

Journey:

Are you ready for change?

Participant Handbook



YMCA
Herts • Beds • Bucks
OneYMCA.org

An eight-week course
to help you explore
how you could achieve
your full potential in
mind, body and spirit

Your Journey to a fuller life begins now!

This 8-week course aims to provide you with the time and space to think about and discuss as part of a small group the questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What is the truth? How do I live? Where is the way? When does it change?

The course and retreat will enable you to make connections with others on a similar journey and be part of a supportive community.

On week 7 you will be participating in a 3-day, 2 nights away retreat where you will stay at a retreat centre with other participants from the courses that have been running across your organisation.

On retreat you will participate in community living, sharing meals, activities and sessions. There will also be time for you to explore your responses to the course ideas and share these with others.

Each course will be led by two facilitators who will provide the time and space to guide you and your group through the questions above. You and your facilitators will explore some group boundaries together so that everyone can feel safe journeying together.

This booklet will help you to get the most from your sessions. Remember to look at the questions before the session and bring the booklet with you to your sessions to note down your ideas. There is also space to write down your thoughts which you can look back on to see how far you have come.

Introduction to the journey

 Before session

Q: Have you thought about if this course is right for you?

Q: Are you ready and able to make the commitment to yourself and the others in your group to turn up every week and engage with the big questions of life?

Q: Do you want to take action to make positive changes in your life, even if it will be hard?

Q: Have you considered how you will feel about the retreat and staying away for two nights?

Introduction to the journey

▶ Session questions

▶ Session focus: a fuller life is a life full of adventure.

- Can we hope?
- Is it possible to trust others? We can begin to know others gently changing and developing, full of potential.

Q: What would you include in the group guidelines?

Q: What expectations do we have of each other?

The course is a time of exploration - be prepared to be open minded - listen and learn from one another - recognize that everyone has value and something valuable to contribute. We are all journeying together.

Q: Have you experienced any catalysts for change?

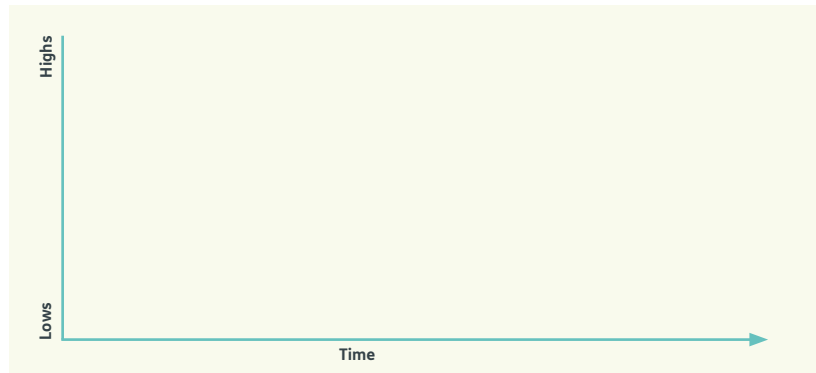
Marriage	Addiction
Bereavement	Emotional Turmoil
Loss of job	Job Dissatisfaction
Relationship breakdown/ Divorce	Health Issues
Loss of Social Standing	Social and Environmental Pressures
Ageing	Retirement
Illness	

Who am I?

► Before session

► Embrace all you have been, all you are and all you can be as you begin your journey to a fuller life.

Exercise: Draw a rough timeline of your life, including highs and lows.



Q: What experiences & people have shaped you?

[Blank area for writing answers to the question above]

► “The real voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”
Marcel Proust.

Time

Q: How do you see yourself?
 Name one strength and one weakness.

[Two blank lines for writing answers to the question above]

► One day the Pope watched Michelangelo hammering away at a slab of marble. “Why are you working so hard?” Michelangelo replied “Can’t you see, there’s an angel imprisoned in this block of stone. I’m working as hard as I can to set him free.”

Imagine there’s someone spectacular beyond your imagination being created in you (like the angel in the stone).

Q: What does the ‘you’ that is being formed look like?

[Blank area for writing answers to the question above]

► “You are more, you can be more, you are not alone”
George Williams,
 Founder of the YMCA movement

Who am I?

▶ Session questions

▶ Session focus: Living life full of value

- We are on a journey to accept who we are – our feelings, our past, our strengths and weaknesses. We have great value despite our imperfections.
- We are a masterpiece in the making, continually changing and developing, full of potential.

▶ After being rejected and betrayed by his brothers, left for dead, sold into slavery, wrongly thrown into jail, Joseph was promoted to Pharaoh’s right-hand man, governing Egypt. He saw that even through all this there was value and purpose in his life, sharing with his brothers: *“You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.”*

Genesis 50:20

Q: Are there areas of my past that I want to accept? To mourn? To give thanks for.

Q: What strengths and qualities can I see being formed in me?

Q: How did it make you feel to see the £10 note crushed and yet keep its value? What do you think gives you value?

Q: In what ways do you think that other people and/or God can help you to see a fuller picture of yourself?

Going Deeper

Q: How do you believe God sees you?

Exercise: Reflect on Psalm 139, which shares how God created you and loves you. Look into the mirror and read this verse to yourself:

▶ **“I am fearfully and wonderfully made”**

Psalm 139:14

Action Plan



<p>Goal: Choose an area you would like to grow in. What is it you want to achieve? What is the dream?</p>	<p>Reality: Where are you at now in this area? Be honest.</p>	<p>Options: What can you do to get a step closer to your dream? What are the options? Who can help you? What do you need?</p>	<p>Way Forward: What actions can you take today, tomorrow, next week? Be specific and take one step at a time.</p>
--	--	--	---

Spirit

Goal:
Reality:
Options:

Way Forward:

Mind

Goal:
Reality:
Options:

Way Forward:

Body

Goal:
Reality:
Options:

Way Forward:

Relationships

Goal:
Reality:
Options:

Way Forward:

Write a brief description of what your life will be like when you've grown in these areas

Write out a daily prayer to use as you walk this journey

Share this plan with at least one person from your support network this week

For full course details
or to find out more,
please get in touch with Emma:
Emma.Leighton@OneYMCA.org

www.oneymca.org

ONE YMCA

Reg Office: Charter House, Charter Place, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD17 2RT

Reg Charity: 1102301 Reg. Company: 4430743

Reg. Housing Provider: HH418 VAT number: 190 3566 03

YMCA

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

Support & advice

Accommodation

Family work

Health & wellbeing

Training & education