The Garden of The Heart

A 10-Session Journey from Awareness to Love in Action



Awareness · Growth · Love · Service

We often learn something that moves us, agree with it, and then return to our usual routines. A week later, very little changed. This gathering is our chance to do something about that; together.

We will read, wonder, laugh, share what feels comfortable, and try a few things between gatherings.

Our Journey at a Glance

The sessions follow a simple idea: noticing is a beginning, not an achievement. We will try things between meetings, talk about what actually happened, and adjust as we go.

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Our intention

We have all read inspiring words, listened to talks, or learned ideas that made perfect sense. Yet knowing something and living it are two different things. That gap is why we started Theory to Practice. We want to encourage ourselves; and one another, to put what we learn into everyday actions, even in small ways. Over time, those small choices may become real change.

Our shared agreements

- Be curious rather than judgmental.
- Listen with kindness; everyone’s experience is different.
- Share only what feels comfortable; passing is always welcome.
- Respect privacy, beliefs, and different perspectives.
- Make room for every voice, including those who prefer to listen.
- Aim for progress and practice, not perfection.

The Four Stages of Growth



01 AWAKEN	Sessions 1–3 · Notice our thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and reactions.
02 CULTIVATE	Sessions 4–6 · Grow self-compassion, gratitude, and intentional living.
03 EXPRESS	Sessions 7–8 · Bring understanding and love into our relationships.
04 RADIATE	Sessions 9–10 · Extend kindness through service and lasting daily practice.

We start by paying attention to ourselves. From there we practice new responses, learn to care for ourselves and others, and see what happens when kindness becomes something we actually do.

Stage 1 · Awakening

Understanding Ourselves



Session 1 · The Journey Begins - From Awareness to Love in Action

Let's get to know each other and think about the feeling we leave behind when we enter a room-or leave it.

SCIENCE	Social connection, perception, and emotional contagion.
WISDOM	Love as a way of living, not only a feeling.
EXPERIENCE	Share one word you hope to grow; then experience what it feels like to be truly heard.
THIS WEEK	Notice the qualities you hope to grow.

FROM PRESENCE TO AWARENESS → As we become more present, we begin to notice the thoughts that shape how we feel, respond, and experience life.

Session 2 · The Power of Thought - Understanding Our Inner Stories

How often do we mistake our first thought for the whole story? We will explore the assumptions we make without noticing.

SCIENCE	Neuroplasticity, attention, cognitive reframing, and learning.
WISDOM	Observe habitual thinking; consider new perspectives.
EXPERIENCE	Thought Detective: can we find three different stories behind the same event?
THIS WEEK	Notice one recurring thought and question it with curiosity.

THE MIND–HEART CONNECTION → Our thoughts shape our emotions, and our emotions influence the way we think.

Session 3 · Understanding Emotions - From Reaction to Response

We all get upset sometimes. What matters is learning to recognize what is happening before our reaction takes over.

SCIENCE	Stress physiology, emotion regulation, and learned responses.
WISDOM	Mindful awareness of difficult feelings.

EXPERIENCE	Try the Pause Button with a familiar, slightly frustrating everyday moment.
THIS WEEK	Practice one conscious pauses each day.

FROM REACTION TO SELF-COMPASSION → As we begin to understand our reactions, we learn to respond to ourselves with greater kindness and compassion.

Stage 2 · Cultivating

Growing Love Within



Session 4 · Self-Love, Compassion & Healthy Boundaries

Would we speak to a friend the way we sometimes speak to ourselves? We will explore kindness toward ourselves, without forgetting healthy boundaries.

SCIENCE	Self-compassion and psychological flexibility.
WISDOM	Compassion begins with how we treat ourselves.
EXPERIENCE	Write yourself the sort of letter you would send to someone you deeply care about.
THIS WEEK	One act of self-compassion and one respectful boundary.

FROM SELF-COMPASSION TO GRATITUDE → As we become less critical of ourselves, we make more room to recognize and appreciate the goodness in our lives.

Session 5 · The Transformative Power of Gratitude

Gratitude is not pretending everything is wonderful. It is making room to notice what is good, even on an ordinary or difficult day.

SCIENCE	Positive psychology, attention, and gratitude research.
WISDOM	Gratitude as a practice across spiritual traditions.
EXPERIENCE	A lighthearted gratitude treasure hunt, followed by sharing appreciation.
THIS WEEK	Write three specific gratitudes and thank someone sincerely.

FROM GRATITUDE TO INTENTION → As we cultivate gratitude, we bring that appreciation into our meditation and begin setting meaningful intentions for how we want to live.

Session 6 · Meditation, Intention & Becoming Our Future Self

What sort of person do I want to be in everyday moments? We will use quiet reflection and intention to bring that question closer to life.

SCIENCE	Mindfulness, attention regulation, and mental rehearsal.
WISDOM	Contemplation, visualization, and intentional living.

EXPERIENCE	Imagine meeting your future self. What would you notice? What would you ask?
THIS WEEK	Five minutes of meditation and one aligned action each day.

FROM INNER GROWTH TO MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS → As we cultivate awareness, gratitude, and compassion within ourselves, we begin expressing these qualities in the way we connect with and treat others.

Stage 3 · Expressing

Love in Our Relationships



Session 7 · Conscious Communication - Listening With the Heart

We will try something surprisingly difficult: listening to understand, rather than listening while preparing our reply.

SCIENCE	Active listening, social cognition, and communication psychology.
WISDOM	Compassionate speech and human unity.
EXPERIENCE	A partner challenge: can you listen for two minutes without interrupting?
THIS WEEK	Give someone your complete attention in a conversation.

FROM LISTENING TO UNDERSTANDING → Listening with an open heart helps us understand others, even when we disagree.

Session 8 · Choosing Love When Life Is Difficult

It is easy to be kind when life is easy. Here we explore what compassion and clear boundaries look like when things get uncomfortable.

SCIENCE	Conflict resolution, reappraisal, and emotional regulation.
WISDOM	Patience, forgiveness, and respectful limits.
EXPERIENCE	Act out a few everyday misunderstandings and explore kinder, firmer responses.
THIS WEEK	Respond consciously to one challenging interaction.

THE CONNECTION → Love can extend beyond our closest relationships.

Stage 4 · Radiating

Becoming a Light for Others



Session 9 · The Ripple Effect of Kindness & Service

A kind word, a small favour, an invitation to someone who feels left out: where might these simple gestures lead?

SCIENCE	Prosocial behaviour, social connection, and well-being.
WISDOM	Service and kindness across spiritual traditions.
EXPERIENCE	Dream up one small act of kindness we could do together.
THIS WEEK	Complete one intentional act of kindness or service.

FROM ACTS OF LOVE TO A WAY OF LIFE → Through daily practice, love becomes more than an occasional act; it becomes how we live.

Session 10 · Living What We Believe - Our Journey Continues

We will look back at what surprised us, what we actually tried, and what we want to keep practising after our last gathering.

SCIENCE	Habit formation, behaviour change, and social support.
WISDOM	Growth is an ongoing journey, not a destination.
EXPERIENCE	Share a discovery, a laugh, or a small change worth celebrating.
THIS WEEK	Create a personal 30-day Love in Action plan.

FROM LEARNING TO LIVING → Our journey continues as we turn what we've learned into everyday actions.

How Each Gathering Works

Two hours together, with room for thoughtful conversation, quiet reflection, a little laughter, and a proper tea break.

15 MIN	Welcome and sharing from the previous week
25 MIN	Reading and discussion: science and psychology
20 MIN	Spiritual wisdom and group reflection
10 MIN	Tea, laughter, and informal connection
30 MIN	Interactive exercises and real-life scenarios
15 MIN	Personal reflection and Love in Action intention
5 MIN	Closing circle

One Journey, Not Ten Separate Workshops

You do not have to collect ten new habits. Keep the practices that make a difference for you. If you miss a day-or a whole week; you can always begin again.

We will draw on psychology and neuroscience, as well as poetry and spiritual wisdom. We will be clear about what research has shown, what remains uncertain, and what belongs to personal belief or experience.

My Garden of Growth

What did I discover about myself?

_____

What did I practice in real life?

_____

What changed, even slightly?

_____

What will I carry into next week?

_____

The point is not to leave knowing all the right words. It is to notice how we live when we go home.