

Vision Journaling Protocol: Validation and Demonstration of Effectiveness

Melena Vandervoort^{1,2}, Rena Kirkland, Ph.D.¹, Dwayne Vandervoort, D.D., CCht.²,
and Colleen M. Schaffner, Ph.D.¹,

¹ Psychology Department, Adams State University, 208 Edgemont Blvd. Alamosa, Colorado
81101 U.S.A

² Radical Freedom Project Intl.

Abstract

Journaling is effective for improving individuals' well-being on a variety of mental health measures. The purpose of our study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a newly developed journaling program and survey tool, termed the Vision Journaling Protocol, developed through the Radical Freedom Project Intl. To assess the effectiveness of the Vision Journaling Protocol, we developed the Radical Freedom Project Intl. Survey (RFPIS). Our study had two aims: to examine the reliability and validity of the RFPIS and to determine if the participants' overall well-being improved following engagement in the program. We hypothesized that participants would experience: increased autonomous functioning; an increased ability to forgive and connect with healthy relationships; improved interconnectedness with nature; improved capacity for gratitude; and heightened concentration and mindfulness. Participants ($n = 48$) engaged in the program for 16 weeks. We surveyed participants before and after engaging in the Vision Journaling Protocol. The subscales in the RFPIS had acceptable to excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's alphas ranged from .79 to .92) apart from one subscale (connectedness to nature) which demonstrated questionable internal consistency ($\alpha = .60$). We found evidence of concurrent validity as the RFPIS subscales significantly correlated with previously validated measures (r ranged from .29 to .75). Finally, results indicated that participants experienced statistically significant increases in the six areas measured. While our sample is small, our data suggest the RFPIS is a reliable and valid measure, and that the Vision Journaling Protocol is an effective method for improving quality of life in the short term.

Keywords: journaling, positive psychology, mental well-being

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The Radical Freedom Project Intl. was originally conceived as a residential facility for inmates as an alternative to incarceration. However, as the program was about to launch, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S., making any residential program impossible. One component of the overall planned intervention was daily journaling, delivered as an online, multi-week program. Journaling is an established healthy and creative vehicle for emotional expression and improved health (Dimitroff, 2016). Evidence shows that journaling is an effective tool for improving well-being (Rash, 2011; Harris, 2006; Coronado-Montoya, 2016; Passmore, 2017; Sheldon, 2002), reducing stress, and cultivating improved self-awareness and healthy relationships (Dimitroff, 2016). Journaling also promotes well-being and self-development (Smyth et al., 2018). In addition, journaling is an evidence-based method for achieving overarching positive mental and physical health (Redwine et al., 2016; Smyth et al., 2018; Stapleton et al., 2021; Stice et al., 2007). For instance, in a study with psychology student volunteers ($n = 41$), participants were assigned to either a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) journaling class or a non-CBT journaling class. Results indicated that regardless of the journaling condition, they experienced increased self-efficacy and locus of control (Fritson, 2007). The journaling program we developed addressed the following topic areas: autonomous functioning (self-congruence), goal setting, forgiveness, gratitude, mindfulness, and spending time in nature. Research shows that each practice is related to positive mental and physical health outcomes. In the section that follows, we briefly review the literature demonstrating the value of goal setting, cultivating gratitude, practicing mindfulness and forgiveness, and spending time in nature.

Autonomous functioning is the ability to take independent action, especially when it aligns with personal goals or values. Research demonstrates that activities such as practicing mindfulness

and setting goals are effective in promoting autonomous functioning. For example, Monteiro et al. (2019) examined the relationship between mindfulness and value congruence after an 8-week mindfulness intervention. Participants ($n = 61$) demonstrated significantly greater self-congruence and a decrease in value incongruence after the mindfulness intervention. The technique of goal setting is a well-studied method of enhancing awareness of an individual's specific plan and envisioning a desired future state (Schippers & Ziegler, 2019). The technique is supported by Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs, Bandura's (2002) social cognitive theory, and operant-based behaviorism (Skinner, 1963). In a study of college students ($n = 102$), Bundick et al. (2011) found that goal setting improved life satisfaction and increased students' desire to act. Researchers also show that goal setting promotes hope and improves personal meaning, psychological well-being, effort, and quality performance (Clarke et al., 2009; Lunenburg, 2011). Additionally, Hematian et al. (2017) found that teaching goal setting to undergraduate students led to significant increases in their self-directed learning and achievement motivation. In a meta-analysis of 94 studies examining the association between implementation intentions and goal achievement, Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006) found a moderate mean effect size ($d = .65$), indicating that when individuals use specific intentions, they are more likely to achieve their goals. The authors reported that implementing intentions helps individuals achieve their goals by improving self-regulatory processes.

Researchers repeatedly show that strong social bonds positively influence psychological and physical health (Umberson et al., 2010). Positive relationships reduce the impact of stress, improve physical health, and foster a sense of meaning and purpose in life (Holt et al., 2010; Umberson & Karas Montez, 2010). Furthermore, Umberson et al. (2010) and Thoits et al. (1995) reviewed research showing that adults who are more socially engaged are healthier and live longer

than their less socially connected peers. Not only do social relationships have positive health benefits, but the benefits endure long after social connections occur (Cohen et al., 2004; Uchino et al., 2004). Forgiveness is a motivational change following an interpersonal transgression and an important factor in healthy relationships (McCullough et al., 2001). In addition to being related to positive social relationships, forgiveness also predicts life satisfaction and subjective happiness in a study of 380 Turkish university students aged 18 to 25 (Eldeleklioglu, 2015). The correlation between forgiveness and subjective happiness was examined in a study of 828 university students (Batik, 2017). Furthermore, experiencing and practicing forgiveness improves happiness, spiritual well-being, and psychological prosperity (Wulandrari et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2014).

Within positive psychology, the construct of gratitude encompasses a regular practice of observing, acknowledging, and appreciating positive elements of life (Wood et al., 2008). There is a substantial body of literature supporting a positive association between actively practicing gratitude and overall well-being and a positive outlook on life (reviewed in Wood et al., 2010). Gratitude is so powerful that it is the subject of a phone app that facilitates daily practice (Kloos et al., 2022). In an analysis of data from an Ecological Momentary Assessment study ($n = 4,825$), Newman (2021) found that practicing gratitude strongly predicted blood pressure, stress intensity and frequency, sleep quality, and expectations and reflections for the day. But an even stronger relationship was observed between gratitude and one's sense of appreciation toward others, as well as pleasantness, when reflecting on the best part of their day.

Mindfulness, defined as moment-to-moment awareness without judgment (Siegel, 2009), improves emotional regulation (Hülshager et al., 2013; Arch & Landy, 2015), working memory capacity, mental clarity, sustained attention (Van Vugt, 2015), positive affect, emotional intelligence (Charoensukmongkol, 2014), empathy towards others (Jones et al., 2019), and

kindness, compassion, and acceptance toward oneself (Raab, 2014). Furthermore, in a quasi-experimental study, Heeren and Philippot (2011) found that mindfulness was negatively correlated with rumination in a sample of 39 participants. Similarly, other researchers found that anxiety (Verplanken & Fisher, 2014), depression, and negative affect are negatively correlated with mindfulness (Schreiner & Malcolm, 2008). Additionally, the ability to respond constructively to relationship stress and communicate effectively is associated with mindfulness (David & Hayes, 2011). For example, Burpee and Langer (2005) demonstrated that mindfulness practice was associated with relationship satisfaction in a sample of 95 married couples. The participants completed a brief questionnaire on overall life satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and perceived similarity between themselves and their spouse. A regression analysis revealed that a positive correlation existed between mindfulness and marital satisfaction. Lastly, research by Davidson et al. (2003) found that mindfulness positively affects the brain and body. After an intensive 8-week mindfulness training program, participants demonstrated increased activation in brain regions associated with positive emotions. Results also revealed a link between mindfulness and improved immune function compared with a wait-list control group. Other researchers identified positive associations between mindfulness and neurological change, including thicker brain regions associated with attention (Tang et al., 2015; David & Hayes, 2011), higher pain tolerance, and improved memory (Congleton et al., 2015).

A further practice that fosters mental well-being is spending time in nature. Research demonstrates that four to five hours a week in nature provides significant cognitive and physical benefits (Keniger et al., 2013; White et al., 2019; Capaldi, 2015). Exposure to nature reduces stress, depression, and anxiety levels (Pearson & Craig, 2014; Cox et al., 2012), improves memory, attention, impulse control, positive affect (Bratman et al., 2012), and increases self-esteem,

academic performance, and reduces anger (Keniger et al., 2013). Even brief exposure to nature, such as a 10-15 min walk outside, increased connectedness to nature, attentional capacity, positive emotion, and the ability to reflect on a life problem in a sample of 76 introductory psychology students (Mayer et al., 2009).

The purpose of our study was twofold: to develop and examine the reliability and validity of a new questionnaire for assessing the above constructs, and to evaluate the effectiveness of our Vision Journaling Protocol. We hypothesized that participants would experience positive increases in: a) autonomous functioning; b) envisioning a life purpose; c) the ability to forgive; d) gratitude; e) mindfulness; and f) interconnectedness with the natural environment.

Method

Participants

We used a combination of convenience and snowball sampling to recruit our participants. Recruitment processes began when we reached out to the Hypnosis Motivation Institute (HMI) student body. We recruited two different cohorts. The first cohort consisted of 8 HMI students and the second cohort had 14 HMI students. Snowball sampling was used to recruit the remaining participants. The HMI participants ($n = 22$) recruited an additional 26 individuals for a total sample size of 48 American adults (39 female, 9 male). The first cohort participated in the fall of 2022 ($n = 21$), and the second cohort participated in the spring of 2023 ($n = 27$). Almost two-thirds (62%) of the participants identified as White ($n = 30$), and the rest of the sample identified as Latinx, Black, Asian, and other ($n = 13$; $n = 2$; $n = 1$; $n = 2$, respectively).

Measures and Materials

To examine the efficacy of the Vision Journaling Protocol, we developed the Radical Freedom Project Intl. Survey designed to assess the six variables of interest (i.e., autonomous

functioning, vision and purpose, forgiveness, gratitude, mindfulness, and connectedness with nature). After the initial survey development, we examined the reliability of the subscales and assessed criterion validity using concurrent validity methods (Allen, 2017). In the section below, we describe the Radical Freedom Project Intl. Survey and the six previously developed scales that we selected to test concurrent validity.

Radical Freedom Project Intl. Survey (RFPIS)

We initially conducted a pilot study in the Fall of 2021, during which we developed a 38-item survey measuring 6 constructs. At the end of the pilot study, we examined the internal consistency of the subscales with Cronbach's alpha, which revealed 16 poor questions (i.e., items that contributed to Cronbach's alpha being 0.7 or lower). The poor questions were modified or replaced. The updated 38-item survey uses a 7-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The survey was designed to measure the following subscales: autonomous functioning (13 items), envisioning a life purpose (7 items), an ability to forgive and connect with healthy relationships (7 items), a sense of gratitude (3 items), mindfulness (4 items), and interconnectedness with nature (3 items). Authors DV and MV developed the survey. In the results section, we report internal consistency and test-retest reliability.

Life Engagement Scale

The Life Engagement scale is a 6-item questionnaire that uses a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." It is intended to measure purpose in life, which measures the extent to which individuals engage in activities they value. Scheier et al. (2006) found evidence of test-retest reliability (correlations ranged from .61 to .76), and internal, discriminant, and predictive validity. Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha (α) for our dataset was .83 suggesting good reliability.

The Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS)

We used 13 items from the KIMS questionnaire (Baum et al., 2010) that measures mindfulness skills. Participants respond to items on a 5-point scale from “never or rarely true” to “very often or always true.” We chose three items from each of the four subscales (except for the subscale of “observe items,” in which we selected four items as it was the longest section of the KIMS survey). Baum et al. (2009) reported strong internal consistency across their four subscales ($\alpha = .75$ to $.88$) and found evidence of construct validity using confirmatory factor analysis. The 13-item scale that we used demonstrated good reliability for our sample ($\alpha = .88$).

The Gratitude Questionnaire

The Gratitude Questionnaire is a 6-item survey with a 7-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (McCullough & Emmons, 2002), designed to assess an individual’s proneness to experience gratitude in daily life. McCullough and Emmons (2002) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.83, and test-retest reliability was .72. Cronbach’s alpha was .77 for our dataset, demonstrating acceptable reliability.

The Heartland Forgiveness scale

We used the full Heartland Forgiveness scale, which measures an individual’s forgiveness of self, others, and situations (Thompson & Snyder, 2005). The 18-item survey uses a 7-point scale ranging from “almost always false of me” to “almost always true of me.” Evidence suggests good predictive and construct validity (Bugay et al., 2012). Asgari et al. (2012) found that the Cronbach’s alpha for the overall scale was 0.92. For our data, reliability was excellent ($\alpha = .94$).

The Index of Autonomous Functioning

To assess whether the autonomous functioning subscale from the RFPIS showed evidence of concurrent validity, we used the authorship/self-congruence subscale from the Index of the

Autonomous Function Scale (Weinstein et al., 2012). Participants respond to items on a 5-point scale ranging from “not at all” to “very much.” A series of seven validation studies demonstrated the congruence subscale had adequate reliability ranging from .83 to .89 and an average of .85 (Weinstein et al., 2012). For our dataset, we found Cronbach’s alpha was .76 for the congruence subscale, demonstrating acceptable reliability.

The Connectedness to Nature Scale

We used 6 items from the Connectedness to Nature Scale (Mayer & McPherson, 2004) to examine concurrent validity with our connection-with-nature subscale. Participants responded to items on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The measure showed good reliability ($\alpha = .80$; Navarro et al., 2017), and we found that the 6-item version demonstrated good reliability in our dataset ($\alpha = .86$).

Vision Journaling Protocol Online Program

The Vision Journal is an online interface that participants engage with at least once a day, and it is divided into eight sections, six of which pertain to the survey items. When participants make an entry in one of the eight sections, they receive immediate positive feedback in the form of points, which lead to badge awards.

The intentions section prompts participants to plan proactive daily actions and the attitude they will use when approaching their daily activities. One of the most important entries in the journal is about discovering a vision and purpose in life. Participants are aided in the process of developing what we call power statements, which are goals, big or small, that the individual has about their desired lifetime achievements, career, health and wellbeing, desired skillsets, and their best possible self.

Another section of the journal interface is geared toward improving or strengthening personal relationships through a process of forgiveness that we term storytime centrifuge. The participant is guided through steps that help them separate opinions from facts and interpretations from reality. The goal is to promote their ability to forgive people, situations, or themselves for past events.

The section entitled "gratitude" prompts participants to write an in-depth response about what they are grateful for, in a descriptive way that sparks a strong, palpable emotion within them. Mindfulness notations are focused on helping the participant practice mindfulness. Here, the participants write about the mindfulness practice they engaged in that day, such as meditation, prayer, mindful eating, or walking. The final section, activity in nature, provides participants with an opportunity to write about their daily experience in nature, especially one that is mindful (i.e., what they heard, saw, felt, or smelt).

Procedure

IRB approval for our study was obtained from Adams State University in May of 2022. Participants took the RFPIS survey before formal engagement with the Vision Journaling Protocol program and again at the end of the 16-week study. The survey was conducted via Qualtrics. Once participants completed the RFPIS, they were given access to the website and to their journal, which they were instructed to engage with daily. In addition to the daily journaling activity, participants were invited to engage in events on the opportunity calendar, which is an online calendar with virtual events for participants to attend, such as guided meditations, inspirational or educational movies, and sessions to develop participants' understanding of more complex aspects of the journal such as the storytime centrifuge or mind mapping. Participants also attended a weekly meeting

that lasted 90 to 120 minutes. The meetings serve as a place to share their journaling experience, progress, and challenges with the program.

Design and Statistical Analyses

First, we examined the reliability and validity of the RFPIS. To examine internal consistency, we used Cronbach's alpha, and we computed an intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) to assess test-retest reliability using participants' pre- and post-assessments. For the ICC, we used a two-way mixed model and a consistency type (Koo & Li, 2016). To examine evidence of concurrent validity of the RFPIS, we computed Pearson's correlations between the RFPIS subscales and their corresponding established measures.

To examine whether participants' scores changed significantly from pre- to post-test, we conducted six mixed-design ANOVAs for each dependent variable. The within-subjects factor examined pre- to post-test scores, and the between-subjects factor examined whether there were differences in the two cohorts. Specifically, we ran 2 (pre- vs post-test) x 2 (cohort 1 vs cohort 2) ANOVAs for each of the six subscales. All tests were performed using SPSS v. 27, and an alpha level of .05 was used to determine statistical significance.

Results

Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's alpha for the RFPIS subscales ranged from .60 to .92, and test-retest reliability ranged from .34 to .49. See Table 1 for the reliability coefficients for each subscale. All subscales demonstrated statistically significant positive correlations with their corresponding validated measure (see Table 2).

Effectiveness of the RFPIS Measure

Results indicated that participants experienced statistically significant increases in the six variables following completion of the program. See Table 3 for descriptive statistics and the factorial ANOVA results. There were two significant interactions: forgiveness x cohort, $F(1, 45) = 8.81, p = .005$; and gratitude x cohort, $F(1, 45) = 4.72, p = .035$ (see Figures 1 and 2).

Discussion

The aim of our study was twofold: to examine the psychometrics of the RFPIS and to assess the effectiveness of our newly developed Vision Journaling Protocol. Our first step was to develop a survey to assess six psychological variables the journaling was intended to target and to examine its psychometric properties. Internal consistency ranged from acceptable to excellent, and test-retest reliability ranged from questionable to fair. The subscales demonstrated strong concurrent validity with their corresponding established measures. Participant scores increased significantly from pre- to post-test across the six subscales of the RFPIS, demonstrating that the Vision Journaling Protocol was effective in the areas we measured.

We examined two forms of reliability of the RFPIS: internal consistency and test-retest reliability. We used Cronbach's alpha to examine internal consistency. Based on Cronbach's (1951) guidelines, internal consistency for the RFPIS subscales was good to excellent for four subscales (autonomous functioning, vision and purpose, forgiveness, gratitude), acceptable for the mindfulness subscale, and questionable for the connectedness to nature subscale. The two subscales that demonstrated the lowest internal consistency were gratitude and connectedness to nature. These subscales include only three items each, making it harder to demonstrate strong internal consistency than in scales with more items (Tavokol & Dennick, 2011).

We used ICC to examine test-retest reliability using the participants' pre- to post-assessments that were 16 weeks apart. It is important to note that, compared with internal

consistency, coefficients assessing test-retest reliability are interpreted more leniently because true changes in the underlying construct may be expected from pre- to post-test (Cicchetti, 1994). In our study, we predicted that participants would experience increases in the six measured variables; therefore, we did not expect the ICC values to be high. However, we still examined test-retest reliability, as it is good practice in survey development (Koo & Li, 2016). Cicchetti's (1994) guidelines for interpreting ICC values are as follows: values from .4 to .59 are considered fair, values from .60 to .74 are good, and values above .75 are excellent. Based on these guidelines, our data indicates that test-retest reliability for the RFPIS subscales ranges from questionable to fair. In the context of our study, however, participants were exposed to an intensive intervention between pre- and post-assessments. Furthermore, the interval between assessments was longer than is typically used to examine test-retest reliability; thus, the ICC values do not seem unreasonably low.

One method to establish evidence of criterion validity is to examine concurrent validity, which evaluates whether a new survey correlates with previously validated measures (Allen, 2017). Each subscale of the RFPIS was significantly correlated with its corresponding validated measure (Table 2). Our results suggest that each subscale of the RFPIS does measure the underlying construct of interest. Therefore, our measure appears to capture the underlying constructs we designed to measure.

After establishing evidence of the measure's reliability and validity, the second aim of our study was to ascertain whether the Vision Journaling Protocol improved the six areas we measured. We hypothesized that participants would experience positive increases in autonomous functioning, envisioning a life purpose, an ability to forgive, and an increased capacity for gratitude, mindfulness, and inter-contentedness with the natural environment. Each of our six hypotheses

was supported. There were two significant interactions. Participant scores for forgiveness increased from pre- to post-test, but the pre-test scores were significantly higher for the first cohort (compared to the second cohort). For the gratitude subscale, scores increased from pre- to post-test, but the effect size was larger in the first cohort than in the second.

We observed an increase in the autonomous functioning subscale, suggesting that the Vision Journaling Protocol helped participants gain greater agency over their actions and decisions and become more connected to their personal values. A central theme in the Vision Journaling Protocol process is that participants set daily intentions and goals. We implemented daily goal setting because research shows that goal setting is associated with self-driven learning and goal-directed behavior (Hematian et al., 2017), and evidence shows that intention setting is associated with goal achievement (Gollwitzer, 2006). Furthermore, research indicates that mindfulness is associated with greater congruence between idealized and experienced values (Monteiro et al., 2019). When individuals hold idealized values that are incongruent with their lived experiences (i.e., actions), they are less likely to achieve goals because their values are disconnected from their actions (Monteiro et al., 2019); thus, increasing value congruence is important for goal achievement. Collectively, our findings suggest that the practices of intentions, mindfulness notations, and mind mapping contributed to the significant increase seen in the autonomous functioning subscale; however, based on our study, it is unclear whether one of the practices (i.e., intentions, mindfulness notations, or mind mapping) was specifically responsible for increasing participants autonomous functioning scores or if it was the combination of the three practices that caused the increase.

Our findings showed that participants demonstrated significant increases from pre- to post-assessment in vision and purpose in life. The technique of designing and planning to attain a

desired future is an effective way to cultivate purpose (Schippers et al., 2019). Thinking about one's ideal future is associated with positive future expectations, which may lead to high levels of self-regulation, resilience, motivation, and self-efficacy (Gilchrist, 2003; Snyder et al., 2016). Our findings suggest that the activity of mind mapping is an effective tool in participants' realization or development of a vision and purpose for their life.

As we predicted, participants' scores on the RFPIS forgiveness subscale improved following the Vision Journaling Protocol program. The observed increase in forgiveness is significant because forgiveness is associated with positive outcomes. For instance, forgiveness is associated with lower stress levels and healthier familial and social relationships (Holt-Lunstad, 2010). Furthermore, practicing forgiveness is associated with happiness, well-being, and psychological prosperity (Wulandrari et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2014). Our findings suggest that the journaling component, storytime centrifuge, helped participants forgive themselves and others for past offenses.

Participants experienced significant increases in gratitude, indicating that the journaling component, gratitude, was an effective method in increasing the frequency and/or quality of participants' gratitude practices. The importance of our findings is that practicing gratitude can lower blood pressure and stress and improve sleep quality (Newman, 2021). Additionally, Lai and O'Carroll (2017) found that a daily gratitude practice significantly improved positive affect among participants ($n = 108$).

Participants' scores on the mindfulness subscale showed significant improvement after the Vision Journaling Protocol program compared to before, suggesting that mindfulness notations were effective in increasing participants' engagement in mindful practices. Mindfulness is associated with mental health and self-regulation (Arch & Landy, 2015). For instance, Schreiner

et al. (2008) found that practicing mindfulness meditation reduced depression, stress, and anxiety and boosted positive affect, concentration, and emotional stability of participants ($n = 43$). Furthermore, meta-analytic evidence indicates that mindfulness interventions positively affect psychological resilience (Joyce et al., 2018).

Lastly, participants' scores on connectedness to nature also significantly improved from pre- to post-assessment. This is important because spending time in nature confers physical and psychological benefits. For instance, White et al. (2019) found that spending 120 minutes a week in nature positively impacted health and emotional wellbeing. Spending time in nature also reduces stress, depression, and anxiety levels (Pearson & Craig, 2014; Cox et al., 2012) and increases memory and attention capacities (Bratman et al., 2012). Although we did not specifically measure how much time participants spent in nature, feeling connected to nature may also lead to positive physical and mental health benefits. Our findings suggest that the activity in nature section was effective in promoting participants to feel more connected to the natural environment.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of our study is the sample size, given the considerable attrition we experienced. The level of commitment required of each participant is considerable: the program is 16 weeks long, and they are required to journal daily, which can take 20 minutes to over an hour. Indeed, our attrition rate mirrors that reported in a meta-analysis of psychotherapy dropout rates (Wierzbicki & Pekarik, 1993). High rates of attrition may undermine the study's validity if they are specific to a particular sector of the sample.

For future research, we first recommend adding items to assess gratitude and connectedness to nature to improve subscale reliability. Second, to further evaluate whether the RFPIS demonstrates strong psychometric properties, it would be ideal to perform a confirmatory factor

analysis (CFA). We were unable to conduct CFA because our sample size was well below the required level (White, 2022). Third, to evaluate whether the RFPIS demonstrates stability over time, test-retest reliability should be examined without participants engaging in the Vision Journaling Protocol, using a 2- or 4-week interval. To provide additional evidence of criterion validity, we recommend that researchers examine divergent validity, which assesses whether a construct does not correlate with variables that are not theoretically related (Steiger, 1980). To assess divergent validity, researchers may examine whether variables such as age, gender, and education level are related to subscales on the RFPIS, as we would not expect to detect such relationships. We also recommend that future research examine the predictive validity of the RFPIS. For example, researchers could examine whether the RFPIS subscales predict measures of psychological well-being using linear regression.

Lastly, it will be important to examine the efficacy of the Vision Journaling Protocol with different samples and to examine whether the program is effective in different settings (e.g., group and educational contexts). Since we recruited participants from the HMI (i.e., the hypnosis institute), the generalizability of the data may be constrained, as this population may be more inclined to participate in our journaling program than the general population. However, it is important to note that after attrition, we ended with more non-HMI participants than HMI students.

In sum, our findings suggest that the Vision Journaling Protocol is an effective tool for improving autonomous functioning (i.e., self-directed goal setting), developing a vision and purpose in life, and increasing forgiveness, gratitude, mindfulness, and connectedness to nature. The program integrates many positive psychology interventions into a holistic process. Not only do our findings suggest that the Vision Journaling Protocol is an effective tool for improving quality of life, but it is also highly accessible. People from all walks of life can use the tool, even

without access to technology, since the prompts can be printed for pen-and-paper use. Future research should examine whether our findings generalize to different samples and in different settings.

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Table 1*Reliability of the RFPIS subscales*

Measure	Reliability Indication	Cronbach's Alpha (Number of Items)	ICC
Autonomous Functioning	Excellent	.92 (13)	.38
Vision and Purpose	Good	.93 (11)	.49
Forgiveness	Good	.85 (7)	.35
Gratitude	Good	.79 (3)	.34
Mindfulness	Acceptable	.83 (4)	.46
Connectedness to Nature	Acceptable	.60 (3)	.46

Note. ICC = interclass correlation coefficient of the pre- and post-measurements.

Table 2*Concurrent Validity of Measures/Subscales*

Name of Validated Measure	Name of RFPIS Measure	Pearson's r	p-value
Index of Autonomous Functioning	Autonomous Functioning	.71	<.001
Life Engagement Scale	Vision and Purpose	.69	<.001
Heartland Forgiveness Scale	Forgiveness	.75	<.001
Penn. Institute Gratitude Scale	Gratitude	.43	<.001
Kentucky Mindfulness Skills	Mindfulness	.29	.047
Connectedness to Nature Scale	Interconnectedness to Nature	.50	<.001

Table 3*Effectiveness of Radical Freedom Program*

Subscale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F^a</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	<i>F^b</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Autonomous Functioning			14.32	<.001	.241	10.39	.002	.188
Pre- test	5.12	1.07						
Post-test	5.88	.69						
Vision and Purpose			13.57	<.001	.232	5.99	.018	.117
Pre- test	4.82	1.40						
Post-test	5.89	.82						
Forgiveness			13.87	<.001	.236	8.3	.006	.156
Pre- test	4.76	1.2						
Post-test	5.69	.73						
Gratitude			24.71	<.001	.354	.014	.905	.000
Pre- test	5.3	1.13						
Post-test	6.22	.71						
Mindfulness			6.16	.017	.120	6.78	.012	.131
Pre- test	4.79	1.37						
Post-test	5.51	1.01						
Connectedness to Nature			17.78	<.001	.283	3.61	.064	.074
Pre- test	5.27	1.112						
Post-test	6.18	.81						

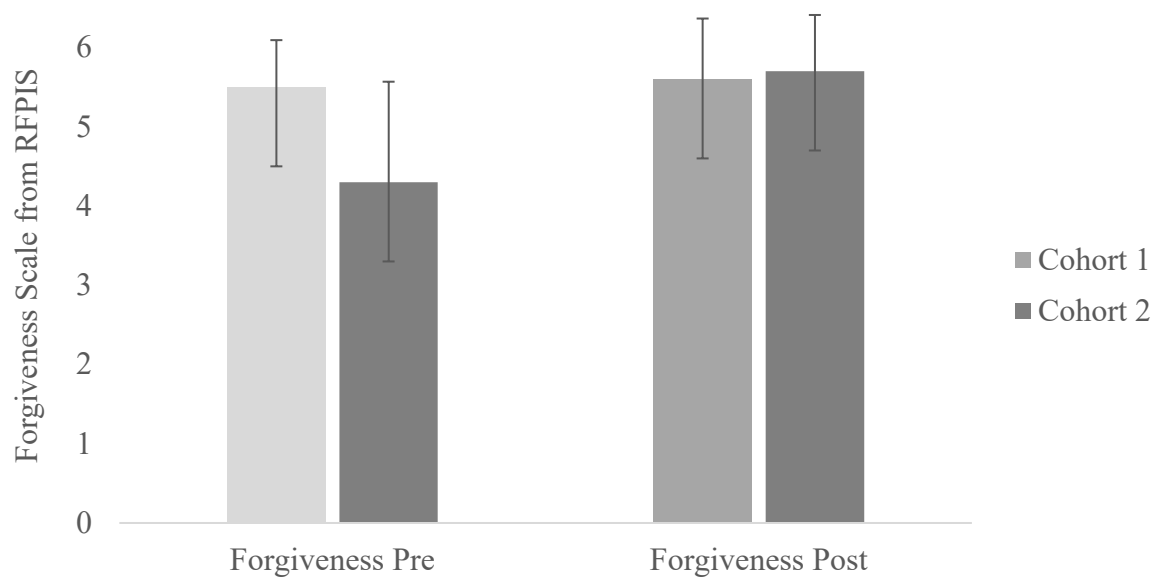
Note. a= F statistic results of the within-subjects factor examining pre- to post-test changes. b=

F statistic results of the between-subjects factor examining whether there were differences

between the cohorts.

Figure 1

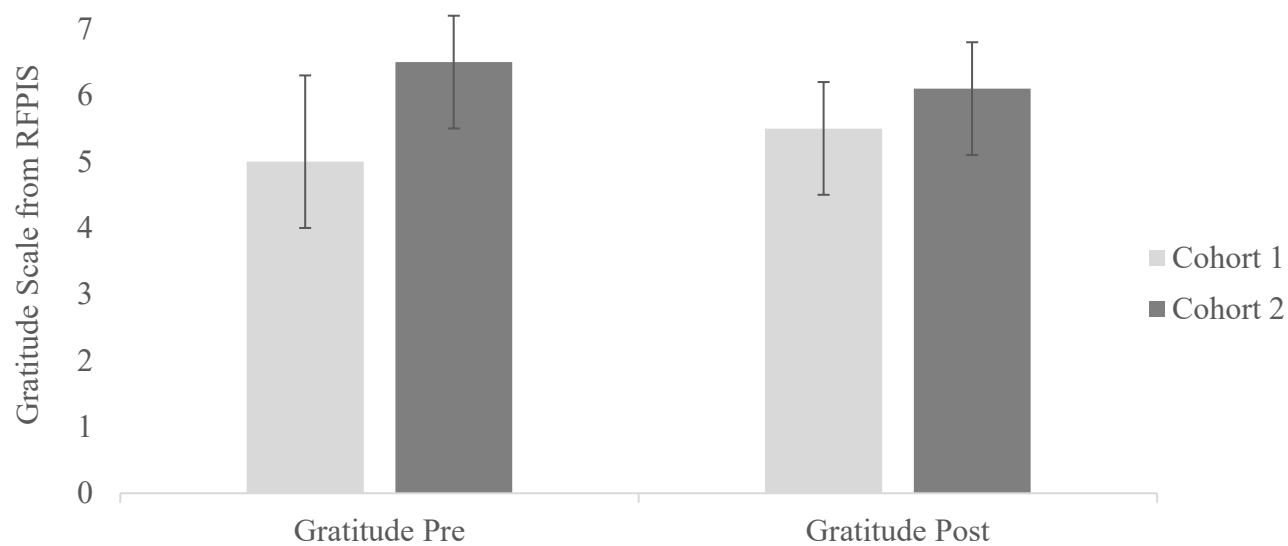
Significant Interactions of Pre-Post Assessment by Cohort for Forgiveness



Note. Error bars represent standard deviation.

Figure 2

Significant Interactions of Pre-Post Assessment by Cohort for Gratitude



Note. Error bars represent standard deviation.