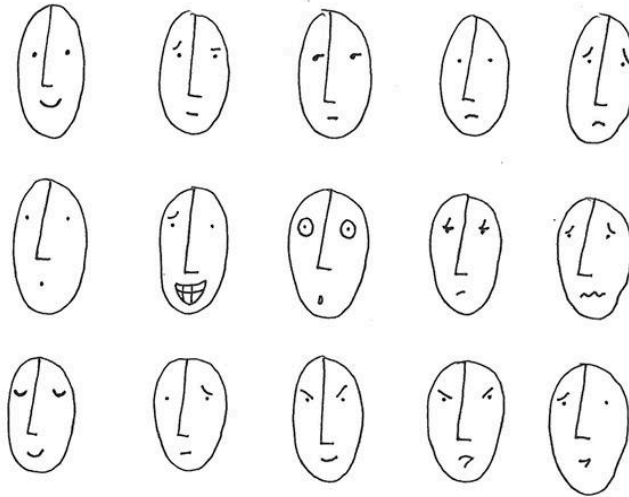


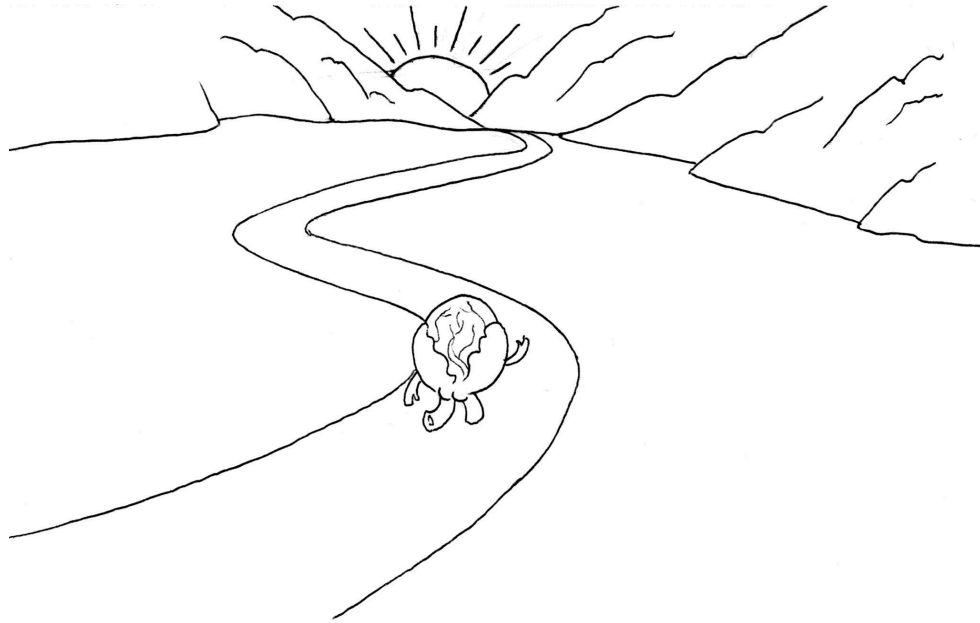
**Sarah Walko**

**Illustrating A Way Forward**

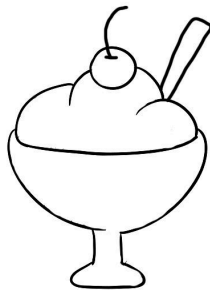
Drawing is a wonderful exercise to express thoughts, feelings, and memories in ways that words cannot, grounding us in the moment to bring us back to ourselves. The simple act of adding color, shapes, scribbles, and images to our writing, we can reduce cortisol levels in our body and bring ourselves to a state of calm.



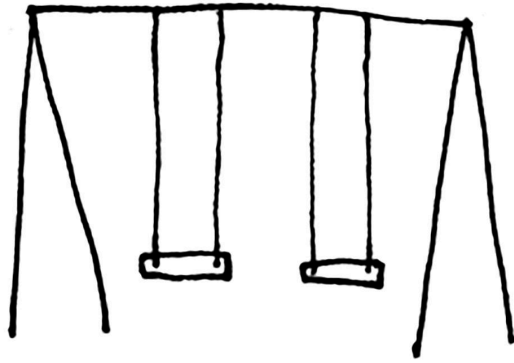
We can process our hard thoughts and feelings through visuals, giving them a more universal expression, using light-heartedness, humor, and humility to remind ourselves that we are never alone in our experiences in life. We can bear witness to our own feelings, experiences, and resilience by simply ***drawing*** a way forward.



Going back to the Bearing Witness to Our Own Experiences writing exercise, look at the list of **feelings** you wrote down. Now take a moment to think about a coping tool that you have used in the past to deal with those feelings. It could be taking a walk, engaging in a favorite sport, meditation, eating lots of ice cream, or maybe you have a fur baby or loved one who brings you joy and reminds you that you are loved.



Once you have that one thing in mind, I want you to make a drawing of something that symbolizes that thing to you. It can be very simple. It can be humorous; something that makes you laugh or brings a smile to your face. The idea is that you can look at the image you made and remember that you **can** get through hard emotions.



don't forget to play