

# Pathfinder Circle Guide

Group Process for working through  
"Pathfinder: A creative journal for finding your way"  
By Heather Plett

## Introduction to this Guide

Thank you for choosing Pathfinder as a tool for your retreat, women's circle, classroom, or group coaching work. I hope that each person who takes the journey through this creative journal will find meaning and clarity in its pages.

This guide has been designed to help you host meaningful conversations with a group of people (which I refer to as a Pathfinder Circle) who are doing their individual journaling and creative work. These group conversations do not replace the individual work, they enhance it. It is important for each person to spend solitary time with their journal in between the group conversations. The conversations will deepen the journey and help people to see that, even though they must do their self-exploration work alone, they are supported in their quest for authenticity and growth.

## Using the Guide

Pathfinder has been broken into sixteen chapters. This guide has a section to support each of those chapters. If you are meeting for an extended period of time, you could cover a chapter each time you meet, or you could combine chapters for shorter timeframes.

Each section will offer **discussion questions** that build on the journal work done individually. They also include a **suggested poem** that you may wish to read to set the tone for each gathering. Some will also suggest **resources** for more reading on the subject covered in that chapter. Add your own creativity wherever you wish!

In order to participate fully in the discussion, participants should be encouraged to do the work in the assigned chapters before you meet.

## Hosting the Conversation

An honest journey through Pathfinder will take people through deep personal journeys. As they seek their paths, they will walk through their fears, wounds, shame, and dysfunctional stories. They will also take bold steps in expressing their passions and trusting their intuition.

While this is a solo journey for each person, the support of other people will be invaluable. As host of a circle of people traveling these individual journeys, you will need to take special care to provide a safe space for their exploration, questions, doubts, and fears.

"We must come together in ways that respect the solitude of the soul, that avoid the unconscious violence we do when we try to save each other, that evoke our capacity to hold another life without dishonoring its mystery, never trying to coerce the other into meeting our own needs." — Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*

Each person in the circle has a hunger for belonging, a hunger for community, a hunger to be held in a circle of grace where she can open her heart and know that she will be treated with tenderness and respect. Some of them may not yet have awakened to that hunger, believing instead that they can go through life as independent, self-reliant souls. It's there, though, hidden under the armour that's been built up in the efforts to avoid being wounded.

To feed this hunger in the world, we need to create more places where people are fed. These are the places I call Circles of Grace.

A Circle of Grace is a place where people gather for meaningful conversation (such as the contents of Pathfinder will evoke), for compassion, for support, for encouragement, and for growth. While in the circle, we do our best to extend grace to everyone there, including ourselves. We speak with openness and listen with intention. We make a commitment, within the circle, to be as authentic as we know how to be, and we welcome the same from others. We share, laugh, cry, grow, stretch, and tremble. Even when we disagree and conflict arises, we respond with compassion and open hearts and minds.

## Tips on Hosting your Pathfinder Circle:

- 1. Create enough structure to hold the container, but enough flexibility to adapt to what wants to emerge.** The best structure I know of can be found in [PeerSpirit's Circle Guidelines](#) (some of which is included below). Sometimes it feels a little strange to bring structure into something that seems organic, but the structure helps you hold whatever is going on in the circle and helps you take conversation to a deeper place without falling into chaos. You can adapt the structure to what needs to happen in the space. For example, I always use a talking piece at the beginning of a gathering for check-in, so that each person has an opportunity to speak without interruption, and then I set it aside for less structured conversation. I pick it up again for check-out, allowing each person to speak a few words about what they are taking with them from the circle into their lives.
- 2. Set guidelines and intentions so that everyone has a sense of their commitment while in the circle.** Guidelines help us feel more secure in the container because we know how to behave with each other and know what to expect from others. This is a sample of the guidelines and intentions I use for similar circles (feel free to adapt them):
  - a. This is a circle of grace.** It is a safe space for all of us, and to make it so, we will treat each other with kindness and grace.
  - b. This is a confidential circle.** Nothing that is shared here will leave the circle without the permission of the person speaking.
  - c. This is a sharing circle.** Each of us will be invited and encouraged to share questions, wisdom, writing, etc. Nobody will be pushed to share if they don't feel ready, but everyone will be invited.
  - d. This is a learning circle.** We are all here to learn, and so no questions will be considered foolish and no wisdom shared will be silenced. We are all learners together, including the teacher.
  - e. This circle belongs to each of us.** Each of us is individually and collectively responsible for how we interact, what we share, and what we get out of this time together.
- 3. Keep an open mind and suspend judgement.** It is important that everyone in the circle feels safe and accepted. This doesn't mean that any kind of behaviour is acceptable (the guidelines and intentions help with that), but it

means that people can share their stories, hurts, and wounds without fearing that they are being judged. Sometimes that will be hard to do (e.g. when someone shares an opinion or worldview that is very different from your own and you're pretty sure they're mistaken) but it is a crucial part of extending grace in a meaningful way.

**4. Don't try to fix anyone.** As Parker Palmer mentions in the above quote, we need to "avoid the unconscious violence we do when we try to save each other". When others share the struggles they are dealing with, it is human nature to want to help them resolve those struggles, but more often than not, they are sharing in order to feel heard rather than to be fixed. According to Brene Brown, these efforts to fix each other are our "defenses against vulnerability". We are afraid to see too much vulnerability in each other and in ourselves, and so we try to rush past the brokenness to a place where we feel more comfortable and struggles are resolved. In a Circle of Grace, we welcome vulnerability and we offer support without trying to fix.

**5. Encourage people to ask for what they need.** While we don't rush in to fix things for people, we are happy - as hosts and co-creators of the circle - to respond to their requests if they ask for hugs, advice, encouragement, or silence. Create a space where people learn to be comfortable asking for what they need. This will probably take time (many of us have been taught to stifle our needs and not to extend trust to each other too quickly), but it's worth the investment.

**6. Host emotions gently.** Undoubtedly, people will respond to some of the work they'll do in this journal with mixed emotions. It may bring up wounds they haven't touched for years, fear, grief, etc. As a host, it's important to be ready to host this emotion gently and with compassion. If people cry, hand them a tissue and let them know tears are welcome. If they get angry, encourage them to direct that anger into the centre of the circle and not direct it at anyone else (or themselves).

**7. Don't take resistance personally.** When we do deep work as this journal invites, there is bound to be some resistance. It's not easy to travel through some of these places, and there may be people who choose to do so at the beginning, and then shut down part way through the process. Resistance may

show up as anger, frustration, inappropriate humour or withdrawal. As a host, it's important to keep your ego in check as much as possible and remember that their resistance is their own journey and it is not about you. If they need to stay silent sometimes, let them do so. If they choose to walk away or take a break, extend grace and let them do what they need to do. Remind others in the circle that each person is responsible for her own journey.

## Circle Guidelines

(Some of this is taken from [PeerSpirit's Circle Guidelines](#), with permission)

1. **Circle** - Before guests arrive for the gathering, set up the circle of chairs to welcome them in. The center of a circle is like the hub of a wheel: all energies pass through it, and it holds the rim together. To help people remember how the hub helps the group, the center of a circle usually holds objects that represent the intention of the circle. Any symbol that fits this purpose or adds beauty will serve: flowers, a bowl or basket, a candle. (Note: If you are hosting a virtual circle (on conference call or Skype), you may wish to create a centre in your own home and share a photo of it, or describe it to others on the call. You could also invite them all to create their own centres and/or light a candle during the call.)
2. **Path** - For a Pathfinder Circle, you may wish to have a centre that reflects pathfinding. For example, outline a path with small stones, or draw one on a large piece of paper. Participants could be invited to write their intentions on small pieces of paper or rocks and place them on the path. (Note: For an online circle, share a photo of such a path and invite people to send or speak their intentions which can be added onto the graphic.)
3. **Welcome** - Once people have arrived, begin with a welcome from the host. You may begin with a poem (or the piece of the Caterpillar's Journey for the chapter you're working on), a song, a moment of silence, or your own words to mark the shift to circle time. A suggested poem is included in each of the lessons below.

4. **Check-in** - After the welcome, host a check-in, giving each person an opportunity to share. Check-in helps people into a frame of mind for council and reminds everyone of their commitment to the expressed intention. It ensures that people are truly present. Verbal sharing, especially a brief story, weaves the interpersonal net. Check-in usually starts with a volunteer and proceeds around the circle. If an individual is not ready to speak, the turn is passed and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken. Sometimes people place individual objects in the center as a way of signifying their presence and relationship to the intention. (Note: You may want to ask them ahead of time to bring an object from their home that represents where they are on their own life paths. They will leave these at the centre of the circle for the duration of the gathering.)
5. **Agreements** - Invite people to contribute to the circle agreements. You can use the guidelines and intentions mentioned above, create your own as a starting point, or start with a blank slate and invite suggestions from the group. These can be established the first time you gather and then revisited (and edited, if necessary) each time you meet.
6. **Discussion** - Using the following conversation starters as a guide, host a conversation about that week's lesson. Keep in mind that this is simply a guide and does not need to restrict you. If the group wants to take the conversation somewhere else, be flexible and host what emerges.
7. **Check-out** - At the close of a circle meeting, it is important to allow a few minutes for each person to comment on what they learned, or what stays in their heart and mind as they leave. Closing the circle by checking out provides a formal end to the meeting, a chance for members to reflect on what has transpired, and to pick up objects if they have placed something in the center. As people shift from council space to social space or private time, they release each other from the intensity of attention being in circle requires. Often after check-out, the host, guardian, or a volunteer will offer a few inspirational words of farewell, or signal a few seconds of silence before the circle is released.

## Creative Exercise for Your Gatherings

You may wish to create an ongoing exercise that participants work on each week. Here are a few examples:

1. **Basket of Stones** - Have a pile of stones available and provide each participant with a basket during the first gathering. At the end of each week's conversation, write a word or phrase on a rock that reflects your learning or intention for that week. Place it in your basket. At the end of your time together, each basket should hold 16 rocks. The baskets can be kept on their desks or altars to remind them of the journey they are on.
2. **Vision Board** - Invite each person to create an ongoing vision board that will grow throughout the 16 sessions. Each week, they can find images that reflect the discussion for that week and add those images to the vision board.
3. **Mandala** - Invite each person to create a large mandala that they add to each week. Divide a large circle into 16 pie pieces (or flower petals) and each week fill in one of the sections with an image or words that reflect that week's conversation.
4. **Path of Intentions** - Draw a path on a large piece of paper. There could be one collective path, or each person could draw their own. Cut a bunch of stone shapes out of paper, and each week participants can write an intention or learning on a stone and add it to the path.
5. **Emerging Butterfly** - Watch this video of the life cycle of a monarch butterfly (made by a friend and his two adorable daughters). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FDE--MG2g> Use it as inspiration for an ongoing creative project. Each person could create a giant butterfly that they add to each week. Or you could play with clay each week - make an egg the first week, a caterpillar a few weeks later, a chrysalis, and eventually a butterfly.

Use your imagination to create something that fits your group and/or the space you're in!

## Chapter 1 - Beginning the Journey

For your first gathering, you will want to spend time getting to know each other and building trust among those gathered. Many of us are longing for a place of belonging, so the step into vulnerability and trust often happens more quickly than expected. Sometimes, in the opening circle, there are already tears shed when people are given a safe opportunity to talk about themselves and the journeys they're on.

As a host, you need to be prepared for all kinds of ways of entering. Some will want to jump into deep conversation quickly and others will be more reluctant to do so. Some may offer up a vulnerable piece of themselves and then second-guess their sharing and withdraw. Each participant must find her own path in.

Start with a check-in question that invites people to share a part of their personal story that relates to the work you'll do together in the coming weeks. For example, you may wish to ask each person to answer the question "What's your name and what brought you here?" or "Who are you and what has your search for your path been like so far?" or "Fill in the blanks... 'I am \_\_\_\_\_ and I am seeking my path because \_\_\_\_\_.'"

### The Journey

By Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew  
what you had to do, and began,  
though the voices around you  
kept shouting  
their bad advice--  
though the whole house  
began to tremble  
and you felt the old tug  
at your ankles.  
"Mend my life!"

each voice cried.  
But you didn't stop.  
You knew what you had to do,  
though the wind pried  
with its stiff fingers  
at the very foundations,  
though their melancholy  
was terrible.

It was already late  
enough, and a wild night,  
and the road full of fallen  
branches and stones.

But little by little,  
as you left their voices behind,  
the stars began to burn  
through the sheets of clouds,  
and there was a new voice  
which you slowly  
recognized as your own,  
that kept you company  
as you strode deeper and deeper  
into the world,  
determined to do  
the only thing you could do--  
determined to save  
the only life you could save.

### Discussion questions:

1. How does the introductory story of Caterpillar's Journey reflect your own life? Have you had to leave something behind to seek your path, or are you at a decision-making point where you may need to leave something behind?
2. What resistance (if any) are you facing from people around you to seek your path in life?
3. What resistance are you facing in yourself?
4. What looks muddy for you right now? What clarity do you hope to find?

5. The Parker Palmer quote in the lesson mentions the ancient tradition of pilgrimage - "a transformative journey to a sacred centre full of hardships, darkness, and peril". Is this how you would describe your own journey toward a sense of self and vocation? Why or why not?
6. One of the journal prompts asks you to describe how the journey you're on feels. Talk about that.
7. What are you hoping for in this journey through Pathfinder?
8. How can the Pathfinder Circle support your journey? What do you need from the other people present? What can you offer them?

## Chapter 2 - Journey to the Bottom of the U

In this chapter, Theory U is briefly introduced. If you want to learn more about it, you can visit <https://www.presencing.com/theoryu>, or read the book called [Theory U: Leading From the Future as it Emerges](#). It's a fairly simple concept at its core, but it also holds a lot of complexity which both the book and website explore (which might be overwhelming if you've never been exposed to it before).

For the purpose of the Pathfinder journey, we are only going to look at Theory U in its simplest form, seeing it as a dive into the unknown where we open our minds, hearts, and wills to the new thing that wants to emerge. Rather than trying too hard to direct the future, we **let go** so that we can **let come**.

If people in the group become overwhelmed trying to understand the complexity of the theory, you may want to show them this simple video that demonstrates Theory U through a silly kids game: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byGulgoXFpPE>

Also, here's a useful article about the feminine principle and Theory U: [http://www.oxfordleadership.com/journal/voll\\_issue2/hayashi.pdf](http://www.oxfordleadership.com/journal/voll_issue2/hayashi.pdf)

# The Guest House

by Jelaluddin Rumi

This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.

## Discussion Questions:

1. In this week's episode of Caterpillar's Journey, she is having second thoughts and is dealing with the resistance of her friends and family in order to take her leave. How does her story reflect your own story?
2. The voice of Caterpillar's little sister was the catalyst that gave her the courage to go. Is there someone in your life who has served as a catalyst, trusting you and encouraging you to step onto your path?
3. What is your response to Theory U? Does it resonate as a path through change? Does it reflect your own journey?
4. Would you say that you allow new things to emerge, or do you have a tendency to try to rush into the new thing to avoid sitting in the unknown for too long?

5. Where in the U do you feel that you are currently? (journal prompt #1)
6. What does letting go feel like? (journal prompt #2)
7. When you sense into what wants to emerge, what is coming up for you?
8. Read the following quote from Václav Havel: "Today, many things indicate that we are going through a transitional period, when it seems that something is on the way out and something else is painfully being born. It is as if something were crumbling, decaying, and exhausting itself, while something else, still indistinct, were arising from the rubble." Do you agree that there is a shift going on that is bigger than the individuals in this circle, or does it feel like it's only happening to you?
9. When you're at the bottom of the U, in the place of the unknown, what spiritual and self-care practices help sustain you?

## Chapter 3 - Cutting up the Map

This chapter may come as a surprise for people who expected this book to offer them direction rather than tell them that pathfinding involves first getting lost. This may bring up frustration, fear, and even anger among some people. On the other hand, it may come as a relief to people who feel lost and are afraid they might be "doing it wrong".

Be prepared to host the emotions that may come as a result of the mixed feelings people have toward lostness and chaos. Whatever their response is, it's okay to feel it. Remind people that they are in a place of safety and they don't have to justify or apologize for their emotional response.

Consider using the book "Oh the Places You'll Go" by Dr. Seuss as an additional resource for your circle. In the book, he talks about "the waiting place", "the slumps" and the place where "bang-ups and hang-ups" happen. Reading the book during this week's section would serve as an interesting conversation starter.

Here's a link to a video of John Lithgow reading the book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQRWeZy-SBQ> and here's a fun one from Burning Man: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahv\\_1lSTSiE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahv_1lSTSiE)

# The Peace of Wild Things

by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

## Discussion Questions

1. In this week's tale, Caterpillar meets Frog, who offers a hint of the transition that Caterpillar will need to go through. How does this story relate to your own story? Have you encountered people who serve as a mirror, offering you hints into what your journey will be like? Who do you look up to, seeing them as transformed people who have found their paths and are doing their work in the world?
2. The article in this chapter talks about the importance of surrender. What does the word surrender mean to you? What do you associate it with? What stories from your background does it bring up?
3. In the creative exercise, you tore up a map to symbolize your surrender. What did it feel like to tear up the map? What did it bring up for you?
4. What images showed up in your "lack of vision board"? What does it feel like to be lost?
5. What does it mean to give yourself permission to be lost? (journal prompt #3) Is it a relief or does it bring up fear?
6. In the quote by Richard Rohr, he talks about being "naked enough and poor enough". Share a story of a time when you felt that you'd reached that place. Did that place offer you the freedom he mentions? What happened next?
7. (If you use "Oh the Places You'll Go") How does Dr. Seuss' book reflect your own journey? At which place in the book do you feel you are currently?

8. What will you do this week to honour the permission you've given yourself to be lost? How will you be intentional about releasing the need to "do things" and simply "be"?

## Chapter 4 - Navigating in the Dark

It is important to remember, as you go through each chapter, that the lesson in that chapter may not reflect the place where the participants are currently at in their own journeys. This week, for example, we'll be talking about being in the darkness of grief, pain, anger, disappointment, etc., and people may feel that the lesson is bringing them down if they are currently in a happier place.

Acknowledge this before you begin the conversation, but then suggest to people that, even if they are not currently in a dark place, it is worthwhile discussing the darkness because all of us have been there and all of us will be there again some day.

The darkness, while frightening, is an important place to be. The darkness has many lessons for us that we can't learn unless we surrender ourselves to it.

### Start Close In

by David Whyte

Start close in,  
don't take the second step  
or the third,  
start with the first  
thing  
close in,  
the step  
you don't want to take.

Start with  
the ground  
you know,  
the pale ground  
beneath your feet,  
your own  
way of starting  
the conversation.

Start with your own  
question,  
give up on other  
people's questions,  
don't let them  
smother something  
simple.

To find  
another's voice,  
follow  
your own voice,  
wait until  
that voice  
becomes a  
private ear  
listening  
to another.

Start right now  
take a small step  
you can call your own  
don't follow  
someone else's  
heroics, be humble  
and focused,  
start close in,  
don't mistake

that other  
for your own.

Start close in,  
don't take  
the second step  
or the third,  
start with the first  
thing  
close in,  
the step  
you don't want to take.

## Discussion Questions

1. In this week's tale, Caterpillar is lost and alone in a dark place. Share a story of a time when you were in the darkness like Caterpillar. What did that feel like? What did you learn from it?
2. Read the Mary Oliver quote: "Someone I loved once gave me a box of darkness. It took me years to understand that this too, was a gift." When have you been given a box of darkness? What was the gift in the darkness?
3. "In the cycle of life, deconstruction has to happen before construction can begin." What do you think this means? How is it reflected in your own life?
4. The lesson talks about shame as your greatest enemy. How has shame kept you from becoming your best self?
5. "Search for the points of light." What do you do when you're in the darkness to remind you that there is light behind the clouds? Share a story of a time when you felt totally lost and alone, and some tiny point of light shone through.
6. In Sacred Contracts, Carolyn Myss talks about how all of the world's major religious leaders - Jesus, Muhammed and the Buddha - had to go through times of testing before they could be commissioned into their roles as teachers. How has hardship deepened your own spiritual journey and made you more prepared to teach/serve/lead/parent/etc.?
7. How have other people helped you get through dark places?
8. In the creative exercise, you were invited to create a visual representation of your dark place. Talk about what that looks like and why.

9. What are the self-care and spiritual practices that help you survive the darkness?
10. What will you do this week to remind yourself that the darkness is an important time of growth and spiritual deepening?

## Chapter 5 - Releasing

This week is about releasing old stories and baggage that try to keep us from stepping onto our paths. There is really only one reason that we hang onto old stories that no longer serve us - **fear**. We are afraid of the new, afraid to let go of the old, afraid we'll be rejected, and afraid we'll fail, and so we hang onto limiting stories that keep us small and safe.

This week you'll be hosting some of that fear and inviting people to take a closer look at what they need to release. As always, it will be important to remind people that they are safe in this circle - safe to express fear, safe to cry, safe to resist, and safe to try something new.

### Wild Geese

by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,

are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting-  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

### Discussion Questions:

1. In this week's tale, Caterpillar encounters Deer who assures her that she is safe and that her eyes will soon adjust to the dark. Deer is a wise guru or spiritual teacher who arrives just at the time Caterpillar needs him the most. Has there been a guru or teacher who has offered you comfort or wisdom at a dark time in your life? It doesn't have to be what we typically think of when we think of a guru/teacher - it could be a small child, an animal, a friend, etc. Share your story.
2. In the lesson, there's a metaphor about a person who stands on the shore of a large lake and must decide whether or not to take along the heavy boots and backpack while traversing the lake. Has there been a time in your life when you've had to make a similar decision? What did you take and what did you leave behind?
3. The lesson mentions Diana Nyad's support team - the people who helped her get safely from Cuba to Florida. Do you have such a support team helping you on this journey? If so, who are they? If not, what kind of support are you looking for?
4. There's a list of some of the old stories that you may need to leave on the shore. Do these reflect your own stories? What other ones would you add?  
(journal prompt #1)
5. What fear is lurking behind your need to hang onto these old stories? (journal prompt #2)
6. In the creative exercise, you drew a pile of stones to represent the stories you're releasing. Talk about what you created. Did anything new emerge for you in this exercise?
7. What does it feel like to release old stories? Do you feel that you're ready for it?
8. In the coming week, what will you do when the old stories crop back up again and threaten to hold you back?

## Chapter 6 - Wandering

In this lesson, we'll talk about what it means to be an explorer, open to the new things that appear on the path rather than trying to will them into existence. In Theory U, this part of the journey is called **sensing**, when we are invited to use all of our senses to witness what is present. We suspend our judgements, opinions, assumptions, and mental models, and we use our eyes and ears and the feeling of our bodies to sense into whatever the context is. We engage in conversations, we ask good questions, we listen deeply, we watch with full attention, and we notice how our bodies feel.

This week, encourage participants to have fun with the exploration process. This is about returning to a childhood sense of playfulness and curiosity. When we let go of expectations and the grown-up need to always be busy achieving our goals and having a purpose in life, we open ourselves to surprise and enchantment. We take delight in our discoveries rather than rushing past them in our busy schedules.

People who are used to leading purpose-driven lives and who have been raised to feel guilty for "wasting time" may have considerable resistance over this chapter's lesson. Talk about that resistance and allow people to work through it in their own ways. Some may even decide that this is a pointless lesson and that they don't have the patience for this kind of frivolity. That's okay. They're living their own journeys and you, as their host, can simply invite them to consider where the resistance is coming from and what message may be found in it.

### What the Day Gives

by Jeanne Lohmann

Suddenly, sun. Over my shoulder  
in the middle of gray November  
what I hoped to do comes back,  
asking.

Across the street the fiery trees

hold onto their leaves,  
red and gold in the final months  
of this unfinished year,  
they offer blazing riddles.

In the frozen fields of my life  
there are no shortcuts to spring,  
but stories of great birds in migration  
carrying small ones on their backs,  
predators flying next to warblers  
they would, in a different season, eat.

Stunned by the astonishing mix in this uneasy world  
that plunges in a single day from despair  
to hope and back again, I commend my life  
to Ruskin's difficult duty of delight,  
and to that most beautiful form of courage,  
to be happy

### Discussion Questions:

1. In this week's tale, Caterpillar regains the courage to carry on. Share a story of a time when you felt lost, but somehow found the courage to carry on. What helped you regain your courage?
2. Do you like to wander, or does it feel like a waste of time? Where/how do you wander?
3. What do you think about when you wander and what does your wandering teach you? (journal prompt #4)
4. What was on the permission slip you wrote before wandering? Did it change anything about your wandering?
5. What did you discover while wandering this week? What surprises were there?
6. Did you have a conversation with a tree? If so, what did it tell you?
7. When you apply your wandering lessons to your own life, what comes up for you? What things did you discover when you took notes on your own life?
8. What do you need to let go of in order to see yourself as an explorer in the world?

9. How will you be more intentional in the coming week to be an explorer in the world who lets her curiosity and a sense of play guide her?

## Chapter 7 - A Basket of Courage

This week, your job as host will be to help remind people of their own courage. We've all done courageous things in the past, but we don't always remember. The simple act of taking part in this program was an act of courage. Sometimes just getting out of bed is an act of courage.

The lesson introduces a concept called Appreciative Inquiry. This is a process that's normally used in corporate environments, but it has a lot of application for personal growth as well. Here's a video that gives a simple introduction to Appreciative Inquiry: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzW22wwhJ4> You don't need a very deep understanding of it to get through this lesson - simply know that it is a process of looking at what works and then figuring out how to do even more of it, instead of focusing on what doesn't work and trying to fix it.

Because we've been taught not to brag about ourselves, participants may have a hard time sharing the courage stories that come up in this lesson. Once again, your job will be to create a safe environment where nobody is judged or ridiculed for an honest assessment of their own courage.

### Courage

by Anne Sexton

It is in the small things we see it.  
The child's first step,  
as awesome as an earthquake.  
The first time you rode a bike,  
wallowing up the sidewalk.  
The first spanking when your heart

went on a journey all alone.  
When they called you crybaby  
or poor or fatty or crazy  
and made you into an alien,  
you drank their acid  
and concealed it.

Later,  
if you faced the death of bombs and bullets  
you did not do it with a banner,  
you did it with only a hat to  
cover your heart.  
You did not fondle the weakness inside you  
though it was there.  
Your courage was a small coal  
that you kept swallowing.  
If your buddy saved you  
and died himself in so doing,  
then his courage was not courage,  
it was love; love as simple as shaving soap.

Later,  
if you have endured a great despair,  
then you did it alone,  
getting a transfusion from the fire,  
picking the scabs off your heart,  
then wringing it out like a sock.  
Next, my kinsman, you powdered your sorrow,  
you gave it a back rub  
and then you covered it with a blanket  
and after it had slept a while  
it woke to the wings of the roses  
and was transformed.

Later,  
when you face old age and its natural conclusion

your courage will still be shown in the little ways,  
each spring will be a sword you'll sharpen,  
those you love will live in a fever of love,  
and you'll bargain with the calendar  
and at the last moment  
when death opens the back door  
you'll put on your carpet slippers  
and stride out.

### Discussion Questions:

1. In this week's tale, Caterpillar is reminded by Tree of her capacity for courage. Has anyone served Tree's purpose in your life, reminding you that you are courageous and encouraging you to carry on? How did you respond?
2. The lesson introduces Appreciative Inquiry, a process that's often used in community groups, businesses, governments, etc. to help them focus on the positive instead of the negative and to move into the future with strength. In Appreciative Inquiry, we must first identify what is going well and where our strengths are. Do you have an easy or hard time identifying your strengths and positive attributes?
3. The lesson says that "Courage is not the absence of fear, it's about choosing to step forward despite it." Does this resonate for you? How do you define courage? (Read the four statements about courage at the end of the written part of the lesson as a conversation starter.)
4. Has there ever been a time when fear served a valuable purpose in your life? What did the fear teach you and how did you respond?
5. A simple exercise for getting to the bottom of our fears... Break the group into pairs. One person in each pair will ask the other person "What are you afraid of?" Once the other person answers, the other person will simply say "Thank you. What are you afraid of?" The person will respond again, and once again the other person will say "Thank you. What are you afraid of?" Keep going for 10 minutes and then switch. This exercise helps people uncover the fears that are hidden beneath the layers.
6. Share some of the courage stories that came up while you were doing the journal prompts.
7. What's the most courageous act you've ever done in your life?
8. What's an area of your life in which you need more courage?

9. How might your courage stories from the past help you find courage in the future?

## Chapter 8 - What do you Value?

This week we're talking about something very personal and often hard to define - our values. Many of us have difficulty identifying our own personal values because they have been so influenced by our families of origin, our cultures, our churches, our schools, etc.

Consider this week's lesson to be a life-long practice. Unless you've done a considerable amount of personal work already, it might be hard to identify your values with one pass through the lesson. Let people know that they don't have to get it right the first time. This is something that they can come back to again and again and refine it as they get to know themselves better.

If you've ever worked in a corporate environment, you may have some resistance to the concept of values. Most companies, governments, non-profits, etc. come up with values statements that are meant to guide their decision-making processes, but many of them don't live up to their stated values. Even if you don't personally have this experience, some people in your group may have this kind of resistance. (It's certainly something that's come up for me, given my own corporate history.) The resistance is fine. Simply offer them an opportunity to reframe the concept to one of personal instead of corporate values. They may not have power over how their companies are living up to their values, but they do have power over their own choices and how those are aligned with their values.

## The Invitation

by Oriah Mountain Dreamer

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living,  
I want to know what you ache for,  
And if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are.  
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love,  
For your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon.  
I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow,  
If you have been opened by life's betrayals or  
Have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain!

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own;  
If you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you  
To the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful,  
Be realistic, or to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you're telling me is true.  
I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself,  
If you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul.

I want to know if you can see beauty  
Even when it is not pretty every day,  
And if you can source your life from God's presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine,  
And still stand on the edge of a lake and shout to the silver of the full moon,  
"Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have,  
I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair,  
Weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done for the children.

It doesn't interest me who you are, how you came here,  
I want to know if you will stand in the center of the Fire with me and not shrink  
back

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied.  
I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away,  
I want to know if you can be alone with yourself, And if you truly like the  
company you keep in the empty moments.

### Discussion Questions:

1. In this week's tale, Caterpillar tries to eat dirt, thinking that if the worm enjoys it, she might enjoy it too. Share a story of when you felt pressure to try something because everyone else was doing it, but you learned fairly quickly that it wasn't for you. What did it feel like to come to that realization? Was it hard to step away from the pack?
2. According to the Ghandi quote, "Your habits become your values, your values become your destiny." Do you agree or disagree? How have you seen this demonstrated in yourself and others?
3. In the first exercise, you were invited to make a pie chart reflecting how you spend your time. How do you spend your time? Were there any surprises in your chart?
4. What are the themes that show up in your reading and entertainment choices?
5. What are the themes that show up in your favourite possessions? What about your relationships?
6. Share your top five values. Do you agree that these reflect who you want to be in the world?
7. What did you learn in this exercise?
8. What changes do you want to make in order to be in greater alignment with your values?

## Chapter 9 - What Song are you Meant to Sing?

This week's lesson is about finding the unique song each of us is meant to sing. To set the stage for this conversation, you may want to start with some music - and perhaps even some movement to go with the music. (Suggestion: Wildest Dreams by Cary Cooper)

The lesson is fairly short, but it packs a powerful punch. Some people may never have explored their own voices or their own songs, choosing instead to be followers, singing the songs they've been taught or keeping their voices silent. Remind them that identifying their own song and claiming their own voice does not mean that they have to become public speakers or professional musicians - it simply encourages them to live out of their own truth instead of echoing back the things they hear from others.

You may wish to have some index cards handy so that people can do more index card exercises, exploring even deeper what their songs are. Perhaps, after the conversation, they will have more clarity and want to write a fresh card that they can hang on their bulletin board or mirror.

### The Voice

by Shel Silverstein

There is a voice inside of you  
That whispers all day long,  
"I feel that this is right for me,  
I know that this is wrong."  
No teacher, preacher, parent, friend  
Or wise man can decide  
What's right for you - just listen to  
The voice that speaks inside.

## Discussion Questions:

1. In this week's tale, Butterfly tells Caterpillar what she is meant to become. Have there been people in your life who have told you something they see in your future that you've had a hard time seeing for yourself? (For example, I was told by a mentor that I had leadership potential long before I imagined myself as a leader.) Share that story.
2. Who do you look to as a model of someone who's found their own song and is singing it with courage? What is it about the way that person lives his/her life that inspires you? What can you learn from him/her?
3. The lesson talks about how birds need to sing unique songs so that they can find their tribes. Does this resonate for you? When have you heard a unique voice that made you know you'd found your tribe?
4. What resistance came up for you in this lesson? Was it easy or hard to begin to explore your own song?
5. Share what you wrote in the cards for your song and your voice. Did anything surprise you?
6. In the Shel Silverstein poem, it says "No teacher, preacher, parent, friend or wise man can decide what's right for you - just listen to the voice that speaks inside." Who has decided what's right for you? How have you allowed them to silence your voice? What can you do to change that?
7. Do you believe that your song can make a difference in the world? What difference do you want to make?
8. What can you do this week to more boldly sing your own song?
9. Who will support you in singing your own song?

## Chapter 10 - Your Wounds

In this lesson, we're taking a look at our wounds and how they become flute holes through which our music is played. After doing an Appreciative Inquiry and focusing on our courage stories and then the songs we're meant to sing, this may seem like a turn to the negative. It's important, however, to acknowledge our wounds so that we can find healing for them and so that they can begin to serve as gifts rather than blocks.

Given the trust that has already been built in your Pathfinder Circle, this will probably be a time of increased vulnerability and tenderness. Look for ways to honour that tenderness. You may, for example, want to find little rituals to do that will acknowledge the risks people are taking to explore their woundedness and symbolize the value of finding healing in community. Perhaps a group hug at the beginning and end would help. Perhaps you want to do a creative exercise where people make and/or decorate wooden flutes that represent their wounds and beautiful music. You could purchase some inexpensive wooden flutes or whistles and decorate them with art supplies.

## Still I Rise

by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?

Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.

### Discussion Questions:

1. This week's tale takes us back to surrender, a word we talked about earlier. Caterpillar has no choice but to surrender in order to emerge a butterfly. What have you been learning about surrender on this journey through Pathfinder?

2. When have you had to trust and "let go of the branch" as Caterpillar is told to do? What was the result?
3. Read the story of the broken-hearted maiden (by Mark Nepo). How does this story reflect your own life? Is there a time when you were too wounded to carry on, and someone helped you understand what was going on?
4. Do you know of people who have used their wounds to play beautiful music? How have they inspired you and what can you learn from them?
5. What are some of the wounds that you have suffered? (journal prompt #1)
6. How have those wounds helped you make music? (journal prompt #2)
7. What are some wounds that are still healing? (journal prompt #3)
8. Talk about the intuitive painting that you did in the creative exercise in this lesson. What is being revealed?
9. How can you be more intentional about seeing your wounds as gifts?

## Chapter II - The Path to your Island

In this lesson, we are each invited to travel an imaginary journey to our own special island. As the host, you may wish to play the audio of the guided visualization, available here: <http://wp.me/a2utVn-6MO>

I have used this visualization in many coaching sessions, and each person has a different response to it. Some people are able to quickly visualize the island and know what things sustain them and give them life. Some people get stuck on the shore of the island and have a hard time even imagining the journey through the jungle to the place of discovery. Some see the island vaguely but can't articulate what is there that they need. All of these responses are valid. Nobody should be pushed to see what they can't see.

Encourage participants to acknowledge where they are on this journey, where they feel stuck, and what delights and/or frustrates them. If they have no clarity, remind them of the earlier lessons that explored the value of being lost. Remind them that they are better off continuing to explore with open-mindedness rather than pushing ahead before they're ready.

## The Way It Is

by William Stafford

There's a thread you follow. It goes among  
things that change. But it doesn't change.  
People wonder about what you are pursuing.  
You have to explain about the thread.  
But it is hard for others to see.  
While you hold it you can't get lost.  
Tragedies happen; people get hurt  
or die; and you suffer and get old.  
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.  
You don't ever let go of the thread.

### Discussion Questions:

1. In this week's tale, Caterpillar is convinced that she must DO something in order to learn to fly. Simply surrendering and waiting doesn't make sense to her. Share a story of a time when you had no choice but to wait for something new to unfold. How did the waiting feel? What did you learn from it?
2. Caterpillar learns that she must be willing to surrender everything she once was in order to be transformed into something new. Is this how transformation feels for you? What have you had to give up in order to grow?
3. Let's talk about the visualization. Were you able to see clearly what your island looks like and what sustains and energizes you, or did you find yourself getting stuck in the jungle trying to find your way to that place? Did anything surprise or reveal itself to you on this imaginary journey?
4. What sustains you and makes you happy? (Journal prompt #1)
5. What things showed up on the island that you haven't found (or haven't allowed yourself to have) in your real life? Why are they missing? What can you do to bring them into your life?
6. Did you feel a sense of calling in this exercise? A sense that there was something you were being asked to invite others to? What is that?

7. Who do you want to bring to your island? (Journal prompt #6) How do you want to serve them? What will you offer them that they need more of in their lives?
8. Are you doing the work you feel called to do? If so, how did you get to this place? If not, what is holding you back?
9. What will you do in the coming week to get closer to alignment in living the way you feel called to live and doing the work you feel called to do?

## Chapter 12 - Your Gifts

In this chapter, we are encouraged to acknowledge and offer our gifts to the world. For those who deal with low self-esteem or who have been taught that we are less valuable than other people or that we should never brag about ourselves, this may be challenging. For other people, identifying their gifts is not the hard part but finding a way to use them is.

The conversation around gifts can be both exciting and frustrating. Hopefully, this chapter - coming after weeks of self-exploration - will offer clarity and hope, but each response will be different.

As this chapter reveals, some of our gifts show up as deep desires and guilty pleasures, and for some people, it may be hard to acknowledge these as valuable things to offer the world. Many of us carry old stories about this (that may or may not have come up in the chapter on releasing) that tell us that anything we should deny ourselves of the things that bring us too much pleasure. You may need to go back to Chapter 5 to talk about the stories that no longer serve us as we grow.

# If

by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,

Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

### Discussion Questions:

1. This week, Caterpillar doubts whether she has the courage and capacity to surrender to the pain that transformation will require of her. What stories do you tell yourself when faced with big decisions that may require sacrifice? Do you have the courage and capacity to step into the next thing, or is fear holding you back?
2. In your life, who serves the purpose that Butterfly serves, reminding you of your courage and coaxing you to take that risky next step? How do you serve that purpose for other people? If you don't have a Butterfly guide in your life, what might you do to find one?
3. The Peter Block quote in this chapter talks about the difference between a citizen and a consumer. A citizen is one of "chooses to create the life, the neighbourhood, the world from their own gifts and the gifts of others". Do you see yourself as a citizen or consumer? Explain. Who do you see around you who models citizenship - people who take responsibility for sharing their gifts and making the world better?
4. What things are easy for you to do? (journal prompt #1) Do you see these as gifts, or do you take them for granted?
5. What things did you enjoy doing as a child that you now deny yourself or can't find the time for? (journal prompt #2 & 3) How might these point you toward your gifts?
6. What are your guilty pleasures? (journal prompt #4) Do you give yourself permission to do or have them? Why or why not? What might they reveal about your gifts?
7. Mihaly Csikszentmihali describes the mental state of flow as being "completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you're using your skills to the utmost." Describe a time when you were in flow. What can you learn from this experience?
8. What are your gifts and how are you sharing them? If you're not sharing them, what's holding you back?

9. The final quote in this section is from Mother Teresa, a woman who sacrificed a lot to share her gifts and offer love to the world. What can we learn from her example about what our responsibility is to the world and what it might take to serve the world with love?
10. What intention do you wish to set for the coming week that will help you acknowledge and share your gifts more fully?

## Chapter 13 - Your Circle of Grace

At this stage in your journey together, participants should have some understanding of the value of a circle of grace, even though they've never experienced it before. You have been through a great deal together. You have shared your wounds and your joys, your gifts and your fears. This creates a bond and it gives people strength to step onto their paths.

Invite participants to reflect on what your Pathfinder Circle has come to mean to them. No circle is perfect, and there may still be some who are reluctant to be vulnerable with and trust each other. You may have even had to deal with conflict. This is the way of community - it's messy and imperfect, it's full of people with egos and wounds, but it serves us if we are willing to serve it.

In the book *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible*, Charles Eisenstein says "Beliefs that deviate substantially from the general social consensus are especially hard to maintain, requiring usually some kind of sanctuary... in which the deviant belief receives constant affirmation... They provide a kind of **incubator** for the fragile, nascent beliefs of the new story to develop. There they can grow a bed of roots to sustain them from the onslaughts of the inclement climate of belief outside." Circles of Grace, like the circle you have created over the past weeks, provides an incubator for the kind of growth and self-discovery that Pathfinder invites people into. It gives people a place to begin to share the tender ideas that other people might reject.

## A Moment Of Happiness

by Rumi

A moment of happiness,  
you and I sitting on the verandah,  
apparently two, but one in soul, you and I.  
We feel the flowing water of life here,  
you and I, with the garden's beauty  
and the birds singing.  
The stars will be watching us,  
and we will show them  
what it is to be a thin crescent moon.  
You and I unselfed, will be together,  
indifferent to idle speculation, you and I.  
The parrots of heaven will be cracking sugar  
as we laugh together, you and I.  
In one form upon this earth,  
and in another form in a timeless sweet land.

### Discussion Questions:

1. In this week's tale, Caterpillar realizes she needs to trust the Tree if she is to go through her transformation. Who holds you up when you need to surrender? Who do you need to trust? Is that easy or hard for you to do?
2. As Caterpillar learns in her journey, sometimes you have to leave people you love behind and learn to rely on new people to support the new thing that is emerging for you. Have you experienced this in your life?
3. When she speaks to the Tree, she finds that he is connected through a deep root system to the other Tree that offered her shelter earlier in her journey. How do we witness this deep root system at work in the world? How are the people you trust connected to each other and what do they have in common?
4. What is your experience of community? Have you found yourself hurt by community and so you shy away from it, or have you been held up by community and so you seek it out? What examples of healthy community have you witnessed?

5. There is much in our culture that is teaching us to be self-sufficient and so we often deny our need for community. How has the movement toward less interdependence impacted the world?
6. In the quote near the end of the written part, Mary Pipher talks about a new cultural definition of wealth being about how many people truly know and care about each other. Do you agree or disagree? Are those people with strong community bonds wealthy?
7. Who are the people in your Circle of Grace? (journal prompt #1) Why are they in your Circle of Grace? (journal prompt #2)
8. How do you define grace? (journal prompt #3)
9. If you don't currently have a Circle of Grace, what can you do to change that?
10. On whose shoulders are you standing and what have they taught you? (journal prompt #6 & 7)
11. The last section of this lesson is about the boundaries we need to set when we realize that some relationships are unhealthy. What are you learning about yourself in this regard? What do you need to do to be more clear about your boundaries and what you need from other people?

## Chapter 14 - Putting it all Together

We're nearing the end of this journey together. It's time to start weaving together the threads that have been spun in earlier chapters, bringing together the beautiful music played through the holes of wounds, the gifts and passions, the sense of vocation that the island calls us to, and the Circle of Grace we gain strength from.

As the lesson mentions, this is not a "Ten Easy Steps to a Better You" journey. Hopefully there is some clarity for people at this stage of the journey, but clarity has a way of shining crystal clear one day and then getting muddied by self-doubt and life's hardships the next. As Brenda Ueland says in the first quote "the true self is never a fixed thing." You never really arrive at a destination on this journey - you seek your path, follow it, and then realize you're being called to a new path that will require even more growth and sacrifice from you.

## Self Portrait

by David Whyte

It doesn't interest me if there is one God  
or many gods.  
I want to know if you belong or feel  
abandoned,  
if you can know despair or see it in others.  
I want to know  
if you are prepared to live in the world  
with its harsh need  
to change you. If you can look back  
with firm eye,  
saying this is where I stand. I want to know  
if you know  
how to melt into that fierce heat of living,  
falling toward  
the center of your longing. I want to know  
if you are willing  
to live, day by day, with the consequence of love  
and the bitter  
unwanted passion of your sure defeat.

I have heard, in that fierce embrace, even  
the gods speak of God.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Caterpillar is finally ready to climb the tree and surrender to her destiny. What does that surrender feel like to you? Are you ready to be transformed into something you've never experienced before?
2. Caterpillar climbs into the tree and finds leaves there for her to eat. Before transformation, we need to nourish ourselves with whatever will get us through that challenging time. How are you being nourished? What are your "leaves"?
3. The Brenda Ueland quote says that "the true self is never a fixed thing" and that "the true self is always in motion like music, a river of life, changing,

moving, failing, suffering, learning, shining." Does this reflect your own understanding of the world? How does it make you feel, knowing that "what is true to you today may not be true at all tomorrow, because you see a better truth"?

4. Talk about the Pathfinder Profile you have developed. What did you learn about yourself? What surprised you? What challenges you?
5. What do you see as your soul's calling/purpose/vision?
6. How are you living your soul's calling? What do you need to change in order to be in greater alignment?
7. Talk about your Path of Action. What do you need to give up, what do you need to start, and who do you need to build relationships with?
8. What five simple actions are you committing to in the next six months?
9. What five bigger actions are you committing to in the next two years?

## Chapter 15 - Speaking it Out Loud

This chapter was written primarily for people who are going through Pathfinder as a solitary journey. Since the participants in your Pathfinder Circle have probably already shared their Pathfinder Profiles and Plans of Action with each other in the last lesson, they may feel that it is less relevant for them to spend time on this lesson. For this reason, you may decide to include it with the final chapter.

I would, however, encourage you to talk about how you can begin to speak out loud beyond your small circle. Who else do you need to share your path with? Who will support your journey outside of this circle? Who are your allies, your teachers, and your partners?

# The Man In The Glass

By Peter Dale Wimbrow Sr.

When you get what you want in your struggle for self  
And the world makes you king for a day  
Just go to the mirror and look at yourself  
And see what that man has to say.

For it isn't your father, or mother, or wife  
Whose judgment upon you must pass  
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life  
Is the one staring back from the glass.

He's the fellow to please - never mind all the rest  
For he's with you, dear to the end  
And you've passed your most difficult, dangerous test  
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years  
And get pats on the back as you pass  
But your final reward will be heartache and tears  
If you've cheated the man in the glass.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Caterpillar is going through the change, cracking open, creating a shell, and then waiting. This is a difficult and painful time for all of us, when we have to let the old version of ourselves die so that the new one can emerge. Talk about your past experiences when you let an old belief die, you walked away from a dying relationship, or you gave up a part of yourself that was holding you back.
2. In an earlier lesson, we introduced Dr. Seuss' "Oh the Places You'll Go". In it, he talked about "The waiting place". What does the waiting place feel like for you? Are you patient with change, or restless?
3. In this lesson, you're encouraged to begin to "speak it out loud". In last week's circle, you began this process by sharing your profile, purpose, and path of

action with others. How did that feel? Did it change anything for you to say it out loud in a supportive circle?

4. Beyond your Pathfinder Circle, who do you want to share your Pathfinder profile, purpose, and path of action with?
5. What do you need to do and/or say so that the person you are sharing it with knows how to support you?
6. If you have already shared with someone beyond your Circle, what did it feel like? What did you learn from the sharing?
7. Who are the people you're looking for who will help you live out your vocation? Who will partner in your work, who will help you promote it, who will mentor you, who will hold you accountable, etc.?
8. Who are the people you are called to serve in your work? Have you already found them? If not, how will you find them?
9. What intentions do you need to set this week in order to more boldly "speak it out loud"?

## Chapter 16 - Stepping onto the Path

This is the end of the journey through Pathfinder, but only the beginning of the journey that Pathfinder has brought you to.

You've been through a lot with your Pathfinder Circle. You've hosted them through many hard and exciting parts of their journey. You've created space for vulnerability, transformation, and courage. This week, create an environment of celebration. Host a potluck, hang streamers, exchange gifts or mementos, or share a bottle of wine. Celebrate the journey and the community you have built.

I encourage you to consider how you might continue to support each other as your tender dreams and ideas grow. Perhaps you want to create an ongoing Circle of Support that lives beyond this work together. Or perhaps you'll meet in a virtual space, such as a private Facebook group.

## For a New Beginning

By John O'Donohue

In out of the way places of the heart  
Where your thoughts never think to wander  
This beginning has been quietly forming  
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire  
Feeling the emptiness grow inside you  
Noticing how you willed yourself on  
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety  
And the grey promises that sameness whispered  
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent  
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,  
And out you stepped onto new ground,  
Your eyes young again with energy and dream  
A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not clear  
You can trust the promise of this opening;  
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning  
That is one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure  
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk  
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm  
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

## Discussion Questions:

1. In this week's tale, Caterpillar has finally become Butterfly. If you try to help a butterfly emerge from a chrysalis, or try to dry it off when it emerges sticky and wet, you will kill the butterfly. It needs to emerge naturally and in its own timing. What lesson can we learn from this in our own journeys? Have you ever been pushed into something you weren't ready for and failed as a result?
2. Butterfly emerges surprised and delighted at her own ability to fly. Have you ever taken on something new that you didn't believe you were capable of and found, with delight, that you knew more than you thought you knew?
3. Two lessons ago, you shared five small steps you are going to take in the direction of your dreams. Have you taken any of those steps yet? If so, what has it been like? What has been gained and/or lost?
4. The lesson mentions that your journey will be like a labyrinth, with a winding path that takes you close to centre, and then veers off and takes you further away again. Has this been your experience? What do you do during those "far from your goal" times when you feel lost again? How do you sustain yourself and remind yourself to keep walking?
5. What are the most important things you have learned about yourself in the journey through Pathfinder?
6. What commitment are you making to yourself?
7. One of the quotes in this section is by Emil Zola who says "If you ask me what I came to do in this world, I, an artist, will answer you: I am here to live out loud." How are you living out loud? How will you do so in the future?

In the words of Dr. Seuss:

Congratulations!  
Today is your day.  
You're off to Great Places!  
You're off and away!  
You have brains in your head.  
You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself any direction you choose.  
You're on your own. And you know what you know.  
And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.