USG SGM ~ Welcome to Healing ~ November 2026

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

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Chalice Lighting: When I am brave enough to see / beyond my longing to soothe, / all I want is to be with you in the dark. / To steep together in the uncomfortable ache. / To quietly meet you in the wounded place / so you know you are not alone. - Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

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:

Option A: The Story of Your Scar

> Some people see scars, and it is wounding they remember. To me, scars are proof of the fact that there is healing. - *Linda Hogan*
>
> Scars have the strange power to remind us that our past is real. - *Cormac McCarthy*

Some scars are just scars. But most contain stories. They keep us tethered to an important memory or part of ourselves that we would never want to live without. The scar from the surgery that removed the cancer not only reminds us, not only how lucky we were to survive, but that we *have* the power to survive. The faint imprint of stitches on our chin doesn't just take us back to that night we fell on the ice and dad rushed over to help; It also reminds us how much we miss him. The blemish left by a dozen busted lips stands as a monument to how much our adolescent self always wanted someone to fight; it's also a testament to all of those precious people who loved that anger out of us.

So how about you? What's the story of your scar? What memory does it help you hold on to? What important part of yourself does it keep you tethered to? What wisdom does it carry? Why would you never want to be without it? How does remembering its pain heal you over and over again? Honor what your scar has meant to you in the past, but also open yourself to what it wants to say to you *today*. What *new* message of comfort or challenge does it have for you?

Option B: The Places that Heal You

There are so many places that offer us healing. That tree from our childhood whose branch so faithfully held our favorite tire swing. The playground we took all three of our kids to when they were little. The porch with rocking chairs where we sat with grandma for hours on end. The ocean we still return to every summer. The art studio or wood shop we retreat to when we need to find our creative self once again. The family cabin so beautifully filled with ghosts. The list goes on.

While people definitely help heal us, places play an equally important role. They hold our memories. They help shape us. And they give us a powerful sense of belonging.

So, for this exercise, find a way to creatively honor a place - or many of the places - that have healed you. If you're an artistic type, drawing or painting them would make a beautiful tribute. For us who are normally creative, pulling together old pictures of them and making a slideshow on your computer is a

great idea. Writers can write about them, or maybe even write a thank you note *to them.* If your healing place is still accessible, find a tangible way to bless it. Or maybe just go there and talk to it.

Whatever your approach, the goal is to step back and gain a new or deeper appreciation for how big of a role these places have played in your life. To help you, here are some questions before you begin:

- *What exactly makes your healing place healing? What does it offer that you cannot find elsewhere?*
- *Has your healing place ever "spoken" to you? What might it be trying to say to you today?*
- *Has age impacted the kind of places you go to for healing?*
- *Are there healing places that you can now visit only in your mind and/or memory, such as a physical place that no longer exists? How does that change your experience of them?*
- *In what sense is your place "holy" or "sacred"?*

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings:

Healing may not be so much about getting better, as about letting go of everything that isn't you - all of the expectations, all of the beliefs - and becoming who you are. - *Rachel Naomi Remen*

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. - Toko-pa Turner

When others mess up, we blame their character. When we mess up, we blame the context. We must 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*

In English we say 'I'm tired.' But in poetry we say I've been holding up entire skies with hands that were only ever meant to hold flowers. - *Sophia Bray*

Stay away from anything that obscures the place it is in. There are no unsacred places; there are only sacred places and desecrated places. - Wendell Berry

My heart is moved by all I cannot save so much has been destroyed. I have to cast my lot with those who age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world. - *Adrienne Rich*

In any moment, on any given day, I can measure my wellness by this question: Is my attention on loving, or is my attention on who isn't loving me? - *Andrea Gibson*

Questions: *Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of Healing means for you and your daily living.*

1. Who first healed you by not trying to fix you?
2. If you were hurting and someone brought you a box full of memories from your childhood to help heal you, which memory would you reach for first?
3. What is the kindest thing you could do for yourself right now?
4. Do you need to be reminded that you *made* a mistake, not *are* a mistake?
5. Have you made peace with self-inflicted wounds?
6. What if the uncontrollable parts of life are where the holy lives?

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.*

Singing (or watching a video of someone else singing): MEGA: Future Me, Scott Orr: Slow Down, Lori McKenna: The Tunnel, and Ben Noble: Healer Might.

Extinguishing the Chalice: The miracle of healing can't be rushed, because as we are healing, we are re-forming, like a broken bone knitting back together. We have undoubtedly experienced a sort of battlefield healing, where there is not the safety, or the time, or the compassion to stay open, and so we become smaller and more heavily defended after a break, bound up by the scar tissue that saved our lives. - Rev. Darcey Laine