

Wild Women, Wild Voices

Writing workshops for women of all ages and backgrounds in the Wellington region.

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When we hear the words *wild* and *woman* something deep in us responds — a stirring, an excitement we may not be able to name, a feeling that yearns for expression, a longing to find or reclaim our true nature.

Intuitive and practical, *Wild Women, Wild Voices* workshops address women's heartfelt need for expression with inspiring activities, creative exercises, and evocative writing prompts.

We will remember the joys and sorrows of our girlhoods; challenge ourselves to examine our relationships with our bodies, homes, families, and friends; and rediscover our inner wildness to access our most authentic voice.

The workshops will provide a safe space for women to find their creative voices and write openly about their experiences, and connect with other women like themselves.

You do not have to identify yourself as a writer to be part of a gathering of Wild Women. The only requirement is a desire to tell your stories honestly and openly, and the willingness to commit to the group.

Each workshop has been based upon the writings of Judy Reeves from her book “Wild Women, Wild Voices: Writing From Your Authentic Wildness”, and Judy has been incredibly supportive of this group starting up in New Zealand.

We will also be inspired by the words of: Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Maya Angelou, Rupi Kaur, Anne Lamott, Sharon Blackie and many, many other wild and empowering women writers.

Sessions will include:

May - Claiming the Wild Woman

June - Wild Child, Wild Woman

July - Body Writing: The Voice of the Senses

August - Family: Fact and Fiction, Myths and Mysteries

September - Writing Geography: Finding Your Writing Place and Life Journeys

October - Finding Your Tribe: Friends and Companions

November - Authentic Expression: The Wild Woman as Artist/Creator

December - Intuitive Wisdom of the Wild Woman

“Wild Women, Wild Voices: Writing from Your Authentic Wildness” Reeves, Judy (© 2014)

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Wild Women, Wild Voices

Usual Class Structure (2 hours)

Hour 1 — 10:30 - 11:30	10	Intro and catch up. Light candle, get into the space, read intro poem, ask people to introduce themselves if wanted
	20	Share last week's homework (if wanted) Intro to this week's session - OBJECTIVES
	30	Warm-up exercise free-write (starter)
	40	Exercise 1
	50	
	60	Share back - 5 mins then 5 mins break
Hour 2 — 11:30 - 12:30	70	Second exercise introduction - emotional tokens - show and tell
	80	Exercise 2 - sustained free-writing
	90	
	100	
	110	Share back - assessment of the workshop (objectives achieved?)
	120	Wind down, set "homework", thanks to all Poem or song to finish

Session 1, May 2019 – Claiming the Wild Woman

Light the candle and get comfortable in the space. Read the opening poem and ask everyone to introduce themselves (if they are comfortable with that.)

Poems to begin

Nikita Gill

Some days
I am more wolf
Than woman
And I am still learning
how to stop apologising
for my wild.

To Those Who Quiver at the Sight of a Wild Woman by Sarah Harvey

I know, she's a lot to behold.
She's a lot to hold.
She's messy, she drips with oceans of emotion and spills with pearls of truth,
Her truth.
She utterly overflows with magic.

If you can't handle her flames and sweetness,
If you can't handle a woman
Shining in the expansive strength of her wholeness.
If you can't stand a woman who gets angry, who isn't afraid to speak her mind, who isn't
hardened to the ways of the world
If you can't be brought to your knees by the crowned strength of her true glory,
Her everlasting thirst for freedom,
Her passion,
Her sexiness,
Her weirdness,

Her tenderness,
The resounding clarity of her voice.
If you can't handle her,
then don't.
Move along.
She deserves someone
who can plunge to the depths
and rise with her
from the fresh, muddy soil of what used to hurt.

If you're not up to it,
that's okay.
But I dare you
to feel what it is to behold a woman
Who glistens with petals of alchemy
A woman
Who will not compromise herself.
A woman
Who sings of courage.
A woman
Who challenges you.
A woman
Who knows of trauma and transformation, love and joy, pain and sweet, breathless
beauty.

But if you're really not up to it,
if you can't handle the storms and softness, the thunder and sumptuous lace,
if you're not ready—
Move
Along.
Either way, it will not break her.
She's already been broken a thousand times.
And she deserves a love
that can penetrate her to the shivering core.

She fears not being alone.

Oh, she'd rather be alone than with a lover
who does not know how to hold her.

A lover who is afraid to behold just how fierce, how resilient, how deep, how wise, how
fantastic she truly is.

If you want a woman you can mold to your whims
Move along.

If you want a woman who suppresses herself in silence
Move along.

If you want a woman who will make herself withered and small
Move along.

If you can't handle feeling the salty waves of the sea crash in your heart

Move

Along.

But don't ever

say

she's too much.

Because she's not.

And know, dear lover—

We're all rising

I feel the roaring heartbeats of so many sisters

So

get

used to it.

Feel the ground shake.

This is your call to

Step

Up.

Your deepest presence is requested.

Welcome to Wild Women, Wild Voices

We are here to find our real and authentic voices. To unlock the wildness in ourselves and find ways to express our true selves freely and openly through creativity and writing.

We will explore our emotional journeys, examine our memories and experiences and emancipate ourselves from the chains that bind us and hold us back from being our real and authentic selves.

If you are here today you are laying claim to your wild nature. You are not here to be fixed in any way, criticism is not needed (or indeed tolerated) and you can share as much or as little as you like. In fact you don't even have to share at all if you are not comfortable doing so. We will be kind and respectful to all of our fellow Wild Women. Surely it goes without saying, but we will not use hate speech or insults or aim to hurt anyone with our words.

Our workshop is not a therapy session. We cannot offer you counselling or psychological support. If you feel at all distressed or uncomfortable we fully understand if you need to step out. We want you to be honest and open, but not at any detriment to your emotional health. We want you to feel inspired and exhilarated, not unhappy or uncomfortable.

We will be writing in our notebooks which we will call our Journey Notes, and we do encourage regular daily writing practice even if it is just a very small amount each day.

Time is commitment. Set some aside. Say NO to distractions and set a schedule that works for you and stick to it. 10 - 15 minutes a day is all you need. I personally like to write in the mornings before anyone else is up.

Our **Journey Notes** will encompass observations, reflections and stories to help us clarify our thoughts and provide a deeper insight into our real selves. It is important to write honestly and to not censor or sanitise anything, but you will not be asked to share

anything which you feel uncomfortable with. First and foremost your Journey Notes are yours and yours only.

You don't have to identify as a "writer" to experience the benefits of a daily writing practice. Don't judge, analyse or compare your writing — just write. Don't even worry about perfect handwriting, rules or grammar or anything else, just put the words down as they come into your head and heart. Put pen to paper, start writing and keep going. And remember to breathe!

We like to highlight also, the importance of writing by hand for this group. This in itself connects to a wilder, earthier self through the tactile association. That is, of course unless handwriting is not possible or is painful in any way.

Hopefully, when we have completed all the workshops, we can celebrate our work in print by creating a chapbook or collection of works to which we can all contribute, and maybe even read aloud to a small audience.

These workshops are not meant to be religious in any way. We completely respect wherever you are coming from and understand that those experiences are an important part of you. However, they might feel spiritual — in whatever way that means to you — and we ask you to be accepting of the individual spiritualities brought into the group. The exercises might awaken feelings and thoughts in you that may surprise you. This is a safe space and we want you to feel welcome and supported at all times. If you are uncomfortable with any of the content or exercises, you are completely free to raise your concerns or opt-out at any time.

At the beginning of each session we will light a candle in preparation, to symbolise that we are setting aside time and space to concentrate on ourselves. We will place this on our "little altar". This is meant to be a place where we can celebrate the journey we've been on, to remember, and to share our stories. Although we might call it an altar, it is not tied to any religion, instead it refers to the spaces we create all around us and fill with our treasured things. These things we place in these spaces inspire, enlighten or soothe us, or simply bring us joy. Even the way we choose to adorn ourselves can be a part of our placing items on the altar of the self. Throughout history, and in many different feminist

spiritual traditions, women have created little altars of their own, perhaps to honour their ancestors, spirits or gods, or simply to define themselves and their feminine space. To bring focus and awareness. These items will remind you of who you are and what matters to you.

Throughout the sessions we will be using special items — or **Emotional Tokens**, if you like— to give our feelings some idea of tangibility. These are simply a focus, just like picking up a stone from the beach which you are drawn to, perhaps because you like the way it looks or feels, they can give your thoughts a focal point.

We often find, collect and keep things which we feel to connected to on a deeper level. They speak to us in words which we might not even be able to utter but we recognise deep within our souls. A lock of hair from your first born. A card from an old friend. A pair of earrings you inherited from your grandma. A feather you found on a walk while with a lover or significant other. All of these things mean something to you which no-one else will ever understand. They are worth more than any amount of money, and they say so much about you as a woman.

Again, we ask that you only bring items which you feel comfortable sharing with the other members of the group. If you are uncomfortable you do not need to participate.

Class leaders show an example of their tokens (5 minutes)

If you want to hear the sound of your wild voice, read your work aloud — even if no-one is listening. I recommend doing this for all of your writing. You will feel the strength in your words and language. Reading our words aloud gives us a greater depth of understanding and strikes a deeper chord.

Above all, in these workshops, we will listen to ourselves and to those others around us, and to the messages we are receiving all the time which encourage us to be free and wild.

“No matter by which culture a woman is influenced, she understands the words wild and women intuitively. When a woman hears these words an old, old memory is stirred and brought back to life.” Clarissa Pinkola Estés - Women Who Run With Wolves

By nature we are creative. Creativity flows through us like blood flows through our veins. In our natural state we are writers, dancers, singers, poets, makers of art and story tellers, even though in our daily lives we may not practice our art or even acknowledge this part of ourselves.

Every woman has a yearning to speak in her own, wild voice. To claim her wild nature.

How many of you sing along to a song at the top of your voice when driving in the car on your own, or dance around the living room to your favourite band when you know no-one is watching?

Do you feel accomplished as a woman — do you feel free?

If you do, awesome! That's a fantastic place to be. If you don't that's okay too, because hopefully these classes will help you to get you closer to finding that.

Exercise 1

10 minutes

“Your true voice may be buried beneath ideas of who you think you are supposed to be, what you think you are supposed to sound like, and what you think you should write.”

Judy Reeves

What do you think about when you hear the words “wild woman?”

Write a list of wild qualities. Start writing and keep your pen moving. Think about words, images, smells, sounds. What does a wild woman look like, sound like, do? How do you know she is wild?

I think of words such as: fearless, brave, outspoken, confident, sexy, empathetic, nurturing, wears red and purple, likes fires and storms, smells of coffee, woodsmoke, dirt

& patchouli, likes walking in the fresh rain, speaks her mind but is never unkind. She is not “too much” or “not enough” she is exactly as she is.

Share these thoughts back with the class (if wanted).

Now, which of these “wild woman” attributes do you think pertain to you?

If you need to, write a list of your wild qualities. Now, choose one of those aspects of your wild nature and free write how you express that quality.

e.g. untamed, fearless, outspoken, confident, determined, creative

Share these thoughts with the class (if wanted).

Exercise 2

10 minutes

When do you feel your most authentic self?

This could be when you are writing, making art, sewing, running, swimming, dancing, cooking, just walking in nature or shopping for new clothes!

What is the basic “nutrition” for your soul? Art, music, sunlight, darkness, exercise, companionship?

What makes you feel calm and happy but also exhilarated and free? When can you really feel and be yourself?

Write down a list of all the times in your whole life when you felt your most authentic self — when you were your most brave or powerful or complete. Don't worry about chronology and think about times in childhood and adolescence as much as in adulthood.

This could be anything like...

- You ran your first marathon and finished it in an amazing time
- You read your poetry aloud to an audience even though you were really scared about doing so
- You went swimming in the sea at night under a full moon
- You went rock climbing even though you thought you might be terrible at it and you discovered you loved it
- You cooked a meal for your parents for the first time
- You spoke up about something you knew was wrong, you took a stand even though you were scared about being unpopular or on your own
- You made a drastic image change for you, not anybody else, because you wanted to have fun with how you presented yourself

What do all of those experiences have in common?

Exercise 3

15 minutes

Your Authentic Experience

Close your eyes and let it settle. Breathe deeply and think about all of those times you felt at your most authentic and wild. Now open your eyes and pick an item at random for extended writing.

Was it something you had done before or was it a surprise or a total chore which became amazing?

Did it give you a rush of adrenaline or a feeling of total calm?

Did you want to share your experience afterwards or keep those feelings private?

What did it spark in you?

Did you ever repeat the activity in any way?

Freewrite for 15 minutes. Don't just write about what happened, but tell us how you felt. Tell us how long that feeling lasted and what you learned from it. Show us how amazing that was so we can experience that wildness with you.

Exercise 4

15 minutes

How do you imprison your wild woman, or how do you think others imprison her?

Your life is a journey and every step, every event and every choice you made has brought you here to this moment on this path. Maybe you started out wild, but along the way you have found yourself being tamed.

- Does your job require you look or act a certain way?
- Do you lack free time to do what you really love?
- Do you often put others' needs before your own and as a consequence your needs never really get met?
- Perhaps you are wild, but you feel like you could be even wilder! Perhaps you are not frightened of your wild voice, but you're just not really sure how to use it yet?

Or maybe you have started waiting for permission to be wild, or you have stopped doing something which you once loved or found value in because someone, somewhere told you you were no good at it, or it was stupid, or it had no value.

What would you do if money, time and energy were no object? If you had no obligations or constraints, and no fear of judgement or failure?

Take a moment to breathe and really think. This is not about erasing any past achievements or rewinding the clock, but thinking about where your real energy lies.

Maybe you would:

- Write that book you always wanted to write

- Travel the world on your own and have loads of adventures
- Quit your current job and do something completely new
- Devote your life to charity fundraising or raising awareness of important world issues

Imagine yourself attaining that goal. Of being that Wild woman, unafraid and determined. Think back to those times when you felt the most authentic and free. Capture those feelings and that power.

Wind down

10 minutes

Homework

Write a poem or short piece of prose which begins —
“When I am Wild I...”

Example:

When I am Wild I will howl at the moon, with no worry at all of how loud I may sound, or who hears my fearless voice.

And they will call me a Wild Woman, as I will not be tamed, but instead I will stride through the darkness and carry my own light.

Next session

Wild Child, Wild Woman

Emotional token - something which invokes a powerful and happy memory of your childhood. Perhaps something you have had since childhood which you will never part with.

Continue to write in Journey Notes

Thanks and appreciation to all

Poem to close

It is said that she's made of storm cells
And a wild wolf's hungry heart,
That she's learned the lightning's secret
To ripping darkened skies apart.

The power of her presence
Can bring the mountains to their knees,
Her song is one of chaos
As she stirs the angry seas.

But if you've met, you'd be none the wiser
Since she's also born of light.
Another face amongst the crowd
The hidden, hiding in plain sight

Great power doesn't always come
Inside the forms you'd assume,
But you would never doubt her strength
When she's howling at the moon.

~Author Unknown

Session 2, June 2019 – Wild Child, Wild Woman

Introductions and catch up. Light the candle and get into the space. Read opening poem and ask everyone to introduce themselves if wanted.

Poem to begin

Jeanne Willis, from her book “Wild Child”

“They caught all the wild children,
and put them in zoos,
They made them do sums
and wear sensible shoes.
They put them to bed
at the wrong time of day,
And made them sit still
when they wanted to play.
They scrubbed them with soap
and they made them eat peas.
They made them behave and
say pardon and please.
They took all their wisdom and wildness away.
That’s why there are none
in the forests today.”

10 minutes

Share last session’s homework

Write a poem or short piece of prose which begins –

“When I am Wild I...”

eg.

When I am Wild I will howl at the moon, with no worry at all of how loud I may sound, or who hears my fearless voice.

And they will call me a Wild Woman, as I will not be tamed, but instead I will stride through the darkness and carry my own light.

This session's objectives

Excerpt From: Judy Reeves. "Wild Women, Wild Voices: Writing from Your Authentic Wildness."

"Memory, soft edged and pastel. I am standing next to my mother, who is busy at the kitchen sink. I'm excited about something, and I must tell her about it. These few details: her apron, her hair in pin curls, the smell of dinner cooking, but no more. What is she doing? Washing dishes? Peeling potatoes? What had I seen or heard or experienced that I so urgently wanted to share? I can't remember. Then parts of the memory become more distinct — her hand on the top of my head (I didn't come much above her waist then). Her hand, not harsh, but solid, resting there. "Settle down," she says. "Just settle down." "Though I don't recall most of the details of this incident, the feel of her hand on my head, holding me down, her words — "settle down" — these details are alive even now, more than half a century later."

Here is Wild Child: responsive to the world, responsive to all her senses. Everything is an adventure, a discovery. She is creative. She is curious. She is physical. She is full of wonder. Sometimes she is too much.

In this session, we'll explore our childhood — our beautiful, creative Wild Child, alive with imagination, everything fresh to be discovered and learned, and our Wild Girl, strong, powerful, and creative. Making memory into story, we'll journey through our early years, what shaped us, who influenced us, and how we began to shape ourselves.

Starter (warm up writing)

5 minutes

Close your eyes and remember a time in your childhood when you felt a strong calling to do something as if it were your destiny. This is a starter exercise. Simply begin, let the words free-fall from your memory.

Your prompt: I always knew I would...

Exercise One

20 minutes

You Have To be Carefully Taught

“At a certain age, generally between ten and twelve, we are at a very powerful stage. We are old enough to have individuated some from our parents; we can go places away from home, such as camp or sleepovers. We’re allowed certain freedoms and choices — how we want to dress, what activities to participate in. Many of us haven’t begun to menstruate and we’re not quite sexual beings, and though we may exhibit some of its signs and symptoms, we’re not totally distracted by the physical and emotional aspects of puberty. We’re girls, Wild Girls, precursors to what we can be as Wild Women.

For some girls, this is also the age, just as we’re really beginning to fly, when our wings are clipped — that is, if they haven’t already been clipped. Sometimes all it takes is a look, a gesture, a subtext we don’t completely understand but that embeds itself in our psyche. “Are you sure you want to wear that?” “Do you think that’s a good idea?” “Oh, I don’t know. . .” the words trailing off with a worried shake of the head. Other times we’re told out and out, “Oh, no you didn’t.” - Judy Reeves

Take a moment to remember who you were then. Close your eyes and allow an image of yourself at this time to arise. Maybe you’re doing something clever and industrious: building a tree house or creating a science or art project. Maybe you see yourself dressed a certain way, in an outfit that makes you feel good and strong, and you remember its colour exactly and the texture of the fabric. Maybe you’re riding your bike or your horse, or you’re at a sleepover with your girlfriends, daring to stay up all night.

Let an image come that shows you as this strong and powerful Wild Girl. What is she doing? What is the look on her face? What are her thoughts or feelings? Take a few moments to be with her, to appreciate her strength, her passion.

You can write each as a list or as prose. The writing may want to come out in dialogue or as the first wobbly construct of a poem. Let the work find its own form; trust the pen and the natural rhythm of the language. Dropping into the writing of this story may bring up some old anger or past hurt. Just keep the pen moving, letting the words come as they will.

Freewrite for as long as the energy is alive.

Your prompt is: *Things my mother never told me.*

Share with the class as wanted

Break (5 minutes)

Emotional Tokens

10 minutes

Share and talk about your emotional token. Something which invokes a powerful memory of your childhood.

Exercise Two

25 minutes

Girl To Woman, a Memory

“There comes a time in puberty and adolescence, as Wild Child becomes Wild Girl, when we come close either to claiming our wildish nature or to allowing ourselves to forget.”

Often when girls begin menstruating and become sexual or at least sexually aware, they begin to follow the crowd. What's in fashion matters. Being popular matters. Finding and forging relationships with the opposite (or same) sex matters. We so want to belong that we may sacrifice our authenticity, our wildness, and move away from what we love so passionately. Belonging becomes the goal, above all else." - Judy Reeves

How you choose to approach this exercise is completely up to you. Were you a diary keeper? Do you still have your diaries? This exercise can be written as a response to them. You can write as the woman you are today to the girl who wrote in that diary.

If, like me, you no longer have those diaries, or you never kept a diary, write a "Dear Diary" entry to that Wild Girl. Let your memory fade back to a time when a diary might have been your best friend; talk to her as if your voices can pass through the years.

Using your emotional token as your prompt, (if you didn't bring one, that's okay), write about a powerful or happy childhood memory which you feel is still important to you and has an impact on you today. Tell your Wild Child self why that memory is so important to you, or let her tell you how she felt.

You could choose a significant date to centre around the 'diary' entry. Rites of passage... a significant birthday with its milestones (13 - officially a teenager, 16- can legally have sex, drive a car, 18 - considered officially 'an adult, can buy alcohol') If for example you choose 13 you can write about how you grew to be the woman you dreamed of being when you were that age? Or 16, reflections of your first sexual experiences or your first road trip and how it felt to be independently journeying for the first time...

5 minutes

Share back with the class as desired

Discuss the objectives - do you now have a better understand of or connection with your wild child and can see how your childhood has shaped you? Perhaps you have lost your connection with your wild child and wish to explore your past a little more to rediscover that connection.

Wind down

10 minutes

Homework

Freewriting (suggested 15 - 20 minutes) - coming of age, loss of innocence, finding identity, relationships, sense of self

Prompt: *Things I never told my mother.*

Next session

Body Writing - The Voice of the Senses

Emotional token - something which invokes one or more of your senses, and explores a strong, personal memory which you are happy to talk about. It could be a bottle of your favourite perfume. A silk scarf which you love the feel of. A favourite piece of music. A recipe for your favourite meal.

Continue to write in Journey Notes

Thanks and appreciation to all

Poem to close

My Mother's Savage Daughter by Wyndreth

<https://wyndrethsavagedaughtershieldmaid.bandcamp.com/track/my-mothers-savage-daughter-studio-2>

Chorus:

I am my mother's savage daughter,
the one who runs barefoot cursing sharp stones.

I am my mother's savage daughter,

I will not cut my hair, I will not lower my voice.

My mother's child is a savage,
She looks for her omens in the colors of stones,
In the faces of cats, in the fall of feathers,
In the dancing of fire and the curve of old bones.

(Chorus)

My mother's child dances in darkness,
And sings heathen songs by the light of the moon,
And watches the stars and renames the planets,
And dreams she can reach them with a song and a broom.

(Chorus)

My mother's child curses too loud and too often,
My mother's child laughs too hard and too long,
And howls at the moon and sleeps in ditches,
And clumsily raises her voice in this song.

(Chorus)

Now we all are brought forth out of darkness and water,
Brought into this world through blood and through pain,
And deep in our bones, the old songs are waking,
So sing them with voices of thunder and rain.

(Chorus x3)

We are our mother's savage daughters,
The ones who run barefoot cursing sharp stones.
We are our mother's savage daughters,
We will not cut our hair, We will not lower our voice

Session 3, July 2019 – Body Writing: The Voice of the Senses

Introductions and catch up. Light the candle and get into the space. Read opening poem and ask everyone to introduce themselves if wanted.

Poem to begin

Phenomenal Woman - Maya Angelou

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms,
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,

And the joy in my feet.

I'm a woman

Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,

That's me.

Men themselves have wondered

What they see in me.

They try so much

But they can't touch

My inner mystery.

When I try to show them,

They say they still can't see.

I say,

It's in the arch of my back,

The sun of my smile,

The ride of my breasts,

The grace of my style.

I'm a woman

Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,

That's me.

Now you understand

Just why my head's not bowed.

I don't shout or jump about

Or have to talk real loud.

When you see me passing,

It ought to make you proud.

I say,

It's in the click of my heels,

The bend of my hair,

the palm of my hand,

The need for my care.
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

10 minutes

Share last session's homework

Freewriting, Wild Woman, Wild Child, explored coming of age, loss of innocence, finding identity and sense of self.

Prompt was: "Things I Never Told My Mother"

This session's objectives

The body and its experiences as a storyteller. History and memory of our ancestral past. Being attuned to, and listening to, our senses. Understanding how our emotions respond to sensory information from seeing, hearing, feeling, touching and smelling.

Starter (warm up writing)

5 minutes

Create a scatter page of physical memories. Write them however you want: in a neat list, as full sentences or simply as random thoughts across the page
eg.

- the smell of my father's tobacco in his pipe when I was small
- my nana's favourite perfume - Anais Anais
- eating blackberries straight off the bush and getting prickled as well as sweetly sticky

Exercise One

20 minutes

The Voice of the body

What would your body say to you if it could? If you could have a conversation with your body, what would you and it say?

You could write this in dialogue, as if you were writing a play, or perhaps like a letter from your body to yourself. Perhaps you might want to imagine a different voice or character which your body would use.

Think about how you have treated your body and the things you have told it - or yourself - and how you feel about your body. But remember, this is your body talking to you. This is not about guilt or accusations, this is about listening to our bodies and noticing those fine details about ourselves which we might not always make time for.

If you decide to write this as dialogue, perhaps you wish to explain something to your body, or tell it how much you love and appreciate it, despite any problems it might give you sometimes.

Share with the class as wanted

Break (5 minutes)

Emotional Tokens

10 minutes

Share and talk about your emotional token. Something which invokes one or more of your senses, which you are happy to talk about.

Exercise Two

25 minutes

In Celebration of the Particularity of My Body

Our bodies are amazing in the true sense of the word in their strength and resilience and their ability to heal themselves, but at the same time they are vulnerable and fragile.

The poet, Adrienne Rich wrote: “To write ‘my body’ plunges me into lived experience, particularity. I see scars, disfigurements, discolourations, damages and losses, as well as what pleases me.”

You can choose:

- To write a story about an illness, injury or wound which you have overcome. Every mark on our bodies, every scar, is another road marked on the map of your life journey. It tells how amazing your body truly is.
- Or, write about what pleases you about your body. Tell us what you love about it and why. Talk about its strength and resilience and what it can do which makes you thankful for it. Your body is fantastic. Tell us why and how.

5 minutes

Share back with the class as desired

Discuss the objectives - do you now have a better understand of or connection with your body, and can you carry on exploring these connections through your journey notes?

Wind down

10 minutes

Homework

Write a poem which focuses on and celebrates one part of your body which you really love or are proud of. This is not specifically a celebration of the way that body part looks, but more what you feel it gives to you.

eg.

- An ode to my hands which write and create great things
- A haiku about my fabulous feet which carry me on my journey through life
- A free poem on my strong legs which can run for miles without stopping

Next session

Family: Fact & Fiction, Myth & Mysteries

Emotional token - something which links you to your family - immediate or extended. To your ancestors or your parents. Perhaps a piece of jewellery, an heirloom of some kind, a photograph or letter. Maybe a lock of baby hair from your child, or simply a diagram of your family tree. If you don't feel connected to your family, you could choose something which you feel connects you to your chosen family - your friends or tribe.

Continue to write in Journey Notes

Thanks and appreciation to all

Poem to close

Two short poems by Rupi Kaur

“It was when I stopped searching for home within others and lifted the foundations of home within myself, I found there were no roots more intimate than those between a mind and body that have decided to be whole.”

“i want to apologise to all the women i have called beautiful

before i've called them intelligent or brave
i am sorry i made it sound as though
something as simple as what you're born with
is all you have to be proud of
when you have broken mountains with your wit
from now on i will say things like
you are resilient, or you are extraordinary
not because i don't think you're beautiful
but because i need you to know
you are more than that"

Session 4, August 2019 – Family: Fact & Fiction, Myth & Mysteries

Introductions and catch up. Light the candle and get into the space. Read opening poem and ask everyone to introduce themselves if wanted.

Poem to begin

A Family Is Like A Circle -Nicole M. O'Neal

A family is like a circle.
The connection never ends,
and even if at times it breaks,
in time it always mends.
A family is like the stars.
Somehow they're always there.
Families are those who help,
who support and always care.
A family is like a book.
The ending's never clear,
but through the pages of the book,
their love is always near.
A family is many things.
With endless words that show
who they are and what they do
and how they teach you so you know.
But don't be weary if it's broken
or if through time it's been so worn.
Families are like that—
they're split up and always torn.
But even if this happens,
your family will always be.
They help define just who you are

and will be a part of you eternally.

10 minutes

Share last session's homework

Body Writing - Write a poem which focuses on and celebrates one part of your body which you really love or are proud of. This is not specifically a celebration of the way that body part looks, but more what you feel it gives to you.

This session's objectives

Thomas Moore said that. "family is the nest in which the soul is born, nurtured and released into life. It is elaborate history, ancestry, and a network of unpredictable personalities".

For Wild Women, sometimes this nest is a welcoming place of nurturing and guidance, and sometimes it is a place filled with sticks and stones.

But from whomever and wherever we came, our present is made up of the stories of our past. These stories are the twigs and string and odd detritus that holds our family nest together.

Here we will explore how our family has shaped us and how it brings out — or hides — our wild nature. We we look at who we came from and who we are now.

Starter (warm up writing)

5 minutes

Describe the members of your family as if they were characters in a story. Focus on physical attributes as well as their personalities and likes and dislikes. You can spend as much or as little time on each member as you wish, and include extended family and family friends if you wish.

eg. my mother is tall, red-haired and unflinchingly fierce. Opinionated and hot-headed but with a wicked sense of humour. Loves cats. Hates the taste of honey.

Exercise One

20 minutes

So It Came To Pass - Family legends

Family life is a huge and complex topic which we could spend a great deal of time on. We are unable to go into full detail in only one session. Our relationships with family members are detailed and nuanced. Our lives are shaped by stories. Sometimes we create them on the spot “look what happened to me today,” and sometimes they are handed down to us through the ages for us to also re-tell.

If a story gets handed down, told enough and for long enough, especially if those tales span generations, it can even take on elements of a myth, revealing who we are and how we got here.

Does your family have a story or a legend? Start with “so it came to pass” or “it is told that” or even “once upon a time” as if you were writing an epic tale or fairy story. Tell us a fabulous story unique to your family’s past - or embellish a little if you have to.

Perhaps your parents met in curious circumstances or their first date was a complete fluke?

Perhaps your grandfather once met one of the Beatles and inspired one of them to write a song about him?

Maybe your great grandma once missed her train and ended up meeting the love of her life, which may or may not have been your great grandfather!

Share with the class as wanted

Break (5 minutes)

Emotional Tokens

10 minutes

Share and talk about your emotional token. Something which connects you to your past and your family.

Exercise Two

25 minutes

Our Parents and Our Selves

There comes a time in our lives as children when we discover that our parents are individuals in their own right, that they have lives which don't include us.

This might be a difficult exercise, in that it might spark thoughts and feelings which you find complicated or raw. Only go as far as you feel comfortable to.

Write about your parents (one or both, or your guardians as is appropriate to you) as if you were a fly on the wall during your childhood.

You could tell your parents what you admire about their parenting, or even what you feel like they missed out. You might think about how your parents might have felt about being parents, the challenges they might have faced and overcome.

Be honest, but not accusatory unless absolutely necessary. Think about the traditions your family may have followed, do you follow them yourself now? Consider how your parented have shaped you, for good and bad, and if you feel like they have helped or hindered you to find your Wild Voice.

Remember, it is up to you how you approach this. You might want to be purely factual, recounting your childhood, or you might wish to be very emotional and explore your feelings towards your parents.

5 minutes

Share back with the class as desired

Discuss the objectives - do you now have a better understand of your family history and how your family has shaped who you are and how you think? Have you uncovered any thoughts you weren't previously aware of, or topics you want to explore in more detail?

Wind down

10 minutes

Homework

Write about another female in your family who you believe is or was a Wild Woman. Do you take after her? Why do you think she was wild - what wild qualities did she exhibit? Tell us a story about her. If you cannot think of a direct relative, a family friend or someone strongly connected to your family and/or past will also do just as well.

Next session

Writing Geography - Writing Our Place

Emotional token - something which connects you to your home or where you came from. Your physical or emotional home. It could be something very physical and literal like a stone or flower, or it could be a photograph or painting. It might even be something that reminds you very strongly of home such as piece of music or favourite book.

Continue to write in Journey Notes

Thanks and appreciation to all

Poem to close

This Be The Verse - Philip Larkin (very tongue in cheek)

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.

They may not mean to, but they do.

They fill you with the faults they had

And add some extra, just for you.

But they were fucked up in their turn

By fools in old-style hats and coats,

Who half the time were sappy-stern

And half at one another's throats.

Man hands on misery to man.

It deepens like a coastal shelf.

Get out as early as you can,

And don't have any kids yourself.

Session 5, September 2019 – Writing Geography: Writing Our Place

Introductions and catch up. Light the candle and get into the space. Read opening poem and ask everyone to introduce themselves if wanted.

Poem to begin

Wild Geese - Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

10 minutes

Share last week's homework

Write about another female in your family who you believe is or was a Wild Woman. Do you take after her? Why do you think she was wild - what wild qualities did she exhibit? Tell us a story about her. If you cannot think of a direct relative, a family friend or someone strongly connected to your family and/or past will also do just as well.

This session's objectives

We are physical beings in physical bodies set down in physical places. We are grounded and set in place, but we are not always still. The place in which we live influences how we speak, eat, dress and measure our days. Not only do we leave a physical mark on where we are, but also where we have been. The map of our psyche is found in the geography of our past.

Our home does not have to be where we have come from, it can also be where we choose. The place we have adopted as our home and find the strongest connection with. Today we will look at how we take up space in the world and how our physical space affects us, encouraging our wildness or muting our voice.

Starter (warm up writing)

5 minutes

Close your eyes and take an imagined walk through a remembered landscape. Somewhere you feel drawn to and safe. Let words and images, scents and textures come to you as they will. Give language to the voice of the landscape. Write a short piece describing this place in whatever form you feel is best - freewriting, poetry, or simply random words and thoughts.

Exercise One

20 minutes

Where I Come From - The Geography of the Home

“My wound is geography. It is also my anchorage, my port of call.” So says Pat Conroy at the beginning of his novel “Prince of Tides.”

The place where you were born, where you come from, may not be what you still call home today, but still, its name and essence and spirit was imprinted on you. Place and emotion are intertwined. We remember places often because of an emotional connection.

Your prompt is: “I came from...”

Freewrite (or create a poem if you prefer) for 15/20 minutes and consider sensory details and physical specifics. Tell us what your home, where you come from, means to you - if anything. What was good or bad about it? Does it ever call to you if you have left it, or are you still in the same place you were born in and long to leave?

Tell us how your home place shaped you. The memories you have and how they make you feel as an adult. Describe how it looks, smells, tastes, feels and sounds. Transport us to your home.

Share with the class as wanted

Break (5 minutes)

Emotional Tokens

10 minutes

Share and talk about your emotional token. Something which connects you to your home - wherever that is. Where you are from or where you are now. Your spiritual or physical home.

Exercise Two

25 minutes

Place As Emotional Geography

Place evokes feelings, and feelings evoke a sense of place. There may be a place which you hold very dear in your heart, a place where a powerful memory was made, or perhaps it is even a place which you long to visit but have not managed to get to yet.

Write about this place in detail. You can choose to free write or write a poem, whichever comes the most natural to you. Concentrate on your emotions and what the location gives you.

Perhaps it might be where you met your now husband or partner.

It might be where you scattered the ashes of a good friend or family member.

It might be a place where you and your children always go to play or have a picnic.

Or it could simply be a favourite spot in your garden, park or coffee shop which brings you calm and peace whenever you visit it - a physical safe space.

5 minutes

Share back with the class as desired

Discuss the objectives - do you now have a better understand of your home and where you come from? Can you map your life journey physically as well as mentally, or do you think there are more lines to draw? Perhaps you have no wish to travel and have always been a homebody, and your writing geography has more to do with your growth as a person in that place.

Wind down

10 minutes

Homework

Write about a place you have only visited once which gave you a strong, powerful, positive memory. It might be a holiday, a honeymoon or a random road trip somewhere. Consider what you feel about that place and the happiness it brought you. Imagine you are finally going back there at the end of your days. How might it have changed, or how have you changed?

Next session

Finding Your Tribe - Friends and Companions

Emotional token - something which describes your “tribe” or your connection to your best friend, or collection of friends. They could be people you are still in contact with, or those who had a positive influence on you as a child. It could be something physical like a friendship bracelet, or as simple as a photograph or the type of tea you always drank together.

Continue to write in Journey Notes

Thanks and appreciation to all

Poem to close

I Learned At Least What Home Could Be - Emily Dickinson

I learned—at least—what Home could be—
How ignorant I had been
Of pretty ways of Covenant—
How awkward at the Hymn

Round our new Fireside—but for this—
This pattern—of the Way—
Whose Memory drowns me, like the Dip
Of a Celestial Sea—

What Mornings in our Garden—guessed—
What Bees—for us—to hum—
With only Birds to interrupt
The Ripple of our Theme—

And Task for Both—
When Play be done—
Your Problem—of the Brain—
And mine—some foolisher effect—
A Ruffle—or a Tune—

The Afternoons—Together spent—
And Twilight—in the Lanes—
Some ministry to poorer lives—
Seen poorest—thro' our gains—

And then Return—and Night—and Home—

And then away to You to pass—
A new—diviner—care—
Till Sunrise take us back to Scene—
Transmuted—Vivider—

This seems a Home—
And Home is not—
But what that Place could be—
Afflicts me—as a Setting Sun—
Where Dawn—knows how to be—

Session 6, October 2019 – Finding Your Tribe: Friends and Companions

Introductions and catch up. Light the candle and get into the space. Read opening poem and ask everyone to introduce themselves if wanted.

Poem to begin

Of Love and Friendship - Emily Jane Brontë

Love is like the wild rose-briar,
Friendship like the holly-tree --
The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms
But which will bloom most constantly?
The wild-rose briar is sweet in the spring,
Its summer blossoms scent the air;
Yet wait till winter comes again
And who will call the wild-briar fair?
Then scorn the silly rose-wreath now
And deck thee with the holly's sheen,
That when December blights thy brow
He may still leave thy garland green.

10 minutes

Share last week's homework

Write about a place you have only visited once which gave you a strong, powerful, positive memory. It might be a holiday, a honeymoon or a random road trip somewhere. Consider what you feel about that place and the happiness it brought you. Imagine you are finally going back there at the end of your days. How might it have changed, or how have you changed?

This session's objectives

"Each friend represents a world in us, a world not possibly born until they arrive." Anaïs Nin

Ask any Wild Woman what matters most in her life, and she will most likely put friends right near the top of her list. From our playground beginnings to our lingering final years, it is our friends in whom we discover ourselves, with whom we express ourselves, and by whom we know ourselves, and these indispensable, sometimes closer-than-family friends are most often other women.

We leave high school, we leave home, and sometimes we move far away to attend college, where we form new friendships. Maybe we keep one or two of our closest high school friends, but the others drift away.

Here we will explore how our friends have shaped us and added to our wildness. We will look at friendships past and present and consider how their voices have helped us find our own wild voice.

Starter (warm up writing)

5 minutes

Who was your first very best female friend when you were young. Write her name and her qualities and everything you can remember about her. What did she do for you, or make you feel? Are you still in contact with her, do you know what she does now or do you sometimes wonder? (Social media has helped us stay in contact with a lot of people, but perhaps you only know what she chooses to post. Did your friendship last the distance, or did it fade away? What did it teach you about yourself?

Exercise One

20 minutes

Friendships Faded

Friends come in and out of your life in many ways. Sometimes we simply lose touch, or we move on. Sometimes we fall out with our friends and never repair the rift, or, more tragically, a friend may pass away.

Write about a friend who is no longer in your life any more but has taught you a great deal. Maybe it was your best friend in college who helped you do your makeup before you both went out on the town. Maybe it was someone who always cheered you up when you were down and were there for you in dark moments. It might be a new mum you met when you were a new mum too, when your kids were small or going to a toddler group. Perhaps it could be a friend who you loved very dearly but who moved away for marriage or work and you were both simply too busy and lost touch.

Write about what happened and how it affected you. Think about how you felt and feel about that friendship. Try not to dwell so much on the loss, but on what they gave you or what you gave them. Do you think if you could reconnect, would you still be as good friends? You can write about whomever you choose, it doesn't not have to be a specifically female friend, but focus on your friendship rather than romantic relationship.

Share with the class as wanted

Break (5 minutes)

Emotional Tokens

10 minutes

Share and talk about your emotional token. Something which connects you to or describes your "tribe" or your connection to your best friend, or collection of friends. They could be people you are still in contact with, or those who had a positive influence on you as a child.

Exercise Two

25 minutes

Best Friends

Best friends are those who are in it for the long haul. Those 3 a.m. call, no matter what, friends. We depend on them for companionship and support. Whose opinion we value above all others, who teach us about ourselves and with whom we can be our most wild and authentic selves.

These are the friends we trust utterly, who we laugh and cry with, who we communicate with more honestly than any other. They are our Soul Sisters and sometimes, our saviours.

Tell us about her, or them, your bestie or your gang. The woman or women you absolutely cannot be without. Who is there for you like no other, and who you are there for just the same. Tell us how you met, why you love her, what she does for you that you can't do for yourself. Do you see her as much as you would like, or is your relationship only via telephone or online now? Have you ever fallen out? Did that strengthen your relationship in any way or perhaps you hated each other at first and never thought you would have anything in common. Talk about your bond and your memories. Your laughter and your tears.

You might freewrite a straight piece, or if you choose, you could write a letter to your friend where you reminisce and tell her why you love her so.

5 minutes

Share back with the class as desired

Discuss the objectives - do you now have a better understanding of how your friends have shaped you and add to your wildness? Do you feel like you appreciate your friends more or have a desire to try and reconnect with those you have lost touch with? Do you

understand what kind of friend you are to others and how you bring out the wildness in them?

Wind down

10 minutes

Homework

Write about what you look for in a friend, as if you were writing an advertisement for a new one. What kinds of women do you know instantly you will get on with, or are drawn to? What kind of people do you want to surround yourself with? What should she like or dislike or even look like (if that's important to you)?

Next session

Authentic Expression - Wild Woman as Artist and Creator

Emotional token - something which you have made with your own hands. It could be something you have written, drawn, sewn, painted, sung or sculpted. Anything that shows your creative talents. If you don't think you have anything, take a photograph of a room in your house you are proud of and talk about the decor. If you are a gardener, you could also talk about how you choose the plants you grow.

Continue to write in Journey Notes

Thanks and appreciation to all

Poem to close

A Female Friend - Daleen Enslinstrydom

A good friend makes life easier
when destiny covers you with a dark blanket

and you have got nowhere to hide
she is there with a cup of tea
and a listening ear.

When the shoe of life does not fit anymore
she will be the one suggesting to get rid of it.
In the biggest shopping-mall she will help you find
whatever you do need
and when the scale indicates some gained weight
she will always say: "there is just a little more to love."

She is the one that leaves messages on your phone
that says that she has prayed for you.
She is a person that helps carry the burdens of life
but does not get involved
and she always points you in the direction of home

A stone on the roof of the house,
a hello at the front gate,
a knock on the window of your car,
a card just to say: "I am thinking of you, "
a hug and a kiss on the cheek and a tear
that is mutually shed
and a hand when the washing machine is out of order
and the basin is overflowing
and the dishes want to run away with the spoons
is the kind of friend that she is

and she does all of this because she wants to
and she is the one that understands
as she is a little bit like me.

Session 7, November 2019 – Authentic Expression: the Wild Woman as an Artist and Creator

Introductions and catch up. Light the candle and get into the space. Read opening poem and ask everyone to introduce themselves if wanted.

Poem to begin

Caged Bird - Maya Angelou

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird

sings of freedom

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

10 minutes

Share last week's homework

Write about what you look for in a friend, as if you were writing an advertisement for a new one. What kinds of women do you know instantly you will get on with, or are drawn to? What kind of people do you want to surround yourself with? What should she like or dislike or even look like (if that's important to you).

This session's objectives

“Creativity is the work of the heart, unrelated to the economy of our ordinary lives. It is not about the ego, not about money, or success or failure. It is a calling from the spirit.” - Jan Phillips from “Marry Your Muse.”

Being creative inspires us and sustains us. It gives us a window into who we are and what we can do and be. It gives us the freedom to embrace a different side of ourselves.

We will explore our creative selves and look at how art and creativity can open up the Wildness in you. We will attempt to harness that Wildness and express ourselves as creators and artists, transforming ourselves in the process.

Starter (warm up writing)

5 minutes

Write a list of all the times you felt good and fulfilled while being creative. This can include examples from childhood to just a few days ago. Don't think too hard, just allow the thoughts to flow. You can write as much or as little as you like about each time.

Eg.

- The piece of artwork I made for my A' Level Art course which was inspired by Alphonse Mucha.
- Painting my kitchen bright sunflower yellow.
- Making a toy kitten out of socks for my children.
- Writing my first collection of poems.

Exercise One

20 minutes

Your Creative Process

“Your creativity in action is so needed by the world and the people in it. No other person in the world has your eccentric blend of ideas, attitudes and perspectives.” - Susan Ariel Rainbow Kennedy a.k.a. SARK

Making any kind of art takes courage. So many people feel like they need to ask permission to make art, which is absolutely not true. A child does not wait for permission to create, he just does. He does not make art for any other purpose than for the enjoyment of doing it and the satisfaction gained through creating.

The sense of being at one with ourselves during the creative process is an authentic expression of our natural wildness. This wildness has many faces - it is an amalgam of passion, vitality, rebelliousness, non-conformity and freedom of expression. How do you express your natural wildness when you create?

Imagine that you writing an essay article for publication on the theme of creativity. How might you write about your creative process? Can you describe the path you take? Any routines or rituals that you have. What do you do to feel creative and when do you think you do your best work? Tell us how you feel when you are creative and how the freedom flows through you.

Share with the class as wanted

Break (5 minutes)

Emotional Tokens

10 minutes

Share and talk about your emotional token. Something which you have made with your own hands. It could be something you have written, drawn, sewn, painted, sung or sculpted. Anything that shows your creative talents.

Exercise Two

25 minutes

Art as Transformation

“Creativity is interactive and art is alchemical. Its power is in its capacity to affect and transform in the artist and the audience.” Jean Shinola Bolen

While nurturing the Wild Voice:

- it’s okay to not know where you are going
- it’s okay to not know how to get there, even if you think you know where you’re going
- it’s okay to make mistakes

Art is transformative in that it allows you to see things, and yourself, through a different lens. Sometimes it is through witnessing other’s creative expression we can awaken our own.

Write about a time when art - either doing or experiencing - transformed you in some way, so that you felt your most authentic and Wild self.

Was it a “hallelujah” moment which moved you so much you felt compelled to create, or was it while making art that you realised this could be your superpower - so to speak.

Write about how you felt and how it affected you. What thoughts and feelings did it open up for you? Did it feel easy or very difficult? Were you unsure of yourself or did you jump right in? Have you ever shared or recreated this experience?

5 minutes

Share back with the class as desired

Discuss the objectives - do you now have a better understanding of how art and creativity can open up the Wildness in you? Are you able to harness that Wildness in your creative

self, or do you think you need to explore this in more depth? Do you feel more confident in yourself as an artist or creator, and would be happy to call yourself as such?

Wind down

10 minutes

Homework

Create something! Literally. A piece of writing or poetry. A painting. A sculpture. A photograph. Take time out of your day to make art and to think about how it makes you feel.

Your piece will be called, unsurprisingly, *Wild Woman!*

This will be your emotional token for next session.

Next session

The Dreams & Intuitive Wisdom of the Wild Woman

Continue to write in Journey Notes

Thanks and appreciation to all

Poem to close

Rupi Kaur

“your art
is not about how many people
like your work
your art
is about
if your heart likes your work

if your soul likes your work
it's about how honest
you are with yourself
and you
must never
trade honesty
for relatability”

Session 8, December 2019 – The Dreams & Intuitive Wisdom of the Wild Woman

Introductions and catch up. Light the candle and get into the space. Read opening poem and ask everyone to introduce themselves if wanted.

Poem to begin

Still I Rise - Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.
Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.
Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.
Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.
You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?
Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

15 minutes

Share last week's homework

Create something! Literally. A piece of writing or poetry. A painting. A sculpture. A photograph. Take time out of your day to make art and to think about how it makes you feel.

Your piece will be called, unsurprisingly, Wild Woman!

This session's objectives

This is the last session of Wild Women, Wild Voices.

We will be looking for people to contribute some of their writing, poetry and art to a book we would like to put together to honour our work in these sessions. You can message us

or email us with anything you would be happy to include. If possible, one or two pieces from everyone would be wonderful. You do not have to do this and we ask that you only share things you are comfortable with. You do not even have to add your name to the pieces if you do not want to.

Exercise One

20 minutes

Inspiration in Dreams

Shakti Gawain, who has written extensively about intuition, said, “One of the sure ways to know if you’re following your intuition is that you feel more alive. You may feel a little scared, or anxious, or excited. . . but one thing for sure is that there’s an aliveness to it.”

Do you ever get inspired by your dreams, or dream about something which sparks off an idea or thought which eventually finds its way into your writing? What sort of things do you dream about which might influence how and what you write?

Write about a dream which you can remember where you felt like you were being guided in some way, either creatively or literally. Have you ever had a prophetic dream? Or perhaps it was not in a dream but in a waking moment where something came to you intuitively. Perhaps you were drawn to doing something, or knew instinctively that you needed to change your path in some way. Perhaps you made a decision based solely on this intuitive feeling?

Writing from this place can cause your hand to shake and your heart to skitter. You may forget to breathe. When we write from this place we’re no longer playing it safe; we may be breaking some rules, telling some secrets, but we’re writing from our most authentic wildness. Once we learn to listen with deep hearing, an open mind, and willing hands, other surprising things may happen. Our language becomes more expansive and inventive. We write things we didn’t know we knew. ”

Write about this moment when you felt like you had tapped into this higher power within yourself. When you channelled the intuitive wisdom of the Wild Woman.

Share with the class as wanted

Break (5 minutes)

Exercise Two

25 minutes

Writing Our Way Home

Something of the wild knows its way home. The songbird finds its way back to the nest. The Rabbit finds its burrow. The flower turns its face to the sun, and our own wild nature shows us the road home to our Self.

“It is said that all you are seeking is also seeking you, that if you lie still, sit still, it will find you. Once it is here, don’t move away. rest. See what happens next.” Clarissa Pinkola Estés

Throughout these sessions we have looked at our wild childhood, how our senses and emotions affect us, our relationships with families and friends, where we have come from and where we are. We have embraced the wildness in ourselves and listened to our authentic voices as they shined through.

Read some of your notes back to yourself. Look back on your journey.

Take some time now to be still. Close your eyes and let what is in this moment find you. Allow the images, colours and sounds to fill you. Listen for the voice of your authentic wildness. You will know what to say.

Write a poem or freewrite about yourself as a powerful and confident Wild Woman, and how you see your future as you embrace this wildness in you. How has finding your wild voice changed you, if at all?

Here you will “write your way home”, you will find YOUR story in the journey. Tell us what these classes have meant to you and if you have discovered things about yourself.

Your prompt, should you need one is: “My Wild Woman is...”

15 minutes

Share back with the class as desired

Discuss the objectives - do you now have a better understanding of your Wildness and how to tap into your creative and authentic wild voice?

“Every word a woman writes changes the story of the world, revises the official version.
— Carolyn See

“The stories that arose from a place of authenticity and written in your wild voice will continue their echo. As in the quote above, you have, through your writing, changed the story of the world. In the work you’ve done, you’ve changed, too, though you may not be able to say exactly how. When you see your image in the mirror, you may, at first glance, appear the same, but looking more closely, holding the steady gaze of your eyes, you’ll know. And others may notice too...” - Judy Reeves

Wind down

10 minutes

Homework

Keep writing your Wildness!

Thanks and appreciation to all

Poem to close

She Sits Naked on a Rock - Judy Reeves

I want to be that goddess. The one who claims the biggest rock in the harbour and chisels a chair for herself with her teeth and polishes her rock with her own spit to a shine that sun-blinds sea birds.

I want to claim that rock for myself and carve my name in it. I want to be Queen of that rock.

I'll shape stairs in it with my bare hands and climb up its slippery sides to that chair I have chiseled and take my clothes off and sit naked on that rock.

Every evening at sunset, I will take my wine and my sweet cakes and go to that big rock and climb those stairs and sit in that chair and disrobe. I will toss my wrap out to sea. My shoes will be left behind.

I will let my hair down and raise my voice up. I will sing the sun down and croon the moon up. I will howl if I want to and kiss a thousand stars. I will be the one they will write poems about.

You will remember my name.

Recommended Further Reading

Information taken from:

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