"VULNERABILITY IS THE BIRTHPLACE OF LOVE, BELONGING, JOY, COURAGE, EMPATHY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND AUTHENTICITY."
### 10 Guideposts for Wholehearted Living

Cultivating…
1. Authenticity
2. Self-compassion
3. A Resilient Spirit
4. Gratitude and Joy
5. Intuition & Trusting Faith
6. Creativity
7. Play and Rest
8. Calm and Stillness
9. Meaningful Work
10. Laughter, Song and Dance

Letting go of…
1. What people think
2. Perfectionism
3. Numbing & Powerlessness
4. Scarcity & Fear of the dark
5. Need for Certainty
6. Comparison
7. Exhaustion as a status symbol and productivity as self-worth
8. Anxiety as a lifestyle
9. Self-doubt & “supposed to”
10. Being Cool and “Always in Control”
Permission Slips

- A practice of self-compassion
- Giving yourself permission to show up & be seen
I give myself permission to:

BE IMPERFECT

BE NERVOUS & BRAVE
**Definitions**

**Courage**

to tell the story of who you are with your whole heart

**Authenticity**

the daily practice of letting go of who we think we are supposed to be and embracing who we really are
Shame
fear of disconnection

Vulnerability
risk
uncertainty
emotional exposure
Four Myths of Vulnerability

(1) Vulnerability is weakness

Two major paradoxes:

• I see vulnerability as courage in you, but as weakness in me.

• I am drawn to the vulnerability in you, but I have learned to hate vulnerability within me
(2) I can opt out (“I don’t do vulnerability”)

- Life is vulnerable and vulnerability is woven throughout our daily experiences
- When we avoid vulnerability, we often behave in ways inconsistent with who we want to be

(3) Oversharing = Vulnerability

- We share with those who have earned the right to hear our story
- Vulnerability is about you and more specifically, about your heart.
- Vulnerability is about connection
(4) I can go it alone

We are biologically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually hardwired for connection.

“IF WE WANT GREATER CLARITY IN OUR PURPOSE OR DEEPER AND MORE MEANINGFUL SPIRITUAL LIVES, VULNERABILITY IS THE PATH.”
Being vulnerable is the only way to allow your heart to feel true pleasure.

–Bob Marley
### Exploring Vulnerability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerability is:</th>
<th>Vulnerability feels like:</th>
<th>I grew up believing vulnerability was:</th>
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• We share our story with those who have earned the right

• MJ moments are not big sweeping moments; they are small intimate moments of connection; subtle bids for connection (Gottman)

• The point of sharing with an MJ person is to experience empathy

• Sliding Doors moments are pivotal moments in which trust is either built or eroded

  *If over time you ignore these moments more than you connect, the result is disengagement.*

• Using my vulnerability against me is emotional treason

• Three things for relationship to survive such betrayal. Betrayal must be

  Acknowledged Healed Rare
Call a spade a spade.

SHAME
I am bad.
I feel alone.
I can't talk about it.

GUILT
I did something bad.
I can do something about it.

HUMILIATION
I didn't deserve that.
I will talk about it.

EMBARRASSMENT
That was a funny or a fleeting feeling.
I know I'm not alone.
I can talk about it.
What is Shame?

- It is a universal experience
  - The only people who do not feel shame are those who do not feel empathy.
  - We store shame in the same way we store trauma

- Shame is the fear of disconnection

- Shame thrives in the darkness; feeds on secrecy and isolation

- Hustling for our worth
What is an Arena?

“YOU CAN CHOOSE COURAGE OR YOU CAN CHOOSE COMFORT, BUT YOU CANNOT HAVE BOTH.”
Who is sitting in your arena?

- **Box Seats**
  - People who built the arena to benefit the people who look like them – People of privilege

- ** Critics Seats**
  - People in our lives who insert judgment, especially in key moments or in significant areas

- **Cheap Seats**
  - They aren’t brave enough to step into the arena, but will hurl insults, criticism, advice, etc. often in the safety of anonymity.

- **Support System**
  - Self-compassion
  - Empathy from a supportive ‘other’ – a marble jar friend
Break time

“OUR SENSE OF WORTHINESS – THAT CRITICAL PIECE THAT GIVES US ACCESS TO LOVE AND BELONGING – LIVES INSIDE OUR STORY.”
We can’t be seen behind our armor

“IF WE WANT TO FULLY EXPERIENCE LOVE AND BELONGING, WE MUST BELIEVE THAT WE ARE WORTHY OF LOVE AND BELONGING.”
The Armory
Common Vulnerability Arsenal

1. Foreboding Joy
   - The myth we can stay one step ahead of our own vulnerability
   - Prevents us from feeling gratitude

2. Perfectionism (The 20-ton shield)
   - Not the same as healthy striving and growth
   - It is the belief we can minimize or avoid blame, judgment and shame
   - It is addictive and compounds shame

3. Numbing
   - Doesn’t just dull the experience of vulnerability, but it dulls out love, joy, belonging, creativity and empathy
   - Compulsive and chronic = addiction
Less Common Arsenal

- Viking or Victim (binary view of the world)
  - Either sucker/loser who is taken advantage of or conqueror
- Letting it all Hang Out
  - Floodlighting
    - Attempt to hotwire connection
    - People recoil and shut down with too much info
- Smash & Grab
  - Smashes social boundaries with intimate details and grabs whatever attention and energy they can get before retreating
Shame Shields

MOVING away

MOVING toward

MOVING against
Shields

- **Moving Against**
  - Use shame to fight shame
  - Come out swinging

- **Moving toward**
  - Pretend, people please

- **Moving Away**
  - Shrink, disappear, get small

“Don’t shrink, don’t puff up, stand your sacred ground.”
Own Your Story

“You either walk inside your story and own it or you stand outside your story and hustle for your worthiness.” Brené Brown, PhD
Key things to know about shame:

1. We cannot bring about lasting change in ourselves or others with shame.

2. The number one mistake in working with clients on shame is empathic failure. We must do our own shame work as clinicians.

3. We don’t stop experiencing shame, but we can learn to interact with it differently.
Shame Resilience

1. Recognizing shame and understanding its triggers
   Can you feel it and hear the messages?
2. Practicing critical awareness
   Can you reality-check your shame experience?
3. Reaching out
   Are you owning and sharing your story? (You can’t experience empathy without sharing)
4. Speaking shame
   Are you talking about how you feel and asking for what you need?
Shame Resilience

Empathy and Self-Compassion

Empathy
- Staying out of judgment
- Perspective taking
- Feel the emotion
- Communicate emotion
- Mindfulness
Self Compassion

• Self-Kindness
  Do I talk to myself like I talk to someone I love?

• Common Humanity
  Do I understand that I struggle with what everyone else struggles?

• Mindfulness
  A balanced approach to emotions where they are neither suppressed nor over-identified with
Defining Our Values

• “A value is a way of being or believing that you hold most important.” – Brené Brown

• Clarification of values and conviction to stay with those values is what strengthens our shame resilience.

• Minding the Gap
Finding our way back

Employing Empathy and Self-Compassion

Who are your marble jar friends?  
What do you do to take care of yourself?  
What comes to mind when you think of living in alignment with your values?
“THE DARK DOES NOT DESTROY THE LIGHT; IT DEFINES IT. IT’S OUR FEAR OF THE DARK THAT CASTS OUR JOY INTO THE SHADOWS.”
Gricelda Fragoso, Psy.D.

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