same time? Why?	
Respondent 1 Ms. Ayessa A. Guilar, RPM	No, as long as the poems are connected with the interactive prompts, it is not a problem.
Respondent 2 Ms. Kamille Salvana	No, I liked the balance between the poems and the prompts. It would be boring and overwhelming if the book was just pure questions and activities. The poems gave me time to breathe and process my emotions.
Respondent 3	No, the inclusion of poetry was a nice touch. It reminded me that someone is behind the book, understanding and seeing me. It made me feel less alone.
Respondent 4	No, because the poetry guided me to better understand what the book wants me to learn.
Respondent 5	No, it wasn't confusing. It made me feel like we don't always need to be perfect or organized. This approach will make people use the book more and find it fun. The interactive elements are perfect because they keep readers engaged and entertained.
Respondent 6	No, it was not confusing because it led me into an exciting world where the calmness of the poems balanced the achievements of the interactive activities, making me wonder about the meaning of everything.
Respondent 7	No, it was not confusing because everything is well-prepared. The poetry allowed me to breathe and led me smoothly to the prompts that followed.
Respondent 8	No, the poetry added a reflective element that complemented the interactive prompts, making the overall experience more meaningful.
Respondent 9	No, the alternating between poetry and prompts created a rhythm that kept me interested and helped me absorb the material more effectively.
Respondent 10	No, the combination of poetry and interactive prompts made the book more engaging and dynamic, preventing it from becoming monotonous.

Figure 14 Respondent explanation

Based on the responses, all respondents unanimously agree that the inclusion of poetry alongside the interactive prompts was not confusing. Instead, the poems complemented and supported the interactive elements in the book. Respondents appreciated the balance, reflective moments, and personal touch of the poetry, which enhanced their understanding and engagement. The alternating rhythm between poetry and prompts kept the material interesting and prevented monotony.

2. Will the readers be able to express themselves through the book? / Will the book achieve its goal on making the readers express themselves? Why?	
Respondent 1 Ms. Ayessa A. Guilar, RPM	Yes, definitely. However, to fully experience the potential of the book and answer the questions effectively, readers need an actual copy. This hands-on approach ensures they can engage with the material and express themselves fully.
Respondent 2 Ms. Kamille Salvana	Yes, what I liked most is that it is artistically translated. The book is crafted in a way that makes it easy for readers to open up and express themselves. The thoughtful prompts and relatable content create a safe space for self-reflection and emotional release.
Respondent 3	One of the emotions I've been suppressing is anger because I know it's hard to think straight when I'm angry. It reached a point where I felt embarrassed to feel angry. Having something to release all that anger is relieving. As someone who likes to journal, writing down my thoughts has been quite helpful. The

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	book guides you on what to do to release your emotions, making you really think about your feelings and what's running through your mind.
Respondent 4	Yes, because the book contains experiences and emotions that readers can relate to. It inspires readers to express their own thoughts and feelings in a meaningful way that makes them feel connected. For me, the book is not just a book but a journey of understanding ourselves better.
Respondent 5	Yes, definitely. The book allows readers to honestly pen their emotions and hang-ups. All broken people need something or someone to rely on, and this is what the book offers. It's an excellent work of art, and I really appreciate it.
Respondent 6	Yes, the book became an effective medium for me to express and release my suppressed emotions. It guides me on what to do and helps me dive deeper into my feelings as I release them.
Respondent 7	Yes, absolutely. The blend of poetry and prompts encourages introspection and self-expression. It's like having a conversation with yourself, and it helps you uncover feelings you might not have realized were there.
Respondent 8	Yes, because the book is designed to help you understand your self-worth and self-evaluation. It's very friendly, understandable, and clear, making it easy for someone who needs to be heard and to listen to their own thoughts.
Respondent 9	Yes, the book acts like a mirror, reflecting various aspects of yourself—beautiful, kind, damaged, broken, but still resilient.
Respondent 10	Yes, the book allows readers to express their emotions and become a better, healthier version of themselves because it offers freedom. No one tells you that you're wrong or that you have to do things a certain way. You can do everything you want without judgment. While some people find it hard to do things without instructions, others don't like instructions much. The small and short introductions help readers decide if they'll use them or not, making it easier to express emotions without feeling lost or judged.

Figure 15 Respondent explanation

Based on the responses, all respondents agree that the book successfully encourages emotional expression and engagement. They emphasized the importance of having a physical copy to fully interact with the prompts and appreciated how the book translated emotions artistically, providing a safe space for self-reflection. The book helped them release suppressed emotions and inspired honest expressions through guided journaling. Respondents found it relatable and valued its guidance in exploring emotions and understanding themselves better. The thoughtful design and mix of poetry and interactive prompts created a safe and engaging environment for exploring emotions.

3. Is it better if the book also comes with a kit, like coloring pens?	
Respondent 1	Yes, having a kit included could make the book more appealing, especially if it's marketed as a complete package for creative expression and self-discovery.
Respondent 2	Yes, that's better. You can also add stickers and additional materials for the book just like the journals in Starbucks.
Respondent 3	No, I prefer to choose my own materials based on personal preference and availability. Plus, I already have a set of coloring pens that I enjoy using.
Respondent 4	Yes, it would be convenient to have everything I need right there in the kit, especially if I'm using the book as a tool for relaxation or self-reflection.
Respondent 5	Yes, so that readers don't have to look for materials to use.

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Respondent 6	Yes, it's better if it comes with a kit, but it depends on the pricing. If this is just for a gift, it's better if it includes the kit. However, if this is for business and it increases the book's price significantly, then I guess not, since no one will buy it if it costs too much.
Respondent 7	No, materials used for journal books are usually provided by readers. So, I think it's normal if it doesn't come with a kit.
Respondent 8	Maybe. Books don't always come with a kit, so it's okay if they don't have one. But if it does, my concern is with the pricing of the book, so I'm hesitant about it.
Respondent 9	I'm not sure. On one hand, having a kit included could attract more buyers looking for a complete package. On the other hand, it might not appeal to everyone, especially if they prefer a more straightforward reading experience.
Respondent 10	Hesitant. While it sounds nice to have a kit included, I wonder if it would drive up the cost of the book. If it's reasonably priced, then maybe it's worth considering.

Figure 16 Respondent explanation

In this Figure, respondents are divided on whether the book should include a kit like coloring pens. Some believe it would enhance the book's appeal by offering a complete package for creative expression and self-discovery, citing convenience and attractiveness for potential buyers. Others express concerns about potential cost increases, preferring to choose their own materials based on personal preference and questioning the necessity of additional supplies.

4. Do you have comments or suggestions for the book?	
Respondent 1 Ms. Ayessa A. Guilar, RPM	<p>The book is meant to be read from the very start; you won't understand it if you just scan through it. It was nice how it took us through different emotions and how to tackle them.</p> <p>Please add a table of contents, as the book can't be finished in one sitting. Since the content is progressive, a table of contents would be helpful.</p> <p>If you want the book to be as unique as possible, consider placing the table of contents at the beginning. Some books I've seen place it at the end, but the last pages should discuss what happened throughout the book, with a detailed summary.</p> <p>Additionally, since your book is visually stimulating and tactile, it could be beneficial for people on the autism spectrum who are drawn to sensory experiences.</p>
Respondent 2 Ms. Kamilie Salvana	<p>It's very creative, and people with an artistic eye will appreciate the book even more. Personally, I enjoy books with lots of visuals and pictures, so your book reminded me of my favorite magazine that carefully laid out its content with plenty of pictures.</p> <p>Suggestion: Adding colored marks on the tip of the pages to indicate interactive sections would make it easier for readers to identify them quickly.</p>
Respondent 3	It felt incredibly personal, almost like reading someone's diary. Not just mine, but the author's as well. I love how I didn't feel alone as I navigated through the pages; it felt like I had a companion guiding me through the book. I

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	appreciate the point of view used in the book. It was a unique experience for me, especially since it was my first time encountering a journal book.
Respondent 4	<p>I really like how this book encourages self-expression and personal growth. It's cool to have something that makes me think about my thoughts and feelings.</p> <p>Suggestion: Some pages have text that is unreadable due to the background color. Please change the text color if the background color is too strong.</p>
Respondent 5	I really admire how carefully crafted the book is; you can see the hard work just by looking at everything inside. It serves its purpose by allowing us readers to release our emotions, and it lives up to its title as an interactive book with so many engaging activities that really make you think. Overall, I'm looking forward to when Trixie will publish this book to the public because I'd like to buy it.
Respondent 6	This book has totally exceeded my expectations. It's not just informative but also inspiring. It's definitely a great addition to my bookshelf.
Respondent 7	While the book covers a lot of emotions well, diving deeper into strategies for managing specific feelings like anxiety or sadness would provide even more helpful tips.
Respondent 8	I liked how the book used real-life examples alongside the prompts. Including more of these examples would make it even more relatable and practical.
Respondent 9	<p>The layout and design of the book are awesome. It's easy to look at and navigate, which makes reading it even better.</p> <p>Suggestion: It would be beneficial to include more diverse interactive prompts, not solely focused on writing. To maximize these techniques, consider using them multiple times throughout the book, maybe two or three times.</p>
Respondent 10	<p>The book presents a very meaningful context. The poems are easy to understand, and the activities are interactive. You can enjoy yourself while learning more about your emotions and how to express them.</p> <p>Suggestion: Some of the text is too small and hard to read, and there are a few typos that could easily be fixed.</p>

Figure 17 Respondent explanation

The respondents like the book for its creative approach to exploring emotions and expressing oneself. They suggest adding a table of contents at the beginning for easier navigation, adjusting text colors for readability, and diversifying interactive prompts beyond just writing. Overall, they find the book personal and educational, with suggestions aimed at making it more user-friendly and accessible while maintaining its unique appeal.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has deeply explored the concept of emotional suppression and its significant implications for creative expression and self-reflection. Through the invaluable feedback received from readers, it is clear that "Words I Held Back" has successfully achieved its primary goal of facilitating emotional expression. Readers consistently highlighted how the book served as a transformative tool, empowering them to articulate and confront suppressed emotions they may have otherwise struggled to acknowledge. By incorporating poetry, reflective exercises, and

interactive prompts, the book provided a structured yet personal framework for readers to explore their innermost thoughts and feelings. The poetry in the book became a good design aspect and an important tool to transition the readers to the activities for people to express themselves.

The feedback from readers underscores the profound impact of "Words I Held Back" in fostering emotional release and introspection. Many expressed gratitude for the book's role in guiding them through their emotional journeys, noting how it encouraged them to engage in honest self-expression. Readers appreciated the balance between creative expression and therapeutic guidance, finding that the book not only helped them understand their emotions better but also facilitated personal growth and healing.

Moreover, the success of "Words I Held Back" in promoting emotional expression highlights its broader relevance in promoting mental well-being through creative means. By integrating insights from psychology with artistic expression, the book exemplifies how literature and art can serve as powerful tools for self-discovery and emotional resilience. The positive reception from readers further validates the effectiveness of such integrative approaches in fostering empathy, understanding, and personal empowerment.

In summary, this study contributes to our understanding of emotional health by demonstrating the efficacy of creative expression in facilitating emotional release and self-reflection. "Words I Held Back" not only encourages readers to confront their suppressed emotions but also empowers them to embrace their vulnerabilities and strengths. Moving forward, the insights gathered from reader feedback will guide future editions of the book, ensuring it continues to serve as a meaningful resource for individuals seeking to navigate their emotional landscapes with courage and authenticity.

Recommendations

Research Topic:

This research is still open to improvements in terms of the data analysis. Researchers could conduct comparative analyses between "Words I Held Back" and similar works within the realm of interactive poetry or emotional self-help literature. This comparative approach would involve identifying similarities and differences in themes, techniques, and the effectiveness of facilitating emotional release. Such comparative studies would provide deeper insights into the unique contributions and strengths of "Words I Held Back" within its genre.

Furthermore, conducting additional research on various styles and strategies for emotional expression would greatly benefit the book. Exploring different interactive methods, such as incorporating visual arts, music, and movement-based activities, could provide readers with a broader range of tools to express themselves. Integrating multimedia elements, like guided audio reflections or video prompts, would also enhance the interactive experience. By diversifying the ways in which readers can

engage with the content, the book could cater to a wider audience and better support individual preferences for emotional expression.

Creative Process:

In the creative process of developing a journal book as a thesis output, there are opportunities for further refinement, particularly in enhancing the art style for consistency and coherence. Currently, the art style exhibits variability, suggesting the need to streamline and follow a unified artistic direction throughout the book. Also, improvements in color selection and application can contribute to enhancing the visual impact of the graphic novel. By focusing on a single art style and refining color choices, the book can achieve greater visual cohesion and resonance with the audience.

Consider exploring different ways to present the book, such as including a complementary kit with colored pens or other creative tools. These additions can enhance reader engagement and provide a hands-on experience that complements the narrative content.

Some pages suffer from readability issues due to the background color overwhelming the text. It would be beneficial to adjust text colors in these instances to ensure that all content remains easily readable throughout the book.

While the book effectively covers a broad spectrum of emotions, there is an opportunity to delve deeper into practical strategies for managing specific feelings such as anxiety or sadness. Expanding on these areas would provide readers with more targeted and helpful tips to navigate their emotional experiences effectively.

Additionally, to enhance reader engagement and interaction, it would be advantageous to diversify the range of interactive prompts beyond writing exercises alone. Including a variety of activities and techniques throughout the book, repeated strategically perhaps two or three times, could maximize their impact and effectiveness in supporting readers on their emotional journeys.

Effective time management is crucial as it directly impacts the entire project. Maximizing the use of time and adhering to a well-planned schedule will ensure the timely completion of the journal book while maintaining the quality of the creative output.

Annex

Production Assets

This section contains all the production assets I have completed thus far. I have successfully finalized 100% of the poems and prompts; however, I remain open to integrating new ideas that may enhance the project further. Furthermore, the design process is still in progress, with continuous updates and refinements being made to

ensure the highest quality outcome.

Poems and Prompts

The following displays all the poems and prompts I have written. Each of the six topics features a maximum of 4 poems, along with 1 page breaker (used as a transition page when switching colors), one activity, and two prompts. It's important to note that these prompts are subject to change, and the poems are presented in a random order. Also, prompts and poems will not always coexist on one spread, meaning that at times, a spread will only have prompts, and other times, only poems.

Topic	Poem	Prompt	Status
Random Musings (PAGE BREAKER)	Here comes the "what if's," the randoms, The everything but nothing at all. Life's a random wander, In shades of green, everything's acknowledged.	None	DONE
Random Musings	Isang akong binhi, tinamnan ng lupa at abo. Ilang takip-silim na rin ang nagdaan. Subalit hikahos akong pilit na mabuhay. Isang mirasol ang nasa gitna ng mga gumamela. Nakakatakot palang mag-isa, maging iba. Bawat dapit hapon kong pinipilit maging isa sa mapang-api ng mundo. Hanggang kailan ito'y lihim? Lihim pa ba itong matuturing? Hindi ka iba. Huwag kang matakot sa kanila.	None	DONE
Random Musings	Us, two random parallel	What is something yours but can't fully have? - subject to change	DONE
Random Musings	Malupit ang totoong mundo. Hindi ito patas; hindi makatarungan. Sadyang mapagmalabis.	ang hindi pag-unlad ay resulta ng pagmamalabis ng mga nakatataas sa lipunan. hanggang kailan ang kawalan ng	DONE

	<p>Marahas sa tunay na mundo. Hindi mahabagin; hindi maamo. Karaniwang nagbabalatkayo.</p> <p>Hindi sapat ang paghihikahos para mabuhay sa bayang mamamayan mismo ang lumalapastangan. Hindi sapat ang manatiling humihinga.</p> <p>Paano na ang mga nasa laylayan? Paano ang mga nasa tama lang? Paano ang mga kailan ma'y subukan ay hindi makaya-kayanan?</p> <p>Labis na mapagmapulit ang mundo. Paano na ang mga taong tulad ko?</p>	<p>pagkakapantay-pantay? Hanggang kailan biktima ang mga pang karaniwang Pilipino?</p>	
<p>Random Musings (Activity Page)</p>		<p>Share a brief, random story from your day. Context is not needed.</p> <p>Return here whenever you have something random to say.</p>	<p>DONE</p>
<p>Loss and Grief (PAGE BREAKER)</p>	<p>All hues of blue In sync with the mourn Of losing you</p> <p>I thought, "How bittersweet the sky is."</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>DONE</p>
<p>Loss and Grief</p>	<p>I have so much to tell you But I don't know how And it's a lot Like..</p> <p>These bottled-up thoughts The grief I have to let it out</p> <p>And yet I can't even comprehend what I feel</p>	<p>Our words left unsaid often linger and rot the brain. They speak volumes of emotions trying to break free.</p> <p>At times, these emotions remain buried, concealed by certain circumstances.</p> <p>Hence, this is a safe space for all your unspoken words. Write down everything you wish you had and</p>	<p>DONE</p>

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		could ever told. Write about anything. Cry your heart out.	
Loss and Grief	Behold, I longed for your gaze to mirror me Yet, too late Love had tired itself out already. <i>I drowned in your eyes There is a whole universe inside it</i>	None	DONE
Loss and Grief	You left.	Who do you wish to have back?	DONE
Loss and Grief (Activity Page)	<p>Step-by-Step Guided Mindfulness Meditation for Recognizing Emotions:</p> <p>Preparation: Find a quiet and comfortable space where you won't be disturbed. Sit or lie down in a relaxed position, ensuring your body is fully supported. Take a moment to settle into your surroundings and bring your attention to the present moment.</p> <p>Relaxation and Awareness: Close your eyes and begin by taking a few deep breaths. Allow yourself to relax, letting go of any tension in your body. Become aware of your present state, acknowledging any thoughts, feelings, or sensations that arise without judgment.</p> <p>Embracing Complexity: Recognize the complexity of emotions, understanding that they can be multifaceted and sometimes challenging to navigate. Acknowledge that both negative and positive emotions are a natural part of the human experience.</p>	<p>Think of a time that you were sad. Who were the individuals present during that time? How did you cope with those feelings? How did others respond to you? If given the chance, what are the things you would like to change?</p> <p>To move forward, one must be courageous enough to look back.</p>	DONE

	<p>Acknowledging Emotions: Bring your attention to any emotions that you're currently experiencing. Notice their presence without trying to change or suppress them. Allow yourself to fully experience the emotions as they arise, observing them with curiosity and openness.</p> <p>Assessment: Assess whether each emotion requires action or if it's something you can simply observe and let go of. Understand the origins of the emotion and whether it's serving you in the present moment.</p> <p>Staying Present: If an emotion is particularly distressing, practice staying present with it without getting overwhelmed. Use your breath as an anchor, focusing on the sensations of each inhale and exhale to ground yourself in the present moment.</p> <p>Letting Go: If you determine that an emotion is unnecessarily distressing or no longer serving you, practice letting it go. Release the grip of the emotion and allow it to dissolve, knowing that you have the power to choose how you respond to it.</p> <p>Mindful Observation: Throughout the meditation, maintain a mindful awareness of your emotions, observing them without judgment. Notice any physical sensations that arise in response to different emotions, such as tension, warmth, or relaxation.</p> <p>Emotional Resilience: Recognize that by developing greater</p>		
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	<p>awareness and acceptance of your emotions, you're building emotional resilience. With practice, you can reduce emotional reactivity and cultivate a greater sense of inner peace and balance.</p> <p>Closing: When you're ready, gently bring your awareness back to your surroundings. Take a few deep breaths and slowly begin to wiggle your fingers and toes, gradually returning to a state of wakefulness. Open your eyes and take a moment to reflect on your meditation experience.</p> <p>Remember, this meditation is a practice, so be patient with yourself and allow yourself to fully experience whatever emotions arise during the process.</p> <p>Reference: This guided meditation is adapted from the "Guided Mindfulness Meditation - You are POWERFUL - Mental Strength and Clarity" video on the MindfulPeace YouTube channel, released in July 2023.</p>		
<p>Mental Health (PAGE BREAKER)</p>	<p>The mind, a maze where sense may elude Yet strives to turn chaos into fortitude Like colors shifting from darkest night Here transitions to a lavender's gentle light.</p> <p>Gentle? No, I don't think so.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>DONE</p>
<p>Mental Health</p>	<p>Passion may feel uncertain sometimes, and continuing is the most difficult thing to do.</p>	<p>To fix</p>	<p>DONE</p>

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	<p>Sometimes I feel like.. too tired pressured self-destructing "What am I doing?" "I don't think I can." "I am not making progress."</p>		
<p>Mental Health</p>	<p>Why? I am silently crying every now and then Carrying all these problems a person called burden The tears are rushing down to flow Now I can't take this hatred and sorrow These shadows are embracing me Saying hugging them back will set me free This four-cornered room can only see How living like hell, a person got used to be Hearing voices in my head Saying one day I'll be dead So why not rush it, slit my wrist Said the voice I called beast Consumed by loneliness I think suicide is the best And now, I am leaving the rest Leaving life and its unanswered tests I was happy in the beginning I never thought I could have a painful ending This feeling is depressing I think I'll just let myself hanging But for now, I'll be holding a blade I think for my wrist, that's perfectly made Then my bed turned red</p>	<p>At times, our shadows amass, Rising like shadows in the dusk. Dump your darkest secrets here; erase them with a marker afterward. Don't mind ruining the page.</p>	<p>DONE</p>

	<p>Just see me in my deathbed</p> <p><i>Note: this should not be readable.</i></p>		
Mental Health	<p>I won't deny that I think about it, maybe 10 times in my life, and that's not something to be proud of.</p> <p>It was scary, dark, and wrong, but sometimes it feels like it's the only way out, the only way to feel something else. Thoughts like these don't come on normal days; they surge on days when the lights are out, when the crowd feels bigger, when the world seems too quiet or noisy, or when days feel a lot harder than usual.</p> <p>During those times, the weight of everything becomes too much, and the longing for escape becomes strong. It's like standing on the edge, wondering whether to step back or take a leap into the unknown. However, deep down, I realize that these thoughts are more about inner struggles than an actual solution.</p> <p>In the midst of the silence, there's a profound sadness that surrounds these thoughts, creating a darkness that's hard to shake off. The heaviness inside reflects a pain that's difficult to put into words. Each heavy breath becomes a silent plea for understanding in a world that sometimes seems indifferent.</p> <p>I think of it today, I hope not to think about it anymore, not ever again.</p>	<p>Suppressed Thoughts Breakdown</p> <p>What is something you often try to hide or keep inside?</p> <p>Why? How long? Who knows?</p> <p>How does keeping this emotion hidden affect you?</p> <p>Will you continue to keep it or choose to release it?</p> <p>yes- how will you handle it?</p> <p>no- will you try to forget about it?</p>	DONE
Mental Health (Activity Page)	<p>This is a list of different ways of releasing emotions.</p>	<p>Use this page to list additional ways you think of for releasing your emotions.</p>	DONE

	<p>Cross out the things you already tried. Draw a star beside the number of the things you haven't tried yet but wanted to.</p> <p>Listening to Music Talking with a Friend Journaling Creating Art Going to Art Galleries Writing Poetries Trying a Rage Room Exercise Going to Movies (Fear-Inducing or Tearjerker) Therapy Approaches with a Professional Reading a Book Breathing Fresh Air Meditation Being Comfortable with Silence</p> <p>Keep in mind that everyone's different, and what works for one person might not work the same way for another. It's totally fine to try out different ways of dealing with your emotions to figure out what suits you best. Mixing and matching these strategies could give you a more complete and personalized way to take care of your emotional well-being.</p> <p>Additionally, it's crucial to recognize that releasing emotions doesn't always require verbalizing them. Sometimes, the process of releasing involves acknowledging your feelings, allowing yourself to experience them, and then letting go to move forward. This can be a silent and internal process, where the focus is on understanding and accepting emotions rather than</p>	<p>Add a label indicating whether you have already tried the method or not. Add as many as possible!</p>	
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	<p>explicitly expressing them. Finding a balance between self-reflection and external expressions can contribute to a holistic and healthy emotional release.</p>		
<p>Hate/Love (PAGE BREAKER)</p>	<p>Emotions ignite in a crimson blaze, Even one's self be left in a haunting daze Within the scarlet folds seething ire Hate consumes, will you make it out alive?</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>DONE</p>
<p>Hate/Love</p>	<p>I hate you. I know "hate" is such a strong word, and it may seem like an absurd way to begin a letter written for you, but it's the main thing I've wanted to tell you for so long.</p> <p>I hate how you wrecked us, how you made decisions without even thinking twice about their outcome. I hate how cowardly you are, how you can't stand up for yourself, face reality, and work towards a better life. I hate how you refuse to step out of your comfort zone, believing that this is the only path for you. I hate how you can't make decisions for yourself, considering the impact on the lives that depend on you. For goodness' sake, can't you try to think about them, too?</p> <p>I hate how you affected us, how this entire situation led to a separation for the sake of another. They say it's an angel in disguise, but was that really the best way to do it? I hate how you hurt us, yet act as if nothing happened, as if pain and trauma can be healed in an instant. Will I ever hear an apology from you? I hate how other people who weren't primarily involved were not given the importance they deserved,</p>	<p>Write a message you've been wanting to say. Hit that send button.</p>	<p>DONE</p>

	<p>as if they weren't affected by the whole damn thing. I hate how their suffering, pain, trauma, and feelings were not acknowledged by others. I hate how they had to stand up for their own selves to get better since there's no way they can heal through the way that they would want to. I hate that I was one of them.</p> <p>I hate you for all the trauma you caused me, for all the principles I had to learn because of the things you showed me. I hate how I had to fight silent battles when someone should have been by my side. I hate how even today, I'm still learning to heal from everything you did to me. Honestly, I thought I had already healed, because I can now talk to you, look into your eyes without feeling uneasy, share a little laugh over small thing. But I was wrong.</p> <p>I guess healing isn't a straightforward path after all, because there are days when I'm still stuck in the same box where you left me. And yes, it still feels scary. It still makes me feel like crap. I hate you. I know "hate" is such a strong word, and it may seem like an absurd way to end a letter written for you, but it's the main thing I've wanted to tell you for so long.</p> <p>I hate you, and I still hope that one day I can learn not to.</p>		
Hate/Love	<p>I have seen your wonders And I am still here</p> <p><i>D R O W N I N G</i></p> <p>in every depth of you.</p>		DONE

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<p>Hate/Love</p>	<p>It was nice knowing you exist. It was nice to know that we exist in the same lifetime, in the same universe, at the same time and space.</p> <p>This isn't something out of this world or something you'd find in science. This is destiny, working right beneath our feet.</p> <p>It's nice to know I have another soul, body, ears, and heart that is not <i>me</i>. You feel so warm; I could sleep in your love forever. God, I will forever thank the heavens for creating such a beautiful existence.</p> <p>I looked up at the sky last night and wished, "Let them stay, forever."</p>	<p>Write a love letter for someone</p>	<p>DONE</p>
<p>Hate/Love (Activity Page)</p>	<p>Take a deep breath.</p> <p>Emotions can be complicated, and it takes effort to understand them.</p> <p>Before expressing them, you must allow yourself to: acknowledge these feelings remind yourself that you are not your own enemy</p> <p>This self-awareness does not only promote healthier emotional expression but also encourages personal growth and deeper connections with others.</p>	<p>Take what you need. To share a little more kindness, invite your friend to grab one as well.</p> <p>My feelings are valid. I am not defined by what I feel. I am in control of my emotions. No one can tell me how I should be feeling. My emotions serve me well. I'm not okay right now, and that's okay. I own my emotions; they don't own me. I am allowed to feel this way. I don't need to be healed to be worthy of love. I am allowed to express my feelings without hurting anyone.</p>	<p>DONE</p>

Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release

		I will heal and grow as I become more in touch with my feelings.	
Family Dynamics (PAGE BREAKER)	In the amber glow of peeling oranges, A weave of love and hate in familial exchanges. Yet these hues are my home I yearn to hold thy hands forever.	None	DONE
Family Dynamics	<p>You're my brightest star, my most comforting human being, my first, and greatest love.</p> <p>I'll admit, you are someone I cannot live without. This is the truest "I couldn't imagine life without you." It was as if life is a blur without you in it. I'm scared of losing you, of not hearing your voice, hugging your soft body, and kissing your cheek as I go.</p> <p>I admire you every day, seeing how you manage to do things successfully. As we were left together in a space just for us, I managed to understand you. It would really be unfair to question you sometimes, after all, this is your first time dealing with stuff like this too, in your lifetime.</p> <p>You are the foundation of my strength, the person who has always been there for me through every high and low. Your unwavering support and endless patience have taught me the true meaning of unconditional love. Every sacrifice you've made, every tear you've wiped away, has not gone unnoticed.</p>		DONE

Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release

	<p>As I grow and learn, I realize more each day just how much of who I am is because of you. Your love has shaped me, your lessons have guided me, and your presence has grounded me.</p> <p>I love you dearly. I have my whole lifetime to translate your love into every piece of art I'll make.</p> <p>I love you, and I am love itself because you love me first too.</p>		
<p>Family Dynamics (Page Breaker)</p>		<p>Grant someone a "guest pass" for this page. Encourage them to respond to any prompt of their choice within the book.</p> <p>Remember, don't try to peek in; let them express themselves freely.</p>	<p>DONE</p>
<p>Personal Growth (PAGE BREAKER)</p>	<p>You are your own brightest star, A work of progress and of art. Cheers to all your baby steps, It's definite, you'll get there soon.</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>Personal Growth (Activity Page)</p>	<p>TO DO, CONTINUE TO DO, ALWAYS DO Love Speak up for myself Practice mindfulness Rest Use "I" statements Take breaks!! Set boundaries Journaling Seek support Draw, write, listen to and make music Maintain a constant state of learning Communicate openly Practice self-care</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>DONE</p>

Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release

	<p>Cry Appreciate myself and my progress Let people know i love them Allow myself to feel Take deep breaths Stay positive!</p>		
<p>Personal Growth (Activity Page)</p>	<p>10 THINGS I'VE LEARNED</p>	<p>RECEIPT</p> <p>Congratulations! You've taken the first courageous step towards releasing your emotions.</p> <p>QTY ITEM PRICE 1 cup courage 1 bundle self-discovery 1 teaspoon of laughter and tears 1 heartfelt self-love</p> <p>Total PRICELESS</p> <p>Remember, this is just the beginning of your journey towards emotional freedom. Keep taking those baby steps forward and embrace the learning process ahead!</p> <p>BARCODE HERE</p> <p>keep this copy as your souvenir.</p>	<p>DONE</p>
<p>MC POSTER 1</p>	<p>I have so much to say, so many thoughts swirling around in my mind like a tempest in a teapot, but I can't seem to let them out. It's like they're trapped behind a glass wall, visible to me but inaccessible to anyone else. At some point, keeping things to myself has become my default mode, a refuge from the</p>		<p>DONE</p>

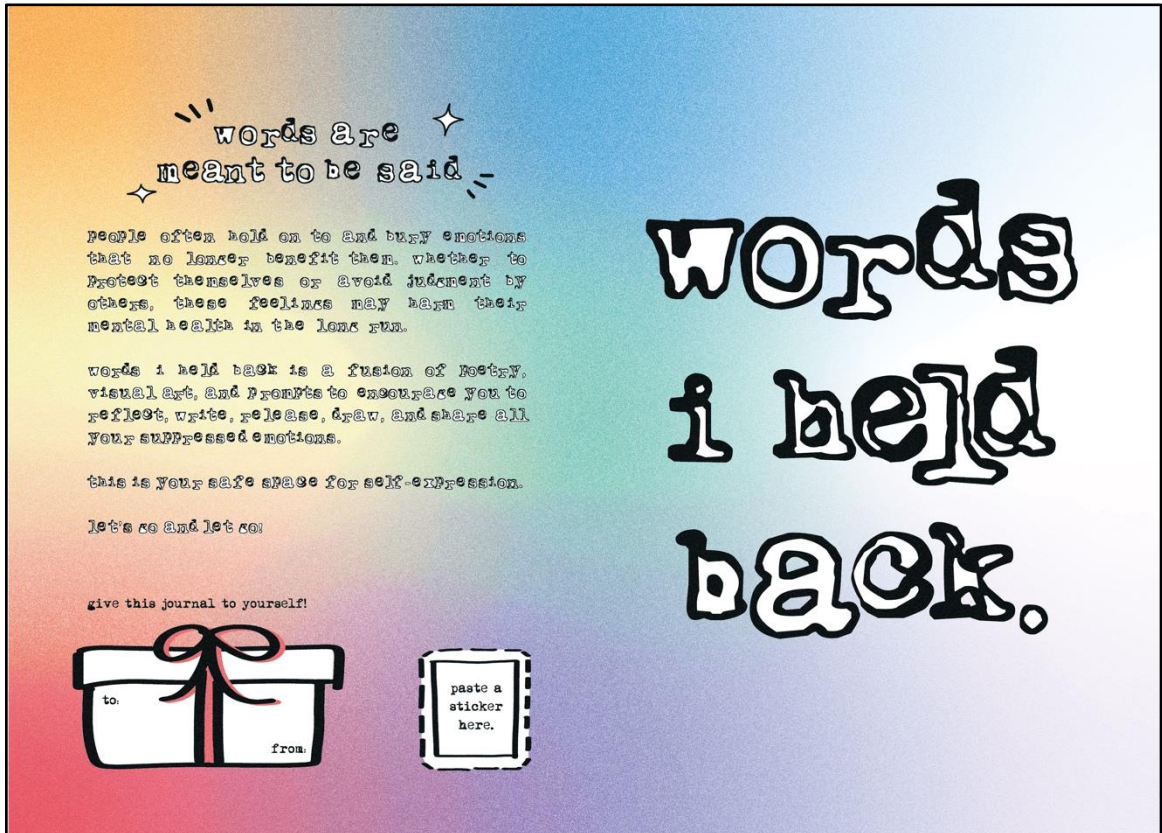
	<p>storm of emotions that threatens to overwhelm me at every turn.</p> <p>There's a strange comfort in my own silence, in the solace of my own skin. It's like I've built a fortress around my heart, keeping it safe from the outside world. But deep down, I know that this self-imposed isolation is slowly suffocating me, like a vine wrapping itself around my chest, squeezing tighter with every passing day.</p> <p>I've become adept at wearing a mask, at pretending that everything is okay when it's anything but. It's like I'm performing on a stage, playing the role of the happy, carefree individual while my true self languishes in the shadows, yearning to be set free.</p> <p>But the thought of opening up to someone, of baring my soul and exposing my vulnerabilities, fills me with a sense of dread. It's like standing on the edge of a cliff, staring into the abyss below, unsure if I'll ever find solid ground again if I take that leap of faith.</p> <p>I've seen what happens when you let someone in, when you lay bare your innermost thoughts and feelings for all to see. It's like handing someone a loaded gun and trusting them not to pull the trigger. And more often than not, they do. They take your vulnerabilities and use them against you, leaving you wounded and bleeding on the battlefield of love and life.</p>		
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	<p>So I've learned to keep my emotions in check, to bury them deep beneath the surface where no one can find them. But the problem with burying things is that they have a way of resurfacing when you least expect it, like ghosts from the past haunting your every move.</p> <p>And so I find myself trapped in a never-ending cycle of suppression and release, longing to break free from the chains that bind me but too afraid to take the first step. It's like being caught in a rip current, struggling against the tide but never making any progress.</p> <p>But perhaps there's a glimmer of hope amidst the darkness, a faint light shining in the distance. Maybe, just maybe, if I can find the courage to let someone in, to share my burden with another soul, I can finally find the peace and acceptance I've been searching for all along.</p> <p>So I'll take a deep breath and steel myself for the journey ahead, knowing that the path won't be easy but trusting that it will ultimately lead me to where I need to be. And maybe, just maybe, I'll finally be able to break free from the prison of my own making and embrace the beauty of vulnerability in all its messy, complicated glory.</p>		
<p>INTERACTIVE</p>	<p>Steps in Expressing Emotions:</p> <p>Identify Your Emotions: Take a moment to recognize and name what you are feeling.</p>		<p>DONE</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Understand the Source: Reflect on why you are feeling this way and what has triggered the emotion. <p>Choose Your Words Carefully: Think about how to articulate your feelings clearly and honestly.</p> <p>Pick the Right Time and Place: Ensure that the setting is appropriate for an open and calm conversation.</p> <p>Use "I" Statements: Focus on your own experiences and feelings to avoid sounding accusatory. For example, say "I feel" instead of "You make me feel."</p> <p>Be Honest but Respectful: Share your emotions truthfully while being considerate of the other person's feelings.</p> <p>Listen Actively: Give the other person a chance to respond and listen to their perspective without interrupting.</p> <p>Seek Resolution or Understanding: Aim for a constructive outcome, whether it's finding a solution or simply gaining mutual understanding.</p> <p>Practice Self-Compassion: Be kind to yourself throughout the process and acknowledge that expressing emotions takes courage.</p> <p>Reflect and Learn: After the conversation, take time to reflect on what you've learned about your emotions and communication style.</p>		
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Design Assets

This section includes some of the spread from the final book.



Sometimes, it feels safer to hide away, to keep our feelings tucked deep inside where no one can hurt us. But staying hidden can make things harder without us even realizing it.

This book is for you—

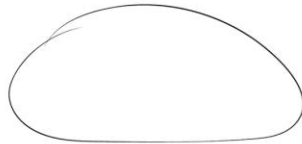
to the ones who've suffered quietly,
those who still hold words left unsaid,
those who ponder every night.

May these pages be a space for release and a sanctuary for expression.

Let it out.

be free.
until it hurts no more.

paste or draw a picture of yourself here.



WRITE YOUR NAME IN PRINT.

write your name in tiny letters.

i am everything
that makes me.



paste anything you like here.

IF FOUND: FLIP TO A RANDOM PAGE.
READ IT LOUD, LET IT SINK IN, ANSWER THE PROMPT.
THEN, RETURN.

phone number

address

random fact about you.

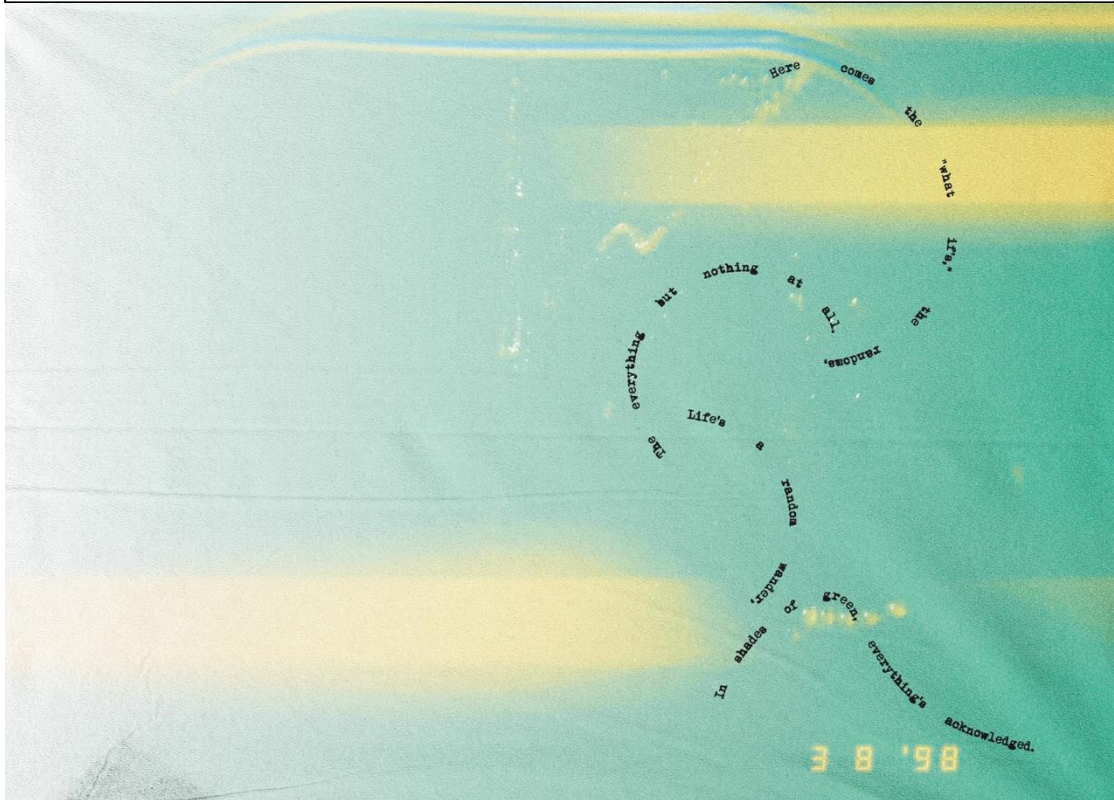
must haves:

pen/pencil
marker
colors pens
emotions
paint
understanding
time
tears
freedom
scissors
crayons
imagination
fears
creativity
attention
photo
heart
mind
body
soul

Emotions are whispers trapped within, longing to break free. Holding them back keeps us in chains, and letting them out feels like setting our spirit loose.

Expressing what we feel is like opening a window to our true selves. It's about letting the colors of our emotions paint the canvas of our lives.

so let it go and be free.



daily emotional check-in

Take a moment to reflect on your day and rate your emotions on the feelings thermometer!



s m t w t h f s

○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
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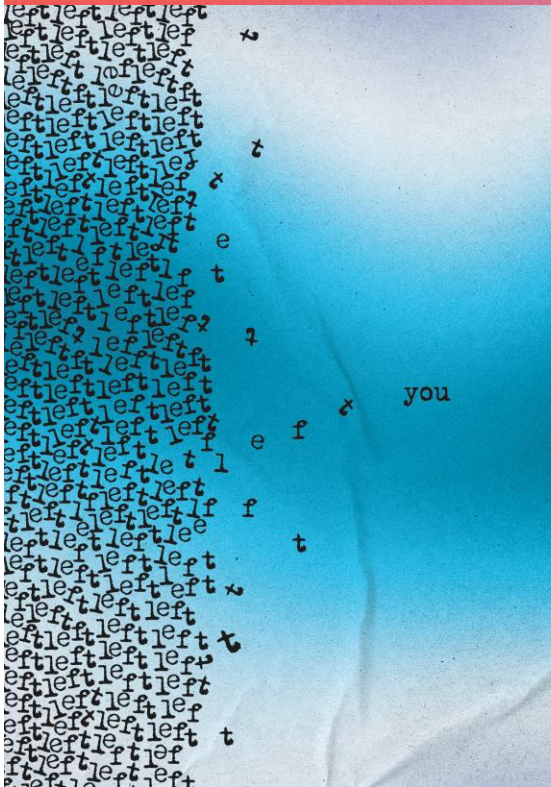
Think of your daily emotional check-in as your personal emotion radar. It helps you avoid bottling up feelings by encouraging you to acknowledge and rate what you're going through. After all, expressing yourself starts with recognizing those emotions.

s m t w t h f s

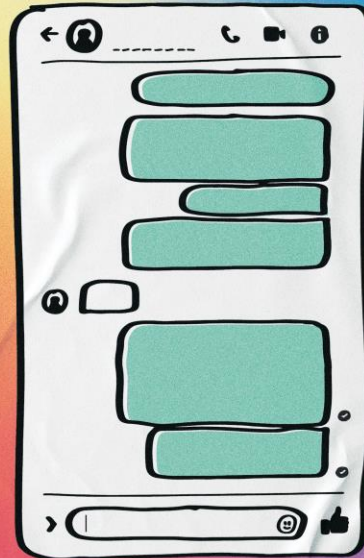
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s m t w t h f s

○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
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write a message to someone from the past. hit that send button.



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You're my brightest star, my most comforting human being, my first and greatest love.

I'll admit, you are someone I cannot live without. This is the truest "I couldn't imagine life without you." It's as if life is a blur without you in it. I'm scared of losing you, of not hearing your voice, hugging your soft body, and kissing your cheek as I go.

I admire you every day, seeing how you manage to do things successfully, of course, with Pa. As we were left together in a space just for us, I managed to understand you. It would really be unfair to question you sometimes, after all, this is your first time dealing with stuff like this too, in your lifetime.

You are the foundation of my strength, the person who has always been there for me through every high and low. Your unwavering support and endless patience have taught me the true meaning of unconditional love. Every sacrifice you've made, every tear you've wiped away, has not gone unnoticed.

As I grow and learn, I realize more each day just how much of who I am is because of you. Your love has shaped me, your lessons have guided me, and your presence has grounded me.

I love you dearly. I have my whole lifetime to translate your love into every piece of art I'll make.

I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.
I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.
I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.
I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.
I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.
I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.
I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.
I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.
I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.
I love you, and I am love itself because you loved me first.

This is a letter for you.

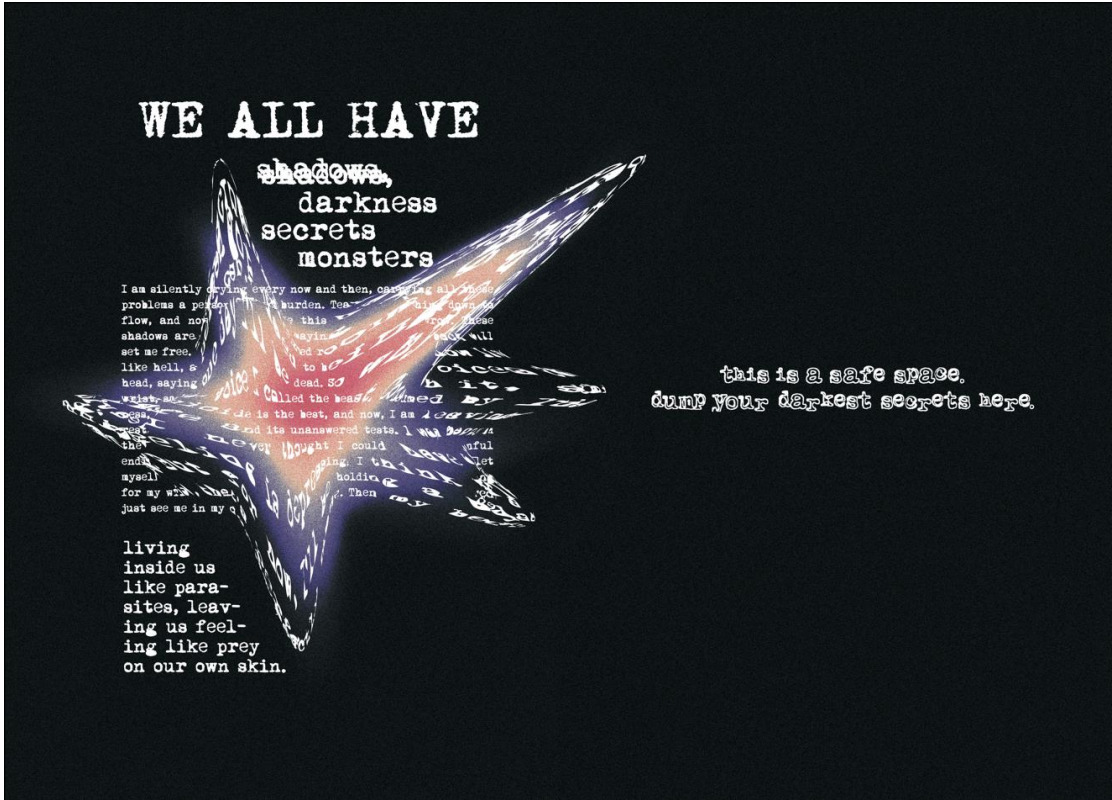
write a letter for your mom, tell her everything without holding back. then, cut it out and give it to her.

Being courageous enough to tell someone how you feel is a step toward healing and self-growth. !

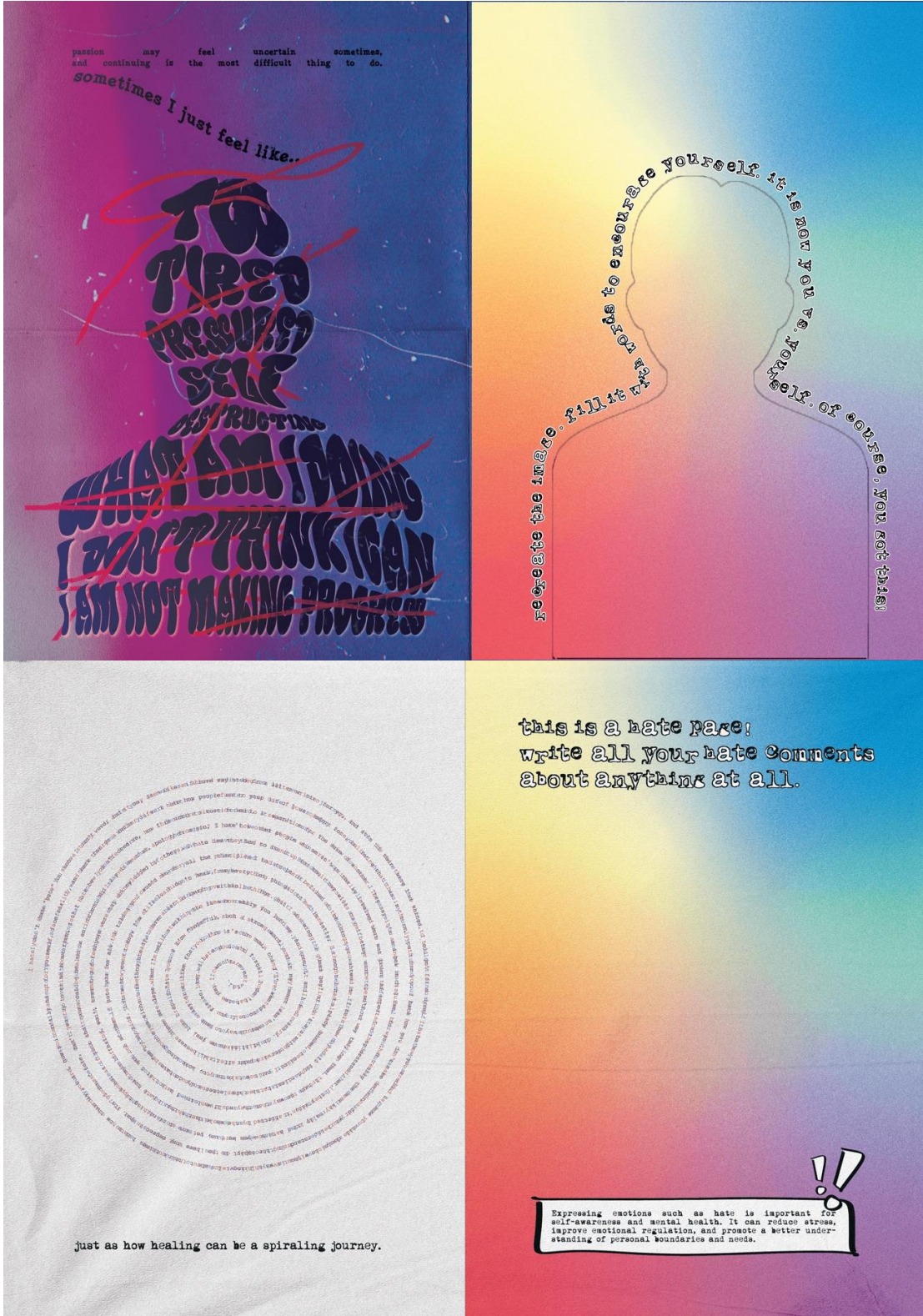
BEHOLD, I LONGED FOR YOUR GAZE TO MIRROR ME,
Behold, I longed for your gaze to mirror me,
YET, TOO LATE
YET, TOO LATE
LOVE HAD TIRED ITSELF OUT ALREADY.
love had tired itself out already.

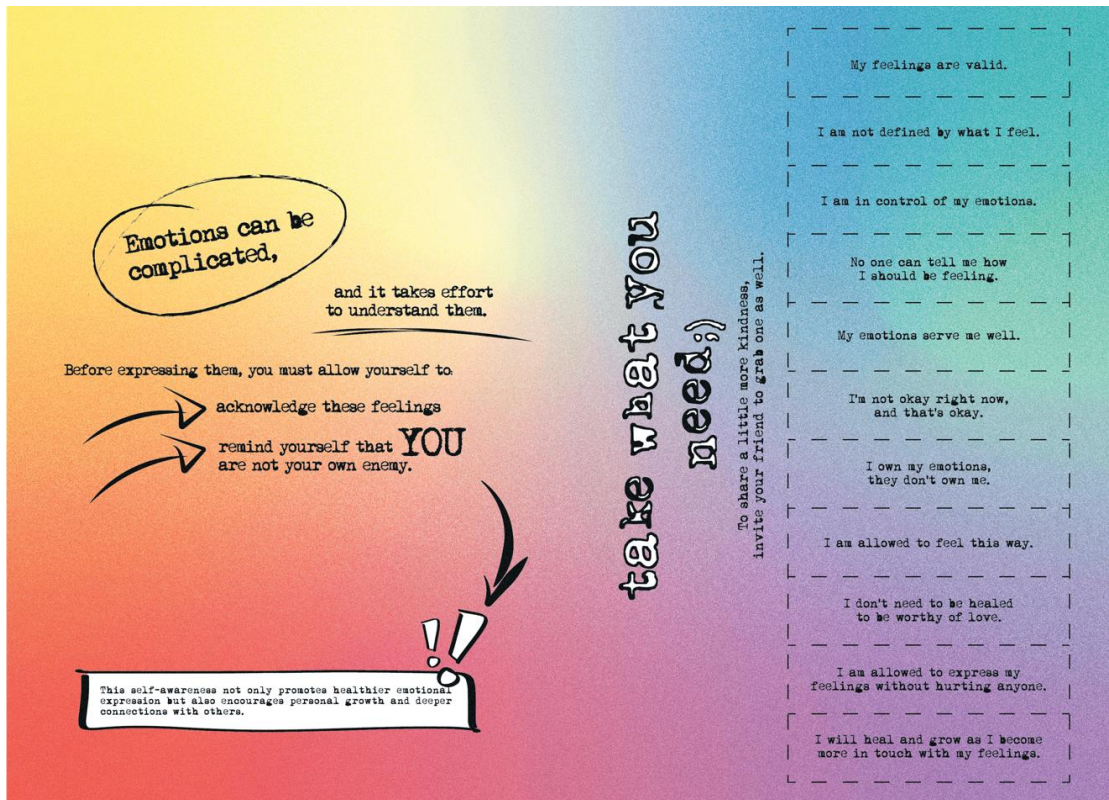
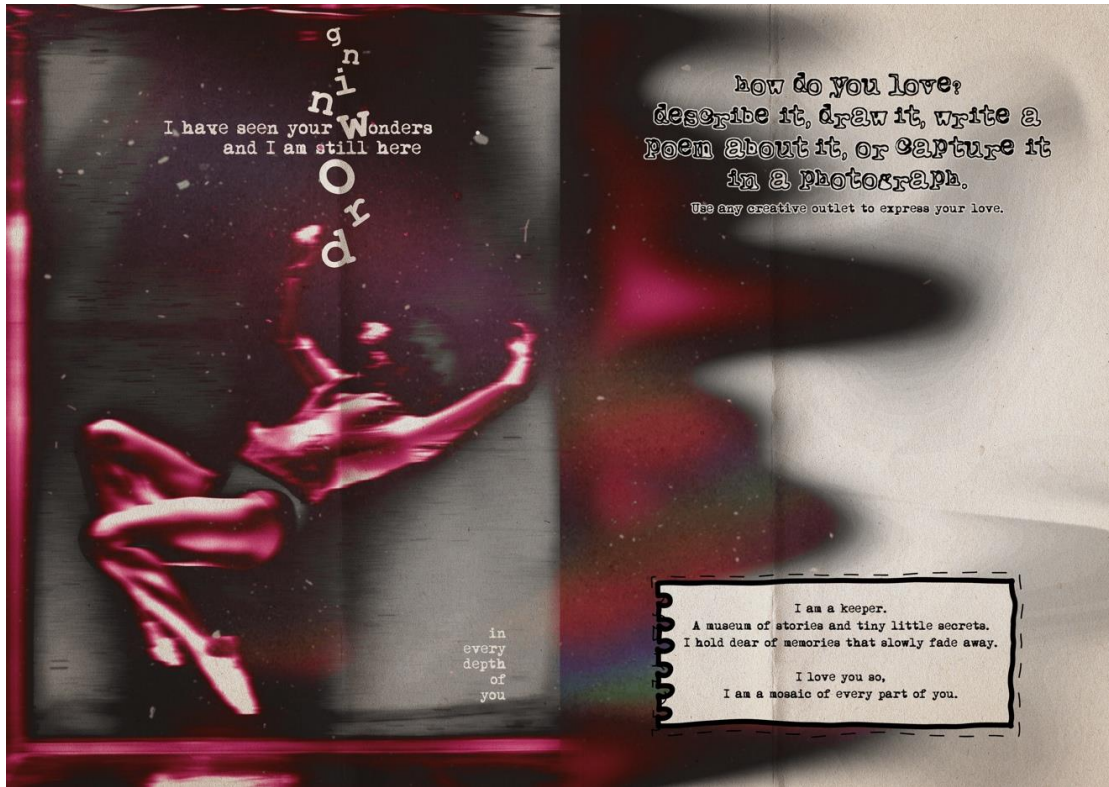
DISCOVER IN YOUR EYES

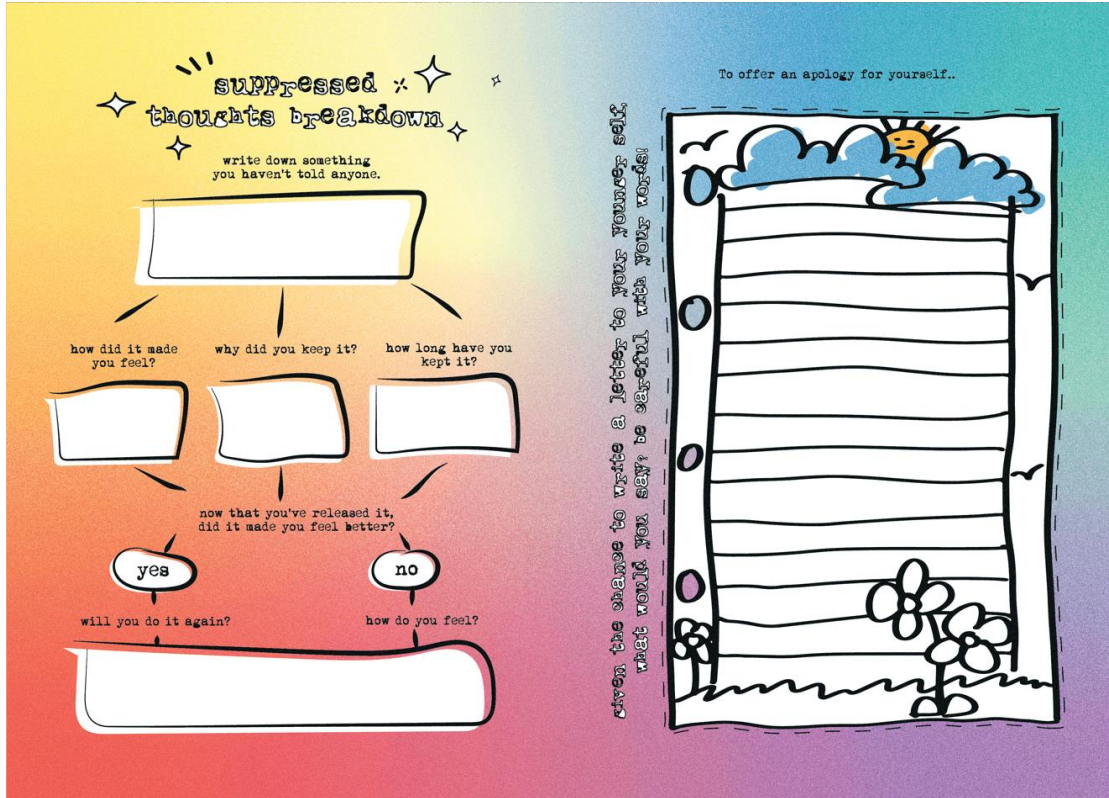
THERE IS A WHOLE UNIVERSE INSIDE IT



Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book on Emotional Release







Interview Form

This section presents the interview form used interviews conducted with two Psychology professionals/professors at Asia Pacific College: Ms. Ayessa A. Guilar, Rpm, and Ms. Kamille Salvana. The insights gathered from these interviews significantly contributed to the enhancement and overall improvement of the book's content. Additionally, the results of some of the questions in the interview helped validate the information I have gathered from different sources.



Asia Pacific College
School of Multimedia Arts

Interview Consent Form

I _____ (interviewee’s name) agree to participate in an interview discussion for the thesis project **“Words I Held Back: An Interactive Journal Book**

on Emotional Release”. I understand the project and the types of questions I will be asked to answer.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I can decline to participate, without consequence, at any time during the interview. I understand that with my consent the interview may be recorded and that the information I provide will remain confidential and used only for completing this thesis project.

I understand that the results from this interview will be used exclusively for this project and will not be published in any form.

I also understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this activity.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Email address: _____

Interviewer Name: Mañozo, Trixie P. / 2021-140231

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