



Connection

Vulnerability is the birthplace of connection and the path to the feeling of worthiness. It is the birthplace of everything we're hungry for. – Brené Brown –

INTRO

Welcome to the first of HOYH's three pillars of belief: Connection. We believe when feeling alone and losing faith, the most empowering thing we can do is reach out and share our story and feelings with someone safe who has earned the right to hear it. Connecting on an authentic, vulnerable level unites us not only with others, but also ourselves. Being heard for who we are and what we feel activates the liberating process of becoming free to be ourselves. Held safely within the support of a community and tribe we find the courage to face our fears and choose to change our own lives one day at a time – no matter what we currently believe we are capable of. Beliefs change, and that starts with the brave decision and intention to open up to others. We also believe that the most proficient way to implement true, lasting healing and change is by walking honestly through the journey of our lives alongside others who are doing the same.

LESSON

Fellow Heartwork™ pioneer Dr. Brené Brown, beautifully explains her definition of **connection** (which HOYH believes and practices) in her seminal work *The Gifts of Imperfection*. She defines it as, “The energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.” How we access and nurture that connection begins with the power of choice to open up to that possibility. The how-to of reaching connection is walking across the bridge of **vulnerability**. Dr. Brown continues, “Vulnerability is about having the courage to show up and be seen. Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. Truth and courage aren't always comfortable but they're never weakness.”

CALL TO ACTION

How do we begin? It's important to first surrender to being vulnerable by drawing upon safe connections to begin or deepen the practice of sharing your story and honest emotions. By doing so, you set a powerful precedent of self-compassion and honesty, which allows you to build from a foundation of truth, humility, and hope. Facing the fear of authentic expression is the first tool you are adding to your belt of Heartwork™! Let it start with you. You hold the keys to the change and healing you are seeking for your life. You have not been the first, and you won't be the last – you are not alone. We are all with you.

Introduction to HOYH Heartwork™

- **Awareness is where we begin every time:** Who do you have real, safe, accepting connections with? Who is unsafe, or makes you feel judged and unaccepted? Understanding where you feel safe and unsafe is not betraying anyone – rather, it is the first step in choosing to be loyal to yourself. Allow yourself to be honest about who you feel you can be yourself around. It might be one person, or many. It might be none. It might be family members or no family. It might be animals, places, books, buildings, etc. With pen and paper, list the places and people where you feel positive, uplifted, accepted and encouraged – and when you don't. Can you be alone with yourself and feel safe? All good things to know. You're not wrong in what you feel, in what you write. You are enough today, exactly how you are.
- **Lean into the truth that you deserve and need healthy connections.** We are born to need and connect. We are born deserving acceptance, validation, and love. And we are born with the power to change our lives, no matter our circumstances. Nothing we could ever do or that has been done to us can change these truths. Even if this is not your truth today, open the possibility for it to become so.
- Choose from your safe list and **share some of your feelings** with them. Just enough to be uncomfortable but doesn't make you feel unsafe with yourself. Then do it again. Practice being honest with your feelings with yourself in the mirror. Speak your truth. Decide that you have the right to be you.

Read the following AFFIRMATION and repeat it frequently:

I have a right to be heard.
I choose to speak from the heart.
I give myself permission to practice the connection
I need by first connecting with myself.
I release the fear and doubts that block my authentic voice.
I believe vulnerability is pure courage and never weakness.
I choose to share my story with those who have earned the right to
hear it, and who keep my feelings safe in their acceptance of me.
I speak my truth with grace and integrity.
I can. I AM.

...

When just starting out on a new journey, it is only natural to feel vulnerable. After all, it may seem that you have much to lose. But may I remind you, that never again, at any other point in the same journey, will you have so much to gain.

Mike Dooley

HouseOfYourHeart.com



Empowerment

“A woman who is empowered is a woman who can change the world.”

– Tania Stewart –

INTRO

The second of HOYH's three pillars of belief is Empowerment. In HOYH terms that means: We believe in the powerful unity of women supporting women. We believe that how we feel and how we deal with our emotions – including our words, behaviors and actions towards self and others – are entirely our responsibility. We believe that what we put into ourselves, we put into the world. And what we put into the world, the world will become. We believe that in the expression of shared story, women free one another to speak their own – and the telling reveals truths we already carry within. We believe that all the answers we seek lie within us, and the HOYH journey of introspection and accountability is about uncovering those truths as we travel. Empowerment contains the expectation to show up for one other, and learning that supporting others teaches us how support ourselves. We believe that we teach people how to treat us. And because that's true, we know we hold equal power to be the revolution in our own lives to heal and effect change. We believe that we can find peace and joy in our lives regardless of our circumstances. Empowerment means we hold unreserved space for one another in love and quiet acceptance. We believe that by practicing self-care, we offer family, friends and community the true strength and vision of who we are as a unique soul; irreplaceable, unrepeatable, and needed. We believe in honoring those who have come before us and in leading the generations who will come after with courage and vulnerability. To be empowered is to choose to take the challenge of self-accountability each and every day. We believe that when we do the hard work, we rise up and become a light for all.

LESSON

Empowerment contains equal ingredients accountability, agency, courage, acceptance, and support. How we interact with the world and how we are treated by others mirrors what we truly think of ourselves on the inside. Living empowered is operating from a powerful core foundation of innate, unbreakable worth. HOYHers remind each other how to hold themselves with love and encourage one another to accept that power and express it thoughtfully in their homes, workplace, community, and confines of the heart. Empowerment truly is the fuel to our heart's connecting, hopeful fire.

CALL TO ACTION

Our stalwart truth of empowerment is fierce and bold, but – so are you. Heartwork™ is all about uncovering that humble confidence. It's the melting away of old memories and wounds and making room for who you really want to become and what you want your life to be. You cannot stop the ripples once you walk into the waters of your own life. Being willing to examine why you feel and believe the way you do is the second HOYH tool you are adding to your belt of Heartwork™! Let it start with you. You hold the keys to the change and healing you are seeking for your life. You have not been the first, and you won't be the last – you are not alone. We are all with you.

Introduction to HOYH Heartwork™

- **Awareness is where we begin every time:** How do you feel after reading the fierce, valiant beliefs that HOYH holds around empowerment? With a highlighter, mark the words and phrases that resonate with you as truth – that get you fired up and clearly align with your own truth. Then with a pen, circle the phrases that you struggle with or don't believe, understanding there is no right or wrong to this exercise.
- **Be willing to examine the pieces that you are resistant to or don't believe.** Here is how we put accountability into action. We don't stop at “I don't like that,” or “I don't like how that feels,” we look at the deeper reasons of *why we feel that way, after we feel the emotion itself*. Dismissing something without respectful examination is the easiest thing we can start to change. Choose one of the circled phrases that you reacted strongly against, write it at the top of a clean page, and answer the following: Why does this statement make you feel uncomfortable / feel resistance / disbelief? And then most importantly, write your thoughts on this final question: “What would it mean for me if [chosen statement] were true? What would change?”
- **Share your feelings around this exercise with someone safe.** Share your reactions, frustrations, opinions, insights, and what you gleaned from writing about it. There is no wrong answer, you are free to feel what you feel, and you have a right to share those emotions with someone who has earned the right to hear your heart.

Read the following AFFIRMATION and repeat it frequently:

I am empowered to change my own life.
My feelings and behaviors are my responsibility to own.
I find courage to speak my story when others do the same.
I accept the challenge of self-accountability.
I can find peace and joy no matter what's happening.
No one and nothing can lessen my innate worth.
I choose to uncover my humble confidence.
I hold the power to be my own revolution.

...





Hope

Even the tiniest of hopes can show me the way to arrive at my soul.

–Sri Chinmoy [last word altered by M.R.S. from 'goal' to 'soul.'] –

INTRO

The third and final of HOYH's three pillars of belief is Hope. From the pages of history the bible concurs with the phrase, "Hope anchors the soul." It is the innermost flame that burns longest, even when weakened and unfed. Even when extinguished, the embers of hope can be brought back to life with simple intention, often ignited by the will to survive and small sparks of support from others. Part of the core of hope is the innate desire to belong, to matter, to know you are needed and integral to the whole. Another part is wild faith that there is something better up ahead than what you are currently experiencing and feeling. We are each driven to find that light and our place of belonging within ourselves and within the world. HOYH holds that space for every woman. What you offer, who you are, what you feel, the experience you bring – are all intimately needed in this sisterhood of like-hearted women. Also in the stadium of hope is fear. Because it is *in* the presence of fear that you are driven to reach for something bigger – something better – something beyond where you find yourself: For change, for healing, for growth. We are designed with the drive to survive. That very act of leaning and yearning indicates the presence of hope in your desire for that. The first step of facing and healing fear is recognizing the presence of hope. Hope is the still small voice of the undying, unbroken soul, urging you on. Listen to it. It speaks truth. It will keep you afloat while it leads you to it.

The last part is what adds fuel to our hope: Safety and support. The safety of an accepting sisterhood draws out the bravery and courage that exist inside every woman, as well as brightens the light to uncover their own unique truth and purpose. We believe that when women hold safe space for one other, they intuitively know how to free themselves. Hope is the hinge where evolution and transformation can happen. **"Hope is the thing with feathers | That perches in the soul | And sings the tune without the words | And never stops at all"** – Emily Dickinson –

LESSON

HOYH founder Monica Rai Silver offers her own sacred experience with Hope, drawn from a place of darkness and confusion about her experience with being raped in 1998. The first time she felt *Hope* again was when she first watched the movie "Shawshank Redemption," and the following scene in particular. She edited the end in her writings in order to claim the *Hope* for herself. **"Hope is grief's best music."** – Unknown –

Andy Dufresne: "That's the beauty of music. They can't get that from you...haven't you ever felt that way about music?" **Red:** "I played a mean harmonica as a younger man. Lost interest in it though. Didn't make much sense in here [prison]." **Andy:** "Here's where it makes the most sense. You need it so you don't forget." **Red:** "Forget?"

Andy: "Forget that...there are places in this world that aren't made out of stone. That there's something inside...that they can't get to, that they can't touch. That's yours." **Red:** "What're you talking about?" **Andy:** "*Hope.*"

Red: [pointing a stern finger at Andy] "Let me tell you something, my friend. Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane." **Andy:** [years later in a letter to Red] "Remember Red, *Hope* is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies..."

Sometimes, the best of things **is Hope**. Sometimes, because pain, confusion and unanswerable realities exist in my world, *Hope* is the immeasurable power, aided by grace, that is allowing me to **"crawl through a river of shit and come out clean on the other side."** **Monica:** [narrating] "I find I'm so excited, I can barely sit still or hold a thought in my head. I think it's the excitement only a free woman can feel, a free woman at the start of a long journey whose conclusion is uncertain. I *Hope* I can make it across these heartlands. I *Hope* to find others already on their way and join them. I *Hope* the ocean of transformation is as blue as it has been in my dreams..." *I Hope.*

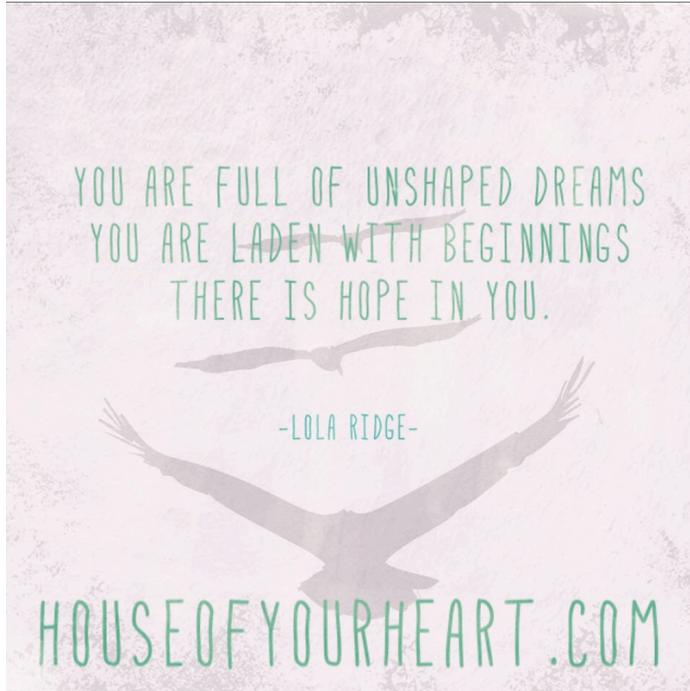
CALL TO ACTION

What really lies underneath the shadow of your fears is the *Hope* that something great is waiting for you. Do whatever it takes to release its light. You cannot stop the ripples once you walk into the waters of your own life. Being willing to face and examine your fears fueled by wild faith and the safe support of others is the third essential HOYH tool you are adding to your belt of Heartwork™! Let it start with you. You hold the keys to the change and healing you are seeking for your life. You have not been the first, and you won't be the last – you are not alone. We are all with you.

Introduction to HOYH Heartwork™

- **Awareness is where we begin every time:** On a piece of paper, write the following: “In my heart, I fear...” and then free-write about what comes to mind. Know that forming the words of fear is actually an act of taking back and reclaiming your own power that has been chained down by fear’s illusory weight and lies. Writing them down is the first step in igniting the hope that leads to healing.

- **Listen to the song, “Let It Be” by the Beatles.** Allow the words to smooth over the rough edges of feeling your fears and seeing them on paper by ushering in some hope. Let yourself sing the lyrics, and lean into feeling them. *It does not matter the way people think it matters. Let It Be. There will be an answer, Let It Be...Let It Be.*



Commit to memory a couple acronyms around fear and hope: Fear is simply **F**alse **E**vidence **A**ppearing **R**eal, or **F***% **E**verything **A**nd **R**un. We turn that around by choosing to believe that by not running away from what we feel, we **F**ace **E**verything **A**nd **R**ise. Now, you’re moving in the opposite direction of fear: Hope. **H**old **O**n, **P**ain **E**nds.

- **Share your feelings around this exercise with someone safe.** Share your thoughts, feelings, and insights about what you learned from writing. There is no wrong answer, you are free to feel what you feel, and you have a right to share those emotions with someone who has earned the right to hear your heart.

...

Read the following AFFIRMATION and repeat it frequently:

There is always hope.
Examining my fears show me where I’m hurting,
And facing them can bring me healing.
I am an integral part of something bigger than myself.
I belong and I am needed.
I choose to have wild faith that there is something
better and brighter up ahead.
The light within me is worth sharing with the world.
I have hope.
I am hope.
I AM.