



The Modern Creative
Woman Publishing Co.



The Modern Creative Woman **Art as Therapy**

Supplies

Week 1: Presence

pen
paper

Week 2: Mindset

water color paper (already taped)
permanent marker/Sharpie
dilemma list

Week 3: Purpose

2-4 completed neurographic drawings watercolors
paint brush
water

Presence Mindset Purpose



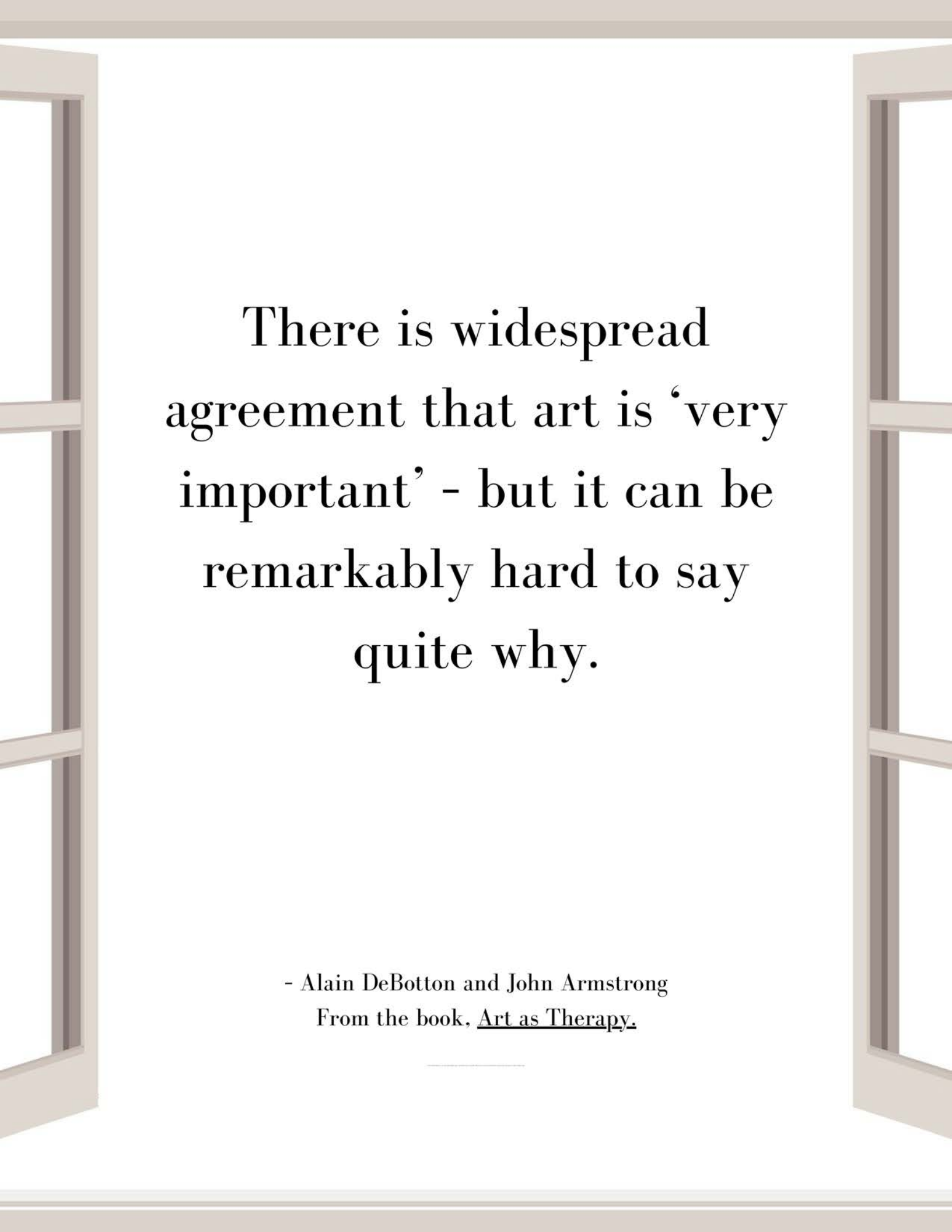
- Make full contact with the present moment.
- See yourself as the 'context' for all your life experiences.
- Get out of your mind and get into your life.



- Acceptance of your thoughts, feelings, and circumstances as they are, rather than what you think they should be.
- Forging a new working relationship with your thoughts.
- Practicing conscious & creative thinking.



- Your personal values about what is most important to you.
- Daily movement towards your values
- Committed actions in alignment with your values and Modern Creative Why.



There is widespread
agreement that art is ‘very
important’ - but it can be
remarkably hard to say
quite why.

- Alain DeBotton and John Armstrong
From the book, Art as Therapy.



The path to Presence

Presence - your ability to make contact with the present moment, separate from your thoughts and feelings about it. This means observing what is happening outside of you as well as observing your thoughts and feelings in the present moment.

Self as Context - Seeing yourself as the context for your life means you are the anchor. Whatever happens inside of you (thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations) as well as whatever happens outside of you (people, places, circumstances) is separate from your experience as a human being. You might think of your "context" as your spirit, your core self, your essence. In other words, you as the context is the view of yourself as the person experiencing your life. For example: you are the journal on which your story is written. Rather than being the story itself, you are able to truthfully see yourself as the journal on which the story is written. Another example: You are the canvas on which you create the painting of your life. Instead of being the paint, you accurately see yourself as the canvas.

Remember, your presence includes getting out of your mind and getting into your life, making contact with the present moment and seeing yourself as the context for your life experiences. Your internal presence can be whatever you decide it to be in each moment of your life.

INTENTION

Abraham Maslow, a humanistic psychologist created the Hierarchy of Needs which describes our basic human needs: bodily needs, safety, belonging/love, self esteem, and self actualization. The final stage becomes possible as we mature and explore ourselves. He describes self-actualization as the process of becoming “everything you are capable of becoming.” His work reminds us that you have a basic human **need** to express yourself and become the woman you always wanted to be.

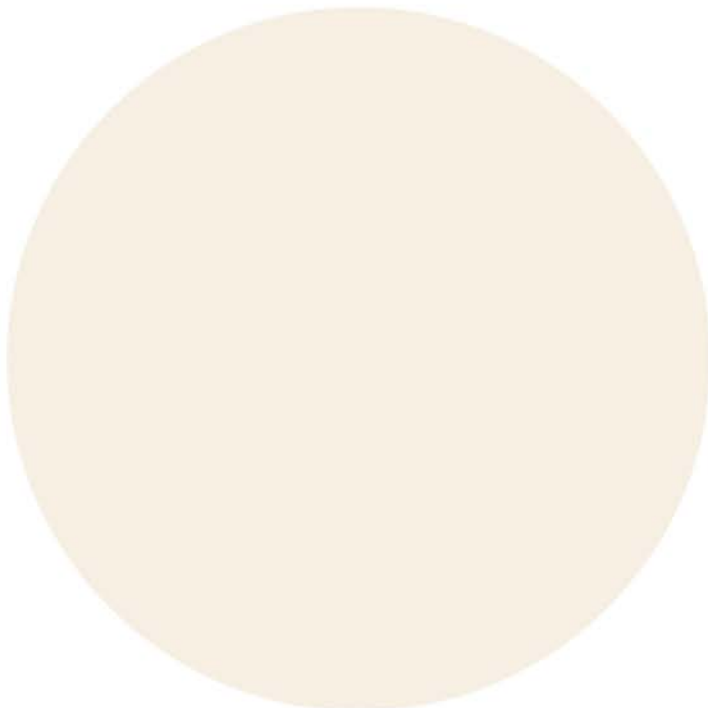
Write your own definition of what it means to YOU to be self actualized. Be creative and think big!

Being Self Actualized

Write 10 aspects of yourself you would think, feel, do, and know as you move towards self actualization.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

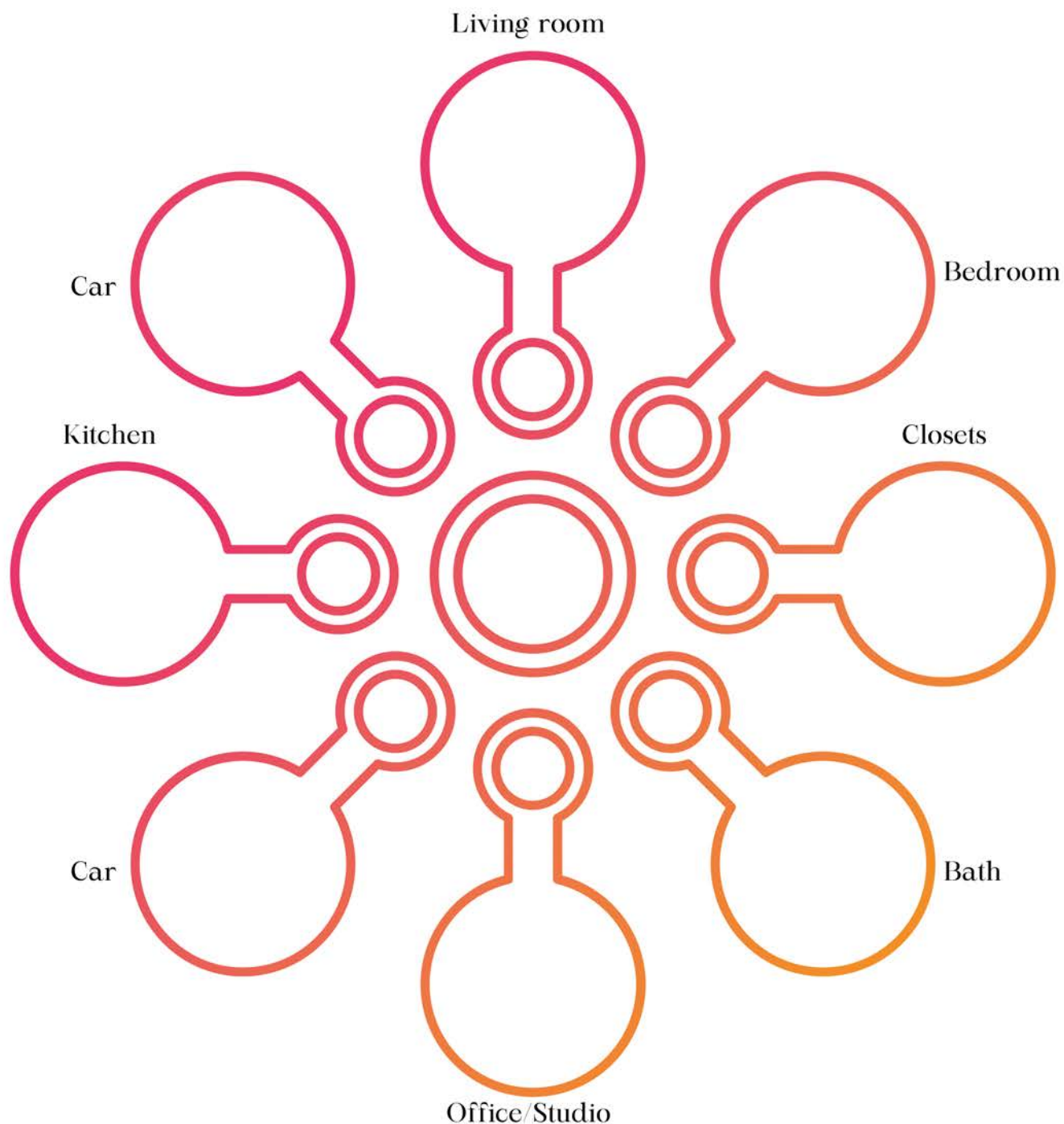
Create an image inside the circle to reflect how you feel as you imagine the things above.
Give it a title and describe your image or the feeling in three words or phrases.



Synergy

Getting more conscious of your creativity is a fun and easy way to be in the present moment and create spaces you love. Allen DeBotton teaches us about using art and our space to change our mood and feel good.

Think about the environments where you spend the most time - living room, office, bedroom, etc. You created these spaces - do you like what you created? Describe the feeling each of each space below. Rank each space from 1-8 (1 is your favorite space and 8 is your least favorite space).



Creative Action

Choose the space you love most from the chart on the previous page. Why does that space “work” so well for you? For example, does the office give you the feeling of focus? Does the living room give you the sense of ease after a hectic day? What emotional want/need does this space fill for you?

What is one thing you can do to make it even better?

Choose the space you like the least from the chart on the previous page. Why does that space “not work” for you? For example, does the office give you the feeling of distraction? Does the living room give you the sense of “busy” after a hectic day? What emotional want/need **could** this space fill for you? What is one thing you can do to make it just a little better?

YOUR DILEMMAS

List some dilemmas you are currently facing. They might be about a relationship, career, or personal experiences. They can be big or small, deep, or surface. Once you have your list complete, place an * next to three you would be most interested in working on. Circle the one that you will work on in class next week.

Doodle Space

REFLECTION

This week was all about art as therapy and getting in contact with the present moment - with yourself and in your environments. Noticing and really seeing aesthetics is the first step to creating new aesthetic experiences. What did you notice? What did you learn?

NeuroGraphic Art

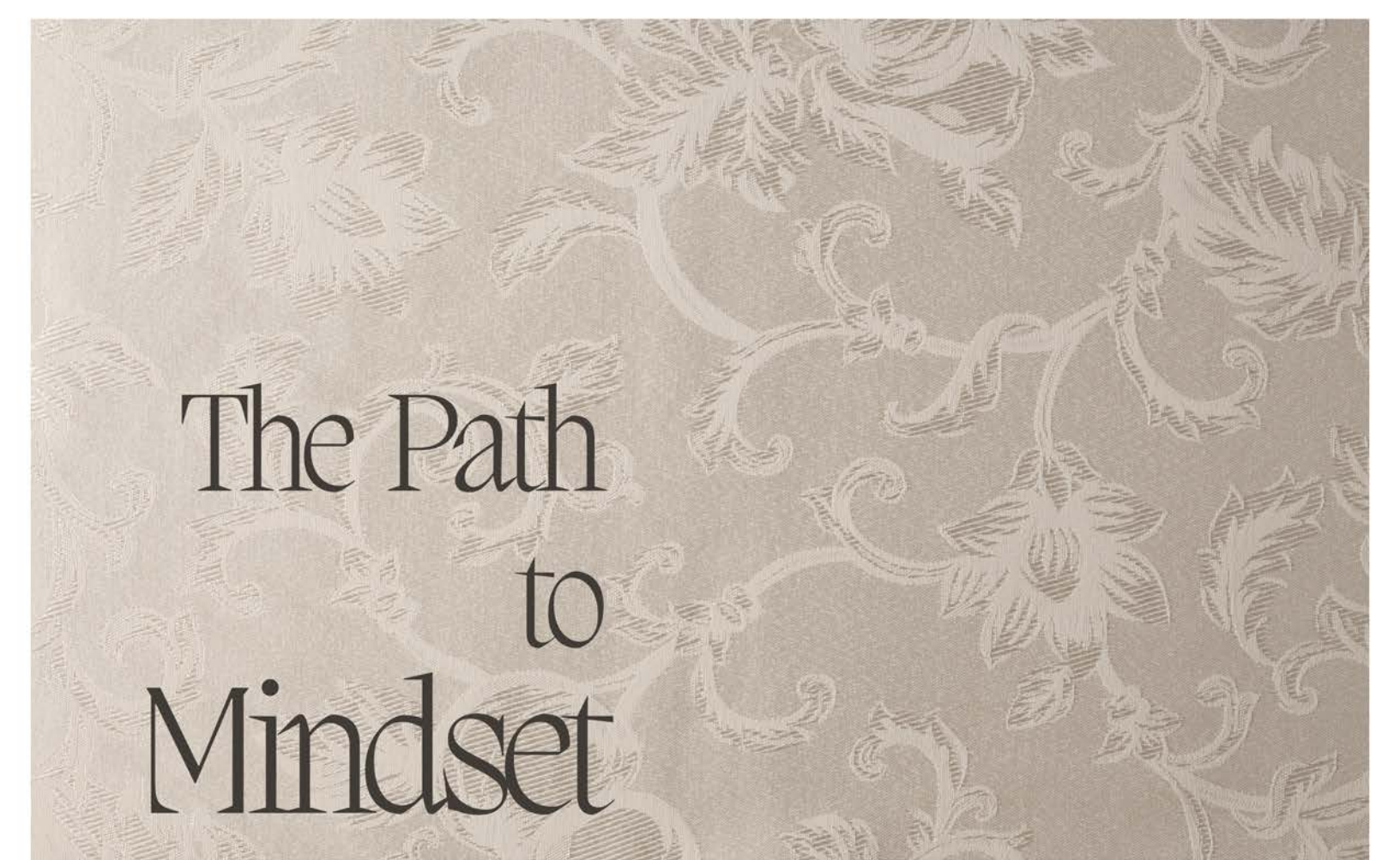
Preparation for Week 2

Materials:

water color paper 5x7
water color paints and brush
blue paint tape or masking tape
permanent marker/Sharpie

Prep: do this before week 2

1. Gather your materials. Create a nice environment for your supplies. Keep them in a basket or cute container for the month so you can work on these anytime you are inspired.
2. Tape the edges of 5-10 sheets of paper to cover about a quarter inch of the edges. This step creates a neat edge that will be completely absent of lines and paint. The edge gives you a metaphorical boundary for a dilemma you have. You will remove the tape when you are all done with the process.
3. Using the list of dilemmas you created previously, choose one to work on in class. You will not be asked to share them in class. If you like, I can help you distill what you wrote into a simple statement that will help you develop creative solutions. Ask me in class or email me in advance of the class.



The Path to Mindset

Acceptance -Acceptance is your ability to see things for what they are. You understand your thoughts as "just thoughts" instead of perceiving your thoughts as "true" or facts. Acceptance is a core concept in changing your self-talk and beliefs about yourself. If you have a negative thought about yourself, it is only a thought. You might be able to find piles of evidence to support your thought, yet a thought is just a thought. It is your brain firing - that is all. Acceptance also helps us be at ease in relationships by not taking things personally. Acceptance means we avoid distorting comments into something negative or personal. This one change in your life can completely transform your relationship with yourself and others.

Relationship to Your Thoughts - Changing your relationship to thoughts frees you from negative self-talk and low self-esteem. Then you can transform your behaviors for health, recovery, and happiness. Your thoughts stem from your brain - not from your essence, spirit or core self. Thoughts are merely a product of your brain. Make your thoughts work for you instead of being swayed by negative thoughts. Start by observing: say "That is just a thought" each time you notice a thought.

Remember, your mindset includes acceptance of what you are currently thinking and feeling as well as the circumstances you are facing. Acceptance is necessary before attempting to make any changes. Mindset also includes forging a new working relationship with your thoughts and practicing conscious & creative thinking.



Art AS Therapy includes

1. *Aesthetic Appreciation*
2. *Aesthetic Experiences*
3. *Aesthetic Actions*

REFLECTION

Reflect on your Neurographic lines - what did you notice? What was it like to start the Neurographic Art during class? Were you in flow? What were you aware of during the process of making the art?

Write your experience with the Neurographic Art exercise and what insights you have so far about your dilemma.

NeuroGraphic Art

Preparation for Week 3

Create two or three more Neurographic drawings on the same dilemma. Instructions are the same as presented in class and are written below. Bring your paints to class.

- Tape the edges of your paper to create a neat edge.
- Write the same dilemma on the back of the paper before you start - just the circumstance rather than a specific question.
- Use a black permanent pen or marker to make your lines.
- Neurographic lines do not repeat and are not straight lines.
- Neurographic lines generally wiggle and are not intentionally a specific shape (such as a curving line).
- Neurographic lines cross over the center of the paper.
- The moment you become aware of the direction of your line, it is time to change direction. This promotes present moment awareness.
- Try doing one using your non-dominant hand to create the lines. Sign your name using your non dominant hand. This increases your consciousness, focus and intention.
- You can add circles to your drawing if you desire.
- When you finish the lines, smooth out the intersections. Use your black permanent pen or marker to round out each of the intersecting lines. Every intersection requires four curves. This process reflects the new neural pathways you are building and is the time when you are open to ideas.

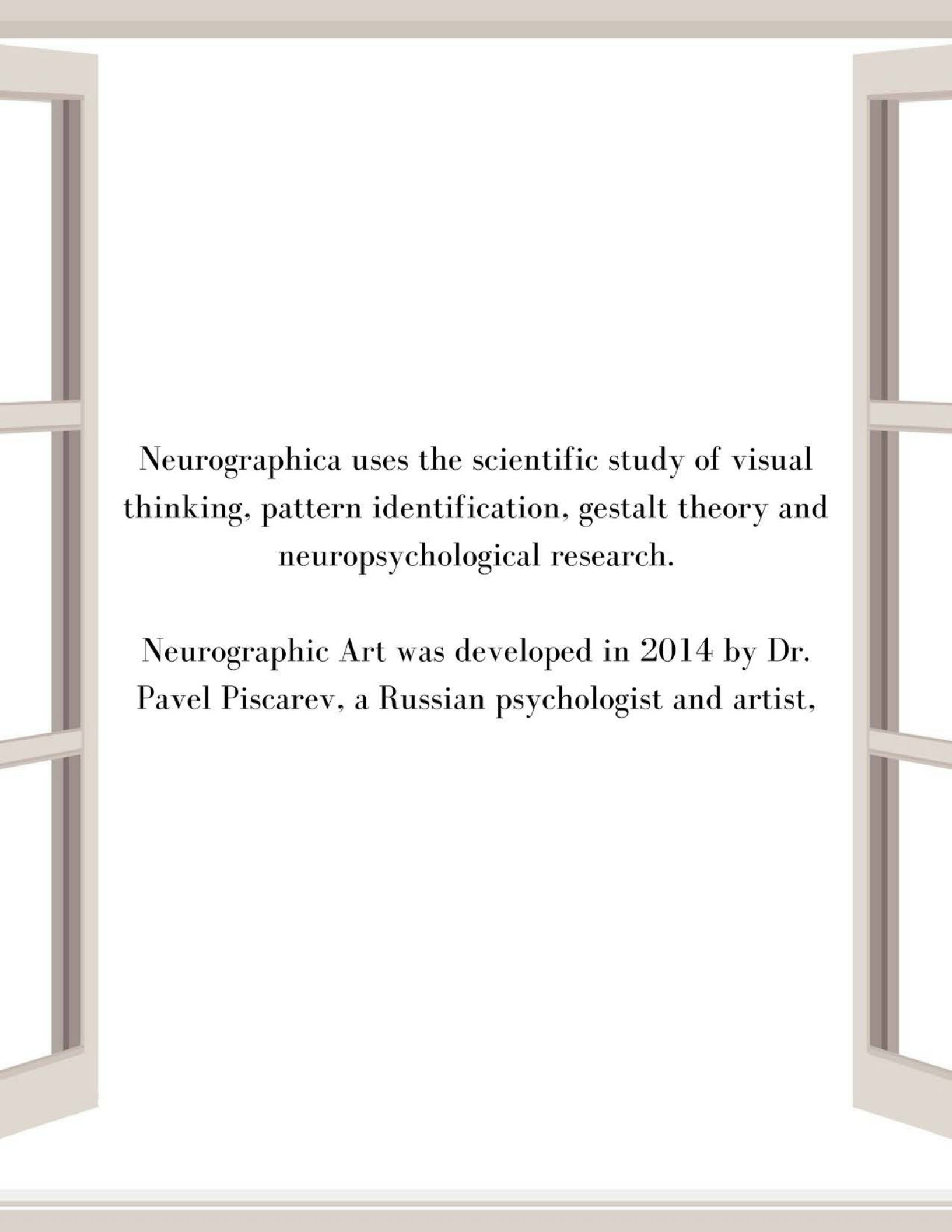


The Path to Purpose

Your purpose includes both your personal values and the action steps you take in alignment with your values. It is through your purpose that you engage with your life, choose what is most important, and make committed actions to demonstrate your values to yourself and others. Your purpose is something you decide based on what you enjoy, have an interest in pursuing, and have an ability/aptitude for doing.

Values - what you decide is most important to you. You have values such as, health, intimate partner relationship, education, family, friendship, parenting, sports, spirituality, work/vocation, community, creativity, service, school, personal development, hobbies, etc. Your values are what YOU want to bring to each area and has nothing to do with what others are doing or even if they like what you are doing. The goal is to make your decisions and actions based on values instead of feelings or reactions to situations or others.

Committed Actions - how you demonstrate your values through your actions. Your actions directly reflect your values. Committed action is how you show your values to yourself and the world. Notice this is action, not thoughts or beliefs. If you live your values, they will show in your behavior. For example, if you truly believe in your health, then your behavior will show it through healthy food choices, exercise, managing your mind, learning what you need to know, practicing body care, and investing time and money in your health. If you only think or talk about your health, then it is a wish, instead of a value and committed action.

A light beige, stylized window frame with multiple panes is visible on both the left and right sides of the image, framing the central text.

Neurographica uses the scientific study of visual thinking, pattern identification, gestalt theory and neuropsychological research.

Neurographic Art was developed in 2014 by Dr. Pavel Piscarev, a Russian psychologist and artist,

Solutions and New Vision

Now it is time for you to reflect on your new insights. Do not skip this step! Set aside 20 minutes or more to write about your dilemma.

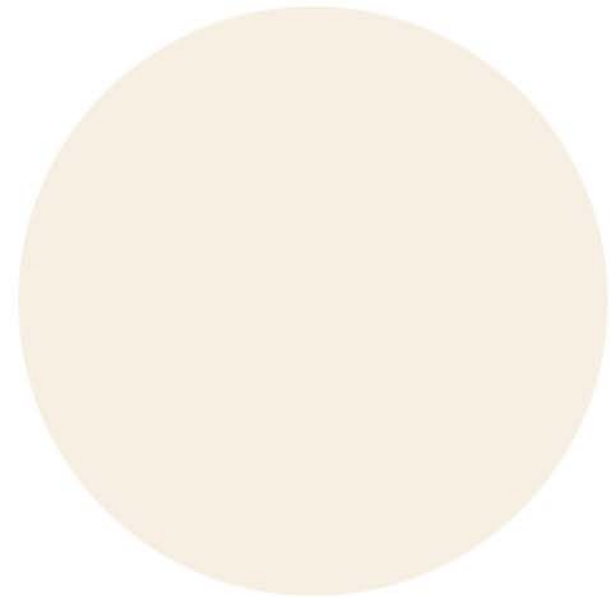
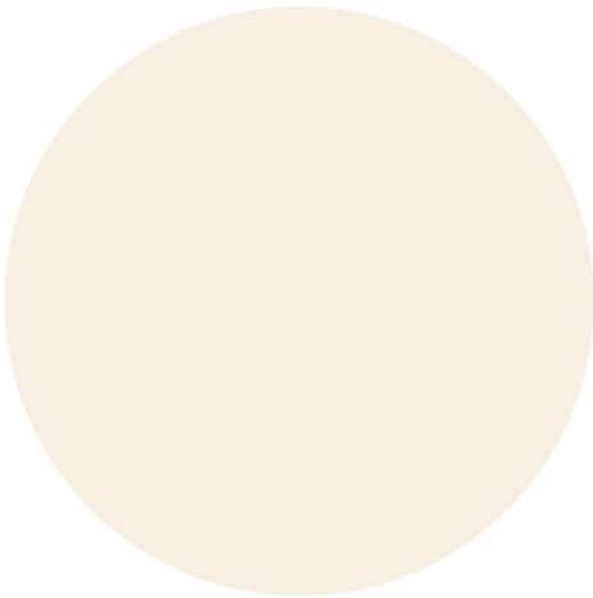
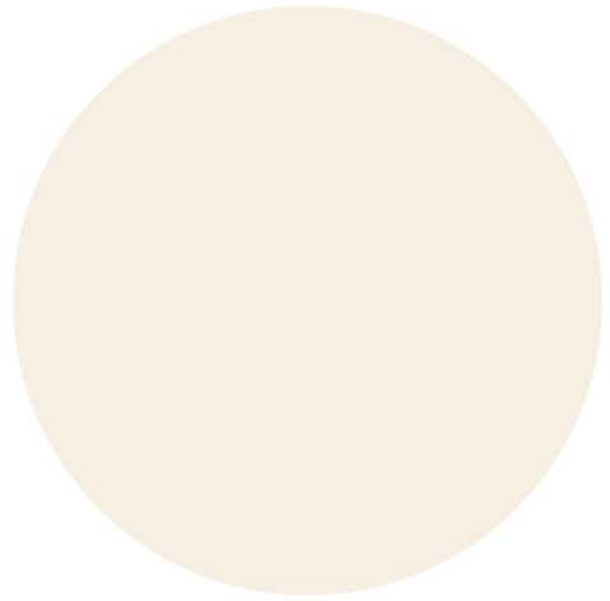
Have your Neurographic art with you for reference. Read the instructions and write on the following page.

- Take a few deep breaths to center yourself.
- You might want to turn on music or light a candle.
- Look at your art very carefully and notice the details in the lines and colors.
- Label the top of the next page: “Reflections on....(write the name of the dilemma).
- Begin writing whatever comes to mind to explore your feelings, thoughts, past experiences, and future vision about the dilemma.
- Solutions and new ideas may emerge in this process or come to you later.
- If you want more insights on your dilemma, set the art next to your bed in the evening and ask your mind to work on it while you sleep. Have a pen and paper by your bed so you can write about it when you wake up. There is no timeline for these insights and there is no hurry.
- Keep making neurographic art about the same dilemma as much as you wish or choose new ones.
- If you get stuck, keep writing and you can describe the process of making the art or the art itself.

More Neurographic Art Ideas

Try making quick and spontaneous Neurographic lines inside the circles below. Remember to soften the corners of intersections by rounding off the points where lines intersect. You can use this quick approach to reflect on your mood in the moment and increase your present moment awareness.

Have fun!



REFLECTION

What was it like to explore your inner artist Art as Therapy? What did you learn? What will you explore next?



YOUR CREATIVE INTEGRATION

Art as Therapy

You have completed a month focused on art as therapy. These exercises were created for you to see creativity and art in every moment of your life.

I am delighted you joined this community of Modern Creative Women who are living more compassionately and making the world a better place. Living your values and passions is part of creating a better world. Imagine if everyone lived in the moment!

If you are excited about continuing this work, I would love to support you. Reach out to The Modern Creative Woman for a list of programs, workshops and retreats. For the ultimate creative glow-up, consider a custom-designed VIP package in San Francisco, Paris or online.



It is my pleasure to share the evidence-based information which has helped people all around the world. I look forward to hearing from you about what you learned in this workbook. Please send me a testimonial that I may share with others so they know the benefits of being a Modern Creative Woman.

Amy Backos, PhD, ATR-BC

Celebrate Yourself!



**How I
increased my
presence this
month...**



**How I changed
my mindset this
month...**



**How I moved
towards my
purpose this
month...**

How I will celebrate myself:

Resources



Personal Development

- **Coaching:** Creativity is everything! Focus on developing your creative thinking to excel in your work, love and presence in the world.
- Creativity Intensives online, in San Francisco and Paris.
- Complementary consultations.



Stay in Touch!

- Instagram @dramybackos
- Join me each Friday at noon PST while I gently guide you to strategies to live a creative and joyful life.
- DM me with questions or topics you want to see covered!



Learn more!

- **Podcast:** The Modern Creative Woman.
- **Book:** ACT Art Therapy by Dr. Amy Backos
- **Book:** PTSD and Art Therapy by Dr. Amy Backos.
- **Book:** Emerging Perspectives in Art Therapy by Drs. Amy Backos & Richard Carolan

NeuroGraphic Art

Instructions

1. Tape the edges of your paper to create a neat edge that will be absent of lines and paint. This gives you a metaphorical boundary for a dilemma.
2. Write a dilemma on the back of the paper - just the circumstance rather than a specific question. This is to keep your mind open to all possibilities and focus on a change you want to make.
3. Use a black permanent pen or marker to make your lines.
4. Neurographic lines do not repeat and are *not* straight lines.
5. Neurographic lines generally wiggle and are not *intentionally* a specific shape (such as a curving line).
6. Neurographic lines cross over the center of the paper to reflect bilateral brain processing and use both sides of your brain.
7. The moment you become aware of the direction of your line, it is time to change direction. This promotes present moment awareness.
8. Try using your non-dominant hand to create the lines and sign your name on the back. This increases consciousness, focus and intention.
9. When finished with the lines, smooth out the intersections. Use your black permanent pen or marker to round out each intersecting line. Every intersection requires 4 curves. This process reflects the new neural pathways you are building and is the time when you are open to ideas.
10. Embellish with watercolor paint.
11. When done with each step, take notes and write down what you learned, new insights, affirmations, and intentions.

