SoulCollage

Honouring your divine self in a visual way

Writer card, with Alice Walker to the right

Heather Conn

A close-up of the eye of a tiger glistens against the splayed stripes of his fur – orange, black, and white. Mona Lisa displays a moustache and goatee, surrounded by a jester, a red-nosed clown on stilts, and several guffawing men with arms folded across their chests. A field of waist-high wild flowers, surrounded by branches bursting with white blossoms, appears to dwarf an artist at his easel, picnic basket at his side.

These images are only a few of the more than 80 SoulCollage cards that I have created as a personalized deck over the past several years. This fun, intuitive form of collage-making, founded by Seena Frost in California, is a creative way to celebrate all aspects of yourself – beyond any concept of positive or negative. Incorporating archetypes and basic concepts from Jungian psychology, SoulCollage honours your whole divine self or spiritual essence in a visual way. Hence, alongside my cards for Bliss and Grace I have one that represents She Who Likes Confrontation. Another one depicts my powerful Source, and yet another my Witness Self, the deep part of me that can view events and actions with detachment and great wisdom.

No art experience is necessary for the SoulCollage practice. All you need are five-by-eight matte cards, magazines, glue, and scissors. The process comes from Frost's background in psychology and theology as well as her work with Jean Houston, one of the founders of the Human Potential Movement. It involves the creation of cards in four suits, which represent the psychological, communal, energetic, and archetypal dimensions respectively.

In simple terms, SoulCollage involves collecting images that you are drawn to or that evoke a strong reaction in you, whether you understand why or not. You can make a collage card without knowing what it signifies at first – the meaning can become clear later. No words are included in the collages in order to bypass the linear, logical brain and celebrate spontaneity instead. (That's a challenge for a professional writer like me.)

Making SoulCollage cards can have great therapeutic value, especially creating a card for universal aspects of our lives such as Fear and Death. You can make a card to represent your Playful Inner Child and one that shows your Wounded Child. I have used SoulCollage with adults with mental illnesses – writing students of mine – and they were able to convey parts of themselves with pictures that they couldn't articulate in words.

Used alone or in groups, SoulCollage cards can serve as a catalyst for journalling, rituals, or poetry. You can pick one a day for inspiration or to accompany an intention. Create one of your hero, mentor, friend, or loved one, and send a copy to him or her as a gift. While working temporarily in San Francisco last year, I showed my Writer card to Pulitzer Prize–winning author Alice Walker, whose image appears on it. Delighted, she signed it with a giant heart.

The next SoulCollage workshop will be held on Saturday, July 4, from 1 to 6 p.m. at Yoga by the Sea, 1055 Roberts Creek Rd. For more information or to register for an upcoming workshop, contact Heather Conn at 604-886-6520 or hconn@dccnet.com. For general information on SoulCollage, see www.soulcollage.com

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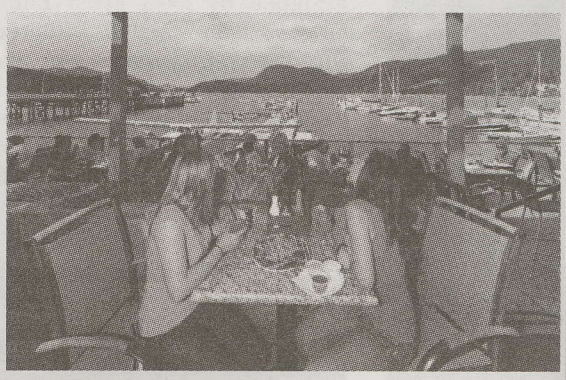

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