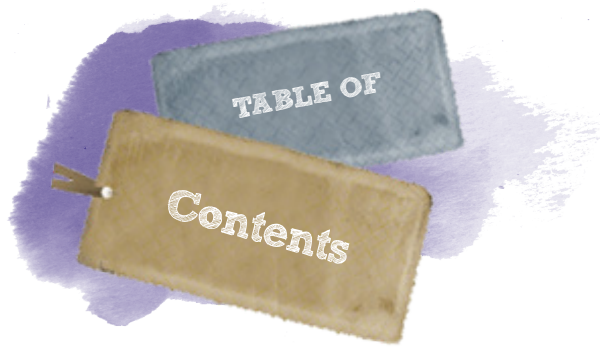


Tranquil TEENS

An 8-Week
Mindfulness, Creativity, and Leadership
Program for Teen Girls





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About Tranquil Teens

After offering a two-hour yoga, creativity, and leadership workshop called Tranquil Teens to over 600 teens, Tranquil Space Foundation shifted the yoga portion to mindfulness with hope of making the programming more inclusive. This allowed us to accommodate disabilities, and avoid the need for special tools (like a yoga mat) and the removal of shoes and socks.



Following this shift, we spent months creating an eight-week program that would allow facilitators around the world to share Tranquil Teens with their communities. Our first program was held in Arizona with a Girl Scout group and their testimonials are below.

Our wish is that you can utilize this curriculum to offer your community an introduction to the therapeutic benefits of mindfulness, creativity, and leadership. Please reach out to share photos or stories on the impact of this work. We hope that you find it inspiring and informative.

“This was one of the best experiences I’ve had with Girl Scouts. You helped me learn a lot about myself and helped me map my life.”

“I wanna say this program has helped me so much in every way and I appreciate it.”

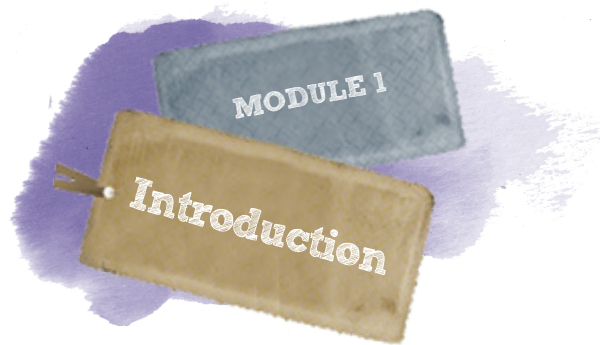
“The leadership portion helped me be a better person to me and everyone else.”

“The creativity portion was very helpful and it helped me open up.”

“The leadership portion helped me not be afraid of being leader.”

“The mindfulness portion helped me get in touch with an inner peace and my senses.”

“Attending this program assisted me with being able to understand how to carry



Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a fancy word for noticing what's happening right now in the body. The official definition is “paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non judgmentally” by Jon Kabat-Zinn, a scientist who has studied the effects of mindfulness since the 1970s.

The practice helps us focus, respond versus react, manage emotions, and make better decisions. If you've ever done something you later regretted, been in a bad mood, spaced out during class, or felt angry and out of control, mindfulness can help. It helps by stopping the chemical release in our brain that makes us feel stress, anger, and fear.



The ABCs of mindfulness, according to Juliet Adams, are:

A is for awareness, becoming more aware of what you are thinking and doing – what's going on in your mind and body.

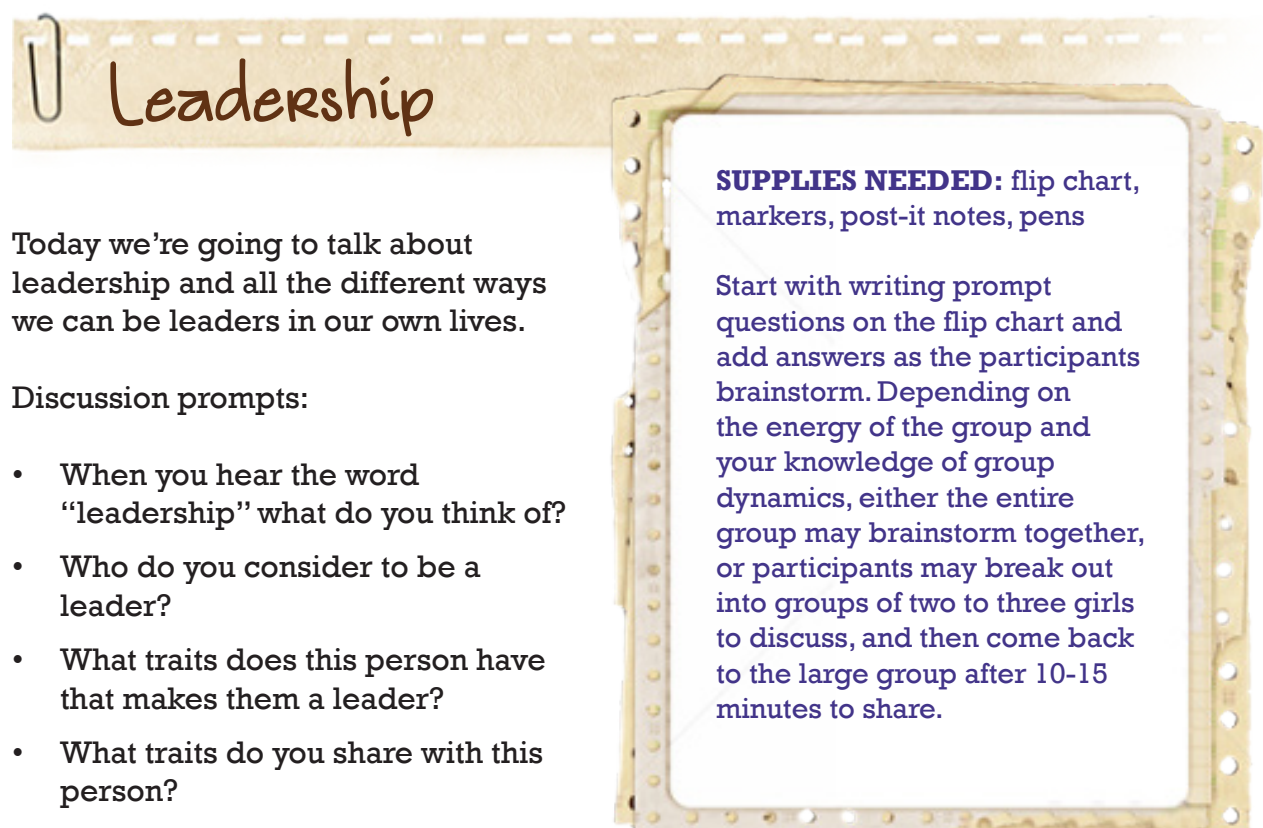
B is for being with your experience. Avoiding the tendency to respond on autopilot and feed problems by creating your own story.

C is for seeing things and responding more wisely. By creating a gap between the experience and our reaction to, we can make wiser choices.

To practice mindfulness, come into your mindful body. This involves a sitting

comfortably with a tall spine and your shoulders over your hips. Relax your body and also keep it alert. Get still and quiet and, if you're comfortable, close your eyes or let your gaze be soft. Sit with a sense of dignity.

Connect to your breath, notice your inhale and exhale. Set your smartphone timer for five minutes, close your eyes, and feel your breath. Notice what you're experiencing internally. Is your mind quiet or racing? Is your body heavy or light? Is your heartbeat fast, or slow and steady? No judgment; simply observe your breath flowing in and out of the body with a keen sense of the present moment. Once the timer goes off, allow your eyes to open.



Leadership

Today we're going to talk about leadership and all the different ways we can be leaders in our own lives.

Discussion prompts:

- When you hear the word "leadership" what do you think of?
- Who do you consider to be a leader?
- What traits does this person have that makes them a leader?
- What traits do you share with this person?
- Can you remember a time when you acted as the leader or took the lead on something in your life? How did that feel?
- What leadership traits would you like to build in yourself?
- What makes it tough to be a leader? What makes it easier?

SUPPLIES NEEDED: flip chart, markers, post-it notes, pens

Start with writing prompt questions on the flip chart and add answers as the participants brainstorm. Depending on the energy of the group and your knowledge of group dynamics, either the entire group may brainstorm together, or participants may break out into groups of two to three girls to discuss, and then come back to the large group after 10-15 minutes to share.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY ONE: ROLE PLAY

Split into two or three groups and have each group pick a scenario at random and

talk through how by using the traits from the wall they could serve as a leader in the scenario.

Scenario One: A new student arrives in your class and knows no one.

Scenario Two: You hear a group of students talking about another student in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Scenario Three: You've just found out that your little brother is cutting class.

Scenario Four: Your friend tells you something and asks you not to tell anyone but you're worried about their safety.

Come back to the group and ask each group to share.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TWO: LEADERSHIP POEM

Leadership Poem Pattern

Line 1: A person you admire/consider a leader

Line 2: Three words to describe the person

Line 3: Place, group, or activity identified with the person

Line 4: Three action words (-ing words) for the person

Line 5: When or where the actions take place

Line 6: Thoughts or feelings about the person

Give students time to write and share.



We are all creative beings with a gift to share with the world. According to Martha Graham, a modern dance choreographer, "There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost."

Each and every day we are given a new beginning—365 fresh days each year. If you begin to think of your life as a work of art, each brushstroke, each decision, each player, each piece, has significant value. Every aspect makes you a unique work of art. One of a kind.

You exude your creativity from the clothes you wear to the color of pens you use to the way you organize your school notebooks.

What does creativity mean to you? What does a creative life look like? Who is an artist that you admire?

Below is a favorite tool and suggestions for nurturing your inner artist.

ARTIST DATES:

There are many little things we can do to kindle a spark of passion with who we are. One of the biggest opportunities lies in the Artist Date. An Artist Date is a favorite way to indulge in self-care and it's a recommended resource from Julia Cameron, author of *The Artist's Way*. It's basically a one-hour weekly solo excursion each week to nurture your creative spark. It's solo so that you can connect within, and avoid external distractions.

The key is to be fully and completely with yourself and your inner artist. You're giving your mind the opportunity to rest, play, and uncover ideas that you may not be able to hear during your daily hustle and bustle.

Here are a few Artist Date ideas:

- Sit at a café and pen your thoughts
- Visit an art store
- Take a dance class
- Stroll the aisles of a bookstore
- Pick up art supplies at a craft store
- Browse thrift stores for a discarded gem
- Go to live music
- Browse garage sales or flea markets
- Plant herbs in colorful pots
- Sit under a tree with a book
- Snap photos
- Sew a dress
- Bead a necklace
- Go on a bike ride through a scenic park

Creativity surrounds you. Through the way you talk and the way you listen and the everyday choices you make in your dress, friends, and food, you are able to connect with creativity. Make conscious choices that allow you to sparkle, grow, and change in a way that radiates your most fabulous self. Infuse your life with creative awareness and watch your own artistic canvas continue to grow into a masterpiece. You are an artist.

OMwork

Think about a time you have been a leader in your own life. It may not have been a formal position you held, but could be a time you tried to set a positive example for your friends, or worked extra hard to help a group project succeed.



Mindfulness

There are many areas in which to be mindful and today's mindfulness lesson is around the topic of body awareness. Being mindful of our bodies helps us to realize how our body reacts to things like stress and anxiety, and can even help us cope with physical pain better.

Today, we're going to do a 10 minute exercise called a "body scan." You may notice your mind wandering or analyzing a feeling or sensation while doing this exercise—that's okay. Acknowledge the thought and return back to realizing whether your body is feeling pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.



BODY SCAN

Begin in a comfortable seated position and with your eyes closed. Begin inhaling and exhaling deeply.

Inhale for three counts and exhale for five counts.

Place your hand on your belly and notice how your belly fills and expands with each inhale, and shrinks back with each exhale. Take a few deep breaths on your own noticing any sensations you may have.

(After three to five deep breaths begin the exercise)

Relax your arms and sit comfortably. During the body scan, if you notice certain parts of your body are tense, try to relax them if possible. If not, it's okay.

Bring awareness to your left foot as it touches the floor. Feel into your heel and your toes. Notice any tingling or sensations here.

Move up from your heel into your calf and shin. Notice how this part of your leg connects to both your ankle and your knee.

Move your awareness up to your left thigh and its connection with your left hip. Release any tensions that you may have noticed on this side.

Bring awareness to your right foot as it touches the floor. Feel into your heel and your toes. Notice any tingling or sensations here.

Move up from your heel into your calf and shin. Notice how this part of your leg connects to both your ankle and your knee.

Move your awareness up to your right thigh and its connection with your right hip. Release any tensions that you may have noticed on this side.

Now lift your awareness to your abdomen and gut, the home of digestion.

Shift your awareness to the tailbone and move through the lower, middle and upper back. Allow any tightness to soften.

Bring the awareness to the heart and lungs. Feel the rib cage and sternum expand as you breathe and fall as you breathe out.

Shift your awareness to your fingertips on your left hand. Slowly move your awareness up your left arm past your elbow and up to your shoulder. Release any tension.

Shift your awareness to your fingertips on your right hand. Slowly move your awareness up your right arm past your elbow and up to your shoulder. Release any tension.

Notice any sensations in the shoulders and neck, a lot of us carry tension here, so if you can try to release it.

Move your awareness to your throat. Slowly move up to your jaw and teeth, tongue and rest of the mouth.

Release any clenching that may be occurring.

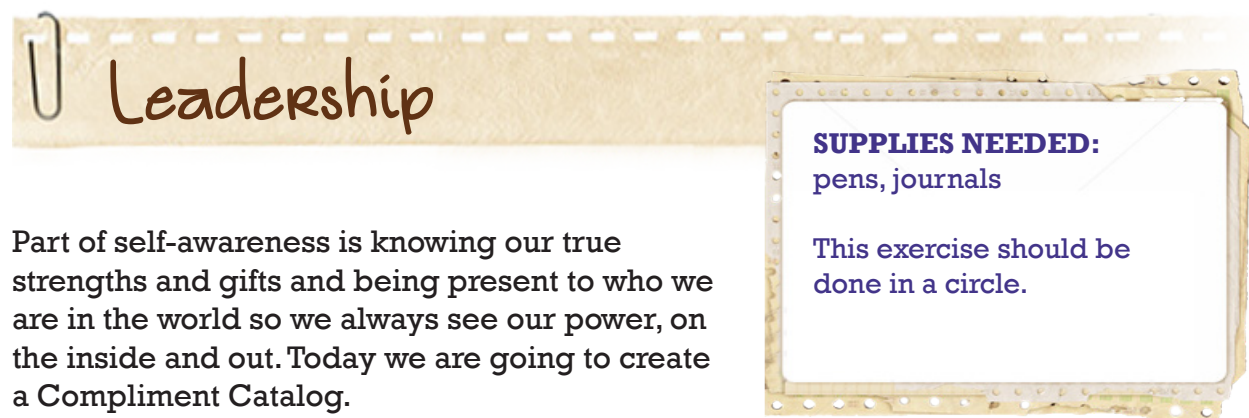
Move up to your nose and notice any sensations as you breathe.

Let your awareness come to the top of the head, noticing the ears, eyes, forehead and temples, and your brain.

Now expand your awareness to your body as a whole. Notice how all of your body parts are interconnected. Acknowledge how your body is feeling after this exercise. Take three more long breaths.

Congratulate yourself for going through this exercise and open your eyes.

RESOURCE: *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook* by Bob Stahl, Ph.D. and Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D.



Part of self-awareness is knowing our true strengths and gifts and being present to who we are in the world so we always see our power, on the inside and out. Today we are going to create a Compliment Catalog.

When you are feeling down or not like yourself, you can flip through your compliment catalog and be reminded of who you are at the core. When we recall things people have said about us, we tend to remember negative things much easier than positive things. That's why the compliment catalog is the perfect way to store the positive things so you never forget them.

Open to a new page in your journal and write, "Compliment Catalog!"

First, Take three minutes and write a list of all the compliments you can remember. These can be from a friend, a parent, a teacher or anyone else in your life. These are things other people have said about you in the past:

- Your eyes are beautiful.
- You're a beautiful writer.
- You're a great athlete.
- You're a talented artist.
- I love your laugh.

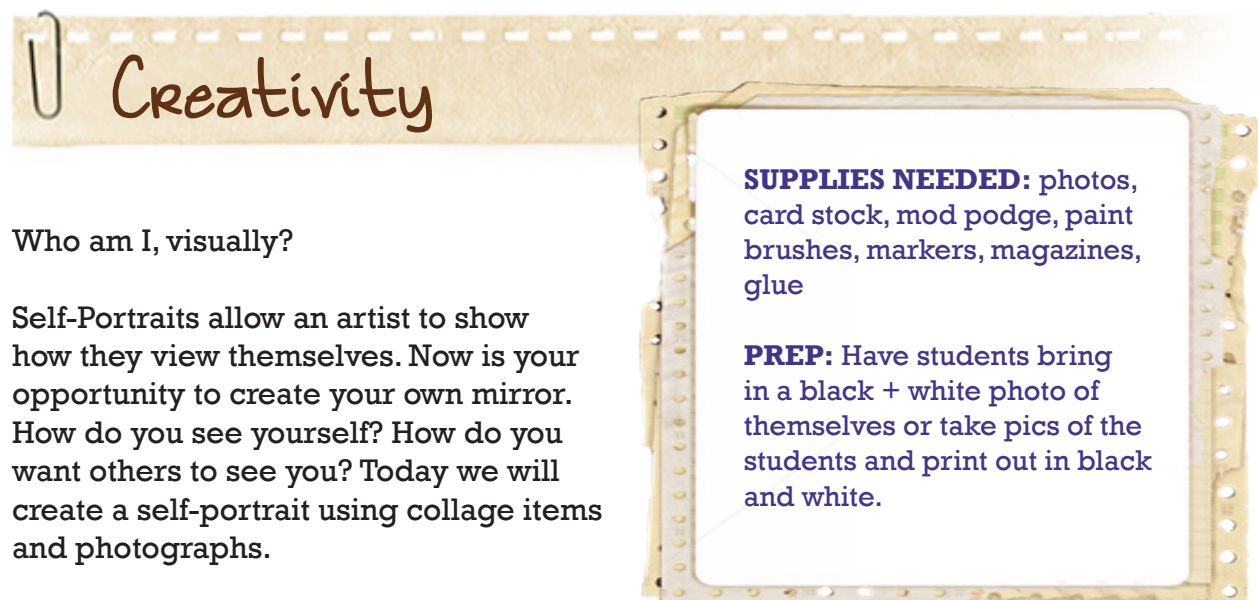
Any compliment or positive reflection you can think of goes on the list!

Next, take three minutes and start complimenting yourself. For many people, this is extremely difficult so if it feels hard, don't get discouraged. Be easy on yourself and see if you can get two or three compliments out!

Most of us spend a lot of time criticizing ourselves and comparing ourselves to other so it's difficult to sit back and just give a compliment. So we're going to try today:

- What do you like about yourself?
- Do you love your eyes or your strong legs?
- Do you appreciate your artistic or athletic skills?
- Do you like how great of a friend you are to others?

Now, here's the reason we're in a circle. You're going to turn to the person on each side of you and give them a compliment to add to their Compliment Catalog. They will give you one to add to yours as well! Give students three minutes to swap compliments and add to their journals.



Who am I, visually?

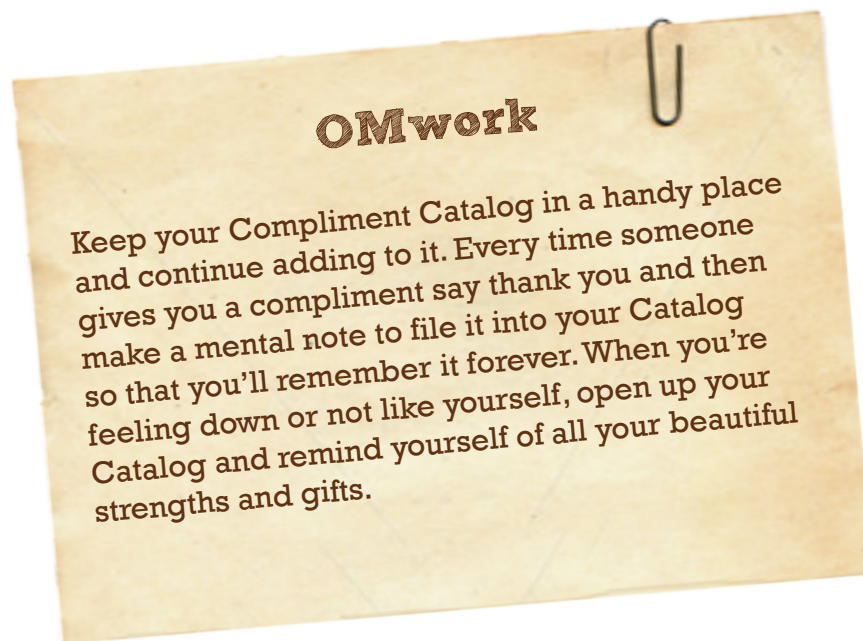
Self-Portraits allow an artist to show how they view themselves. Now is your opportunity to create your own mirror. How do you see yourself? How do you want others to see you? Today we will create a self-portrait using collage items and photographs.

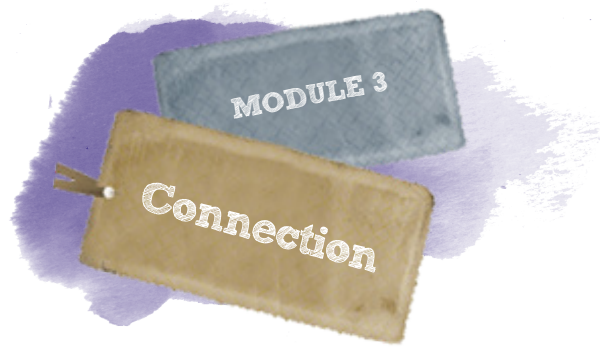
SUPPLIES NEEDED: photos, card stock, mod podge, paint brushes, markers, magazines, glue

PREP: Have students bring in a black + white photo of themselves or take pics of the students and print out in black and white.

Step One: Cut out your photo, so its just you, and place on a piece of card stock. Go through magazines and find images, words, anything that you would consider "YOU" and cut/tear out. Arrange these images around your photo. Use the mod podge like paint over your photo and magazine clippings. This will dry clear and glues your clippings to the card stock.

Step Two: Use the markers and colored markers to decorate your self-portrait collage. Add pops of color, add words, drawings, and shapes.





Mindfulness

Today we'll focus on mindfulness as it relates to our sense of hearing by listening to the world around and within us.

Let's get started by finding your way into a comfortable seated position. As you are ready, allow your eyes to close, and begin to pay attention to the sounds around you.

What sounds do you hear coming from outside of the room, off in the distance? Simply notice the sounds themselves, without trying to picture where they are coming from.

(Pause for 15 – 20 seconds)

Now notice some of the sounds from the room around you. *(Depending on surroundings)*: The ticking of the clock, the hum of the thermostat, perhaps even the breath of the person next to you.

Any time you notice your mind has wandered, simply bring your attention back to the sounds around you.

(Pause)

As you are ready, bring your hands up to your ears, and bring your attention completely inward. What do you hear? Your breath? Your heartbeat? Anything else?

(Pause)



Now release your hands, and invite the sounds from the room around you back into your consciousness.

(Pause and, if a meditation bell is available, ring three times, allowing for the reverberations to complete between each ring.)

Slowly allow your eyes to open.

QUESTIONS:

- Did you hear any sounds you usually don't notice?
- Was it easy or hard to focus on the sounds themselves without thinking about the object they came from?



Today we're going to talk about communication and some strategies for using communication as a tool of leadership. Communication goes well beyond talking to (or at) an individual or group of people. Among other things, a big part of communication includes active listening and non-verbal communication...

The three areas of communication we're going to touch on today are as follows:

Verbal communication: words, tone, pace, pauses

Non Verbal communication: body language, demeanor, eye contact

Active listening: eye contact, not interrupting, restating important points, asking questions, not being distracted.

Everyone has their own unique communication style. Many times, especially in today's digital world, when there are communication issues it's not what you say but how you say it.

Take a minute and think about someone that has a communication style that you want to emulate:

- Is it a teacher or a parent?
- Think about a person who can command a room, how do they present themselves?
- How do they speak?
- How is their intonation?
- Do they make eye contact?
- Do they pause for reflection?

Jot some notes down about good communicators that you want to emulate.

Consider the following ideas when thinking about your own communication style and how others perceive you:

- What's the message that you want to send?
- Who is your audience?
- At what pace do you speak?
- What language do you use?

Call up a couple of students to demonstrate the following behaviors. Ask the students to comment on how they're interpreting the student's behavior:

- Crossing arms over chest
- Hunched over/not standing up straight/slouching in chair
- Rolling eyes
- Making eye contact
- Hand gestures
- Smiling

Active listening is a big and often not discussed part of communication. Who has an idea of what it means to actively listen? *(Jot down students' ideas.)*

Active listening makes the person who is speaking not only feel valued, but also helps you to really understand the message that the person is sending. Active listening goes beyond putting down your phone and looking at the person; it involves interpreting the other person's ideas in a way that you can relate to. It also means being able to restate the other person's point in your own words.

Active listening is not a passive activity. This activity is especially useful in school – being able to interpret an idea that a teacher is presenting in a way that relates to you will help you further understand the material and the point that the teacher is trying to make.

It's okay if your mind wanders during this exercise, just acknowledge the wandering and come back to the present moment.

Take out a piece of paper and jot down a few thoughts on the following:

- When do I notice myself daydreaming?
- When do I find myself rehearsing what I'm going to say next?
- When do I find myself judging?
- What is my natural demeanor/body language?

Use these prompts to help you become more mindful of how you communicate and how others perceive you.



Creativity

As we continue to talk about creativity, we are reminded that nature is the basis of all creation. If you want to remind yourself how creation works or spark your own creativity, just walk outside. In our busy lives, full of texting and technology, we often forget how important it is to get outside on a daily basis.

Aside from needing our daily dose of Vitamin D, we also need to be connected to nature, the source of all creation, to inspire and fuel us. It's the perfect way to refocus and reenergize if you're stuck writing a paper or studying for a test.



SUPPLIES NEEDED:

pens, journals

Need access to open grassy space outside. Blankets or towels are optional.

Today, we're going to get outside.

(Walk participants – with pens and journals – outside if they are not already outside. Have participants sit in a circle on the grass. Blankets or towels are optional.)

The purpose of today's exercise is to get connected with nature in order to inspire your own creativity. Everything we are going to write today is for your eyes only. You will have the option to share at the end, but you are not required. Remember, this is your private journal.

So open up to a new page. I'm going to give you a few prompts. Just write them out and give about four or five lines between each prompt.

1. "When I look at the trees, I feel..." Repeat slowly for the participants.
2. "When I hear the birds chirping, I feel..." Repeat slowly.
3. "When I can't access nature, I feel..." Repeat.
4. "I can use nature to help me when I'm stuck creatively by..." Repeat.

Now, take six minutes and complete the sentences.

At the end, go around the circle and have three or four people share one of their statements and what they learned from the exercise.

OMwork

Sometime this week, take five minutes just to sit down and listen. In your journal, make a list of the noises and sounds that you begin to notice that you don't usually think about.

Next time you feel stuck around a project, take it outside! Use the connected force of nature to inspire you as you study or work on your project or paper. If you can't work outside because you have to use the computer, take a luxurious 10 minute break and just walk outside. It's really important that you don't bring your phone with you during this break.

Just go outside, walk or find a comfortable place to sit, watch the trees and listen to the birds. You will find so much inspiration by just being still. When you go back inside, watch how easily the words flow through you for your paper or how much easier it feels to study! Voila!



For our mindfulness practice this week, we're going to talk about mindful eating.

Have you ever eaten a food and didn't even realize you were eating it? Not focusing on the flavors, maybe eating while watching TV or on the computer. Or how about when you're upset, and you devour a pint of ice cream? We've all had those days.

In order to bring more awareness to an activity that we all do multiple times a day, we're going to do an exercise with the raisins on the table in front of you.

Instruct the students to do the following (*pause between each bullet point*):

- Place the raisins in your hand. Look at the features, the wrinkles, how some are darker and lighter than the others. Some are plumper, some more shriveled. How do the raisins look in the light?
- Think about how the raisin got to our classroom today. These raisins weren't always raisins, they started out as grapes on a bush, which shriveled over time into raisins. Those raisins were then picked, collected, transported, washed, packaged, re-transported to a wholesale distributor, driven to a supermarket where they were purchased.
- If your mind starts to wander with thoughts like, "Why am I staring at and thinking about a raisin" (or anything else, really), it's okay to acknowledge those thoughts and come back into the moment. If at any time in your mindfulness practice you notice this happening, acknowledge the thought and release it, coming back to the present moment.
- Take a raisin out of the box and hold it in the palm of your hand.

- Bring the raisin to your nose and smell them, what do you notice?
- Bring a raisin to your ear, squeeze it. What sound does the raisin make?
- Slowly bring the raisin to your mouth, paying attention to how your body feels in anticipation of eating the fruit. Gently place the raisin on your tongue with out biting. What sensations do you notice?
- When ready, bite down on the raisin. Does it go to one side of your mouth or the other? Notice the taste it releases.
- Slowly chew the raisin. Notice how the consistency changes the more you chew it.
- When you're ready, swallow the raisin. Notice the sensations in your body as the raisin moves down your throat all the way to your stomach.

REFLECTION:

What did you notice during this exercise? Was anything surprising?



One of the most important parts of leadership is self-care. When we talk about self-care, we aren't just talking about brushing your teeth or taking a shower every day. That's part of it, but we're also talking about making sure you are physically and emotionally cared for.


In order to show up fully for the people you are leading, you have to make sure you are taken care of. This is so interesting because leaders often do not put themselves first! They feel they are too busy or they have to take care of everyone else first. But there's a reason why the flight attendants tell you to put on your oxygen mask first, if there's an emergency on the plane. You have to take care of YOU first!

Imagine yourself in a future career. It doesn't have to be THE career if you aren't sure what you want to do as an adult yet, it just has to be a realistic scenario for the purpose of this exercise. You could imagine yourself as the CEO of a company, an entrepreneur, a teacher, a CEO of the household (a mom or dad) or even the

President of the United States, if that's a dream of yours.

If you were at that level of power and responsibility, how would you need to take care of yourself to be available for others? Write a self-care checklist for your future self. Here are some areas to look:

- Times a week you would need to stretch/exercise
- Healthy meals per day
- Vacations per year
- Hours of sleep per night
- Time with friends
- Time with family
- Haircuts
- Massages
- Doctors appointments



Creativity

Today we are going to do some mandala coloring pages.

Mandala is a Sanskrit word for “circle” or “center.” Mandalas are geometric shapes with no beginning or end.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:
mandala coloring pages
(and finishing self-portrait collages).

Mandalas can be found at printmandala.com.



Coloring

mandalas allow us an opportunity to practice mindfulness. How does the crayon marker/colored pencil sound? Smell? How does it feel in my hand? What pops into my mind when I use certain colors?

Just like with our self-portrait collages there is no right or wrong way to color. You choose the colors and patterns. Practice coloring using a mindfulness tool we have talked about, for example: listen to the sound of the crayon/marker/colored pencil on the paper and breathe.

OMwork

If you deserve this level of self-care as a CEO, why not give it to yourself now? Using the self-care checklist you created today, create one tailored to your life now. Post it on your bedroom or bathroom wall and start using it daily.



Mindfulness

We've covered mindfulness and sound and taste. Today we'll explore how we communicate with others.

Come to a comfortable seat and close your eyes. We'll begin today by thinking about our relationships, and how we communicate with others.

Think about a time when you walked away from a conversation and felt really good that you talked to a specific person:

- What made you feel so good?
- Did they make you smile or laugh?
- Did you tell someone about a problem you were having and get some really good advice?
- Or were you just catching up with a friend that you hadn't talked to in a while?

Now think about a time when a conversation was harder. How do you know that someone is listening to you, or if they are distracted?

Now think about your own communication style. How do you let the person you're speaking with know that you've been listening? Do you make eye contact, ask questions?



What about when you are texting a friend or posting something online? How is that different from having a conversation face-to-face?

As we continue with today's session, think about how you interact with the group, and begin to practice and consider these questions for all of your interactions:

- What else can you do to make someone feel good or supported after a conversation with you?
- How do you choose your words with care?
- Are they kind, are they true, are they necessary?

Conclude the session by discussing in small groups or the larger group what they noticed through this process.



Setbacks and obstacles happen to everyone. Oftentimes, it's not the setback or obstacle itself that causes a major issue, it's our reaction to having a wrench thrown in our plan.

Interactive piece with students (*write on board or flip charts*):

- What is an obstacle? (Define)
- When have you physically come in contact with an obstacle?
- What did you do when confronted with this obstacle?
- Not all setbacks are physical. Sometimes, things get in the way of us accomplishing a goal. One example might be forgetting to bring home a textbook the night before an exam. Can anyone share a similar type of obstacle they've faced?
- What did you do to overcome this obstacle?

It's great that you have showed that you've overcome obstacles — this should help

build your confidence if and when it happens again. Right now we're going to give you some building blocks so that the next time you run into an obstacle, regardless of what it is, you will be able to surpass it.

Take a piece of paper and write down something you want to accomplish, or something that you're hoping for.

- What is this setback? What are all aspects of it? How is this getting in the way of your accomplishment?
- Lets break this down into small pieces. How many faces does this obstacle have? How can you break down the obstacle into smaller chunks that you can tackle individually?
- What are your alternatives to this setback? If you had to choose other paths, what are some other options that will still get you to your final result?
- What assumptions might you be making that may not be true? How can you challenge these assumptions? Are you jumping to conclusions anywhere?
- What is the most viable option, either breaking down the obstacle into pieces or is there an alternative to getting to your final destination?

Ask for a volunteer to share their issue with the class. Write down the actions taken and prompt the student to clarify/answer questions.



Journal writing can serve as a light into self-understanding. Penning your thoughts onto paper can be a powerful life tool to help you change your mind and your habits. Benefits include clarified thoughts and feelings, self-expression, a place to dream and plan, development of a writing practice, and problem solving.

Time in your journal can be a safe space for working through confusion, tough emotions and the details of everyday life. And, it's a great dose of self-care.

1. How to write? Some prefer a spiral bound, hardcover, compact journal for easy transport. Using colored pens, scented colored pencils, highlighters, or an

average blue ballpoint works for me. You may prefer loose-leaf paper or a large art book and calligraphy pens. Either way, make sure your journal reflects who you are and works for your lifestyle.

2. Where to write? Find a cozy place that allows you to let go. Journal in solitude while in bed, at the dog park, a quiet café, or in a candlelit bathtub. You may prefer an active Internet café, bustling local diner, or city park. The key is to find a place where you can let your pen dance across the page in comfort without being interrupted.
3. When to write? Julia Cameron, author of *The Artist's Way*, swears by a writing exercise called the morning pages. She encourages us to write first thing in the morning before our conscious mind creeps into the writing. Others claim that evening is best when you're unwinding and wrapping up the day. You should write when you can squeeze in time—while riding the metro, waiting at the airport, after putting the kids to bed. Find what works best for your lifestyle and let the thoughts flow. The point is not to add this process to your to-do list, but to make space with ease into your routine.
4. What to write? Ah, now this is the million-dollar question. Staring at a blank page is very scary for many of us. However, take the plunge! You'll probably be pleasantly surprised with the process. Some days you may feel like you could write for hours as you have so many emotions that you need to share in a safe place. Other days, you feel very little motivation and have trouble getting past the date and time. Outlined below are some of favorite ways to jump-start the writing when you encounter an uncomfortable silence toward your journal.

JUMP-START YOUR JOURNALING

Don't worry about punctuation or grammar. Let your pen dance freely across the page. You can doodle, paint, make lists, ask questions, relive a past experience, fantasize about a future experience, interpret dreams, explore options, or craft a cathartic letter you don't plan on sending. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to journal.

When stuck, try answering the following to get you going:

- How am I feeling?
- What do I really want?
- Am I happy with my current lifestyle?
- In what ways do I want to grow?
- Five lessons I have learned recently.
- Am I living in alignment with my vision statement?
- In what ways am I challenging myself?

- How would I describe my overall mood?
- Where can I add more creativity in my life?
- How can I serve?
- Am I noticing patterns that I'd like to change?

Take the time to nurture your relationship with your journal. Ultimately, it will draw you closer to a more insightful relationship with yourself. By exploring patterns, reading your repeated scenarios, and observing your fears, you will have a more compassionate and enlightened view of who you are. Journaling is the perfect way to diffuse emotion and help you return to a state of tranquility.

OMwork

Practice having a mindful conversation with a friend or a family member. Make a conscious effort to listen to them without interrupting. Then tell them what you understood about what they have said to you.

Spend a few moments penning morning pages, noting highlights from your day, recurring dreams, experiences, how you're feeling, or anything else on your mind.



Mindfulness

Mindful walking is one of the easiest ways to incorporate mindfulness into your life, especially if there is minimal time for a formal practice. When we walk mindfully in nature, we notice things we otherwise may not have. For today's practice, we're going to head outside and do a guided 10-minute mindful walk.



MINDFUL WALKING:

- Begin by closing your eyes and taking three deep breaths. Inhale for a count of three and exhale for a count of five.
- Set an intention for your walking practice to be aware of your surroundings and any thoughts or feelings that arise during your walk.
- Open your eyes. Begin walking slowly, still taking deep breaths.
- Notice your foot on the ground as you walk. Does your heel strike first or are you more flat footed (or neither)? Do you feel any pebbles under your foot? Do your footsteps make sounds?
- Notice what muscles are helping you walk. Are they tense? Is one side more relaxed and easy to move than the other? How does the rest of your body feel as you walk?

- Begin to shift your focus to your environment. What do you see, hear and smell? This may or may not be an area that you walk through every day. If it is, what seems different about it? What have you not noticed before? How does it feel to be walking outside?
- Continue walking and noticing your environment. Acknowledge any thoughts, feelings or emotions that arise on this walk. You don't have to judge anything that comes up, just notice that it's there and come back to your walking practice.

(Continue for about 10 minutes total)

(At conclusion of walk) Congratulate yourself for taking on your mindfulness practice today, no matter how many times you may have gotten distracted. What matters is that you're bringing awareness to your daily activities, like walking. Notice how your body feels after a mindful 10-minute walk in nature.

Consider having students journal about or discuss with the group their mindful walking experience especially how they felt during and after the walk.



As leaders, part of how we express gratitude is by giving back. Today, we're going to create our own service projects as examples of how we want to give back in the world.

First, let's break up in groups of two or three *(break up based on the size of the group overall)*.

We will use 10 minutes of this module for creating your mock service project and then five minutes for sharing.

Break up into groups and hand out the following worksheet.

After ten minutes, bring the group together.

Great, now it's time to share. Let's come back together. Choose one representative from each group and we'll go around the room and share our vision and our projects. Lead the group in sharing their projects.



1. What is the biggest problem you want to solve in your community? In the world?
2. Create a service project that would help solve that exact problem. You don't have to tackle the entire problem at once, but you can start with one piece and make a BIG difference.
3. Let's start backwards, with the end in sight. What is your ultimate vision? If you could give back anything to the world (peace, love, food, creativity, art, health, medicine, etc.), what would it be?
4. What resources do you need for your service project?
5. Does it require traveling? Are you going outside of the United States?
6. How many volunteers do you need?
7. Are you visiting people's homes? A shelter? Hospital? Animal shelter?
8. What gifts or supplies do you need to bring with you?
9. What information do you want to share as part of your service project?
10. How is this project an expression of YOUR gratitude?



Creativity

Writing is a tool for creative self-expression and some claim that the practice helps them figure out what they are thinking. You may dabble in it for school assignments, journal writing, or a creative outlet. Pull out pen and paper to explore the following writing tools and prompts.

1. **Journals.** In Module 5 we explored the benefits of journal writing. This practice can serve as a creative tool for expressing feelings.
2. **Ideas book.** Keep a small notebook with you to record thoughts, ideas, and dreams. This helpful tool for capturing them in the moment.
3. **Make a date with your writing.** Add your writing practice into your schedule as you would a class time. This will help ensure it becomes a habit.
4. **Set the timer.** Timed writings offer a set time for writing often using a prompt. A simple one to try is “Today I am feeling. . .” and write for 10 minutes.
5. **Create a regular practice.** Is there a daily, weekly, or monthly time you can carve out to write? Books have been written in daily 15-minute chunks.
6. **Study writers whose voices you admire.** Notice authors you are drawn to and what it is that you like about their writing. Is it descriptive? Is it inspiring? Is it entertaining?
7. **Read, read, read.** To be a writer, one must be a reader. Make reading for pleasure a regular part of your weekly schedule.
8. **Start a blog.** One way to hone your writing is to start a blog. Creating regular content for a blog will strengthen your writing muscles.
9. **Create a writing ritual.** Before sitting to write, light a candle, set your intention, ask yourself why you’re writing, take a few deep breaths, or move your body through gentle stretches to prepare. Find a ritual that allows you to settle into your writing practice.
10. **Gratitude journal.** Note a few things that you are grateful for each day—sunshine on your skin, a good grade, your pet, new friend.

Not sure where to start with your writing process. Explore the writing prompts below as a great jump off point and watch your creativity flow.

WRITING PROMPTS:

1. Write down what is happening to you in the present moment using the five senses.
2. Describe how you are feeling right now—physically, emotionally, mentally.
3. Describe your ideal day in detail.
4. I remember ...
5. Write a letter to your future self. Imagine yourself five to 10 years from today. How do you see yourself? What advice would you give yourself? What do you hope to be doing? Where do you see yourself living? Who are you with? What have you created?

OMwork

Research places where you can volunteer in your community that would support your service vision. Grab a friend, classmate or family member and schedule a day to volunteer as an expression of your gratitude back to the world.

Reach out to a friend, family member, pen pal, or even yourself (a letter to your past or future self) with a thoughtful note letting them know you're thinking of them and sending good thoughts.



Mindfulness

We'll be taking some time today to focus on our vision and goals, and how our thoughts, our experiences, and our planning can help us.

Let's start by closing our eyes and thinking of something important that may be coming up for you during the next few weeks. This could be something at school like a test or a paper, a social activity like a dance, or perhaps another activity that is important for you like a performance, or a big game or race.



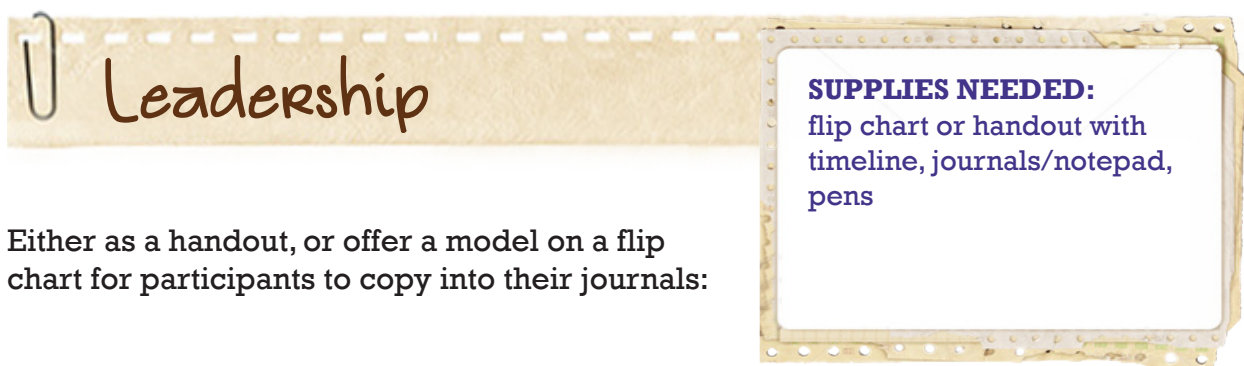
This may be something that you are excited about and looking forward to, or it maybe something that makes you nervous. Maybe both, that's okay.

Why is this event or activity important to you? What makes you feel excited or nervous? What needs to happen for you to feel successful?

Now imagine yourself there already. Imagine that you have done everything you can to prepare, and to be a success. Even if everything doesn't go perfectly, you know you have done your best, and your teachers, classmates, friends, family, and most importantly yourself, are all proud of what you've accomplished.

Whether it is something exciting or challenging, we have an opportunity to learn from the process, and to build upon every challenge and success. What will you learn from this event, and where do you see yourself going next?

Students share their experiences in pairs and then in the larger group.



5 years ago 1 year ago 1 year from now 5 years from now 10 years from now

Now we are going to take some time to think about our goals. Even though we think about goals as something in our future, a helpful step towards understanding our path to those goals includes looking at our past as well. This enables us to identify when we have made important choices, and think about how and when we have dealt with both challenges and successes.

Think about the last few years of your life. What have been the most important moments for you, and what have been the biggest challenges? Mark these moments on your timeline. They may include:

- Moving to a new city or school
- New friendships
- Joining new clubs or activities
- Learning about something that excited you
- Winning an award or other recognition
- Finishing something important or challenging
- Current events that were important to you.

Give participants about five minutes to mark some of these events on their timelines. Next, invite participants to share some of the events that they highlighted. Encourage each participant to share at least one important event, and to explain why they thought it was important.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

When you think about your timeline:

- Did anything surprising come up for you in creating your personal timeline or in listening to others?
- What was the most interesting or exciting thing you see in your own history?
- What opportunities helped you reach milestones?
- What events did you plan for, and what were unexpected?

Now, let's do the same exercise and think ahead to the next 10 years. What do you hope to accomplish? Where do you see yourself five years and 10 years from now? This could be anything: finishing college, a job goal, running a marathon, starting a family, living somewhere exciting or new. Mark one or two of these aspirations on your timeline.

Allow participants one to two minutes to jot down their goals/aspirations.

Now let's think about a few of the steps that need to happen to help you get there, and add those to your timeline. Think, for example, about what else you might need to learn, whose help you might enlist, or where you need to be. What training or education do you need? How will you meet people who can help you? Add these important steps or moments to your timeline as well.

Depending on available time, invite two to three participants to share their goals and steps.

Reflection: Once we break down our big goals into smaller steps and accomplishments, what seems easier or harder?



Creating a vision board or inspiration board is an engaging exercise. Participants may come in as skeptics but they often leave as believers with their vision boards proudly in hand. Vision boards are great for bringing dreams to life in a visual format through pictures and images.

Set aside time for this project. Turn off your phone. Light a candle. Turn on your favorite music. Grab a pile of your favorite magazines or catalogs. Gather scissors, glue sticks, and washi tape. Have file folders, construction paper, or scrapbooking paper handy for when you're ready to attach the images.

Now that you have all your tools, begin flipping through magazines and tear out pictures and quotes that appeal to you. Find images that bring your vision to life based on your goals from the exercise in the Leadership section of this module. Feel free to stop along the way to read an exposé that catches your eye. Let this time be playful and totally self-indulgent. You are, after all, creating your future. Might as well have some fun with it! Collect any photos, postcards, or notes from around your abode that might be inspirational to include. This hunting-and-gathering phase is the most time-consuming process of the project. But the results are well worth it.

Once you have a stack of images, begin cutting your favorites out of the torn pages. Place them on top of the thicker paper you've set aside as the backing. Arrange them in a way that looks pleasing, so that they become eye candy. You can group by category—style, decor, food, relationships, emotions, and so on—or have one that embodies all these categories.

If you're using a file folder as your backing, use the back and inside of it, too. If you're using a large sheet of card stock, don't forget the back. Sometimes we have too many images and too little space. Get creative. You can think (and glue) completely outside the board with this project.

OMwork

Continue to work on steps toward your larger goals, and perhaps add to your timeline some of the smaller steps you might take to reach those.

Write a letter to your future self. What questions do you want to ask? What do you want to remind her about your life right now?

Additional journaling or meditation prompts: If you could do anything, be anything, what would it be? Where would you live? Who would you spend time with?



Mindfulness

The mindfulness tools presented offer us a respite from the roller coaster of daily life—emotions, stress, tests, papers, and relationships. By bringing mindfulness into your day through a morning meditation or conscious sipping of tea, life can begin to feel less chaotic. Below is a refresher of some ways to get grounded, whether you struggle with anxiety, overcommitting, or a deadline.



Body scan. Take a moment to check in with your body. Notice areas of tension or tightness. Observe heat or coolness. Relax your muscles. Notice your heart beating. Unclench your teeth and relax your tongue to the bottom of your mouth. Soften your jaw and the space between your eyebrows. Check in with your physical body and scan from the top of your head to the tips of your toes to help ground yourself.

Breathe. Close your eyes and feel your breath. Notice your inhale and your exhale. Stay here five to 50 minutes.

Touch. Feel your clothes against your skin. Hug someone or put your hand onto another being when talking to them. Watch how this lowers your heart rate and helps bring you both into the present moment.

Yoga. Move your body with your breath. Get in touch with your body and move it through poses while focusing on your breath. Your mind will be calm and better able to center through this process.

Play the observer. By noticing sensations in your body, moving your body, and connecting to the breath, you are playing the observer. Avoid judging what you notice. Sure, you may feel tight hips and hamstrings. That's okay. Simply observe without labeling as good or bad. Same with emotions. Notice anger arising or sadness coming on. There is no right or wrong; just notice what comes up.

World-renowned Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh writes in *Peace Is Every Step*, "We must be aware of which programs do harm to our nervous systems, minds, and hearts, and which programs benefit us." Observe how you feel after watching, reading, eating, or spending time with certain things—our bodies have lots to tell us.

Be in the moment. Notice how the mind moves forward to future worries or past events. Try to train the mind to continually come back to the present moment. So much of our life is lost by not being with what is transpiring in this exact moment.



In our leadership sessions for the past seven weeks we've discussed things like goal setting, communication, overcoming obstacles, strengths, gratitude and self care. These building blocks will help you develop your inner leader and allow you to get clear on the things that are important to you.

For today's last session, we're going to complete an outline for a leadership project you'd like to take on outside of class. Below is a list of possible leadership projects, feel free to choose one of these or create one of your own. It should be a project that can be completed within three months, and we'll use the reverse timeline that we went over in our goal setting session.

Possible leadership projects:

- Start a blog
- Find a mentor
- Host a community service event
- Get an internship
- Become a big brother/big sister
- Other



1. Using the skills you learned in goal setting, break this project down into milestones and tasks for the next three months.

Month One Milestone:

Month One Sub-tasks:

-
-

Month Two Milestone:

Month Two Sub-tasks:

-
-

Month Three Milestone:

Month Three Sub-tasks

-
-

2. Now think of two or three obstacles that might come up and how you'll deal with them.

Obstacle One:

Workaround:

Obstacle Two :

Workaround:

Obstacle Three:

Workaround:

3. What strengths of yours will you use during this project, and how will you use them?

Strength One:

Application:

Strength Two:

Application:

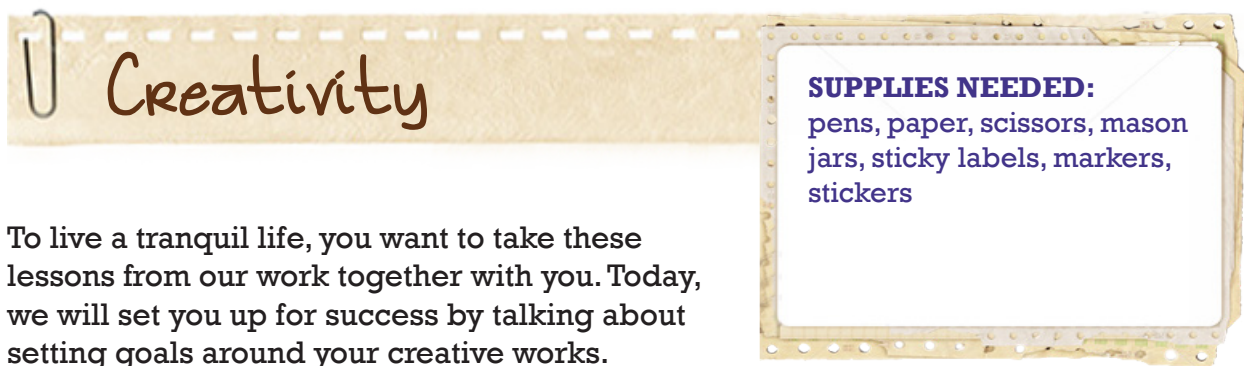
Strength Three:

Application:

4. Will you need help from someone to achieve your goal? List resources below:

5. How will you use your communication skills to get the help that you need?

6. What will your reward be when you complete your project?



To live a tranquil life, you want to take these lessons from our work together with you. Today, we will set you up for success by talking about setting goals around your creative works.

Most of us are familiar with setting goals around grades, sports, saving money or health. However, many of us don't realize that we can also set creative goals to help push us along and encourage us.

As we've learned, many people feel they are not creative. We are all creative; some of us just don't tap into our creativity, so we believe we are not creative. In order to understand our creativity, we have to use it.

Take out a piece of paper and write "Creative Dreams" at the top. Then, write the numbers 1 through 10 from top to bottom on the left side of the page.

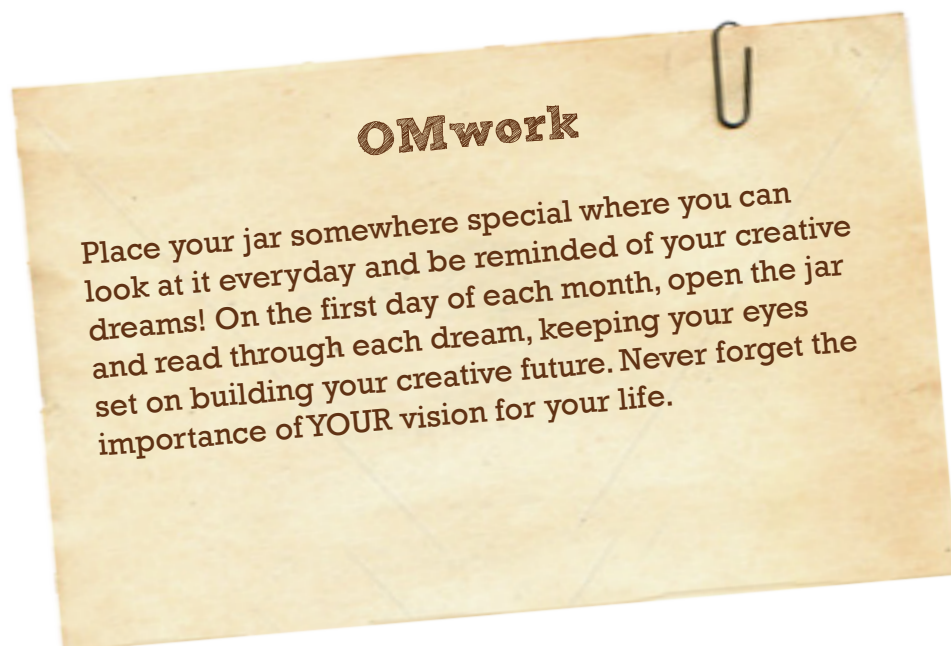
Now, close your eyes. I want you to take a deep breath in and exhale. Take two more deep breaths in and out. Keeping your eyes closed, I want you to start to let your mind wander. We want to go into the place of possibility where anything is attainable.

- What creative dreams do you have?
- If you could create anything, what would it be?
- What do you want to create this year? In five years? In 10 years?
- Think of your life as a whole and what you want it to be. Do you want to create a business someday? Do you want to create a piece of art? What about a nonprofit?
- Is your dream to create a big family like the one you grew up in?
- Traveling?
- A beautiful home on the water? Writing a book or a TV show?
- What creative dreams do you have?

Take another deep breath in and exhale. Now, open your eyes. Write down 10 creative dreams that you have. What do you want to create this year? In five years? In your life overall? Give the participants five minutes to write.

Now, we are going to create Dream Jars for your creative dreams. Using the labels, stickers and markers, create a jar that's worthy of holding your dreams. Give the participants five minutes to decorate.

Now, cut each dream horizontally across the page, fold it up and put it in your dream jar.





Additional Activities and Resources

MINDFULNESS BOTTLE/GLITTER JARS

Fill a Mason jar or spice jar with 1/8 to 1/4 glue. Add a tablespoon of fine glitter. Fill the rest of the jar with warm water and leave ½ an inch of space at the top. Add the lid. When shaken the bottle shows glitter swirling around (similar to how our brains/bodies may feel). As we breathe and watch the glitter settle we can visually see and feel how mindfulness helps everything settle.

POEM FLOW

Create “Magnetic Refrigerator” poetry: Decide on a topic and have students brainstorm nouns, verbs, and adjectives relating to the topic. Cut out each word individually and mix up on a bulletin board/butcher paper. Have students take turns creating original poems using the words.

MANTRAS

One tool that can be used to help focus your mind is a mantra. A mantra is a sound, syllable, word, or group of words that can be repeated silently or out loud over and over again to bring focus and strength to an idea. Does everyone know the story of the *Little Engine That Could*? A stranded train is unable to find an engine willing to take it on over difficult terrain to its destination. Only the little blue engine is willing to try, and while repeating the mantra “I think I can, I think I can” overcomes a seemingly impossible task.

Let’s pull out our journals and spend some time creating our own mantras. Amanda Berlin, a teen writer in NYC introduces a two-part way to write a mantra. She says:

“Words are power. In the same way the negative words make you feel deflated, positive words can help you build confidence and feel better. Words themselves have a physical vibration, so empowering words can positively influence your thought processes and your actions. A practice of saying nicer things to yourself, even if you don’t totally believe them yet, can change the way you feel everyday of your life.”

So, turn those negative thoughts into a personal mantra. Your brain has as many as 60,000 thoughts everyday, and many are the same ones all over again. Start by flipping the negative thoughts that already exist in your head. Phrase your mantra with positive words (avoid “I won’t...” or “I don’t...”) and in the present tense (“I am...”). Otherwise, do what feels right. To get started, here are your two steps: recognize what you’re thinking. Then flip it!

Let’s spend three to five minutes brainstorming some words, phrases that might feel good as mantras.

NAME GAME

Have students stand in a circle. Each person will say their name with an adjective that describes them. For example “I am Amazing Alicia,” everyone then says “Hello Amazing Alicia.”

If time permits students can go around a second time and add a movement/gesture. For example “Amazing Alicia” and throwing their arms up in the air. Students would say hello and imitate gesture.



COLOR QUIZ

The object of this small group exercise is to get the group to quickly meet the other members. Each member of the group picks a colored card (spread them out on the floor) and the facilitator goes around the circle and each member says their name and answers the question that corresponds with the color card they choose:

PINK: is the power color. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

YELLOW: is the sunshine color. Name one thing that cheers you up, no matter what.

GREEN: is the color of nature. Name a favorite outdoor spot.

BLUE: is the adventure color. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

RAIN GAME (FOCUS)

Students stand in circle. Leader begins by asking students to follow what they are doing. They begin by rubbing hands together to make a light “rain” noise. Once students are all doing hand rubbing, leader starts to snap fingers, like the rhythm of the rain. (Students don’t have to do in rhythm). The rain storm gets louder as leader begins to pat their hands on their legs. The rainstorm reaches its loudest as leader stomps feet and adds hand claps/thunder. Leader then begins to quiet storm going in reverse (legs, snap fingers, rubbing hands) until all is quiet. Note how they need to focus their attention on the leader and carefully watch for their cues. Ask students how it sounded? Could they visualize a rainstorm? Was there any part that felt chaotic? How did they know when it was over? Did it make them feel calm or focused? Did it make them feel anxious/irritated as the storm grew? Give students the opportunity to lead the rainstorm.

WORD BALL (FOCUS)

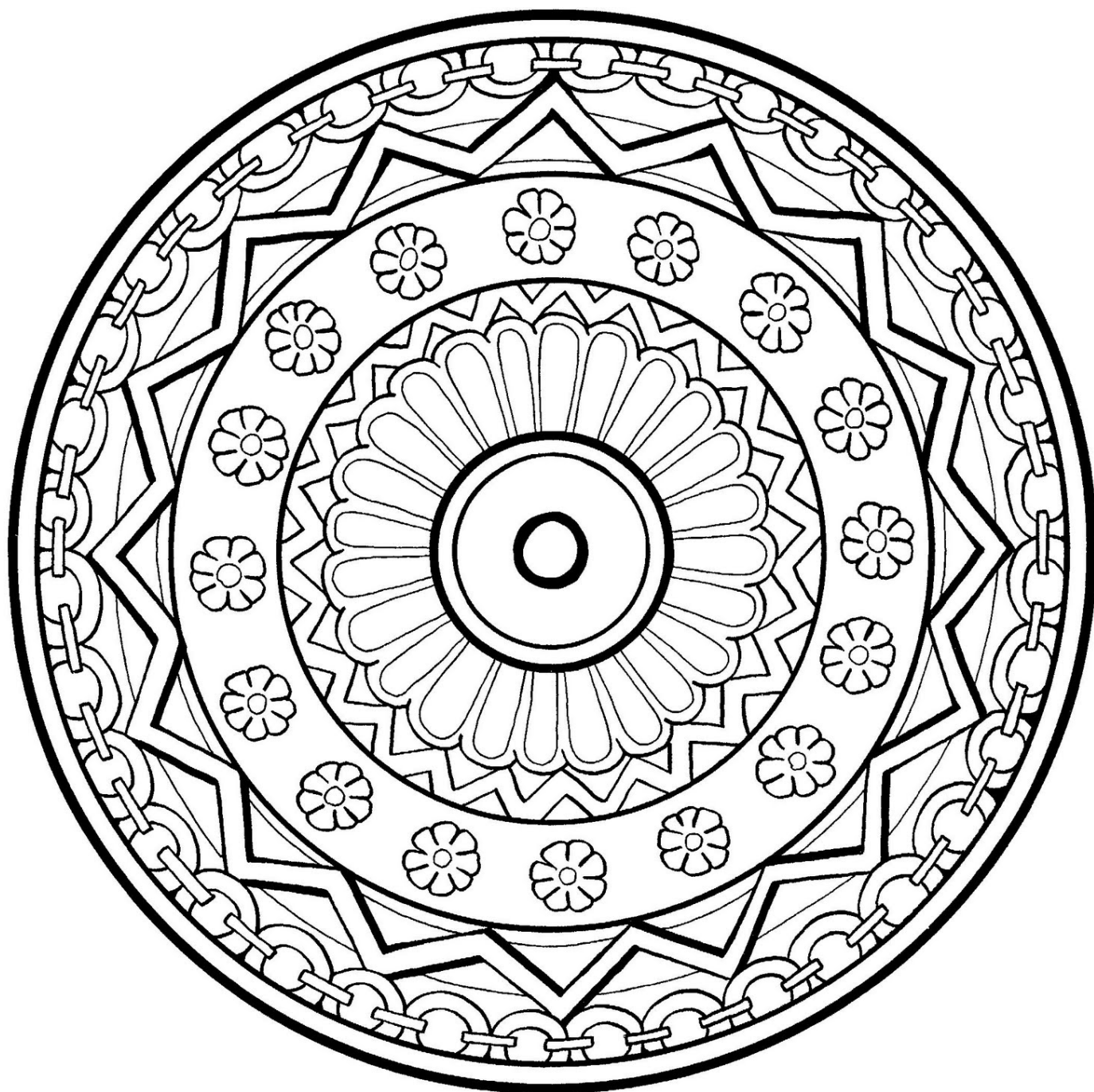
Students stand in circle. The leader tosses an imaginary ball to another person in the circle. When they toss the ball they say any word that comes to mind (for example “cold”). Word association: the catcher “catches” the ball and says whatever word comes to mind (for example “winter”). Tossing the ball/word associations continue. Leader stops the game when it feels natural. Option: have one student write all the words during the game and then at the end reads it as free-verse poem.

CIRCLE WALK (FOCUS)

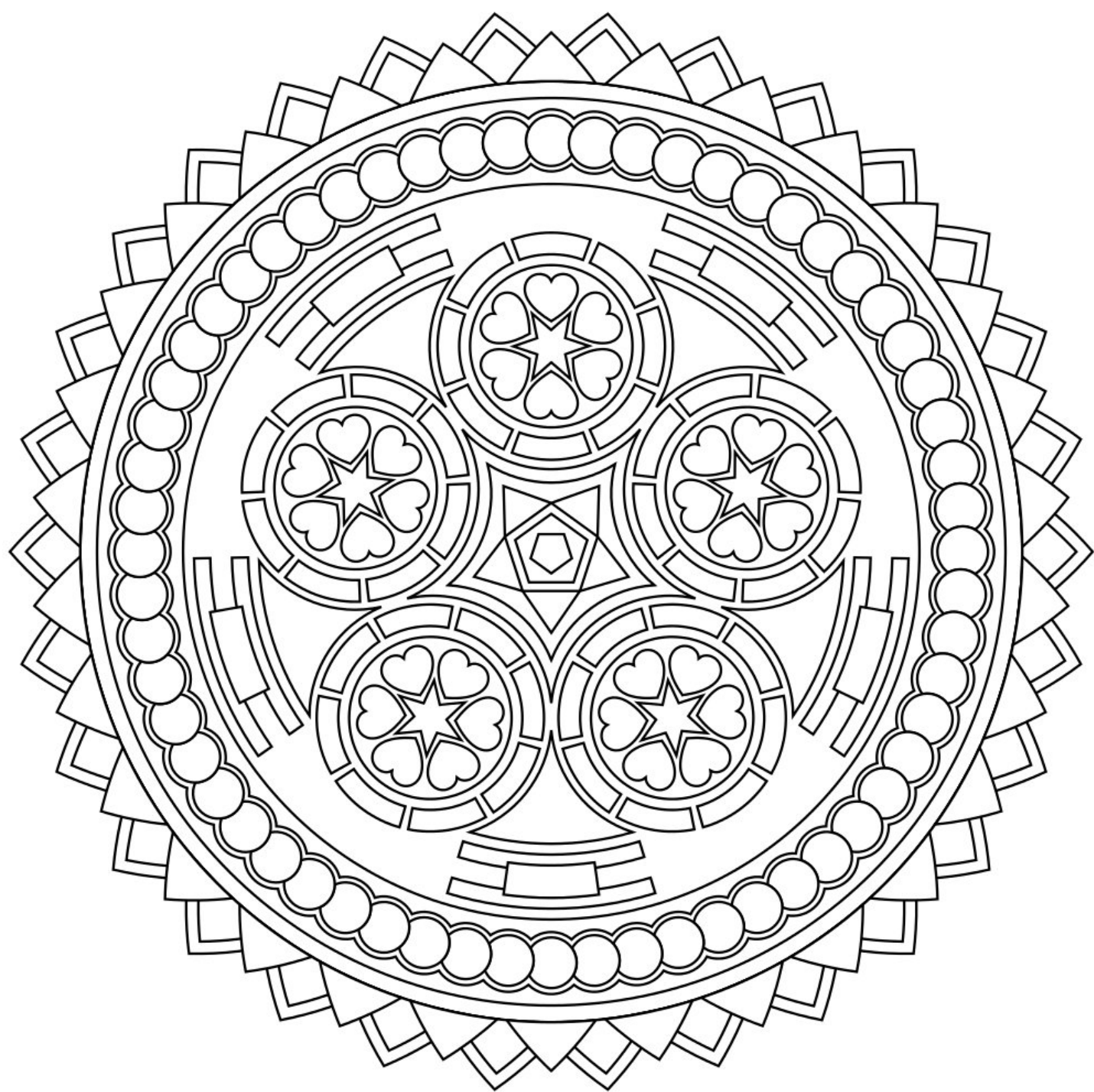
Have students stand in circle facing one direction. Begin by walking in a circle. Be aware of the person in front of you and behind you. Be aware of the rest of the people in the circle. Ask students to begin to work together to establish a rhythm so they are walking in time with one another. (They are to do this without talking!). Have them shift to walking the exact same way (for example—same foot, marching, skipping). Build up to work together and maintain awareness of the whole group to do the following actions: speed up, slow down, stop, jump at the same time, change direction, etc. It may take awhile and a lot of focus for them to do these actions without knowing who is initiating. The purpose is to be aware of others and focused so that everyone is doing the same thing.

Mandala Coloring Pages









Acknowledgements

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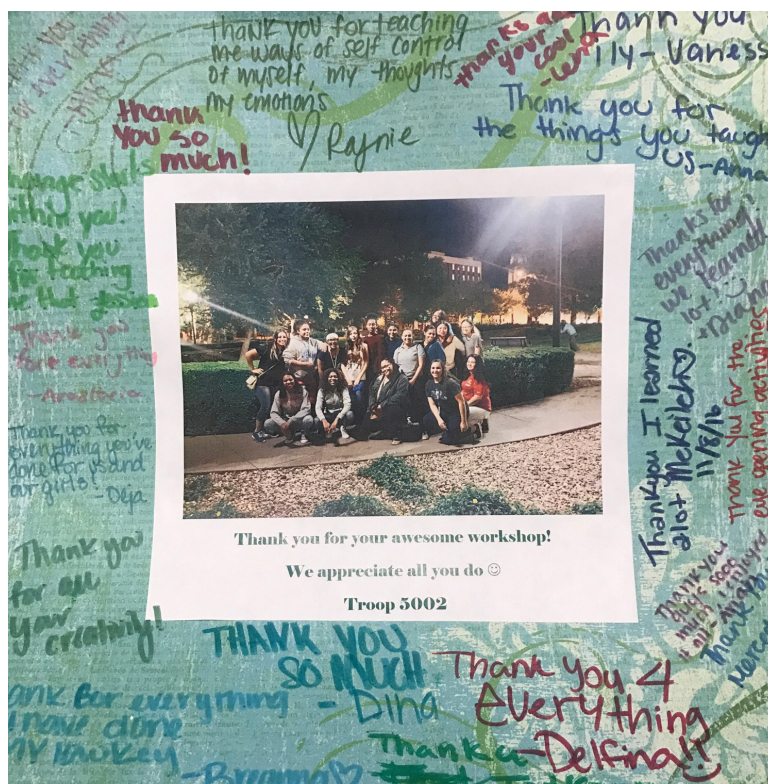
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Thank you to the dozens of volunteers who helped create and bring Tranquil Teens to over 600 girls during our 10 years of designing the curriculum, stuffing goody bags, and offering the program.

Thank you to Lauren Brownstein who chaired our Generosity Program and helped us contribute over \$25,000 to like-minded organizations supporting women and girls.

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Thank you to Bobbie Legg in Arizona who piloted this program and shared this photo from their mindful walk.





About Tranquil Space Foundation

Tranquil Space Foundation grew from Tranquil Space, a dynamic DC yoga community founded by Kimberly Wilson. In 2006, she collaborated with leaders within the community to launch a nonprofit with goals parallel to the guiding principles of Tranquil Space.

Tranquil Space Foundation's first decade focused on empowering women and girls through generosity microgrants to like-minded organizations, sponsoring women filmmakers through the Lunafest film festival screenings held in Washington, DC and through TranquilTeens, a signature program blending mindfulness, creative activities, and leadership development designed to help girls 9th – 12th grade build healthy bodies and strong self-esteem. This program has been taught to over 600 girls in the Washington, D.C. area since 2007 by a team of volunteers and is currently being converted to an online program where we hope to serve many more women and girls. The final stage of this program is the 2017 public release of an eight-week facilitator's toolkit complete with full curriculum.

Tranquil Space Foundation's second signature program has been in development since 2016 and is a part of the Foundation's shift to animal welfare issues which have always been at the forefront of Kimberly's mind and mission. The Pigs & Pugs Project (PPP) raises awareness and educates the public about the amazing work of pig sanctuaries and pug rescue organizations throughout the United States. The program launches in 2017 with microgrants for pug rescue organizations and will expand in 2018.

