



PLANNING, CONSULTING AND INTERVENTIONS

A pocket practice handbook from HSI 2026

FIRST, SOME FRAMING...

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...

They are:

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

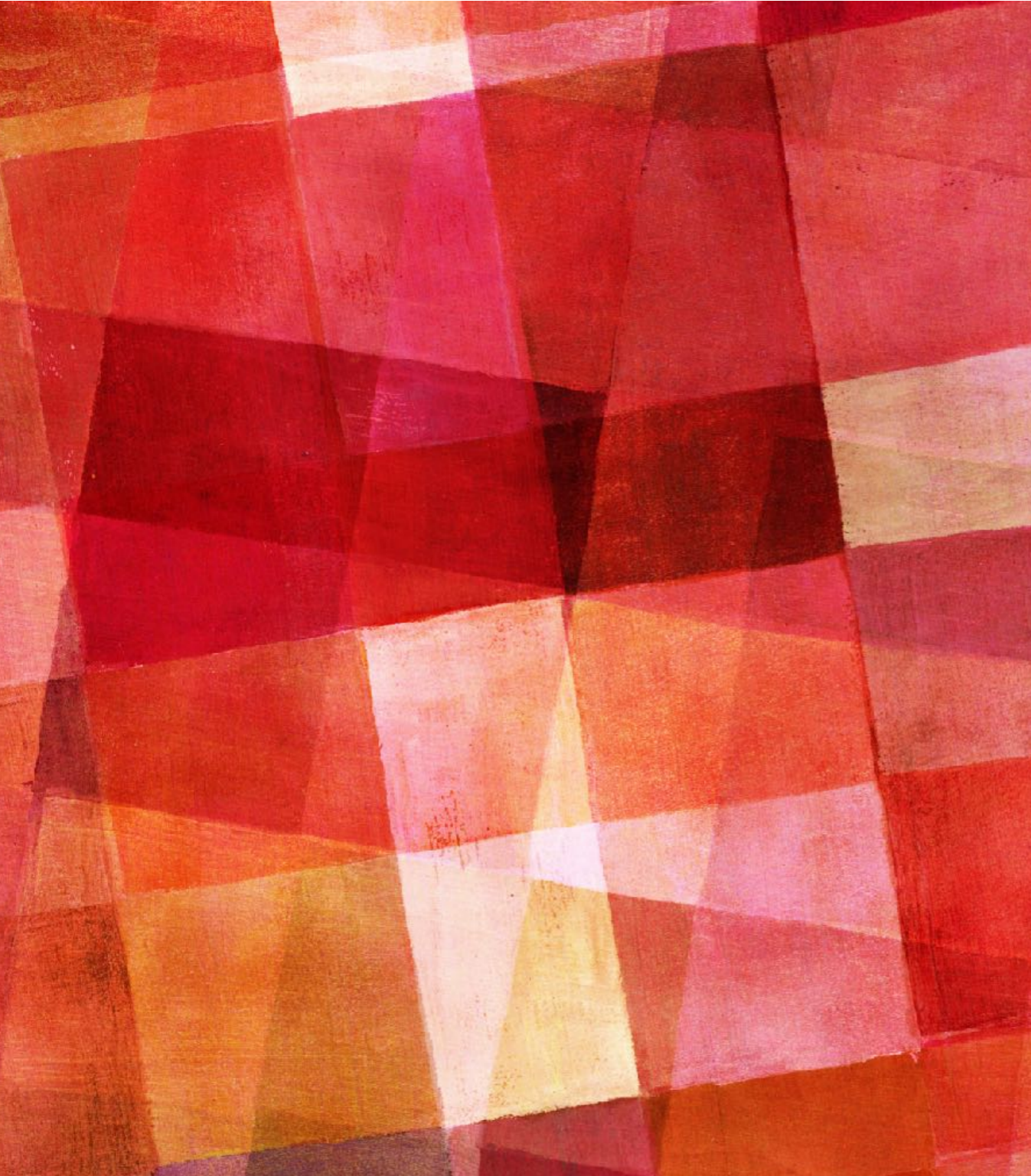
What follows is the compilation of all the pieces of advice you gave yourselves to maintain a good balance as you practice this tricky art of Intervening in Human Systems.

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.

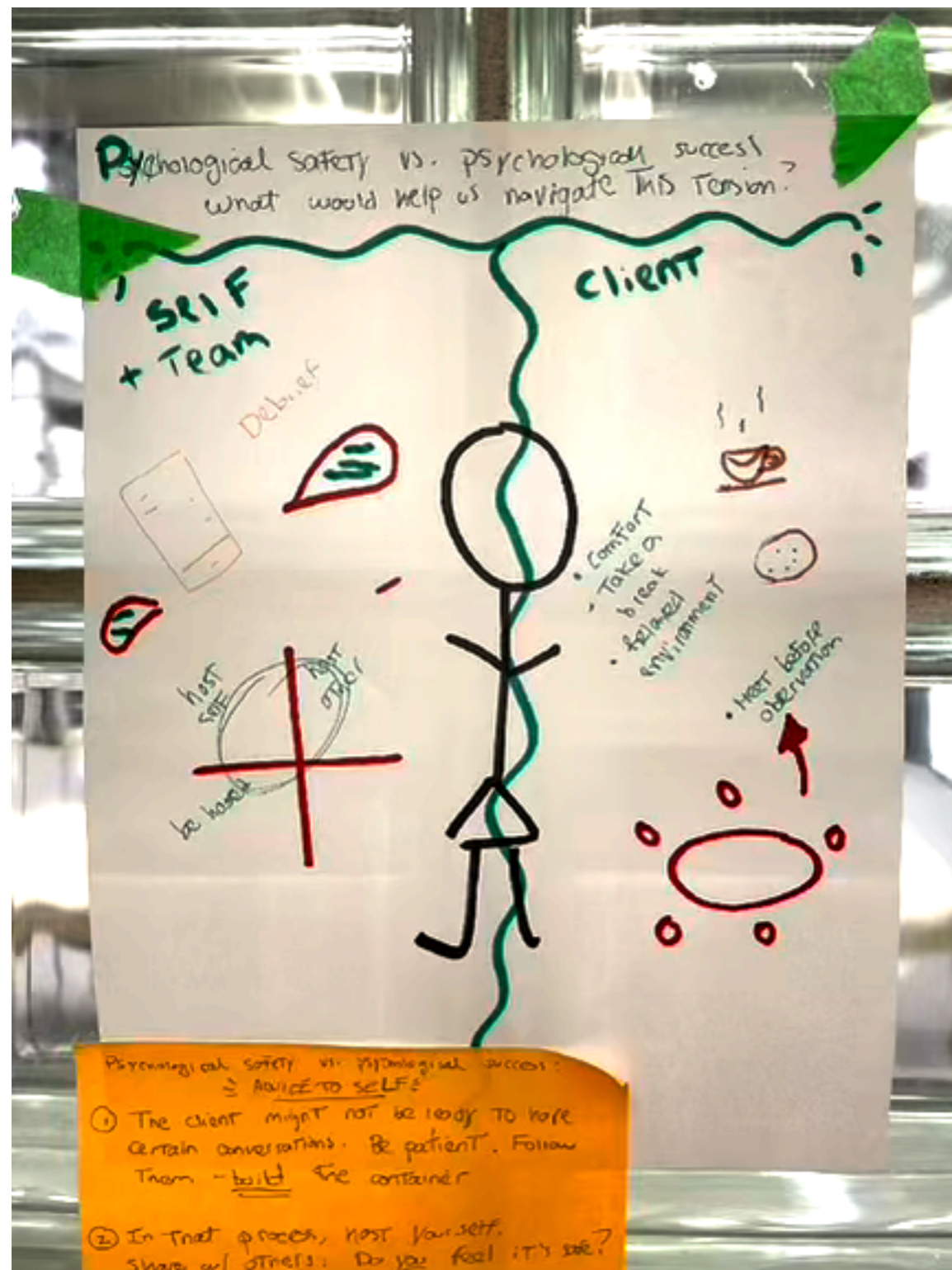
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PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

- 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 rapport

Trust

Focus on the relationship

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

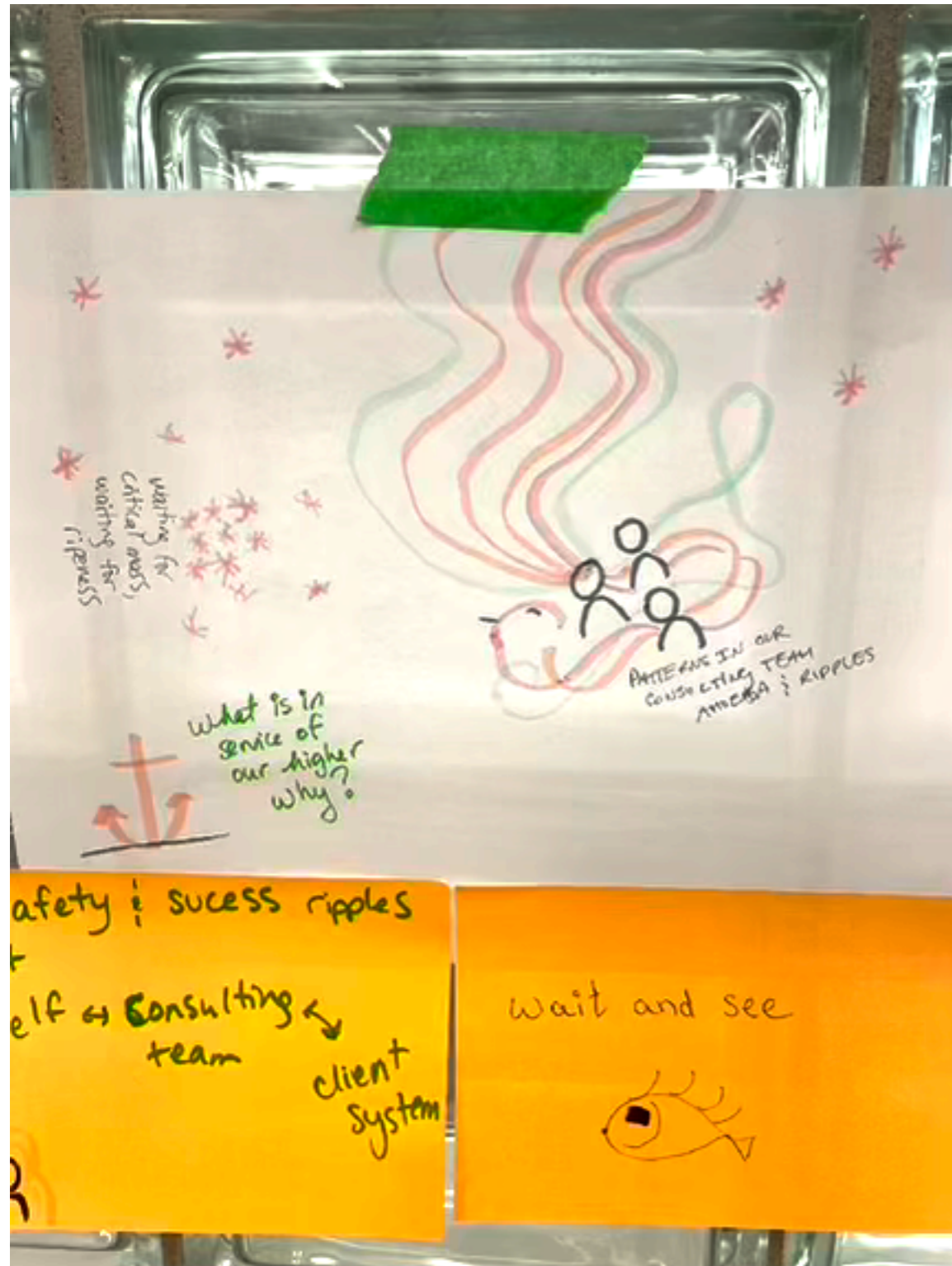
In that process, Host yourself. Share with others. Do You feel it is safe? Why? Why not?



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

Trust the process will emerge.

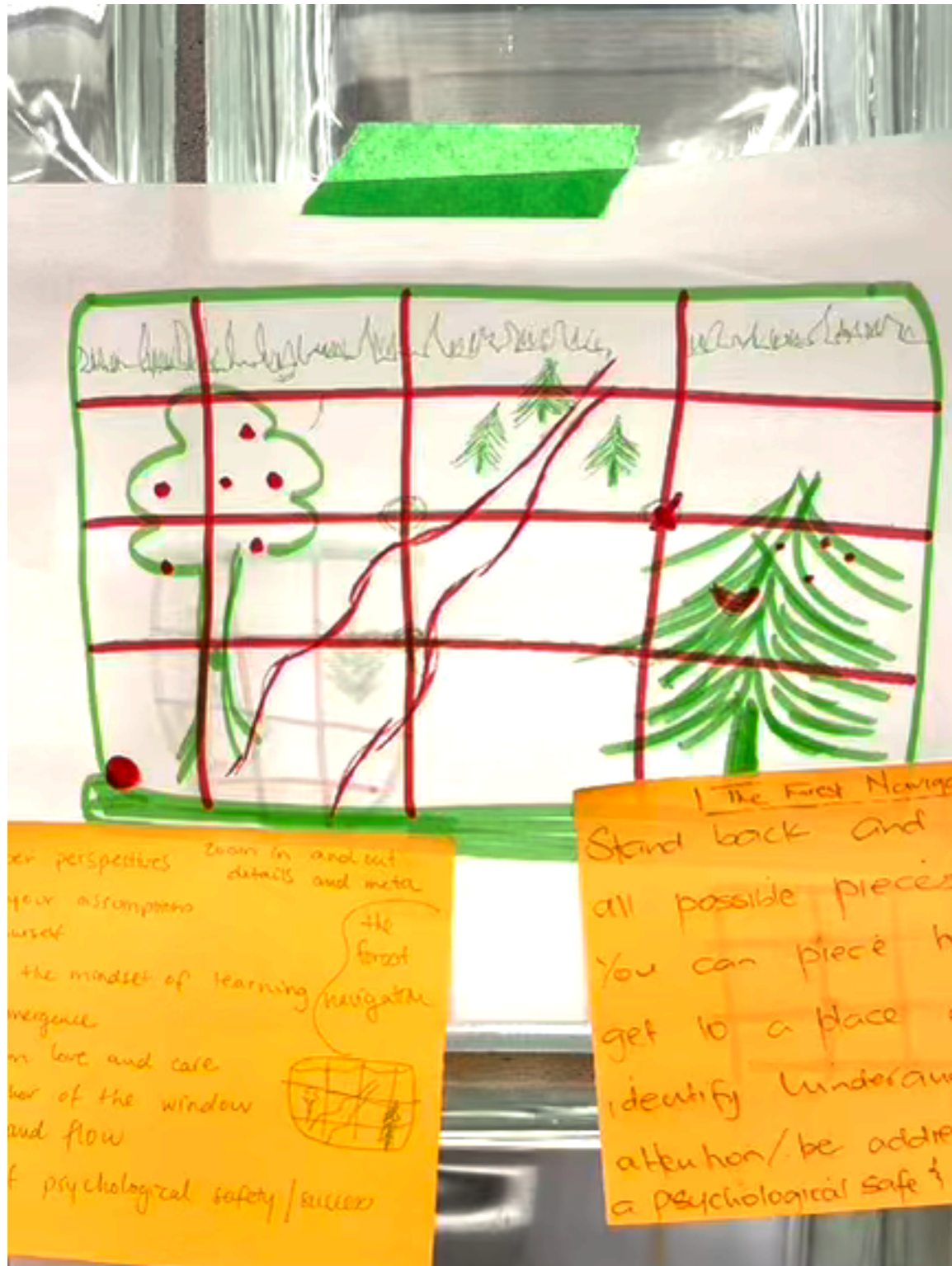
Don't get stuck in the problem,
Listen to the Story.



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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

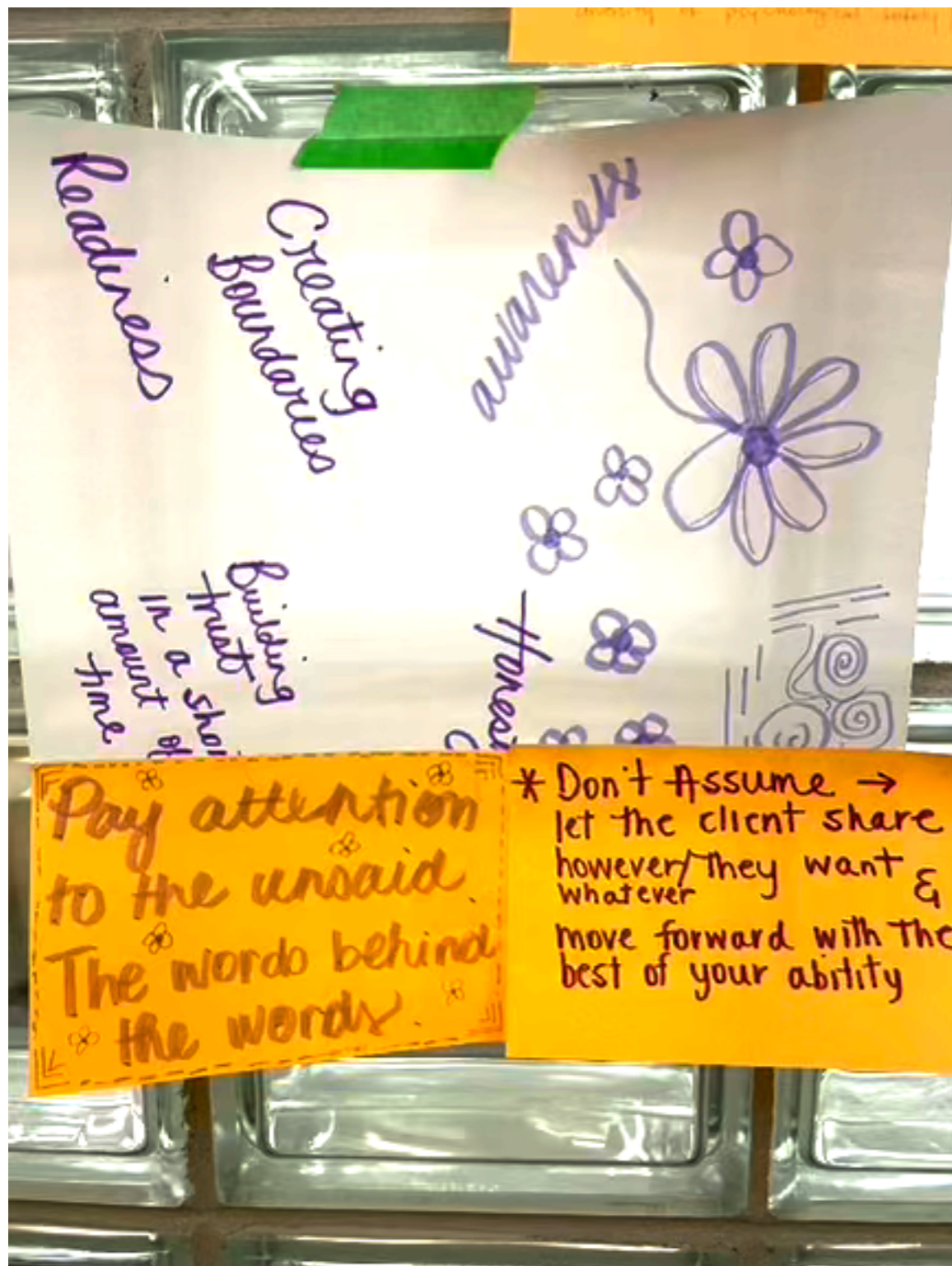
Wait and see.



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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

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

Be yourself.

No act

A lot of love

Follow your feeling

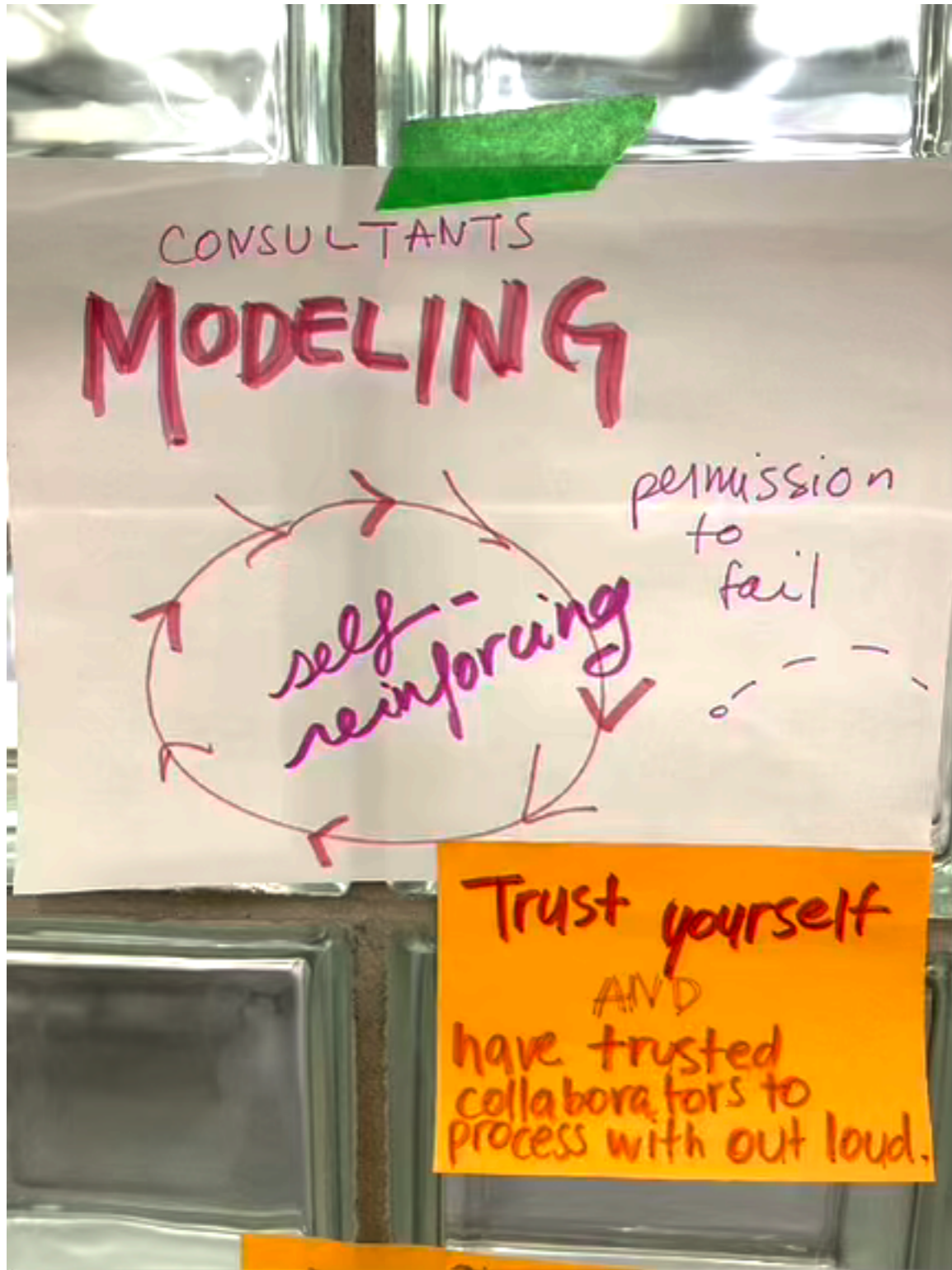


PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

Dear my love,

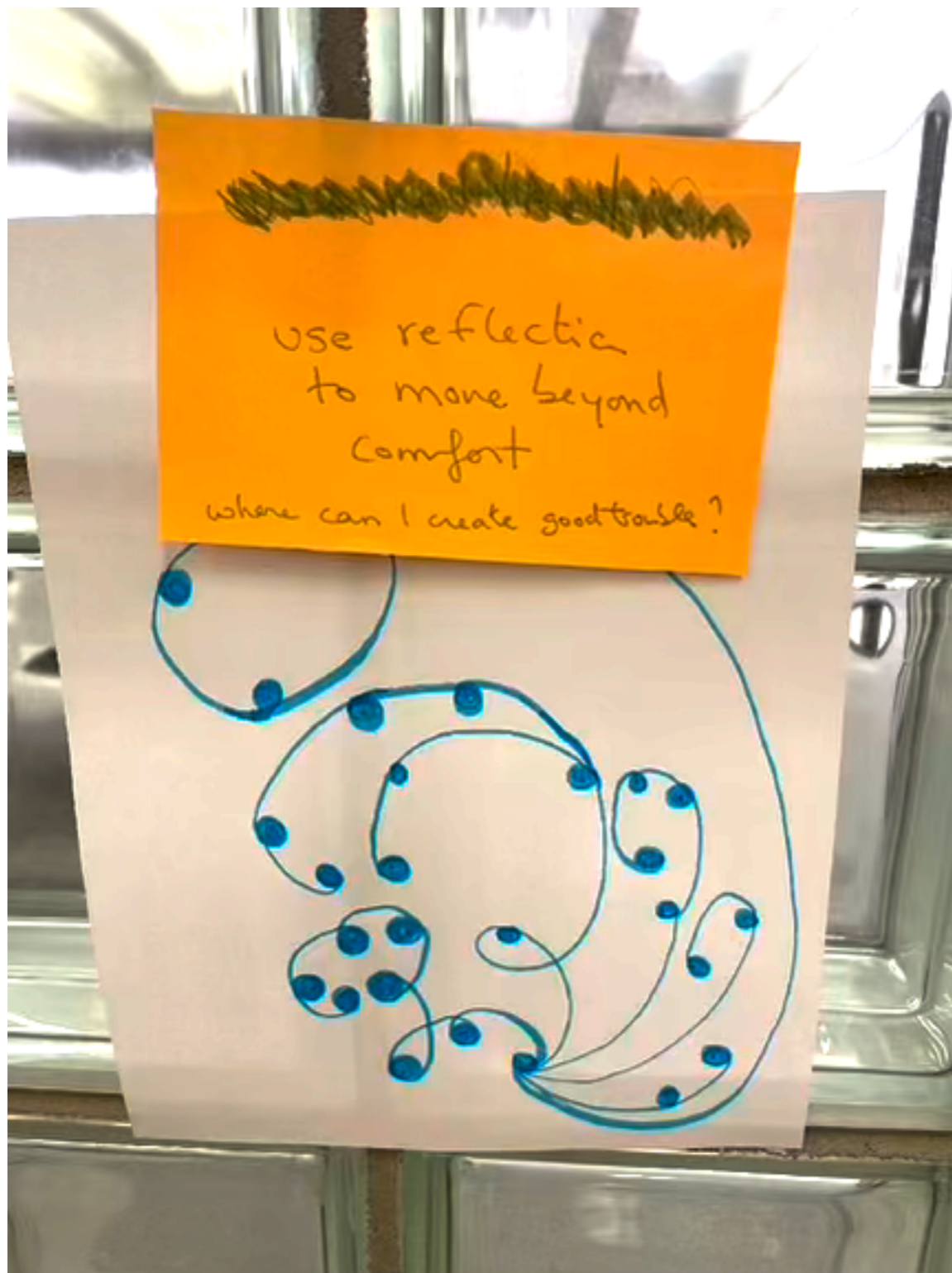
To navigate this tension between psychological safety and psychological success, always remember to come back to yourself.

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



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

Use reflection to move beyond comfort.

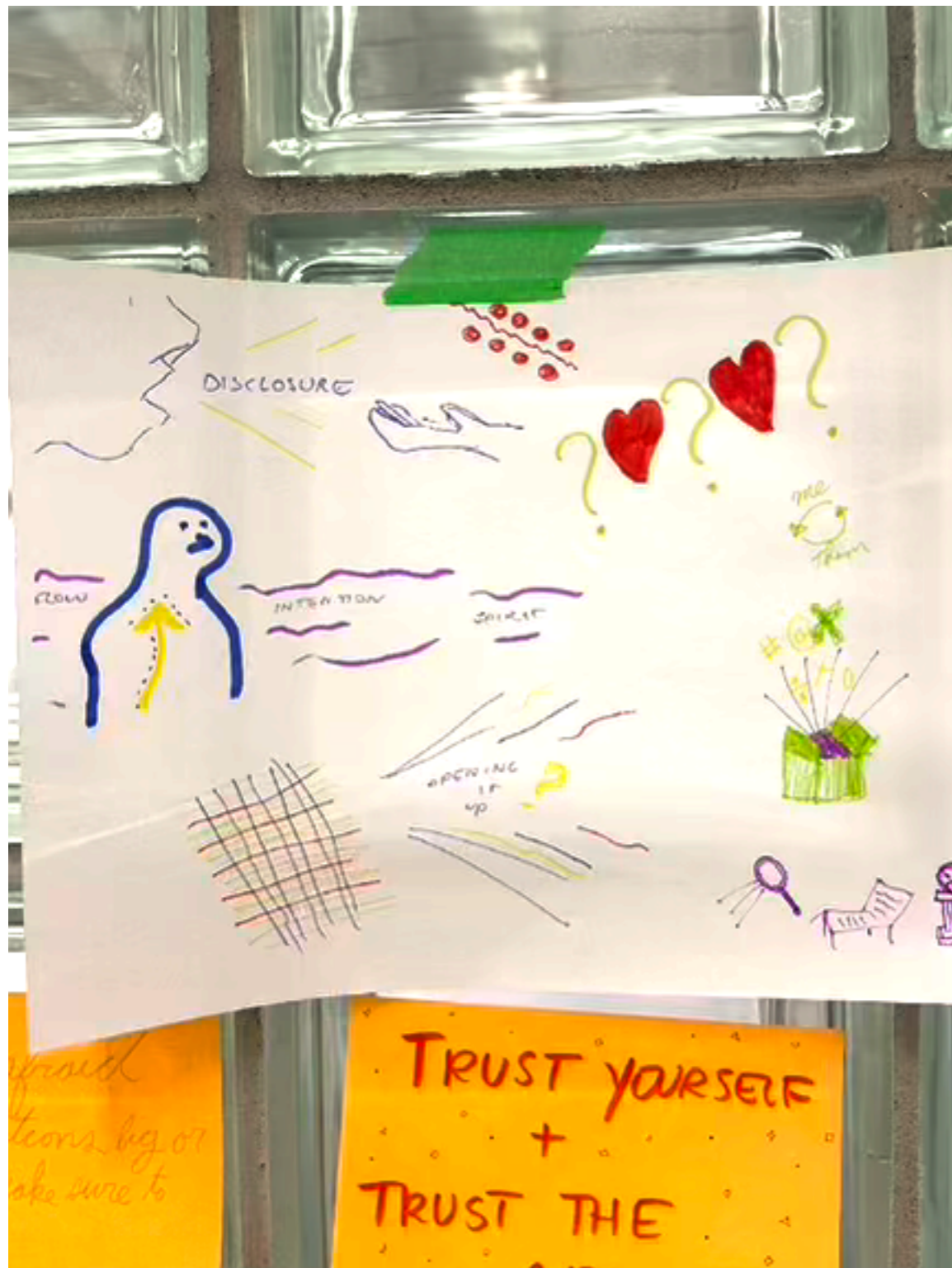
Where can I create good trouble?

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

Trust yourself and trust the group

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

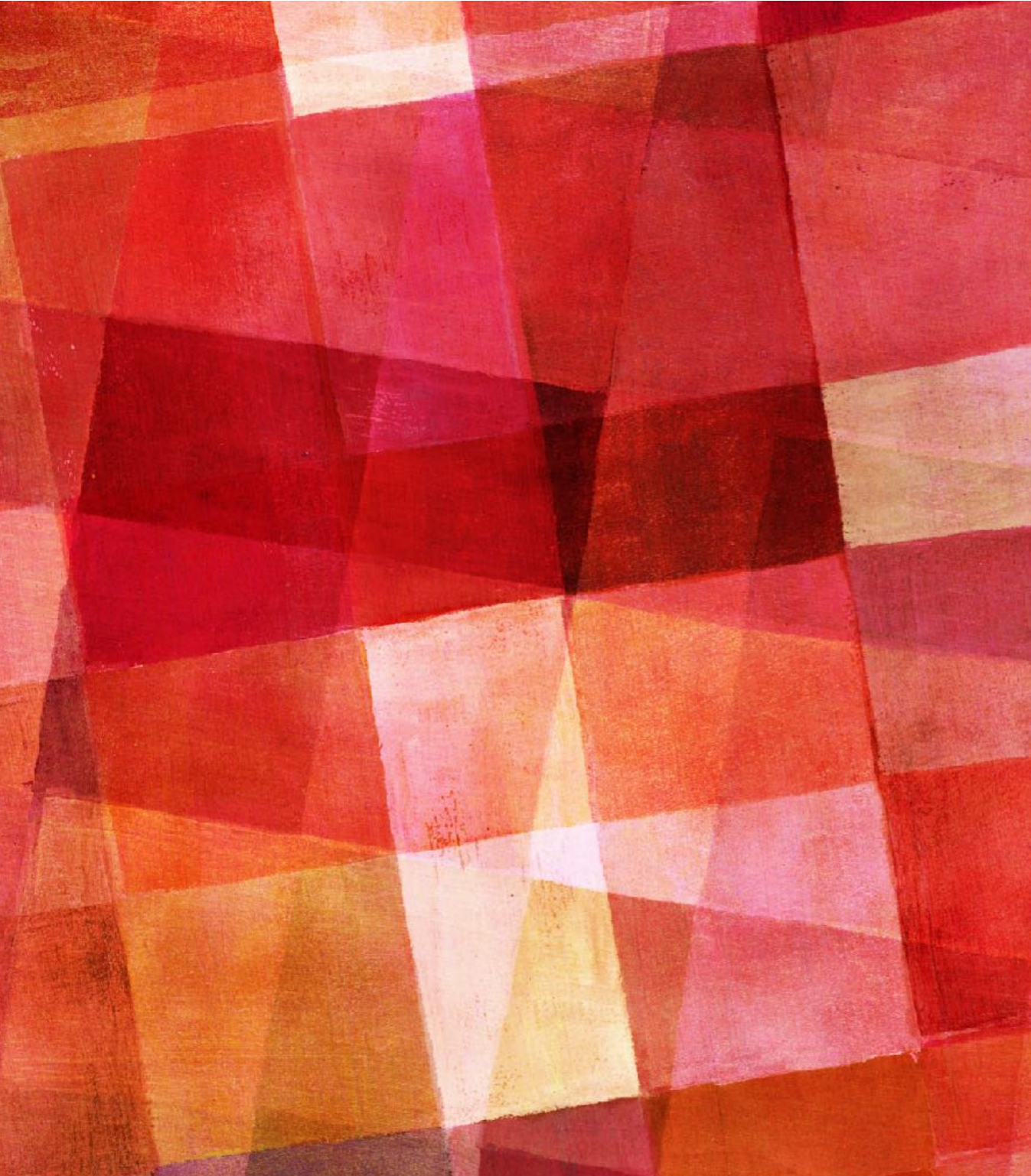
Just make sure to add the heart.





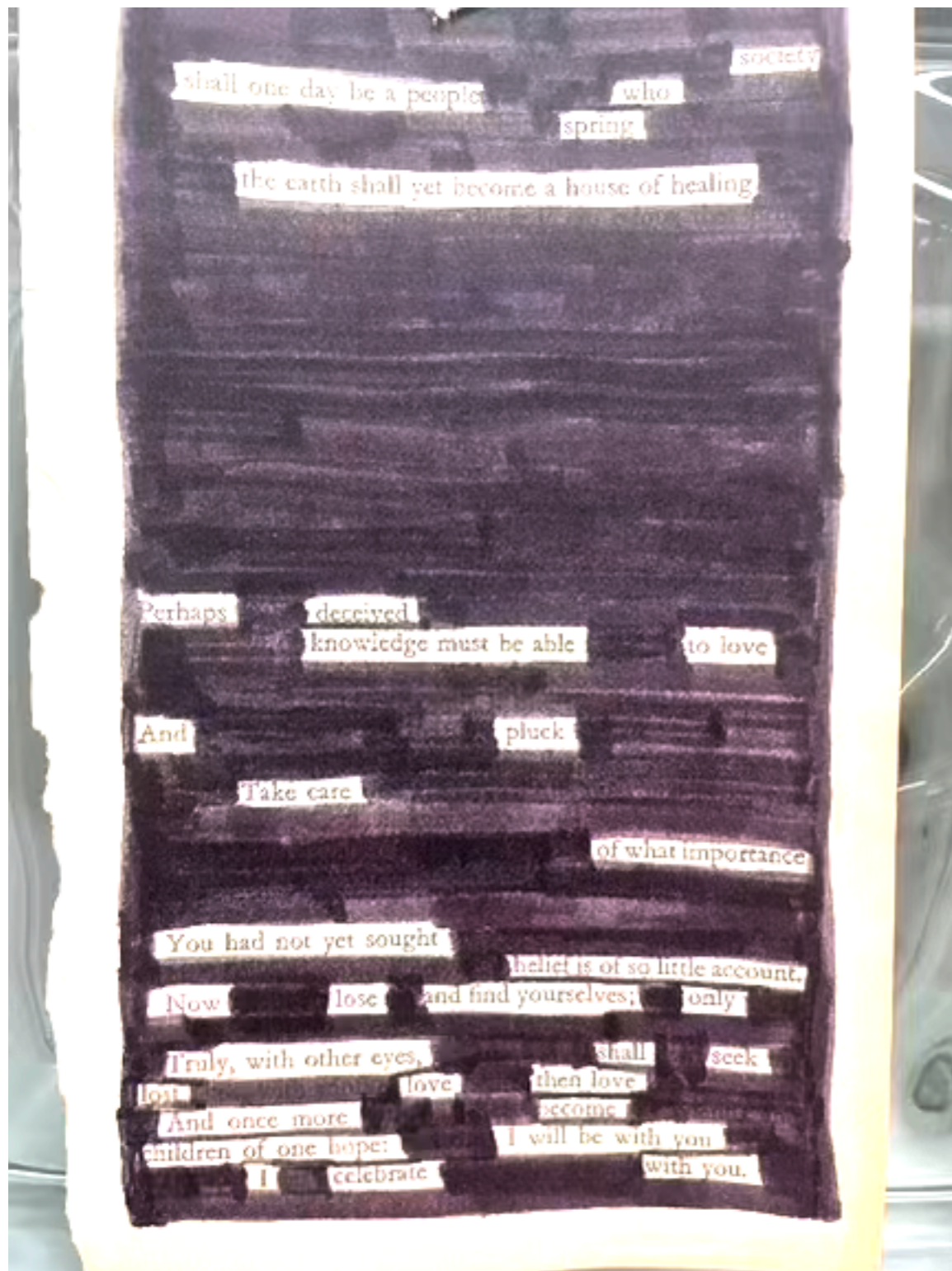
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS

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



DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

- 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)

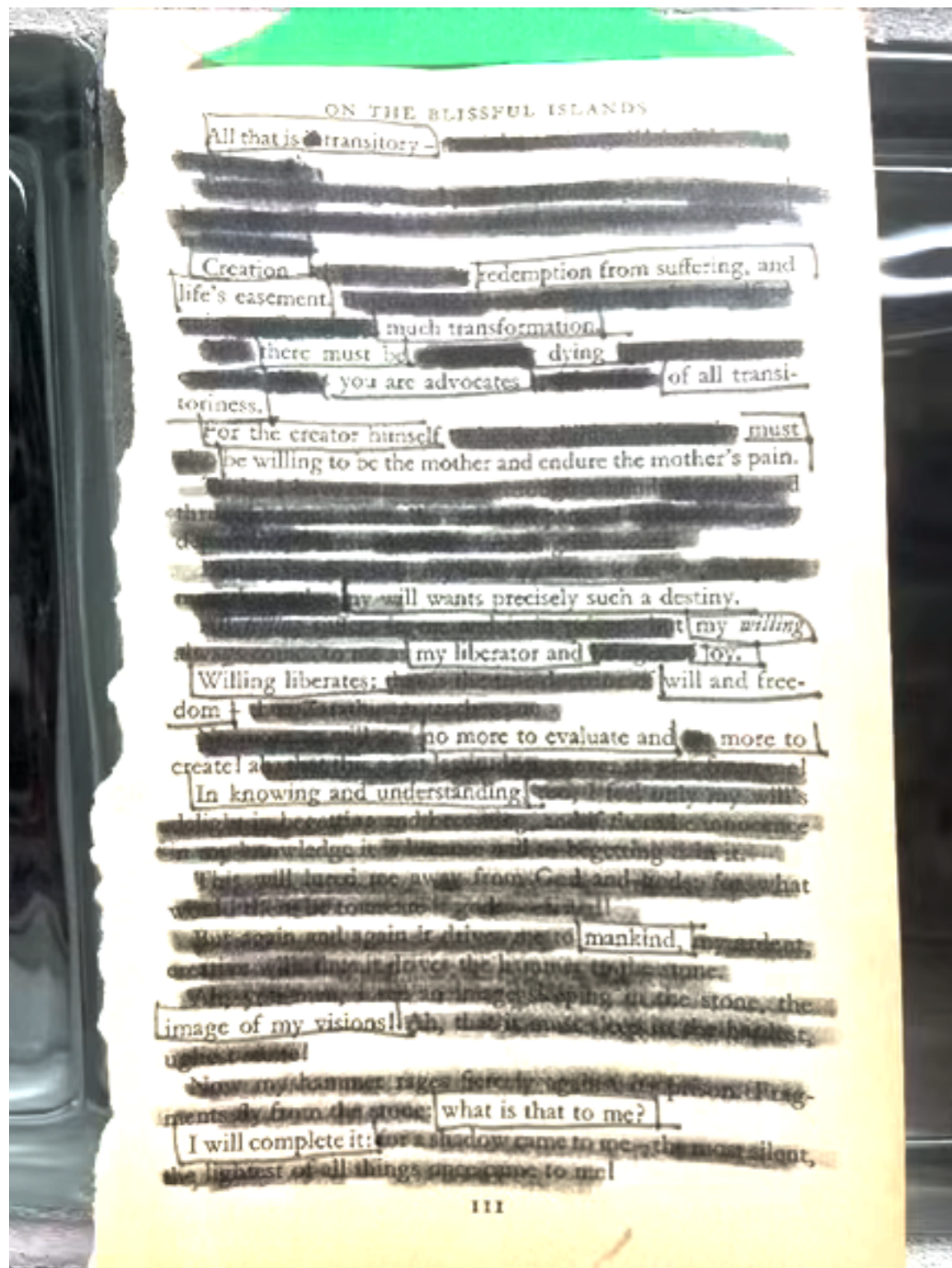


DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

Dear Love,

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

What is the next most elegant step?



DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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 forego.

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 overcome 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 *wretched* 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 man, are only a path and foot-step 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 still want to come into 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!'

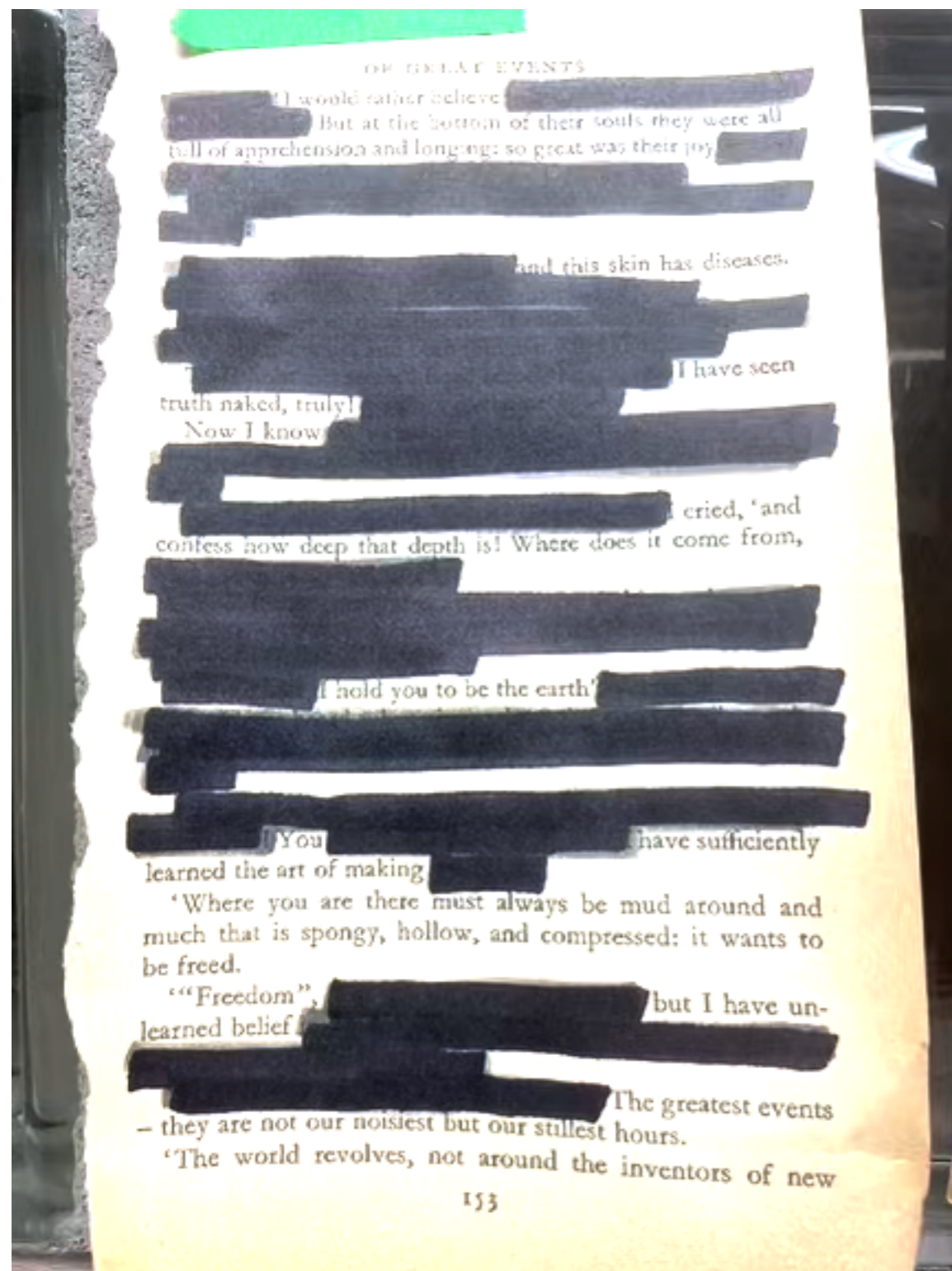
DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

- 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 grows tall

You ~~shall~~ honour even ~~the lowliest~~
~~near~~ ~~the lowliest~~ over ~~the lowliest~~
 In your friend ~~the lowliest~~ Your
 heart ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ wish ~~the lowliest~~ your friend? ~~the lowliest~~ in
 honour ~~the lowliest~~ you show yourself to him ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~
 who makes no secret of himself ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ how much reason ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ your friend: ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ an arrow and a longing ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ watched ~~the lowliest~~
 what he looked like? ~~the lowliest~~ your friend's face ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ It is your own face, in a rough and imperfect mirror.
~~the lowliest~~ watched ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ to see what he looked like? ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ master ~~the lowliest~~
 silence: ~~the lowliest~~ see everything. Your dream
~~the lowliest~~ when awake.
~~the lowliest~~ that you may first know
~~the lowliest~~ the
 undimmed eye and the glance of eternity.
~~the lowliest~~ your friend ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ will
 have delicacy and sweetness.
~~the lowliest~~ pure air and solitude and bread and medicine
~~the lowliest~~ deliver ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ all too long been
 concealed. ~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ she knows only love.
~~the lowliest~~
~~the lowliest~~ enlightened love ~~the lowliest~~

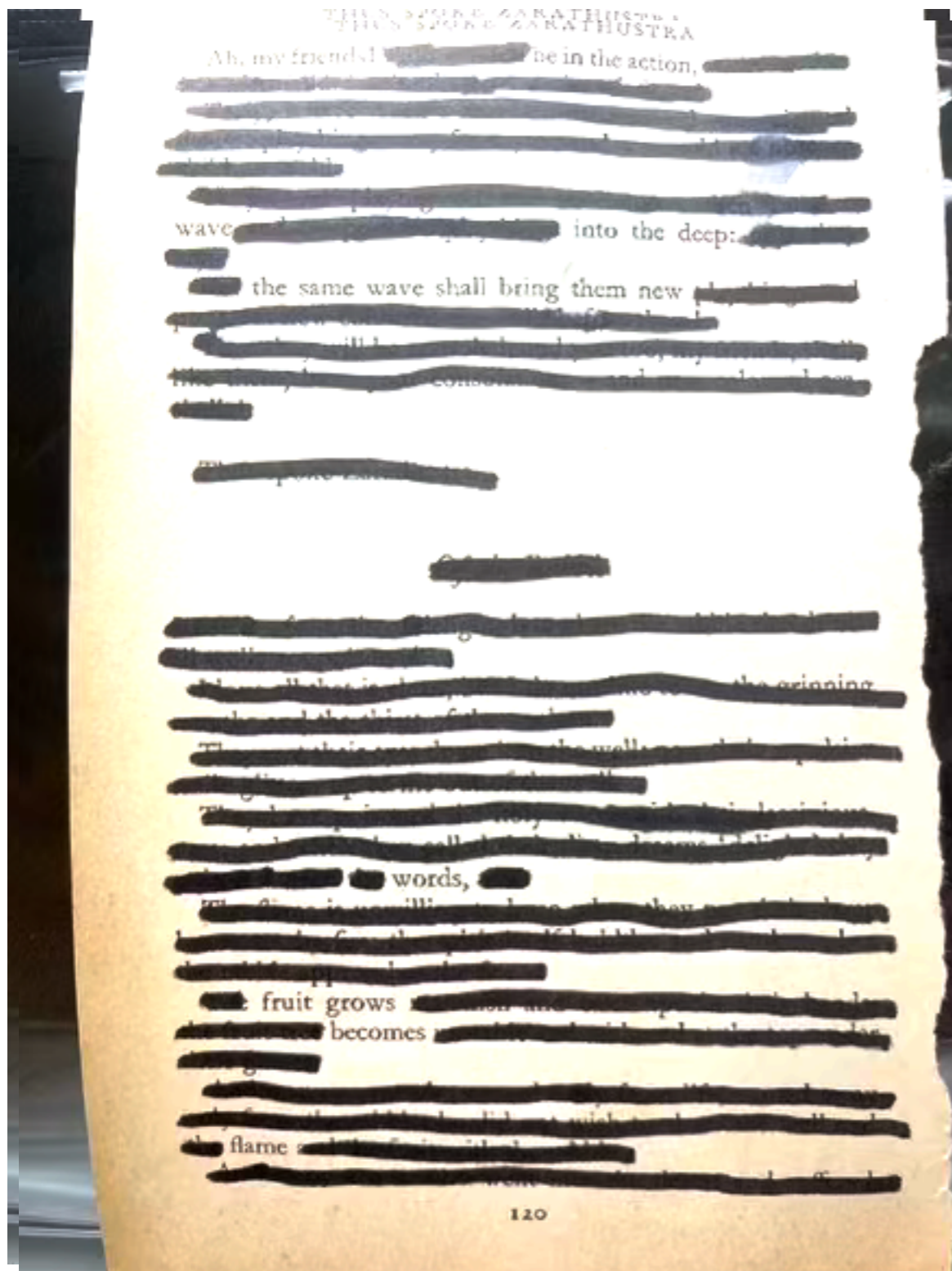
DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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

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.

Be moved in accepting. Honour a man by accepting from him! – And I advise those who have nothing to give.

I, however, am a giver: I give gladly as 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 spares us many a great evil deed.' But here one should not wish to be spared.

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!

Ah, 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 men, 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.

DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

Notice the direction of the wind.

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 - into evil.'

'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.'

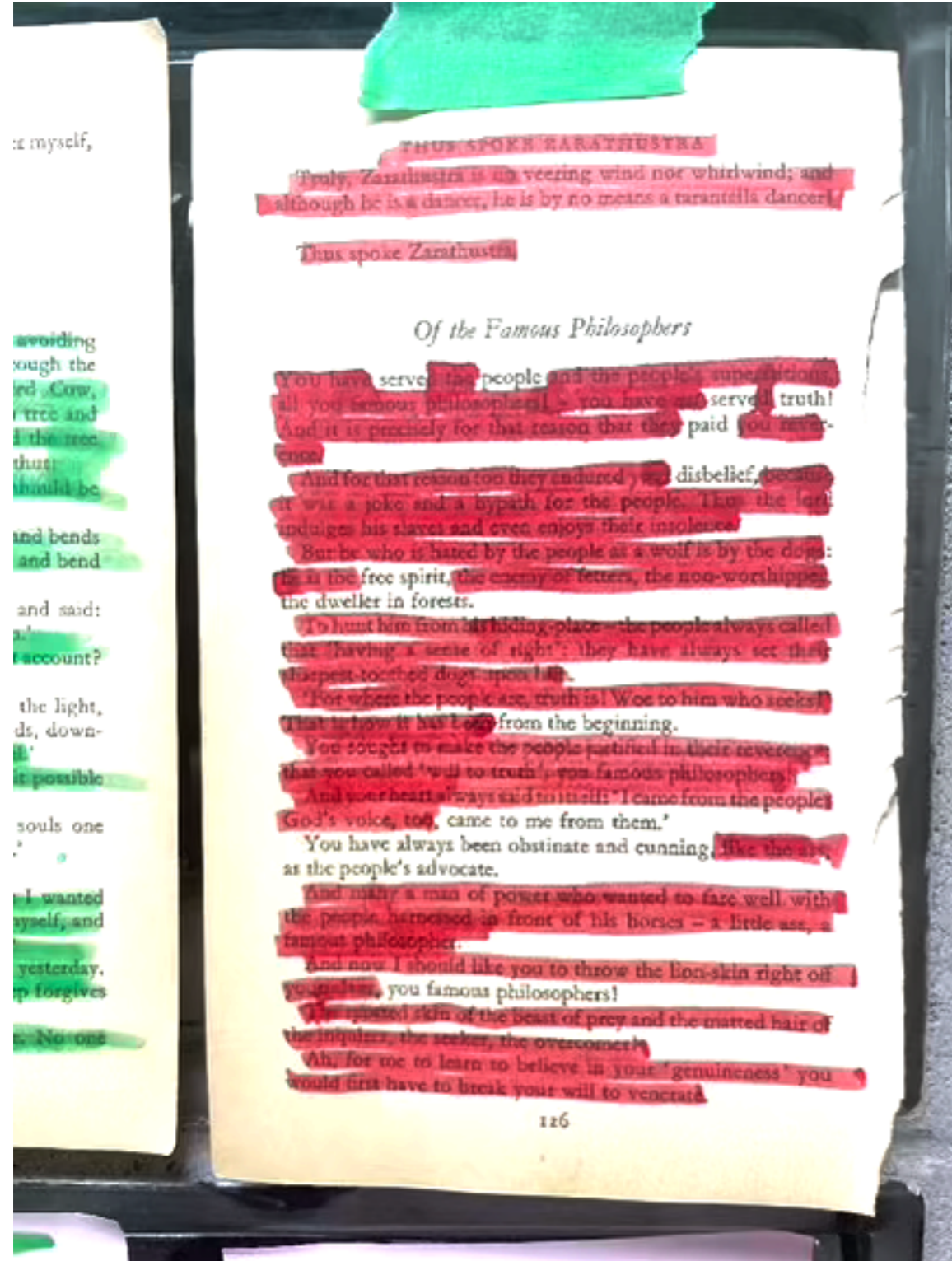
'Yes, into evil!' cried the young man again. 'You have spoken the truth, Zarathustra. Since I wanted to rise into the heights I have no longer trusted myself, and no one trusts me any more. How did this happen?'

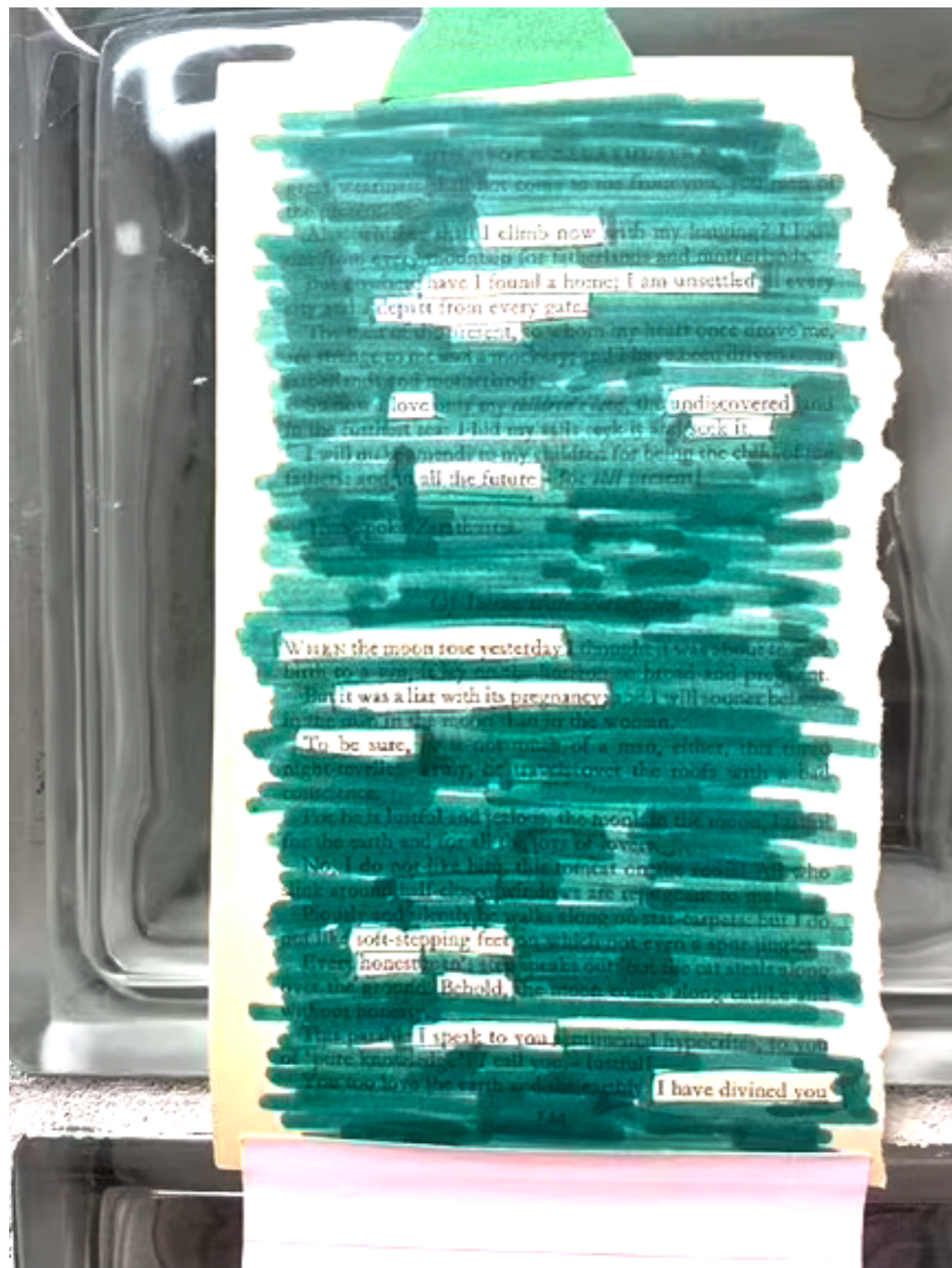
'I change too quickly; my today refutes my yesterday. When I stand I often pump over my steps, and no step forgives me that.'

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

DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

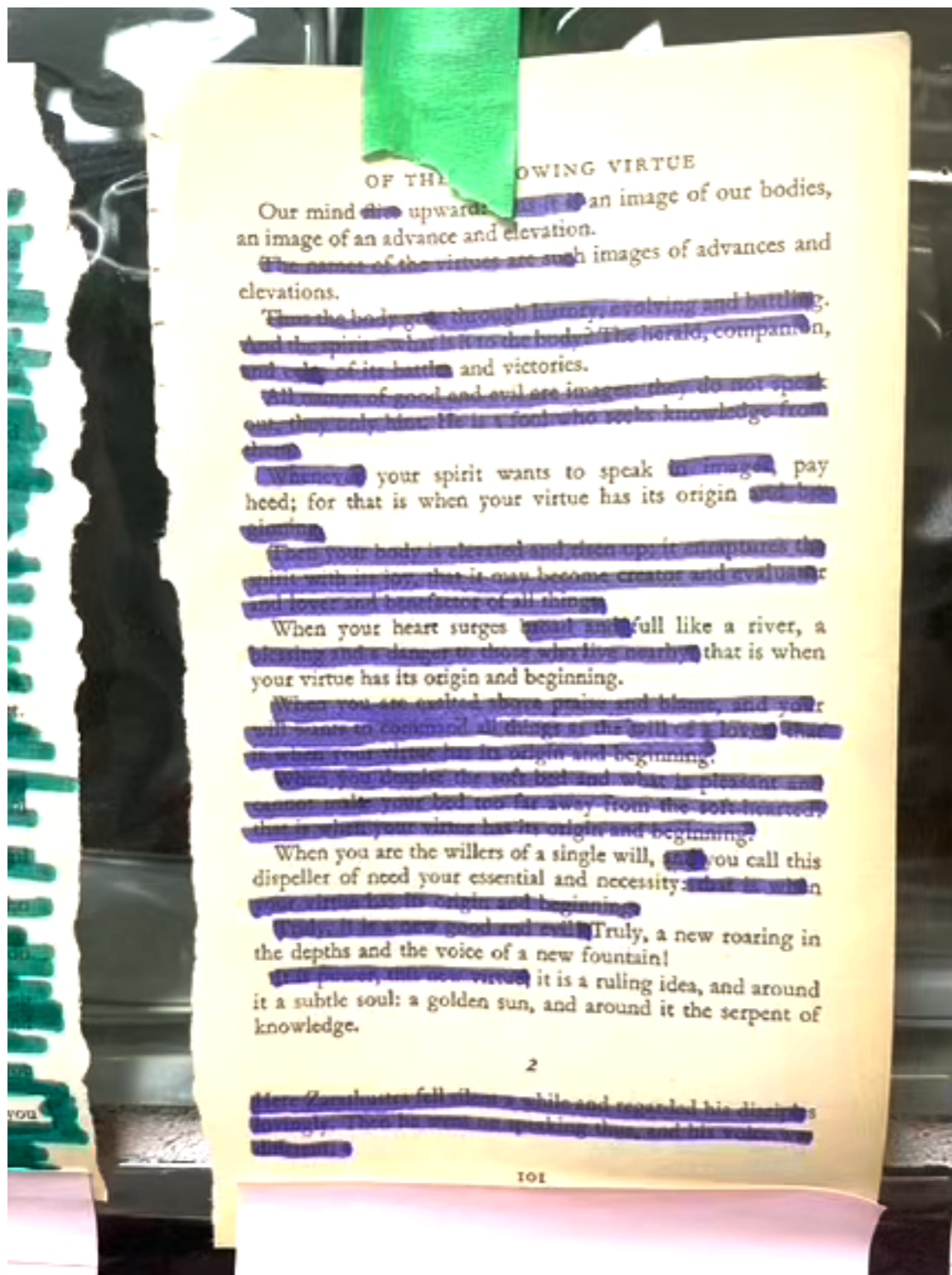
Stay true to your North Star





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!

GOALS
the attainment of the evaluation and the meaning
of all things.

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

You should
path to greatness.

'To speak the truth and to know well how to handle
bow and arrow'

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

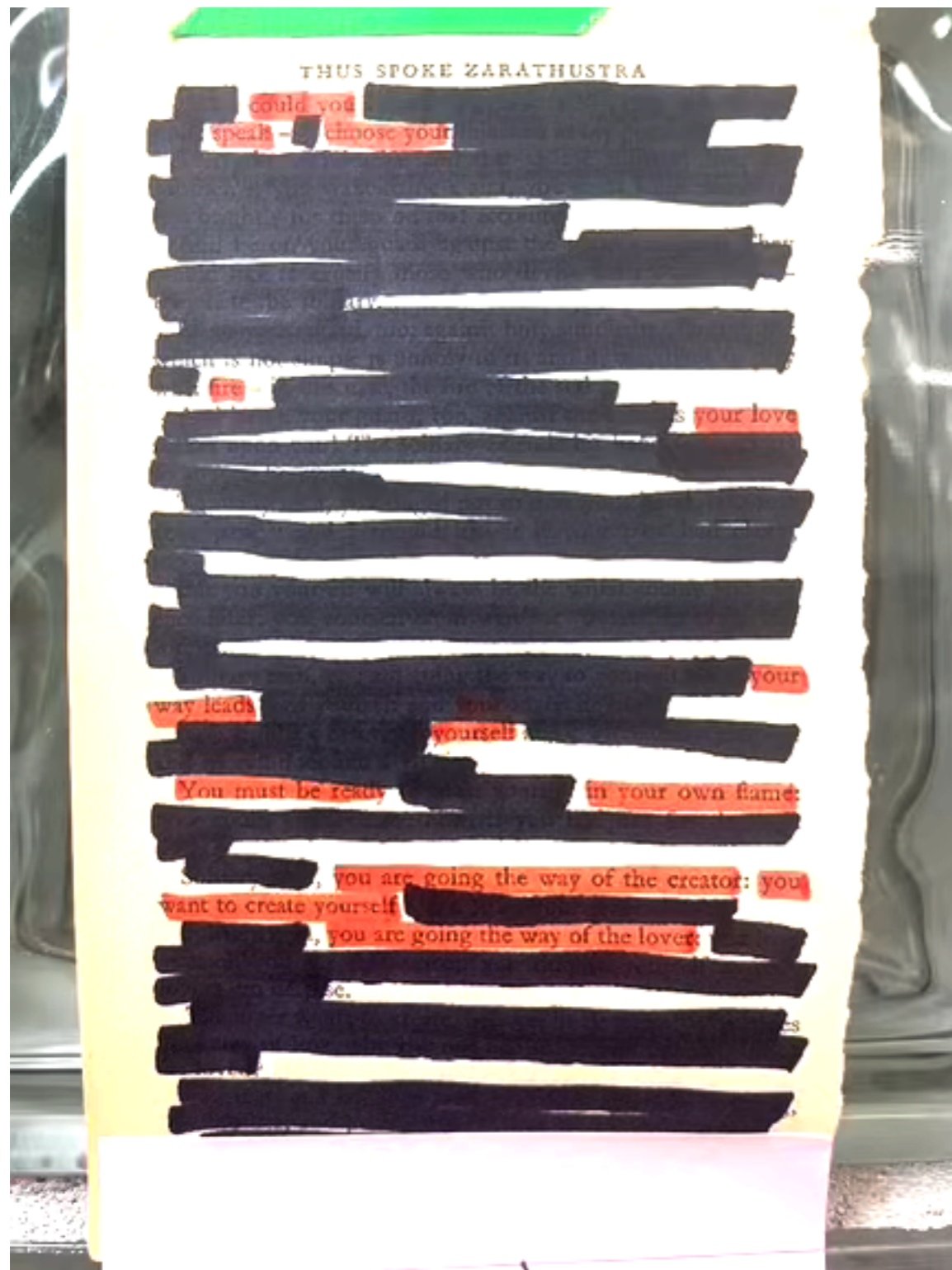
Evaluation is creation: hear it, you creative men! Valuating
is itself the value and jewel of all valued things.

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

A change
individual

DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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



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 spoiler 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.'

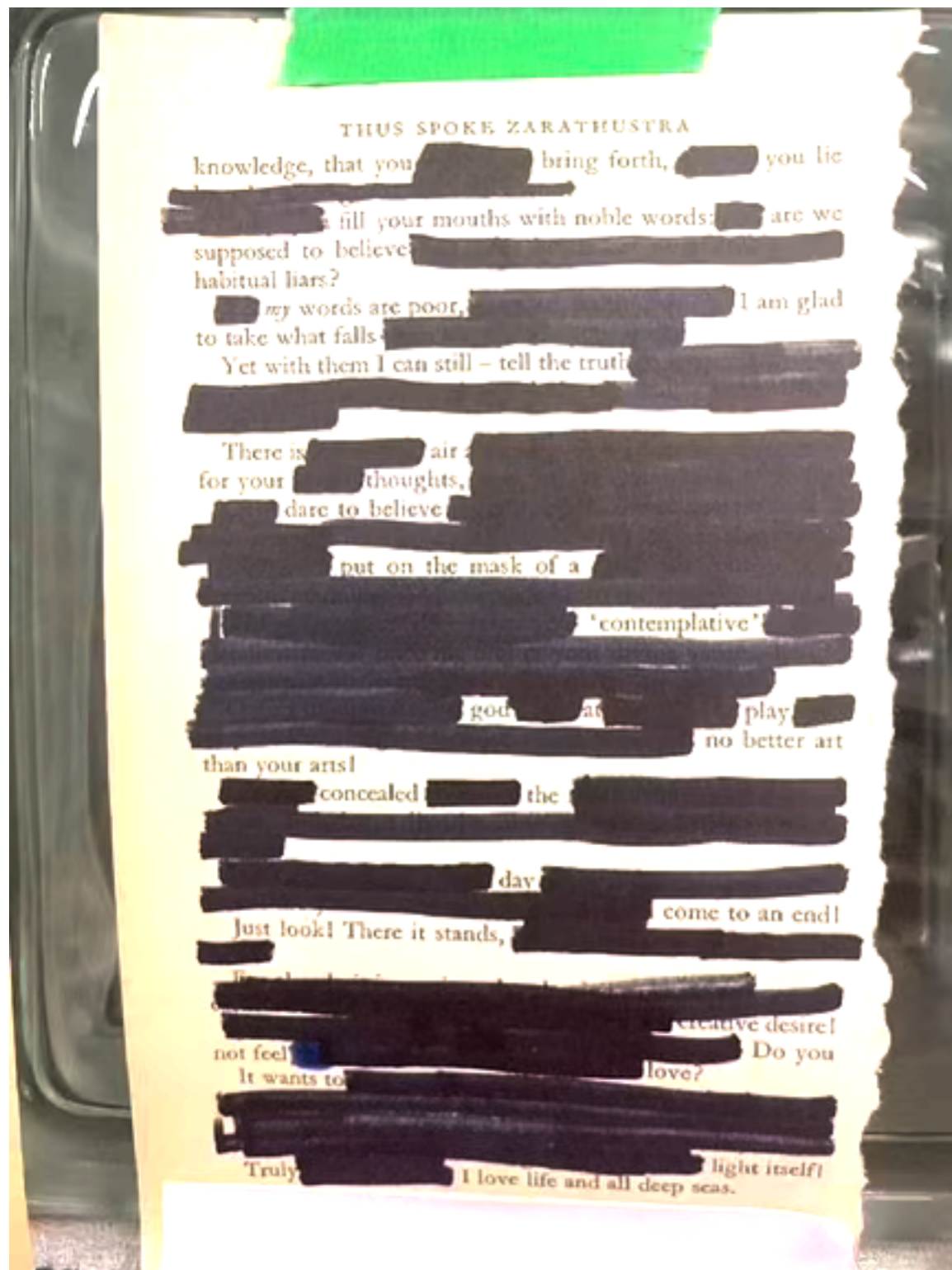
'But I am merely changeable and untamed and in everything a woman, and no virtuous one.'

DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

Keep laughing

Tell stories

Practice black out poetry



DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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

Listen To what The client brings
Forth.
stay creative.

OF PORTS

I have grown weary of the port: the old and the new: they all seem to be superficial and shallow.
They are not deep enough for me, either: they all distrust their depths so that they may seem deep.
And in that way they would like to show themselves deep, clear, and honest, and mediators and meddlers, and mediocre and unclear men.
Ah, indeed I cast my net into their sea and hoped to catch fine fish, but I drew out an old, grubby lead.
That the sea gave a mood to the hungry man. And that themselves may well originate from the sea.
To be sure, one finds pearls in them: for they themselves are all the more like hard and cold. And the sea of the soul I often found in them salty stuff.
They learned vanity, too, from the sea: is the sea not the peacock of peacock?
It unfurls its tail even before the ugliest of buffaloes, it never wearies of its lace-fan of silver and satin.
The buffalo looks on insolently, his soul like the sand, yet more like the thicket, but most like the swamp.
What are beauty and sea and peacock-ornaments to him? I speak this parable to the poets.
Truly, their spirit itself is the peacock of peacocks and a sea of vanity!
The poet's spirit wants spectators, even if they are only buffaloes!
But I have grown weary of this spirit, and I see the day coming when it will grow weary of itself.
I have seen the poets transformed; I have seen them direct their glance upon themselves.

DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

DANCE IN
THE MESSY
IN - BETWEEN.
EVERYTHING
is BOTH

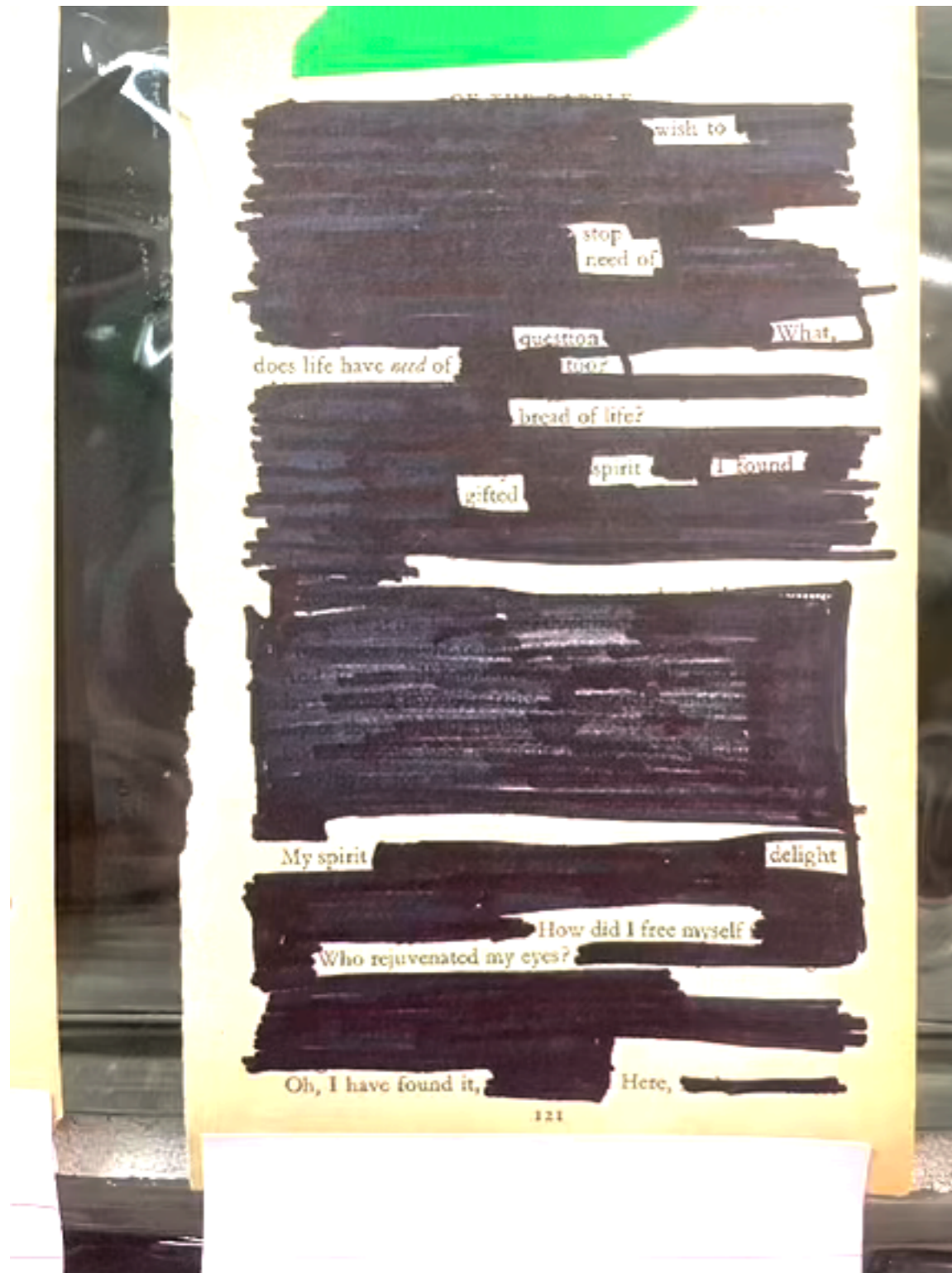


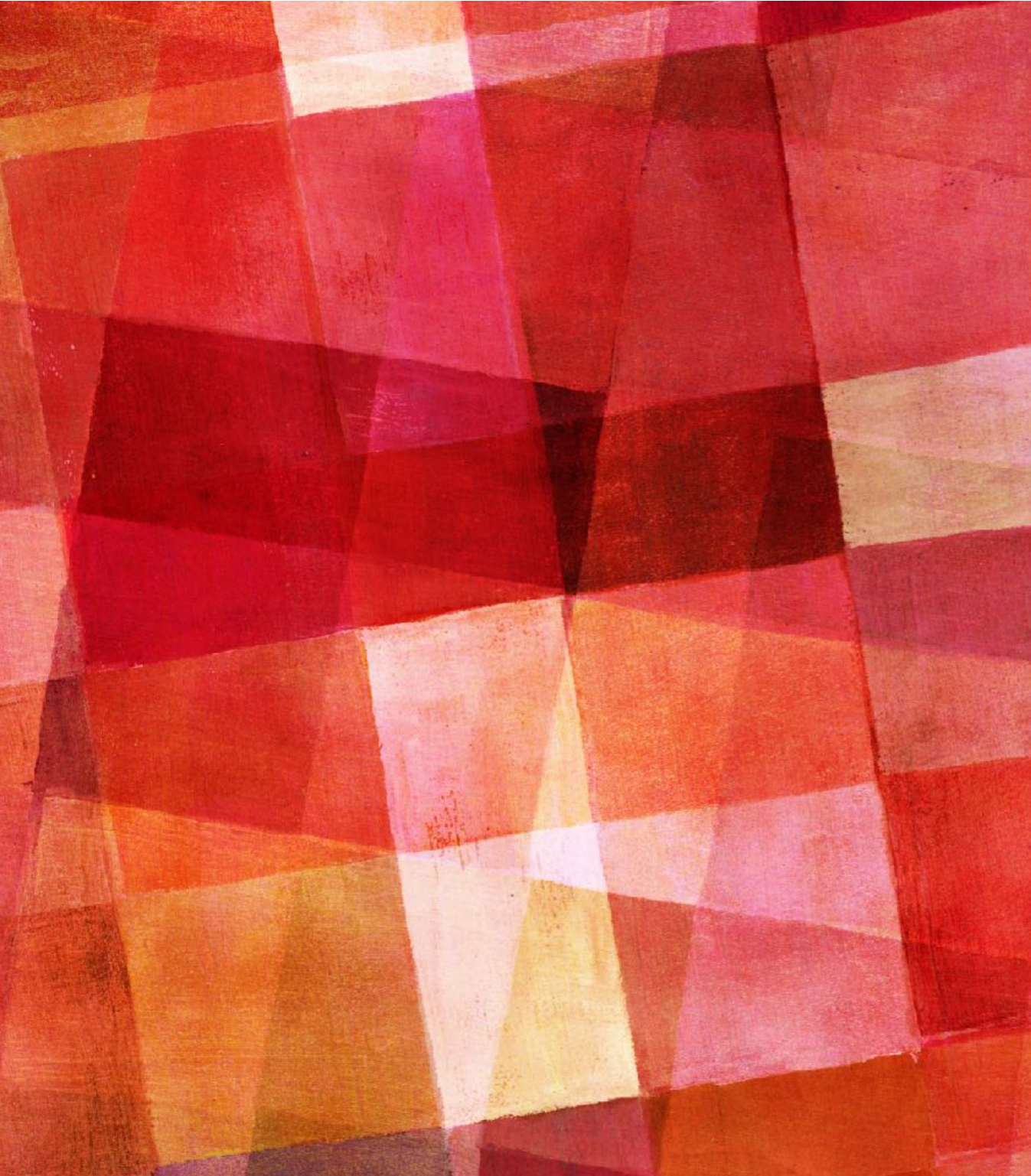
DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

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

DIAGNOSE VS. DIALOGUE

Listen to your heart.



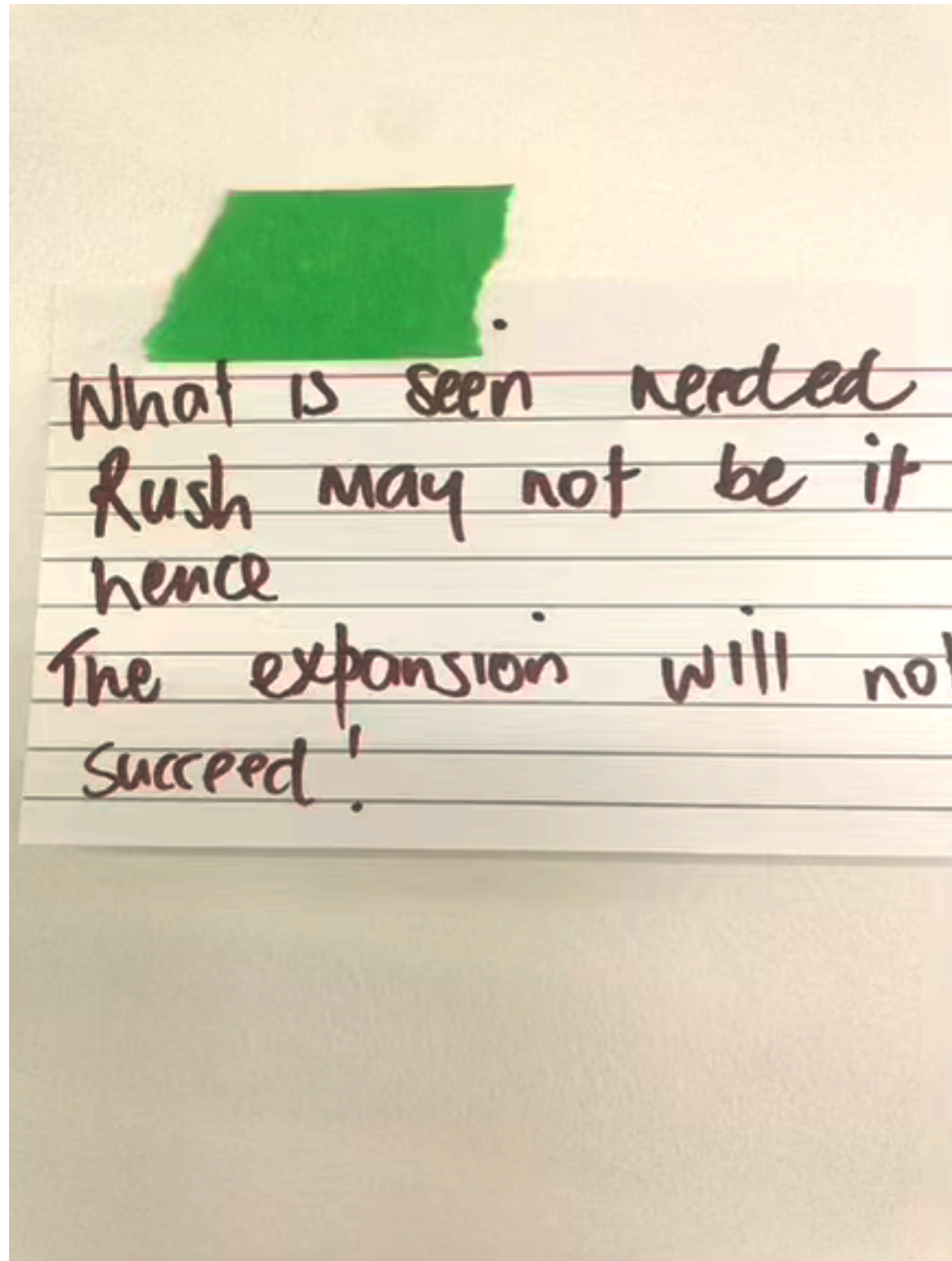


PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

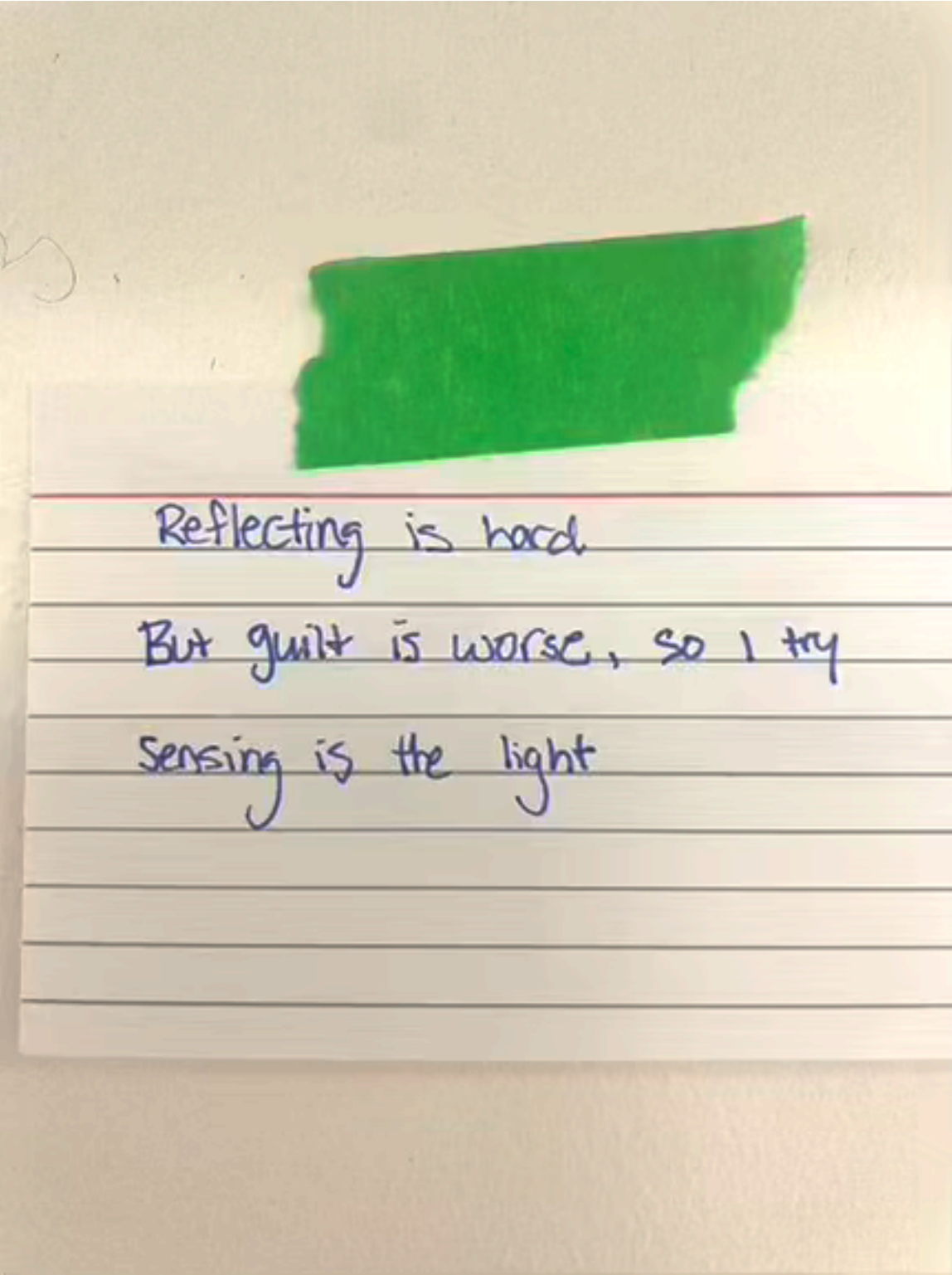
- In the fishbowl, share moments in your project where you experienced this polarity
- In conversation with another person, what advice would you give yourself to navigate this tension in your future practice?
- Harvest this in a collaborative haiku.

PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

Allow novelty!



PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE VS. DIALOGIC

A photograph of a piece of lined paper. At the top, there is a rectangular piece of bright green paper, possibly a sticky note, which has been partially torn. Below the green paper, the text "Reflecting is hard" is written in blue ink. The next line contains the text "But guilt is worse, so I try", and the following line contains "Sensing is the light". The paper is placed on a light-colored, textured surface.

Reflecting is hard

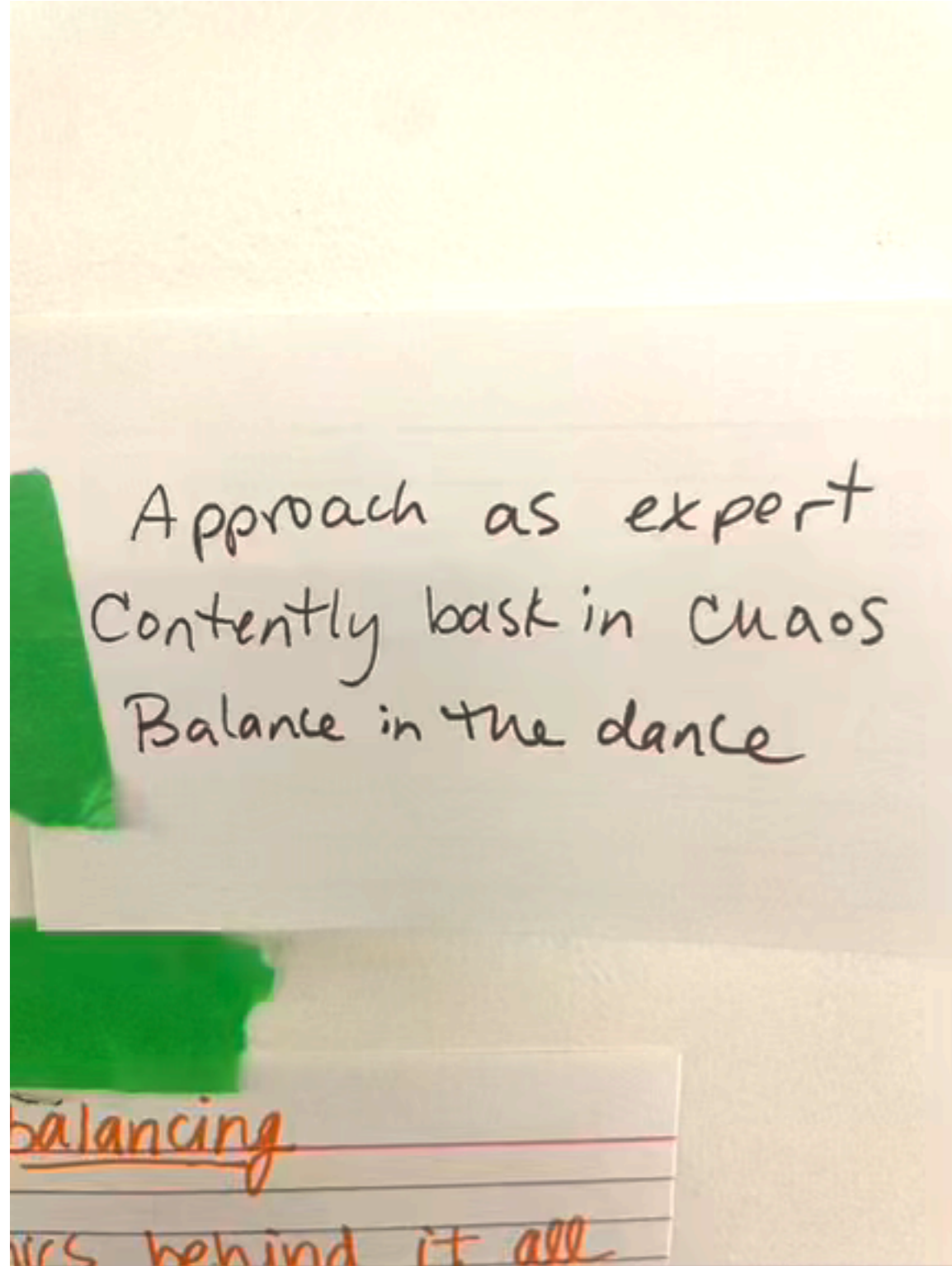
But guilt is worse, so I try

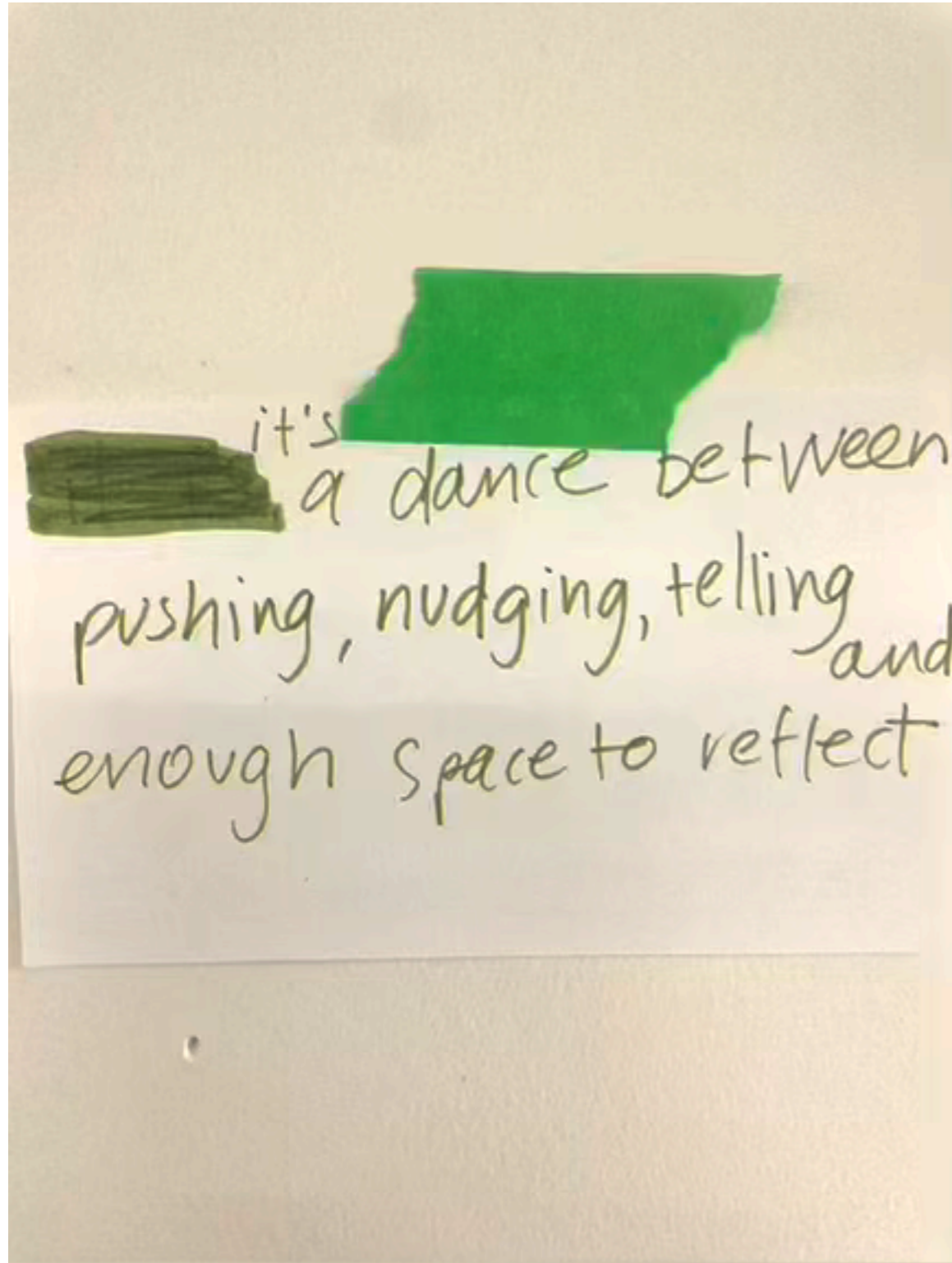
Sensing is the light

HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE
NOT TIED TO
AN OUTCOME

PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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

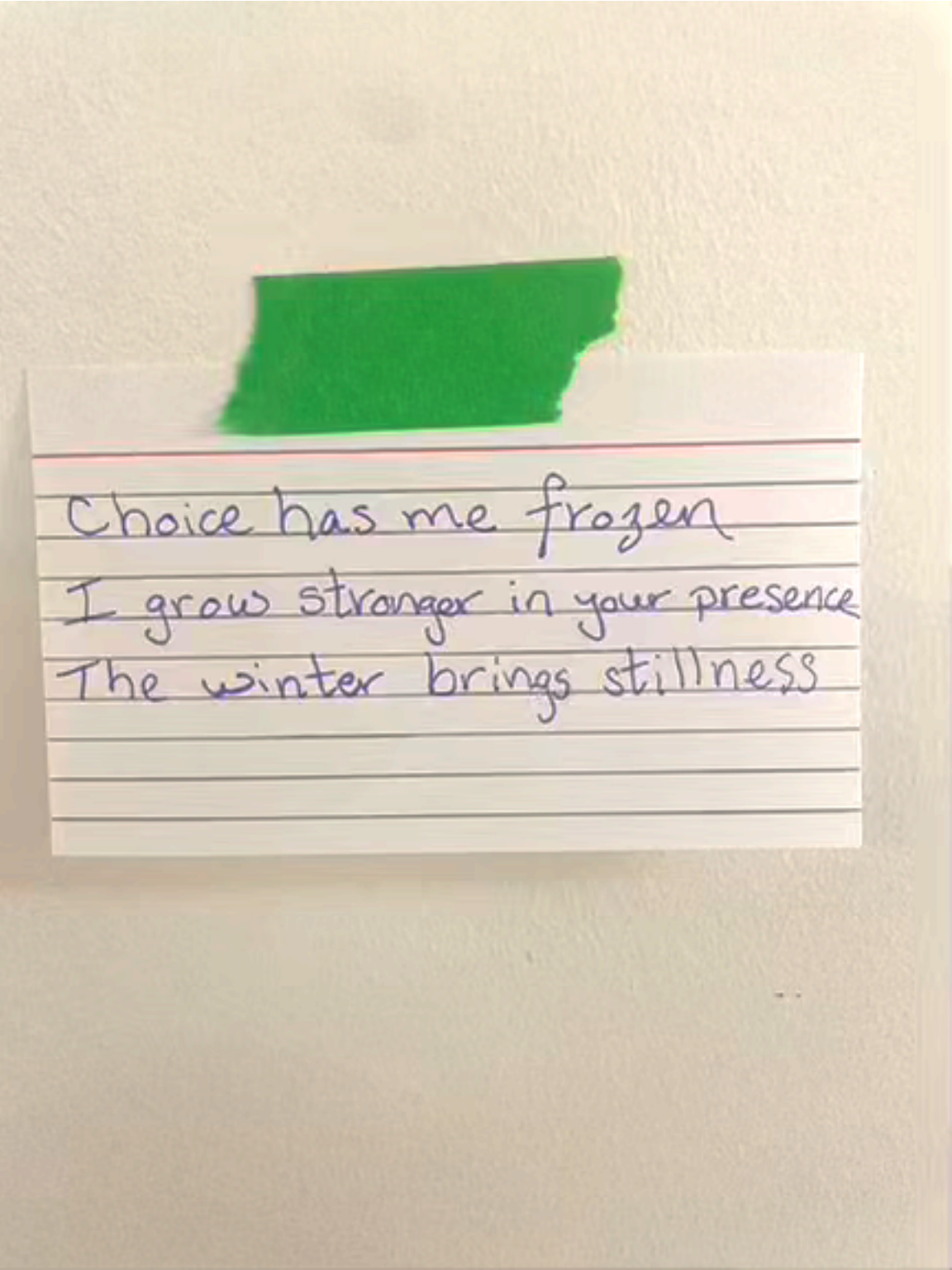




PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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

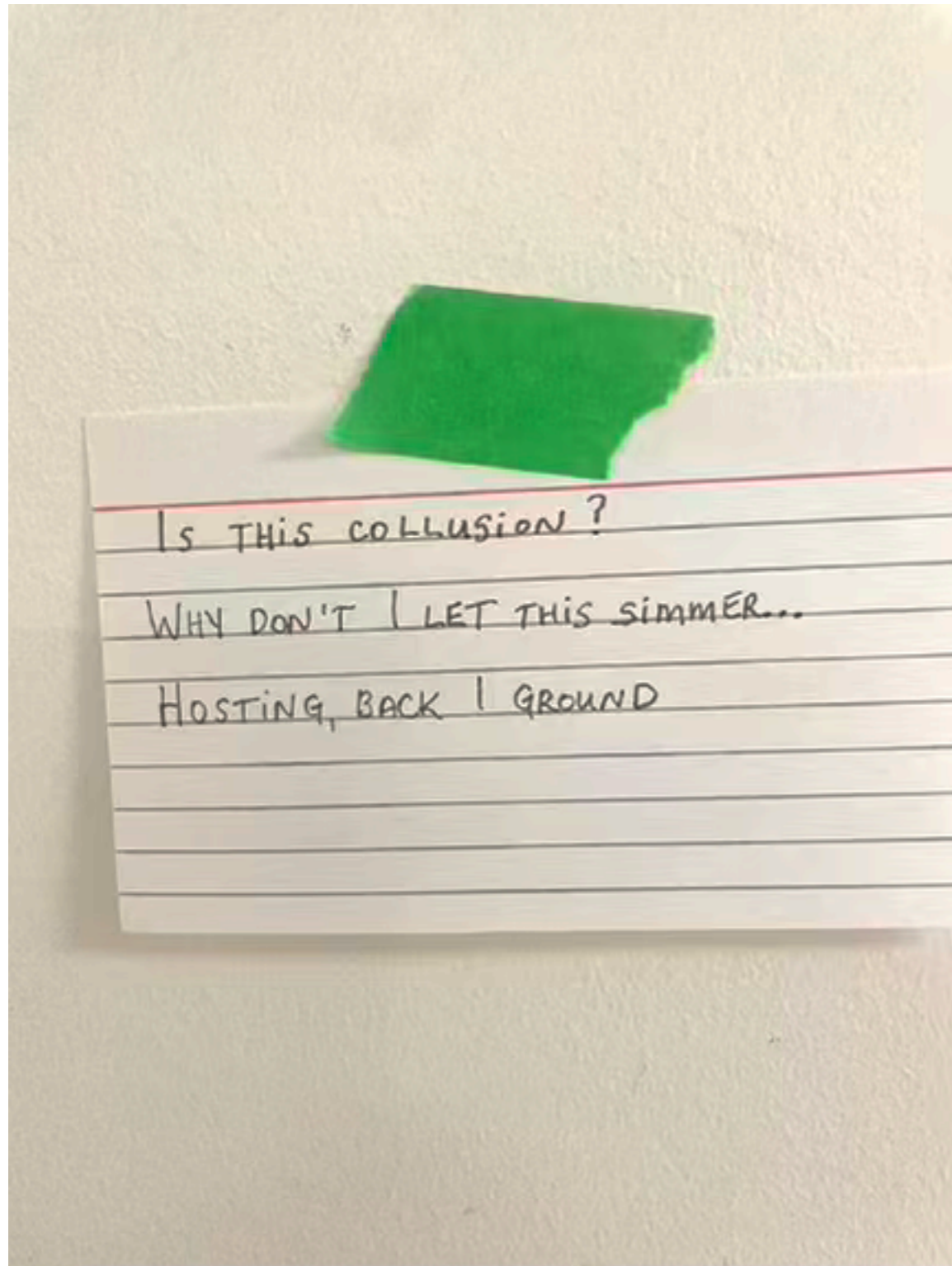
PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE



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

Observe the stillness

PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE



May 3, 2025


Hello love,

When facing a tension between
participation + observation,
Soak back into presense.

Sense into what the space needs

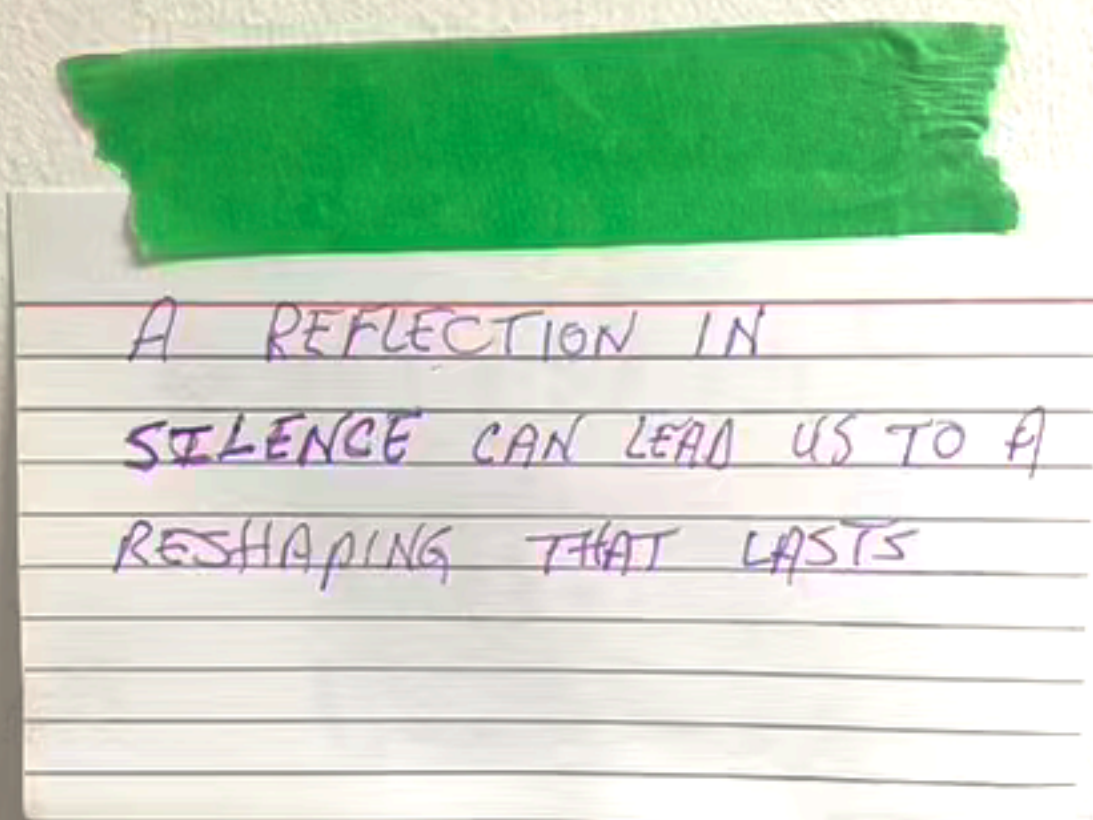
PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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



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

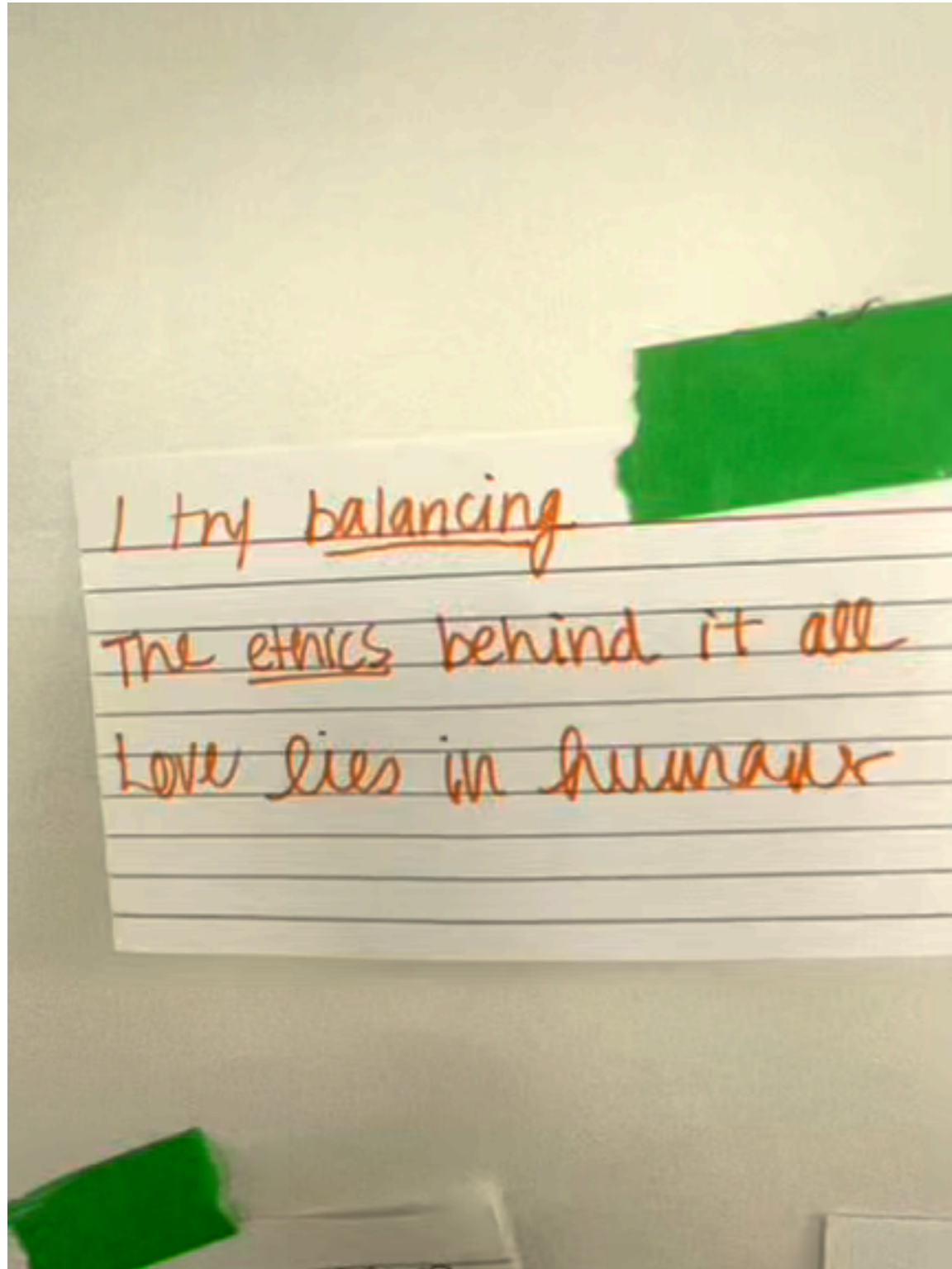
PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE



A REFLECTION IN
SILENCE CAN LEAD US TO A
RESHAPING THAT LASTS


Reflection is never not good.

PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE



Embrace silence.

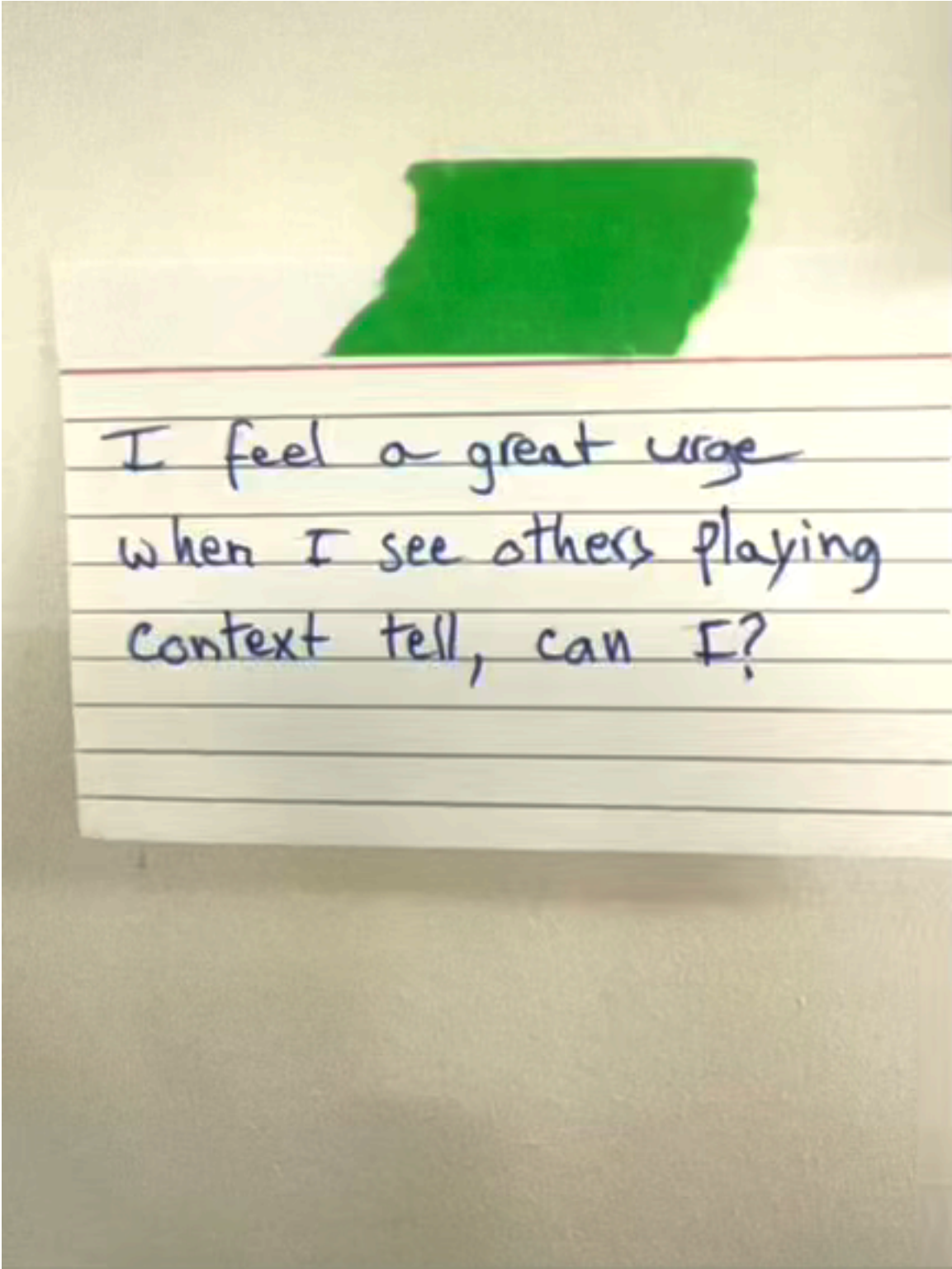
PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE



Listen to your self
Humanness will show up
Observe and Absorb
-Lucia

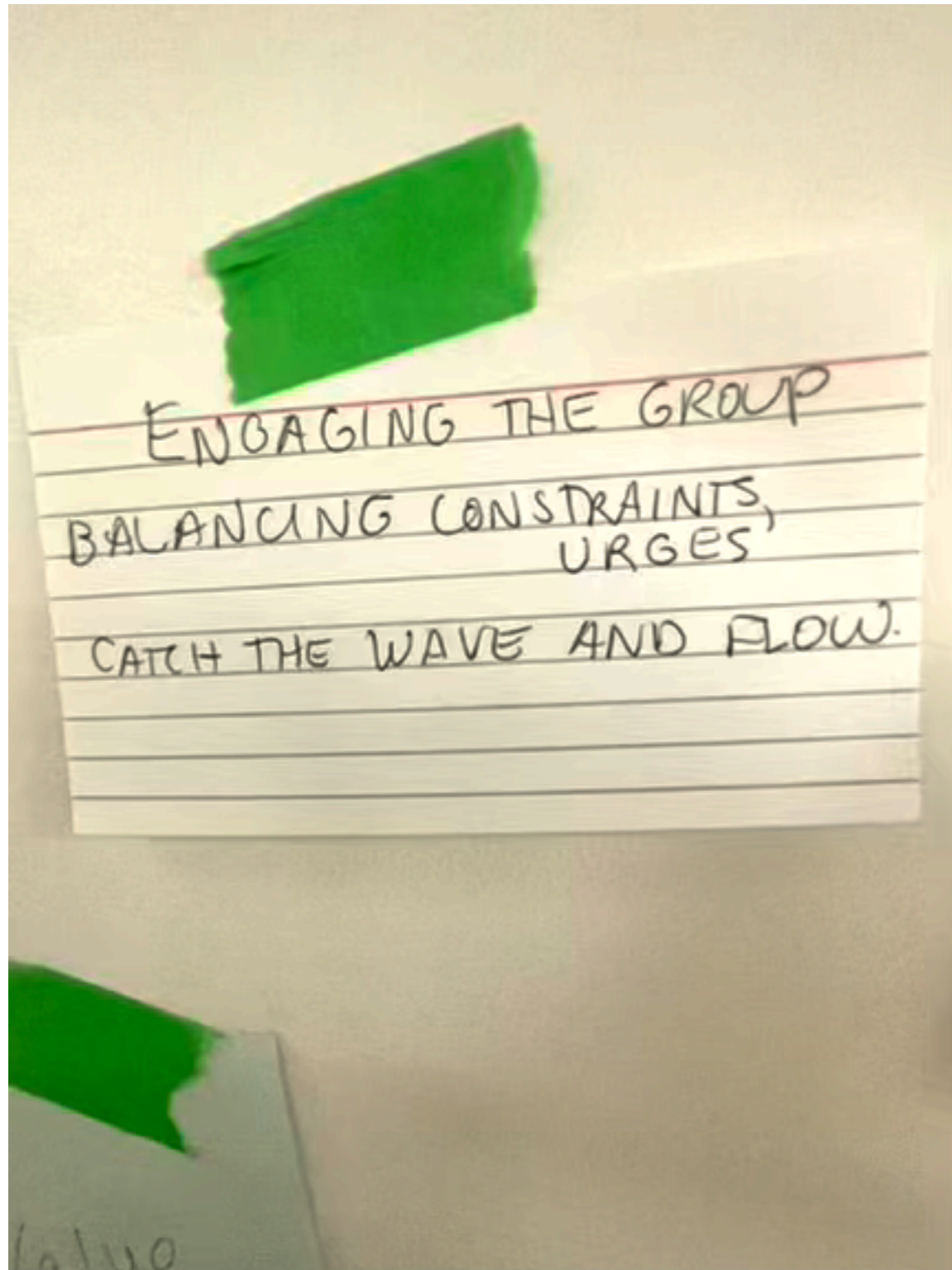
Listen actively
Show up authentically

PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

A photograph of a piece of lined paper with handwritten text. A green sticky note is attached to the top of the paper. The text on the paper reads: "I feel a great urge when I see others playing context tell, can I?"

I feel a great urge
when I see others playing
context tell, can I?

Resist the Urge
To make it about you.



PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

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

PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

Question and accept?

Observe, ~~witness~~, ~~act~~, ~~witness~~
be present, and act

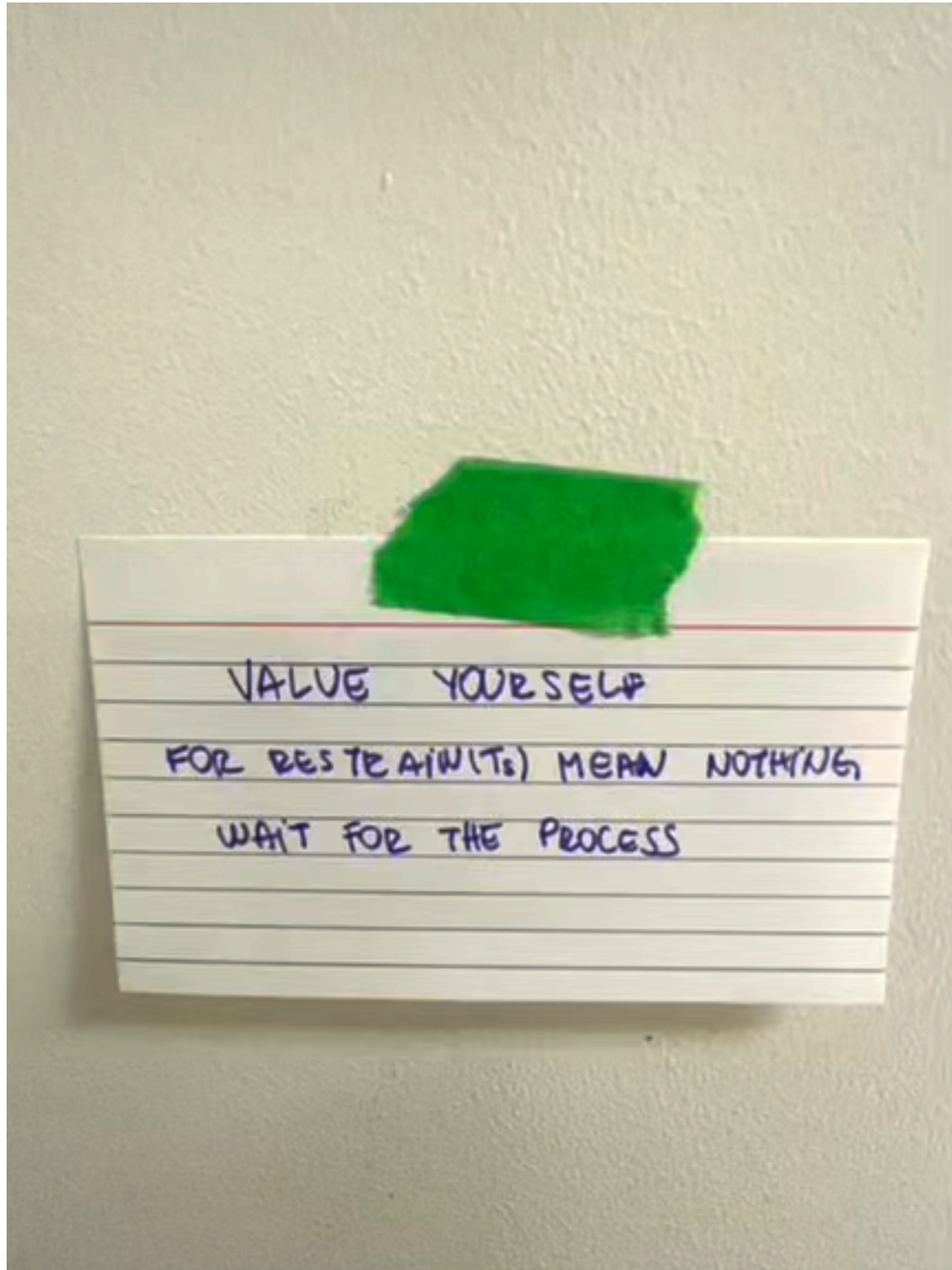
space, flow, witness it all

Give yourself Grace
Remind yourself
You are learning

PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

ADVICE

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



PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE

Here, to ask ~~the~~ questions,
observing, feeling into the presence
of myself & others.
filled with intention, I answer the call.

5-7-5

Now

I Think and Feel

Diving with ~~the~~ purpose, a why

5-7-5

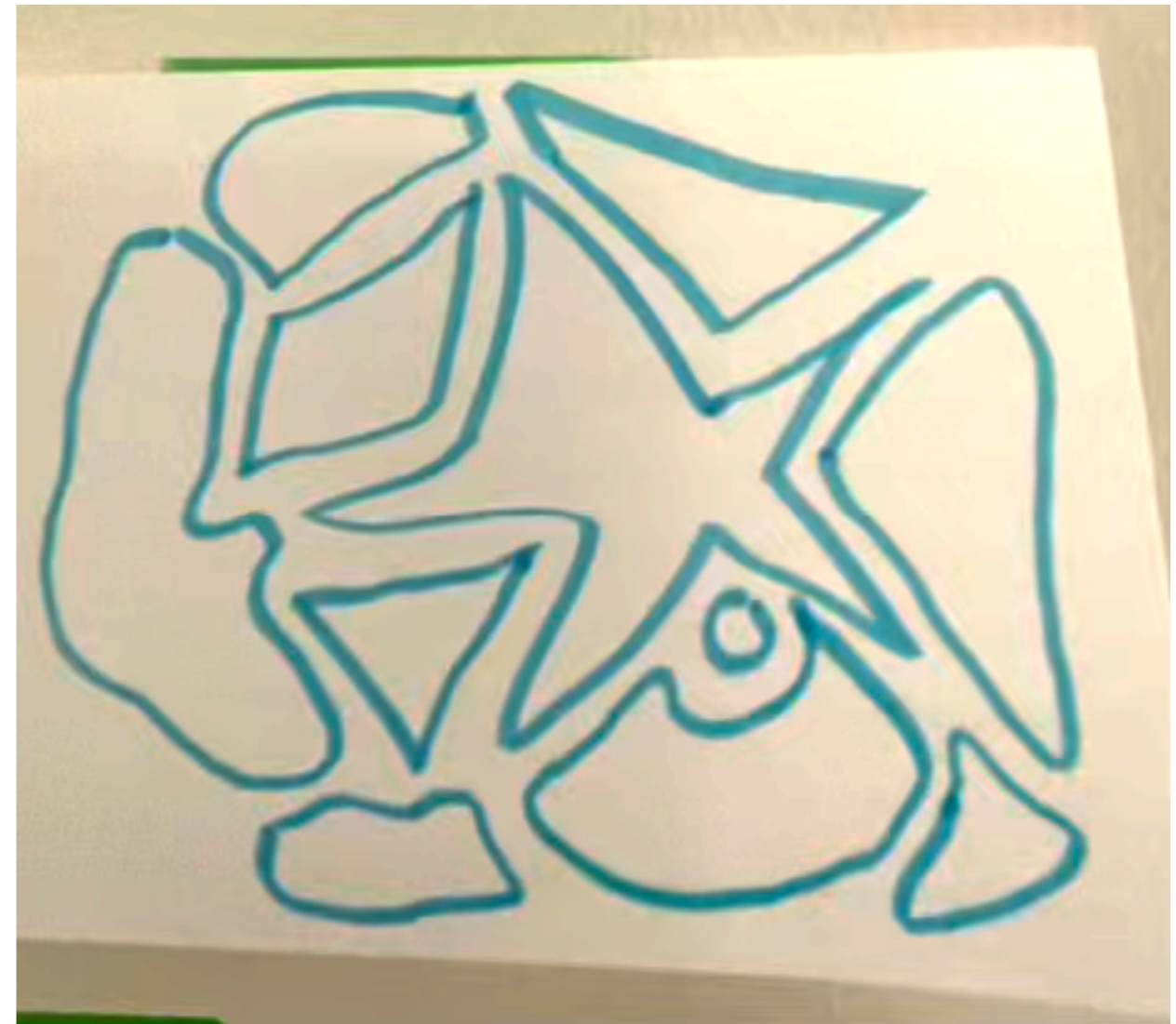
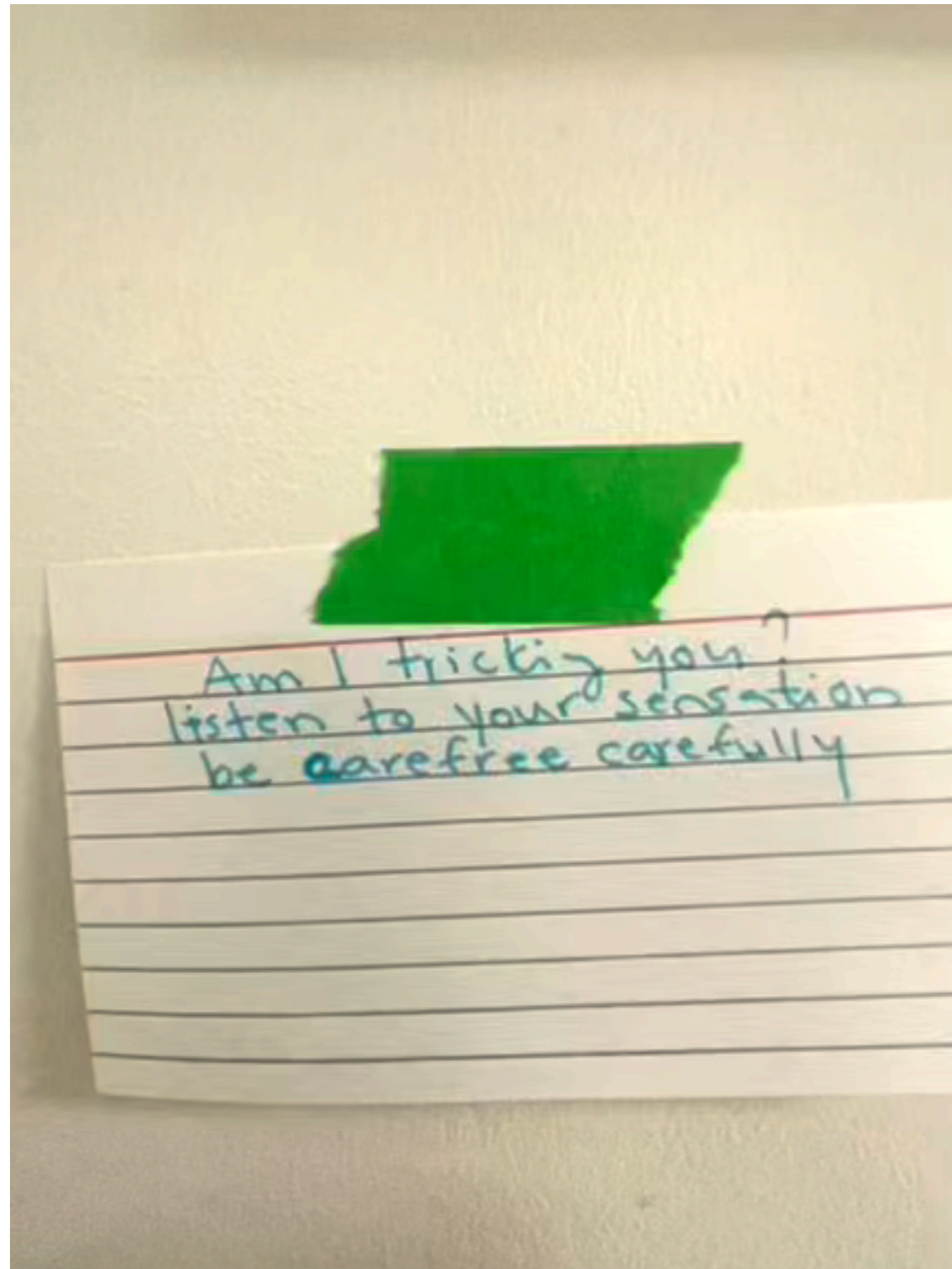
Now

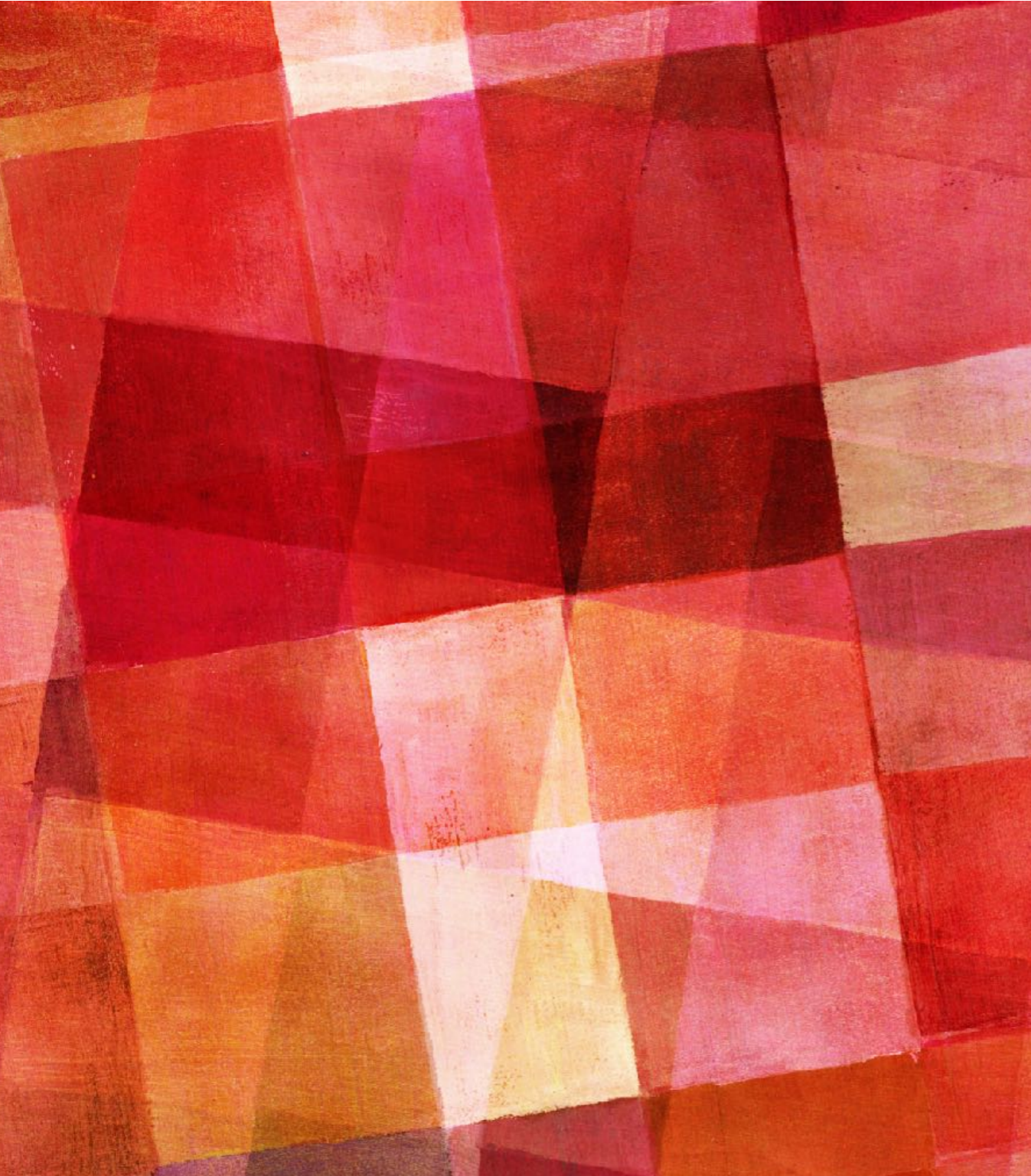
I Think and Feel

Diving with ~~the~~ purpose, a why

To be ~~a~~ one, again.

PARTICIPATE VS. OBSERVE





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

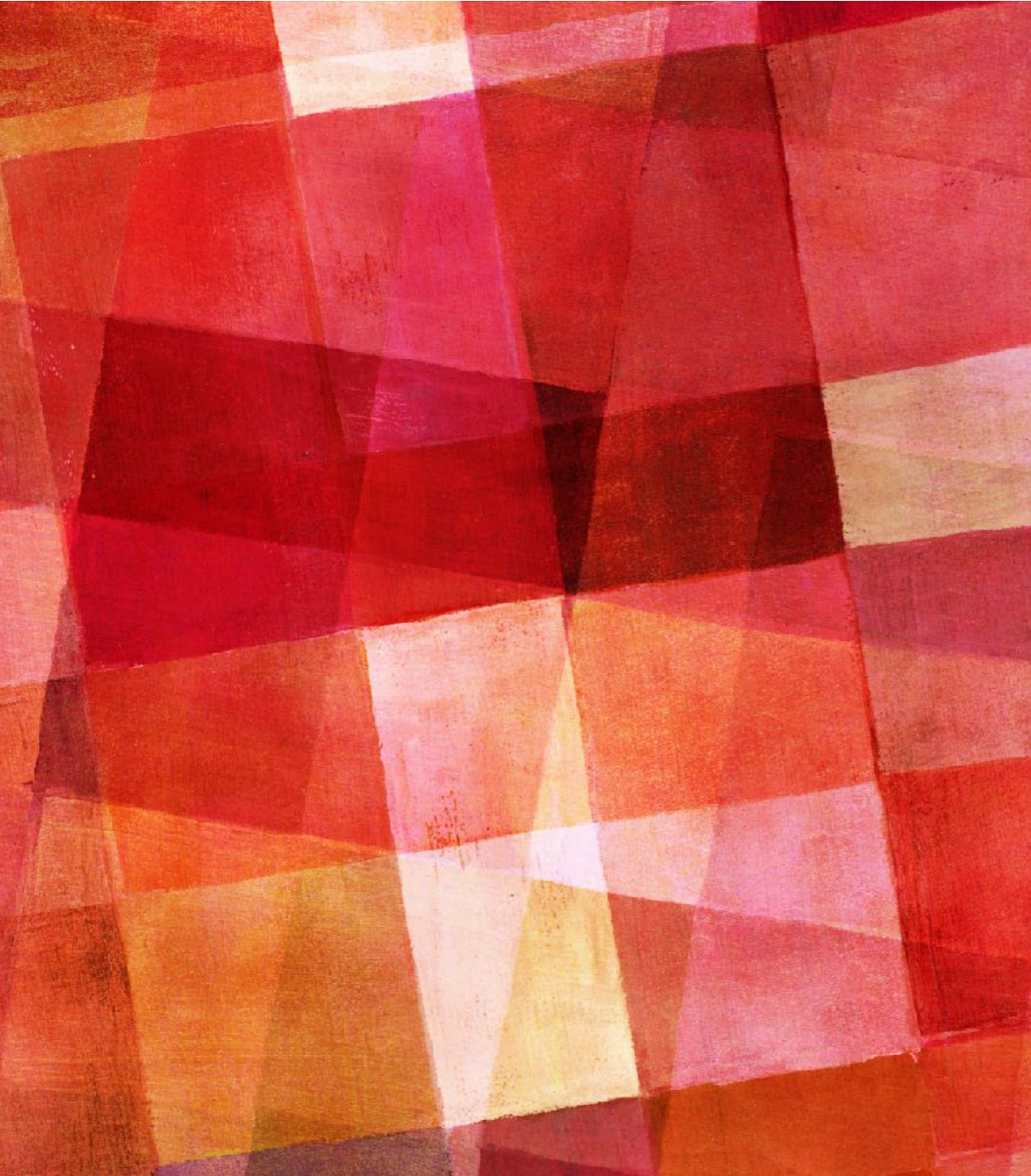


PLANS VS. EMERGENCE

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

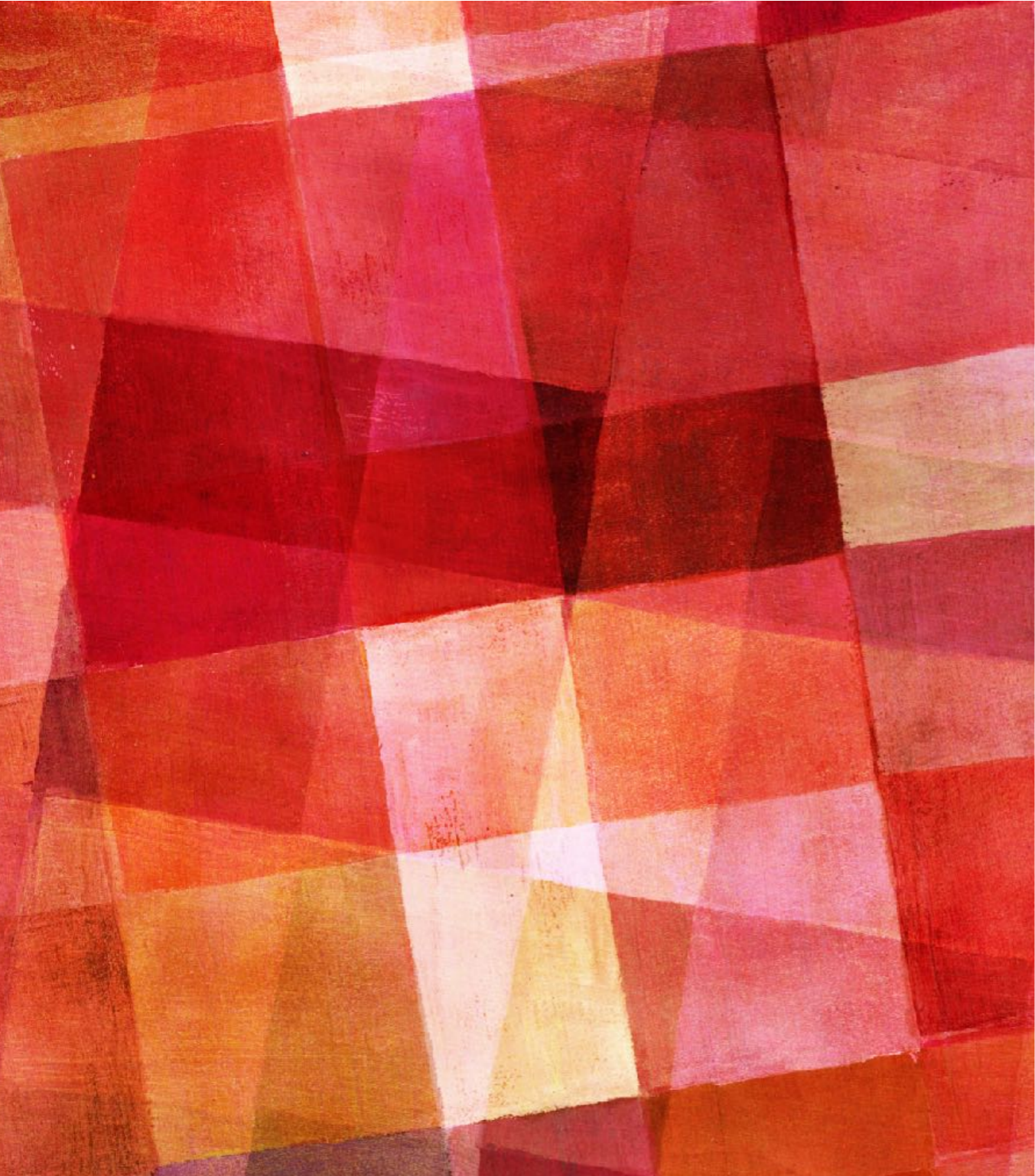
Preparing to recognize the voice
of need
And recognize the path
It is now in me
With the community
That will support me
Do not waste
A good chaos

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

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.



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