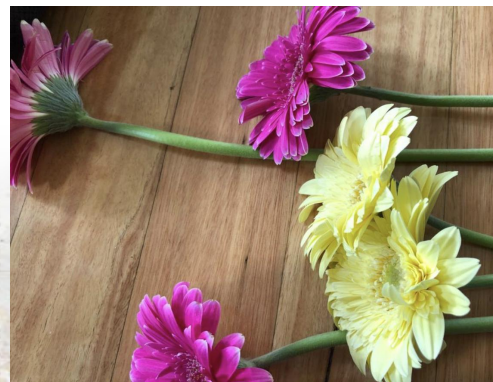


HEART & SOUL CARE TRAUMA HEALING RETREAT FOR WOMEN SURVIVING DOMESTIC ABUSE

23-25th SEPTEMBER 2022

BLOG



Friday, 23rd September
Opening Circle, Meditation
Nancie Clisby, Sublime Healing Pathways

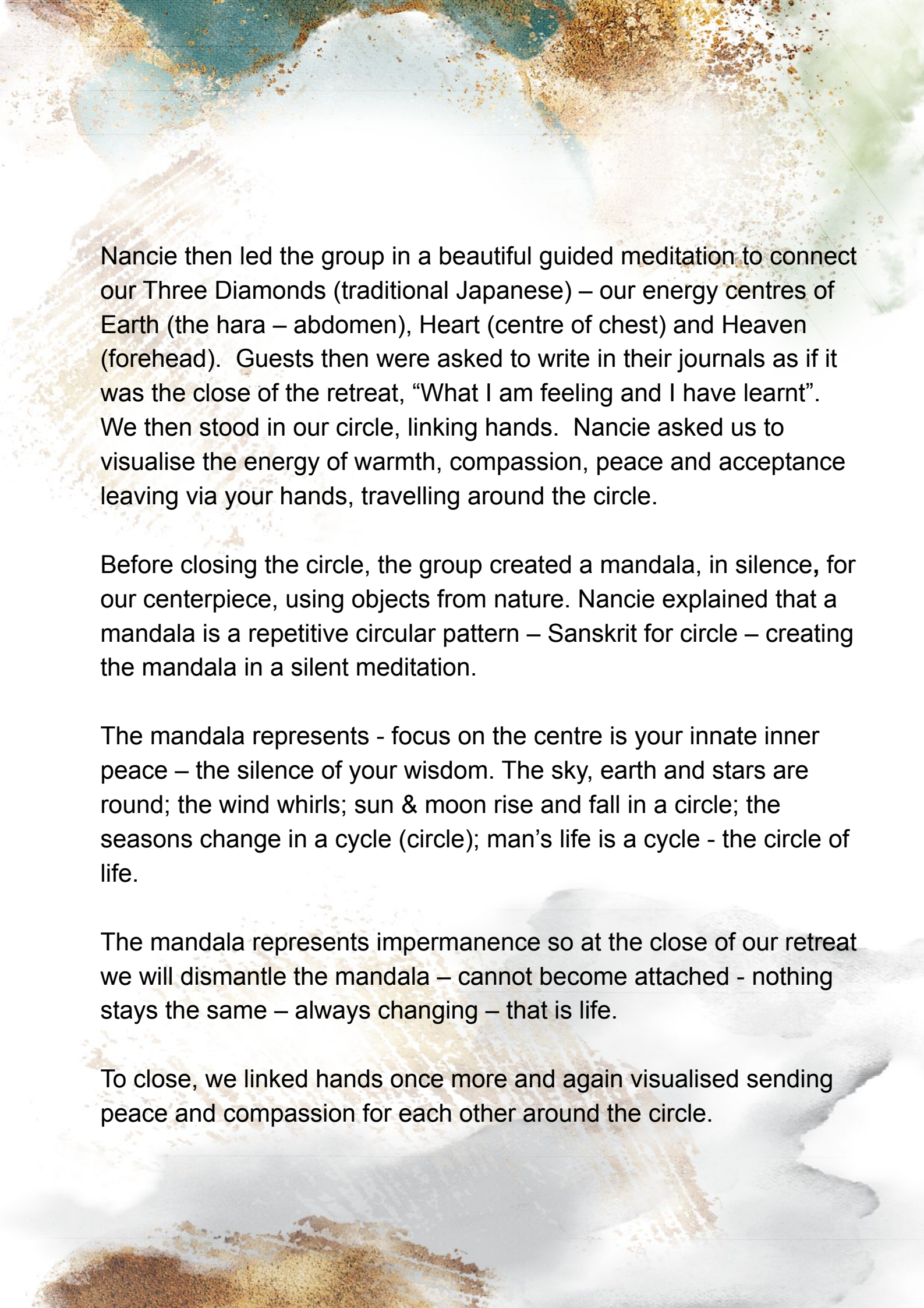


Nancie began by acknowledging the Dharawal people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet.

She welcomed everyone by saying that this weekend is for their respite and rejuvenation and to focus on being in the present moment.

Nancie announced that the September Heart & Soul Care Trauma Healing Retreat was in part sponsored by “The Yoga For Good Foundation”.

Guests were invited to open their journal and write down one of their qualities/strengths they would like to develop. Moving around the circle, Nancie asked each person to introduce themselves and shared their name and strength/quality they would like to develop.



Nancie then led the group in a beautiful guided meditation to connect our Three Diamonds (traditional Japanese) – our energy centres of Earth (the hara – abdomen), Heart (centre of chest) and Heaven (forehead). Guests then were asked to write in their journals as if it was the close of the retreat, “What I am feeling and I have learnt”. We then stood in our circle, linking hands. Nancie asked us to visualise the energy of warmth, compassion, peace and acceptance leaving via your hands, travelling around the circle.

Before closing the circle, the group created a mandala, in silence, for our centerpiece, using objects from nature. Nancie explained that a mandala is a repetitive circular pattern – Sanskrit for circle – creating the mandala in a silent meditation.

The mandala represents - focus on the centre is your innate inner peace – the silence of your wisdom. The sky, earth and stars are round; the wind whirls; sun & moon rise and fall in a circle; the seasons change in a cycle (circle); man’s life is a cycle - the circle of life.

The mandala represents impermanence so at the close of our retreat we will dismantle the mandala – cannot become attached - nothing stays the same – always changing – that is life.

To close, we linked hands once more and again visualised sending peace and compassion for each other around the circle.

**Friday, 23rd September
Night Dance Party
Dr Pauline Manley, New Moves Wellness**



Pauline's work helps people who just want to be well and happy.

Her PhD was in comparative movement practices that incorporate the latest science and ancient wisdom where yoga can meet neuroscience.

Pauline opened the evening Moving Into Joy session, by guiding the ladies into silly moves, getting a little high on life, dancing life nobody's watching, because no one is, grooving side by side creating joy in our wondrous body, shaking loose any sadness and anxiety.

Saturday, 24th September
Trauma Informed Yoga
Ro Simmons - PSIYOGA.com



Ro is a Clinical Psychologist and provides PsiYoga Trauma Informed yoga at both Otford and Paddington.

Trauma Informed Yoga is aimed at calming the nervous system, improving breathing and increasing the body-mind connection. Trauma Informed Yoga can be an effective complementary treatment for trauma because it works with both the mind and the body, while also providing a safe community, drawing comfort and support.

Saturday, 24th September
Biodanza
Heleen Fourie



Biodanza seeks to promote the ability to make a holistic link to oneself and one's emotions and to express them.

A system of self-development utilizing music, movement and positive feelings to deepen self-awareness.

Heleen introduced her session as, "Courage and Curiosity", to represent the women participating.

She invited the women to move their bodies in Biodanza – moving in response to the music. Some instruction/ guidance was given with the stressed proviso from Heleen "that any movement is acceptable, there are no strict rules and that it is absolutely fine to stand still and feel the vibration of the music move through your body."

We moved to a variety of music styles with varied tempo, loudness, rhythm; sometimes dancing alone; at other times dancing with a partner.

At the conclusion of the Biodanza movement we were guided to take some deep breaths and let the air out with a sigh – to help 'release'.

Then we were asked to write in our journal – words, thoughts, phrases that expressed our experience. Next, we underlined the words that resonated the most with us. Next, we wrote these underlined words on a separate page – options suggested were to simply list the words or to incorporate them in a poem. Heleen asked if anyone would like to share - a few women chose to share their list or poem with the group.



Saturday, 24th September
Transpersonal Art Therapy
Heleen Fourie





After a tea break, we then headed outside to collect an object or objects from nature that resonated with us. On return we divided into two groups to create nature mandalas from the abundance of leaves, flowers, twigs etc. one group chose to work in silence, each person taking turns to add to the mandala. Each woman in the other group shared what the objects she collected meant to her, before placing them in the mandala.

Saturday, 24th September
“The Power of Words” talk
Karen Levin - The Equanimity Project



“The Power of Words”

Karen began by sharing that our words and thoughts are powerful. They are what guides our everyday behavior, whether or not we are aware. Therefore, we need to express in a clear and positive way, what it is we wish to achieve/work towards.

She encouraged the women to put themselves first; to speak the language of what they DO want; to let go of being angry with themselves and others; to stop carrying the hurt because it becomes a burden that impacts YOU.

“What you put out there, is what you get back”.

Karen then asked the women to write down “What is something that you would like to take away from the retreat – what is a promise you would like to make yourself.

A few women chose to share.

Karen explained the power that lay within and behind these words they had written as a promise.

Karen concluded by urging them to discover “Who I am” and “What I want” and to “Prove to yourself who you are and who you aren’t”.

Saturday, 24th September
Group Meditation, Song & Sound Healing Meditation
Louise Charman-James, Soul Signature



Group Meditation, Song and Sound Healing meditation

Louise guided the participants through a variety of simple techniques to help them find a way to access the meditative state that felt easy and accessible to them. These included conscious breath practices, visualisation, mindful movement, sound and mantra.

The group particularly enjoyed working with the Sa Ta Na Ma mantra, which incorporates chanting the mantra while gently touching the fingers together in a repetitive movement. This practice from the Kundalini Yoga tradition is very potent to clear the mind and restore calm to the nervous system.

In the evening, Louise encouraged the participants to enjoy using their voices with a series of guided toning practices and simple songs, assisted by Ro Simmons. The women thoroughly enjoyed singing together and playing percussion (drums and shakers) and by the end of the session they had built the confidence to improvise a 'soundscape' together.

The session concluded with a soothing sound healing which allowed the group to deeply relax and integrate the experiences and learnings from the day.

Sunday, 25th September
Walk to Bald Hill
Pam and Wendy



Pam led the guests and volunteers
to the Bald Hill Lookout.

The weather was crisp and sunny,
with Bald Hill presenting a
stunning vista.

Sunday 25th September
Dru Yoga
Moira Gordon



Moira led us in Dru Yoga which is a gentle yoga practice that is about finding your “still point”.

The breath and movements activate and clear the body.

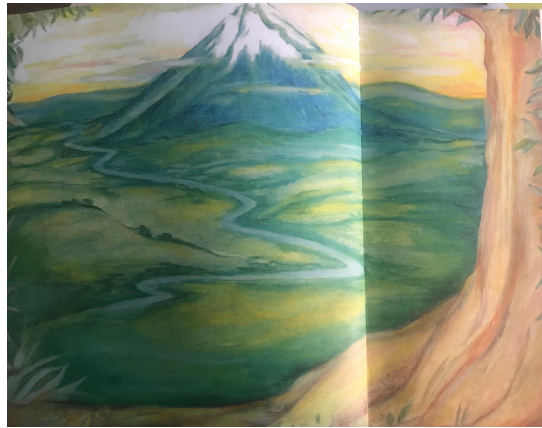
The movements are in sequences called “energy block release sequences”.

In this session the focus was on expanding the heart.



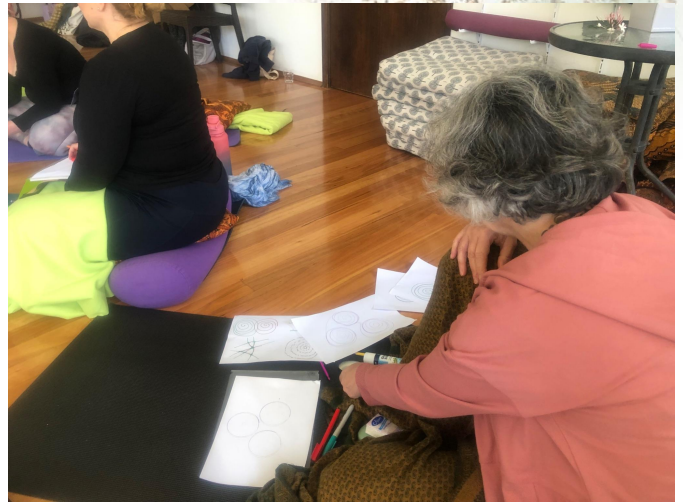
At this time of the Spring Equinox the universe is helping us achieve balance, and Dru Yoga will help with this too. Moira led an Earth Sequence, utilizing the Dru Yoga book, “Deerlightful” by Suzanna Thell, to settle and ground us.

The sequence started with Mount Tadasana, a strong solid mountain, standing tall like a mountain, feet connected to earth, head reaching to the sky, feet rocking back and forth, shifting weight anti-clockwise.



Another pose was resting the hands on the lower back, pulling elbows behind, looking at sky, hips back, followed by bending forward and side stretch.

Sunday, 25th September
Yoga Art
Moira Gordon



Moira's art therapy session was based on the Celtic Triple Spiral – which represents past, present and future, using a neuro-graphic line.

We were guided in how to draw each spiral to represent our past, present and future, and then, how to connect them. Guidance was then given in creating a web of interconnected lines that would, in essence, represent our inner self. We each created our unique, individual, beautiful, winding journey.

Moira asked us to consider “what do I need to release from the past, so that I can move into the future?”

Moira concluded her session with a guided meditation, focused on renewal and settling of energy.

Sunday, 25th September
Yoga, the Language of Love
Dr Reetu Verma – Healing, Health & Happiness



Yoga, the Language of Love

Reetu introduced Yoga, as being more than just a physical practice. She explained that Yoga actually has “eight limbs”. She explained how each limb is related to ‘self-love’.

Her message was for the women to, “lie low before you can rise higher”. She explained how important it is “yolk yourself and draw yourself up to connect to the higher self”. By taking care of your own needs; being aware of your thoughts; changing your thoughts to focus on the positive and the actions you wish to take.

Because our outside world is a direct reflection of our inside world, we need to ensure our thought patterns represent what we DO want. Reetu explained that if you think negative, you’ll feel negative and then you’ll act negative. That our thought patterns affect our emotions, and it is our emotions that drive us. Being aware of our thoughts and changing them, can help to change our actions.

She reminded us that “what other people say to you is all about what THEY are feeling”. It is NOT the truth about you.

Reetu encouraged the women to find a practice that supported self-care and self-love.

Reetu concluded her session by leading us in a meditation, guiding us to connect to our heart and to love for self.

Sunday 25th September
Closing Circle
Nancie Clisby



Nancie began with a meditation, guiding the women to connect to the three diamonds, their energy centers, and to what resonated with them as a “truth” about themselves; i.e. the essence of what they had gained from their retreat experience. The women then wrote this “truth” in their journals, before each person in turn shared this aloud.

We then joined hands in one circle; participants, facilitators and helpers, sending love, energy and gratitude around the circle. Nancie invited us to make eye contact with each other through “eyes of love and compassion” and finish by giving silent thanks in our hearts for the retreat experience.



