

# GLOW UP!

VOICE JOURNALING FOR SELF-COMPASSION



INCLUDES  
PROMPTS AND  
INTERACTIVE  
PAGES TO GUIDE  
YOU ALONG THE  
WAY

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# DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my matriarchal ancestry, those who came before me and those who will come after me. To my Grandma Lucy, who helped me see the beauty in my own voice. To my mother Corrine, who has always supported every project I've ever developed. To my daughter Corrie-Rai who has been my biggest motivation in doing this work and my greatest teacher. You changed my life the day you were born.

To every person...

Who has felt their voice didn't matter  
Who hates the sound of their own voice  
Who felt they would be punished for speaking their truth  
Who has hidden their light from the world because they were afraid  
to take up space  
Who was told their beliefs were wrong  
Who was made to believe that they have nothing valuable to say  
Who isn't sure who they are  
Who wants to reconnect to themselves  
Who doesn't think their story matters

I dedicate this ebook to YOU. I am YOU and you are me. Together, we will reconnect to our truest, highest selves and find the courage and strength to access the resilience of our ancestors and be our authentic selves every day of our lives!



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# START *introductions* HERE





# A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

WELCOME, MY BEAUTIFUL FRIEND, THANK  
YOU FOR BEING HERE.

I am so proud of you for taking a step in the direction of self-discovery, self-reflection, self-care, and ultimately, self-love. This is all about you! This project was born out of pure, organic curiosity and so if that alone is what brought you to this practice, you are already in the right place.

Voice Journaling quite literally saved my life and changed my perspective from one of deflection, self-destruction, and anxiety into one of peace, love, and ease. I'll get into the details later on, but for now, just know that I have the same intention for you; that you find peace, love, and ease in life and compassion for yourself during and after you begin to integrate this practice. Never did I think that I would know anything about Voice Journaling, self-discovery, and self-love, much less, that I would be sharing about these things with the world. But, truth be told, writing about something amazing that would change the lives of a lot of people is a low-key dream of mine, so the nerd inside of me is geeking out over the fact that I even get to type these words into existence!

I hope you enjoy your time with this practice as much as I've enjoyed working through it myself and putting it together to share with you! Please keep me updated and let me know how you are doing along your journey! You will have an opportunity to join my online community to stay connected and I hope you do!

Abrazos,

*Danellia  
Arechiga*

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# GLOW UP!

People keep saying I'm glowing  
But they don't have the internal knowing  
The inner workings of my sleepless nights  
That glow you speak of is a sign of the fight  
I've fought so hard for years  
To defend my tears and feelings of abandonment  
My daddy issues and boxes on boxes of tissues  
I used to hide the hurt I was feeling inside

I had to learn how to sit with my pain  
I had to learn how to be my own best friend  
I had to learn how to love myself again  
Even when I didn't feel so lovable  
Or at least that's what the voices in my head were saying

See, it's not just the pregnancy hormones  
or the bronzer  
it's a light from within me  
It's bursting out, unafraid to be seen  
I found it and I will never let go, no

That light was out for quite some time  
It was under construction...  
It was being worked on in the long, dark, hours of the  
night where no one could see the maintenance  
This fire was reignited by my truest self emerging from  
the muck of what society had planned out for me

When I rejected it, I took my shine back

When I rejected it, I came back fully into my power and  
purpose

When I rejected it, I felt like myself again

The hardest part about all of this has been staying lit  
when the people I'm closest to in my life are still  
operating under the muck  
Their microaggressions cut like a knife and pierce my  
glow ever so slightly with their unknowing ignorance  
and bias  
Don't believe the hype, ignorance is not bliss  
But as my light grows, it gets harder to dim  
And the more fully aligned I become, the more you'll  
see this glow grow

This is true happiness shining from the inside out  
And I'm no longer afraid to admit that I am happy  
now  
There's a sense of belonging when you're in the struggle  
with everyone else  
But you don't have to be  
You deserve infinite love and support  
Here, it is safe to be you  
The struggle is ongoing, our happiness can be too

-Poem by Danellia Arechiga, 2020



# PREFACE

When I posted this poem on social media in the Spring of 2020 amid the notorious COVID-19 pandemic, I wrote it out of frustration. I was 20 weeks pregnant and had just started to show. Every other comment I received on my social media accounts on any picture I posted was something like “glowing!” or “Wow, mama! You are glowing!” Don’t get me wrong, it was nice the first couple of times I heard this compliment, but it got old fast, and with every mention of my new glow, my eyes rolled further and further toward the back of my skull. See, what bothered me about these comments is that they were all centered around my physical appearance. No one stopped to ask me how I was feeling. No one seemed to notice that it could be possible that the way I looked was a reflection of how I was feeling inside. Our society has an obsession with physical appearance and a disconnection with how we feel.

I had planned to share my experience with Voice Journaling a year ago, but I was also in the process of launching an online Childbirth Education course and needed to give myself time and energy to create a great program for my clients. I’m glad I went with my intuition on that decision because a month after I launched my online course, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and everyone was placed on strict “safer-at-home” orders. This worked out in my favor because I was ahead of the game in the sense that I didn’t need to start from scratch as many others in my field of work did. I was also able to transfer the few folks who had already registered for my in-person classes into my new online class without any issues. I felt grateful to have a little income during that time and a way to connect to my clients even if it was from a distance. Above all, I was newly pregnant and grateful to be given the gift of time to work through this ebook while I was growing a person. The pregnancy glow everyone was talking about was merely a coincidence, I was glowing because I was doing what I loved and feeling fully aligned!

As the quarantine became part of my family’s reality for over 4 months, I finally felt ready to share this medicine with my community. I wanted everyone I knew to experience the glow that they were all pointing out in me! With this revelation came the realization that I would have to share my own story along with the practice. The practice of Voice Journaling changed me, so I can’t present this practice to you without showing you the evidence of how it worked for me. That may have been the part that was the scariest for me; accepting that I would be putting my dirty laundry out there for all to see (it’s not all dirty, I swear!). Some of the details I will share in this ebook are personal truths that some of my closest family and friends don’t even know.

# PREFACE

(CONTINUED)

Part of speaking and living out your truth is not wearing a mask or hiding in the shadows of the expectations of others around you. I am living proof of this! I refuse to be anyone but myself!

If you're still with me, I want you to know that although this practice seems simple, (pull out your phone and talk, how hard can it be right?) it is deep work that will force you to take a good hard look at your flaws and your strengths. If done correctly and intentionally, it could change the trajectory of your life. If you are open to the possibilities that this practice can have for your life, you will be given so much clarity and insight about yourself. The goal here is to learn more about yourself, build a relationship with that person, and form a daily, weekly, or monthly practice that will cultivate self-love and self-compassion, thus igniting that epic glow up that I keep mentioning. By the way, the title GLOW UP! is a play on the common demand from adults to children to **grow up**. Can you imagine what it would have been like to be raised without the pressure to grow up, but rather, encouraged to glow up? The growth you'll experience in this practice is implied; we are taking it a step further, and aspiring to GLOW UP!

You might be wondering what's in it for you in the long run. Once you learn to speak your truth, then what? What will happen to your journals? Will you save them in a password-protected file for your family to find one day? Will you share your journals or the findings in them with someone you love? Will your journals inspire you to write a book of your own? It can be all of these or none of these. The choice is yours. Your recordings belong to you. You can keep them private and refer back to them during periods of your life when you might need some inspiration. You may find yourself listening back to them to remind yourself of how far you've come. You may decide to trash them and never listen to them again. It's completely your call. The beauty of this practice is learning to trust what feels good to you. My only advice to you on this topic is to honor your story. The compilation of recordings you will accumulate will inevitably form a version of your own personal story, and the only thing you have to do is honor it.

Your story is real and it matters.





# INTRODUCTION

## WHY VOICE JOURNALING?

When I was a child I used to keep a diary. It was a cheap one from the dollar store with a little lock and key. As early as I could remember, I would write down what was going on in my life, usually about my latest crush. It's a little embarrassing to think about how much of my diary entries had to do with crushes or drama with friends (grades 6-12).

When I think back to those days, there was so much going on around me that I never talked about or released. My parents' messy and violent divorce, the 7 and 16 year difference between my siblings and I—that often left me feeling like an only child—my brother being deployed in Korea and Vietnam for many years, my periods of self-harm and substance abuse, just to name a few. I can see now that I was burying myself in social situations that would distract me from the challenging realities of my family life.

I was experiencing what many people of color go through: trauma, emotional and physical abuse, and needs that were not being met by my primary caregivers because they were struggling and trying to survive.

Flash forward to 20 or so years later, I was in my late 20's feeling an intense urge to document my feelings but literally had no time. Between being a single mom, caring for my family, experiencing the sudden death of my brother, homeschooling my daughter, trying to make a complicated romantic relationship work, running two businesses, and trying to survive, I didn't have much spare time to sit and write down all of the overwhelming things I was feeling on any given day. I felt like a shaken bottle of soda ready to explode.





This is me at 7 years old when I first started keeping a diary

I looked into therapy, but I couldn't afford it at the time. I was put on a wait-list for the local Jewish Community Center's low-cost mental health services but I got the run around for months. I met with a therapist that I drove across town to see twice, but she was super flaky—she kept canceling our appointments. I was so frustrated. I just needed someone to talk to that I could be myself with.

Around this time, a few things happened that called me to go in deeper, though at the time I didn't see it. The first one was that I randomly found some of my old journals and read them thinking "that's not me, that's not my inner voice". I seemed so superficial in my writing and felt inauthentic. I made a mental note to find a new way to journal because I was being weighed down by a lot of intense feelings with no outlet.

Then, on January 3, 2019 I set up a meeting with my Grandma Lucy to ask her questions about her life and our family lineage and I recorded our conversation on the Voice Memos app on my iPhone. The next day, I played it back and discovered how much I had overcome my insecurities surrounding the sound of my own voice. I used to HATE hearing myself talk because I had a lot of insecurity about my low vocal range. My voice has never been gender-conforming. People, (especially boys) always made fun of my voice growing up. Some of my own family members would mock my voice. But this time as I listened to my conversation with my Grandma, it was different. Not only did I not cringe at the sound of my voice, but I actually enjoyed listening to myself converse with my grandma. It was so organic; a perfect reflection of how our conversations always were. My grandma and I wouldn't bullshit each other, we got down to brass tax. Had I known my grandma would pass away exactly 2 months later to the day, I would've asked her so many more questions that day. I will cherish those recordings forever.

The next day, I decided to record myself talking since I had such a great time listening to my conversation with my Grandma. The first time I recorded, my intention was simply to unload some of the baggage I was being weighed down by. I decided to record in the car after I dropped my daughter off at our homeschooling co-op, because it's one of the few places where I could be alone in a private setting. I used my voice memos app as my recording device. It was a little weird, but I just spoke. I started by saying the date and time and what I was doing, and it took off from there. Before I knew it, I was talking as if I was having a conversation with an old friend and I instantly felt better. I decided I would hold myself accountable by trying to do this once a day for at least 5 minutes. I wanted to see how it would benefit me.

The first month I saw how unrealistic it was to record every day so I decided to commit to 20 days out of the month for at least 5 minutes each time. This worked really well for me and my lifestyle. I originally set the target because I wanted to hold myself accountable and make sure I followed through with journaling often, but after a while I stopped needing to track how often I was recording my thoughts and feelings because it was happening so often and so organically that I didn't need to keep track.

I began to look forward to my alone time for journaling. It was my time to be with myself. As someone who never appreciated being alone before, this was a game-changer. Before I started voice journaling, any time I would have alone time in the car, I would use that time to call someone and catch up with them or listen to podcasts.

In being alone with myself and recording my thoughts and feelings, I realized that once again I had not been facing my feelings and experiences head-on just like when I was a child. I was burying them by staying distracted by the company and attention of others. I started to fill this time with voice journaling and what I have been receiving is a new perspective on who I am.

*"Voice Journaling Literally Saved My Life!"*

I would record the most while I was driving and I noticed that I was a much less distracted driver. I previously had a problem with texting and driving, and voice journaling gave me something else to do while I drove that didn't require my hands, only my voice. It was a win-win to record in the car. Voice journaling literally saved my life! I am significantly not as distracted as I used to be. I don't miss my exits anymore, I don't swerve into other lanes, or slam on my brakes due to being distracted by looking down at my phone.

Throughout my experience with voice journaling I have been able to uncover parts of myself that I thought were gone and discover parts of myself that I never knew were there. I have been able to face my own worst fears and openly say things about myself that I never thought would come out of my mouth; good and bad. I have been able to prioritize the important things in life and make adjustments in other areas that perhaps do not deserve as much of my energy. I have been able to build a relationship with my true self and I reflect that in my everyday life. Not only have I gotten to know who I am, but I have fallen in love with that person and value her more than ever before. This sparked an alignment that shifted me toward a higher vibration.

Within this practice, I will be sharing some of my own breakthroughs in hopes that they will inspire you to see how powerful this practice can be. I encourage you to highlight some of your own breakthroughs as you move through this practice too.



Me and my grandma Lucy,  
Thanksgiving 2017



**“THERE’S NO WAY TO DETERMINE WHAT THE ANCESTORS TELL US. THERE’S NO WAY FOR US TO PROVE WHETHER OR NOT WHAT THEY ARE SHARING WITH US IS REAL. THE ONLY EQUIVALENT THAT CAN MAYBE MAKE SENSE TO PEOPLE (WHO DOUBT) IS “HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU’RE GOING TO GO TO HEAVEN WHEN YOU DIE?” YOU DON’T. YOU HAVE FAITH. FAITH IS EVERYTHING. FAITH IS WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN, IT’S WHY YOU KEEP HOLDING ON. FAITH IS THE SAME EXACT SAME THING THAT LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT WHAT I EXPERIENCE WITH MY ANCESTORS IS REAL. THE MESSAGES THEY SEND ME ARE REAL. THE EXPERIENCES I HAVE WITH THEM ARE REAL. AND NOBODY CAN TELL ME THAT THEY’RE NOT. IT’S JUST AS OFFENSIVE AS TELLING A CHRISTIAN THAT THERE IS NO GOD, THERE IS NO JESUS, AND WE’RE ALL GOING TO HELL. THIS IS MY STORY, AND I AM THE ONLY PERSON WHO GETS TO DETERMINE MY BELIEFS.”**

**-DANELLIA ARECHIGA**  
RECORDED: MAY 16, 2019





## HOW SELF-COMPASSION IGNITES YOUR GLOW UP

The basis of this practice is not only to unload your emotions and experiences but also to go back and listen to yourself and reflect. Self-reflection allows for self-compassion by taking the opportunity to listen with compassion to ourselves. With practice, we eventually learn to extend this same compassion to others around us as well. In order to listen with compassion, we have to be conscious of our learned expectations of others and be careful not to compare ourselves to anyone else.

Dr. Kristin Neff, one of the world's leading experts on self-compassion says "Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings – after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect?" Many of us struggle with perfectionism that doesn't necessarily stem from our DNA, but from our upbringing with caregivers who made us feel as though their love was dependent on our behaviors being pleasing to them.

*"You are perfectly imperfect just the way you are!"*

Not being heard as a child makes it very difficult to hear and trust our own voices as we become adults who think for ourselves. With time and consistency, this practice will help you learn to decipher the narratives that don't belong to you and the ones that do. As your self-reflection deepens, and your ability to be compassionate with yourself intensifies, you will start to cultivate a new outlook on your life and a love for yourself that might have gotten lost along the way. It's in this way that a snowball effect occurs in your favor. Your only job here is to let it happen. Don't fight the feelings of falling in love with yourself. We live in a society that tells us we need to consume material items in order to love ourselves. Here lies your opportunity to rise above that ideology and take back your shine. This is where you find your GLOW UP!



## BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

I highly recommend that you approach this practice with an open mind and a well-rested body. You are going to need to use your entire body, mind, and spirit to get into the space needed to truly benefit from this work. Below are a couple of ways that you can do this:

**Body:** Be well-rested (6-8 hours of sleep at least) and not tired, sit in a comfortable place, be well-nourished and not hungry or thirsty, have a beverage of choice handy to keep your vocal chords lubricated. Some recommendations are: water or warm-tea. Wear comfortable, non-restrictive clothing that you can breathe easily in.

**Mind:** Try to avoid distractions/disruptions, avoid phone use (I record on my phone so I can't use it for anything else in the moment), avoid doing this work if you are heavily distracted by something going on in your personal life to the point where you can't focus on anything else. Take it from me, you'll be left with long recordings of silence and wasted storage.

**Spirit:** When you are optimally aligned, your spirit can absorb downloads from your inner voice, higher self, guides, and ancestors more easily. When you are open and willing to receive unexpected blessings, that is when the breakthroughs will come. You can do this by grounding yourself with a guided meditation, earthing (touching the earth), or saying a prayer to your ancestors/God/Spirit/Creator/The Universe, or whatever higher power you believe in, if any.

**Safety:** Feeling safe is also a priority on this journey as it allows for a few benefits below. Cultivating safety in this practice means recording your journals in a private space, on a device that is password-protected and private so you can speak as authentically and candidly as possible without worrying about anyone finding or listening to your recordings.

Safety:

- Allows you to go at a comfortable pace
- Gives you permission to take a break
- Allows you to be truthful and vulnerable
- Allows you to be fully authentic and therefore, truly in alignment





## A NOTE ON TRIGGERS

Triggers are physical and psychological responses to an action, word, or person who activates a traumatizing memory or experience. The stimulus itself need not be frightening or traumatic and may be only indirectly or superficially reminiscent of an earlier traumatic incident, such as a scent or a piece of clothing.

Triggers are often indications of areas of our healing that we need to focus more energy on. Because of this, you will not see trigger warnings throughout this book. Just as most areas of growth and development can be painful, this practice can also sometimes invoke painful experiences, realizations, and/or memories. When these moments come up, feel free to use whichever coping mechanism you have in your toolbox, or refer to the next section for general suggestions for coping with triggers.

**Observe the trigger**, acknowledge it, and remind yourself in that moment that you are safe. For example: If you are being triggered by a memory of someone who hurt you in the past, stop what you're doing, look around and observe 3 things in your view. Acknowledge that the person who hurt you is not near you. Identify why this memory activated you. Gently remind yourself out-loud or in your mind's eye that that person is not near you and you are safe.

**Ask yourself what this trigger is trying to tell you.** What could this trigger be shining a light on that perhaps you have not yet healed from or worked through? For example, maybe this trigger is highlighting a harm that this person caused that has left you questioning if you can trust your own decisions. What can you do to help you heal from this? Think about all the decisions you've made that have benefited you in your life, make a list.

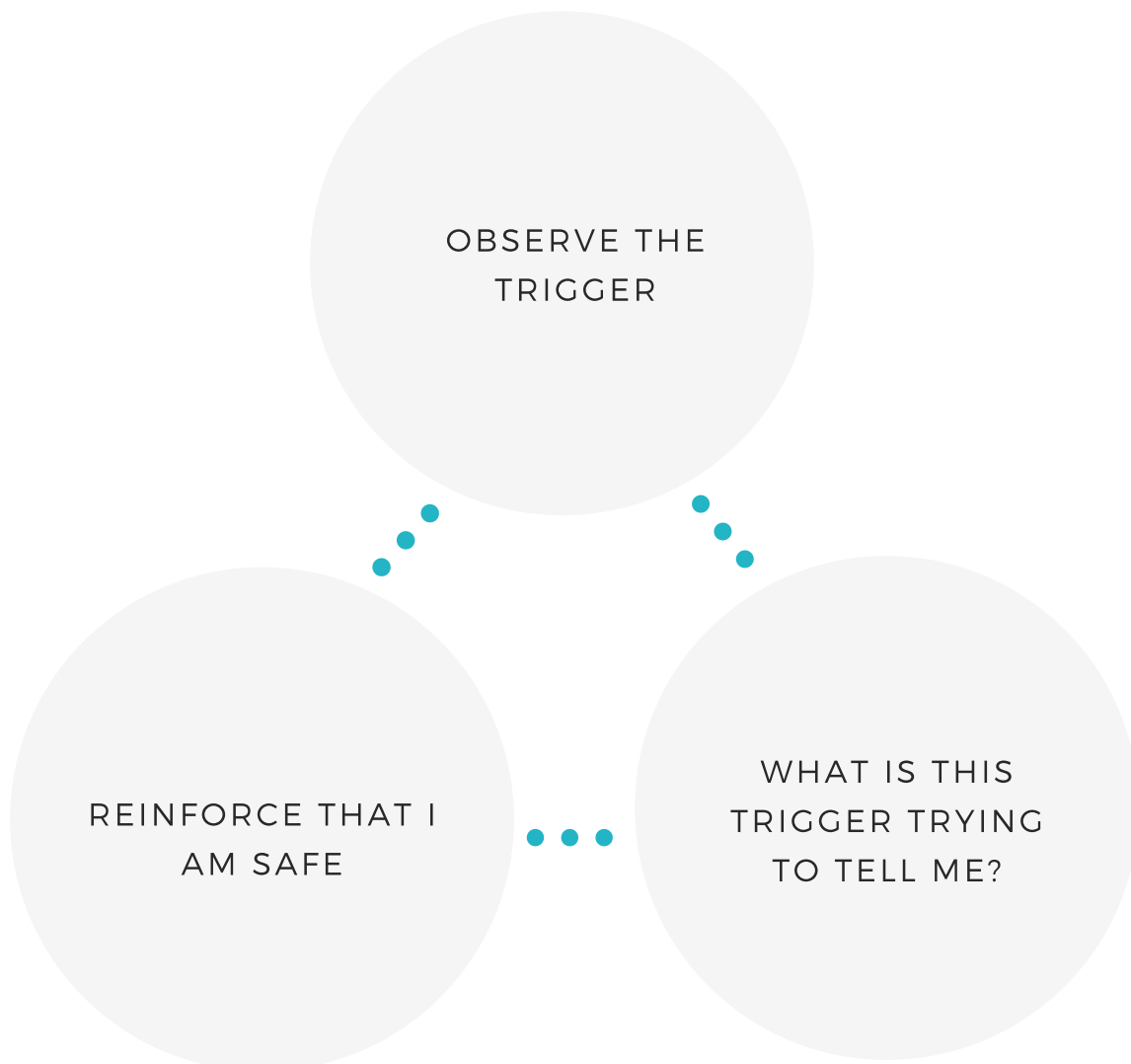
**Do an action to reinforce that you are safe.** For example, look at your phone and search for that person's number, if it is not in your phone, remind yourself why. If it is in your phone, check the settings to make sure it's blocked, or delete it, whichever feels safer to you.

Half of the work is done by simply by following these instructions for preparation. I will help along the way. I will provide guided meditations in our online community and reflection prompts to help you check-in with yourself in the preparation process.

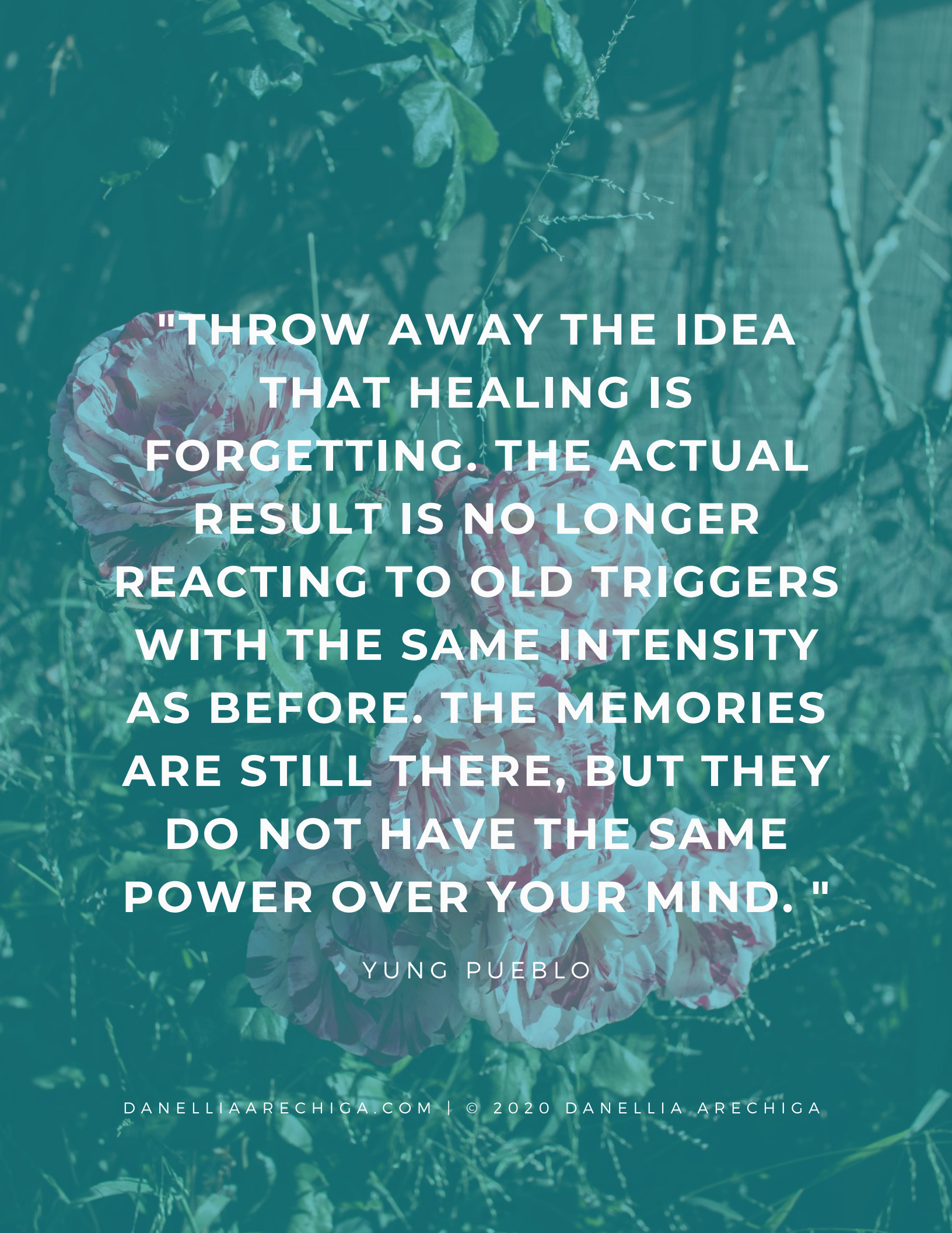


# A REMINDER FOR WORKING THROUGH TRIGGERS

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS NOT TO BE USED IN PLACE OF  
PROFESSIONAL OR MEDICAL ADVICE.







**"THROW AWAY THE IDEA  
THAT HEALING IS  
FORGETTING. THE ACTUAL  
RESULT IS NO LONGER  
REACTING TO OLD TRIGGERS  
WITH THE SAME INTENSITY  
AS BEFORE. THE MEMORIES  
ARE STILL THERE, BUT THEY  
DO NOT HAVE THE SAME  
POWER OVER YOUR MIND. "**

YUNG PUEBLO

# THE *Voice Journaling* PRACTICE

# GET TO KNOW YOURSELF

*Step 1*





## FINDING YOUR VOICE

I don't know about you, but I used to hate the way my voice sounded when I heard it, especially because it didn't sound the same as it did when I heard it in my head. Then I learned that it's all very musical and has everything to do with vibration, so I was more open to it. I do love talking even though I didn't always like the sound of my voice. I am often loud and my voice can overpower others. This is something I have had to come to peace with. I take up a lot of space even when I'm not speaking. I have been told my presence commands attention, I'm okay with that now, but there was a time that I would try to make physical self and my voice small so as to not intimidate or overshadow others. All of these realizations have come from listening to myself talk and observing how I talk and why I speak the way I do. Through my observations in my voice journaling practice, I have been able to come to peace with these characteristics about myself.

In this first step, you will explore speaking out loud with yourself, thus, finding your voice and observing how it makes you feel to use your voice and why.

## STEP 1: LOGISTICS

Find a safe space to record, a dependable recording device (a phone voice recording app works just fine but be cautious of devices that are synched with other devices or that others have access too including your children), and a private place to store these recordings because playback is an important part of this process.

Start your very first recording with a brain dump. Talk like you're talking to a friend who knows you really well. Be yourself. You may find yourself saying things you've never said out loud before. That's okay. Give yourself at least 5 minutes to try this out for a few days before you move on to Step 2.



# GET TO KNOW YOURSELF

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You can start your first journal by saying whatever comes to mind. Below are some prompts to get you started. You can choose to answer these questions in your first voice journal or write your answers below before starting.

WHAT IS THE DATE/TIME?

WHERE AM I?

WHAT AM I DOING TODAY?

WHO HAVE I INTERACTED WITH TODAY AND WHAT WERE THOSE EXPERIENCES LIKE?

WHO WILL I INTERACT WITH THROUGHOUT THE DAY?

WHAT ARE MY RELATIONSHIPS LIKE TO THE PEOPLE I WILL INTERACT WITH TODAY?

ARE THERE ANY AREAS OF MY LIFE THAT FEEL HEAVY AT THE MOMENT?

WHEN I THINK ABOUT MY FAMILY, I FEEL...

WHEN I THINK ABOUT MY FRIENDS, I FEEL...

WHEN I THINK ABOUT MY PARTNER/LOVE LIFE, I FEEL...

A FEW WORDS TO DESCRIBE HOW I FEEL IN THIS MOMENT ARE...



## GET TO KNOW YOURSELF (cont.)

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IN THIS MOMENT, I AM GRATEFUL FOR ...

IN THIS MOMENT, I FEEL...


AN AREA OF MY LIFE THAT I COULD USE SOME HELP WITH IS...

SOMETHING I THINK ABOUT OFTEN IS...

SOMETHING I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN NEEDING TO DO IS...

SOMETHING THAT IS HOLDING ME BACK FROM REACHING MY GOALS IS...





"WHEN WE DROP FEAR,  
WE CAN DRAW NEARER  
TO PEOPLE, WE CAN  
DRAW NEARER TO THE  
EARTH, WE CAN DRAW  
NEARER TO ALL THE  
HEAVENLY CREATURES  
THAT SURROUND US."

BELL HOOKS

# SET AN *Step 2* INTENTION





## STEP 2:

### SET AN INTENTION

## WHAT IS YOUR WHY?

Now that you have started to voice journal, search within yourself and ask why you are doing this. Who are you doing it for? Are you doing this because you don't have time to sit down and write in your physical journal? Are you doing this because you commute to/from work/home and have the time to commit to it on your drive? Are you doing this because it's your last resort? Is it because you are willing to try anything? Is it because you are struggling with anxiety or depression and need relief? Is it because you strive to build a healthier relationship with yourself? Is it because you want to build confidence in your speaking ability starting with yourself as the audience?

No matter your why, this is where you'll name it. You can write it or say it out-loud in one of your voice journals. Do what feels best, just make sure to document it. Your why will evolve as time goes on in your practice and you want to be sure that you can see it shift over time so you can see how far you've come. It is for this reason that you must be 100% authentic and truthful about your why. This is the only way it will work. Once you identify your why, ask yourself how important your why is to you. What are you willing to do to keep up with this practice? How often are you willing and able to commit to your voice journals? These are all questions you can answer in your next voice journal or using the worksheets in the next section.

I recommend you name this journal something like "My Why" or "My Intention" that way you can always return to it if you start to feel lost or unmotivated.

My original why started as a means to process a very difficult break up. I would voice journal reflecting all all of the toxic beliefs about myself that I had learned in the relationship. By speaking them out loud in my journals, I was able to hear how ridiculous some of them were and reject them. Eventually, my why evolved into "I want to write a book!"

A person is seen from behind, hanging dried herbs from a string in a kitchen window. The scene is bathed in soft, natural light. In the background, a calendar is visible on the wall, and a potted plant hangs from the window frame. The overall mood is calm and focused.

## STEP 2:

### SET AN INTENTION

Next, you will make a commitment to yourself. How often will you journal and how many minutes minimum each time? When I started this practice, I committed to 5 minutes a day for 20 days out of the month. I know that seems like a weird number but my thought was that I would journal every day and give myself 10 days to skip because life happens and I wanted to give myself some grace for those days I may have to skip this practice. This worked well for the perfectionist in me who also knew that journaling every day just wasn't always going to be possible.

*"Practice makes permanent." -Dharma Shakti*

Like any good wellness regimen, it's important that you build consistency in this practice, but consistency doesn't take away room for grace. What I mean by that is that consistency doesn't mean you have to record a journal every day. It's not always possible given the need for privacy and safety in this practice. Consistency means practicing this often. This is why we make a written commitment to ourselves to record a certain number of days per week. Be realistic with yourself these first 2 weeks as you try this out. I recommend committing to 3-4 days out of the week to start. You're going to want to record often enough that you're able to feel the impact of this practice, but not overdo it by jumping in every day right away.

Many of us struggle with trust because we were taught at as children not to trust ourselves or our inner voices. Many of us were taught to trust our caregivers, and they often let us down (as humans sometimes do) so unhealthy boundaries and attachment often plague our ability to trust. I want to challenge you to fight through that initial distaste for making a commitment to anyone or anything including yourself, and channel the strength to trust yourself and document your commitment to yourself here.



## STEP 2:

### SET AN INTENTION

On the next page you will be prompted to document your commitment to yourself and also to identify how meeting this commitment will make you feel afterward. When your commitment is focussed on how you will feel after, it becomes all the more attainable. If you're focussed on how not meeting your commitment will make you feel like shit, well, that may not work because then you are seeing this as a chore that you do to avoid feeling that way.

Try to make this your prayer or offering to yourself. This is time set aside just for you and it doesn't have to be a long time. You deserve this.





# A COMMITMENT TO SELF

Use this page to document your commitment or as a prompt in your next voice journal. If you choose the latter, name it something like "My Commitment to Self" so you can easily refer back to it when you need a reminder.

I AM COMMITTED TO JOURNALING  
\_\_\_\_ MINUTES EACH SESSION.

- ☐ 5 minutes
- ☐ 15 minutes
- ☐ 45 minutes

I AGREE TO BE GENTLE WITH MYSELF IF I AM UNABLE TO MEET THESE COMMITMENTS, BUT I PROMISE TO TRY MY BEST FOR MY OWN WELL-BEING, GROWTH, AND HEALING.

I AM COMMITTED TO JOURNALING  
\_\_\_\_ TIMES PER \_\_\_\_

- ☐ 3-5 times
- ☐ 6-10 times
- ☐ Day
- ☐ Week
- ☐ Month

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO ME:

HOW I WANT TO FEEL AFTER:

- ☐ Joyful
- ☐ Grateful
- ☐ Balanced
- ☐ Relaxed
- ☐ Loved
- ☐ Happy
- ☐ Other:

*"You owe it to yourself to invest time in yourself, no matter how long it is." -DA*





**"WHO LOOKS OUTSIDE,  
DREAMS; WHO LOOKS  
INSIDE, AWAKES."**

CARL JUNG

# GIVE YOURSELF TIME

*Steps 3*



# STEP 3:

## GIVE YOURSELF TIME

### FORM YOUR PRACTICE

What comes to mind when you think about practices or rituals?

I am what I call a recovering Catholic. I was raised in the Catholic Church for most of my life and part of our family ritual was to eat breakfast outside on the plaza after mass. This is a ritual that I carried into the first few years of my daughter's life. Her favorite thing to eat was the homemade enchiladas that the señoras would make to order, and my favorite were the tacos de papa.

While we made many beautiful friends and memories for years out on the plaza, I grappled with my commitment to being part of the church for years for many reasons. With the outbreak of childhood sexual abuse cases going public and the way the church handled them along with the church's views on homosexuality, and its history of oppression of women, the Catholic Church never truly felt like a safe place to me. Yet, I continued to reluctantly participate because it was our family ritual.

It wasn't until I found the courage to step away from the church that I saw with clear eyes that rituals can be both empowering but also disempowering if they don't feel quite right. As you prepare to start forming a new ritual, I'd like to outline a few key points:

#### **Rituals shouldn't...**

- Feel like a burden
- Feel uncomfortable or forced
- Keep you from the important things

#### **Rituals should...**

- Be fulfilling
- Feel effortless and organic
- Contribute to your overall well-being





# STEP 3:

## GIVE YOURSELF TIME

If at any time your practice starts to feel like a chore, take a break. I don't want you to end up resenting this practice, but just know that when you are ready to revisit it, it will be here for you. At the same time, the best way to form any ritual is to practice it often, so keep in mind that if you want to form a consistent practice, practicing often is essential.

When you get started, try to be consistent with recording for two weeks to start as a trial period. During this time, do your best to record the amount of minutes/days you agreed to in Step 2. If you miss a day, try again the next day. If you are like me and find check marks and lists helpful, you can log your recordings using the log and reflection sheet on the next couple of pages. Be realistic with your frequency. You can also use the mood tracker to track how journaling makes you feel before and after. Remember, we want to make the way we feel after we journal, our motivation, not necessarily the way we feel when we don't meet our commitment to self. This is very important to the self-compassion piece of this practice.

This practice is about self-reflection which includes being able to hold ourselves accountable for things that we may not be so proud of, and self-compassion which allows us to forgive ourselves for those same things. In this step, make a commitment to sharing your most authentic voice with yourself; your true self. If you run out of things to talk about, use the prompts from Step 1. You will thank yourself for it later.

*"Being honest with yourself is the greatest gift you can give to yourself." -Danellia Arechiga*





# VOICE JOURNALING LOG

---

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
MON				
TUES				
WED				
THURS				
FRIDAY				
SATURDAY				
SUNDAY				



# DAILY MOOD TRACKER

USE THIS DAILY MOOD TRACKER TO GAUGE HOW YOU FEEL BEFORE AND AFTER YOU VOICE JOURNAL. YOU CAN USE THIS AS A PROMPT WHEN YOU VOICE JOURNAL OR USE THESE PAGES TO WRITE ON DIRECTLY TO KEEP TRACK OF HOW OFTEN YOU'RE JOURNALING AND HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL.



DAY :

BEFORE, I FELT...

AFTER, I FELT...



DAY :

BEFORE, I FELT...

AFTER, I FELT...

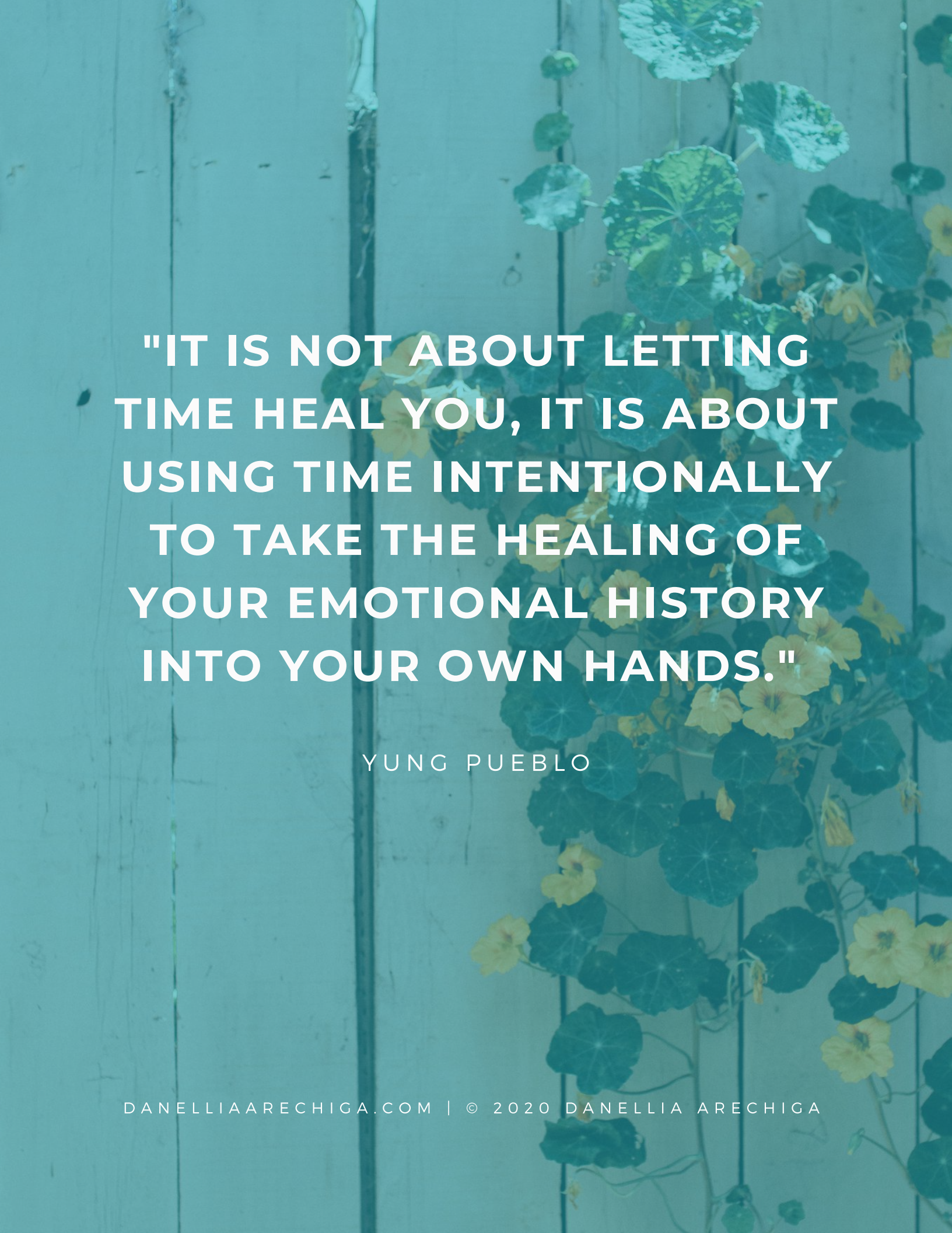


DAY :

BEFORE, I FELT...

AFTER, I FELT...





**"IT IS NOT ABOUT LETTING  
TIME HEAL YOU, IT IS ABOUT  
USING TIME INTENTIONALLY  
TO TAKE THE HEALING OF  
YOUR EMOTIONAL HISTORY  
INTO YOUR OWN HANDS."**

YUNG PUEBLO



# LISTEN TO *Step 4* YOUR VOICE



## STEP 4: LISTEN TO YOUR VOICE

### LISTENING WITH COMPASSION

Can you think of a time when you listened to your inner voice or didn't listen to your inner voice and either way ended up hurt?

Allow me to share a quick story with you. When I was 24 I reunited with a family friend who I had romantic feelings for in my adolescence. This person was now incarcerated and though our lives had taken very different paths, I was convinced that curiosity and fate had led us back to each other. I jumped head-first into a romantic relationship with this person while my heart and my inner voice duked it out over whether or not this was the right path for me. Nevermind what my family and friends warned me about, I was having my own inner battle all by myself. I moved forward with the relationship anyway.

Long story short, our relationship did not end well. After they were released from prison, they moved in with me and my 3-year-old and within the first 3 months, I was seeing behaviors that were alarming and unsafe. I had to put an end to the relationship and fast. It was painful and difficult to navigate the feelings of regret and failure I experienced afterward. I kept thinking, "if only I had trusted my intuition, I wouldn't have to explain to my daughter why our lives are changing again", "If only I hadn't listened to my heart and listened to my inner voice that told me this was wrong, I would not have wasted my time again."

I can now openly admit without judgement that when I entered this relationship I was lonely and in denial about my issues with self-sabotage. But getting here took awhile. First, I had to forgive myself for shaming myself for listening to my heart. This is what Sonya Renee Taylor calls *meta-shame*; feeling shame and then shaming ourselves for feeling shame. Listening to our hearts is never a bad thing, but listening to our hearts does not guarantee that our hearts will not be broken.



# STEP 4:

## LISTEN TO YOUR VOICE

### LISTENING WITH COMPASSION

Next, I had to rebuild trust with my inner voice. This was the voice that told me that this was probably not a good idea to pursue this relationship, but I had ignored it and decided to follow my heart even though I knew the risks in this situation definitely outweighed the possible benefits. I was able to rebuild that trust through my voice journals.

By talking out these feelings, letting out why I chose this path, what needs weren't being met prior to the relationship, and what I was hoping to achieve in this relationship, I was able to forgive myself for following my heart while also being compassionate with myself for it too. At the end of the day all I really wanted was a companion. And while I did put myself and my family in a challenging situation, I learned so much about what I was willing to do for companionship. And that exposed a larger area of my life that I needed to work on: self-love.

When you think about listening to your heart and your inner voice, which seems louder to you? Can you tell the difference?

Your inner voice is your highest self, the part of you that knows all.

Your inner voice will tell you things you may not be ready to hear, but need to.

Your inner voice will not shame you or make you feel bad for your thoughts; your inner voice always has your back.

Sometimes our inner voice resembles that of a parent or caregiver who didn't uplift and encourage us. Your inner voice should be one that is supportive.





# STEP 4:

## LISTEN TO YOUR VOICE

### LISTENING WITH COMPASSION

This step is the most important and also the hardest part about this whole practice. This is where you will listen to your recordings. This step is what will set this practice apart from any other kind of journaling.

For some of us, it's hard to face ourselves. It's hard to be alone with our truth. I want to encourage you to take some deep breaths before listening and leave any judgement or negative self-talk at the door before you begin. Be gentle with yourself. This is a new practice for you and you may not like what you hear, but that is not the goal in this section. The goal here is to get used to not just facing yourself, but embracing yourself and identify who your true self is through these recordings. Then, and only then can you begin to cultivate a relationship with yourself so that self-love can start to blossom.

Take an hour to sit with your recordings and just listen. You can listen on your headphones as you wash dishes, or on a drive. You can pretty much do anything else while you listen, as long as it is a safe and non-distracting activity. You will obviously want to listen somewhere private since you have recorded intimate details about your life. As you listen, feel free to jot down some key words or bring awareness to anything that stands out to you. .

Are you being honest with yourself?  
Are you being kind to yourself?

You can use the worksheets on the next page to identify when you have negative thoughts about your voice or your journals. Take these negative thoughts and turn them into affirmations for future voice journals. As you listen more compassionately to yourself, you will start to see the compassion spreading to others around you.



# LISTEN WITH COMPASSION

**INSTRUCTIONS:** As you set aside time to listen to your journals, notice when you have negative or judgemental thoughts about yourself or the things that you say. Note them on the left side of this worksheet and then come up with a positive affirmation for that negative thought. An example is provided below.

NEGATIVE THOUGHT:

I sound unsure of myself.  
I keep saying "um" and "like".

POSITIVE AFFIRMATION:

This is new and different.  
I have a lot to say and my words are valuable.

NEGATIVE THOUGHT:

POSITIVE AFFIRMATION:



NEGATIVE THOUGHT:

POSITIVE AFFIRMATION:



NEGATIVE THOUGHT:

POSITIVE AFFIRMATION:



NEGATIVE THOUGHT:

POSITIVE AFFIRMATION:





# LISTENING WITH COMPASSION

---



## LISTENING EXERCISE

DATE:

BEFORE, I FELT...

AFTER, I FELT...

MY THOUGHTS, INTUITIONS, REALIZATIONS...



## LISTENING EXERCISE

DATE:

BEFORE, I FELT...

AFTER, I FELT...

MY THOUGHTS, INTUITIONS, REALIZATIONS...



## LISTENING EXERCISE


DATE:

BEFORE, I FELT...

AFTER, I FELT...

MY THOUGHTS, INTUITIONS, REALIZATIONS...





**"WITHOUT COMPASSION FOR  
OURSELVES WE WILL NEVER  
STAY ON THE ROAD TO  
RADICAL SELF LOVE.  
WITHOUT COMPASSION FOR  
OTHERS WE CAN ONLY  
REPLICATE THE WORLD WE  
HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN."**

SONYA RENE TAYLOR

# ASSESS *Step 5* AND ADDRESS





## STEP 5:

### ASSESS AND ADDRESS

#### TAKE YOUR PRACTICE DEEPER

As I shared in the last section, my experience in that toxic relationship highlighted an area of my life where I needed to focus more energy and healing. For me the need I had was self-love. I needed to learn how to love myself. This voice journal practice naturally cultivates self-love through self-compassion. Once we start being more compassionate with ourselves, we can start to see our strengths despite our weaknesses. We start to see our power and our skills when we allow ourselves to embrace our whole selves and when we stop comparing ourselves to others.

If you have followed Steps 1-4 in this ebook so far, the areas in need of healing or extra attention should naturally present themselves to you by the time you reach Step 5. Once they do, it will be your decision how you will address these assessed needs. Maybe you will decide to participate in more of the voice journaling practice and set aside time to specifically address each need that arises. Maybe you will decide to seek additional support from a professional like a coach or therapist. Or maybe you will decide to ignore these needs and return to them later when you feel more prepared. No matter your decision, the goal in this step is to excavate the stories we've been telling ourselves and start telling ourselves a new story.

Try to identify where these old stories originated. Perhaps they came from stories our family have told us since we were little, i.e. "You have never been good at math." Maybe they began because of comments a partner or ex-partner have shared, i.e. "You look insecure when you wear too much makeup."

If we keep telling ourselves the old stories, we will never find our way back home to true selves. We will continue to live under the influence of others rather than pave our own way through life.





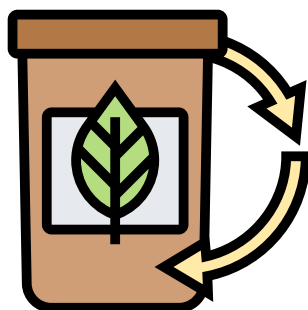
# STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use this worksheet to bring awareness to the old stories you used to tell yourself and draft the new stories you will be telling yourself moving forward. Use your voice journal recordings to guide you as you identify and sympathize with the old stories you've heard. Whatever the origin of these old stories, here is where they will be composted to fertilize your new story. Next, share the new story you will be telling yourself starting today. You can use this worksheet to write on and keep as a reminder or simply use this page as a guide for your next voice journal.

OLD STORY

A large, empty, light gray rectangular box intended for writing the 'Old Story'.

NEW STORY

A large, empty, light gray rectangular box intended for writing the 'New Story'.



**"STORIES ARE JUST DATA  
WITH A SOUL."**

BRENÉ BROWN

# YOUR *Step 6* STORY





## STEP 6: YOUR STORY

### YOUR STORY MATTERS

Many of our ancestors used spoken word to pass down their stories and traditions. Unless these stories and traditions were documented, many of them became lost. The few that we know now still exist because someone in our family line kept these stories alive.

Are there stories that have been passed on in your family? Think about the ones that have stuck and ask yourself who kept them alive?

After my first year of voice journaling, I was backing up over 200 voice journals to my computer and realized that what I had in my possession was a documentation of my life! It's a living memoir! What I am holding onto is my family's legacy! These recordings are living artifacts that document my growth as a person and the relationships I have held onto and outgrown. They make my experiences real, valid, and tangible. Most importantly, I came to the conclusion that my story matters. Even if it doesn't matter to anyone else, it matters to me.

There's power in documentation. The next question is what will you do with it?

Will you choose to use it to start writing that book you promised yourself you'd write one day?

Will you use it to document your life and leave it behind for your family once you have transitioned out of this world?

Will you store it somewhere safe and go back from time to time to remind yourself of your journey?

The choice is yours.



## YOUR STORY MATTERS

My hope for you is that you go out into the world after implementing this practice and begin to share your story in whatever way feels most organic to you. Your story matters, and you will likely find that as you share it, there will be others who gravitate to you because they resonate and want to learn more. This is how communities are created.

While sharing our deepest truths can be terrifying, it is also liberating. In living authentically in all aspects of our lives, we are free to be who we are without the fear of having to wear a mask any longer. By living authentically and unapologetically in your own truth, you inspire others around you to do the same.

Use the next pages to jot down some ideas about what your story means to you and why it matters. Then take a moment to brainstorm how your story can inspire others.

## GLOW UP!

This is the step in which you will experience the GLOW UP I've been talking about all along. As you continue your practice from here, you may start to notice you get more comfortable with speaking and listening to yourself. As you start to feel confidence in sharing your story, you may start to notice others gravitate to you because that inner GLOW is contagious. The GLOW UP comes from finally feeling comfortable enough with yourself that you can talk to yourself without judgement and with compassion. The GLOW UP comes from giving yourself grace around the things that you may have been hard on yourself about in the past. The GLOW UP comes from letting your light shine bright for all to see, unapologetically.



# MY STORY

WHAT IS MY STORY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER TO ME?

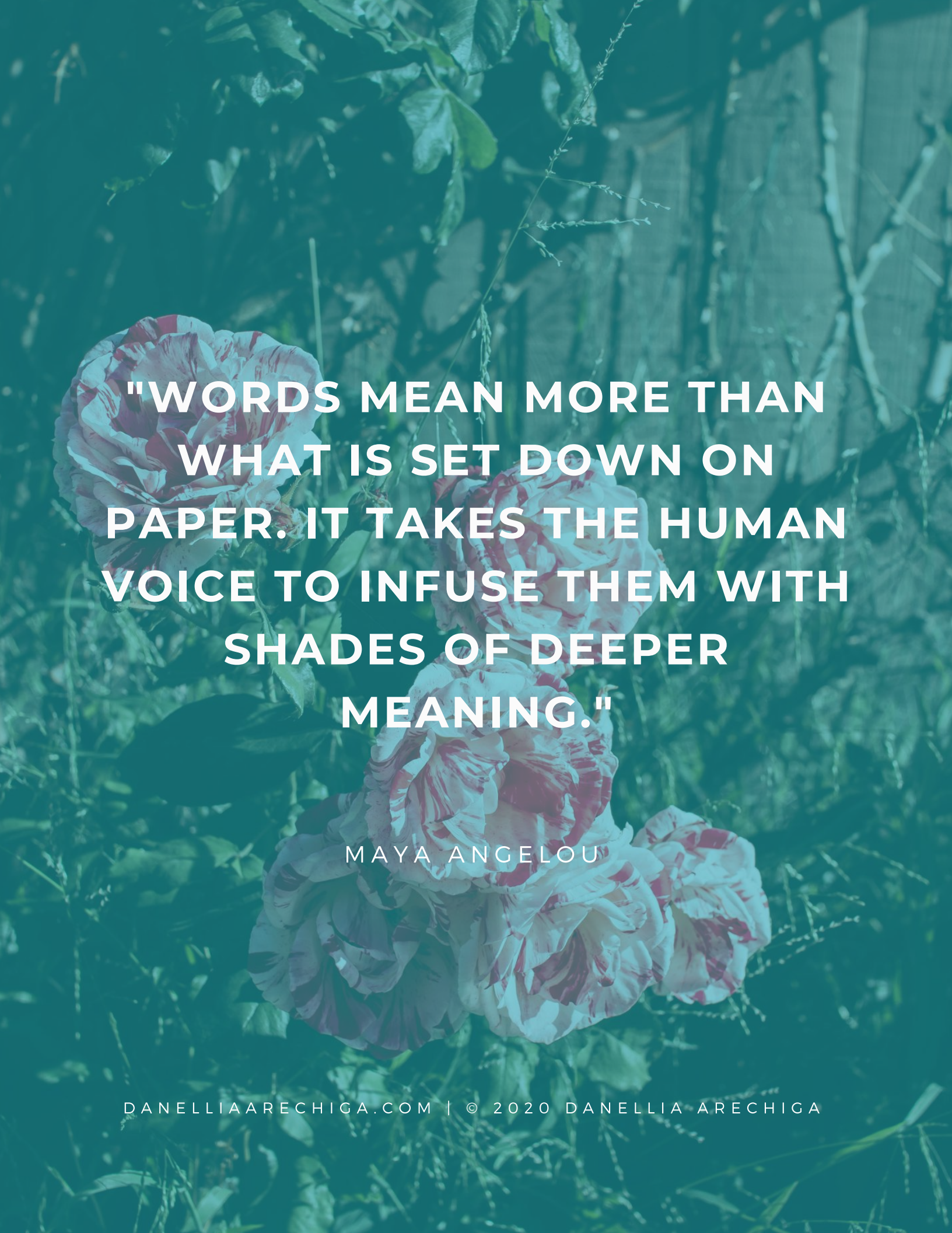
**QUESTION #1:** What is my story? What are the successes and challenges that have brought me to this point? What am I most proud of? What were learning experiences for me?

**QUESTION #2:** What is important about my story to me? Why does my story matter?



# MY STORY

WHAT IS MY GIFT TO THE WORLD THROUGH MY STORY?



**"WORDS MEAN MORE THAN  
WHAT IS SET DOWN ON  
PAPER. IT TAKES THE HUMAN  
VOICE TO INFUSE THEM WITH  
SHADES OF DEEPER  
MEANING."**

MAYA ANGELOU



# CHEAT SHEET

USE THIS ACRONYM TO HELP YOU REMEMBER THE STEPS IN THIS PRACTICE:

**V**OCALIZE

**I**NTENTION

**C**ONSISTENCY

**L**ISTEN WITH COMPASSION

**A**SSESS AND ADDRESS

**S**HARE YOUR STORY



A photograph of a person from behind, hanging dried herbs from a window frame. The person is wearing a dark blue shirt. To the left, there is a calendar on the wall and a small shelf with various items. To the right, there is a window with a patterned curtain and a small plant hanging from the frame. The word "CONCLUSION" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image.

# CONCLUSION

When I started my voice journaling practice, it started out as a means to relieve some of the stressors in my life. I was going through a painful break up, homeschooling my daughter, working through intergenerational healing, and running two businesses. I had been blaming my ex for silencing my voice, but what I found was that my lack of a voice had stemmed from my childhood. I have felt like my feelings and emotions have fallen on deaf ears for most of my life, often being classified by my loved ones as being "extra" and "dramatic". It's easy to blame others for what we didn't have, it's harder to be compassionate to those same people for what they couldn't give us.

Looking back at those loved ones and their own abilities or hesitations to use their own voices, I can see why they would silence me. Why would they support and encourage me to speak my truth if they could never speak theirs? This is where that cycle ends.

The truth is, the act of silencing our voices often starts in childhood. Using this practice has allowed me to pass on a new way of communicating with my daughter. She's only 8 but she is already showing me what being allowed to speak your truth can do for the human spirit. She's free-spirited, creative, and honest. She's not afraid to be herself because we have cultivated a safe space for her to do so. Even if the world outside of our safe bubble at home does not approve, she has enough self-confidence to advocate for herself and stand up for what she believes in, including her right to say no to me or tell me when I am not being kind or helpful.

I often think about what my life would be like if I were to be given the same safe space to express myself and my feelings as a child. Then I have to stop and remember that my journey is my own and that I went through what I had to in order to circle back to this practice and share it with you and with my daughter.

Now it's your turn to share this practice with the next person. Whose life will you enrich by sharing this practice with them? Whose turn is it to GLOW UP next?





## READY TO CONTINUE YOUR GLOW UP?

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As a Vocal Empowerment Guide, I help People of Color reconnect to their most authentic selves through intergenerational healing, 1-on-1 and group guidance, and the use of my voice journaling framework. Below you will find a couple of ways to continue this work with me at whatever capacity you are needing at the moment:

✓ **GET LIT-** EBOOK + ADMISSION TO OUR PRIVATE ONLINE COMMUNITY

You will receive my ebook as well as access to our private online community. In our group you will receive a support network, weekly check-ins, guided meditations, peer support, special events, and bonuses throughout your journey.

✓ **GLOWING!** - EBOOK + ONLINE COMMUNITY + 3 MONTH MEMBERSHIP + MONTHLY LIVE SESSIONS WITH ME!

This all-inclusive package includes the ebook, access to our private online community as described above, and a 3 month membership program with monthly 1-on-1 sessions with me. Here we will take time to get deeper into your vocal empowerment practice and focus on your specific needs and desires.

If you are ready to continue your GLOW UP and move forward into a life of abundance, self-compassion, and self love, visit [danelliaarechiga.com/GLOWUP](https://danelliaarechiga.com/GLOWUP). You don't have to do it alone!





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## MEET THE AUTHOR

DANELLIA ARECHIGA

I hold close to my heart the stories and wisdom of my grandmother and my great grandmothers who were the women who helped other birthing folks before the medical industry took that away from us. I call in my guides and ancestors who led me into this work as I remind families and individuals of their innate wisdom and strength throughout their life journey. Through my offerings in birth work, childbirth education, traditional postpartum care, support group facilitation, and public speaking, I help people and families of color return home to their true selves through vocal empowerment, birth education, and intergenerational healing.

*"It's okay not to be strong all the time. It's moments like these that stretch us to prepare us for the most influential growth of our lives. "*

HAVE QUESTIONS OR  
FEEDBACK? CONTACT ME.

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