



Preparing for your journey

my **map** to freedom

by Jane Douglas

Hello!

It is so good to have you here!

This little booklet contains the same information as the introductory video and like the introductory video it aims to give you enough information to prepare you for your journey. Your journal will be arriving in the post over the next few days, so while you wait for it to arrive there are a few things you can be doing.

- 1. Your downloadable map and guide** - The first thing that will be very useful is to read the downloadable guide to your map. The guide explains what the layers of your map mean and contains more detail about your personality type. It is also well worth spending some time getting familiar with your soul map by looking at it each day and noticing what you recognise about yourself. The more you can do this the easier your practice will flow when it begins.
- 2. Your Materials** - The next thing to think about is your art materials. Here you have some choices. There are three ways you can engage in this practice.
 - The mixed media route - which involves paints, inks and all things messy.
 - The single media route - which simply involves a pen, pencil and some glue.

The mixed media route requires you to invest in the following materials. All of these materials can be purchased on Amazon. If you are on a budget then shops like 'The Works' are great for this kind of merchandise.

- Two 1-inch paint brushes – I use water colour brushes.
- One Brayer (roller)
- Black and White roller pens - 'Posca' pens are good.
- Liquid Acrylic paints (not tubes) – Choose three colours from your soul map.
- Spray Inks (any brand) - Choose three colours from your soul map.
- GESSO!!!

- Stencils – mandala stencils and patterned stencils.
- A spray bottle for spraying water.
- Scissors.
- Pencil
- Baby wipes.
- Liquitex Mat Medium
- An A3 cutting mat (to protect your surface)

The single media route involves the following kit

- Black and White roller pens (fine). 'Posca' pens and 'uni' pens are good.
- Pencil
- Liquitex Mat Medium to glue images to page.

These lists are what I would describe as your basics and you may choose to add to these as we go along.

3. Your space

If you intend following the mixed media route, then one of the factors you will need to consider is a physical space. This does not have to be a big space, but you will need some form of table to work on and a protective mat. I am fully aware most of us will not have a dedicated space for this practice, so it is important that you create one, even if it is just temporary.

In the early days, I had a large box to keep my materials in and I worked on my dressing table. Of course, I had to pack away after each session, but I found that the packing away became an enjoyable part of the process. Essentially you need a space that you can call your own for half an hour each day.

Which-ever route you go down silence is a vital factor in this process, as connection with the soul requires you to rid yourself of as many distractions as possible. Just like any practice with a spiritual orientation when you are carving out this space you are creating the conditions through which you can experience your soul.

4. Your Inner Tool Kit

When it comes to unleashing your soul there is one tool you will need to bring to your journaling practice that is head and shoulders above the rest. This tool is what does the heavy lifting when it comes to 'unleashing.' This tool is awareness.

In the early days it is not unusual to find yourself resisting the idea that awareness is enough to set you free. I think this is often because the self-improvement market bombards you with the message that you need to change and improve yourself to have a happier life. In these early days I am asking you to take a leap of faith and believe me when I say that awareness is THE key tool in your armoury.

But. We are not talking about your everyday awareness here. Here, we are talking about something I like to call unconditional awareness. Unconditional Awareness has the power to dissolve your conditioned and habitual ways of acting, thinking and feeling by bringing a sense of release, a letting go of the 'shouldn'ts' and 'musts' that have kept you locked in your self-created prison. When you can bring unconditional awareness to your patterns, the natural process of unleashing, or more accurately, releasing can take place.

To help you understand unconditional awareness think for a moment of the way that a loving parent holds their baby, or the way an adoring animal owner looks into the eyes of their beloved pet. When parents hold their baby, their whole attention is directed towards their child. They speak to them, touch them and maintain a constant steady presence. The kind of awareness we are talking about here is identical to the gaze of unconditional love. In short, the quality of this awareness is grounded, receptive, open-hearted and non-judgemental. The kind of awareness you are being invited to bring to your journaling is routed in becoming present to your habitual patterns without reacting to them, seeing them as objectively as you can without judging them. Unconditional awareness does not try to change you, manipulate you or otherwise interfere with you. This kind of awareness has the same effect water has on a soluble painkiller, it dissolves your self-created ways of thinking, feeling and acting and sets you free.

I have found there are four pillars to developing unconditional awareness.

Trust

A central part in developing non-judgemental awareness is to loosen your habit of trying to control and direct so much of what happens. Instead, listen inwards and attune to what is trying to naturally unfold. This way, you will leave some space for the intelligence of your awareness to lead the way.

Although you will have had experiences where life has felt very tough, in retrospect you may often have come to see that what looked like bad luck turned out to be offering you a deeper gift. It is extremely helpful to trust that life is trying to orient you to greater connection with your soul. If you can accept this view, you will find that it will be invaluable in supporting you.

Truth

Truth transforms your visits to the soul map into a grand adventure. So often I got caught in trying to live up to an idealised vision of who I would like to be, because facing where I was in my process felt disappointing. Cultivating an attitude of seeking truth, allowed me to develop the capacity be more aware, resulting in my being able to find and recognise truth. I have learned that this depth of honesty and capacity to be real, to face my truth, has made me more willing and able to be vulnerable, leading to me being more open to feedback and support from others. The more I sought my truth, the easier it was to cut through the patterns of my emotional defences and the faster connection to my soul became. It will be the same for you.

Curiosity

As you journey through the soul map you may often try to block out aspects of your experience that you find uncomfortable. This will confine and imprison you. The length of your imprisonment will be in direct proportion to how long you allow your tendency to block out or close to operate. How much more enjoyable would your life be if you lived it with a habit of curiosity rather than fear of everything you encounter? Your practice with the soul map will be so much more interesting and fulfilling if you meet it fresh each time. Trying to fit it into preconceived or existing perceptions keeps your view of reality in the known and shuts out so much possibility. The spirit of curiosity will completely revolutionise the way you are learning to be with yourself and will transform every pattern of your emotional defences into a core quality that has freedom at its heart.

Compassion

Compassion is the vital and often difficult task of learning to let go and relinquish your tendencies toward self-attack whether you direct that attack inwardly or project it outwards. When you begin working with the soul map you will start to see how extensive your habits and conditioned responses are. It is easy to get despondent and feel bad about this, giving yourself a hard time and punishing yourself for not trying hard enough to be different. It is very important for you to get a handle on this. Self-attack is something you need to learn how to spot and stop giving energy to. Instead, cultivate a deep kindness and compassion for yourself and those around you.

What is required to learn to develop and grow these qualities is courage. Courage and the willingness to keep going with your practice, to keep on with your journey and learn along the way. That is why companionship is so invaluable on this journey, and why I invite you to stay connected on social media.