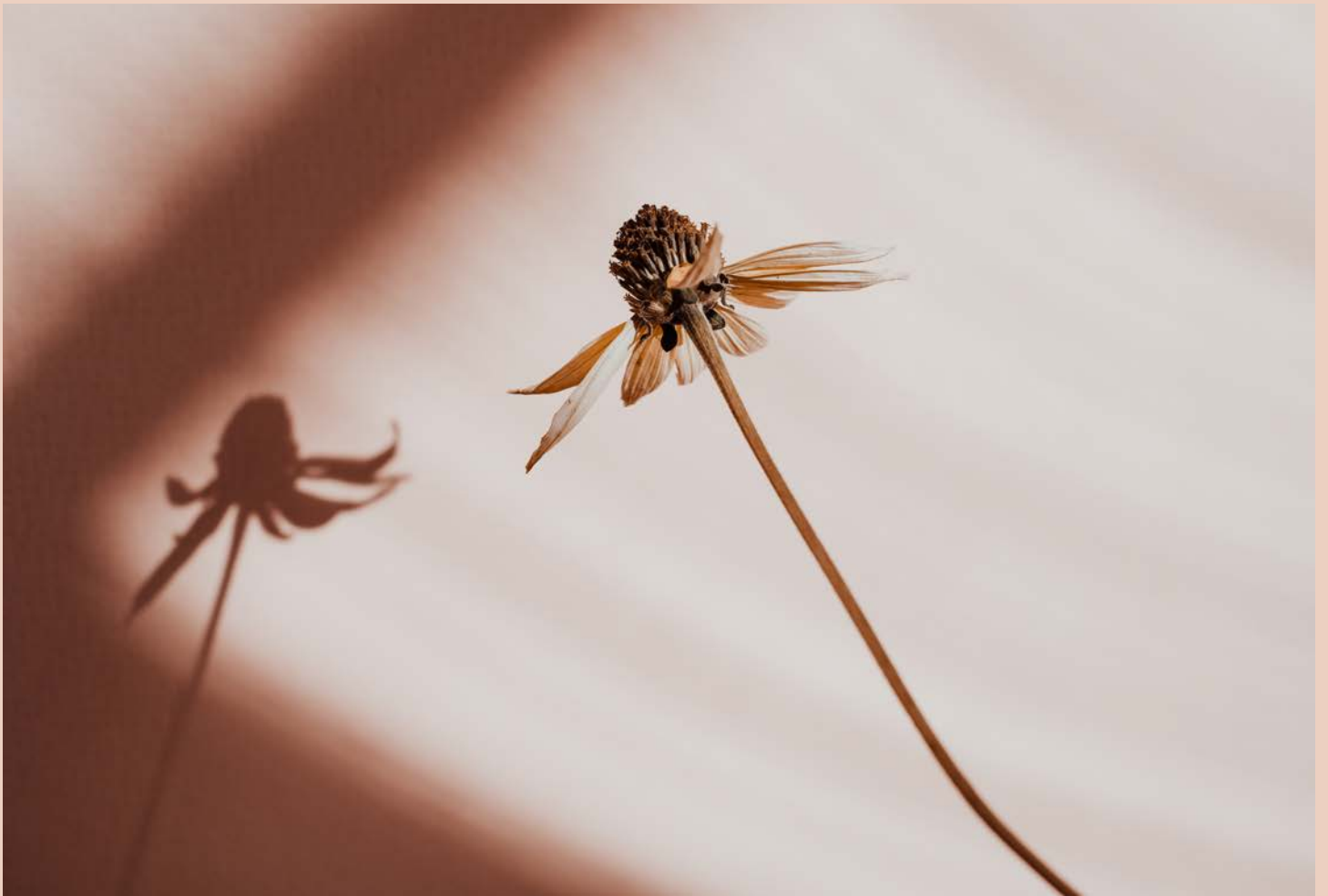


Hello
Joy!



CREATING JOY WORKSHOP
AMY BACKOS, PHD. ATR-BC

COPYRIGHT DISCLAIMER

This book and workshop are offered as an educational tool to inspire you to reflect on joy and values. The class is not therapy and participating does not constitute a therapeutic relationship.

The assignments are offered as inspiration to increase authenticity in your relationship with yourself, and achieve your value-based goals.
Enjoy the process!

Want more? Email me!
Have any questions/concerns? Email me!
Amy@Amybackos.com

Love the class? Tell a friend!!

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WELCOME

Welcome to this amazing community of people who are building authenticity and cultivating opportunities to experience joy! Joy is a feeling of happiness without any external reason. It springs from an internal decision to look for and cultivate joy. A joyful outlook makes situations a little (or a lot!) better, creates more loving relationships, and makes us feel better. Joy can transform our lives, relationships, work, and our community.

This workshop utilizes evidence-based strategies from psychology and art therapy to enhance your understanding of your thoughts and feelings and then do what brings you joy. These tools help you relate to yourself in positive ways and move towards your values and dreams with excitement.

The "Hello Joy!" workshop will guide you towards experiences which bring you a positive and joyful attitude towards yourself, your family, friends, and community. This workbook offers the resources you need to create personal satisfaction and a life you love. Enjoy the process of self-discovery with curiosity and joy!



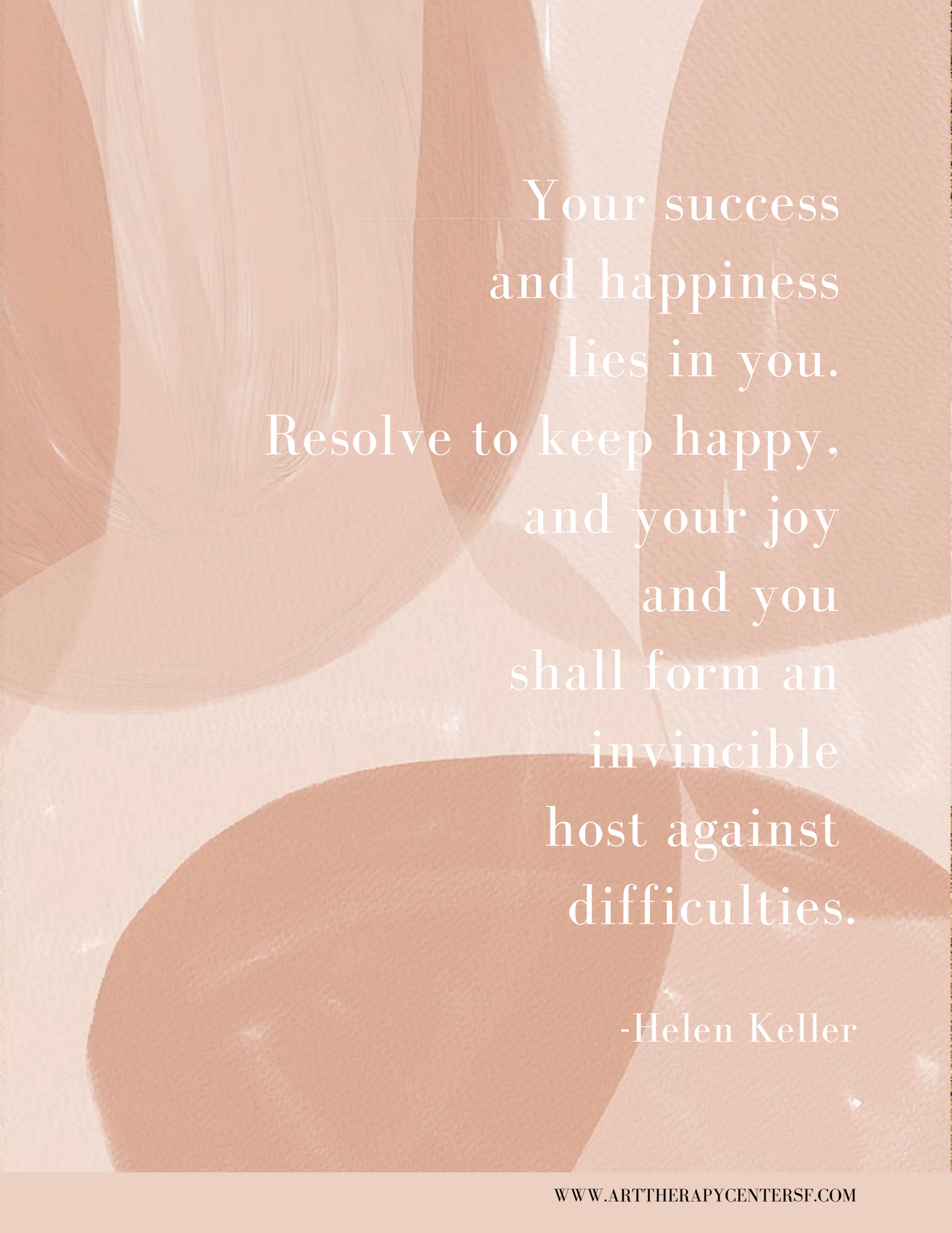
A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Amy'. The signature is stylized with a large, looping 'A' and a cursive 'y'.

Amy Backos, PhD, ATR-BC
Licensed Psychologist & Board Certified Art Therapist

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Your success
and happiness
lies in you.
Resolve to keep happy,
and your joy
and you
shall form an
invincible
host against
difficulties.

-Helen Keller



BEGINNING

Happiness lies in the joy of
achievement and the thrill of creative
effort.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Before class starts

1

Plan your mode of writing

Print this workbook and find a lovely binder to keep it all together, or have it bound at an office store. If you prefer to skip printing, get a blank journal for the writing and art exercises.

2

Schedule the Class

Use your calendar or the planner at the end of this book to mark the time of live classes, or the time you will watch the recordings the next day.

3

Schedule Committed Actions

Schedule time for inspired action! Use your calendar to invest 20 minutes each day on your self compassion for the next month. For maximum impact, schedule 7 days a week.

4

Find an Accountability Partner

Tell someone about your commitment to the class who can help you be accountable to your daily 20 minute commitment.

5

Get ready to create!

Gather some tools for drawing - crayons, colored pencils, markers, or pens, etc. It is unnecessary for you to have anything fancy - just pick ones you like!

Weekly Outline

1

Understanding Joy

Orientation and introduction to joy and why it matters.

Inspired action (complete before class 2)

- Review pages 1-18.
- Complete week 1 writing & art.

2

Joyful Thoughts

Barriers to joyful thoughts, cognitive defusion and tools for success.

Inspired action (complete before class 3)

- Complete week 2 writing & art.

3

Joyful Spirit

Creating your compassionate self, self as context, a growth-promoting environment.

Inspired action (complete before class 4)

- Complete week 3 writing and art.

4

Joyful Action

Bringing compassion and kindness to others; committed actions.

Inspired action (complete after class 4)

- Complete week 4 writing and art.
- Create your plan for further action.



True happiness
comes from
the joy of
deeds well done,
the zest
of creating
things new.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

How to Keep a Commitment

If you have had difficulty with consistency in the past, don't worry! This time you will succeed using the best psychology strategies! You will learn and use all of these tricks for success this month.

If you have taken a class with me before, you know some of these tips. However, make sure you are calibrated to success by checking to make sure you are still using these strategies.

- **Write it down!** Research shows when you write down your goal, you are 70% likely to succeed! That's right! Simply writing down your goals gives you 70% of what you need for success. Using this workbook and your calendar will give you the leverage you need for consistency!
- **Discipline before motivation!** We often wait until we "feel" inspired to take action. Motivation is a feeling and discipline is an action. Take action through a consistent schedule and you will soon feel the motivation to continue.
- **Slow and Steady!** Making small daily progress is more likely to lead to big success! Research shows people making small incremental movement towards goals ultimately surpass people attempting to tackle multiple goals at once or trying to do too much.
- **Changing Habits!** Research shows pairing a new habit with an old one is the recipe for success. Pair your 20 minute a day for this class with another well established habit. For example, brushing your teeth in the morning, eating your breakfast or lunch, washing your face at night. Schedule 20 minutes before or after one of these times or pick another regular habit and schedule 20 minutes around that.

More about Commitments

- **Pleasure!** There is decades of research demonstrating you can increase a new behavior with a reward! All you have to do is pair a new behavior with something pleasurable. Add something you enjoy to your 20 minutes and you are significantly more likely to succeed! For example, you can fix a cup of hot chocolate or tea to drink while you write and make art (I encourage you to choose a non-alcoholic beverage). Deciding you don't need a reward, is the opposite of self-compassion! Really do this!
- **Location! Location! Location!** Research demonstrates if you practice in the same location, your mind will be ready for learn just by going to that location! Pick a comfortable spot and work there each day.
- **1% more!** All you need for this workshop is 20 minutes a day. This is about 1% of your day! You have already made an important commitment to complete this workshop...all it requires for success is 1% of your day for the next month.
- **Be decisive!** Make your commitment and stick to it! Keep self-compassion as your priority for one month. Practicing indecision reinforces that habit, prevents us from making progress, and increases stress. Stick to your commitment!
- **A word of caution!** Reading and knowing these strategies is not enough for success. Actual practice is required! Avoid letting your mind fool you into thinking you can skip these steps. The next page is where you make your commitment. Tempted to skip this step? Go back and reread the research above about success.

Your Personal Commitment

I _____

(Your name)

commit to 20 minutes each day this month.

&

I will focus on cultivating joy.

I will complete my 20 minutes a day at this time:

I will complete my 20 minutes a day in this location:

I will complete my 20 minutes a day with this additional pleasure:

Your signature _____

date

Commitments



Joyful actions

We make time for self care. We create an internal environment to welcome joy. Each week we create a healthy environment by attending to our mental and physical health, nutrition, rest, friendships, education, and fun.

Commitment

We commit to a life-long process of learning and relearning self-compassion. We seek new actions to show kindness to ourself and others. We look for and find joy in each day.

Self Compassion

We speak kindly to ourselves. We patiently redirect ourselves to speak with love and compassion.

Kind Thoughts

We learn to relate to our thoughts in new ways. We see thoughts for what they are - just thoughts. In this way, we free up time and psychological energy for things we love.

Authentic Presence

We show up for others with our self compassion and love. Our kind and joyful example is a gift to others in our family and community.



Instructions

Beauty is whatever
gives joy.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Committed Actions

Now that you have identified to the time and place, the additional pleasure, and made your commitment, it is time to get started!

You have just made a life changing commitment to yourself to prioritize 1% of your day for self-compassion, kindness, and joy.

Each week, you will have a lesson and then work on the topic for the whole week. You have journaling and art prompts to complete each week and 20 minutes a day is plenty of time. Once you complete the worksheets and art each week, you can use any remaining 20 minutes as you wish - writing and making art, reading, silent contemplation, and written reflection about how to put your compassion into action.

Here is a sample schedule you can use each day - use your timer for maximum focus.

1 minute breath and relax, get comfortable, smile

18 minutes write / make art

1 minute breath and relax, stretch, smile

It is most important that you stick to your 20 minute schedule each day! No need to try and catch up if you miss a day - just return to 20 minutes a day. Whatever you do to enhance your self-compassion, kindness, and joy will be great!

Instructions: Write

It is essential you to reflect on your thoughts and feelings about yourself. Why is this important? As you grow in your relationship with yourself, you begin to know what you like and what brings you joy. This certainly increases your happiness and gives you direction for your goals and purpose. A compassionate attitude towards yourself uplifts your spirit, makes room for joy, and allows you to move forward with what is important to you.

Negative and critical thoughts towards yourself makes everything more difficult, limits happiness and joy, and likely stops you from going towards your values. Each week of the "Hello Joy!" workshop includes practice for 20 minutes each day where you will write and make art.

Writing helps you know yourself.

Writing offers an efficient way to explore your thoughts - we write to "know" ourselves and to learn more about our thoughts and feelings. We tend to think the same thoughts every day for years. The writing will allow you to unpack your thoughts and decide if you want to keep thinking them or change them.

We pick up negative self talk from childhood and from uncomfortable experiences.

Because our brains tend to naturally focus on the negative, we engage in negative thoughts a lot! You may find you feel a little sad, angry or surprised at the negative thoughts you discover this month. When uncomfortable thoughts and feelings arise, you have the chance to practice kind thoughts with yourself.

Try telling yourself something gentle like this:

Hello old thought. I see you are here again. I am learning to relate differently to you. I am not trying to get rid of you. I am learning to respond with curiosity and ease, even when you are here with me and when I feel uncomfortable.

You might want to write that sentence (or create your own) on a note card to hang by your bed, on your mirror, or in your car. Text it to yourself or make it your screen saver.

Instructions: Art

Art Therapy is a creative process to understand ourselves, express feelings, clarify thoughts, promote flow, and feel great. In fact, creative expression is a human need!

The use of Art Therapy dates back to the early 1900's. Furthermore, art for storytelling, expression, and healing is as old as human history!

The art process helps you solidify feelings and allows your brain to deeply explore why some thoughts seem to have so much power. The creative process incorporates more parts of your brain than the writing can do alone. You can use what you learn in this class about your creative process anytime you want to understand your feelings or figure out what you want to do.

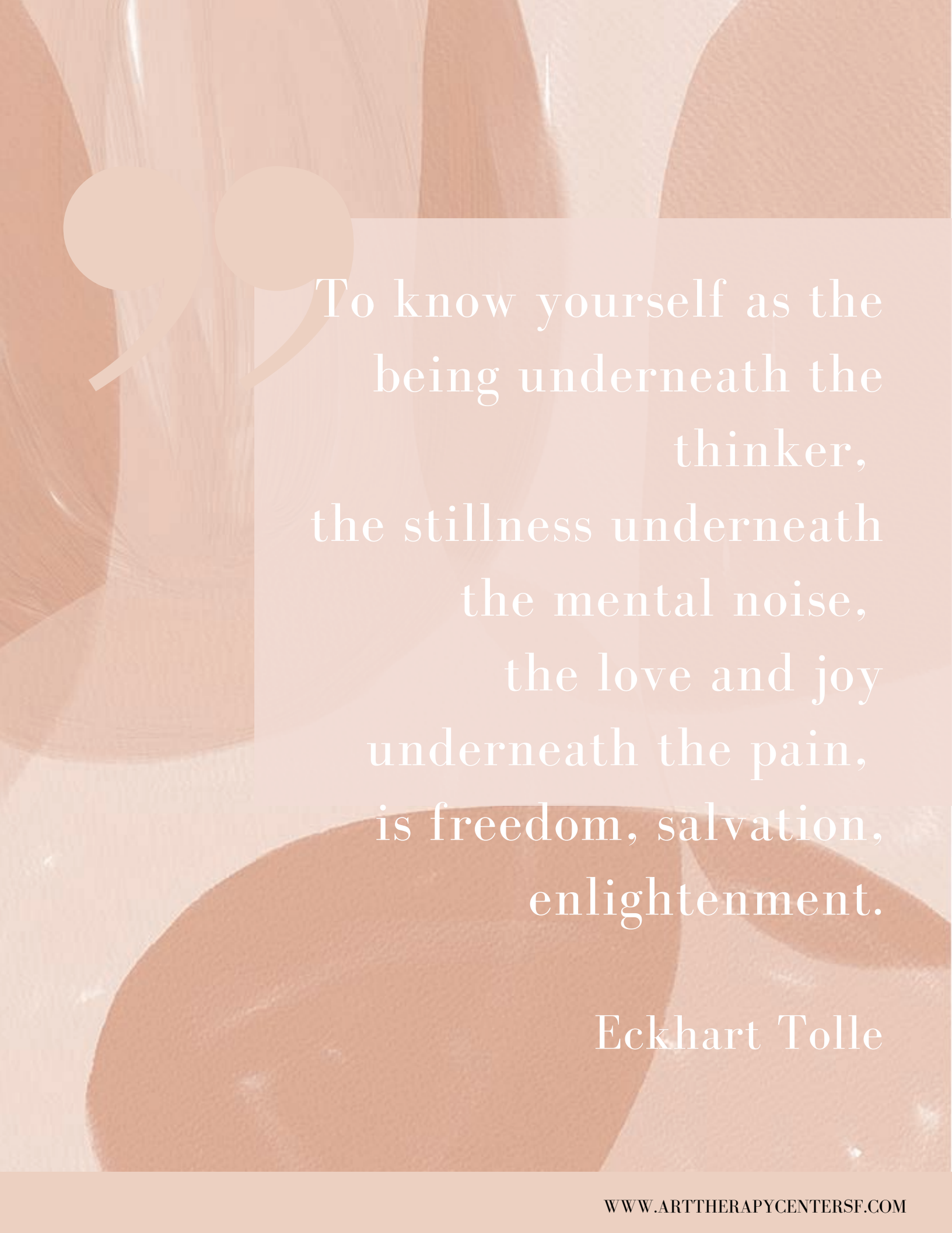
Art allows us to know our preverbal self.

You can spend as much or as little time on the art as you wish - however, it is important to engage in a creative expression each week. Avoid thinking too long about what to create and avoid judgment. Be spontaneous and have fun!

When you are done with each drawing, take a moment to reflect (without judgement) on the PROCESS of creating. It's important to suspend judgement about what your art looks like. Whatever you create will be great for understanding yourself more and generating self compassion! If you are tempted to skip the art, please reconsider so you get the most impact from this workshop

Remember to aside 20 minutes each day to complete these inspired actions. You are committed to one month of self understanding and joy. Give yourself the gift of completing your commitment each day to get the most value from this class!

If you want to work with an Art Therapist, reach out to The Art Therapy Center of San Francisco and always look for a Registered and Board Certified Art Therapist (ATR-BC). Registered and board certified art therapists are trained artists and counseling professionals who can help you express yourself to the fullest using visual art and creative thinking.

The background is a warm, textured orange-brown color. On the left side, there is a large, stylized graphic of a quote mark, composed of two overlapping circles and a curved line. The text is centered on the right side of the image, written in a white, serif font. The quote is: "To know yourself as the being underneath the thinker, the stillness underneath the mental noise, the love and joy underneath the pain, is freedom, salvation, enlightenment." The attribution "Eckhart Tolle" is centered below the quote.

To know yourself as the
being underneath the
thinker,
the stillness underneath
the mental noise,
the love and joy
underneath the pain,
is freedom, salvation,
enlightenment.

Eckhart Tolle

Summary

Get ready to welcome joy into your life! Start small, only 20 minutes a day. Be easy on yourself when you discover uncomfortable feelings, or have thoughts with a lot of strong emotion. This is normal so avoid judging yourself. Acknowledge the thought and call it by its name - an unkind thought, an unhelpful thought, or an old negative story. Even if you have piles of evidence that a thought might be true, you are learning to relate to thoughts differently. They are only thoughts.

Research shows that when we push away or distract ourselves from an unwanted thought, it will definitely come back and even feel worse the next time. Take a deep breath, notice the thoughts and feel the feelings. Then move on. No need to mull it over or ask why you keep having the thought. Just "be" with it for a moment and then move forward. Thoughts lead to feelings and research demonstrates a feeling will last about 90 seconds if we are not pushing it away or clinging to it. If you are really stuck on a memory, be compassionate with yourself, take time to write about how you can take care of yourself, and consider talking with a therapist.

Remember, research confirms that making a small commitment and sticking to it leads to success, while taking on too much leads to burn out, frustration in lack of progress and ultimately giving up. You can succeed here by being consistent with just 20 minutes a day. Avoid trying to complete all the tasks in a day or two. Focus on small, daily actions.

TO SUCCEED

- Work only 20 minutes a day.
- Practice self-compassion - gently redirect yourself when you notice unkind thoughts or uncomfortable feelings.
- Work everyday at the same time and place.
- Pair your time with another habit (eg., right after your brush your teeth).
- Pair your time with a simple pleasure (hot tea, flowers, a chocolate, etc.).
- If you skip a day, get right back on track with 20 minutes a day. Do not work 40 minutes to try and "make up" for a missed day. Avoid judgement. Just move forward.

20 minutes a day can change your life!

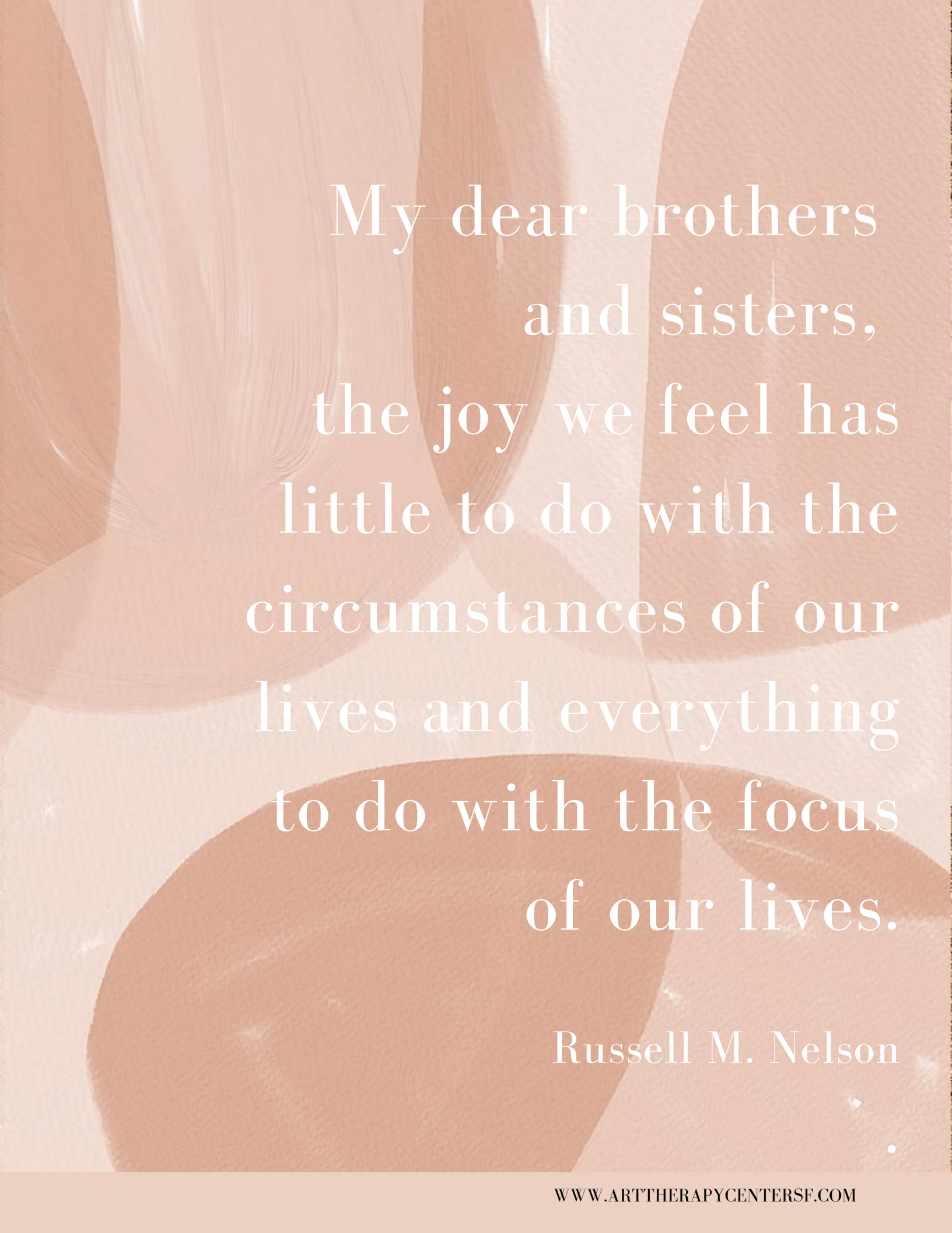


Week 1

Understanding Joy

Joy is the simplest form of
gratitude.

Karl Barth



My dear brothers
and sisters,
the joy we feel has
little to do with the
circumstances of our
lives and everything
to do with the focus
of our lives.

Russell M. Nelson

Understanding Joy

Here are the areas you will cover this week.
Spend 20 minutes a day, take your time, and savor them over the week.

1

Savoring and Brainstorming

Here you let your creative thinking flow to savor a joyful memory and recall aspects in life which bring you joy. These will help guide you towards more joy.

2

Acknowledging and Accepting

Time to explore what you really want. You can dream of traveling, sharing your home with a dog, having a clean closet, or flying in outer space. There are zero limits on these dreams which can bring you joy.

3

Identifying Values

This week we start by identifying your values which bring you joy. Values are aspirational and guide us, like a map, towards what is most important in life.

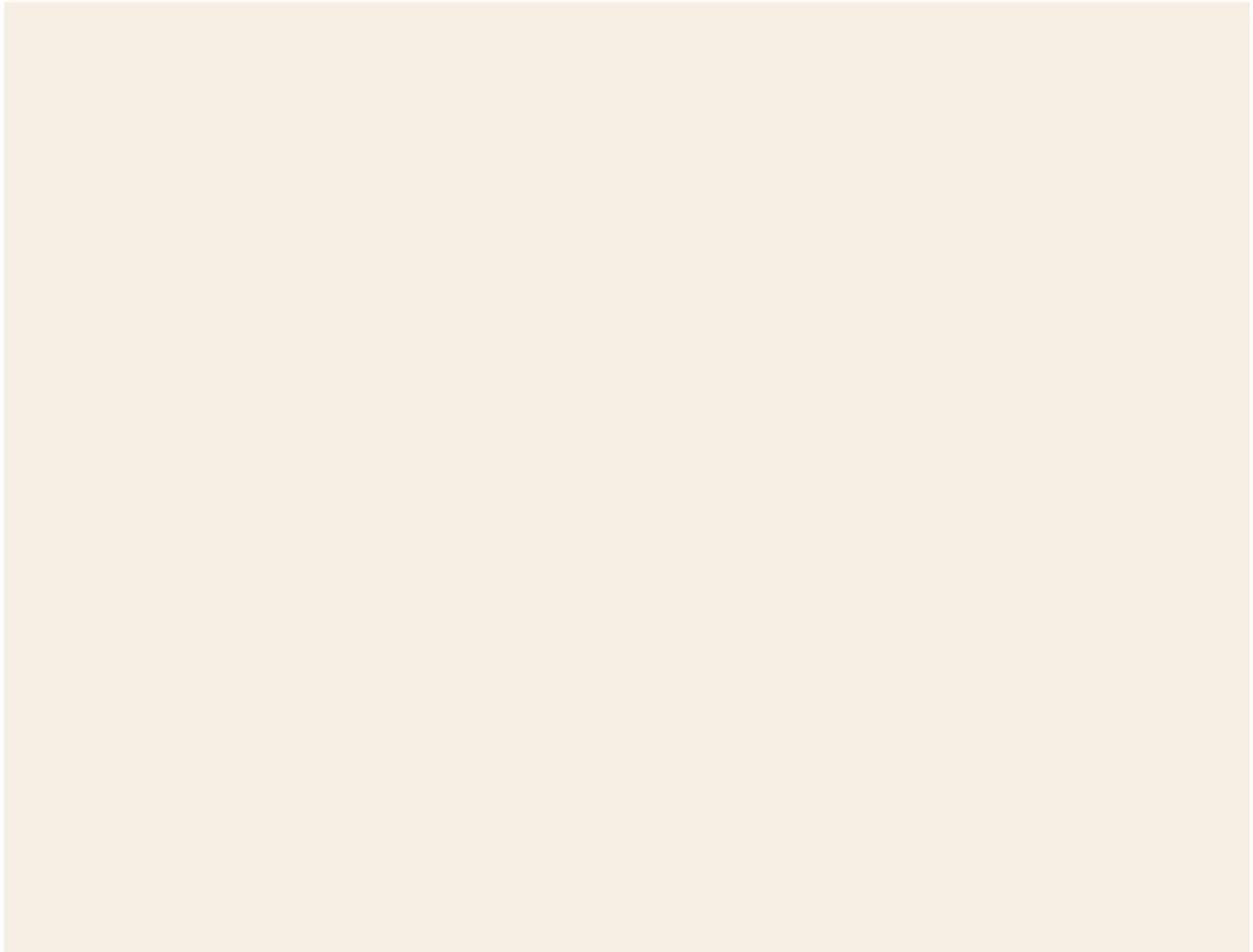
4

Creative Expression and Reflection

Creativity hones in on emotions and helps you connect your feelings with your values and your brainstorming. Enjoy this process and see what emerges for you! Reflect on the week and note what you have learned.

SAVOR A JOYFUL MEMORY

Spend several minutes recalling a memory which brings you joy. It might be a moment in nature, a joyful exchange you shared with someone, or an occasion you found to be very special. Any memory of joy will work here - it does not have to be big or seem joyful to anyone else. Write 20 minutes about your joyful experience in as much detail as you can.

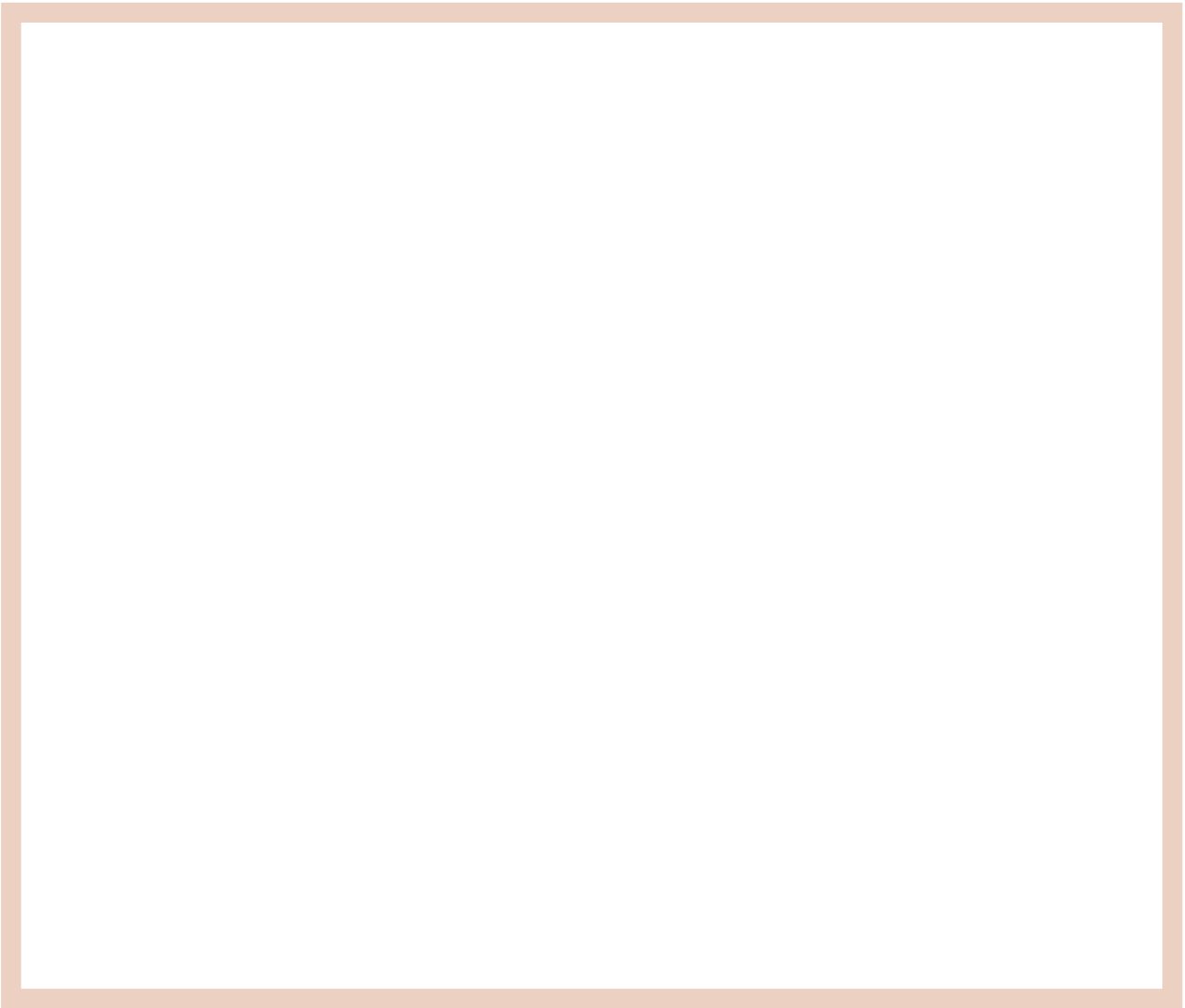


Reflect on what you just wrote and highlight the words which are exciting and interesting to you. Below, write three aspects of the memory you think most inspired your feeling of joy. It might be the setting, how you were feeling, what the moment meant to you, the people around you, the sounds, etc.



Joyful Brainstorm

Reflect on the places in life where you find small bits of pleasure and joy - these should be little things like playing with a dog, the smell of delicious food, a hug, a friend's smile, the feel of warm water in the shower, the way the sun makes shadows below a tree, etc. Spend 20 minutes writing all the ways you notice these small joys. Look for all the pleasures of your senses and brief enjoyable moments. You can keep adding to this list all week as you notice new simple joys.



- Draw a star next to one item on your list above and focus on every day this week. Pick something you do each day - your task will be to simply notice more joy when you are doing it.
- For example, you might choose playing with your dog. Each time you play with the dog, pay attention to the feeling of happiness, pleasure, or joy you have. Savor the moment and smile.
- For maximum success schedule your small joy - write it on your calendar or make a note to remind you to look for joy in this action. Writing it down makes a commitment and serves as a reminder to follow through.

Joyful Dreams

Take a few deep breaths and allow yourself to relax - what are your wishes and dreams? What would fill you with joy? Want to ride a horse on the beach? See your favorite band in concert? Swim with the dolphins? Camp in the woods? Imagine and savor each dream. Your mind might interrupt you with thoughts such as "You can't have that." "Don't be silly." or "Who do you think you are?" Thank your mind for doing its job and ask it to wait while you savor your joyful dreams.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Joyful Dreams

Keep dreaming! Add more joyful dreams over the week until you have filled the page.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

Joyful Dream Response

Reflect on the dreams you wrote down and describe your reactions. Did you have fun? Are you inspired? Did you entertain negative thoughts? Write it all down. You might discover some inspiring thoughts and motivation for inspired action. You might also have the chance to unpack some old, negative judgements about yourself. Either way, you get to know more about what makes you happy or learn about thoughts interfering with your joy.

Visual Expression

Take a few moments to show the what joy looks like to you using lines, shapes and colors. It could range from just one line to a fully fleshed-out, abstract or representational picture. Avoid thinking too long about it and be spontaneous. This will help you connect to your feelings of joy and serve as an expression of today's joyful feelings.

EnJOY the process of creating and don't worry about the finished product.

However you do it will be great!



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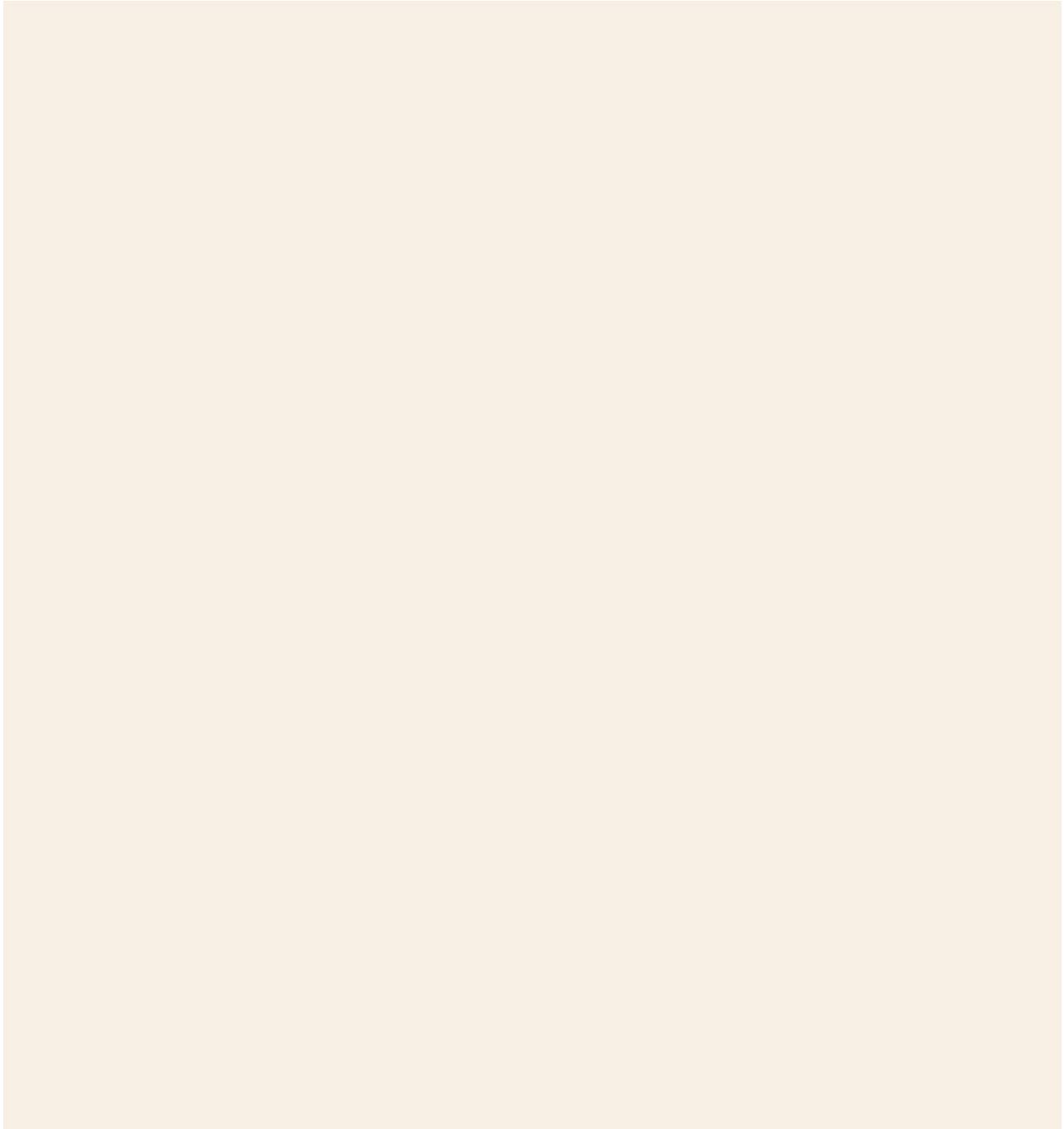
Three words or phrases to describe your art.

-
-
-

How do you feel?

REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned about your joy this week. Appreciate your strengths, and focus on your positive actions which cultivated joy. Notice your thoughts, feelings and actions which brought you joy. Avoid judging yourself for what you did or did not do this week. How did you feel paying such close attention to your personal sense of joy this week?





Week 2

Joyful Thoughts

Carrying yourself with poise
and joy and peace within -
that's sexy.

Leah LaBelle

Compassionate Thoughts

Here are the areas you will cover this week.
Spend 20 minutes a day, take your time, and savor them over the week.

1

Kill-Joy Thoughts

What are the thoughts that kill your joy? These are old thoughts and it's time to let them go. Start with unpacking these kill-joys and realizing they are only thoughts...and thoughts can be changed!

2

Joyful Thoughts

Begin to train your mind to focus on the positive aspects of your life. Thoughts are your choice -might as well pick the happy ones!

3

Practice Joyful Thoughts

Joyful thoughts can give your whole day a boost. You can create new joyful stories where you are the master of your story instead of a victim of circumstances.

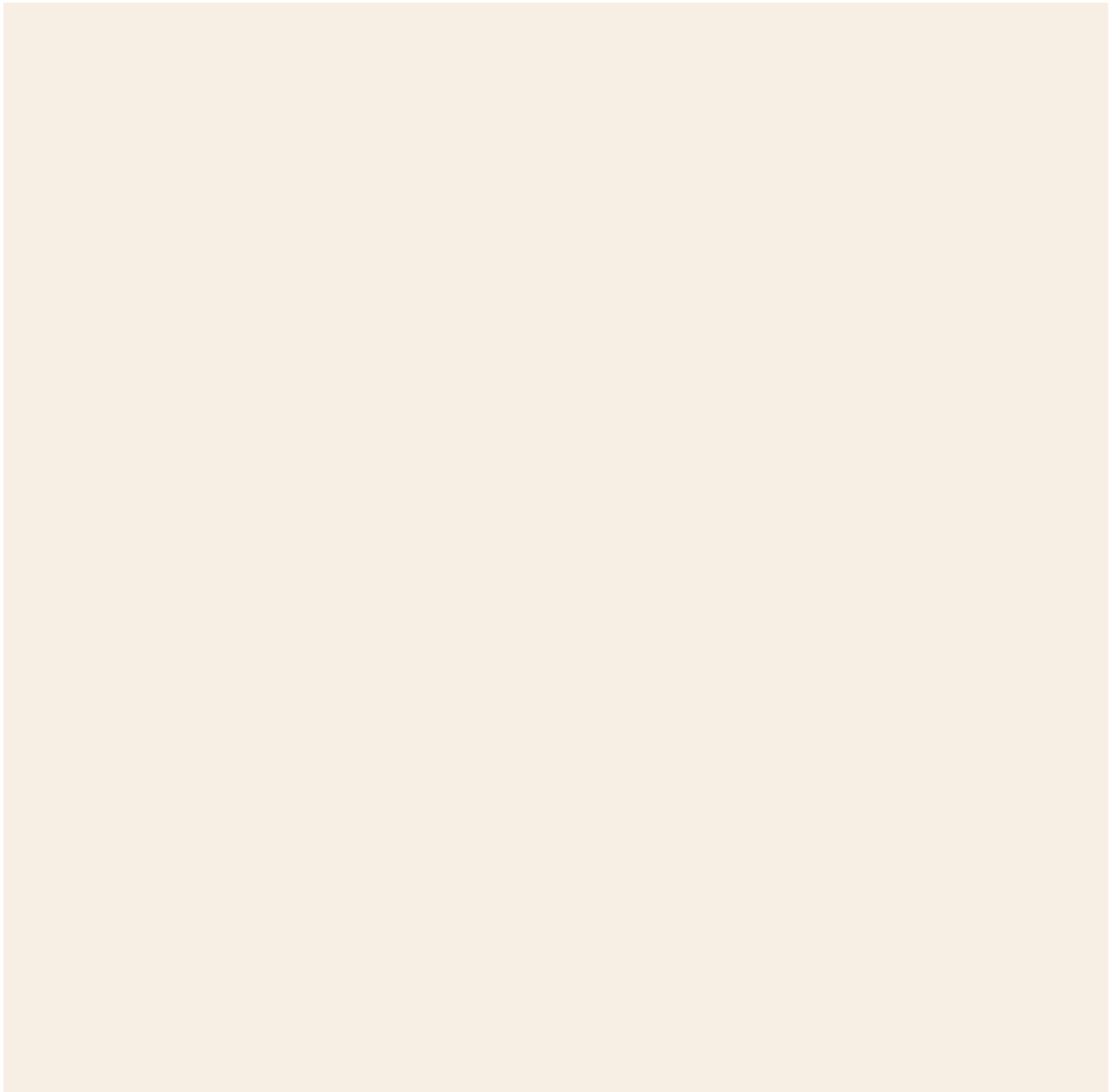
4

Creative Expression and Reflection

Creativity hones in on emotions and helps you connect your feelings of joy with your values. Enjoy this process and see what emerges for you! Reflect on the week and note what you have learned.

Kill-Joy Thoughts

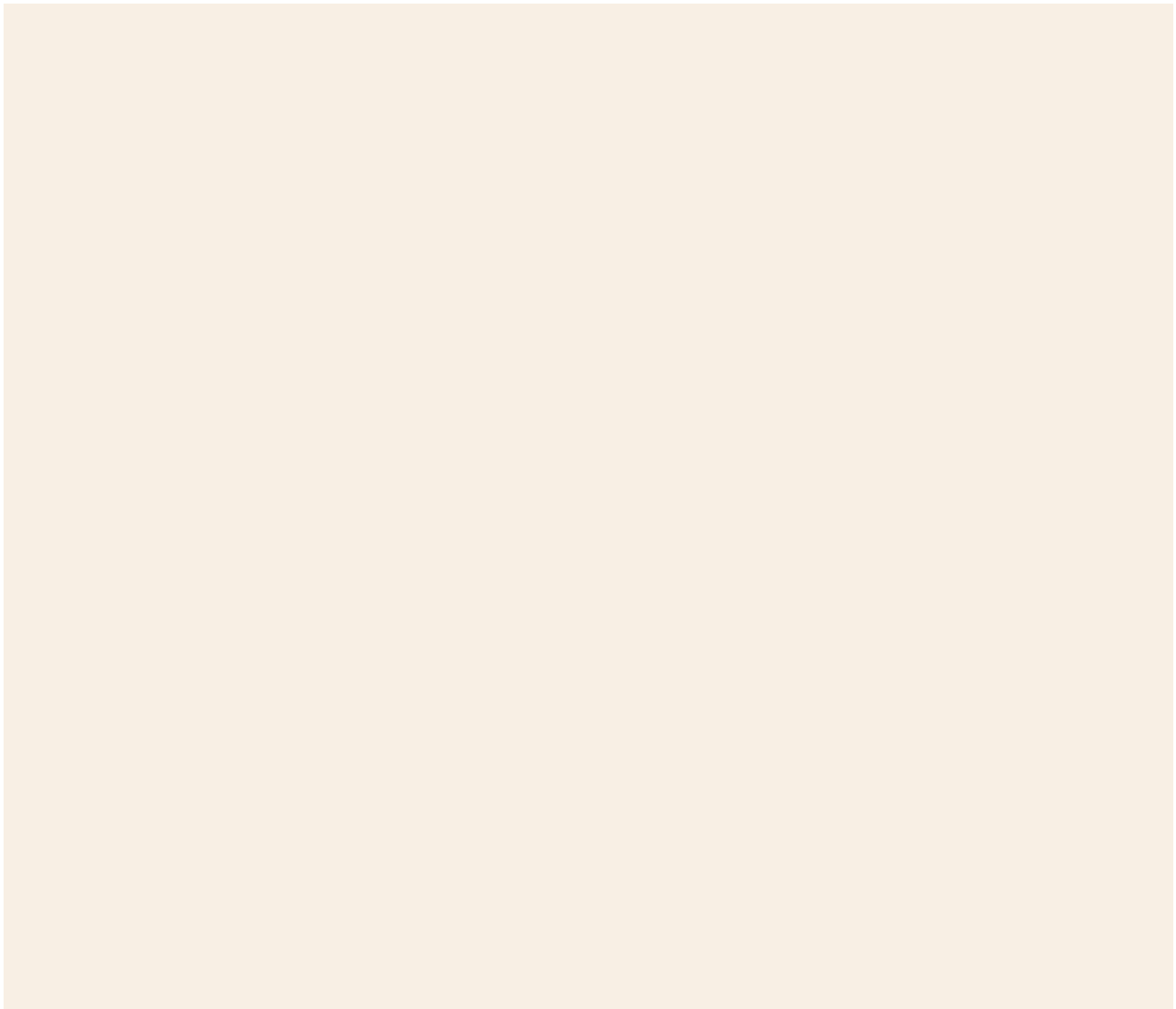
Our brains focus on the negative - it's one reason we struggle and feel bad throughout the day. The negative stories in our heads have been told so many times, we start to believe them as true. A thought like, "Driving in the city is terrible" is only a thought. However, if you think it, you will surely find congested streets and surly drivers. You will find them all the time because that is exactly what you are looking for. You will generate piles of evidence to support that thought. Start writing down the ways your brain is acting like a kill-joy. Avoid getting caught up in the "truth" of the story. It is unnecessary to try to alter your point of view right now. Just jot down a few of the negative stories you are telling yourself.



Re-Authoring Your Story

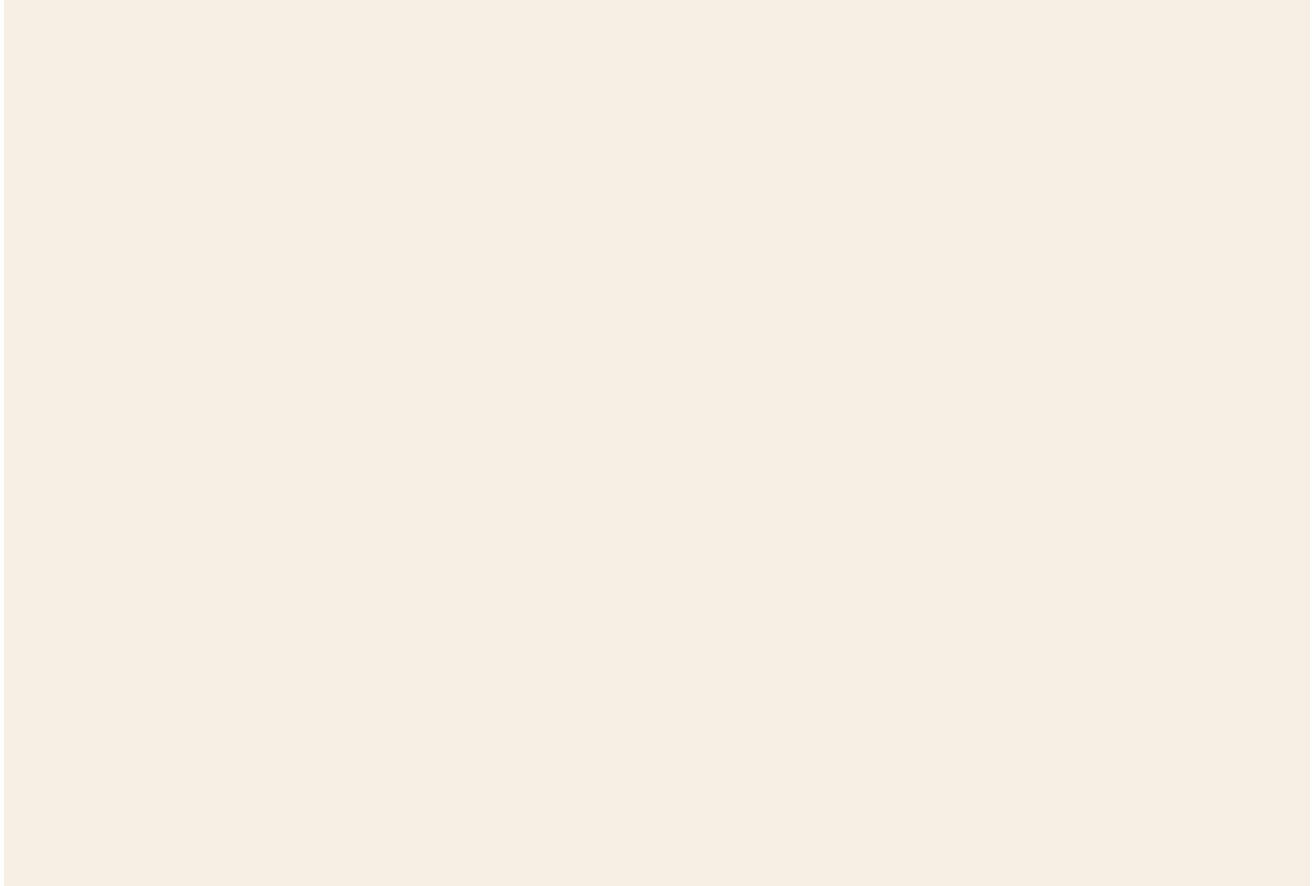
Write three statements which tell the story from a different point of view. Far more than just positive thinking, this exercise is about re-authoring the story you tell yourself. This evidence based practice of Narrative Therapy is empowering work. It is essential for releasing the past and letting go of negative thoughts.

For example, "Traffic is terrible" can become "I am enjoying this podcast and I am glad I have a car to get to work." Pick something that is believable. In other words, skip dramatic statements like "Traffic is great." Your brain will reject thoughts which are the opposite of the old story, so choose a statement you can believe. Here is another example. "I can't afford that" can become, "I choose to spend my money elsewhere." Both statements can be true, but the second, more joyful thought puts you in charge of your money instead of a victim of finance.



Joyful Thoughts

With practice, you can train your mind to focus on positive, joyful thoughts. Telling your story with you as the heroine/hero puts you in the drivers seat. Your thoughts are your choice - why not tell an uplifting and joyful story? Set your timer for five minutes and create a list of joyful ways to describe your day. Consider gratitude for the things you have (and for the things you don't want which you don't have!). Attend to the people, places and things you appreciate. Keep writing until the timer stops. It's ok to go longer, but make sure you get at least five minutes of writing joyful thoughts full of gratitude.



Read your list OUT LOUD - don't skip this step! Put a star next to five statements where you felt excitement or interest when you read it out loud. Perhaps you liked how it sounded, or that one day you could imagine really believing it. Finally, pick three statements you liked the best and write them below.



Practicing Gratitude

Using your three stories of joy and gratitude from the previous page, write the positive story on cards, or cut this page into three strips and place them where you will see them three times a day: when you wake up, mid-day, and before you go to bed. During each of these times, first read them out loud to yourself, then whisper them to yourself, and finally read them silently. Do this everyday for a month - you can mark your end day on the back of the paper. Morning example: I am grateful to be alive, for my home, and to watch the sun rise each morning.

Mid-day Example: I am grateful for healthy food and I love listening to music while I eat.

Evening Example: I am grateful for the people I love, my community, and I am happy to be alive.

Research demonstrates this is how you retrain your mind to notice more joy in your life.

GOOD
MORNING!

HAPPY
DAY!

SWEET
DREAMS!

Visual Expression

Take a few moments to show what your joyful story looks like using lines, shapes and colors. It could range from just one line to a fully fleshed-out, abstract or representational picture. Avoid thinking too long about it and just be spontaneous. You might enjoy using magazine collage for this exercise - cut out images of joy from magazines or print images from your computer. Cut neatly, arrange artfully, and glue them onto paper. Enjoy the process of creating and don't worry about the finished product. For added joy, hang this picture where you can see it each day. However you do it will be great!



Title:

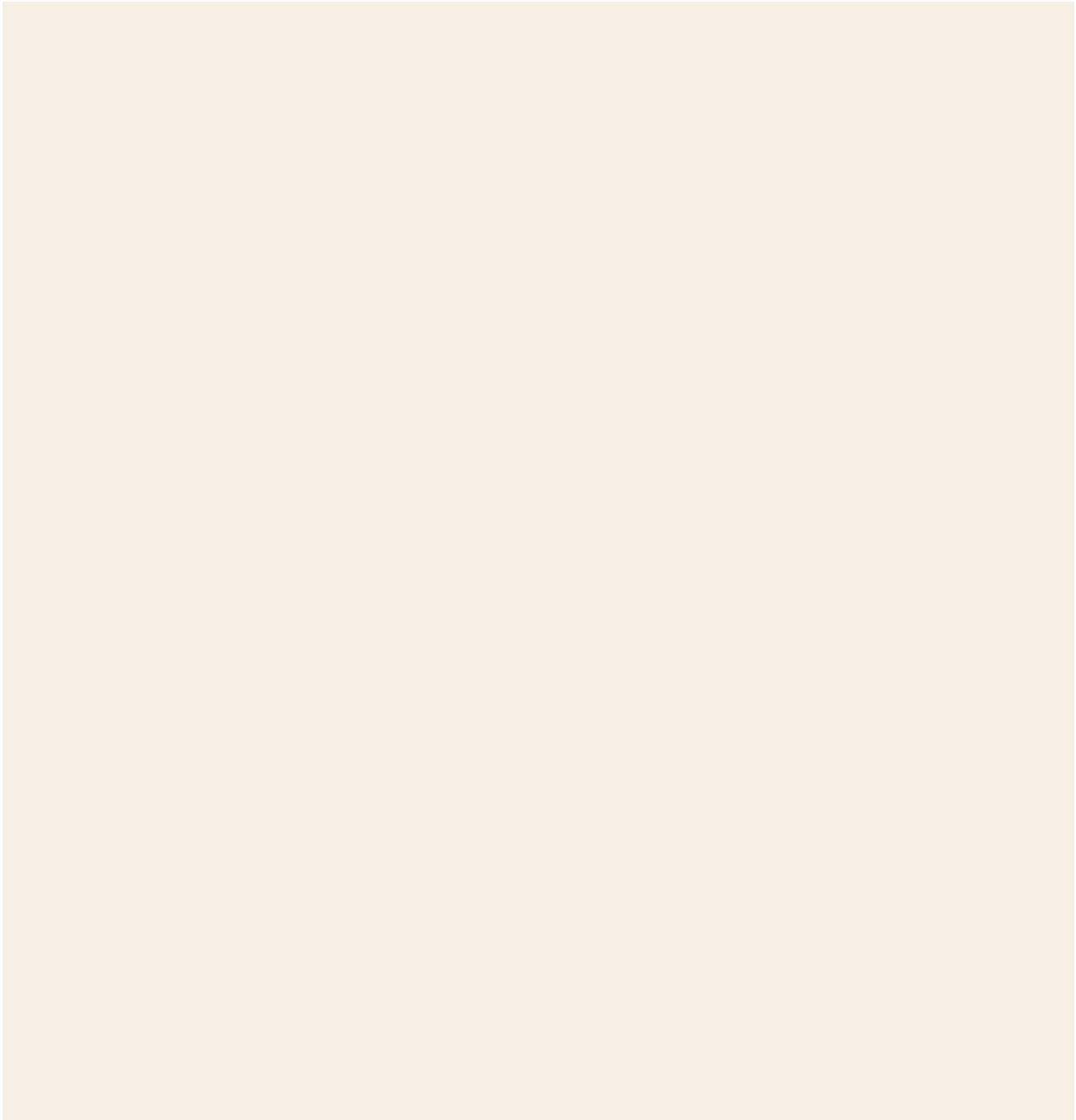
Three words or phrases to describe your art.

-
-
-

How do you feel?

REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned about what brings you joy and gratitude this week. Appreciate your strengths, and focus on your positive actions. Notice your thoughts, feelings and actions in alignment with joy. Avoid judging yourself for what you did or did not do this week. How did you feel paying such close attention to cultivating your personal joy? Did you notice or do anything differently after you practiced gratitude?





Week 3

Joyful Spirit

Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day.

- Henri J. M. Neuwan

Joyful Spirit

Here are the areas you will cover this week.
Spend 20 minutes a day, take your time, and savor them over the week.

1

Complaint Department

This week is your chance to free up space in your mind for joy. Let go of complaining about everything...from the dirty socks on the floor to politics. This absence will be replaced with joy!

2

Introducing Joy

Joy will replace your complaining this week. This exercise adds in healthy, joyful thoughts as you are learning to let go of the complaining thoughts.

3

Joyful Spirit

Tapping into your spirit will help you find your motivation for joy when you are in moments of struggle. Getting in touch with your higher self assists you tremendously in generating joy.

4

Creative Expression and Reflection

Creativity hones in on emotions and helps you connect your joyful feelings with your values and thoughts. Enjoy this process and see what emerges for you! Reflect on the week and note what you have learned.

Complaint Department

What do you typically talk about? How much of that is complaining without solutions or actions?

You may talk about the news without really learning anything new about the world. You might discuss politics, complaining about what is happening without deeper understanding or feeling called to action. Do you have the same conversations over and over? Do you announce how difficult traffic was when you arrive someplace? When someone asks you how your day is, do you typically reply with "So busy!" or another kind of complaint? What about negative thoughts about your commute or waiting in line? Do you judge yourself and others in unkind ways?

Write down all the ways you typically choose to complain. Add to this list as you discover more.

What do you notice about your complaints? How do you feel reading this list?

Introducing Joy

Your task the rest of the week is to make zero complaints! None! Not in your head and not out loud.

With zero complaints for 7 days, you need thoughts to replace the old complaints. When you notice judgmental thoughts and complaints, pause, say the word yet, and add a joyful thought. For example, "This line at the grocery is taking forever. (Pause.) Yet, it gives me time to practice my joyful thoughts." You might find yourself complaining about yourself: "I am such an idiot, I should have come to the grocery when it was less busy. (Pause.) Yet, I know I am really a terrific and intelligent person and I am proud I noticed my negative self talk."

Below, generate a list of joyful thoughts full of gratitude and self compassion to help you through the week. Start by creating a list of joyful thoughts spontaneously. Then be sure to add joyful comments specifically to balance your greatest complaints from the previous page.

Joyful Spirit

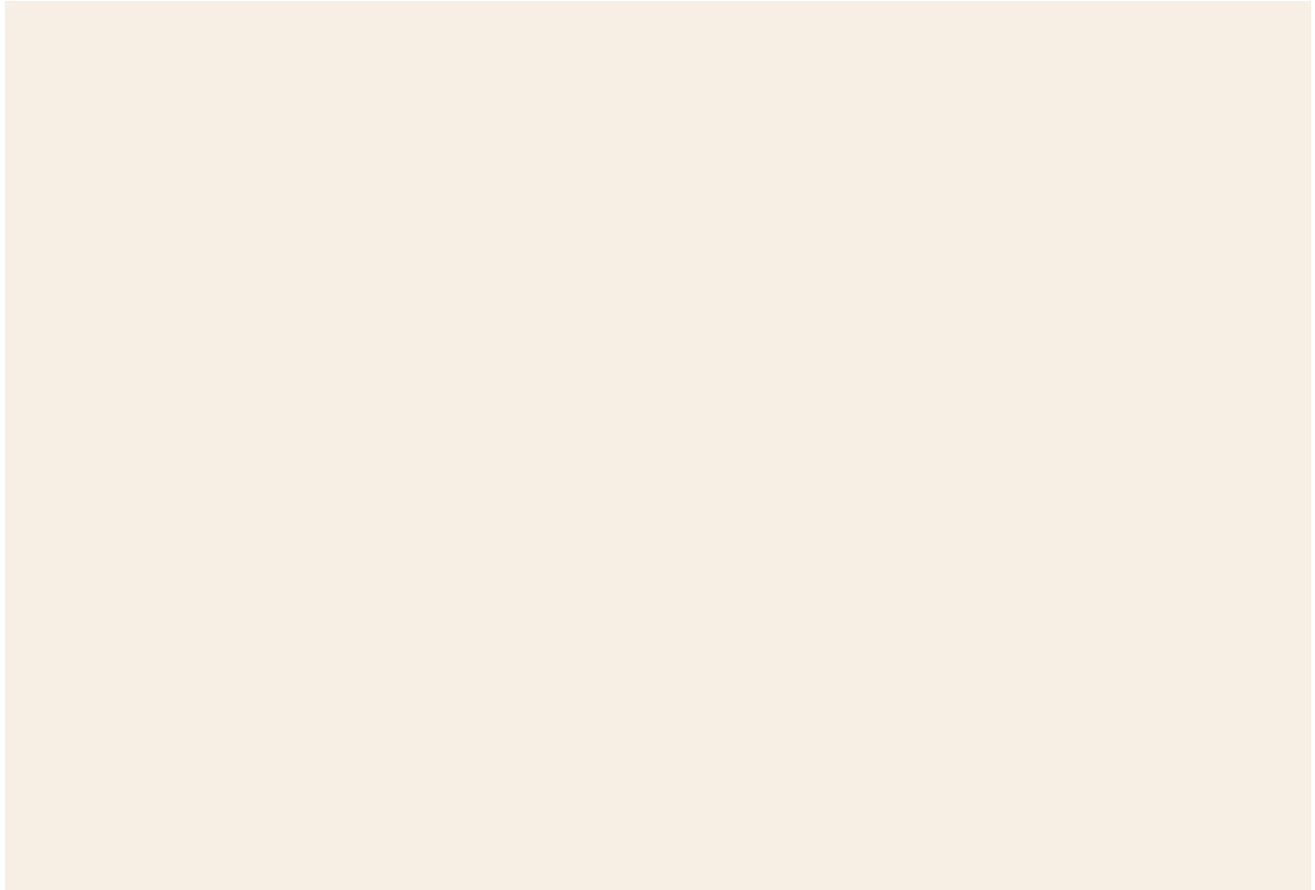
Imagine your highest, joyful self. Perhaps you are fortunate enough to have joyful memories from childhood: you might recall a memory of yourself as a child and find joy in your curiosity and delight. Or perhaps you created joyful moments as an adult and you find peace and joy in nature, loving relationships, or pride in who you have become.

Take 10 deep, slow breaths, counting each one out loud. Imagine you are full of joy and embodying your joyful self today. What is this kind, generous part of you doing? How are you talking to yourself? Behaving towards others? Set your timer and write for 10 minute without stopping.

Read it out loud. Smile. Pick one or two and practice them all day long.

Joyful Spirit Mantras

Reflect on what you wrote on the previous page. Underline the words which are exciting and interesting to you. Below, describe your joyful self. Be spontaneous and creative - this is a rough draft so feel free to get a little wild! Be real and have fun. However you do this will be great! Here are some ideas: "I am joyful feeling the grass when barefoot in the park. I feel joy playing silly card games with my child. I have joy making spontaneous art. Joyful me sings each morning. Speaking kindly to my pet and plants brings me joy. Joyful me is brave when making decisions."



Condense your writing into three statements which feel powerful and meaningful to you. Begin each one with: "Joyful me...." and then finish the sentence. For example, Joyful me shares happiness with others by saying hello to all my neighbors and jumping through the hop scotch drawings on the sidewalk. Read these before bed this evening and enJOY!



Visual Expression

Take a few moments to show some aspect of your joyful self by using lines, shapes and colors. It could range from just one line to a fully fleshed-out, abstract or representational picture. Avoid thinking too long and be spontaneous. This will help you connect to your pre-verbal and physical aspects of experiences of joy. EnJOY the process of creating and don't worry about the finished product. However you do it will be great!



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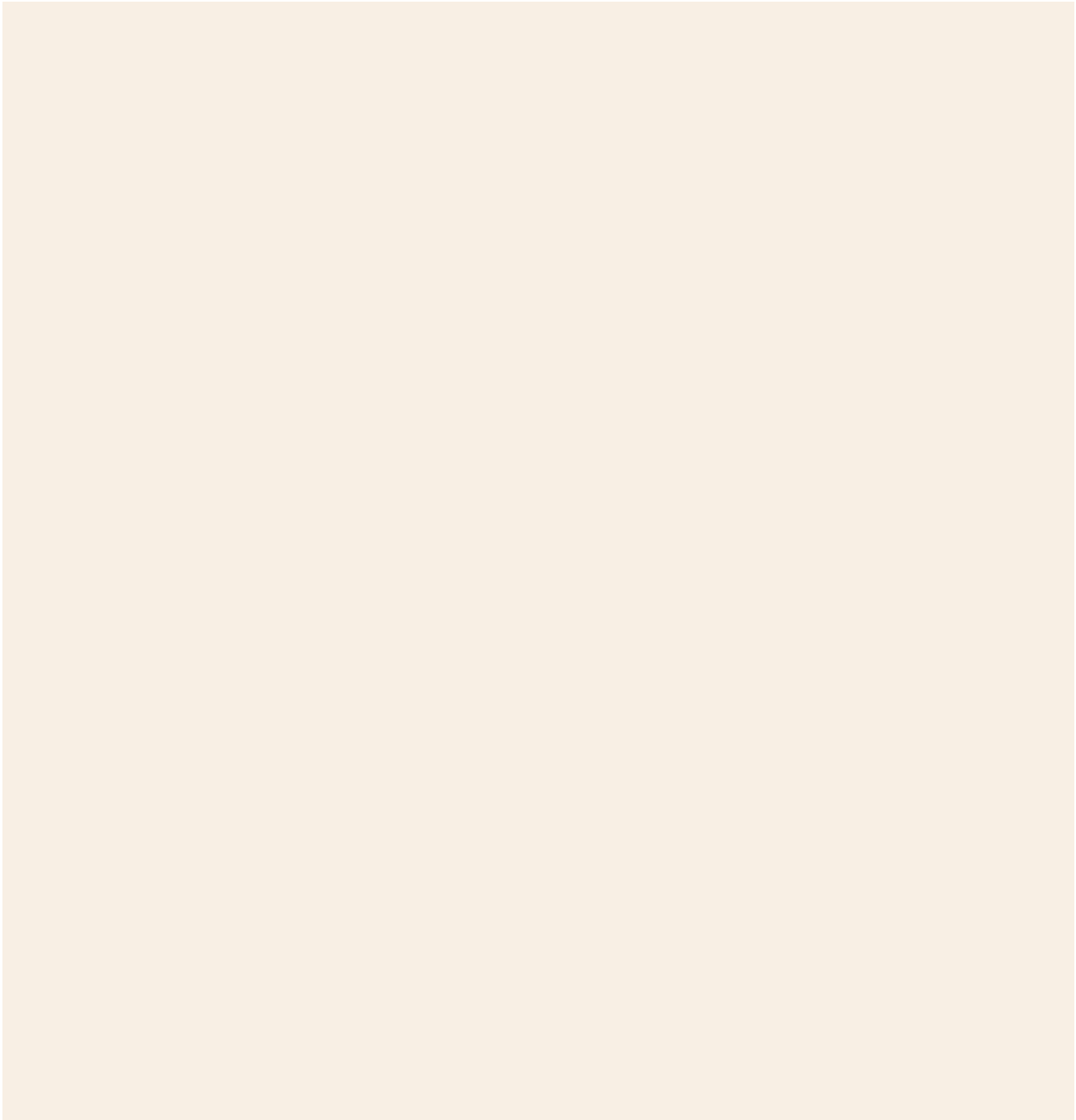
Three words or phrases to describe your art.

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-

How do you feel?

REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned about your higher self experiencing joy this week. Appreciate your strengths, and focus on your positive actions. Notice your thoughts, feelings and actions in alignment with your joyful spirit. Avoid judging yourself for what you did or did not do this week. How does it feel to quit complaining? How did you feel paying such close attention to your joyful self?





Week 4

Joy in Action

Joy to the world.
Joy to everyone.
Joy to the fishes in the deep
blue sea.
Joy to you and me.

-Hoyt Axton

Joyful Thoughts

Here are the areas you will cover this week.
Spend 20 minutes a day, take your time, and savor them over the week.

1

Joyful World

This week you begin identifying with an aspirational goal of making your world a more joyful place. Indeed, this is possible through your committed actions.

2

It All Starts with YOU!

Philosophers, peace makers musicians poets, and spiritual leaders remind us that change in the world happens when YOU begin to change yourself. The good news is: sharing joy is easy because joy is quite contagious!

3

Joyful Action Plan

Time to put all that you have learned into an action plan. Remember writing your goals and plans down gives you the boost you need to succeed!

4

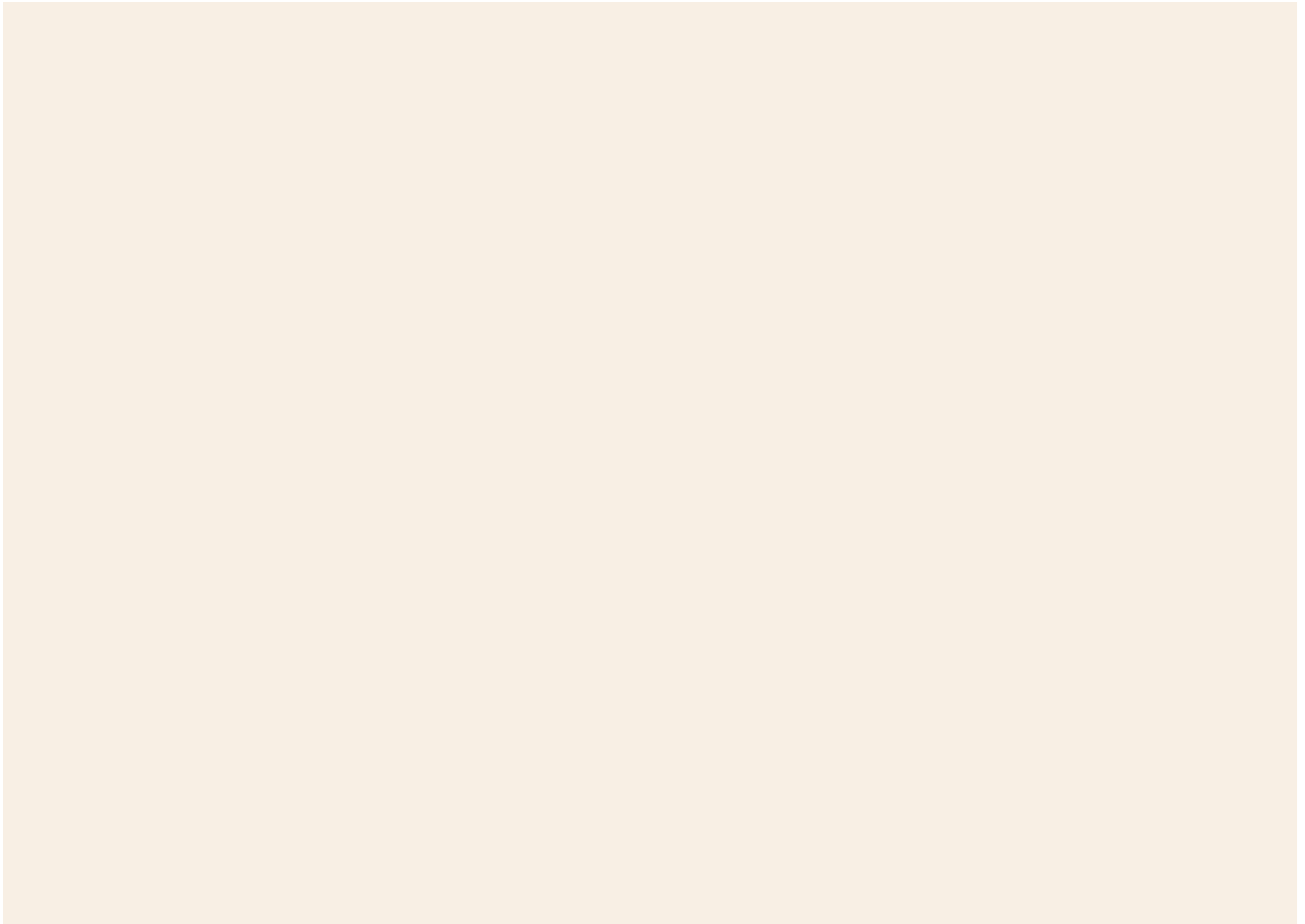
Creative Expression and Reflection

Creativity hones in on emotions and helps you connect your feelings with your values and thoughts. Enjoy this process and see what emerges for you! Reflect on the week and note what you have learned.

Creating a Joyful World

It is time to create an aspirational vision of joy in the world. Ask yourself: "What is my vision for more joy in my world?" Imagine if you and others used joy to enhance business, make money, raise children, and build happy relationships? What would your daily interactions be like? How would your home, school or work be different? When your mind tells you an idea is silly or impossible, thank your mind for all its thoughts and recalibrate by rereading the question out loud. Dream big!

Imagine joy!

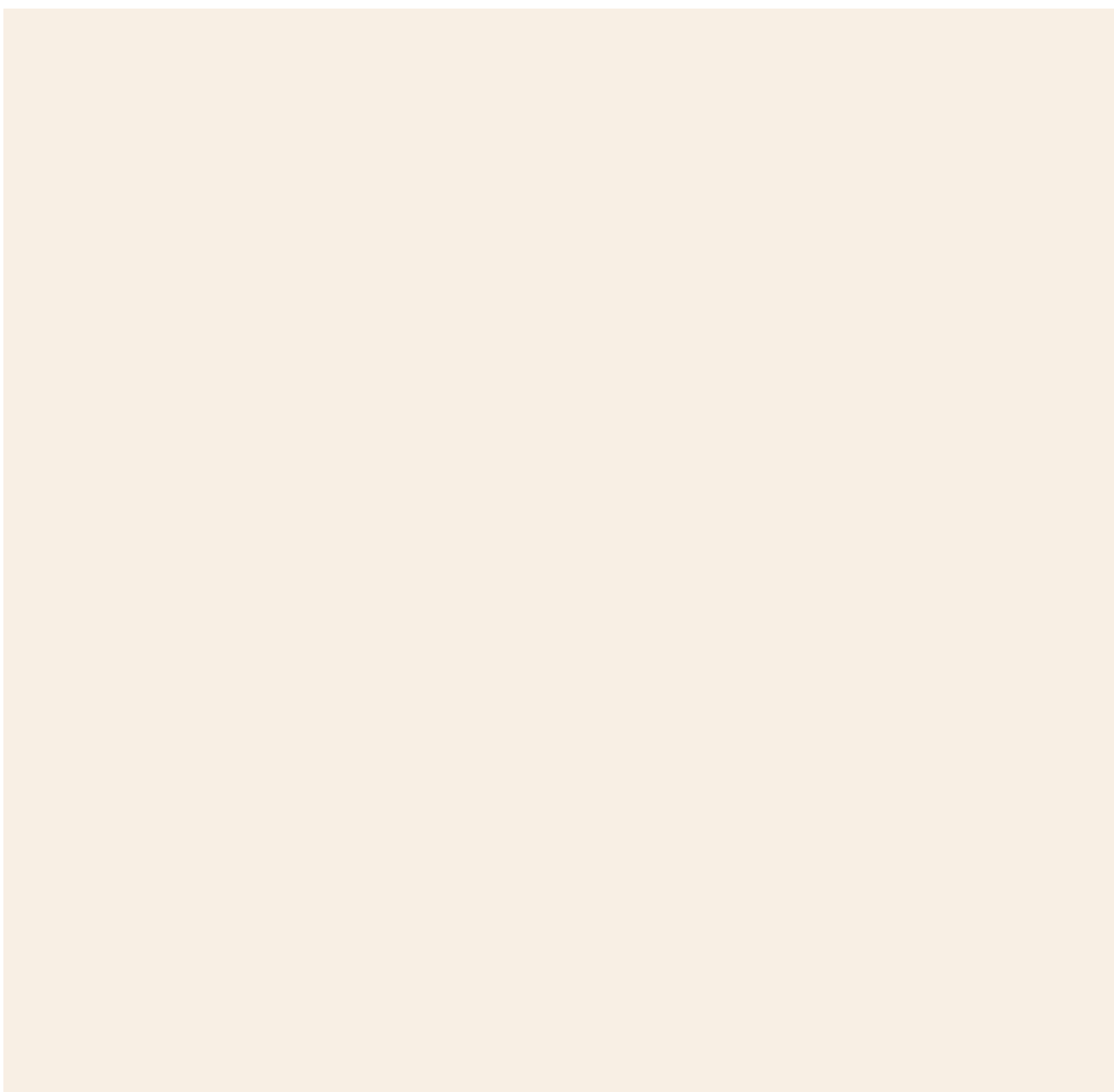


Reflect on what you just wrote and underline the words which are exciting and interesting to you. Condense your writing into three main areas where you would like to see joy. For example, you might want a more joy at your workplace, with family or in your community. Describe how you imagine joy happening.



Begin with yourself

Philosophers, peace makers musicians poets, and spiritual leaders note that change in the world happens when we begin to change ourselves. You are not being asked to change the whole world, simply your presence in it. Using your aspirational vision of more joy from the previous page, start creating your action plan to cultivate more joy towards yourself and others. Brainstorm as many ideas as you can in 10 minutes. Remember, a brainstorm is quick, designed to generate lots of ideas with zero evaluation of them. Each idea leads to the next, so suspend judgement. Only evaluate when the brainstorm is over. If your mind interrupts you with challenging thoughts like "You could never do that" or "You have already tried that," thank your mind for all the ideas and recalibrate by saying the word "Brainstorm" out loud.



Joyful Action Plan

From your previous brainstorm, identify two ideas you can implement for increasing your joy. Be very specific including what and when you will cultivate joyful actions. You can choose something that increases joy towards yourself or towards others. Make it something very small that takes only a minute or a few minutes, and can be completed each day.

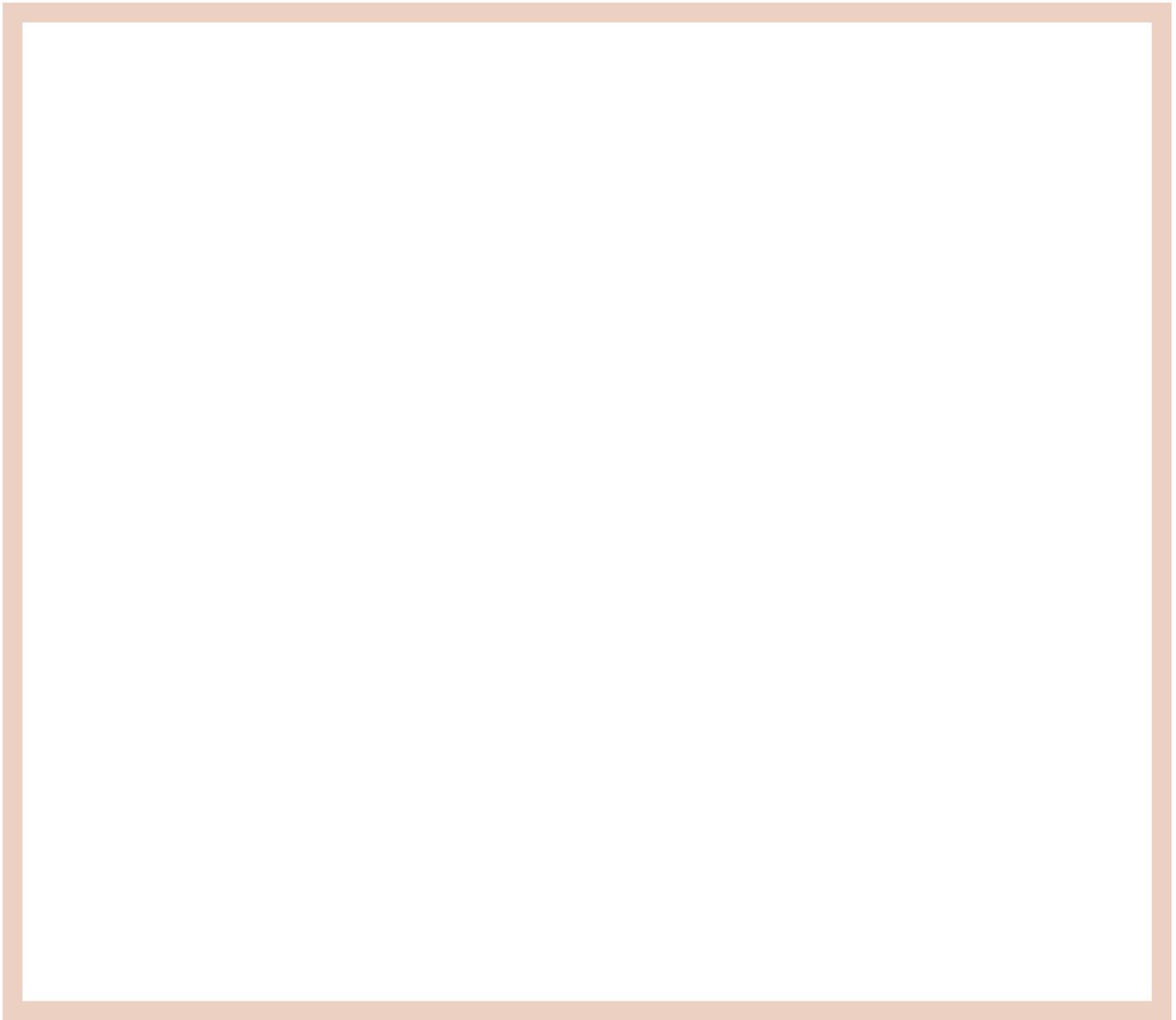
For example, here are some of my daily joyful commitments. I sing out loud a happy song each morning while I make coffee. I stretch and jump up and down as soon as I wake up. I tell my friends they are beautiful and send happy texts before lunch. I check my emails to make sure I include something joyful before I hit send.

Write it as if you are already doing it...in other words, write "I smile in the mirror" instead of "I will" smile in the mirror. Be specific about what time of day you will act on joy.

Now pick just one of these and schedule it by writing it in your calendar. Do not skip this step! Make sure you know exactly when will you complete the act of compassion. Pair it with an existing habit such as brushing your teeth, walking the dog, having breakfast, etc.

Visual Expression

Take a few moments to show some aspect of bringing joy into the world using lines, shapes and colors. This may range from just one line to a fully fleshed-out, abstract or representational picture. Avoid thinking too long about it and be spontaneous. This will help you connect to your preverbal and physical feelings of joy and how you can bring it to the world. EnJOY the process of creating and don't worry about the finished product. However you do it will be great!



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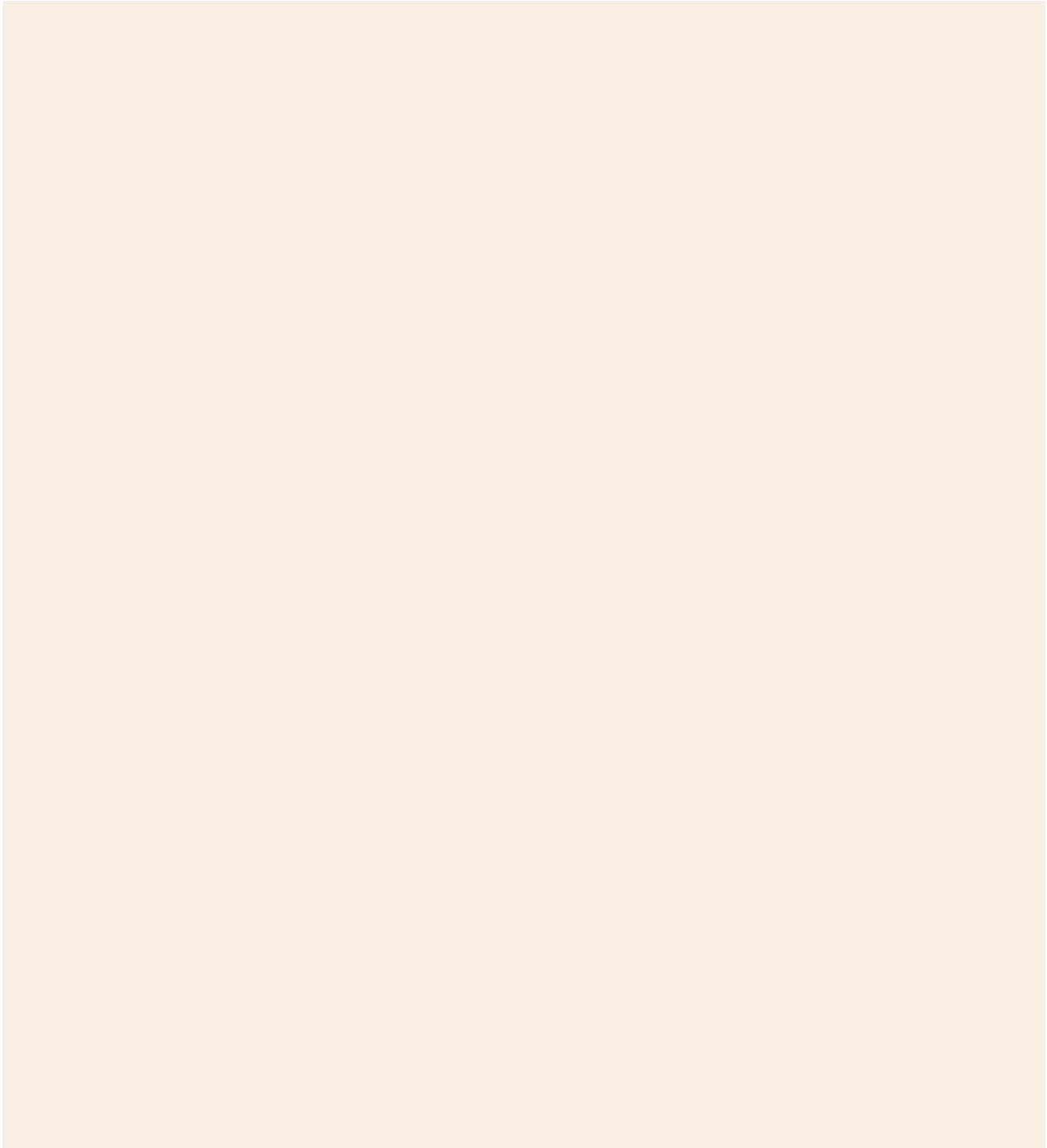
Three words or phrases to describe your art.

-
-
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How do you feel?

REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned about your joy and how you can bring it to the world. What do you know about yourself now? How will you create joy for yourself and others? Remember being joyful is a real gift to you AND everyone around you. As a joyful person, you become kinder to others and you set an example for others for how they can treat themselves. Notice your thoughts, feelings and actions in alignment with the value and actions of joy.



NEW BEGINNINGS

You have completed a month of joy. Congratulations on all your progress! What new thoughts will you keep? What new actions will you take with you into the world? I am delighted you joined this community of people who are living more compassionately and making the world a better place. Your compassionate and joyful attitude towards yourself and others is a significant contribution to your life and the lives of those around you.

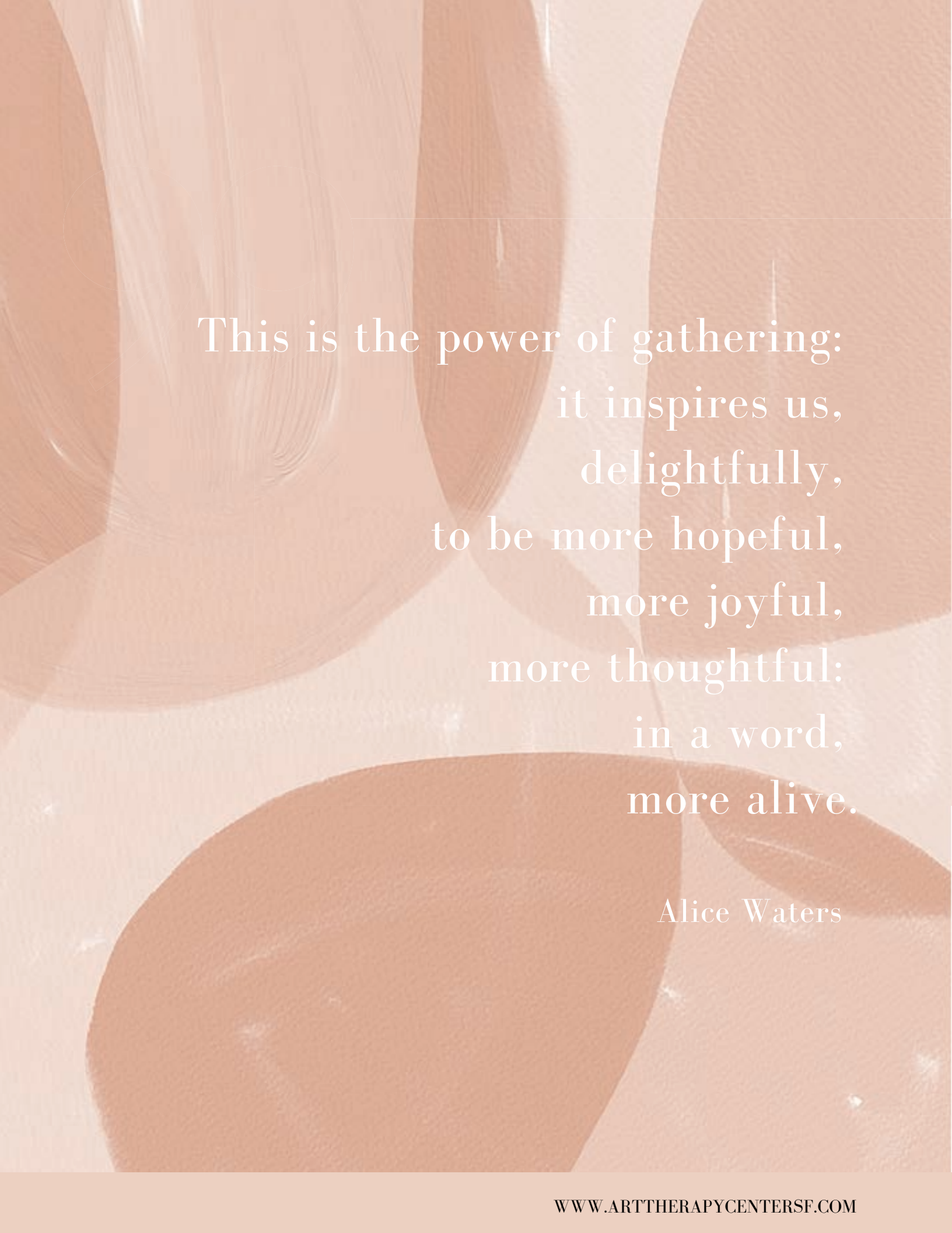
If you are excited about continuing this work, please reach out to The Art Therapy Center of San Francisco for more workshops and see our new advanced classes, which are available to you now that you have completed this workshop.

It was my pleasure to share the evidence-based information which has helped people all around the world increase positive feelings and improve their relationships. I look forward to hearing from you about what you learned in this workshop and I hope to see you in future workshops or advanced classes. It is my wish that you continue to enJOY the process of self-discovery with curiosity and compassion!



Amy Backos, PhD, ATR-BC
Licensed Psychologist & Board Certified Art Therapist





This is the power of gathering:
it inspires us,
delightfully,
to be more hopeful,
more joyful,
more thoughtful:
in a word,
more alive.

Alice Waters



RESOURCES

I slept and dreamt that
life was joy.
I awoke and saw that
life was service.
I acted and behold,
service was joy.

-Rabindranath Tagore

RESOURCES

01

Art Therapy Center of San Francisco

Center for creative expression, psychological wellness, positive psychology and value-based living, including online workshops as well as in person & online art psychotherapy.

02

Joy: 100 poems

Edited by Christian Wiman, this slim volume of poetry offers joyful expressions to uplift your spirit and deepen your experience of joy.

03

You Can Heal Your Life

Book by Louise Hay

This best selling book offers a philosophical and spiritual approach to self compassion and healing.

04

You are Here: Discovering the Magic of the Present Moment

A straightforward and deeply meaningful book by Thich Nhat Hanh, this book offers an introduction to mindfulness from a Buddhist perspective.

05

Authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu

Website with resources & free assessments on happiness and positive living from the grandfather of positive psychology, Martin Seligman at the University of PA.

MY WEEK

MON

DATE:

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PRIORITIES

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MY WEEK

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