



Session One – The Power of Awareness

my **map** to freedom

by Jane Douglas

Hello...

...and a huge welcome to your first adventure in your journaling practice. I hope this finds you excited and eager to begin!

If you will forgive me for turning into a 'teacher' for a moment, I would like to set out the aims for this month's practice. There are two aims:

- To understand the R.E.S.T. Practice and begin using it to guide your journaling.
- To understand the pivotal role 'unconditional awareness' has in your practice.

The R.E.S.T. Practice is a four-step process which stands for Recognise, Explore, Surrender and Transform.

Unconditional awareness is the key tool you need to bring to this practice.

This practice is so much more than a foundation piece. What you will learn this month will be your constant companion and the backbone of everything you do. taking you through working with your soul map and beyond.



So let's begin by taking a look at two aspects of the R.E.S.T. Practice. The Inner Game and the Outer Game.

- The Inner Game relates to where you direct your awareness.
- The Outer Game relates to the journaling techniques you will use.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE R.E.S.T. PRACTICE

RECOGNISE – THE INNER GAME.

This first stage of your practice means using your map to recognise in any given moment, the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that are present in your experience. The first step to awakening from your habitual patterns is simply to recognise that you are stuck in them. Each month you will be guided to focus on a different layer of your map. The only exception to this will be in this first month whilst you are learning the foundation pieces.

RECOGNISE - THE OUTER GAME

The outer game of the RECOGNISE stage of the R.E.S.T. Practice is called 'Preparing The Background Of Your Page.' This process is both joyful and enriching. As you will see below, this stage differs slightly depending on whether you are using the 'Mixed Media' route or the 'Single Media' route.

- For the mixed media route, begin by adding Gesso to the page. As you apply Gesso stay connected to what you are doing in a mindful and conscious way, bring your awareness to the sensations of each movement and each brush stroke. For those following the single media route, skip this step.
- For both the mixed media route and the single media route, you are next invited to place a circle or a mandala somewhere on your page. Both in nature and in psychology the circle is a meaningful symbol and a powerful tool. Placing a circle into the background of your page reminds you that your soul is always waiting for you to come home to yourself.
- For the mixed media route, you are next invited to add paint to your page. I highly recommend that you stick to the colours on your soul map. I tend to use two or three colours only. For those following the single media route, skip this step.
- Finally, for both the mixed media and the single media route, draw a border around your page leaving enough space for you to doodle in later.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE R.E.S.T. PRACTICE

EXPLORE – THE INNER GAME

Exploring is all about exploring whatever it is you have recognised or experienced in the previous step. Exploring is simple but tricky to master because we often get in our way by assuming that we know ourselves well, when in fact we do not!

Approaching this part of your practice requires what the Buddhists call a 'beginners mind' which is essentially, exploring your experience with no expectation of what you will discover.

This aspect of your practice is about remaining open, curious and most of all non-judgemental. To facilitate this aspect of your practice each month you will be given a set of coaching style questions to consider.

EXPLORE - THE OUTER GAME

For both the mixed media and the single media route, the outer game of the Explore stage invites you to 'free write' your 'answers' to the coaching style questions on your page.

Your journal is a non-judgemental place therefore it is the perfect companion for free writing. Free writing is writing without editing or censoring yourself and without interrupting the continuous stream of awareness. Be unrestricted and unfettered, allow yourself to become absorbed. You can write over the entire page or just write in a section of it, the choice is yours.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE R.E.S.T. PRACTICE

SURRENDER – THE INNER GAME

The previous explore stage of the R.E.S.T. Practice tends to stir up feelings and emotions. The Surrender stage of the process is about surrendering to these feelings. Surrender means letting the thoughts, emotions, feelings, or sensations simply be there, without trying to fix, fade or avoid anything.

Unlike many mindful techniques where you are asked to 'breathe away' or 'let go' of what you are experiencing, here the invitation is to 'surrender into' your experience rather than letting it go or breathing it away. Here you will be encouraged to let your feelings and sensations be as big as they want to be, to just let them be.

SURRENDER - THE OUTER GAME

For both the mixed media and the single media route doodling is a wonderful way to surrender and soften to your inner experience because it takes your conscious mind 'off-line' and allows you to stay with rather than avoid what is happening in your body.

The doodling process is entirely intuitive with no thought or planning required from you. You are simply invited to stay in contact with your inner experience and being doodling in the border of your page.

Each time you come to this part of the journaling process you will notice something different in terms of the quality of your doodling. If you are feeling light emotions such as happiness your doodling may result in lines and shapes that are playful and skip lightly across your page. Equally if you are feeling anger or resentment it is not uncommon to find yourself producing doodles that are more rigid and linear. It is important to remember you are not attempting to draw what you are feeling, you are simply allowing the doodling to be the vehicle to **stay with your feelings**.

Often staying with your feelings feels counter-intuitive because, like the rest of us, you have spent your entire life avoiding feeling your inner experience.

The truly amazing news is, that once you learn to surrender and allow your feelings and sensations, you discover that not only will you not be overwhelmed by them, they are actually the gateway to your soul. You will discover for yourself, that your habitual avoidance of your direct experience is what blocks access to your soul and hearing your authentic voice.

When you learn to bring your loving awareness to what is often uncomfortable, the discomfort gradually dissolves and is replaced by a profound sense of peace. This can often feel miraculous. What happens is that as your awareness dissolves your holding patterns, it creates the inner space for the various qualities of your soul to be experienced. It is not that the qualities of your soul have been 'created' by allowing your feelings, it is simply that you now have the internal space to see what was always there.

This can only happen when you approach your experience with unconditional loving awareness, and this my friends is where the real practice happens. The attitude of loving awareness helps create a sufficient sense of safety, making it possible to honestly connect with your experience. Never underestimate the power of unconditional awareness.

NB: If you notice yourself drifting away from your inner experience then simply stop doodling for a while, bring your attention back to your body and continue.

TRANSFORM – THE INNER GAME

The final step is an invitation to gently come into conversation with your soul or your authentic voice and listen for its wisdom.

Here you are invited to bring your awareness into the stillness of your centre and to listen. As you bring yourself to stillness, each month you will be invited to consider a simple question, such as "What would you have me know?"

As your practice develops you will come to think of this aspect of your practice as a sacred conversation in which you are being guided to know the truth about yourself and your life.

TRANSFORM - THE OUTER GAME

For both the mixed media and the single media route, the outer game of this final stage is about collaging (gluing) the messages and/or images onto your page. Of course if you wish to write your own 'soul message' on your page, go ahead!

Finally, once your images and/or words are glued to your page you are invited to add further doodles and decoration to your page. Adding further decoration allows you time to integrate and absorb the message/s from your soul. It is not uncommon for further insights, messages or calls to action to be heard at this stage.

My wish is that over time your pages quickly become a rich and valuable source of messages for you, precious objects that show you the way back to your soul when you most need it.

It is my profound wish that your pages walk you home.

Jane

x



Your Practice – Month One

my **map** to freedom

by Jane Douglas

YOUR PRACTICE FOR MONTH ONE

RECOGNISE – THE INNER GAME

As I mentioned earlier, the Recognise stage of the R.E.S.T. Practice typically directs your awareness onto some aspect of your soul map. But for this month only I am inviting you to put your map to one side, and to recognise one thing that is bothering you at the moment. The Question you are asking yourself is...

“What is bothering me in this moment?”

As you reflect, you might recognise something obvious like worrying about a relative, money, an aspect of your work or even a relationship issue. Or it could be that you recognise something vague, like a sense of loneliness, disconnection or lack of motivation. Essentially, you need to recognise one thing that appears to be stopping you from feeling fully alive. When you have done this, hold it loosely in your mind and prepare the background of your journal page as below.

RECOGNISE - THE OUTER GAME

The outer game of the RECOGNISE section of the R.E.S.T. Practice is about Preparing the background of your page. This process is both joyful and enriching. This stage of the journaling process differs depending on whether you are taking the ‘Mixed Media’ Route or the ‘Single Media’ Route.

- For the mixed media route, begin by adding Gesso to the page. As you apply the Gesso stay connected to what you are doing in a mindful and conscious way, bringing your awareness to the sensations of each movement and each brush stroke. For the single media route, miss this step out.
- For both the mixed media route and the single media route, you are next invited to place a circle or a mandala somewhere on your page. Both in nature and in psychology the circle is a meaningful symbol and a powerful tool. Placing a circle into the background of your page reminds you that your soul is always waiting for you to come home to yourself.
- For the mixed media route only, you are next invited to add paint to your page. I highly recommend that you stick to the palette of colours on your soul map, I tend to use two or three colours only. For the single media route, miss this step out.
- Finally, for both the mixed media and the single media route you are asked to draw a border around your page.

EXPLORE - THE INNER GAME

Again, for the remainder of your journey the Explore section will invite you to explore an aspect of your soul map. This month the Explore stage of the R.E.S.T. Practice asks you to explore the thing that is bothering you that you identified in the previous step.

Here you are invited to consider the questions below.

“How is this affecting me?”

- What do I find myself doing, saying, (or not doing or saying) thinking or feeling?
- What am I experiencing in my body? What sensations are present i.e. tightness, tension, temperature variations?
(Scalp, Jaw, Throat, Neck, Shoulders, Chest, Stomach, Abdomen, Lower back, Arms, Legs)

REMEMBER You are not invited to analyse, comment on or otherwise interfere with your experience! This stage of the practice calls on your natural curiosity and your desire to know truth, so it is important to stay open to what arises during your inquiry especially if it feels difficult!

EXPLORE - THE OUTER GAME

For both the mixed media and the single media route the outer game of the Explore stage invites you to ‘free write’ your answers and observations to these questions on your page.

Your journal is a non-judgemental place therefore it is the perfect companion for free writing. Free writing is writing without editing or censoring yourself and without interrupting the continuous stream of awareness. Be unrestricted and unfettered, allow yourself to become absorbed. You can write over the entire page or just write in a section of it, the choice is yours.

NB: I find it easier to think about the questions first and then come to my page to write, but some people prefer to write as they think through the answers, whichever way works for you is fine. It is preferable if you can avoid writing in the border of your page.

SURRENDER – THE INNER GAME

The Surrender section of the R.E.S.T. Practice invites you to surrender and soften into the feelings and emotions that have surfaced from your explorations in the previous step. Here you are invited to feel what needs to be felt by bringing your awareness to the area of your body that feels as though it needs your attention the most. Gently say to yourself:

“I am willing to allow this experience to be as it is.”

Simply allow what you are experiencing to be exactly as it is. Some days you will be able to stay with your experience for longer than others, that is fine, simply continue to surrender, soften and allow. Remember the places in your body that are blocked, or tense are simply calling for your unconditional awareness. Nothing else is needed. Nothing needs to be fixed or got rid of. Just awareness.

SURRENDER - THE OUTER GAME

For both the mixed media and the single media route doodling is a wonderful way to surrender and soften to your inner experience because it takes your conscious mind ‘off-line’ and allows you to ‘stay with’ rather than ‘avoid’ what is happening in your body. This process is entirely intuitive with no thought or planning required from you. You are simply invited to stay in contact with your inner experience and begin doodling in the border of your page.

Each time you come to this part of the journaling process you will notice something different. If you are feeling light emotions such as happiness your doodling may result in lines and shapes that are playful and skip lightly across your page. Equally if you are feeling anger or resentment it is not uncommon to find yourself producing doodles that are more rigid and linear. It is important to remember that you are not attempting to draw what you are feeling, you are simply allowing the doodling to be the vehicle to **stay with your feelings**.

NB: If you notice your awareness drifting away from your inner experience then simply stop doodling for a while, bring your attention back to your body and continue. After a while, you will notice your doodling seems to naturally slow and come to a stop.

TRANSFORM – THE INNER GAME

As your practice develops you will come to think of the Transform aspect of the R.E.S.T. Practice as a sacred conversation in which you are being guided to know the truth about yourself and your life. This step in the R.E.S.T. Practice is a form of deep listening, where you are literally listening into the stillness of your inner being. To assist with this inner listening you are invited to bring your awareness to the circular symbol of your soul that you placed on your page at the beginning of this process whilst staying in full contact with your inner stillness. Here you are invited to ask your soul...

“What would you have me know/do/become?”

Do not force an answer, simply listen for any messages that emerge. To assist with your listening you are invited to use the selection of tissue paper ‘soul messages’ and images in your journaling pack. Staying connected to your inner stillness, flick through the images and words on the sheets and select those that seem to be ‘speaking’ to you. Sometimes you will be drawn to an image, sometimes words, sometimes both.

TRANSFORM - THE OUTER GAME

For both the mixed media and the single media route the outer game of this final stage is about collaging (gluing) the message and/or images onto your page. Of course if you wish to write your own ‘soul message’ on your page, go ahead!

Finally, once your images and/or words are glued to your page you are invited to add further doodles and decoration to your page. Adding further decoration allows you time to integrate and absorb the message from your soul. It is not uncommon for further insights, messages or calls to action to be heard at this stage.

My wish is that over time your pages quickly become a rich and valuable source of messages for you, precious objects that show you the way back to your soul when you most need it.

It is my profound wish that your pages walk you home.

The R.E.S.T. Practice – The Power of Awareness

RECOGNISE (Inner Game)

- What is going on?
 - “What is ‘bothering’ me at the moment?”

RECOGNISE (Outer Game)

- Prepare the background of your journal page. Mixed Media Route: Gesso, Paint, circular symbol, border, Single media route: Circular symbol, border.

EXPLORE (Inner Game)

- “How is this affecting me?”
 - What do I find myself doing, saying, (or not doing or saying) thinking or feeling?
 - What am I experiencing in my body? What sensations are present i.e. tightness, tension, temperature variations?
(Scalp, Jaw, Throat, Neck, Shoulders, Chest, Stomach, Abdomen, Lower back, Arms, Legs)

EXPLORE (Outer Game)

- Free-Write your answers in the body of your page.

SURRENDER - (Inner Game)

- Say to yourself
 - “I am willing to let everything be as it is.”

SURRENDER (Outer Game)

- Doodle in the border of your page.

TRANSFORM (Inner Game)

- Ask your soul
 - “What would you have me know/do/become?”

TRANSFORM (Outer Game)

- Collage images or words to your page.