



# PLANNING, CONSULTING AND INTERVENTIONS

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*A pocket practice handbook from HSI 2026*

# FIRST, SOME FRAMING...

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This is a handbook. This handbook is a harvest: it is a tangible trace of the final conversation we had in AHSC 672 - consulting, planning and interventions, on May 3rd, 2025.

In this day long conversation, you all shared stories from projects done during the year-long course: stories about building relationships with clients, finding out what it took to be “helpful”, experiencing collusion, the struggles of navigating resistance and the joy of seeing humans humaning together.

As a framework to make sense of these experiences, we used Jamie Conklin’s four balancing acts: four core tensions in the practice of process consulting in human systems. As process consultants, we engage in all of these four balancing acts at the same time.

# FIRST, SOME FRAMING...

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They are:

- cultivating psychological safety and psychological success,
- offering diagnostic and inviting dialogue,
- participating and observing,
- planning and opening to emergence.

What follows is the compilation of all the pieces of advice you gave yourselves to maintain a good balance as you practice this tricky art of Intervening in Human Systems.

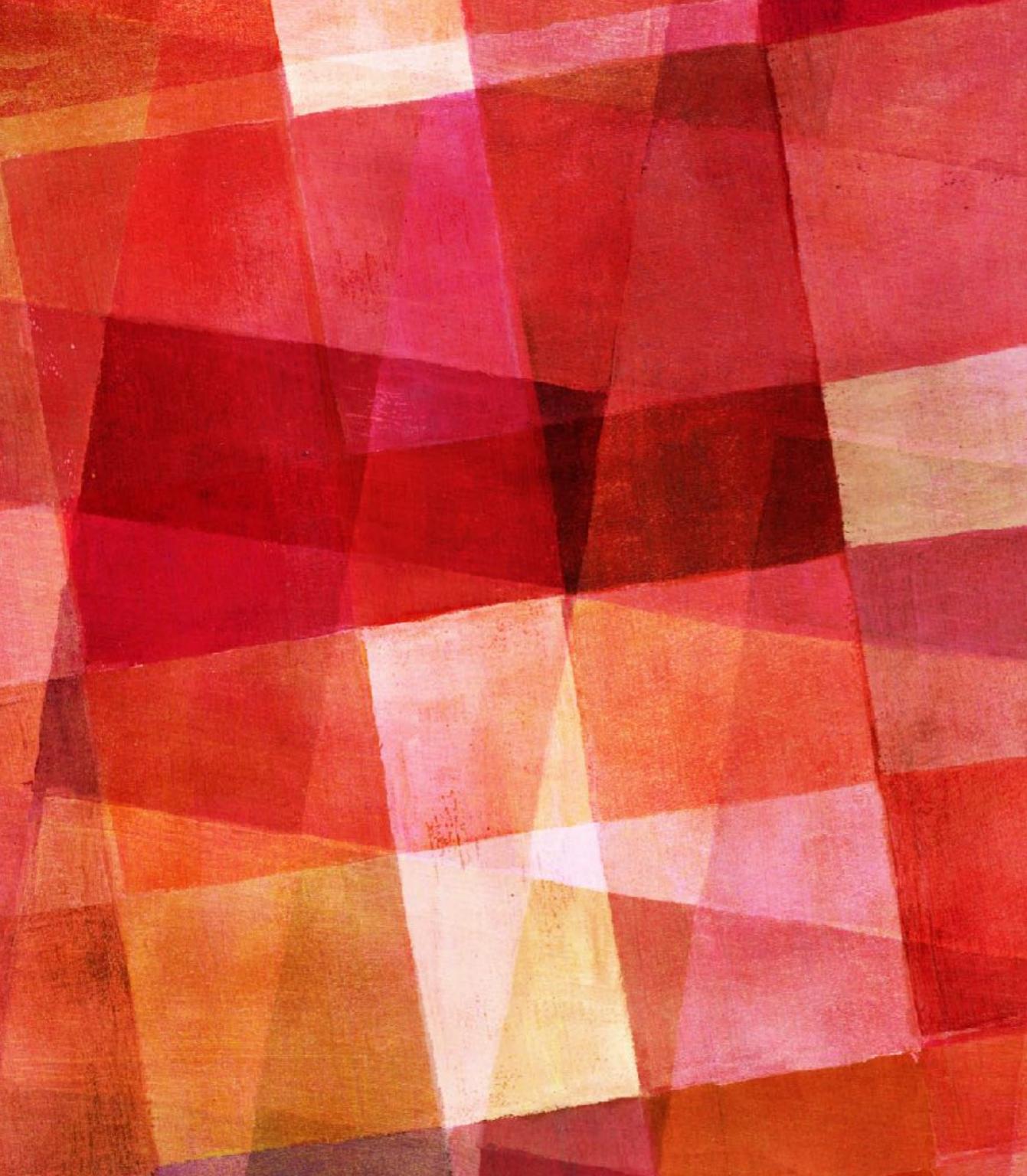
I hope these wise and often beautiful words will continue guiding you as you strive to do good work with your clients, in your organizations or in your communities.

In the end, it is not all that complicated. It all comes down to practicing Love.

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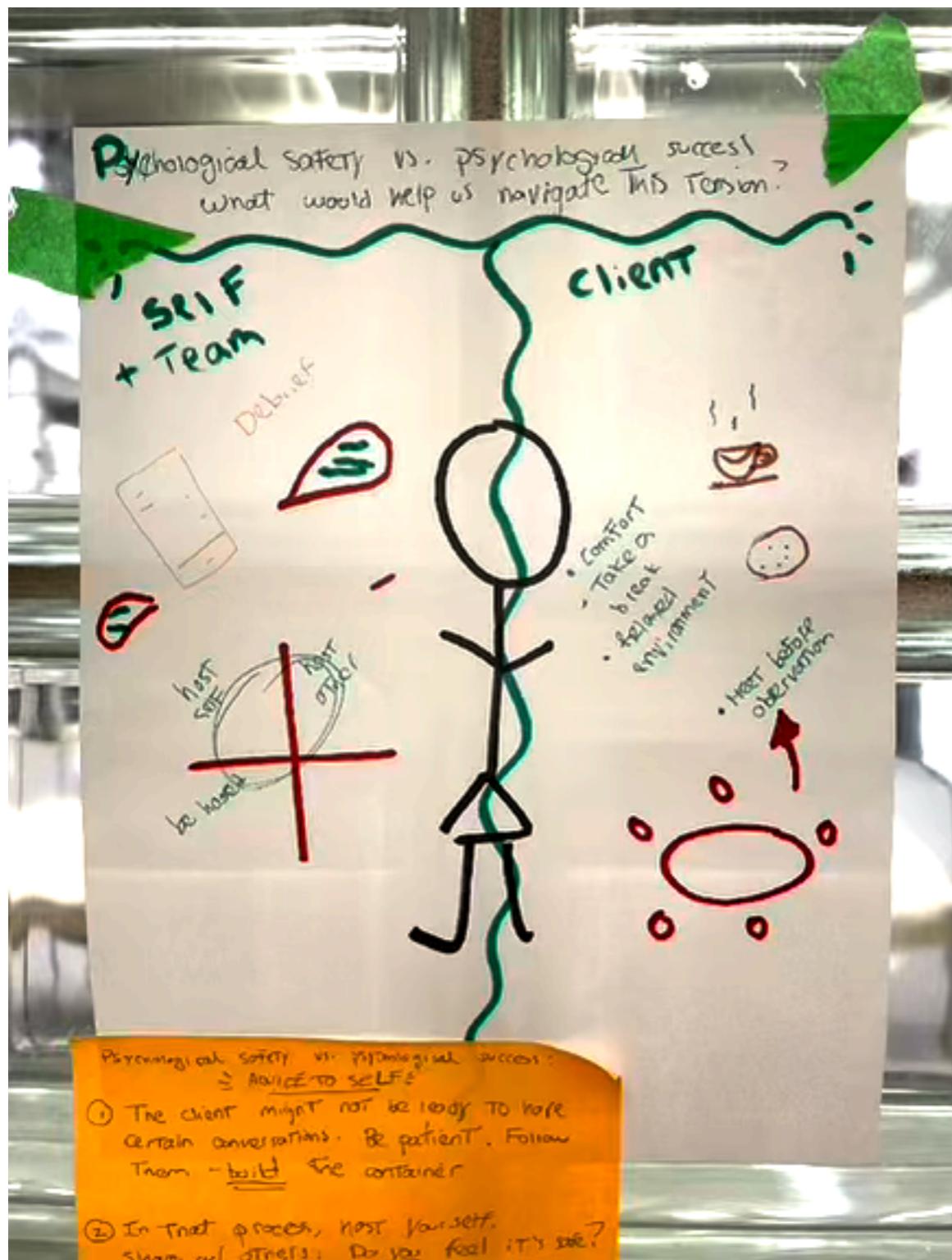
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## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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- In the fishbowl, share moments in your project where you experienced this polarity
- In conversation with another person, what advice would you give yourself to navigate this tension in your future practice?
- Harvest this in a collaborative drawing.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

Build report

Trust

Focus on the relationship

The client might not be ready to have the conversation. Be Patient. Follow them. Build the container.

In that process, Host yourself. Share with others. Do You feel it is safe? Why? Why not?

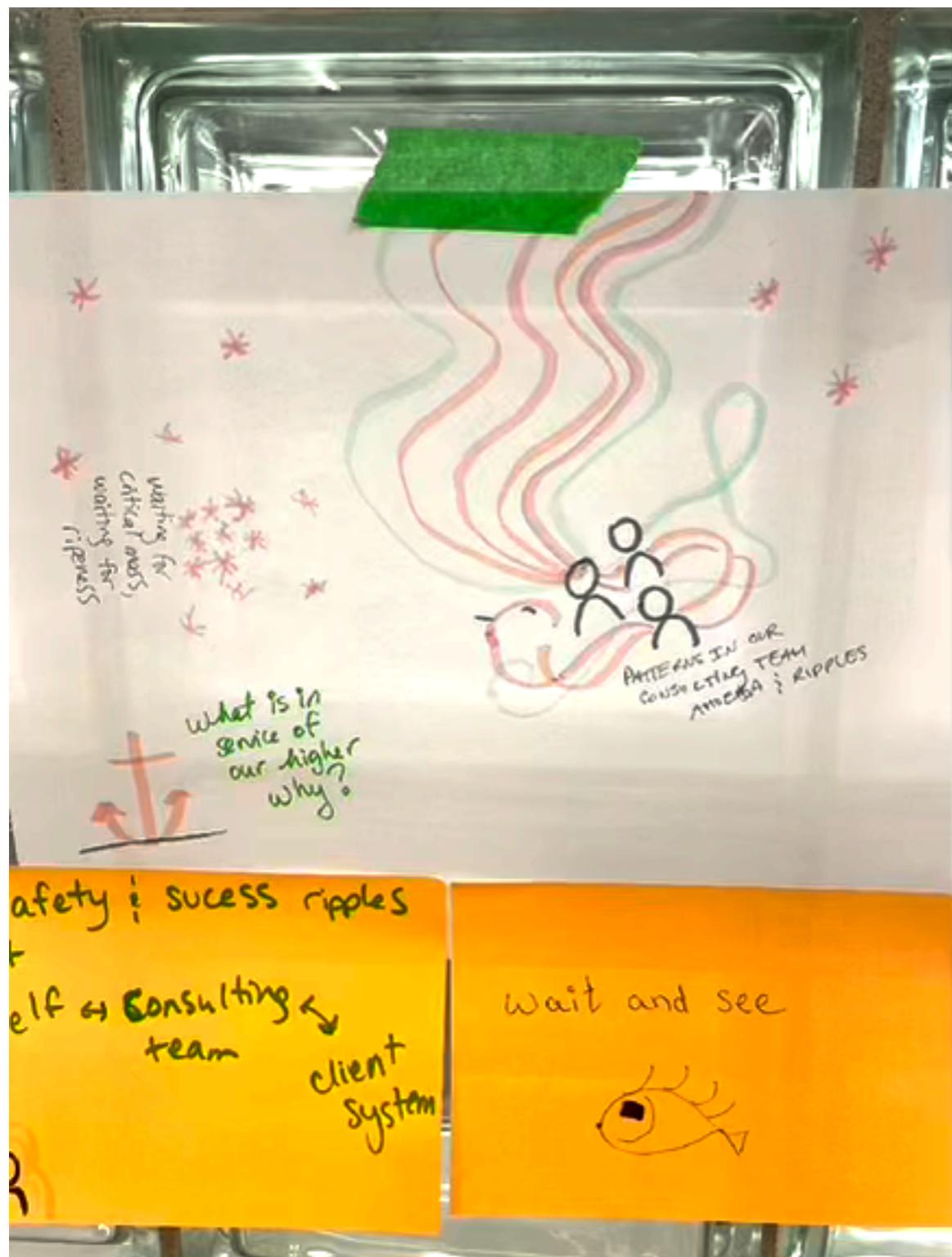


## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Trust the process will emerge.

Don't get stuck in the problem,  
Listen to the Story.

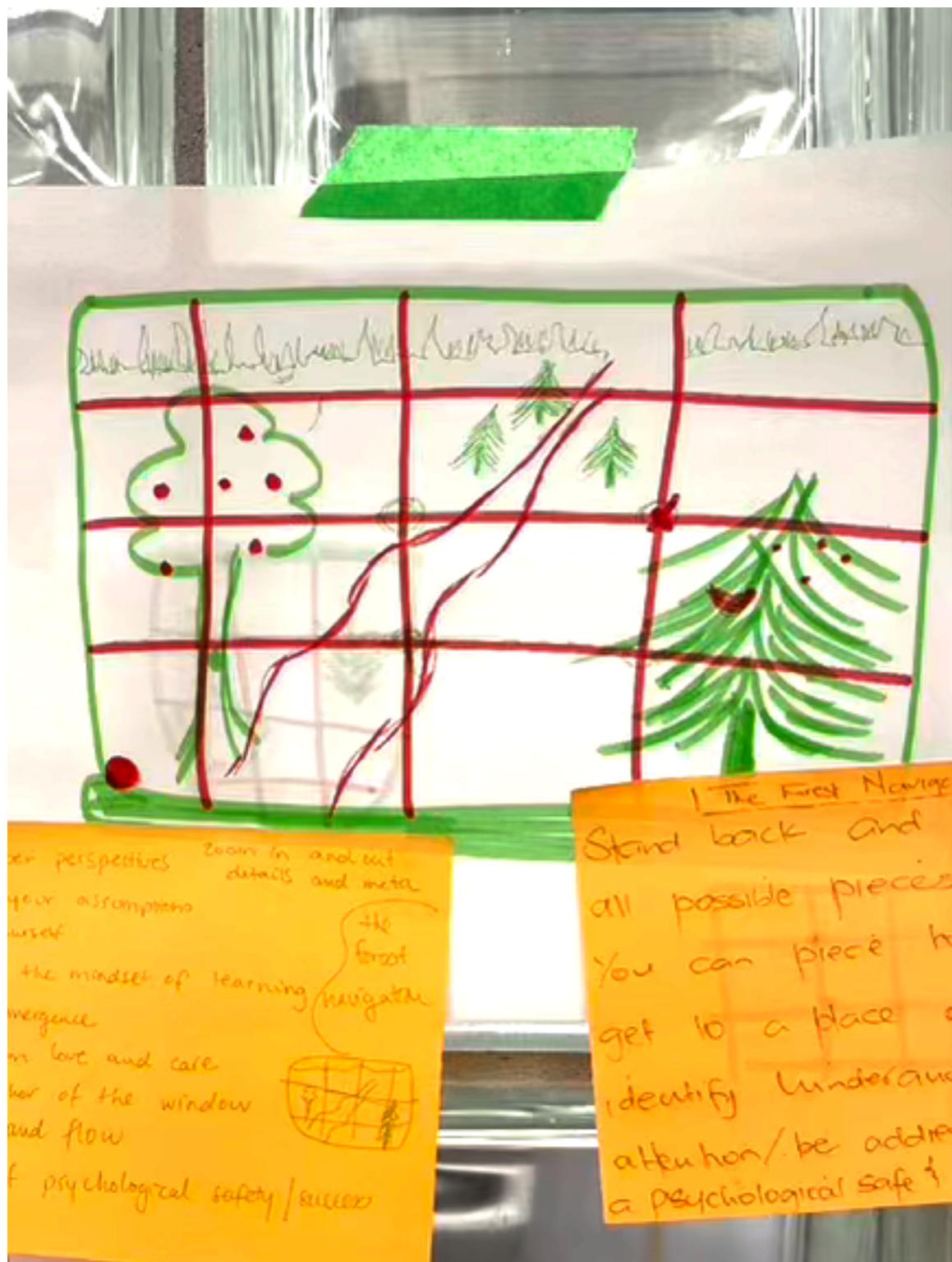


## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Safety and success ripple outwards: from self, to consulting team, to client system.

Wait and see.

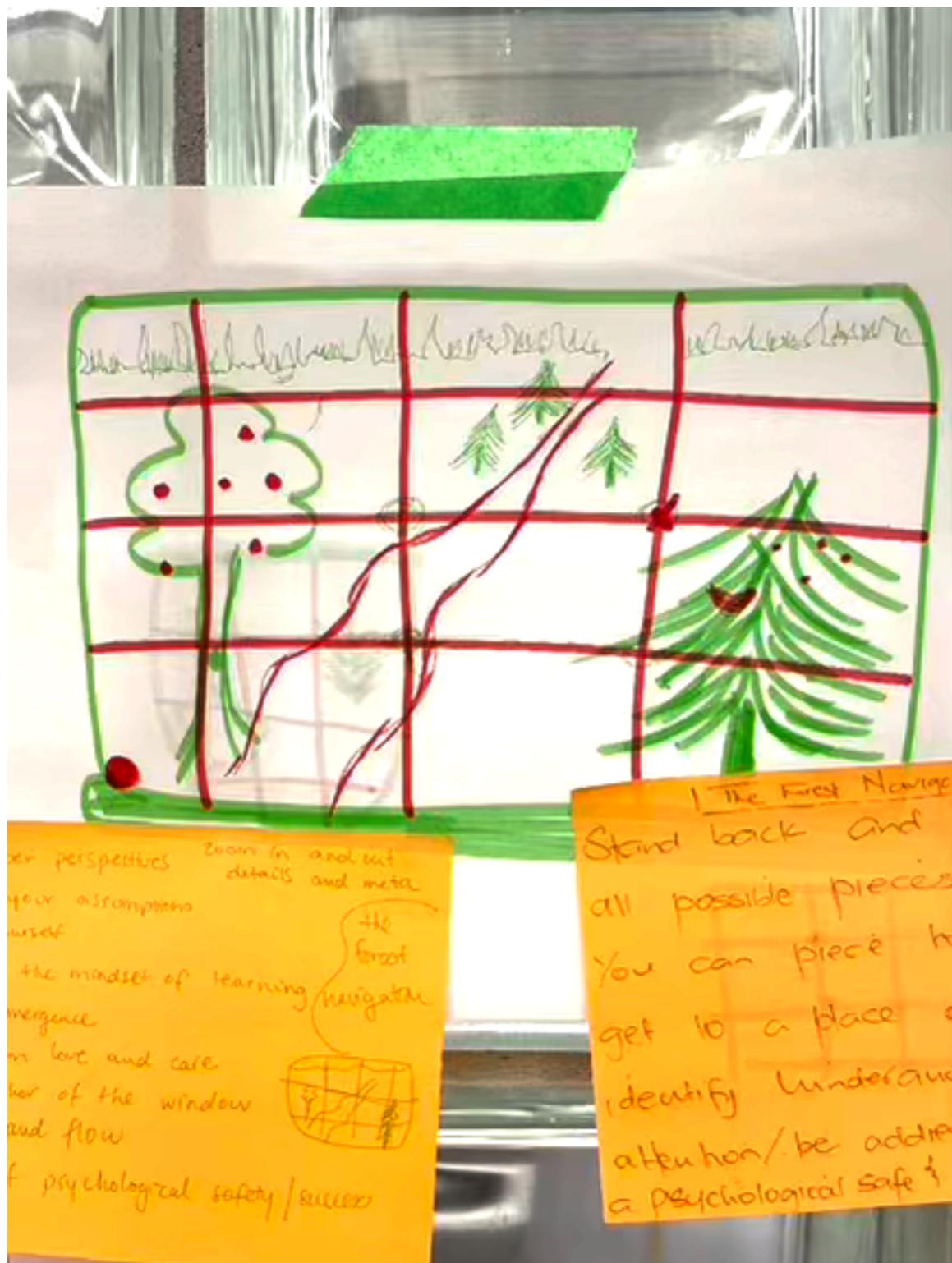


## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Cues to navigate the forest of consulting projects:

- Remember perspectives: Zoom in and Zoom out; go to the details and go meta.
- Know your assumptions.
- Trust yourself.
- Stay in a learning mindset.
- Allow emergence.
- Lead from love and care.
- Be a window: structure and flow.
- There are many ways to find safety and success.

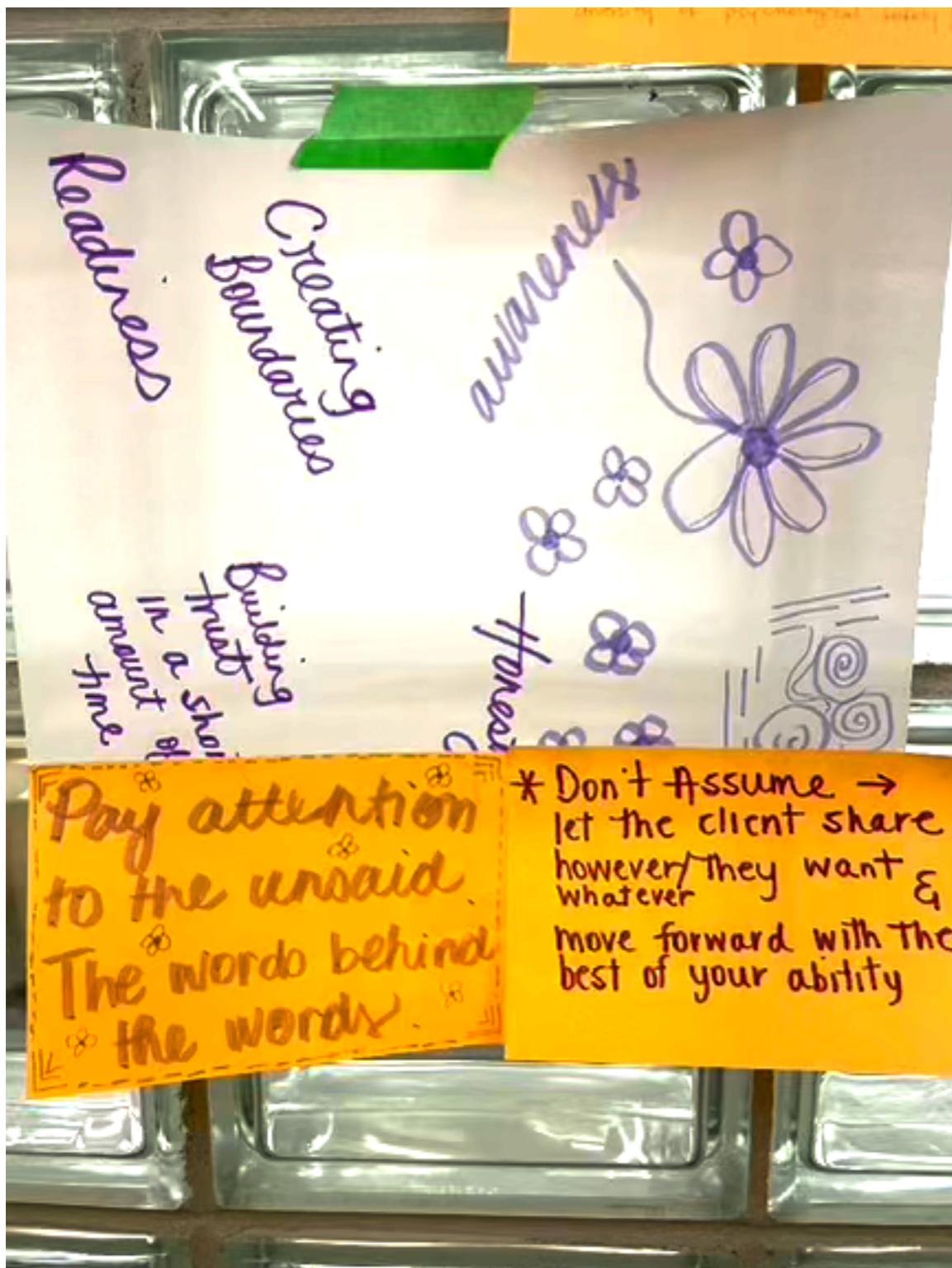


## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Forest navigation tip:

Stand back and look at all possible pieces that you can piece together to get to a place of safety or identify hindrances that need attention or need to be addressed to achieve a psychologically safe and successful environment.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Pay attention to the unsaid: the words behind the words

Don't assume - let the client share however / whatever they want

Move forward with the best of your ability



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Be yourself.

No act

A lot of love

Follow your feeling



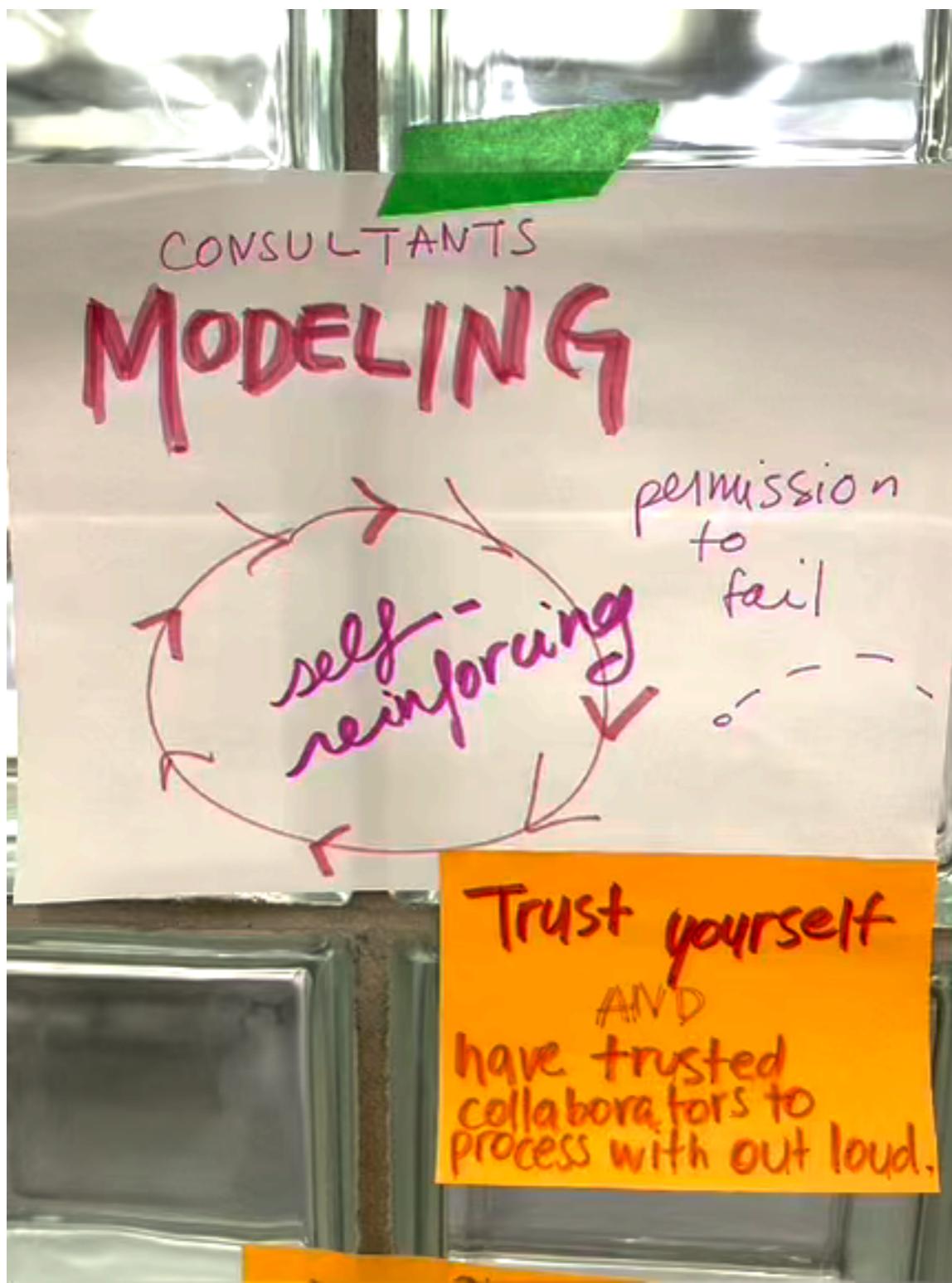
## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Dear my love,

To navigate this tension between psychological safety and psychological success, always remember to come back to yourself.

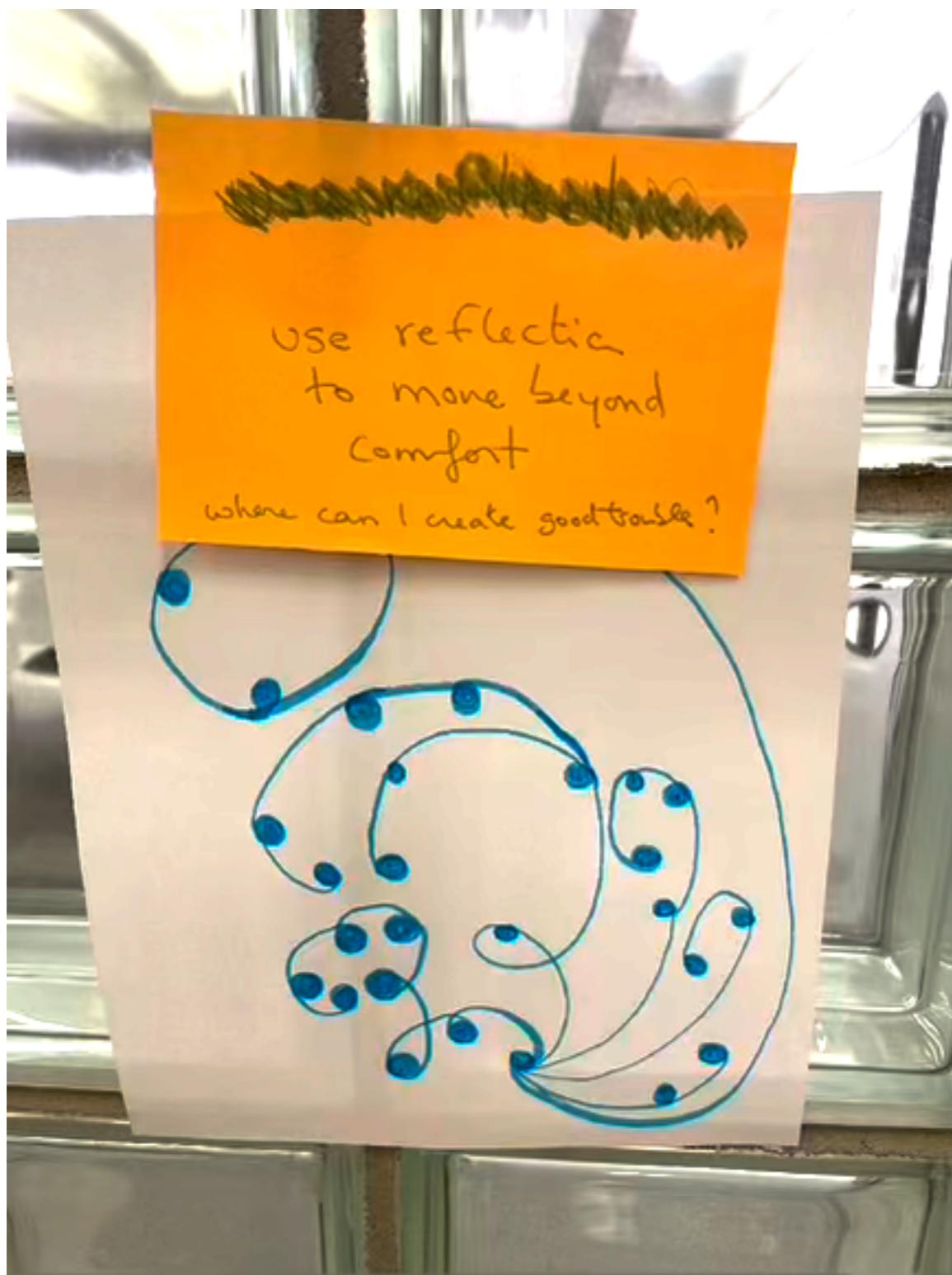
Check-in with your intention, take time to discern, and trust the process.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Trust yourself and have trusted collaborators to process with out loud.

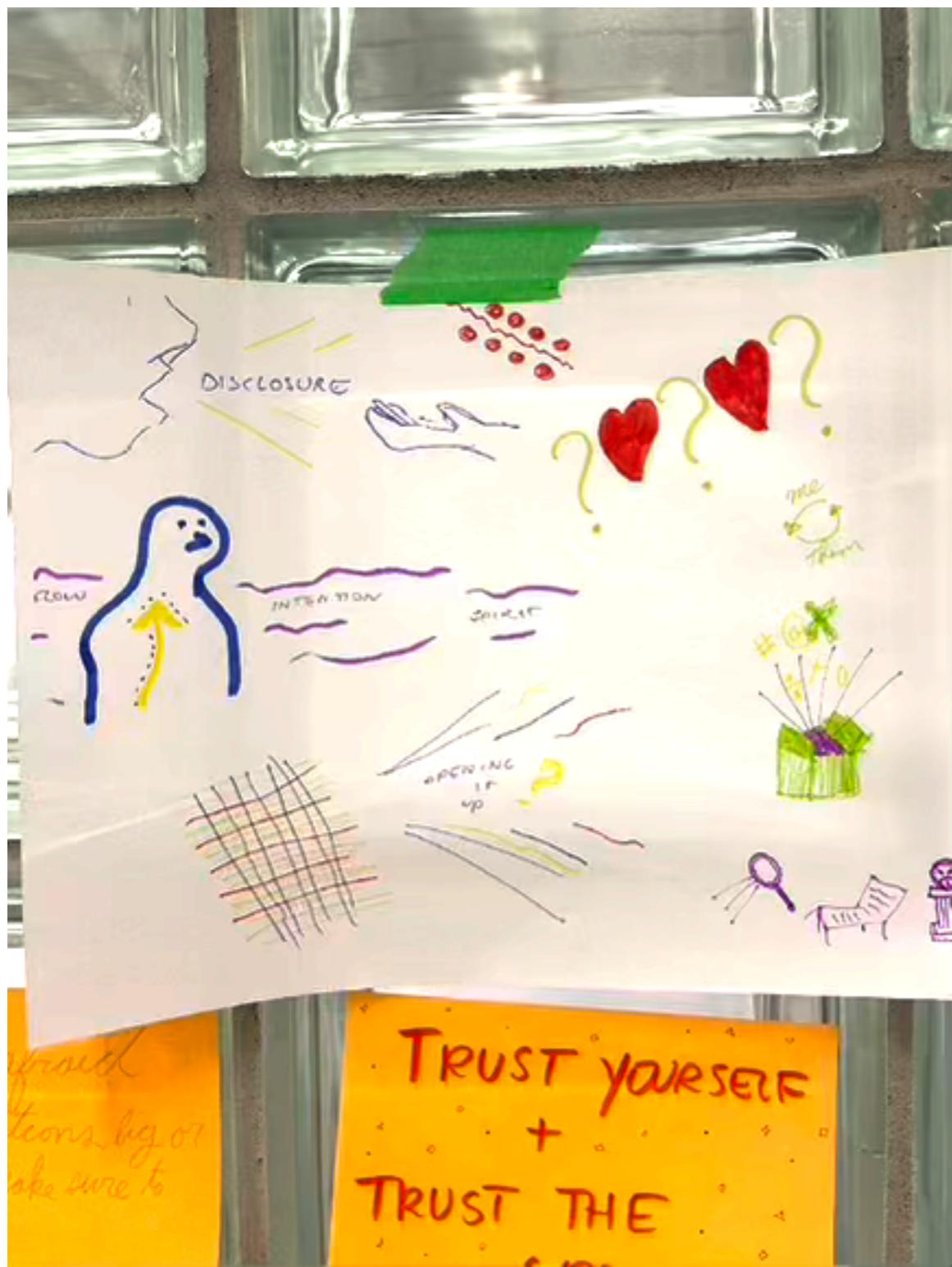


## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Use reflection to move beyond comfort.

Where can I create good trouble?



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Trust yourself and trust the group

Don't be afraid to ask questions,  
big or small.

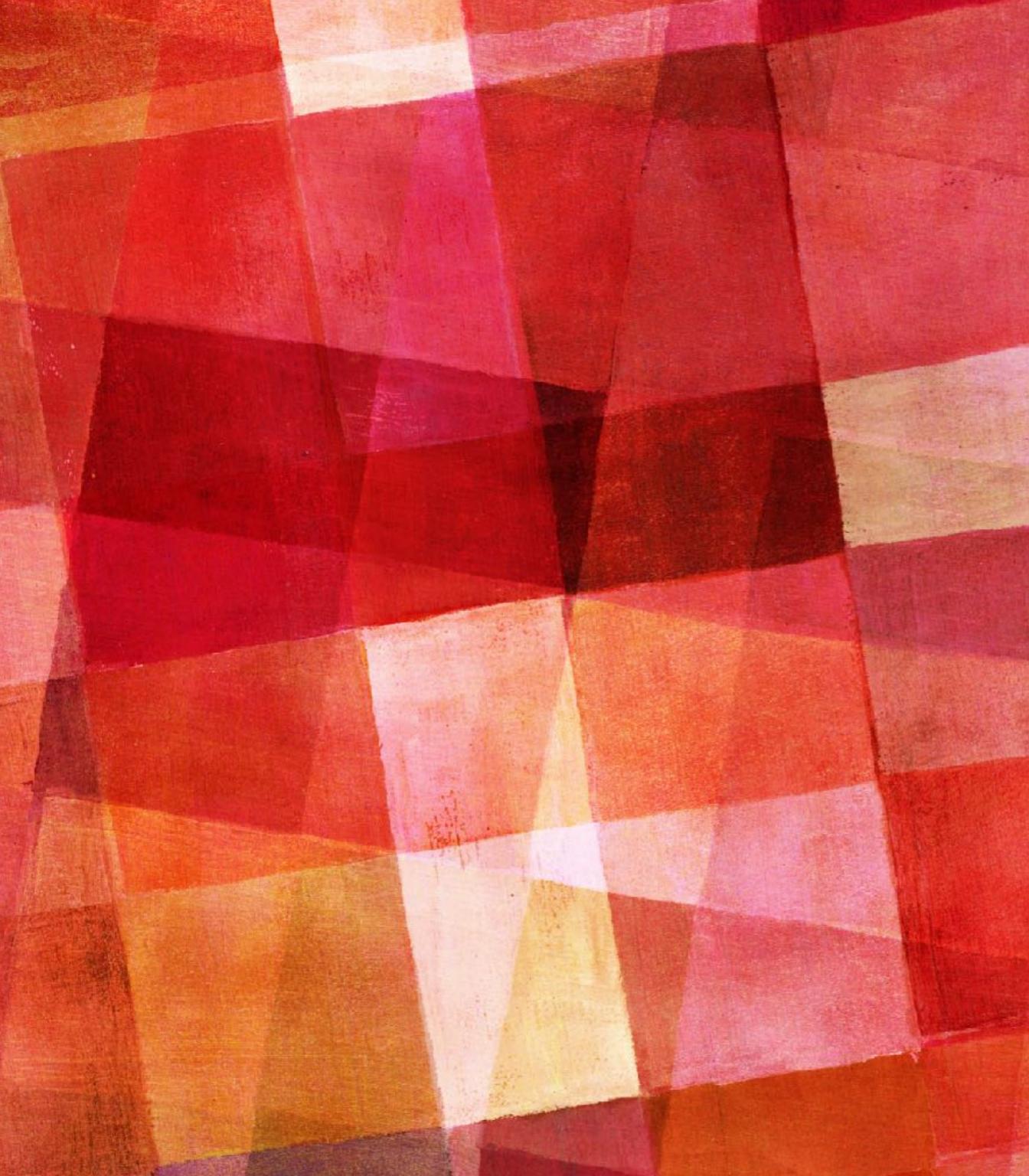
Just make sure to add the heart.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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Let go, Let them, Let God  
Take 5 steps back!



## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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- In the fishbowl, share moments in your project where you experienced this polarity
- In conversation with another person, what advice would you give yourself to navigate this tension in your future practice?
- Harvest this by uncovering the hidden poem about process consulting in a page of *So Spoke Zarathustra* (Nietzsche)

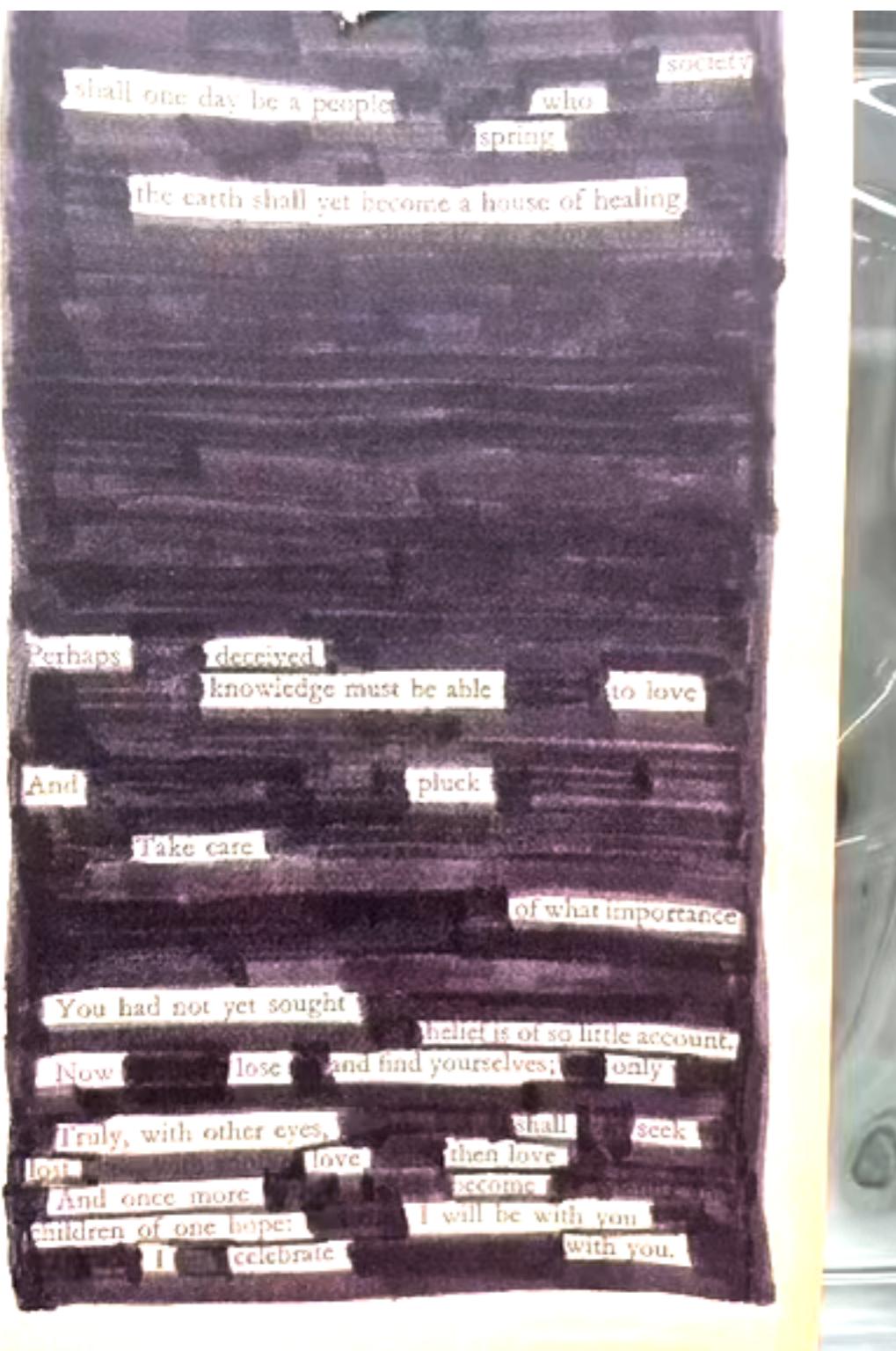
## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

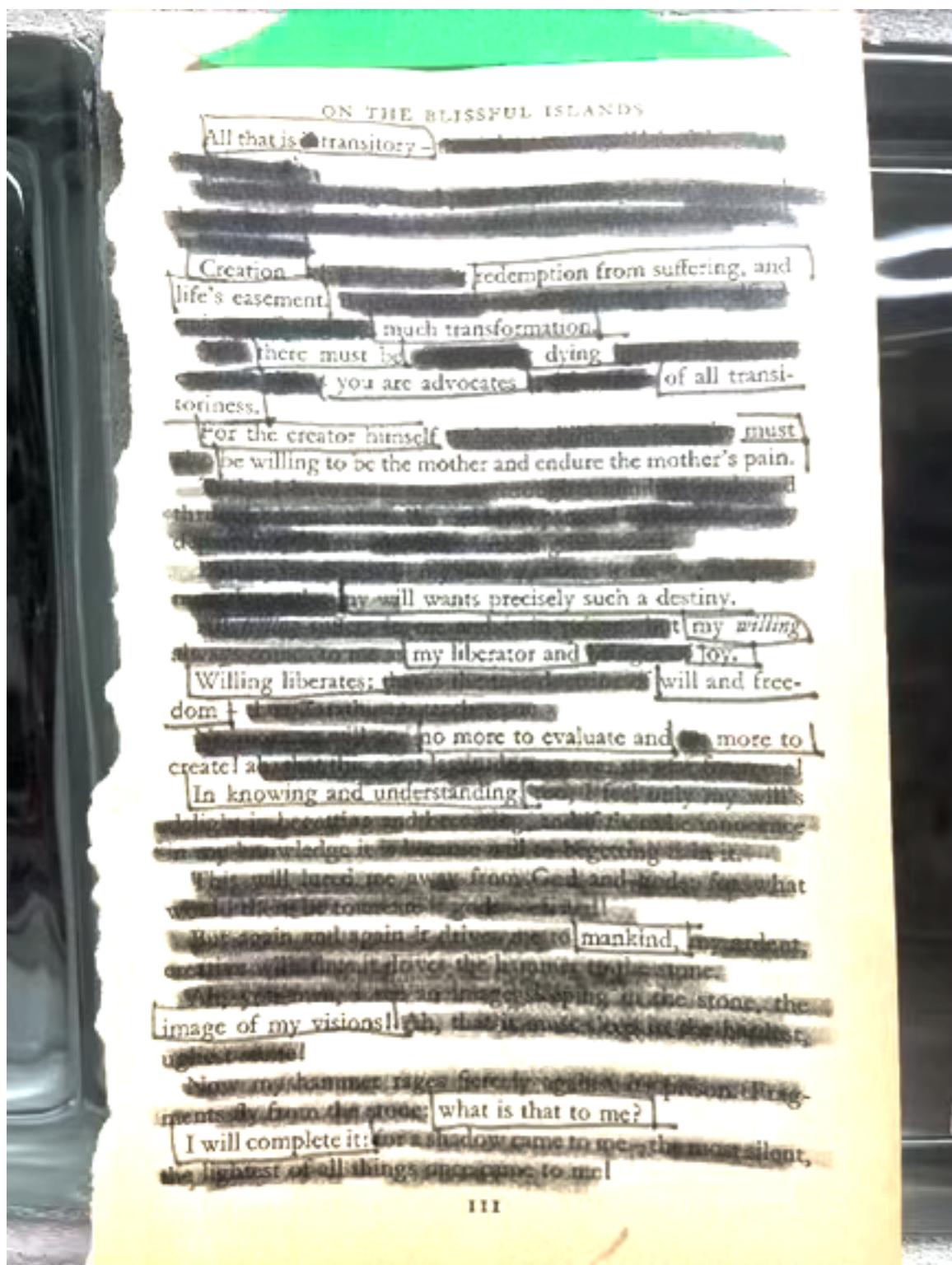
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Dear Love,

If you truly step with love, what do they need?

What is the next most elegant step?





## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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Trust yourself

Be authentic

Listen to what's there and not there

Remember what has worked in your own practice !

Be compassionate.

### THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA

The will of the weaker persuades it to serve the stronger; its will wants to be master over those weaker still; this delight alone it is unwilling to forgo.

And as the lesser surrenders to the greater, that it may have delight and power over the least of all, so the greatest, too, surrenders and for the sake of power stakes – life.

The devotion of the greatest is to encounter risk and danger and play dice for death.

And where sacrifice and service and loving glances are, there too is will to be master. There the weaker steals by secret paths into the castle and even into the heart of the more powerful – and steals the power.

And life itself told me this secret: 'Behold,' it said, 'I am that which must overtake itself again and again.'

'To be sure, you call it will to procreate or impulse towards a goal, towards the higher, more distant, more manifold; but all this is one and one secret.'

'I would rather perish than renounce this one thing; and truly, where there is perishing and the falling of leaves, behold, there life sacrifices itself – for the sake of power.'

'That I have to be struggle and becoming and goal and conflict of goals: ah, he who divines my will surely divines, too, along what ~~weaker~~ paths it has to go.'

'Whatever I create and however much I love it – soon I have to oppose it and my love; thus will my will have it.'

'And you too, enlightened magi, are only a path and footstep of my will: truly, my will to power walks with the feet of your will to truth!'

'He who shot the doctrine of "will to existence" at truth, certainly did not hit the truth: this will – does not exist!'

'For what does not exist cannot will; but that which is in existence, how could it will want to come from existence?'

'Only where life is, there is also will; not will to life, but – so I teach you – will to power!'

'The living creature values many things higher than life itself; yet out of this evaluation itself speaks – the will to power!'

## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

- Remember the wave of the tides, high and low, diagnostic and dialogic,
- The meeting point in between is where language meets its own structure as an understanding of experiencing itself, like the oroboros, what comes first in the layers of shedding oneself
- Listen, assume, come back, Listen, take a step back, meet again, stay centered in your heart, allow yourself to root and grow tall

OF THE FRIEND

You honour even near over

In your friend Your heart

wish your friend in honour you show yourself to him

who makes no secret of himself how much reason

for your friend: an arrow and a longing

watched what he looked like? your friend's face It is your own face, in a rough and imperfect mirror.

watched your friend to see what he looked like?

a master in silence: see everything. Your dream when awake.

that you may first know the undimmed eye and the glance of eternity.

your friend will have delicacy and sweetness.

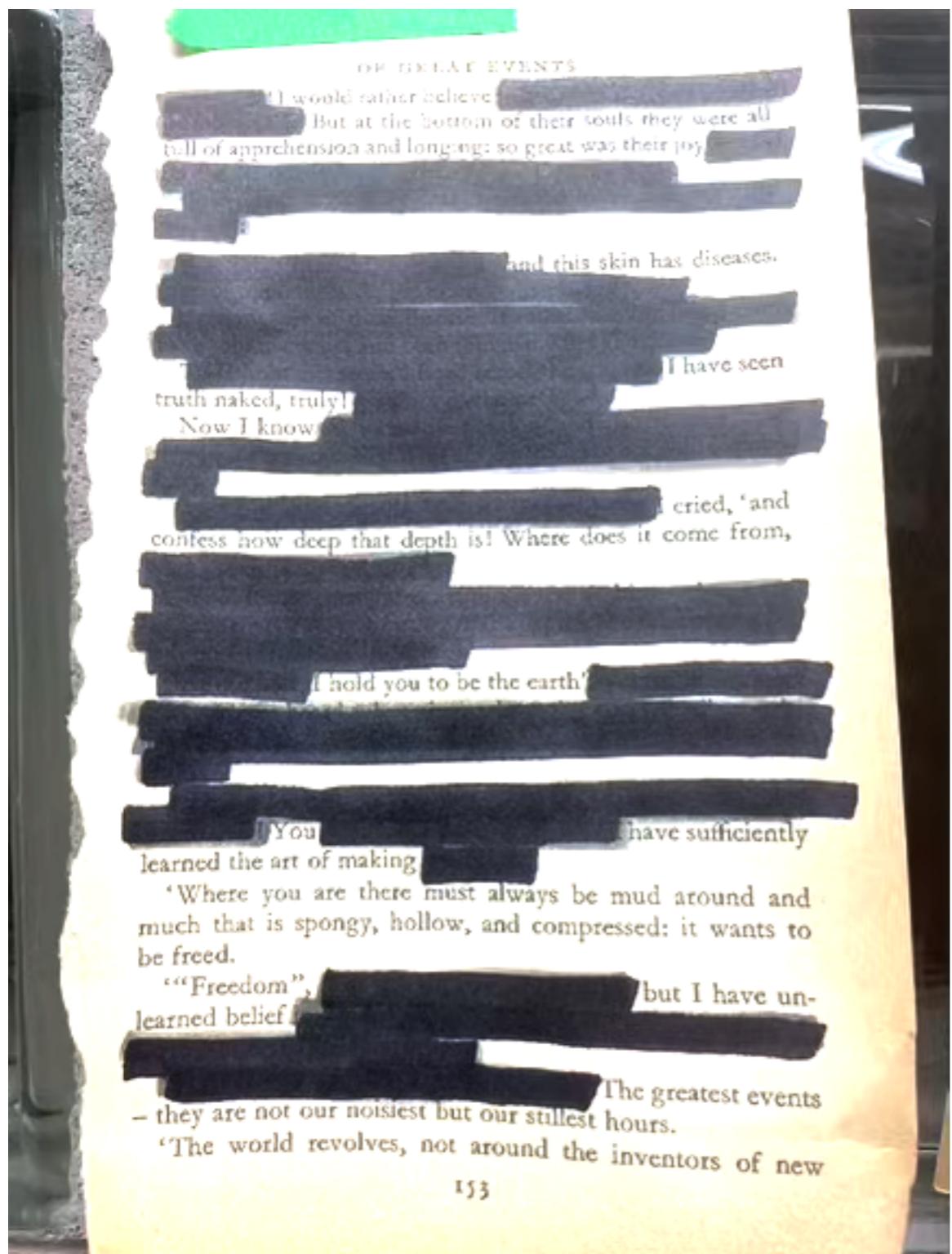
pure air and solitude and bread and medicine deliver

all too long been concealed. she knows only love.

enlightened love

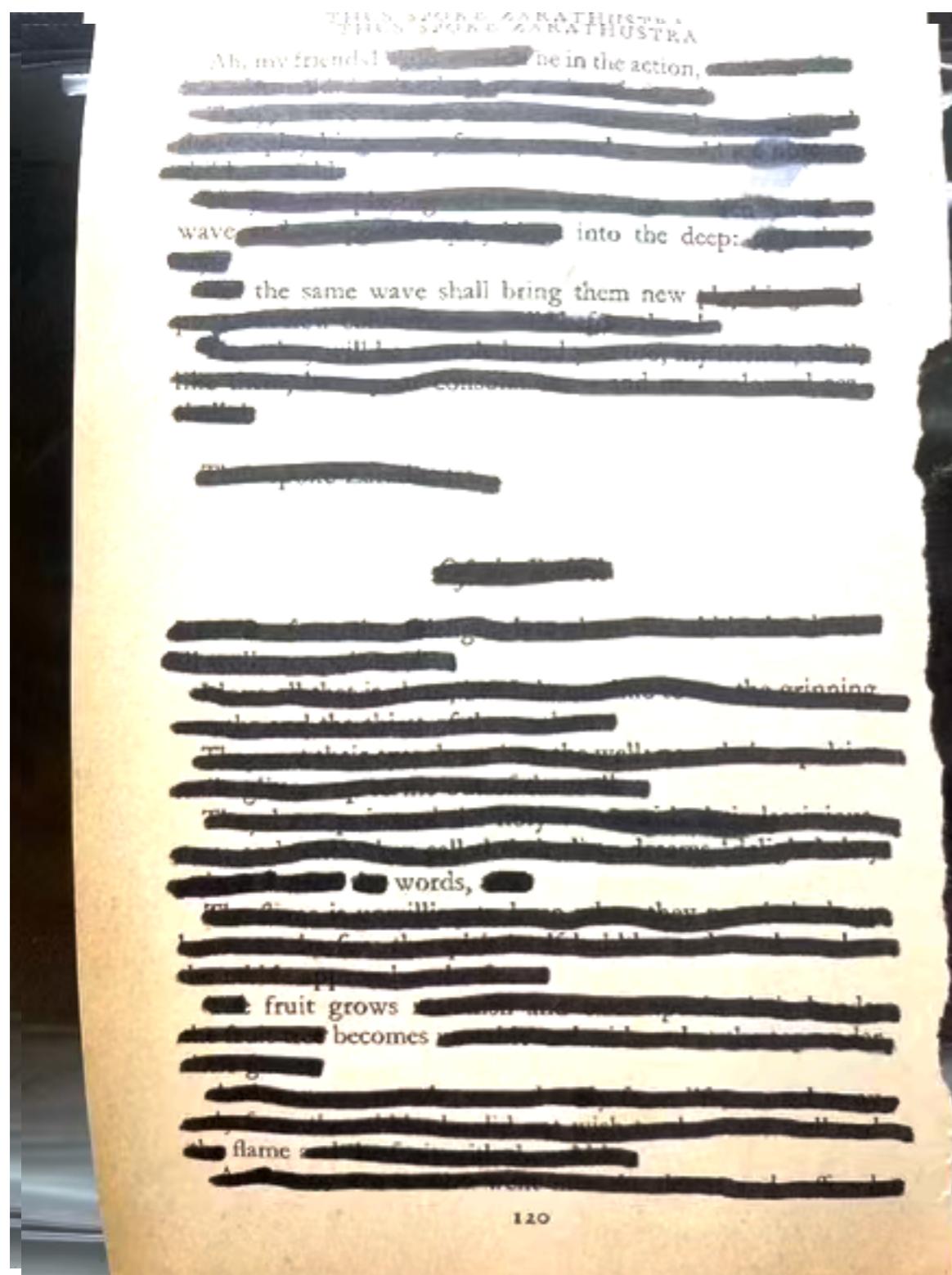
## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

If you find yourself  
too far in one direction  
move closer to the other



## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

Talk it through with someone not involved.



## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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Instead of marrying an idea or diagnosis, ask  
One more question  
What's the first step we have to take?

### OF THE COMPASSIONATE

For I saw the sufferer suffer, and because I saw it I was ashamed on account of his shame; and when I helped him, then I sorely injured his pride.

Great obligations do not make a man grateful, they make him resentful; and if a small kindness is not forgotten it becomes a gnawing worm.

~~He received. In accepting, Honour a man by accepting from him!~~ – ~~But I advise those who have nothing to give,~~

~~I, however, am a giver: I give gladly ~~to a friend to friends,~~~~  
~~But strangers and the poor may pluck the fruit from my tree~~  
~~for themselves: it causes less shame that way.~~

~~Beggars, however, should be entirely abolished!~~ Truly, it is annoying to give to them and annoying not to give to them.

~~And likewise sinners and bad consciences!~~ Believe me, my friends: stings of conscience teach one to sting.

But worst of all are petty thoughts. ~~Truly, better even to have done wickedly than to have thought pettily!~~

~~To be sure, you will say: 'Delight in petty wickedness gives us many a great evil deed.'~~ But here one should not ~~think the worse~~

~~The evil deed is like a boil: it itches and irritates and breaks forth, it speaks honourably.~~

~~'Behold, I am disease' – thus speaks the evil deed, that is its honesty.~~

But the petty thought is like a canker: ~~it creeps and hides and wants to appear nowhere, until the whole body is rotten and withered by little cankers.~~

~~But I whisper this advice in the ear of him possessed of a devil: Better for you to rear your devil! There is a way to goodness, even for you!~~

~~As my brothers!~~ One knows a little too much about everybody! And many a one who has become transparent to us is still for a long time invulnerable.

It is hard to live with ~~them~~, because keeping silent is so hard.

And we are the most unfair, not towards him whom we do not like, but towards him for whom we feel nothing at all.

But if you have a suffering friend, be a resting-place for his

## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

Patience, silence,  
Waiting is all part of dialogue.  
Let the space be filled by them  
in their own time and meet them  
there.

#### OF READING AND WRITING

Now I am nimble, now I fly, now I see myself under myself,  
now a god dances within me.

Thus spoke Zarathustra.

#### *Of the Tree on the Mountainside*

ZARATHUSTRA had noticed that a young man was avoiding him. And as he was walking alone one evening through the mountains surrounding the town called The Pied Cow, behold! he found this young man leaning against a tree and gazing wearily into the valley. Zarathustra grasped the tree beside which the young man was sitting and spoke thus:

'If I wanted to shake this tree with my hands I should be unable to do it.'

'But the wind, which we cannot see, torments it and bends it where it wishes. It is invisible hands that torment and bend us the worst.'

At that the young man stood up in confusion and said: 'I hear Zarathustra and I was just thinking of him.'

Zarathustra replied: 'Why are you alarmed on that account? – Now it is with men as with this tree.'

'The more it wants to rise into the heights and the light, the more determinedly do its roots strive earthwards, downwards, into the darkness, into the depths – *inversely*.'

'Yes, into evil!' cried the young man. 'How is it possible you can uncover my soul?'

Zarathustra smiled and said: 'There are many souls one will never uncover, unless one invents them first.'

'Yes, into evil!' cried the young man again.

'You have spoken the truth, Zarathustra. Since I wanted to rise into the heights I have no longer trusted myself, and no one trusts me any more. How did this happen?'

'I change too quickly: my today refutes my yesterday. When I stand I often jump over steps, and no step forgives me that.'

'When I am alone, I always find myself alone. No one

## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

Notice the direction of the wind.

## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

myself,

avoiding  
ough the  
ed Cow,  
tree and  
the tree  
that  
should be

and bends  
and bend

and said:  
at  
account?

the light,  
ds, down-

it possible

souls one

I wanted  
myself, and

yesterday,  
to forgives

No one

THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA

Proty, Zarathustra is no veering wind nor whirlwind; and although he is a dancer, he is by no means a tarantella dancer!

Thus spoke Zarathustra.

*Of the Famous Philosophers*

You have served the people and the people's superstitions; all you famous philosophers! - you have not served truth! And it is precisely for that reason that they paid you no reverence!

And for that reason too they endured my disbelief, because it was a joke and a bypath for the people. Thus the last touches his slaves and even enjoys their insolence.

But he who is hated by the people as a wolf is by the dogs: he is the free spirit, the enemy of fitters, the non-worshipper, the dweller in forests.

To hunt him from his hiding-place - the people always called that 'having a sense of sight'; they have always set their sharpest-toothed dogs upon him.

'For where the people are, truth is! Woe to him who seeks! That is how it has been from the beginning.'

You sought to make the people justified in their reverence - that you called 'will to truth', you famous philosophers!

And your heart always said to itself: 'I came from the people; God's voice, too, came to me from them.'

You have always been obstinate and cunning, like the fox, as the people's advocate.

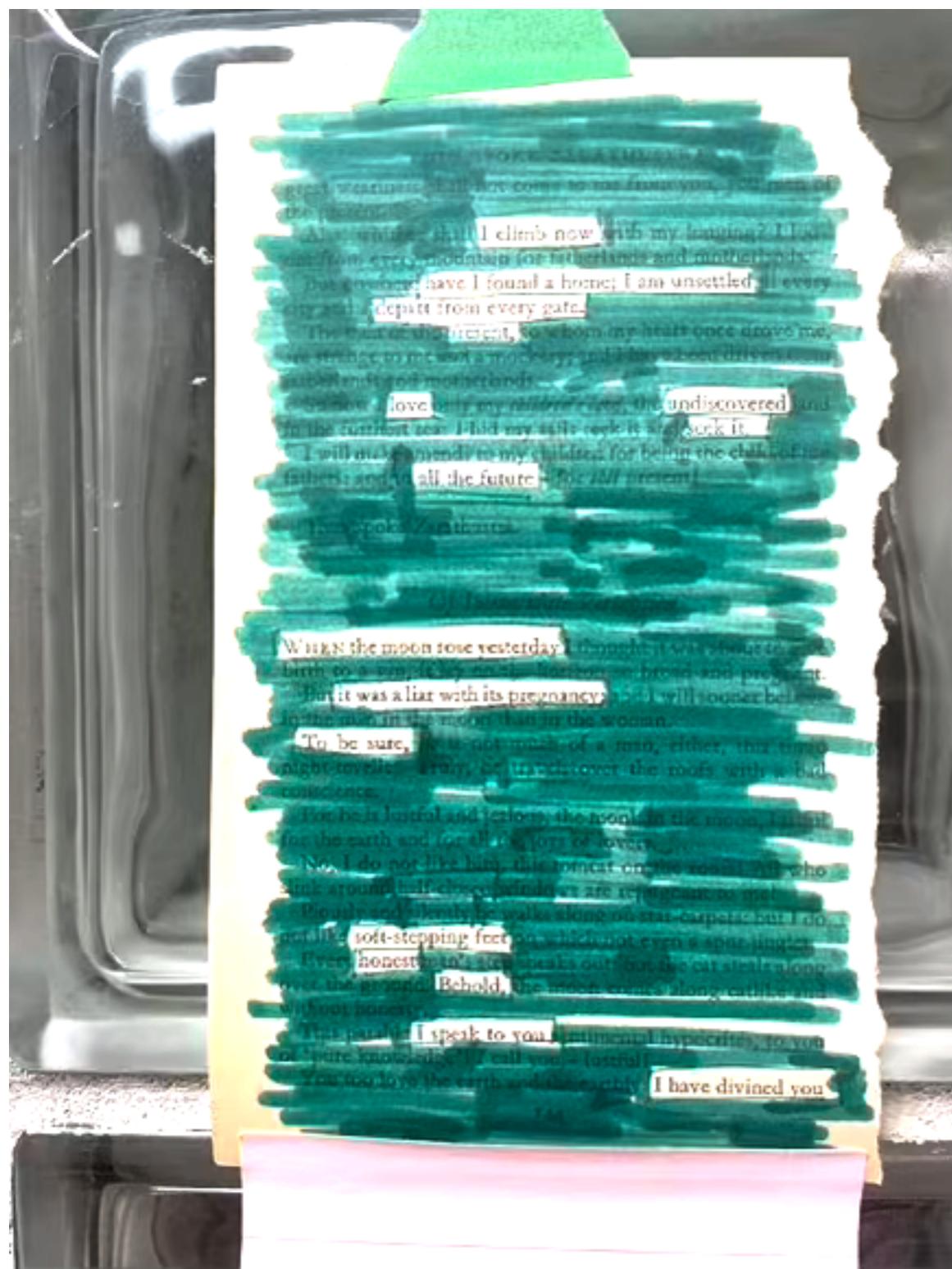
And many a man of power who wanted to fare well with the people, harpooned in front of his horses - a little ass, a famous philosopher.

And now I should like you to throw the lion-skin right off you again, you famous philosophers!

The matted skin of the beast of prey and the matted hair of the impious, the seeker, the overcomer!

Ah, for me to learn to believe in your 'genuineness' you would first have to break your will to venetaria.

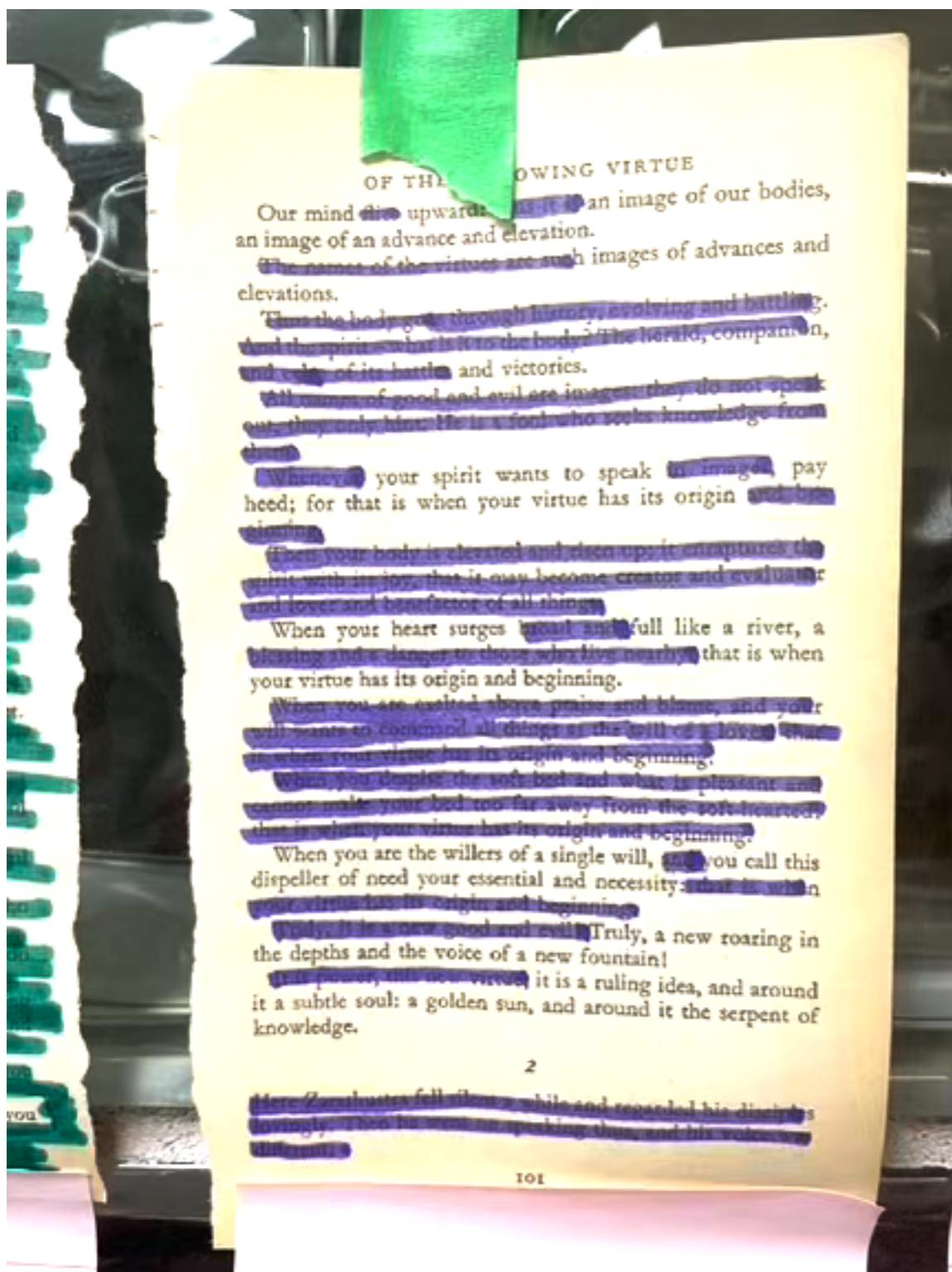
Stay true to your North Star



## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

---

Be honest.  
Speak gently.  
Continuous  
Witnessing —  
Hold everything  
lightly.



## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

See / Observe  
Listen and Talk  
about it:  
Find out, Be curious  
Ask / Question it!  
check / have dialogue  
Verify / learn anew!

## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

---

Ask questions,  
encourage creativity,  
be brave,  
Fail Forward,  
Perservere

GOALS  
the evaluation and the meaning  
of all things.

people's need  
you could surely divine the  
law of its overcomings, and  
hope.

"You should  
not be afraid  
of the present, make the  
present pain to greatness.

"To speak the truth and to know well how to handle  
bow and arrow" - this is the highest ideal.

roots of the soul'

"To practise loyalty and for the sake of loyalty to risk  
honour."

teaching,

a voice

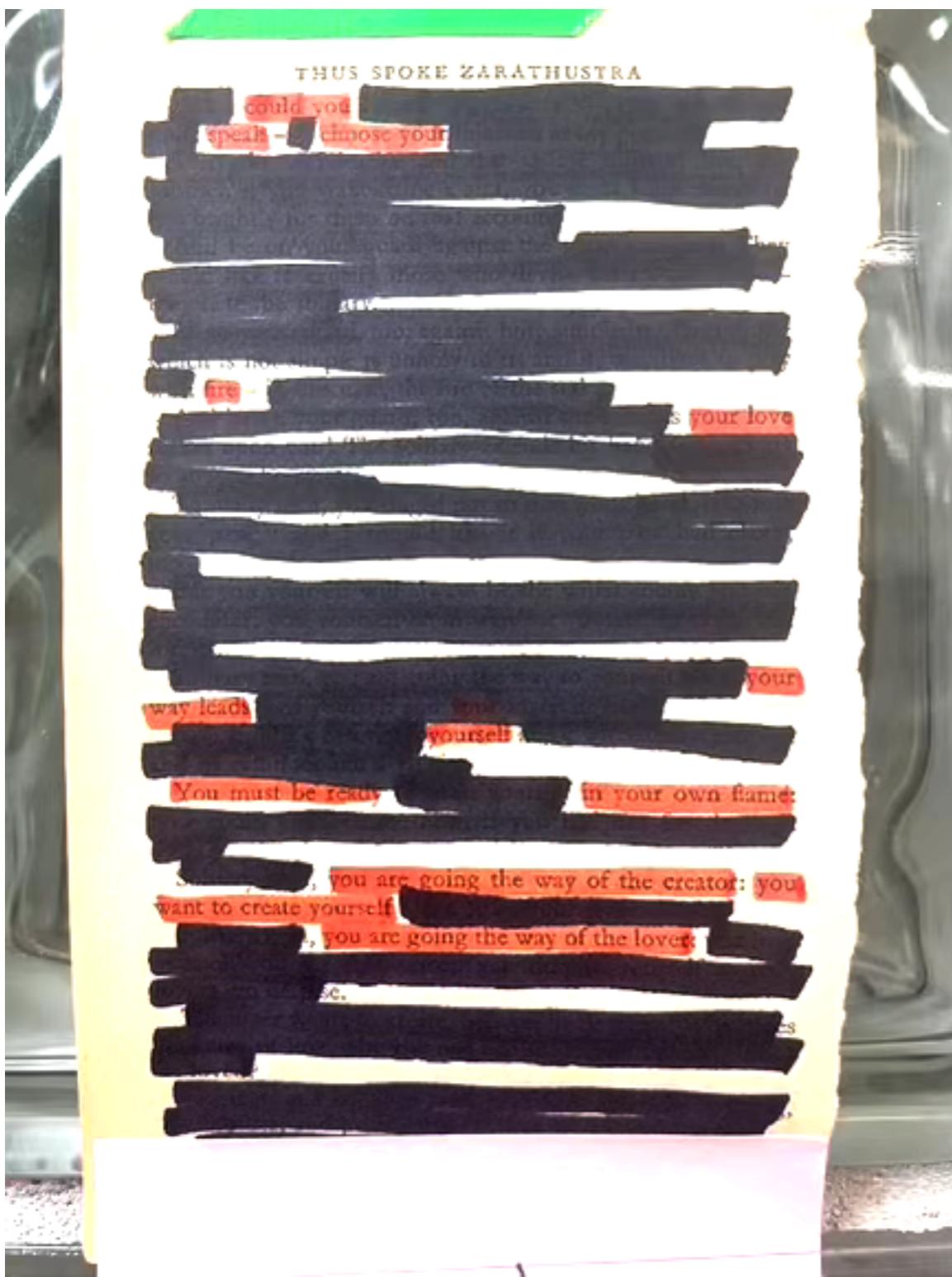
meaning of things, a human meaning!

Evaluation is creation: hear it, you creative men! Valuating  
is itself the value and jewel of all valued things.

Only through evaluation is there value: and without evalua-  
tion the nut of existence would be hollow.

A change

individual



## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

---

Share what you  
Know with people.  
Talk Slow  
Trust Fast.

### THE DANCE SONG

came upon a green meadow quietly surrounded by trees and bushes; and in the meadow girls were dancing together. As soon as the girls recognized Zarathustra they ceased their dance; Zarathustra, however, approached them with a friendly air and spoke these words:

Do not cease your dance, sweet girls! No spoilsport has come to you with an evil eye, no enemy of girls.

I am God's advocate with the Devil; he, however, is the Spirit of Gravity. How could I be enemy to divine dancing, you nimble creatures? or to girls' feet with fair ankles?

To be sure, I am a forest and a night of dark trees; but he who is not afraid of my darkness will find rosebowers too under my cypresses.

And he will surely find too the little god whom girls love best: he lies beside the fountain, still, with his eyes closed.

Truly, he has fallen asleep in broad daylight, the idler! Has he been chasing butterflies too much?

Do not be angry with me, fair dancers, if I chastise the little god a little! Perhaps he will cry out and weep, but he is laughable even in weeping!

And with tears in his eyes, he shall ask you for a dance; and I myself will sing a song for his dance.

A dance-song and a mocking-song on the Spirit of Gravity, my supreme, most powerful devil, who they say is 'the lord of the earth'.

And this is the song Zarathustra sang as cupid and the girls danced together:

Lately I looked into your eye, O Life! And I seemed to sink into the unfathomable.

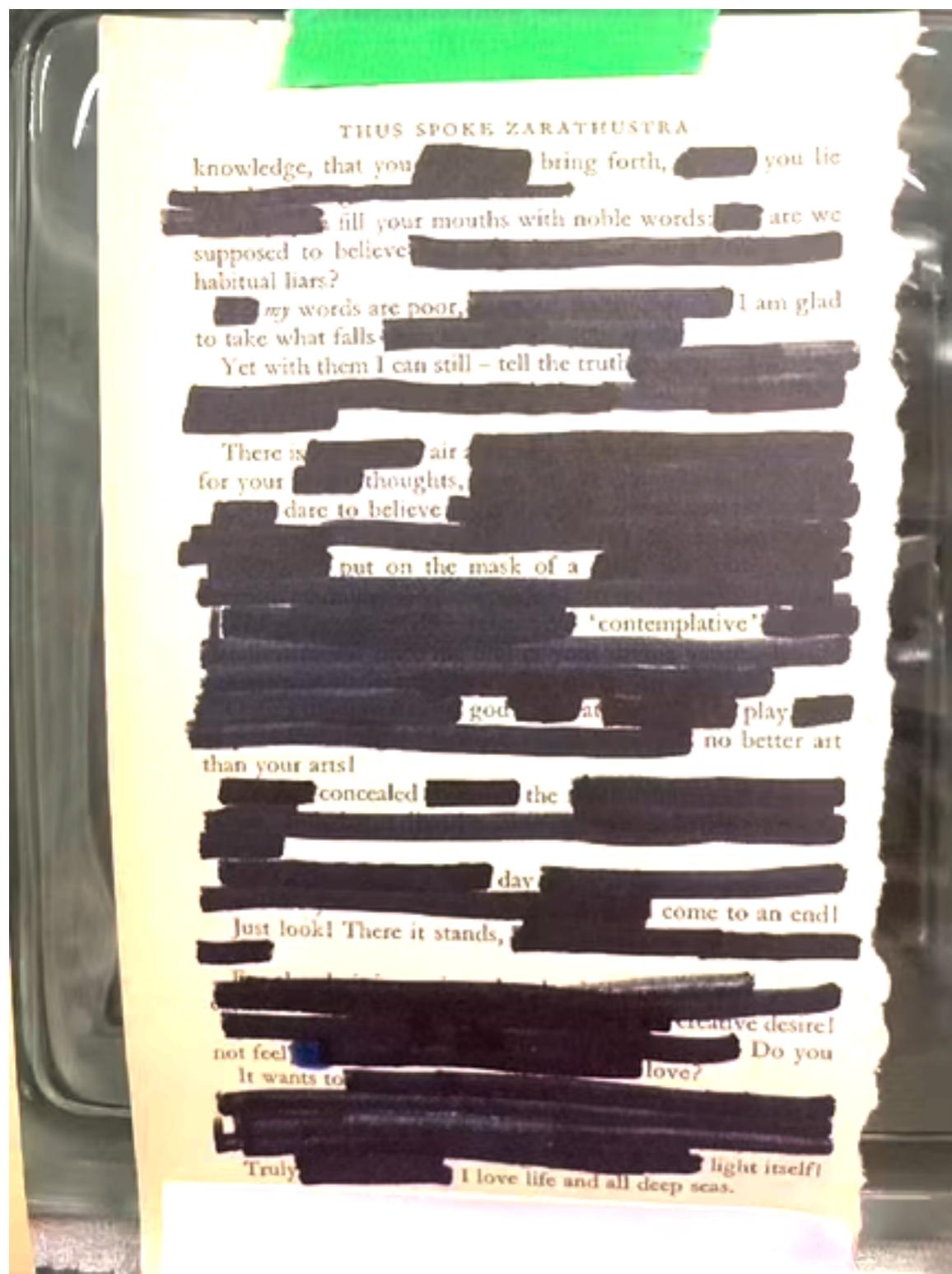
But you pulled me out with a golden rod; you laughed mockingly when I called you unfathomable.

"All fish talk like that," you said; "what they cannot fathom is unfathomable."

"But I am merely changable and untamed and in everything a woman, and no virtuous one."

## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

Keep laughing  
Tell stories  
Practice black out poetry

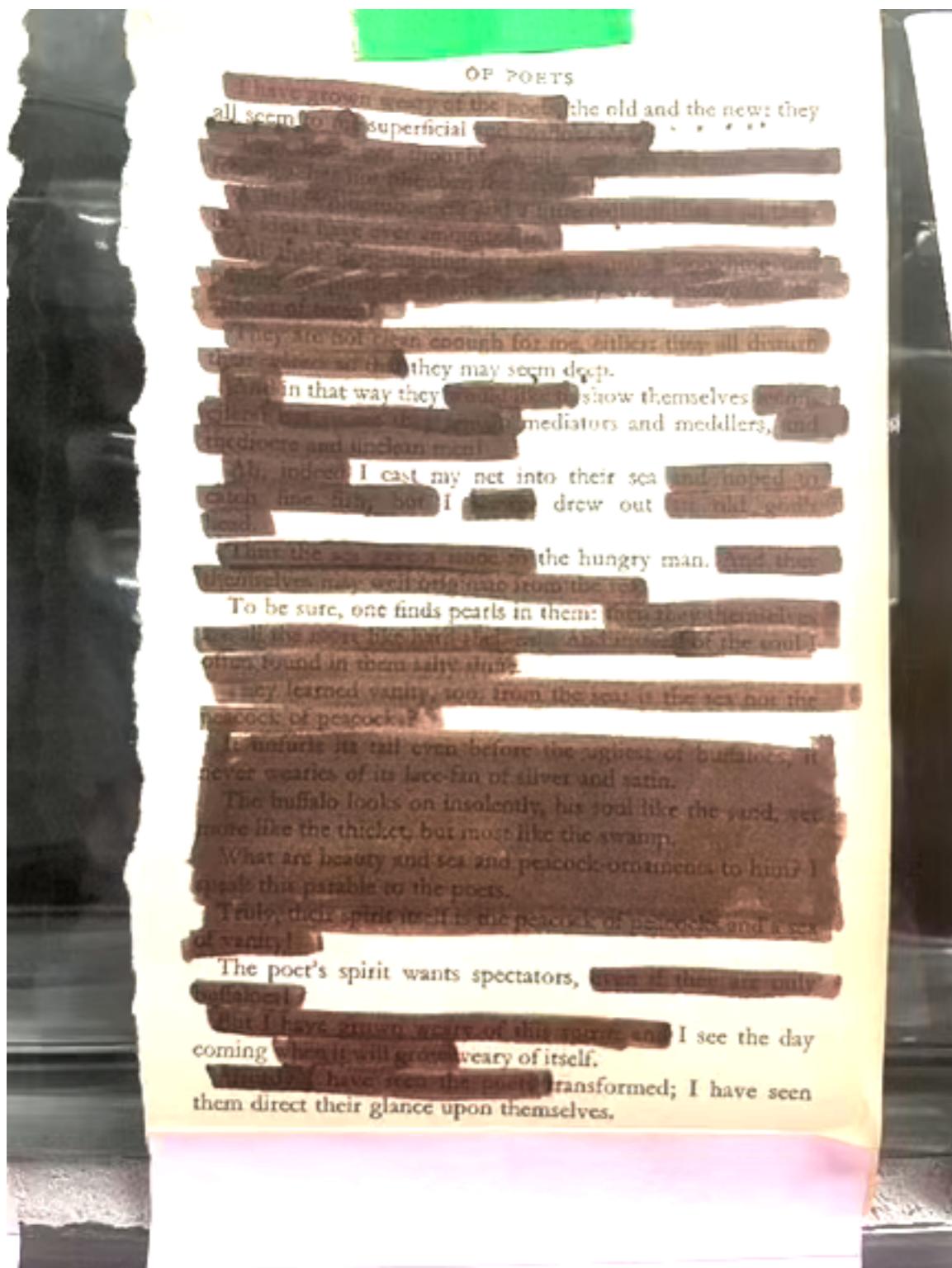


## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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Listen to your diagnosis,  
But contemplate it, don't sink in  
it.

Listen To what The client brings  
Forth.  
stay creative.



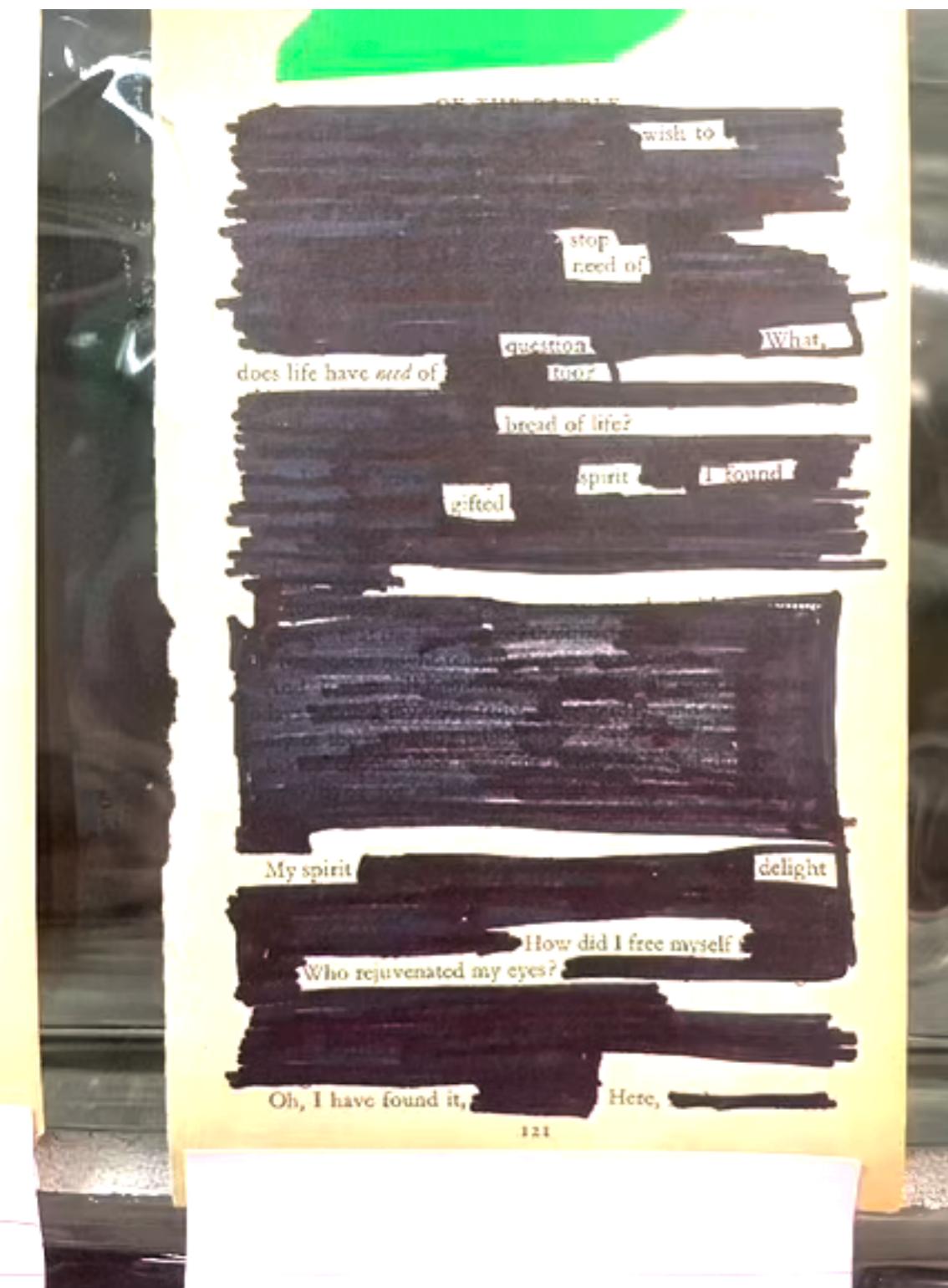
## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

DANCE IN  
THE MESSY  
IN - BETWEEN.  
EVERYTHING  
is BOTH



## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

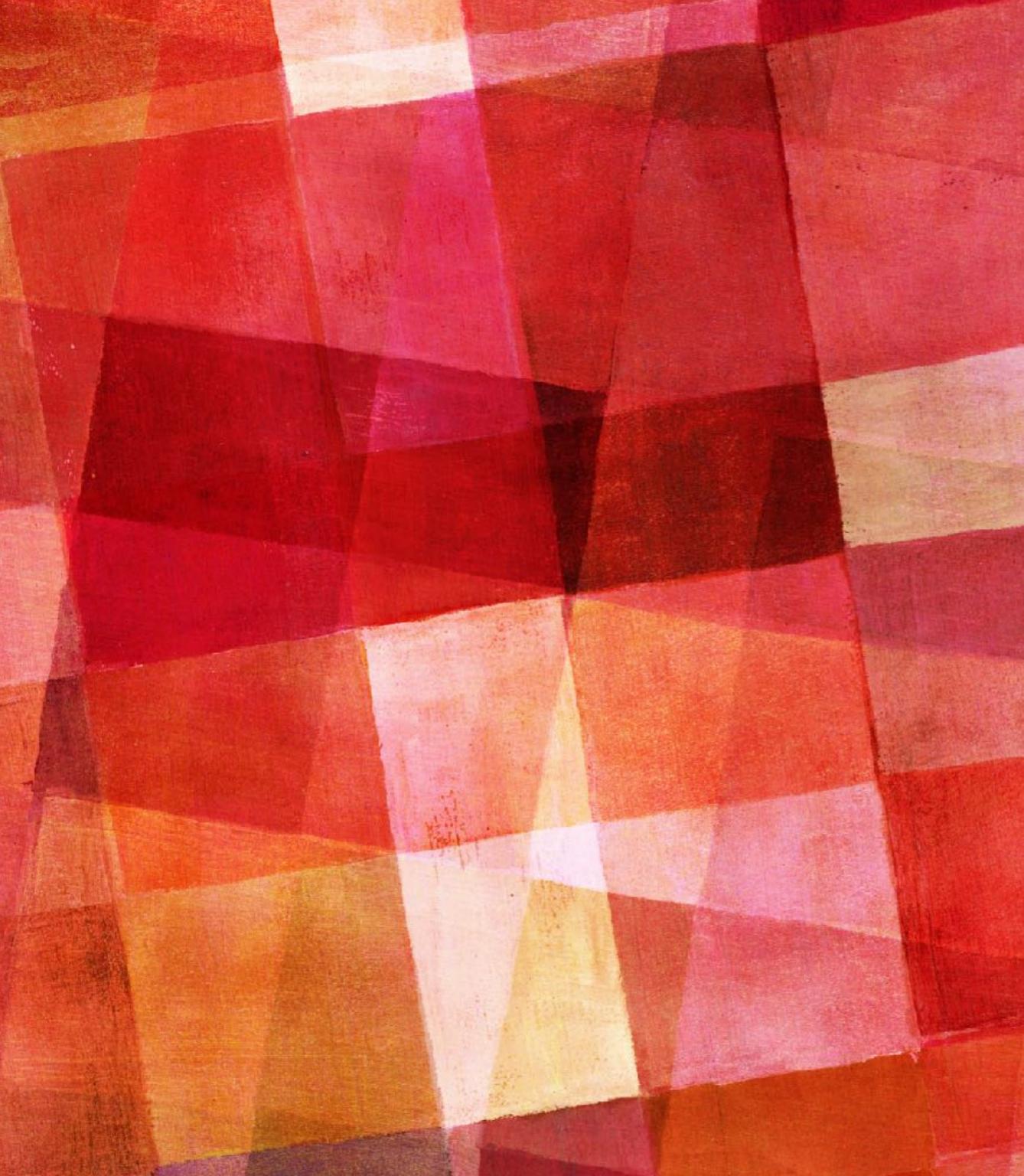
Spend time on a diagnosis  
then put it aside  
and let it go



## DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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Listen to your heart.



## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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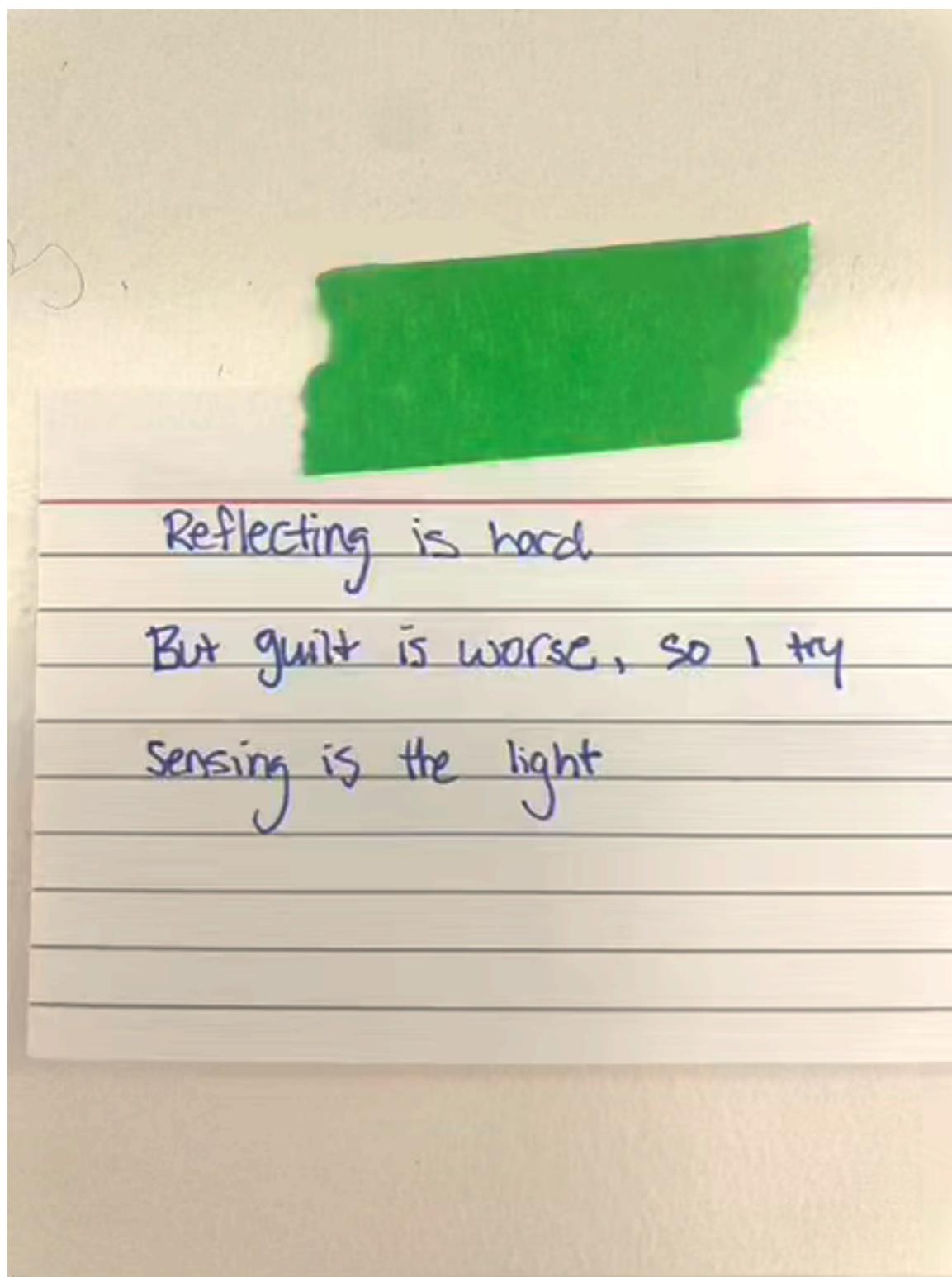
- In the fishbowl, share moments in your project where you experienced this polarity
- In conversation with another person, what advice would you give yourself to navigate this tension in your future practice?
- Harvest this in a collaborative haiku.

## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

---

What is seen needed  
Rush may not be it  
hence  
The expansion will not  
succeed!

Allow novelty!



## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE VS. DIALOGIC

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HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE  
NOT TIED TO  
AN OUTCOME

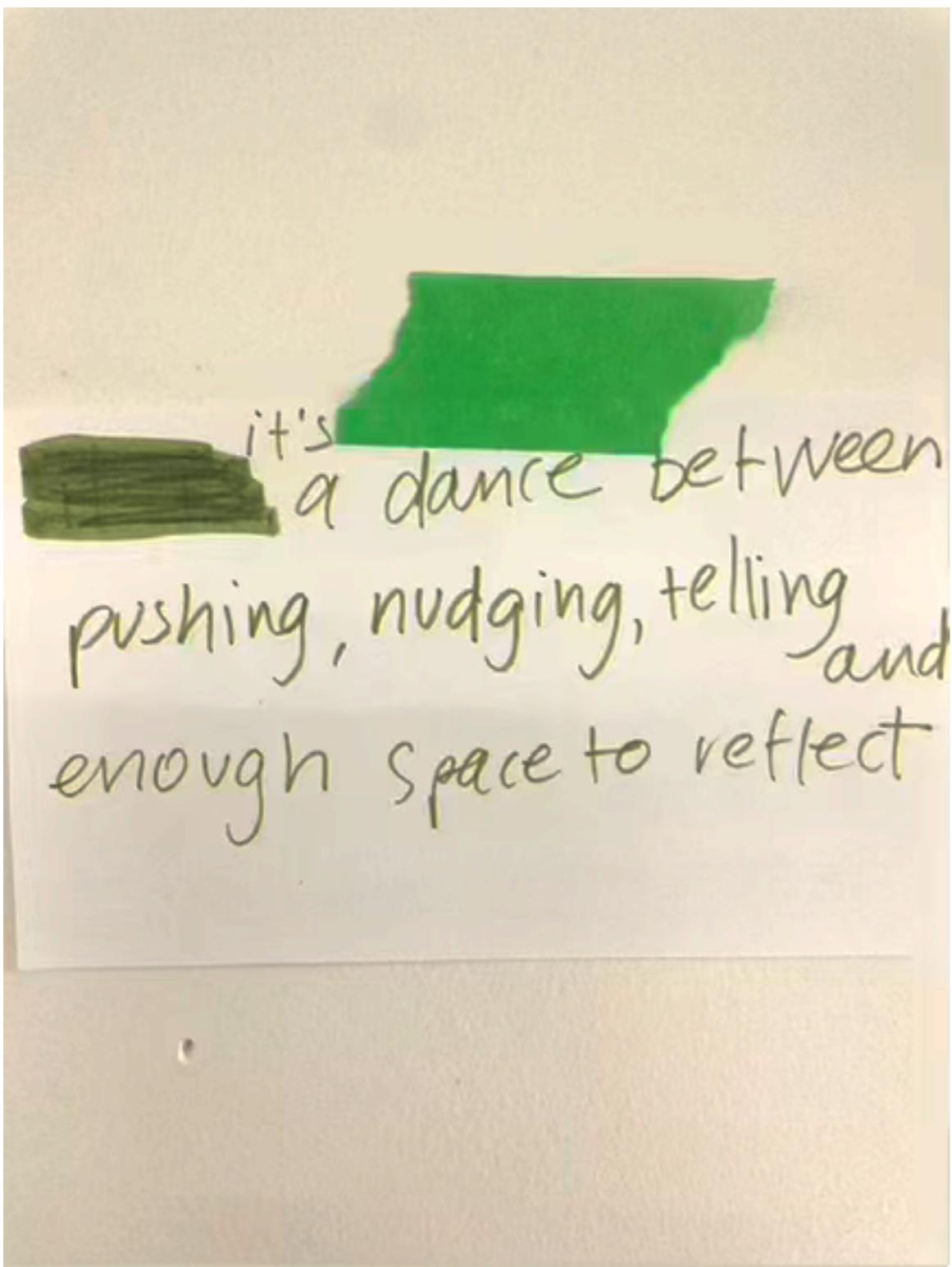
## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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Approach as expert  
Contently bask in chaos  
Balance in the dance

work within your skills  
wait for people to say  
what they have waited to say.

balancing  
vers behind it all



## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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Observe yourself,  
observe the system.  
In the space between  
observe something beautiful  
emerge

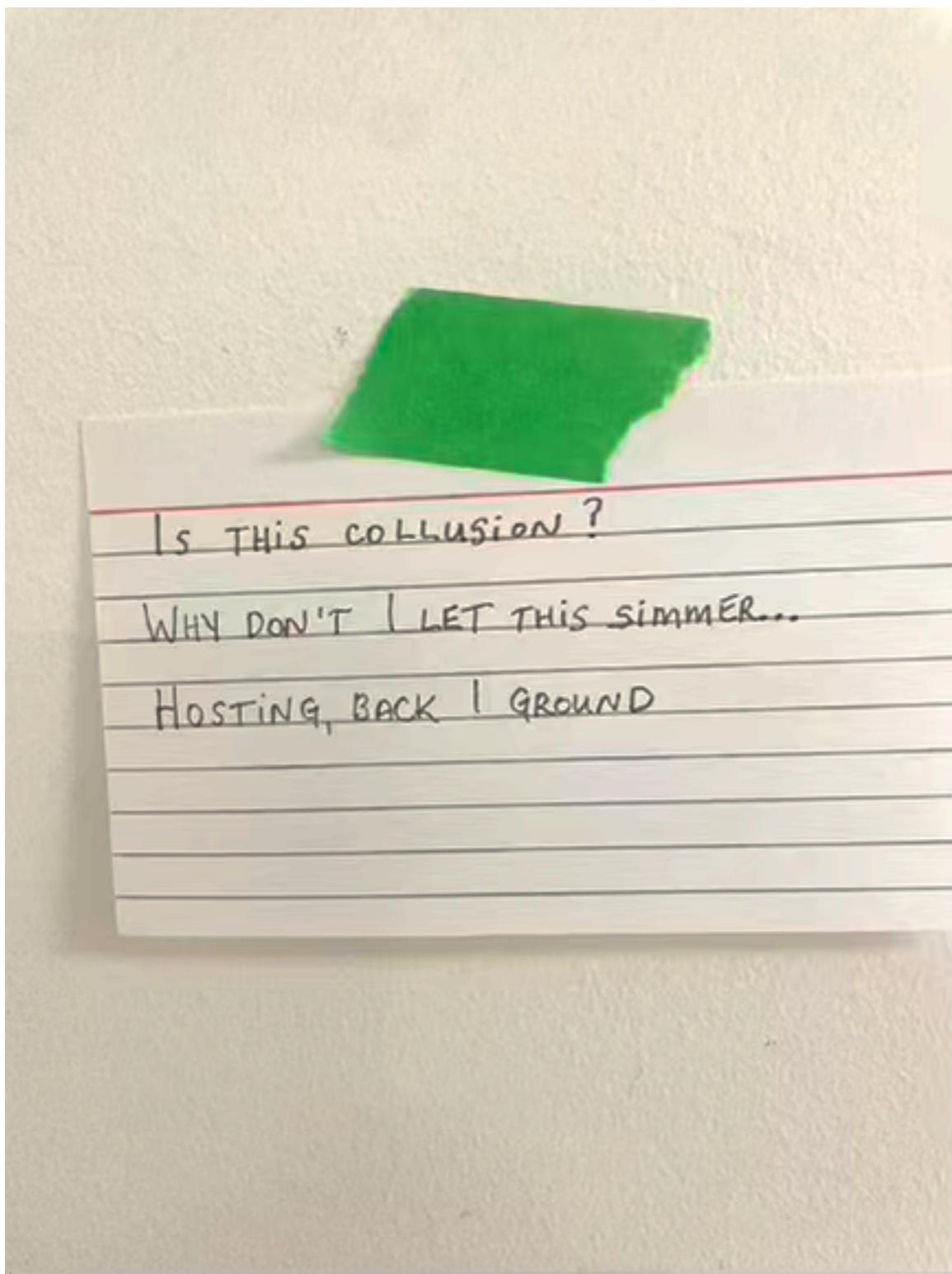
## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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Choice has me frozen  
I grow stronger in your presence  
The winter brings stillness

Observe the stillness



## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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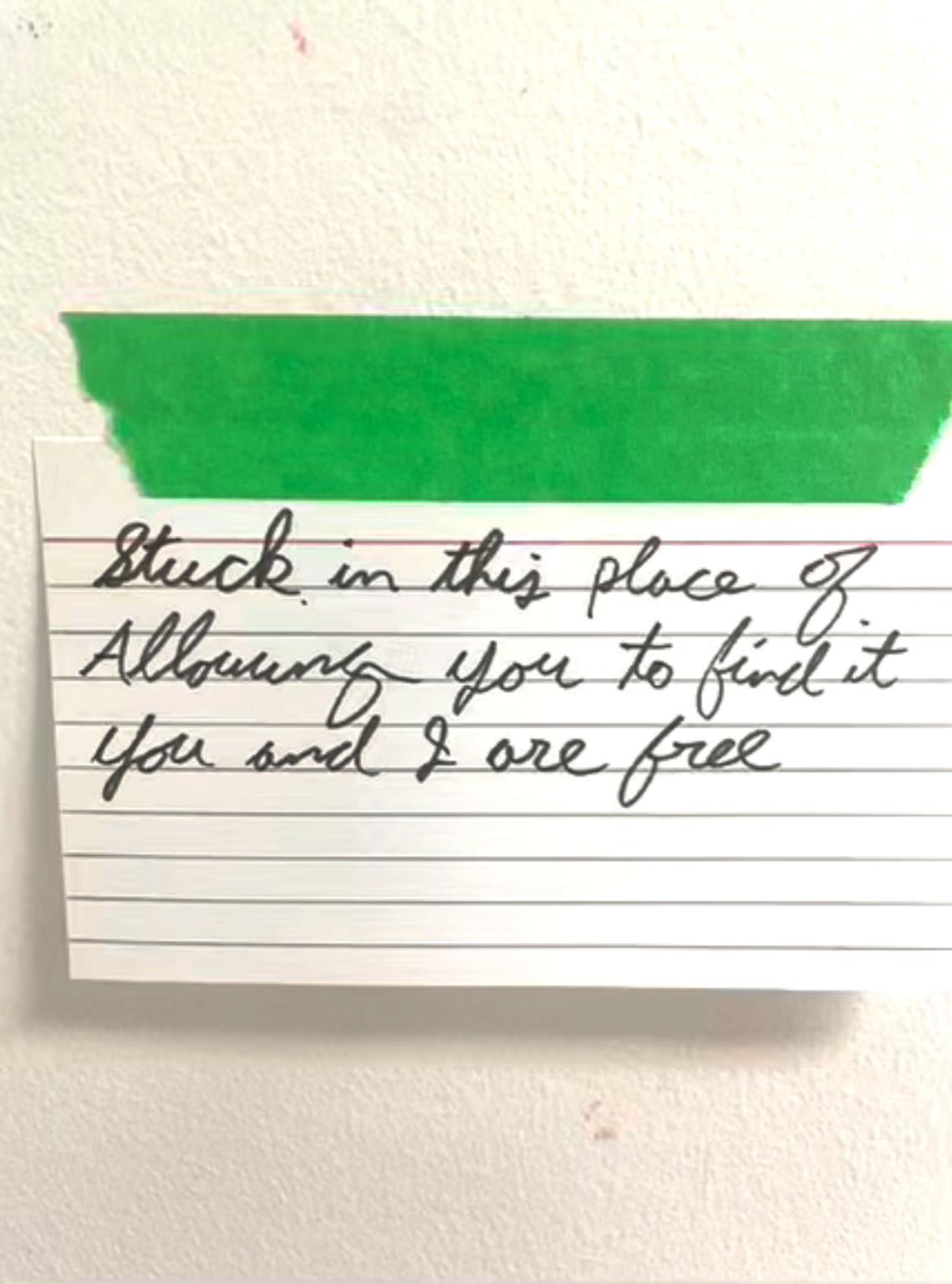
May 3, 2025

Hello love,

When facing a tension between  
participation + observation,  
Soak back into presence.  
Sense into what the space needs

## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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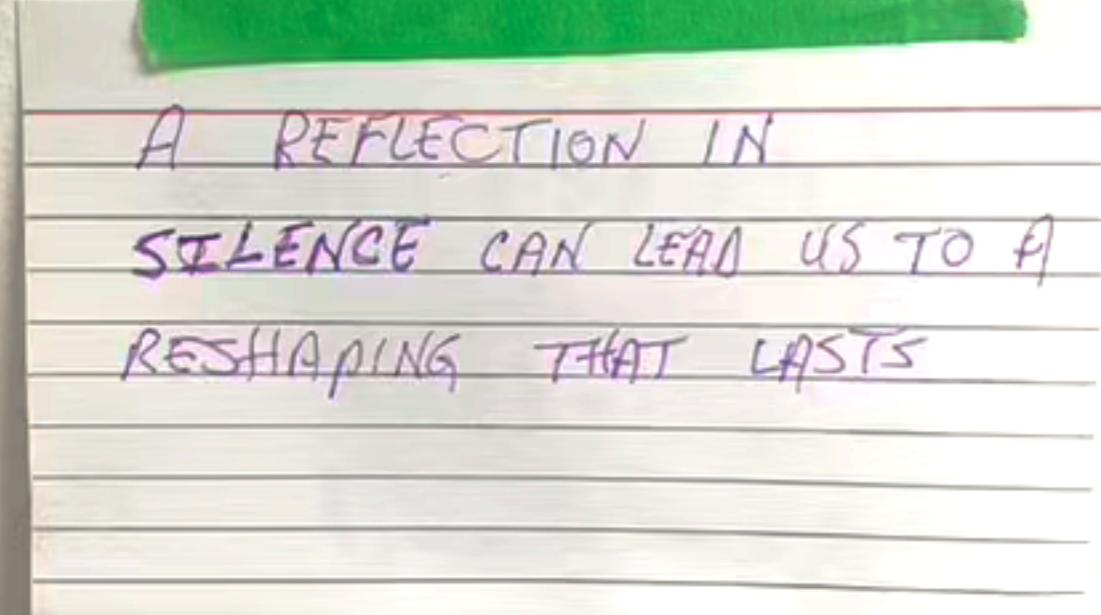


Stuck in this place of  
Allowing you to find it  
You and I are free

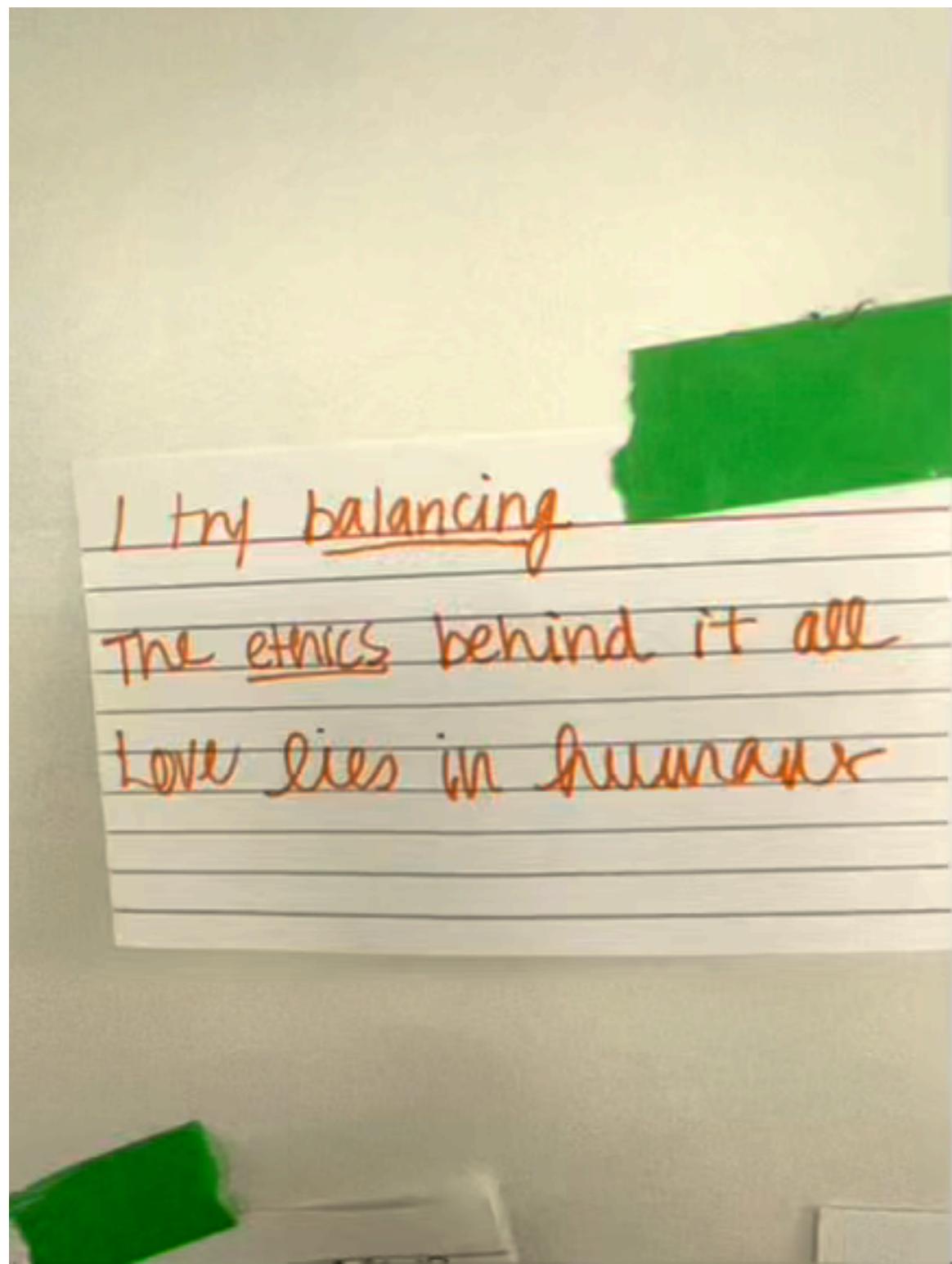
Be the mirror in Snow White but  
with  
a heart and a face.

## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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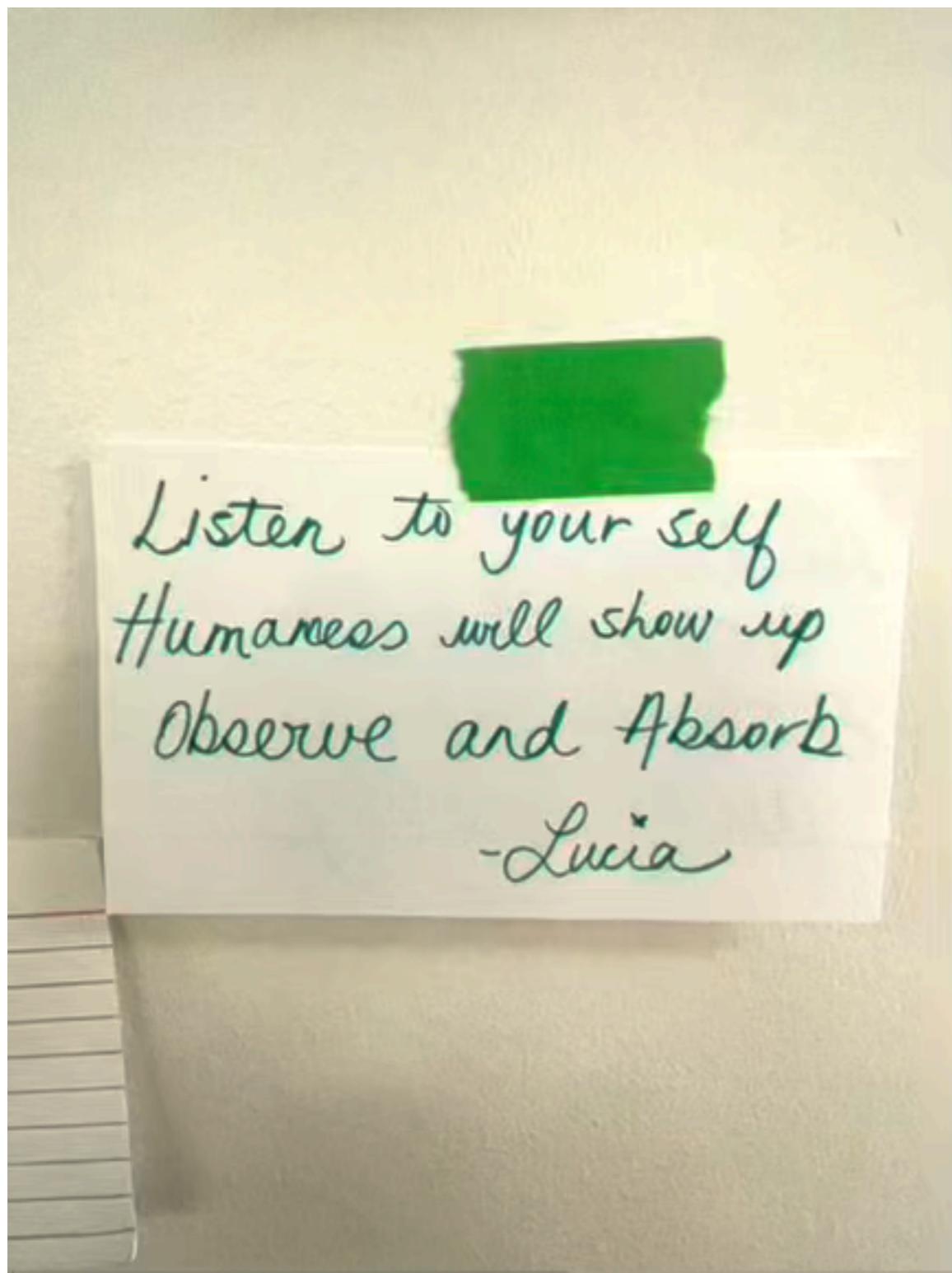
Reflection is never not good.



## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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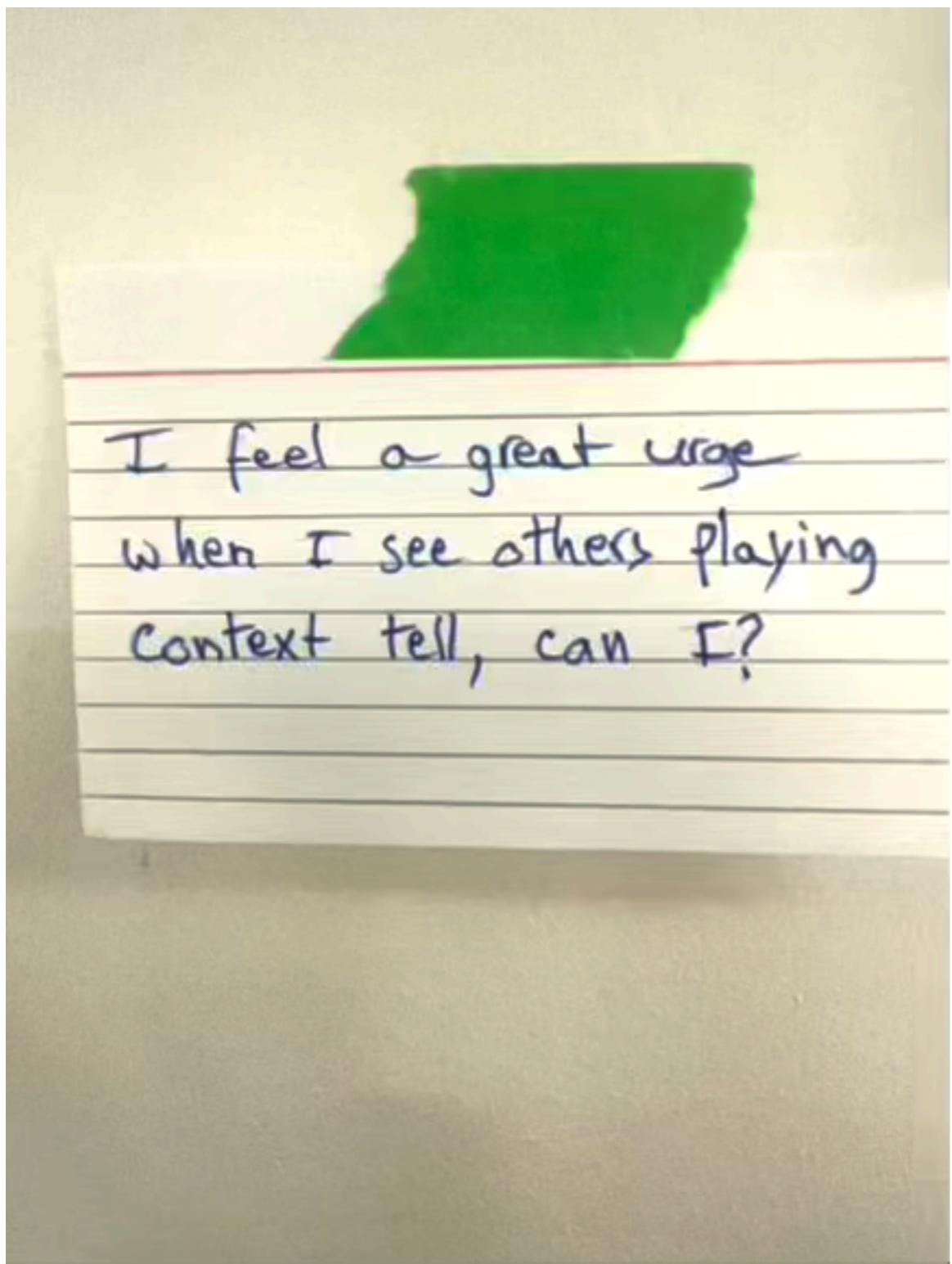
Embrace silence.



## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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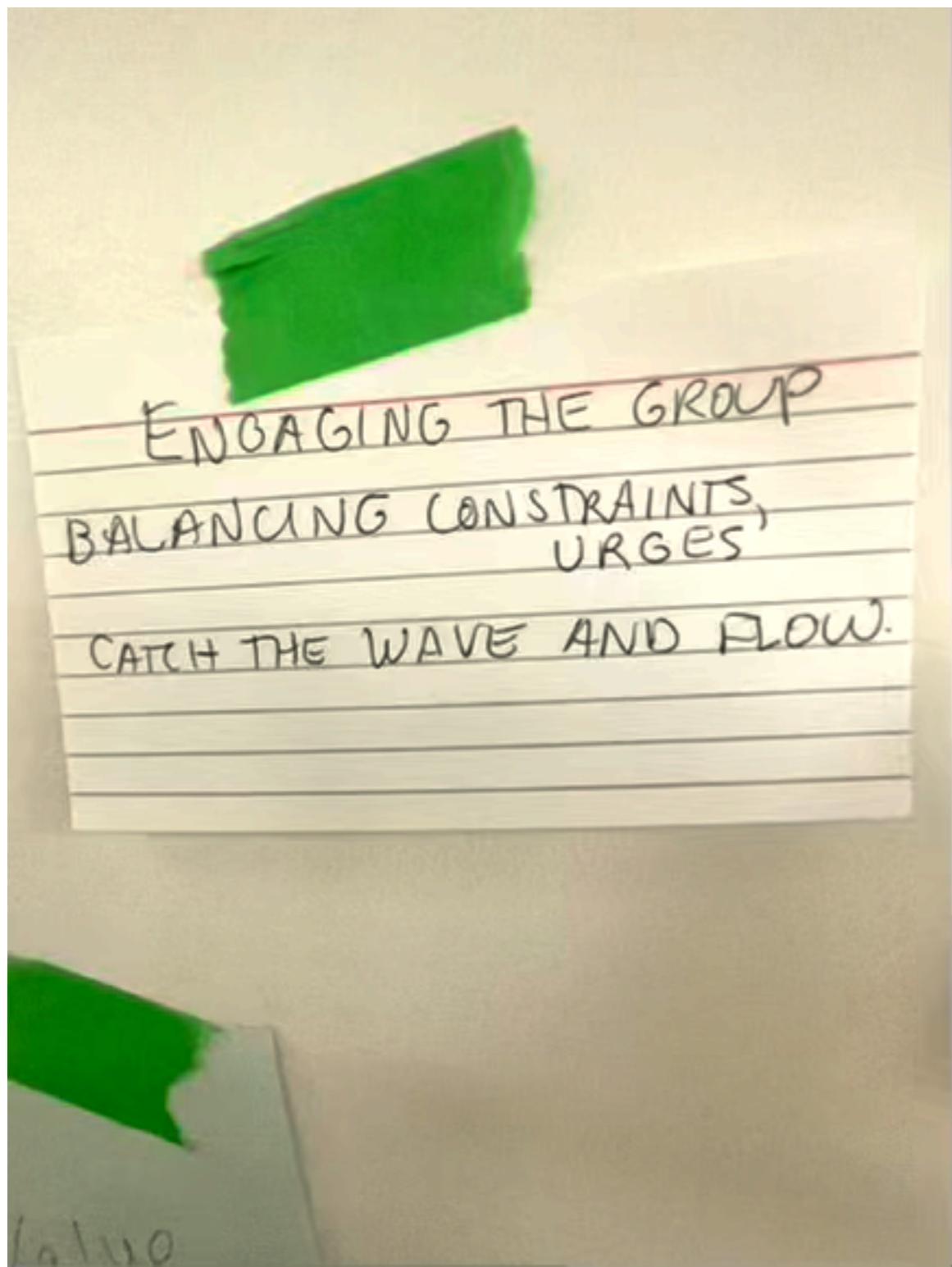
Listen actively  
Show up authentically



## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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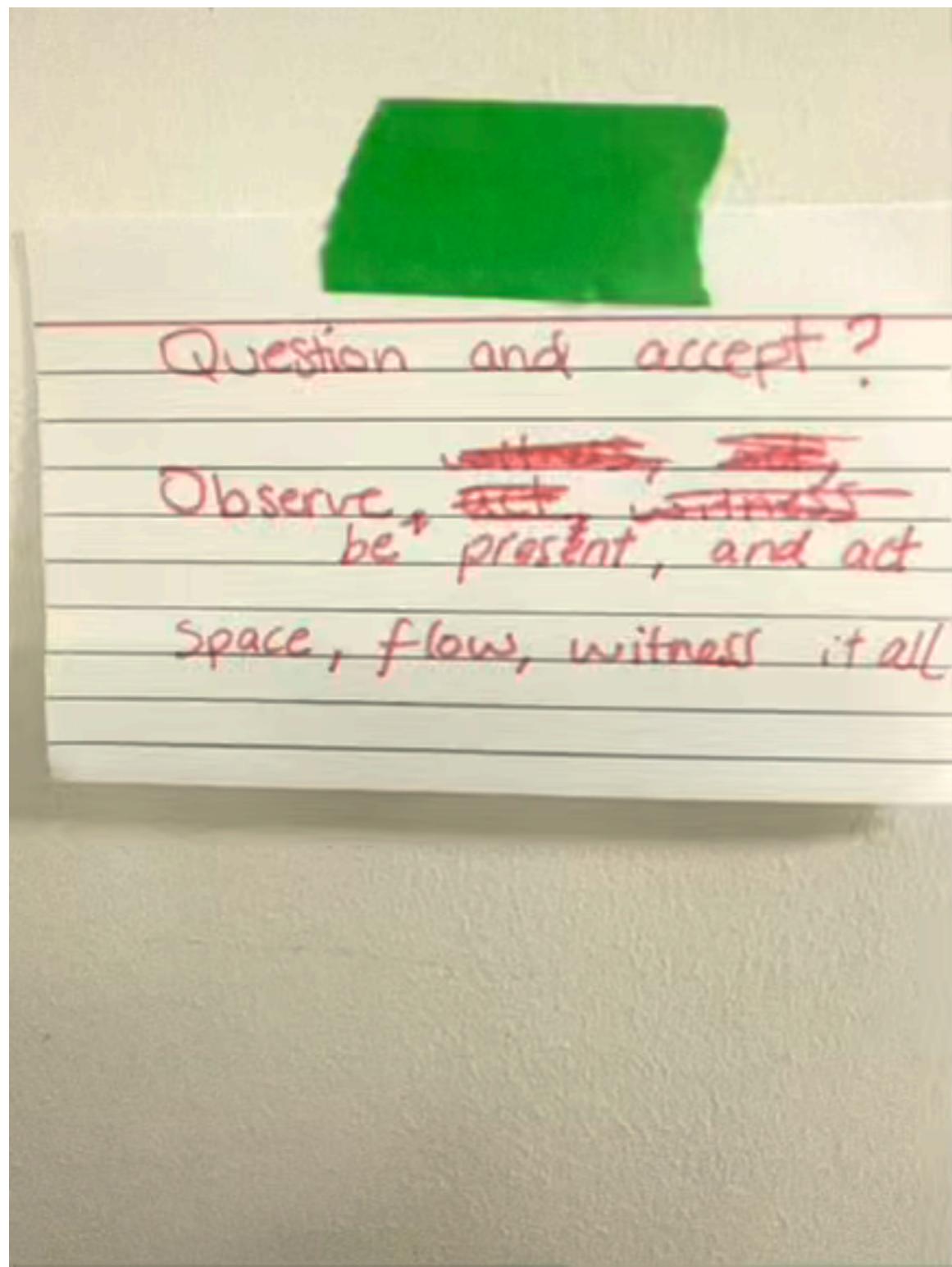
Resist the Urge  
To make it about you.



## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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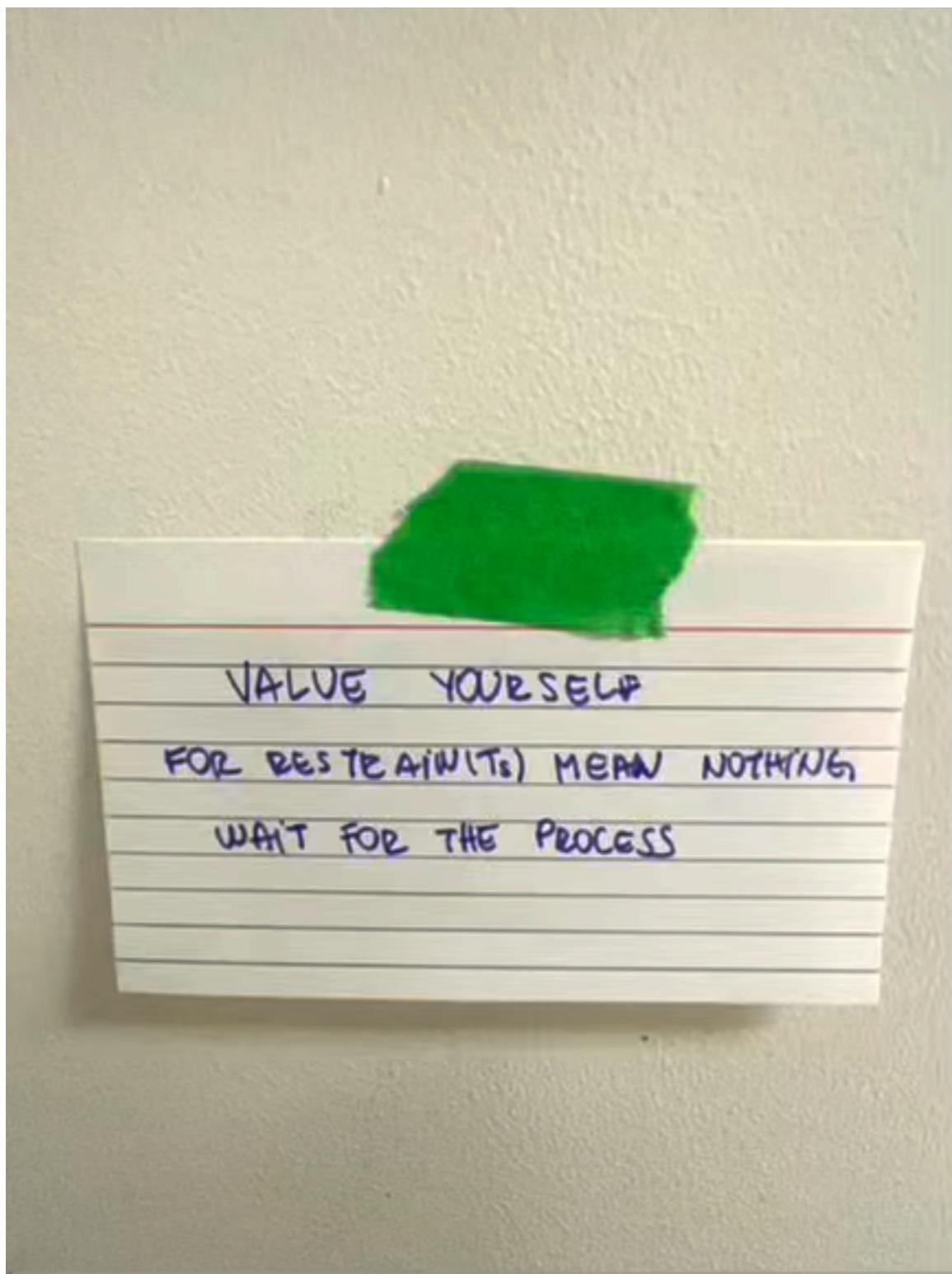
DONT FIGHT THROUGH  
STRANGE FEELINGS -  
ASK THEM WHAT THEY HAVE  
TO TELL ME.



## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

---

Give yourself Grace  
Remind yourself  
You are learning



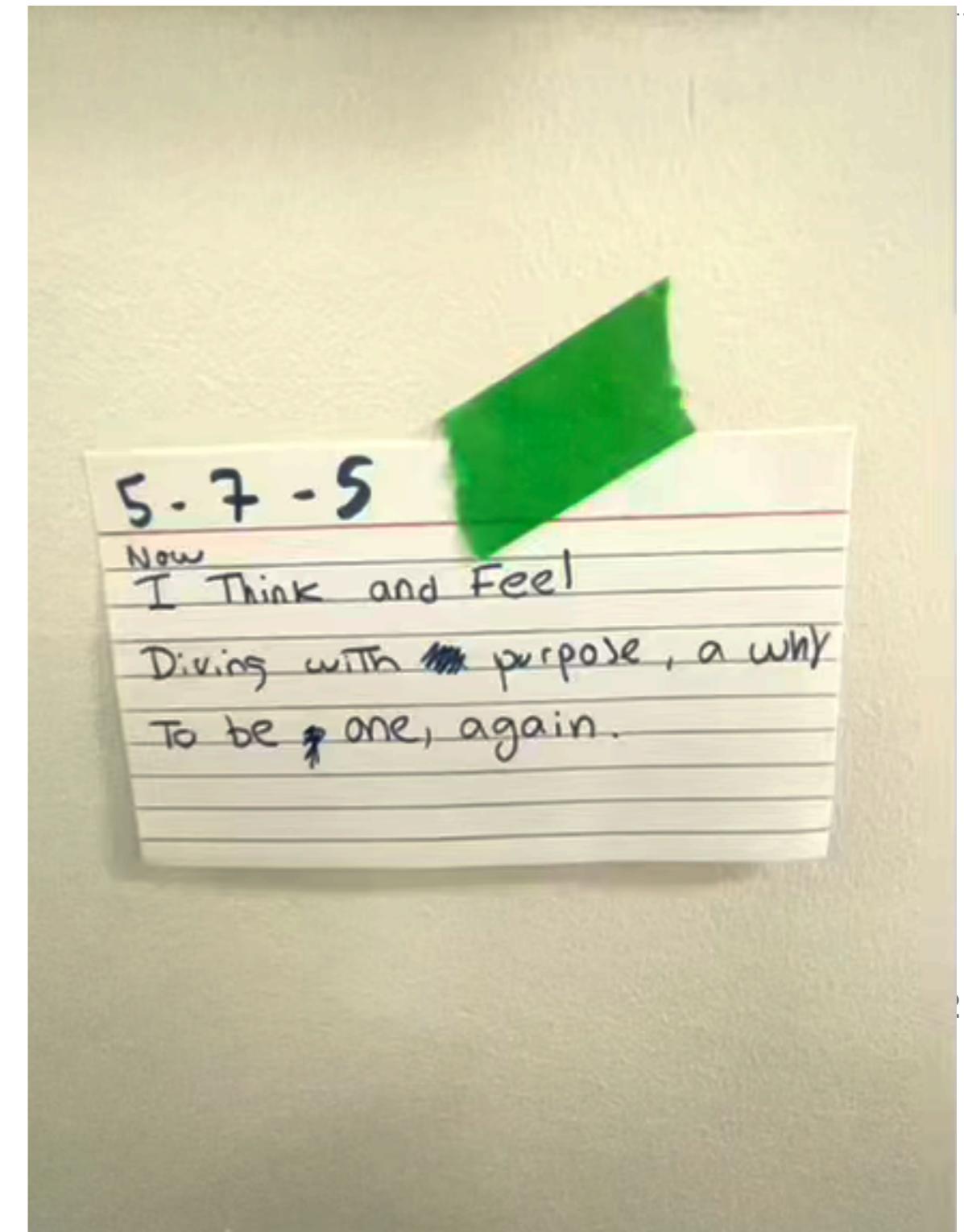
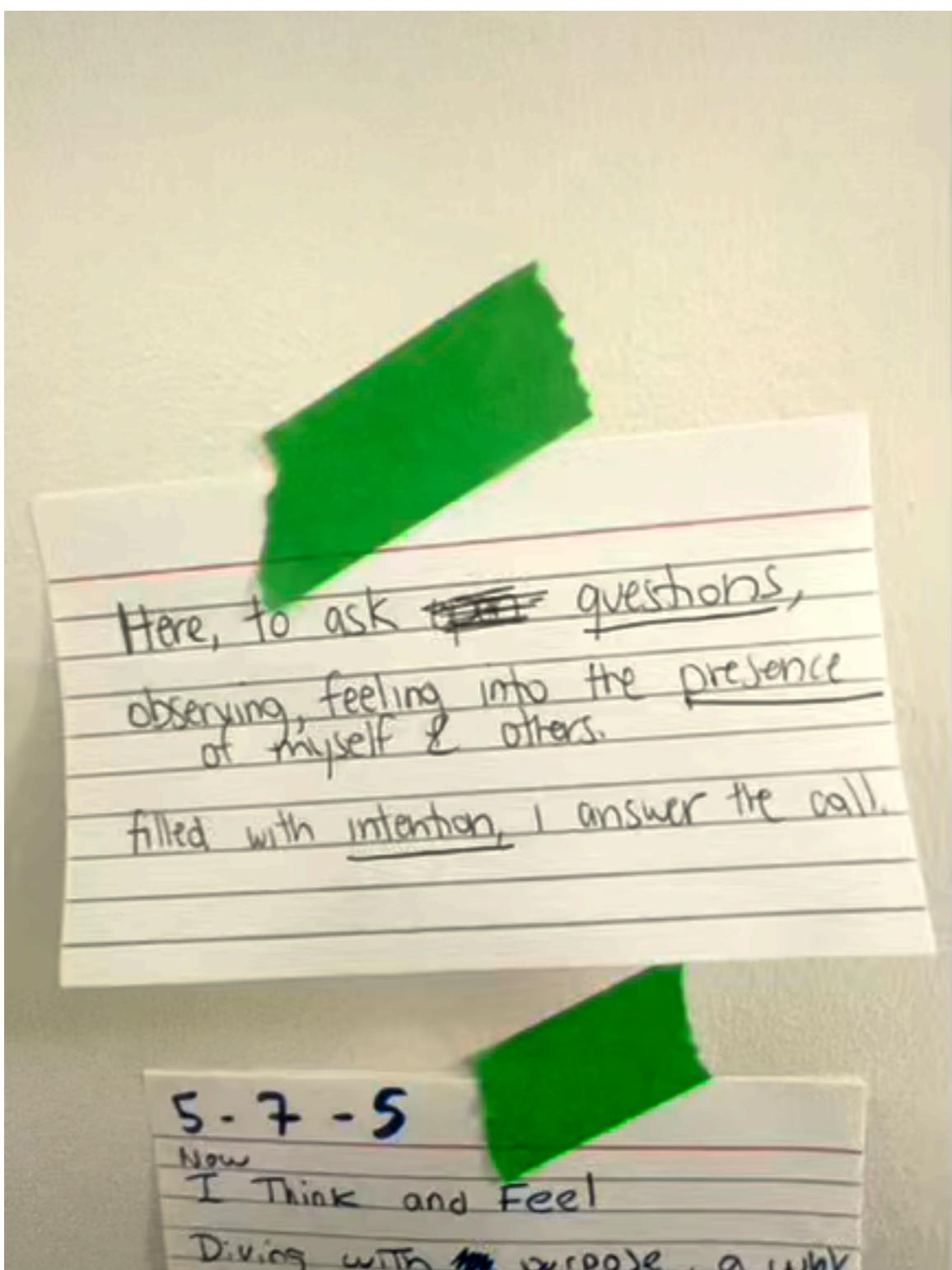
## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

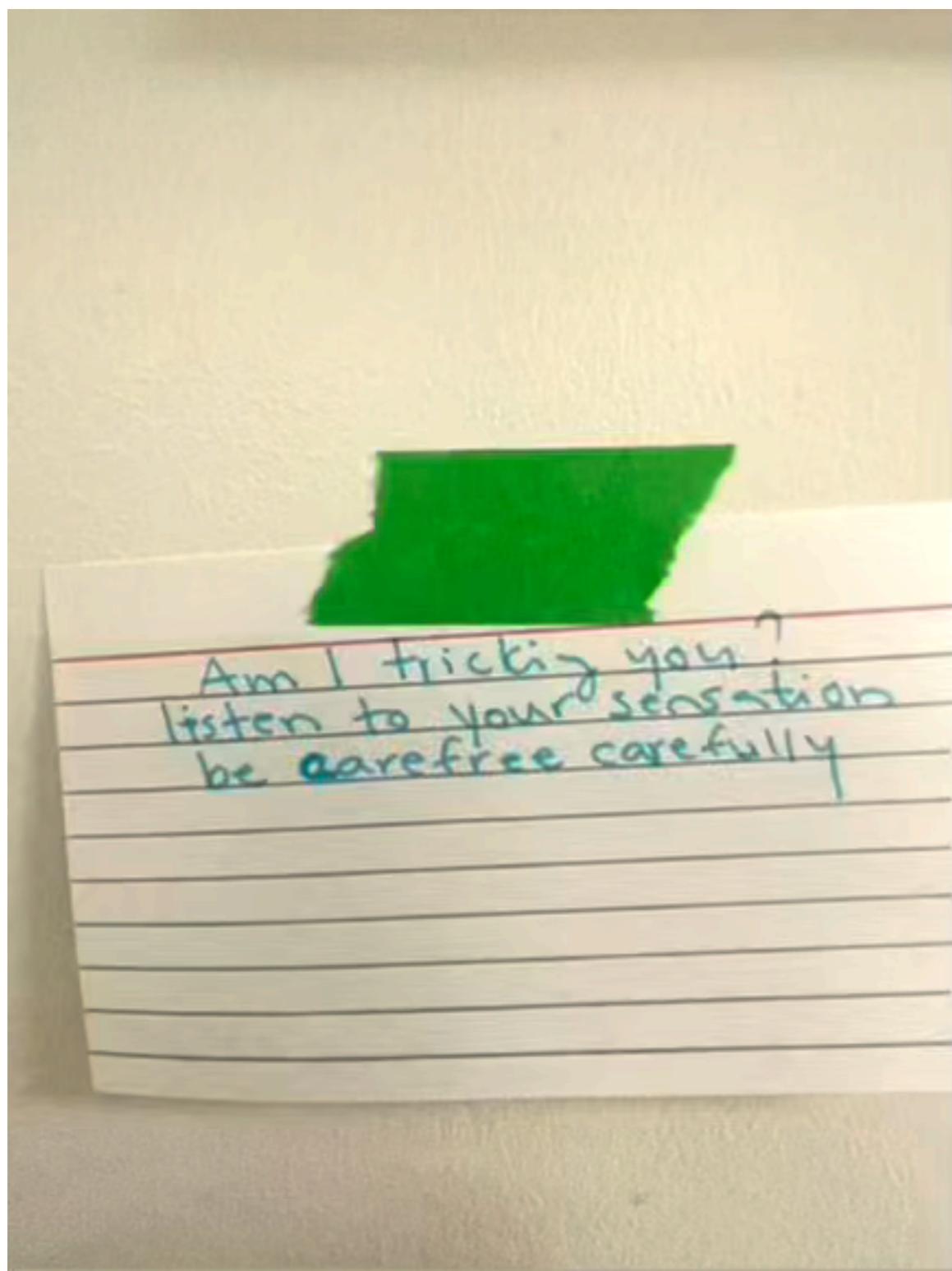
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### ADVICE

Wait. Resist the urge & performance anxiety  
Hold. Process it.

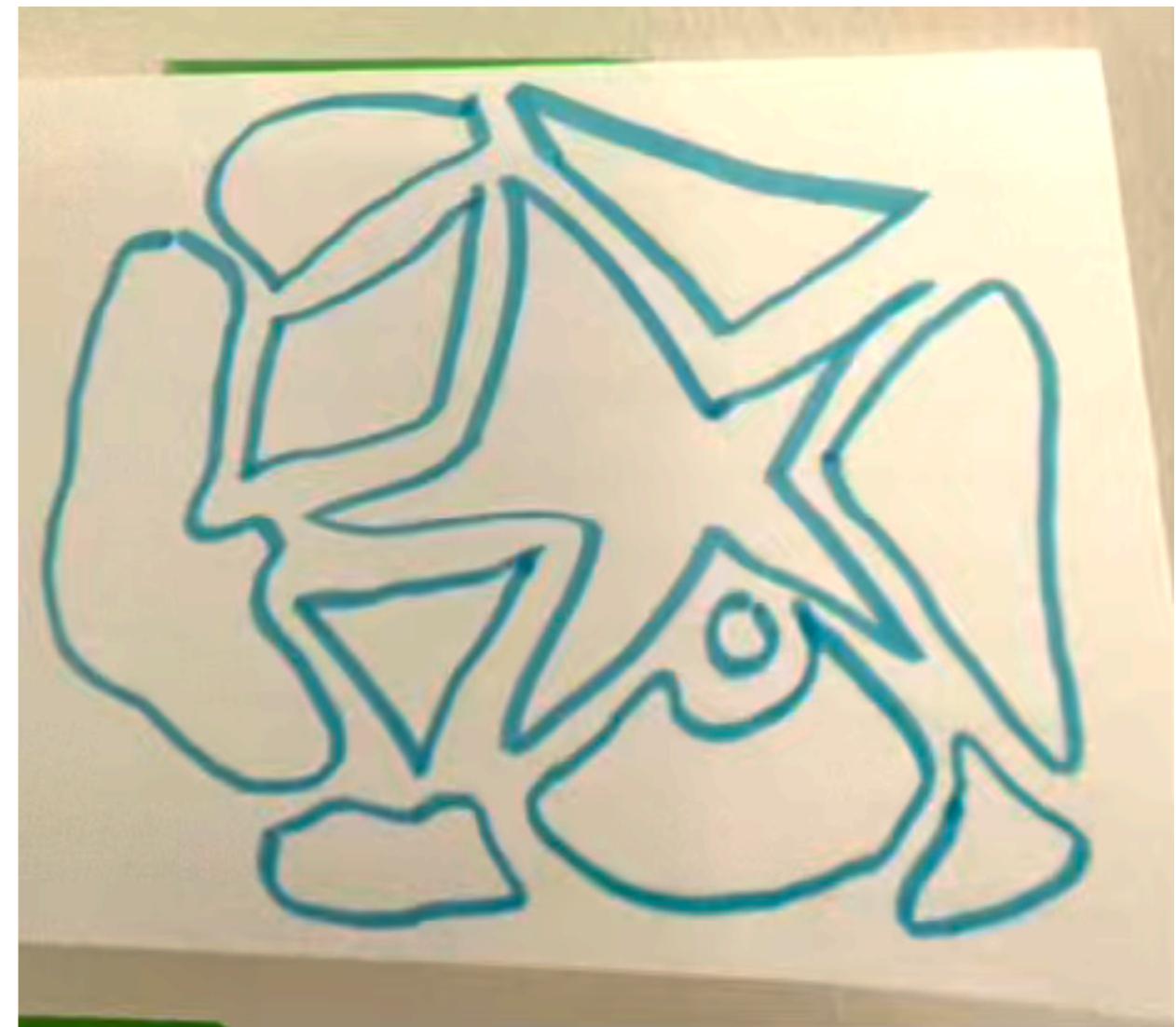
## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

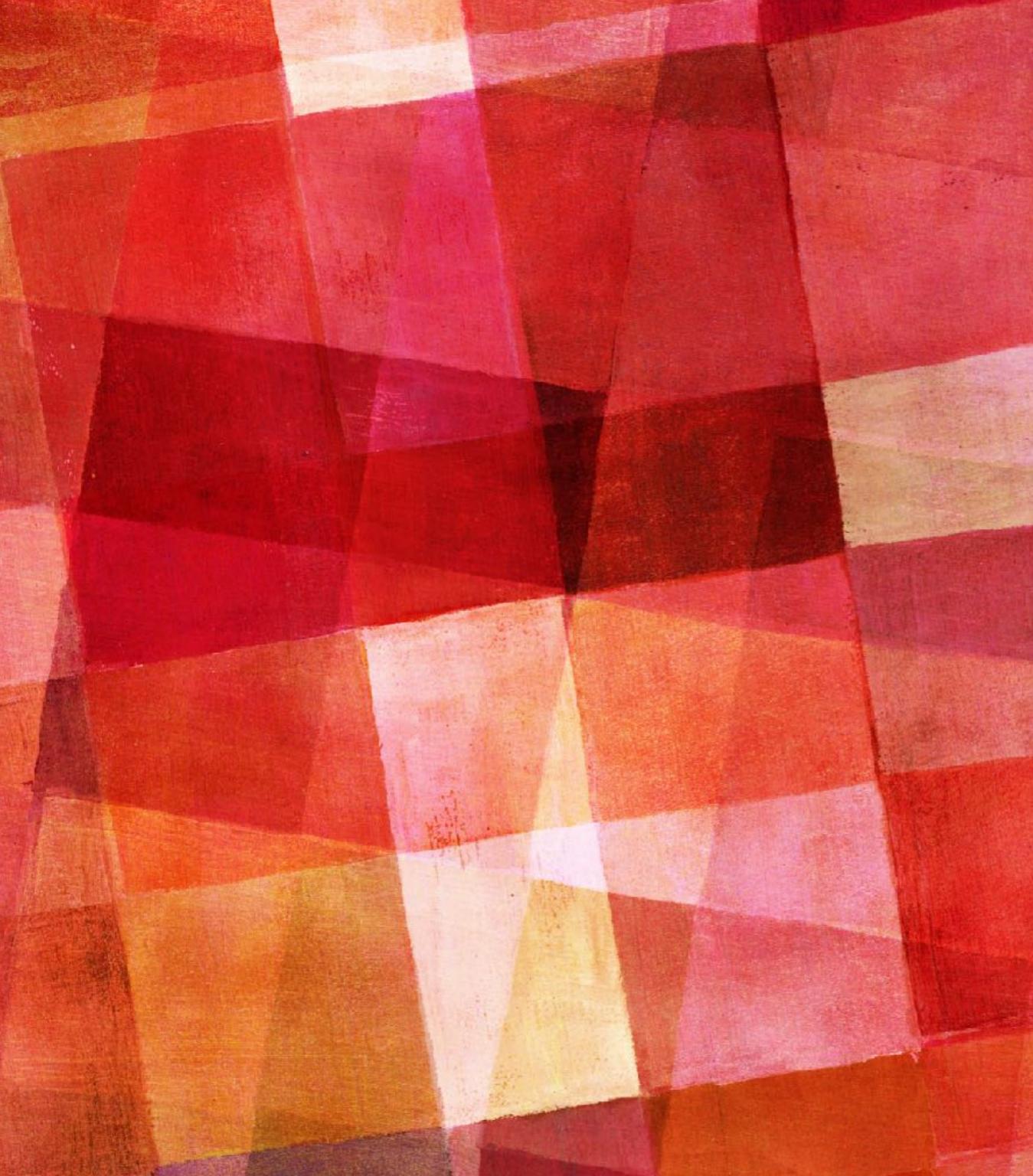




## PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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## PLANS VS. EMERGENCE

---

- In the fishbowl, share moments in your project where you experienced this polarity
- In conversation with another person, what advice would you give yourself to navigate this tension in your future practice?
- Harvest this through a picture taken somewhere outside on the Loyola campus.



## PLANS VS. EMERGENCE

---

Satisfaction - think of the goal  
Is this not the way to do it?

Exceptions can be made,  
Emergencies are bound to  
happen  
It depends

You can only help a system  
As much as it wants to help itself



## PLANS VS. EMERGENCE

---

Let the wind control you  
Be open to change

Host yourself  
Consider boundaries  
Who is responsible?  
Is everything on the intervener's shoulders?

Hold plans lightly  
Go with the flow



## PLANS VS. EMERGENCE

---

Work on yourself  
Blindspots, anxieties, discomforts,  
Boundaries, emotions

Flowy planning emerges from  
Maintenance and Groundedness

Dive in  
use of self



## PLANS VS. EMERGENCE

---

Plan. Plan. Plan,  
Then get ready to  
move away from them  
to get to emergence

Allow it  
Let it go

Trust yourself  
Trust your instincts



## PLANS VS. EMERGENCE

---

Uncertainty is needed to  
See boundaries, insecurities and  
To re-plan emergence

Allow yourself to see patterns  
Learn, play, and deconstruct

You are amazing



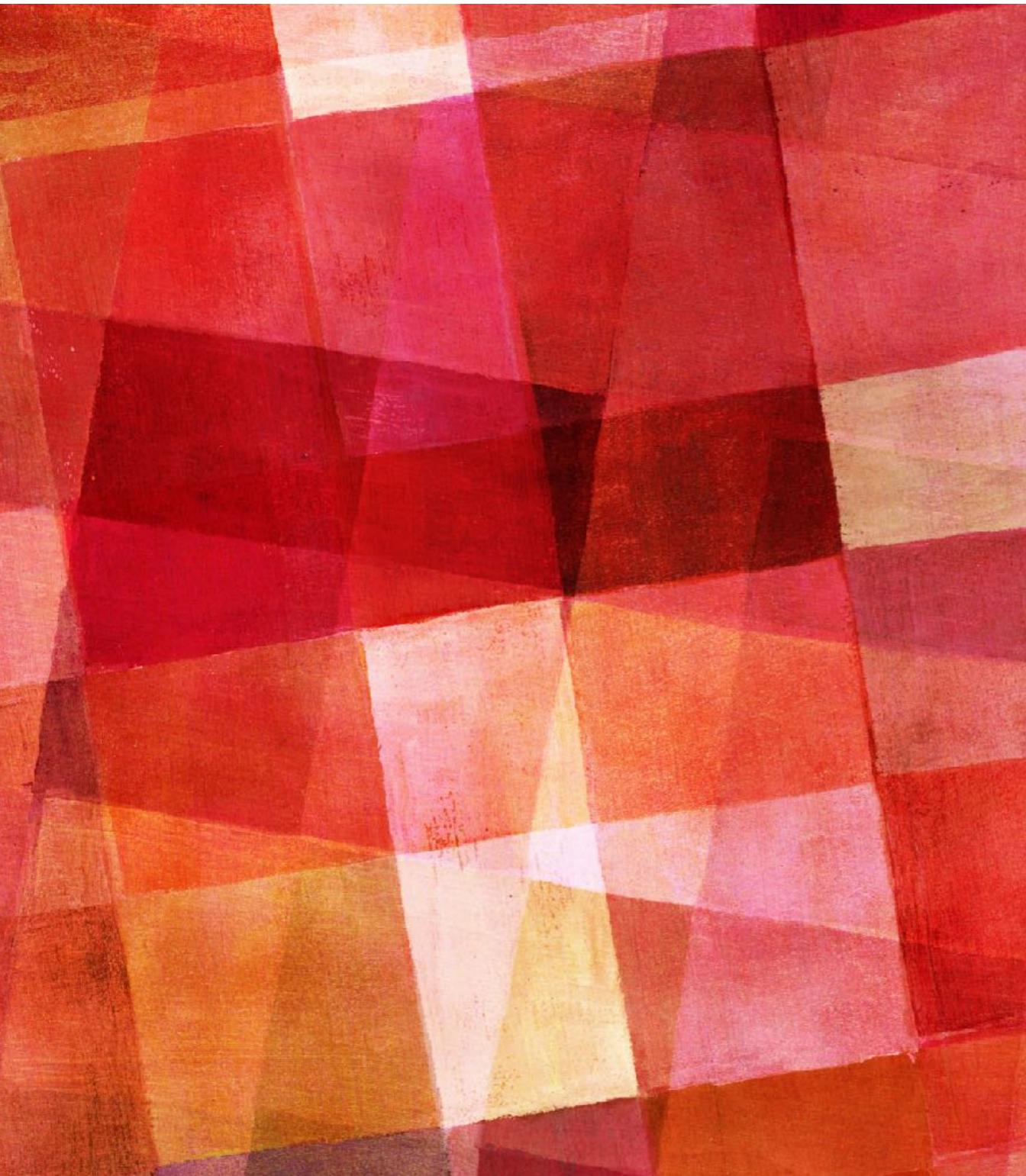
## PLANS VS. EMERGENCE

---

Dear love,

Even when uncertainties  
Arise,  
Know that you can trust  
How to plan

And remember it can  
Always change



## A FINAL HARVEST

---

Practising precision  
To not be precise  
In the jump  
To the water  
To the struggle  
And the fun  
There is a depth to the story  
There is something beneath the surface  
Not knowing up from down  
Right from left  
Where to go?  
Is this something for me?

## A FINAL HARVEST

---

I wanted to jump  
In the adventure  
There is always more  
Not knowing where  
The track is leading  
Or how the train works  
Many pictures  
In one uncertainty  
See the tunnel  
To the future  
Far away  
Layered  
So close

I stopped and wandered  
without knowing how I would  
shape the change  
I am going to grow  
I am going to flourish  
And support the growth  
Of structures  
And organizations  
It takes 100  
To build the house of change

## A FINAL HARVEST

---

Beyond the drowning  
And the stories  
And the beliefs  
That held me  
Tethered to the past  
In the middle  
A little voice of clarity and wonder  
One step  
And then another  
One way  
And then the other  
Embracing the joys  
Of different colours  
Opposite but united

The pain is gone now  
The cycle gets larger  
To strengthen the dream  
The circle of life  
And community  
Not knowing is knowing  
The map is not a map  
An essence  
An act of faith in the unknown  
Daring to jump

## A FINAL HARVEST

---

Preparing to recognize the voice  
of need  
And recognize the path  
It is now in me  
With the community  
That will support me  
Do not waste  
A good chaos

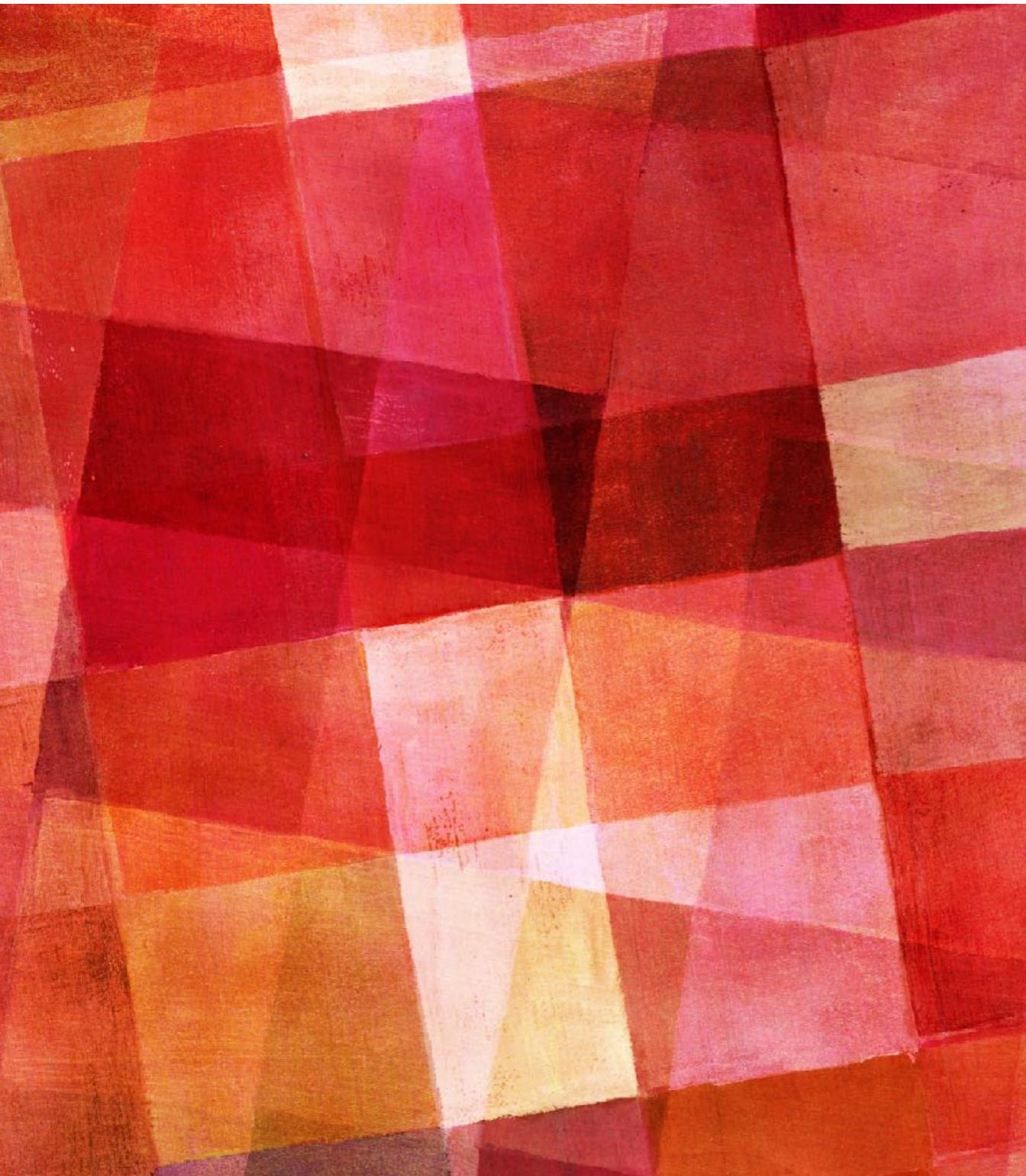
Figuring it out together  
To live in the not order  
Let the forest of wisdom grow  
To shape change  
To give light  
In conversations  
And stories  
With right tools to navigate  
The river  
Reading the landscape in  
Relationships

## A FINAL HARVEST

---

I live a story  
Of readiness  
I am ready  
For the losses  
and the wins  
I let go of where we will end  
I am in something  
That has a longer arc  
Bigger and larger than me  
And beautiful  
In all its possible directions

I can choose to go  
In any direction  
I sit calm  
In a house  
That practice is building  
I see the  
Power of my witnessing  
In that space and time of magic  
An injection of colour  
In which vision is created in  
Collective curiosity  
Together, we will  
Go somewhere we don't know yet  
A place of power and wonder  
I don't need to fix  
I help by letting go



## HSI 2026 – PLANNING, CONSULTING AND INTERVENTIONS

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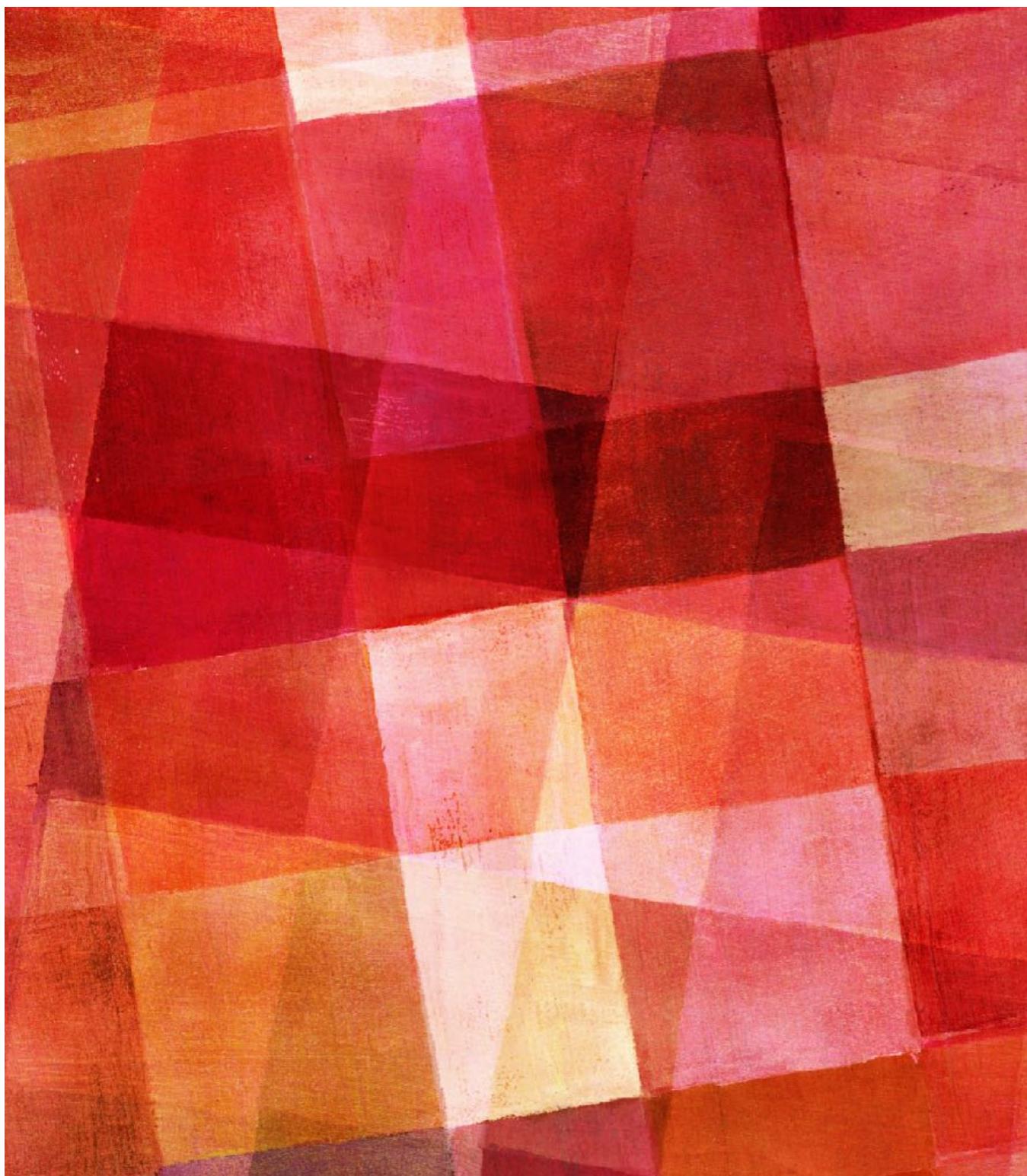
From August 2024 to May 2025  
We formed a learning community.

It was not always pretty, or smooth, or easy.  
But it was always real and it was always  
beautiful and we learned so much together.

Thank you for a great year of practicing.

Now go in the world, and do good work,  
and don't be strangers when you come back.

You will never walk alone.



## HSI 2026 – PLANNING, CONSULTING AND INTERVENTIONS

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