

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Introduction

THEMES

- Reimagining leadership as full-spectrum, holistically, and through a culture-informed, gendered lens.
- Strengthening and cultivating oneself as a leader through self-awareness and expanded definitions.

PROMPTS

WRITE OR TALK ABOUT YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF EXPERIENCING YOURSELF AS A LEADER.

- Before you started this book, did you identify as a leader?
- If you don't, do you know why not?
- Do others consider you a leader?
- If so, what do you think they see in you?

For me the idea of leadership was closely linked to the influence of patriarchy, and later to White supremacist, capitalist, and colonial cultures, as well.

- List any connotations, positive or negative, that leadership holds for you.
- Where do you sense that those associations arise from, in yourself, those around you, and the culture at large?

For me, the phrase “full-spectrum leadership” encompasses all of my human capacities.

- Do you experience ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ aspects within yourself?
- If so, can you name them? How do you relate to each of them?
- What of non-binary capacities, such as courage or competence or other qualities of character?
- How useful are gendered concepts to you, given gender fluidity?

Make a list of how you see your unique gifts or talents. As you reflect on them, notice whether you appreciate yourself when you apply them well.

Inventory and list your ‘learning edges,’ or the places you know you want to grow yourself. How might you cultivate yourself or your skill sets in those areas?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Shifting Guidance from Head to Heart

THEMES

- Decentering mind as primary navigational system.
- Shifting inner compass from head to heart through deep listening, and attending to guidance from other ways of knowing — body, heart, intuition.
- Seeking to balance ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ within oneself.

PROMPTS

Sometimes I write in prose poems because I like how that form allows me the freedom of being less linear, more evocative and creative. It seems to offer me greater flow, and less internalized judgment.

I encourage you to respond to these pieces in whatever way offers you the same freedom, liberating any kind of expression that opens a flow for you.

- How do you relate to the form of your own response?
- What does “listening with your heart” mean for you?
- How else might you listen, besides with your ears?

How would you define “deep listening” and why is it so important to leadership?

“Reclaiming the feminine” is a theme throughout the book.

- How would you define “the feminine” in your own life, experience, and psyche?

Pay particular attention to any somatic or body responses that might arise, or any emotions or judgments that may come up in relation to ‘the feminine.’

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

A River of Purpose: A Human-Nature Landscape

THEMES

- An intimate relationship with nature can be a source of calling, or purpose. So can any issue, place, or social environment you feel drawn to protect, defend, or change.
- A sense of 'calling' is not static, or a goal, but can be continually evolving. It can seem disparate and non-linear, yet still be informed with pattern.

PROMPTS

My winding path led me eventually into exploring my relationship to leadership, and to cultivating myself toward who I wished to become.

- What strikes you most about your own journey?
- Do you have negative judgments you could release about the shape of your own exploration or path?
- Do you perceive any patterns or clarity when you look at it from a bird's eye view?

My early connection to nature offered me comfort and sanctuary, and returned as a devotional throughline later in my life.

- Where or to whom did you turn to for comfort, in your youth?
- What in your life affects or nourishes you now?

This same connection led to my first sense of a calling.

- Can you recall any early experiences that affected you in this way?

In relation to your own sense of calling or purpose:

- Who, where, or what do you love, and might you feel called to serve? (Not necessarily forever, but for now, for your next step...).

To help you clarify, try this either orally in a circle or in writing:

- List the people, places, creatures, or experiences you love most passionately.
- What breaks your heart? What evokes sorrow in you?
Depression? Outrage or anger?

Do any of these answers surprise you? They might provide clues to what calls you, for now.

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Listening for Guidance: Mystery, Intuition and Dreamtime

THEMES

- Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Learning through Creativity
- Reclaiming Intuition and Dreamtime

PROMPTS

Has an encounter with another's culture ever evoked learning for you, beyond your rational mind, and if so, can you describe what you felt, sensed, learned?

Recall a time when you discovered something about yourself through creativity. It could be something you or another made, wrote, sang, or danced.

- How was it to learn from that artist part of yourself, rather than through thinking?

How do you experience your own intuition? Recall a specific time in your life when you've felt it.

- Where in your body do you sense it? Is it mostly auditory, kinesthetic, or visual?
- Are there any times of day or year when it seems strongest?
- Has your moon time or that of another near you corresponded to any heightened sensitivities? If so, please describe them.

Think of a time or situation when a dream or an intuition guided you and may have affected the outcome.

Now consider a time when you didn't follow your intuition or instincts. What happened?

Share a story based on an experience with intuition, dreamtime, instincts, or synchronicity.

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Cultivating Relational Intelligence

THEMES

- All our crises are rooted in a crisis of relationship.
- Relational skills are essential to good leadership, and can be learned.
- Expanding intelligence to include wisdom of relatedness, both inside of ourselves and externally with others.
- Relational smarts include body knowing and intuition, and learning from attending to reciprocity in all nature's systems.
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PROMPTS

In your own experience, have feelings and sensing and other ways of knowing been discounted or undervalued?

- Share a story of when or how you received that message.

What is relational intelligence, how would you describe it? How is it different from “rational” or “linear” intelligence?

- Share or write a specific example of how your relational intelligence serves you in your life or leadership.

Do you tend to prioritize your agenda or “to do” list over tending to your relationships? What effect does this have in your life?

Who taught you to love, and how did they teach you?

- Who teaches you about love now?
- What excites you about the power of love, and what scares you about it?

Do you value your emotions, or only some of them?

- Which emotions seem scary to you, or confusing?
- Which may be your “default” emotions?
- Do you notice any emotions that seem to hide behind others?
- Which emotions would you like to relate to and express more skillfully?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Through Darkness Into Vision

THEMES

- The gifts in not knowing, faith, darkness, and vulnerability.
- Turning toward (instead of away from) Shadow wounds and uncertainty.
- The value of receiving loving care when you need it, and letting it in.
- The importance of rest and taking time for healing.

PROMPTS

Have you faced a health or other life or loss challenge that took you to a dark, disorienting, or frightening place?

- What did you learn from the experience? Share or write about it.

What arises in you when you don't know what to do?

- Do you ask for help, and if so, are you able to receive it?
- What helps you to center yourself when there's chaos around you?

Reflect on a time when you may have prayed, asked for help, or felt lost. Perhaps you sang or danced your prayer, or just said it internally. Notice what you turned to for comfort, to anchor you in a storm. These reference points can help stabilize us, whenever we need grounding.

Do you become impatient when your body or psyche needs time to heal?

- What could help you to change that pattern in yourself?
- How does uncertainty or mistrust in the natural process manifest in you?

Our need for rest, self-care, and renewal is a theme throughout this book. Take a moment to think about when you last took a break, slowed down, rested, took a nap, did nothing at all.

- Might you be able to take 10 minutes today to relax and rest?
- What comes up for you? What gets in the way?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

From Mourning Into Daybreak

THEMES

- How we find healing: the necessity of grieving what we have lost and are losing.
- The power of losing our moorings, when we lose someone close, to be reborn in a new or different way.
- Identifying and listening for the council of voices within ourselves.

PROMPTS

Reflect on how you think about, relate to, and talk about death. Then consider how you feel about the big losses we face collectively: Creatures. Family. Climate. Oceans. Violence. Forests. Refugees.

- Are your ways of relating to these losses and death connected?

Our culture doesn't offer many opportunities to feel, yet we're living through times when waves of emotion are frequent and intense.

- How do you give yourself space, permission, or practices to feel the emotions that arise in you?
- How might you tamp them down, or avoid or deny them?

Reflect on or write about how you disconnect from, or relate to these emotions. If needed, how might you shift the pattern?

Do you ever sense a circle of characters within you, and if so, can you listen for their voices, or intuit their characters? Perhaps they are different ages, or from different genders or species or traditions.

- How might you deepen your relationship to the varied facets of yourself, to help liberate greater expression?

The theme of healing runs through these last two pieces.

- How does personal healing relate to leadership?
- How do you resource yourself so you can stay present to grieving, either personally or societally, and keep going?
- And if you feel anger or outrage, how do you express and allow for that in a healthy way?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Reinventing Leadership: Reclaiming The Feminine

THEMES

- Legacy of silencing and diminishing the ‘feminine’ within ourselves.
- Dissonance between our inner and outer stories, the masks we wear.
- Optimizing engagement among diverse people, perspectives, and orientations.
- How leadership is changing already, globally.

PROMPTS

Who in your life most inspires you to be the kind of leader you want to be, and why?

Learning about the witch burnings in Europe brought me greater understanding of the ongoing, cross-sectoral, and intergenerational influence of patriarchal structures.

- How do you think that legacy may continue to affect our interior stories and collective cultures?
- In what ways are women’s voices still shut out, silenced, and/or discounted today?

Regardless of our gender, we all have internal biases that need to be

made conscious, so they can be rebalanced. Reflect on your mix of gifts or traits, both in terms of how you treat yourself, and how you show up in the world. What gender biases do you find within yourself? Notice if you judge yourself for lacking or possessing certain traits.

Do you think of mothering as leadership? Why, or why not?

For me, “leading from the feminine” includes feeling sourced from a connection to what I most love, and what’s sacred to me.

- How do you experience your connection to the divine?
- What does this have to do with leadership?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Embodied and Group Practices for Part I

FULL SPECTRUM TOOLKIT

Create your own image or metaphor -- a toolkit, backpack, treasure chest, nest, carpetbag — in a drawing, painting, or collage. List or draw the particular skills, gifts, and talents you use in your ways of leading, that you keep in your toolkit. You might opt to keep adding to this list as you read this book.

HEALING RELATIONSHIP TO SELF

How might you cultivate greater patience, compassion, and self-love?

Create an image or write a phrase or affirmation, or find a quote to remind yourself. Place it where you can see it each day.

Each night, before bed, notice all the things you did that day that you feel good about, including challenges you faced, and appreciate yourself for how you met them. Notice what you want to get better at and give yourself permission and kindness around your learning edges, encouraging yourself to keep stretching, risking, and learning.

DREAMS AND INTUITION

Keep a dream journal. When you have a dream, waking or sleeping, or an intuition, record it in any creative way you prefer, writing or drawing or painting or composing a song. As you do so, what might you discover about yourself, or how you are being guided?

GUIDANCE

Where do you turn to for guidance when you're uncertain, both inwardly and outwardly? Reflect on a person or place you seek out for guidance. Go to that person or place, either in your imagination or actually, and ask for their help. Then be present: wait and listen. Write, dance, or create an artistic expression based in this experience.

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Go out and experience nature through amplifying your sense of smell, touch, hearing, feeling. Close your eyes: Can you feel the earth under your feet? Notice everything you can hear for one minute, what you smell for another. Notice what you feel on your skin, through your hands or limbs. Feel your breath and appreciate the miracle of your lungs working. Open your eyes and observe something you may not have noticed before. Share or write about what you experienced.

For pairs or groups: Go outside, get into pairs and blindfold one. Remaining silent throughout, lead the blindfolded one to things they might hear, smell, or touch. Then switch roles. Afterwards, share about the experience of leading and being led. How does this relate to leadership?

REST AND RENEWAL

A simple practice to help remember to take it easy: Sit or lie down, and gently focus on your breath. Notice what happens in your body and mind as you slow down. What might help you cultivate greater patience, inner kindness, and self-love? Create an image or write a phrase to remind yourself. Place it where you can see it each day.

EMOTIONAL/RELATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

In a private space, select an emotion that is uncomfortable for you to feel. Reflect on how it played out at home in your family when you were a kid. Notice whether you perceive that same discomfort in others. Now try expressing or acting it out: write it, sing it, dance it, draw it.

PRACTICE GRIEVING

Notice what brings up deep sorrow whenever you think of it and allow yourself permission to fully feel it in your body for a few minutes. Write a grief poem or song or create an image that expresses what you feel in an authentic way.

EXPRESSING YOURSELF OR GIVING VOICE

Remember a time you have been silenced or silenced yourself from fear. What lesson did you draw from this experience? Can you turn it around by expressing your voice in a creative way, through a poem, song, drawing, or dance?

Do you notice yourself adding question marks at the ends of your sentences? If so, you might try experimenting with using periods or exclamation marks instead, to strengthen your ways of expressing what you believe is true and right.

CLARIFYING A SENSE OF PURPOSE

This exercise can help to clarify your path, calling, or purpose. Sit with a partner and take a moment to get present, centered, and connect. Then ask over and over for three minutes, repeating the question without responding after each answer:

- (Name), what really lights you up? (ask 5-10 times)
- (Name), what do you love most deeply? (ask 5-10 times)
- (Name), what breaks your heart? (ask 5-10 times)

Listen deeply without interruption. When 3 minutes are up, stop and let your partner jot some notes. Reflect back what you heard. Then switch roles. At the end, share with each other what you learned.

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

At the Frontlines: The Global War on Women

THEMES

- Statistics detailing the oppression of women reveal brutal realities.
- Extractive industries enabled by governments have targeted women, to destroy and uproot Indigenous communities all over the planet.
- When women band together, we can strengthen each other to confront harm, heal, increase each other's leadership, and co-create solutions.

PROMPTS

Reflect on how you respond when you are confronted with the ongoing reality of women's oppression: numbness, a sigh, anger, grief, resignation? Can you name and honor what you feel?

Some historians believe that patriarchy was reified by the expansion of systems of supremacy, colonialism and capitalism. Extractive industries treat Indigenous communities as expendable, destroying families, landscapes, lifeways, cultures.

- What combination of forces is driving this destruction? As Indigenous communities fight back, where do you think their resilience and strength comes from?

Few women escape some form of harassment, assault, or oppression, whether in family, at work or on the street.

- Do you have experiences you are willing to write about, or share in your discussion circle?
- Might you share your own strategies for self-protection and healing?

The promise of women-led change won't happen if we sabotage ourselves and compete and undermine each other.

- Have you been able to recognize such behaviors inside yourself?
- Are there ways you have worked to change the general tendency towards competing?

Reflect on how women have helped you claim the confidence to lead.

- How and when have you experienced being strengthened by other women? Share or write about one such time or mentor.

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Grassroots Women: Restoring Relations Around the World

THEMES

- “Solving for pattern” means applying solutions that create cascading benefits to the whole system, beyond the initial problem it sought to solve.
- Grassroots, women-led movements create solutions by reconnecting relationships, and forging and cultivating relationships among disparate issues or constituencies.
- Women-lead grassroots approaches are based on collaboration and cooperative leadership, and respect for people, land, and culture.

PROMPTS

The January 2017 Women’s March was an example of fast action emerging from creating connective tissue between disparate groups aligned in common cause.

- If you participated, what was your experience?
- Did you find yourself aligned with more than one group?

This chapter describes several examples of grassroots, women-led movements for rights, sovereignty, and the Earth.

- Which were already known to you? Which not?
- What does that tell you about “grassroots movements?”
- Which of these would you like to know more about, and why?

You might research one of these further to see how it might serve as a model for your own activism. Share whatever you learn to inspire others.

It is clear to me that “What is good for women is good for the Earth.” Discuss why that might be.

Project Drawdown shows that “empowering and educating girls” is a vital solution to lowering carbon, and is an example of “solving for pattern.” Reflect on a main concern/problem/issue you are devoted to.

- How might it intersect with other problems/issues?
- How might you come up with solutions or collaborations that affect a broader range of issues?

Coalition building is central to women-led movements.

- In your own life and work, how do you practice forging connections?
- How might you be able to enhance cooperation with other kindred change agents to leverage power?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Reclaiming Activism: Indigeneity, Leadership, and Collaboration

THEMES

- Expanding the idea of what activism is defined as and looks like.
- Movements for change suffer from factionalism, hierarchies, discounting voices of women, the poor, and POC: We need to learn coalition-building towards greater impact and leveraging power.
- Indigenous cultures and lifeways can inspire shifts in consciousness to focus on our connectedness to each other and the land.
- Befriending sacrifice as part of leadership, and balancing it with joy and self-care.

PROMPTS

Do you identify as an activist?

- If so, what does that mean to you? If not, why not?
- Do you think a mother can be an activist through mothering, a farmer through farming, a writer through writing? How exactly?

The principle of “prioritizing relationship over agenda” can be a means to rebalance our world and our activism. Think of the balance of those in your work life, in your activism life, and at home.

- How would such prioritizing shift your work? How?
- How might it enhance your effectiveness?

- What skills might you have learned in your intimate relationships that translate to movement-building and influencing change?
- How might you strengthen your partnering with others to leverage power?

Can we embrace a model of leadership that includes sacrifice yet at the same time integrates joy, creativity, and self-care? Or does that seem contradictory?

Generosity and mutual aid characterize many traditional indigenous societies around the world. In our competition-oriented culture, how might we learn from those models without engaging in cultural appropriation?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Illuminating Possibilities: Leaders Lifting Others Up

THEMES

While extremely diverse in their approaches, paths, and styles for expressing love-inspired leadership, the leaders who inspire me have much in common:

- they move from inner guidance to outer expression;
- they embody deep listening, a passion for justice, ecological and cultural healing, connectedness, humility, reverence, and joy;
- they create conditions for others to flourish as leaders.

PROMPTS

Which of the leaders described in this chapter most inspires you? Why?

Pick two that do very different kinds of work: reflect upon and/or discuss what they have in common.

Bring to mind a leader not mentioned here who inspires you, or one you have learned from: what might this person have in common with the two that you picked from this list? What might be different or unique?

Bring to mind a leader you don't like. What might you glean from what you dislike about their way of leading?

How do the leaders featured here work with power?

- From what or where does their power to lead others derive?
- What do you see that draws or repels you about power and different ways to wield power?

Write a list of the values that are most important to you. Then examine your list and see if and how those values underlie your own leadership ways, style, choices, and expression. If your leadership ways don't reflect your deeply held values, reflect on how you might change to embody more of what you most value.

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

The Power of Story

THEMES

The power of story to reclaim our voices, express our truth, shed negative conditioning, discern life purpose, become who we yearn to be, awaken our vision, attract support, connect with allies, inspire vision, and mobilize change.

PROMPTS

How has being silenced and silencing ourselves enabled and perpetuated women's oppression?

- "When we make our voices heard, change starts to happen."
- Can you share a personal example of this principle?

The stories we tell ourselves often determine the risks and stands we are willing to take. But some stories we carry unconsciously.

- Do you have a practice to help you become aware of self-limiting stories?
- If not, might you invent a practice or ritual?

Stories enhance our capacity for empathy and connection.

- Can you think of a story that helped or helps you reconnect with your emotions and/or empathy? How did it do that?

Researchers are now finding that fear and threat don't change people for the better, whereas having a more enticing story can. Why do you think that is?

Charles Eisenstein and others suggest we are living in a world between two paradigms or stories: The old story of fear, separation, scarcity, and the new story of relatedness, giving, caring, and sharing.

- Look within. Which story you are feeding internally, both in relation to yourself and to others?
- How does the story of separation live inside you? How are you able to let it go?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

The Power of Story: V (formerly known as Eve Ensler)

THEMES

- V's play *The Vagina Monologues* brilliantly illustrates the power of story-telling to raise awareness globally about violence against women, and to shift culture towards healing.
- Her life demonstrates her ability to turn her own painful story into inspiration, action, and resources to support others.
- One Billion Rising celebrates women's ability to rise up and express their connection, liberation, and healing.

PROMPTS

How does V use her own story to shift consciousness inside herself and everywhere? How does she uplift the voices of silenced women?

What do you think is central to the amazing success of *The Vagina Monologues*?

How do you relate to V's courage in her stand to actually end violence against women?

How does it feel to you?

- Is your own stand large enough to reflect your heart's true desire?

Here are some story-telling points:

- Don't be afraid of your own vulnerability.

- Don't lecture or tell people what they should think or feel; instead offer your own subjective transformative experience.
- By valuing your own story, you give others permission to trust the value of their own.

How has telling stories enhanced your leadership skills? How might you expand and make more effective your use of storytelling as a leadership tool?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Celebrating Women's Ways

THEMES

- Appreciating women stepping out of our safety zones and shedding negative conditioning.
- Celebrating and uplifting women's unique qualities: connectedness to cycles, to each other, to the earth, to intuition, to listening and tending and mending, to color, and movement — while admiring men who support and embody women's ways.

PROMPTS

I find reassurance in the ancient prophecy that predicts the return of the “feminine” as a time for rebalancing the world. I often refer to non-conventional sources such as these.

- Do you find myths and prophecies useful?
- What nonrational sources of wisdom do you learn from?
- How do they contribute to your sense of what is true and your understanding of what is happening now?

In relation to gender roles, what conditioning do you recognize in yourself that you would like to shed?

- What do you love about women?
- What don't you like or trust?

Be real, risk telling the truth of whatever comes up. Go around your circle and appreciate something you've noticed about each woman in the group. Notice how it feels, afterward — in your body, heart, mind, and spirit.

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Embodied or Group Practices for Part II

EXPRESSING FEELINGS

What happens when you allow the terrible statistics of the “global war on women” into your heart? What feelings arise? Express both the difficult reality and your own feelings in some creative form: writing, chanting, painting, dancing.

CONFRONTING COMPETITION

Do you experience patterns of competition with women friends or co-workers? Identify someone with whom you experience this sense of competition and explore what might lie underneath the pattern: insecurity, jealousy, a wound from the past?

Try thumb-wrestling with another, or racing to reach a goal, or notice if you compete inwardly, comparing clothes, beauty, or sexuality of yourself with another. How does it feel? Notice any positive or negative associations and how they affect how you feel about yourself.

Imagine letting go of that to move towards mutual support, and notice what that feels like, including any resistance you may feel.

TO STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS:

Sit with a person with whom you would like to have a more collaborative, stronger relationship to accomplish a task. First tell each other a story about your lives that’s not task-related, one that shares something of your innermost realities. Perhaps introduce yourselves in ways you never have before. Then, identify a common vision or goal.

Next, ask each other: What do you most need to feel supported in this task? Listen with an open heart, and take notes of what your partner is naming. If something isn’t working, gently request a different approach.

Appreciate in words something about how you experience the other.

End by asking and responding to the question: How might we hold ourselves and each other accountable? What agreements could support us in that?

OWNING OUR INDIGENEITY

We are all indigenous to some place on planet Earth. How much do you know about your ancestors and where they came from?

Learn about your own lineage and their values, challenges, and customs. Create a way to honor your ancestors and/or forgive them: imagine and write or draw their childhoods, or maybe create an altar, a ritual, an artistic expression, or a family tree.

EMBODY WHAT YOU VALUE

Reflect upon how your leadership behaviors do or don’t reflect your deeply-held values. In the places where they may not, first forgive yourself — recognizing that we are all works in progress, and cultivating ourselves toward who we wish to become.

Where they are congruent, appreciate that alignment in yourself. Now imagine a practice or strategy that might help you to align more congruently. Create a reminder to help you engage that practice.

STORY-TELLING PRACTICE #1: Tell a story to another person of a leader you admire or of your own vision or accomplishment, with a goal of inspiring them to join you in something you care deeply about.

Listen non-defensively for their response about what moved them and what didn't, receiving their feedback as an investment in your leadership.

STORY TELLING PRACTICE #2: Write a one-page story about a transformational moment in your life.

Now rewrite or edit it, using these practical tips:

- Be specific and sensory in your imagery;
- Reveal your vulnerability;
- Don't tell people what to think or feel;
- Humor and humility are always welcome.

When you are done, see how those changes may have enlivened the story.

READ/PERFORM LIBERATING STORIES

If you have not attended or participated in a performance of *The Vagina Monologues*, read the play, watch on video, or better yet, get together with a group of women to read it out loud together.

BREAKING TABOOS

In *The Vagina Monologues*, V broke a taboo to ignite a movement. Reflect on what taboos might be stopping you from speaking your truth.

Write a monologue about your discovery of your own sexual nature, or about something else that feels risky to you.

- What fears arise when you think about sharing it?
- Can you go ahead and share with a person you trust anyway?

If you do, reflect on what happened and appreciate yourself for your courage.

EMBODIED MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE

Inspired by One Billion Rising: Move or dance, alone or with others; play some music you love and totally let yourself go.

If emotions arise, let yourself express them with your body.

Afterwards, notice how movement can shift your energy.

LOVING WOMEN WHOLE-HEARTEDLY

Reflect on what you love about women and express it in a creative endeavor: a poem, drawing, collage, song, or dance.

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Valuing Relationships & Tradition (Towards a Future that Works for All)

THEMES

- Indigenous life ways and knowledge traditions have much to offer contemporary mainstream society.
- In the Okanagan teachings called The Four Societies (Tradition, Vision, Relationship, and Action), decision-making and community health are designed to integrate all four perspectives equally whereas we in patriarchal culture tend to favor vision and action.

PROMPTS

I describe the Okanagan Salmon Ceremony in detail because it so moved me to be welcomed as a participant and witness to a ritual that expresses the right relations between humans with each other and with the land, creatures, and waters that sustain our lives.

- Have you participated in any kinds of ceremony?
- If so, can you share or write about it, naming what values you recognize as embedded in the ritual?
- What wisdom traditions or lifeways from your own lineage do you love? Reflect, research, and share with others.

How do you balance the modes of action and relationship, tradition and vision in your own life and decision-making?

- Consider an example and notice: which tend to take priority for you?
- How does the Okanagan way of reaching a decision compare to how our Western capitalist societies make decisions?
- How might we learn from this model to improve our own governing practices?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Healing at the Intersections: Environment and Social Justice Conjoin at Bioneers

THEMES

Bioneers has always embodied a whole systems approach to advance nature's designs and diversity, but our organization reached a deeper commitment to social justice when we realized that working on behalf of racial and social justice, women, democracy and the environment are all one and the same struggle.

PROMPTS

Bioneers made an evolutionary leap when we heard from renowned civil rights activist J.L. Chestnut that "The way our cultures have treated women, people of color, Indigenous Peoples, immigrants, and the earth are all octaves of the same legacy." I saw how our inherited biases are at the root of all our challenges.

- Do you think US mainstream culture has come to this understanding yet?
- Discuss in what ways you see such a shift, and in what ways not? What might be in the way?
- Can you give an example from your own experience of how environmental and social justice are related?

When did you first hear the phrase Environmental Justice and how do you understand it?

- What does the word intersectionality mean to you?
- In what ways has your understanding of these concepts shifted your own ideas, work or actions?

I like to end speeches with a prayer.

- Write or say your own prayer, expressing what your heart yearns for.
- Speak your deepest aspiration for people and planet out loud. Share with others.

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Escaping the Tilted Room

THEMES

- Melissa Harris-Perry's metaphor "the tilted room" demonstrates how effectively unconscious biases distort our reality.
- Biases hurts those who hold them, as well as those on the receiving end.
- Deep listening and conscious practice are needed to become aware of bias and unlearn it, especially if you are on the benefitting side of the tilt.

PROMPTS

When did you first become aware of racial and/or gender ranking — of yourself or others being treated unfairly or as less? Share a memory.

Reflect on and name an internalized bias that limits your aspirations or behavior.

- Can you think of a bias you once held, and have changed?
- What allowed you to become aware of it? To shed it?

The 2017 Women's March, while a somewhat successful expression of solidarity and common values, also revealed the "shadow side" of women's leadership. Have you experienced this shadow side? Write or describe what you experienced.

To promote healing from bias and trauma, I believe it's essential that we listen to our hearts, intuition, and bodies and less to our rational minds.

- Do you notice ways your body or sensing registers harm, injustice, or unfairness?
- What do you do when you perceive that?
- Is it hard for you to witness another's pain and recognize your own complicity in it?
- Are you willing to learn, and to be uncomfortable, to strengthen your ability to be with and relate to difference, while discovering more about your own privilege or complicity?
- What do you sense holding you back?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Trauma, Rupture, Repair

THEMES

- In a country built on White supremacy, its wealth a function of slavery, theft, and genocide, repairing and healing our ruptured relations with each other is essential to address our social problems.
- Discomfort and uncertainty are part of addressing racial and other types of wounding; staying present while uncomfortable is a practice.
- Repair happens in relationships when we commit to listening and negotiating between different lived realities, a process that confers strength and resilience.

PROMPTS

How have you personally addressed wounds from your past?

- Have you employed ritual?
- Have you shared your story with trusted friends?
- Have you used therapy or other methods? Would you consider therapy a form of ritual?

With her permission, I tell the story of holding a woman suffering an asthma attack as piercing the shell of my privilege.

- Has any experience pierced you in that way?
- How does it affect you to feel the pain of racial and other injustices?

We all have blind spots that come with privilege.

- How do you perceive your blind spots?
- Can you be kind to yourself, and hold yourself tenderly when you notice your mistakes?

When confronting the harms created by the systems we live in, how do we avoid overwhelm and guilt, but hold our own accountability, cultivating our capacity to stay present and respond?

What rituals or practices allow you to be present to the pain our movements are trying to rectify, but not burn out or get overwhelmed?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Pathways for Repair after Ruptures: Best Practices

THEMES

From a gathering of diverse women leaders, some best practices and common principles emerged for inoculating against ruptures and dealing with repair:

- name power and privilege differences up front;
- seek mutual agreement on intention and desired outcomes;
- establish group norms;
- representation matters;
- encourage embodied awareness;
- prioritize relationship before task.

PROMPTS

I included a painful personal example of a rupture that occurred over an issue of cultural appropriation, because it taught me so much and it's emblematic of many other problems that arise when we try to work together.

- Have you had an experience of being among a group that came apart?
- How did it get resolved?
- What did you learn that may be beneficial to share?

What resonates for you among the best practices garnered from different women across a spectrum of age, class, nationality, sexual orientation, and issue area?

- What practices might you add to the list?
- How might they make a difference in your next meetings at work, in school or in your activism?
- If you anticipate there could be resistance, how might you diffuse it?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Women Finding Voice: A Conversation with Terry Tempest Williams

THEMES

- The challenge of reconciling contemplation and action; dancing with apparent contradiction, and the value of discernment.
- What does leadership of the heart look like? Leadership of community? How do we sustain ourselves, balancing service and self-care?
- What is the source of our love, of our inspiration, our creativity?
- Observing and not caving to the systemic and archetypal silencing and continued judgment of the feminine.

PROMPTS

How do you respond to the form of this interview, which allows you to hear our unique voices? Does any particular exchange stand out for you?

I think of finding my voice as connected to finding my sense of purpose, whereas Terry relates her voice to being present, listening for guidance from the natural world, and informing her action. What is true for you? Are these distinct approaches connected?

Terry says that “We have to stand in the center of our authenticity and claim what we are feeling, with our truth and our anger and other emotions.” What do you sense about the connections between your authentic voice and your emotions?

Terry points to a paradox we are all living in: we have to scale up solutions, the times are urgent, and yet we also need to slow down and be still and local to listen for guidance. How do you reconcile the two seemingly opposing needs?

- How do you relate to paradox?
- Can you give an example of paradox in your own life?
- Is your instinct to try to resolve, reconcile or embrace paradoxes when you encounter them?

The sources of Terry’s joy and strength are: solitude, her marriage, friends and community, and nature. What are your sources of joy and strength, and how do they feed you?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Nature, Culture & Spirit: Integration and Congruence through Practical Magic

THEMES

- A Peruvian shaman's teaching helps me create my own rituals for inner integration, cultivation, and self-care, as well as for strengthening communal bonds.
- Learning to integrate contradictions and embrace binaries, we can create inner balance, congruence, and magic.

PROMPTS

In this chapter, I share personal examples of my living into these three principles: Consciousness creates matter; Language creates reality; Ritual creates relationship.

- As you feel into these ideas, what comes up for you?
- Can you unpack these principles and translate them into your own understanding, finding examples of each from your own life?

Consciousness Creates Matter

- Have you experienced prayer or visualization or other spiritual practices create changes in your physical reality?

Language Creates Reality:

- Have you noticed yourself changing your own use of words and phrases to express your values more accurately?

Ritual Creates Relationship:

- Have you adopted or can you adopt rituals to manifest self-care and partnership with others?

We need to shift our culture's habit of ranking and binary realities based in separation towards a culture of complementarity, mutuality, and reciprocity. For example, there is a false notion that we cannot attend to our inner life or spiritual selves and be activists at the same time.

- Can you think of a contradiction or paradox in your life and imagine how you might dance with what may seem like contrary perspectives?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Why I'm Deepening Into Indigenous Allyship

THEMES

- When the pandemic started, my heart led me to care for Indigenous Peoples, and the traditional knowledge and culture they carry.
- More and more I see how much we have to learn from the ways of First Peoples, and how wise we'd be to encourage and follow their leadership.
- We can reciprocate by humbly supporting them in material ways, listening to and being guided by their needs.
- The Haudenosaunee way of balancing the roles of masculine and feminine in power sharing and decision making is an inspiring model.

As I list some of the ways Native Peoples have been murdered, forced from their lands, oppressed, poisoned, stolen from, and betrayed, what arises in your heart, mind, body, or spirit?

How aware are you of Native Peoples' history and presence in the place where you live? Of their languages and practices? How much of their history were you taught in school? What do you perceive might be interesting or useful for you to learn about more deeply?

Are you surprised when I say that in spite of all the horror they've experienced, Indigenous Peoples have not only survived, but managed to retain many of their languages and cultures? Can you give an example of traditional ecological knowledge we might do well to learn about?

I am inspired by the example of how the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois women of the long house select their leaders. Do you know of any other indigenous practices that you admire and think we should consider for the reinvention of our cultures?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

For My Mother: Bridging the Worlds

THEMES

- Being with my mother as she was dying gave me profound lessons: the power of presence, patience, and love to face into the pain of our current losses of species, peoples, and cultures.
- Tending her forced me to slow down to accompany her process of dying.
- I felt how we are conditioned to prefer beginnings and productivity.
- As we perceive the beauty in endings and in death, we become more aware of the preciousness of our lives and relations and world.

PROMPTS

My mother's death was the first time I hospiced someone through the process of letting go of this life.

- What is your personal relationship with death?
- Have you witnessed or nursed someone you love through their dying?
- What did you find familiar? What is different?
- What have you learned from that person's process and from your own loss that you can name and share?
- Have you prepared for your own passing in any way?
If not, why not?

Have you experienced the "in-between" state described in this poem, a "between worlds" state?

- What was happening at the time?
- What physical and emotional sensations accompanied this "in-between" or liminal state?
- Did the experience change you? If so, how?

Our culture barely acknowledges death or grief, but death's nearness makes life more precious. And grief is a function of love.

- What is your attitude towards grieving?
- Do you allow grief space and time in your life?
- Do you have a process or ritual?
- Do you grieve with others?
- What are your sources of courage and comfort?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Nourishing An Emergent Culture

THEMES

- What is culture made of, and where does it come from?
- Many inherited cultural stories are not based in values that will lead us to a thriving future.
- To heal division and polarization, we need to develop empathy and cultivate “discomfort resilience.”

How would you define culture?

Reflect and name some cultural patterns, stories, and myths you have inherited that you want to share.

- Pick one and discuss how you might shift that in yourself.
- How might changing that affect the larger culture?
- Can you name any harmful cultural stories and myths can you name that are accepted as reality? Make your own list.

Some say we are in a “near death” experience as a culture.

- Do you think this is true?
- If so, what does this call upon us to do? And to become?
- What does value change for survival mean to you?

Have you had an experience of being in a community bound in common values and love? If so, what have you noticed about your body and mind, emotions and spirit?

How does the phrase “this is our time” or “we were born for this” land in you?

- What do you think it means?
- What emotions or judgments come up?
- What if it’s true?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

From Discipline To Discipleship: Cultivating Love, Collaboration, & Imagination

THEMES

- It's important to peel back the layers to see and shed unconscious biases that live deep within our psyches.
- Ongoing self-cultivation is necessary, through practice and discipline or discipleship, strengthening our hearts and skillfulness to connect across differences.
- Values and worldviews are changing, within ourselves and collectively; it's important to nourish the liberation of our imaginations.

PROMPTS

In scanning yourself for learned patterns from systems of patriarchy, capitalism, White supremacy, or colonialism, what can you see that you'd like to shed?

How might the idea of disciple-ship alter your own relationship to discipline?

How does the long history of social movements, and the endurance that's required to 'bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice,' relate to how you feel about your own leadership?

Have your values changed in response to the pandemic, climate emergency, racial injustice, and emergent authoritarianism? If so, how?

What are the skills and capacities we need to strengthen in order to contribute to the vision of a movement of movements, connecting across the many differences that currently factionalize efforts toward progressive change?

How might you love the future, and what might that future look like or feel like? What do your inner voices of judgment say, as you reach for a vision of a future you can whole-heartedly love?

Given your own preferred ways of processing information (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic), what might help you to free up your imagination?

- What experiences have opened your mind or heart to envision new realities?

PROMPTS FOR DEEPENING LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING OR DISCUSSION

Embodied or Group Practices for Part III

RITUAL

Create a ritual or ceremony to honor and thank the source or sources of the bounty in your life: Have it emerge from your own heart, in words, song, rhythm, movement, prayer, art-making, gift-giving. Engage others to participate with you.

DECISION-MAKING THE OKANAGAN WAY

When a decision needs to be made in a group at work or in a volunteer or other organization, you can try this experiment.

In examining the decision, have one person speak for Tradition (what has worked before), one for Vision (what is a preferred future), one for Relationship (the impacts of a decision on the people), and one for Action (how the decision will be implemented). Then allow all members of the group to speak to what has been learned and how the decision might change based on valuing all of these factors equally.

COPING WITH DISCOMFORT

How afraid are you of another's pain and your own complicity in it? To help cultivate the muscle to witness and feel the suffering of others and of ourselves while staying present and well-resourced:

- Turn within. Adopt an attitude of kindness and curiosity.
- Notice your particular ways of being triggered, or the kinds of issues that trigger you. What do you notice in your body? What

emotions arise? What thoughts or memories may be connected to the feeling?

- Stay present and breathe. Witness whether the feelings change, and if so, how.

EXPLORING PRIVILEGE

A process of exploring our privilege:

- Sit with someone with whom you share a kind of privilege in common:
- Describe a specific experience of awakening to your privilege. Notice and share the feelings that emerge. Shame? Anger? Guilt? Sorrow?
- Also note whether positive feelings were part of the experience, such as relief, feeling special, smarter or better than.
- After each of you shares, discuss what you might learn.
- End by appreciating each other for honesty and caring to do the work.

BEST PRACTICES

From a gathering of wise mentors, we delved into best practices for bringing together groups across differences, and certain common principles emerged:

- name power and privilege difference up front;
- forge agreement on intention and desired outcomes;
- establish group norms;
- representation matters;
- encourage embodied awareness;
- prioritizing relationship before task.

Discuss each of these principles with any work team or group you are active in. Decide together which you may adopt and define a process by which you can witness the results.

RITUAL CREATES RELATIONSHIP

Is there a ritual you can create to help heal or strengthen your relationship with yourself? Create your own personal ritual and be accountable to practice it daily for four to six weeks. Notice any shifts in your attitude towards yourself.

RITUAL: COMPOST/CAULDRON

Engage in a ritual that creates group connection and cohesion.

In a circle, reflect on and name what you want to shed, and what you want to cultivate in yourself. Designate an object or space in the middle as the compost bin, and another as the cauldron.

Now go around the circle with each person naming something they are ready to let go of in themselves and placing it in the compost, as well as something they appreciate in themselves and wish to grow, which they put in the cauldron.

Notice any commonalities among those in the circle, and how the field among you may feel after this exercise.

ALLYSHIP, INDIGENOUS AND OTHER

Do you know the names of the Indigenous Peoples who lived and cared for the place where you now make your home?

Can you or your group think of a way to respectfully support a nearby Native community, or one connected to an issue or cause you care about?

DEATH

How much do you navigate the awareness of death in your life?

Reflect on a personal example of death denial or death appreciation that you've experienced. Write a poem or create a piece of visual art, song, or dance to honor death.

CREATE A GRIEF ALTAR

Use earth elements, photos, flowers, candles, whatever appeals. Then design a short grieving ceremony. Invite at least one other person to share the ceremony at your altar with you.

SHIFTING CULTURE

Culture is in part a function of our language and values, as expressed in the stories we tell about ourselves and each other.

Negative and apocalyptic stories abound but there are not as many of a beautiful positive future. What we cannot imagine, we cannot create or move towards, so we need to liberate our imaginations to envision "the more beautiful world our hearts know is possible," to quote Charles Eisenstein.

Imagine and express a story of a positive future, individually or as a group. In a group, one person could begin the story, and have it evolve as it passes around the circle, with a guideline that the story you weave embodies a future you want to love into being.