

Collage Life

ADVANCE PREP:

Bring lots of magazines, scissors,
glue and craft paper

TIME TO COMPLETE:

An hour or more

**BEST PAIRED
WITH:**

DWAG #61
Here's My Card

Collage... recognizes duality, contradiction, juxtaposition, complexity... and expansion as the essential qualities of modern life... —April Kingsley

You may be familiar with collage as a creative work incorporating different materials and elements, but did you know that the art of collage dates back to the twelfth century? Japanese calligraphers were the first to glue bits of paper and fabric to adorn their poetry. Nobody knows what prompted those first collages, but since the twelfth century, artists have been likewise inspired, creating bookmarks, bookbindings, wall hangings and other forms of art using collage as their medium. Historically, materials used to create collages were diverse and not limited to paper. Any organic material was a candidate for collage including seeds, shells, straw and feathers. In the twentieth century, Picasso gave collage its name (from the French word *coller*, meaning “glue”) and made it a distinctive feature of modern art.

So what do Picasso and the collages of modern art have to do with the activity known as *Collage Life*? It is said that collage bridges art and life and brings the incongruous in meaningful congress with the ordinary. In other words, it's the perfect medium to make a visual representation of the contradictory elements that make up YOU. Think of the collage as the surrealists did—a way to reveal

SOUL

your true subconscious essence—or simply have fun sticking random stuff that *speaks to you* on a piece of poster board.

Before you take scissors to magazines, get into the proper collage mindset by reflecting on who you are. Close your eyes, take a deep breath and think back to when you were a child. What were you like then? What did you enjoy doing? Now think about a young adult version of yourself. Where did you spend your time? Finally, who are you today? What do you do with your time? What are your interests?

Okay, now that your mind is a collage of past versions of yourself, flip through a pile of magazines and cut and paste away. Look for words, images or materials that you find appealing and try not to curb your impulses. Is it a picture of Wonder Woman or Jackie O that resonates with you? Does skiing, running or skydiving strike a chord? It doesn't matter what you choose as long as you arrange them in a way that pleases you and conveys your diverse, multi-faceted, unique self.

Once everyone has collaged to exhaustion, it's time for show and tell. As a prelude to the formal presentation you may wish to have a *Collage Life* exhibition where you display your unsigned masterpieces and play match the girlfriend to the collage. When you present your collage to the group, rather than tell your girlfriends how it expresses who you are, ask your girlfriends what they see. Another spin on this activity is to have a *Collage Life* marathon where you and your girlfriends make collages of yourselves and each other.

Collages make great keepsakes. Take your collage out from time to time and compare what you're doing now to how you saw yourself when you made your collage. The disparity between real life and *Collage Life* may prompt you to make changes or to resurrect a long-forgotten project. Your collage may even be suitable for framing.



Julie's Giggles

Collage Life is one of the first activities we did together. We reserved a meeting room in the lodge in West Virginia where we were retreating and each of us cut out pictures from magazines to create our collages.

I still have my collage lying at the bottom of my night table preserved beneath many of the books Deb and Lynne have given me over the years. Every once in a while, I remove the layers of books uncovering my collage and realize that not much has changed. The essence of who I am and what I want is the same. The big change has come in how I go about achieving what I want. I've changed the way I earn an income so that I have more time for my family and continue to use the power of my girlfriend-time to inspire me.

SOUL



Deb's Giggles

I still have my collage in a shoebox in my closet along with other treasured artifacts of days gone by. My collage still reflects who I am today or at least how I see myself but it strikes me as being incomplete. I would have to add a few more pictures and images to more accurately reflect the person I am today.

We had so much fun making collages. Don't let the simplicity of the activity fool you. If approached in a spirit of complete inhibition, making your Collage Life will give you a glimpse into your soul.



Lynne's Giggles

*Oh, this is so embarrassing. I threw my collage out—not because the contrast between the cutout from *Architectural Digest* and my own living room annoyed me—because my subconscious essence is minimalist.*