

P l a y



If you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time.

Joseph Campbell

“Can you come out and play?” These magical words echoed throughout my childhood. They were an invitation to come out of the ordinary world and plunge into an extraordinary realm of joy and imagination, a world where each puddle was for splashing, a simple walk to the park was an adventure and I was a fearless princess ready to conquer the world.

Our ability to play is a powerful healer and a fundamental element to our recovery from abuse. Through it we transform the ordinary into something extraordinary. We take adventures, express love and friendship, create art, poetry and song. It is through play that we dance, laugh and love our way through each stage of our lives.

I do not remember the exact moment that I stopped playing, but I do know that at some point in my adulthood I simply stopped. I decided that following my playful urges was a waste of time and began neglecting my sense of adventure, my creativity and my passion for life. It was not a conscious decision. Instead, it was a subtle shift of focus from my needs and desires to the needs and desires of others. I abandoned play because I no longer valued myself or the power of my imagination. Consequently, I lost touch with my playful spirit and forgot how to play.

During my recovery process I began searching for ways to bring play back into my life. I became curious about my playful spirit and reintroduced myself to a willingness to play. I began listening to my inner urging and responding with yes when I received an impulse to create something, to take an adventure or make a new friend.

My playful spirit led me gently toward deeper wholeness, it lead me in the way play does, naturally and with out pretense. My playful spirit simply understood in each moment what was most needed and expertly grabbed it with innocence.

The journal exercises in this section will help you begin to explore your playful instincts. They will guide you as you reconnect to the activities that bring you joy. They will reintroduce you to your playful spirit, the part of you that is creative and paints her life with a broad brush. You will began to hear a still small voice call out from deep within... she will be whispering, “Can you come out and play?”