

Community session: Embracing your whole self

Toolkit for radical self-acceptance

January 2022

“In order to love who you are, you cannot hate the experiences that shaped you.”

– Andrea Dykstra

A note from the co-creation team

We had an amazing and heartfelt session last Tuesday. Thank you once again for the gift of your presence and for your willingness to be open and vulnerable during the session.

We had a moment to reflect on a time in our lives when we struggled to embrace our whole self. From the reflections shared, the resounding sentiment is that we all go through similar experiences and we have - at one time or another - all struggled.

There was such an overflow of pearls of wisdom in the room that we have collated a toolkit for radical self-acceptance. It is our hope that as you go forth into 2022, you will find it a companion to walk the journey into your best year yet. May it be a reminder, that no matter what you are going through, you have a community available to support you, you are not alone and you have everything within yourself to overcome..

Here's to the endless possibilities that lie ahead - and to embracing our whole selves as we march towards them!

- Prisca, Julia, Louise, Thobs, Naz, Elizabeth & Bridget

“Journeying through the Leading From Within programme has brought to my awareness the fact that, no journey outwards is worthwhile without first taking a journey inwards.

It has equipped me with tools that I will no doubt use to keep this introspection and growth in self-awareness going for the rest of my life.

- Prisca, She Leads Change graduate



Toolkit for Radical Self-Acceptance

The tools we shared for radical self-acceptance and kindness towards self:

a) Putting pen to paper

- Journaling
- Starting to write poetry free from the rules and expectations of prose
- Writing down everything I need to do - makes it look more manageable
- "Morning pages" -writing 3 full pages of "Stream of Consciousness" first thing every day has helped me greatly (as described in The Artist's Way). See <https://juliacameronlive.com/basic-tools/morning-pages/>

“In day-to-day life, there's often little opportunity to sit down and really critically think about the barriers that might be impacting you, whether that's personal or professional.

She Leads Change provided the space for me to do just that. It wasn't always a comfortable experience but is something I would definitely recommend!

- Ellen, She Leads Change graduate



b) Getting active

- Walking
- Practicing yoga
- Stretching
- Spending time in nature, the ocean and mountains

“Being part of the SLC group has helped me polish where I can shine, re-built my resilience enabling me to tap back into and re-discover more of my talents.

I have so much energy and feel ignited to shape my women's organisation not only locally but on a global level - Thank You!

- Helen, She Leads Change graduate



c) **Practising stillness**

- Here are some beautiful meditation practises: [Loving Kindness / Metta Bhavana](#) - about accepting yourself and others and [Compassion meditation \(Tara Brach\)](#).

“I learnt how to be unapologetic about what I stand for.

I learnt how to listen and I became more aware of what surrounds me.

- Nina, She Leads Change graduate



d) Listening

- Being part She Leads Change's 'Our Thinking Space' each Wednesday to practice 'deep listening'
- Notice when I am being unkind to myself and taking a moment to respond as I would to a friend
- Creating space for myself - just for taking care of myself. A state of 'being', not 'doing' / a human being rather than a human doing
- Looking at myself in the mirror and re-connecting with the child within me
- Getting in touch with the parts that are uncomfortable and sitting with them, then asking what they need and what they are trying to do (usually they are trying to protect me)
- Recognising/noticing (negative) inner narrative

“I have learnt that our self-critics are the barriers that we limit to ourselves in the way to our best self.

She Leads Change empowers me to stop doubting my own potential and believe in myself to achieve more.

- Htwe Htwe, She Leads Change graduate



- Celebrating my sensitive side
- Inner coach to drown out voice of inner critic
- Listening because I'm fascinated by the fact that someone is thinking (rather than listening to their content) keeps me in the moment, and totally present. Which is a very healthy place to be :)
- Eating foods that suit my body
- One type of play is improvisation and that teaches us to let go, notice more, and use everything... that can also apply to things within us too!

“ I have a better understanding of who I am as a person, which has led to an improved belief in my own ability.

The programme has opened my eyes to the growth process and created a respect for the journey as much as reaching the end goal...It's been eye-opening to learn about the vast challenges women face at all levels, from all across the world.

- Laura, She Leads Change graduate



e) Prioritising me-time

- Giving myself 30 minutes of 'me time' everyday
- Taking time for myself e.g., walking or simply sitting - recognising I need it.
- To just be!

“ The Leading From Within programme helped me to realise that how I AM is much more important than what I DO.

It helped me realise that I can lead change simply by being my authentic self and spreading joy.

- Louise, She Leads Change graduate



f) Nurturing

- My lovely pod helped me to realise that some personal relationships can be kindly left behind, allowing more energy to grow with the ones you feel truly valued within.
- Strengthen the good that is already present

- Be comfortable to receive not only give
- Reframing
- Embracing polarities

“She Leads Change has helped me consider the thought patterns and belief systems that hinder me when I step into the spaces I lead.

I am beginning to explore those self-limiting beliefs about myself, my position as a woman and my legitimacy to lead - how I connect with others and how to have better relationships within the very complex systems in which we all operate.

- Thobekile, She Leads Change graduate



g) Affirmations

- Reminding myself daily of the following statement: *“I am not who I think I am. I am not who you think I am. I am who I think you think I am!”* Reminding myself I am a collection of my own thoughts!

“What I really loved, is that the program is well tailored for someone like me - a busy working mom - to easily plug in with other like-minded women and to collectively create a safe learning environment on human interactions.

The often unexplored side of life is about bringing one’s true self to any situation and conversation or encounter.

- Bridget, She Leads Change graduate



Drawing inspiration from others on taking agency in 2022

I will take agency by:

- Listening more deeply
- Setting aside armour to listen within ([Elizabeth's visualisation](#))
- Continuing to building connections
- Journaling to be present to my inner knowing and to release and realise
- Stopping to judge myself for what I want and need
- Embracing my whole self
- Listening to listen and not listen to respond
- Expanding joy
- Recognising and strengthening what is already good
- Being prepared to take more care of the physical me. Eat even better, take even more exercise. Relax and take in my surroundings
- Being kind to myself (treat myself like I treat my friends)
- Speaking tenderly to myself
- Practising saying NO and being okay with it
- Following my heart in my professional path

“She Leads Change has helped me understand and embrace the unique proposition I bring to the professional arena, particularly as a woman.

Regularly connecting with a diverse group of amazing women, from all around the world, both inspired and reinvigorated me.

- Linda, She Leads Change graduate



I will take agency by (continued):

- Doing the things that help! For self-care or just me :)
- Knowing what we do when we're in a good place and recognising that they're often the things we let go of when we're stressed/tired/overwhelmed - at exactly the time we need to focus on self-care. If it works for us, it's ok even if it doesn't 'fit' what we think self-care 'should' look like.
- Listening to my inner voice
- Being curious and explore
- Being me
- Noticing small decisions and how they align with my values
- Trusting myself
- Describing myself fearlessly as an expert in my field, and stop hiding
- Making more space to listen to the wisdom
- Being kind to myself and talking to myself like I would a friend

“Being part of the programme has given me the confidence to dream bigger, better things and to take action to realise them, a small step at a time.

It has equipped me with lots of tools to support myself and nurture/trust my own resilience.

- Julia, She Leads Change graduate



“Through my time with She Leads Change, I have seen and heard how other women manage their relationships and it has had a huge impact on the way I see, value and manage my own.

I have also enjoyed practicing unconditional equality at first meeting and feeling the power of being met as an equal by all the fellow participants with whom I engaged...

- Clare, She Leads Change graduate



Thank you

Thank you to our co-creation team, and **congratulations** to all our graduates on the Leading from Within Autumn 2021 programme. You inspire us - we think you are all amazing!

Thank you to each of you who attended the session - we loved learning and connecting with you and hope to see you again soon.

With love from your She Leads Change team xx

To discover more about Leading from Within and how you can apply to our next cohort, go to our [website](https://sheleadschange.org) or contact us at: hello@sheleadschange.org

“I have re-discovered my inner strengths and expanded my external resources which I needed to continue my journey from a space that is more connected, embracing, reflective, and free thanks to She Leads Change community and the program.

I know that this is only the beginning.

- Naz, She Leads Change graduate

