

## USG SGM ~ Practice of Repair ~ November, 2024

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements

[www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com](http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com)



**Chalice Lighting:** Nobody escapes being wounded. We all are wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not “How can we hide our wounds?” so we don’t have to be embarrassed, but “How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?” [Henri J. M. Nouwen](#)

**Check-in:** *Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what’s in their hearts.*

**Spiritual Exercises** It’s one thing to analyze a theme; it’s quite another to experience it. By pulling us out of the space of thinking and into the space of doing, these exercises invite us to figure out not just what we have to say about life, but also what life has to say to us! Pick the exercise that speaks to you the most. Come to the group ready to share why you picked the exercise you did and what gift it gave you.

**Option A – An Overdue Letter to Your Body:** When we think about repairing relationships, our relationships with other people naturally come to mind. But what regularly gets overlooked is the work of repairing our relationship *with our body*. This exercise invites us to begin that important and overdue work. And to help us, we turn to a writing exercise used by the clinical psychologist and author [Hillary McBride](#). On her blog, Dr. McBride shares a letter she wrote to her body. She used it as a vehicle to better understand and heal her relationship with her body. Here is the link to that letter: <https://hillarymcbride.com/dear-body-im-sorry-i-love-you/>

**Here’s your assignment:** Use Dr. McBride’s letter as a guide to creating your own. Be sure to notice that her letter has two distinct parts. The first half is a bunch of “I’m sorry for...” statements. The second half contains “I love you for...” statements. Both parts or *steps* are important and key to the work of repairing our relationship with our bodies.

**Alternative approach:** Not all of us are writers, so another way to engage this exercise is to read through Dr. McBride’s letter multiple times with a highlighter in hand. As you read her words, identify and highlight those that speak to you and echo your own feelings about your body.

**Option B – The Messages that Left a Mark:** One of the biggest reasons we have to repair ourselves is because of harmful cultural messages we are burdened with, in our childhood but also throughout our lives. Each generation has them: well-accepted sayings that reflect societal norms that form - and deform - us in ways that are hard to shake. For example, here are a bunch you might recognize: “Boys don’t cry.” “Boys will be boys” “No pain. No gain.” “Man up.” “You run like a girl.” “You can’t wear your heart on your sleeve.” “Work hard. Play Hard.” “Children are meant to be seen not heard.” “Women should be seen and not heard.” “Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps.” “America is a melting pot.” “Trust in God’s plan.” “Know your place.” “They are here to steal our jobs.”

Just reading through that list is likely triggering for many of us. Which is expected. After all, behind these sayings and others like them lies regret, shame, sadness, anger, betrayal, harm done to you, harm you did to others. So, if you pick this exercise, go gently and do what you need to care for yourself.

Here your assignment:

- Set aside your contemplative time this month to think of the one or two outdated and harmful cultural messages that left a mark on you and twisted your experience in some way.
- Also spend some time identifying how you resisted it or blunted its impact/influence on you.
- Then come to your group ready to tell the story of how you overcame (or are overcoming) that harmful cultural message.

## Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

When the reverberations of shock subside in you,  
may grace come to restore you to balance.  
May it shape a new space in your heart  
to embrace this illness as a teacher

who has come to open your life to new worlds.  
May you find in yourself a courageous hospitality  
towards what is difficult, painful and unknown.  
[John O'Donohue](#)

This is what I know: the demonization and erasure of grief are really strategic tools of oppressive powers. After all, if you are reduced to positivity—if you are less capable of sensing pain and injustice—whom does that benefit? There are people and systems that have everything to gain from our numbness. [Cole Arthur Riley](#)

The times are urgent; let us slow down. [Bayo Akomolafe](#)

Let us not rush to the language of healing, before understanding the fullness of the injury and the depth of the wound. [Dr. Yolanda Pierce](#)

Have you ever noticed how beautiful a person is after they've wept? It's as if they are made new again by the baptism of tears. Indeed, when something stuck can be released through grief, we are freeing up a greater capacity to love. [Toko-pa Turner](#)

the places in our heart  
where the world took bites out of us  
may never fully heal  
and will likely become

wide open spaces  
be careful to not fill them  
with just anything or anyone.  
[John Roedel](#)

When others mess up, we blame their character. When we mess up, we blame the context. No relationship gets mended until we grant others the same grace we grant ourselves. Until we widen our view and notice that there are circumstances wounding us both, the painful gap between us will never heal. [Rev. Scott Tayler](#)

**Questions:** This list of questions is an aid for deep reflection. They are not meant to be answered as much as to take you on a journey. Read through the questions 2-3 times until one question sticks out for you and captures your attention, or as some faith traditions say, until one of the questions “*shimmers*.”

1. Who first repaired you by not trying to fix you?
2. How would your life change if you committed to giving yourself a dose of joy once-a-week?
3. Have you been running on empty for so long that you no longer notice?
4. What joyful, courageous or healing childhood memories repair you over and over again? Are any of them trying to speak to you today?
5. Are some things better left broken? Does everything need to be repaired?

**Sitting in Silence:** *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

**Sharing/Deep Listening:** *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

**Reflection and Gratitude:** *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

**Music:** Raye Zaragoza – [American Dream](#); Cat Burns – [healing](#); and fourteen more songs in the YouTube playlist entitled [The Practice of Repair – Soul Matters November 2024](#).

**Extinguishing the Chalice:** It's not forgetting that heals. It's remembering. [Amy Greene](#)