

LEAD WITH YOUR WILD HEART

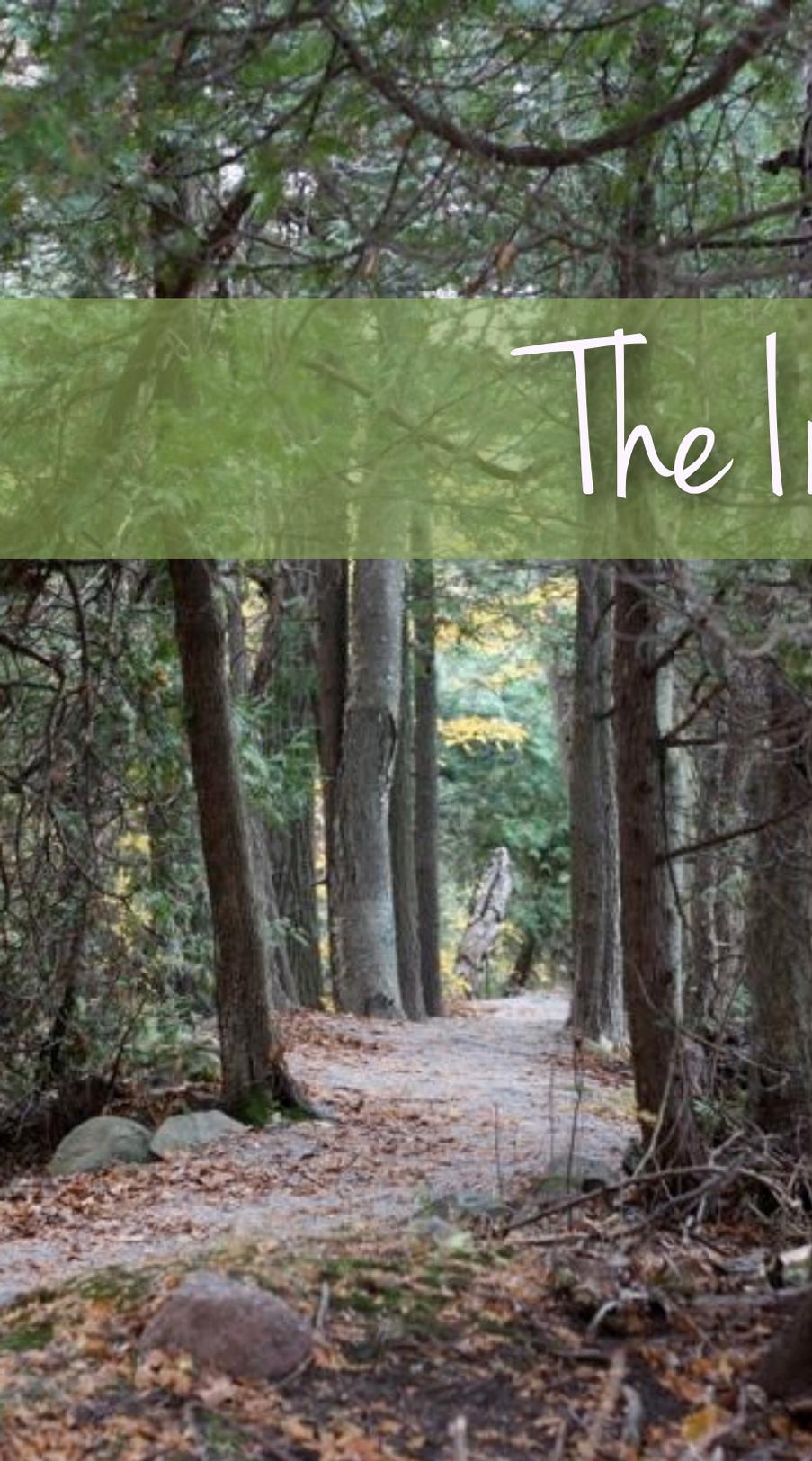
MODULE 1 - RETURN TO YOUR WILD HEART



Lesson 1

The Invitation

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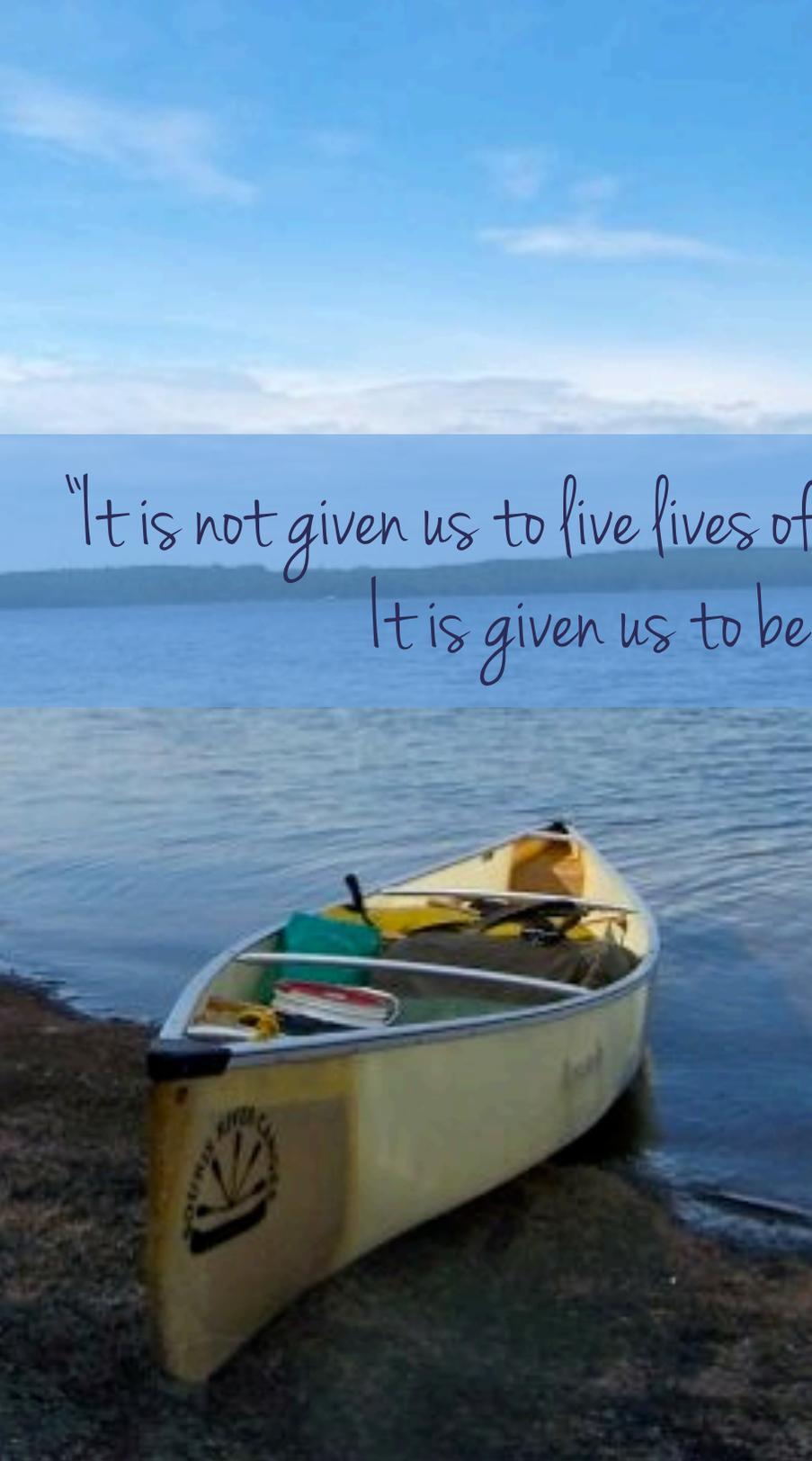
The Invitation

There's a restlessness stirring. A relentless voice keeps whispering in your heart. "Is this all there is?" it says. "Doesn't this feel too tame for you? Aren't you letting too many other people call the shots? Don't you want more fun, more freedom, more expansiveness?"

You've been able to silence the voice in the past, but it's getting harder and harder to ignore. It wakes you up in the night. It calls you into the woods. It makes your dancing feet itch. It urges you to read the kinds of books you're slightly embarrassed to show your friends or your husband. It makes you want to scream when you're faced with institutional thinking that everyone around you seems to blindly accept.

This is the voice of your wild heart, and it will not be ignored. It's not a new voice - it's been with you throughout eternity. It's a primal voice - the voice of the earth, the voice of the wild women in your lineage, the voice of the Divine. It won't go away, because it can't. It's always been there and it always will be. **It's YOU - the true you, the wild you, the primal you.**

It's the authentic you - the you that you've let the world tame. It's the part of you that used to run wild in the woods before they told you it was

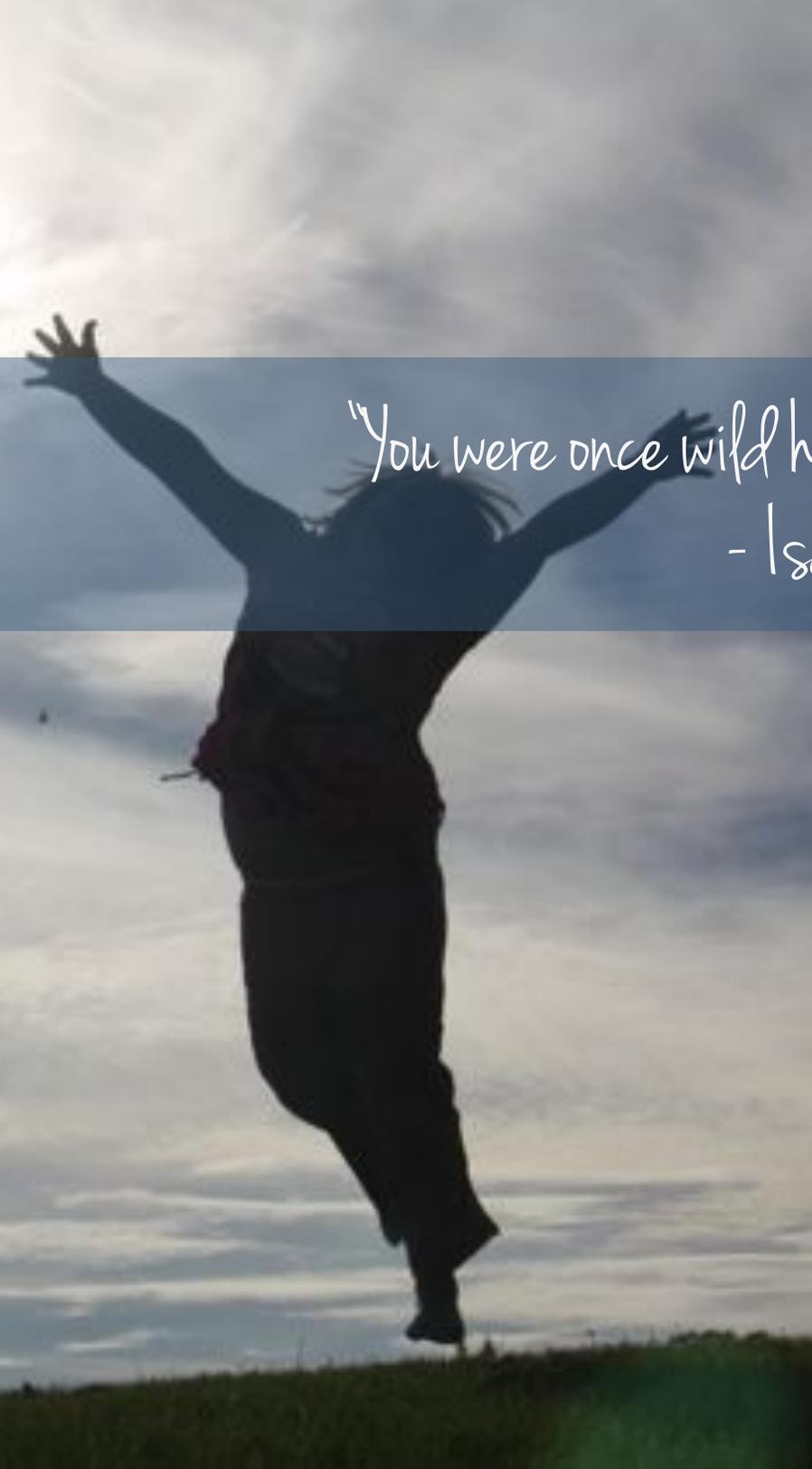
A yellow canoe is beached on a dark, pebbly shore. The water is calm and blue, meeting a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The canoe is the central focus, with its bow pointing towards the viewer. Inside the canoe, there are some items like a green bag and a red and white striped object. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

a dangerous place to play. It's the part that used to wear wild colours before they told you that you were embarrassing yourself in public. It's the part that used to follow your intuition in choosing friends and deciding what to do on Saturday afternoons. It's the part of you that got buried under other people's shame stories. **It's the part of you that was told she had to grow up, get a real job, stop painting, stop dancing, stop chasing rainbows, stop playing with stray animals - stop and BE SHAMED AND BE TAMED.**

"It is not given us to live lives of uninterrupted calm, boredom, and mediocrity. It is given us to be edge-dwellers." - Jay Deacon

Every year you've been on this earth, she got a little more tamed. She was told to follow the rules in school. She was shamed for wanting to climb trees at recess time. She was told not to go outside at night. She was told her stories didn't matter. She was told her art had no relevance. In university, she thought she would find more openness, but there she was told that she needed to get good marks or she'd never get a good job, and getting good marks looked a lot like conformity and rule-following. She wrote essays that were a little too wild and unconventional, and her professors looked down their noses at her. She got out of university and got a good job, and there she was handed more rules and more conventional thinking. She got trapped in a workplace build on patriarchal models. Hierarchies mattered, rules mattered, productivity mattered, logic mattered. Stories didn't matter. Art didn't matter. Neither did nature, or passion, or emotions or wild creativity.

Every time you let yourself get a little more tame, the restlessness increased. Your wild heart did what she could to show up in your tears, in your dreams, in your hunger, and in those quiet "stolen" moments



when you finally let yourself play with paint or walk in the woods. She refused to let you forget her.

You don't need me to tell you this, because you already know.

Your wild heart is tired of being tamed. She wants to come out and play.

*"You were once wild here. Don't let them tame you."
- Isadora Duncan*

She wants to dance, sing, paint, run, play in the woods, chase frogs, and tell wild stories. She wants to re-imagine the world through art and community and storytelling. She wants to stop accepting old broken patriarchal models. She wants to weep in lament over the damage being done to Mother Earth. She wants to change the status quo. She wants to tell the truth. She wants to be in circle with other wild hearts who are also learning to whisper their truth.

It's time to accept her invitation. It's time to brew a pot of tea (or buy a bottle of wine - she may think tea is too tame for her), put out your most decadent chocolate brownies, and entertain your wild heart. It's time to give her a little space in your life. But be prepared - she's a rather dangerous guest and she won't sit calmly with her legs crossed daintily on your couch. She's going to want to sprawl out on the floor or eat her decadent brownies in the woods.

Whatever your wild woman looks like, it's time to say "I don't want to be tame anymore."



That's a big, BIG thing to say, and when you're honest with yourself, you know that it causes a lot of fear and shame and resistance. (We'll talk more about that in a future lesson.) You know that it's not something you can say aloud yet. You know you couldn't handle the scoffing or the questioning looks if you said it to your best friend, your mother, or your husband.

Here's a little secret... You don't have to say it all at once. Your wild heart will be happy if you simply start with a late night tea party after everyone else in the house has gone to bed. She'll be happy if you simply pick up a new set of coloured markers at the stationary store and sit and doodle for 15 minutes. She'll be happy if you simply open the door and let her tiniest whisper find a place in your heart. She doesn't need to take up residence all at once. She's wild, and she won't be satisfied with that little opening for long, but she can also be patient, because a little bit of space is better than none.

"It has taken me three decades to unlearn the impulse to be practical. Just imagine what you might have accomplished if only you'd been encouraged to honor your creative reveries as spiritual gifts." - Sarah Ban Breathnach



This is a journey you're on. It's a journey that didn't start today and it didn't even start last year or the year before. It started in the stories that fed into yours before you were born. It's been playing itself out in your life since before you could walk. It's a journey that will go on for the rest of your life. It's a journey that has many detours, many obstacle courses, many mountains to climb, and many unbelievable views when you open your eyes.

Your journey is a pilgrimage that is taking you closer and closer to your Source, your Wild Heart, your Self, your Goddess. It's not exactly the "hero's journey", because there are no enemies to vanquish (more on that later), but it's similar.

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."
- Howard Thurman

The good news is that you don't have to take the journey all at once. You'll be on it for the rest of your life, so why hurry? It's much better if you slow down and are fully present in each step. You have permission to slow down. You have permission to take the pace that's most comfortable for you. You have permission to pause, to rest, to put your aching feet up on a cushion, to read trashy novels for awhile, and to take a retreat when you need it.

The other good news is that the world is WAITING for you to take this journey. **The world NEEDS more people who are in right relationship with their wild hearts.** The world wants you to be alive and full of delight, because that's what makes the world come alive.

Oh it's also true that there are a lot of people who don't want you to take this journey - people who are afraid to see you change because it shakes them out of their comfort zones, people who don't want to see you get hurt, people who think they're protecting you out of their love. It



will be hard to stand up to these people, and it may cause some relationships to be damaged in the process. But know this - to truly love these people and to truly love yourself with authentic wild-hearted love, you need to be on this journey. Otherwise, you will resent them, and they will resent you, and you'll all be stuck in tameness together.

Don't let them tame you. Don't let them hold you back with their fear and misguided love. Be gentle with them, and promise to be kind, but then look them in the eyes and tell them it's a journey you must take if you are to feel alive.

Those who truly love you will find a way to support you. It may not be tomorrow, or next week, or even next year. But some day, they'll see you in all your wild-hearted beauty, and they'll rejoice with you. They may even be inspired to find their own paths to wild-heartedness.

On behalf of the part of the world that's waiting for you to come alive, thank you or accepting this invitation. Thank you for taking this tiny step into your courage. **Thank you for deciding you don't want to be tame anymore.**

*"Just let the soft animal of your body love what it loves."
- Mary Oliver*

You are beautiful.

You are wild.

You are enough.

You are supported.

WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY.

How to be a woman

(by Heather Plett)

*There may come a time, my friend,
when you have lived too many lives that are not your own,
followed too many rules that broke your spirit,
and mastered the art of imitation.*

*This will be a time when you've forgotten your own shape
and you find that you no longer remember just how to be a woman.*

*Believe this: you can remember again,
you can fit back into the shape that you were meant to be.
It hasn't truly gone away.*

*Start by taking a deep breath, and sit quietly while you
listen to the wisdom written on your heart
by your God/Goddess.*

*Be kind to yourself
caress your skin, your hair, your breasts,
all the body bits that make you woman.*

*Gently touch the flabby bits, the too-skinny bits,
the old bits, the not-perfect bits*

*Stop to kiss Mother Earth, Gaia,
bend your knees, run your fingers through her soil
hug her trees, blow kisses into her wind.*

*Twirl your skirts, kick up your heels
and dance while you listen to the music nobody else hears.*





*Then, when you are ready, turn your head in the direction
your own journey calls you and don't look back
even when you hear the cries
of those who feel betrayed by your leaving.*

*Stand tall, my friend,
you need to be courageous for this remembering
you need to be ready to break things
shift things, disturb the status quo.*

*You need to be powerful, and wise, and steadfast,
in this re-birth, because it is what is expected of you
by all of those waiting for you to lead them.*

*Make no mistake - they ARE waiting for you to lead them
because they are afraid, they are hurting,
and they have lost their way.*

*They need your strength, your courage,
your beauty, your art, to lead them into this new place.*

*But first,
be gentle, sit quietly,
for you need this time of rest
to prepare you for the journey.*

*"A Woman in harmony with her spirit is like a river flowing.
She goes where she will without pretense and arrives at her destination
prepared to be herself and only herself." - Maya Angelou*



Creative Process

ACCEPTING THE INVITATION:

Pause for a moment and just be present in however big or little this step feels for you.

Say this out loud. ***“I am a woman of courage. I accept the invitation of my wild heart. I am taking this new step on my journey despite the fear and resistance. I am not alone. I have the courage stories of other women to keep me company. I have a lineage of wild-hearted women who promise to watch over me. I have the blessing of the Divine.”***

When you have said the words, find or make a token that will symbolize the journey you are on. Here are some options for your token:

1. Walk into the woods or your backyard and find something that represents the wild - a feather, a pinecone, or a rock. Decorate it, write on it, paint it, or hang it from a string around your neck. It's your token - make it uniquely yours!

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- A hand is shown at the bottom left, holding a dandelion seed head. The seed head is white and fluffy, with a long, thin stem extending upwards. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The image is partially obscured by a purple horizontal band at the bottom.
2. Paint the above words into a piece of art - either the words themselves or a visual representation of the words. Hang that in a place where you will see it regularly.
 3. Make some other kind of physical token - a piece of pottery that represents the journey or your wild heart, a dreamcatcher, or a mandala.
 4. Find a childhood toy or treasured object that represents the wild heart that was present in your childhood. Perhaps it's something that reminds you what it was like to ride your beloved horse, or a toy microphone that brings back memories of your dreams of being a rock star.
 5. Buy or make a special piece of jewelry that reminds you of what it feels to be wild. I bought myself a promise ring in a place that represented a lot of my past stories - both the stories of the dreams I'd held and the stories of why I wasn't good enough to follow those dreams. When I bought it, I promised myself that I would no longer silence those dreams.

Once you have found or made a token, give it a place of honour in your home or office or on your body. This object is both sacred and profane. It is sacred in that it holds your promise to yourself, but it is not too sacred that you're not allowed to play with it or change it or replace it if some day it feels too small for you.

*"The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago.
The second best time is now." - Chinese proverb*



JOURNAL PROMPTS:

Consider dedicating (and even decorating) a special journal for your wild-hearted journey. Here are some prompts to get you started:

1. I feel most alive when I...
2. For me, the invitation to my wild heart feels like... *(consider how it has manifested in your dreams, your emotions, your hunger, etc.)*
3. My first step in accepting the invitation will be to...
4. These women are in my lineage of wild-hearted women... *(Write down a list of all of the people you know - whether they are friends, acquaintances, historical figures, or even fictional characters from movies or books - who have stepped into their wild-hearted courage and dared to be edgewalkers and pathmakers.)*
5. I know that the women in my lineage are welcoming me on this journey, and so I will...

"Be a first rate version of yourself, not a second rate version of someone else"
— Judy Garland

"The point of passion is mainly to follow, to let yourself love what you love, to respect your hunger and obey your thirst." - Gregg Levoy



FEATURED INTERVIEW:

[Chris Zydel](#) teaches people to paint from their wild hearts in an environment of encouragement that awakens their artists' souls and challenges them to become spiritual adventurers journeying to their own creative source.

"The wild heart is who we really are - the juiciest, most passionate, most colourful part of ourselves. Stepping into it just takes some permission. Follow the YES and step into it!"

"Each of us has a spark of Divinity in us."

"It's about connecting to our deepest desire and using that to find our creativity."

To view, click [here](#).



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

For further inspiration on your wild-hearted journey, the following books may be of interest:

[Women Who Run With Wolves](#), by Clarissa Pinkola Estes

[Soul Fire](#), by Thomas Ryan

[Callings](#), by Gregg Levoy

[Hope for the Flowers](#), by Trina Paulus

[The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything](#), by Ken Robinson

"We will discover the nature of our particular genius when we stop trying to conform to our own or to other people's models, learn to be ourselves, and allow our natural channel to open." - Shakti Gawain



"I am a woman of courage. I accept the invitation of my wild heart. I am taking this new step on my journey despite the fear and resistance. I am not alone. I have the courage stories of other women to keep me company. I have a lineage of wild-hearted women who promise to watch over me. I have the blessing of the Divine."

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