

A course in letting go

by Leanne Matton

Strengthening
Skin



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Shedding Skin



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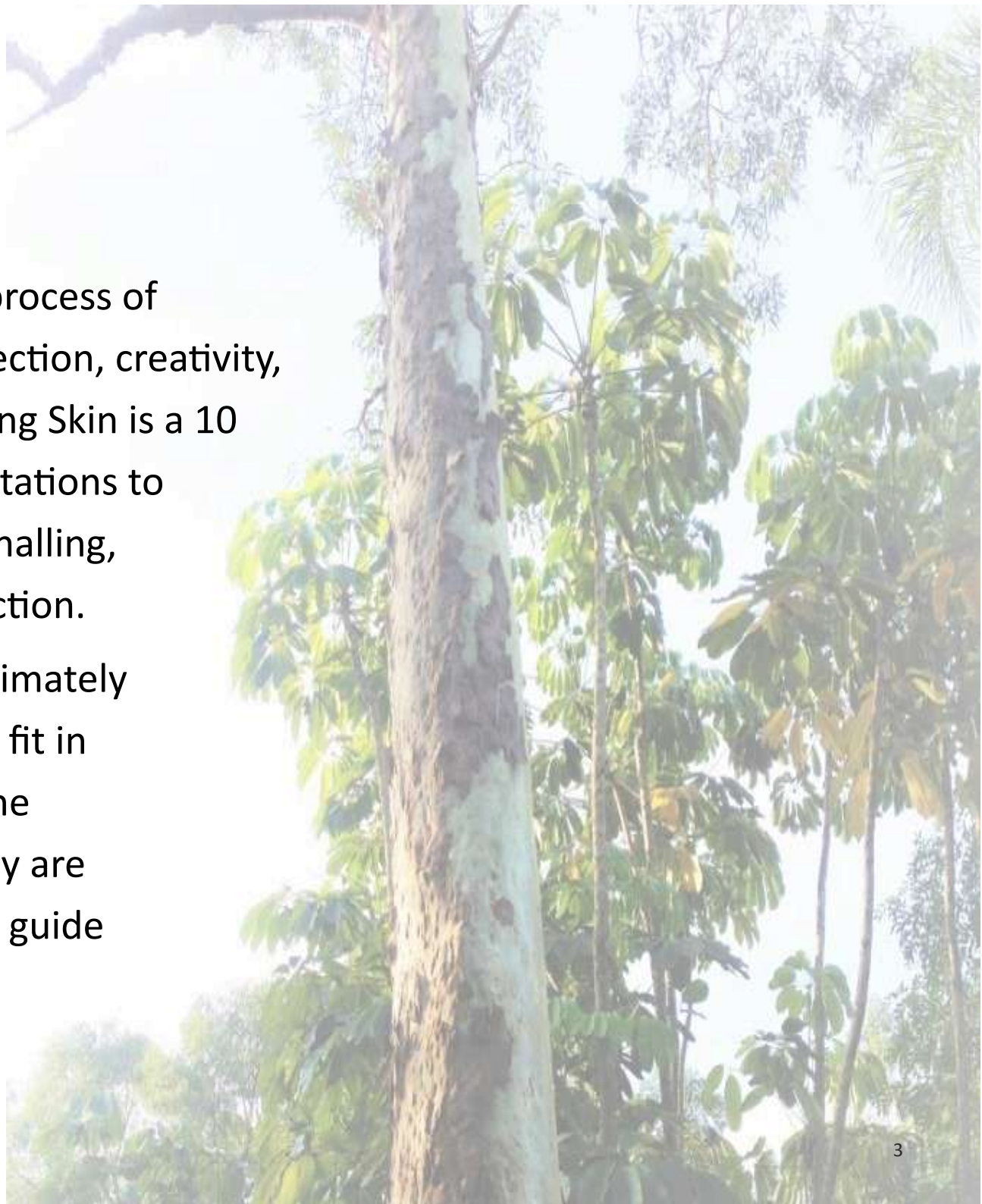
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Welcome!

This is your invitation to join in the process of undoing and becoming through reflection, creativity, and like-minded community. Shedding Skin is a 10 day expedition filled with gentle invitations to explore soul prompts using art, journalling, movement, ritual and sacred connection.

It's best to start the prompts approximately 4 days prior to the next full moon to fit in with the activities. But remember, the answers are not in the prompts. They are in you, when you let all that rises up guide you back to yourself.



Day 1

DAY 1

all the parts

What moves
and surges in
your body?

What hides
there, quiet as
the stars
overhead?



Most of us have more than one primary part to our identity, for example:

- the part we show to the world and the part we keep hidden
- the person we are at work and the person we are when engaged in leisure activities
- the person we were born to be and person we became through circumstance.

I ended up in a family who thought I was strange because, as an adoptee, I was so different from them. We also moved 10 times during my childhood.



Trying to fit into foreign environments at home and at school meant I became a person I didn't recognise, living a life I wasn't built for. I've been excavating me ever since.

The parts, expressed:

- The rushed office worker
- The 'too sensitive' introvert
- The one who works to others' rules
- The early riser
- The one who is sensibly dressed with neat hair

The parts, unexpressed:

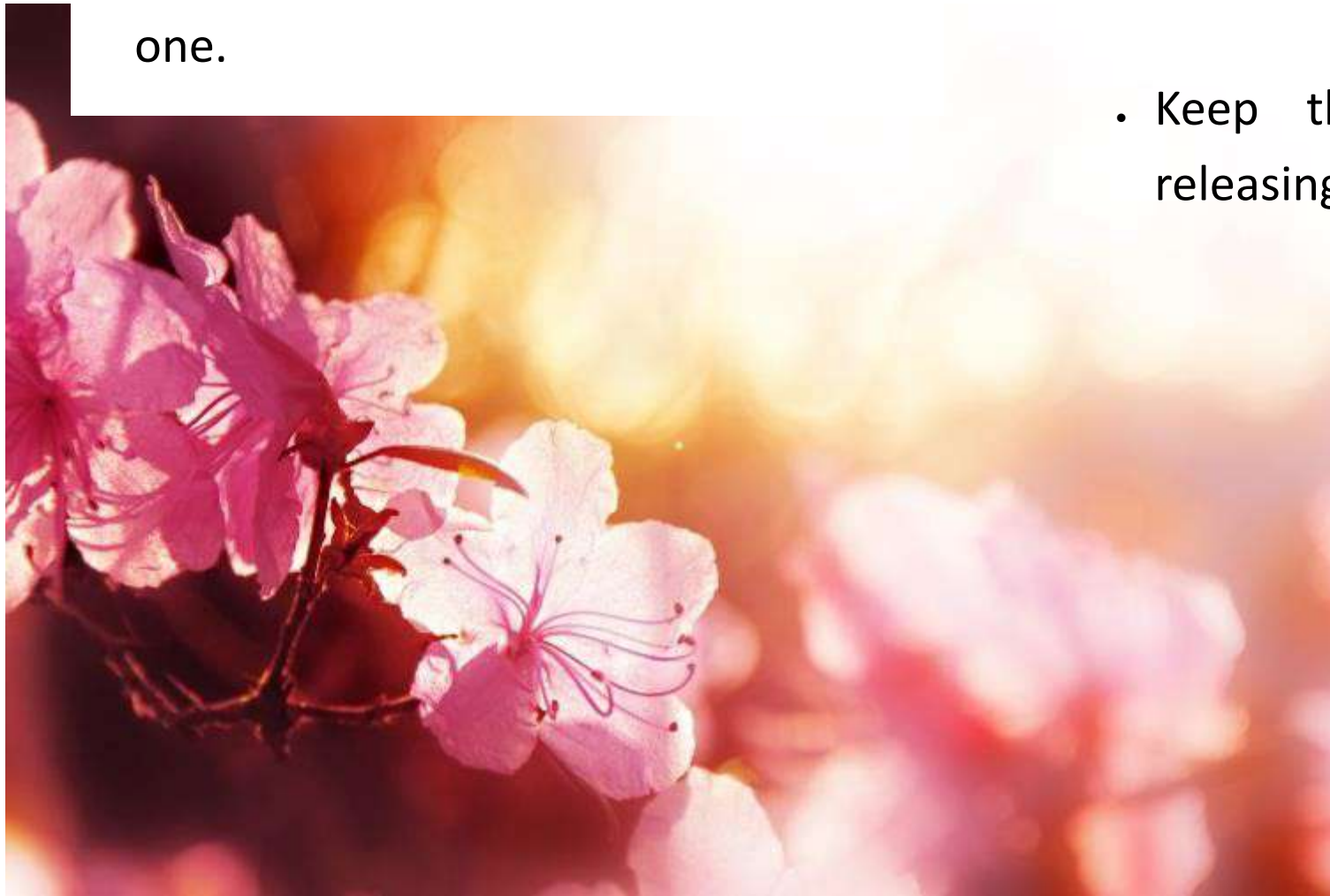
- The one who needs quiet and slow and calm
- The outdoors nature-lover
- The creative (artist, writer, musician)
- The night owl
- The barefoot hippy with colourful clothes and jewellery

I found an unexpressed part who would have liked to study art and languages and music and writing at school. I imagine she would've ended up working on a funky magazine as an art director and editor, with kindred spirits who would have probably remained lifelong friends

Instead, I dropped out of school to work in a bank with strangers who remained strangers, where essential parts of me were left out. Some of the parts that were being expressed didn't look, sound, or feel like me.

Activity

- Sit in your sacred space, take some deep breaths, and invite in the expressed and unexpressed. Allow all the parts to reveal themselves, one by one.
- You can write them on scraps of paper, or you can draw, use photos, or cut images from magazines.
- Keep them safe, we will be releasing some to the full moon.



Day 2

Day 2

How can you
live inside the
feeling?

embodying



I fell in love with the bracelet at first sight but I never wore it. I couldn't find a suitable place for it in my life. It didn't fit with who I was.

Then Fleetwood Mac came to town. I always felt Stevie looked like some of my unexpressed parts, so I let her inspire me and give me courage.

Wearing the bracelet allowed me to start shedding an old part of me that didn't fit anymore, and made space for an unexpressed part to step forward.

The one who wears colourful jewellery, who has messy hair and no shoes, who stays up late at night to paint. The part whose name is Freedom.



Activity

- ♦ Choose an unexpressed part that you want to embody.
- ♦ Imagine a space opening up, and fill it with faith.
- ♦ Find one action you can take that gives you the feeling inside that part.

And as you step inside this part,
ask yourself:

What is its name?



Day 3

Day 3

- the ache
- the want
- the unclaimed

the unspoken



The ache is for the living I couldn't do.
The ice I couldn't skate on, the snow I
couldn't ski on, the ocean I couldn't dive
in, the horses I couldn't ride on.

I tried them all but was left clinging - to
the rail, to the rope, to the instructor -
my lizard brain shouting at me that I was
drowning, falling, dying.

I grieve for or all the ways, known and
unknown, that fear of my body stopped
me from taking up space.

I mourn the person I couldn't be in
my younger years. For the 'no' I
couldn't say, the truths I couldn't
speak, for not knowing that the
only thing wrong with me was a
shutdown nervous system trying
not to be overwhelmed.

I am releasing the ancient seasons
of my life and welcoming in the
unspoken truths.

Let it be so and so it is.

Activity

What parts of a life have you lived that weren't yours? What spaces in the world have you relinquished, the ones that could've been yours if you'd been able to claim them?

These untruths hold secret and sacred messages for you. So tether yourself inside the feeling you embodied yesterday, gather your courage and dive deep into the mystery.

Write down all that has been lost or gone unclaimed. Everything ancient and new, small and overwhelming. Use photos or images if you prefer.

The shedding of the old stories makes space for your unspoken truth to be fully embodied.

Day 4

Day 4

Step out of your
old skin under the
moonlight.



The Burning



We are a community of kindred spirits, connected by inspiration and support.

We are circling together under the same moon.

We are lighting each other's candles so that together we can light the world.

The new moon begins a new cycle, a time of possibilities, of setting intentions, whereas the full moon is a time to release what no longer serves us, the parts we have outgrown.

Energy at the full moon is intense, empowering you to celebrate stepping out of an old way of being.

Conducting this transformation in a formal ceremony lets the Universe know you're ready for the new to emerge.

When La Luna is next at her most brilliant, gather together crystals, candles and other special items to prepare an altar in your sacred space.

Using a cauldron or other suitable (and fireproof) bowl, gather together:

- the parts you once claimed
- the life you once embodied
- the meanings you once made

and cast them into the fire.

Strike your matches, burn your words and images, and release with love. Watch them change form and float away. Bid them thank you and goodbye.

You can also seek guidance to help illuminate what is ready to be shed through drawing an oracle card or sitting in quiet meditation.

Do what feels comfortable and add in any other steps you choose.

Day 5

Now that
the barn
has
burned
down, I
can see
the moon.



The Ashes

The night sky lit up and you touched our matches to the flame. We pause here to honour those parts you offered to the fire.

You might feel empty, lost, a piece of driftwood tossed up by the tide. Releasing any part of ourselves, however obsolete, is a loss.

When the pain of loss comes knocking, you open the door and say welcome. You make a space for it at your table. You do not distract or numb.

The phoenix must burn to emerge from the ashes.

Let the wave wash over you, let the grief tremble through your body.

You are finding solid ground, tracing your new edges. You know in your heart that this is life and truth.

Pamper yourself today, find ways to be gentle with yourself, cocoon. Ask for support, say no, turn off your phone, let the tears come.

Go to bed earlier, sleep a little later, take even five minutes of time out.

What can you do to land in a soft place today?



Day 6



Movement

Slowly but surely the drums that are playing in your soul will tremble loose everything that no longer honours your highest truth.

You choose this path. Walk it speaking your own voice Radiantly dance into the night Woman you are too awake to play tame now.

Face your boundlessness and roam free.

-

Sharona Lautoe

We are there to make mandalas.
But first she says we will dance.

I don't dance, says ego.

We will close our eyes, she says, and
paint the room with our hands, our
feet, our bodies.

Some other part of me says I want to
do this, let me do it.

We start to move to Gabrielle Roth's
The Wave. Ego opens her eyes to make
sure it's not a trick, that everyone is
not watching her and mocking.

But they are moving, swaying, painting
the room with rhythm. Someone is
seated on the floor, curled in her own
connection to the music.

The sounds wind around us, our bare
feet stepping to the beat, our bodies
moving with their own interpretation
of the wave.



Ego steps aside. We shed our inhibitions, our stuckness, our rigidity.

And when we finish, we make glorious mandalas with our unbound energies.

Activity

Choose your favourite music, or you can listen to Gabrielle Roth [here](#).

Life is energy in motion. Use the dance to explore new ways of moving, let your body lead instead of your head.

Nothing changes without movement. Notice memories, emotions, edges. Move your body, thrash it out, dance, jump, kick, tremble, crawl.

Feel your spirit connect, and let all that is no longer you fall from you and slip away in the dance. Let the drums that are playing in your soul tremble loose everything that no longer honours you.

Try to do your dance alone, but if that isn't possible, include your children, your flatmates, your partner, your pets, and dance together. Eyes closed, no peeking.

For integration you can finish by creating or colouring in a mandala – you'll find some free printable ones [here](#).

A mandala is another form of sacred circle, helping us to orient ourselves, integrate new information and redefine who we are.



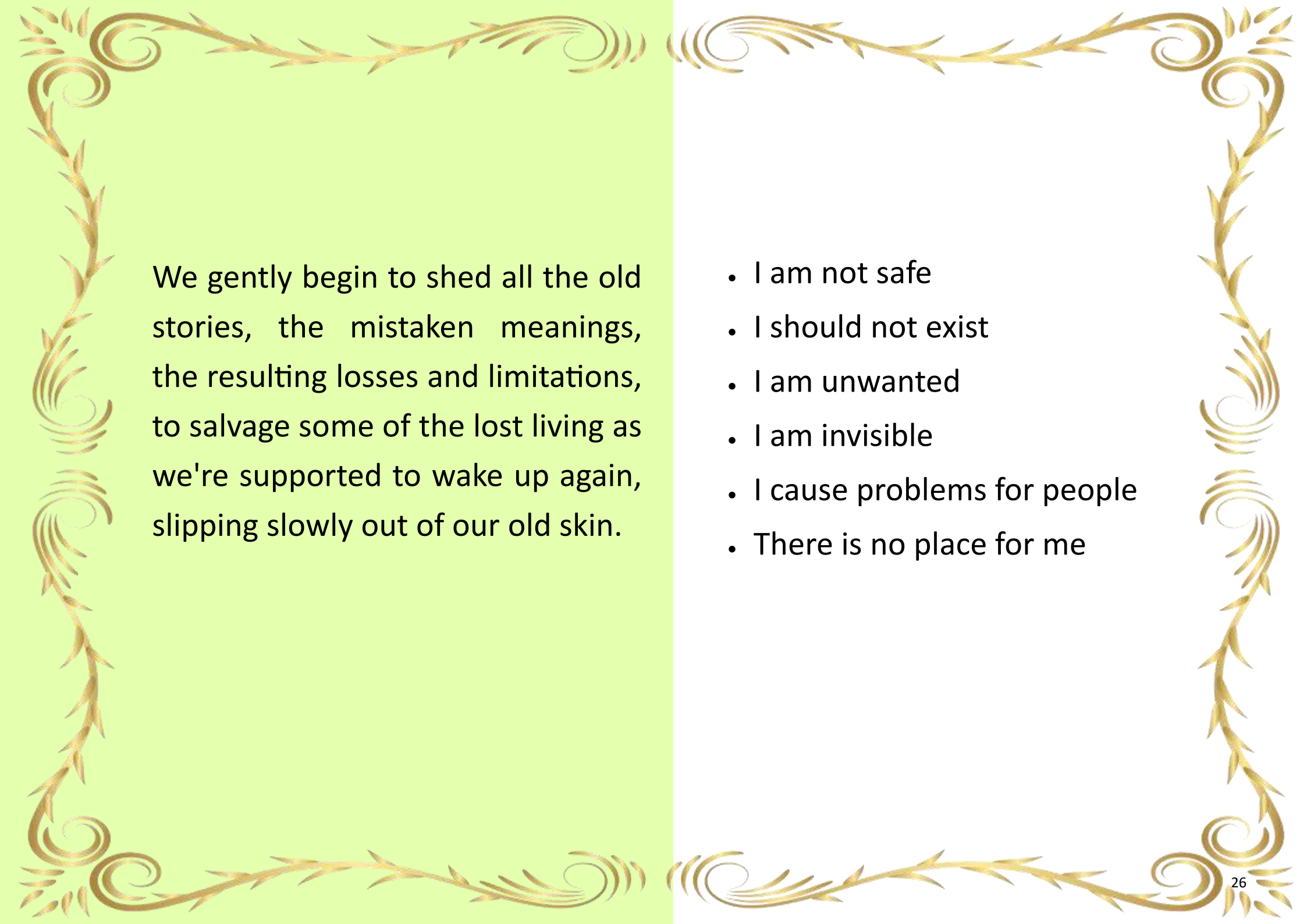
Learn more from Gabrielle about the dance [here](#).

Day 7

Unravelling and
becoming

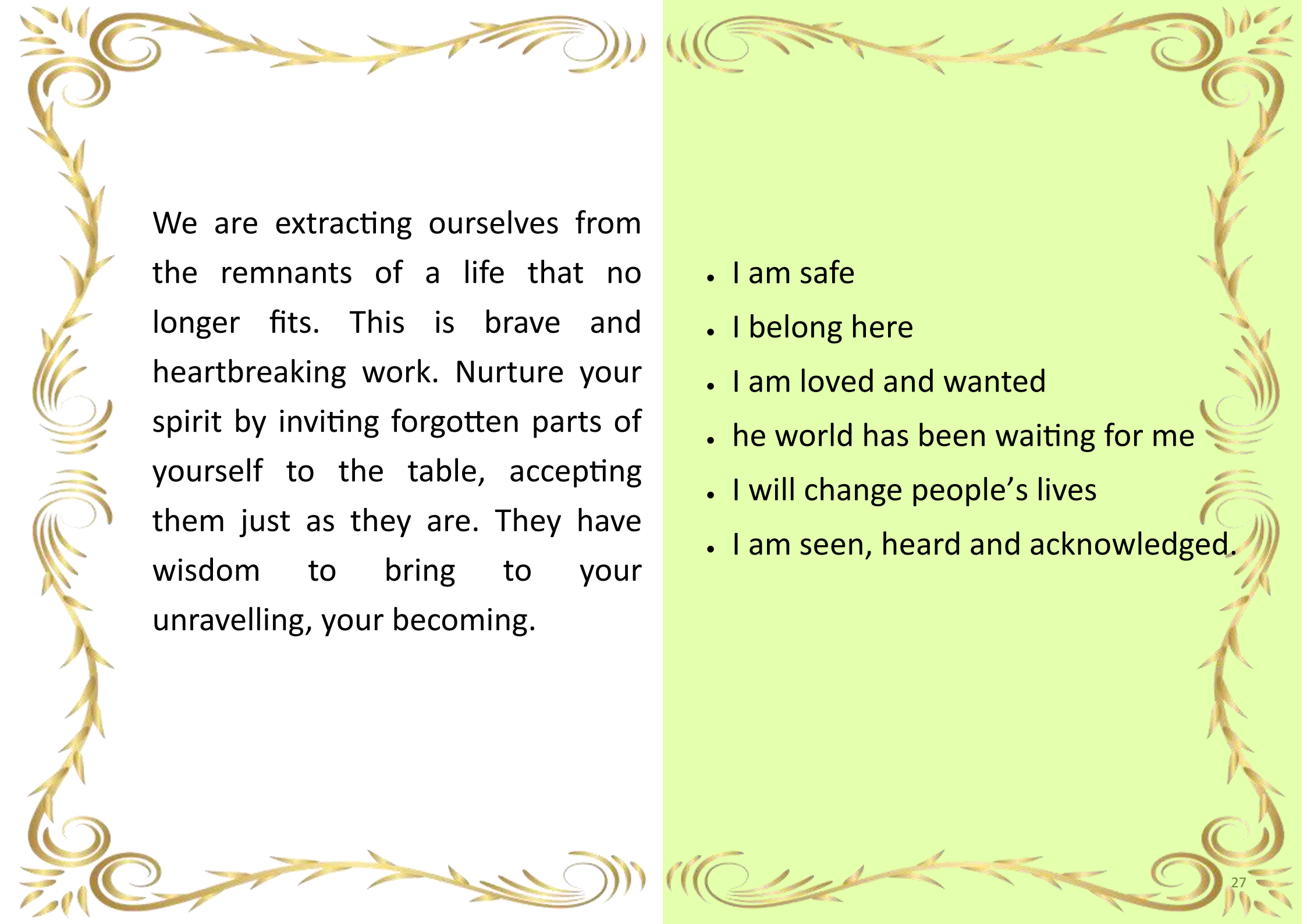
Reclaiming



A decorative border of a golden vine with leaves and scrolls frames the entire page. The left side of the page has a light green background, while the right side is white.

We gently begin to shed all the old stories, the mistaken meanings, the resulting losses and limitations, to salvage some of the lost living as we're supported to wake up again, slipping slowly out of our old skin.

- I am not safe
- I should not exist
- I am unwanted
- I am invisible
- I cause problems for people
- There is no place for me

A decorative golden vine border with leaves and swirls frames the entire page. The left side of the page has a white background, while the right side has a light green background.

We are extracting ourselves from the remnants of a life that no longer fits. This is brave and heartbreaking work. Nurture your spirit by inviting forgotten parts of yourself to the table, accepting them just as they are. They have wisdom to bring to your unravelling, your becoming.

- I am safe
- I belong here
- I am loved and wanted
- The world has been waiting for me
- I will change people's lives
- I am seen, heard and acknowledged.

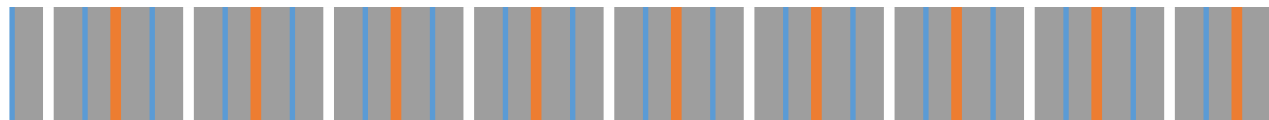
Activity

What meanings have you made from the unspoken, the lost, the unclaimed? What no longer fits, what is no longer (or was never) you?

List the limitations, the fears, the misinterpretations, the secrets.

Then ask yourself, how could they be different?

You are a soul reclaiming its body,
a life reclaiming its truth.



Day 8

Day 8

You have seen my
descent, now
watch my rising.

-

Rumi

Emerging



She invited us to wear masks and act out our shadow parts. My introversion, slowness, quiet, night owl, taking up space, being bright and messy and different.

All the parts that were shamed and pushed aside, apologised for and hidden. The unexpressed.

I shared them from behind my mask and for the first time they were witnessed and applauded.

In gratitude, supported in my vulnerability and shame, I began filling the emptiness with emerging parts. I invited them in with feathers in my hair, late night painting sessions, turning off the phone, colourful beaded bracelets.

You burned. You moved and danced and shook yourselves free. You are stripped bare, vulnerable, emerging from the inside out. You are growing into the space created by shedding the old layers of story and time.

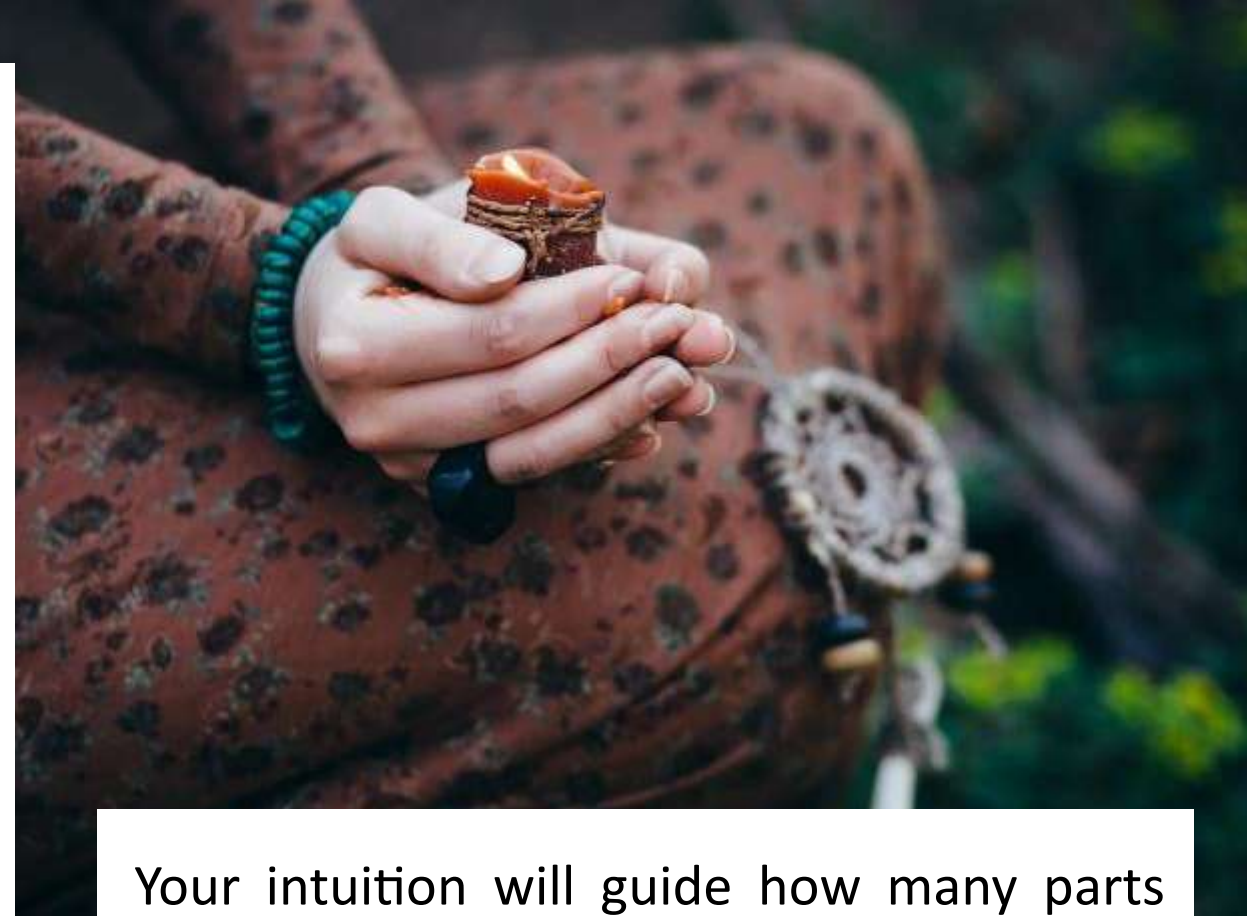


Activity

What will you put into that space?
Who can you ask to be a witness for
your emerging?

Find a beautiful container and put
your unexpressed parts inside. They
can be words or images. Let them
be held.

Invite them out one at a time. How
can you honour this part today?
Share one small action within the
next day with someone you trust.



Your intuition will guide how many parts
you work with, and how quickly you let
each part emerge. There is time for all the
parts.

Let yourself fill the space, rising fully and
consciously, like butterflies, like phoenix
birds.

Day 9


Your sacred space is where you can find yourself again and again.

-

Joseph Campbell



Emerging



We have been creating from the inside out. We have been shedding skin to make room for what's inside to emerge.

We are growing new skin to hold all of who we are. Let's create a symbolic container for this transformation.

A treasure box lets us find form for all the parts to be expressed and held. It is a self-portrait, representing all sides of you.

It encompasses the public skin that you display out in the world, along with those more private parts that you keep in the quiet corners, sharing with those you choose.

I covered my treasure box with beads and ribbons and leaves and colour.

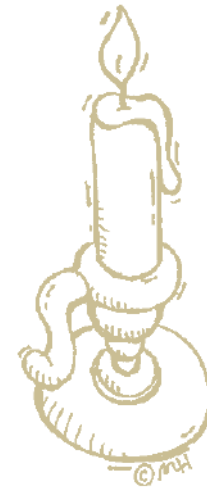
I added hope and love among them. Inside it held unicorns and pianos and beads and feathers, coloured material and glitter, inspirational words and secret wishes.

Activity

Find an old shoebox (or something similar).

- Decorate the outside as a reflection of how you want to feel in the world.
- Place inside it anything that feels like treasure to you.
- Decorate the top of the box as a doorway to your treasure.

This is a gift to yourself, a container to give voice to the expression of your true nature, inside and out.



Let your new skin
gleam and
sparkle as you
bring it to life.
Light a candle
and call it home.

Day 10

DAY 10

And I became a woman
who learned her own
skin and dug into her
soul and found it full.

-

Anne Sexton

Celebration



Ten days ago you said yes. You made a significant step towards investing in your growth and well-being, to finding your truth and allowing this to be shared in community.



I understand and applaud the courage and commitment it takes to do this and see it through. I am in awe of your willingness to stay the course and to keep returning to your core truth again and again.

You may still be working through the prompts. Only you can know the best pace for your process. I thank you for taking this chance and being vulnerable .

Our last prompt invites you to connect with all you've gathered and released and reassembled, to be fully seen in your magnificent new skin.

Activity

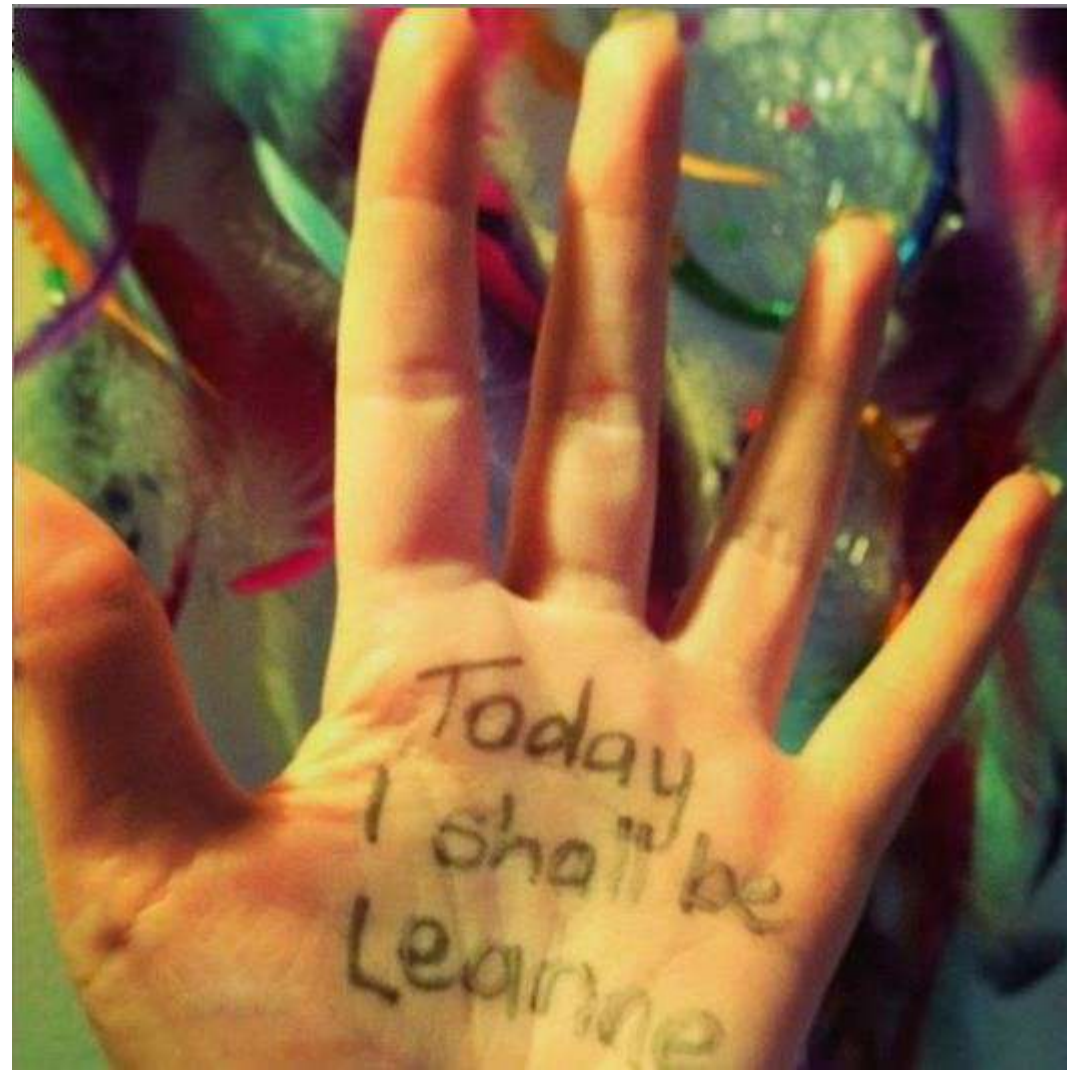
Today, be fully you. Be seen, heard, known. Be all in.

Tell someone something about you they didn't know.

Say your name. Write it on your hand. Take a photo.

Take more photos of yourself, using different angles, lighting, movements. Really see yourself.

You are inspiration. Share with us your stories and photos, truths, insights, realisations, wisdom, goals, actions, prayers and intentions.



Thank You



Thank you for doing the work and honouring yourself and the world with the truth of who you are. I hope you'll keep choosing to live from a place of authenticity as you allow the wisdom of your heart, body and spirit to emerge.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Leanne Matton

I'm a registered psychologist and certified art therapist and life coach living and working on Queensland's Gold Coast. I spent years searching for ways to heal from childhood trauma, recover my creativity, and reconnect with my dreams. Along the way I became a therapist committed to going beyond intellectual processes to a deeper level of nervous system repair and creative and spiritual healing. For the last 23 years I've been helping people recover from the impact of childhood abuse and neglect. That journey is so filled with wrong turns and dead ends and nobody should have to walk it alone.

