



FINDING ME

THE JOURNEY





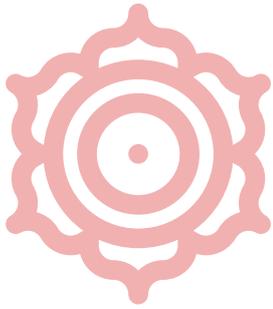
Welcome to
FINDING ME
THE JOURNEY
with
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INTRODUCTION

WHAT'S THIS BOOK ALL ABOUT?

We all lose touch with ourselves at some point in life - it's normal.

Whether you're middle-aged and facing the reality that your kids are leaving for college; or you have young kids and are just realising that somewhere in the midst of being a parent, you've lost yourself; or if you're facing the breakup of a marriage; or you're leaving an abusive and oppressive marriage; or maybe you're living the life set out for you by someone else - your parents, perhaps.

Whatever the reason, if you've ever looked into a mirror and thought, "Who is this person?" this book is for you.

In the next few chapters of this short book, we will go on a healing journey together. On this journey, you will get to know a little bit more about who you are. We will use two main methods to make our way from the beginning to the end of this part of your journey, including: guided imagery meditations, question and answer reflections.

Take your time making your way through this book. There are only a handful of chapters and you could potentially finish this all in one day, but you won't get the same effect from it as you would if you give it some time. Try completing one chapter per week and letting things settle in your mind between those times.

As you work through this book you will be asked to answer questions. I haven't included any space directly on the pages of this book. Instead, please grab a journal, diary, loose paper, or print this out and write directly on the back - you can even use a blog to explore your answers to these personal questions - whatever is comfortable for you.

It's important, though, that you answer the questions in written form - that you actually see your thoughts and feelings on paper or a screen.





CHAPTER 1

HOW THE HELL DID I GET HERE?

If you're anything like me you've probably asked yourself this question more than once in your life.

It's easy to get caught up in the way that life moves us - takes us on rides. Sometimes we don't even realise we've been on one of those rides until it comes to an end and, suddenly, we look in the mirror and don't recognise ourselves. Or, we look around and don't even recognise the lives we're living.

Maybe the jobs we have aren't what we hoped they'd be. Maybe years have passed since some important date in our lives and we haven't accomplished what we promised ourselves we would by then. Maybe the relationships in our lives aren't what we hoped they'd be. At some point, maybe it all just fell apart.

Maybe not. Maybe it all stayed put together really well. Maybe you are exactly where you wanted to be in your life plan when you devised that plan 5, 10, 20 years ago. But, perhaps your dreams or hopes have changed along the way.

Does any of this sound familiar?

In this chapter, you will work through your first guided imagery and answer some questions based on that experience. It may help to have someone else read the imagery aloud to you or to record yourself reading it out loud. If you choose to read it yourself, directly from the sheet, pause between the imagery and the questions that follow it. Take some time to take a few deep breaths. Close your eyes. And try to drift into a bit of a meditation.





CHAPTER 1

GUIDED IMAGERY #1

HOW THE HELL DID I GET HERE?

I want you to imagine a bubble.

I want you to imagine a bubble. It's round, almost clear, but with a beautiful shine that glistens as the sun graces its spherical surface. Can you see it? See it in your mind's eye. It starts out small - sitting on the tip of your finger as delicate as only a bubble can be.

But this is no ordinary bubble at all. It isn't delicate at all. It is strong. You can try to squish it with your fingers but it will not burst. You can try to blow it away with your breath but it will go nowhere. This bubble is safe and secure. This bubble goes only where your mind wants it to go and opens only when your heart wants it to.

This bubble is your safe place for this part of your healing journey.

Imagine, now, that the bubble grows larger. With your mind's eye, see the bubble grow and grow until you are holding, on your fingertip, a bubble larger than your body. When you are ready, use the warmth of your heart to open a tiny slit in the side of this bubble and slip inside.

The air is clean inside. The temperature is just as you like it to be - not too warm, not too cold. You can comfortably sit or lie down here inside your bubble - safe inside its impermeable shell but able to see all that is around you.

This bubble will be your safety as you travel through time in your mind to answer the question: "How did I get here?"

This part of your healing journey may not be the easiest, but it will be worth it and you will be safe in your bubble the entire time. Similar to the way that Scrooge is able to travel through time undetected by the people around him, you will also travel through time undetected

in your bubble. No one will know you are there. Nothing bad will return with you. Your bubble will keep you safe while allowing you to watch all that is going on around you.

Using your mind to fly your bubble, soar it up into the sky. Magically transport yourself through the ceiling of the room you are in, through the roof, above your home, above the city or countryside around you - up into the sky.

Feel how freeing it is to be up this high without any fear, knowing you are safe inside your bubble.

Pause here for a moment - looking all around yourself. What time of day is it? Is the sun bright overhead, rising or setting in the distance? Or is the moon above you? Perhaps it is night time but there is no moon at all.

What do you see around you? Are there buildings or trees? Are there clouds in the sky with you? What about birds? What can you hear? Do you hear traffic and people bustling about, the sound of crickets and winds rushing through trees, or the tranquility of stillness and silence?





CHAPTER 1

GUIDED IMAGERY #1

HOW THE HELL DID I GET HERE?

This world around you is a part of where you are, right now, in your life. All of the things that happened in your life - the things you experienced, the relationships you've participated in, the decisions you've made, the decisions that were made for you, the things you learned, the things you forgot - all of it brought you here.

In your bubble, float back down into your home for a moment to observe the way things currently are in your life. Have a look around your home. What do you see? A neat and orderly space with everything in its place? A messy jumble of stuff tossed about without care? If you see a mess is it a dirty mess or just a comfortable one?

It is a typical day in your home. Find yourself inside. Where are you? Are you in the kitchen? The living room? Your office space? Perhaps you are in bed.

Wherever you are in your home, find yourself and take a moment to observe.

What are you doing? Are you cooking? Cleaning? Relaxing? Working? Taking care of someone? Being taken care of?

How do you look? Are you happy? Sad? Angry? Irritated? Bored? Excited? Maybe on this typical day you are feeling a mixture of emotions.

Take a moment to observe yourself, but do not interfere. You are safe in your bubble, just here to observe.

When you are satisfied that you have seen all you need to float back up into the sky in your bubble and use your mind to transport yourself through time to your childhood.

Pick any regular day of your childhood to observe. It's OK if you don't remember everything exactly as it was - what you are searching for here is the feelings you had as a child and the typical things you experienced.

It is a regular day in your home. Look around from the safety of your bubble. What do you see? Where do you live? How does your home look?

You see yourself in your home as a child. Is anyone else there with you? If so, who?

What is happening in your home? Are you surrounded by family? Is your family happy or sad? Are they angry? Do the people in your home show you love and compassion or are they mean and display anger? Maybe their actions fall somewhere in the middle. Or maybe it's something different entirely.

What are the people in your home doing on this regular day?

Take a moment to focus in on your young self. What does your self look like? Is your self happy, sad, angry, or does your self look like he or she is feeling something different?





CHAPTER 1

GUIDED IMAGERY #1

HOW THE HELL DID I GET HERE?

You know this younger version of you. You know what he or she is thinking and feeling. What does this young you hope for the future? What does this young you think the future will be? Who does this young you want to be?

Take some time to observe your young self for a little while longer, then float back up to the sky in the safety of your bubble.

For our final journey in this safe bubble (at least for right now) we will travel to a few different places.

Slowly and deliberately move your safe bubble through time and space to some of the most monumental moments of your life - those life-changing events you will never forget which helped shape who you are.

They might be good things like: important birthdays, coming of age moments, graduating, getting a prized gift, achieving something you worked hard at, witnessing a miracle, getting married, having children, facing a challenge.

Maybe they are unhappy memories: tragedy befalling your family, the loss of a loved one, a terrifying event, a world or local event that negatively impacted you.

Take a moment to travel to some of these moments - the moments in your life which stand out most in your mind.

Try to visit these moments in the order that they occurred - starting with your earliest major memories and working up through to the present moment.

Watch yourself as you age, as you experience these moments. How do you change over the years? Do you grow stronger, braver? Do you grow weaker, more fearful? Do you begin to do less for yourself and put others first more often? Do you begin to shut others out and hide within yourself? Do you begin to fall into negative patterns in your relationship or find positive ones? Maybe you go back and forth on some of these things - moving in one direction for a while only to have a new set of events set you onto a new path.

Take some time to wander around in your past. Remember that you are safe in your bubble. You can visit and leave moments as you wish, nothing is keeping you in those moments. If you feel uncomfortable at all, just fly your bubble to a new space and time - or stay and remind yourself that you are completely safe. Your body remains here in the current moment, it is only your mind that is traveling.

When you feel that you have learned all you can from this voyage, fly your special bubble back to the current time and float down into your home or wherever you are and settle back into the current moment.





CHAPTER 1

JOURNAL REFLECTION HOW THE HELL DID I GET HERE?

JOURNAL REFLECTION

- 1** What was it like taking your first guided journey in this book?
- 2** When you looked at the current state of your life, how did it make you feel? What did it make you think about yourself?
- 3** What has changed between the self you saw in your childhood and the self you are now?
- 4** What was your home like when you were a child? How do you think that has affected you and brought you to where you are today?
- 5** As you moved through the major events in your life, what patterns did you notice? How do you think these events and your reactions to them helped shape you into the person you are today?





CHAPTER 2

THE BEST PARTS OF ME

Let's keep things a little lighter this time.

That last guided journey was probably a little difficult for some of you - and that's OK. This time, though, we will focus on something a little easier; a little more lighthearted. Let's take a look at the best parts of you.

It's hard to build a better future if you don't know your strengths. Knowing your strengths will allow you to use them to build good things and plow your way through those difficult challenges and roadblocks ahead of you.

Knowing your weaknesses is important, too. You may not think of weaknesses as the "best parts of you" but a weakness is really a potential in disguise. It represents an area of your life that you can continue to develop - something you can grow. As it grows, it becomes something bigger, better, and more fulfilling. In a way, a weakness is like a seed - it has the potential to be a big, strong tree, as long as you give it the nutrients it needs. Proper self-care and a growth mindset can help you turn your weaknesses into strengths.

Some of our other great parts of ourselves are ones we don't necessarily realise or acknowledge as much as we should.

With all this in mind, let's take a quick journey just to relax. Then you will have a chance to answer a bunch of self-exploration questions.





CHAPTER 2

GUIDED IMAGERY #2

LOOKING AT THE BRIGHT SIDE

Life isn't always puppy dogs and rainbows, but there are some good things in every day if you look hard enough. The same can be said for each of us. None of us is perfect. None of us are 100% good, 100% of the time. None of us have achieved and become everything we wish to be in life. But that doesn't mean there aren't some good things about us.

On this journey, I invite you to find a happy and comfortable place. This place may be somewhere you have visited before or it may be somewhere you will create in your own mind.

It may be realistic - looking much like a place on Earth, or it may be a make-believe landscape filled where trees are purple and the sky is orange.

To get to this happy, comfortable place you will fly up into the sky in your imagination. There is no need to fly up in a bubble as you did in our last imagery - you are going somewhere completely safe with only positive feelings and emotions.

So, when you are ready, fly up into the clouds or the clear blue sky in your mind. Take a moment to enjoy the weightlessness of your body as you float in the sky - knowing that you are completely safe.

Take a look at the world as you float around. Notice the people, the plants, the buildings. See how it looks so calm and peaceful from a distance. But you are going somewhere even calmer and more peaceful for this journey. When you feel ready, take flight off into the sky. Climb up through the white puffs of clouds, feeling the mist of future raindrops gently caressing your face.

Fly around the sky above the earth until you

can see, below you, your destination. You will know it as soon as you see it - it will look like a place that makes you feel calm, warm, happy, and safe. Maybe you will feel it approaching before you even get there.

Use your senses to discover your special place and when you feel confident that you've come across it allow yourself to slowly descend from the cloud down toward the ground.

When you land on the ground, take a long look around you.

What does your special place look like, smell like, feel like? What colors do you see?

Are there plants? Trees? Are there animals here with you in your safe place? Maybe there are people. If so, are they people you know?

Do you see buildings in your special place? What do they look like? Are they tall and solid, or small and built of soft materials like moss or cotton candy? - Remember, your special happy place is whatever you want it to be.





CHAPTER 2

GUIDED IMAGERY #2

LOOKING AT THE BRIGHT SIDE

Can you hear anything? The gentle rolling of ocean waves, soft music playing from a distance, the sound of people laughing?

What sort of a place is this? What things are happening here that make you feel safe?

After you've taken a moment to look around in this safe place, look around until you find a building or a cave or some sort of special area with walls.

Make your way to this special area and walk inside. All around you the walls are covered with pictures - photographs and illustrations. Each of these photographs and illustrations was taped to the wall by a person you know. Your friends, your family, your neighbors, your hairdresser, the nice lady who works at the grocery store.

And each of these photographs or illustrations represents a snippet in time from your own life. These aren't necessarily photographs you could find in the real world - they may never have been taken. But in this special place they exist.

Each of these pictures - represents a time in your life when your positive qualities have shone through. They represent things like: times you have helped other people; times you have made people laugh; things you have done to go above and beyond; times you've been a good friend; your positive personal characteristics.

Some of these photographs and illustrations exhibit your compassion, some show your humor. Some of these pictures show your strength in action - physical or emotional.

As you look around at these pictures, imagine how you would feel if you were able to accept all of these positive qualities. Take some time to sit with this feeling.

When you're ready, tuck a few of these pictures in your pocket and make the journey back to the current moment.





CHAPTER 2

JOURNAL REFLECTION LOOKING AT THE BRIGHT SIDE

JOURNAL REFLECTION

- 1 What sorts of memories did you come across on your photo wall?
- 2 What kinds of positive qualities did you find in yourself?
- 3 Describe a time when you showed compassion in your life and the positive effect it had on another person.
- 4 Describe a time when you exhibited emotional strength.
- 5 Describe a time when your humor had a positive impact on the people around you.
- 6 What did it feel like to complete this exercise? How did you feel during your journey? How did you feel answering these questions?
- 7 What has this exercise taught you about yourself and/or your life?





CHAPTER 3

WHO I WANT TO BE

You may now have a bit of a better idea of who you are.

Perhaps you've seen truths about your beliefs about yourself, things that happened in your life that brought you to the place where you are now, things about yourself that you do not like or want to improve and things about yourself that you like and can be proud of.

Even though I'm a firm believer that everyone is, currently, who they are meant to be right now at this exact moment, we understand the urge for self-improvement. In fact, I advocate for it. Even though we come to be who we are and exist the way we are without flaw for a particular reason, I believe that we are evolving and growing in our own ways. Sometimes that evolution and that growth just happens on its own and, sometimes, we make it happen.

If you're ready for growth and you want to take it into your own hands, you probably already know at least a few area of your life that you would like to improve. Most people see their lives as things that need to be improved, but don't realise that it is the self that needs to change in order for their lives to change. What?! That's just crazy!!

Want a better job? Guess you better start looking for one, develop the confidence to believe in yourself to find a better one, have courage to stand up to your boss, or take initiative to learn a new skill or trade.

Want better relationships? Maybe it's time to start standing up for your rights, surrounding yourself with positive people, disengaging from enmeshment.

See how that all looped around to the self?

The point here is not to say that there is anything wrong with you. You are perfectly you just the way you are. If you want to see change in your life, though, you must start with the self.





CHAPTER 3

GUIDED IMAGERY #3 LOOKING FORWARD

On this journey I want you to imagine that you can see into your own future.

You aren't looking forward to a terrible future the way that the Ghost of Christmas Future makes Scrooge look forward, though. Instead, you are looking forward to your ideal future. You are looking forward as if someone has waved a magical wand and made all of your hopes come true - hopes within reason, of course.

We aren't talking about winning the lottery or having some other fantastical thing occur. This wand simply makes your life into what you hoped it would be. Imagine that, suddenly, your relationships are what you want them to be, your career is what you want it to be, the overall feeling you have from day to day is what you want it to be (barring a few inevitable ups and downs).

Take some time to look around this landscape - this world of your hopes and your dreams. This place where you feel safe, happy, secure, and empowered.

What does it feel like to be here?

Look at yourself in this place. How do you look? More importantly, how do you act? How do you act in your interactions with the people in your life - your significant others, children, parents, siblings, friends?

Take a moment to watch the way that you interact with the people around you.

See yourself at home.

See yourself at work.

See yourself at social events.

What are you like?

How does this "you" you are observing feel? Does this other you feel confident, scared, anxious, happy, at ease, angry, calm? What words would you use to describe this you?

How does the you from the future spend time? Does this you work for a living? If so, what does this you do? Does this you like what he or she does? Does this you get along with his or coworkers? How are those relationships?

Is this you ambitious at work or does this you just see work as a means to an end?

Float around the life of your imagined future self. Move back and forth from one scene to another however you like. Just sit and observe yourself. Observe the people around you. Observe your thoughts, feelings, actions, intentions, and beliefs.

When you feel that you've collected all of the information you need from these scenes bring your consciousness back to the current moment and answer the questions below.





CHAPTER 3

JOURNAL REFLECTION LOOKING FORWARD

JOURNAL REFLECTION

- 1 How did it feel to complete this exercise?
- 2 What thoughts went through your mind as you observed your ideal future self?
- 3 How was your ideal future self different from your current self?
- 4 How was your ideal future life different from your current life?.
- 5 How were your ideal future relationships different from your current relationships?
- 6 How was your ideal future career different from your current one?
- 7 What other differences did you notice about your ideal future? Did you act differently, speak differently, feel differently, perceive differently?
- 8 How did it feel coming back to the current moment after spending some time in this ideal future?





CHAPTER 4

WHO I WILL BE

You've seen your ideal future.

Chances are that it felt great while you imagined it but you might have noticed that it felt a little less than great to leave it and return to the current moment. It's normal. We all get this feeling when we who we think we should be or want to be doesn't match up with who we perceive ourselves to be in the current moment. There's even a term for it: incongruency.

Incongruency is the enemy of self-esteem. It tells you that you aren't good enough. If your incongruency is fed by a feeling of not being good enough or attached to over-zealous goals of perfection it can be quite unhealthy. It can also be damaging to your sense of self if it is based on the beliefs, wants, and preferences of other people.

If, however, your incongruency comes from a place of accepting who you are right now and simply wanting to improve upon that self because you believe growth and change are good things, it can actually be a very healthy and powerfully motivating feeling.

Before moving forward with your plans for the future, consider the following questions.





CHAPTER 4

JOURNAL REFLECTION WHO I WILL BE

JOURNAL REFLECTION

- 1** When you look at your ideal life and self you pictured in the previous exercise, how much of it was based on your own ideals and how much was based on the ideals of other people in your life - your parents, teachers, peers, boss, spouse, etc.?
- 2** If you believe that your ideal life and self were influenced by other people in ways that do not match up with your true hopes and desires, revise your answers for the questions in chapter three according to your own healthy, achievable ideals.





CHAPTER 5

BUILDING MY PATH TO THE FUTURE

Now that you've had a chance to look at your ideal life and self - REALLY look at them - you can begin devising a path toward that future.

You may have had some enlightening thoughts about changes you can make in your life RIGHT NOW to get started. Perhaps you have already begun putting some of those changes in place. Maybe you have no clue where to start - that's OK too.

The cool thing about life is that we have an abundance of resources at our fingertips. From books and documentaries to counselors, doctors, and life coaches. From online courses to group therapy. From assertiveness training to self-esteem workshops and learning about personal and relational boundaries. All the tools we need are out there just waiting to be discovered.

And the questions below to begin making plans and taking steps toward that change.





CHAPTER 5

JOURNAL REFLECTION BUILDING MY PATH TO THE FUTURE

JOURNAL REFLECTION

- 1** What resources and tools would I like to use to help build my ideal future?
(List all)
- 2** Put the resources and tools in order of which you would like to try first, second, third, etc. so that you don't overwhelm yourself.
- 3** Who can I ask for support from as I work toward these life changes?
- 4** When will I check in on my progress?
(Mark your calendar)





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