

know self. be self. do self.

self leadership masterclass #1: how to strengthen, empower, and cultivate your sense of self (aka "how to self")

class outline:

introduction

- activity: *i am* _____

i: know the self

1. the self
2. the parts
3. permission

- activity: *know your self*

ii. strengthen the self

1. outward focus
2. inward focus
3. qualities of the self

- activity: *name your self*
- bonus content: *strengths, values, desire*

iii. engage the self

1. the leading self
2. the observing self
3. body + soul

- activity: *your self practice*
- bonus content: *engage the Cs of self*

conclusion

- activity: *new i am statement + anchor*

introduction

a. about me & this class

- teacher, author, life coach. my thing: helping people feel more empowered to help themselves, to become the hero they have been waiting for. i love to learn and explore, i love to take ideas from all sorts of places and put them together in new ways to create strategies that are doable, to make things click for people who are struggling
- disclaimer: this isn't therapy or counselling or medical intervention, and doesn't replace any of that – please seek support from these avenues whenever and wherever you need them
- acknowledge: some aspects of your struggle won't be solved with 'self-help' – whatever problem you are facing may be bigger than the scope of this particular work. i applaud you for being here, taking a step to help your self in this way
- this masterclass: part 1 of a 3 part series on learning how to become a self-leader, leading your self out of struggle and into more of what you say you want for you. it starts with SELF and always goes back to self so that's the first thing we need to focus on!

b. self is the pre-requisite

- been into exploring the SELF for long time, even back in 2012 when i started sharing ideas to 'build a little biz' my message was "BE YOU!"
- more recently, doing the work to find myself... not only did i find my self but i found the remarkable power of the self, what it means to lead *from* and *with* SELF that's what i am excited to share with you!

what i am learning to be true...

- if you want to claim your worth, claim your self.
- if you want to find your purpose, find your self.
- if you want to connect with others – accept others, embrace others, have kindness for others – connect with, embrace, and have kindness for your self.
- if you want to figure out your next right steps, figure out your self.
- if you want to learn to let go, be brave, get unstuck, heal... learn your self.
- if you want to create a life you love, love your self.

self is the pre-requisite. we must know self. be self. do self. in order to heal our self... to coach our self, to lead our self... we first must know our self. and everything we do to claim, honour, love, celebrate, BE our self is what empowers the self.

c. **why explore the self? who does it help?**

- if you are lost – whether you've lost your self, your direction, your mojo, your purpose, or your meaning to day to day life...
- if you are struggling or stuck – feeling like something has got to give, wishing you had a magic wand, finding yourself at the end of the rope, or even sick of the rope entirely
- if your focus has been outward for a long time – care taking, people pleasing, focused on the roles you play/jobs you do in the world, finding yourself reactive... frustrated, irritated, fed up with others
- if you are longing for a change - to heal, to increase confidence courage self worth or self trust, to change or shift or transform things, ready/itchy for next steps

whatever it is you are struggling with or experiencing, **the way forward starts with who you are. the way to alleviate struggle is to strengthen your self.**

do stay tuned for the next 2 classes in this series: we start with self and then work on struggle and finally figure out our next right steps.

to be clear: this is not some overnight, quick fix to the struggles of life. it's the work of a lifetime to go back to self over and over again.

start now with a notebook or journal or digital document that becomes the book of your self. add to it now and come back to it again and again.

activity: i am _____.

tune into how things are for you at the present moment. think about what brought you here to this class, what life is like right now, whatever struggle you've been stuck in. write about your self, right now in this moment, by finishing the following statement: *i am _____.*

note: you will not have to share this with anyone. it is safe to be raw, honest, vulnerable, real. in fact make a promise to your self right now that you will be real.

know the self

listening to a podcast about healing: "in order to heal yourself you must first know that you have a self. you are a self." that's our first step.

1. the self

a. as defined by psychology

- the totality of an individual; all characteristics, attributes, conscious and unconscious, mental and physical; personal identity, being, and experience; selfhood, sense of self, self concept

b. your self your way

- some ideas: true self, inner self, real self, wise self, higher self... favourite self... centre of self... soul self.
- note: NOT "your best self." bullshit. best is a judgement, a pressure... no one needs that. careful of best or any word that feels like judgement or pressure.
- we are complex, multi-layered, flawed human creatures doing our best to survive this life, maybe even thrive if we can figure out how. so called best self a tiny fraction of life. much of the time: resentful self, impatient self, judgey self. point is to get better at knowing soul self, knowing who they are, what they need, and engaging them more often
- another problem with concept of "best" self is the implication you need to be your best self everyday... your most maximum awesomest self as much as possible. but then, days you aren't at your "best" (whatever you decided that was) you feel like you have failed your self.
- the self is not about being your "best"... it's about being real, being true, being you.

c. as an intentional act

- spiritual ideas: self as the witness, self as the builder, self as no self, no thing, no construct at all. will work some more on spiritual self later in class, but for know let's acknowledge that it can be confusing!
- my take: i choose to be intentional about my construct of self, of creating and cultivating my sense of self. i decide what is my self. not culture. or society. definitions and labels and roles and expectations and judgements in our world. me. i choose who i am.
- i engage my soul self/true self to construct an identity – a sense of that true self into words – that is right for me, for right now. this is about claiming self and identity as an intentional act.

2. the parts

a. some aspects don't fit

- may be parts of us that don't feel like our soul self or true self (remember impatient self, resentful self, judgey self... you might have these parts too and others!)

b. self vs parts

- Richard Schwartz, author *no bad parts*, developed model of the self and parts called *internal family systems (IFS)*, sometimes also hear it called parts psychology. rather than "mono-mind" approach (we have one mind with different thoughts, beliefs, feelings), this approach says we have a Self and a number of discrete minds or parts
- i think it can be really helpful to borrow from this idea – to see those aspects within us not as our true self or even in opposition to our true self, but simply one part of us that we can offer compassion and guidance, in fact life is about activating and honouring all the parts of us
- Tom Holms, author *parts work*, describes Self as the conductor of an orchestra "all our parts are musicians playing the instruments that make the music of our lives. without musicians there is no music. without the conductor the music becomes chaotic, if it begins at all."

c. your parts your way

- don't have to use the word parts. ideas: friends, pals, players, troupe, team, roles, characters, elements, aspects
- self leadership requires us to lead our self (all our parts) and lead with self – to let our true self take the lead. like a CEO at the head of the table with their team, the driver of the bus with many passengers, the coach and the players, the guide holding the space of the circle
- practice thinking about your parts and notice your own language... what do you say? examples: a part of me that; a me who; a spot in me is; rebel me, helper me; the controlling one, the irritated one; ...try some of these out and see what feels like you

3. permission

a. **you get to decide who you are.**

- make up your own words and definitions for who you are. choose the labels that liberate you rather than the ones that box you in. you get to both embrace and reject through this process... both honour and disregard as you see fit.

b. **you are always correct.**

- knowing your true self can be complicated... it can be fluid and ongoing and ever changing. self is a work in progress. the self is the work of a whole life time! you are always correct, in any one moment of time, when you say: *this is me*. and you will also always be exploring: *who is me?* remember that who you say you are is not a tattoo – it is not permanent. it's a snapshot of a moment in time. this is permission to explore and experiment and exclaim.

c. **your way to do you.**

- remember, you are the builder of your construct of self. how do you visualise this work?
- perhaps your self is like a light and your light is like a chandelier made of many crystals and facets. you are the boss of your light you get to hang new crystals and toss out old and dingy bit or bits that others hang on you which no longer serve!
- or perhaps your light is like a rainbow with many layers of colours and shades. you contain multitudes! and the way that all the parts of you layer and mix and shine is unique and exactly right. or maybe, for you, your light is more like a long and winding string of twinkling bulbs.
- maybe instead of thinking of yourself as light, you are a cheetah with a unique pattern of spots that no one else has, or a painting with many shades and colours and layers, or a puzzle with a wide variety of pieces... some you might not have even discovered yet!

remember: you write the story of you. say out loud: *this is me*. and then fill in the rest of the story with everything that you are. grab your notebook or journal, this is your book of you.

activity: know *your* self

brainstorm, play, summarise your concept of self... your idea of your parts... your way of constructing what makes you you. you are the builder, the writer... what metaphors, language, ideas, visuals do you use? know your self as in know how *you* think of or visualise your self.

strengthen the self

self: the totality of an individual, everything that makes you you. the work is to explore and identify things about you: personality, values, strengths, interests, talents, passions, mindset, beliefs, experiences, achievements.

anne lamott: *lighthouses don't go running all over the island looking for a boat to save, they just stand there shining.* we each have a light all our own... that light is a rainbow with many layers and colours and shades and blends. learn yours!

(workbook: shine – 21 questions to explore who you are. quizzes and articles online. enneagram, astrology. if it means something to you it is meaningful. if not, never mind!) try: the 3 best areas to begin are strengths, values, and desires.

bonus content: your 3-2-1 strengths, values, and desire

1. outward focus

a. self-discovery work often paints a picture of self with an outward focus

- who we are in relation to others
- how we show up for others, show up in the world
- the roles we play in life and work
- what we DO in the world for others, for ourselves (passions/talents/interests are what we do)
- what we offer, contribute or create,
- what we achieve or accomplish
- who we have needed to be in order to manage, to be safe, to hustle
- i am a runner, i am a writer. i am a mom, i am a wife. i am a teacher.

b. caution: what if things change?

- important to ask: who are you when we take all of that away? if we take away what we do, who are we?
- if our identity is about what we do, achieve, or offer... a role we play or who we are to others... how we spend our time... then when that relationship or work or ability or circumstance changes, or if the goal or project is achieved... we can become lost.
- must be careful: one basket, one egg identity (i am a mother)
- Abby Wambach – Olympic gold medalist and FIFA world cup record holder – said this about her retirement from soccer: my struggle was who am i without soccer? soccer is what makes me special! her wife, Glennon Doyle, said: no, YOU are special. you make soccer special, you bring YOU wherever you go next.

c. **self. the you that is just for you.**

important work to know your self as *the you that is just for you* – untainted, uncomplicated, unrestrained by the world around you – to cultivate and strengthen that self, so no one can take it away, so you can't lose your self

2. inward focus

- a. a shift in thinking... turn our focus inward: to know a self that is just for you – rather than outward: your self in relation to outer world. as you do the work to intentionally explore and cultivate a sense of self, watch for opportunities to turn your focus inwards.
- b. questions you might ask as you explore your self:
 - is the power of this quality out in the world or is it inside of me?
 - a shift from it makes me special to i make it special, because i am me.
 - can i turn this from being some thing *about* me into a gift *for* me or from me?
- c. who are you giving your power to? who are you giving credit to?

3. qualities of self

let's play with this, 11 examples – aspects that contribute to sense of self. explore both the common outward focus + a shift or approach that has inward focus

(see list attached)

remember your work is to cultivate and in fact strengthen your sense of self, as the you that is just for you.

activity: name your self

- way to honour, embrace the self – the you that is just for you: name that self
- example: karen h, karen g, karen brandy
- magic/folklore: the power of a name

stefan zweig: names have a mysterious transforming power. like a ring on a finger, a name may at first seem merely accidental, committing you to nothing, but before you realise its magical power it's gotten under your skin, become a part of you and your destiny

eden robinson: names have power. this is the fundamental principal of magic everywhere. call out the name of a supernatural being and you will have its instant and undivided attention...

self: the you that is just for you... shifting from an outer focus to an inner focus

1. **strengths** – also, talents, passions, interests, achievements
 - something you do because you are good at it
 - something that is good *for you* to do, it strengthens you to do it
2. **values** – what is most important to you , how you want to live
 - guides your behaviours & actions, how you show up in outer world
 - empowers you, adds coins (value) to your soul bank (inner world)
3. **goals**
 - what you want to do, achieve, create, offer, have (outer world)
 - who you want to be (inner world)
4. **roles** – eg mum, biz owner, teacher, author
 - being a mum makes me special
 - i am special, i make my family/biz/work/library special (ie it's not about the 'job' you do, it's about what you bring to the job)
5. **experiences** – especially the bad shit, the hard shit
 - it made you brave/resilient/strong/funny/interesting
 - no. YOU made you brave. YOU are the gift in the experience
6. **archetypes** – universal theme/symbol/pattern; typical type (artist, explorer)
 - your whole persona vs one part of you
 - how the world sees you vs who you needed to be (to manage, be safe, hustle)
 - defined by world: who you are supposed to be if you are that thing
7. **personality** – characteristics and qualities (introvert, logical)
 - binary, dichotomous, either/or – based on cultural norms; the world decides
 - outside of binary – YOU decide: both and/also, a third way, spectrum
8. **purpose** – what you are here to do
 - something decided for you or planted in you; destiny or higher calling; universe is calling you to your purpose
 - you get to choose, your purpose is whatever you say it is
9. **intuition & spirituality**
 - universe, guides, angels give me messages/guide me; vs inner guidance, i notice because my soul self is noticing, messages are from my soul self;
 - spirit is outside of me; vs i am spirit, spirit is in me
10. **gratitude**
 - grateful that it happened to you or for you
 - grateful that it happened because you *are* you
11. **flaws** – differences, weaknesses, shadow
 - a flaw in me, a flaw of mine
 - a flaw in culture, a flaw of society (i am not broken, i don't need to be fixed, the problem is the world and how it views _____. eg 'emotional')

engage the self

self-leadership is about creating a self-led inner and outer world, you lead your self and you lead with self... self drives the bus. how do we know when self is in the lead? and how do we engage the self so that it can lead?

1. the leading self

a. the 8 Cs

- Richard Schwartz (IFS): we know we are in the seat of the Self when the following qualities are present... the 8 C's: curiosity, creativity, courage, calm, clarity, confidence, compassion, and connection.
- alternatively: knee jerk reactions, buttons pushed, defensiveness and defence mechanisms, judgement... this is not our true self. there may be parts of us that are reacting, needing to control, protect, help, manage but we aren't in the seat of our self.
- can use these Cs as starting point to explore, for us, how to engage self

bonus content: engaging the Cs of self

b. leadership qualities

- think about being a self-leader, can consider qualities of a leader in general what you think or see as being a good leader
- consider your own personal qualities that you engage when you are leading others, when you are helping others
- leading – wise perspective, open, guiding, good of all; vs following – reactionary, defensive, black & white, own interests

c. engaging your way

- how do you engage these qualities... what does that look like for you specifically?
- how do you know, for you, that these qualities are in fact engaged
- how can you tune into this sense of self, listen to your self, and also build trust in this self?

2. the observing self

this notion exists in a number of psychological and spiritual perspectives – including ACT (acceptance and commitment therapy), spiritual works like Eckhart Tolle's *power of now*, Michael Singer's *untethered soul*, practices like yoga and mindfulness

idea is that self is the observer. the witness. the noticer. not judging, evaluating, thinking... just noticing.

Steven Hayes (ACT author *get out of your mind and into your life*) describes self as the ongoing act of self-awareness... the moment you are aware of your awareness you are aware of the self.

a. noticing

- Michael Singer suggests that we tune into the self when we are aware that we are aware, when we notice our noticing, observe the one who is doing the observing. "who is the one noticing this?" that is self.
- he also describes self as the builder, so when you notice the construct of self that you have created you recognise that self is the builder of that construct. being intentional with your own construct let's self take the lead
- martha beck suggests noticing space, stillness, and silence. in noticing these we connect with no self or witness self. for instance: try noticing the space between your eyes and the thing you are looking at, or the silence between sounds.

b. labelling

- in ACT, defusion is when we relate to our thoughts in a new way... not about getting rid of thoughts but seeing them for what they are
- the thinking mind is simply a word machine, we engage the observing self by labelling the words
- i am having the thought that, i am making the judgement that, the story i am telling myself is, my mind is showing me a picture of, there is an emotion...

c. mindfulness

- present moment awareness, attention to your experience moment to moment
- noticing: environment, body, breath, senses (5 things i see, hear, feel)
- any mindfulness practice you resonate with

3. body + soul

a. not just the mind

common thinking = mind, body, and soul... mind being the one both in charge of and working on self – basic premise of psychology, therapy, even self-help

b. embodiment

- Hillary McBride, author *the wisdom of your body*: definition of embodiment = allowing that my self is in my whole body, not just my mind. remembering your body is remembering your self... i am my fingertips as much as i am my thoughts about them.
- know and explore for you: what activities or strategies help you to become embodied... to remember your self in your body, creating safety to be in your body? what activities keep you out of your body? how do you know you are safe or not safe in your body... what does that feel like to you? where in your body do you feel safe, grounded, solid, present? where in your body do you feel chaos, restless, churning, urge to flee? and when does that happen?
- noticing, labelling, honouring body sensations (i am thirsty); physical activities or movements (yoga, dance); sensing external environment through body

c. divine self

- self as divinity, as vast or infinite; self that requires no words, no construct
- what is your notion of who you are as divine – your way of thinking, believing, your concept, your labels and definitions (universe, light, spirit, god)
- notion of self as oneness with all, as connected to all (can be helpful to remember in this work, to have a connection to something bigger than self)

remember: this is really about knowing and exploring YOU. how you connect into your self, engage the self and how you can tell when self is engaged... how you get into the seat of self, the leaders seat, or the drivers seat. it is individual, different for each of us, and even the practice of exploring is a way to build your self-trust

activity: your self practice

start playing with ideas to create a self practice – a practice for engaging, connecting to, honouring, listening to the self – that is specific to you. brainstorm: what to try, what to explore or adapt so that it suits you, what to discard because you know it doesn't work for me. consider how you might engage your self in a variety of ways (body, soul, and mind... the leading self and observing self or any other notion of self you have.)

conclusion

know self, be self, do self. your work is to cultivate a sense of self – a you that is just for you – a self that you can:

- strengthen & empower;
- engage... let lead, let drive the bus of life;
- and tune into... building even more self-knowing, self-trust, and self-agency.

the first step of self-leadership is to know the self... from here we will build on the strength of self that you cultivate. the next masterclass will be about how we can use the power of the self to get unstuck and alleviate struggle. self is the prerequisite!

as you do this self work you can ask:

- a. what does your self need more of?
- b. what does your self want you to know?
- c. how do you create space for your self in your life?

Emily Dickinson: i am out with lanterns, looking for myself.

that is the work! illumination. shine a light of awareness inward and around and find your self in all of those places.

activity: new *i am* + anchor

write a new "i am" statement. one that describes and honours the you that is just for you. summarises the work you have done here to know your self, name your self, cultivate your self.

choose an anchor that represents your self, your new i am. anchor = touchstone, talisman... a way to remember your self and come back to you, over and over.

(see attached information about anchors)

thank you for joining me for this masterclass on how to "self." if you have any questions please DM or email. other resources you might be interested in: shine workbook, enough free eBook, illuminate oracle deck. find all of this and me at karengunton.com. as mentioned the next class is how to "struggle." i hope you will join me again for that! until next time, keep shining.

anchor (*noun*)

- an object that moors a ship to earth so that it does not drift away at sea
- a fixed object to which a rope or tether is secured
- something that serves to hold an object firmly

you have set an intention for your self – a goal, a desire, a dream, a choice, a direction... in this case, it is a deep knowing of the self

right now you feel solid in that intention. but ahead there will be challenges! it's easy to get off track, to forget or become distracted, to lose sight or lose focus. this is normal. this is life!

what matters most is your comeback rate!

an anchor helps you come back to your self, come back to your deepest intention.

an anchor gives you something to hang on to, a way to remember your intention or come back to your intention in any moment, at any time.

it acts as a touchstone, a talisman, and a guide.

your anchor can help you keep your intention front of mind.

and your anchor can be any thing you choose... if it is meaningful to you it has meaning.

some ideas to create your own unique anchor:

- a word, a phrase, a mantra, a quote
- a theme song, a lyric, or a whole playlist
- a scent or essential oil
- a colour
- an animal
- a physical movement (for instance a pose, a posture, or an action like superhero pose, hands on heart, clapping your hands)
- a symbol, a shape, a design or pattern
- a crystal or stone
- a piece of jewellery – ring, bracelet, necklace, a charm or pendant
- a sigil that you create (examples: overlapping letters, a grid, a wheel)
- a secret code (example: morse code)

wear it. hold it. display it where you will see it. keep it in your pocket. set it as a reminder on your phone or watch. surround yourself with it... make it your thing, your signature. no one has to know what it means but you, and you shouldn't just know it's meaning but you should feel it deep inside that place where you feel your self.