Art as a Healing Practice  
Session 2 Handout  
Art and Emotion

In this week's session, we explore our emotional landscape.

- To effectively access our emotional experience, we need to bypass our "thinking brain". Our left-brain labels our emotions. By tuning in to our bodies, and using our image-making right brain, we are able to explore, rather than simply categorize, our emotions.

- When we simply label our emotions, we lose the richness and complexity of what I like to call our “emotional landscape”, as labeling tends to reduce, rather than expand, experience. While labels are useful and necessary, they tend not to promote exploration.

- We tend to categorize emotions into “good/desirable” and bad/undesirable”, In order to deny the “bad” ones, do we lose access to our emotional richness?

- Without internal emotional skills, we can feel trapped in our emotional states. Bringing our emotional life into visible, tangible form, through the arts, increases both our awareness and our choice.

- It is the nature of emotions to move. Allowing our emotions to flow naturally (like water) is a key to noticing them, welcoming them, and letting them flow freely through our lives, consciously channeling them in ways that serve us, rather than moving between the extremes of expression and repression.

- Barbara Ganim says: Imagery is the body-mind's inner language. Art is the voice or expression of that language. Using art to express what your body-mind is saying will enable you to connect with your deepest feelings and emotions. To start creating your own healing art, you must first learn how to bypass your verbal thoughts so that you can become fully present to how your body is experiencing your feelings, rather than what you mind is telling you about these feelings. *Art and Healing, Three Rivers Press, 1998*

**Resources:**
Lucia Cappachione: Living with Feeling
Lucia Cappachione: The Art of Emotional Healing,
Karla McLaren: The Language of Emotions, Sounds True, 2010
Content of Session #2

Guided Meditation on Emotional Landscape
Image-making
Title Image

Writing Prompts
I am.....
I see...
I feel...
I imagine...

Questions for Reflection:
• What did I learn from this week’s process?
• Identify one “nugget of wisdom”
• How can I take that into my life?

Ideas for Further Exploration (optional)
• Does your “nugget of wisdom” have a pose/gesture/stance that you expresses it? Embody that.
• Explore your image in movement, sound (voice), or rhythm and see what else you learn.
• Is there another visual image that seems to be emerging – if so, follow that impulse and create it?
• Imagine “stepping in to” the landscape of your image. What do you see? Feel? Step out and write about that.

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