



Who Am I Now

A Photo Journal Guide

By: Dr. Kerri Fair

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Welcome

I'm proud of you. Something in you connected with this practice and feels hopeful and curious. You took this first step toward yourself and I remember how hard that was for me. That is all it takes, though, that first step to showing up for yourself.

Before we get into the process, I want to share a word of caution. If you are anything like me, you may end up focusing on the steps or overthinking during the photo selection process. Resist the urge to control the process and outcome. Photo journaling is more than writing your thoughts and feelings, it is about leaning into intuition and finding what is already there. We build walls around our emotions, wants, needs, and even some of our thoughts to stay safely in our comfort zone. But, we still have those things and some part of us wants them to resurface. If you work too hard to attach meaning or find the perfect image, the process will be full of distraction and noise.

Let me guide you through the basic steps, but feel free to alter them a bit to customize your own practice. This is really about encouraging your autonomy. In doing so, you will be more likely to complete the prompts and continue the practice because it feels like yours.

Walking this journey with you,

Dr. Kevin L. Fair

The Process

Each prompt in this guide follows the same simple sequence.

Read the prompt slowly

Let it settle before you reach for your phone or your pen. Notice what surfaces: an image, a feeling, a resistance. That first flicker of response is information.

Select or take up to three photos

They can be images already on your phone, something you photograph in your immediate space, or even a quick sketch. There is no correct image, only the one that calls to you.

Write freely.

Open your journal and write about what you chose and why. What do you notice? What does the image reveal that words alone might not have reached?

Harvest your words.

Read back through what you wrote once, all the way through, without stopping. Then read it a second time and circle anywhere from three to six words that feel most alive: words that surprise you, words that repeat, words that feel truer than the sentences around them. From those, choose your final three or four. The ones you can't let go of are the right ones.

Add them to your list.

At the back of this guide you will find a page for collecting your words across all six prompts. Patterns will emerge. Trust them.

The Prompts



Feel

You may have spent years managing your feelings rather than listening to them.

This prompt asks you to slow down and notice what keeps showing up — not to fix it, but to finally let it be seen.

Photo Prompt

Find or take an image of a space or moment that is yours alone — not shared, not in service of anyone else, just quietly yours. It might be small. It might feel almost guilty to claim it.

Journal prompt

What does it feel like to look at this image? When did you last give yourself permission to want something just for yourself, without justifying it to anyone? What emotion lives in that question?

Harvest your words:

Read back through what you wrote once, all the way through, without stopping. Then read it a second time and circle three to six words that feel most alive. From those, choose your final three or four. Add them to your word list at the back of this guide.

Accept

Some things are yours to tend. Some are not. This prompt asks you to look honestly at what you have been carrying and consider what it might mean to loosen your grip.

Photo Prompt

Find or take an image of something that feels out of your hands — something you have been trying to control or change without success.

Journal prompt

What have you been carrying that was never entirely yours to carry? What would it mean to set some of it down — not abandon it, just loosen your grip? What are you afraid would happen if you did?

Harvest your words:

Read back through what you wrote once, all the way through, without stopping. Then read it a second time and circle three to six words that feel most alive. From those, choose your final three or four. Add them to your word list at the back of this guide.

Creativity

You have spent a long time creating space for everyone else. This prompt asks what you might create for yourself, even now, even in small ways.

Photo Prompt

Find or take an image of something that sparks even the faintest flicker of interest or curiosity in you — something that has nothing to do with being useful to anyone else. A small pull is enough.

Journal prompt

What is this image pointing toward? What have you quietly set aside over the years because there wasn't time, or it felt selfish, or no one else needed it from you? What might it look like to move toward it, even slightly, even now?

Harvest your words:

Read back through what you wrote once, all the way through, without stopping. Then read it a second time and circle three to six words that feel most alive. From those, choose your final three or four. Add them to your word list at the back of this guide.[cv](http://thisguide.cv)

Take Action

This prompt is not asking for a plan. It is asking for one small, honest move — the kind that belongs entirely to you.

Photo Prompt

Find or take an image of a space or moment that is yours alone — not shared, not in service of anyone else, just quietly yours. It might be small. It might feel almost guilty to claim it.

Journal prompt

What does it feel like to look at this image? When did you last give yourself permission to want something just for yourself, without justifying it to anyone? What emotion lives in that question?

Harvest your words:

Read back through what you wrote once, all the way through, without stopping. Then read it a second time and circle three to six words that feel most alive. From those, choose your final three or four. Add them to your word list at the back of this guide.

Optimism

This is not about manufactured positivity. It is about finding what is genuinely still growing in you, and giving yourself credit for having tended it.

Photo Prompt

Find or take an image of something that is still growing — a plant, a project, a relationship, a small habit, anything that shows you that tending something over time produces something real.

Journal prompt

What have you been quietly nurturing that you have not given yourself credit for? What in your life is further along than it was a year ago because of your care and attention — not your sacrifice, but your genuine investment in it? What does that tell you about what you are capable of when you tend to something that matters to you?

Harvest your words:

Read back through what you wrote once, all the way through, without stopping. Then read it a second time and circle three to six words that feel most alive. From those, choose your final three or four. Add them to your word list at the back of this guide.

Reflect

No image for this one. You have everything you need in the words you have already gathered.

Journal prompt

Open to your word list and read it slowly, all the way through, more than once. Whose needs have lived in these words? Yours, or someone else's? What word keeps appearing that you did not expect? What has this process shown you about who you are when no one is watching and nothing is required of you? That woman — the one underneath all the roles — what does she want you to know?

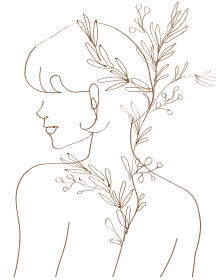


What's Next?

If you've worked through all six prompts, pause for a moment before you move on. Look at your word list. You gathered those words from yourself, not from a quiz, not from someone else's framework, not from who you used to be. That list is evidence of what's already there.

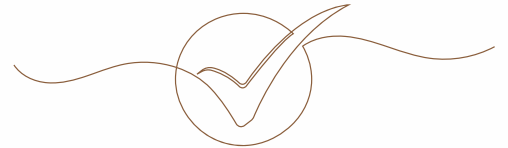
F

Feel



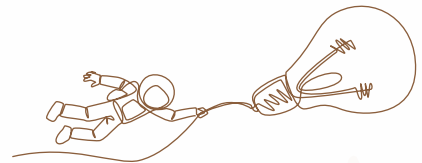
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Accept



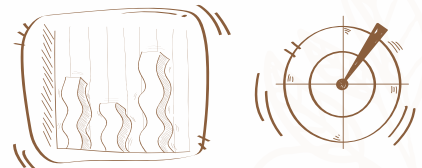
C

Creativity



T

Take action



O

Optimism



R

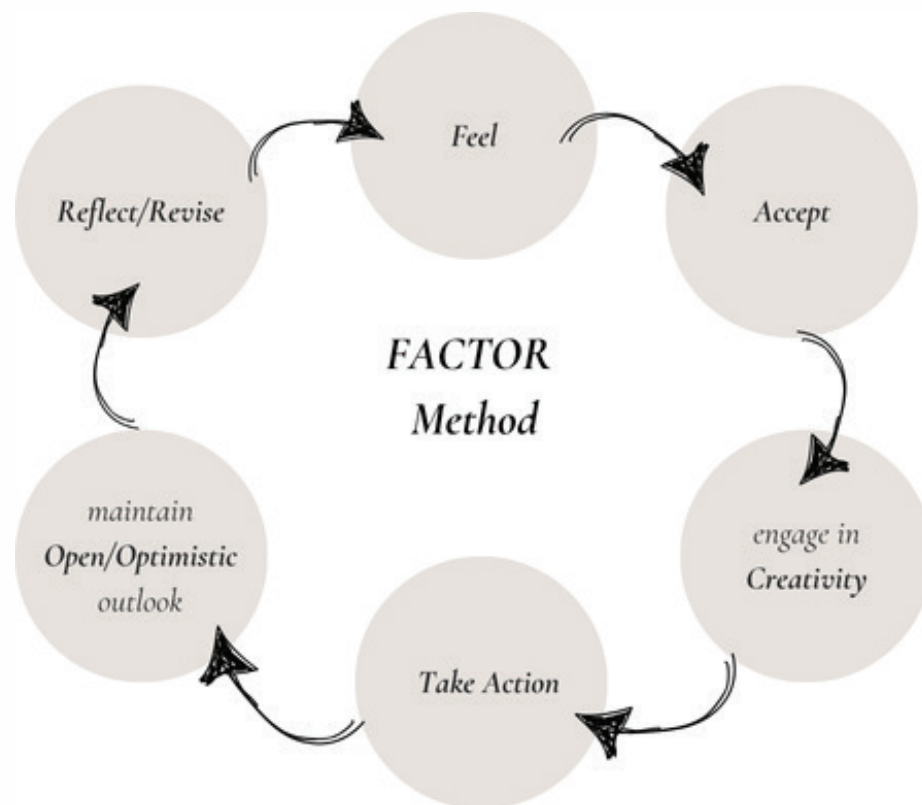
Reflect



FACTOR Framework

These six prompts follow a framework I developed through doctoral research and through my own lived experience as a woman in midlife asking the same questions you may have been asking when you found this guide. The framework is called FACTOR. If you noticed a shape to the prompts: the way they moved through feeling, then acceptance, then possibility, then action, then hope, then reflection. That was intentional. You just moved through the whole arc.

If you want to go deeper into that framework and what it can do, you'll find more at quietalchemyspace.com. There is more waiting for you there: essays, a method, and more guides like this one designed for specific moments in midlife.



You don't have to have it all figured out. You just have to keep showing up.

— Kerri



About Me



I'm Dr. Kerri Fair, and I understand what it feels like when life asks you to become someone new just when you thought you had it all figured out. My career in education spans three decades, beginning as an elementary teacher before earning my Master's degree in reading education. I spent three years as a reading specialist, then moved to an independent school where I taught while also serving as a literacy specialist, coaching my colleagues in literacy instruction.

When I became a principal, I spent seven years in that role before leaving to pursue my doctorate. I currently work as a full-time lecturer in higher education, where I continue to support and guide emerging educators.

Throughout these years, I've had the privilege of training, leading, and coaching countless educators through professional transitions. I've witnessed how capable, accomplished women can lose themselves in the process of caring for everyone else. I've seen the exhaustion that comes from suppressing your own needs while meeting everyone else's expectations.

If you're feeling the pull toward something different, something more authentic, I'm here to walk that path with you.

www.quietalchemy.com
kerrifair@midlifesparkle.net

Dr. Kerri L. Fair