Flareability

Notes on pain, pacing, and small victories

There's a lot of space in this eBook.
Space to breathe.
Space to think.
Space to write.
And if you feel like colouring outside the lines - that space is waiting for you too.

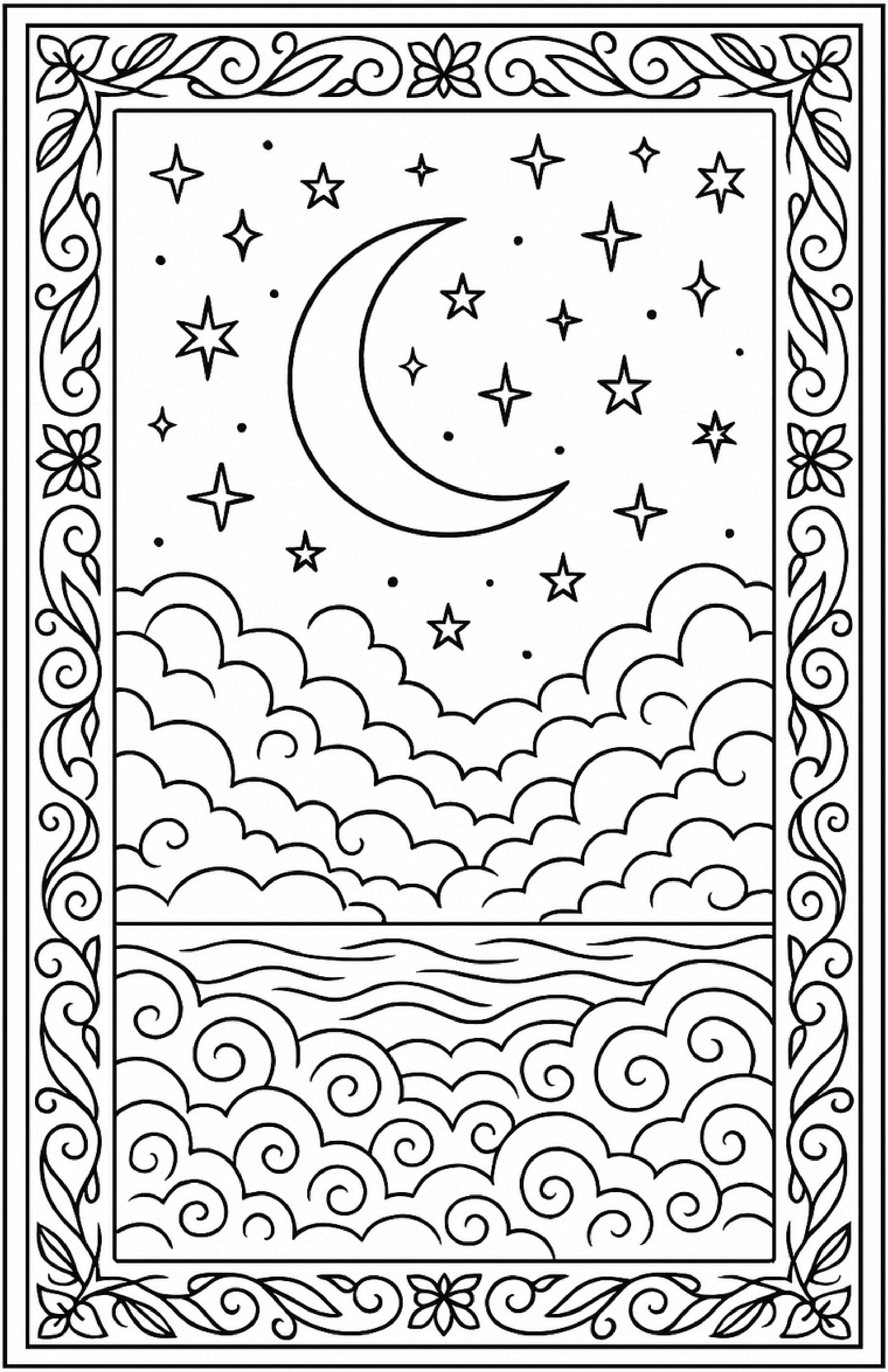
- Mx

Introduction

I'm not an expert on fibromyalgia. I'm an expert on me, and I happen to have fibromyalgia. That's the difference. I can't tell you what will work for everyone, but I can tell you what has worked, or not worked, for me.

Fibromyalgia has shaped much of my life, but it doesn't define me. Over the years, I've found ways to live alongside it; sometimes messy, sometimes clumsy, often trial and error. That's what this book is: not a manual, but a companion. Something you can dip into when you need a reminder that you're not alone.

And here's the important part: it's your book now. Scribble in the margins, colour the illustrations, add your own notes. Make it fit you.



Sleep and Rest

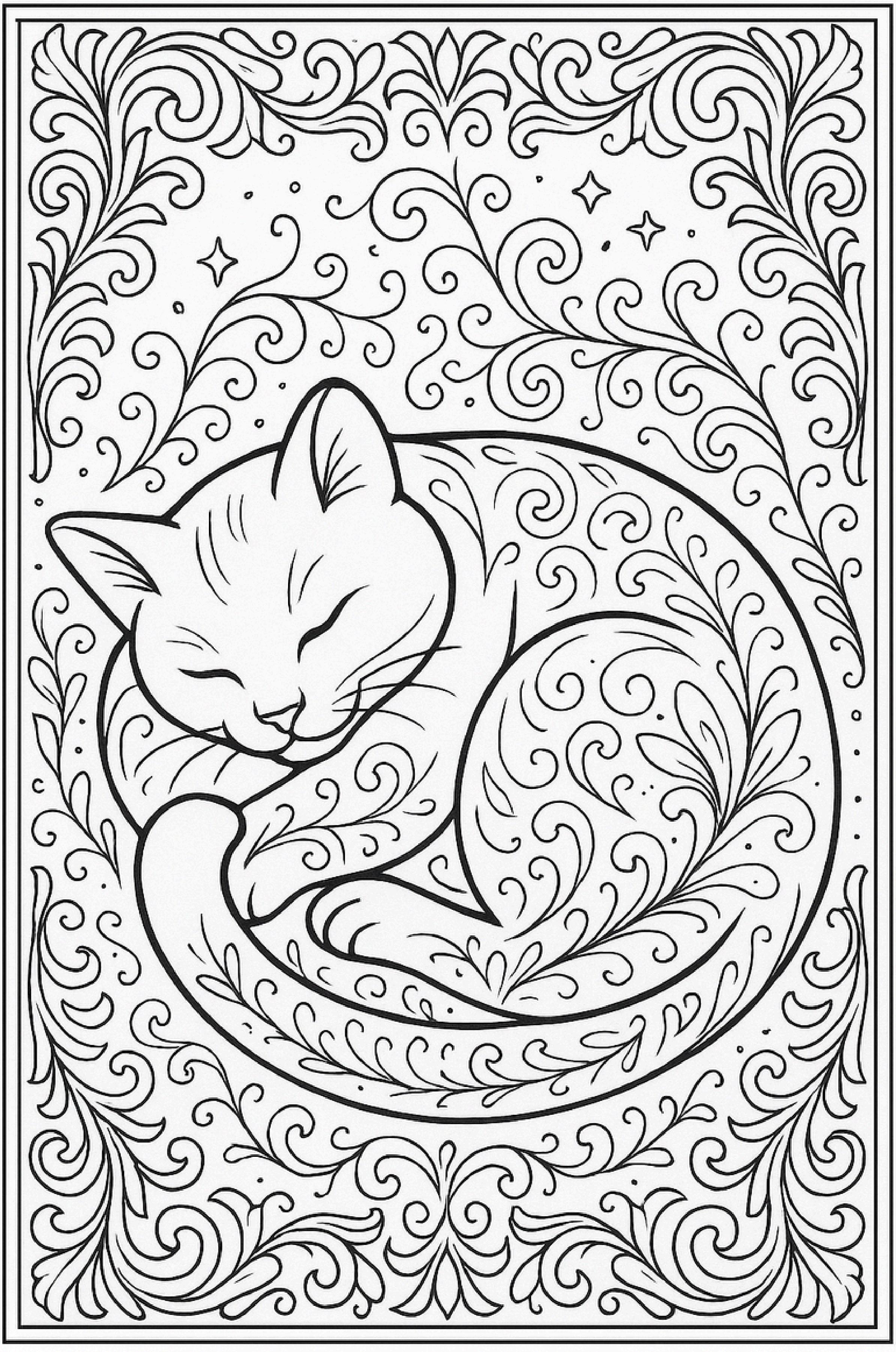
Sleep is one of the hardest parts of fibromyalgia for me. Either you can't get to sleep, or you wake up unrefreshed. For me, creating a routine helps more than any single trick.

In my nighttime skincare routine, I use an aromatherapy resting cream as part of a calming ritual. I keep my room dark, cool, and quiet, and I leave a small thermos of tea nearby so I don't have to get up in the night. Little things. But little things add up.

I don't pretend to sleep well every night.

Sometimes, I'm woken by cramp. When that happens, a soothing cream or gentle massage can help me relax again.

It's often interrupted, but even a few hours of decent rest makes the next day more bearable.

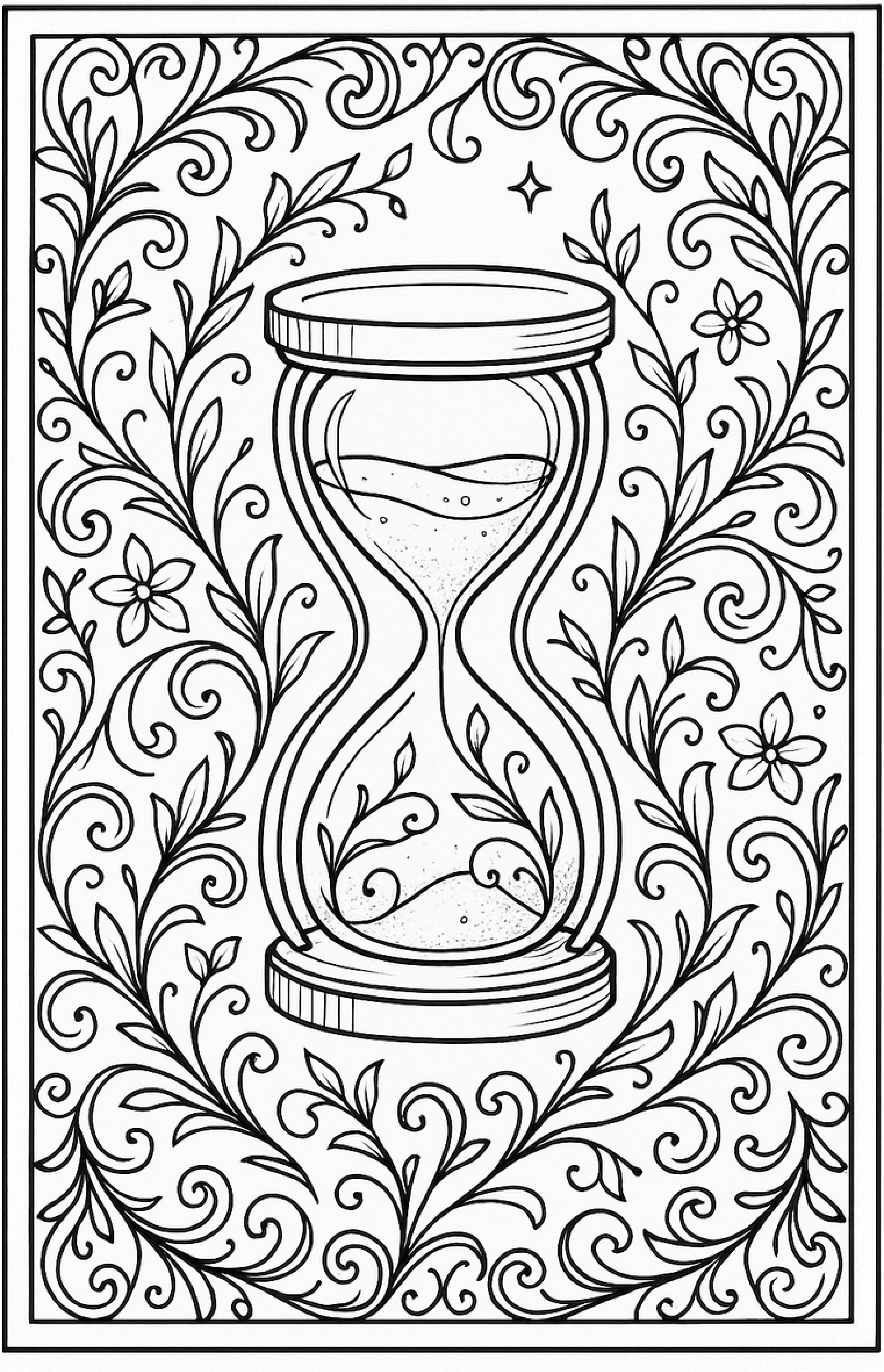


Energy and Pacing

Energy is not a constant. With fibro, you learn the ‘spoon theory’ quickly that energy is finite and you must spend it wisely.

I try to pace myself. Some days, I fail. And that’s fine. It’s a work in progress. I use lists and reminders, but I also give myself permission to rest. That’s harder than it sounds.

What helps: breaking things into smaller tasks. Paper plates when I can’t face washing up. Overnight oats when cooking is too much. Gum if I can’t brush my teeth. None of these replace the ‘proper’ version, but they get me through.



Self-Care That Fits

Self-care can sound indulgent, but for people with fibro, it’s survival. Heat packs. Hot showers. Comfortable clothes. Even planning for ‘old lady snoozes’ in the afternoon.

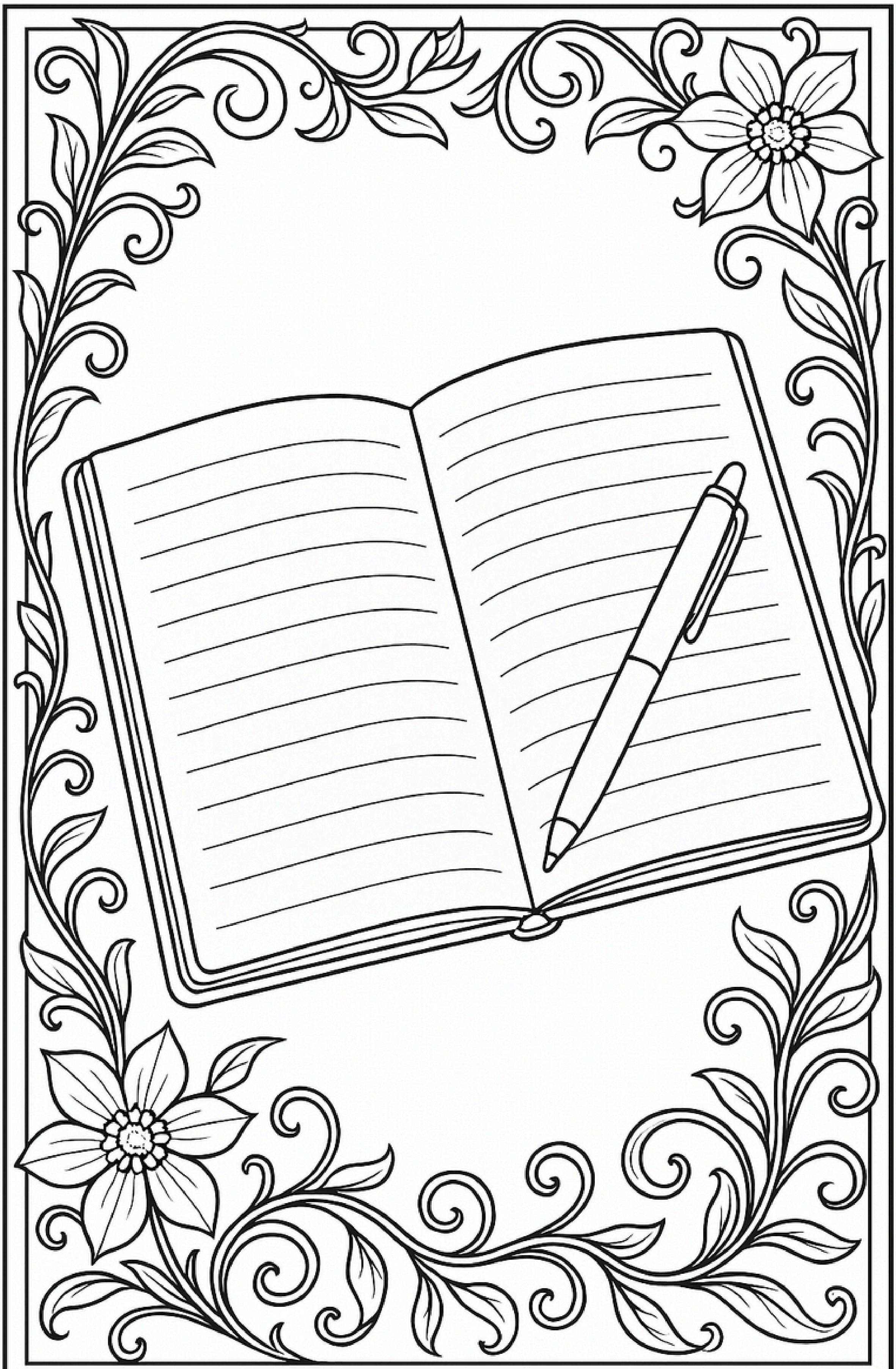
I also learned not to judge myself for these choices. If lying down with a heat pack is what I need, then that’s what I’ll do. And isn’t that the point?

Symptom Diaries

I sometimes wish I had started a symptom diary all those years ago. It might have saved me some confusion and frustration. But you can only start from where you are now, and that's enough.

When I noticed how times of day affected pain, which foods poked the IBS, how weather shifts brought fatigue and fog - I should have written it down.

But, I didn't. I'm not perfect and this isn't about a perfect you or a perfect log. A few notes are enough. Tired. Foggy. Pain six out of ten. Rested? Used heat? Small clues, small changes.



Creativity and Coping

Fibro affects my hands, my fingers, even my vision. Drawing and painting by hand became harder, but I found that art, in whatever form, was still vital.

I sometimes use artificial intelligence (AI) art tools, not as a replacement for hand drawing, but as an outlet when my body won’t cooperate. It’s not about the medium, it’s about the space it opens up in my mind. Creativity is therapy, in whatever form you can manage.

Community and Support

Fibromyalgia is invisible, but you don't have to feel invisible with it. Online spaces have been lifelines for me.

On X (Twitter), I've found folk like:

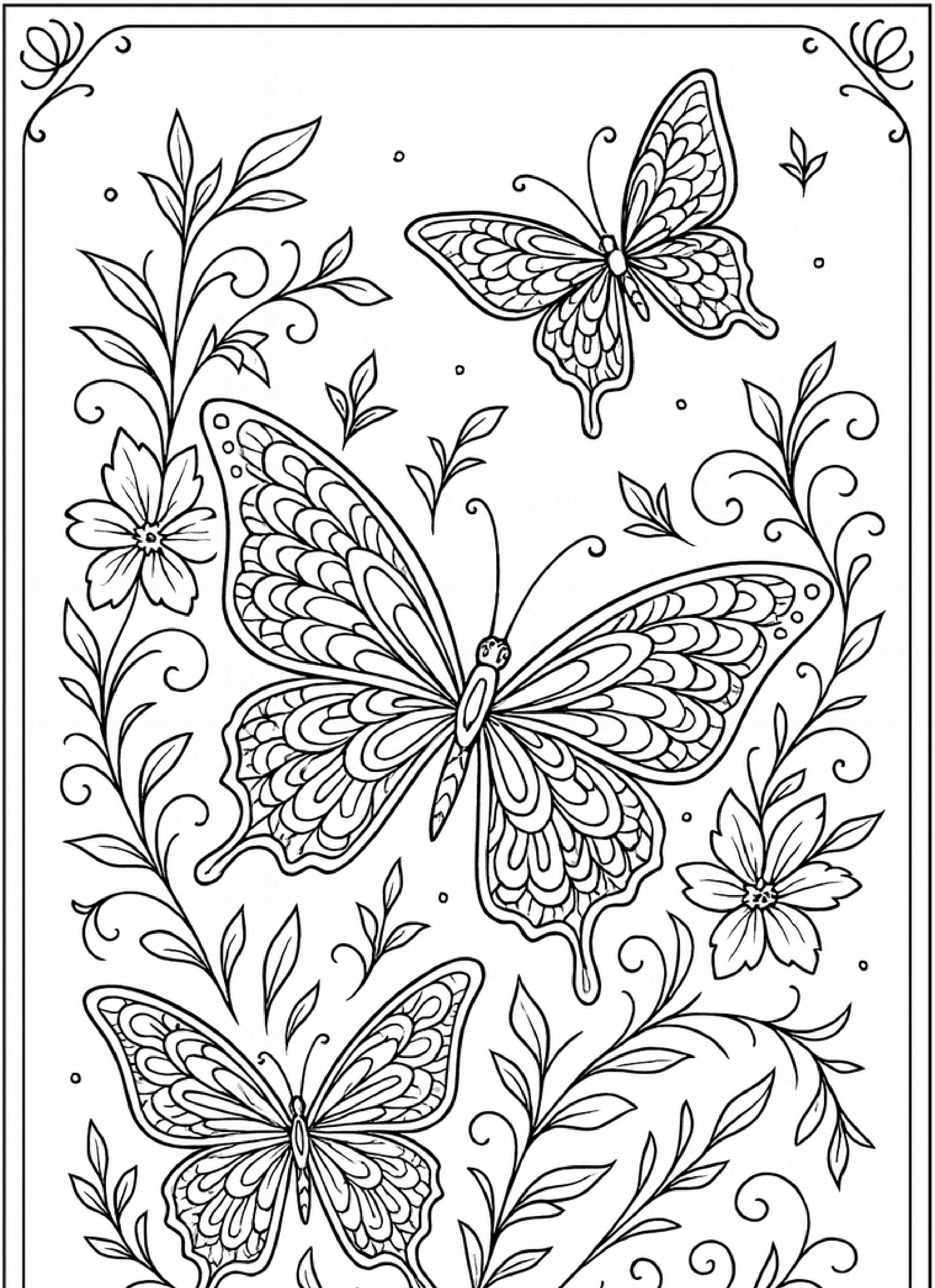
- @FibroBloggers: sharing stories and tips, from pacing to laughter.
- @APainPrincess: fierce truths about CRPS and fibro, unfiltered.
- @thefibromama: blending writing, resilience and practical self-care.
- @AChVoice: thoughtful insights on chronic illness and language.
- @fmauk: Fibromyalgia Action UK, a charity pushing for awareness and better services.

Connecting with others doesn't take the pain away, but it gives you perspective and sometimes laughter. That matters.

Fibro and Disability

Fibromyalgia is recognised in the UK as a potentially disabling condition. Many people, myself included, face daily challenges that limit work, mobility, or basic self-care.

Some claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Success rates are higher than average, at about 62%. It’s not an easy process; forms, assessments, and waiting. But support exists, and knowing your rights makes a difference.



Living With It: A Few More Notes

What a Flare Feels Like (For Me)

A flare is not the everyday background pain; it's everything turned up. Joints lock, skin burns, even sound can hurt. Imagine the worst flu you've ever had, multiplied, while being squeezed under a heavy weight. For some of us, that's a flare. It doesn't last forever, but when it comes, it demands all our energy.

Comfort Clothes

Wearing the same outfit again and again isn't laziness. It's survival. Soft fabrics, easy layers, no fiddly fastenings. If something feels good, I keep a few spares and call it a win. Comfort first, always.

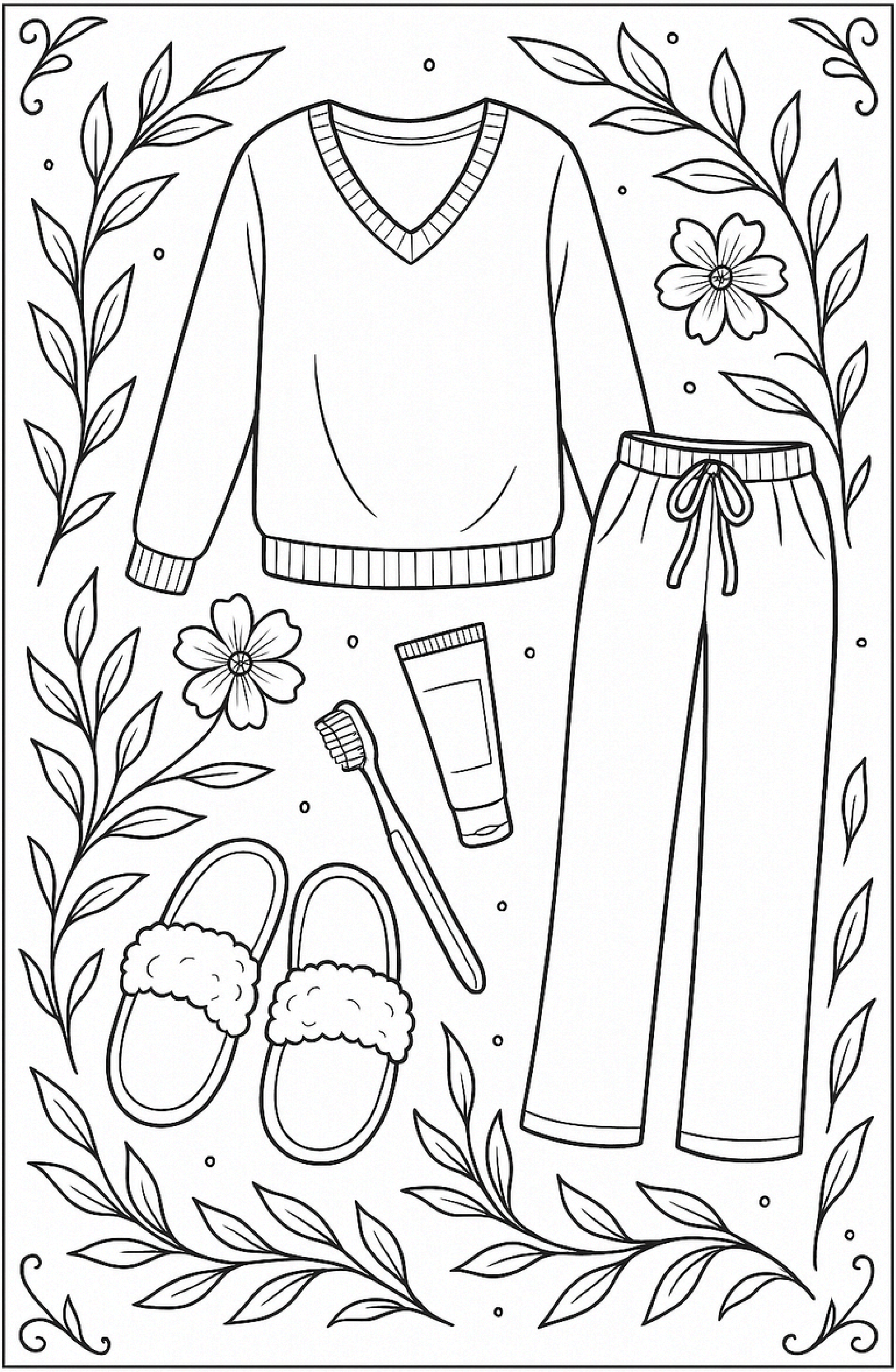
Body Care Hacks

- Tooth care is harder on low-energy days: gum, mouthwash, or a softer brush are enough.
- Jaw pain and scalp tenderness are part of fibro too; a shower stool or soft hair band can make the difference.
- Do what you can, and let that be enough.

Awareness and Solidarity

You are not alone in this. Every year, people around the world mark days like May 12th: Fibromyalgia Awareness Day, or September: Pain Awareness Month.

Hashtags like #FibromyalgiaAwareness or #SpoonieLife connect us across distances. Even if you never post, just knowing others are out there can be a quiet kind of strength.

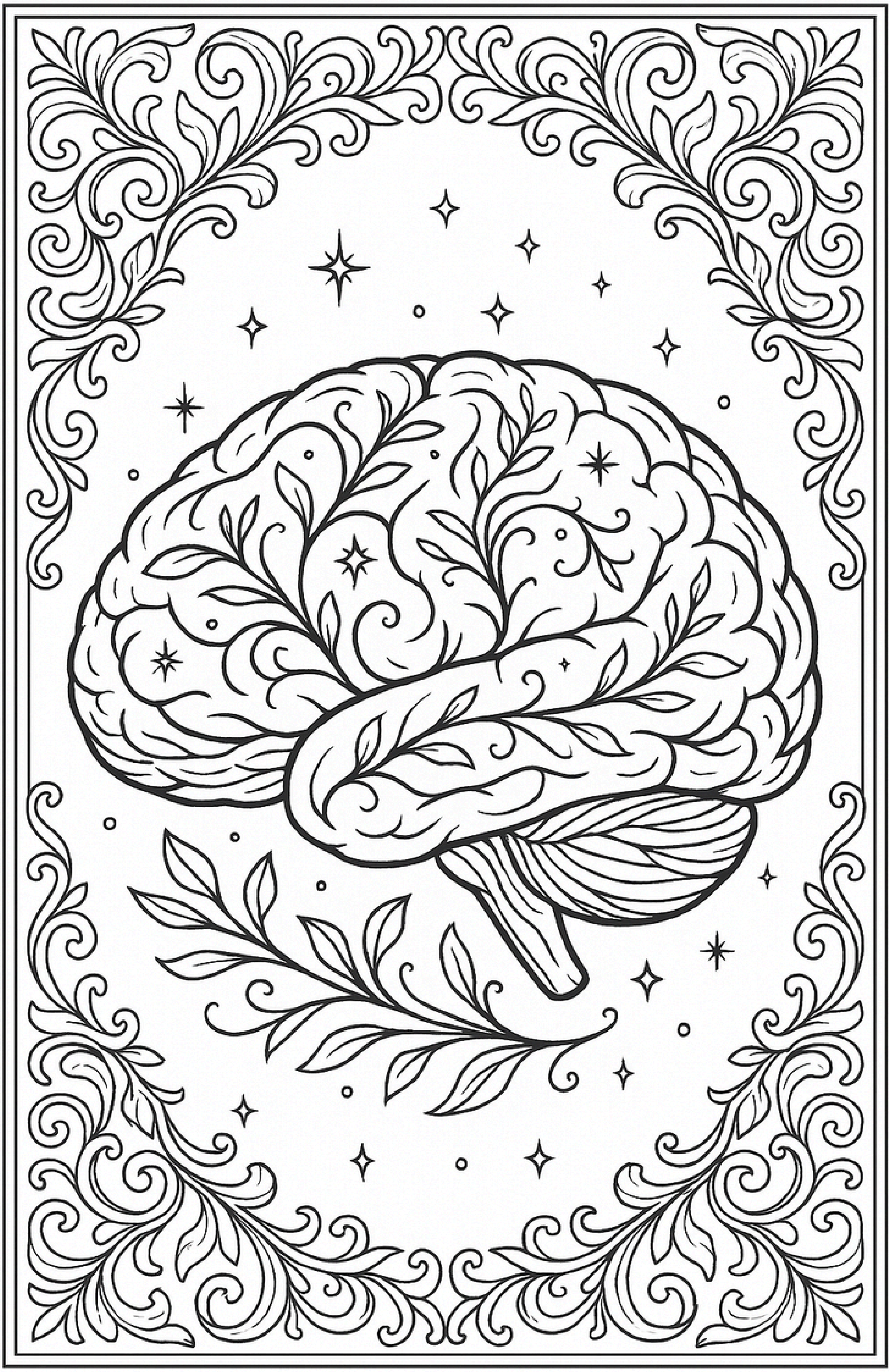


The Point of It All

Flareability is not about mastering fibromyalgia. It’s about finding ways to live with it that are true to you. Some days that means pushing through. Some days it means surrendering to rest. Both are valid.

This book is free because I believe this: you don’t need to buy another promise. You need stories, reminders, and perhaps a little company along the way.

So take what fits, leave what doesn’t, and fill the spaces. Like I said, it’s your book now.



Appendix: Resources

Organisations & Websites

Fibromyalgia Action UK: fmauk.org
Pain UK: painuk.org
NHS: nhs.uk/conditions/fibromyalgia
Bupa UK: bupa.co.uk/health-information/brain-nervous-system/fibromyalgia
Royal College of Physicians: rcp.ac.uk/improving-care/resources/the-diagnosis-of-fibromyalgia-syndrome

Communities on Twitter/X

@FibroBloggers
@APainPrincess
@thefibromama
@AChVoice
@fmauk

Benefits & Support

Fibromyalgia is recognised as a potentially disabling condition in the UK.
PIP may be available depending on individual circumstances.
Claims are assessed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
through a functional assessment process.

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Written by Melanie Lampro.
Drafted with support from AI (ChatGPT).
Illustrations generated as line art for optional colouring.
Layout in Canva.

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