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ART OF THE STATE

BY HOLLY HUTCHINGS



Blaire Zika is teaching a class called Transcending the Illusion to help others overcome grief, self-doubt and trauma.

## Life lessons

Blaire Zika

**Blaire Zika's poetry and paintings have**

served as an outlet to process a lot. But, she said, there were some painful threads woven so deeply into her life she felt like she was on a shame merry-go-round, asking herself, "How am in this same spot again?"

She's definitely not in that spot today.

Zika began drilling down to find the internal triggers that led to her emotional funks, and a healing journey began. She took up meditation and began doing yoga. Through a lot of "soul work," she said, she's grown into a place of complete self-love. Now, she feels compelled to pass on what she's gained to others who have been through hurt. She's teaching a course in April called "Transcending the Illusion."

The illusion, as she sees it, is separation—separation from love and community, caused by "old narratives" and traumatic experiences. She said staying in the shame of mistakes and mishaps can be a narrative. Or maybe the story is sadness from a loss that we keep revisiting, or the embarrassment of a past mistake that we just can't shake. It could be a gripping insecurity felt every time we put ourselves out there.

Zika said her upcoming course will introduce attendees to new stories about themselves and help them shed the insecurities and heartaches they feel in the negative corners of their minds that keep them from being their "highest selves."

"In the space of this class, people can share without judgement," Zika said. "When things come up related to their pain, we'll give it a name. Drill down on it. All the ego things that want to stop us, they'll get killed in this course. It won't be an easy course, but will have a shift in

people's lives. We all just need permission to go there."

The work in "soul work" will consist of meditation, yoga and spiritual exercises, intended to open participants up to discussing freely. The first week will lay the foundation by teaching participants about being "in flow" and guide them to listen to their inner voices.

"We seek guidance with a higher source, and if we don't know what that voice is we'll miss it," she said. "When we're in flow, we'll recognize ego."

Zika's own scars come from her husband's suicide a few years ago, as well as more faded marks left by her upbringing. The "not good enough" baggage is something she said she's carried for a long time. And while she doesn't have a degree hanging on her wall, she feels equipped to guide others to a healing place, she said.

Not everyone—this writer included—is big on cosmic and mystical things, but Zika said this course is not just for the big believers in God or "Source," as Zika calls the higher being. It's for anyone who has faced darkness, sadness or haunting shadows of negativity and self-doubt.

"The primary goal is to shine a light on our pain, grief and trauma so that we may bring it up out of our shadows and heal it, transcend it and no longer live in a space of suffering," she said. "The goal is to nurture a loving relationship within ourselves so that we may begin to see that life is always happening for us and not to us, so that when we navigate through difficult moments going forward they don't consume and control us." □

"Transcending The Illusion" classes will begin April 2 and continue weekly every Tuesday for eight weeks at The Urban Lotus Project, 316 California Ave.