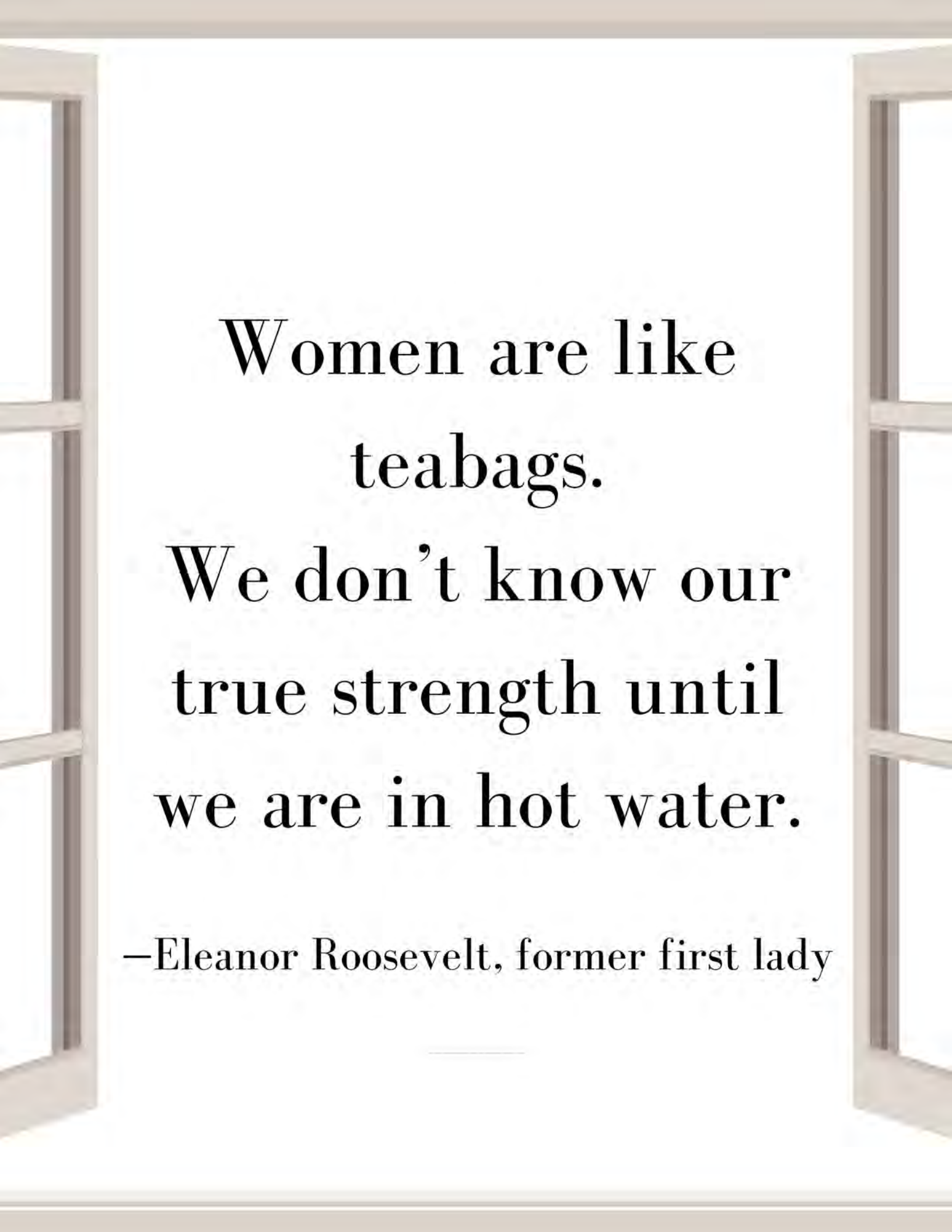




The Modern Creative
Woman Publishing Co.



The Modern Creative Woman React–Respond–Create



Women are like
teabags.

We don't know our
true strength until
we are in hot water.

—Eleanor Roosevelt, former first lady

Presence - Mindset - Purpose



Presence

Your presence includes getting out of your mind and getting into your life, making contact with the present moment and seeing yourself as the "context" for your life experiences. Your internal presence can be whatever you decide it to be in each moment of your life.



Mindset

Your mindset includes acceptance of what you are currently thinking and feeling as well as the circumstances you are facing. Acceptance of what currently exists is necessary before attempting to make any changes. Mindset also includes forging a new working relationship with your thoughts and practicing conscious & creative thinking.



Purpose

Your purpose includes both your personal values and the action steps you take in alignment with your values. It is through your purpose that you engage with your life, choose what is most important, and make committed actions to demonstrate your values to yourself and others.

PRESENCE

Present Moment Awareness & Yourself as Context

Presence - your ability to make contact with the present moment, separate from your thoughts and feelings about it. This means observing what is happening outside of you as well as observing your thoughts and feelings in the present moment.

Self as Context - Seeing yourself as the context for your life means you are the anchor. Whatever happens inside of you (thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations) as well as whatever happens outside of you (people, places, circumstances) is separate from your experience as a human being. You might think of your "context" as your spirit, your core self, your essence. In other words, you as the context is the view of yourself as the person experiencing your life. For example: you are the journal on which your story is written. Rather than being the story itself, you are able to truthfully see yourself as the journal on which the story is written. Another example: You are the canvas on which you create the painting of your life. Instead of being the paint, you accurately see yourself as the canvas.

Remember, your presence includes getting out of your mind and getting into your life, making contact with the present moment and seeing yourself as the context for your life experiences. Your internal presence can be whatever you decide it to be in each moment of your life.



I say if I'm beautiful.

I say if I'm strong.

You will not
determine my story.—

I will.

—Amy Schumer, comedian

INTENTIONS

Reflect on a time you reacted automatically (without thought) and did not like the results. Now reflect on a time you responded with your values and with intention. Describe the difference below.

What is your motivation for wanting to respond with values and create your responses with intention? What are you hoping to get out of this class?



My Current Automatic Reactions

You can use automatic reacts to your benefit - the more you focus on your values and being mindfully in the present, the more automatic your value-based thoughts and actions become.

1. List your current thoughts and behaviors that you like being automatic...loving someone, saying thank you, brushing your teeth, appreciating beauty, being kind to those who serve you at a restaurant, having patience for a child, etc.
2. For each of your positive automatic habits, write HOW you created that habit. Where did it come from? How are these habits sustained?

Future Automatic Reactions - Future

From the last exercise, you now know how you created your current automatic reactions. You can use these same strategies to create new automatic habits.

1. List 3-5 desired future thoughts and behaviors that you would like to be automatic. For example: saying kind things to yourself, being patient about the speed of your work, giving yourself grace and not rushing, choosing healthy food, exercising everyday, etc.
2. Pick ONE you want to work on this month. Brainstorm how you can create that habit.
3. Pick one strategy and add it to your calendar, write a note and hang it up where you can see it everyday.

Visual Expression

How would you like to intentionally respond to life's circumstances? Create a visual expression of this. You could draw using lines shapes and colors or find a magazine picture that reflects how you want to respond. For example - with ease, confidence, curiosity, patience, love, or any other feeling that inspires you. Allow yourself to create freely.

However you do it will be great. Answer the questions below.



Title:

Three words or phrases to describe your art.

-
-
-

How do you feel?

REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned about "responding" instead of reacting. How does it feel to imagine yourself responding in a way of your choosing instead of reacting out of fear or uncertainty? Notice what parts you enjoyed and what parts challenged you. Avoid judging yourself for what you did or did not do this week.

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MINDSET

Acceptance & Relationship to Your Thoughts

Acceptance -Acceptance is your ability to see things for what they are. You understand your thoughts as "just thoughts" instead of perceiving your thoughts as "true" or facts. Acceptance is a core concept in changing your self-talk and beliefs about yourself. For example, if you have a negative thought about yourself, it is only a thought. You might be able to find piles of evidence to support your thought, yet a thought is just a thought. It is your brain firing - that is all. Acceptance also helps us be better in relationships by not taking things personally. For example, if someone says something to us, we can allow it to be what it is - just a comment.

Acceptance means we avoid distorting the comment into something negative or personal. This one change in your life can completely transform your relationship with your significant other, friends, family and coworkers.

Relationship to your Thoughts - Changing your relationship to thoughts frees you from negative self-talk and low self-esteem. Then you can transform your behaviors for health, recovery, and happiness. Your thoughts stem from your brain - not from your essence, spirit or core self. Thoughts are merely a product of your brain. Make your thoughts work for you instead of being swayed by negative thoughts. Start by observing: say "That is just a thought" each time you notice a thought.

Remember, your mindset includes acceptance of what you are currently thinking and feeling as well as the circumstances you are facing. Acceptance is necessary before attempting to make any changes. Mindset also includes forging a new working relationship with your thoughts and practicing conscious & creative thinking.

We need women who are
so strong they can be
gentle, so educated they
can be humble, so fierce
they can be compassionate,
so passionate they can be
rational and so disciplined
they can be free.

—Kavita Ramdas, advocate

My "go-to" Mindset

What is your "go-to" mindset? In other words, what are your automatic responses to yourself and others? Knowing the answer to this question gives you a choice about what you want to do. Once you write your answers, you can no longer simply react unconsciously. Awareness is the first step. Answer the questions on the next few pages to identify your automatic responses. NO judgement about how you typically respond...write your answers as if you were a curious observer.

What are the three feelings you experience the most?



List 5-10 words or phrases you say to yourself on a regular basis. (include good and bad)



What is something kind you would like to start saying to yourself? For example: I'm doing a good job. I have all the time there is. I have nice eyes. I love myself. Take it easy. How can I feel good right now?



My "go-to" Mindset

What are your urges and behaviors when some one asks you a question about something you did? Imagine a slightly uncomfortable circumstance. Circle all that you have tried.

- a. prepare to defend myself
- b. yell or attack them
- c. assume the worst
- d. walk away
- e. endure the pain in the moment and deal with it later
- f. roll your eyes
- g. drink, eat, or anything to feel numb
- h. listen to see what they have to say

Which responses are you least satisfied with? Why?

Describe your ideal way to respond to a situation. This will be different for everyone and there is no right or wrong way to answer this question. What is the way you would like to respond when you are at your best? For example, you might want to ask for time to think, use humor, practice compassion for yourself and others, be in the present moment, avoid comparing to the past, etc.

My "go-to" Mindset

Describe how you would like to feel in circumstances where someone is asking questions about your actions. For example: Confident, secure, curious, engaged, lightly detached.



What thoughts do you need to think to feel the way you want in these circumstances? For example: I am listening. Nothing bad is happening. Nothing has gone wrong.



What thoughts do you need to let go of?



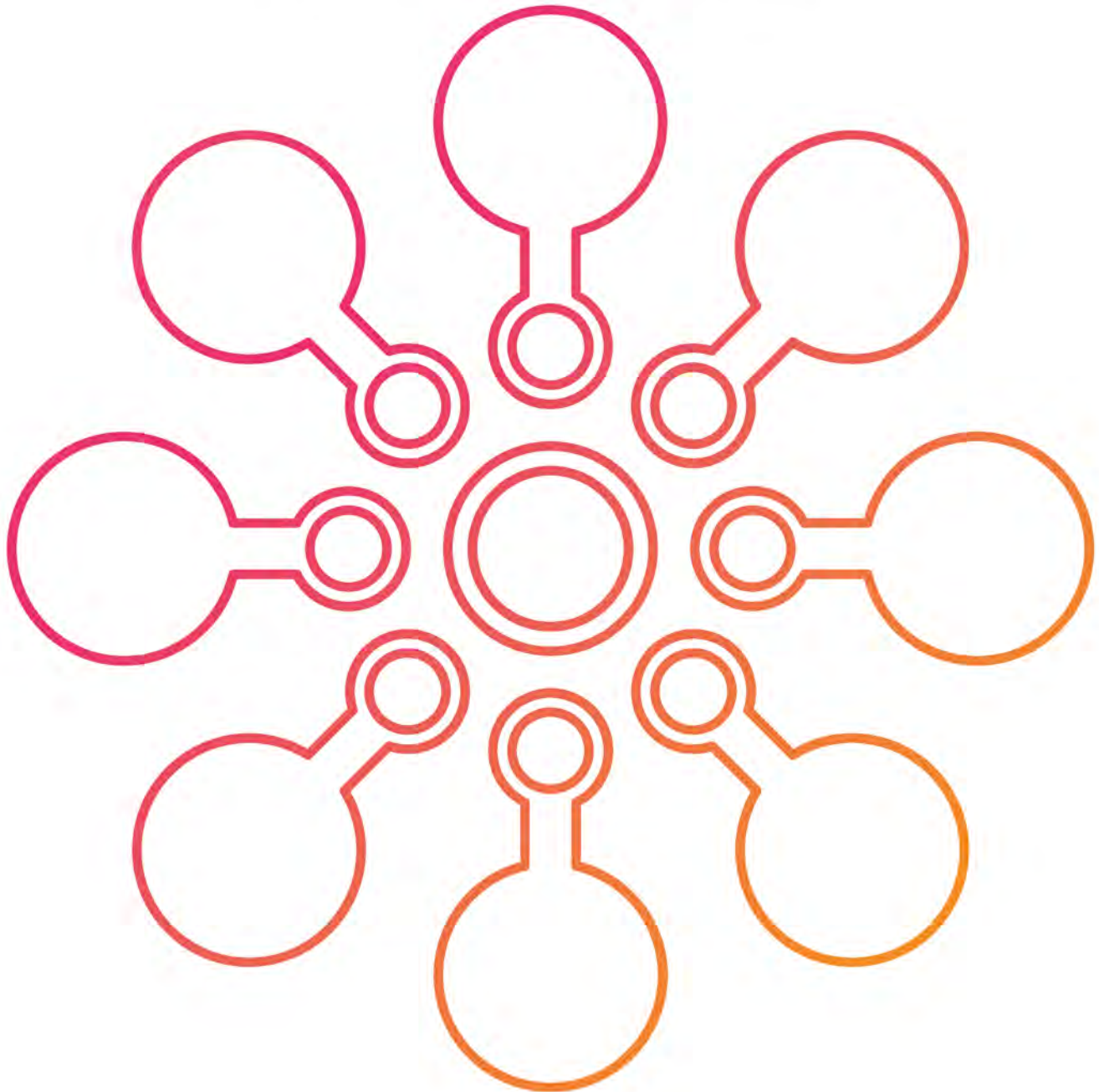
Brain Storm

Brainstorm a list of things you can do to help you think and feel good in uncomfortable circumstances. Be creative! For example, meditation, practice a silly walk every day, create situations where you feel vulnerable to get used to the feeling, journal about it, etc. Be creative and let your mind wander.

A large, empty, light beige rectangular area, likely a placeholder for a list or notes generated during the brainstorming exercise.

Mind Map

Identify a small circumstance where you would like to feel better. Write it in the middle of the mind map. In the bubbles surrounding the circumstance, write thoughts, feelings and behaviors you would like to have in this situation. For example: a disagreement with a friend might be benefit from feelings of love and appreciation, present moment awareness, self compassion, compassion for your friend, patience, appropriate surroundings, etc.



Visual Expression

Create a visual expression of you at your wisest, highest or best. You could draw using lines shapes and colors or find a magazine picture that reflects how you want to respond.

Want to get really creative?

Using your printer at home, print a photo that you like of yourself in black and white. You can use regular printer paper or thicker stock paper. Use colored pencils, markers, or paints to draw a circle around the picture. Expand the circle using as many colors as you like. Feel free to fill in your picture with colors you love as well. Paste the picture below if you like or add it to your sketch book. Allow yourself to create freely. However you do it will be great. Answer the questions below.



Title:

Three words or phrases to describe your art.

-
-
-

How do you feel?

REFLECTION

Reflect on what you noticed this week about how your highest, wisest, or best self would respond.
Avoid judging yourself for what you did or did not do.

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PURPOSE

Your Values & Committed Actions

Your purpose includes both your personal values and the action steps you take in alignment with your values. It is through your purpose that you engage with your life, choose what is most important, and make committed actions to demonstrate your values to yourself and others.

Purpose - your chosen presence and actions in the world. Your purpose is something you decide based on what you enjoy, have an interest in pursuing, and have an ability/aptitude for doing.

Values - what you decide is most important to you. You have values in many areas such as, health, intimate partner relationship, education, family, friendship, parenting, sports, spirituality, work/vocation, community, creativity, service, school, personal development, hobbies, etc. Your values are what YOU want to bring to each area and has nothing to do with what others are doing or even if they like what you are doing. For example you might value honesty in work. When you come across someone being dishonest at work, your values help you commit to acting honestly, even if you feel resentful, angry or tempted to become dishonest when you work with a dishonest person.

Committed Actions - how you demonstrate your values through your actions. Your actions directly reflect your values. Committed action is how you show your values to yourself and the world. Notice this is action, not thoughts or beliefs. If you live your values, they will show in your behavior. For example, if you truly believe in your health, then your behavior will show it through healthy food choices, exercise, managing your mind, learning what you need to know, practicing body care, and investing time and money in your health. If you only think or talk about your health, then it is a wish, instead of a value and committed action.

You own your attitude and your
responses.

They are your choice and your
responsibility.

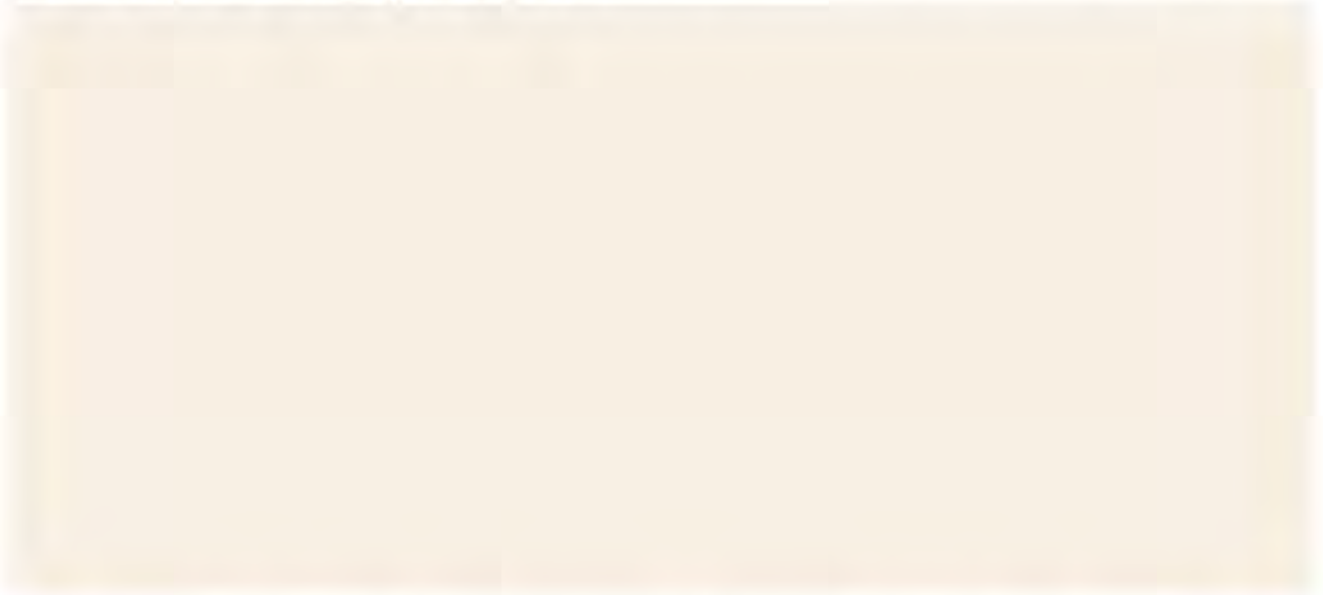
Your responses were influenced by
the past, but you get to decide if
you want to keep thinking the same
thoughts and making the same
choices.

Nobody else can choose your
current attitude and actions except
for you.

-Dr. Amy Backos

My "go-to" Values

What is your go-to value...the one you react to automatically. For example - taking care of a child or other family member. What are the pros and cons of focusing on this automatic value? In other words, does going towards this value come from a place of guilt or love or somewhere else? Does focusing on this automatic value feel authentic or does it leave you feeling uncomfortable, resentful, worried, etc.? Do your actions leave you feeling balanced or does focusing on this value leave little room for other important values?



Is there another way you would like to demonstrate or balance this value? What changes would you make?

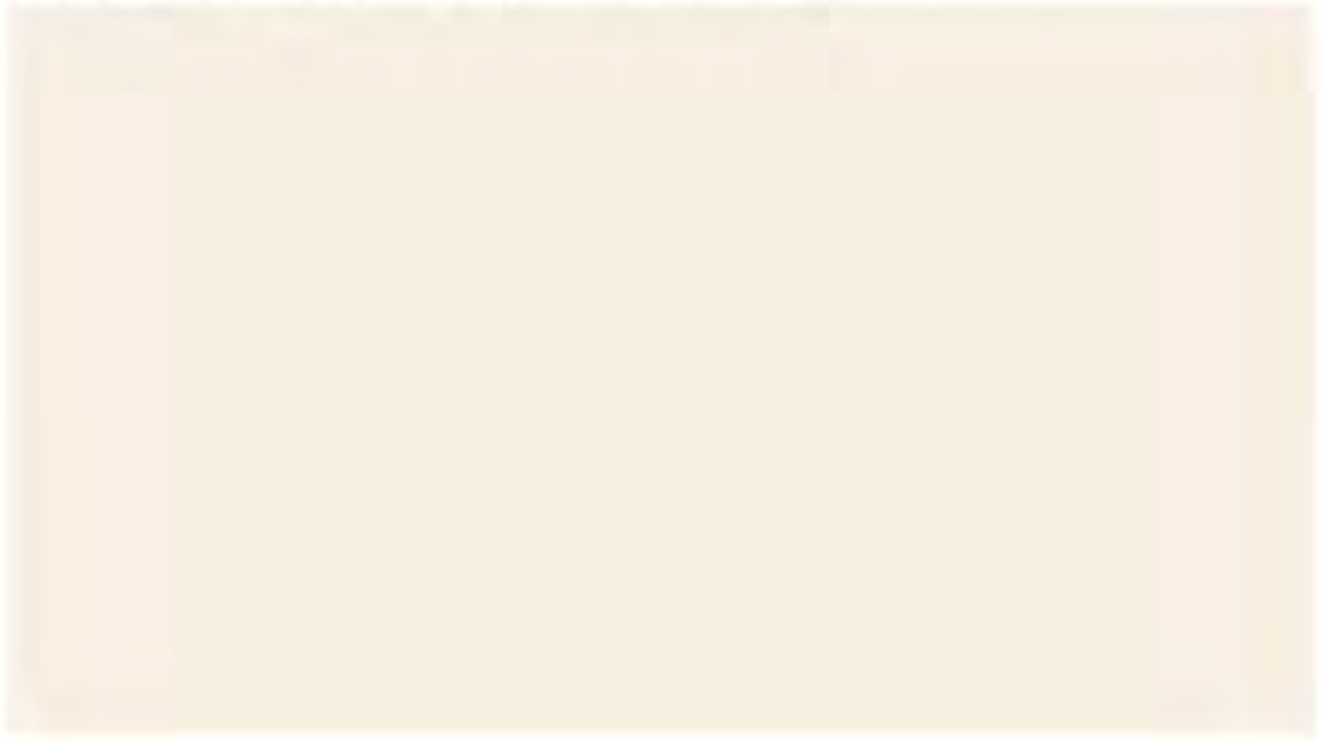


My "go-to" Values

What is your usual, automatic outfit you select each day? Why do you choose this outfit automatically? Do you like this automatic outfit? Does it reflect the authentic you? If you could only wear one outfit for the rest of your life to represent you, would this be it?

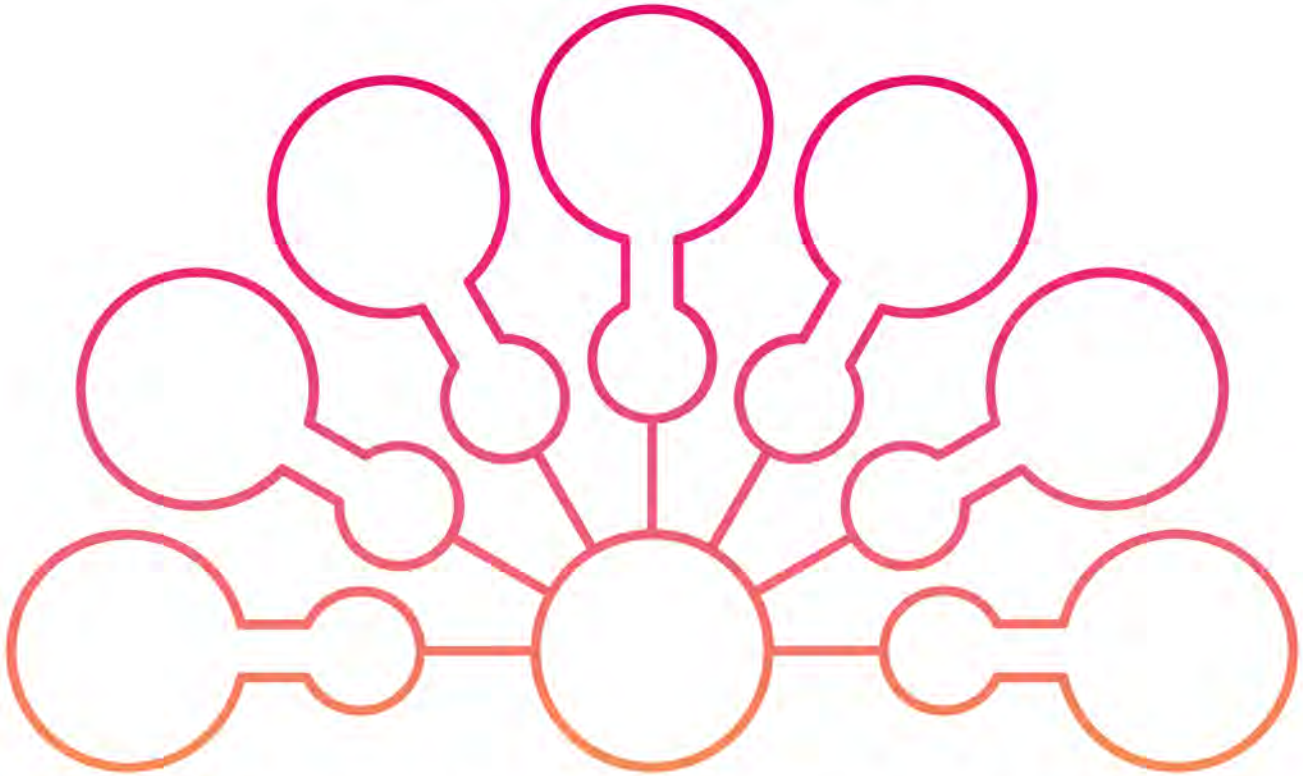


Is there another outfit that would better reflect you? You have to get dressed each day...so what can you do to wear clothes and colors that reflect the authentic you?



Values Assessment

Write your name in the middle of the mind map. Write 3-7 values that are most important to you (family, friends, partner, home, spirituality, personal development, creativity, parenting, work, community, education, health, nature, etc.)



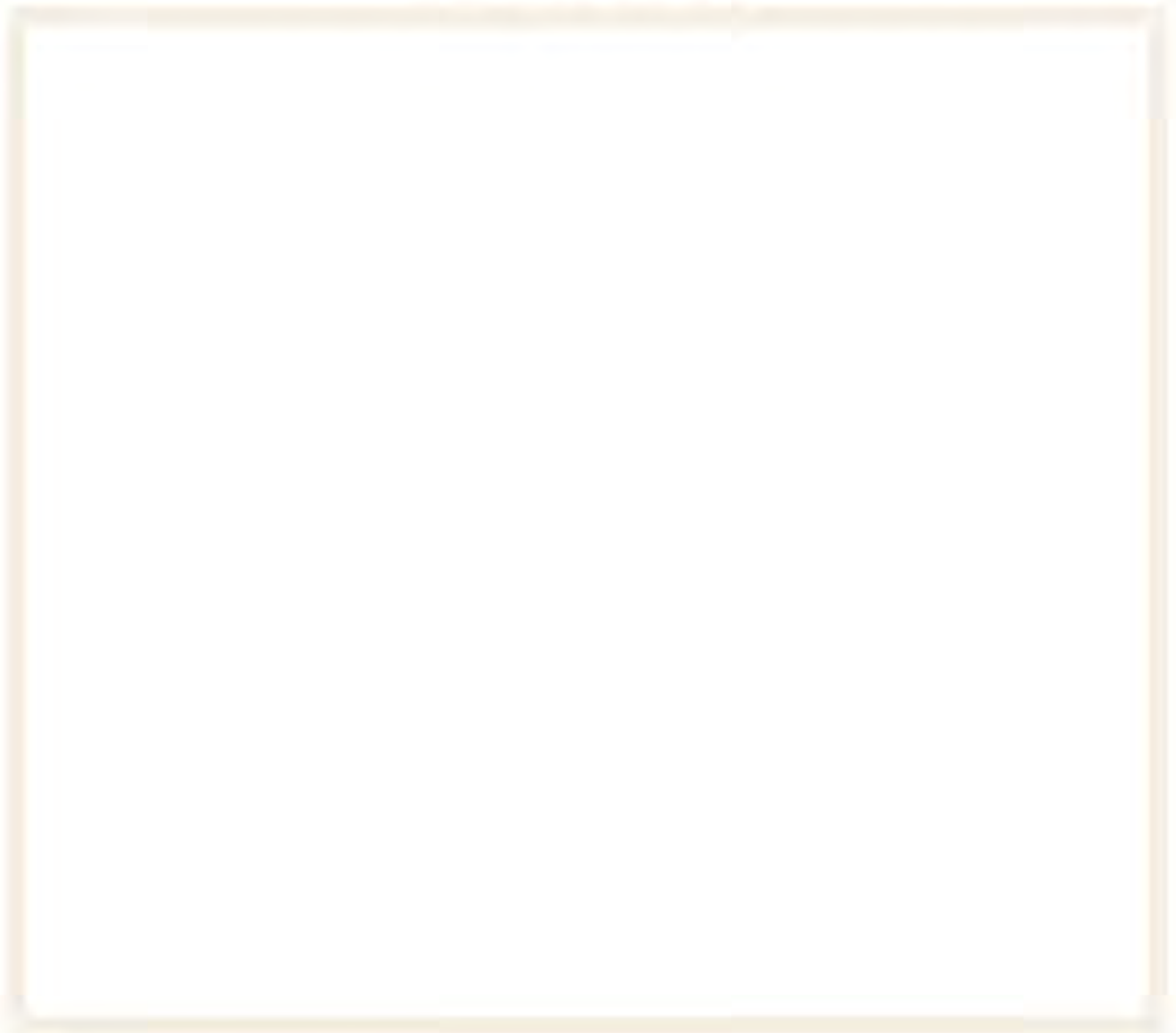
Reflect on the last week. After subtracting the time you sleep each night, you have about 16 hours a day (112 hours a week) to spend according to your values. If you go to work, what value does that serve? Probably it fuels a lot of values...supports you/your family, funds your personal development and health, etc. Your health value includes your food, meditation, exercise, walks in nature, etc. Next to each value, write the percent of time you spent on each over the last seven days. No Math required! Just estimate!

Reflection: What do you think of the percentages? If you have a low percentage on an important value, why do you think that is? Explore the other ways you are spending your time. What changes would you make?

Visual Expression

Imagine your values are flowers and greenery in a gorgeous garden. Create a visual expression of your values as a garden and each value is a different type of flower. You can use pencils, markers, paint, magazine pictures, etc. This is a good metaphor for your values because flowers keep growing, but bloom at different times and need different amounts of care. However you do it will be great.

Answer the questions below.



Title:

Three words or phrases to describe your art.

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-
-

How do you feel?

REFLECTION

What was it like to reflect honestly about your reactions and responses this month? What did you notice when you considered how you are using your time to attend to your values?

Is there anything you would like to change in your life to help you respond in a way of your choosing? What will you change? How will you take action today?

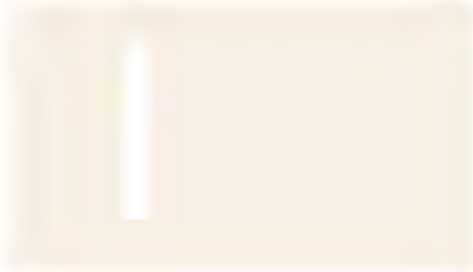


The image features a light beige window frame with multiple panes, visible on both the left and right sides. The background is a solid, bright white, creating a clean and minimalist aesthetic. The word "INTEGRATION" is centered in the middle of the frame.

INTEGRATION

Celebrate!

Recognize and celebrate your presence, mindset and purpose this month. Celebration creates motivation for your next level of growth and change. You can celebrate anything you accomplished, a time you remained calm under stress, your self care, a new way of relating to your thoughts, your increased time in the present moment, your creative expressions, your actions in line with your values - anything you do should be celebrated!



My increased presence I am celebrating this month...



My intentional mindset I am celebrating this month...



My purpose, values and committed actions that I am celebrating this month...



What external celebration I will have this month...

(flowers, book on aesthetics, manicure, etc.)

Modern Woman's Creativity

You have completed a month of reflection of your automatic reactions and how you would like to respond from your values. These exercises expanded your mind and opened you to new ways of thinking. Use your creative thoughts to figure out where you want to apply your new thinking.

I am delighted you joined this community of Modern Creative Women who are living more compassionately and making the world a better place. Living your values and passions is part of creating a better world. Imagine if everyone focused on living their values...the world would be a happier place indeed!

If you are excited about continuing this work, reach out to The Art Therapy Center of San Francisco for a list of programs, workshops and retreats. For the ultimate creative glow-up, consider a custom-designed VIP package in San Francisco, Paris or online.



It is my pleasure to share the evidence-based information which has helped people all around the world. I look forward to hearing from you about what you learned in this workbook. Please send me a testimonial that I may share with others so they know the benefits of being a Modern Creative Woman.

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

RESOURCES

11

Art Therapy Center of San Francisco

Center for creative expression, psychological wellness, positive psychology and value-based living. Email for complementary 20 minute consultation. Amy@amybackos.com

12

Instagram: @dramybackos

Join me each Friday at noon PST while I gently guide you to strategies to live a meaningful and joyful life.

13

Podcast: The Modern Creative Woman

Your go-to resource for the art and science of creativity. Topics coincide with the Modern Creative Woman membership. New episodes drop every Wednesday.

14

Book: ACT Art Therapy

By Dr. Amy Backos

A book about how to live a value-based life using mindfulness, creativity, and connecting to your highest self.

