# + + + + + 1008841111

Give thanks. Pass it on.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

As I get older, I've realized the importance of living in the moment. I find myself overstimulated, constantly thinking ahead, and forgetting to focus on what's right in front of me. I want to remember the people, places, and things I am most grateful. My goal for this project was to design an app that serves as this reminder.

Welcome to blossum. Let's grow together.



Abby Giesecke Senior Thesis 2023 Visual Communication Design The Ohio State University

# TOPIC

mission statement overview research methods

# 2 RESEARCH

findings competitive analysis interviews key takeaways user personas proposed user journey

# **3** CONCEPT

brand positioning design principles brand identity priority guides initial wireframes video storyboard

# 4 SOLUTION

the app the plant the pop-up promotional video



blossum is a mobile app to help foster a healthy mindset amidst the chaos in life through the practice of gratitude and positive psychology.

# **OVERVIEW**

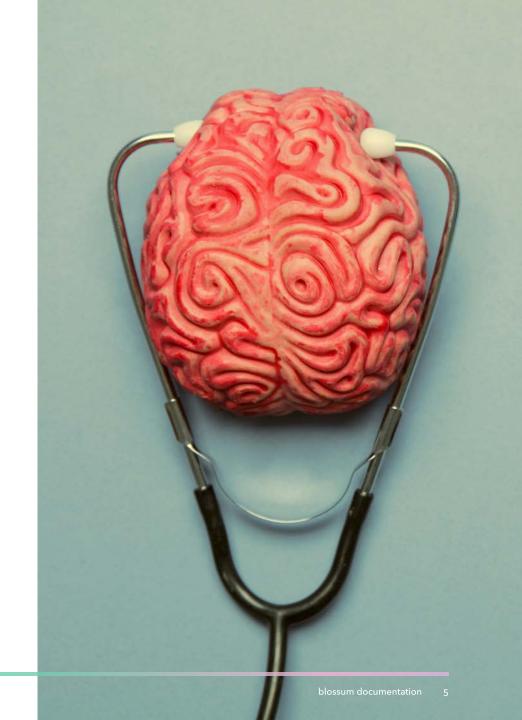
"Gratitude is a positive emotion that can arise **when you acknowledge** that you have goodness in your life."

Positive psychology studies show a strong association between practicing gratitude and an individual's well-being. Feeling gratitude is only half the equation; expressing gratitude is equally important (and being specific).

Consistently keeping a gratitude journal in some form is proven to benefit a person's quality of life in ways such as lowering depression, improving sleep quality, reducing stress, and even reducing cellular inflammation.

Key word: **consistently**. what are the incentives for users to use a gratitude journal every day?

Proposed solution: plants and other people.



# **RESEARCH METHODS**

**Primary:** I will conduct interviews with family and friends. I will then ask these same participants to keep their own gratitude journal for a week. A post-interview will be conducted, aiming to understand how they felt before, during, and after daily journaling. Later, personas will be created and usability testing will be conducted on prototypes.

## **Key Questions**

- What are some common stressors in your life?
- Do you currently have any methods of combating these stressors, whether it be medication, exercise, journaling, etc.?
- What would the most desired features be for a platform that helps better mental health?

**Secondary:** There are various resources that exist pertaining to the practice of gratitude, especially in the field of positive psychology. I plan to do a media scan to learn about the science and benefits of gratitude along with looking at examples of gratitude practices.

## **Key Questions**

- What studies/trials are out there related to practicing gratitude?
- What are mental and emotional benefits of practicing gratitude?
- Are there physical benefits of practicing gratitude?
- What methods already exist for practicing gratitude?
  - What works for them? What doesn't?
- Are the benefits of practicing gratitude stronger when done consistently?
  - If so, what are incentives for people to continue practicing?



# **FINDINGS**

Bottom line: there is no "wrong way" to keep a gratitude journal. but there are definitely tips...

#### write regularly.

Commit to a certain schedule o writing and stick to it. Incorporate gratitude into your daily routine.

# it's the little things.

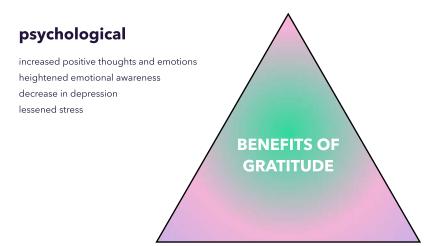
Can't think of anything? Think of the small, seemingly insignificant parts of your day that made it a hit bottor

# quality over quantity.

Go into detail for each entry instead of short, trivial entries Think about how something really made you feel.

#### shift your mindset.

Try to start thinking as gratitud journaling as something you want to do rather than feeling like you have to.



# physical

improved sleep quality better cardiac functioning

((the most immediate and reliable benefits of gratitude are likely to be psychological and social, rather than physical.)

#### social

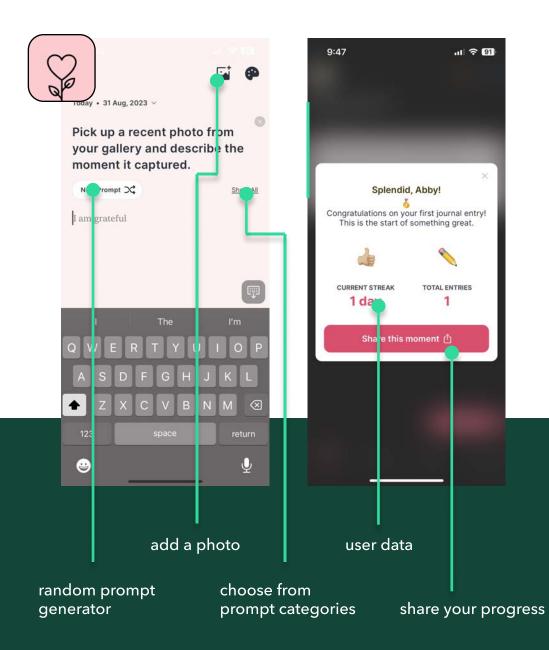
better communication stronger interpersonal relationships

increase in empathy increase in selflessness

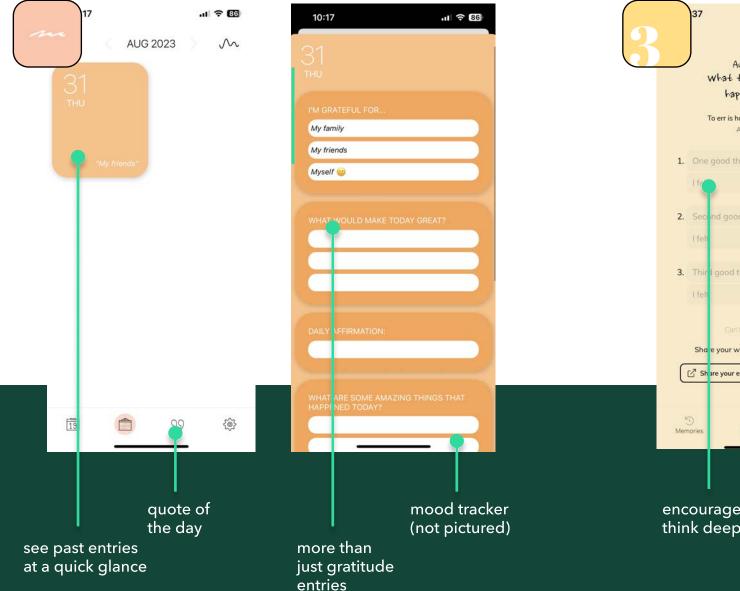
# **COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS**

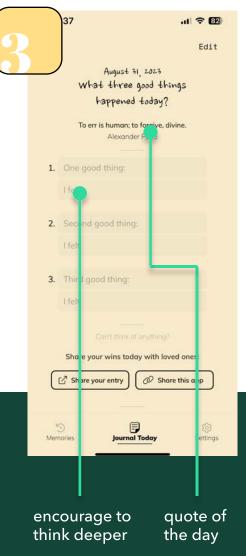
For my competitive analysis, I downloaded four of the most popular gratitude apps. There were **four common features** the apps all shared:

Competitor	Gratitude	Gratitude Jar	Morning!	ThreeGoodThings
Category	Health & Fitness	Lifestyle	Lifestlye	Health & Fitness
Free/Paid	Free, but has paid "pro" version	Free	Free, but has paid "premium" version	Free, but has paid "maximum gratitude" version
Time on Market	4 years	1 year	4 years	4 years
Main Features common features between the 4 are in green	Write 1+ gratitudes per day     Attach photo from camera roll to entries     Prompt generator with category options     Current streak and total entry data     Journal to scroll through past entries by day     Set personalized reminders     Vision board tab	Write 1+ gratitudes per day     Journal to see past entries by day, OR     Shake a jar to get a random past entry     Quote of the day	Write up to 3 gratitudes per day     Further questions per day: "Mood tracker day: "What would make today great?", Set personalized reminders done to make today even better?"	Must write 3 gratitudes per day     Must include how it made you feel     Can share entry     Quote of the day     Set personalized reminders
Strongest/ Weakest Attribute	Multifaceted- lots of options for engagement. Inconsistent UI.	Jar idea is unique and a creative way to randomize past entries. Possibly too juvenile.	Additional questions to deepen gratitude and a mood tracker. Really simple, could get too repetitive.	Explains the psychology behind gratitude when app is first opened. Most features that would make it stand out more are paid.
Customer Reviews	"I just have a hard time starting things but with the app asking me questions about what to write daily instead of me trying to come up with something. It pulls more out of me."  "Can we get a way to turn off PROMPTS and challenge and awards and thank you notes each time. We just want a SIMPLE app. please if I want to turn on rewards I would like to have that option."	"I love the design and the shake to pull up random old gratitudes feature is a huge help in remembering all the positive things in my life."  "I wish we could create prompts. For example, I want at least two text boxes in each "star journal." One prompt would say "I am grateful for" and the other would say "What I love about myself today is" I would also agree with another review. It would be nice to be able to create an account and save precious years' stars instead of them deleting every year."	"It is super clean and only gives what you need: clear space to document some gratitude and react to your days. The added bonus of a mood tracker is very cool. If I want to, I will be able to figure out when I was having dips or when strings of days seemed consistenly 5 stars, what was going on in my life."  "The other concern is that the same feature also randomly shows what would make the day great which doesn't hold up over time and could be demotivating if it wasn't a positive outcome."	"Even the notifications are well worded and not overly pushy. It's just a very straightforward app. But the real beauty is the WAY it gets statements and then the "I feel" really helps me to ground and make the gratitude more tangible."  "I love the concept and it's ease of use but I really dislike some of the quotes as some of them are somewhat in your face/distracting or not helpful/out of touch, Please create an option to "hide" the quotes."









10:38

◀ Three Good Thin...

MENU

Oatmeal Apps simple made easy

#### Maybe it's just on of those days...

- 1. I flushed a toilet today. It had modern plumbing. King Louis XIV's didn't, so I win.
- I am reading this on my phone via the Internet. Try explaning that to my ancestors.
- 3. I cried a lot. I have memories of being too numb to cry, won dering if I would ever feel again. Or being too scared to cry, fearing what others might think. At least I'm not there. At least I could feel my feelings today.
- 4. I woke up in a warm, dry bed when there are others who wake up in the cold, damp streets. I know the y would likely trade places with me in a heart peat, and I am lucky.
- I once heard a sa ying that goes "A healthy person wants many things, while a sick



entry suggestions (in browser?)

# **INTERVIEWS**

I asked **twelve participants to keep a gratitude journal for five days** with pre and post journaling questions. here's what I found:

The **most common stressors** are...



#### school

Holding yourself to a high standard Getting homework done



#### work

What the future holds for your career

Job searching

Having to make money not just for yourself

2

## family/friends

Keeping relationships happy & healthy Parenting

It was hard to remember to do it sometimes when I'm having a

busy day. I liked the prompts. They helped me when I wasn't sure what to write about.



## health

Own health, especially mental Family and friends' health, especially if threatened

# The most common combat methods for stress are...



#### exercise

Lifting
Taking a walk
Yoga



#### medication

Anti-depressants Anti-anxiety



#### distraction

Social media Video games





# The most desired features for a gratitude journal app are...



# reminders to write in journal



# positive reinforcement

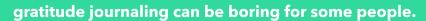
Does not feel like a chore Element of fun



# ability to see improvement

Flashbacks- one year ago, etc. Mood tracker





opportunities:

"gamifying" the app to make it more

multi-faceted

adding a social aspect for users to encourage each other to keep using



a large majority of people do not currently practice gratitude.

opportunities:

introducing the user to the research

behind gratitude

giving general tips to get started and

write effective entries



gratitude is a gradual process. benefits accumulate overtime.

opportunities:

data dashboard showing progression via mood tracker, total entries, and current streak

ability to see past entries to see

mental progress

# **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

Even though I had many participants finish their journal, there were others who forgot despite a reminder. this itself led to a new understanding: people need stronger incentive to continue journaling besides self-improvement.

Every app I researched only had one purpose: a virtual journal. Based on my research, I found that in order for the average person to start journaling and continue to, there has to be multiple reasons. This is where the idea of a virtual garden comes in. The gratitude experience could be "gamified" to keep users entertained yet still accomplish its ultimate purpose.



#### **Antonio**

Age: 33

Occupation: Stay At Home Dad

Antonio is a stay at home dad, taking care of his two young children while his partner is at work. He considers himself pretty mindful of his mental health, and he currently engages in stress combats such as his weekly exercise class. He currently owns a gratitude journal, but he wants to transfer from a physical journal to a digital one. As a busy parent, he often forgets to carry his journal with him everywhere.

Needs/Wants:



Age: 18

Occupation: Student

Carson is a freshman at college. He lives away from home for the first time and in a new state. He has a hard time adjusting to change and therefore has had a difficult time settling into his new environment. He's made a few friends, but they just don't compare to his friends from home. Dropping out and going home is not an option, and he wants a healthy way to make sense of his emotions as opposed to distracting himself.

#### Needs/Wants:

- An app that will help him sort his emotions and guide him through this transitional period
- Reminders to use the app, especially during busy days
- To genuinely enjoy self-improvement





#### **Joanne**

Age: 48

Occupation: Senior Content Director

Joanne holds a senior position at a large marketing firm, having work there for about 20 years. Because of her long standing position with the same company, her days have started to feel mundane. She would rather not find another job but rather find the joy in what she already has in life. She thinks in logic and not emotions, and she's skeptical of most mental health betterment methods she's seen.

Needs/Wants:

## Naomi & Shay

Ages: 23 & 24

Occupations: Assistant Editor & Junior Web Developer

Naomi and Shay are best friends from college that have recently graduated. They lived together all throughout college, and they now live in different states. Starting a new job and moving to a new city has been difficult for the both of them; it's a lot at once. They want to stay connected with each other amidst their busy new lives.

#### Needs/Wants:

- A way to stay in touch with each other
- An app that will help them sort their emotions and guide them through this transitional period
- Trendy and welcoming app content and style

# PROPOSED USER JOURNEY



















Carson sees an ad through his university for the blossum app. He sees that it's for mental health and, having had a hard time adjusting to college life, downloads it. blossum asks him his familiarity with gratitude journaling. Given he has low familiarity, the app introduces him to the benefits. Carson is brought to the journal and reads the tips. Having a hard time thinking of something, he also looks at the different prompt categories

He writes his first entry about his best friend from home. He then chooses which plant he wants to represent his entry: a cactus. He is brought to his garden where he sees his cactus seedling growing. He taps on it and sees the entry date, but he must wait until the plant has fully bloomed to see what he wrote.

He switches to his dashboard where he sees his calendar. One day has been filled out, and he can tap on it to be brought to his plant.













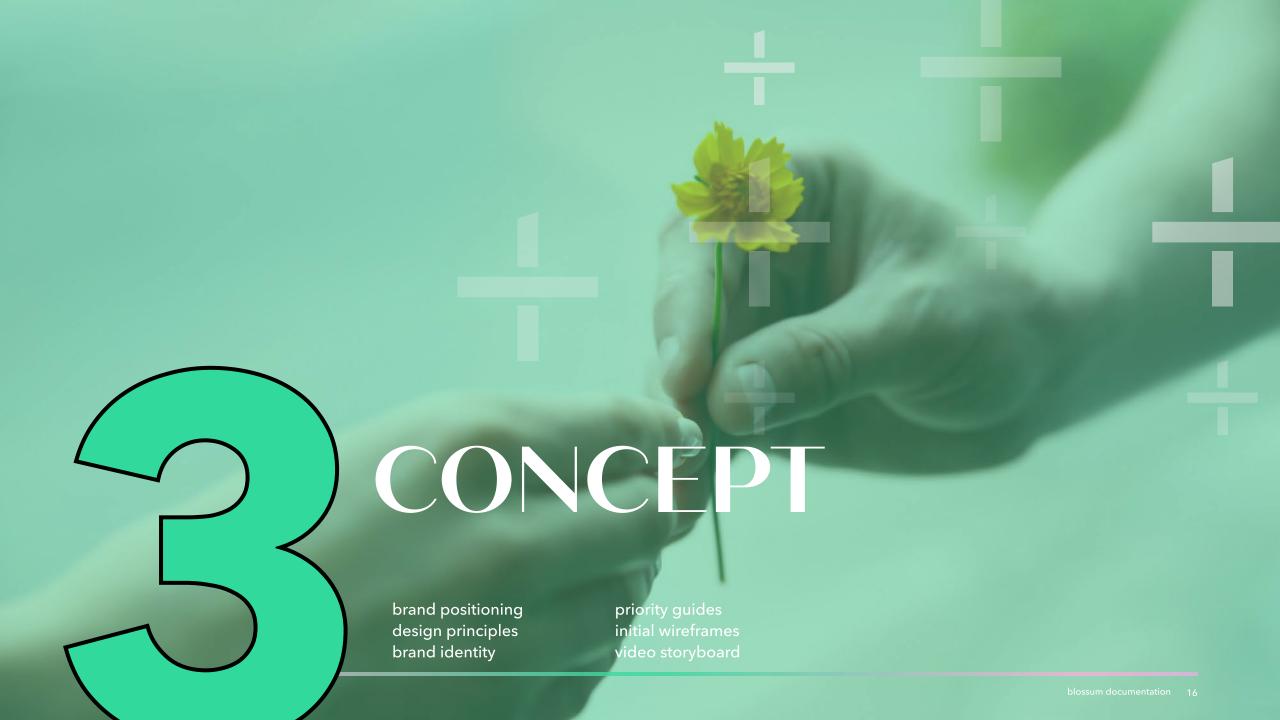


Carson writes his gratitude in the space provided on the plant packaging. He gives the plant to his roommate. Inspired, his roommate downloads blossum, scans the QR code on the packaging, and adds the plant to his garden. Carson's writing also scans, and his gratitude message appears with the plant in his garden.

Carson is walking to class one day and sees a blossum pop-up. The reps introduce themselves and show how he can gift a real plant to someone he's grateful for. Carson's friend adds the gratitude he sent her as a flower in her garden. In return, she sends him a gratitude about him that he then adds to his garden.

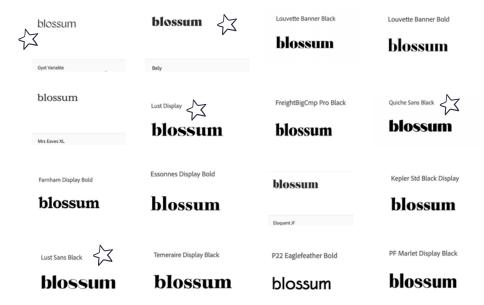
Carson notices he can share his gratitude with a friend. Since he wrote his entry about his best friend from home, he sends it to her. Curious, she downloads the app.

He also sees his user stats for current streak, total entries, amount of plants unlocked, and progress toward unlocking a new plant option.



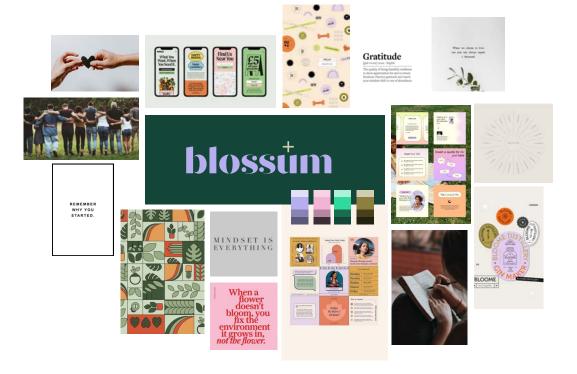
# **BRAND POSITIONING**

I went through a brand filter exercise provided by Chute Gerdeman to determine what blossum's brand voice should be. I also tested out several typefaces.



Dynamic Crafted Geeky Wise Steady Standardized Playful Quiet Imaginative Practical Professional Bold Niche Small Secure Big Free Mass-market Relatable Surprising Progressive Dependable Mysterious Traditional Raw Casual Current Refined Timeless Cheeky Scientific Rigorous Respectful Effortless Artistic Graceful Budding Idealistic Rugged Open-minded Realistic Accomplished Organic Vibrant Opinionated Industrial Subtle Glamorous Laid-back Energetic Austere Aggressive Calm Welcoming Radical Wide-eyed Reserved Rational Sophisticated Fun Modern Emotional Serious Vintage Analytical Intuitive Humble Basic Technical High-end Brash Savvv Optimistic Relaxed Scholarly Pessimistic Disciplined Complex Experimental Clever Simple Conventional Sincere Cutting-edge Approachable Adventurous Trusted Exclusive Momentous Daring Ordinary Everyday **Futuristic** Best-in-class Nostalgic Add your own! Curious Multifaceted Certain Focused

**Concept One** features more structured and geometric forms with thin black outlines around shapes. The tone is strong and inspirational using sophisticated imagery. Gradients and garden metaphors can be seen throughout. Overall, it is somewhat minimalistic.



**Concept Two** features more organic forms and is very illustration-reliant. Bright, fun imagery is used throughout along with hand-drawn elements. Garden metaphors and plant characters add to the fun. Overall tone is warm and welcoming.





journal is being written in

My final concept is a frankenstein of two concepts I explored. I wanted the app to feel inspiring and hopeful, yet sophisticated as this app is for anyone of any age.

blossum documentation 19 topic research concept solution

# **DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

#### enrichment

Learn to shift your mindset and focus on the sources of joy in life.

#### Related Features:

Write one or more gratitude entires daily

Be reminded to write via personalized notifications

Review past gratitude entries and use as a "pick-me-up" when needed

#### connection

Feel a sense of interconnectedness as you acknowledge your environment, the people in it, and your purpose in it all.

#### **Related Features:**

Share option for entries

Can send / receive plants & import into your garden

Scan feature for plant if you've received one in real life via QR code

## inspiration

Recognize the care others have shown and learn to reciprocate.

#### Related Features:

Tips section if user is struggling to think of what to write about

Quote of the day

## progression

Discover the importance of mental health awareness as you track your growth.

#### **Related Features:**

Current streak/total entries

Progress towards unlocking next plant

Progress towards gratitude plants being in full bloom (and therefore able to be viewed)

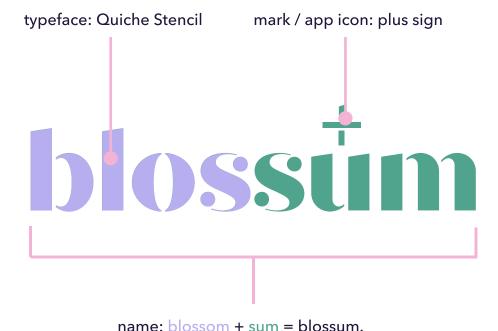
## sincerity

Acknowledge the good and bad days and accept both.

#### Related Features:

Positive reinforcement- encourage users to keep coming back via reminders and garden notifs





## Why blossom?

The app will have a virtual garden to accompany the virtual journal. not only does this gamify the app and make it more multifaceted, but it also is a metaphor for gratitude. Slowly, your gratitude for the blessings in your life will grow like plants in a garden.

## Why sum?

The plus sign is a symbol for three things:

**Addition**. You are the sum of all the people who have ever loved you.

**Positivity**. A positive mindset is the starting point for a life filled with joy.

**Medicine**. Practicing gratitude is mentally and physically healing.

## logotype & tagline lockup

# blossům







### **UI** icons & illustration









## mark / app icon





## buttons & fields

Button

Type here

## typography

## **Quiche Sans Bold**

AaBcCcDdEeFfGgHhliJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQ qRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz



#### **Avenir Next Demi Bold**

AaBcCcDdEeFfGgHhliJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQ qRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

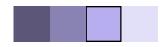


## Avenir Next Regular

AaBcCcDdEeFfGgHhliJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQ qRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

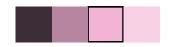
#### brand colors

#### Loving Life Lavender



#5C5778, #8983B3, #B7AEEF, #E2DFF8

#### **Positivity Pink**



#3D2D36, #B686A0, #F3B3D5, #F8D1E5

#### Gratitude Green



#134638, #186D4F, #31DA9C #ABF0D7

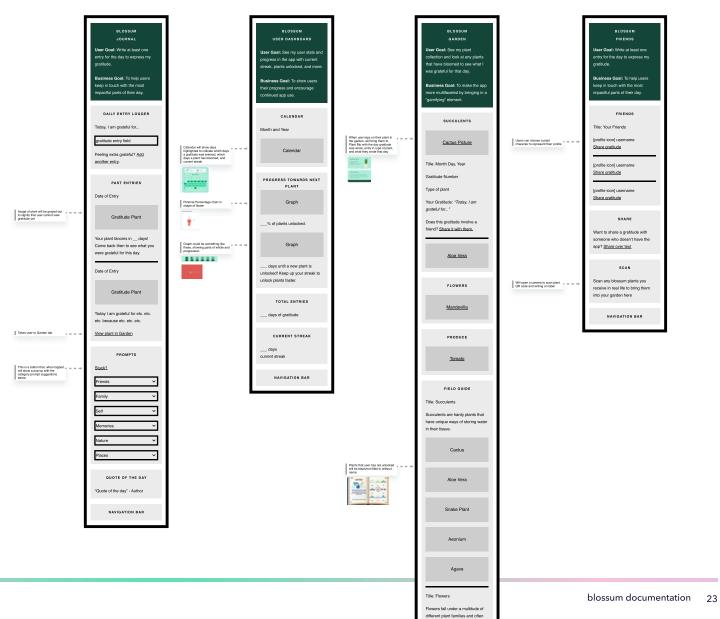
#### **Balance Brown**



#23200F, #473F1E, #8D7F3D, #D2CCB0

# **PRIORITY GUIDES**

before jumping into wireframes, I created priority guides (provided by Zoco) in order to focus on the content of my app without being distracted by any visual layout.



add a pop of color to any garden.

# Journal

# **INITIAL WIREFRAMES**



enrichment

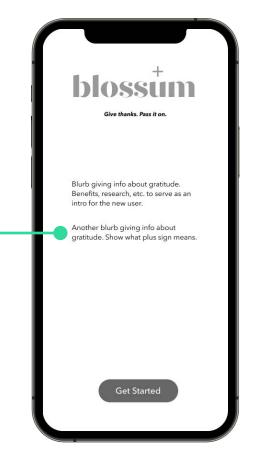


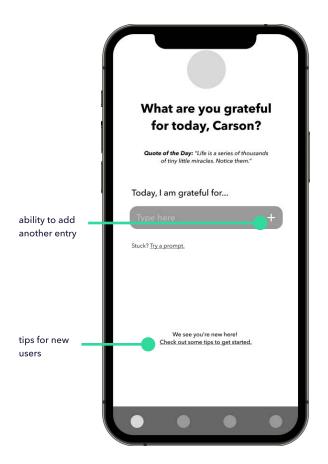
inspiration

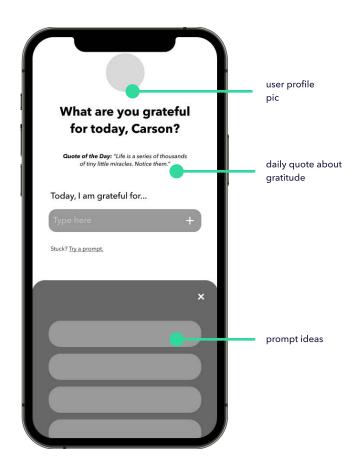


sincerity

upon downloading, the user will be introduced to the concept of gratitude journaling and its benefits.

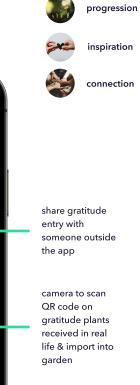


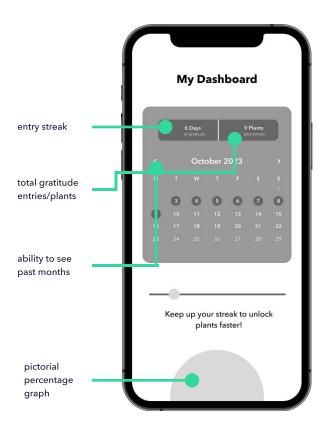




# Dashboard

# **Profile**





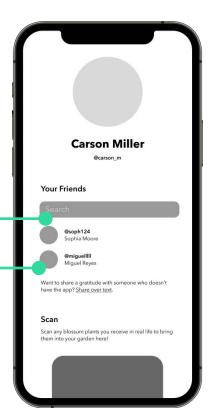


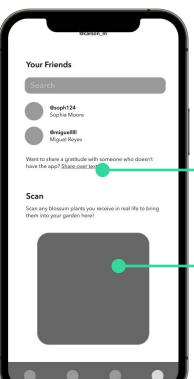
day where entry
was made

progress bar

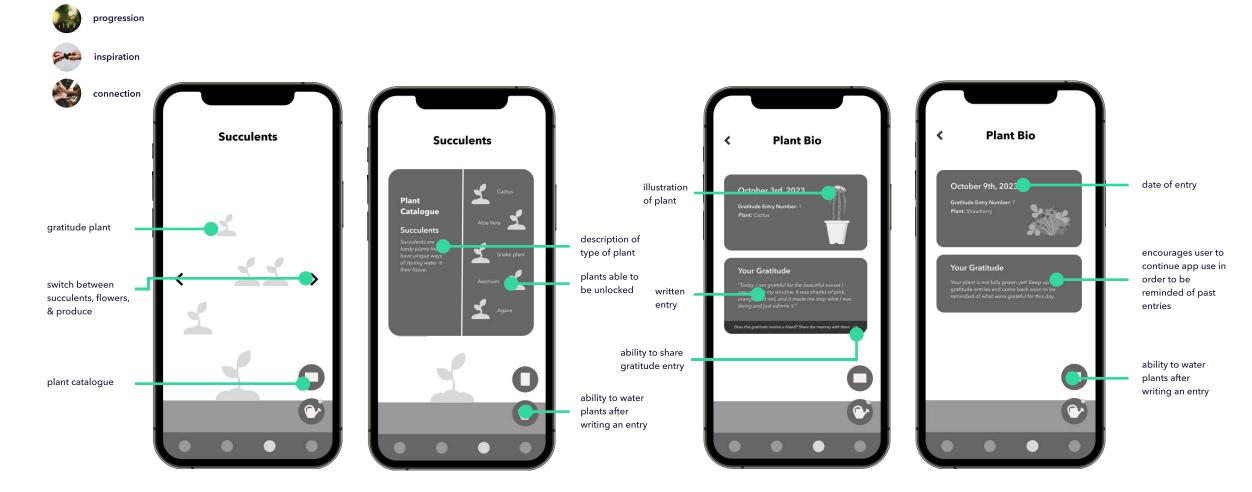
search within
added friends or
find new ones

can share a
gratitude with
added friends by
tapping them



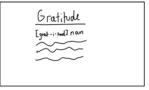


# Garden

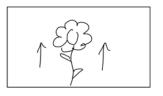


# VIDEO STORYBOARD

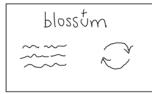
I created a storyboard for blossum's promotional video. I wanted the video to be informative in terms of how the app works, yet also have emotion behind in to showcase the brand voice.



start with a definition of gratitude. handwritten effect



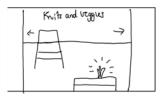
flower appears, time lapse of flower growing. "think of gratitude like a flower. gratitude can blossom into something beautiful. overtime, your gratitude for the people, places, and things in your life accumulate and thrive like plants in a garden."



enter blossum. maybe copy: "like energy, gratitude cannot be destroyed-- only transferred. shows tag: "give thanks, pass it on"



move into stock video of user on phone. show them typing in gratitude entry. can animate it so it types in the field on wireframe.



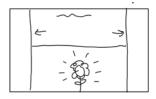
plant appears in garden. hand drawn accents popping out or arrows to bring attention to it



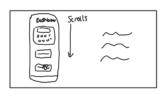
time lapse of plants popping up in garden. copy that explains how the more you write, the more plants you'll have



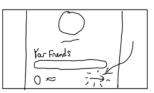
"give thanks, pass it on". move to a new person after first user taps on the share button in plant bio. new user (stock video) gets a notification "carson sent you a gratitude plant!"



either person clicks on it and/or it zooms into phone. new plant pops up in garden.



move to dashboard. see a new day pop up on calendar, see little animation (idk what) with total plants chart (maybe just spins?), and seed moves more on progress towards next plant



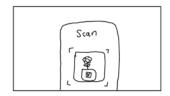
user moves to friends profile. sees one of their friends. "give thanks, pass it on" and hits arrow to send grattiude



another new user gets notif. new plant pops up, or just smiles at phone or something



switch to stock video of person giving another person potted plant. copy says something about how you can gift gratitude in real life, too.



video of scanning qr code. OR animate so that video is shown through camera on wireframe

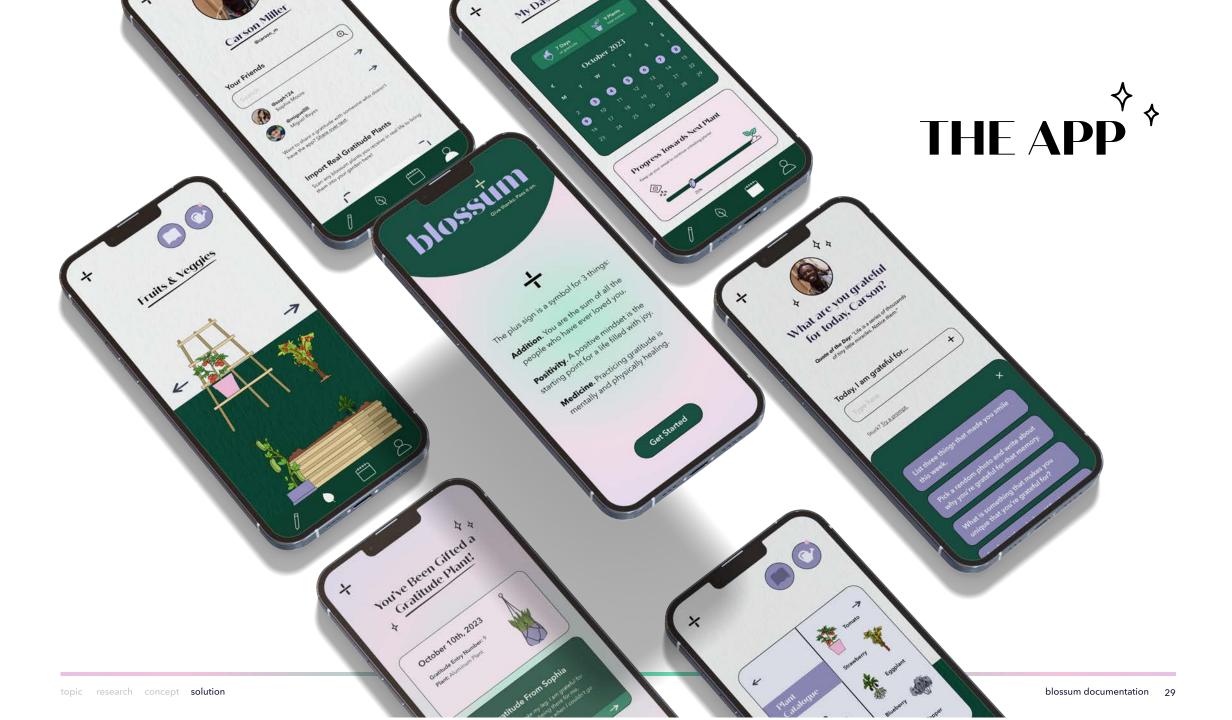


Compilation of videos. "life moves fast. hold on to the moments that matter most." Music swells



end scene with blossum logo. transition closes out with plus sign?





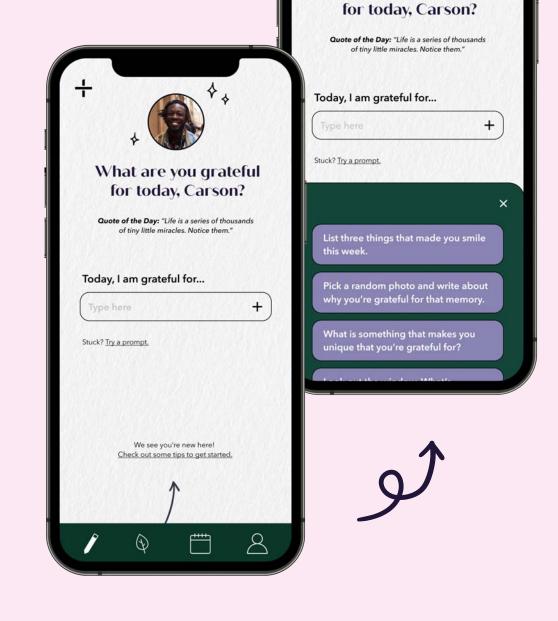


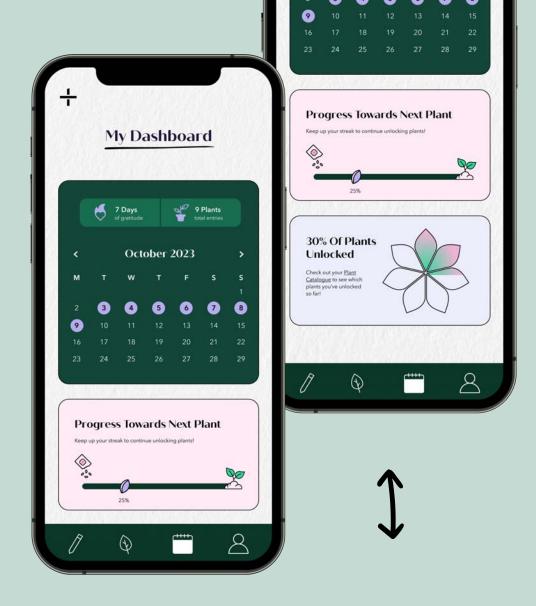
# Upon first opening the app, the user is introduced to the concept of gratitude journaling. The symbolism behind the app's icon is also explained.

# **JOURNAL**

Users type what they're grateful for everyday in the journal tab. If they're new, blossum provides them with tips to get started. If they are in need of inspiration, blossum also has sample prompts to scroll through.

Feeling extra grateful? Users can tap the plus sign to fill out another entry, up to three per day.

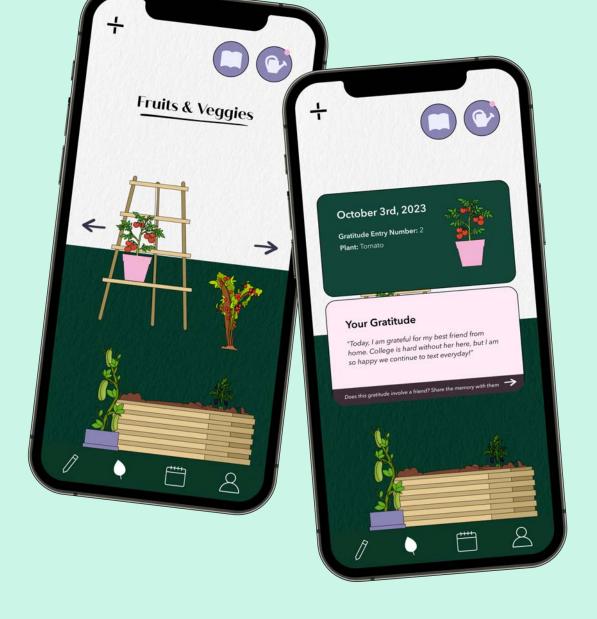




# **DASHBOARD**

Users can scroll through their dashboard to see user data including current streak, total plants/entries, how close they are to unlocking new plant options, and total plants unlocked.

Their calendar gives them a visual of their streak, with the circled days representing a day an entry was written.
Clicking on a circle brings the user to their garden to see the gratitude plant.



In their virtual garden, users will find all their gratitude entries in the form of their chosen plants. They can switch between fruits & veggie, succulent, and flower gardens. Tapping on a plant brings them to their gratitude entry for that day. If the plant has not bloomed yet, they will have to wait to see what they wrote.

Each entry also equals a day's watering, which keeps users on track for unlocking their next plant. Users can see which plants they have yet to unlock in the plant catalogue.

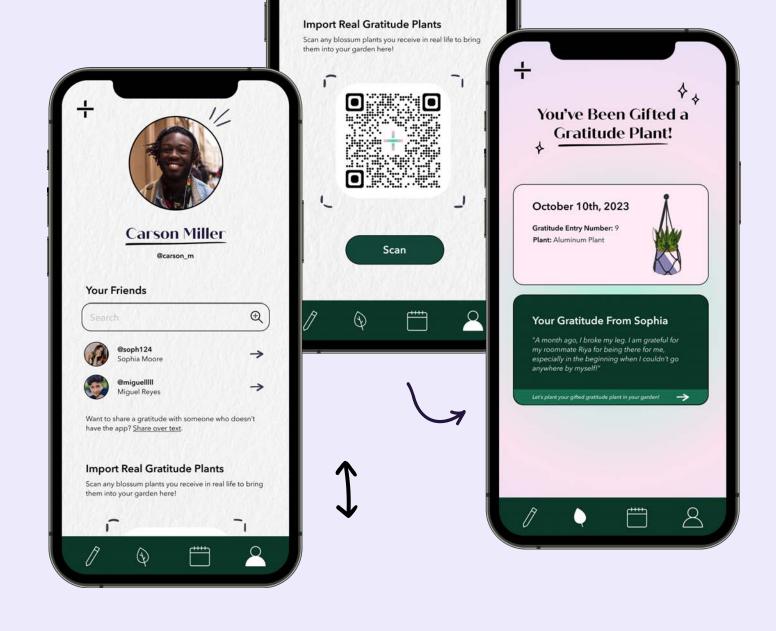


# **GARDEN**

# **PROFILE**

Users can edit their name/image, see friends, and search for new friends on their profile tab. By tapping on the arrow next to a friend, they can send them a gratitude plant.

Scrolling down, users can tap the "scan" button to scan the QR code on plant received in real life. A screen with their gifted plant and message will appear after doing so.



# THE PLANT

Real-life gratitude plants are available at the blossum pop-up. Users can write a message on the sticker before putting it on the pot. The recipient can scan the QR code to import the plant into their virtual garden. The writing scans too, and users can tap on the plant to see the message whenever.

Each plant comes with a blossum pen. This pen is used to write on the label, but it also serves as a reminder to take a moment whenever you use it to practice gratitude.

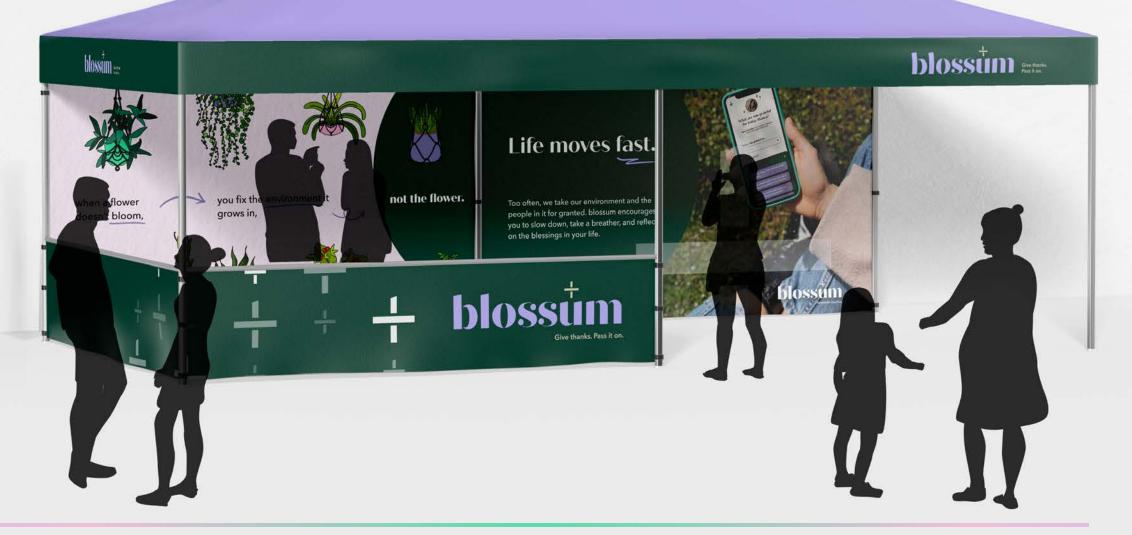




# THE POP-UP

The blossum pop-up is an interactive experience that can travel to businesses, schools, and more.

Visitors can talk to reps to learn about the app and receive their own gratitude plant to gift to someone special.

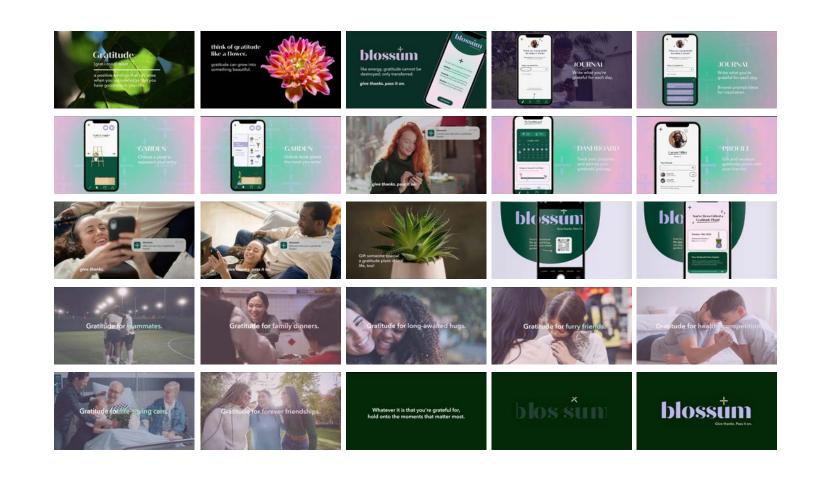


# **VIDEO STILLS**

blossum's promotional video is both explanatory and appealing to emotion. Playing on the brand's tagline "give thanks. pass it on.", the video follows several different users as they use the app and send and receive gratitude plants with each other. The ending shows multiple scenarios for which a person could be grateful for, showing examples as to what a potential user may write about in their own journal.



Scan to see the final video.



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