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PICTURE *THIS*

Could making your own 'soul collage' put you on the path to true personal enlightenment? Therapist Linda Woolfson explains

A lot of people have made collages at some point in their lives and there are many reasons for doing so, such as creating a wish board of images to express what you want over the coming months. Soul collaging – or SoulCollage as it correctly known – was developed in the 1980s by American therapist and poet Seena B Frost to help give you support and guidance in your life.

Her empowering technique teaches you how to create a deck of collaged cards which reveal particular aspects of your personality. This in turn helps you to understand the many facets of your life and allows you to access your own inner wisdom. Says Seena: "Images have a way of bypassing the chatter of our logical minds and nudging our deep soul wisdom where intuitive answers can be found and spoken. Most SoulCollage cards are made purely intuitively."

HOW TO DO IT

The deck is like a personal tarot pack but with crucial differences: you decide which cards you want to make, you can have any number of cards; and no one reads them except you. Creating and finding meaning in your cards can be a truly empowering experience.

Once you've made a few cards, you can use them for guidance and to find direction in your life. You do this by asking an important question and then turning over several cards for answers. You learn a special way to take on the role of each of the cards you've picked so that 'they' can answer the question from their own particular point of view.



The four suits

SoulCollage is easy to use, share, and find meaning in your collages. There are four suits:

1 THE COMMITTEE SUIT

Holds all our cards for our personality parts.

2 THE COMMUNITY SUIT

Holds cards for all the people and pets you love and perhaps some special places which inspire you.

3 THE COMPANIONS SUIT

Holds cards representing our physical energies.

4 THE COUNCIL SUIT

Holds the cards for archetypes and universal principles which seem to have a powerful influence on our lives.



Having four suits reminds us to make cards for all parts of our lives.



CARD CREATING

Here's an example of how I made one of the cards in my own deck

One Sunday I was browsing through some old family photo albums when I came across some black and white photos of my sister and I aged about five and seven, including one taken just after our mother had bought us the first 'must-have' in our lives, hula hoops. The photos brought back long-forgotten memories of the carefree joy of childhood. So I photocopied them and cut them out carefully. I then looked for a background to echo the happy absorption of the two little girls. One image, of a park full of luscious red flowers, seemed to leap up from the rest and grab me. This was exactly what I'd been looking for. So I placed the two children playing onto the background of the park and was delighted to see how the bright red and green profusion of entangled flowers brought out the children's wild, exuberant energy. I called this my 'happy child' card and added it to my growing SoulCollage deck.

How to...

START DOING SOULCOLLAGE AT HOME

Start tearing out and collecting images that are enticing to you. Recycle pictures from magazines, use photos, artwork or buy stock photos online.

Other essential equipment is a good pair of scissors, a good glue stick and some high quality heavy card cut into rectangles all the same size, usually 8"x 5" (20.3cm x 12.7cm).

From your hoard of images, choose two or three which strongly draw you to them. Then, working instinctively, not thinking too much, cut out your images, move them around, arrange them in a combination you like and collage them onto a card. You can use your cards both ways round, 'landscape' or 'portrait'.

As you get into the flow of making more complex collages, you may want to invest in a cutting mat, a craft knife and a roller but these are optional extras.

When making your first cards, try to focus on one thing at a time. This will make it easier to connect with what your cards have to say once you've made them.

Images have a way of bypassing the chatter of our logical minds and nudging our deep soul wisdom



MORE INFORMATION

Linda Woolfson runs SoulCollage workshops throughout the year. Doing SoulCollage at home alone can be relaxing, meditative and fulfilling. Yet participating in a SoulCollage® workshop with other people, guided and supported by a trained facilitator, will enrich your experience. For more information go to collageyourlife.co.uk

To learn more about the background and principles of SoulCollage visit soulcollage.com. Thanks to all the creators of the SoulCollage cards in this article and to the publisher, Hanford Mead, for permission to use these images. Most of the images are from Seena B. Frost's book *SoulCollage® Evolving – An Intuitive Collage Process for Self-Discovery & Community* (£17.21, Hanford Mead Pub).