

Safety

Artwork by Etel Adnan

“Nothing has a stronger influence psychologically on their environment and especially on their children than the unlived life of the parent.”

–C G Jung



Our inner artist is a child. And what it yearns for is a soft, supportive voice that says “Yes, try it and see what happens!” That cheers on our curiosity and wonder.

However, most of us had parents, extended families, teachers and friends that not only belittled our creative curiosity but berated and shamed our inner artist. And as a result many people walking around do not know they are artists at all!

Write: Time travel and investigate who your greatest creative nah-sayers were. Who said things like “Art won’t pay the electric bills!” or “You’ll end up a starving artist!”



We internalize these negative messages and they become the roots of our own creative blocks. We become 'shadow artists' - too intimidated to claim our own self worth as creative people, we might find ways to be near art without having to claim that space for ourselves. We might buy a lot of art, frequent art museums, marry someone artistic, or work in an art related field. Hesitant to place our dreams at center stage.

There is a powerful mythology that famous artists are the ones with the most talent. Often it is those with the most audacity, not those imbued with creative genius.

Another powerful mythology is that artists have to be mentally ill, alcoholics, poor, and promiscuous to be authentic.

Write: What are your greatest fears/myths around being more creative? Examples: I don't have time. I don't have any talent. It is a waste of time. I will come unhinged.

But wait! you say. I have to work to make money to _____. There are lots of reasonable and unreasonable arguments against being creative. The most important thing is that we bring awareness to what our inner voices are saying.

Write: An affirmation - choose one or a few affirmations that will support your inner artist as you begin this process. And listen carefully for the Censor to perk its head up! Record all the things your Censor blurts out while you are actively supporting yourself. Examples: My creativity heals myself and others. Creativity is the divine's will for me. I want to feel my creative energy. I am a talented and valued artist.

Who was a champion of your creativity in your life? Did you have a family member, a teacher, a friend who encouraged you to listen to your intuitive self?

Through these questions we are beginning to regain a sense of safety and of attention to what inner obstacles stand in our way of living a deeply creative and intuitive life. Feel free to write your answers separately or in one longer piece. And post in the Unit One section of our forum so we can begin to get to know each other.



Art Practice: Please get out a large piece of paper and tape it to a table top. Take crayons, oil pastels or colored pencils, one in each hand, close your eyes, and begin to move your hands across the paper. Let the movement come from your body, not your eyes. How are you feeling right now? How can you express that in movement? What does your body need right now in terms of rhythm? This has nothing to do with the way the piece looks.

Maybe try this a couple different times. How did your mark making change? Are your shapes rounder or more angular? What colors did you choose? How did you feel afterward? Please share one of your drawings if you are comfortable.



Meditation: Find a couple minutes each day to sit quietly and observe with your senses. Take a few deep breaths. What do you smell? Jot it down. Close your eyes and listen. What do you hear? Jot it down. Open your eyes as if for the first time. What do you see? Do a body check in: Where is there tension? Where is there pain? Can I send a few breaths to those areas? We are beginning to train our attention.

“Sometimes I feel caught between two opposing selves - the 'false' self, imposed by society and what I would call my 'true self'. How often we confuse the two and assume society's mould to be our true self. Battles between our two selves rarely result in a peaceful reconciliation. Our mind becomes a battlefield on which the form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness of our being - are strewn about like debris in a hurricane. These are our loneliest moments. Yet every time we survive such a storm, we grow a little. I must be who I am, I cannot force myself back into the shell I have just broken out of.”

–Thich Nhat Hanh’s journals