



CULTIVATE CHANGE GROUP GUIDE

A group discussion & connection guide for change-makers



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A NOTE FROM CARA & AMBER

Hello! We're so excited you're banding together to boost your Cultivate Change experience and learning. Cheers to carving out time to invest in your health and well-being. And cheers to helping your friends do the same. We're stronger together! And these experiences are even richer and deeper when shared. We hope you enjoy this amazing opportunity to create a rich well of support for your desired changes.

As a group, you're free to design an experience that will best meet the unique needs of the people involved. That said, there are a few things you'll need to put in place to create a supportive and thriving learning group. This Change-Makers Group Guide is designed to get you started on the right foot. It'll help you think through the logistics and details that allow learning groups to thrive and get to the heart of the matter more quickly in your discussions—so you maximize the benefits of your time together.

GROUP SIZE

This group guide format is designed for small groups of 2-5. If your group is bigger than this, make sure your meeting time accommodates adequate sharing for everyone. Or consider breaking off into two groups, with opportunities to gather all together occasionally.

GETTING STARTED

We encourage your group to meet once before you formally begin the Cultivate Change Course to create the structure, group agreements, and intentions you'll need to succeed.

Read through our recommendations for group guidelines and agreements, as well as the sample agenda. Decide together how you want to customize this information for the needs and preferences of your group. Bring your calendars to the meeting and schedule the following 8 group meetings to coincide with the 8 modules of Cultivate Change.

We encourage you to embrace the tenants of non-judgement, growth, progress (not perfection!), empathy, and authenticity. Encourage each other to stay the course and engage in each week's course materials. Also, be kind and understanding when challenges inevitably get in the way. If one of one (or more) of you don't 100% complete a week's module—meet anyways! The benefits come from keeping the learning and conversation going.

Above all, keep showing up, keep engaging, and give each other plenty of hugs and high fives along the way.

With love and encouragement,

Cara + Amber



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FIRST MEETING AGENDA

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR SHARED PURPOSE

As a learning group identify a shared purpose for gathering and meeting together. This is a way of setting a very clear and thoughtful intention for your group. Below is a sample group purpose statement you can use. Or feel free to make it your own.

SAMPLE GROUP PURPOSE STATEMENT: *The purpose of our group is to create an intentional space to nurture our learning as well as offer encouragement for each other as we engage in the Cultivate Change Course. We value learning from each other's and our own life experiences, exploring our inner and outer lives, and deepening our learning through connected conversation.*

STEP 2: CREATE YOUR GROUP AGREEMENTS

We've learned from years of facilitating groups, that putting group agreements in place right from the start makes all the difference in the success of the group.

We recommend that together you create a list of group agreements to guide the boundaries and expectations of your shared time. These agreements should support a group learning environment of safety, respect, collaboration, compassion and confidentiality.

On the next page there's a sample group agreements list for you to look at as group, use as is, or add to and adjust.

CONSIDER AS YOU LOOK OVER THE GROUP AGREEMENTS LIST..

- What agreements do you need in place to ensure each of you thrive, connect, feel safe, and share whole-heartedly as a member of this group?
- What agreements could you put into place to make this the most nourishing experience possible?



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SAMPLE GROUP AGREEMENTS

In our change-maker's circle....

- We empower each member to be a co-creator of the process. We are all students and we are all leaders.
- We strive to gather together in the spirit of non-judgement, growth, progress (not perfection), compassion, authenticity, and mutual support.
- We keep what is said in our learning group 100% confidential. If we would like to share another's story or something that happened in the group we agree to ask for permission. And we agree to say "no" when asked if we'd rather not have our story shared.
- We listen with respect (without fixing, problem solving or advice giving) and are open to being transformed. We listen wholeheartedly and serve as a compassionate witness for our friends in our learning group.
- We offer advice only when directly solicited.
- We encourage full participation, but we can speak only if we wish, and may pass at any time. No one is required to say or do anything they are not comfortable with.
- We agree to speak only for ourselves. And will speak in a way that encourages conversation. We strive to be concise and to the point in order to honor equitable sharing time.
- We will show up with curiosity and an open mind to the views of others. We cherish differences and create loving space for them.

STEP 3: DISCUSS ROLES & HOSTING

You'll need to choose a host for each meeting to handle any logistics and to be the timekeeper. It's important to rotate this responsibility so everyone gets to the opportunity to both take on this hosting role and also the role of being solely a participant.

We recommend the host rotates with each meeting.



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THE HOST'S RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Confirming a location for the meeting.
- Guiding the group through the meeting agenda.
- Assuring the formal portion of the meeting opens and closes on time.
- Helping allot space for everyone to have an equitable opportunity to share their experiences and be supported by the group. Some groups find that having a gentle sounding timer, managed by the host, can be helpful for keeping everyone aware of when their time to share has passed.
- Helping the group to refer back to the discussion questions for each module, so that in addition to this being a rewarding time to connect, your group also engages in intentional conversation around the curriculum outlined in the Cultivate Change course.

STEP 4: DECIDE ON SCHEDULES & LOGISTICS

1) DATES, TIMES & HOSTS: Agree upon dates and times to meet, as well as who will host each meeting. We encourage your group to schedule out all 8 meeting times (over the course of 2-3 months). Even if every group member cannot be present for every meeting, commit to keeping the group meeting times consistent and predictable.

2) LOCATIONS: If your group can meet in person, we strongly recommend it. If not, platforms like google hangouts or skype allow for engaging group meetings. When determining where you'll meet be sure to find a quiet and private place to gather—in one of your homes, in a quiet place outside, or in another space you have access to.

2) LENGTH OF MEETINGS: You will also need to agree on the length of time for the formal group meeting. Our sample agenda designates 1.5 hrs for this. If you can meet longer, we highly recommend it. If your time together is more limited, you can adjust the discussion times to meet your needs.

3) RESOURCES: We highly recommend keeping a printed copy of this guide available for the group to refer to throughout the meeting. Each group member should bring their Cultivate Change module workbook with them. Some groups also bring snacks or drinks. Some groups bring fun and meaningful items to create a little altar in the middle of their circle. Some groups have dinner or do another activity together before or after they meet (like go for a walk or share tea).

Above all, make it your own and have fun with it!



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REGULAR GROUP MEETING AGENDA

ARRIVING & SETTLING (5 MIN)

- The goal of this time is to create an intentional space for learning and connection. Get comfortable and settled. Turn off alerts and silence your phones. Join the group with an open mind and heart.
- The host for this meeting can take a leadership role by signaling the start of the meeting and welcoming everyone to the group.
- (Optional) The host may also guide the group through a short mindfulness practice to support everyone in getting settled and into the right headspace before the meeting begins. Feel free to use our Group Guided Mindfulness Check-In Script or create your own ritual for getting present and settling in.

CHECK-INS (15 MIN)

- This is a time to connect with how you and those in your group are showing up to the meeting today.
 - Each person can check-in by either briefly describing how they are doing that day, sharing a high or low from the week prior, or by describing their hopes for what they'd like to gain from the group gathering that day.
 - Divide the time allotted for checking-in evenly between each group member. (For a group of 3, 5 minutes each. For a group of 5, 3 minutes each. Etc.)
 - The host sets the timer before each person checks in. As soon as the timer goes off, the person speaking should pause and allow their words to trickle off, perhaps unfinished and incomplete. This is OK! The group should remain silent. Allow the story to rest and be right where it is and give a few seconds of shared quiet to honor what the person has said. Then, the timekeeper should reset the timer and encourage the next person to begin their check-in. Repeat this ritual for each group member.
 - It's important to honor the timeline to give everyone an opportunity to check-in, and to prioritize the module discussion questions. And remember, you can always take time to hear more or connect again with someone outside of the group meeting.
 - No feedback is necessary between each person's check-in. Simply allow the speaker to speak. And listeners, listen generously.
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MODULE DISCUSSION (60 MIN)

- This is the heart of your Cultivate Change Group meeting! Use the suggested Cultivate Change Module Discussion Questions to deepen the group's understanding and experience of the curriculum introduced in each module.
- Divide the time allotted for this check-in evenly between each group member. (For a group of 3, 20 minutes total per person. For a group of 5, 12 minutes total per person. Etc.) You may go around the group for one question at a time. Or have each group member share something about all 4 questions.
- If you have more time to meet together, we suggest using any additional time to allow group members to engage in the discussion questions more fully.
- The host for that meeting should set a timer before each person speaks and gently guide the group to make a shift in conversation, allowing the next person to get their time to share.
- Each speaker can decide to use their time to 1) answer the module discussion questions and/or 2) solicit feedback or support from the group members. Each speaker should let the group know what they need from their time that day.

CLOSING & PARTING (10 MIN)

- Take a few minutes at the end of your meeting to individually write a few notes, journal, or reflect further on questions or revelations that emerged from this shared group time.
- Then each group member (including the host) can share one word or a short phrase to symbolize or represent their key learning/take-away from the group that week.
- The timekeeper can then share closing words, a poem, a quote, or simply thank the group for choosing to invest their time and energy in learning together.
- Confirm the date of the next group gathering.
- Give each other a warm goodbye until next time!



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MODULE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

MODULE 1: GET HOPEFUL

- 1) What is your focus area for change for the next 8 weeks?
- 2) What was your key takeaway from the Module 1 video teaching? What resonated with you, what surprised you, and did you learn something new?
- 3) What was your experience of the “Get Hopeful” audio activity?
- 4) What do you most hope to create, to experience, or to feel in your focus area? What hopeful vision(s) did you write for the health and wellbeing of your focus area?

MODULE 2: CALIBRATE YOUR INNER COMPASS

- 1) What are your core values in this season of your life?
- 2) What was your key takeaway from the Module 2 video teaching? What resonated with you, what surprised you, and did you learn something new?
- 3) What was your experience of the “What Matters Most” audio activity?
- 4) How aligned is your current behavior in your focus area for change with your core values? What initial thoughts do you have about the concept of aligning your behavior with your values, especially in areas of life that might be challenging for you?

MODULE 3: DRAW YOUR MAP

- 1) Share your roadmap with the group. What immediate, short, medium and/or long-term goals have set for yourself?
- 2) What was your key takeaway from the Module 3 video teaching? What resonated with you, what surprised you, and did you learn something new?
- 3) What was your experience of the “Guided SMART Goal Setting” audio activity?
- 4) What was the process of really slowing down and getting concrete with your goals like for you? What was rewarding, what was challenging?



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MODULE 4: BUST THROUGH BARRIERS

- 1) What “passengers on the bus” are you practicing “unhooking from” and “making room for” as you try to move toward your values and goals in your focus area for change?
- 2) What was your key takeaway from the Module 4 video teaching? What resonated with you, what surprised you, and did you learn something new?
- 3) What was your experience of the “Make Room & Soothe” audio activity?
- 4) What are your initial thoughts about relating to your unworkable thoughts or uncomfortable feelings in this way? What will you need to practice this week as you keep setting and meeting your goals?

MODULE 5: DISCOVER THE CHANGE-MAKING SECRET

- 1) What’s been your experience of incorporating mindfulness into your life prior to this course?
- 2) What was your key takeaway from the Module 5 video teaching? What resonated with you, what surprised you, and did you learn something new?
- 3) What was your experience of the 3 mindfulness audio activities included in this module? Did you have a favorite practice?
- 4) How do you think strengthening your mind in this way could directly benefit your goals for your focus area this week?

MODULE 6: BECOME YOUR MOST POWERFUL ALLY

- 1) How compassionate were you toward yourself before taking this course? How familiar or foreign is this concept for you?
 - 2) What was your key takeaway from the Module 6 video teaching? What resonated with you, what surprised you, and did you learn something new?
 - 3) What was your experience of the “Self-Compassion SOS” audio activity?
 - 4) Did you practice self-compassion this week? If so, what happened? What opened up? And did this practice shift your experience of working toward your goals?
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MODULE 7: STAY THE COURSE

- 1) What was one “toward” and one “away” move you made in your focus area for change this week?
- 2) What was your key takeaway from the Module 7 video teaching? What resonated with you, what surprised you, and did you learn something new?
- 3) What was your experience of the “Be BOLD Tool” audio activity?
- 4) Which part of the BOLD tool do you think could be your biggest helper in your choice point moments? How can you incorporate the BOLD tool into your week so you’re more fully supported in choice point moments to meet your goals?

MODULE 8: YOUR SUPPORT CREW

- 1) Who is in your support crew? How can you take a more active role in asking your support crew for help?
- 2) What was your key takeaway from the Module 8 video teaching? What resonated with you, what surprised you, and did you learn something new?
- 3) What was your experience of the “Supported & Empowered” audio activity?
- 4) How has this group served as a part of your support network? What have you appreciated about your shared learning? What do you want to take with you as a reminder for connection and support as a result of your experiences together?



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MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY SCRIPT: ARRIVING & SETTLING

Welcome everyone! Let's take a few minutes together to settle in. To prepare for our time together. To arrive fully into the present moment. And to connect with ourselves. [pause]

Find a comfortable seat and sit upright. Allow your eyes to close, or place your gaze softly on the floor in front of you. [pause]

Turn your attention inside. Notice the rising and falling of your breath. [pause] Begin to feel the tangible, physical sensations that accompany your breathing. {[pause] Invite your breathing to grow very big inside, and start to lengthen your exhales and your inhales. [pause]

Keep a steady breath. Note the thoughts, sensations, and feelings that bubble up when you start to pay attention to yourself and your breathing in this way. [pause] Just notice, without judgement. [pause]

Note the demands and other priorities that are important to you outside of this time together. Acknowledge them. And then let them fade into the background for now. Choose to claim this time for yourself. [pause] And to be truly present for our group. [pause]

Let's take 3 deep breaths together. Take a steady, deep breath in through your nose, filling your chest. [pause] And then open your mouth to exhale, letting the breath release slowly from your lungs. [pause]

Again, take a generous breath in through your nose, and pause at the top of your inhale. [pause] Exhale, and soften the features of your face. [pause]

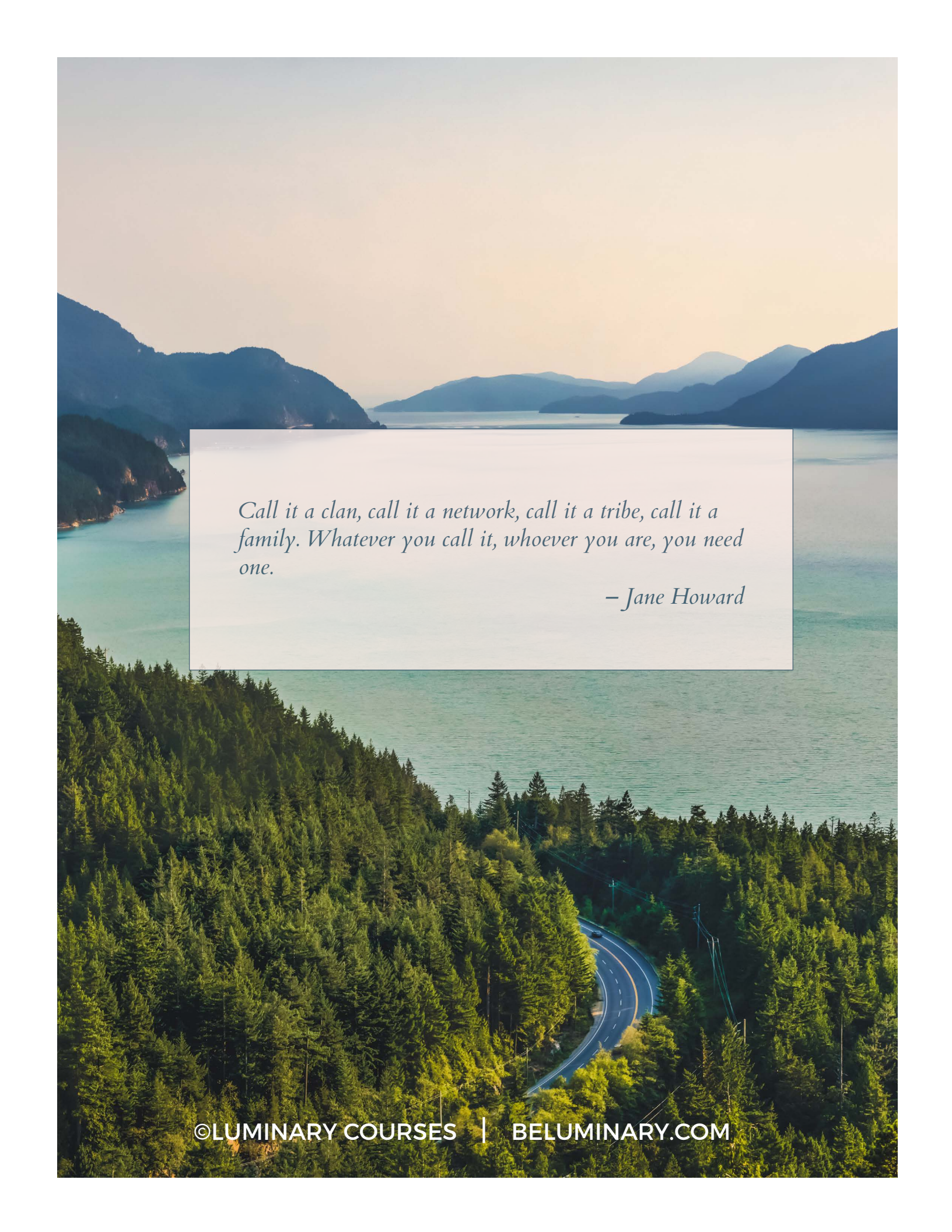
One more time together. Inhale slowly and enjoy the sensation of the breath filling your body. [pause] Release your breath, and relax your shoulders away from your ears. [pause]

Breathe naturally now. [pause] Sit softly for a moment, becoming aware of your own presence, and the presence of our group together. [pause]

Gently wiggle your fingers and toes. Blink your eyes open or lift your gaze. Reach your arms up over head and give yourself a nice stretch. [pause]

Now, we are ready to begin.

*Cheers to your group!
xoxo. Cara & Amber*



Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.

– Jane Howard