



Self-Discovery Circle

Mindful activities for women

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Introduction

CHAPTER ONE

I have a belief based on my own life experience. Being in the present moment connects us not only to that moment but also to ourselves. In that quiet space within we discover who we truly are. We can use what we find to lead a life that reflects our true selves and ultimately, we are happier, more fulfilled and contented because of it.

This eBook invites you on a guided journey to deepen your self-discovery. You'll use tools that will give you easy ways to explore your creativity, to connect with your quiet place within and to re-engage with your playful self, all the while being very present and mindful. Some activities may be new to you while others may already be part of your self-care or spiritual practice. We'll meditate, journal, experiment with art, use inspirational books, play with crystals, Tibetan bowls, essential oils, reflect in nature and move to music. These are the tools that have helped me in my own self-discovery journey and I am excited to share them with you. They have helped me become more mindful, more secure in my own skin, more introspective and more confident to live a life that more fully reflects who I really am, bringing me more contentment, fulfillment and happiness.

The concept of this Self-Discovery Circle began its life with workshops presented in-person by me in my hometown, Brisbane, Australia. I will continue to offer these in-person as well as now offering the same concept in digital form so the opportunity to open, explore and play can be available to many more self-discovery seekers.

The activities that form this circle work can be performed in many different ways. You can work through all the experiences at once on your own, or you may choose to begin simply by engaging with a single activity. You can be your own workshop facilitator of a self-discovery circle and set up the entire process complete with your own centres around the room for each activity. It can be done in the company of other like-minded women. If you are a part of a women's circle, it would be a perfect theme to explore together. I recommend that each participant read this eBook before working in a group setting in the Self-Discovery Circle to facilitate a more fulfilling experience for everyone.

In whatever way you choose to engage with this work, it is intrinsically a deeply personal, mindful experience, one that will open you to new possibilities. Over time, creating this space for yourself will become more and more important as you use the activities to open to knowing more fully who you really are. As you cycle your way through the whole range of activities, some will speak to you more than others and will quite naturally become your favourite activities, to be engaged in more frequently. I would, however, suggest you try all of the activities. While we all tend to seek out those experiences that feel the safest to us, by challenging ourselves to try the activities we avoid, much growth and opening can happen.

I encourage you to be open to what you find, to listen to your intuition and any guidance you receive from the universe, looking for meaning in what you find. Notice what attracts you, what feelings arise from the different activities, which ones bring joy, challenges or uncomfortable feelings even. Mostly look for what makes you feel 'like home', for what allows your inner child to come out to play and feel happy. Finally question if there are ways that your life can change, however small, to more fully reflect what you find.

One session of this Self-Discovery Circle is not going to be an instant solution for you to discover your real self and to live your truth on a day-to-day basis. Adopting these experiences into your regular way of life may be though. I invite you to regularly engage by choosing an activity that resonates with you or challenges you, perhaps making this a daily or weekly gift of self-love and 'me time'. Making a regular time for your self-discovery work and marking it in your calendar or diary is a perfect way to fulfil your commitment to yourself, sending a strong message of self-love straight to you.



Key Activities

CHAPTER TWO

These are the core activities we will explore in the circle, I'll explain why they're valuable experiences and what my own experience has been with each.

1. Meditation

We begin our circle with a simple guided meditation in a space that invites you to gather your thoughts, to welcome the quiet and to connect with yourself. We then use five minutes of silence to consolidate the engagement with both yourself and the space. The value of meditation in lowering our stress levels and clearing our minds is well-documented and puts us in a perfect position to open to what we find in our inner selves.

My Experience

When I began meditating I gave myself the time and space to find the quiet within myself that allowed me to both prioritise myself and to connect with myself. A simple routine of two 20-minute sessions per day of Transcendental Meditation (TM) taught me that when you engage on this level you begin to discover and welcome the real you. Whilst I can't teach you the TM technique in this eBook we use a simple format that moves you toward communing with the quiet within.

2. Experimental Art

Here you are asked to leave judgment far away from this space, to park any previous art practice or to welcome the challenge if artistic expression is new to you. You will be encouraged to open yourself up to connecting with the paper, paint and brush in a way that unlocks your creative self. We use a series of prompts that encourage you to focus on the process rather than the product in this activity. Finding our creative selves is meant to be fun, even childlike, so engaging without fear of judgment allows us to connect with our real selves within and express what we find there.

My Experience

I am the embodiment of a person who unlocked her creativity later in life, learning about herself along the way. It was a part of me that I had kept quietly hidden for most of my life. It was somewhere that I had not allowed myself to venture near, believing those teachers and peers who didn't see value in what I had produced as 'art' as a child. Judgment is a very big part of our perceived lack of creativity and I had carried it with me all my life. When I became less judgemental about myself, I realised that creativity is an inherent part of me as I believe it is a part of all of us, irrespective of talent or skill.

3. Journaling

In this experience you will use your journal to write your true unfiltered thoughts and feelings, perhaps whatever is front and centre in your life right now will come out on paper, or maybe some deep thoughts that you have kept buried. Journaling is a very significant way of freeing yourself and connecting with your emotions. Like all the experiences in the Self-Discovery Circle, journaling is just for you, not a shared experience nor to be judged in any way.

My Experience

I began journaling on a daily basis and in the process, my own true thoughts and feelings surfaced. I learned that being with myself was a valuable and precious time to learn about myself and writing freely further validated those thoughts and feelings for me. This practice of journaling sometimes comes easily, sometimes not. I found the use of prompts like questions or messages from oracle cards or inspirational quotes and texts could trigger me to open to myself and any guidance that I was ready to receive. This process is how we will journal in the Circle work.

4. Play Centre

We include play because as women we are often weighed down with responsibility and this is an opportunity for a light-hearted moment where we can just have fun, rediscovering the joy of experimentation and play just for the sake of it.

Opening to the possibilities that working with new practices can bring invites us to be curious about life, allowing us to look beyond our regular way of being and opening to what new experiences can bring to our lives. I hope by trying these you may be encouraged to seek other new practices to open to as well.

All of the chosen experiences in the play centre – essential oils, crystals, oracle cards and sound healing with Tibetan Bowls – facilitate healing and self-discovery and I encourage you to note how grounded and in-tune to your inner self (or not) you may feel before and after engaging in these activities.

My Experience

When I began experimenting with new modalities I embraced them into my daily practice to such an extent that now, I never leave home without them – they are essential for me. I feel grounded and connected with myself but I also love the element of fun I enjoy when I use them. I find them very comforting and I use that time as an expression of self-love.

Essential Oils

As an example, I began gathering my collection of essential oils several years ago. What I love about them is they have the ability to make a tangible difference to how you feel and therefore operate in the world. I began with a simple oil burner and I now use an infuser that runs 24/7 in my household with oils specifically chosen for what I need.

Tibetan Bowls

Further, I use my Tibetan bowl most days – I find it centres and grounds me and the warm tuneful vibrations signal to my body to be calm and at peace. I like to play it before meditation and sleep time. Often when I'm working I play a Tibetan bowl playlist – it's not only grounding but also soothing and healing.

Oracle Cards

My oracle cards are special to me. As part of my daily ritual, I use them every morning, always pulling one but sometimes more; they offer me guidance and affirmation. I have never pulled a card I thought didn't fit my current life circumstances.

5. A Moment in Nature

Nature is a pure example of authenticity. Humans can alter it slightly to suit their own purposes, change it to their own design at times but nature is real, always authentic, always reflects its true nature just as we are aiming to do in our circle of self-discovery. It only flourishes where it is suited to flourish. It does not change itself to keep others happy and in the spotlight. It is happy to take the spotlight; indeed, it flourishes with it, nature is admired for it. I invite you to mirror nature – you can be calm, authentic, your real self and in the spotlight and admired for all those things if you take nature as your guide. Here you will be invited to take a moment in nature, connect with its beauty and peace and note your feelings.

My Experience

Slowing down my life was easier when I included time in nature as often as I could. I found it important to not only be physically present but also to purposefully notice my surroundings, to mindfully engage with my surroundings. It inspires me to be my real self without the need for the approval of others. Nature just 'is' and being in its presence inspires me to be the same. This experience has a way of taking me out of the thoughts in my head and keeping me in the present moment.

6. Move to Music

Moving to music allows us to abandon our inhibitions, to feel free and subsequently release emotions we have been storing deep inside ourselves. Using scarves as the vehicle for movement can help if there are feelings of self-consciousness. It can be helpful to initially focus on the scarf but over time they are recognised for what they really are – simply a prop. Whether you continue to use them or not is really a personal decision. This too is an avenue to re-discover our sense of fun if we feel we have abandoned it in keeping our responsible lives in the forefront!

My Experience

One of my first experiences with this free movement to music began when I joined a free form group dance session called Five Rhythms. I loved the freedom it gave me, the permission to express myself in ways that felt unjudged, soul-centred and liberating.

Inspirational Texts

Reading all or part of an inspirational book will encourage you to see yourself, others and the world a little differently. Reading an inspirational book is, therefore, a wonderful opportunity to broaden our minds and ourselves and can offer an alternative to ways we've always done things or thought about things. It can trigger us into memories of past experiences and meeting memories is essential to moving forward on our own journey.

My Experience

Inspirational books are almost an addiction for me. I love them because they open my mind, they bring comfort as I identify with what I read but maybe most importantly they offer insight into how others have moved forward in their lives, igniting my own courage to do the same.

I like taking small or large messages from what I read and putting them into practice. For example, one book I found very helpful was *Letting Go* by David R. Hawkins, a psychiatrist, consciousness researcher and author. His method of allowing an emotion or past experience to rise and be held for however long it needs to be felt before it subsides has brought me great healing. I previously would push a particular emotion or memory away and cover it with activity and distraction. All this does is allow the pain to return over and over again but in dealing with it, its power over us is very diminished.

Conversation Centre

Sometimes our thoughts may be undeveloped or erratic about a particular topic but fleshing them out with another can bring clarity. Discussing soulful topics can also fill us with compassion, allowing us to marvel at the beauty of human expression, allowing us to really listen to another person and all without judgement.

My Experience

I'm an introvert and typically we shy away from small talk – it exhausts us. Meaningful conversations, however, energise us and lead us easily to a place where we voice our opinions and really listen to those of others. This is why I decided to include this activity in the Self-Discovery Circle. It validates this kind of communication and may be the type of communication some of you thrive on.



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