

Simply Being: Reflective Practice for Helping Professionals
An interview with Lynda Monk and Marlena Field
December 11, 2008

Lynda: Welcome to the Simply Being: Reflective Practice for Helping Professionals free teleseminar. And this is Lynda Monk of Creative Wellness. This is December 11, 2008 and I'm interviewing and am joined by Marlena Field of Body, Mind and Spirit Coaching.

We'd like to welcome all of you to this call. There will be a few people that will be joining in here, so welcome if you just joined us. We have people registered from various parts of Canada, the United States, and the UK, so thank you for joining the call. As many of you know, I'm here on Salt Spring Island, which is located on the west coast of British Columbia in Canada and Marlena Field is calling in from Kamloops, BC, just to give you our geography.

So this is my first opportunity to facilitate a seminar, and this is part of my new website launch, so thank you. And Marlena is a master at facilitating teleseminars; she does them often as a means of teaching through her work in the area of body-centered coaching. And we trust our collaborative effort to meet some of your needs and intentions that bring you forward in joining this call.

I'm just going to give you a brief overview as to what you can expect. I'll give you some brief introductions to ourselves so you know a bit about who we are and how we arrived at facilitating a teleseminar about reflective practice. Then I will interview Marlena about the book she co-authored with Donna Martin. And the title of that book is *Simply Being: A Reflective Practice Guide for Helping Professionals*, hence the name of the teleseminar. And at that time, we'll focus on the essential qualities of reflective practice.

In order to bring some of that to life, we'll include some guided exercises throughout the call so we aren't as much talking about reflective practice, but actually doing it and being it all at the same time. And of course, there'll be some opportunity for dialogue around this and you can participate if you want to, or participate through being an active listener while other people speak up.

So in terms of who I am, I have a business called Creative Wellness and I work with helpers, healers, and leaders to create greater well-being, balance, and fulfillment in their lives and work. I also work with the organizations to cultivate a healthy work environment where quality care and employee wellness can actually flow. I've spent the last 8 years developing and facilitating training programs in the area of organizational health, care for the caregivers, stress management – various things.

Most of this work has embraced looking at the common occupational hazards that are relevant for helpers, including things like professional burnout, vicarious trauma, and compassion fatigue. These are things many of you may well know as helpers that we can experience ourselves as we are in service to others.

Before I started my coaching, training and consulting business in 2000, I worked for 10 years as a front-line social worker - first in child welfare in Ontario and then as counselor in a children and youth mental agency, then as a medical social worker here in BC, up in Prince George for those of you who know the area. And although I loved my work as a social worker, I really became more interested in how helping impacts the people who are doing it and so I began to look more

closely at the well-being of helping professionals themselves and devoted my Master's studies to researching and exploring professional burnout among helpers.

I think it was really through the close look at burnout where I really began to gravitate and begin to understand and grow in my own reflective process as a helper. And I really, truly believe that this quality and skill and way of being is truly foundational for us to achieve the satisfaction and fulfillment and, of course, well-being that we want in our life and work as helpers.

So this led me to finding Marlana. I originally met Marlana through taking a course with her; I was a student in her body-centered coaching program and then I later learned of her book *Simply Being*, which I bought and read and have it here. It's highlighted and has Post-It Notes; it's been a real tool for me and I'm excited to share this with you.

One of the things I've found as a helper is that we're so often told that self-awareness is an important part of the competencies to do our work; it's often embedded in some of our ethical guidelines. But what often doesn't happen is learning how to do this. What does it mean to be more self-aware? How do we actually cultivate self-awareness? And that's what I really love about Marlana's work and her book; it offers some practical skills for gaining self-awareness in our presence and our work. So, I'm happy to have Marlana here.

And to briefly introduce Marlana, she's a professional certified coach. She's an expert in using the body as a resource for change, and she created the body-centered coaching method and wrote a book and created CDs of live coaching demonstrations. Her techniques combine mindfulness and the body's wisdom for the purpose of integrating body, mind, and spirit. She has helped coaches and other helping professionals assist clients to access body information that creates a greater depth of insight, self-awareness and self-acceptance.

Marlana, welcome!

Marlana: Thank you, Lynda. I'm delighted to be here. Thank you so much for initiating this conversation, this teleclass, and for taking yourself on to launch your website and use this as part of your launch. I think it's wonderful.

Those on the call with us, welcome. Today's call, we're going to talk about some concrete steps that you're going to take away and you're going to implement them in your life. It's going to help you be more peaceful and calm. It's also going to give you some ideas of some take-aways that you can do with the people you work with, because I understand some of you all work with other people. Anything we talk about today, we'll have a personal take-away for you, and you can take away to your clients.

And as we're talking, because we've been talking quite a bit so far, I want you on this call to begin to notice your own habits as a listener. Lynda has been saying a number of things, I'll be saying a number of things, and in the background of you listening, I encourage you to notice what keeps you present, what takes you away, what are some of your own learning styles and what are some of the things you do. The purpose of me inviting you to do that is simply to begin to be mindful of your own experience, because as we study our own experience, we get to know ourselves better. I'm delighted to be here, and welcome to everybody.

Lynda: Thanks, Marlana. One of the things I loved about your book is that it's filled with some wonderful quotes by others, but largely by yourself and Donna Martin, your

co-author on the book. And what I've done is to pull out a couple of them as springboards or launches for us to explore this notion of reflective process further together.

The first quote was from page 8, and it says 'Helping others is all about being in relationship, and therefore, about developing personhood and full human-beingness. Yes, it's gaining experience and skills, but unless we can show up fully in our relationships and be authentically ourselves, our presence offers less than its full potential and we end up being generally less fulfilled.'

Marlena, I'm wondering if you can please share with us a bit about how reflective process can help us show up more fully and begin to share with us what some of the essential qualities of the reflective practice are?

Marlena: Great question, Lynda, and as I was listening, there were a few parts there that I can definitely address. First, I'll talk a little bit about personhood and full human-beingness; then I'll say a few words about reflective practice and then we'll have – well, let's do a practice after that and you can feel for yourself some of the essential qualities. Then we'll talk about that.

Lynda: Great.

Marlena: When Donna and I talk about personhood and full human-beingness; the good news about this is you just need to be yourself. That is just such good news, because really if we're going to be in relationship with other people, it really begins with us being in relationship with ourselves, and as we become in a more intimate relationship with ourselves and understand what we're about and what's going on for us, the more confident we can be and the more empowering we can be when we're in relationship with other people.

So, my work basically is all about body, mind and spirit. In my view, we're whole people and when ever we do anything or we're out in the world or we're working with someone, there are the parts of us – the body, our mind and our spirit. And what those are, are parts that go together to make us whole people. as you begin to do some reflective practice and you become more in touch with who you are, who you be, and you begin looking at your values and your purpose and how you express yourself, then you're going to be forming an even more intimate relationship with yourself.

One of the things I like to say a lot and to teach about is the question: Who are you being while you are out in the world doing? We go out in the world and do things, and the important part is who we're being while we're out doing things. As you become more aware of that, then when you go and work with other people, you give them the gift of your presence. You give them the gift of showing up as you. And as you begin to show up fully as you, then they feel more heard and they feel more understood.

One of the things my husband always says to me when I'm going out and I'm going to be doing something and I get a little bit nervous or wonder what I'm going to say, he always says, 'Remember that it's not what you say; it's how you how you make people feel.' And I think that's a really important part for us to bring into our work, and that's how are we impacting the person we're working with; how are we making them feel and whatever it is that we're doing and whatever's coming out of our mouth is not the important part.

So, are there any questions or comments about that part before I talk about reflective presence? Anything that's coming up for anyone on the call?

Basically in the book, the reason it's called *Simply Being* is that it's simply being who we are; it's simply being with whatever is happening to us, and the reflective practice is about who we're simply being. It's being aware of our present experience and aware of what's happening.

The other part, the reflective part, is when something happens to us, it's important for us to notice what's going on and reflect on it in the moment and sometimes in a stressful situation, that's hard. And it's important then to reflect on it later. So by reflection, what I'm talking about is being quiet, being reflective, being open to whatever is there, and being willing to step back from whatever the situation was and to quietly reflect on it. I think the important word here is 'quiet'. We so often in our busy lives forget to pause, to step back; we forget to be mindful and those are really important qualities for helping professionals because otherwise, we can get burned out.

I'd like to do a simple exercise with you on the call, and before we start, I want you to – without changing anything – I want you to notice your shoulders and I want you to give your shoulders a rating; this is your shoulders and how they are, without judging them. It's just on a scale of 1 to 10, if 1 is quite tight and 10 is being totally relaxed; just give yourself a number. And please do not judge the number – we're just noticing.

Give yourself the number. Now, I invite you to close your eyes, take a moment to be with your breath, so you're being with your breath, not trying to change it. And now as we're being with our breath, as you inhale, I want you to shrug your shoulders right up to your ears. So as you inhale, up come your shoulders to your ears; exhale, let your shoulders drop down. Inhale, big shrug; exhale, drop down. And all you're doing is coordinating your in breath with the shrug, and your exhale with the shrug down.

I'm going to let you do that a couple of times with your own breathing pattern so I'm not directing it. Take a few moments and do that for yourself.

(short period of silence)

And the next time you do it, I'd like you to extend your out-breath just a tiny bit. So you're still doing the inhale, and the exhale, and just let your exhale be a tiny bit longer. Practice that a couple of times.

(short period of silence)

Just being with your breath, being with your shoulders.... And I'd like you to stop now and give yourself a new rating. Is the rating the same, or is it different? Just kind of notice what the number is. And now I'd like you to take a moment to reflect on your experience. What was it that you noticed? Were you able to keep your full attention on your shoulders and your breath or not? What did you make out about this thing we were doing with our shoulders? So you're just reflecting and noticing.

I'd love it if a couple of you could share what you noticed.

Participant: As soon as I focused, I automatically started thinking of better ways to posture, better ways to align and straighten my body. I got to a better posture and became aware of certain muscle tension, just by commenting on my shoulders.

Marlena: Wonderful.

Participant: And then we did the exercise – I've done yoga breathing and lots of similar exercises before, so I just became more relaxed with that and just went through relaxation for the muscles in the shoulders, top of the shoulders, the neck and just slowed my breathing down.

Marlena: Great. So you went from what number to what number?

Participant: Oh, from about a 7 to an 8. I wasn't feeling terrible to start with.

Marlena: That's wonderful.

Participant: I'm never at a 10 – I'm never perfect!

Marlena: Well, we should start a club because neither am I. I think most of us would be in that club. It's so wonderful. Thanks for sharing. Anybody else have something they want to share with us?

Basically, what happened was when we were focusing on our breathing and what was happening, we were basically taking our attention to ourselves and being in what's called a mindful state. When we're in a mindful state, it's really present moment, and what else is it? What's happening in a mindful state?

Lynda: It gives us the opportunity to be non-judgmental, Marlena, and I really think it creates a safe place for non-judgment. And the more often we can hold a non-judgmental space for ourselves, the more we have the ability to extend that to others.

Marlena: Yes. Absolutely. And that's such a key point to being mindful and paying attention. If we're not – if we're judging and thinking to ourselves 'I wish this wasn't the way it was', then we're so busy judging that we actually don't notice the experience. So if we can stand back and not be judging, but being curious and being an observer, then we're going to get a whole lot more information. What I know about this practice of being mindful and being with our body and whatever the signal is, it's like if your shoulders were really, really tight and you decided to judge your shoulders, make your shoulders wrong, be critical of your shoulders and wish it wasn't so, then your shoulders would get tighter.

There's a tension that comes just from your thoughts about your shoulders, so if we can stand back and think, 'Oh, I notice my shoulders are tight. I bet my shoulders are telling me something.' As an example, when my shoulders feel tight, I'll notice them and say 'Shoulders, thank you. It is time for me to have a cup of tea, it is time for me to move away from the computer. It is time for me to take a few moments and rotate my shoulders and give myself a breath.' So when it happens, you can either make the body signal wrong or you can embrace and go, 'Body, thank you. I needed that break for a few minutes.'

It's just a perspective, isn't it?

Lynda: I think the other thing that happens as helpers is that our focus is often outward, looking at how that person is doing, what their needs are, listening to what they're

saying, and can get quite disconnected from those same things for ourselves. And there's a lot of distraction around and lots and lots of doing and lots of activity. This place of pause, and it doesn't have to take long, but creating that habit of checking in with oneself and observing one's own behavior and one's own thinking, while also holding this focus on the other, is a real strengthening feature to truly helping other people and doing it in a way that allows us to feel healthy and strong and connected as helpers as well.

Marlena: Yes, absolutely. And it will go a long way to preventing that burnout that helpers often experience. Sometimes with my clients what they say to me is 'How am I going to remember to notice? How am I going to remember to pay attention to my body's signal?' Like you say, Lynda, it's something that we're learning and practicing. So often I'll say – well, there's a couple of things.

I'll often say to people, 'If you're going to be in person with someone else, wear something you don't normally wear, like a scarf or a sweater, or wear your watch on a different arm or wear a ring on a different finger.' Anything like that, because I know for myself if I haven't worn a ring for a while and then put it on, I'm aware of it. Then I'll just remember 'Yeah, I need to check in.' Or, 'That reminds me to take a breath.' It's kind of this lovely secret that you have, where you're bringing yourself more present and being more mindful and being more relaxed. At the same time, you're with someone else. There are little tricks like that to start forming the habit of noticing. So great...thank you for bringing that in.

Lynda: Marlena, I hear you identifying as you're speaking with us and giving us examples, I've heard you repeatedly use the word 'mindful' and 'mindfulness', and also that there is an action involved. That there are things we can be doing, or not doing as the case might be, to support us in our reflective practice.

In your book on page 9, you say that 'Reflective practice allows insight and clarity to emerge out of confusion and helps you to listen to your inner wisdom.' Can you elaborate a bit on how reflective practice can help us gain clarity?

Marlena: Oh, absolutely. It's – it helps us gain clarity by pausing and by noticing. It's like the example I was talking about with the shoulders. When – part of noticing is confusion; it's a wonderful thing to notice, actually. What goes on with confusion is that when we're confused, we do not take any actions. We don't know what action to take, we don't know what to decide; it's like a fog rolls in. So what happens is we can notice that we're in that place and we're saying to ourselves, 'I am so confused about this.' It gives us an opportunity to reflect on it in a more empowered way. So I noticed I'm confused; I stop, I pause, I check with my body. Where am I holding this confusion in my body? What are thoughts that keep me in this place? What would be better or what would be easier for me in this place of confusion?

It's really that standing-back place, and it's empowering. It's empowering in that we do know the answers. We do know what to do, and we get in the hold of something like confusion, or we get in a hold of stress or whatever it is that's happening to us. It's kind of like being in the grip, and to un-grip sounds really simple, but it's actually pretty profound.

It's noticing, being with your breath, standing back, and choosing to look at the idea of a more empowered way to be with it.

Lynda: Great. I hear something that almost makes a distinction between responding and reacting, and you talk a little bit about that in your book. Can you say something to those, please?

Marlena: Sure. Reacting is really about a knee-jerk reaction that happens to us. Often times, clients will say 'I don't want to have that reaction to a situation'. You're in a typical situation and there's a reaction that habitually happens every time you're in that situation, and clients will say to me, 'I don't want to do that; I don't want to react like that anymore.' What I say to them is 'Here's the deal. You probably will continue to react that way to that situation for we don't know how long. The good news is, you don't have to stay in that reaction.'

So, it's like a reaction is so knee-jerk; it's so automatic, it's so habitual that it just happens. And that's not the part that we need to concern ourselves with. The part we need to concern ourselves with is 'Oh, I just noticed that I reacted. Oh, I bet I have choices here.' It's about pausing; it's about opening ourselves to a different experience of what it is. This is where reflection often comes in.

Sometimes when the reaction happens, sometimes it's so immediate and so stressful in the moment that sometimes we have to go away to reflect on it to do it better next time, and sometimes we can learn how to do it in the moment. So, a situation happens, an automatic, habitual reaction; notice it, and pause. The pause could be anything like taking a couple of breaths, not opening our mouths and not saying what we usually say in that situation. Instead, we're breathing, we're stopping, and we're noticing and we put ourselves in a very delicious place of choosing what we get to do.

We get to choose our response, which is, when you think about the word 'responsibility' – you have 'response' and 'ability'. You have the ability to respond. The responsibility is really being aware and being responsible for your own actions. That's an empowered choice. So that's how I see reacting and response.

Lynda: Let me summarize what I heard, because I almost hear – you talk about in your book about these three stages of responding. The first stage is noticing what is happening right now. And the second is opening, which is that pause, the breath, creating the space. And the third is the responding and asking ourselves what is a new way or what is a way in this moment that I can be with what is going on.

Marlena: Yes. Absolutely.

We've been talking about reflective practice and response and I was thinking that it would be a really nice thing to offer the people on the call and the people that are going to be listening to the recording, offering them an experience where we give them something concrete that they can take away and use as a way of sustaining their own energy – particularly in the helping field. An exercise that will help them be more creative and self-nourishing as they're working with other people.

What I've noticed is there's something called appreciation and gratitude that is so undervalued in that work that we do in the helping professions. Just the idea of appreciation and gratitude are such wonderful antidotes. They're antidotes to stress; it's an antidote to negative thinking and it's something that when we instill that in our clients as well, what it does is a really positive impact on how people are perceiving what it is that's going on.

I'd like to offer that experience to people on the call. It'll take just a few minutes – once again we'll be closing our eyes and we'll be doing an exercise where we're

inviting in appreciation, we're inviting in gratitude, we're going to be thinking about what we're grateful for. We're going to be taking that and using our body in this exercise and doing all sorts of things.

In order to do that, I'd like you to very gently close your eyes. If you don't like closing your eyes, allow them to be soft-focused on something in your space – just looking down at the carpet or if you feel comfortable, closing your eyes. The intention for this exercise is to anchor in some appreciation, to locate that feeling and energy in your body, and to make it accessible to you afterwards so you can use it as a resource.

So, with your eyes closed, just become aware of your breath and just kind of noticing how nice it is to drop into that still place inside of yourself, to drop into that being. And as you're sitting quietly and sitting mindfully, you're being inside, simply sitting with yourself, I'd like you to think of something in your life that is a blessing. It could be a person, an event – it could be anything at all, where when you think about that person or thing or event, you feel really, really blessed.

It could be something from the past, it could be something you enjoy daily, or anything at all. What we're going for is the feeling of gratitude and joy; the feeling of appreciation, the feeling of 'Oh, I am so lucky' or 'This really makes my heart sing.' It's that feeling we're going for. Just take a few moments and feel the feeling of whatever that is that you feel blessed to have in your life right now. Just breathe it into your center and really have the feeling of appreciation, the feeling of gratitude. You could even magnify it a little bit and allow it to take up even more heart space.

Just allow yourself the experience in a few moments to really experience it. As you're being with this feeling of appreciation, just notice what is happening in your body. As you're feeling it, notice if something happens with your heart or in your abdomen or somewhere in your body, as you think the thought of appreciation, you think the thought of gratitude, and you feel the delicious feeling of it. There's an impact that it will be having on your body, so just notice where that is; notice what it is. It will be somewhere inside of you.

Take a moment to appreciate that you do have that feeling, that it is in your body; there is some energy here, and just notice what that's like for you. You may even want to take your hand and put it over that part of your body where you're feeling that appreciation. If it's a part of your body that you can't reach, then go and imagine that there's a hand that's supporting you and supporting this feeling of appreciation and gratitude. Breathing that in....

And just notice if there's a simple – and this may or may not happen; just notice if it happens naturally. Notice if there's a symbol that comes forward for you that represents this feeling, this sensation, this appreciation. It might be a color, it might be something in nature, it might be a shape – and it may just be a feeling. It's all good. Just notice what you're noticing.

And something else you may notice is there may be a silent word or a sound or a phrase that comes with this feeling. It might be 'I am so thankful...' Or, 'I am blessed'. It could be anything like that. You're inviting in the feeling, the body sensation, any visual, any sound, and you're anchoring it inside of your body. It's inside of you; it's here right now. It's who you are and what you have access to. Breathe it in.

What this is, is an internal resource for you. It's a place where, when you're feeling stressed or feeling at odds or feeling low, you can go to this place. You can remember this experience today; you can remember the parts of it, you can remember the image or the sound – whatever it is – that you're experiencing, and you can access this feeling at any time. You can bring it into you, and this is you. This is your resource and it will help you be with your life, be calm and be more relaxed with what is going on.

Take a couple of deep breaths, and thank your body and your mind and your spirit for participating. And thank yourself fully. And when you're ready, very gently bring yourself back to the call. Very gently open your eyes, and really appreciate yourself for allowing yourself to go into that exercise and find that resource inside of yourself.

Take a deep breath. And I'm wondering if there's anybody on the call that would like to share that with us – what you experienced, what you noticed.

Participant: I experienced a lot of peace and calm and a very warm, cozy feeling.

Marlena: Wonderful. And isn't it great that you can access that any time you want?

Participant: It's wonderful, yes.

Marlena: Great. Thank you for sharing.

Participant: And the phrase I loved in this exercise was to drop into the still place.

Marlena: Great.

Participant: Thank you for that.

Marlena: You're welcome. Anybody else? What did you notice? What happened?

Lynda: What I noticed is, ironically, as I dropped into myself and I opened my eyes part way through, I began to notice more clearly what was around me. Although the focus was internal, I ended up looking out my office window and there's this beautiful ray of sun coming through my cedar trees right now and it's like it was mirroring this feeling of warmth I was having inside. It's like my gratitude was extending both inside myself and also into an appreciation for what's around me.

Marlena: That's so beautiful. That's so beautiful. Wonderful. And so as you're out in nature – I'm so glad you brought that in because it's an internal experience to get in touch with it, and as you said, it's an external experience to take it out into the world with us now. So you can take that out in nature and you can expand it out. That's so beautiful. Thank you. That was great.

Participant: I experienced something similar to what everyone else was saying. In addition to those feelings of peace and warmth, was a sense of stillness and clarity. I've just been struggling with having a sense of clarity and calm as to what direction to head, and this is going to help bring me to that place. I don't necessarily know still, but I feel much more clear-headed about it. It seems like a place I could work from and get somewhere from here.

Marlena: Yes. So often when we're trying to figure something out with our minds, whatever it is you're doing and the rest of us always do, what's going to be wonderful for you

is exactly what you said. When you go to this place, you begin to look at it from this place, and then you are going to have more clarity. More creativity can come in from this place and more insight can from this place. So when you take yourself out of the worry and go to this place, wow! You've really got something to work with here. Congratulations!

Participant: Thank you.

Marlena: That's awesome.

Lynda: I like to sometimes filter decisions through my body. That's actually something I learned in Marlena's class, where you can actually – for example, you were mentioning being in a place to make decisions; you can then begin to articulate the different options. So, it could be 'I could do this or I could do this' if it was as simple as two choices for example, and literally just be with that one decision and close my eyes and tune into to the place that Marlena took us – that still, quiet, calm place – and just begin to listen.

So I give myself the decision and then I start to listen. Then I shake that off and then I give myself the other option and I tune into that internal place and I listen. It really is a tool for accessing intuition and the knowing – that knowing that Marlena's referencing we all have, so it helps us access our inner resource and that place of gratitude and warmth, and that helps as well. Thanks for mentioning that with reference to making decisions.

Marlena: What I'm always working on with my clients is if you're going to be making a decision and this is where the body, mind and spirit come in. Because we're whole people and because our mind has a point of view – I love our mind; our mind is very helpful, and often when we're making decisions, we only go with the mind. We forget the body has some wisdom and we forget all about the spirit of how we're going to feel when the decision is made.

If it's the right decision and it's congruent and it's in alignment with your wholeness, then your body, your mind and your spirit will be on board. So if you work with your body, mind and spirit – all of them – towards making that decision, and Lynda was talking about a technique that I use and it's a great one; it brings in the body, and how does the spirit feel. So whatever it is that you're deciding in any situation – whether it's a small one or a big one, it's important to have all those parts in alignment, one with another, and then you've made the decision that's in your best interests and in your higher good. So it's great.

Lynda: Thanks, Marlena. I'm mindful of our time, and I'd like to open up some opportunities for some further reflection and discussion as a group. What I'm going to do is pose a question to the group and see where we go with this. So, I'd like you to imagine and I'd like you to do this with your feet planted on the ground. If your legs are tucked up under you, just let them make contact with the floor or the surface beneath you and imagine that from the bottom of your feet, there's a large root system growing out from beneath you. Perhaps it's reaching through the building to the layers of the earth, the rock, the soil.

And this root system is nourishing you. It's bringing you everything you need in this moment without you even needing to know what that is. Just allow yourself to stay connected with your breath as it enters and leaves your body, giving you life. Simply notice the path of the inhale and the exhale. And staying connected to this root system, imagine it giving you energy, creativity, support, courage, wisdom, well-being, and anything else you might need in this one moment.

Allow all of these qualities and virtues to be drawn into your body through these roots, through the bottom of your feet, up through your legs, your abdomen, your spine, down your arm, out through the top of your head, and you're infused with all that this replenishing root system is bringing to you in this moment. And from this place of connection and groundedness, I'd like you to imagine what would your life look like if you were a master at reflective practice – a master of self-awareness, mindfulness, and noticing.

What would be different? We now welcome any comments, thoughts, or reflections from the group. I'll give you the question again. What would life look like if you were a master at reflective practice, a master of self-awareness, mindfulness, and noticing? What would be or what might be different in your life and work?

Participant: I would have a greater feeling of harmony.

Lynda: Harmony, yes. And how important that is to all of us.

Participant: I'm just feeling just going from this kind of place that I easily and effortlessly find ways to express myself in ways that are positive to the world and the people that live in it. It's the people that need what I have come along my way.

Lynda: That's like a magnet; people show up and say 'I want some of that.'

Participant: Yes.

Lynda: Thank you. Anyone else? This may also be any sort of immediate take-away you're having from the discussion we've been having and the exercises we've been doing.

Participant: I feel like I would be able to enter into my work with less fear and more connection.

Lynda: Wonderful.

Participant: Without fear.

Lynda: I love that! Completely eradicate fear.

Marlena: Lynda, just from what's been said, I've read that there are two emotions, love and fear, and which one do we want to go towards. So as we learn to be better at letting go of our fear, we become better at manifesting and experiencing love. For me, it's on a continuum sometimes, but I love what she was saying about moving away from fear because then it allows more space for love and gratitude to come in. It sounds wonderful.

Participant: You know, when you say that, that kind of sparks something for me and that Biblical idea of perfect love casts out fear. That's what I feel like we were going into – the perfect nourishment and being taken care of, and what it's like to be in perfect or divine love. When you're in that, your fears are just gone; they're not even in your conscious or awareness. I feel like that's a different way of looking at what we just went through.

Marlena: Absolutely. Wonderful. Well said.

Lynda: We're moving towards the close of our call, so thank you, everyone, for your participation and comments and for holding the space with your silence as well. It all makes the contribution to our time together. I had a professor in University named (Ruth Solvay) when I was studying social work, and during many of our classes, she always offered us this thought: 'We only take people as far as we have gone ourselves.' At the time, I didn't exactly know what that meant, although I did recognize that it had some significance.

I've held on to that mantra through the many years now of practicing as a social worker and now as a life and wellness coach. I really want to acknowledge all of you on the call because clearly, you care about going the distance with yourself, just being interested in the topic of reflective practice. So, thank you. Thank you also for all the educating and care-giving work you do, not just in your working world but in your families and communities. It really does contribute to a positive vibration, not just in your immediate circle but I just imagine all these ripples reaching out and connecting with one another and creating a positive vibration at large.

I'd also like to draw your attention to an item in my store at www.creativewellnessworks.com I'm very excited about the release of my first guided meditation CD; it's called *Creative Wellness: Guided Meditations*. It's a series of six mini-retreats. One is designed for balance; the others are self-care, replenishment, relaxation, clarity, and celebration. It really is intended as a tool to support your reflective practice, and of course, your well-being as a helper and a human being.

If you'd like to learn more about Marlina's work, her website is www.bodymindspiritcoaching.com. What I'd love to do as a check-out, if you wish, is to just offer the opportunity for each person on the call to provide one word – it could be a feeling, a thought, or something in the moment as your contribution and check-out to our time together. And then we'll say good-bye and hang up. Can we go around please?

Participant: Peace.

Participant: I would say the same.

Participant: Gratitude.

Participant: I second that – gratitude. Thank you.

Participant: Comfort.

Participant: I just want to share my imagery, which was a heart wearing a crown – a noble heart.

Participant: Openness.

Marlena: Stillness.

Lynda: Excitement - and gratitude that you were all here. Thank you; I hope to meet you all again on future calls. Take care and have a peaceful holiday season, whatever that means to each of you in your respective worlds. And be well. Thank you Marlina for joining us on the call today.