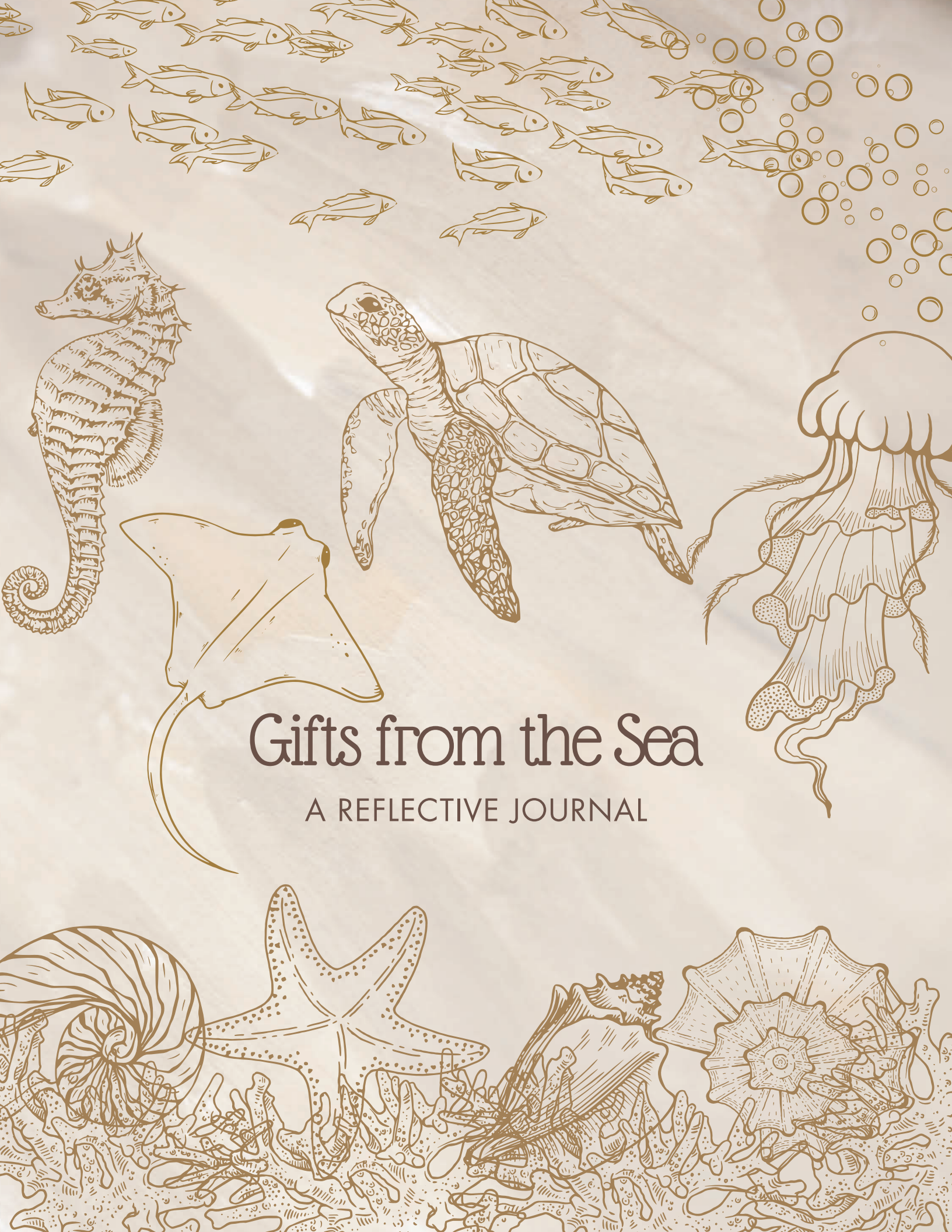


Gifts from the Sea

A REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Gifts from the Sea

Something about the sea brings perspective and creates an opportunity for reflection. Maybe the vastness of the ocean helps us see our place in the world with a bit more clarity and beauty. Nature calms us to hear the messages we know to be true in the quiet place of our souls.

This journal is a labor of love for me. It is what I needed when I needed it. I walked the sand with an open heart, looking for the “sea gifts” that spoke to me. As I was guided, I picked up each item and looked for the meaning it offered me. Then I reflected on the related questions that prompted me to go deeper.

How to Use this Journal

Included in this journal are my six gifts, key messages, and reflection questions. You can use all six as a weekly reflection or select a few that speak to you. You can also use the journal to document your own “sea gifts” and the messages they offer you.

Journaling can take you deeper into your thoughts and feelings to build a powerful awareness of your life. Whether on a family vacation, business trip, or just taking some time to pause, integrate this self-care practice for personal clarity and insight.

May the life-giving power of the sea wash over you and bring you inner wisdom and peace.

Sea Gift #1 “The Paths We Walk”

We all have paths, and very rarely are any of them straight. We want to know where we are going, yet that is the beauty of life. We get to be surprised. Sometimes there are gaps, detours, and forks in our roads. And sometimes they multiply into beautiful new roads. It is our life’s legacy. Sometimes we need to pause on the path and look back. We need to see our life for what it is ... an important rock in a big ocean of other stones, shells, and amazing creatures.

What purposeful paths have you been on and what next steps are calling you?

Today's Reflection Questions

1. What part of your life's path has been the most meaningful to you?
2. What have been some turning points that have taken you in a new direction?
3. What legacy do you want to leave?

Reflection Questions

Sea Gift #2 “A Broken Heart”

We live in a world of expectations of how life should be. And yet, sometimes, our heart breaks. It breaks from tattered relationships, from the loss of people we hold dear, and from unmet expectations. We have to remember that if we didn’t have a heart in the first place, it couldn’t break. I am grateful for my heart because it has allowed me to see the beauty around me and within me. There are cracks and holes in our hearts. Times where we let people in expecting beauty and we got pain. There are dents, people who try to penetrate it, and sometimes our heart is too hard. We lose. Some people take a part of our hearts with them when they leave this Earth.

Don’t be sad for a broken heart. Be grateful that you have this beautiful vessel of life.

Today's Reflection Questions

1. In what ways has your heart been broken?
2. How has your heart been forever changed by loss?
3. What unmet expectations are breaking your heart today?

Reflection Questions

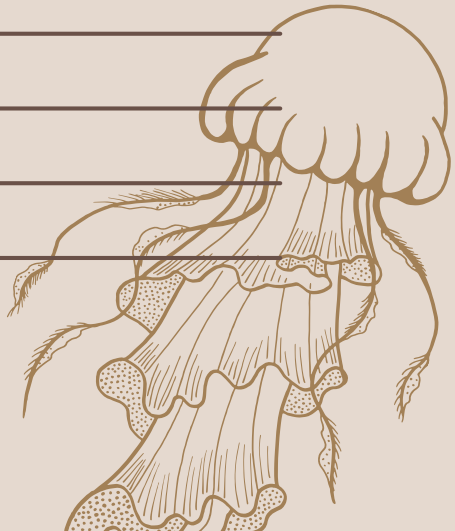
Sea Gift #3 “Who We Are”

All shapes and sizes, hues and textures, everything from the sea is different. The beauty of life is all the differences we have from the sea and what surrounds us on this planet. Nothing and no one is the same. So much of life lies in our uniqueness and the essence of who we are. We have to stand fully in who we are created to be. Standing in our own space yields tremendous impact and power. To live in balance and harmony, we must recognize that we each bring something to this planet, and all gifts are important.

Being who we are and embracing our differences can create either paralyzing fear or tremendous opportunity. Use your gifts to serve the world in powerful ways.

Today's Reflection Questions

1. Describe who you are as your authentic, true self.
2. What are some of the ways in which you are unique?
3. How can you embrace the differences around you?

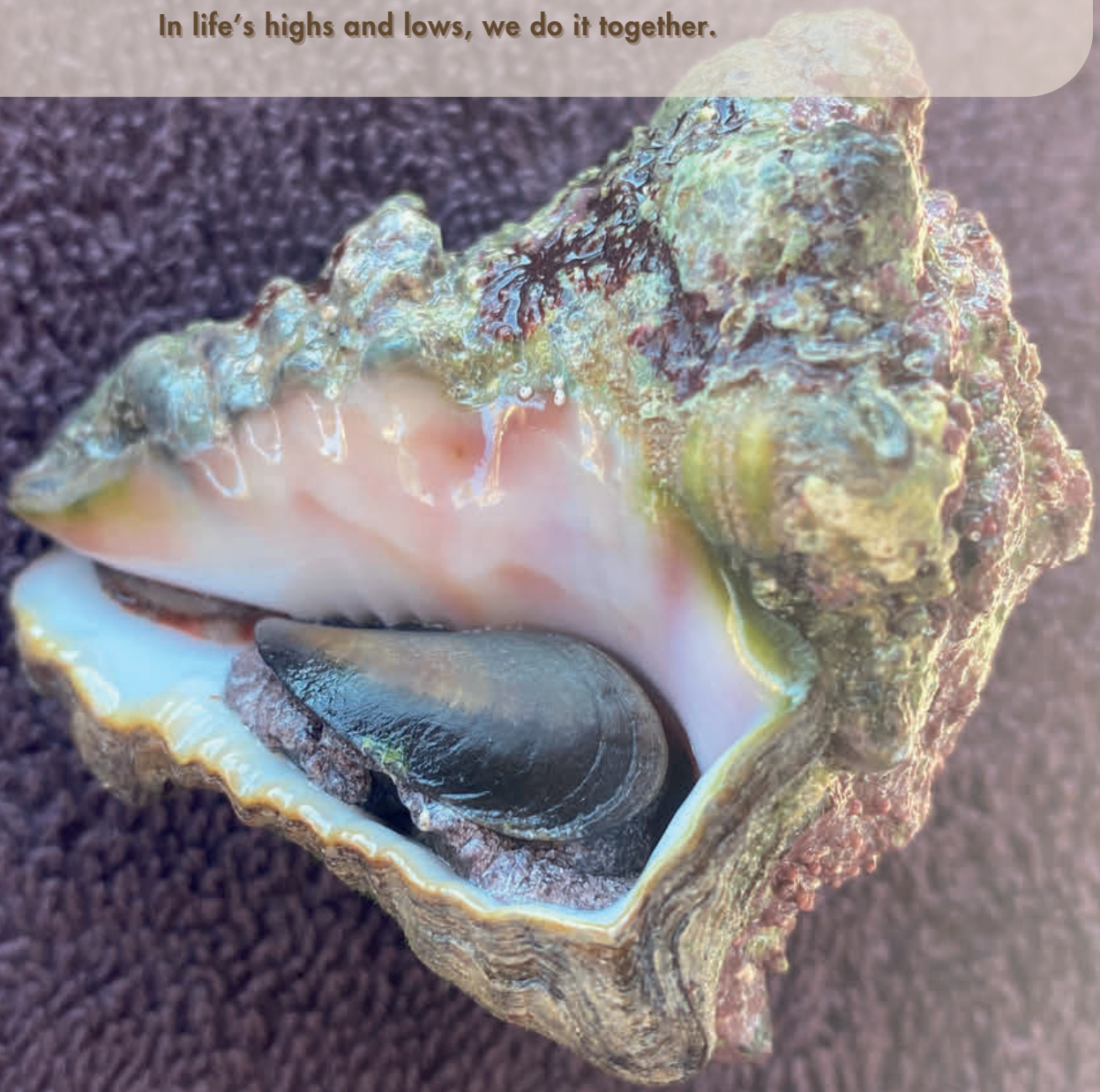


Reflection Questions

Sea Gift #4 “Connection”

We are not meant to do life alone. Just like this shell, it attaches to the reef to shelter other marine life. The snail looks for shelter inside the conch shell. We are connected. We are meant to connect. We are meant to do life in community. The people in our lives offer us gifts of shelter and protection and hold space for us. People come into our lives for a reason, season, or purpose. I treasure those people who have protected me or offered me a space to just breathe.

In life’s highs and lows, we do it together.



Today's Reflection Questions

1. Who are the connections in your life that are important to you?
2. In what ways do you offer shelter, protection, and space for others?
3. What connections are important to nourish?

Reflection Questions

Sea Gift #5 “Weeds”

Spanning over 5,000 miles, about twice the width of the United States, a thick band of sargassum (seaweed) floats between the Gulf of Mexico and West Africa's shores. When this golden alga washes up on the beaches, the smell and magnitude of this seaweed threatens the pristine beaches and crystal-clear oceans. It taints our view of the beauty that “belongs” in this glorious space. Same with our lives. We desire a life free from seaweed ... or at least in manageable proportions. When it becomes overwhelming, it threatens our perspective on how things should be. We try and find ways to get rid of it.

Yet, the weeds in our lives serve us in purposeful ways.

Today's Reflection Questions

1. What are the weeds in your life?
2. How are they shaping you?
3. What actions can you take to embrace life fully, weeds and all?

Reflection Questions

Sea Gift #6 “Our Heart”

Everything has a purpose. I could have missed this little gift without much thought. There it was, a little “heart” on the sand. Ready to get washed back into the sea. Small and dainty. A sea pebble that was shaped into a heart. It seems fitting that this would be the end of my sea gifts.

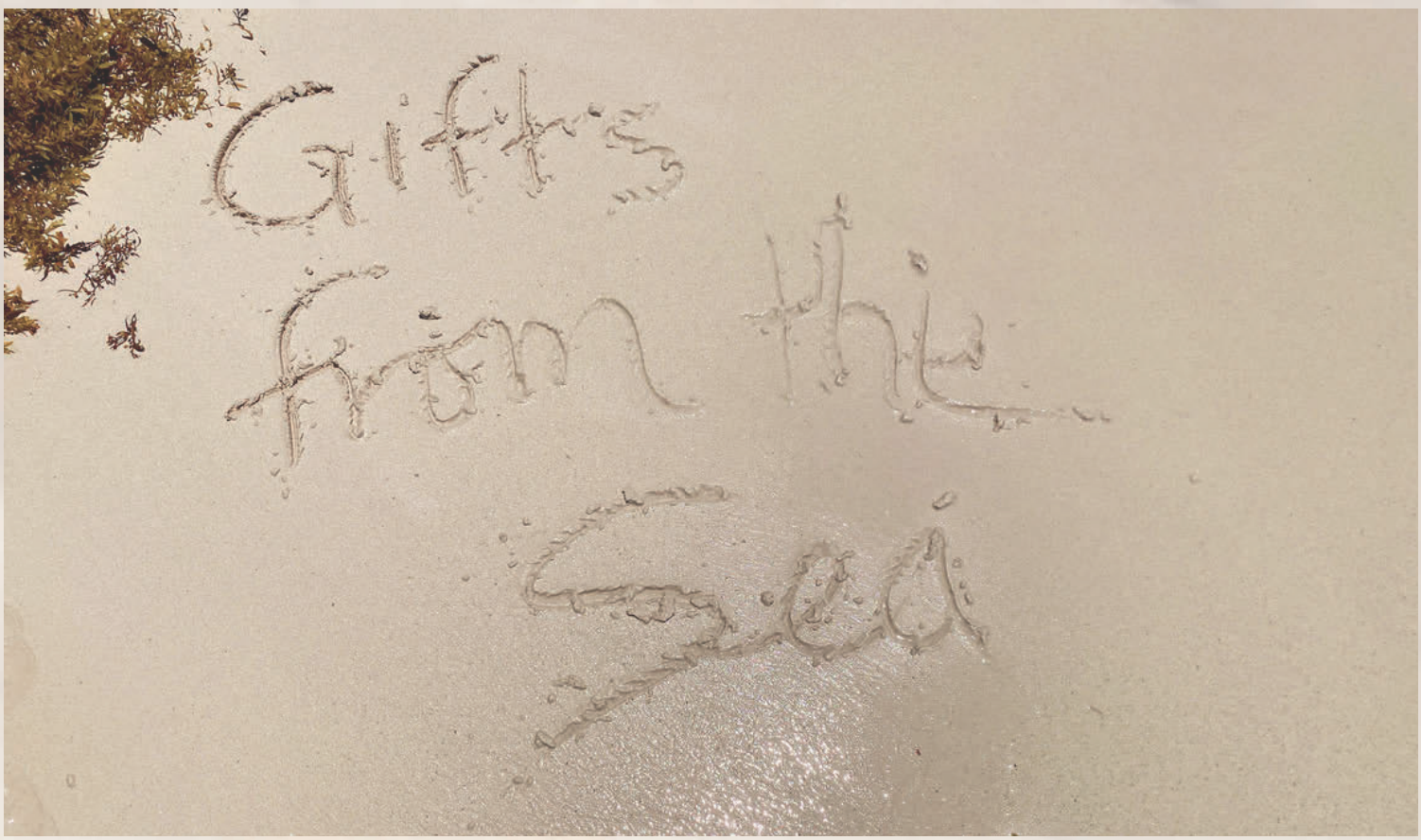
Our hearts are the core of who we are. From birth, they are tiny beating vessels ready to sustain life for each of us. When our time here is done, they stop. Ready for rest. In between is our dash. We are each given a beating heart to produce joy, laughter, and impact.

How can you bring your heart to the world?

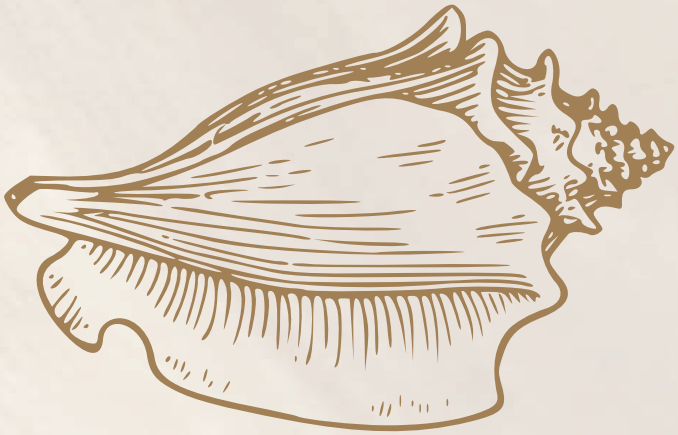
Today's Reflection Questions

1. How are you using your heart to bring goodness to the world?
2. What do you want your legacy to be?
3. What changes do you want to make in your life?

Reflection Questions



Now it's your turn. Take a walk and pay attention. Look around. What gifts come to you? What messages will be shared with you?



Reflections

Reflections

Reflections

Reflections

Reflections

Reflections

About Dorene

Dorene lives in Des Moines, Iowa, with her husband, Kirk, whom she has been married to for over 34 years. Many family vacations have been spent in Mexico with beautiful memories to hold close to her heart. Dorene is a professional Life and Leadership Coach who operates a Coaching and Personal Development Company, ithrive31.com.

I created this journal while on my vacation to Akumal, Mexico, in May 2023. I needed a pause in my life, knowing this would be the place to get it. I love Mexico, and I treasure the ocean. Like on land, there are messages for us everywhere. We just have to get quiet and listen. The ocean can teach us many things.

During my vacation, I found quiet time to absorb the gifts that lie around me. Because this vacation was with my spouse, we would discuss the questions together, and later, I would journal my thoughts. It offered us an opportunity to have deeper conversations about areas that were important to us.

Whether you use this journal for conversation or a means to go deeper into your soul, my prayer is that you see your life as a gift and one the world needs.

Many blessings,

Dorene