



# Ending the Year Softly

*A Sacred Pause Reflection Guide*



**TOOREL**  
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

ROOTS.  
EQUITY.  
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# An Invitation to Pause

This guide is an invitation, *not a requirement!* There is nothing here to complete, perfect, or rush through.

Move slowly, skip what doesn't resonate or serve you, and return to the reflection activities as often as you need.

Before you begin, take a moment to settle.

You may wish to:

- Place your feet on the floor
- Take a few slow, intentional breaths
- Close your eyes or soften your gaze

Silently or aloud, read the intention below, or create one of your own.

## **Opening Intention**

*I give myself permission to pause.*

*I honor what this year has asked of me.*

*I release the need to rush or perform.*

*I enter this reflection with care, honesty, and grace.*

Take one more breath before continuing.



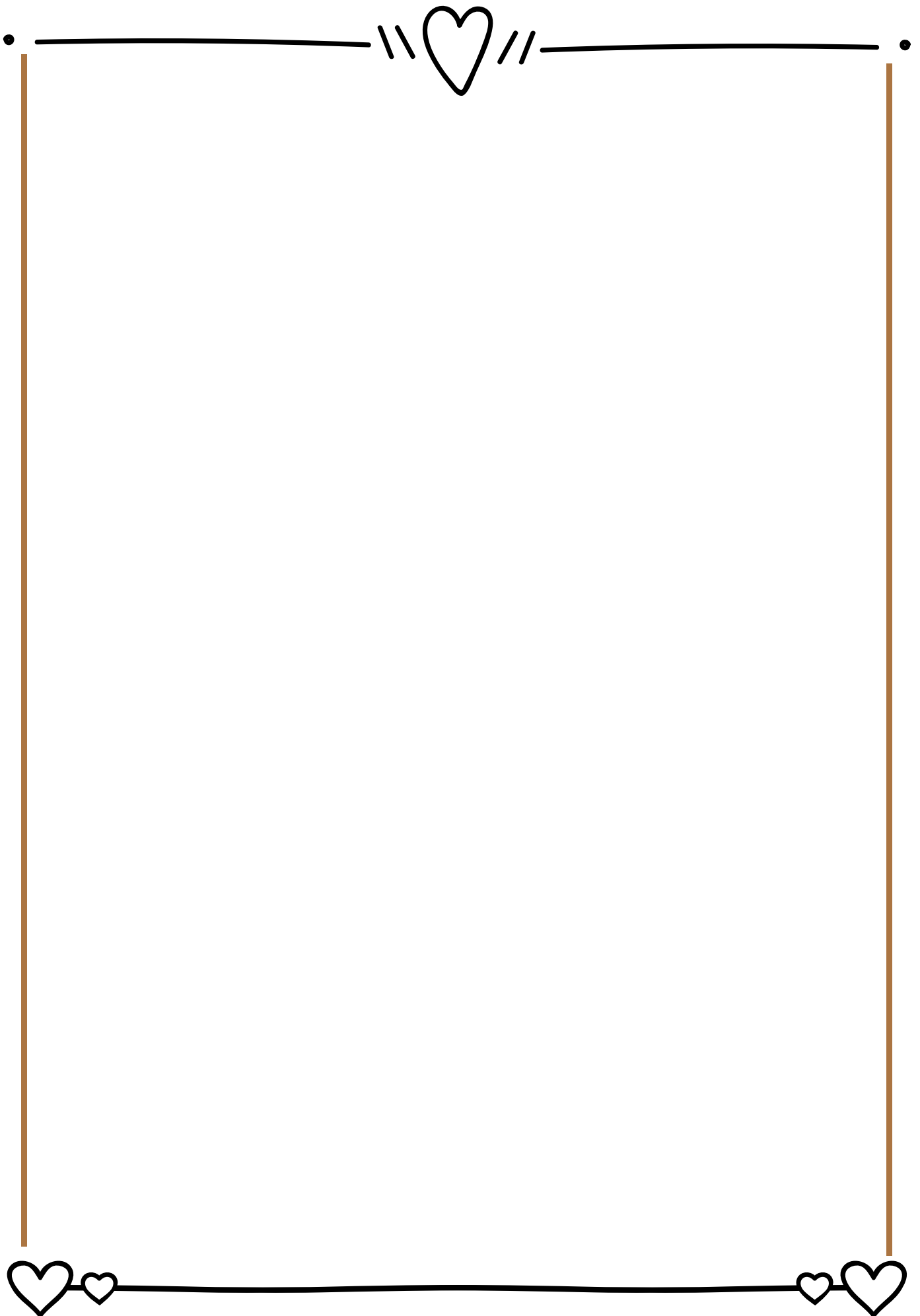


# Granting Yourself Grace

This year likely held moments of joy, challenge, uncertainty, growth, and quiet perseverance.  
*Grace allows you to hold all of it without judgment.*

Use the space below to reflect in whatever way feels nourishing—briefly or deeply.







## Reflection Prompts

Where did I offer myself grace this year?

Where might I still be holding unrealistic expectations of myself?

What does self-compassion look like for me right now?





Write, list, draw, or sit quietly with what's arising in this moment.





# The Sacred Pause

A sacred pause is an intentional stillness.  
A moment to notice and feel—without fixing,  
solving, or planning.

We pause not to stop, but to let what has already  
been written settle.

This is a space to breathe with the year as it was, to  
honor what surfaced, and to allow meaning to rise  
without being forced.

Nothing needs to be resolved here.  
No planning is necessary.

This pause is an invitation to presence—  
to acknowledge what mattered,  
to feel what lingers,  
to recognize what was quietly sacred.

**Breathe.**  
**Notice what your body, heart, or spirit may be**  
**holding.**





## Reflection Prompts

What moments from this year feel meaningful or sacred to me?

When did I feel most aligned with my core values?

What stretched me, and what sustained me?

### **Carry Forward/Release**

What am I carrying forward into the new season?

What am I gently releasing?







# Honoring What You've Carried

Celebration is a form of care. It allows us to  
acknowledge effort, growth, and resilience—  
*especially the kind that often goes unseen.*

Big Wins I'm Honoring:





Quiet or Everyday Wins I'm Naming ( e.g., *setting boundaries, asking for help, saying no without guilt or shame, staying true to my values, choosing myself, letting go when it was time*):

A moment I'm proud of myself for this year:

**PAUSE HERE! Let yourself receive this acknowledgment.**





# A Gentle Reflection

If this is all you have space for today, that is enough.

Answer one.

Answer a few.

Or simply reflect quietly.

One word that describes how I'm ending this year:

One thing I'm grateful to myself for:

One person I'm deeply grateful for this year:

One intention I'm holding as I move forward:





# Carrying Forward

Ending the year softly is a **People First, Purpose Always** practice.

It is the choice to center your humanity before productivity.

To honor your well-being alongside your work.

To recognize that purpose is not only found in what you accomplish, but in how you care for yourself and others along the way.

As you step into the year ahead, may you do so gently and grounded, rather than rushed.

May you trust the wisdom gained through lived experience.

May clarity come without force.

May rest be treated as essential, not earned.

And may care—not urgency—guide your path forward.





# Words to Carry With You

*"Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning."* -  
Dr. Maya Angelou, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

**Read this aloud and return to it often:**

*I am allowed to rest—without earning it.*

*I am allowed to pause—without explanation.*

*I am allowed to celebrate myself—fully and without apology.*

*I am allowed to move at a pace that honors my capacity.*

*I am allowed to change course as clarity emerges.*

*I am allowed to trust the wisdom I carry forward.*

*I move forward with care, clarity, curiosity, and compassion.*





# Note to Self

*"Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us." - Dr. Maya Angelou*





# Note to Self

*"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change, I am changing the things I cannot accept." - Angela Davis*





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