



CLEARING — THE — GROUND

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WHERE TO BEGIN

When a relationship (romantic or otherwise) is truly loving, it feels alive. At Achieving Joy, we envision relationships as fields of possibility to grow everything that honors each person involved. For this reason, they require intentional care and attention- just like any living thing.

As those of us who are plant parents know, keeping our babies well is no easy task! In order for them to not just survive, but thrive, we must nourish them properly. Moreover, when it comes to gardening or farming, before we can even begin putting seeds in the soil, specific steps must be followed in order to yield the best crops; the same is true for relationships.

In order to harvest what you desire in partnerships, you must first determine what to plant in your field. By showing up today, you've decided to grow assurity. This program will provide the seeds for you to nurture.

Moving forward, after deciding what you'd like to plant, there is one more essential step before you begin: preparing the ground for cultivation. This is done by ridding it of things that aren't conducive to the health and wealth of your plants. In relationships, this process is what Achieving Joy calls the Clearing.



Assurity is a Caribbean term that simply means "a firm promise."

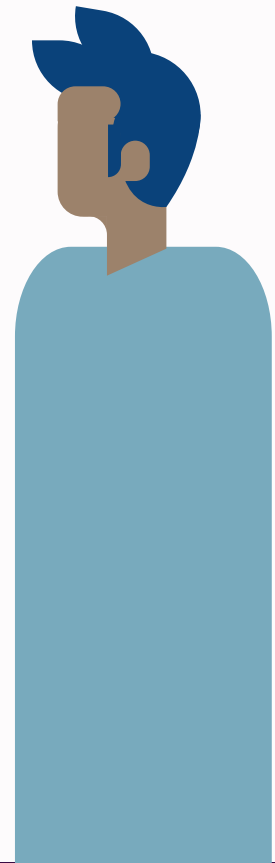


THE CLEARING

Clearing (as in clearing the ground) is potentially the most important work you'll be doing on this journey.

It is all about understanding your own individual conceptualizations of love and relationships. Additionally, through this work, we will learn how to acknowledge and release any beliefs that no longer serve us. Overall, the Clearing involves generational and relational healing while figuring out the root of certain mindsets we hold.

Following are some activities and questions to be considered separately. We advise that you complete one a day because each will require intentional time and attention.



AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

It is very brave of you to embark on this 7-day journey.

Furthermore, it is courageous of you to seek support or stop this work if it becomes too much. Utilizing resources like The National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network, Therapy for Black Girls, Therapy for Black Men, Therapy for Latinx, Psychology Today, and several other sites will help you identify a practitioner who meets your emotional and financial needs (along with any other concerns you may have). Additionally, know that I am available to you as well. Feel free to email me if you have questions/concerns about anything or head over to achievingjoy.com to view our services. We're here for and with you!

Above all, please keep in mind that what comes next is not a replacement for therapy and, for some, thinking about the past can be triggering. Along with the resources mentioned above, The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7 if you ever find yourself in crisis: 1-800-273-8255





DAY 1

FLOWERS OR WEEDS?

Quite often, we unknowingly form habits/behaviors that are based on patterns we're repeating. When dating, these patterns can look like always asking a specific set of questions during courtship or "tests" we secretly administer to evaluate our potential partner's actions. Once in a relationship, we began to engage with these patterns on a deeper level. I like to call this behavior our Autopilot Default Nature. For example, think about your initial response/behavior when you're desiring closeness, afraid, or upset. What's the first thing you do after having sex or when you think someone's angry with you? How do you respond when your partner tells you no? Take some time to think about your autopilot behaviors, the things you do now without thinking deeply about them.

Step 1: List them below

Step 2: Go back through the list and ask yourself what experience or person taught you to do this, in this way

Step 3: Consider whether this behavior has historically supported you feeling closer to or more isolated from your partner



DAY 2

RELATIONAL FAMILY PROFILE AND SOCIAL LEARNING WEB

Our guardian(s) and environment significantly impact how we come to understand relationships- sometimes without us even realizing! Think about the patterns you listed in the previous exercise. Do you think they were consciously created? The below activities will help you begin to identify where they came from and why they were established. **We highly recommend completing both, but understand if that isn't possible for any reason (i.e. lack of familial information or finding the exercise overwhelming).**

Part 1: Complete the Family Profile for at least two generations back by answering the following question. Incorporate as much information as possible regarding what you know about your family members' relationships.

What was your parents and/or other caregivers' relationship with themselves, spouse(s)/romantic partner(s), you, your siblings, and others in general?

Note: Parents can be biological, adoptive, or otherwise. Caregivers can be aunts, uncles, grandparents, godparents, or other persons who played a major role in your upbringing. Feel free to use the blank grid on the next page if need be.

Relational Family Profile

	Parent 1: Dad	Parent 2: Mom	Caregiver(s):
Self:	Took care of basic needs, but ignored self, low expression of emotions	Was very aware of personal needs, and giving self their heart desire	
Spouses/romantic partners:	Attentive to his wife and children. Ensured basic and safety needs were covered	Appeared disconnected, selectively cold, accepting, committed, and very loyal.	
You:	Loving, nurturing, strict, willing to gift time and resources.	Cared about appearance, nurturing, invested in success, and self exploration	
Your siblings:	Some what disconnected from the brothers, but ensured their wellbeing.	Showed up constantly for everyone. Loving all around.	
Others:	Took great care of his siblings, willing to give time and resources for their wellness	Loyal to family, irregularly met with friends, If she could not cover the bill, would not participate.	

RELATIONSHIPS WITH

Relational Family Profile

RELATIONSHIPS WITH	Parent 1:	Parent 2:	Caregiver(s):
Self:			
Spouses/romantic partners:			
You:			
Your siblings:			
Others:			

Relational Family Profile

RELATIONSHIPS WITH			
Self:			
Spouses/romantic partners:			
You:			
Your siblings:			
Others:			

Afterwards: Looking at the finished profile, what did the patterns that are present in your family teach you about relationships? Place this information in your Social Learning Web where it says "Familial Relationships." Please note that the information doesn't need to connect in any obvious way. The purpose of the web is simply to show you the different influences that helped shape your understanding of relationships.

SOCIAL LEARNING WEB

Part 2: Please fill in the remaining circles with any non-familial relationships you observed. Include anyone or anything (television shows, teachers, family friends, etc.) that impacted your understanding of relationships during your childhood. State what you learned from them and how following (or not following) their examples impacted your relationships.

NON-FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP

Uncle Phil & Aunt Viv
Loving/Supportive
of personal dreams
(i.e. dance)
Committed (to each
other & children)

For example, you may list Uncle Phil and Aunt Viv from The Fresh Prince of Bel Air because those were your parental role models.

SOCIAL LEARNING WEB

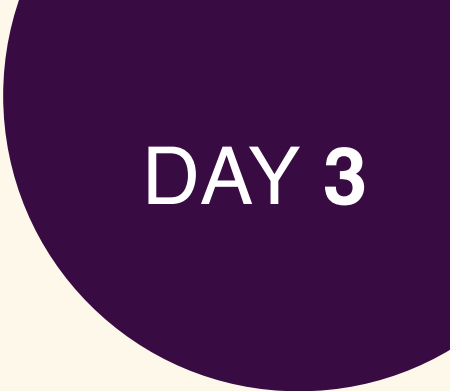
FAMILIAL
RELATIONSHIP

FAMILIAL
RELATIONSHIP

FAMILIAL
RELATIONSHIP

NON-FAMILIAL
RELATIONSHIP

NON-FAMILIAL
RELATIONSHIP



DAY 3

DEFINE ME

As we saw yesterday, our personal journeys influence how we understand the world around us. Even more, they affect the meaning we assign to words. In any type of relationship, miscommunication can cause unnecessary and intense conflict. Especially when it seems like all involved are saying the same thing, but meaning different things. This activity will help you see your understanding of the below topics/words and how that understanding may (or may not) differ from others.

Without overthinking, write the first things that come to mind when you read the following topics/words

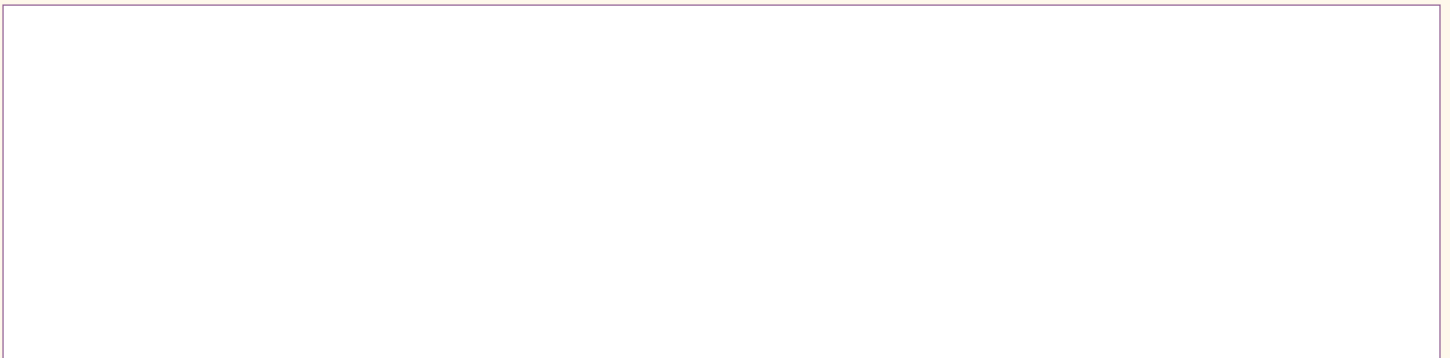
Sex vs. Intimacy

Conditional Love vs. Unconditional Love

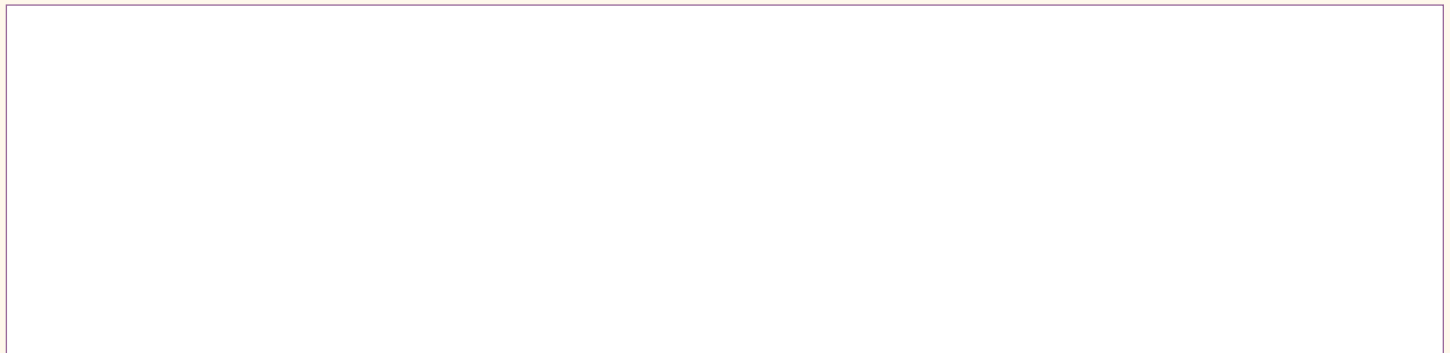
Change vs. Consistency

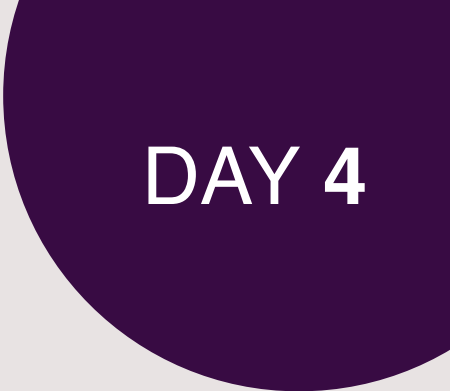


Peace (in a relationship)



Prosperity (In a relationship)





DAY 4

GENDER ROLES

At Achieving Joy, we believe- though gender is a social construct- it plays a major role in how we know as well as understand ourselves. Additionally, it can impact how we view our partner and the expectations we create for them. Take a moment and explore below the role gender plays in your interactions with others.

How do you conceptualize your role in relationships based on your gender (or lack thereof)?

How do you conceptualize your partners' roles in relationships based on their gender (or lack thereof)?

Where did these conceptualizations come from and how do you feel they've impacted your relationships over time?





DAY 5

MY ASSURITY

Now that you've taken some time to self-evaluate, here's a moment to explore some of your desires. Becoming clear on this for yourself will ultimately help you communicate these wants and needs more effectively.

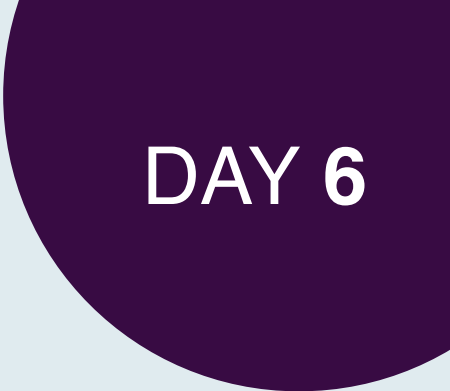


Assurity is a Caribbean term that simply means "a firm promise."

What do you need to feel assured in a relationship?

What does a successful relationship look like to you?

Where did that image come from?



DAY 6

SELF REFLECTION/ MY CLEARING

Over the past few days, you've done some **deep** diving. As we mentioned before we began, this work is extremely brave. I hope you're proud of yourself! Take a moment to look back over everything then answer the below question:

**What would I need to clear within myself in order to curate my vision of assurity?
(This can be in your current or next relationship)**



SHARE YOUR RESPONSE

If it feels good to do so, share your responses with a loved one.

For those on a self-journey, this can be a friend or family member.

For those in a relationship, we recommend that all involved complete the activities then make time to discuss your responses together.

During this discussion, be sure to note anything new you learn about yourself and one another.

**INTERESTED IN CHATTING WITH ME
ABOUT THESE ACTIVITIES?
JOIN US LIVE TOMORROW FOR DAY 7:**

WHAT'S NEXT?