Gratitude Art Journal: A Daily Practice with Mou Saha

Chapter 1 - Gratitude Art Journal: A Daily Practice

Overview

(bright music) - Hi there, my name is Mou Saha. I am a mixed media artist, coloring book author, and an avid art journaler. Coming from an academic background in clinical psychology, emotional healing through the practice of art has been one of my personal interests for a long time. Join me this month to dive deeper into art journaling as we create simple pages using basic supplies while exploring techniques in hand lettering, mark making, doodling, all from a perspective of gratitude.

Materials

- Let me walk you through the materials for this class. I like to use 140-pound cold-pressed watercolor paper. I use loose sheets in nine inches by six inches. But you can work in your bound art journals if you like. And other than that, you are also going to need an assortment of colors of acrylic paints, a palette to mix your colors or dilute any paint, some brushes, and I particularly love a number four round brush for brush lettering. I also use some spatula, you could use a palette knife for that. And we also use pens. Using black pens in a variety of tips is very helpful and I also keep a white jelly roll pen for accenting. A straight edge, a pencil, eraser, pencil sharpener, a water cup with water, and some paper napkins.

Day 1 - Parental figures

- We will start by expressing gratitude for the building blocks of our lives. Not all of these prompts are going to apply to everyone in the exact same way. So rather than trying to fit into the prompt, I suggest you alter the prompt to honor your experiences. And if any of these prompts stir up deep emotions that disturb you, please seek support from professionals or your loved ones. Our first prompt is going to be parents or parental figures. Some of us grew up with our birth parents, and some of us didn't. But if you are here, watching this class, I'm assuming someone raised you. Let's thank those people today, parents and parental figures. So I have pulled out a little bit of black acrylic paint here, and I'm using my number four round brush. I will start with brush lettering. And you don't have to use a paintbrush to do it. You could use a pen too. And you don't have to use the exact words that I'm using. These are my words. Feel free to take these or use your own. I don't draw lines for my letters. I just turn them around to fit together. But if you want it in a straight line, that is also an option. I'm writing, "It's in the eyes of our parents that we first see our worth." When I journal like this, I always pick a few words as the standouts. In this one, I'm going to capitalize parents. And there is no rule that you have to do it this way. I just prefer it this way. If you want a thicker line, just push your brush down a little harder. It all depends on how much pressure you want to put in. And remember, if you're brush lettering, it all gets better with practice. I am nowhere near where I want to be. But I practice, and I got better from where I was when I started. If you're using watercolor paper, you will notice that there is one side that is slightly more rough than the other. I work on the rough side of the paper. But for work like this, you can choose either side. And when I'm working in a bound journal that I bound out of watercolor paper, I work on both surfaces. The focus of this page are the words, but I'm going to fill up the blank spaces around with some easy patterns. (water splashing) If you're worried that you are going to smudge your paint, then just let it dry or use a heat tool to speed up the drying process. I'm gonna draw a very simple pattern around

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my lettering, working around the words. Feel free to turn your paper around whenever you need to. If you would like to change up the pattern or use a different one, feel free to do that. Remember, this is your page. And take my page as an inspiration and just a starting point, and let your imagination lead the way. I'm gonna bring in another color. This is a lovely fluorescent red. I think the contrast of the colors make me really happy. No matter how you do your art journal pages, you can never really go wrong. And here's my finished page.

Day 2 - Objects of admiration
- Today's prompt is someone you looked up to as a child. For me, that person was my grandma, my mom's mom. She had this incredible ability to simplify the most complex things, and I admire that about her till this day. And the last time I met her was the day before my wedding, and this is the advice she gave me: Never lose your tempers at the same time. An advice I have lived by. And today, I'm gonna honor that in my art journal page. I'll create a very quick and simple background simply by squirting and spreading paint onto my page. I'll take spatula, you can also use a flat brush, but the spatula gives it these interesting marks, kind of in the direction of your pull. I can also use brush. This is just a very easy way to fill up a whole background in very little time. And you also get this little bit of interesting texture here. I'm gonna let this dry. Now that my paint is dry, I can write that advice that I have from my grandma. I'm using a super fine, deep black permanent pen, and I'm gonna do a block lettering. And next, I'm going to make some marks and doodles around this. I'm using a different deep pen, this is a soft brush, and just adding small, little marks that don't seem like much when we add them, but they have a much nicer impact overall. Let's add some accents, some doodles with the white gel pen. And these don't have to be extremely prominent, just very, very subtle. And if you want, you could use darker colors on your background as well. But I think these colors remind me of her, and that's why I chose the colors. When you choose your colors, you can choose colors that bring back the memories of that person. And I will be always grateful to my grandma for this advice.

Day 3 - Teachers
- I have always loved to learn. Even when I'm the one teaching a class, I set an intention for myself to learn something from that experience. This love of learning is a gift from my incredible teachers, some of whom became my mentors and showed me how powerful encouragement can be. So who are your most favorite teachers? How did they influence you? Let's make a page today to honor those connections. I'm gonna start by blocking out a title space or a label space where I'm gonna write "teachers." This does not have to be perfect. I'm trying to do a diamond shape here. And if you want to change it up, you can do it when you color. I'm just gonna add my favorite colors around here. I'm just using the flat edge of my brush to create a clean edge for my label here. And even if you get inside it, it's really not a problem. But this helps you get a cleaner edge. If you're not comfortable using the same brush dipping into two paint tubs, two different colors, you can use a different brush. And this color combination reminds me of peaches. I'm gonna write "teachers" inside the label. For that, I have diluted some black acrylic paint and I'm using a number four round brush. You will notice that I don't write all the letters in the same size, that's just, I feel much better flow when I change up the sizes. Sometimes to fit into a place better. Sometimes just because I like the look. And there are no hard-and-fast rules to this. You do whatever suits your aesthetics and whatever way you feel comfortable doing it. Now, I'm gonna let this dry, and then add some journaling above and below. On this page, I'm mixing up block letters and brush letters. Just once

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you learn how to do it, there are so many ways to mix and match to create your favorite look. I'm kinda wrapping my lettering around the central label, and that just helps bring the whole page together, because there are a lot of different elements going on. There is pen lettering, brush lettering, a painted background, some blank space left. So just to pull everything together is to respect how they come together in one space. I'm gonna add a little bit of doodle to fill up a little bit of the space. Maybe add a vine here. I'm using a small, soft brush tip pen here. You could do this with a finer paint brush as well. When you are using any material, no matter what material you are using, don't get stuck on making things perfect. That just takes the fun out of it and that's the whole process for this kind of journaling. It's not about the end product so much as the process. And to match that, I'm gonna turn my page and do a similar one right here. I want my heart to face the right way so I'm just gonna keep it like that. A soft brush pen is almost like a brush. Slightly stiffer, so kinda easier in some ways. But I love using all my markers as well as my paint brushes when I'm lettering and doodling. I'm gonna add a little something here, maybe some dots. And just to bring back a little bit of the focus to the star of the page. And I think we are good.

Day 4 - Friends
- I am an only child. Growing up in a small flat in a big city was lonely at times. Thankfully, I had academic and extracurricular interests that connected me with friends of different ages and backgrounds. Today's page is dedicated to all my friends who played with me, fought with me, loved and cried with me, and were always there for me. I'm gonna start by drawing something like a flower. This is actually where I'm gonna add the word friends. But they are also like flowers in my garden, so I think a flower would be a nice way to present this page. Oh, this is just like a very very basic flower. And a little stem. And I'm gonna write the word friends inside the flower's center. I'm choosing pink for this and my number four round brush. If you like finer lines, you could use a smaller round brush. I have a two that also works great. And if you wanna write bigger, if your paper is bigger and you wanna write bigger, you could use a bigger brush. I go up to number six for my lettering, but those numbers go up a long way and you can choose what you are most comfortable with. You could also use your brush markers for these steps if you are feeling uncomfortable, but if you are feeling uncomfortable, I say that you go ahead and do it so that you don't stay uncomfortable. I'm gonna add some yellow polka dots. Just to fill up the space so it's not very white. And it's very easy. If you are not sure that you can make your circles look circular with the brush, you can always dip the back of a brush and just dip it in. Let me show you what I mean. If you take a bigger brush, you will get bigger dots, but that's the idea. Like, use the back of your brush or your pencil as a stamp. I kinda like my circles a little off, so I prefer to do it with my brush like this. Get in between the letters so they all become part of one complete whole. And we'll now color the petals next. I'm gonna choose orange and purple. It reminds me of Halloween. Again, I'm alternating my colors, so I'll finish all the oranges and then start with the purple. I take my paint directly out of the bottle or two. And you could always squirt it out in your palette if that makes you comfortable. And next I'm gonna bring in the purple. And next I'm going to color the stem and the leaves. I'm going to let this page dry before I add my journaling. Now that my paper is dry, I'm gonna erase any pencil lines. And before I add the journaling, I want to add a few little fun details to the flower. And next put some dots on the stem. Some veins for the leaves. Actually, just this one leaf for the time being. I'm gonna wait to add veins to this leaf after I have added my journaling. Oh, and I can see the base of the leaves so I'm just gonna add a little bit of vein right there and some here. I think that is that. And to fill up the background I'm gonna just do a very simple mark making. Actually, let's go

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with some asterisks. Your mark making and doodling do not have to be extraordinary. Sometimes just looking at most ordinary, everyday things in a new way would open up what you consider a doodle or a mark. It's like when I was in kindergarten we used to draw stars like this. And my friends are definitely kinda like stars. Adding the journaling first makes sure that your journaling is not having to fight for space with other things are not the most important on the page. Everything works around the journaling. And that's it. One page dedicated to my friends.

Day 5 - Education
- Education for the girl child is not a priority where I come from. Thankfully, my parents did not subscribe to that idea and gave me the best private school education they could afford. That education gave me wings, and I think everyone deserves that, and I'm so thankful for my education. I really like the soft brush pen because it has more of a give so it's closer to a brush, but a little less stiff than a marker. I'm gonna use that one to do today's lettering. Just go in and create an area for my title. Mm-hmm, gonna bring in my superfine tip pen that I use for my block lettering and draw some lines here where my journaling's gonna go. I think I'm gonna start writing and add the lines as I go. And next, I'm going to add some colors around my journaling block. Again, choose your own favorite colors. I seem to gravitate toward warmer colors. And you don't even have to blend this. I just like the slightly scratchy dry brush look. I'm using paint straight from the bottle. I'm not wetting my brush in between. And that's what's creating this dry brushed effect. I might add a vine around it. I'm taking my black acrylic paint. When you are working on pages like this, don't overthink your embellishment too much. Just go with the flow. Keep it loose. And it would be a perfect match for your journaling. And I'm going to leave it at that.

Day 6 - Activity
- Nothing teaches you discipline, determination, and values as a rigorous sport. Growing up, I was a competitive swimmer, and that taught me two very valuable lessons, grit and grace. And today's page is dedicated to those experiences. I'm gonna start by drawing a straight line across at about the halfway point on the page. I'm gonna make the bottom half my water, and also a little space for journaling. I'm gonna draw a swimmer. I'm basically drawing myself. And I'm gonna make a little space for the journaling here and a line here. And then, I'm gonna bring in my pen and just outline. And then start adding my colors after I erase the pencil lines. You can always go over your lines one more time if you feel that you didn't get enough color in. Along the contours of the swimmer. I'm just gonna add some fun little lines here. I'm starting with her skin. It's a lot of fun to write your letters inside of shapes of varying width. Then you can play with the size of your letters. And you do not even have to be a competitive athlete. If you played and you learned to play fair, then that's what we're honoring today. Swimming taught me the only way to lead is by example. And now I'm going to add the color of the water. I'm picking two different blues for this one. I'm adding my paint in very little amounts because it's much easier to handle a little less quantity of paint than to put it all in and then having a hard time staying within lines or whatever I'm trying to do with it. Unless I need to move the paint around directly, I try to add them little by little, particularly when I'm nearing the end of a page. And I certainly don't want to mess anything up. I'm gonna let this dry and then add some waves. Again, very simple mark making, but adds a lot to the overall page. And there it is. Back then I didn't even realize all the lessons, I just did it for fun.

Day 7 - Hobbies

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- Hobbies help us grow in incredible ways. What began as a fun pastime as a child became an emotional outlet as a young mother and eventually led me to a rewarding life path. I'm talking about my art and crafts hobby. And your hobby does not have to become a profession to be rewarding. Today, we honor our fulfilling hobbies. I'm gonna start by drawing a big oval outline. This is gonna serve sort of like a frame for my page. And I'm gonna draw a face. I'm loading up my flat brush with paint, and then I'm just gonna go around, follow the curvature. And this is the benefit of using a flat brush because they cover a lot of ground and you do not have to go so much back-and-forth. It would take more effort and time for me to do this with a round brush. In portrait style, make the background a little bit black around her face. And then I'm gonna color her skin. Think I'm gonna make her face slightly bigger. Just gonna erase her features so I don't get confused. All right. Feel free to make adjustments while you are doing it. Just because you did it, it doesn't, there's no shame in erasing. Add brown, brownish skin tone. Whatever is getting lost under paint, if you cannot see it when the paint dries, you can just draw over it. Acrylic is a pretty forgiving medium. And if you're not comfortable with drawing and painting your own, you could always cut up a face from a magazine or use a photo. Make whatever changes that make you happy. I'm gonna paint her lips now. And I'm gonna bring my pencil in, just fine-tune that face and... And let's give her a blouse. Whenever you are layering a lighter color over a darker one, just add a couple of coats and you'll be good. And we're not going for perfection here, just to give a clear idea of what you're trying to do. And while that part dries, I'm gonna add some pen details to her face. And looks like outside is also dry. I'm gonna give it a little bit of a doodle. And turn my page around and continue to with the pattern. Always remember these patterns are never about perfection. The more open and loose you are with this, the more charming your page is gonna end up to be. I'm gonna write the title of the page here with my white pen. I think I'm gonna add my journaling along here or maybe right up here. Mm-hmm, and sometimes if you make a mistake while your ink is still wet, you can just bring your brush and clean that up. And go over it with a little bit of paint. Now that I look at it, I want to give her some eyeshadow. And just make sure that your paint is completely dry before you bring your pen back in. And I'm gonna add a few more strands of hair. And outline the blouse. And I think I'm done with this.

Day 8 - Favorite place

- Did you have a favorite spot in your house, or a vacation place, or a hideaway that you really loved growing up? I loved my grandma's farmhouse in the country. Going there and waking up in the morning, going out in the fields, collecting vegetables for the day, what a treat it was for a big city girl like me to enjoy all that open space. And I have such beautiful memories that I'm grateful for. Today I'm gonna dedicate my page to my grandma's farmhouse. I'm gonna start by dividing my page into two halves with a simple straight line. The top half is gonna be my sky. I'm simply squirting a little bit of paint out, which I'm gonna spread with my spatula. You could use a brush, but a spatula goes a little faster. I don't always like to go all the way over the edge, so I just leave a little bit of white showing. And that's a personal preference. I'm gonna add a green to the bottom of my page, and I mixed up, I started mixing up a little green. It's a little light green and then a little bit of blue. It's very easy to mix your own colors. Just sometimes you may not have the exact color you wanna use, and instead of having to wait to go to the shop to get that paint, you could mix your own and keep working on your project. I'm gonna journal over the grass. This is supposed to be the grassy part of my page, and I'm gonna keep it fairly light so that when I journal on top of it it is not hard to read. And I'm gonna have to let this dry before I can add the house and the tree and my

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journaling. And now I'm gonna add the lettering, going back to my round brush number 4 and diluted black acrylic paint. And the place I loved the most.

Day 9 - An outstanding year
- Was there a particular year when a lot of significant events happened in your life? For me, one such year was 1999. I am so grateful for all the changes the events from that year brought into my life. So today's page is dedicated to 1999. I'll start with a pencil outline of an oval. And then, I'll go straight to adding colors. Again, remember your oval does not have to be a perfectly perfect oval. And it's just kind of a label or a central plate to add your journaling on. I'm gonna try to smooth it down a little bit, so when I go over it later with pen, I don't get too many bumps. And can do this with a spatula. But I love that the width of the brush can help me round this out in a much nicer way than I can do with the spatula. And I'm just evening out as much of the paint that I can. And that's that. And I'm gonna go around it with some black paint. While I wanna create my pages to look different and have a variety, I also want them to be part of a series, so there are going to be elements like the oval or the doodles that are going to be common from one page to another. Maybe not on every page, but there's going to be a continuous design, common design elements. Now, my paint is dry, and I'm gonna go inside the oval and write the year. So block lettering can be applied not only to letters but also to numbers. And when they are big like this, you can fill up those numbers and letters with patterns. So I'm just writing the outline of each number with the pencil. Now I'm gonna color these numbers in. I think that blue just pops right out of the page and it also gives a nice background for what we are gonna add right after this. And if you don't want any of the base color to show through, you can always add a second layer of color. The one is completely dry now, so I can give it an outline. I like to freehand my letters and numbers, but there is also the option of using a stencil for letters and numbers in case you wanna make it perfect. I don't encourage perfect, so I don't use it myself. I'm just adding a vine here. I'm just trying to fill up as much of the space as I can. I'm going to add a different pattern on the upper half and a different one at the bottom. You have full freedom to choose how to fill up these numbers with patterns. I don't always plan ahead for these patterns, just let them come as they come. And you can make it as detailed or as simple as you like. You don't even have to put pattern in all of them, but I think the more you do in this case, the more fun you'll have. I'm going to add a little bit of accent color to some of these. And all of these are totally optional. You can stop whenever you want to stop. And some of the pages stick out little longer than others depending on how detailed you wanna make it, and if you are short on time, you can always just put your journaling and a little bit of creativity to go with it. And whatever way serves you best, you do that. And next, I'm gonna add my journaling in the center. For that, I'll just draw small lines. I'm just using the space between the numbers to write my journaling. So now that I've got my journaling there, I'm gonna take a white pen and make some marks to frame the oval here and to bring out some of the patterns from inside the oval out. And that is it.

Day 10 - Children
- Do you often see the world through the eyes of a child? If you do, you will see many new colors because children have this special way of teaching us things. I am really grateful for all the children in my life, including my inner child. I'm gonna create a multicolored background by simply taking a variety of bright colors starting with the pink. Some yellow, yellow is my happy color. And let's bring in some blues and purples. Just a little bit more yellow. And I'm gonna let this paper dry. And I'm

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gonna draw a track for my journaling today. Let's do a, kind of like a target. And I'm gonna fit my letters inside these rings. I think we're good. Let's put a heart. I'm going to use a quote today for my journaling. I don't memorize and reproduce quotes correctly all the time, so I've written them down and I'm gonna refer to it right now. I'm just starting out here using a brush pen today, you could also use a bullet-tip pen for this. When I drew the rings it just made it really easy for me to figure out the height of my letters and everything. And as you write you're gonna keep turning the page. The quote says, "Children are not only innocent and curious, but also optimistic and joyful, and essentially happy. They are, in short, everything adults wish they could be." How true is that? Have fun with this one, because sometimes you'll have to turn a little sideways, kind of, stretch it in a strange way. But it looks really fun when it's all done. Because it's not ending at an end point I'm gonna continue writing here. And that little joining is just a way to lead the eye to read the quote uninterrupted. Since there are a few little gaps here and there I'm gonna fill those gaps with little hearts. Sometimes you cannot plan these things in advance, you just go with the flow and add what you feel at the moment. Because these words are not mine I'm gonna write at the bottom corner who they're by, and leave it there, and add some accents with paint around my circle just to accentuate that circular bit. Easy dots, you can use the back of a pencil or your paintbrush if you're not comfortable making your own dots. These dots do not need to be perfect. Nobody cares if they're perfect around. Just their being there adds a lot to the page.

Day 11 - Pets

- I have a poodle, his name is Brave. He's brave as a mouse and if I'm ever sick, you cannot drag Brave away from me. Such is the unconditional love of animals. Is there a special animal in your life that you're grateful for? I'm gonna start by drawing my poodle, it's just gonna be a simple little face. I sometimes feel honestly that Brave is smiling. And we love playing with his soft ears and he doesn't mind. And he's always eager to see me home. Let's give him a speech bubble. I'm gonna paint around. Brave is very, very black but I'm gonna mix up a little brown and black for today. When I get home, he's going to be the first in line to get a hug, the kids not so much, but Brave is sure gonna be there. While that dries, I'm gonna color the background. I'm gonna go around the speech bubble. Again, this is one of those pages where flat brush comes in very handy because it's going around a curve. I'm gonna let his face dry while I color the rest of the page. And with a flat brush you can do both straight edges as well as go around curves very easily, without having to change brushes in-between which is very helpful when I'm in the flow of things. When I'm coming around his snout, I will take a small brush. Now I know why I picked this pink because that's the color of his tongue. I'm gonna work on the speech bubble next. Let's give it a little outline. And I will say what he says. You can add so much variation to simple letters just by having fun. I mean, there is no steadfast rule that you have to do it this way or you cannot do it a certain way, so just have fun, and you will get ideas while you are having fun. None of these lines are hard to draw, it's just how you put them together makes all the difference. And always try to match up the letters to the theme of your page. If this was something very serious, then I probably would not use these kind of lettering, or use it with modification. I think I missed the O, this happens sometimes when I'm lettering a lot. I'm just gonna cover it up with a little bit of white paint. (drier whirring) And next I'm going to add some details to his face. Giving him an eyebrow, he really doesn't have an eyebrow, but it's fun. He has very curly hair but even this kind of gives the impression of that. Like a fish won't be a fish without its scales, a dog won't be a dog without its fur or hair. The background looks a little bit dull so I'm going to add some dots to it and let me, he actually has a very lovely fluffy head

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too. Let me add some fluff to it with my pen. Again, very easy, very quick. Even if the cover is just not super solid, it's okay. It just breaks up the monotony of the single color of the background. Let me turn my page. And I think this is it, this is Brave.

Day 12 - Significant other
- I have learned a lot of valuable life lessons from my husband. His teaching style can be summed up in two words, no mercy. If you ever watched the "Karate Kid" movies, you will get the reference. But there is truth to his lessons, and that's why I'm grateful for them. So far, I have shown you how to brush letter with paint and a real brush. Today I will show you how you can do the same with a brush marker. It's the same style of lettering. This just goes a lot faster but we're not having to dip for paint or ink. And the color is also more consistent. But each have their own place. So the main word here is husband, and so he gets a little bit of special treatment. And you can always go back in and check if you wanna change anything up, if you wanna add an accent. Maybe I wanna add an accent. This is very much his style, no muss, no fuss, no sugar, no chill. So let's put a line here. I am gonna fill in some of the insides of these letters, though. Like I said, play with this and you will get ideas of your own. Let's add some color to life lessons. And that would be the finished page.

Day 13 - Healthcare
- We all know the saying health is wealth. I'm so grateful for all my healthy parts and the healthcare professionals who have kept me alive and well all this time. So today is dedicated to our good health and our healers. I'm gonna start with a pencil sketch of a stethoscope. Nothing says a doctor's office like that to me. My youngest calls it tetoscope. I'm gonna make this loop the space for adding my journaling. Always think of interesting ways that you can give your journaling a special place on the page. You could dedicate the whole page to it like I did with the page about my husband, but sometimes it's fun to fit it inside a shape that relates to the theme at hand. I'm gonna accentuate the lines with pen. And feel free to change up your lines when you go over it with pen. That's the whole point of doing the pen line, to make any corrections. I'm just covering my stethoscope in black. You can do this with paint, but it is also a lot of fun to use these markers for coloring. Just like coloring in a coloring book. And now I'm gonna add my title. Let me color around this a little bit. I'm not gonna color the whole page, I'm just going to kinda make it into maybe a little oval or a weird little square, rectangle, who knows. You can keep your brush dry or just wet it a little bit for more smooth gliding of the paint. That brush was a little too big for me to get into all these little curves and spaces, so feel free to change up your brush. Our journaling is not just about a finished page. It's really hardly ever about a finished page. It's more about the process, what you learn along the way, what you release, and the fun that you have. And when we grow up we hardly ever consider fun as an important part of our life. It's important to find that, whether you do it via art journaling, or sport, or something. Keep the fun alive. While that dries I'm just gonna journal under health. Now that that is done I'm gonna finish this page with simple little dots. I think I'm gonna do that in pink. No, let's just make some marks just to shake things up. And we're good.

Day 14 - Purpose
- Each of us have a life purpose, but we don't always know it. It's not difficult to find though, if you follow your bliss. Be very grateful for the day that you find your purpose because that is the day you find the power to rise above your circumstances and become unstoppable. I will start with a blueish background. Let's take a darker blue. Sometimes I tap my paint bottle on my paper just to get some

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paint out quickly. Patience is not my strength. Art journaling is also a process of accepting your own self, and the more you're able to embrace what's happening in the moment even if it's not exactly how you pictured it or it's not ideal, the better it gets, the hardest thing to forgive is yourself because you know all about yourself and you do not treat yourself kindly. I'm not talking just about you, I'm talking including myself in that too. But we are not kind to ourselves a lot of the time, and accept yourself just as you are and know that wherever you stand you are perfect. So my paper is now dry and I'm going to move on to my journaling. Today's journaling is really a quote, one of my favorites by Viktor Frankl that goes something like, "Life is never made unbearable by circumstances but only by lack of meaning and purpose." When you have a really dark background, the white pen pops up really good. And if you ever do what I just did, add a lot of paint, you could scrape it off, you could dry it, and you could also bring another piece of paper and then kinda take a print from that paint. You could also use white paint and brush to do this if you don't wanna use a pen. So the main words here are meaning and purpose. I'm gonna give special place to them just by making the size a tad bit bigger. If you are using a pen though, make sure your paint is completely dry. Otherwise your pen tip is gonna start pushing the paint around. Here goes the byline, very important to give credit. And because I placed the quote a little higher up on my page, I have left room for some freehand doodling at the bottom. I'm gonna do some organic botanical. A simple doodle, there's nothing complex about this. And I think that is plenty. So don't give up on searching for your purpose, if you haven't found it already.

Day 15 - Courage
- There is a deep sense of vulnerability attached to creativity. And every time we create, we overcome that vulnerability, so let's be grateful for our courage to be creative. I'm gonna start by coloring the background with some of my favorite colors. You can choose your favorite colors any time. You might see that I am not really blending my colors together. That's how I like to leave my colors just sitting on the page when I'm mixing a lot of colors that when mixed together is going to make a muddy brown. So you can still use very opposing colors. And by not blending them together, you get the effect of the color but no muddiness. I'm gonna let this dry. I'm gonna do the journaling in two layers. The first one is gonna be the quote, "Creativity takes courage." And it's a sort of part of the background, but also can be read. Even if I'm dividing the word creativity in more than one line, you can still read it. And now I'm gonna let this dry and finally add my own journaling on top. I'm using a white pen. And it will look different as it goes over all the different colors. I wanted my paper to look a lot like its palette, like a paint palette. It looks like it could use a little bit of mark-making around, but just little, little, little marks, nothing big. There's already enough going on. And sometimes to get a rich look, you really don't need to do too, too much. It's just the layers of colors have already done everything this page needed. And I think I have everything I need.

Day 16 - Opportunities
- Once we recognize our purpose and find the courage to follow that purpose, opportunities present themselves to us, and as we follow those opportunities, one thing leads to another to guide us on our journey. I am so grateful for all the opportunities that have greeted me as I started following my bliss. I'm gonna start on this corner. I'm not gonna color the whole page this time. I am just adding colors in batches. And simply layering one color on top of another. Not trying to blend them or anything. And this is a very easy way to fill up quite a bit of surface in very little time. And now, I am going to write my journaling. Today's journaling is gonna be a quote that goes like,

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"Follow your bliss and the universe will open doors where there were only walls." It's words by Joseph Campbell. And I'm gonna take my big brush pen. And you can use the sides for bigger mark and the tip for smaller. So it's like two pens in one, really. As with brushes, you can, same with pens, if you wanna make smaller lettering, you can choose a smaller pen. And let's make some marks. And I'm gonna come in with a super-fine tip pen and write the by line. And so far, the page is kind of boring, so I'm gonna add some doodle but in a different kind of way. If you aren't good at Zentangles, these kind of journal pages are a good place to practice that skill, and I'm no good at it, but I'm gonna do my own version of something. And like everything else, doesn't have to be perfect. Do the best you can and that's usually more than enough. I'm gonna stop right there, and now I think I'm gonna add some accent colors. You can stop any time you want if you think you had added everything and don't need to see anything else, that's fine. But if you wanna take it farther, keep going. Sometimes the problem I have with that is I don't know where to stop. I'm just having so much fun, I forget about the end result altogether, and then I look back and see, eh, that's just too much. But that's okay. Next time I try to remember to stop before it's too late. Sometimes I have to remind myself that I don't have to try every single technique on one page. And I think I'm gonna stop right there.

Day 17 - Life philosophy
- What is your core philosophy? How does it enrich your life? When I embraced simplicity as my philosophy, it freed up both physical and mental space for me. I am grateful to be simple. I'm gonna start by drawing a face right here. And I think the person's going to have a, not really a thought bubble, but kind of, say, a vision. And let me start by coloring the face. I'm not gonna add eyes or do that kind of detail. And so when the face dries, I'm going to add a little bit of background color. And I think I'm going with black this time. I'm doing a combination of wet and dry brush, so it's not totally solid and kind of creates a little bit of a visual texture. Because these pages are really simple with very few materials and not too many layers, just any way that you can add interest is good. I think I will add a little bit of blush to the cheek. Let's give it some hair. And now I'm gonna add the journaling inside my vision bubble. It's gonna be a quote by Paulo Coelho, one of my favorite authors. And it goes like, "The simple things are also the most extraordinary things." When you read a book, it's a good idea to collect your favorite lines and use them as quotes when you create. Sometimes I like to underline the most important words in a quote. In this case, "simple" and "extraordinary" are the two most outstanding words to me. And I'm going to keep adding some interest around my vision bubble. And these are asterisks bound by circles. Go for simple shapes when you are in doubt, and you're gonna end up with something amazing. And let's put some dots to connect the vision to the person. And I'm guessing the other line extends to the universe. And some more doodles. And be careful if you are working with semi-dry painted surfaces. You don't want your pen to go over them. We don't want our pens getting clogged. So now, I need to add some brighter colors. This time, that's not going to be the background, sometimes the bright colors can be accents. You have seen me add dark accents on light backgrounds, this time I'm reversing the process. No matter which way you go, you cannot go wrong. Believe that and see how life changes. And I'm gonna add some blue, and maybe some pink dots, I'm not sure about the pink yet, but the blue is a go. And because I dry brushed the yellow, I have no need to wait for it to dry. In some way, this bottom part with the dry brushing seems like kinda like a galaxy, like there are stars over there or something. Just imagine away. I think I'm gonna stop right here.

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Day 18 - Sense of abundance
- It took me a long time to understand that I always have everything that I need. That if I manage my resources wisely, there is no shortage. I am grateful for the sense of abundance. What realization or motto are you grateful for? I'm gonna start here with one face, but divided into two parts. So, we're gonna see only half on each side. You could also draw or paint one face and then cut it or tear it down the middle and attach it on the opposite halves of the page. That is something I've done. Oh, let me give her a little neck. (artist chuckling) I'm gonna color their hair next. One of them is gonna get, actually, it's one person, but well, the left half is getting blue hair. I'm gonna journal inside the hair, so it's important that if I plan on using a dark pen, that I'm using a light paint. And if I was gonna use a white pen, then I would need to use a darker paint. Otherwise, dark on dark and light on light are hard to read. Let's give the other half orange hair. Go crazy. Choose whatever colors you like. While the hair dries I'm gonna color in between. By now the skin is dry and I'm gonna take my pen and draw the details on the face. And my paper is still a little wet, that's why I'm turning my paper in all weird directions. I think I'm gonna have to let this dry a little before I can finish drawing the face. Like she's a little less happy than our, and I'm going to write how she feels. How I felt. And let's give her infinity symbol. And little touches to the faces. A little blush. (water sloshing) I'm gonna let this dry. So, now I'm going to write my journaling with a white pen. Drawing straight lines up here. Let's start with these three and then I can add if I need to. And add little decorative touches to their faces and around their hair. Just so there is not a huge void between the two faces. And here it is from divided to abundant.

Day 19 - Nature
- Spending time in nature always rejuvenates me and brings me peace and clarity. How does nature recharge you? Let's make a page about that. I'm gonna start with a little vine or sprig of leaves and you can depict nature any way you want. I just feel like some green right now so that's what I'm gonna do. Just very, very basic leaves. I'm going to keep this page a very, very simple. Just the leaves. And I'm gonna let this dry and I'm gonna add my title right here. This is my soft brush. Then I can see how much more brush-like it is than a marker, but still more control than a brush. I cannot say if one of these tools is better than another, but they all have their purpose and they're all a lot of fun to use and try and then when you practice, you will find which one you like the most and then you can work with that. I'm gonna add a little more journaling here. I am moving into lowercase block lettering here. Feel free to mix things up. I'm gonna finish this page off by erasing any pencil lines that I have and by adding some veins to my leaves. Clean and simple, just like a day in nature.

Day 20 - Wellbeing meditation
- When I first started meditating as part of my wellness practice, I could not sit still, I forgot to breathe, I looked cross-eyed trying to focus my gaze in the center of my forehead. But then when I stopped trying so hard, the silence of meditation began to guide me. I am so grateful for that eloquent silence. Meditation does not have to be your wellness practice. Honor the wellness practice that you have. When I first started meditating, I could see some colors when I closed my eyes, I could see colors and that was so exciting. And then I would ask my yoga teacher who's also my meditation guide, "What did the colors mean?" And she would smile and tell me, "They mean nothing." And I would be disappointed like "What? I saw such cool things and that means nothing?" She said, "Well, you need to just focus on not having thoughts. So if focusing on the lights makes that work, then that's good." And since then, things have come to down colorize but I still wanted to

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capture that colorful time that I had. The paint is almost dry, I'm gonna start by writing my title in the center of the oval. I'm using the oval as my frame and as a guide. And write silence starting here. I'm connecting, just make it a continuous phrase. I can touch up some of my lettering if I want to. I'll leave them just be. And now I'm gonna doodle. I'm choosing a different pen for this, the extra super fine. Sometimes the width of a pen tip alone can make such difference. I'm just looking for spots to fill and maybe use the yellow. I'm just using the various colored bands as a guide to using different patterns. Choose a variety of marks. I'm gonna bring the same brush pen that I used for lettering and fill in some of the triangles. It's really up to you how much detail you wanna add. We only go so far as not to distract from the title or the journaling. I'm going to add a few more marks but this time I'm gonna use paint. On such a colorful page, little touches of black just sort of anchors everything. Feel like I can go on adding details to this page forever. But I'll take my own advice and stop before it's too busy.

Day 21 - Exercise
- This spring, I went to a yoga class in my local library. I found that I could not lay comfortably in a corpse pose. People who are in their 80s were more agile than me. I felt ashamed. So I joined a local yoga studio and kept going back every single day. In that process, I lost weight and gained strength. I felt graceful again. What is an exercise routine that you are grateful for? I'm gonna start by sketching a lotus. That's the emblem of my yoga school. And it's a simple lotus. I'm gonna fill around the lotus with paint. The reason many yoga studios have lotus as their emblem is because lotus grows in mud, but it still rises above and it's taken as a symbol of enlightenment. And it's really fitting that that is used as an emblem for a school that teaches yoga and meditation. I'm just gonna color the stem and the leaves. This is not really a leaf, it's actually part of the petal. But sometimes, some of the petals are still a little green. I'm going to go with that. And it adds a nice contrast to the pink we have here. I'm gonna bring in a blue just to outline the petals. So now I'm gonna add my page title inside the lotus. And I'm taking my number four round brush and a little purple paint. And while that dries, I'm gonna start to add some pen details and also add some journaling. Lotus stems have little thorns on them. Not like thorns, they're like a little fuzzy. But if you run your finger along the stem, you feel them. Feel free to go inside the loops of other words just to keep the one word looking continuous. I'm going to pick up my purple paint one more time and just connect that to the edge of the petal. I think that kinda completes it nicer. I'm also gonna continue that with the other petals. It's okay to let your imagination rule when it comes to drawing flowers your own way. I make this up as I go and you should feel free to do the same. I'm gonna leave these two out of those details. And because this is also a petal, maybe give this one a little detail too. And now I can see that the focal point is complete. However, I do wanna add some marks just so the background does not look forgotten. I'm taking a slightly off white paint and, I want to keep the color scheme gentle, serene, peaceful in keeping with the theme. Always choose colors that work well with your theme. Let me just turn this over around. And I am happy with it.

Day 22 - Hands
- We hardly ever pay attention to our hands, fingers, toes, feet, even if they help us do so much. We hardly ever think of them, until something hurts. So let's take the time today to appreciate our hands, and all that they help us do. I'm gonna start by tracing my right hand. I'm a right handed person, so I'm tracing my right hand, and if you are left handed, trace your left hand if you like. And this is something everybody can do. We, most of us did it in kindergarten, and you can see how

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easy it is. It doesn't have to be perfect. You can, if it looks very strange, you can make any corrections later. We'll just go around. And some of the fingers are gonna appear wider than they are, and you can correct them. My hand looks very rickety here, and that's okay. I can come back with a pencil, and smooth things out. I'll also wanna make sure that I have enough room to journal inside my hand, so I'm not going to try to make it so correct that there's no more space left. I still have the finger turkeys that my older kids made when they were in school. They were in kindergarten, they're still in school. In every finger, they wrote what they were thankful for, and it changed from preschool to kindergarten, what they were thankful for changed, and I saved those as a memory of how their thinking changed. The first one my oldest brought home was, I am thankful for snacks. There was no mention of mommy or anything, just snacks. And then it eventually became, I am so thankful for my family. I think they got prompted by their teachers. You can match your paint color with your skin color, or you can color it any color you want. Doesn't even have to be a skin tone. And I'm gonna let the hand dry, and color the background. You can make the skin look smoother if you wanted to, but to me it does not matter so much, so I'm just gonna leave it be, and color around it. And I have chosen a bright green. You could choose your favorite color. And I'm gonna let this dry. I'm gonna start my journaling inside the hand, and... I'll just use simple lettering. If you take the time to write your letters, they will look better than your everyday handwriting, that's what I have found in my case. And when you are trying to fit a lot of letters in one line, you can vary the size. You don't have to write them all small. You can make some of them small, some of them big. Like the L, it kind of allows another letter to almost sit on its lap. I'm gonna give myself a little tattoo. Okay. Now I'm gonna add little bits of color inside some of the letters like O, D, and such. And you don't have to fill them all in if you don't want to. And now I'm gonna add some doodles around the hand. I'm using my white gel pen here. You could use your black pen, or another color marker. Or even dip your brush into paint, and do dots. And just add a few little doodles to the back, so the back is not completely empty. Just little stars and circles around them. Sometimes when my white pen stops to flow, just give it a little shake, and usually that's enough, but because I'm drawing over a painted surface, sometimes the pigment from the paint adds a little bit of resistance. And I am going to call it done.

Day 23 - Travel
- So far, I have traveled to eight different countries, 34 of the 50 U.S. states, and almost 80% of the national parks in the U.S. Travel brings me so much joy, whether I'm traveling with family or by myself. I love to explore beyond the landmarks and I'm really grateful for all the opportunities to travel. I'm gonna create a little background here first, starting with our waterline. It's just simply a straight line with a pencil. I'm gonna color this part, and this part is gonna be the sky. And if there is a sky, let there be some happy clouds. Let's take a different blue, a lighter one, and do the clouds. I want to add interest to the background, but not so much that it gets too busy and fights with the journaling when I add it later. I'm really diluting the paint down with water. So this is a very easy way to add some pattern to your backgrounds. I'm using a brush pen. This is the soft brush. I'm gonna write my entire journaling with this pen and then add some doodles. You can also take your paint and dilute it and use it with a brush to do the journaling. It's okay to mix up your upper and lowercase letters and the uppercase does not have to be always the first one. And that's my journaling. I'm going to add a cruise ship kind of ship down here, just some kind of, not really a cruise ship. These look more fun than cruise ships do. Cruise ships just look like buildings floating in the water. So that maybe we give just so we know what they are. And a little airplane up here. Yeah.

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Welcome to go over the outlines with pen. And once that is done, I might fill in a little bit of color. I'm gonna erase my pencil lines real quick and get into coloring this airplane and the wing. And the only thing left to do is to add some windows to the plane and to the boat. It's great to travel to destinations, but also remember to take the roads less traveled.

Day 24 - Support
- When you start to follow your heart, some people may fall away from your life, but you will meet new people who get you and support you in your dreams. They become part of your soul tribe, and I'm grateful for mine. I'm gonna start with the outline of a heart. You can make a roundish heart. You can make a tall heart. However you wanna do it, it's all good. I'm gonna erase that pencil line and fill this heart in with color. Draw. And this is a round brush. You could also use a flat brush going around the curvature, but I wanted to show you how I use both of those brushes. I'm going to let this dry. I'm gonna take a small flat brush and draw some stripes in the back. They don't have to be perfectly straight. This is not only adding pattern to the background, but also when I try to journal, they're gonna give me lines to write on. I'm gonna let the paint dry completely and then start adding my journaling. I'm gonna start with the part of the journaling, but also paying attention to it in a manner that it looks like a title. And I'm gonna switch pens and basically write love, support, encouragement, and generosity in those lines. I'm just pretending that a whole word is there and the heart is just standing in front. I'm going to dry that and finish this page with a few doodles inside the heart. Here's to our soul families.

Day 25 - The kindness of strangers
- Have you noticed how often someone holds the door for you, lets you go first in line, holds the traffic just so you can make a left turn? I'm always grateful for the kindness of strangers and always eager to pay it forward. I'm gonna just add patches of color for this background. And because I'm not blending my colors, some, a little bit of natural blending always happens, but I'm not vigorously trying to blend the blue with the yellow, so that allows me to use a lot of different colors and mix warm and cool colors together without making a muddy brown. I use a flat brush for this kind of patchwork because it's much easier to get that squarish feel with it, which would be harder to get with the round brush. The title and the journaling for this page are one in the same. I'm using a soft brush pen here. You could use paint and brush, as well. I think I'm gonna give a little bit of an antenna to my K. And, and just so I can connect them. Same on this side. And let's make a few marks. Now let's complete our T here. Let's dress up our letters a little more. I'm just bringing in a white gel pen, and just small touches. Sometimes, pens have a hard time traveling over other inks and paints. Just take your time. I think I'm gonna leave the lettering at that and just add a few doodles. Like very organic, under the sea, botanical seaweed kind of. And that's just my favorite thing to draw. You can draw whatever you like best. Because we rarely get a chance to thank strangers who help us or return the favor because we may never meet them again. I always try to do it for someone else. Let's always remember to pay it forward.

Day 26 - Challenges
- Our next set of prompts really are notes to our future selves. These are nuggets of wisdom and reminders to smooth our way. And the first prompt in the set is challenges. Challenges are a part of our lives. We feel that challenges are sent to us to disrupt us, but really they bring us lessons. Let's say thanks to our challenges that made us who we never thought we could be. I'm gonna start

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writing my words first. I've mixed a little bit of blue and black paint. And I'm using my number four round brush. You can also use a brush marker if you like. And because these are my words, I'm just gonna put my name here. And I'm gonna let this dry, and then add some dots and dashes to the background. So the paint is now dry. I'm going to add some dots and dashes with other colors of paint. I'm adding few accent dots to my yellow dots. And not all of them. I think I'm gonna bring more attention to the word "strengths" so I'm gonna underline it with the same black that I used to write it with. And instead of putting dots, I'm gonna just tap on the brush handle and add just a little bit of very fine splatter. If you want bigger splatters, you could use a bigger brush. But I don't want too much, so. So next time you are faced with a challenge, look for the lesson in it and see how it can make you strong.

Day 27 - Embracing flaws
- Recently, I read some books by Wallace D. Wattles and he wrote that any of us are perfect at any given moment and moving towards completion. That really shifted my perspective and made me think that my flaws are the voids where I have seen the most magnificent miracles. I'm gonna start with my lettering. With a pen like this, you can use both the width of the tip as well as the tip of the tip to get two different looks, so if I use the very tip, I can get very narrow letters, and then use the width of the tip to get the bigger letters, like I got here. When I'm going up, I'm applying lesser pressure and staying more with the tip so it's a skinnier line, and then when I'm coming down, it's a broader stroke. Once you are done writing, you can go back and see if there are places where the pen did not make contact with the paper and you can, you can leave it as is, embrace it, or just make little bits of corrections. It's totally okay to do that. I think the rest of it looks good. Okay. Maybe a little bit here. I think I'm going to add a frame around the page and I'm going to do that with my pencil. Adding a frame later makes it easier to fill up the page than to first put a frame and then trying to make your words fit within. Some of the scallops are going to be big and some of them are going to be really tiny. Just remember, you are perfect at any given moment and progressing toward completion.

Day 28 - A brand new day
- Life does not come with any guarantees. Every day that we get is a gift, a gift to be grateful for, another chance to live life to the fullest. I will be using block lettering with my extra superfine pen. And I'm gonna mix uppercase and lowercase. It's like a new day with a new sun. Mixing your words with a little heart here and there can be really, really a fun experience. I'm gonna make some of the letters really wide and leave some of them their usual size. My letters look like they're skipping. Let's pretend that these blues represent the sky and then bring in some green, and that would be art. You know how when we start a day, we say that we woke up on the wrong side of the bed and then everything else in the day goes wrong? So if you wake up feeling grumpy, then just remember all the things that you are grateful for. And when you do, your day will start to look up especially when we cannot change circumstances that are beyond our control and this is a good attitude to have, to make it through the day and not have a super bad experience. I think I'm going to add very simple doodles, paint a few circles and I'm gonna fill those in with doodles. Now that my dots are dry, I'm gonna doodle inside them. So like a pie in the sky. Always be grateful to have this brand new day.

Day 29 - Leaps of faith
- Sometimes the choice comes down to staying within our comfort zone or taking that bold leap of

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faith toward new horizons. I am so grateful for all the times I did take that bold leap. I will draw a lady in a hat. The journaling goes like this, "Don't let fear stop you. Venture beyond comfort." And you're gonna do continuous lettering, just leaving enough space in between so we can still tell that they're two different words. Have fun with it. It's one of those big-rimmed beach hats that are supposed to protect you from the sun. I'm kind of thinking voyage, adventure, and that reminds me of my sun hat. And I think light fits in here very well. It's a very simple face. Fear is such an integral part of life that you can't really not feel fear, but that doesn't mean that fear has to win. If you decide that you wanna go for it, play it full out, you do that. And you may still feel scared, but then do it despite the fact that you are scared. And this is a hard one for me. I struggle with it a lot. But I think every time I have taken the leap anyways, I have never regretted it. I'm gonna start by erasing the pencil lines here. And this is a very, very, basic face. Just give her a little hair. Yeah, don't let fear stop you.

Day 30 - Trusting the universe
- Not a single leaf moves without the will of a higher power. Everything dances in divine orchestration. Let's wrap up our gratitude journal with a page dedicated to the abundant and forever-gracious universe. I'm going to create a very colorful background for this one. I'm trying to spread my colors around, like if I have one color in the center, I'm gonna put it in two other places and like that, so that the eye can move around the page. And when this page dries, I'm gonna letter in my quote. For the journaling, I'm gonna use words by my favorite author, Paulo Coelho, from the book, The Alchemist. If you haven't read that book, read it. I think you're gonna love it. And this quote makes me so happy. And I'm going to doodle with my brush around it. I'm gonna repeat what I did at the bottom right at the top left just to keep that continuity of the design. And because I added black up there, now I want to add a little black down here. I'll just make a few marks and then see what else to do. I'm gonna switch to my white gel pen and fill in the cavities of my letters, of some of the letters. I think a little pop will go a long way. I think this is making me happy and this quote makes me feel so comfortable, thinking that the universe has my back. Wow, we just finished a whole month of gratitude journaling. Doesn't that feel good? And if you worked on loose sheets of paper like I did, you can save them in paper mache book boxes. I actually have a class called make an altered box on Creativebug, where you can learn how to make a box and make all of this work together. Your gratitude journaling does not need to end with this class. Make it a practice. Come back to gratitude journaling throughout the year and see how it shifts your perspective over time.

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