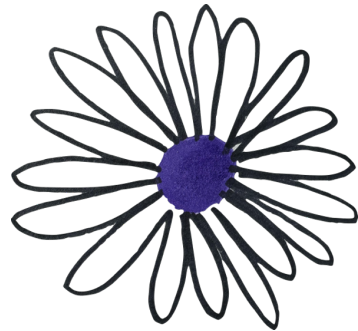


Thank you for checking out my zine!

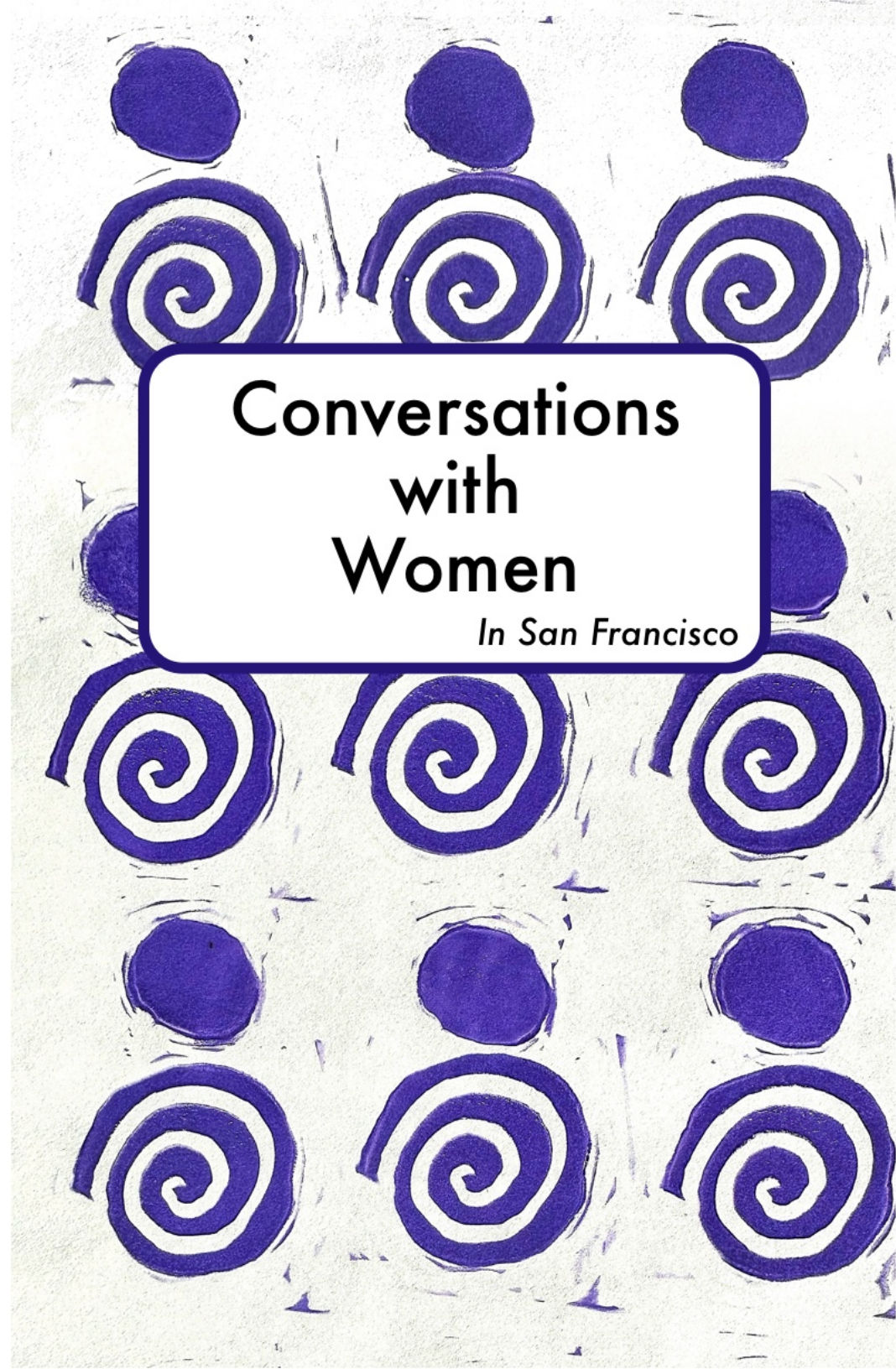
Please reach out if you have thoughts you'd like to share, or  
if you'd be interested in participating in future interviews.

[conversationswwomen@gmail.com](mailto:conversationswwomen@gmail.com)



# Conversations with Women

*In San Francisco*



I wanted to talk more about the ups and downs in our days, to create a place that says: these feelings happen, they're okay, and they are part of the human experience.

This project is designed to surface those feelings, help people feel seen in their everyday emotional experiences, and build curiosity about the lives of others.

I chose three questions:

1. Tell me about your day so far today.
2. Is there a feeling you've been feeling a lot recently?
3. Tell me about a time recently when you felt that way.

Each question is open ended, with no specific emotions named, giving space for each person to describe their experiences and emotions in their own words.

# Pinballer

## Today

It's been a pretty average day. I got ready for work this morning. I worked 8 to 5. I had a nice lunch — a delicious salad. I went for a little walk at lunch. I went to pinball league with some friends, and now I'm home. It's been a great day. Nothing bad happened. It was just a really good regular day.

## Anxiety

I've been feeling a little bit of anxiety. I'm starting a new job soon, and just kind of a little bit of jitters about my life in general.

I haven't been feeling it so much today. Probably over the weekend, maybe on Sunday. I was at home just hanging around the house, doing some chores. Nothing too exciting. I just started thinking about my job goals that I currently have, and being a little worried that maybe I'm not making good progress toward those goals.

I just kind of started spiraling a little bit. One of my really good friends just graduated from a master's program, and that's something I've been kind of thinking about doing. So I was just thinking about her, and then thinking about my own life, and that's kind of when things started to spiral a little bit.



*Caught up.*

# Mother

## Today

My day so far has been pretty uneventful. I worked from home in the morning, picked up my kids from school, ran some errands, made dinner, and went on a walk. I watched TV, and now I'm just getting ready for winding down for the night.

The walk was really nice. We always walk along the San Francisco Bay in the evenings, and we've had extremely high winds lately, so it was a really windy walk. That was sort of frustrating, but it was also kind of cool and very unusual.

## Overwhelm

I've been feeling like I'm overwhelmed and I have too much to do and it's hard for me to keep up.

Day to day, I feel like I'm just treading water, just trying to stay afloat. I try super hard to get all of my tasks and goals accomplished, but I have this nagging feeling in the back of my head that I'm falling behind, that it's not enough, that I need to earn more money. Because things are so expensive. That's a level of stress that's just always there in the back of my mind.

And then I have three kids with their own individual challenges. So as a mom, I think a lot of moms feel just this very latent feeling in the back of our minds, like we're totally overwhelmed, but we cannot stop or give up.

I felt this way especially last Saturday. I had to be in three different places in very quick succession. Nothing was optional. It all had to get done, and it had to get done at the right time.

I just felt like when I was at each place, I couldn't concentrate on the experience that I was having. I was just feeling like, this needs to be over.

I needed to take my daughter and her friends for an end-of-year graduation celebration, a spa day with hair and nails. I was the mom driving, the mom staying during it. I needed to get a bunch of shopping done while they were getting their treatments. I couldn't find what I was looking for. I ended up having to rush back to be at the spa at the right time, but it wasn't the right time. When I went to pick them up, they still had a ton of time left.

I was sitting there thinking I'm spending a lot of money. That I never want to do this again. That everybody is really ungrateful, not being mindful and aware of how much I'm sacrificing in the time that I'm losing doing this. I felt like a lot of negative emotions waiting there.

The whole thing was supposed to be an enjoyable experience for my daughter. The whole time, I really resented it. It should have been something I looked back on with good memories. But it was rushed and stressed.

I know I need to schedule less. I need to overcommit myself less. I need to not test my own limits.

# Voter



*I had my hands in the dirt and I remembered the urge to create something beautiful again.*

## Today

I've mostly just been working. I dropped off my ballot for the California elections and then started work, and have pretty much just been at my computer taking meetings and working on tasks since then.

It's a lot of virtual meetings, about half virtual meetings, half sort of self-directed time to work on projects, deal with my direct reports, client fires, anything in that space.

There's nothing specific really taking up my attention. Generally things are going fairly smoothly this week. Fingers crossed it stays that way.

## Terror

I've been feeling generally fairly contented, but very stressed out about the state of the world.

On a personal, intimate note, things have been very calm and feel very comfortable. But when you zoom out, I'm very terrified about the state of the United States, the state of the global infrastructure, kind of everything really.

I felt this way last night when I was going through my ballot and figuring out how I wanted to vote on things, and researching the governmental positions — who does what and what their belief systems are, who's paying for what, who's bankrolling all these individuals. That definitely put it front and center.

I was sitting on my couch. I had my computer and my phone and I was doing various amounts of research on both, to make sure the people that I voted for align with the policy choices that I have, and where they don't, that I understand the rationale.

There were a few that I felt more inclined to agree with than others. I obviously have specific things that I care about probably more than the average person — women's rights being one of them. In California, most people are pretty aligned on that. Environmental policy being the other that I think I have an outsized feeling on. So that was definitely leading the charge.

I think we're all just trying to do the best with what we've got. So trying to balance, "Hey, what do I think is gonna get the most done with the least harmful impact?" And that's kind of how I squared it away.



*That urge that had brought me to this apartment with the bay windows and a backyard where I had built this raised bed out of old redwood fence boards.*

# Caretaker

## Today

I've been working, like, kind of nonstop, juggling gigs. I'm prepping because my friend's mom is going to be staying in my house. I'm dog sitting. And I'm working the election poll tomorrow. So I kinda have a lot going on today.

I've also sort of been coming down with a cold. And the cold is throwing me.

## Joy

In the last several months, I have been feeling joy. I'm born and raised in San Francisco. I have lived in other parts of the world, and I've come back here every time. I love our city. I feel joy about all the different people who are here.

Yesterday, I took Gus the dog out to Land's End. It was really crowded, which is not so great, but the best part is that I probably heard, like, nineteen different languages. So I love that.

And just feeling healthy and good. I'm free of some icky relationships.

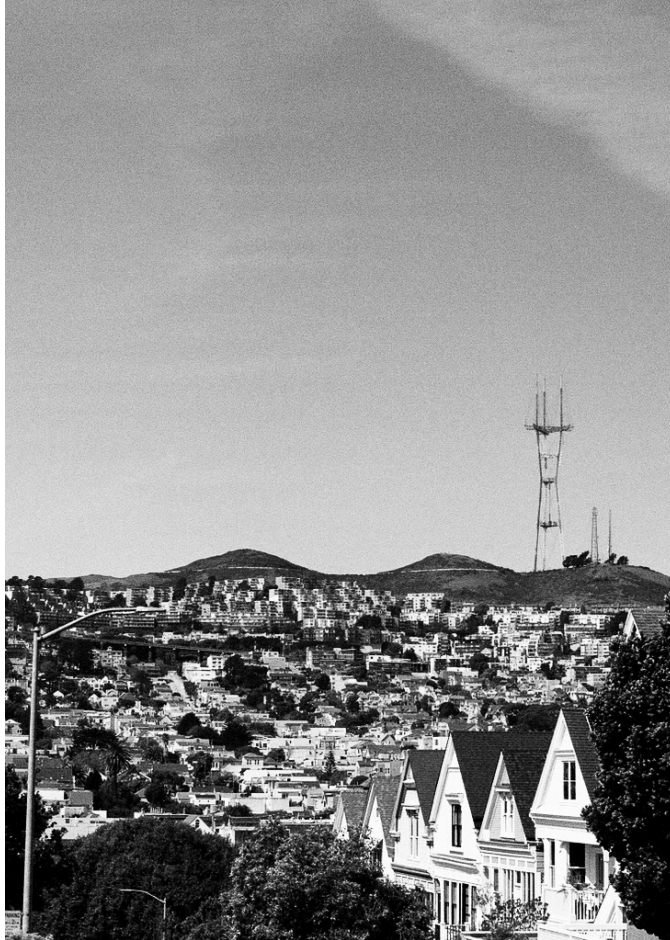
The serendipitous stuff makes me feel joy. I was coming back from a gig and stopped at my mom's to do something, and was walking home from there, and I just happened upon a makeup vanity on the sidewalk. So I immediately sat down. I'm not a makeup person, and

started primping and all this stuff. Tourists walked past, I'm in the Marina, and I was like, "Oh, I'm just doing my makeup." One of the delivery people on a scooter drove up. He parked right next to my vanity. And I was motioning, could you take my photo? Because we didn't speak the same language. And so he did. I find joy in, like, little stuff like that.

Connection is huge. Yesterday, right before the vanity, I was walking back, and I got a phone call from someone who's never called me before. It was this woman I'd met about six weeks ago. We were working one of those hideous tech gigs down at Moscone. She lives in Santa Cruz, and we just hit it off. She was getting on a plane when the event ended. We somehow exchanged numbers, and I had invited her to a gathering that some friends and I had in the park a couple of weeks ago. She couldn't come. But she just called out of the blue, and she was kind of surprised that she got me, and I was surprised she called. I've been fighting off this cold, so usually I'd just feel tired. But it totally uplifted me, and we just seemed to be completely on the same page. It was a brief chat, but it was really great. A real surprise hit of joy.

I'm not always so good at following up. But I'm learning to keep those connections.

# Student



*How sidetracked I'd gotten, forgotten it all, leaving my lettuce for dead when it rained every day for all of December.*

## Today

Today I was mainly working on a final exam for one of the classes I'm in. I'm in a master's program right now at UCSF. I worked on my final for most of the day, then I made dinner for me and my parents. I did a little bit of exercise, watched some TV with my folks, and took a shower, and I think that's about it.

## Stress

I'd say stress is what I've been feeling most recently. I have my final exam, I have a few other things that I need to do for my master's program before officially finishing it and becoming a master. I will also be beginning medical school in a month or so. That's very exciting, but it is a little bit stressful, just trying to figure out where I'm going to live and all of those logistical things.

When I start to feel stressed, my body gets very tense. I get very shaky — not necessarily hands trembling, but my legs are moving up and down, picking up in pace. It feels like things are moving very, very quickly, and there's a lot of thoughts happening at the same time.

The last time I felt this way was probably just a few hours ago. I was in the bedroom that I stay at when I'm with my parents in Sacramento. It's a pretty safe and comfortable space.

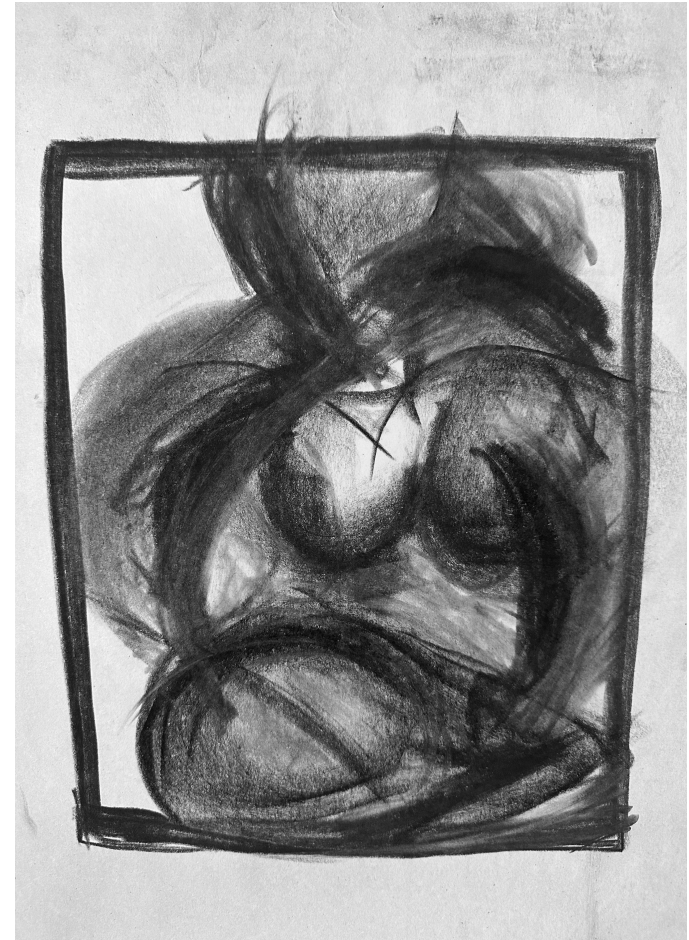
I was sitting on my bed, mainly staring at the screen,

locked in. Definitely very tense in the body, but not necessarily pacing.

I was finishing up my work for my final exam. It's not due till Wednesday, which I guess now it's Tuesday. But I got most of it done today, which is nice. I was also trying to figure out a few different logistical things for medical school, like uploading my vaccination records.

I think it gradually eased. It's hard for me to transition from work mode to relaxation mode. Even when I stopped working on my final for the day, I was still thinking about it and still had a little bit of residual stress.

I think that I exhibit a few different depressive symptoms. I can be a big procrastinator and put stuff off. I also struggle a little bit with just getting the momentum up to start certain tasks. Once I start them, it's fine — but it's just that initial starting of it that can be difficult.



*(There was nothing to be done.)*

# Peacenik

## Today

I woke up, had my coffee, like I do every single morning. I always begin every morning, before I get out of bed, with some kind of prayer. Just to center myself and align with a higher power.

I always pray, “Lord, please give me the strength and the energy to get through this day.” It’s really crucial. I’ve experienced very serious health challenges in the past few years. If you’re 20 years old, it doesn’t matter — you know you’re going to get through the day. When you’re a little older, you need a little boost.

I had my coffee, my breakfast, and then I got online. And I get a little nervous.

## Concern

I’m very concerned. There’s a feeling of, “Oh my God, what can I do? What can I do?”

There’s a little bit of dread. I think, “This is scary.” But I’m also an optimist.

I always go back to my faith. And because I’m a peacenik, I think we are strong together. It’s my hope and my prayer that we are going to become united as a population. People will see that we have more in common with each other. I’m going to believe that. So I do feel a feeling of hope.

This morning. I was listening to a documentary an hour

long, on YouTube. He’s talking about whistleblowers, how deeply involved AI is in surveillance. This is very, very scary.

I can only listen to a little bit at a time. I’ll turn it off, walk around, look out the window, then come back to it. It’s too much sometimes.

I haven’t even finished it. I probably have about 20 minutes left.

But I still feel centered. I feel that if we’re not grounded, we can become overwhelmed with what’s happening in the world.

I have such faith and hope that things are going to turn around. I’ll share one thing. I don’t know if you’ve ever heard of Paramahansa Yogananda. He was a great Indian yogi from the last century. His master’s guru had died, and he was devastated because he missed his passing. He had isolated himself in a hotel room in Bombay, grieving. According to the story, his guru resurrected and appeared to him, spoke with him, embraced him. One thing his guru told him was that divine forces would eventually intervene in the affairs of mankind.

I think we’re heading into that time now. I hope so.



*I'm touching the earth.  
I'm remembering again.*

Thank you to the women who sat down with me for these conversations. Thank you for the honesty, the time, the trust.

All participants knew their words might be included here. Their interviews have been lightly edited for length and clarity, and anonymized.

