Week 26 Practice

So far, the weeks of loving probably have not felt very, well, lovely. This is because all true belonging begins with self-revelation and all true self-revelation begins with the very painful process of letting down our defenses, letting up on our ego, and letting go of some of the people who can't accept who we are. These were difficult weeks.

Now though, for the remaining weeks of loving, we are going to shift toward cultivating belonging with those who remain.

In a busy world, the ritual of gathering is becoming an antiquated practice. We congregate on Facebook and it fools us into feeling like we've experienced satisfying community. We text on the go and juggle a hundred conversation without really settling into any of them. We are moving too fast to slow down and *see* each other. Perhaps this is why therapy is an increasingly coveted experience. It is a weekly ritual of gathering. You can count on someone showing up, slowing down, and seeing you. We need to create more spaces like this, and this week we are going to do just that.

Begin to establish a ritual of gathering.

Reach out to one or more people (no more than eight) who live near you—physical proximity is essential for feeling seen. Skype won't do. These are the people in your day-to-day life who you feel closest to, the people you feel most comfortable revealing yourself to, the people who have demonstrated acceptance for who you are. Tell them you'd like to establish a regular time of gathering. At least one hour, preferably once per week, but at least once per month. The key is regularity. Work together to find a time that works for everyone, then put it in the calendar on your phone. Set it to repeat. Do not set an end date.

Give your group a name. An identity. At your first meeting, establish the ground rules. Confidentiality is important. Also, respect. But whatever else you decide, make sure you share a common goal: to slowly, over time, reveal your truest self to each other and to learn even more clearly who you are in the process.