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**BY DESIGN**

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# A Year of Love Reflections Challenge: 52 Journal Prompts to Build Together

## A *LOVE BY DESIGN* Companion Journal

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Welcome to your Year of Love Reflections Challenge! Whatever it is that brought you here, I'm excited to be able to offer you a new way to look at loving relationships—one that is designed to give

your heart a break, and not another heartbreak, and help you to build a coupledness strong enough to support the love you bring each other.

I believe that mutually satisfying relationships have to be based on more than just luck, chance, or the feeling of being in love. And so I've spent decades as a researcher and therapist helping couples learn the skills and mindset that they need to enjoy the kind of sustainable, life-affirming relationships they deserve.

My book, *Love by Design* will teach you how to nurture the six foundational ingredients that allow love emerge in your coupledness (Attraction, Respect, Trust, Compassion, Shared Vision, and Being Loving), but there's no reason you can't get started building the love you desire in the meantime.

Life moves fast, and I appreciate the challenges of finding time for self-improvement, let alone nurturing a relationship. This shared journal is your cheat-sheet: A bite-sized opportunity to enhance your connection and weave the fabric of love into the tapestry of your everyday lives through weekly reflections and actions.

You'll find in the following pages fifty-two prompts—enough for every week of the year, though you don't have to go in order, or start on any particular date. It is already a positive step to make time as a couple to pause and nurture your relationship together, even for just five minutes a day.

### WHY JOURNAL TOGETHER?

Did you know that the number one reason couples separate is the feeling that they've drifted apart over time? Journaling together is a powerful way for couples to deepen their connection and schedule time to come together on a regular basis. It fosters effective communication, encourages shared reflection on experiences and goals, and provides a dedicated space for expressing emotions and gratitude. Through this collaborative practice, couples can strengthen their bond, create shared language, and navigate the journey of growth and love together.

Just as importantly, when you document what worked for you on a weekly basis you are creating a shared reference point for your coupledness for the future when you need guidance as how to get unstuck from a situation or bring in more joy and care into your relationship.

Keep it handy – on your bedside table, in your bag, or on the kitchen counter. Let it become a natural part of your day, a tool you can turn to whenever you want to strengthen your



connection. This isn't about adding more to your busy schedule; it's about infusing intention and love into what you're already doing. It's about celebrating the small victories and creating a love-filled space in the midst of your busy lives.

So, whether you're sipping morning coffee, taking a lunch break, or winding down before bed, I hope these prompts can support you in making intentional opportunity to deepen your connection and build a relationship that flourishes.

With love,  
Dr. Sara

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### WEEK 1

**REFLECTION:** What made you smile in the past week,  
and how can you share that joy with your partner?

**ACTION:** Share your joyful moment with your partner and express why it mattered.

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### WEEK 2

**Reflection:** What qualities in your partner did you appreciate most in the past week?

**Action:** Compliment your partner on one of these qualities in the coming week.

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### WEEK 3

**REFLECTION:** What's a fond memory you have with your partner?

**ACTION:** Tell your partner about this memory and share why it's special to you.

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### WEEK 4

**REFLECTION:** What's a small, thoughtful gesture your partner has done recently?

**ACTION:** Acknowledge and thank your partner for that gesture  
(even if you already did so in the moment!).

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### WEEK 5

**REFLECTION:** What's one action that your partner did in the  
past week that made you feel cared for?

**ACTION:** Name it for them.

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## WEEK 6

**REFLECTION:** What's one action that your partner did in the past week that made you feel special? (Hint: This should be something they would not do for others)

**ACTION:** Name it for them and say why it made you feel valued.

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## WEEK 7

**REFLECTION:** What is one action that you have seen from your partner in the past week that enriched your sense of trust in them?

**ACTION:** Discuss it with one another and see if this is something that could become a constant in the weeks to come (consistency is a big part of trust building).

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## WEEK 8

**REFLECTION:** What are your partner's most important values, and how do they show up in daily actions?

**ACTION:** Have a conversation about your values and how they complement each other (share up to 5).

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## WEEK 9

**REFLECTION:** How do you handle disagreements with your partner?

**ACTION:** Next time you have a disagreement, ask yourself what is the problem that you are trying to solve (instead of making it about yourself or the other person).

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## WEEK 10

**REFLECTION:** Remember a time that your partner came through for you in a way that was meaningful.

**ACTION:** Describe it to your partner, being specific about why it was meaningful, and how it felt to be able to trust your partner in that moment.

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## WEEK 11

**REFLECTION:** How do you show your partner that you trust them?

**ACTION:** check in with one another, is it verbal or specific action that would convey this to the other.

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## WEEK 12

**REFLECTION:** How do you show your partner (through action) that you respect them?

**ACTION:** Show respect by actively listening to your partner's thoughts and opinions in the coming week without judgement or trying to solve things for them.

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## WEEK 13

**REFLECTION:** How do you prioritize your partner's needs in your daily routine?

How do you know what each of you needs?

**ACTION:** Make a conscious effort to prioritize your partner's needs in the coming week.

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## WEEK 14

**REFLECTION:** What boundaries have you set in your relationship, and are they being communicated with one another?

**ACTION:** check in with each other to see if there is any confusions or need for adjustment around any boundaries.

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## WEEK 15

**REFLECTION:** In what ways do you celebrate your partner's individuality?

**ACTION:** Acknowledge and appreciate a unique quality your partner possesses.

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## WEEK 16

**REFLECTION:** How do you express gratitude towards your partner?

**ACTION:** Write a note of gratitude to your partner and leave it where they'll find it.

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## WEEK 17

**REFLECTION:** What physical and emotional aspects of your partner do you find most attractive in the present?

**ACTION:** Compliment your partner on one of these aspects in the coming week.

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## WEEK 18

**REFLECTION:** How do you keep the romance alive in your relationship?

**ACTION:** Plan a surprise date or intimate moment for your partner (even a small effort will do).

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## WEEK 19

**REFLECTION:** What activities or hobbies do you enjoy together that strengthen your bond?

**ACTION:** Spend quality time engaging in one of these activities in the coming week

(If that is not possible, take a moment this week to plan time you can spend sharing that activity within the next month).

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## WEEK 20

**REFLECTION:** How do you express your affection for your partner?

**ACTION:** Initiate physical touch or a warm embrace in the coming week.

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## WEEK 21

**REFLECTION:** How do you make your partner feel desired and wanted?

**ACTION:** Share this with one another and see if it is perceived and received by the other the way you intend it.

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## WEEK 22

**REFLECTION:** In what ways do you show compassion towards your partner's struggles?

**ACTION:** Does the other receive it the way you intend?

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## WEEK 23

**REFLECTION:** How do you handle stress or conflicts within the relationship?

**ACTION:** Discuss a time that you have handled a stressor well (individually and together) and notice what actions you can build into common practice to support each other with it (e.g. a hug, shoulder to cry on without judgment, offer take on a task that was overwhelming for the other, etc. ).

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## WEEK 24

**REFLECTION:** When was the last time you apologized and truly meant it?

**ACTION:** If necessary, apologize sincerely for any recent misunderstandings.

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## WEEK 25

**REFLECTION:** What self-care practices help you be a better partner?

**ACTION:** Take time for self-care in the past week to ensure you bring your best self to the relationship.

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## WEEK 26

**REFLECTION:** How do you actively show kindness and consideration to your partner?

**ACTION:** Perform a small, unexpected act of kindness for your partner.

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## WEEK 27

**REFLECTION:** What shared goals and dreams do you have as a couple?  
Where are you going together?

**ACTION:** Discuss progress toward these goals and reaffirm your commitment.

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## WEEK 28

**REFLECTION:** How do you envision your relationship in the next five years?

**ACTION:** Share your vision with your partner and discuss any adjustments.

What is great to have, great to adjust or great to let go of?

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## WEEK 29

**REFLECTION:** What role does communication play in achieving your relationship goals?

**ACTION:** Have an open and honest conversation about your communication styles.

Which parts are working? Give examples if you can.

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## WEEK 30

**REFLECTION:** What individual goals do you have that can enhance your partnership?

**ACTION:** discuss how you each can support one another in one of your personal goals.

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## WEEK 31

**REFLECTION:** How do you navigate changes and challenges as a team?

**ACTION:** Face a challenge together, using teamwork and communication. It could be having a talk with your child, in-laws, learning something new, going for a strenuous hike or anything else that would create a sense of overcoming a challenge together.

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## WEEK 32

**REFLECTION:** What small gestures make your partner feel loved and appreciated?

**ACTION:** Incorporate one of these gestures into your day.

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### WEEK 33

**REFLECTION:** How do you express your love during both good and challenging times?

**ACTION:** Remind your partner of your love and support, especially if they're facing difficulties.

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### WEEK 34

**REFLECTION:** What words or phrases reassure your partner in times of uncertainty?

**ACTION:** check in with each other to see if those comforting words are truly reassuring to you each.

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### WEEK 35

**REFLECTION:** How do you celebrate each other's achievements, big or small?

**ACTION:** Acknowledge and celebrate a recent accomplishment together.

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### WEEK 36

**REFLECTION:** How do you maintain a balance between independence and interdependence?

**ACTION:** Discuss examples that have worked for you in the past.

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### WEEK 37

**REFLECTION:** What was the highlight of your day with your partner?

**ACTION:** Share this highlight with your partner.

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### WEEK 38

**REFLECTION:** What brought you joy together recently

**ACTION:** Discuss strategies to create more of it together.

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### WEEK 39

**REFLECTION:** What new thing did you learn about your partner in the past week?

**ACTION:** Bring it up and ask them if they observed something new about you, you can also ask one another about one thing new they learned or experienced in the past week.

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### WEEK 40

**REFLECTION:** What aspect of your relationship are you most grateful for right now?

**ACTION:** Express gratitude to your partner for this aspect.

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### WEEK 41

**REFLECTION:** What's one thing you can do next week to strengthen your relationship?

**ACTION:** Create a daily ritual—such as a morning coffee together or an evening walk—to create consistent opportunities for connection.

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## WEEK 42

**REFLECTION:** Who are the people that bring cheers and encouragement for your coupledness and those who take more energy than they give?

**ACTION:** create rituals and come together to think about adjusting how you invest your resources (time, energy, attention and money) to create a more fulfilling social capital.

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## WEEK 43

**REFLECTION:** How have you grown individually since being in this relationship?

**ACTION:** Share your personal growth with your partner and encourage them to do the same.

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## WEEK 44

**REFLECTION:** What personal challenges are you currently facing, and how can your partner support you?

**ACTION:** Communicate your challenges and discuss ways your partner can provide support.

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### WEEK 45

**REFLECTION:** How do you balance self-love and love for your partner?

**ACTION:** Dedicate time to self-care in the past week to nourish your individual well-being.

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### WEEK 46

**REFLECTION:** What qualities do you bring to the relationship that you value most?

**ACTION:** Acknowledge and appreciate these qualities within yourself.

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### WEEK 47

**REFLECTION:** In what ways can you be a better partner moving forward?

**ACTION:** Set a small, achievable goal to improve a specific aspect of your partnership.

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## WEEK 48

**REFLECTION:** How can you actively show appreciation for your partner's efforts in the past week?

**ACTION:** Express genuine appreciation for something your partner did or said.

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## WEEK 49

**REFLECTION:** What's one thing you love about your partner's personality?

**ACTION:** Compliment your partner on this specific aspect.

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## WEEK 50

**REFLECTION:** How do you prioritize quality time with your partner?

**ACTION:** Plan an activity that allows for meaningful conversation and connection.

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## WEEK 51

**REFLECTION:** What is something your partner has said or done made you feel truly seen or heard?

**ACTION:** Discuss examples in which this feeling was present and then break it down to see what worked.

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## WEEK 52

**REFLECTION:** What's one thing you can do to make your partner's day a little brighter?

**ACTION:** Perform a small, unexpected act of kindness for your partner. Make their lives easier!

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## BONUS REFLECTIONS!

**REFLECTION:** What is something you're looking forward to in you next year together?

**ACTION:** Have a conversation or create a plan about what is about to come to create a sense of positive anticipation.

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**REFLECTION:** What was something challenging that you navigated together in the past year?

**ACTION:** Come together to acknowledge the hardship, celebrate your win, and discuss both what worked and what could be different next time.

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