

Reflective Practice for therapists: Reflection without self-criticism

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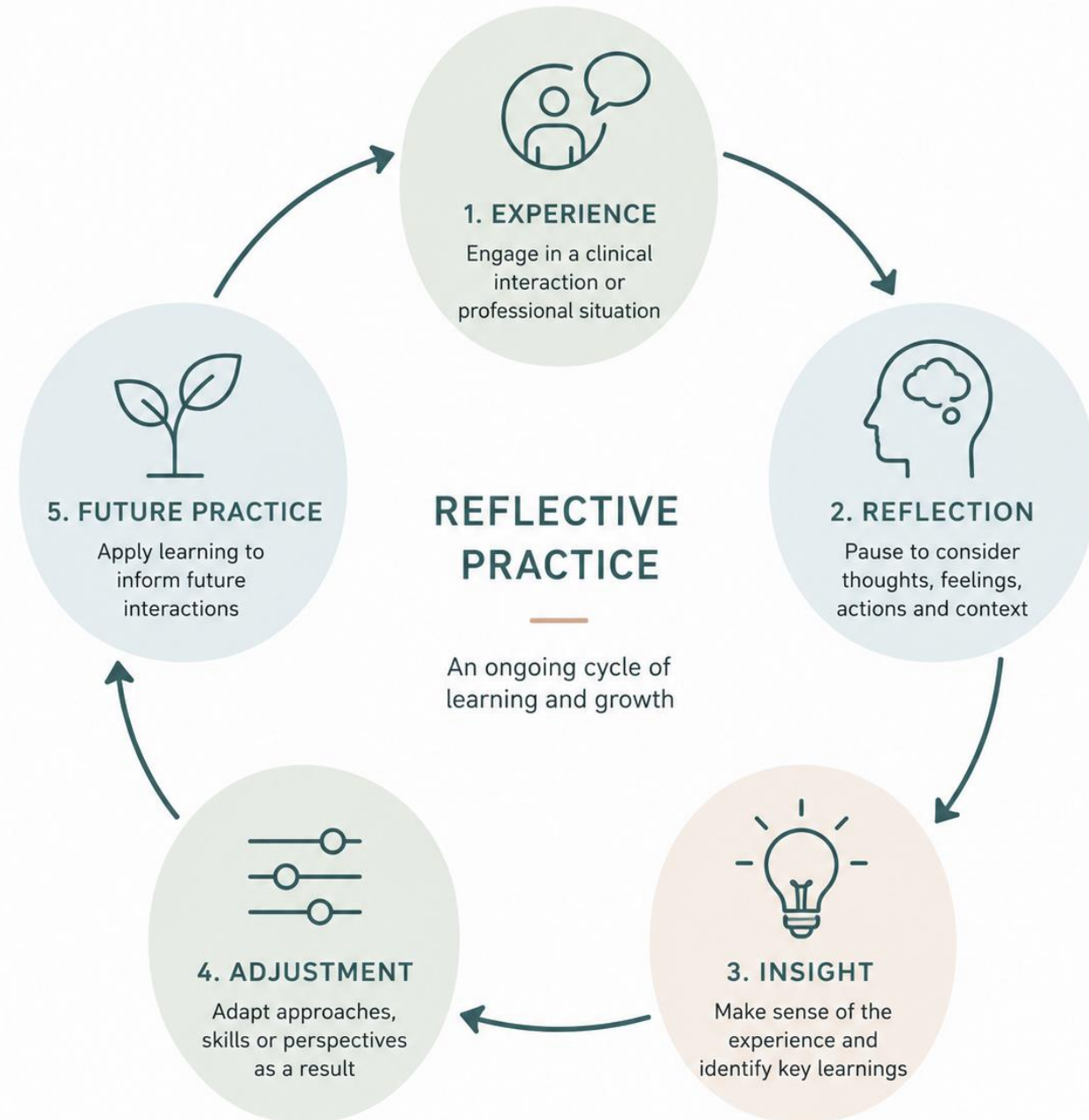
What is reflective practice?

A definition:

- Reflective practice involves actively examining thoughts, actions, decisions, emotional responses, and interpersonal processes in professional situations to learn, adapt, and improve future practice.^{1,2}

Effective reflective practice involves:

- Curiosity over criticism.
- Openness to uncertainty.
- Awareness of personal and interpersonal processes.
- Commitment to ongoing growth.



Why is reflective practice important?

- Supports professional growth and self-awareness.^{2,3}
- Improves responsiveness to clients.^{3,4}
- Helps navigate uncertainty and complexity.³
- A core feature of training and supervision.



Development of the Reflective Practice Questionnaire (RPQ)^{1,2}

- Existing reflective practice questionnaires were typically narrow or profession-specific.
 - Reflective Thinking Questionnaire.⁶
 - Reflective practice in medicine questionnaire.⁷
 - Gronigen Reflection Ability Scale.⁸
 - Reflective Practice Groups Questionnaire (RPGQ).⁹
- During development reviewed prior measures, and the pre-existing literature (e.g., Schon¹⁰).
- The RPQ was developed as a multidimensional measure for helping professions.



Emerging research and applications with the RPQ

- Validation and translation studies.¹¹⁻¹⁶
- Training and intervention studies.¹⁷⁻²⁴
- Comparison across groups.^{1,2,25,26}
- Links with empathy and critical thinking.^{22,27}
- RPQ differs from ‘general reflection’.^{2,13,28}
 - Self-reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS)²⁹



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Reflective Practice Questionnaire – Extended (RPQ-E)

The Reflective Practice Questionnaire – Extended (RPQ-E) is a 30-item self-report measure of reflective practice and related professional attributes in adults working in client-facing professional roles (Rogers et al., 2024).

🕒 5 minutes

👤 Ages 18+

☑️ Clinician self-assessment

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Reflective Practice Questionnaire – Extended (RPQ-E) Overview

Reflective practice, as conceptualised by the RPQ-E, refers to the tendency to actively reflect upon the thoughts, actions, and experiences that occur when working with clients. This includes both reflection-in-action (awareness during the interaction) and reflection-on-action (reviewing the interaction afterwards; Schön, 1983). For example, a psychologist might notice during a session that they are feeling frustrated with a client's lack of progress and use that awareness to consider whether their approach needs adjusting, or a nurse might reflect after a difficult patient interaction on what they could have communicated differently. The RPQ-E captures these kinds of work-specific reflective behaviours alongside the professional attributes that accompany them: confidence, uncertainty and stress, and work satisfaction.

Reflective Practice Questionnaire - Extended (RPQ-E)

Instructions:
Please answer the questions below that ask you about your perceptions and behaviours. Please read each question carefully, and choose the nearest option that most accurately reflects how often the statement applies to you.

	Very rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always
1. During interactions with clients I notice when my own thinking habits are affecting the interaction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. During interactions with clients I notice when my thoughts and feelings are affecting the interaction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. During interactions with clients I notice when I feel the thinking habits are affecting the interaction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I usually think about things in advance when I am with clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. After interacting with clients I often think about what I did well at.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. After interacting with clients I often think about the client's experience of the interaction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. After interacting with clients I often think about my own experience of the interaction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. After interacting with clients I often think about how I might have done things differently.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I think about how I might improve my skills to work with clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I already evaluate the strengths and weaknesses I see in my work with clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I feel that I have the experience that is needed to effectively interact with clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I feel that I have the professional skills I need to effectively interact with clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I feel that I have been working towards being in a state to effectively interact with clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I feel that I have the theoretical knowledge that is needed to effectively interact with clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I feel able to communicate in a clear and professional way.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I feel confident when communicating with clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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Reflective Practice Questionnaire - Extended (RPQ-E)

Client Name: Practice Pilot | Date administered: 18 Apr 2025
 Date of birth (age): 1 Jan 1993 (32) | Assessor: Jane Smith | Date: 18 Apr 2025

RPQ-E Subscale Scores	Average Score (1-6)	Frequency Descriptor
1. Reflective Practice	3.5	Often
2. Professional Attributes	3.2	Sometimes
3. Work Satisfaction	3.8	Often
4. Confidence	3.1	Sometimes
5. Uncertainty	2.9	Sometimes
6. Stress	3.4	Often

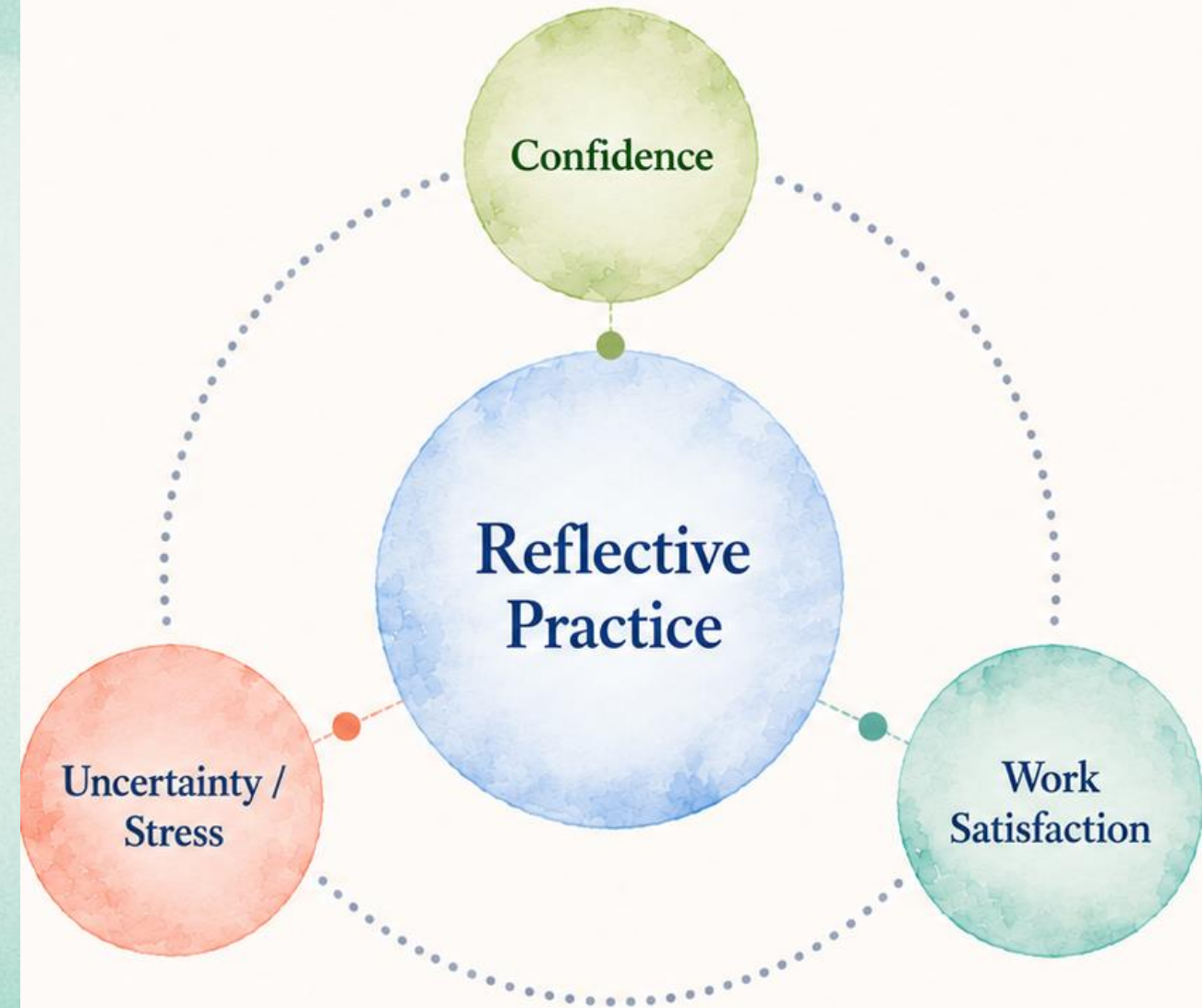
Reflective Practice Questionnaire – Extended (RPQ-E) sub-scales²

Reflective Practice (10 items)

Confidence (8 items)

Uncertainty/stress (8 items)

Work satisfaction (4 items)



Reflective Practice (10 items)

Reflection in action

1. During interactions with clients I recognize when my pre-existing beliefs are influencing the interaction.
2. During interactions with clients I consider how my personal thoughts and feelings are influencing the interaction.
3. During interactions with clients I recognize when their pre-existing beliefs are influencing the interaction.
4. During interactions with clients I consider how their personal thoughts and feelings are influencing the interaction.

Reflection on action

5. After interacting with clients I spend time thinking about what was said and done.
6. After interacting with clients I wonder about the client's experience of the interaction.
7. After interacting with clients I wonder about my own experience of the interaction.
8. After interacting with clients I think about how things went during the interaction.

Self-appraisal

9. I think about how I might improve my ability to work with clients.
10. I critically evaluate the strategies and techniques I use in my work with clients.



Interpreting your score

Reflective Practice score

Score bands based off therapist normative sample (n = 236).



These bands are for self-reflection, not for judging performance.

Confidence (8 items)

General confidence

1. I feel like I have all the experience I require to effectively interact with clients.
2. I feel like I have all the practical skills I require to effectively interact with clients.
3. I feel like I have learnt everything I need to know in order to effectively interact with clients.
4. I feel like I have all the theoretical knowledge I require to effectively interact with clients.

Communication confidence

5. I feel able to communicate so that a client can understand me easily.
6. I feel confident when communicating my ideas with a client.
7. I feel that I provide clear messages to my clients.
8. I feel capable in my ability to communicate with clients.



Interpreting your score

Confidence score

Score bands based off therapist normative sample (n = 236).



These bands are for self-reflection, not for judging performance.

Uncertainty/Stress (8 items)

Uncertainty

1. I am uncertain that my planning for a client is the best possible way to proceed.
2. I am uncertain that I am interpreting the needs of a client correctly.
3. I am uncertain about how to handle the needs of a client.
4. I am uncertain that I properly understand the needs of a client.

Stress

5. After interacting with clients I feel exhausted.
6. I find interacting with a client to be stressful.
7. I feel distressed after communicating with a client.
8. The pressure to meet needs of a client can feel overwhelming.

- Research has found a positive association with this measure and burnout in psychologists in Australia.³⁰



Interpreting your score

Uncertainty/Stress score

Score bands based off therapist normative sample (n = 236).



These bands are for self-reflection, not for judging performance.

Work Satisfaction (4 items)

1. My work provides me with a sense of fulfilment.
2. I feel like my work means more to me than simply earning money.
3. I enjoy my work.
4. I find my work rewarding.

- Research has found a negative association with this measure and burnout in psychologists in Australia.³⁰



Interpreting your score

Work Satisfaction score

Score bands based off therapist normative sample (n = 236).



These bands are for self-reflection, not for judging performance.

The double-edged sword of reflection^{1,2,30}

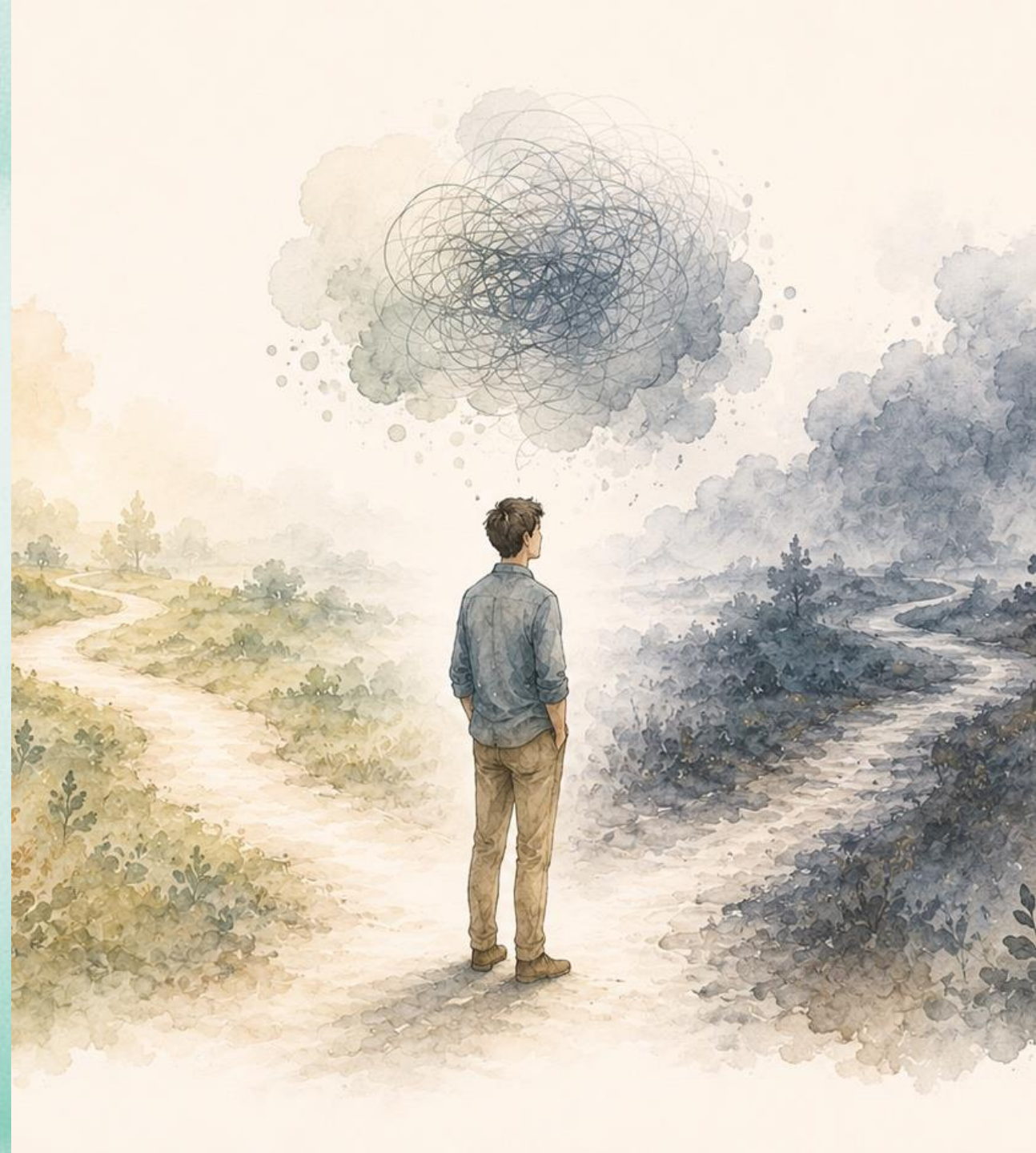
Reflective practice can support:

- Learning, self-awareness, and growth.
- Responsiveness to clients.

However, reflection can also contribute to:

- Excessive self-monitoring.
- Unhealthy self-criticism.
- Rumination & perfectionism.
- Stress and emotional exhaustion.

More reflection is not always better reflection.



From research to practice

Thanks for listening!

Now handing over to
Belinda Seymour-Wright.



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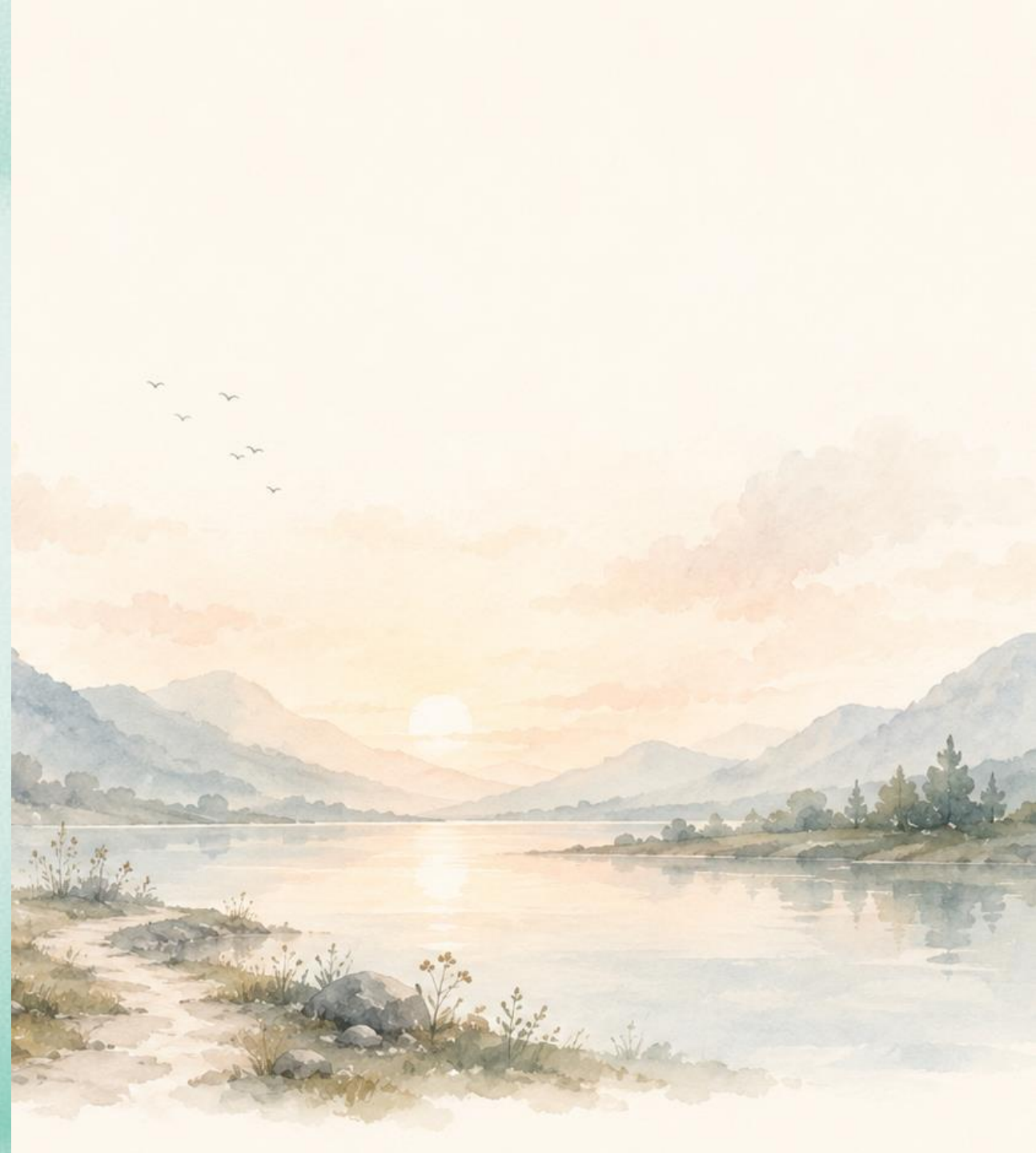
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