

The Resilient Journey

*A Journal for Healing, Growth, and Joy
While Parenting Autistic Children*

Welcome to The Resilient Journey

Parenting a child with autism is a profound and beautiful experience. One filled with love, unique challenges, moments of wonder, and opportunities for growth. Each day, you pour your heart into supporting your child, celebrating their achievements, and helping them navigate a world that may not always understand them. In doing so, you demonstrate a strength and resilience that often goes unnoticed, even by you. But W.E. see you.

W.E. see the sleepless nights, the weight of advocating for your child, the emotional tightrope you walk when managing meltdowns or navigating sensory needs. W.E. see the immense joy you feel when your child reaches a milestone or expresses love in their way. W.E. see your worry, your pride, your exhaustion, and your unwavering devotion.

This journal is a space created just for you, a sanctuary where you can pause, reflect, and breathe. It's a reminder that in the midst of giving so much to your child, you are worthy of care, too. Self-care isn't selfish; it's essential. By nurturing your well-being, you model self-love and resilience for your child. You equip yourself with the energy and clarity to navigate challenges and the capacity to savor moments of connection and joy. Healing is not about achieving perfection; it's about honoring the journey, yours and your child's.

Through these pages, you will find prompts to guide your thoughts, space to express your feelings, and tools to celebrate your victories and process your challenges. This journal isn't about fixing anything that's "wrong" but about embracing all that is right within you and your relationship with your child/children.

Remember, you are not alone. Countless other parents walk similar paths, and this journal connects you to a community of strength and understanding. Wherever you are on this journey, W.E. hope this space brings you comfort, clarity, and encouragement.

You are doing an incredible job.

With warmth and solidarity,

Williams-Edwards Autism Family Support Center



Journal Features

1. Daily and Weekly Prompts

Morning Reflection:

- How do I feel as I begin the day?
- What is one thing I can do for myself today?

Gratitude Practice:

- What moment with my child made me smile this week?
- What am I grateful for in my parenting journey?

Evening Reflection:

- What went well today, and how did I care for myself?
- What did I learn about myself or my child today?

2. Self-Care Tracker

- A structured space to track activities like meditation, exercise, or journaling. Includes a weekly overview to visualize self-care patterns and recognize areas for growth.

3. Parenting Wins and Challenges Wins:

- What is a parenting success I achieved today?

Challenges:

- What was challenging, and how did I handle it?
- What support or strategies can help me manage this challenge better?

4. Mindful Parenting Exercises

Guided practices to promote presence and mindfulness:

- Breathing exercises for moments of overwhelm.
- Post-sensory day reflection prompts.
- Creative ways to connect with your child through play.

5. Inspiration Pages

Spread throughout the journal, uplifting quotes, and affirmations, such as:

- “I am enough for my child, just as I am.”
- “Small steps lead to great progress.”
- “Healing is a journey, and I honor my progress.”

6. Specific Reflection Sections

Trigger Processing:

- What triggered me today?
- What emotions did it bring up?
- How can I respond differently next time?
- Moments of Joy:
- Blank space to describe or draw joyful moments with your child.

Child’s Growth:

- What new skill or milestone did my child achieve?

7. Monthly Check-In

A reflective practice to review progress:

- What helped me feel strong this month?
- What area of healing or self-care do I want to focus on next month?

8. Creative Space

Blank or lightly guided pages for free-form expression:

- Doodles, sketches, or vision boards.
- Letters to oneself or their child.
- Notes of encouragement or creative reflections.

Part I: Where are you now?

Daily Reflections

Part I of “The Resilient Journey” focuses on daily reflections to help you build awareness, clarity, and connection in your parenting and personal journey. These reflections are designed to encourage you to pause, check in with your emotions, and honor your mental and emotional state each day. Parenting an autistic child often comes with unpredictable challenges, but also profound joys. By engaging in these reflections, you create a safe space to process your feelings, celebrate your wins, and acknowledge the effort you pour into being present for yourself and your child. This practice helps you grow in self-compassion and resilience, reminding you that every day is an opportunity to learn and heal.

Through daily reflections, you also develop a deeper understanding of how your emotions shape your responses, relationships, and energy levels. These insights empower you to regulate your emotions more effectively, even on exhausting days, and find moments of peace amidst the demands of parenting. The purpose is not perfection but progress—to gently guide you toward becoming the best version of yourself while embracing your humanity. Part I lays the foundation for healing and growth, helping you nurture not only your child but also your own well-being.

The Resilient Journey

Balance, peace, strength, and courage are the pillars that sustain you on this incredible journey. Balance is your steadying force, reminding you to honor both your child's needs and your own. Peace is the gift you give yourself when you choose to let go of perfection and embrace the beauty of the present moment. Strength is the quiet power that carries you through the hard days, a wellspring of resilience born from love. Courage is your light, guiding you to advocate fiercely, face the unknown, and keep moving forward, even when the path feels uncertain. Together, these qualities form the foundation of a life where healing, growth, and joy coexist. Trust in their presence within you—you embody them more than you know.

Daily Reflection Entry

Date: _____

Mood Check-In: Circle the words that resonate with you today.

😊 Calm 😊 Hopeful 😊 Grateful 😊 Tired 😊 Overwhelmed 😊 Anxious 😊 Inspired 😊 Other:

Morning Intention

What do I want to focus on today for myself and my child?

Parenting Moment of the Day

What was one special or meaningful moment with my child today?

Gratitude Practice

What are three things I am grateful for today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Healing Reflection

1. How did I take care of myself today?

2. What emotions surfaced for me, and how did I navigate them?

3. What is one thing I learned about myself through today's experience?

Evening Affirmation

Write or choose an affirmation that speaks to your heart.

“I honor my journey and trust that healing unfolds in its own time.”

or

Creative Space

Use this space to doodle, write freely, or record an observation about your child’s growth.

Be Open & Give yourself Grace

Openness, understanding, acceptance, and love for yourself are powerful tools for personal growth and inner peace. Openness allows you to welcome life as it is, without judgment, and to see possibilities even in the most challenging moments. Understanding helps you recognize your unique journey, honoring your efforts and acknowledging that growth takes time. Acceptance of where you are is a gift of grace, reminding you that your worth is not tied to perfection but to the courage it takes to keep moving forward. And love for yourself is the gentle reminder that you are deserving of compassion, care, and celebration at every stage of your path. Together, these qualities nurture your spirit and empower you to live authentically and wholeheartedly.

Daily Reflection Entry

Date: _____

Mood Check-In: Circle the words that resonate with you today.

😊 Energized 😊 Calm 😊 Reflective 😊 Frustrated 😊 Overwhelmed 😊 Hopeful 😊 Inspired 😊

Other: _____

Morning Intention

What is one small act of kindness I can show myself today?

Parenting Moment of the Day

How did I connect with my child in a meaningful way today?

Gratitude Practice

What are three things that made me smile today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Healing Reflection

1. What did I do today that made me feel grounded?

2. How did I show patience toward myself or my child?

3. What strength did I discover in myself today?

Evening Affirmation

Write or choose an affirmation that speaks to your heart.

“I am proud of the love and effort I give each day.”

or

Life is Fluid

Life is not perfect, nor does it follow a straight line—and that's what makes it beautiful and meaningful. The twists and turns, the highs, and lows, all weave together to create a journey that is uniquely yours. Remember, growth often comes from the unexpected detours, and strength is built in the moments when the path seems unclear. It's okay to stumble, to pause, to take a step back; these moments are not failures but opportunities to realign with what truly matters. Embrace the imperfections and the winding road, knowing that each step you take, no matter how small, moves you forward. Trust in the process and have faith in your ability to navigate your own unique journey.

Daily Reflection Entry

Date: _____

Mood Check-In: Circle the words that resonate with you today.

😊 Peaceful 😊 Restless 😊 Hopeful 😊 Grateful 😊 Anxious 😊 Confident 😊 Reflective 😊 Other:

Morning Intention

What can I do today to feel more present and mindful?

Parenting Moment of the Day

What is one thing my child did today that made me proud?

Gratitude Practice

Who or what offered me support today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Healing Reflection

1. What boundaries did I set today to protect my peace?

2. How did I face a challenge today with courage?

3. What lesson will I carry forward from today?

Evening Affirmation

Write or choose an affirmation that speaks to your heart.

“I am learning and growing every single day.”

or

Perfectly Imperfect

It's okay to not know everything—parenting is not about perfection, but about love, effort, and growth. There is no such thing as a perfect parent because every child, every situation, and every moment is unique. What matters most is showing up with care and a willingness to learn along the way. Mistakes are not failures; they are opportunities to grow, to adapt, and to show your child the power of resilience and humility. Give yourself grace, knowing that your love and presence mean more than getting everything "right." You are enough, just as you are, and your imperfect, authentic self is exactly what your child needs.

Daily Reflection Entry

Date: _____

Mood Check-In: Circle the words that resonate with you today.

😊 Excited 😊 Calm 😊 Grateful 😊 Tired 😊 Overwhelmed 😊 Determined 😊 Content 😊 Other:

Morning Intention

What is one thing I can do to bring joy into my day?

Parenting Moment of the Day

How did I learn something new about my child today?

Gratitude Practice

What beauty or kindness did I notice today?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Healing Reflection

1. What self-care practice made the most difference today?

2. How did I manage moments of stress today?

3. What is one thing I can forgive myself for today?

Evening Affirmation

Write or choose an affirmation that speaks to your heart.

“I am a source of love and light for myself and my child.”

or

Part I Reflection

Day 1: Acknowledging Your Feelings

How do you feel today? Pause and really tune in. Are you feeling calm, hopeful, or perhaps overwhelmed and drained? Whatever it is, honor those emotions—they are valid. Understanding where you are mentally in every moment of the day is a powerful step toward healing and balance. When you take the time to reflect on your feelings, you allow yourself the space to respond with kindness rather than reacting out of frustration. Emotions are not good or bad—they are simply signals, guiding you toward what needs care and attention. Today, let your feelings be your teacher and remind yourself that it's okay to feel what you feel.

Day 2: Navigating Exhaustion with Compassion

Some days, the weight of exhaustion feels heavier than others, especially when you're pouring so much into supporting your autistic child. It's tough to regulate your emotions when you're running on empty, and moments of frustration or sadness may feel overwhelming. Take a deep breath and remind yourself: you are human. These tough days don't define you; they are a natural part of the journey. Instead of fighting the exhaustion, lean into compassion for yourself. Small acts of kindness—resting when you can, asking for help, or even stepping outside for fresh air—can remind you that your well-being matters too.

Day 3: Shifting Away from the Negative

When challenges pile up, it's easy to feel like you're sinking into negativity. But remember, there is nothing negative about striving to be the best version of yourself for you and your family. Shift the focus from what's hard to what you're doing right. Did you show patience in a tough moment? Did you share a laugh or a quiet connection with your child? Celebrate those wins, no

matter how small they seem. Each one is proof of your dedication and love. The best version of you doesn't mean a perfect you; it means a compassionate, growing, and resilient you.

Day 4: Embracing the Present Moment

How do you feel in this very moment? Pause and take it in. The present moment is where life happens, not in the worries about tomorrow or the regrets about yesterday. Embracing where you are—mentally, emotionally, and physically—helps you find clarity and peace. Even when life feels chaotic, there are moments of joy and connection waiting to be noticed. Maybe it's the sound of your child's laughter, the warmth of a hug, or simply a quiet moment of stillness. By focusing on what you can appreciate right now, you anchor yourself in the beauty of the journey, imperfections, and all.

Part II: The Point of it All

This journey is hard but there is a point.

The Purpose of Self-Healing as an Autism Parent

Self-healing is essential for autism parents because it allows you to replenish the energy and emotional strength needed to care for your child. Parenting an autistic child is a unique and rewarding journey, but it can also be physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding. Without taking the time to address your own needs and emotions, it's easy to feel burned out or overwhelmed. Self-healing is not selfish, it's a necessary act of love that ensures you can show up fully for your child and yourself. By tending to your own well-being, you model resilience and self-compassion, teaching your child these vital life skills by example.

The Role of Journaling in Self-Healing

Journaling serves as a powerful tool for self-healing because it creates a space for reflection, understanding, and release. As an autism parent, you may experience a wide range of emotions—joy, pride, frustration, guilt, and exhaustion—sometimes all in the same day. Writing down your thoughts and feelings helps you process them in a nonjudgmental way, offering clarity and perspective. Journaling allows you to celebrate your wins, explore your challenges, and document your child's milestones, creating a narrative of growth and resilience. It's a way to give voice to your inner world, freeing you from the weight of unspoken emotions and reconnecting you to your strength and purpose.

A Path to Mindfulness and Connection

Through journaling, you also cultivate mindfulness, a practice that helps you stay present and engaged in the moment. As you write, you slow down and focus on what matters most, whether it's a small victory, a hard-learned lesson, or an observation about your child's unique personality. This practice fosters a deeper connection not only to yourself but also to your child and your journey as a parent. Self-healing through journaling is a reminder that your experiences matter, your efforts are meaningful, and your story is worth telling. It's an act of empowerment and self-care that nurtures both your personal growth and your ability to support your child.

What's Next

In Part II, we will take your reflections to a deeper level by incorporating thought-provoking questions designed to encourage introspection and personal growth. These questions will guide you to explore the "why" behind your feelings, patterns, and reactions, helping you uncover insights about yourself and your parenting journey. By digging deeper, you'll have the opportunity to address unspoken fears, celebrate hidden strengths, and identify areas where healing and growth are needed. This process is not about judgment but about understanding yourself more fully, embracing your authenticity, and strengthening the foundation of love and resilience you bring to your family. Through these deeper reflections, Part II empowers you to continue evolving as both an individual and a parent.

***"Life Is a Trial by the Mile, Hard by the Yard, but a
Cinch by the Inch. "***

Understanding your fears, self-doubt, and self-esteem is a courageous step toward turning these challenges into sources of positive power and energy. Fear and self-doubt often arise when we feel uncertain or overwhelmed, but they can also guide us to areas where we need growth or support. By facing these feelings with compassion, you can transform them into tools that strengthen your resolve and clarify your purpose. Building self-esteem comes from recognizing your worth, not in perfection, but in the effort and love you bring each day. Sometimes, life feels so overwhelming that the only way to move forward is to take it second by second, minute by minute, and moment by moment, and that's okay. Those small steps, no matter how tiny, are acts of strength and resilience. They remind you that progress is not about speed but about persistence, and every moment you keep going is a testament to your courage and love for yourself and your family.

Day 1: Acknowledging Where You Are
Know your Starting Point

- How do you feel about yourself today?

- What does self-healing mean to you in this moment?

- What is one small thing you can do today to show yourself kindness?

Day 2: Exploring Your Fears

What's Stopping You?

- What are you most afraid of in your parenting journey?

- How do your fears show up in your thoughts or actions?

- What would it feel like to face one of those fears, even in a small way?

Day 3: Understanding Self-Doubt

You can't change what you don't understand.

- What is one thing you doubt about yourself as a parent or individual?

- Where do you think this self-doubt comes from?

- How can you reframe this doubt into a statement of possibility or growth?

Day 4: Reflecting on Self-Esteem

It starts within.

- How would you describe your self-esteem in one word today? Why?

- What is one area where you feel confident and proud of yourself? Why?

- What is one area where you'd like to feel more confident, and how might you start improving it? Why?

Day 5: Starting Small
Cinch by the inch, right?

- What is one small change you can make today to improve your self-esteem?

- How can you celebrate yourself for even the smallest achievements?

- What does “starting small” look like in your journey to self-healing?

Day 6: Building Understanding
Have you reached your “Ah-ha” moment?

- What have you learned about yourself so far in this journey of self-healing?

- How have your fears or doubts shaped the way you see yourself?

- What is one positive lesson you can take from your challenges?

Day 7: Embracing Progress
Remember, give yourself GRACE.

- How do you feel about the progress you've made this week?

- What is one fear or doubt you've started to address, even in a small way?

- What affirmation can you create to remind yourself of your strength as you move forward?

Reflecting on Part II: The Point of It All

As we conclude Part II, it's time to pause and ask yourself: how do you feel? Have you noticed subtle shifts in your heart and mind as you've reflected on the deeper questions of self-healing, fears, and self-esteem? Maybe you're beginning to feel a little lighter, as if the weight of unspoken emotions is easing. Or perhaps you're just starting to crack the surface, recognizing emotions you've carried for years without fully understanding them. Whatever you feel, know that this is your journey, and every step forward is significant, no matter how small.

The purpose of these reflections has been to open your heart to the possibility of change—of letting go, growing, and discovering. Have you found your heart opening yet? Maybe it's in the moments when you've celebrated a small success or recognized your strength in overcoming doubt. Perhaps it's in the times when you allowed yourself to grieve without guilt or judgment. Opening your heart is not about having all the answers; it's about allowing yourself to be present with your feelings and trusting that healing is unfolding, even when it doesn't feel linear.

Part II has been a step toward understanding and embracing the person you are becoming. It's about realizing that self-healing is not a destination but a journey—one where you learn to see your worth, honor your progress, and believe in your resilience. If you're not feeling lighter yet, that's okay. Sometimes the work takes time, and the most important thing is that you've begun. Keep asking yourself these questions and allow the answers to guide you toward a life of greater peace, balance, and love. You are on your way, and that is enough.

Part III: Let the Healing Begin

Embracing the Journey of Healing

Allowing yourself to heal is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself. Healing is not about erasing the past or denying the challenges you've faced—it's about acknowledging them, learning from them, and giving yourself permission to move forward with grace. It's okay to feel vulnerable in this process; vulnerability is a sign of strength, showing your willingness to grow. When you open yourself to healing, you create space for renewal, resilience, and hope. You deserve to release the weight of pain and self-doubt so that you can step into a life filled with possibility and joy.

Opening Yourself to Balance

A balanced life doesn't mean that every day will be perfect or free of challenges—it means creating harmony between your responsibilities and your well-being. To achieve balance, it's important to prioritize self-care as much as you prioritize caring for others. Allow yourself to set boundaries, to rest, and to ask for help when needed. Balance comes from recognizing that you cannot pour from an empty cup and that taking care of your mental, emotional, and physical health is essential to showing up fully for your loved ones. By embracing the idea of balance, you give yourself permission to lead a life that nurtures both your family and your personal growth.

Choosing Positivity

A positive life begins with a positive mindset, but that doesn't mean ignoring hardships or pretending everything is fine when it's not. Positivity is about choosing to focus on what's within your control, finding gratitude in the small moments, and believing in your capacity to overcome obstacles. It's about reframing challenges as opportunities for growth and celebrating your

progress, no matter how small. When you allow yourself to heal and embrace balance, you naturally open the door to positivity. By choosing to see the possibilities instead of the limitations, you create a life that feels not just manageable but meaningful, fulfilling, and aligned with the best version of yourself.

Everything you feel is necessary

Grieving is a natural and necessary part of processing the understanding of having an autistic child. It's not about mourning your child but rather about letting go of preconceived expectations and making space for the beauty and uniqueness of your journey together. It's also about grieving the relationships that may change or fade away when those you thought would stand by you struggle to offer the support you need. This process is not a sign of weakness but of profound love and resilience. Grieving allows you to heal and move forward with clarity, enabling you to focus on building a life that honors your child's individuality and your family's strength.

As you navigate this path, you'll discover the power of finding support within a community of people who truly understand. These are individuals who are walking or have walked the same road and who can offer empathy, guidance, and shared victories. You'll come to see the value of creating a protective space for your family—a space filled with love, respect, and acceptance. It's okay to let go of environments where you and your child are merely tolerated and instead embrace spaces where you are celebrated. Your journey is not about pleasing others; it's about cultivating a life filled with authenticity, connection, and unconditional love for yourself and your family.

The Purpose of Part III

The purpose of Part III is to help you find your own words—a space free of prompts, where you can write whatever is on your heart or mind. This section is yours to fill with thoughts, reflections, fears, hopes, or anything that feels true to you in the moment. It is a sanctuary within the pages, a place to process your emotions and experiences without judgment or structure. Here, you can discover peace amid the noise, balance in the chaos, and strength in what you once believed was weakness. This space invites you to connect deeply with yourself, to honor your journey, and to find clarity and empowerment in your unique voice.

Stay Open through this process

Monthly Check-ins

January: Setting Intentions

What are three goals or intentions I want to focus on this year?

What does healing look like for me right now?

How can I prioritize my well-being this month?

February: Cultivating Self-Love

What do I love most about myself as a parent and as a person?

How have I shown myself kindness this month?

What is one way I can nurture my self-esteem this month?

March: Reflecting on Growth

What have I learned about myself so far this year?

What progress, big or small, have I made in my healing journey?

What is one thing I am proud of this month?

April: Embracing Resilience

How have I overcome challenges this month?

What has helped me stay strong during difficult moments?

How can I continue to build resilience in the months ahead?

May: Celebrating Joy

What brought me joy this month?

How have I celebrated small victories in my parenting journey?

What can I do to create more joyful moments next month?

June: Focusing on Balance

How balanced do I feel between caring for my family and caring for myself?

What is one area of my life that feels balanced, and one that doesn't?

What adjustments can I make to create more balance in my life?

July: Recharging Energy

How have I taken time to recharge and rest this month?

What activities or moments gave me energy and inspiration?

What can I let go of to feel less drained or overwhelmed?

August: Reflecting on Community

How has my support network helped me this month?

What role does the community play in my healing journey?

Who can I reach out to for additional support or connection?

September: Honoring Progress

What milestones have I or my child reached this month?

How have I grown as a parent and individual since the start of the year?

What is one thing I am grateful for about my journey so far?

October: Navigating Challenges

What challenges did I face this month, and how did I respond to them?

What have these challenges taught me about myself?

How can I prepare myself to handle future obstacles?

November: Gratitude and Reflection

What am I most thankful for this month?

How has practicing gratitude impacted my mindset and healing?

What is one thing I want to carry forward into next month? Why?

December: Closing the Year

What was my biggest accomplishment this year?

What have I learned about healing, resilience, and self-love in the past 12 months?

How can I celebrate my progress and set intentions for the year ahead?

Our Story: The Journey Behind W.E. AFSC

My name is Jorise Williams-Edwards, and I am the proud mother of four beautiful children. My youngest two, Logynn and Carson, are both autistic, and their diagnoses reshaped my understanding of what it means to be a parent. Learning how to parent all over again—how to communicate with a nonverbal child and adapt to their unique needs—was both exhausting and eye-opening. It's a journey that challenges your patience, breaks your heart, and ultimately builds a love stronger than anything you could have imagined.

What I hoped and planned for my children's futures had to shift. I learned to let go of the expectations I once held and instead embrace the joy and fulfillment of equipping them with the tools they need to thrive in their own way. It's a must, a calling, and a labor of love that comes with sleepless nights, moments of feeling completely alone, and times of being utterly lost. Yet, even in the darkness, I found light—light in online support groups where other parents shared their stories, struggles, and victories. These connections reminded me that I was not alone, and they inspired me to create a space where others could feel that same sense of belonging.

The Williams-Edwards Autism Family Support Center (W.E. AFSC) was born from my lived experience. It is a family-led community that walks this journey every moment of every day. I am still healing, still learning, and still growing alongside my children and this incredible community. Together, we remind each other that the journey may not be easy, but it is filled with resilience, love, and hope. This center is more than a resource—it's a home for families like mine, where you can find understanding, support, and encouragement. Because when it comes to support, there's no such thing as too much, and no one should ever feel they're walking this path alone.

Thank You from the Williams-Edwards Autism Family Support Center

Dear Family,

Thank you for opening your heart to the journey of healing and resilience. We know this path is not an easy one—it is filled with challenges, uncertainties, and moments that test your strength in ways you never imagined. But it is also a journey filled with love, growth, and incredible breakthroughs that remind you of the beauty and power of your unique story.

At the Williams-Edwards Autism Family Support Center, we want you to know that you are never alone. While the road may feel overwhelming at times, we are here to walk beside you, to listen, to encourage, and to remind you of the strength you already carry within. Together, we form a community of families who understand, uplift, and celebrate one another.

Your willingness to embrace healing and resilience inspires us. Every small step you take matters, not just for you, but for your child and your family. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your journey. Remember, we are all in this together, and together, we will continue to find hope, strength, and joy.

With gratitude and support,

The Williams-Edwards Autism Family Support Center

