



Congratulations!

Congratulations on all the work you've done in this journal! Whether you feel like you did a little or a lot, you should feel good because you took the time to get better at telling your story and relating to the stories of others. You are awesome!

NEXT STEPS

1

How do you feel about doing more storytelling and developing your cultural competence going forward?

Not very - feeling skeptical



Confident - I am SO ready for this!

Draw an arrow indicating you feel.

2

Continue your work with others.

You can make your journey easier by seeking the support of others. One place to do that is at the 2018 MFLN Virtual Conference (Live! Sept. 18-20. All sessions will be recorded), militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/2018virtualconference/. There is a journal like this one available for the Virtual Conference experience.

3

Make a plan for change.

Cultural competence is a lifelong journey. You've taken some critical steps in the past few weeks. Making an action plan can help you maintain your momentum. You can find a guide for making your advocacy action plan at militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/2018virtualconference/

PERSONAL

storytelling

SELF-PACED LEARNING EXPERIENCE



Cultural COMPETENCY

awareness
action
advocacy

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 18 - 20, 2018

MilitaryFamiliesLearningNetwork.org/2018VirtualConference

How to Use this Journal

Weekly Reflection Pages

Each week, use this section of the journal to:

- **Set intentions for participation** ●

What do you intend to do & learn?

- **Reflect on the previous week** ●

Reflect on anything that may have become more clear for you during the previous week.

- **Identify/Mitigate obstacles** ●

You may also choose to use this space for making plans to mitigate obstacles in the upcoming week.

**YOU'RE
NEVER
BEHIND!**

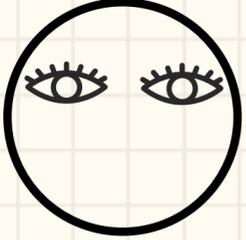
START WHERE YOU ARE



Week Four

Day 6

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

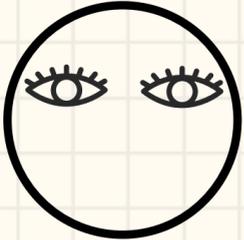
One thing to try: Introduce yourself to someone new and ask them to share something about themselves. Share a small part of your story with them. If this activity feels uncomfortable to you, try find a safe space to practice it.



Week Four

Day 5

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

Think and write about how sharing your story, even in small ways, connects to cultural competency. How does embracing failure connect to building cultural competency?

How to Use this Journal

Daily Journal Pages

The daily journal pages are divided into three sections:

On my mind today

Use this section track how you are feeling - fill in the face!



It can be helpful to be mindful of your feelings and anything that might be on your mind. Use this space to put these thoughts in the "parking lot."

Moments to treasure

Engaging in a daily practice of gratitude can help you build empathy toward others, as well as increase your own feelings of happiness!

Journal prompt & One thing to try

Each day includes a prompt or an action to help develop your storytelling, communication, or relationship skills.

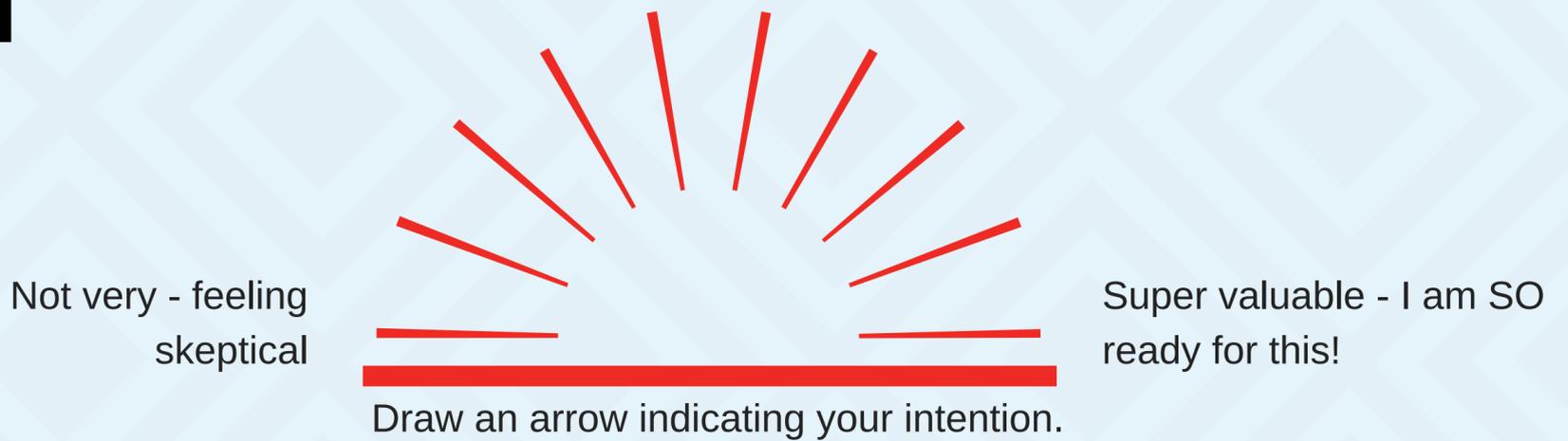


Week One

Reflection & Preparation

1

How valuable an experience do you plan this week to be?



2

How participative do you plan to be?

What action(s) do you need to take to make space for this week's learning experience?

3

Do you feel authentically committed to your personal growth?

What adjustments might you need to make to fully commit?

4

What obstacles (if any) do you expect to interfere with this week's practice/learning?

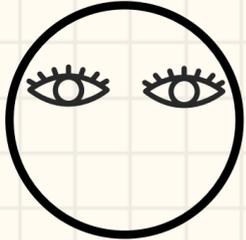
What do you need to do to mitigate this obstacles?



Week Four

Day 4

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

Plan for failure. Identify an important behavior-change goal you'd like to achieve and think you can accomplish. Fully imagine the most positive outcomes that would occur if you achieved this behavior change goal. Next, imagine a critical obstacle that you know could derail your progress. Finally, make a plan for overcoming that obstacle.

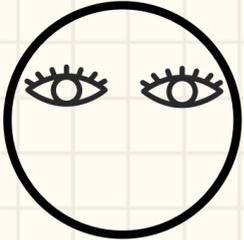
Bonus: You can use this mental contrasting activity each time you'd like to change your behavior.



Week Four

Day 3

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

Write the story of a time you failed and you considered the failure to be your fault. Take a step back and observe yourself in the situation. What do you see happening? Who was there? What were you feeling? What was the goal you were trying to reach? Have you forgiven yourself? Did you give up? Why? If you gave up, did you forgive yourself for giving up?



Story Tip

Be Present In Your Story



This is my time to shine, Id-iom, CC BY-NC, <https://flic.kr/p/bW7xoe>

To connect with a story, people need someone to connect with.

Be present in your story. The pronoun “I” should appear in all your stories, even if it’s a story about someone else.

If you’re telling a story where the word “I” doesn’t fit, then stop telling that story because it’s not your story or you don’t feel a personal connection with it.

Being present in your story requires knowing yourself. Nakanishi & Rittner wrote that intercultural learning is a process that occurs “through increasing levels of *cultural self-knowledge*.”

We must learn about our own culture before we can learn about other cultures.

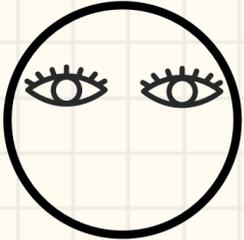
Use the daily prompts in the Week One section of this journal to begin to learn about yourself and your own cultural story. As you learn more about yourself, you’ll become ready to include yourself in your stories and give others someone to connect to.



Week One

Day 1

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

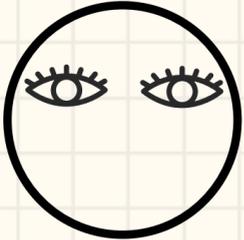
Where did you grow up? Describe details - rural, urban, what the people were like, whether you moved frequently, what kind of home you lived in, your neighborhood, the architecture, any details that come to you.



Week Four

Day 2

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

If you feel you are ready, try writing about a loss you experienced in your life. Take a step back and observe yourself in the experience. What do you see happening? How did they touch your life? How did they make you feel? What stories can you tell about them?

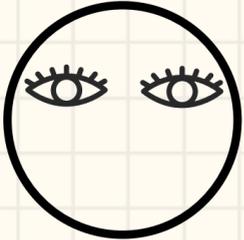
Bonus activity: Using the same concepts above, write about someone currently in your life that you care about deeply.



Week Four

Day 1

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

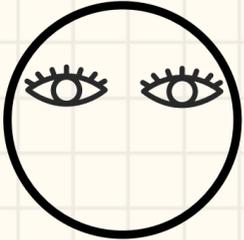
Take a moment to imagine yourself sharing your story in small ways. How are you sharing? With whom? Publicly, privately, with groups of people? Why are you sharing it in this way? What are some other small ways to share?



Week One

Day 2

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

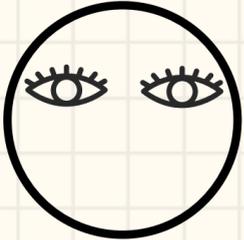
How do you identify racially, ethnically, and culturally? Describe your ancestry.



Week One

Day 3

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

Describe your generational category - what trends, events, pop culture, or other things were significant to you? Why?



Story Tip

Keep Telling Your Stories



Don't Give Up, Quinn Dombrowski, CC BY-SA, <https://flic.kr/p/7vwnts>

“Writing helps to put an experience into perspective. It can help people find meaning.” - James W. Pennebaker

Telling our stories can bring us amazing benefits. Writing about our experiences and how we feel about them can improve our health, lead to self-knowledge and help us understand and empathize with others, but it doesn't happen overnight. Storytelling is a lifelong practice. Here are some small steps to get you going and keep you going.

- **Start small** - This journaling experience has been pretty intense. Writing every day might not always fit into your life. Find a way to tell your stories in small ways when you can't sustain more.
- **Take a step back** - Writing about some experiences can be really stressful. Don't let difficult feelings stop you. Imagine you are observing yourself in the experience you are trying to write about. What do you see happening? How do you imagine you are feeling?
- **Embrace failure** - You are not always going to achieve the goals you set for yourself. When you fail, forgive yourself, learn from it and don't give up.



Week Four

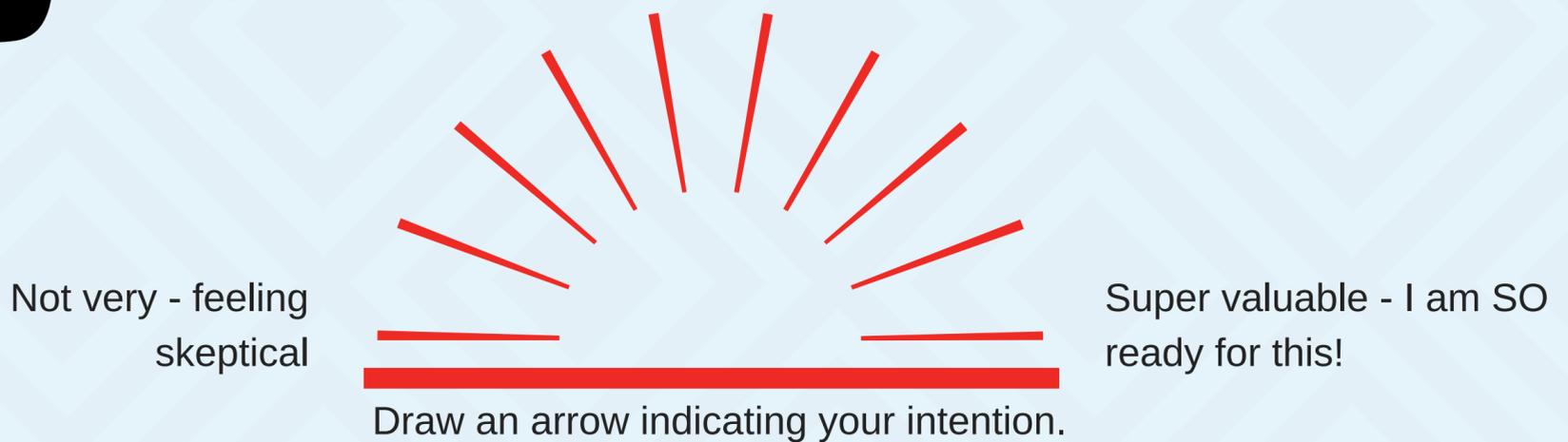
Reflection & Preparation

1

What shifted for you or became clear during the past week?

2

How valuable an experience do you plan this week to be?



3

How participative do you plan to be?

What action(s) do you need to take to make space or prepare yourself for this week's learning experience?

4

What obstacles (if any) do you expect to interfere with this week's practice/learning?

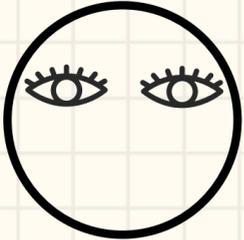
What is your plan for mitigating these obstacles?



Week One

Day 4

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

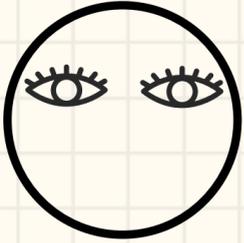
Describe your family's class background and any changes you have experienced.



Week One

Day 5

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

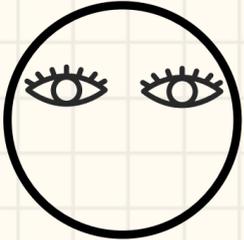
Using your answers to the previous 4 prompts in this journal as a guide, as well as any other cultural identities that have had an influence on your life (religion, etc), describe one thing you like and one thing you don't like about your cultural identification. Why?



Week Three

Day 6

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

One thing to try: Take a piece of paper or your journal with you for a day and notice every act of kindness you witness or engage in – big or tiny. Reflect on each one – how did it feel to witness one? How did it feel to receive or perform kindness? How do you imagine the others felt?

Bonus activity: Perform 3 intentional acts of kindness in one day. They don't have to be large gestures, in fact the smallest act can elicit a big impact. What did you do? Who did you do it for? Why did you choose to do it? What value do you hold that this act connected with? How did it feel to do it? What made you feel authentic or what made it feel forced? How can you cultivate this level of generosity on a regular basis?

[MilitaryFamiliesLearningNetwork.org](https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org)

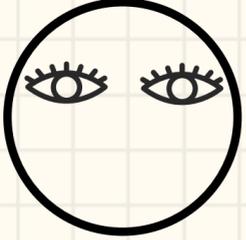
Source: Adapted from *Character Strengths Interventions*, Ryan M. Niemiec, 2018



Week Three

Day 5

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

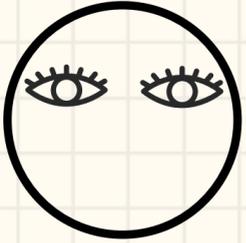
When is it most important for you to turn your kindness inward, toward yourself?



Week One

Day 6

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

Make a list of ways of how your cultural identify might/does help you and how it might/does hinder you.

Helps

Hinders



Week Two

Reflection & Preparation

1

What shifted for you or became clear during the past week?

2

How valuable an experience do you plan this week to be?

Not very - feeling skeptical



Super valuable - I am SO ready for this!

Draw an arrow indicating your intention.

3

How participative do you plan to be?

What action(s) do you need to take to make space or prepare yourself for this week's learning experience?

4

What obstacles (if any) do you expect to interfere with this week's practice/learning?

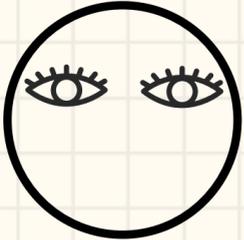
What is your plan for mitigating these obstacles?



Week Three

Day 4

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

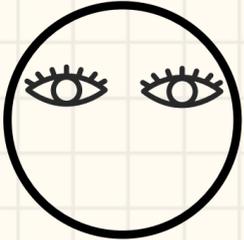
Do you notice a difference in the ease with which you express different dimensions of kindness (generosity, care, compassion, being nice?) When do you feel most comfortable expressing the different dimensions? Least comfortable? Which dimension would you like to work toward expressing more?



Week Three

Day 3

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

Reflect on your day, or the previous day, and take notice of all the acts of love you experienced. Look carefully. Look for kindnesses you received and kindnesses you gave to others. Often these kindnesses are in very small packages, so take care to notice every moment you can. Make one list of kindnesses you received from others, another of kindnesses you gave to others, and identify at least one kindness you gave to yourself.

Bonus Activity: Make a list of kindnesses you'd like to give to yourself, others, and the world:

[MilitaryFamiliesLearningNetwork.org](https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org)

Source: Adapted from *Character Strengths Interventions*, Ryan M. Niemiec, 2018



Story Tip

Share Your Passion/Purpose



Creation Myth 2, TikkunGer, CC BY-NC-ND, <https://flic.kr/p/bo2Pg>

Passion, purpose and universal emotion can make true stories into myth

"Certainly nothing reinforces the kinship of humanity across oceans and time more than folklore." - Daryl Cumber Dance

It's difficult to think about our personal stories rising to the level of myth. Our stories don't have the magical elements often present in myths, but magic is not what makes myths powerful. Myths are powerful because they preserve our values, give voice to our fears and aspirations, and connect us through universal emotion. Your stories can do that as well.

Start with your origin story. Answer one of these questions: What lights you up? or What are you an advocate for? Next think of an event that led you to that passion or purpose. Finally explain why that event lead you there? That's your origin story.

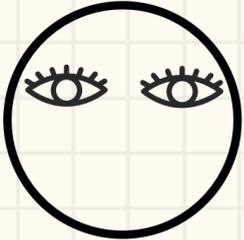
Use the daily prompts in the Week Two section of this journal to continue to explore your passion and purpose. When you tell stories with passion and purpose, you'll feel your connection to the "kinship of humanity," and help others feel their kinship as well.



Week Two

Day 1

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

What are you intensely interested in or curious about? What lights you up? What's your jam? What activities make you feel really useful, alive, and strong? Try to think beyond your traditional social roles.

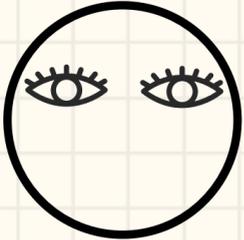
Bonus storytelling activity: For each item you listed above, write about a time when you were able to fully express your curiosity or engage in activities that fed this passion. What were you doing? Who was with you? What was the environment like? What was your energy like? How did it make you feel? Why?



Week Three

Day 2

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

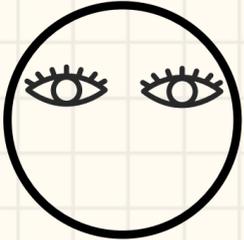
Think back to the last time you heard the story of someone that is very different from you. If you can't recall an experience, then seek one out - it can be from a book, article, tv show, movie, etc. Did you "hear" their story? What does it mean to hear someone else's story? How does hearing the stories of others that are different from us relate to building empathy?



Week Three

Day 1

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

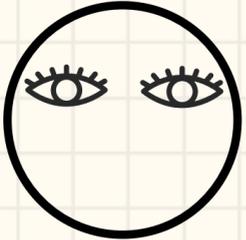
Write about an event or experience or period of your life where you learned an important life lesson. What was happening? What stage of life were you in? How were you feeling? What was the struggle or trial you had to go through? Was it internal, interpersonal, or something else? What was the outcome? Where are you with this issue now? Write as though you are telling the story to someone else - what is it about this story that you can give to others?



Week Two

Day 2

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

How do you want to feel (happy, powerful, confident, needed, etc.)? Brainstorm a list. Read it over. Think on it.

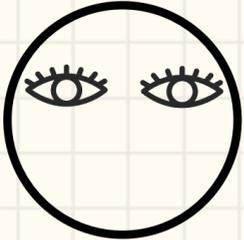
Choose no more than 5 to focus on. Then think about which experiences or accomplishments have made or will make you feel that way.



Week Two

Day 3

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

What's your message? What do you stand for? What are you an advocate for? What is it that you want people to know, see, understand, "get" in life? What are you always piping up or preaching about? It could be as simple as "freedom!" "support local" "the arts are important" "treat others as they would like to be treated" or "truth."

Bonus Storytelling Activity: Explore where the things you listed in the previous two journal prompts intersect with your message?

MilitaryFamiliesLearningNetwork.org

Source: Adapted from *The Firestarter Sessions*, Danielle LaPorte, 2012



Story Tip

Practice Generosity & Empathy



Practice empathy, Quinn Dombrowski, CC BY-SA, <https://flic.kr/p/dfNYpq>

Storytelling is an act of generosity.

Storytelling can have great benefits for the teller. It can make you more visible, illustrate your point, and connect you with others. But the best way to get those benefits is to focus less on what you want and more on what you have to give.

Writer and storyteller Margo McLoughlin calls storytelling “a gift of human presence.” When you are open, authentic and vulnerable as a storyteller, you are creating space for others to do the same.

Tell your stories with empathy.

Storytelling with empathy means being open to possible experiences and human connection, not closing the door by shielding ourselves from discomfort with feigned confidence. Your ability to empathize with others is directly tied to your ability to tell stories in an inclusive way that maximizes the opportunity for connection.

“Empathy fuels connection. Sympathy drives disconnection.” - Brene Brown



Week Three

Reflection & Preparation

1

What shifted for you or became clear during the past week?

2

How valuable an experience do you plan this week to be?

Not very - feeling skeptical



Super valuable - I am SO ready for this!

Draw an arrow indicating your intention.

3

How participative do you plan to be?

What action(s) do you need to take to make space or prepare yourself for this week's learning experience?

4

What obstacles (if any) do you expect to interfere with this week's practice/learning?

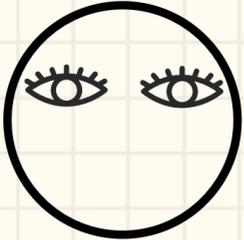
What is your plan for mitigating these obstacles?



Week Two

Day 4

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

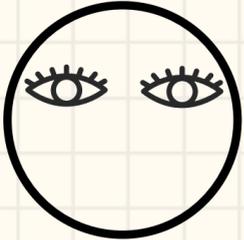
What are you afraid of? What fears hold you back - from succeeding, from relationships, from sharing your purposes/passions, from growing your cultural competency, from taking care of yourself? For each fear you list, ask yourself why you hold this fear. Continue asking why until you've arrived at the core answer.



Week Two

Day 5

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

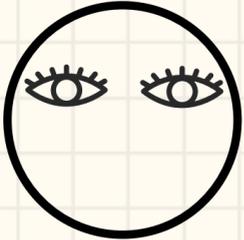
Find or write an epigraph - a short quote or piece of writing that sets the tone for what's to come. It can be something you write yourself, or a quote from someone else. All that matters is that it feels inspiring for you. Once you find or write your epigraph, read it and write whatever comes to your mind in connection with it. Wonder about it. How does it relate to your purpose? Your fears? Your cultural identity?



Week Two

Day 6

On my mind today:



I feel...

Moment(s) to treasure that I experienced today:

One thing to try: Get interviewed about why you do what you do in the world. Sometimes we can uncover additional insights when we verbally begin to tell our story. Enlist a friend or even interview yourself! Take an audio or video recording of the interview (even if you do it on your own). Watch it or listen to it. Allow yourself to cringe, feel uncomfortable, laugh at yourself, become curious about your story.