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Examples of the Writing Exercises (for each of the nine modules):

MODULE #1: BECOMING AN ALLY

Example 1: The Missed Deadline (Professional/Self-Criticism)

Focus: Internalized perfectionism and the fear of professional exposure.

- a. Briefly describe the situation:** I recently missed a project deadline because I felt overwhelmed and began procrastinating. Once I realized I was late, I spiraled into self-criticism, telling myself I was incompetent and that my colleagues would finally see I don't belong in this role.
- b. What feelings did you have?** I felt a sharp jab of panic and intense guilt. I was terrified that I had permanently damaged my professional reputation.
- c. Using the emotion wheels, what other feelings can you identify?**
 - Inadequacy: A deep-seated fear that I lack the "stuff" to handle my job.
 - Frozen: Not just "lazy," but physically unable to move due to high cortisol/stress.
 - Exposed: A sense of "Imposter Syndrome" where my flaws are now public.
- d. What could you tell yourself to validate your feelings?** "It makes sense that I'm panicking. I've tied my safety to being perfect for so long that a mistake feels like a threat to my survival. Procrastination wasn't a character flaw; it was my brain's way of trying to hide from a stressor it didn't know how to handle. I am allowed to be a human who mismanages time occasionally."

...BECOMING AN ALLY

Example 2: The Empty Chair (Childhood/Neglect)

Focus: The foundational wound of being overlooked or undervalued by a caregiver.

- a. Briefly describe the situation:** When I was ten, my father promised to attend my piano recital. I scanned the audience during my entire performance, but his seat remained empty. He later brushed it off, saying work ran late and it "wasn't a big deal."
- b. What feelings did you have?** I felt incredibly small and unimportant. I felt a cold sense of sadness that my "big moment" didn't matter to the person I loved most.
- c. Using the emotion wheels, what other feelings can you identify?**
 - Neglected: The realization that I was lower on the priority list than a work task.
 - Invisible: The feeling that I could do something amazing and it still wouldn't be 'seen.'
 - Resentful: Anger at being told my feelings weren't valid (gaslighting of the experience).



PROCESSING:

A. Old Business

Ask the participants to **refer to their Adult Ally Letter and share some of the following:**

- Overall, what is the **Adult Ally's** attitude toward the Little Girl?
- Did the **Adult Ally demonstrate** compassion, understanding, patience, grace, support, encouragement...?
- How did the Adult Ally **validate the feelings** of the Little Girl?
- What commitment did the Adult make to improve the care of the Little Girl?

- **Referring to their Response Letter:**

If the Little Girl is not at peace, what still needs attention for her to be able to move ahead without emotional clutter from this relationship?

B. New Business:

Ask the participant(s) to **refer to their Heart Letter** and share some of the following:

- In a few words, how would you **describe your relationship with your mother**? Was she your biggest supporter, toughest critic or a passive bystander? What, if anything, made you feel seen, valued and cherished by your mother?
- What was **frustrating or painful** about your relationship with your mother? **What did you need** that she was unwilling or unable to provide?
- Based on this relationship, **what did you come to believe** about yourself?
- **What does that little girl need** (from the Adult Ally) to help heal the wounds from the relationship with her mother?

*Remind the participant(s) to include any of the 7 required elements of a HEART letter to get the most they can out of this decluttering process.

HEALING WORK:

Explain THE HEALING WORK at the end of each writing exercise:

The "Healing Work" is the second phase of emotional decluttering. It is designed to "close the loop" on past pain and promote a sense of peace, healing and restoration.

Self-Assessment for Facilitators of the Wholehearted Living Program

REFLECTIVE SUMMARY

- **Wins:** What felt natural and effective today?
- **Growth:** Where did I feel tension, anxiety, or a need for more training?
- **Pivot:** What is one specific thing I will do differently next time?

1. PRESENCE & SELF-REGULATION

- **The Silence Test:** Did I hold space for silence, or did I “fill” it to soothe my own anxiety?
- **Body Language:** Was I an active listener with my mind and body?
- **Internal State:** Was my self-talk focused on my performance (“What do I say next?”) or on the participant’s needs?
- **Distractions:** Did I exhibit nervous habits (fidgeting, “ums,” interrupting) that may have broken the participant’s flow?

2. THE LISTENING HIERARCHY

- **The Ratio:** Did I listen more than I spoke? Did I ask more than I told? (A rule of thumb is that the facilitator should speak no more than 20% of the time, leaving 80% for the participant(s) to speak.)
- **Accuracy:** Did I mirror/restate for clarity, or was I just using “filler” repetition?
- **Projection:** Did I state things I assumed I heard, or only what was actually shared?

3. COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE

- **Sequence:** Did I lead with compassion and affirmation, or did I jump straight to logic/next steps?
- **Validation:** Did I spiritualize, minimize, or “fix” their feelings instead of sitting with them? Did I ask them to validate their own feelings?
- **Tone:** Was my affirmation specific and sincere, or generic?

4. DIRECTING VS. DRAWING OUT

- **The Agenda:** Were my questions truly curious, or were they “leading” the participant(s) toward my desired conclusion?
- **Advice Trap:** Did I offer a diagnosis, give advice, or teach a lesson? (Remember: Draw it out, don’t put it in.)

