




The Modern Creative
Woman Publishing Co.



The Modern Creative Woman

How to Think Like an Artist



To think like an artist is to
to make contact with your
intuitive spirit of
exploration.

- Amy Backos

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.



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

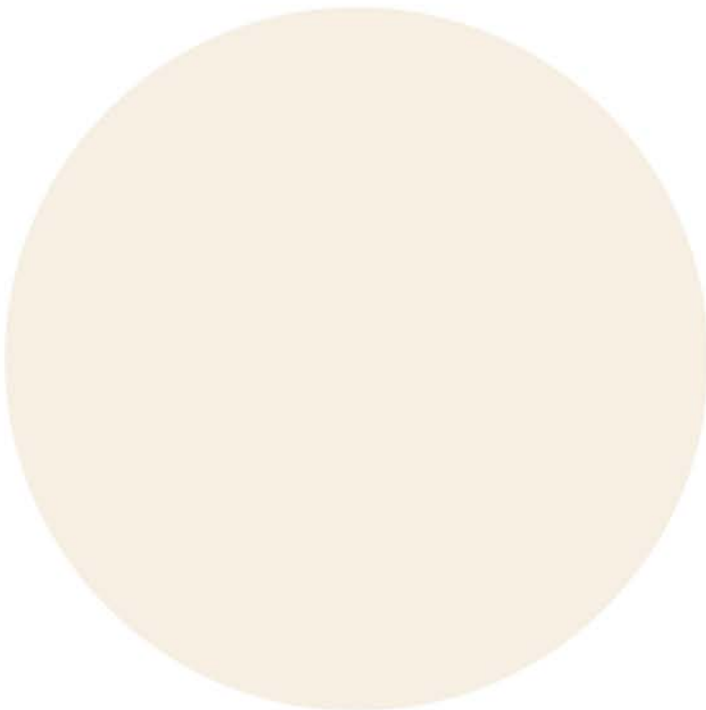
Imagine you are using your brain at its full capacity with a free-flowing abundance of new ideas and solutions. What might you be willing to risk knowing that your brain can generate new ideas any time it wants? What would you do? What would you try? What problems would you try to solve first? How would you help yourself and others?

Think like an Artist

Write 10 things (places, people, objects, ideas, or concepts) that you find beautiful. This is not about conventional beauty - this is your unique aesthetic pleasures.

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

Linking your Present Moment Awareness to your senses is a powerful way to increase your creativity. What kind of music is your favorite? What is your favorite song? Make a mind map to include your top 8 favorite songs. Ranking and ordering is a wonderful creativity skill to have, especially when you have so many options. Now make a playlist! You can listen with your full attention to the music or enjoy it while you make art, cook, drive or enjoy your coffee in the morning.



Artist Thoughts

Creative thinkers see connections! One way to increase your creative thinking is to link unrelated ideas. Choose one topic you are interested in...art, baking, jewelry, writing, parenting, hiking, nature, fashion, literature, film, theater, music, etc.

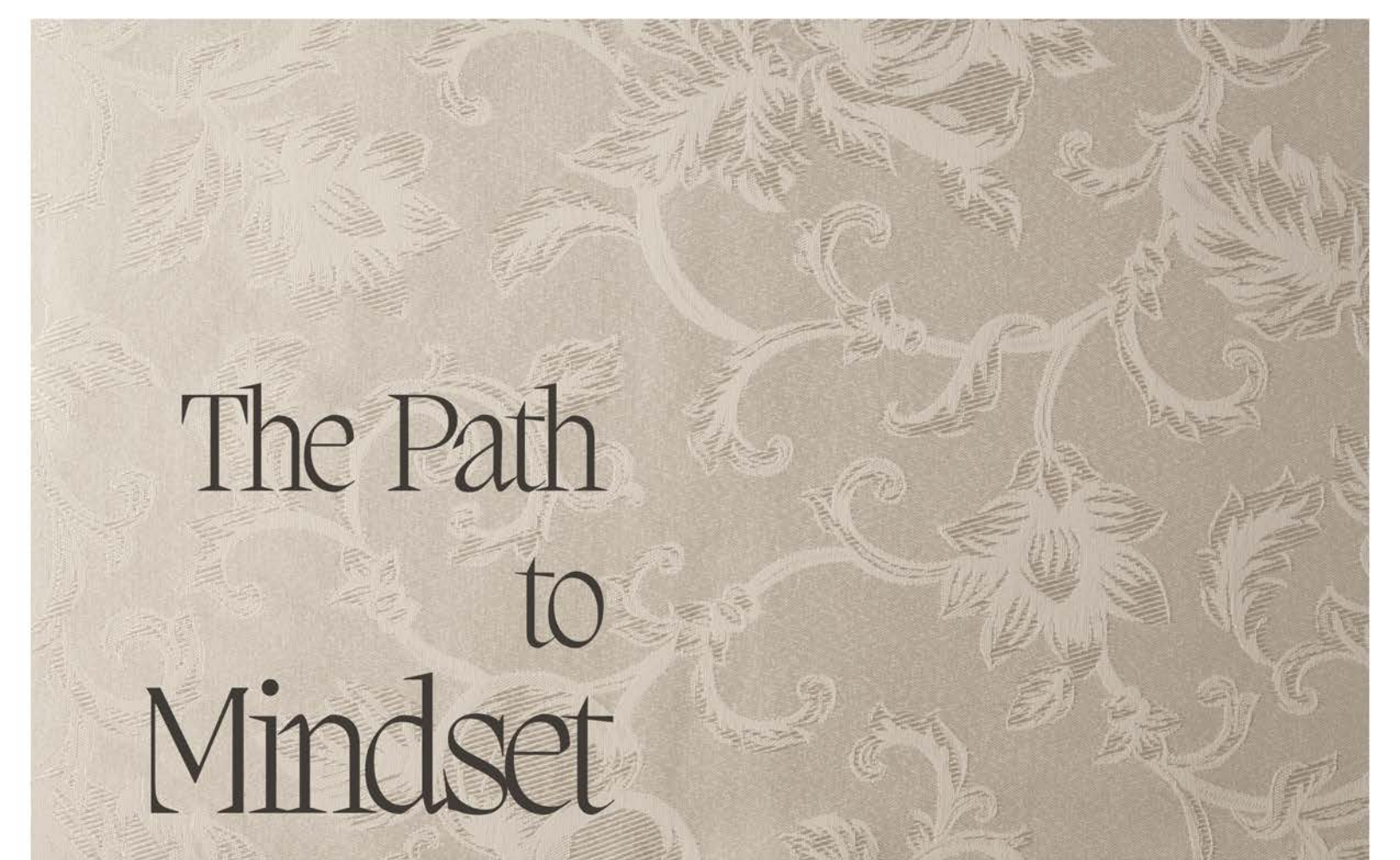
Topic: _____

Write and doodle your associations to your chosen topic. You might revisit why you are interested in it, where you first learned of it, memories and associations from the past, dreams of the future.

Infuse your writing and doodles with as many associations as you can - sights, smells, tastes, sensations and sounds. Let your mind wander and just see where your associations take you.

REFLECTION

Reflect on how you have been thinking like an artist. What came up for you? How comfortable are you with thinking like an artist? Do you see yourself as thinking creatively? Whatever comes up is ok. Let go of judgement about how you think the present moment “should” be, and just let it be.

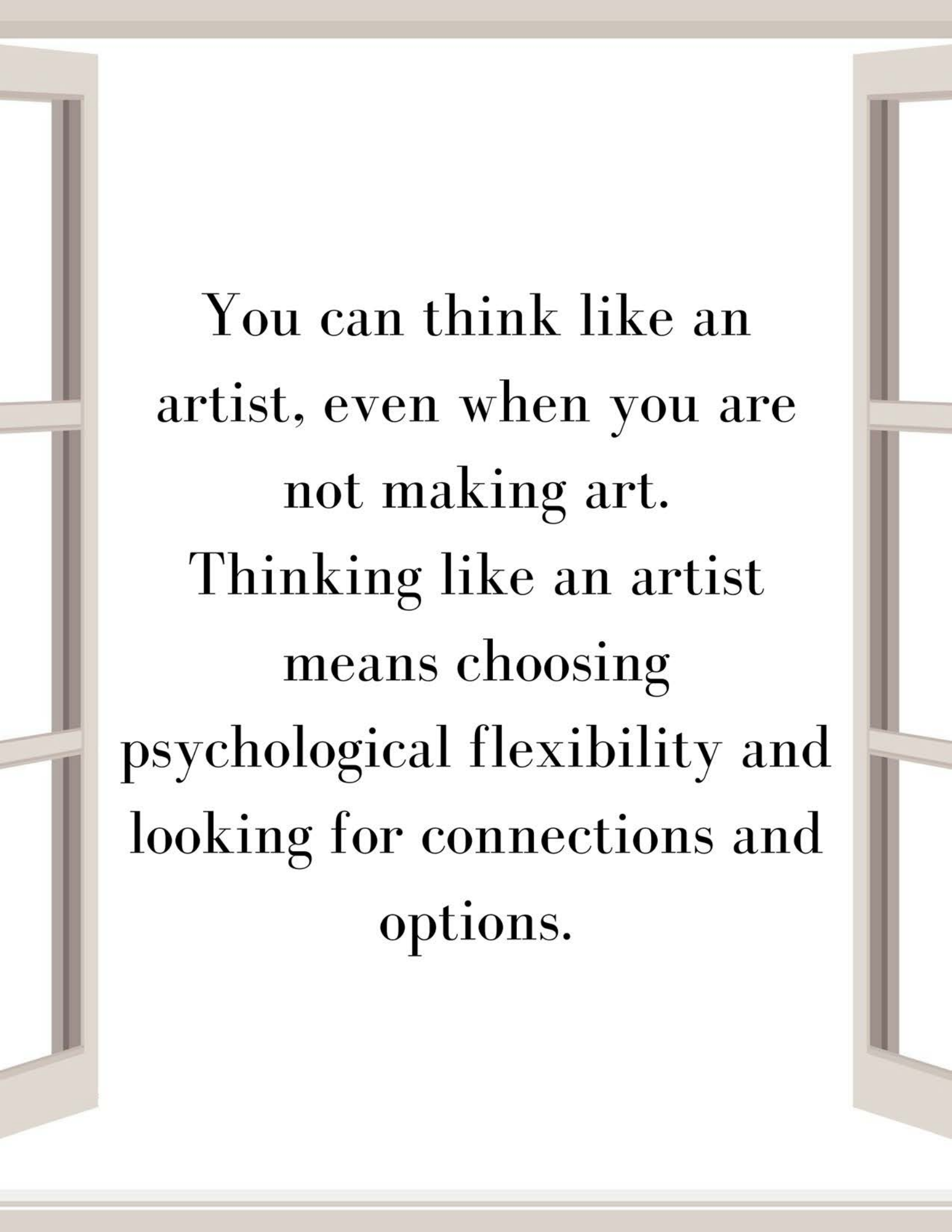


The Path to Mindset

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.



You can think like an
artist, even when you are
not making art.

Thinking like an artist
means choosing
psychological flexibility and
looking for connections and
options.

CREATIVE BRAINSTORM

See how quickly you
can answer the
following questions.



Doodle Space

5 foods starting with
the letter A

5 animals that start
with the letter B

Name 4 types of
cars

5 feelings

5 streets in your
neighborhood

3 types of art

3 of your favorite
people

3 types of flowers

UNIVERSAL EXPRESSIONS

Researcher, Paul Ekman found 7 universal feelings that we show in our face: anger, surprise, disgust, fear, sadness, contempt, and enjoyment. His work to understand emotions and facial expressions took him around the world; he found these feelings are present in all cultures. While we don't always like each of these emotions, they are a fundamental part of being a human. In this exercise you will get comfortable with these feelings and link them to an artistic line and color.

This will strengthen your ability to understand and master your emotions.

1. Grab a box of markers or colored pencils.
2. Choose a different color to reflect each feeling. In the box next to the word, draw a line to reflect the feeling. However you do this will be great.
3. Make the expression on your face as you look at the word and draw the line.

Anger

Surprise

Disgust

Fear

Contempt

Sadness

Enjoyment

UNIVERSAL EXPRESSIONS

Now it is time to bring about emotions that you want to generate. Cultivating feelings of gratitude and happiness benefit our brains tremendously. A positive mood helps us generate even more positive emotions. We benefit from being able to change our emotions and so do the people who rely on us.

Repeat the same exercise as before to cultivate these positive emotions.

1. Grab a box of markers or colored pencils.
- 2 Choose a different color to reflect each feelings. In the box next to the word, draw a line to reflect the feeling.
3. Make the expression on your face as you look at the word and draw the line.

Happiness

Joy

Pride

Excitement

Peaceful

Satisfaction

Delight

Reflection on Universal Expressions

What was it like to do the Universal Expressions exercise? Did you feel the emotions as you made the facial expression, chose the color, and drew the line? What was this like? You have the power to bring up any of these feelings. It is especially important to learn the skill to bring up feelings you like, such as pleasure happiness and joy.

Write your experience with the Universal Expression exercise and how you can use this experience to feel better in any given moment.

10 Ways to Think Like an Artist

1. **Embrace Curiosity:** Cultivate a natural inquisitiveness about the world around you and ask questions about everything.
2. **See Beauty in the Ordinary:** Train yourself to find inspiration in everyday objects, scenes, and experiences.
3. **Experiment Freely:** Don't be afraid to try new techniques, materials, or approaches without worrying about perfection.
4. **Trust Your Intuition:** Learn to listen to your inner voice and follow your instincts, even if it feels uncomfortable or leads you in unconventional directions.
5. **Suspend Judgement about the Process:** Understand that mistakes, setbacks, and confusion are essential parts of the creative process and opportunities for growth.
6. **Seek Inspiration Everywhere:** Keep an open mind and draw inspiration from diverse sources, including nature, art, literature, and everyday life.
7. **Develop a Unique Perspective:** Cultivate your own distinct viewpoint and use it to infuse your work with authenticity and originality.
8. **Practice Mindfulness:** Stay present in the moment and pay attention to your thoughts, emotions, and surroundings to fuel your creativity.
9. **Collaborate and Connect:** Engage with other artists and creative people, share ideas, and collaborate on projects to expand your perspective and learn from others.
10. **Stay Playful:** Approach your work with a sense of playfulness and experimentation. Let yourself explore and have fun with your creative process.

REFLECTION

Reflect on how you have used your mindset to focus on creativity. Does it excite you or pique your curiosity? Perhaps it brings up fears and anxiety? Reflect on your mindset - what is your reaction to thinking like an artist thus far? Avoid self judgments or criticism.

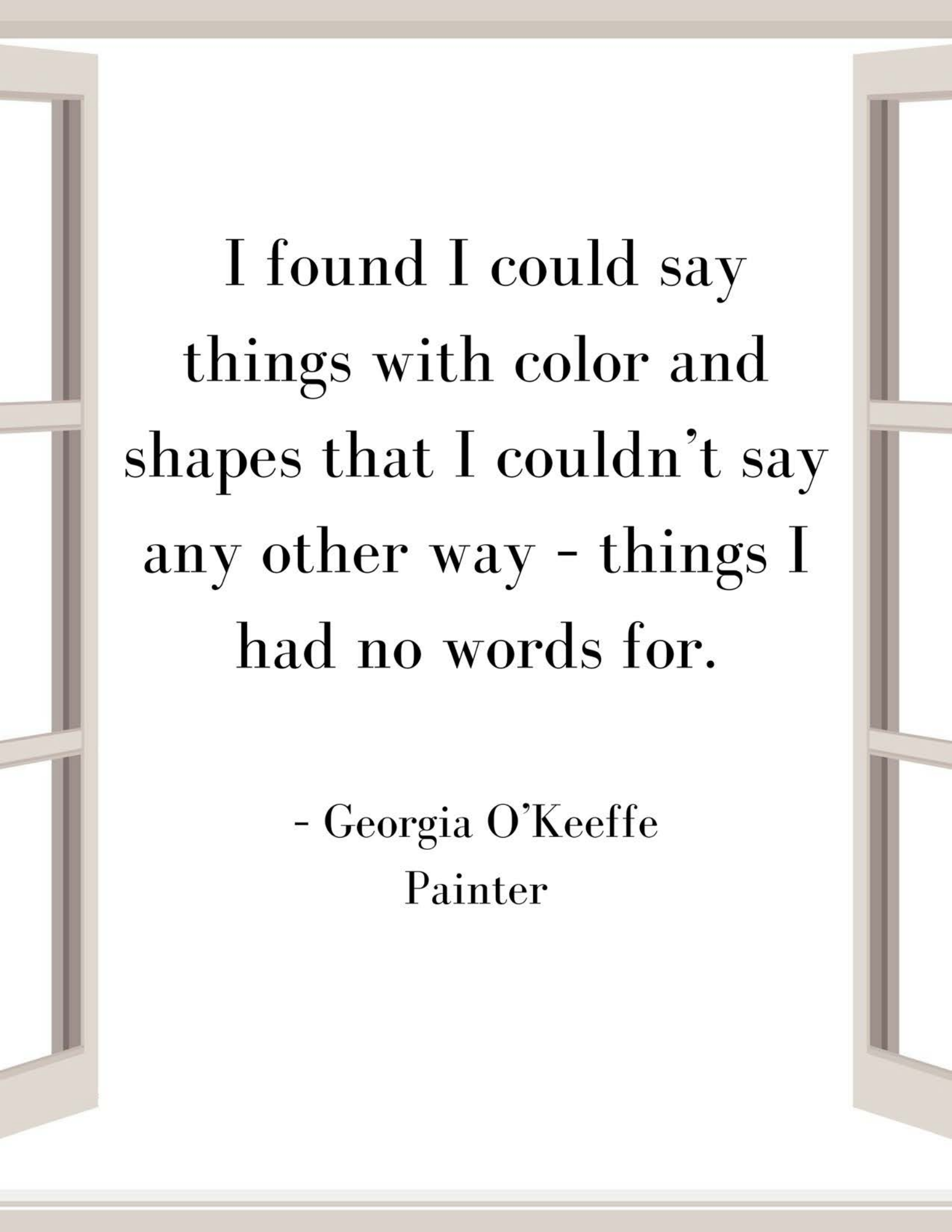


The Path to Purpose

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.



I found I could say
things with color and
shapes that I couldn't say
any other way - things I
had no words for.

- Georgia O'Keeffe
Painter

Are you really SEEING?

Do you ever feel like you look but don't really see? We do this all the time! Our brain fills in the blanks to be efficient. We skip over spelling mistakes, make assumptions about what we see and prejudge conversations in relationships. You may find that you have driven past the same tree everyday for years and only when you really stop to look, can you see and appreciate it. The same is true of relationships, including our relationship with ourselves. To think like an artist, you must slow down, look, and really SEE.

Grab a pencil and decide what you want to draw - your face, tree, friend, pet, plant, leaf, etc. Place your pencil on the paper and then only look at the object. Do not pick up your pencil and do not look at your paper. If you need some more instruction, search on the internet for "contour line drawings" and see how others have approached this task. Relax and just focus on SEEING.

Artist Date

When was the last time you went on an artist date with yourself? An artist date means setting aside time to create and/or appreciate the creativity of others. Our brains need time to reflect and be inspired. Our busy lives often leave us feeling like we don't have enough time for things like artists dates. Nothing could be further from the truth! We need creative rest to be inspired and continue producing, working, relating to others, and enjoying life.

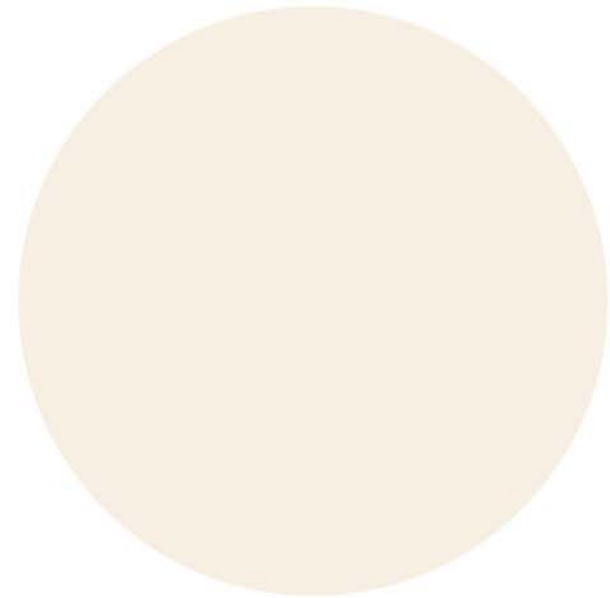
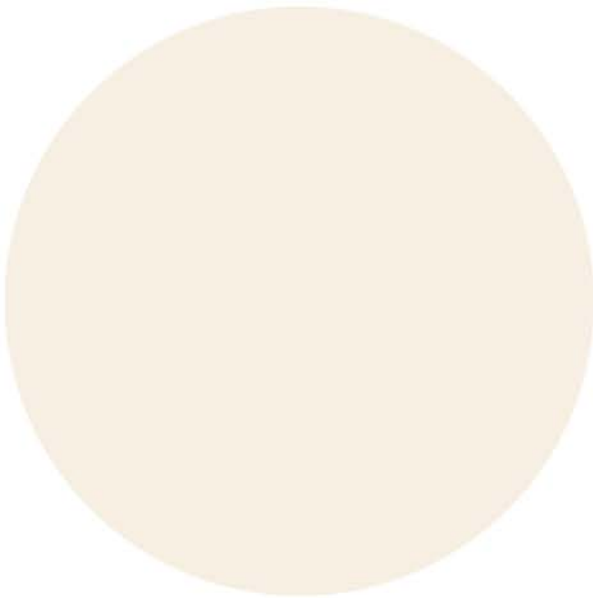
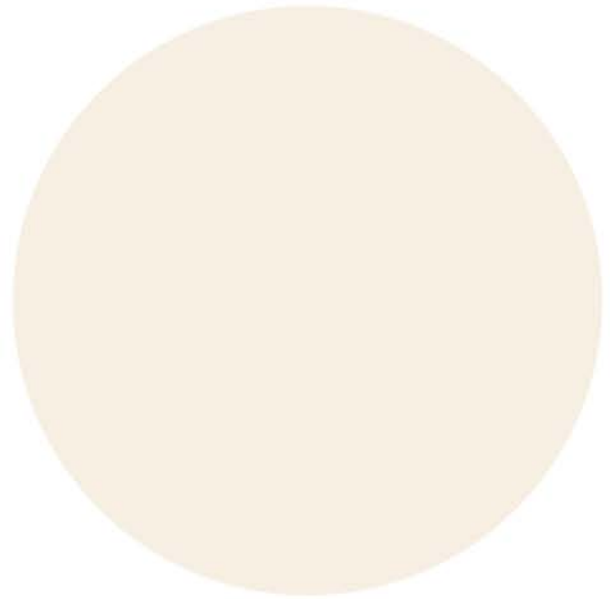
Your artist date could be making art at home, visiting a museum or gallery, or taking yourself out to coffee with your journal/sketchbook. However you do it will be great!

Make a list of 10 different ideas for artists dates. This is a brain storm so let your mind wander!

Choose one from your list and schedule it this month!.

Your Artist's Sketch Book

Early artists used whatever they could find to make marks - carving into rocks, blowing dried, ground ochre plants to leave a hand print in a cave. It is now your turn to use whatever you have to make your mark. Try coffee, tea, makeup, food coloring, spices, chocolate, pollen, dirt, ashes from the fireplace, crushed flowers...the possibilities are unlimited! Find four non-art materials and make your marks in the boxes below. Be sure to label each one and observe over 24-48 hours what happens to the color on the page.



Making Stone Soup

Do you know the story of how to make stone soup? Stone Soup is a European folk story where hungry strangers are denied food from the villagers. They eventually convince the villagers to share their food to make a shared meal. They use creative thinking and community bonding. The travelers set up a pot of filled with water and drop in a stone. The villagers are curious and the travelers describe how wonderful stone soup is and they invite them to stay for the meal when it is ready. They also mention the soup will need a little garnish to be truly delicious. One by one, the villagers bring a little food to add to the soup - a potato, a carrot, onions, a cabbage, etc. In the end, the travelers and villagers enjoy a wonderful shared meal of s"tone soup."

The moral of the story is about sharing and collaborating on a creative and nourishing endeavor. Variations on this story have been used in countless movies and books.

Let your imagination run wild and see how you can apply this story to your work, your family, your friendships, your creative process...the lesson fits anywhere! Write your ideas here.

REFLECTION

What was it like to explore your inner artist? What connections have you made? What did you get curious about? What do you like best about thinking like an artist? Summarize what you learned from the exercises this month.



YOUR CREATIVE INTEGRATION

Think Like an Artist

You have completed a month focused on thinking like an artist. These exercises hopefully opened you to embracing ambiguity, looking to really SEE, and generating comfort with new ideas.

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

