



Wintering Well: A Northwoods Journal

16 weeks of gentle prompts and quiet reflection



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Greetings!

I'm Marta, founder of Northwoods Vibes, and I'm thrilled to share something I've created just for this season: the Winter Journal.

Working from home here in the Northwoods—surrounded by forests, lakes, and quiet trails—has taught me the value of pausing, reflecting, and noticing the little things that make each day meaningful. That insight inspired this journal. It's the companion I wish I'd had in my first isolated winter here—and now I get to share it with you.

Introduction

Winter in the Northwoods has a rhythm all its own—quiet, slow, and deeply grounding.

This journal is your companion for the season. Each week, you'll explore gentle reflections and simple practices that help you notice what's around you—the crunch of snow underfoot, the warmth of a familiar corner, the comfort of shared connection.

You don't need to do it perfectly. Just show up with curiosity.

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How to Use This Journal

Take your time. A few minutes each week is enough.

Create a cozy space. A warm drink, a quiet corner, and an open mind.

Reflect honestly. There are no right or wrong answers—these pages are for you.

Look back. By spring, you'll have a collection of stories, insights, and memories—your own winter map.

What You'll Gain

- These small reflections can help you:
- Stay grounded and present
- Notice beauty in everyday life
- Strengthen connection—with nature and with others
- Move into spring with clarity and intention

I hope this journal brings you the same moments of clarity, warmth, and connection that it has brought me.

With Winter Cheer,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marta". The script is fluid and elegant, with a large, sweeping 'M' and a cursive 'arta'.

Founder, Northwoods Vibes

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"Winter is the time for
comfort, for good food
and warmth, for the touch
of a friendly hand and for a
talk beside the fire: it is the
time for home."

— Edith Sitwell

Week 1 | Nov 30 - Dec 6

Winter Wildlife



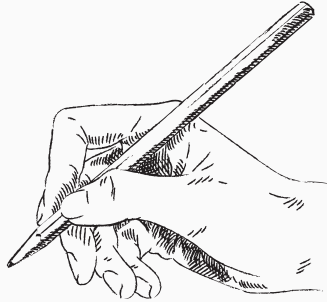
Early winter settles in; snow makes movement visible.

REFLECTIONS

- WHAT SIGNS OF WILDLIFE HAVE YOU NOTICED — TRACKS, BIRDS, SOUNDS?
- HOW DOES TIME OUTDOORS AFFECT YOUR SENSE OF PACE?
- WHAT WINTER BEHAVIORS IN ANIMALS COULD INSPIRE YOUR OWN ROUTINES?

ACTIVITY

Take a short walk; note
three observations.
Sketch or photograph one.



Your Sketchpad - Unleash your creativity!

Week 2 | Dec 7 - 13

Home Comfort



Cold pushes us inward; indoor space becomes center.

REFLECTIONS

- WHICH CORNER OF YOUR HOME FEELS MOST COMFORTING — AND WHY?
- WHAT SMALL HABIT HELPS YOU SLOW DOWN AT HOME?
- WHAT COULD YOU ADD OR REMOVE TO MAKE YOUR SPACE MORE WELCOMING?

ACTIVITY

Create a cozy nook; enjoy it
for 10-15 minutes.

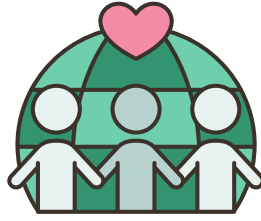


15 Small Habits to Slow Down at Home

1. Make a warm drink and sit for a few quiet minutes
2. Put your phone in another room during meals
3. Take five slow breaths when you walk in the door
4. Read a few pages of a book before bed
5. Step outside for a minute of fresh air
6. Play calm music while cooking or winding down
7. Do a quick tidy of one small surface (counter, nightstand)
8. Sit with a pet or loved one – no multitasking
9. Take a 10-minute walk around the block or yard
10. End the day by noting three good moments
11. Have a "no-rush" morning once a week
12. Stop to look out the window when the weather changes
13. Keep a regular "lights-lowered" hour before bed
14. Keep phones/screens away from the bedroom
15. Take a short stretch break between tasks

Week 3 | Dec 14 - 20

Community



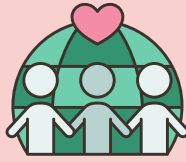
Holiday energy grows; community feels closer.

REFLECTIONS

- NOTICE SOMEONE NEARBY WHO ADDS LIGHT OR LAUGHTER TO YOUR DAY—HOW CAN YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THEM?
- WHERE COULD YOU STEP OUTSIDE YOUR USUAL ROUTINE TO MEET SOMEONE NEW OR SHARE A MOMENT THIS WEEK?
- WHAT SMALL GESTURE COULD YOU OFFER THAT MIGHT BRIGHTEN A NEIGHBOR'S OR FRIEND'S DAY?

ACTIVITY

Check in with a neighbor; attend a local gathering or market.



What I'm grateful for:

How I want to feel:

What I want to do:

Who I appreciate:

Notes:

Week 4 | Dec 21 - 27

Holiday Connection



The holidays gather us – in person or in memory.

REFLECTIONS

- IS THERE SOMEONE YOU'VE LOST TOUCH WITH WHO COULD USE A NOTE, CALL, OR SMALL MESSAGE THIS SEASON?
- WHAT MOMENT, MEMORY, OR TRADITION FILLS YOU WITH WARMTH THIS TIME OF YEAR?
- HOW COULD YOU CREATE A NEW WAY TO SHOW GRATITUDE TO SOMEONE WHO MATTERS TO YOU?

ACTIVITY

Share a note, call, or small gesture with a neighbor or friend.

Attend a local winter gathering, market, or event to meet new people.



What I'm grateful for:

Who may need a kind word?

A past connection to rekindle:

Who I appreciate:

Notes:

Week 5 | Dec 28-Jan 3

New Year Beginnings



A natural pause between seasons and years.

REFLECTIONS

- WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BEGIN — EVEN IN A SMALL WAY?
- WHAT HABIT DESERVES MORE OF YOUR ATTENTION THIS YEAR?
- WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO RELEASE AS YOU START FRESH?

ACTIVITY

Write a short note to your future self or set a simple weekly ritual.



What I'd like to START

What I'd like to STOP

What I'd like to do MORE of

Who will I CONNECT with

Other goals or intentions for the year ahead

Week 6 | Jan 4 - Jan 10

Declutter / Physical Space



Winter is long; a tidy space helps lighten the load.

REFLECTIONS

- WHICH AREA FEELS MOST IN NEED OF CLEARING — AND WHY?
- HOW DOES CLUTTER AFFECT YOUR FOCUS OR MOOD?
- WHAT'S ONE SMALL IMPROVEMENT YOU CAN FINISH IN 20 MINUTES?

ACTIVITY

→ Declutter one small area; donate or recycle.



Quick Declutter Checklist (15 minutes or less each).

- ☐ Empty one junk drawer (discard, recycle, keep)
- ☐ Clear off and wipe one countertop or table surface
- ☐ Sort and recycle unread flyers/mail stack (one pile)
- ☐ Unsubscribe from 3 email lists you never read
- ☐ Delete unused apps you won't open again
- ☐ Clear your smartphone home screen – move 5 apps to folders
- ☐ Tidy one shelf in a closet (stack or donate items)
- ☐ Clean out one kitchen utensil drawer
- ☐ Recycle old receipts and paper scraps from your wallet
- ☐ Quick sweep or vacuum one entryway or mudroom area
- ☐ Empty one small box or tote of "maybe" items – decide keep/donate
- ☐ Sort one set of photos on your phone – delete blurry duplicates
- ☐ Wipe down and organize one bathroom cabinet shelf
- ☐ Toss expired food from one pantry shelf or spice jar
- ☐ Clear the top of your nightstand – leave only essentials
- ☐ Sort and fold one small pile of laundry or linens
- ☐ Remove 5 bookmarks or saved tabs in your browser
- ☐ Archive or delete 10 old files from your desktop
- ☐ Donate one bag (or box) of clothes you haven't worn in a year
- ☐ Clean out one shoerack – pair or donate mismatches
- ☐ Streamline one surface of your workspace – only daily tools remain
- ☐ Remove dead batteries and recycle old electronics responsibly
- ☐ Clear out one set of kitchen containers (match lids to bottoms)

Week 7 | Jan 11–17

Nature - Snow & Stillness



Deep winter; days are quiet, the landscape white.

REFLECTIONS

- WHEN IS YOUR WORLD MOST QUIET — EARLY MORNING, EVENING, SNOWFALL?
- WHICH WINTER DETAILS — TEXTURES, PATTERNS, COLOR — CATCH YOUR EYE?
- WHERE COULD YOU ADD A MOMENT OF CALM EACH DAY?

ACTIVITY

→ Spend time observing outdoors; sketch or photograph what stands out.



What slows down in winter?

When do you notice silence?

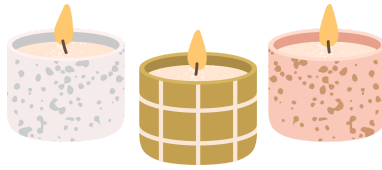
Favorite winter scape near
your home?

What sounds do you observe
in the weather?

Other Notes:

Week 8 | Jan 18–24

Cozy Home Rituals



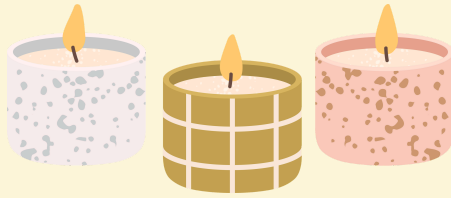
Nights are long; small routines bring warmth.

REFLECTIONS

- WHAT EVENING ROUTINE HELPS YOU SETTLE?
- WHAT FOOD, DRINK, OR PASTIME BRINGS COMFORT?
- WHAT COULD YOU DO ONCE THIS WEEK TO END THE DAY INTENTIONALLY?

ACTIVITY

→ Set aside 15 minutes for a calming ritual — candle, tea, reading, fire.



Comfort Foods – Make Soon!

Drinks That Relax Me

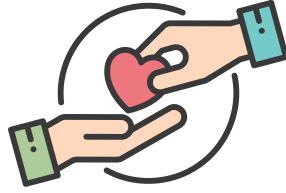
What I'd Like to Read

Name some cozy favorites..

Other Notes

Week 9 | Jan 25–31

Community Giving



Midwinter invites small actions to lift others.

REFLECTIONS

- WHO MIGHT APPRECIATE A KIND WORD OR GESTURE RIGHT NOW?
- HOW COULD YOU OFFER HELP WITHOUT OVEREXTENDING?
- WHAT SKILL OR STRENGTH COULD YOU SHARE WITH OTHERS?

ACTIVITY

→ Write a note of thanks; donate; or lend a hand locally.



Who can I complement today?

Who can I thank today?

Who may benefit from my donations?

How can I share my talents?

Other notes or thoughts

Week 10 | Feb 1–7

Winter Wellness / Self Care



Energy fluctuates; check in with body + mind.

REFLECTIONS

- WHAT DOES YOUR BODY NEED MOST TODAY — REST, MOVEMENT, FRESH AIR?
- WHAT HELPS YOU FEEL MENTALLY CLEAR?
- WHAT COULD YOU DO THIS WEEK TO SUPPORT YOUR HEALTH?

ACTIVITY

→ Choose one self-care task: stretch, walk, rest, doctors appointment, drink more water.



What do I need most today:
rest, connection, or
activity?

What's one thing that makes
me feel calm or happy?

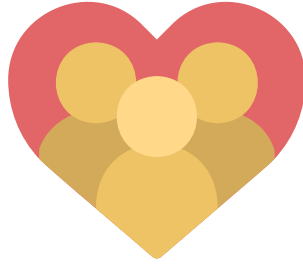
What can I let go of today?

Am I current on all of my
“visits” (doctor, dentist,
etc.)?

Other Notes:

Week 11 | Feb 8–14

Friends and Support



Connection warms the coldest days.

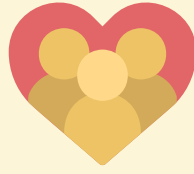
REFLECTIONS

- WHO DO YOU FEEL GOOD AROUND — AND WHY?
- HOW CAN YOU SPEND INTENTIONAL TIME WITH SOMEONE THIS WEEK?
- WHAT HELPS YOU MAINTAIN STRONG RELATIONSHIPS?

ACTIVITY

Invite someone for a short winter walk or coffee and really connect.

Share a cozy experience together...like cooking, crafting, or watching a favorite movie.



WHO do I want to see more?

WHAT can we do together?

What's one meaningful way
you can show up for
someone this week?

WHEN to set a plan?

Other notes about connecting with friends and family

Week 12 | Feb 15 - 21

Water and Ice



Frozen water changes the landscape; new patterns appear.

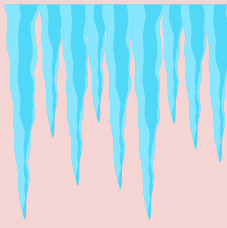
REFLECTIONS

- HOW DO FROZEN LAKES OR RIVERS MAKE YOU FEEL — CALM, SMALL, CURIOUS?
- WHAT DOES WATER TEACH YOU ABOUT FLEXIBILITY OR STEADINESS?
- WHAT HELPS YOU MAINTAIN A SENSE OF FLOW IN DAILY LIFE?

ACTIVITY

→ Visit water nearby; sketch, photograph, or describe what you see.

Take a short mindful walk near frozen water.



What natural sights or sounds catch your attention today?

How does being outside affect your mood or energy?

What patterns in nature feel familiar or comforting?

Other notes or thoughts

Week 13 | Feb 22 – 28

Digital & Mental Clearing



Late winter brings mental clutter; time to lighten.

REFLECTIONS

- WHICH DIGITAL HABITS WEIGH ON YOU MOST?
- WHAT MENTAL WORRY COULD YOU SET ASIDE THIS WEEK?
- WHAT SMALL CHANGE COULD MAKE YOUR DAYS CLEARER?

ACTIVITY

→ Unsubscribe, clean files and inboxes, limit notifications, or schedule screen-free time.



10 Tips to Declutter Digital Space. Try This week!

- ☐ Turn off non-essential notifications this week
- ☐ Limit social scrolling to set times
- ☐ Unsubscribe from emails you never read
- ☐ Delete apps you haven't used in 30+ days
- ☐ Take one evening this week screen-free
- ☐ Create a calm workspace (tidy + no phone)
- ☐ Journal before opening your phone in the morning
- ☐ Move unused files into an archive folder
- ☐ Choose one mental worry to set aside
- ☐ Replace 10 min of scrolling with reading, walking, or quiet

Week 14 | Feb 28 - March 6

Creativity and Home Space



Late winter invites small bursts of creativity.

REFLECTIONS

- WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU MADE SOMETHING JUST FOR FUN?
- WHICH SPACE AT HOME SPARKS CREATIVITY?
- WHAT SIMPLE PROJECT WOULD BRING YOU SATISFACTION?

ACTIVITY

Try a small creative project: drawing, baking, crafting, or decorating.

Rearrange or refresh one cozy area in your home.



Creative Brainstorm

If time, money and talent were not barriers, what creative project would you like to take on?

What small creative activity could you try this week?

Week 15 | March 7 - 13

Nature and Seasonal Change



Hints of spring arrive; the woods soften.

REFLECTIONS

- WHAT SIGNS OF SEASONAL CHANGE HAVE YOU NOTICED?
- WHAT OUTDOOR ACTIVITY ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?
- WHAT SMALL TASK COULD PREPARE YOU FOR SPRING?

ACTIVITY

Take a nature walk and photograph early signs of seasonal change. Plan one outdoor activity to enjoy the end of winter.



Prepare Physically

- ☐ Refresh your winter workout routine or add gentle movement
- ☐ Get outside at least once this week
- ☐ Plan or map out spring projects (garden, cabin, repairs)
- ☐ Declutter one small space (drawer, closet, mudroom)
- ☐ Do a pantry/gear check for spring activities
- ☐ Schedule needed appointments (health, home maintenance)

Prepare Emotionally

- ☐ Reflect on what you want more of this spring
- ☐ Identify one habit to leave behind
- ☐ Set a small goal or intention for the new season
- ☐ Revisit your budget for spring plans or travel
- ☐ Spend time imagining outdoor activities you're excited for
- ☐ Create a weekly ritual to nurture calm (journaling, reading, prayer, tea)

Week 16 | March 14 - 30

Reflection and Growth



Winter loosens; spring draws closer.

REFLECTIONS

- WHAT HABITS OR INSIGHTS FROM WINTER WILL YOU CARRY FORWARD?
- WHAT ARE YOU READY TO LEAVE BEHIND?
- WHAT INTENTION WILL GUIDE YOU INTO SPRING?

ACTIVITY

→ Make a simple spring plan: one priority, one ritual, one goal.



Priority

Ritual

Goal

Congratulations

You made it.

Sixteen weeks of noticing, pausing, and being present.

Thank you for showing up – for yourself, for this season.

As winter shifts toward spring, carry these simple practices with you:
a slow walk, a steady breath, a moment to look closely at what's right in front of you.

The reflections you gathered here will continue to guide you – like a familiar trail, a quiet lake, or the glow of a cabin window on a dark night.

If this journal brought calm, inspiration, or curiosity to your winter, we'd love to stay connected and hear what you discovered.

- Share your reflections with hashtag #NorthwoodsVibes
- Follow Northwoods Vibes on Pinterest, Instagram or Facebook

See you out there – under the pines, on the ice, or wherever stillness finds you.

