

# *Invitation to HeART and SoulCollage® journaling*

## *Listening to your life*

“Carefully explore who you are and the work you have been given, and sink yourself into that. Don’t be impressed with yourself. Don’t compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.”

*Galatians 6:4-5 The Message*

“Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery it is. In the boredom and pain of it, no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, and smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because, in the last analysis, all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.”

*Frederick Buechner*

HeART and SoulCollage® journaling is a creative way to listen to our lives, develop discernment on our faith journeys, and grow in union with God by collating spontaneous images into a collage.

The process involves knowledge, experience, reflection, intuition, and meditation.

The pursuit of God and discovering our innermost selves are intertwined. Teresa of Avila believed that by finding God within ourselves, we can also discover our true selves. This contemplative seeing is a beautiful spiritual gift that allows one to rest deeply.

HeART and SoulCollage® journaling helps to develop spiritual awareness and gain insight into our interior life using images instead of words. It allows us to understand our motivations and recognise what brings us joy and peace, as well as what drains us.

Jim invites you to HeART and SoulCollage®, a personalised version of a self-discovery art therapy technique that helps individuals gain psychological and spiritual insight.

## *A picture paints a thousand words.*

“The Soul thinks in images.”

*Aristotle*

“When the Soul wants to experience something, she throws out an image before her and then steps into it.”

*Meister Eckhart*

Humans are highly visual. Over a third of our brain is more dedicated to processing visual information than sounds, smells, language, and movement combined.

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.” *Picasso*

HeART and SoulCollage® do not require artistic skills. All you need is your imagination, scissors, and a glue stick. It's a powerful tool for exploring your inner world, providing glimpses of significant themes and illuminating eureka moments. Collage journaling cards can help you communicate what's challenging to put into words.

It's a process of self-discovery that helps us understand our emotions and motivations. By listening to our inner voice, we can gain insights into our journey of personal growth and take care of our souls.

HeART and SoulCollage® help us bear fruit and can be part of similar practices found in a healthy life; contemplation, spiritual insights toolbox Such as

*Walking labyrinths ( walking meditation, contemplation)*

*The Ignatian examen, Ignatian spiritual exercises, Ignatian Spiritual accompaniment are all ways of using our God-given imagination to bring scripture to life.*

*Intentional times and periods of retreat into solitude and silence*

*Discovering our motivational gifting - Given for life Andy Raine*

*The Enneagram, Meyers-Briggs self-help assessment tools*

*Paying attention to and journaling dreams (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17) Joseph, Daniel*

*Having a rule of life, Vows, Actively belonging and engaging in an intentional spiritual community. Such as The Northumbria Community.*

*Lectio Divina*

*Contemplative, creative photography,*

*Contemplation with religious art icons*

*Being in Nature, God's book of nature, meditative observations in creation*

“Our real journey in life is interior; It is a matter of growth, deepening, and an ever-greater surrender to the creative action of love and grace in our hearts. Never was it more necessary to respond to that action?”

*Thomas Merton*

“The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.”

“Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.

*C.G.Jung*

Images in these traditions offer fresh perspectives on our inner life. Through unplanned collage art, we can mirror our emotions when words fail us.

*Hints to create HeART and SoulCollage® collage journaling cards.*

*Gather Your Supplies*

Gather together the following items which you might already have around:-

- 1) **Lots of random images!** Anything and everything, the more eclectic, the better from magazines, journals, books, comics, and postcards - cut out any images that appeal to you and put them aside.

Follow your instinct when choosing images. Trust what speaks to you.

Avoid using images with printed words. Cut them out or cover them over. Be impromptu with your image choices. Use appealing images without overthinking.

Gather together around 20 images. I have included a random selection in your pack to get you started.

2) **Mounting board to create your collage journaling cards.**

I use a 5' x 8' card, but an A5 card can be used.

Included in your pack are some pre-made mounting board cards

3) **Glue stick, scissors, craft knife** and something to cover your work surface to protect it.

4) **A Roller/Brayer** or your hands ! or something to evenly spread the glue to press/attach a smooth and flat image to the mounting board.

5) **Optional A 5 x 8 aperture framing card**

This helps position and guide your card. It aids in positioning and fitting the background and foreground images on the card.

### *Settle yourself down*

Gather your supplies and find a quiet space. Take deep breaths and pray for guidance. Listen for subtle messages as you choose images. Avoid using words.

Choose images that resonate with you. Trust your intuition. Only select one foreground image. Less is more. There is no right or wrong way. . These are your cards, so go with what feels right to you.

### *Framing the images onto your cards*

First, choose a main image for the foreground of your picture, and cut it out by clipping around the edge of the image with scissors or a craft knife.

Second, choose the background for the image you have cut out. This needs to be 5'8' inches to cover your mounting card.

Find an image that's not too busy for your background.

Cutting around an image engages both our logical and intuitive brain functions, similar to walking a labyrinth.

Try out different combinations of foreground and background images.

Assemble the images you have cut out onto the card. Have fun playing with the combinations of the chosen images until you find a main picture and a background you feel happy with.

Glue all the images onto the card using a roller to press them down or similar means to ensure they are attached smoothly and evenly.

The cards you create are for you only; they are for you to interpret what they say. The idea is only to make 1 or 2 cards in one sitting.

Write your name and the date on the back of the card.

Think of a 'title' for the image on the card and write that out on the back.

Keep it somewhere safe !!! Get a cup of tea!

The idea of Heart & SoulCollage™ is to construct a deck diary of your cards over a period of years.

Using cards instead of a book format rewires and enhances intuitive parts of yourself. The Heart & SoulCollage™ cards can be used when needed for assurance, discernment, comfort, or direction. It's a positive and fun way to uncover and work on your shadow side with spiritual accompaniment.

“What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we cannot cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery, and without it, all the rest are not only useless but disastrous.”  
*Thomas Merton*

“True spirituality is learning how to gather the exiled parts of ourselves together.”  
*Catherine Askew*

Sometimes, it's about waiting for the right questions to emerge. It requires learning about yourself and asking them at the right time.

Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart,  
and try to love the questions themselves  
as if they were locked rooms  
or books written in a very foreign language.  
Do not search for the answers which could not be given to you now  
because you would not be able to live them.  
And the point is to live everything.  
Live the questions now.  
Perhaps then, someday, far in the future,  
you will gradually,  
without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

“The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.”  
*Proverbs 20:5*

Heart & SoulCollage™ cards inspire and guide you on your journey to balance and harmony.

### *Asking the right questions "I am one who" method*

View the images on your card prayerfully.

You are trying to let the images you have put together speak what you already know but don't quite know we know or can't quite have the perspective to bring into focus. Insights are discovered. Heart & SoulCollage™ cards are like a mirror that reveals our inner reflections and motivations through images.

Some have helpfully described it as “bringing together the jumbled pieces of a jigsaw of where you are at to help find the edges of things you are working through.” Some likened it to a parable or poetry that communicates before it is understood.

Changing the question to a statement and using "I am one who" really helps.

If your image contains pictures of children, a beneficial way that helps to answer the question is with the statement: "I am one who" sees that being simple, childlike, and trusting are important.

If your image contains pictures of plants or trees, a beneficial way that helps to answer the question is with the statement: "I am one who" sees trees and plants as an example of nature's growth. I am one who wants to grow and mature.

If your image contains pictures of cars, planes, or boats, a beneficial way that helps to answer the question is with the statement: "I am one. " sees travel images connect with me in pilgrimage and journey

If your card image contains a picture of people, a beneficial way that helps to answer the question is with the statement: "I am one who" sees others., I am one who believes in others in the community...

Try not to describe the image but turn it around to what it is saying to us by using the I am one who method.

What is this image saying to you about yourself? I am one who...

What is the image reflecting in you right now? I am one who

What do you see of yourself in the image? I am one who

How does it make you feel? I am one who feels...

What does it make you think? I am one who thinks...

What does the image help you appreciate? I am one who appreciates.

What details in the image resonate with you? Why? I am one who

What details of the image inspire you?

What details in the image surprise you?

What images give you hope?

What images challenge you?

Is this image speaking of something you are longing for in yourself?

**Journal your insights, what you noticed, and what turned up.**

### *Journaling*

Journals of faith journeys evolve over time, providing more profound revelation. What you write today will have different meanings months or years later. It's like walking a labyrinth - a non-linear journey of growth and self-discovery, transformation and rediscovery.

Journaling is a beautiful way of treasuring words, thoughts, insights, and blessings. It helps in self-discovery, encourages us in dry and dark times, and improves mental health symptoms like anxiety. It allows us to recall, release, remember, and reflect, helping us realign and rest in Jesus. Lastly, it helps us return to a place of action and involvement with others. I hope that your spiritual collage work enhances personal growth and transformation.

“Keeping a journal has taught me that there is not so much new in your life as you sometimes think. When you reread your journal, you find out that your latest discovery is something you discovered five years ago. Still, one indeed penetrates deeper and deeper into the same ideas and the same experiences.”  
*Thomas Merton*

“We shall not cease from exploration, And the end of all our exploring Will be to arrive where we started And know the place for the first time.”  
*T.S. Eliot*

*“Be willing to be a beginner every single morning.” Meister Eckhart*

#### **BEGINNER'S MIND**

Let me start this day with a beginner's mind  
Let me be ready to be thrilled at the shock of the new  
To see what others may not see, what I've never attended to before  
Let me not be arrogant or proud,  
Believing that I've seen it all, or know enough  
To feign myself an “expert”, or a source of great understanding worthy of high esteem.  
May I humbly come before the One Who knows  
Who reminds me that whatever I think I once knew  
Is but a minute fraction of all there is  
Because I think I see,  
But really my eyes deceive,  
Not detecting that which is hidden and miraculous,  
Not capable of reading the intensity of light  
Beyond the curtain of each new day  
Lies a promise of new discovery  
For one who searches for the extraordinary  
Great adventure abounds  
*Clive Johnson*

Personal statement from Jim on SoulCollage®

The SoulCollage® method helps people discover their unique inner/outer guides and challengers and access their wisdom to answer their life questions. SoulCollage® is a method used in many contexts and applications. It's an all-inclusive approach and taps into different expressions of spirituality.

Jim's version of HeART and SoulCollage® is a unique interpretation acknowledging elements of the SoulCollage® method but interpreted through Jim's Trinitarian, Holy Spirit-centred lens like his Labyrinth work.

It's helped Jim personally in his spiritual journey as it's psycho-spiritual art therapy.

“My shift to the second half of life has been catalysed by a series of life events and experiences that touch me at the core, unsettling me and forcing me to reorder and make meaning in a new way. These destabilising events have brought deep pain and intense joy. Negotiating and navigating their reordering have brought about my inner work of Metanoia.” Jim

Metanoia is the first word out of Jesus’ mouth at the start of his public ministry (often translated as repentance), but the true meaning is moving from paranoia to metanoia, from fear to love bias. Growing and transforming into a bigger beyond (meta) mind,(noia) a bigger heart of inclusive mercy and compassion, it’s a true ‘ coming home’ or coming to one’s senses, like the prodigal son.

Jim has had to become slightly more open to other people’s faith or no-faith views. SoulCollage® can come across by some practitioners as a bit ‘new consciousness’.

New consciousness is where Scientific evidence has brought previously considered weird thinking into the new norm of consciousness. It involves a deeper understanding of interconnectedness and a willingness to take responsibility for positive change. We now ask, "What do I need to learn from this?" when something happens.

Unconscious biases are mental shortcuts that aid decision-making but can also lead to skewed judgments, prejudice, and stereotypes. They are formed outside of conscious awareness and can be activated under certain scenarios.

Confirmation bias is the most common unconscious bias when pre-existing beliefs influence conclusions rather than unbiased merit. For instance, voters ignore news that contradicts their beliefs. Holistic personal responsibility is growing, with authenticity as a key value to show alternative options are available if specific approaches don't suit you.

### *Some deeper questions*

What do the colours mean in the image?

What do the shapes signify in the images?

Why have I put this image on the right-hand side of the card?

Why have I put this image on the left-hand side of the card?

Why have I put this image near the top of the card?

Why have I put this image near the bottom of the card?

Why have I put the image in this part of the card?