Soul Journal Curriculum for Mothers in prison

Course Description
The Mother’s Soul Journal for incarcerated women uses the power of narrative art in combination with inspirational/educational literature and reflection to facilitate participants in creating a journal. The journaling process encourages the women to explore their values, teaches the women to reclaim their identity as mothers and strengthens their relationships with their children.

The class is five sessions and runs about two hours per session, meeting once per week. The ideal group size is 8 – 10 women.

Basic supplies needed to conduct the program:
- Envelopes (large to be glued into the journal as a pocket)
- Journals (the prison would only allow journals with staples, it is very important to use mixed media journals that can hold up to water color, I use Kunst & Papier Soft Cover Sketchbook 8x9- which I order through a local art store.)
- Art Pens (Pitt pens by Faber-Castell size F or M, used for all writing)
- Watercolors
- Brushes
- Washable Markers (Crayola)
- Glue sticks (UHU stics are the best for this work)
- Pencils (#2 for drawing)
- Craypas
- Colored copies of images
- Colored card stock paper
- Scrap paper at least one sheet per student per class
- Handouts
- Scissors (if your prison will let you use them, sometimes they can be signed out)
- CD player and CD’s with quiet instrumental background music (it is best to have no talking during writing times).

Each student keeps their journal and art pen and brings it to class each week (the prison gave permission for the women to have the journals and the pens.) The intention is that the journals remain private and the women share it with those they choose.

It is important to do the class where there are tables for people to spread out and also necessary to have water available to use watercolors.

Day One: Prison Journal Mother’s program

0:00 gather – introduce self and program
  The Journal is: an opportunity to explore your self - using words and
images, a fusion of images and words and your soul/spirit. This journal will also focus on you and your relationship with your child/ren. Have participants introduce themselves: say their name and the ages of their child/ren.

0:10  
Set-up the Journal
1) write your name and date on the first page in the journal (inside the cover)
2) glue in pockets (the pocket is an envelop glued in the back of the journal to be used for saving images or writing to be use in the future)

0:20  
Creating the Hand page:
1) trace non-dominant hand on two pages (facing each other)
2) paint with water color around one hand and inside one hand (see example)

3) quiet reflection on hand (ask participants to sit in silence while you read the following reflection with pauses):

“Just sit and breathe . . .
looking at your non-dominant hand – what does your hand say about you? What kind of work has this hand done? Washing dishes, computer work, cleaning, painting, dressing children, gardening, waitressing, cooking, baking, driving . . . (pause)

What kind of care-giving has this hand done?
Caring for children, parents, grandparents, partners, animals . . . (pause)

What kind of recreation has this hand done?
Playing with children, sewing, needle work, dancing, sports, biking, swimming, music (playing instruments), artwork, pottery, bead work, jewelry making . . . (pause)

What else does your hand say about you?
Have you used your hands in prayer, clapping to music
How have your hands expressed who you are? Just sit and look at your hand and breathe . . .” (pause)

4) Then write in the journal:
Inside of the white hand (page 1): What does my hand say about me at this age?
Around the outside of the colored hand (page 2): What am I reaching for?
If children are able to visit their mother - ask the women to trace their child/ren’s hand in the journal, color it and ask, what does the child reach for? Write the child’s ideas around their hand. This is a great way to involve the child/children in the journaling process and introduce them to the possibility of doing their own journal.

0:50  Do river wash in the middle of the journal . . .
Find the middle of your journal, where the staples hold it together. Paint a river (with water color) across the two open pages in the middle, this should be a very quick watercolor river, does not need to be precise (example can be seen in the next class) set the open journal aside to let it dry.

1:00  Creating the Dreams for my child/ren page with Child Spirit Images
Tomie DePaola created these and you can find the images through a Google search. They come in many ethnicities it is important to provide the images for all the differing ethnicities in the group. This is the African American image (they come with a description of the card):
1) Give each woman a Child Spirit card image for her ethnicity.

2) Read the following guided imagery (ask the women to close their eyes, relax and just breath) with pauses and quiet background music:

Child Spirit images reflection . . .

_When this child was born – a new spark of life was brought into this world. How did you feel when you gave birth? . . . How did you feel when you held the child in your arms for the first time? . . . What dreams did you have for this tiny baby – this gift of new life? (pause)_

_Your child begins to grow, becomes curious, starts to play and talk and walk. . . . what dreams did you have for this toddler – this amazing little girl or boy? (pause)_

_Your child starts school - begins to learn new things, meet new people, explore the world . . . what dreams did you have for this young child – your boy or girl? (pause)_

_Envision your child the age she/he is today . . . 
See the spark of life in his/her eyes . . . 
You gave this child life, what dreams do you have for your son/daughter today? (pause)_
3) Give each woman a blank piece of colored paper (precut to fit in the journal) using markers have them write “Dreams for my Child/ren” in large letters across the top of the page. On the page they write or list or draw the dreams they have for their child. It is helpful to have them speak some ideas in the large group before they start individual writing (i.e. “I dream my child will get a good education” “I dream my child will stay off drugs”) When finished with the writing, glue the page into journal with Child Spirit design on the opposite page.

1:45 Clean up (collect water colors, pencils, markers, all things used by the group*)

1:50 Discuss what did we do today . . . what does it mean to you? Invite them to share ideas – they don’t have to talk, but it helps others in the group to learn and grow when we share our own thoughts.
1) What did you learn about your self from doing the hand exercise?
2) How did you feel during “the childhood dreams” reflection?
   What dreams did you write down for your child/ren? Did anyone have dreams for you when you were born? Were you ever told what those dreams were?
Encourage them to write more in their journal during the next week.

2:00 end of class

If Time: Name page: on the second page of the journal write your name large (use large markers makers)
   Around your name write: Who named you? What does your name mean? Were you named after someone? Do you like your name? Draw images that you associate with your name.
   Show them how to do some decorative lettering.

*I was able to keep all my supplies in a box that was stored at the prison, so I didn’t have to bring in the supplies every week.

Day Two: Prison Journal Mother’s program

0:00 Gather – attendance, ask if there are any questions from the last week, if so discuss the questions.

0:10 Creating the River of My Life page:
1) find the river that you painted in the middle of your journal last week.
   Choose one end of the river to be your represent your birth. Write your birth date and place there.
Ask: why is a river a good metaphor for our lives? Discuss their answers.
Quote: “My soul has grown deep like the rivers.” From Langston Hughes
What might the quote mean?

0:15 Guided imagery and writing . . .
Explain the guided imagery process: we will divide your life into sections of years. For each section there will be some questions. While I read the reflection, I will ask you to close your eyes (this helps us visualize our life). When I am done with the reading for each section of your life, you will be asked to open your eyes, pick up your pen and write along the river about the questions from the reflection.

**Guided imagery:** (adapted from “The River of Your Life” exercise by G. Lynn Nelson from the book *Writing and Being, 2004*)
Turn on some soft instrumental music in the background, read slowly with pauses.
Begin by just sitting and breathing gently for awhile . . .

**Look back over the “river” of your life.** Now in your mind’s eye, fly over the river of your life. Follow it back to its source, to your birth. Look at that time.

Wonder about it, where you came from, about your parents, about your conception, about the miracle of your birth. Where were you born – in a hospital, at home? What town, or in the country? What was the season of the year? Who was there - your grandparents, siblings? What must your mother have been feeling? Was your father there? What would your father have been feeling?

What was it like to come from that nine-month meditation in your mother’s womb and into the world? Can you feel any distant memories, any whispers?

Now open your eyes, pick up your pen and let the words flow from you, dreaming about how it must have been, write freely about your birth.

(Some women have difficulty with this part of the exercise – they say they don’t know anything about their birth. I have them write questions about their birth – the things they wish they knew. Some of the women will then ask their mother or other relatives about their birth.

After about 5 min. begin the guided reflection again:

Please put your pens down now and close your eyes again and just breathe . . .

**Now follow further the river of your life.** Follow it from its source, from your birth, along its course over the first seven years or so of your life.

Where did it flow smoothly? Where were there rapids and rough water?

What was going on outwardly – were did you live, did you move, were there changes, losses?

Who was caring for you? Who were your most important relationships? Relatives? Friends? Animals?

And what was going on inwardly? What were your fears, your struggles your joys in these childhood years?

Now open your eyes, pick up your pen and write about the first seven years of your life. Put down bits and pieces as they come to you - memories, feelings, images, and fragments of scenes from the flow of your life in those first seven years.
After about 7 min. begin the guided reflection again:

*Please put your pens down now and close your eyes again and just breathe . . .*

**Follow further the river of your life further in your mind.** See the river from its source and through those first seven years and flowing on to the next seven years. See your river from ages eight to fourteen. Watch for places it flowed smoothly. Watch for rough water.

What was going on outwardly – were did you live, did you move, were there changes, losses?

Who were your most important relationships during these years? Family? Animals? Friends? Did you have a best friend or group of friends?

Did you like or dislike school? Why?

What did you most like to do? (ride bikes, sports, music, be outside . . .)

And what was going on inwardly? What were your fears, your struggles your joys in these early years?

Now open your eyes, pick up your pen and write about the years between eight and fourteen. Remember that whatever comes up is all right. Do not judge it; just put it down. Do not worry about proper chronology or facts; just gather moments and feelings and insight until the flow slows.

After about 7 min. begin the guided reflection again:

*Please put your pens down now and close your eyes again and just breathe . . .*

**Follow further the river of your life further in your mind.** See the river from its source and through those first fourteen years and flowing on to the next seven years. See your river from ages fifteen to twenty one. Watch for places it flowed smoothly. Watch for rough water.

What was going on in your life? What were you most excited about?

Who were your most important relationships during these years? Who were your friends? Were they supportive and good for you, or did your river meander away into a swamp or bog? Did you start to explore boyfriend/girlfriend relationships?

What was going on in school? Did you have a favorite subject or teacher? Did you leave school – if so why? Did you try college?
How did you spend your time outside of school? Did you work?

What were your fears, your struggles?
What were your dreams in these years from fifteen to twenty one?

Now open your eyes, pick up your pen and write about the years between fifteen and twenty one. Remember that whatever comes up is all right. Do not judge it; just put it down. Do not worry about proper chronology or facts; just gather moments and feelings and insight until the flow slows.

After about 7 min. begin the guided reflection again:

Please put your pens down now and close your eyes again and just breathe . . .

The river of your life is flowing onward. See your river from ages to twenty-two to thirty. Watch again for places it flowed smoothly. Watch for rough water.

What was going on in your life? Were you working? What kind of work did you do? Where did you live?
Who were your most important relationships during these years?
Did you have partners? Were your relationships positive and supportive?
Were you in contact with your parents, siblings? How would you describe those relationships?

Did you have children? What was being a parent like for you?

What were your fears, your struggles? Did you struggle with addiction?
What were your greatest joys?
What was most important to you during these years from twenty-two to thirty?

Was your river flowing smoothly or did it overflow into a flood plain?

Is this when you came to prison? What did that mean in your life?

Now open your eyes, pick up your pen and write about the years between twenty-two and 30.

After about 7 min. begin the guided reflection again:

Please put your pens down now and close your eyes again and just breathe . . .

Let the river of your life flow further in your mind. Follow the river from its source and through the years and flowing on to the next ten years. See your river from ages thirty-one to forty. Watch for places it flowed smoothly. Watch for rough water.
In these years what were your passions?

Why did you get up in the morning?

What relationships were central to your life? Partners, children, friends, family?
Did you feel supported in life, or did you feel alone?

How had your life goals or vision changed?

Now open your eyes, pick up your pen and write about the years between thirty-one and forty.

After about 7 min. end the guided reflection. Usually people need to take a break here because of the intensity of the exercise. You may need to end the exercise after the age of thirty depending on the age of the participants. If there are women older than forty, have them finish the next years on their own, outside of class time.

1:05 In the journal do a color wash on two facing pages with watercolor- this is a background for a future exercise. It doesn’t water what color is used. A color wash means quickly putting watercolor down on the page without precision, just lightly washing the page for some background color. While those pages are drying start the Ideal World exercise.

1:10 Creating the Ideal World page:
Give each participant two pieces of blue paper – one lighter blue and one darker blue and an image of earth similar to the one below (or search on Google images) and size the earth big enough to fit on the journal page.
Glue the earth on the darker blue paper.
On lighter blue paper write “My ideal world” in large letters. Then draw images or write words around this prompt: If I could create the ideal world for my child, my friends, animals, parents, family and me… what would that include, what would that look like?

It is helpful to give examples here: i.e. food for everyone, no guns, free medical care, no racism, ask the participants for ideas before they start to write and draw.

When they have finished the exercise they can glue both pages into the journal. Encourage them to do this exercise with their child, if they visit.
1:30  Creating the “What I need today . . .” page:
Make copies of some of the cards from the Grace Cards deck by Cheryl Richardson (or something similar). These cards have graphics showing women of different ethnicities and focus words like “Listen” “Patience” “Support”.
Make enough copies of different cards so that the women have a choice of what to choose. Set the cards out and let everyone walk around to view the cards. After everyone has seen the cards ask them to choose one card that they are drawn to – especially focusing on the word which will address “What I need today.”
Once they chose their card they will glue it on one of the pages that has the color-wash that they completed earlier today in class.

Then opposite the page where they glued the image they write about:
a) Describe the woman in the picture first. What is she doing? How is she dressed? Is she alone? Looking down? What does she seem to be feeling?
b) What does the word on the card mean to me?
c) Why do I need this (the word on the card) in my life today?

1:45 Clean up  (collect water colors, pencils, markers, all things used by the group)

1:50 Begin to discuss what did we do today . . .
Invite them to share ideas – they don’t have to talk, but it helps others in the group to learn and grow when we share our own thoughts.
What did you learn about your self from doing “The River of my Life? Encourage them to write more in their journal during the next week.
We will wi ith discussing their Ideal World and the card they chose next week.

2:00 End of class

Day Three: Prison Journal Mother’s program

0:00 Gather, check in about last week
Invite people to present and discuss their ideal world page
Ask participants to share the “What I need today…” page and explain why they chose their card
Do a color wash using red watercolor across two pages.

0:15 Creating the “Pieces of my Heart” page
1) Give each participant a copy of the Heart Quotes (included at the end of this lesson)
   Read through the quotes, asking what the quotes mean to them and which one they like the best and why?

2) Give each person a heart shaped puzzle (example below). (These can be purchased on-line or hand made. It is best to use a card stock paper. The puzzles need to be cut apart before the class.) ‘Have participants put the puzzles together and lay them on the table. Some people may need help putting the puzzle together. The women that complete their puzzles first can help the people who take longer.
0:30 Pieces of My Heart Guided imagery:

Turn on some soft instrumental music in the background, ask participants to put down all pencils, pens and puzzles and close their eyes and just breathe then read slowly with pauses.

*What is in your heart today?*
*Visualize your heart as a puzzle with many pieces . . .
*What are the pieces of my heart puzzle?*

*Are there people in my heart puzzle?*
*Who are they? Friends? Family? Lovers?*
*Have I lost a piece of my heart to a person (through hurt, disappointment, a lost relationship, death)?*
*What have I learned from the people in my heart?*

*Are there animals in my heart puzzle?*
*Who are they? Have I lost my heart to a creature?*
*What have I learned from the animals in my heart?*

*Are there ideas or beliefs in my heart?*
Are there thoughts/dreams that I am passionate about? Are there heart pieces that represent ideas and thoughts that keep me going – that give me hope for the future?

Are there places in my heart? Places that I long to be? Places that I was hurt and lost a piece of my heart?

Are there scars in my heart? Pieces that are painful and need healing?

See your heart as a puzzle with many pieces . . . some of the pieces may be missing or out of place . . . Some pieces are strong and whole and keep your heart beating.

Visualize your heart puzzle

Invite participants to slowly open their eyes and look at their heart puzzle. Show them examples of what a heart puzzle might include. Here is an example from a past participant:
As they create their heart puzzle they should write on it with their black art pen. They can take puzzle pieces out (areas in black, in the sample above) and still glue them on to their page. After the writing and drawing with the black pen is done, the heart can be colored with markers. Then glue the heart puzzle on one of the red pages that was color washed at the beginning of the class. You can add extra art and graphics to the page around the heart puzzle.

On the page across from the heart puzzle, ask them to journal with these questions:

A) What have I learned from the missing pieces, scars and the losses in my heart?  
B) How does that affect me as a parent?

Do a color wash on two pages of the journal (any colors are fine)

Creating the Bio-poem page
Give each participant the Bio-poem hand out with the instructions/outline below.

A BIOPOEM (has nine lines)

. 1) your first name
. 2) four adjectives that describe you (traits)
. 3) relative of (daughter of, sister of, friend of, child of, creature of) (example: daughter of the wind whispering through the forest)
. 4) “lover of . . .” (three things, places, ideas that you love)
. 5) “who feels . . .” (three ideas about what you feel) (example: mystical in the deep dark night of winter)
. 6) “who needs . . .” (three ideas about what you need)(example: the touch of wild fur against my skin)
. 7) “who fears . . .” (three ideas about your fears)
. 8) “who would like to see . . .” (what would you like to see)
. 9) your last name

Read some examples from past students (one is included below). Encourage the women to use imaginative images and metaphors. Give them a lined piece of paper to write on (they will copy their Bio-poem into the journal later).
Bio-poem written by Angel at the MN Department of Corrections, Shakopee (Soul Journal Program) Feb 2013
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Angel

Smiling, humorous, positive and loving.

Relative of Prairie Land, daughter of the West End, friend of every living creature, child of love.

Lover of stars glistening at night, sand in my toes, bright rays of sun on my skin.

Lover of knowledge for all, positive attitudes and drug-free lives.

Lover of the reservation, bright light city of St. Paul, bright rays of sun on my skin.

Who feels positive, optimistic, open-mindedness and willingness to move forward and conquer anything that gets in my way.

Who needs positive influence, love and loyalty to be able to keep my heart beating.

Who fears the unknown, death of self and others and rejection due to past reflections.

Who would like to see the day I walk out of the prison to be with my loved ones. They give me unconditional love, positive reinforcement and no judgment.

(Last name omitted for privacy)

When they finish the poem they should save it in their journal for next week. If they don’t get finished in class ask them to finish the poem for next week. At the next class they will be invited to read their Bio-poems.

1:45 Clean-up and discuss Pieces of my Heart exercise. What came up for them while they did the exercise? What memories came back to them? What did they learn about themselves from doing the exercise? Invite them share their heart puzzles.

2:00 End of class
Heart Quotes

Love is the only reality and it is not a mere sentiment. It is the ultimate truth that lies at the heart of creation. **Rabindranath Tagore**

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes. **Carl Jung**

And now here is my secret, a very simple secret; it is only with the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eye. **Antoine de Saint-Exupery**

I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart's affections, and the truth of imagination. **John Keats**

The moment you have in your heart this extraordinary thing called love and feel the depth, the delight, the ecstasy of it, you will discover that for you the world is transformed. **Jiddu Krishnamurti**

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart. **Helen Keller**

When our eyes see our hands doing the work of our hearts, the circle of Creation is completed inside us; the doors of our souls fly open, and love steps forth to heal everything in sight. **Michael Bridge**

One of the hardest things in life is having words in your heart that you can't utter. **James Earl Jones**

By using your heart as your compass, you can see more clearly which direction to go to stop self-defeating behavior. If you take just one mental or emotional habit that really bothers or drains you and apply heart intelligence to it, you'll see a noticeable difference in your life. **Doc Childre and Howard Martin**

If I keep a green bough in my heart, then the singing bird will come. **Chinese proverb**
Day Four: Prison Journal Mother’s program

0:00 Gather, check in about last week
Invite people to read their Bio-poems from last week, give positive feedback and encourage the women to use descriptive writing. Give them examples and let them enhance their poems. For those who are not finished with the bio-poem, have them finish it now (usually there are several people who have not finished the bio-poem).

0:15 Creating the “Identity” page Give each person a colored piece of paper that is cut to fit in their journal. Ask them to write their Bio-poem on the paper. (This will be glued into the journal.)

On the white page (opposite of where they will glue their bio-poem) have them draw an outline of a woman. It is meant to represent them; they can adjust the features, size and hair to their own look. Give them samples to look at, or cut some female figures out that they can trace. The figures should be large enough to fit the full height of the page. Example:
Have each woman use outline to create an image of her self. Provide markers in different skin tones. They can design clothing and hair to their preference. When they have finished the drawing on the white page they can write significant words from their bio-poem around their self-figure. You can also have them use oil pastels to decorate around the female figure.

Then glue in the bio-poem on the page opposite from the female figure.

Those who have children visit can do a bio-poem with their child and put it in the journal. The women can also share their bio-poem with their children/loved ones.

0:50  **Creating the “Journey to Dreams” page**

Ask participants to go back to the first week in their journals and find the page where they wrote out the dreams they have for their child/children.

The dreams we have for our children don’t just happen – why? We need to support those dreams. Today we will focus on how we help our child achieve or live those dreams.

On a board or large paper write one of the dreams that they listed for their child/children. Then delineate the steps a parent would take to help a child with reach that dream.

Example: Mother’s dream: **“that my child will get a good education”**

Ask: “what are the steps a mother could take to support that dream?”

Have them brainstorm the steps and write the steps on the board.

Steps toward the dream:

“making sure that education is a priority in our home”

“providing a quiet time and space to do homework”

“mother goes to parent-teacher conferences”

“mother volunteers for school activities if possible”

“reading to your child”

“limit TV and screen time”

“mother takes her own education seriously, maybe study time together”
After going through several examples in the large group have the women find the pages that they color-washed last week. Give them the graphic of green baby feet.

Have them glue the baby feet somewhere on the color washed pages (from last week) and write in large letters: JOURNEY to DREAMS. Then they write on the pages each dream they have for their child/ren and the steps they can take to support those dreams. The participants usually need help with identifying steps to the dreams for their children. Asking them for examples during this process is very helpful. They can help each other with ideas.

Another graphic that can be copied and used on this journal page:
1:30 Journey to Dreams Discussion
In the large group discuss these questions:
1) Why is it important to have dreams for our child/ren?
2) Is it important to identify the steps to reaching those dreams? Why?
3) What are some of the dreams and the steps to those dreams that you wrote about today?
4) Is it important to tell/show our children that we have dreams for them?
5) Did someone have dreams for you when you were a child?
   Who was that person/s and what were those dreams?
   How did that person support their dreams for you?
   If you do not feel that someone had dreams for you, how did that impact your life?

Encourage the women to speak/discuss their dreams for their child/ren with them either through in person or phone visits if possible.

1:50 Clean up

2:00 End of class
Day Five: Prison Journal Mother’s program

0:00 Gather, check in about last week, ask if there are any volunteers to read their finished or reworked Bio-poems.

0:05 Do a color wash on two facing journal pages (using winter colors or colors for whatever season you will be doing: spring - summer - fall - winter)

0:15 Hand out the “Ten Important Ways to Mother Your Child” sheet (see the end of this class)
Read through the 10 points, discussing them as you go through the hand out. When you get to the end of the handout and ask each of the women to choose one of the ten ways that they are doing well and one of the ten ways where they could improve. Discuss their choices and ways that they could improve their mothering.

0:45 Creating the “Letter to my Child/ren” page
Give each person a decorative piece of paper (stationary- cut to fit in the journal) to write letters to their son/daughter or children.
The letter should start with:
“Dear _______________,
I am becoming a mother who/that . . .
And then continue with ideas about how they want to mother and be in relationship with their child/ren.

When they are finished writing their letters give them graphics for the “Letter to my children page” like:

What to Leave Behind
by Nancy Wood

The only gift to leave to children is example.
The only road to show them is awareness.
The only blessing to give them is responsibility.
The only thing to ask in return is understanding.
The only memory to take with you is one of love.
On a white page in the journal have them glue their letter and on the opposite page they can glue the graphics.

Ask for volunteers to read their letters.

1:10 Creating the Seasonal Reflection page
This is an opportunity to reflect on the seasons on a deeper level and explore what wisdom each of the seasons might offer for our lives. Choose the season that corresponds to your class time. Find poetry and images that will engage the women.
Here is an example for a Winter class
Ask the participants what memories they have of wintertime.
Discuss the themes of Winter – going within, hibernation, rest, gathering around the hearth fire, story telling, winter holidays (embracing the darkness and anticipating the return of the light).

Read the “Woman in Winter” poem (see below) and discuss what it might mean to them, what words and phrases stand out?

Lay out winter graphics for the women to choose from to create their winter page. (see some examples below or search Google images)

1:20 On the page they water-colored earlier today (with winter colors), ask them to journal about the following questions and use graphics to compose their page.

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1 The Woman in Winter

Going within, hibernation, rest, gathering around the hearth fire, story telling, winter holidays (embracing the darkness and anticipating the return of the light).
What memories do I have of Winter?
What does Winter mean to me today?
This year, how will I go within and do self reflection . . . ?
How might I celebrate this Winter season with my children?

1:40  Clean up

Ask for volunteers to show and discuss their winter pages.

Review the work of the five weeks
Ask participants to complete evaluations
Collect evaluations
Encourage the women to keep journaling even though the class is finished.
Say Goodbye to students

2:00  End

A Woman in Winter

A woman in winter
_is_ winter:
turning inward,
deepening,
elemental force,
time’s reckoning;
sudden frost
and fire’s warming,
depth of loss
and edge of storming.

She is avalanche,
quiet hungering,
utter stillness,
snowfall brewing;
hollowed, hallowed,
shadows casting,
field in fallow,
wisdom gathering.
Waiting, watching,
darkness craving,
shedding, touching,
reaching, laboring;
burning, carrying fire
within her,
a woman turning,
becoming winter.

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Winter graphics:
Ten important ways to mother your child: (by Michelle Scharlop MS and LMFT)

1. Listen to your child. Let your child know that you are interested in their thoughts, feelings, opinions, daily activities, etc. Show your child you are listening by giving them 100% of your attention during that sharing time. Mothers of small children starting this early will get your kids used to this and hopefully this will carry you through the teen years.

2. Be consistent with your child. Children need rules, boundaries and consistency. This structure provides a sense of security that helps build trust that strengthens your relationship.

3. Follow through with your child. As a parent, think before you react to your child’s slip-ups. Give consequences that are fitting to the disobeying act and follow through with the consequence. Children need to know that their mother will follow through with what she says. If you “threaten” to cancel the child’s play date if they act up one more time and then they do act up one more time, you need to cancel the play date. This will reinforce to your child that you will stand behind your words.

4. Exhibit patience with your child. Your child will test you. Take a deep breath, count to five and try to remember how much love you feel for your child.

5. Laugh with your child. Having fun, acting silly and finding the humor of a situation helps lessen stress. It also teaches your child the value of laughter.

6. Set a good example and practice what you preach. Show your child that you follow rules and laws. This reinforces the importance of rules and models the behavior you want to see in your child.

7. Teach your children. You are your child’s first teacher. Take your knowledge about life and share it with your child so you prepare them for their future. Talk about your values and beliefs.

8. Recognize your mistakes and apologize when necessary. A perfect person does not exist neither does a perfect mother. We all make mistakes. Apologize for your mistake and tell your child that you will do your best not to repeat it.

9. Be present in your child’s life. Being in attendance for the “events” of your child’s life like sporting activities, dance recitals, or school plays are important. As well, as spending some time daily with your child like playing a board game, going for a walk, or getting an ice cream cone. Quality time with your child will reinforce your child’s sense of perception of how much he/she means to you.

10. Express your love to your child. Say I love you several times a day. Regardless the age of the child, saying “I love you” can only strengthen your bond. You can also show your child that love with hugs, kisses, holding their hand, singing your child a song and by always accepting who they are unconditionally. As moms, we give our children the advice of “do your best”. Well moms, take your own advice, “do your best” and look at the beautiful smile of your wonderful child.