

Touchstones: A Creative Journey



“ These Touchstones are a reminder of all the things that keep me grounded. My goal is to always hold these close for those difficult moments when it can be easy to lose sight of what’s important.

Life is a journey. We learn, we grow but the most important thing is to live through the hurt, through the pain. ”

Touchstones: A Creative Journey



We're excited to share art as a catalyst for change on multiple levels, from the personal to the global. By taking the time to create your own Touchstones, and leading others in creating theirs, you can build resilience in the face of challenges.

We welcome you and your community to carry these small pieces of art with you in whatever way will support you best — as talismans, talking pieces, etc. The art process is not only the tangible stone itself, it is also the collective action of carrying our Touchstones into our lives, relationships, and communities to create change.

For over two decades AWBW has shared art as a touchstone of change for those impacted by violence and trauma. *Touchstones: A Creative Journey* is a community art initiative in which A Window Between Worlds brings this change directly to you, in your own life, in whatever way you may need it.



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Using Touchstones as a Catalyst for Change in Your Community

*You are invited to be a part of this A Window Between Worlds' community art initiative by innovating the use of touchstones as a way to **connect deeply to ourselves and each other in the face of challenges**. Through creating touchstones with your community, and carrying these small pieces of art throughout our life journeys, they become catalysts for healing and positive change.*

For inspiration, here are a few examples of how touchstones have provided a safe way for difficult conversations and profound connection to occur:



Across generations: A father/daughter pair who had been separated for years due to violence and trauma created sets of touchstones for each other, one stone symbolizing the pain and loss from the past that they wanted to move away from, the other representing a wish or hope they wanted to move toward with each other. They carried each others' stones for a week, then came back together to share their experiences.

Connecting staff: Think of the core purpose that brought you to work in this field. Put it in stone. Keep the stone on your desk to anchor you when challenges arise.

With a spouse: A woman created a stone to share with her spouse when she felt she really needed to be listened to. She also welcomed him to use it with her when he feels she isn't listening or he needs to be heard with love. Sharing the invitation to use the touchstone both ways, she could tell that he didn't feel like he was being attacked but understood where she was coming from.



Commitment stones: A group of friends each shared a commitment that felt challenging to them. They each created a stone to carry on their journey as a resource for support.



Seeds of Change: Participants at a protest created stones to show their solidarity, strength and persistence in the face of oppression, inspired by the phrase "They tried to bury us. They did not know we were seeds."

In Court: Survivors of abuse have created and carried stones into court as a source of grounding and strength when facing their abusers. Siblings have also made stones for each other as a source of support.

Expressing a need: A student who had attempted suicide multiple times made a Touchstone that said, "I need 5 minutes" as a tool he could use to communicate to his teachers that he needed a time out to self-regulate.

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Supply Resources

*These are the supplies we use; however **you can create Touchstones out of any available materials**, such as real stones, polymer clay, shrinky dinks, or paper. When creating something that can be a touchstone and used to connect with others, **the art is the journey**, regardless of the supplies used.*

General Supplies:

Use permanent markers*, colored pencils, pens, acrylic paints and oil pastels to draw, write and color on your paper circles. You can also collage other pieces of paper* onto your circle using a glue stick.

*Please note: regular markers and ink jet prints will bleed when glue is applied and glass stone is mounted.



Paper Circles:

Use any brand of white or colored card stock paper (65lb) or other heavyweight craft papers.

1.25-inch circle punch:

EK Tools Circle Punch, 1.25
ASIN # B0090JVF7E on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

.5-inch circle punch:

EK Success Medium Punch-Circle, .5
ASIN # B00SA7YO0W on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Organza Bags:

We recommend 3in x 4in, but any size works:
Standard Organza Bags on [papermart.com](https://www.papermart.com)

Clear Glass Stones:

We recommend using non-iridescent stones for the best legibility (for light & dark paper):

1.25-inch stones:

Clear Mosaic Glass Gems By ArtMinds®
Item # 10286301 on [michaels.com](https://www.michaels.com)

.5-inch stones:

Ashland™ Decorative Fillers, Gems
Item # 10253959 on [michaels.com](https://www.michaels.com)

Clear Glue:

We recommend:
Aleene's® Clear Gel Tacky Glue™
Item # 10312185 on [michaels.com](https://www.michaels.com)



It is most cost effective for you to order your own supplies. We do have small group kits meant for making 1.25 inch touchstones with 10 people available at awbw.org/shop

This page with clickable links, and additional resources, available at awbw.org/touchstones

Touchstones: A Creative Journey

CREATE

1. Take a moment to breathe, relax and ground yourself.

**2. What are you moving from and what are you moving towards?
What words, colors or shapes may be resources for your journey?**



3. Choose a circle.



4. Draw / Color / Write. There is no right or wrong way to create.



5. Apply a pea sized dot of glue. Place flat side of stone on top of the glue and press firmly. Wipe off any extra glue and let it dry.

**6. If you'd like, journal about your creation and the intent that inspired it.
Is there anything you'd like to write on the back of your Touchstone?**

Touchstones: A Creative Journey

CARRY



How can you use your stone(s) as a tangible reminder of your resilience and your connection to others? How can you share your journey of transformation with others? How can you support others in their journeys?



Touchstones: A Creative Journey CONNECT

You are not alone. Creating your Touchstone is only the beginning of the art process and of your journey.

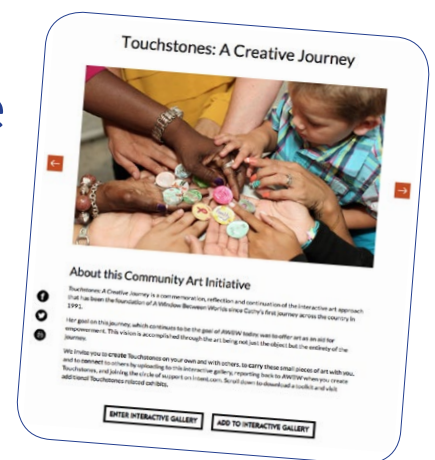
Share the Connection with Others

We have included a table sign on the next page you can display when creating touchstones with a group so that others know they are part of a greater project — a source of support for people all over the world.

We have also included a page of cards you can cut down and hand out to participants with instructions on how they can remain connected to others.

Share Your Stories Online

Upload photos and words to go with your creation to our interactive gallery at awbw.org/touchstonesgallery



Share Your Stories Directly with A Window Between Worlds

Report back to us when innovating and creating touchstones with a group by clicking the “Report My Workshop” button on awbw.org/touchstones

Start a conversation about your journey with AWBW founder and Touchstones lead artist Cathy Salser by emailing cathy.touchstones@awbw.org

Touchstones: A Creative Journey

A Window Between Worlds Community Art Initiative



Touchstones: A Creative Journey is offered as a way to connect deeply with yourself and with each other. Join others across the world in carrying these small pieces of art with you as a reminder of your strength and connection in the face of challenges. Know that you are not alone in your journey of resilience and creating positive change.

Learn more at awbw.org/touchstones

AWBW/A WINDOW BETWEEN WORLDS
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Thank you for participating in an AWWB community art project!

AWBW is dedicated to cultivating and supporting a network of transformative arts programs that empower individuals and communities impacted by violence and trauma. Along with partnering with human service organizations, we encourage engaging communities in creating art as a resource for positive change.



To lead a workshop with your community, and to share your stories of transformation, please visit our art initiative web pages:

**awbw.org/touchstones
awbw.org/atthecore**

310.396.0317 • info@awbw.org • [@awbworg](https://www.instagram.com/awbworg)

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