

“Have a Word with Yourself”

Course Evaluation

2025



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Introduction

When I started shaping the Have a Word with Yourself workbook, I didn't know precisely what it would become; only that it needed to exist. But before I could release it into the universe, I wanted to test it out with a few women first.

This wasn't a polished programme but a shared experiment in truth-telling, getting honest with us, learning to prioritise, and practising self-reflection.

The following reflections come from women brave enough to show up for themselves, start practising, and make themselves a priority. They didn't just attend, they leaned in, listened, wrote, and felt.

Words can't do justice to what it meant to witness their journeys. It was an absolute pleasure and a profound honour to be trusted by each of them throughout this process.

Their courage, honesty, and willingness to explore made this pilot more than a workshop. It became a shared space of transformation, so ladies

Thank you

Thank you for showing up.

Thank you for having a word with yourself.

Thank you for letting me walk beside you.



Pre workshop

Before the workshops began, I sent out some pre-course information to help set the tone. I outlined the themes we'd explore each week and shared a few YouTube videos that helped me in my journey – powerful reminders, mantras, and provocations that had stuck with me when I needed them most.

Week 1 – Everything Starts with a Thought

Week 2 – We Are More Than the Labels

Week 3 – The Power Leaks We Don't See

Week 4 – Making Yourself a Priority

Following each workshop

After each session, I would email the group a summary of the session, not just to recap, but to reflect, reinforce, and remind. I wanted the learning to linger. I wanted the space to stretch beyond the team's call.

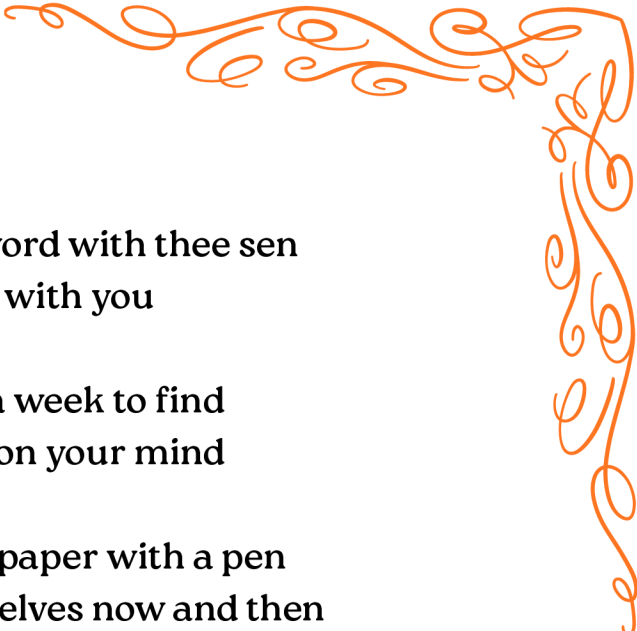
Evaluation themes

As part of the evaluation, I wanted first to understand what attracted them to the workshop and measure the other following areas of personal growth by the end of the sessions

- Self-awareness
- Emotional growth
- Creative process
- Transformation
- Legacy and Impact

Results

This wasn't the end, this was only the beginning, as soon as the sessions had finished, the ladies made a pact to stay in touch and set up their own support group on FB Messenger, turn over the page to read an amazing poem that I think captures the sentiments of all the women involved.



Come along and av a word with thee sen
See how it sits with you

A couple of hours a week to find
And to see what's on your mind

We'll write it down on paper with a pen
Then check in with ourselves now and then

Meet other women who are just like me
And share some camaraderie.

These women, so honest, giving their a **1**
Juggling life issues to prevent a fall

We laughed, we cried, we shared a common theme,
Trying our best, trying not to scream.

Yet here I am writing, ignoring Candy Crush,
My thoughts are in more order,
not quite so much mush

The sessions are now over, but that bond is still there.

We're learning how to love ourselves
with a tribe of women who really care

So don't be sad, keep writing and express yourself with words

Continue connecting with like-minded people
for your voice to be heard.

RB

What Drew You to the Workshop

What made you say yes to this space?

“Mainly curiosity. I've heard people go on about journaling, etc, but it's never really helped me. I've seen how much it has helped you and wondered if it might be worth giving it a go. I love the action of writing with a nice pen on nice paper, and I often express my feelings through poetry. I guess a fear of missing out on something that could help me swayed my decision.”

“I wasn't feeling myself. Something was off. After meeting Tracey, I felt this might be the right space to start untangling the mess in my head and heart. I needed somewhere safe, somewhere real.”

“The workshop came at the perfect time for me; I joined because I needed something to help me improve my wellbeing, get on top of my anxiety and stop feeling stuck.”

“It was both curiosity and gut feeling that I needed some guidance and direction with myself—and I was thinking about journaling.”

How Did the Sessions Feel?

What did it feel like to show up?

“I realised I would enjoy this about 1/2 hour into the first session. We all seemed a tad hesitant to speak, but after we had introduced ourselves, it felt as if we all had a lot in common... The sessions were emotional, but I felt safe.”

“Weeks 1 and 2 hit me hard—in the best way—raw, honest, emotional. We were strangers, yet each of us had a story, a reason to be there. Tears came easily, and so did trust. I shared things that had weighed me down for years. It felt like a big hug from people I’d only just met.”

“I found the workshops a welcoming, safe space. The group size was perfect... I looked forward to the session each week and felt uplifted afterwards.”

“It was nice to be around other women from different ages, backgrounds, and job roles and to learn that we all struggle with prioritising ourselves.”

“The very first session was the best. A lot of rawness occurred within that session, with some beauty. We all agreed it felt a safe place to speak vulnerably, to cry and to laugh at ourselves.”

“Before the sessions, I was a little anxious, but that soon disappeared after I met everyone for the first time—and after each session, I felt a little better about myself.”

“Prioritising questions towards ourselves such as ‘How do I want to show up for myself today?’ is something I had never asked.”

“This session was also where I realised that checking my phone first thing in the morning—something so frighteningly natural—can dictate how my whole day will go. I no longer do this. Instead, I allow myself to wake up, sit with my thoughts for the day, and enjoy a nice coffee.”

“Before each session, I would think, ‘I should be doing housework.’ During the session, I would realise that it was time well spent on myself and not to feel guilty.

Group Dynamic

What did it feel like to be part of this group?

“The group size was perfect—intimate enough that no one got lost, and everyone had space to speak. I was nervous before the first session, inwardly shaking, but afterwards, I felt content.”

“I was uncertain about journaling at first, but each week, I built my confidence. I started looking forward to seeing the group, sharing, and growing.”

“I felt heard by the group—it made me feel strong. I was surprised to hear from each member that we, as women, had all been through very similar lived experiences. By listening to others, it made me feel less alone and like I was part of a special group of powerful women.”

“I liked that it was a nice small group—I felt included and safe.”

“Everyone was very welcoming and I felt at ease in their presence. Hopefully they felt the same about me.”

Self-Awareness

What did you learn about yourself? What shifted?

“I feel that with the work I have done on myself during my ongoing recovery path I am a better version of myself, probably the best yet.”

“Over the sessions I have recognised and confirmed to myself that the way my life spiraled into a booze-driven existence was my way of trying to escape from myself and my feelings.”

“Over the last 6 years I have established firm boundaries and I am no longer afraid to use them.”

“Doing the workshops gave me permission to show up for myself—to plan things just for me.”

“I worked through what I needed to do to make time for myself, reduced my hours at work, and have set boundaries.”

“I met my former self and gave her permission to move on. I acknowledged that I have grown, I am skilled, and that I have earned my space in the world.”

“My understanding of ‘showing up for myself’ has shifted. It’s no longer a luxury—it’s a necessity.”

“Parts of my identity were both affirmed and challenged. I met versions of myself I hadn’t seen in years, and some I didn’t know were still there.”

“I take time to do some mindfulness and try to journal when I feel like I’m holding in too much.”

“I usually busy myself with helping others instead of looking at myself—but that is changing. I’m setting boundaries for myself and having a word wi’ mi sen.”

Emotional Growth

What emotions surfaced? How did you hold them?

“There was a lot of frustration within the group, a lack of confidence in what ‘looked like’ a group of confident women. Self-doubt kept raising its head and I wanted to shout out that we were all worth more.”

“This vulnerability kept coming up but it still felt safe. I never felt judged in the sessions and didn't judge the others.”

“Tears, frustration, even a bit of anger surfaced—but I noticed the anger has mostly gone now.”

“I always felt seen and heard, never judged or asked to justify myself. Vulnerability looked like all of us, showing up honestly and trusting each other.”

“In one workshop we investigated our past and reflected on labels we had been given—this session was powerful.”

“I felt really vulnerable, physically sweating and shaky. I went back to my early life, spent time looking at the timeline of my experiences and how they delivered those labels.”

“I recognised that the experiences made me who I am today, but the labels are not mine—they do not belong to me.”

“The emotions that surfaced most often were vulnerability, grief, and joy. I didn't shy away—I shared them with the group.”

“Vulnerability looked like acceptance. No masks, no performance. Just truth.”

Creative Process

How did writing support your journey?

“Writing hasn't necessarily unlocked anything that I don't feel comfortable talking about to others—but it has become an easier way of ‘talking to myself.’”

“I love the way I feel after writing down my feelings about a situation and in particular a person that's troubled me.”

“Writing unlocked something talking couldn't. I started with my life story, then moved to daily snippets.”

“I rediscovered poetry after decades, and sharing my first poem felt incredible.”

“My journal is glowing now. Metaphors and mantras stuck with me—especially the Buddha's ‘10 things to tell yourself every day’ and the Stoics.”

“Writing helps me with my thought processes and gets rid of the noise in my head.”

“Talking with someone often feels like I'm moaning, but writing helps me find my own solutions.”

“I feel that if a situation arises that I feel I can't talk about, writing it down takes the power out of it.”

“Now every day I try to write things I'm grateful for—it keeps me grounded and puts a smile on my face.”

“It is what it is. Tomorrow is a new day.”

Transformation

What does healing look like now?

“I've been given the green light to go ahead and believe in myself so much more.”

“Reflection has shown that in the past I have shown real strength and courage than I ever realised.”

“My boundaries are strong but I am continuing to check them, seeing if they are still relevant and adding to them when necessary.”

“I believe I am less of a worrier and I try not to overthink things. I'm living much more in the moment.”

“I've started rewriting my story. The past doesn't define me. I'm my own person.”

“Healing now means grounding myself, reflecting, and knowing I'll be okay.”

“I've begun to set boundaries in my work life and create time and space for me—something I had forgotten to do.”

“I can't change my past, but I can make a brighter, happier future.”

“It's amazing—I want to wake up in the morning and embrace each day, whether good or bad.”

“To put myself first. Be kind to myself.”

Legacy & Impact

What would you say to your younger self, or to another woman just starting out?

“I would say to others and my younger self—go with your gut feelings and don't overanalyse stuff. Be kind to yourself and others, stick to your own values and don't tolerate people who use and drain you. Get rid of them. My love of myself is time well spent.”

“To my younger self: You're not responsible for everyone's happiness. Say no. Be honest. You're strong. You're enough.”

“To another woman, starting: Do this. Keep your heart and mind open. You deserve space and joy.”

“Reclaiming my story now means one thing: inner peace. I'm at ease, even without external achievements or big changes.”

“That tiny flicker of strength you felt—it carried you through. It grew. Well done, darling.”

“To another woman just starting: Dig deep. You're safe to explore. You're not alone.”

“Reclaiming my story means this: Generational trauma can end with me. But it's also okay to let it flow in safe directions while protecting my young. I deserve to heal. I'm proud of breaking the cycle—even when I'm exhausted.”

Whats next?...

I am not sure when i will be in a position to host more of these sessions, but if you think this is something that you could be interested in joining, please register your interest by emailing me at Traceyfordy@me.com



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