 You can click File/Make a copy to create your own copy if you would like to write directly into the document.

Module One: Roots and Origins

“That is the way it is with a wound. The wound begins to close in on itself, to protect what is hurting so much. And once it is closed, you no longer see what is underneath, what started the pain.” — Amy Tan


Week One: The Remembering

Self-Discovery

Let’s start by reconnecting with our younger selves.


Reflect on the labels, beliefs, and invisible boundaries that were placed on you by the people, experiences, and environments that shaped your early years. Reflect on the stories—spoken or unspoken—that you absorbed about who you are, what you're worth, and what you're allowed to feel, need, or become.

Consider areas like safety and trust, worth and lovability, identity and agency, and belonging and expression.

 **Make a list of the empowering narratives that uplifted you, and the disempowering ones that may still echo through your inner voice. This is the first step in understanding what narratives belong to you and what was never yours to carry.**

Empowering narratives	Disempowering narratives

How have these narratives shown up in your life choices (school, relationships, career, etc.)

 **Choose one disempowering narrative to focus on that is active right now in this season of your life and that is leading you to a limited belief about the possibilities for your life, then ask yourself a series of questions:**

A few examples: I'm bad with money. I have a disability or difference that keeps me from pursuing my dreams. I'm too old. No one understands me. I'll never find a partner. Everyone abandons me. It's too late for me to turn my life around.

- Where does this narrative come from? Can you identify one or more sources?
- How does this narrative affect my feelings, thoughts, and behavior?
- What facts have I gathered to support this narrative?
- What facts do I have that disprove this narrative?
- Does this narrative align with my faith, values, and principles? If you were talking to a loved one who shared this disempowered narrative with you, what would you say to them?

Storytelling

The beauty of writing about life experiences—especially those that highlight the themes and patterns woven through our lives—is that it often reveals insights we might not access by simply writing about our thoughts and feelings. Storytelling allows us to see ourselves within a larger arc, offering perspective, compassion, and healing where reflection alone might not reach.

Choose one of the three storytelling prompts below. There's no 'right' format—write in fragments, paragraphs, as a letter to yourself, as a poem, or however the story wants to come out. You may notice that the one you are drawn to connects back to the disempowering narratives you identified earlier, or it might uncover new ones. Either way, this practice is about discovery. You're paying attention to patterns, making connections, and staying open and curious about what comes through.

- **Conditional Love or Acceptance:** Write about a time when love, approval, or attention from a parent, teacher, or peer felt conditional. What did you think you had to be or do to be accepted? How did that shape how you saw yourself? What inner narrative developed from that experience? What is your perspective on it now?
- **Measuring Up.** Write the story of a moment in childhood when you first felt like you didn't measure up—whether at home, school, or with friends. What was said or implied that made you feel that way? What inner narrative developed? What did you start to believe about yourself in that moment? With the wisdom you carry now, how do you view that experience differently?
- **Unseen and Unheard.** Write about a moment when you felt invisible, overlooked, or silenced—whether in your family, at school, or among peers. What message did you take in about your voice or your worth? How did the beliefs and narratives that you picked up from that experience shape the way you expressed (or hid) yourself moving forward? What do you believe about your voice and presence now?

The narratives you've identified and the stories you've begun to explore in these exercises may reveal patterns or wounds you've carried quietly for a long time. What you discover here can become powerful material for your writing practice, offering insight into the storylines you no longer want to ignore and illuminating the places where old beliefs are still shaping your life today. Writing into these discoveries allows you to bring them out of the shadows, give them language, and begin reshaping them into narratives that support your healing and growth.

Week Two: The Reclaiming

In his book, *The Seven Basic Plots*, Christopher Booker breaks down the seven story plot types that he positions as the foundation of all storytelling. They're not just tools for novelists and screenwriters. Anyone can use these frameworks to explore their personal stories and highlight plot points that give the details of their lives new meaning.


<p>Overcoming the Monster</p> <p>The main character must dig deep for the strength to overcome a monster or evil of some sort that is seemingly larger, greater, or smarter. The monster could be a physical one or a conceptual one.</p>	<p>What is the monster in your story? Where did the monster come from? What do you know about it? How do you feel about it?</p> <p>What do you plan to do about the monster? What are you thinking and doing to prepare? Do you feel willing and able to defeat it? Why or why not? What does the battle with the monster entail? How did you defeat the monster? If you have not defeated it, what are some ways you could change your perspective to defeat it? In what ways could the monster be a teacher?</p>
<p>Rags to Riches</p> <p>The main character grows up in poor living conditions and must go through obstacles to find their way to wealth and prosperity.</p>	<p>What are the poor circumstances? Describe how the opportunity for wealth comes about. How do you feel about it? What struggles do you face when you venture towards the opportunity? In what ways do you find success? In what ways do you find that you are not ready?</p> <p>How does it all blow up? What happens to the progress you made? What motivates you to get back on your feet?</p> <p>What is the final challenge? What did you sacrifice, what do you gain, and what did you learn?</p>
<p>The Quest</p> <p>The main character sets out on a physical or spiritual mission to find a person, place, or thing that requires them to face tests and obstacles.</p>	<p>Who are you and what are you doing when you realize that you have a mission to accomplish?</p> <p>What obstacles do you face along the way? What forms do they take?</p> <p>What milestones do you reach along the way that make you think that your mission is complete? Describe the ups and downs.</p> <p>What do you have to do to finally complete this mission? What do you learn?</p>

<p>Voyage and Return</p> <p>Similar to the Quest, but the character is unexpectedly transported to a whole different world or universe with mysteries that must be solved before they can escape and return home.</p>	<p>Who are you and what are you doing when you realize that you have a mission to accomplish? What happens that pulls you into another world? Describe the new, strange world. Do you feel at home here? Do you want to stay in the new world or go home? Why? What obstacles do you face to get home? Who do you meet along the way? What do you learn?</p>
<p>Rebirth</p> <p>The main character has been under a negative or limiting influence and during the course of the story, they encounter a person or situation that inspires them to see the world differently and break free.</p>	<p>What dark or imposing force are you under at the beginning of the story? What circumstances or people pose threats to your existence? Who or what comes along to change the path that you're on? What ultimately saves you from the dark or imposing force? What do you learn?</p>
<p>Tragedy</p> <p>The main character has a doomed outcome due to some kind of fatal flaw or misconception. This story could be about a villain (or misguided innocent) who goes down a dark road that ends in destruction—either a literal or symbolic death or loss.</p>	<p>Describe the dark path that presents itself to you. How do you think it will turn out? What opposing forces are in the way and what dark things happen while trying to overcome them? How does your plan unravel? What causes your demise?</p>
<p>Comedy</p> <p>The main character is drawn to a certain person or situation, maybe a job or ideal, but there is an obstacle in the way, and it's presented with humor or chaos.</p>	<p>What is the situation or person that you are drawn to, that you feel is meant for you? What is the confusion, miscommunication, or frustration that occurs? What obstacles are in the way? How are the misunderstandings eventually resolved? What does happily ever after look and feel like?</p>

Many of us are playing the main character in our own Tragedy stories because we have a misconception or circumstance that we think will ultimately lead to our downfall in some way, or at best, will prevent us from living the lives that we really want. Referencing the seven basic plots, we can use our imaginations to find new perspectives. Your so-called fatal flaw is just one plot point of many. Being intentional about the plot points you choose to highlight, you can rewrite any Tragedy story you might be carrying to center the values and life lessons that allow you to thrive despite the difficult circumstances—or fatal flaws— in your life.


As you do the next exercise, think about the experiences and influences that created the misconception (fatal flaw) and then also think about the experiences and influences that triggered a change of heart, mindset, and behavior. Notice where struggle revealed opportunity. Reflect on the moments of choice, challenge, and change, and what factors and motivations fueled your decisions.

Self-Discovery

 Use each of the seven basic plots to create a storyline for your life that incorporates one of the limiting narratives you identified last week or one that comes up during this session. Here are some examples:

- **Tragedy** - My Tragedy story is about a girl with no voice or backbone, who believes she is destined to become mentally ill like her mother and unable to live a quality life. She uses this belief to play the role of a victim and not show up as her true self which leads to years of struggle.
- **Rebirth** - My character in the Tragedy story becomes a mother. Motherhood provides a portal for Rebirth and clarity, and the desire to end generational cycles inspires her to see the world differently and release these old beliefs.
- **Overcoming the Monster** - Family secrets that are beyond my understanding threaten to silence my voice, but through books, art, and friendship, I find superpowers that allow me to conquer the “silence” monster that held my truth captive and stifled my ability to live a fully expressed life.
- **Rags to Riches** - I grew up metaphorically poor in truth-telling, and I experience peaks and valleys as I learn in many hard but rewarding ways the value of emotional honesty, and I gradually become rich through the power of my voice.
- **The Quest** - My quest is a healing journey, where I go on an adventure away from my family to find my own values and meaning.
- **Voyage and Return** - My quest leads me to discover new worlds like college, corporate America, and creative entrepreneurship, which introduce me to new lands and different cultures. Finally, I come home and must figure out how to exist with the same family while keeping my personal values.
- **Comedy** - I would use dark humor to tell you about my childhood trauma and how it showed up in adulthood through ill-advised decisions around money and men.

Storytelling

 **Use your imagination to transform one of your (visible or hidden) fatal flaws/defeated storylines using one of the narrative arcs.**

A few helpful notes:

- When I did this exercise, I began with the Tragedy storyline and then explored how it could evolve through the lens of the other narrative arcs. Sometimes, we need to first write and acknowledge the Tragedy in order to create space for a broader perspective and to imagine new possibilities for transformation.
- Use the prompts next to each arc to explore ideas for your own storylines.
- Sometimes, it's easier to arrive at the core of a challenging narrative by beginning with a more zoomed-out, reflective perspective. If it feels difficult thinking about this exercise with a defeated storyline as the entry point, consider one of these alternatives:
 - Try thinking about your life in a broader sense. For example, if your life were a Rags to Riches story, or one of the other arcs, how would you describe it?
 - What is a situation or memory in your life that could be told as an Overcoming the Monster story or a Rebirth, or one of the other arcs?

Module Two: Truth and Lies

“Wounding and healing are not opposites. They're part of the same thing. It is our wounds that enable us to be compassionate with the wounds of others. It is our limitations that make us kind to the limitations of other people. It is our loneliness that helps us to find other people or to even know they're alone with an illness. I think I have served people perfectly with parts of myself I used to be ashamed of.” — Rachel Naomi Remen

Week Three: The Observing

As we move through life, we often adopt false identities to conform to our environments, and we may not recognize where our authenticity stops and the adaptations begin. We forget what was originally ours and what we picked up to feel safe, accepted, or valued.

Now that we have done some exploration of our roots and origins, let's observe where we are in alignment and out of alignment with who really are by looking at the wanted and unwanted patterns we notice, and the values that speak to us through our experiences.

Even our struggles offer clues, pointing toward the values we care about most, and the life we're being called to live. These observations allow us to break from unconscious patterns and choose something different.

After these exercises, you will have fresh insights into your values and how they affect the quality of your experiences, past and present. This awareness can open your eyes to new choices and alternative stories, allowing you to reconnect with your creative power.

Self-Discovery

The connection between your peaks and valleys may not seem obvious, but if you look closely enough, they reveal clues about your values. Your values are ideas and concepts that are intrinsic to who you are and what brings you fulfillment. Your values highlight what you stand for, and if you're not masking your true self, they guide your behaviors, decisions, and actions.

In this exercise, you will mine your memories for peaks and valleys to highlight the values that were—or were not—being honored, acknowledged, or expressed in those highs and lows.

Step One

List some of your peak moments: times in your life when you felt most authentic, alive, and inspired.

→ To narrow the scope, it may help to think of your life in seasons like childhood, young adulthood, etc. Or you can think of your life in terms of categories like relationships, career, education, health, personal growth, etc.

- What were you appreciating or experiencing in those peak moments?
- What personal values were being honored or expressed in those moments?

Step Two

Now, list some of your valley moments—times when you felt distant from your true or ideal self.

→ Some of these moments may be directly related to choices you made or situations you allowed to happen. Others may have been beyond your control, such as an accident, a loss, or a diagnosis. When it falls outside of your control, take note of what it reveals about the values in your life that were disrupted or taken away.


- What were you experiencing in those valley moments?
- What personal values were missing, out of reach, or disrupted?

Step Three

After listing out your peaks and valleys, look for patterns and connections:

- How do your peaks and valleys relate to one another?
- Are there recurring themes, emotions, or turning points?
- Do certain values appear repeatedly across experiences?
- What do these highs and lows reveal about the gap between who you are, who you've had to be, and who you want to be?

Storytelling

 **For homework, choose one of the peak or valley moments you listed above and write about it in more detail.**

Describe what happened, how you felt, who was involved, and why this moment stands out in your memory. How did the moment/situation shape the way you see yourself or the world? Be sure to differentiate between your personal experience of the situation and the way anyone else perceived it. (For example, you may have accomplished something that your family was proud of, but you were unhappy.)

Here are some ways you could approach this:

Peaks

→ Write about a time when you felt fully true to yourself and unapologetically you. This might have been a quiet moment of clarity or a bold act of self-expression. This could be an event, accomplishment, or a life transition. Maybe you were doing something you love or surrounded by people who saw and accepted you, speaking your truth, creating something meaningful, or simply existing without needing to perform, please, or prove.

- What values were you embodying, relishing, or upholding in that moment or situation?

- What parts of yourself were you allowing to come forward?
- What part of you was being seen, celebrated, or expressed?

Valleys

→ Tell a story about a time you felt unseen, out of place, or disconnected from your authentic self. This could be an external experience—when others overlooked or misunderstood you—or an internal one, when you abandoned your own truth. Perhaps it was a moment of self-betrayal, when you silenced your needs or went along with something that didn't feel right. It might have been a time when things didn't go as planned, when you let yourself or someone else down, or when a decision led to unexpected consequences. It could be a quiet regret that lingered or a painful turning point that forced you to change course.

- What parts of you were asking to be acknowledged?
- What motivated you to make the choices that you did? How do you feel about it now?
- What did that experience illuminate about what really matters to you? What values or desires were at the heart of your disappointment?

Week Four: The Revealing

After reflecting on our values—and the ways we align or fall out of alignment with them—what new truths are beginning to emerge? The work we're doing here is undoubtedly opening doors to more questions, but it's also revealing greater clarity about the direction we want to take our healing journeys.

Even after this workshop, I encourage you to continue cultivating awareness of your values and noticing how they do—or don't—show up in your daily life, choices, and relationships. This awareness is not a final destination, but a compass.

With that compass in hand, let's now turn our attention to the strengths, differences, and perceived weaknesses we carry, and the quiet grief that often comes with growth. Our differences aren't liabilities; they are the roots of our unique contribution. What makes you different gives you power. What you once perceived as a weakness may simply be an untapped strength. And a strength becomes a superpower when we embrace its benefits while learning to navigate its complexity.

No matter the specifics of our individual gifts, we all share the ability to reframe and reclaim our stories, to turn pain into wisdom, and wounds into creative fuel.

Self-Discovery

Part One - Strengths and Weaknesses


- First, make a list of personal characteristics or circumstances that make you different or have caused you to feel different from your family or peers in the past.
- Next to each one, identify the strengths and benefits of that characteristic, as well as the downsides and challenges. By doing this, you are getting to know this trait from all different sides, including the shadow side.
- The last step is to journal about actions you can take to support the strengths and manage the weaknesses.

As we do the inner work of exploring our strengths and perceived weaknesses, we often uncover parts of ourselves—old identities, beliefs, or narratives—that we’ve outgrown. Letting go of these versions of ourselves can be necessary for healing and growth, but it isn’t always easy. These discoveries can stir up unexpected grief—a mourning for what was, what could’ve been, or who we used to be.

Part Two - Grief and Loss

- Write about a version of yourself you’re beginning to outgrow. What did this version of you need? What did they protect you from? What are you afraid will happen if you let them go?
- Write about something or someone that once felt aligned or meaningful, but no longer fits. What is hard about letting it go, even if you know it’s necessary for your growth?
- Reflect on a personal strength that has helped you survive, but may now be holding you back. What would it take to release the need for it to protect or define you?

Storytelling

 **For homework, choose one of the following exercises. Feel free to customize it in a way that works for you, or to create your own way to expand on what we covered this week.**

- Choose one personal trait or circumstance that once made you feel different from others.

- Write a short personal story that captures a moment when this trait caused you to feel isolated, misunderstood, or set apart.
- Then, shift the narrative: write about a time when that same trait became a gift, advantage, or source of strength.
- Write a conversation between your strengths and weaknesses.
- Think of a loss (big or small) that changed you. What did it take from you, and what did it give you? What have you learned about yourself in the aftermath? Consider writing a letter to the loss, or experiment with a format that you don't usually use.

Module Three: Voice and Vision

“If you inherently long for something, become it first. If you want gardens, become the gardener. If you want love, embody love. If you want mental stimulation, change the conversation. If you want peace, exude calmness. If you want to fill your world with artists, begin to paint. If you want to be valued, respect your own time. If you want to live ecstatically, find the ecstasy within yourself. This is how to draw it in, day by day, inch by inch.” — Victoria Erickson

In the final section of the book, we fully step into our roles as the narrators of our life stories and examine how our words, mindsets, and lifestyles give meaning to our vast experiences.

Week Five: The Integrating

So far, while reflecting on the origins of our defeated storylines and limiting beliefs, we've peeled back layers to face truths, assumptions, and fears that have shaped our paths. It is a radical thing to open our minds and accept that we have the power to change our stories. An unexpected challenge that comes with this enlightenment is grasping what it calls for day-to-day in terms of our thought patterns, self-talk, and how we express ourselves.

It's easy to overlook this part of the transformation, where we observe our daily habits and rhythms to see how our thought patterns and lifestyles either support or take away from the new stories we are crafting. We must study the building blocks, our habits of thought, because they affect how our stories unfold.

Our words have the power to elevate us or hurt us, and we can harness this power when we are intentional with our language. When our thoughts improve, our well-being improves, so if we want to change how we think, we also need to change how we live and spend our time.

Self-Discovery

✍️ In the following exercise, you will complete a series of phrases that invite you to free your voice, declare the truths you want to live by, and what values you want to be a voice for. As you do this, you are also identifying aspirational beliefs and the limiting beliefs that undermine them. You will then create an actionable value statement to support you in carving out new neural pathways that lead to new stories.

Below, I have provided an additional example from the book:

Aspirational Belief (affirmation): I want to believe....

I am whole. I am worthy. I am safe.

Limiting Belief: But my doubts say...

Most of the time I feel broken, inadequate, and bruised. When I tell myself that I am worthy, my mind reminds me of all the ways I fall short. I never feel safe.

Actionable Value Statement: When I do *(insert empowering habit or practice)*, I overcome *(insert limiting belief)*, and I make *(insert aspirational belief)* possible.

I am whole. I am worthy. I am safe. Spiritual practice through prayer, meditation, and writing deepens my capacity to find peace and value in the present moment instead of drifting into regrets from the past and worries about the future.

Storytelling

✍️ **For homework, choose one of the following exercises. Feel free to customize it in a way that works for you, or to create your own way to expand on what we covered this week.**

- Describe a time when choosing a positive mindset changed the outcome of a situation.
- Tell the story of a mantra or affirmation that has been a keepsake or touchpoint for you.
- Tell the story of how your internal dialogue has evolved over the years. Is there a negative phrase or belief that used to echo in your mind, one you've since rewritten or transformed into something more empowering?

- Write a dialogue between two parts of your inner voice, perhaps the inner coach and the inner critic. Let them speak to each other on the page.
- Write about a time when your thoughts/words became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

At the heart of this conversation we've been having about healing is a fundamental choice: love or fear. You can use whatever language resonates with you — intuition, trust, truth, source — but the essence remains the same.

Week Five: The Aligning

Choosing love is a risk because it makes us vulnerable, while choosing fear often feels more protective. Fear disguises itself as practicality and says:

If I don't try, I can't fail. If I do things the way they've always been done, I'll be safe. If I'm not emotionally available, I can't be hurt.

We think our comfort zones will secure and satisfy us, but they only dim our light and numb our power. Without the risk that comes with choosing Love, our lives are made smaller, our dreams fade into the distance.

So what sustains you when things get hard, the pressure builds, the discomfort aches, the anger won't subside?

What does *faith* mean to you—whether it's faith in a higher power, in the wisdom of something greater, or in your own inner knowing?

How did that belief take shape? How does it hold you now?

And if you don't claim a particular faith or spiritual practice, what do you lean on when hope feels out of reach?

These are questions that shape our healing. Because when the work gets hard—when we're faced with grief, resistance, or uncertainty—we need something to keep us anchored. Something that grounds us in purpose. Something that helps us hold our boundaries, values, and visions.

Love.

So, we must keep returning to the question:

What does it mean, for *you*, to choose love?

- **What aspects of your healing have come up most during this intensive?** Think about the limiting beliefs, old narratives, stagnant emotions, victim storylines, or inner conflicts that surfaced. What patterns have made themselves known?
- **When you view these areas through the eyes of love, what does love have to say?** What tone does it take? What wisdom does it offer?
- **What does it mean to choose love over fear in these specific areas?** How might love respond differently than fear has in the past?
- **Moving forward, what choices or actions can help you align more fully with love?** What might it look like to act in service of love, even in small ways?