

# Blessing Someone's Heart

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## Version for 4-Week Small Group

After reading the second section, you're invited to write a blessing or create a work of art full of love reflecting and blessing someone's heart (like Sophia to the Dragon on pg. 13 in the physical book). This could even be an offering to your own heart.

Begin by taking a few moments to center yourself with deep, intentional breaths. Slowly begin to open your own heart in order to listen for who you are being invited to bless. It may be a close soul friend, an estranged family member, or an ancestor. Remember, it could even be yourself. Try to let go of planning and let yourself receive the invitation.

After your heart has heard who it is you are called to bless, allow a few more minutes with your breath to open the eyes of your heart to see the truths resting at the core of the recipient of your blessing. What are the gifts unique to them? What are their struggles and wounds? What are the words of love they long to hear?

As you see their heart with the eyes of your heart, begin to enter your creative practice — writing, drawing, painting, dancing — and offer your blessing to their heart, letting your expression be as free as possible.

After your expression has come to its conclusion, reflect on how you felt during the experience, what you're invited to take with you into your day and week, and what you feel led to share with the one whose heart you blessed.

# Blessing Someone's Heart

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## Version for 8-Week Small Group

After reading the second section, you're invited to write a blessing or create a work of art full of love reflecting and blessing someone's heart (like Sophia to the Dragon on pg. 13 in the physical book).

The first week you are invited to bless the heart of someone else, and the second week you are invited to bless yourself, a beloved animal, or an element of creation.

**First Week:** Begin by allowing a few moments to center yourself with deep, intentional breaths. Slowly begin to open your own heart in order to listen for who you are being invited to bless. It may be a close soul friend, an estranged family member, or even an ancestor. Try to let go of planning and let yourself receive the invitation.

**Second Week:** Begin by allowing a few moments to center yourself with deep, intentional breaths. Slowly begin to open your own heart in order to listen for who you are being invited to bless. It may be your past, future, or present self; an animal or pet you love dearly; or an element of nature facing extinction in the face of climate crisis. Try to let go of planning and let yourself receive the invitation.

**All Weeks:** After your heart has heard who it is you are called to bless, allow a few more minutes with your breath to open the eyes of your heart to see the truths resting at the core of the recipient of your blessing. What are the gifts unique to them? What are their struggles and wounds? What are the words of love they long to hear?

As you see their heart with the eyes of your heart, begin to enter your creative practice — writing, drawing, painting, dancing — and offer your blessing to their heart, letting your expression be as free as possible.

After your expression has come to its conclusion, reflect on how you felt during the experience, what you're invited to take with you into your day and week, and what you feel led to share with the one whose heart you blessed.

# Acrostic Poem with Your Question

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This is a practice to engage with after reading the fourth section.

Through acrostic poetry, you're invited to receive wisdom from both the elements and from within yourself.

First, find a space where you can commune with the elements. Whether in a summer-time field or by a candle in the winter-time, find some element to serve as your guide in this practice.

When you've settled into a contemplative space, allow a moment to center yourself and listen for the question that is forming in your heart; it could be "What is my song?" or "What is my truth?" or an entirely different question that is calling to you on your particular journey of transformation.

After the question has revealed itself, write it out vertically, each letter on its own line.

From here, you are invited to create an acrostic, listening to both the elemental wisdom from your guide and to the wisdom emerging from within. Try not to edit this process. If your inner critic arises, there is no need to force the voice aside — this can sometimes make it stick around with more stubborn severity. Try to breathe and allow your voices of grace and creativity to stay present with you as well, reminding your critic to allow other voices space to speak. You may even consider engaging with your inner critic further, asking what is at the root of its opinion.

This process is your own, and you are encouraged to experiment and find the balance of inner conversation that works for you.

After completing your acrostic, you're invited to place it somewhere where you can see it over the coming weeks and notice any shifts in your relationship to your question.

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## **An example:**

**What is my song?**

*Who am I?*

*How am I to show up in the world?*

*Attentively, I witness*

*Tentatively, I grow*

*Inertia keeps me down, yet*

*Speed grinds my bones to dust.*

*My*

*Yes*

*Sings its silver harmonies, whispering to*

*Open my heart and*

*Not succumb to fear.*

*Great joy awaits my "yes"*

# Love Letters to Self

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It is suggested to engage with this practice after reading the sixth section.

This is an invitation to dive deeper into the work of welcoming all the rejected parts of yourself back in and finding wholeness within yourself. If, like Sophia, writing is how you best connect to your inner experience, you may write love letters; however, if you feel drawn to a visual or kinesthetic mode of creativity, you are most welcome to draw, paint, dance, create mandalas, etc. What creative avenue of self-exploration is calling to you today?

Begin the practice by centering yourself with your breath. Imagine this time of centering as a way of stilling your inner waters in order to see more clearly. Then, gaze upon the reflective surface of this calm, inner lake. What faces emerge? What do they look like? What are their names? And how do they make you feel?

As you gaze upon the many faces, which one is most prominent? If the name of this part does not reveal itself, do not push it, but simply spend time in its presence, asking questions and inviting honest answers.

What does this part need? What does it want? What is the other side of this part's face?

As you listen, draw on your creative practice to help deepen your conversation with this part of yourself, letting it speak through words, symbols, colors, or dance.

What has this part been offering you? And what love can you offer in return?

If you wish, you can repeat this process with as many parts as you desire, knowing that this work is never truly finished, but the gifts of clarity and wholeness will accompany each exploration.

# Tell Your Story

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You're invited to begin this practice after you have finished reading *Journey to Joy*.

“What is joy?” Engage the question through the story of your life, your own fairytale.

How is this question longing to be expressed?

You're invited to write, draw, dance, create a diagram, or reflect with a soul friend or alone about your own journey to joy.

If your reflection needs scaffolding to build on or a trellis to grow upon, you can list out some main fairy tale elements you've noticed and fill in your own experiences. You may use the questions below to help prompt your reflection.

- ✦ What is the community to which you belong known for?
- ✦ What event (outer or inner) has spurred you into pilgrimage?
- ✦ Who or what is the troll that steals your and/or your community's joy?
- ✦ Who is the Medicine Woman who helps to nourish you? And the Wise One who helps guide you?
- ✦ What unique gift is innate to you?
- ✦ Who is the Drachenhund who guides, buoys, and companions you?
- ✦ Who is the Dragon who is enslaved by the system and you feel called to bless?
- ✦ What are the initiations of transformation you've journeyed through?
- ✦ What are the gifts and wisdom offered to you by the seasons, elements, and directions?

Or your journey to joy may share no resemblance to this book, and that is welcome too! This reflection will take as many shapes as there are people who participate — your story is yours to tell.