



The Modern Creative  
Woman Publishing Co.



# The Modern Woman's Guide to Creativity

Creation takes things forward.  
Without anything  
new, there is no progress.  
Creation equals new.

— Rei Kawakubo

Rei Kawakubo is regarded as one of the most original fashion designers working and is a leader in avant-garde fashion. A Japanese designer, Kawakubo creates powerfully innovative designs that completely reinvent the human silhouette and create thought-provoking shapes around the human figure. She created the fashion label Comme des Garçons.

# Presence - Mindset - Purpose

1

## **Presence**

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.

2

## **Mindset**

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

3

## **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.



# PRESENCE

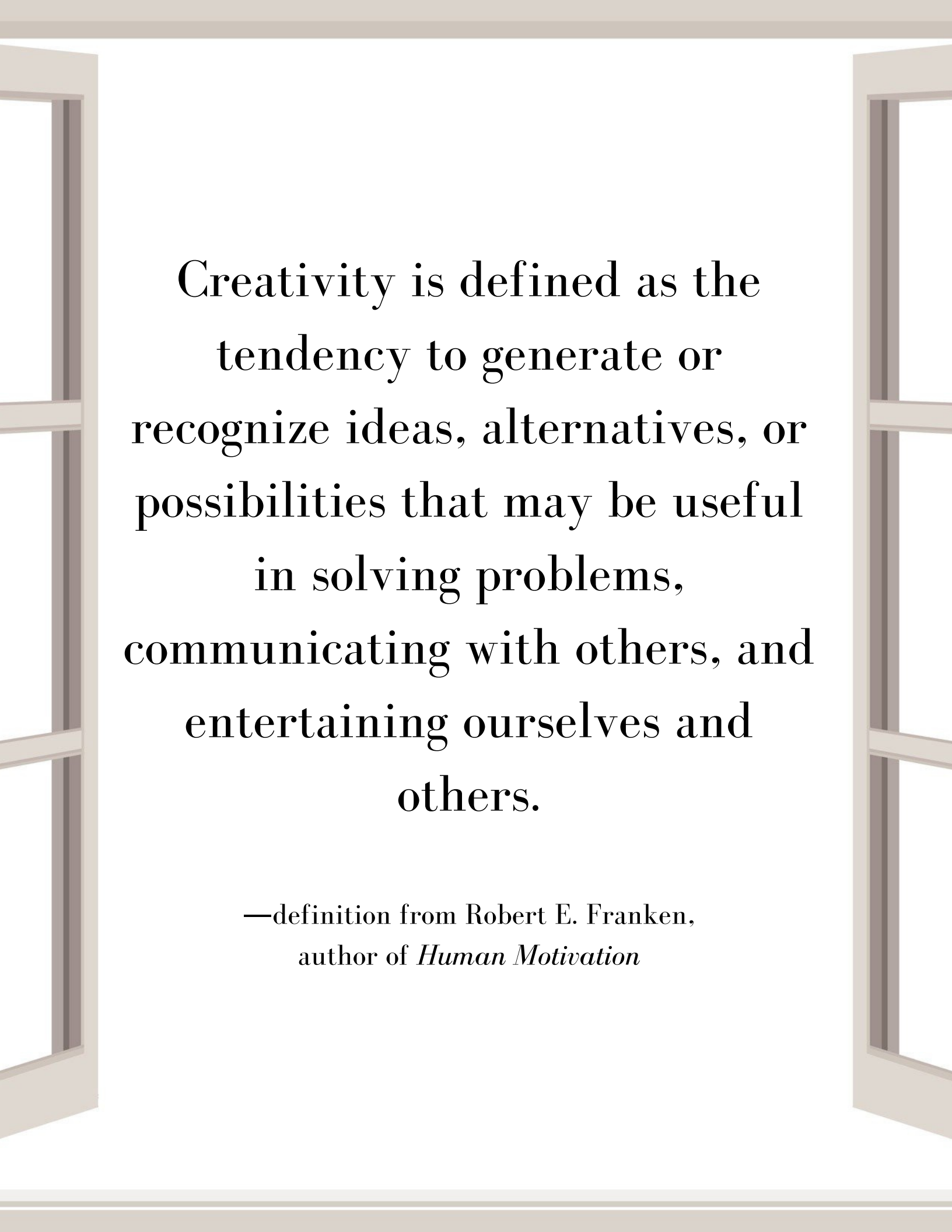
## **Present Moment Awareness & Yourself as Context**

**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.





Creativity is defined as the  
tendency to generate or  
recognize ideas, alternatives, or  
possibilities that may be useful  
in solving problems,  
communicating with others, and  
entertaining ourselves and  
others.

—definition from Robert E. Franken,  
author of *Human Motivation*

# INTENTIONS

Review the definition of creativity on the previous page. What is your motivation for wanting to increase your creativity? What are you hoping to get out of this class? What would you like to add, remove or change in your life using creativity?

## Creativity Game: What might this be? (Round 1)

Ready to play? The following activity is designed for you to stretch your creative thinking skills. Set your timer for two minutes and write down as many ways as you can think of to use a particular item. Don't peek at the item (listed at the bottom of the page) until you are all set with your timer.

The item for this round is: a 2 foot long branch.



# Why Creativity is Essential

What inspires people to use creative thinking:

1. To solve a problem.
2. To communicate your ideas, feelings, values, beliefs.
3. To satisfy a personal thirst for novelty or stimulation.

Select one area of your life about which you would you like to have some creative thinking. Choose something you are currently working on, want to enjoy more, or want to change. Describe the aspect of your life or the situation. For example - you want to feel differently about your family or work, make more money, experience more romance, get along better with someone, know yourself more deeply, generate more energy, make new friends, etc.

How do you CURRENTLY feel about the situation?

How do you WANT to feel about the situation?

What thoughts would you need to be think so you could feel this new way about the situation?

Describe why you want to change, elevate, enhance this situation?  
Why is it important to you right now?

How does this change relate to your values and what is most important to you? For example, if you decide you want a job, you could find this relates to your value of being self sufficient, being able to pay your bills, or using your gifts to help the world. Keep writing until you get a tingle of excitement or interest. (If it honestly is not important to you or you only want it to please others or you get no tingle of excitement, pick a new situation.)

How do you feel about the situation now?

Brain storm 10 or more actions you could take to make a small change in the situation?

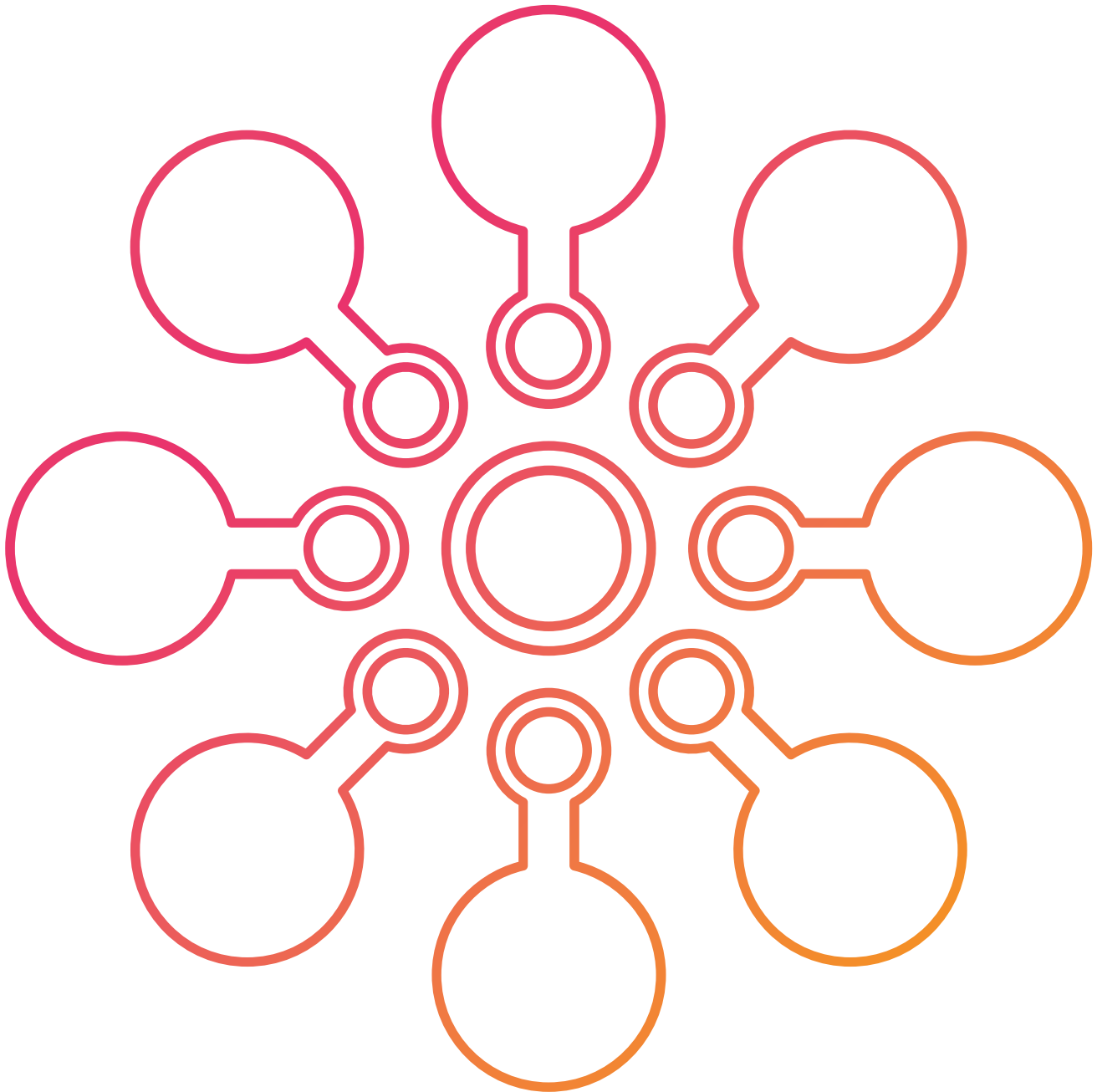
Pick one action from the list above that you are willing to take action on today. If it is too much to do today, break it into smaller and smaller steps until you can take action on it today.

How do you feel about the situation now?



# Creative Thinking

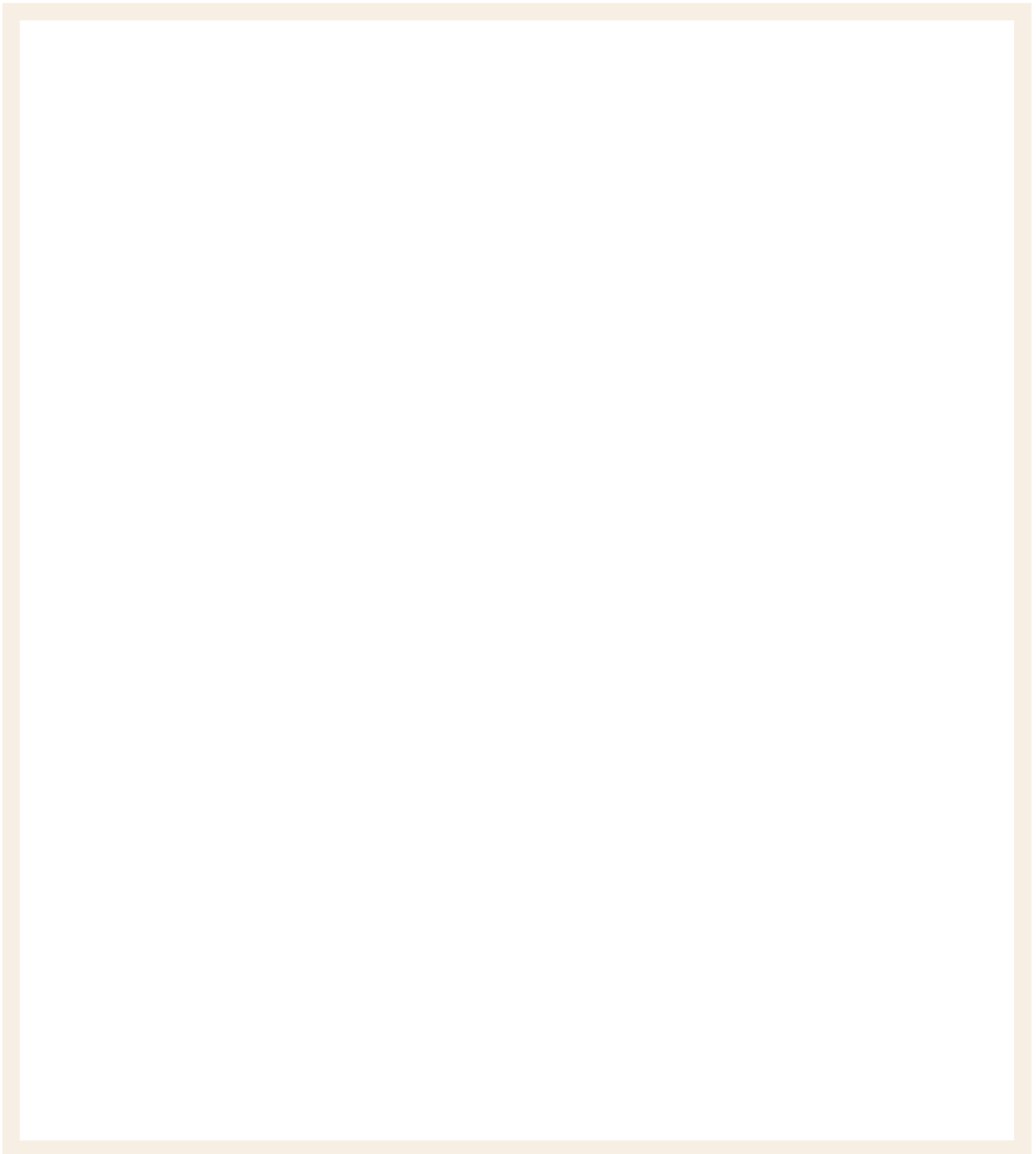
Write your circumstance in the middle of the diagram below. In the surrounding bubbles, write all the ways you would benefit from this change. Focus on linking this to your positive emotions.



# Visual Expression: Scribble Game

This powerful art therapy exercise will give your practice using both sides of your brain. You will need a pack of thin markers. Start with a dark color. Create a scribble in the box below. Just enjoy the movement of your hand, the sound of the marker, and the way the scribble presents itself.

Make a simple design with circles, loop-de-loops, zig zags or whatever designs you like for 30 seconds to a minute. If you like, you can create several scribbles on different paper and then pick one to answer the questions on the following two pages.



## Visual Expression: Scribble Game

Look at your scribble and ask yourself, "What might this be?" Set your timer for at least 3 minutes (longer is ok too) and turn your paper all around. Use your imagination and creativity to see what images reveal themselves to you in the shape of the scribble. There is no right or wrong in how to do this. List as many as possible on the paper below. When you are done, go onto the next page.



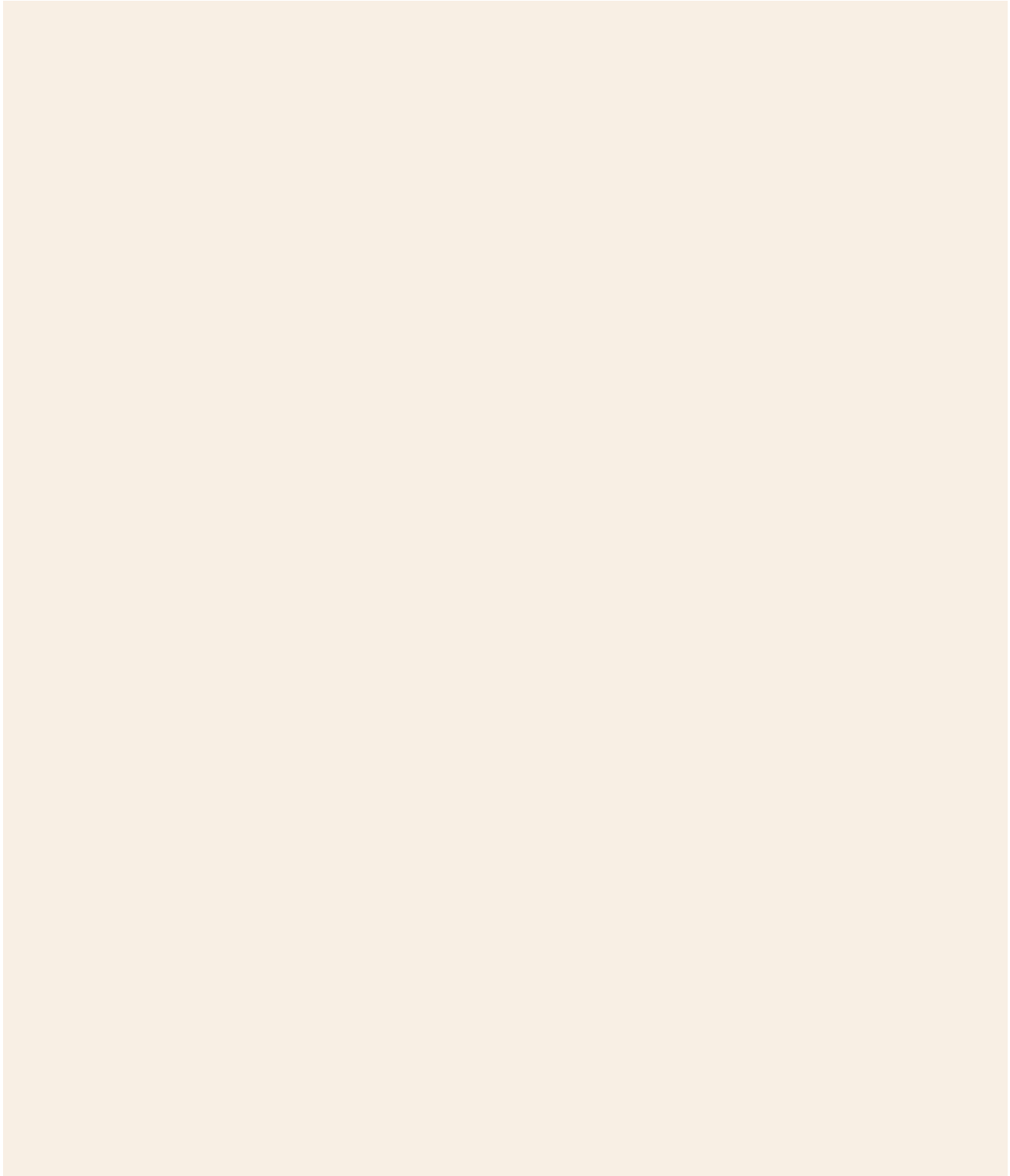
## Visual Expression: Scribble Game

Now it is time to develop your scribble into one of the images you listed on the previous page. Select whichever one seems most interesting to you. Develop your scribble into a picture using your thin markers in a variety of colors. Keep drawing until the image is obvious to you. You can spend as much time as you like on this. When you are done developing your scribble into a picture, write a story about your art below. You can describe it or tell a real or imaginary story. However you do this will be great!

# REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learned about using your creativity. How does it feel to stretch your mind using thoughts and imagination? Notice what parts you enjoyed and what parts challenged you.

Avoid judging yourself for what you did or did not do this week.





# MINDSET

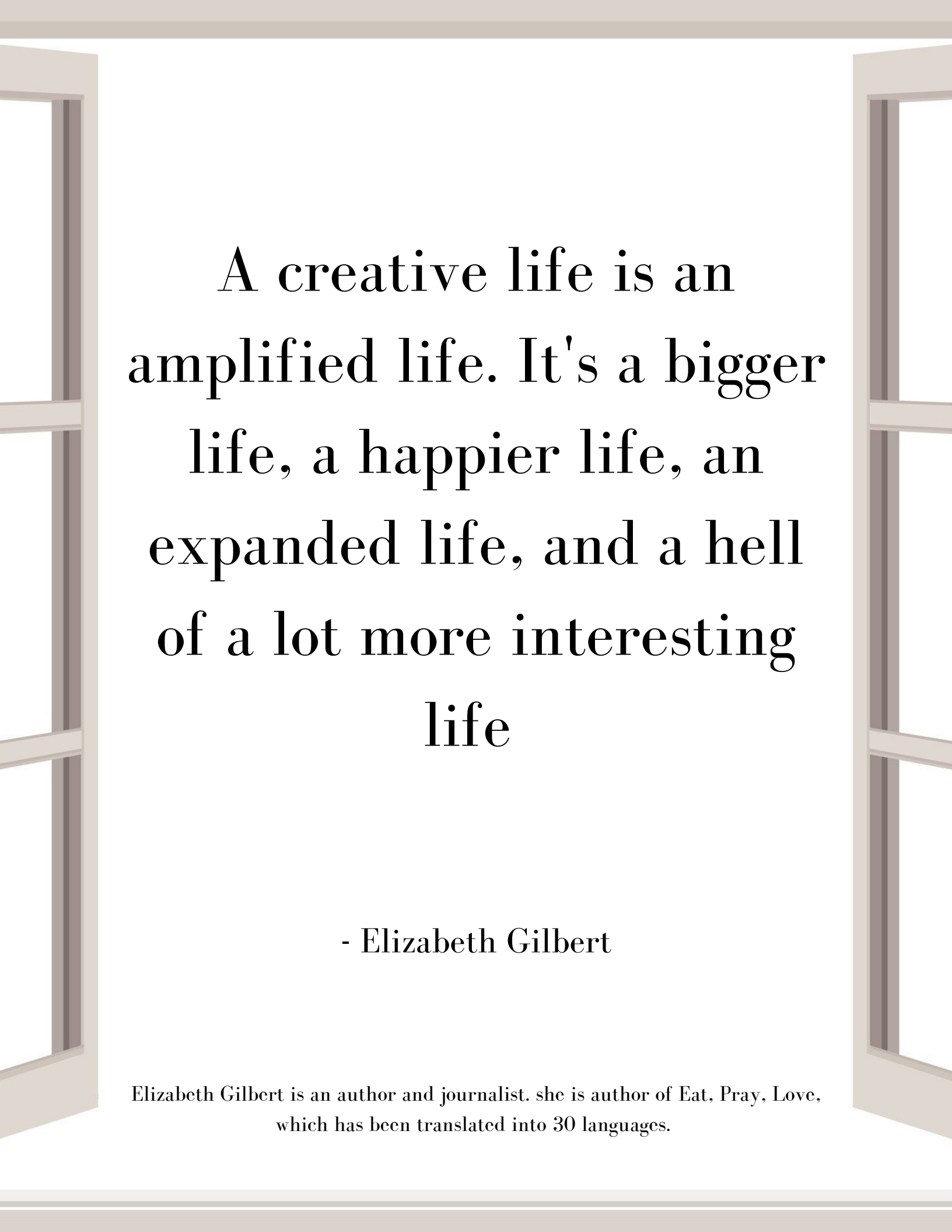
## **Acceptance & Relationship to Your Thoughts**

**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. For example, 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 better in relationships by not taking things personally. For example, if someone says something to us, we can allow it to be what it is - just a comment.

Acceptance means we avoid distorting the comment into something negative or personal. This one change in your life can completely transform your relationship with your significant other, friends, family and coworkers.

**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.



A creative life is an  
amplified life. It's a bigger  
life, a happier life, an  
expanded life, and a hell  
of a lot more interesting  
life

- Elizabeth Gilbert

Elizabeth Gilbert is an author and journalist. she is author of Eat, Pray, Love,  
which has been translated into 30 languages.

## Creativity Game: What might this be? (Round 2)

Set your timer for two minutes and write down as many ways as you can think of to use a particular item. Don't peek at the item (listed at the bottom of the page) until you are all set with your timer.

The item for this round is: a shawl.

# Creative thinking...Always, Never Sometimes

This fun exercise highlights our tendency to use black and white thinking. This refers to what psychology calls a "cognitive distortion." There are many ways our brain distorts reality...black and white thinking is our tendency to either love or hate things. This can show up, if something goes "wrong" you might think the whole project is ruined. For example, if you burn the potatoes for dinner, you might say "I always mess things up and now dinner is ruined." That is black and white thinking. A more balanced thought is "Oops, I burned the potatoes, Dinner is probably not ruined...I can still serve the main dish and a salad. Nobody will likely miss the potatoes anyway."

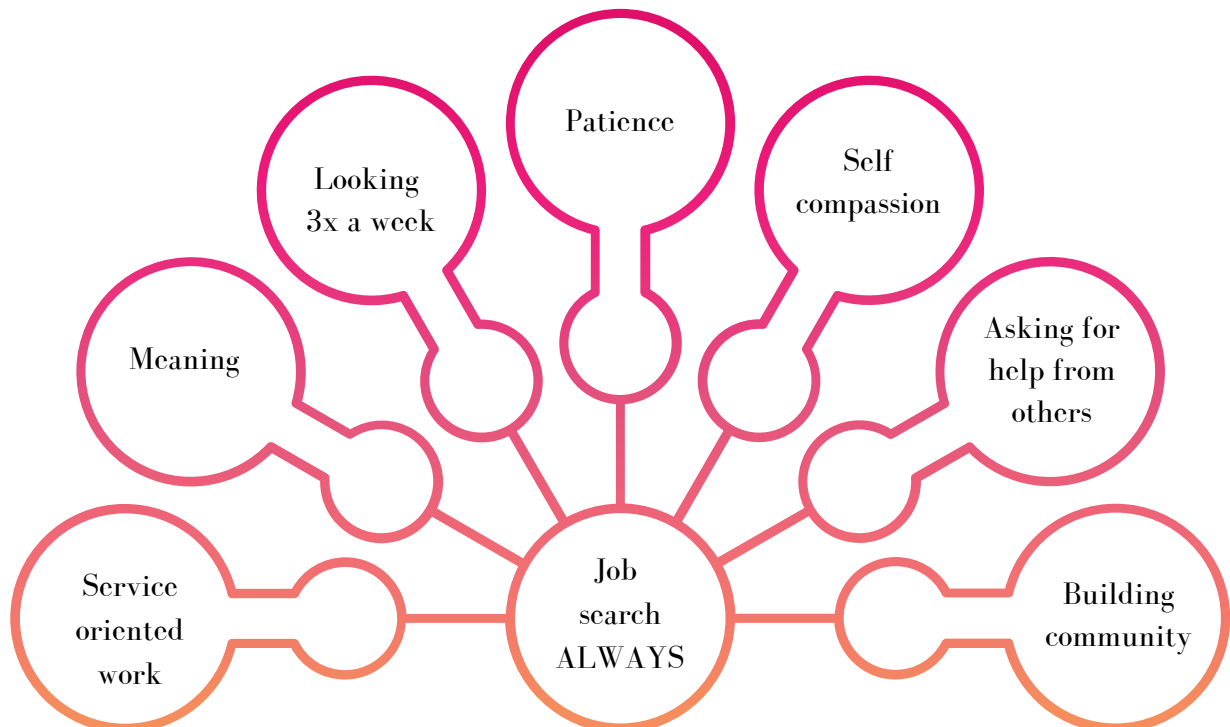
For this exercise, you will practice thinking "always, never and sometimes." You can use the same circumstance you worked on in last week's exercises or select something new. Here are some ideas:

I am...  
My life is...  
My extraordinary goal is...  
My work is...  
My personal development is...  
My self worth is...

Be sure to include optimistic and positive answers as well as realistic answers. Avoid being pessimistic.

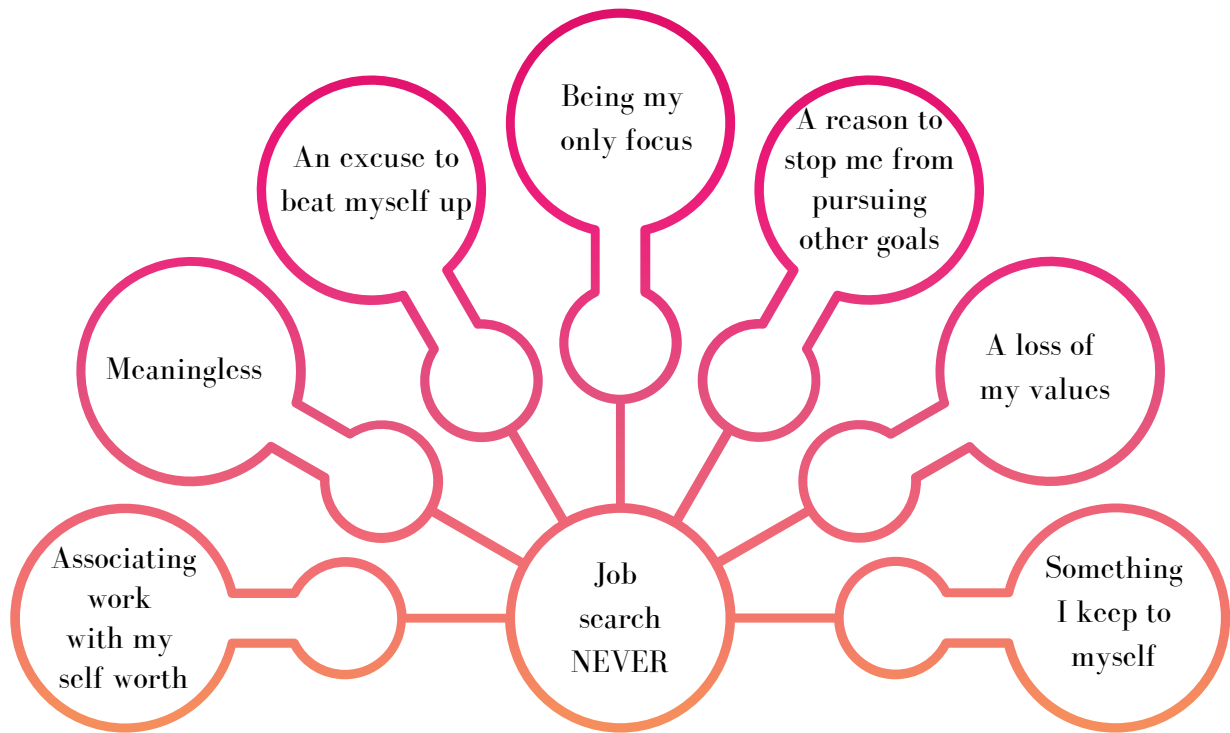
The next three diagrams are an exaple of a woman looking for a job.

My job search will ALWAYS include...

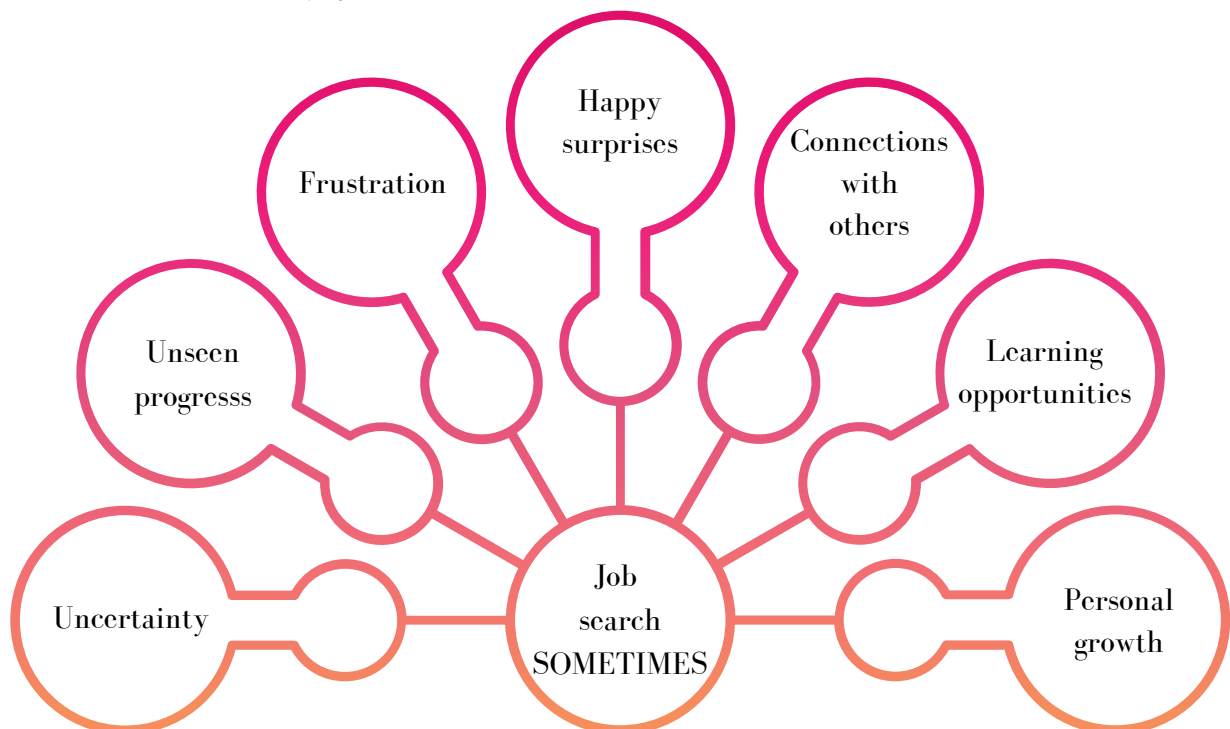


# Creative thinking...Always, Never Sometimes

My job search will NEVER include...



My job search will SOMETIMES include



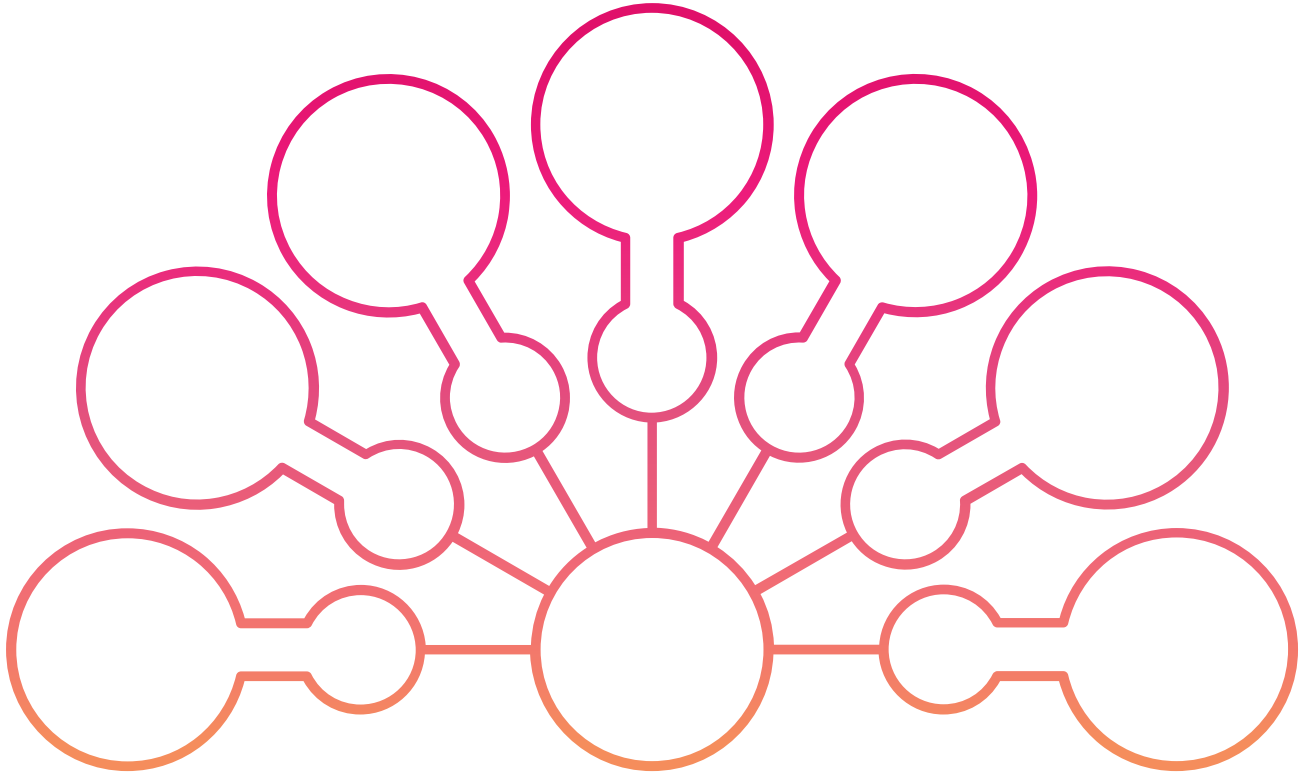


# Creative thinking...Always

Now it is your turn to play "Always, Never and Sometimes"

Examples or create your own: I am...My life is...My extraordinary goal is...My work is...My personal development is...My self worth is...

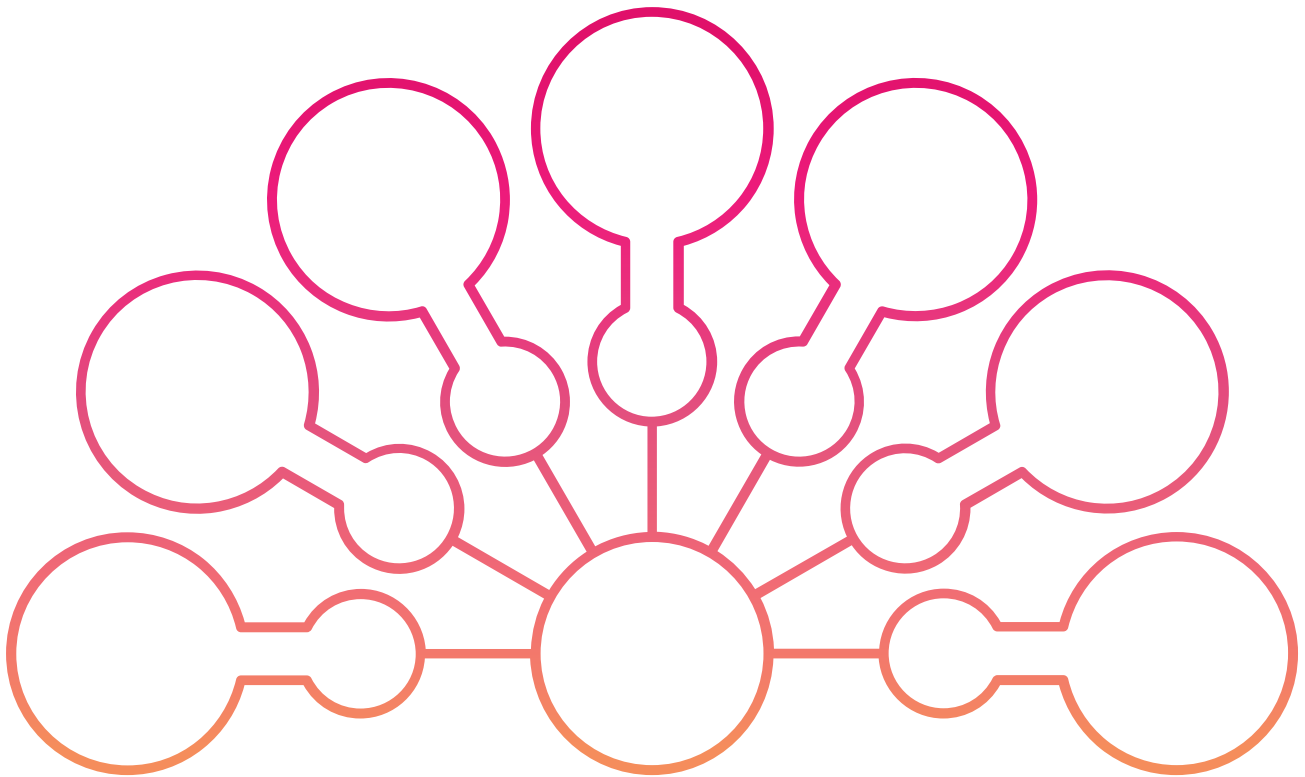
My topic:



ALWAYS

Reflections

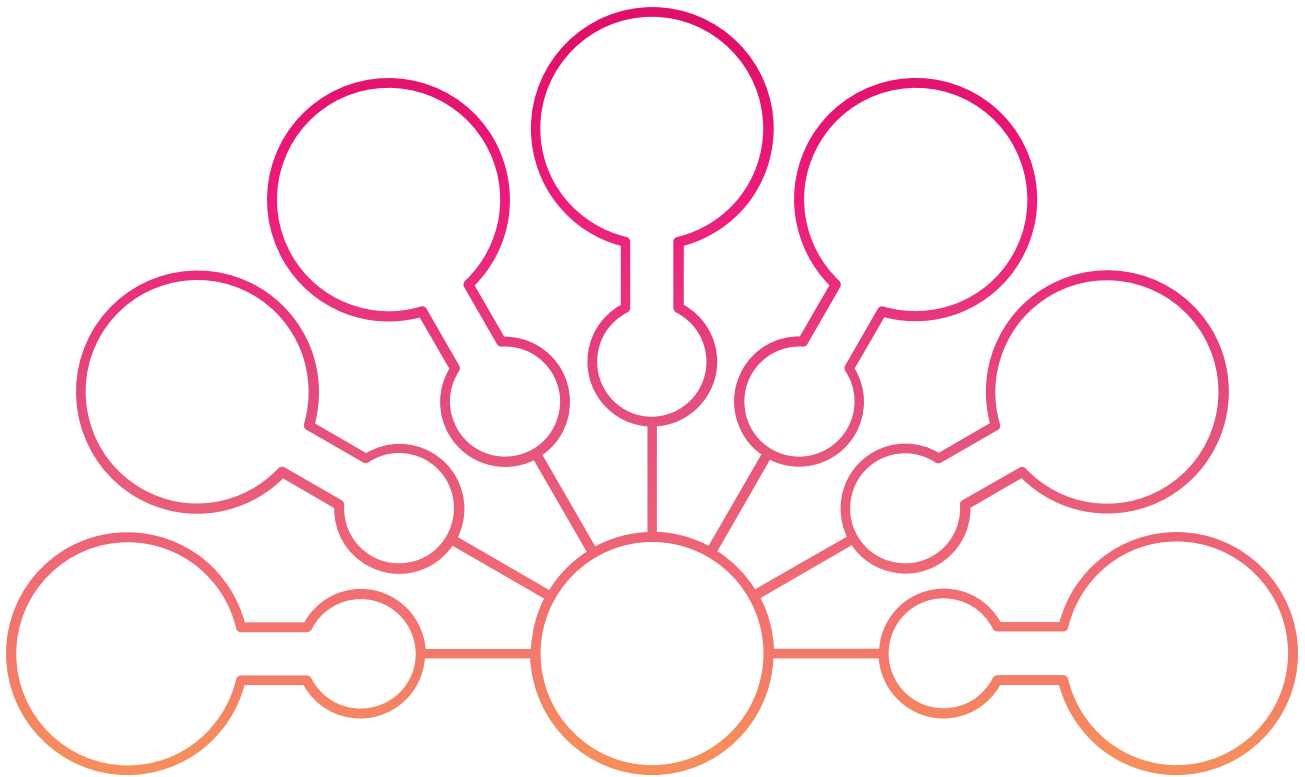
# Creative thinking...Never



NEVER

Reflections

# Creative thinking...Sometimes



SOMETIMES

Reflections

# Visual Expression: New Crayola Colors

Crayola needs to name its new crayon colors and they hired you to do it. Find two images on your phone, in a magazine or on Pinterest. Avoid thinking too long about it and just be spontaneous in your selection. Title each picture using a color in the title and then combine the titles to create the new color name. Play around with the titles and final name until your title makes you smile.

For Example:



**Champion Gold**

+



**Sunrise Orange**

**New Crayola Color:**  
"First Place"



# REFLECTION

Reflect on what you noticed this week about your creativity. What different things are you combining in your mind this week? Avoid judging yourself for what you did or did not do.



# PURPOSE

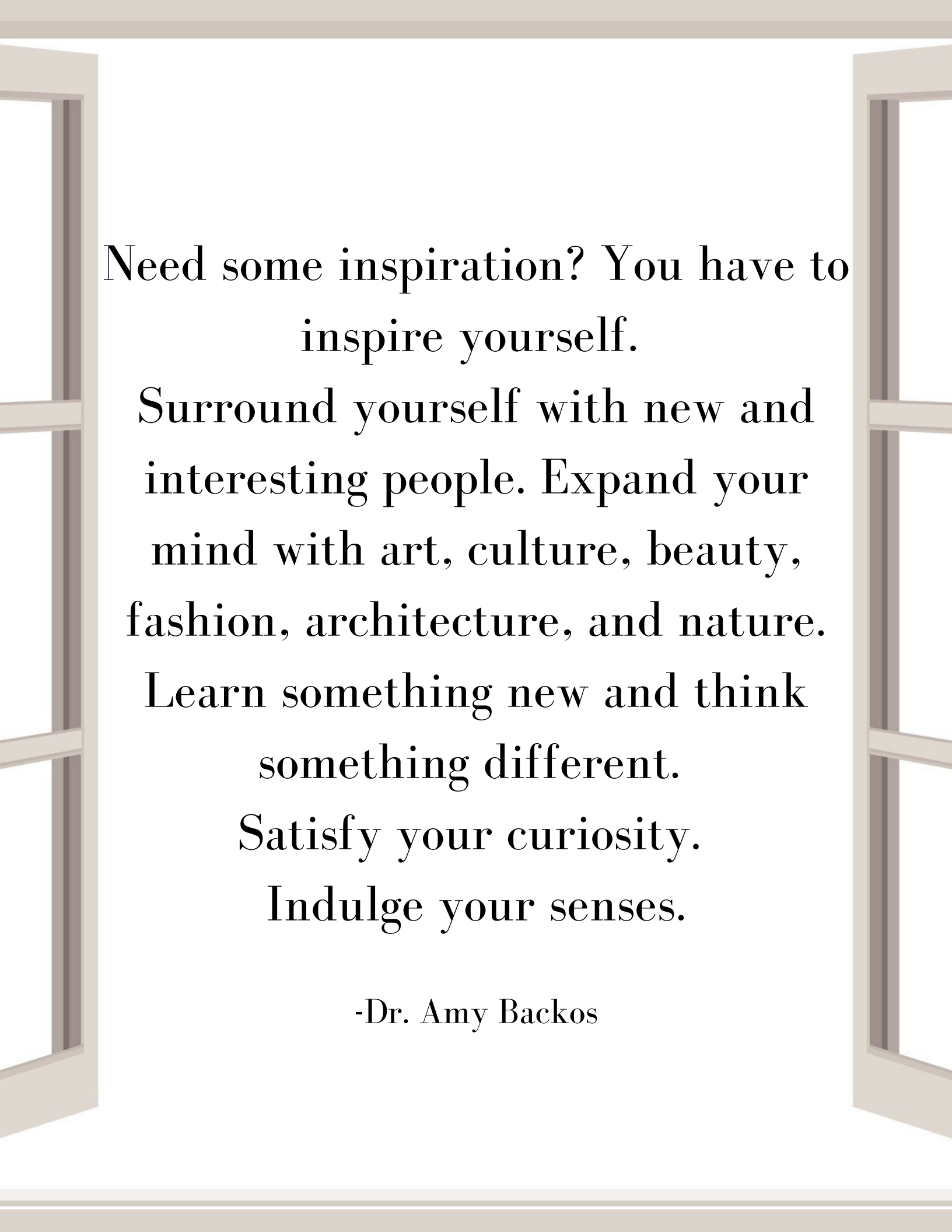
## Your Values & Committed Actions

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.

**Purpose** - your chosen presence and actions in the world. 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 in many areas 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. For example you might value honesty in work. When you come across someone being dishonest at work, your values help you commit to acting honestly, even if you feel resentful, angry or tempted to become dishonest when you work with a dishonest person.

**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.



Need some inspiration? You have to  
inspire yourself.

Surround yourself with new and  
interesting people. Expand your  
mind with art, culture, beauty,  
fashion, architecture, and nature.

Learn something new and think  
something different.

Satisfy your curiosity.

Indulge your senses.

-Dr. Amy Backos



### Creativity Game: What might this be? (Round 3)

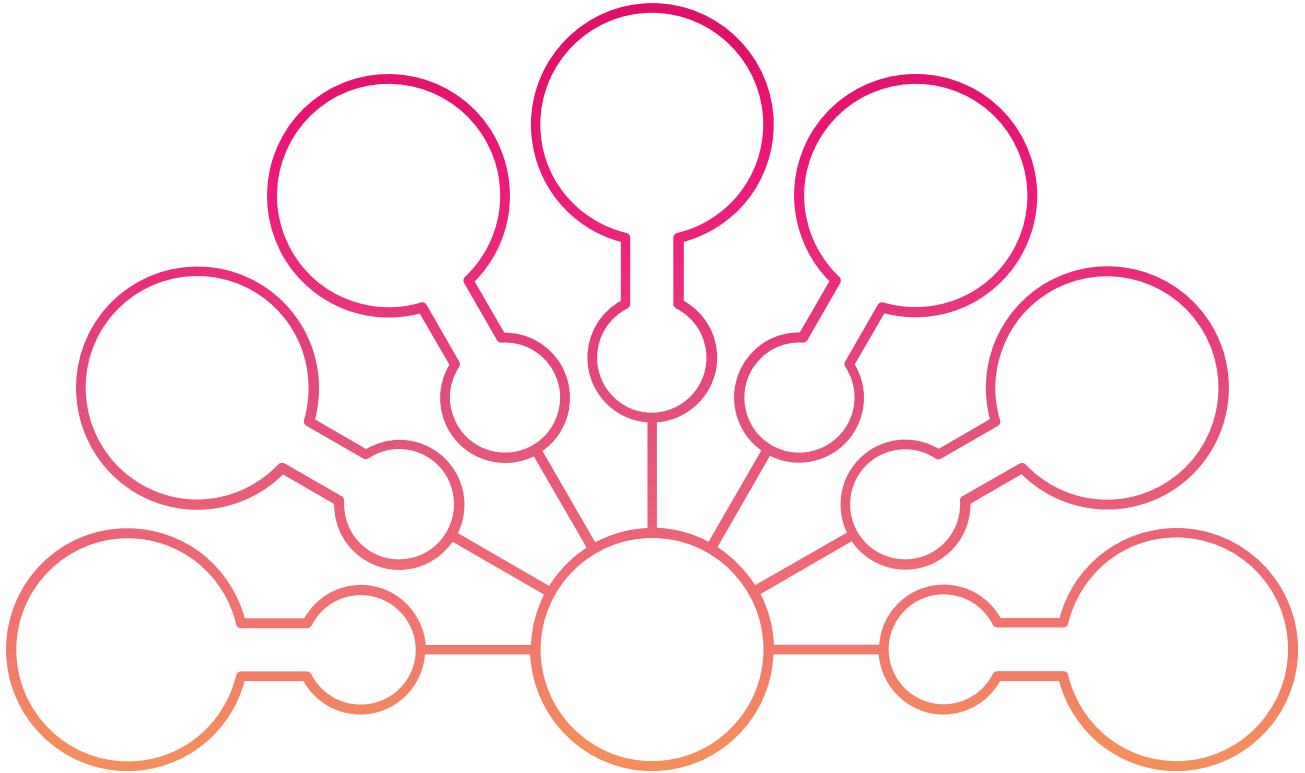
Set your timer for two minutes and write down as many ways as you can think of to use a particular item. Don't peek at the item (listed at the bottom of the page) until you are all set with your timer.

The item for this round is: a plastic measuring cup.

## Creativity Connections

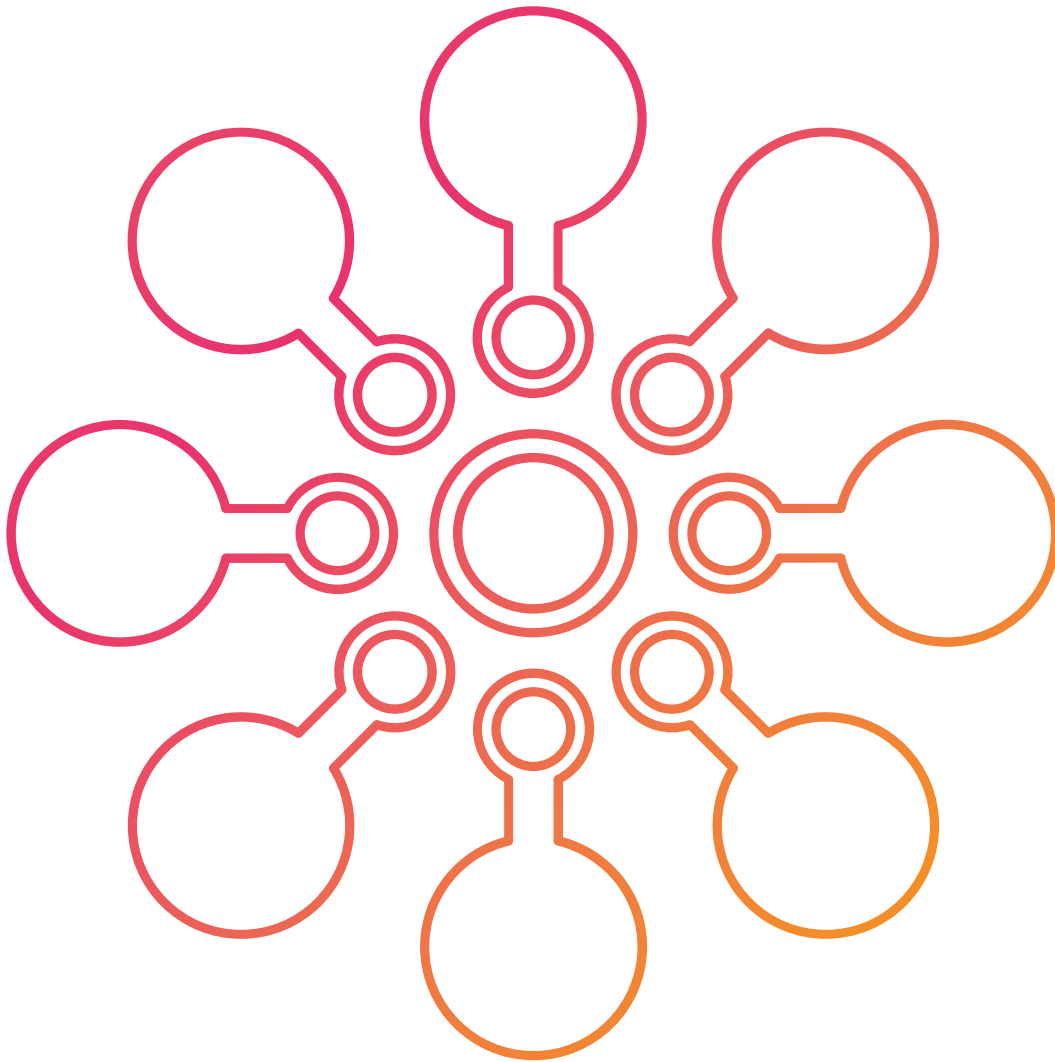
Create your own creative connections on the next three charts. Review what you wrote in week one and see where you can expand your ideas. For example, you might pick areas such as confidence, persistence, goals, values, optimism, presence, mindset or purpose. You could also pick style, creativity, relaxation, ease, fun, etc. Anything that sparks your interest will work. Allow your mind wander and practice making connections.

**Topic:**



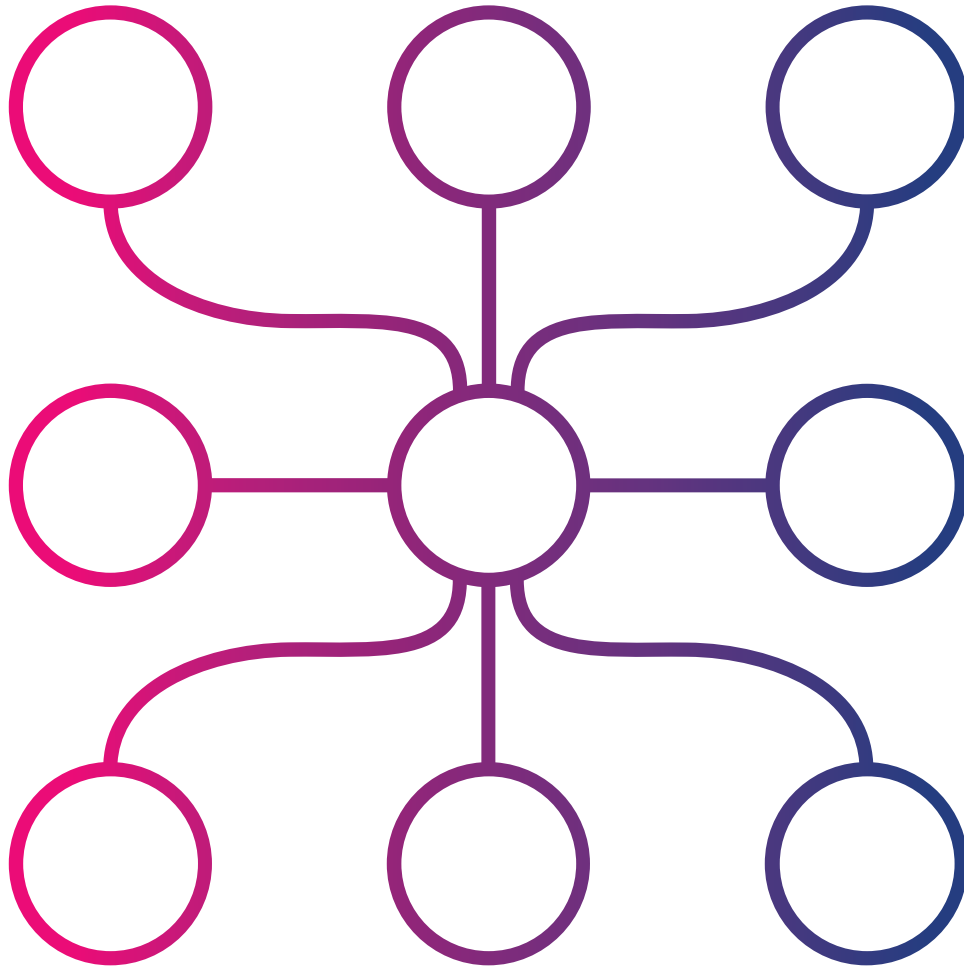
Reflections

**Topic:**



Reflections

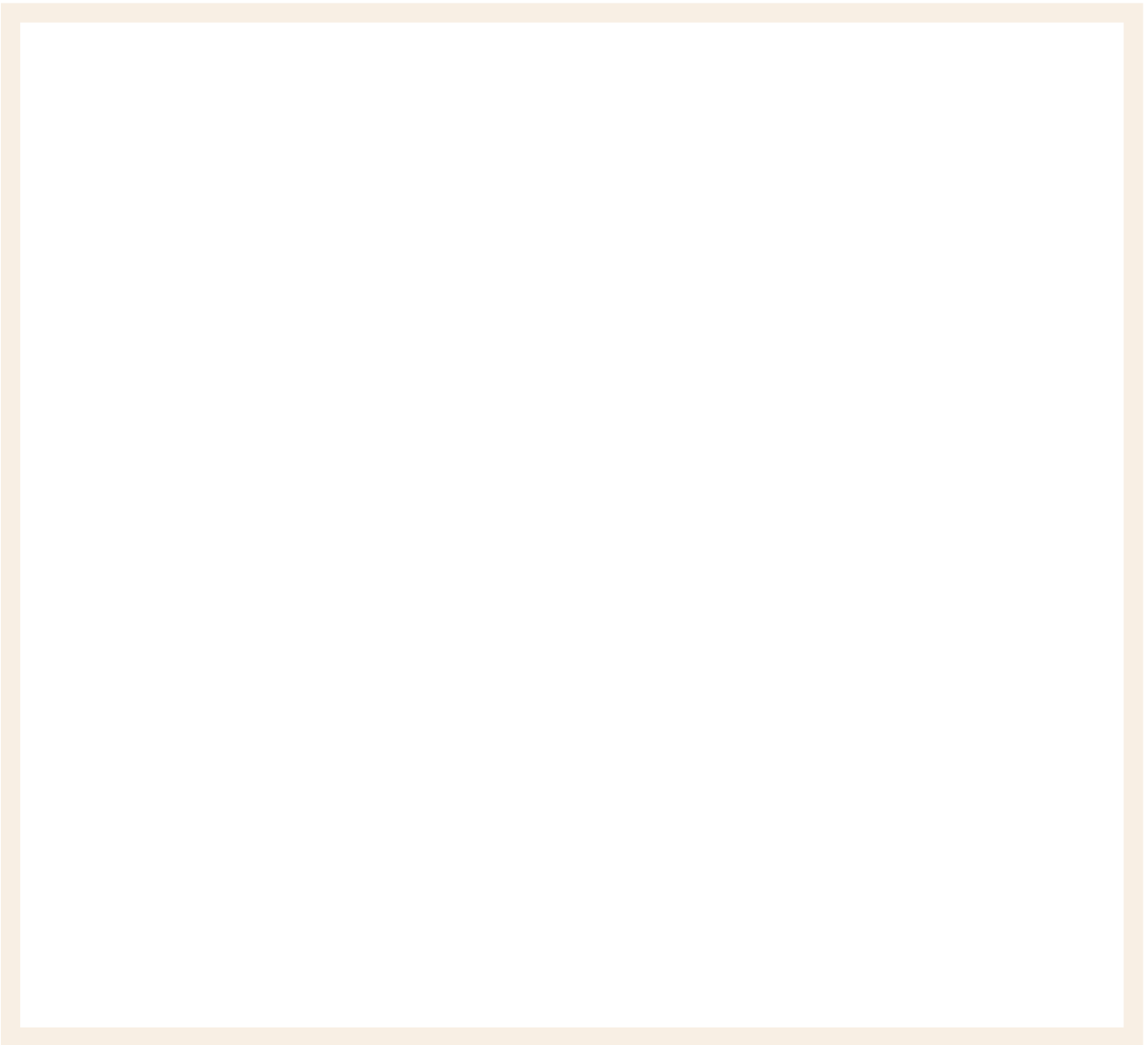
**Topic:**



Reflections

# Visual Expression

Create your own visual expression using two or three different materials. For example, a magazine picture and paint, or a magazine picture, paint and glitter. Allow yourself to create freely. If you reach a point where you dislike your creation, commit to working a little longer on the image and watch how it transforms. However you do it will be great. Answer the questions below.



Title:

Three words or phrases to describe your art.

- 
- 
- 

How do you feel?

# REFLECTION

What was it like to stretch your brain using creativity? Write out your personal formula for how you can spark your creativity in the future. For example: take time for silence, keep working when it seems like the art looks terrible or nothing is happening, brainstorm, practice creativity each week so my creative muscle gets stronger.

Create your personal plan, so just write whatever best works for you.



A minimalist, light beige window frame with multiple panes is visible on both the left and right sides of the image, framing the central text. The frame has a modern, clean design with thin lines.

# INTEGRATION



# Celebrate!

Recognize and celebrate your presence, mindset and purpose this month. Celebration creates motivation for your next level of growth and change. You can celebrate anything you accomplished, a time you remained calm under stress, your self care, a new way of relating to your thoughts, your increased time in the present moment, your creative expressions, your actions in line with your values - anything you do should be celebrated!

1

My increased presence I am celebrating this month...

2

My intentional mindset I am celebrating this month...

3

My purpose, values and committed actions that I am celebrating this month...

4

What external celebration I will have this month...

(flowers, book on aesthetics, manicure, etc.)

# Modern Woman's Creativity

You have completed a month of creativity and creative thinking. These exercises expanded your mind and opened you to new ways of thinking. What you did for fun this month in class can be applied to any aspect of your life. Use your creative thoughts to figure out where you want to apply your new thinking.

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 focused on living their values...the world would be a happier place indeed!

If you are excited about continuing this work, reach out to The Art Therapy Center of San Francisco 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  
Licensed Psychologist & Board Certified Art Therapist

# RESOURCES

01

Art Therapy Center of San Francisco

Center for creative expression, psychological wellness, positive psychology and value-based living. Email for complementary 20 minute consultation. Amy@amybackos.com

02

Instagram: @dramybackos

Join me each Friday at noon PST while I gently guide you to strategies to live a meaningful and joyful life.

03

Book: PTSD and Art Therapy

By Dr. Amy Backos

A book about using creative process and thinking to overcome traumas. Includes a history of trauma therapy and approaches to trauma treatment as well as art interventions and personal reflections.

04

Book: ACT Art Therapy

By Dr. Amy Backos

A book about how to live a value-based life using mindfulness, creativity, and connecting to your highest self.





