

I Create What I Believe!

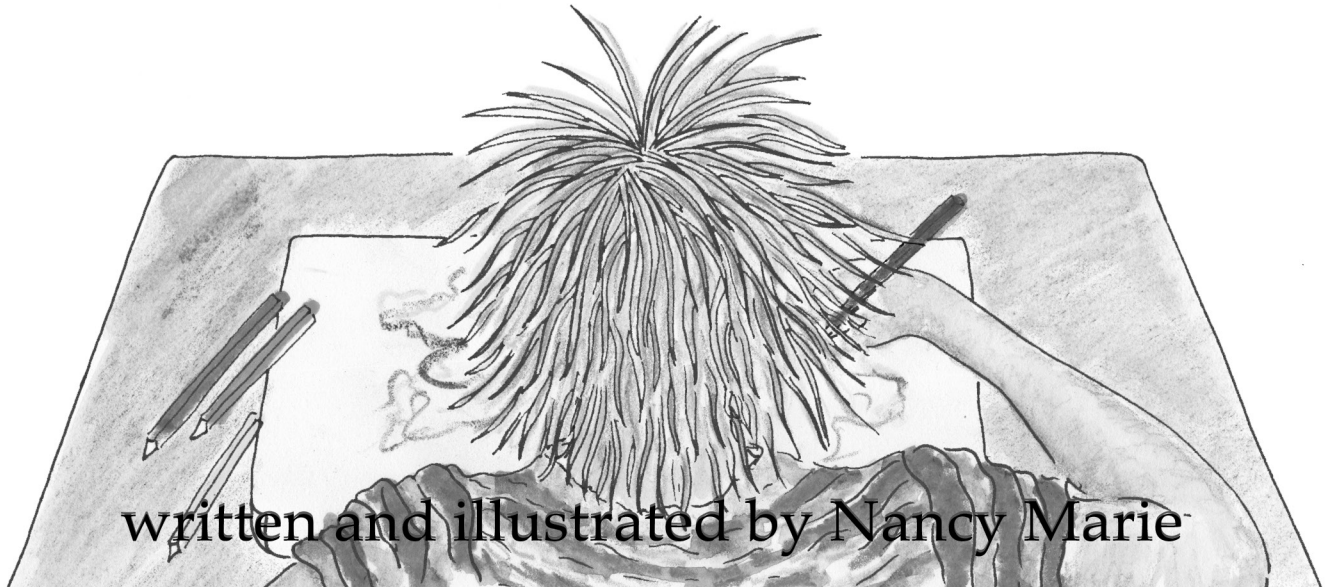
Self-Awareness Art Program

written and illustrated by Nancy Marie



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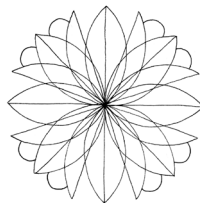
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Foreword

In my lectures I usually describe how the sensations we experience with our emotions are functionally similar to the gauges on the dashboard of a car. I then ask the audience, “If you find yourself in stop-and-go rush-hour traffic, and the temperature gauge on your dashboard begins to climb into the red, what would you do?” Invariably, I get the same answer, “Pull over, turn off the car, and let it cool down.”

I then describe how the emotion of anger is the body's equivalent of a car's temperature gauge, for anger certainly generates "heat." Then I ask what do they do when they find themselves getting angry. Do they pull over and cool down? No! Usually they get angrier, pushing themselves deeper into the emotional red zone! If our emotions were registered on physical gauges and the needle was going into the red, we would logically "pull over and cool down." When we are being driven by our emotions, our perceptions can become clouded and our behaviors counter-productive. This is because stress-released hormones suppress conscious thinking and engage the subconscious mind's automatic reflex behaviors, generally disempowering programs derived from old belief patterns.

People feel their emotions but generally do not realize that these *sensations* are really physiology "gauges," a feedback mechanism used by the body to inform the driver, the conscious mind, of the system's operating conditions. Positive emotions reveal that our bodies are operating in the safe zone, while negative emotions signal that we are stressing the vehicle. If we responded to our emotions when stressed, we would pull over and take a constructive "time out" to reflect on what was really going on. In "coolness" we operate from consciousness; in an emotionally overheated state, we operate from reactive reflexes.

Whenever you are blocked by an obstacle, or feel you are stuck or boxed-in, your mind will always seek

an alternative pathway to support your progress. Activities that help you transition from “stuck and overheating” to “unstuck and cooling down” can serve as pattern interrupts. Unfortunately, not all interrupts are equally effective.

Good pattern interrupts, like the drawing activities in Nancy Marie’s program, are ones that quickly free up the mind, activate curiosity and creativity, and put one into a state of calm that quiets the subconscious mind. A good interrupt response also increases conscious awareness and helps the body release bottled-up emotions so we don’t “blow our gaskets.”

Less effective interrupt responses, like having children fold their hands on their desks, may interrupt their previous undesirable behavior but it doesn’t spur creativity and curiosity by encouraging a more effective use of repressed emotional energy. While this type of response interrupt might appear to be helpful in the immediate moment, ultimately it is disruptive and harmful to the health of the system.

An analogy that comes to mind relates to the pressure cooker my mom used to have when I was growing up. On its lid was a steam release lever. When the pressure built up too high, you wouldn’t shut off the pot, you would simply push the lever and release some of the steam. This was an effective pattern interrupt, for it would prevent the pot from exploding and not interfere with the progress of cooking.

Nancy Marie's art exercises provide children and adults with an alternative way to consciously release the stress or pressure that is building up in their system. These exercises enable the participants to both express their emotions and generate more constructive responses. They are so simple and adaptable, they can be used in almost any situation to effectively redirect energy without having to consciously focus on the prevailing situation. These activities can actually become part of a child's behavioral "download" wherein they automatically provide constructive responses in place of current destructive pre-programmed responses they may be engaging now. Constructive pattern interrupts release stressful pressures, clear perceptions, and pave the way for more wholesome behaviors and resolutions.

—**Bruce Lipton, Ph.D.**

Author of *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter, and Miracles*

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“When patterns are broken, new worlds emerge.”

—Tuli Kupferberg



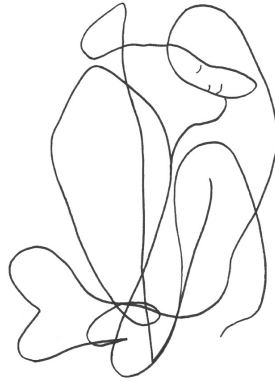
Introduction

We do not have to strive for wholeness—wholeness exists within us. Sometimes it can be clouded by false beliefs about life or ourselves—but it is always there. If that happens, we need to take the time to uncover and change our inaccurate perceptions and beliefs. When we do we can transform our whole life. Activities that quiet the mind, open the heart and relax the body are the most effective way to bring about deep internal change. My favorite method for shifting my consciousness and gaining insight about my true nature is drawing.

For over 30 years, drawing has helped me gain a deeper understanding of myself and provided me with creative and innovative approaches to my own personal challenges. Drawing has also served as a form of biofeedback, providing me with insights into what was bothering me or keeping me from materializing my dreams.

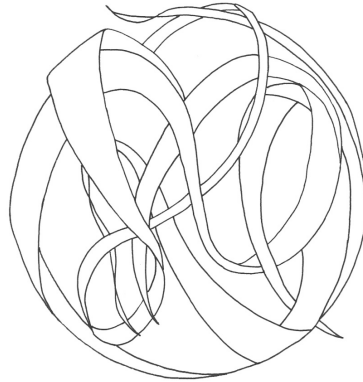
Art, in my experience, is not *just* about creating beautiful pictures for the walls of others. Art is about finding the walls that are holding you back—both internal and external—and finding a way out. Art is a form of expression, pure expression, which disentangles us from the “have to’s” of life and allows us to reconnect with our authentic nature.

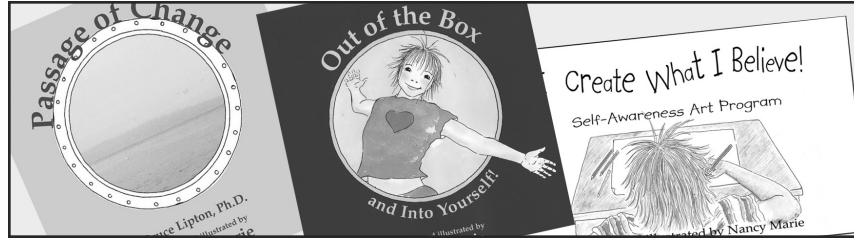




With a mere flick of a pencil or crayon—like the quick turn of a kaleidoscope—we can move ourselves out of a stuck and boxed-in perspective and uncover a new and innovative solution to our present challenge. It is the fear of being wrong or the feeling that who we are is wrong is what stifles creative development and expression and holds us trapped in a box. When a child or adult remembers how to spontaneously play with color, line, texture and form, however; they can easily uncover and transform the false beliefs that are holding them back. They only need a safe environment to creatively explore life in a manner that does not allow judgment or competition to dominate their experience.

This nongoal-oriented approach to art opens the heart and mind to new ideas and new ways of being. Art is not something you need to learn; it is already hard-wired into your body. Your body organically responds to color, line, texture, and dimension. You just need to explore and play with the different elements (color, line, texture, and dimension) to uncover your own personal style and ultimately come to know yourself better. Then as your “authentic nature” begins to flourish, you will gain more clarity about your current challenges and gain the ability to render realistically with minimal difficulty, because art is really the art of seeing.

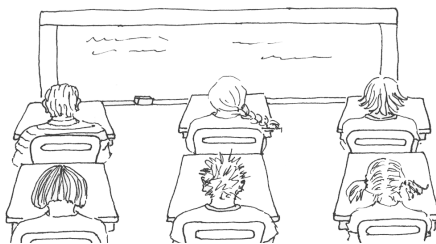




The books and exploratory exercises in this new self-awareness art program are based on my own experience and the research of Bruce Lipton, Ph.D. In 1987, while Dr. Lipton was a fellow in pathology at Stanford Medical School, his studies proved that our beliefs and perceptions control our cellular biology, and that when we change our beliefs we can change our whole life. Dr. Lipton also found that hypnotic-like practices were the most effective way to change old beliefs that are stored in our subconscious. He felt that *drawing*, when approached in a noncompetitive manner, was an excellent method for transforming old beliefs, because it takes the brain into that relaxed and receptive state, which allows for the easy reconfiguration of thought patterns and beliefs, and it is also self-initiated.

“When an inner situation is not made conscious, it appears outside as fate.”
—**Carl Gustav Jung**

In the classroom setting, I recommend setting aside 45 to 60 minutes at least once a week (preferably twice) for several weeks to introduce this new approach to drawing. Think of this time as an opportunity for the students to learn how to change their internal climate and also become aware of how that change affects the external climate of the classroom and their learning experience. You can use soft music in the background or even light a single candle to set the stage that they are now working on introspection and the shifting of their perceptions. You can also frame this approach by mentioning that all great composers, artists, scientists, and inventors have one thing in common: They knew how to shift their perceptions and invite new and innovative solutions to age-old problems. This approach to art and self-awareness can help students uncover and create their own methods for shifting their perceptions when their old ways of thinking or doing something no longer works. Ultimately, you are teaching them how to tap into their authentic nature and become original thinkers.



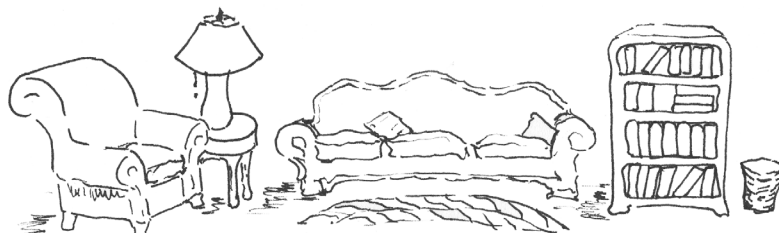


Once a child knows how to enter into that place where knowing and a deep sense of self and worth resides they will be able to return there with only a flick of their pencil or crayon. At that point, I suggest integrating or providing the time for at least four activities a day into your current curriculum to encourage the continued integration and use of this approach to their daily problem solving. Keep in mind that at this point the activity will not need to last more than 5 to 20 minutes to help re-oxygenate the brain, refresh the body, reconnect them with their authentic nature, and delight the spirit (the real driving force to learning). We are not adding a new subject to the curriculum. We are attempting to create a new rhythm with learning—one that allows room for the entire child to be present and to be valued. When this happens, a true whole-brain learning experience takes place. I have found that this kind of repeated momentary perspective shift and creative energy activation can help students learn how to step out of any “stuck” pattern and move forward with renewed confidence and enthusiasm.

“The purpose of art is not a rarified, intellectual distillate—it is life, intensified, brilliant life.”

—Alain Arian-Mission

In the home setting, a much more organic approach is possible. I recommend that the parents spend time with the materials before using them with their children. This approach will work unless your children immediately hone in to what you are doing and want to participate right now! If that is the case, approach all of the materials from the standpoint of discovering and uncovering the materials and program as equals. Ask questions: What do they think? What pictures do they like the best? Which exercise should you start with? I normally recommend always starting with the *Just Scribble!* exercise unless a child is adamant about where they want to start. In those moments I refer to their innate intelligence and wisdom and let them lead the parade. Remember, none of the directions are set in stone! I always welcome collaboration and co-creation! If you do have the luxury of exploring the materials by yourself, do it slowly using the same gentle and loving observation you use with your children. Trust that you will uncover and know how to best use these materials for yourself and your family.

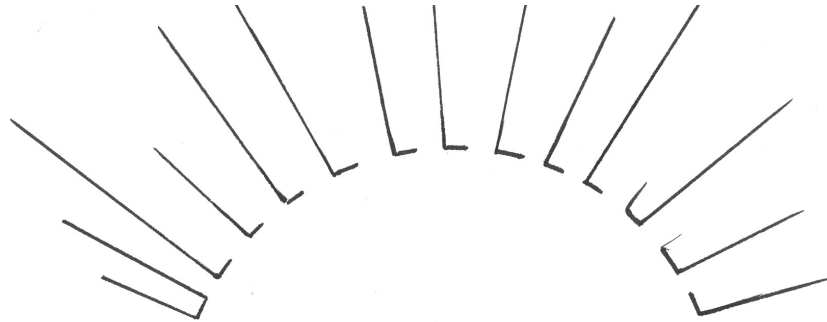




Finally, remember when you focus on transmitting your feelings via color, line, texture, and dimension, that you are working on a vibrational level. (Similar to *The Hidden Messages in Water* by Masaru Emoto.) In Masaru Emoto's research it was the emotion that the words conveyed that changed the structure of the water. In the same manner, it is the emotions that students feel when they are creating that is transmitted. For years Miro, Picasso, Klee, and Kandinsky explored how the elements of color, line, texture, and dimension carried and transmitted their feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. They perused art in this manner because they were all interested in self-transformation. They found that by removing the focus on realistic rendering and playing with only the elements (color, line, texture, and dimension) they freed their subconscious to express itself in a unique and unabashed manner. And in that place of spontaneous, almost childlike play, delight, and wonder, the authentic self was rekindled. This is the essence of the *I Create What I Believe!* program.

*"Inspiration may be a form of superconsciousness or perhaps of subconsciousness
—I wouldn't know. But I am sure it is the antithesis of self-consciousness."*

—Aaron Copland



Benefits

After teaching these exercises to children in an after-school program, in the classroom setting and to parents and children in the home setting, I have come to see that these exercises have the ability to:

- Help to release tension and stress
- Encourage ingenuity, innovative problem solving, and whole-brain learning
- Enhance the student's drawing skills and complex problem solving
- Release old beliefs and perceptions
- Allow a clearer and more accurate self-image to emerge



How Exercises Interconnect

The twelve explorative exercises have been organized into four groups:

- (1) learning to free up your creative energy and drawing from your subconscious mind,
- (2) further developing your own creative style,
- (3) building confidence in the area of creative risk taking, and
- (4) exploring different canvases as a method of strengthening your sense of self.

Group One:

Just Scribble! is the first of five exploratory exercises that work together to help students free up their energy and learn to draw from their subconscious mind. I think the reason kids love to scribble is they sense its innate wisdom. *Just Scribble!* releases stress and tension from the body and re-oxygenates and refreshes the brain. *Explore and Ponder*, the second exercise of this sequence, introduces and invites inquiry into the act of drawing. The third exercise, *Senses*, introduces the realization that every sound, sensation, and feeling has a physically renderable equivalent. It further supports the inner inquiry into drawing and initiates the concept of drawing from our feelings and sensations instead of our thoughts. The fourth exercise, *Labyrinth*, introduces the concept of movement propelled by the breath. This is important because linking our breath and movement helps stabilize the images in our mind and steadies our hand and our emotions for more effective and clearer rendering. *Improv*, the fifth exercise of this series, is also known as automatic drawing. This meditative drawing exercise can help the student uncover feelings, novel compositions, and innovative solutions. Miro, Picasso, Klee, and Kandinsky used this technique to uncover the “roots” of their compositions. It can turn random scribbling into an exploratory wonder.

Group Two:

The *Reflective Circle* is an outgrowth of an exercise designed by Betty Edwards (*Drawing from the Right Side of the Brain*), which helps students learn to effectively shift from the left hemisphere of the brain into the right hemisphere. This is an important skill for an artist, because the right hemisphere is the part of the brain that can see “without distortion.” This ability can also help strengthen the student’s understanding of their authentic self and encourage a “whole-brain” approach to all learning. *Color and Form* helps strengthen their awareness of color and shape and encourages the natural unfolding of their unique sense of composition. Since each of us is organized and relates to life in a different manner, this is an important step in understanding one’s own style and oneself.

Group Three:

The exercises *What Do You See?* and *What Does It Do?* strengthens the intuition and activates the imagination in an unabashed manner. These exercises can help the student overcome fear and learn to build an inner boldness in the area of trust and creative risk taking. This newfound confidence can then be transferred in other aspects of knowledge acquisition, creative problem solving, and life.

Group Four:

The exercises *Textures and Dimensions*, *Books*, and *Boxes* are unusual approaches to composition that can delight and intrigue the mind. Please view them only as the beginning—you and your children/students will certainly come up with other innovative and challenging surfaces (soup cans, milk cartons, long packing tubes, etc.) to leave your own personal marks on.

When you provide a “different canvas” you are creating a situation that requires the assistance of the right side of the brain. You are inviting the child/student to step out of the known and conquer the unknown in his or her own unique way. This deviation from the norm also allows them to personalize the information, thus creating a whole-brain learning experience. This also creates a situation that is ripe for self-discovery.



Guidelines and Lesson Plans

The purpose of this art program is to cultivate the art of introspection and learn how to implement change in your life. The program consists of three books: *Passage of Change, A fable based on the research of Bruce Lipton, Ph.D., Out of the Box and Into Yourself!* and *I Create What I Believe! Self-Awareness Art Program*.

Passage of Change and *Out of the Box* will help you understand how your beliefs affect your cellular biology and how other people's beliefs can box you in. *I Create What I Believe!* introduces a series of exploratory art exercises that help you shift your perceptions and transform old stifling beliefs that are holding you back.

Beginning with *Passage of Change* or *Out of the Box* helps to lay a foundational understanding of how introspection can help you make changes in your life. Casual reading and discussing of the books can be enough to instill the new concept into your children's minds. Occasionally referencing the material can help them apply the underling principles to their current challenges. Once an understanding is present, the exploratory exercises can help your children discover a delightful way to redefine their sense of self. Please view the following guidelines and suggestions as a starting point, for I am certain that you will come up with many more ways to integrate this transformative information into your and your children's life.

Older Child:

For the older child I would begin with *Passage of Change*. This will provide them with a better understanding on where beliefs originate, and how changing their beliefs can affect their performance and success. Remember to read the book out loud because the rhythm and rhyme can have a profound effect on the body and understanding. Stop and talk about what you have read occasionally. This will prevent the “glazed over just reading of words,” and help them integrate and apply this information to their own life. Some children immediately grasp the information, while others—especially the younger reader—may need some help to break down the metaphors and understand the scientific information. Don’t be fooled by the simplicity of this little book, it is packed with tons of information.



Suggested Activities:

1. Explore the rhythm by having the students tap or clap it out as a stanza is read out loud.
2. Read the book out loud as a group while the students continue to tap the rhythm softly on their arm or leg.
3. As a group, have the students extract all of the scientific information.
4. As a group, have the students extract all of the metaphors and images.
5. Discuss the possible reasons the author chose to present the material in this fashion.
6. Discuss how the main character gained clarity. How is that similar to ways they know how to get clear?
7. Use one of the exercises included in *I Create What I Believe! Self-Awareness Art Program* book to illustrate how drawing can encourage introspection and help you become clearer.



Younger Child:

With the younger child (third grade and younger) I would begin with *Out of the Box* because just looking at the pictures and talking about the pictures can open up a dialogue about how it would feel to be stuck. When you add in the simple text you can gracefully move into a discussion about how to get unstuck. This deceptively simple book illustrates how to free yourself of other people's expectations and be the one you were meant to be.

Suggested Activities:

1. Explore the pictures together. (If possible, provide children with their own copy. This will allow him or her to move and reflect at his or her own speed.) Have each child identify the picture they like the best.
2. Discuss how it feels to get stuck and how they feel like responding in that moment. Laugh and talk about the possibilities. Tell stories about when you were stuck and how you got unstuck. Encourage them to tell their own stories.
3. Discuss things they do that make them happy. Discuss how doing or remembering something that makes you happy can help you get unstuck.
4. Uncover the rhythm of the story. Have the students tap the rhythm with their hands so they can experience how rhythm is an important part of story telling.
5. Read the book out loud as a group continuing to focus on the rhythm and the rhyme.
6. Discuss the ways the character was able to get unstuck. How is that similar to the ways they know how to get unstuck? Did they discover any new ways of getting unstuck from reading the book?
7. Use one of the exercises included in *I Create What I Believe! Self-Awareness Art Program* book to demonstrate how they can get unstuck just using their pencil.

Preparing to Play and Draw

Materials Needed:

Plain inexpensive paper (such as photocopy), pencils, crayons, colored pencils, and/or felt pens are needed for all of the exercises. Several exercises also require scissors, tape, a stapler, and slightly heavier-weight paper (cardstock).



Notes to Teachers:

I recommend using the inexpensive paper (even the heavy-weight stock) because it helps downplay the need to create something great. When I began testing the exercises in this program with middle and elementary school children, I found that the expectation that they needed to create something wonderful (a good use of the paper) was creatively stifling for many children. When they discovered we were just playing and there was no pressure to create a masterpiece, their fear dissolved and was replaced with spontaneous creativity.

If you are a teacher or parent, I also advise doing each exercise by yourself before doing it with your

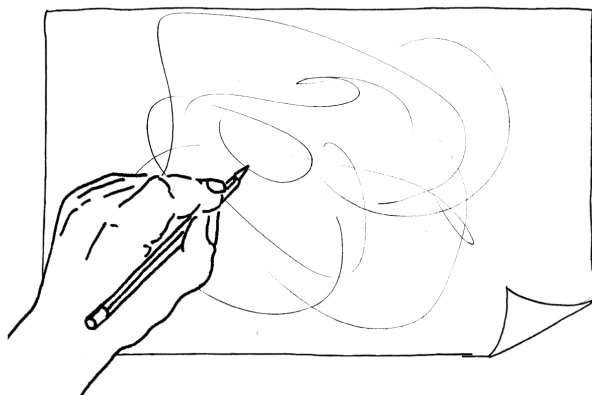
students. This will provide you with an experiential model of the exercise, which will greatly enhance your children's understanding and enjoyment of the experience.

I have used the following exercises with children and young adults ranging from two-years-old to sixteen. They obviously all enter into the exercise with varying degrees of coordination and sophistication, though the end result usually is the same—a wonderful and delightful adjustment of perception.

Preparatory Steps for All Exploration Exercises:

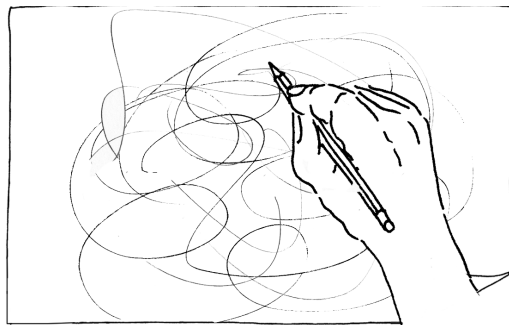
1. Sit in a comfortable chair or anywhere you feel at ease.
2. Place a plain piece of paper in front of you on your flat drawing surface and a stack of plain paper near by so you don't have to break your concentration to get a new piece of paper.
3. Close your eyes and take three very slow, deep breaths to slow yourself down and bring your attention inward. When you feel you are ready, begin drawing.
4. Once you have introduced and demonstrated an exercise to your children and/or students, don't correct them. Instead let them unfold and discover what works best for them, even if they create their own version of the exercise. You will know the exercise is working by the change in their behavior and rejuvenated energy.

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.”
—**Pablo Picasso**



Exercise One: *Just Scribble!*

I can't write enough about the importance of scribbling. In a goal-oriented culture, scribbling allows us, if only for a moment, to turn back the clock and spontaneously create like very young children. I have seen children unravel emotional conflict and reconnect deeply with their true nature in a very short period of time with scribbling. Scribbling can be immensely freeing and help promote a more open-minded and spontaneous attitude. I think there are as many approaches to scribbling as there are people in the world.

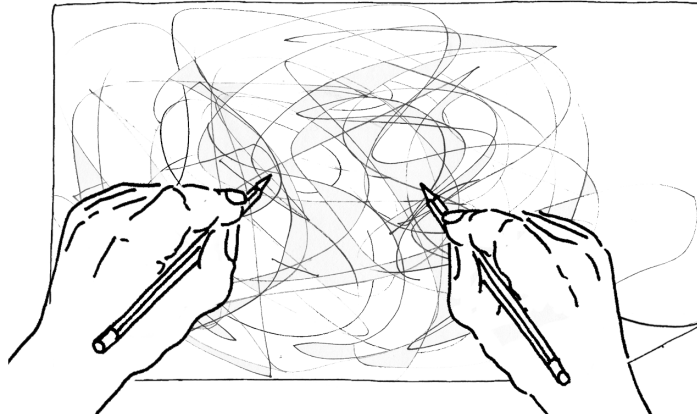


Instructions:

1. Place a crayon, felt pen, or colored pencil in your nondominant hand (the hand one doesn't normally write with). And with your eyes closed, let that hand scribble whatever it wants to scribble. When you feel done and with your eyes still closed, place the pencil or felt pen in the other hand and continue scribbling. Try passing the pencil or felt pen back and forth to see which one is more relaxed or spontaneous.
2. Now take a colored pencil or felt pen in both hands and continue scribbling—maybe even use two or three pens in each hand. Pay attention to which movement you like the most. Do you prefer holding the pencils and pens at the very top or gripping them like a two-year old would? Focus on the rhythm and movement. Does your body get into the scribbling or are you doing it with just your

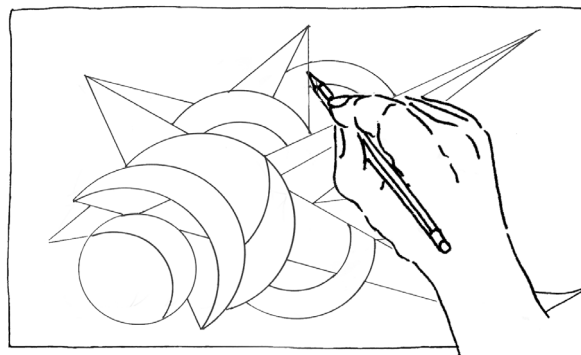
hands and arms? Does your body like to scribble in circles or straight lines? Do you prefer to go clockwise or counter clockwise? Think about what movement makes you the happiest? Scribble to music. Try different kinds of sounds and rhythms. Scribble in silence, or make your own sounds with the movements. Play and explore with no agenda.

3. If you are using felt pens, always use watercolor pens, because in your enthusiasm, it is very easy to scribble off the edge of the paper. If this happens, that is OK because a damp paper towel used for clean up can actually end up becoming a beautiful tie-dye.



“Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought.”

Albert von Szent-Gyorgy



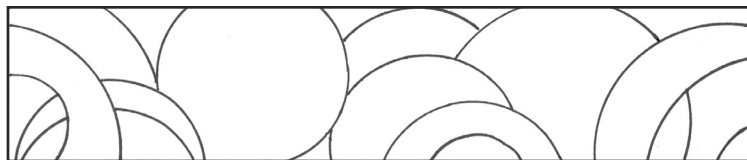
Exercise Two: *Explore and Ponder*

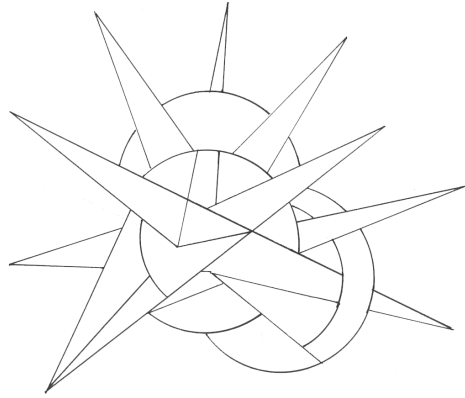
With little more than jar lids, crayons, and paper, a wondrous world can be opened up. Just take a moment to trace a circle and feel how drawing in that circular motion actually affects your body. Now fill your paper with circles. When you feel finished, turn your paper over and draw a series of straight lines. Can you feel a difference? On another piece of paper explore the difference between small circles and large circles. Then put circles inside of circles. What pleases you more? Now go back to drawing lines. Draw thick lines and then draw thin lines. Draw lines going every which way. What is the feeling of the lines? What is the

feeling of the circles? Which of your senses are activated? Now place circles and lines on the same paper. Remember there is no right or wrong way to organize them—just follow your heart and your senses.

Next explore texture. Peel the paper wrapper off of your crayon. Then place a paper clip under your paper and rub your crayon sideways across your paper. Does the design of the paper clip emerge? Then place different things under your paper and rub your crayon sideways across the paper. Try as many things as you can think of. Some will work well and some won't.

Which rubbings work well? Did you notice any details about the objects you hadn't noticed before? Let participants discuss their observations and/or write their observations. Be sure to mention that there are no wrong answers—you are just curious about what they see and how what they see inspires their imagination.

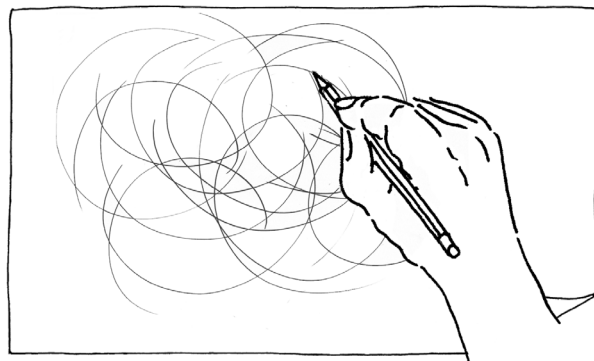




In this exercise you are duplicating the natural exploration very young children do unless they are inhibited by emotional restriction. Returning to the natural exploration of life with our five senses helps strengthen our authentic nature and is a great way to step out of the “right” and “wrong” approach to learning. It also rests the mind and encourages students to think for themselves, feel safe enough to form their own opinions, and be inspired by their own observations and those of others. How they respond will give you further insight into their authentic nature, which is an invaluable resource for you as their parent or teacher.

Always pose questions that can be answered in many ways and requires introspection and exploration. What different shapes did you observe in the pinecone? Were they symmetrical? Did this pattern remind you of anything else that was either manmade or natural? How many bends did you see in the paper clip? Do you prefer drawing circles, lines, or doing rubbings?

Convert these observations into a math lesson and ask: If you did twenty rubbings of the paperclip how many curves would you produce? (Now the truth is that the “right answer is dependent on how they place the paperclips. So maybe you would want them to do twenty rubbings and then count all of the curves they created and found.)

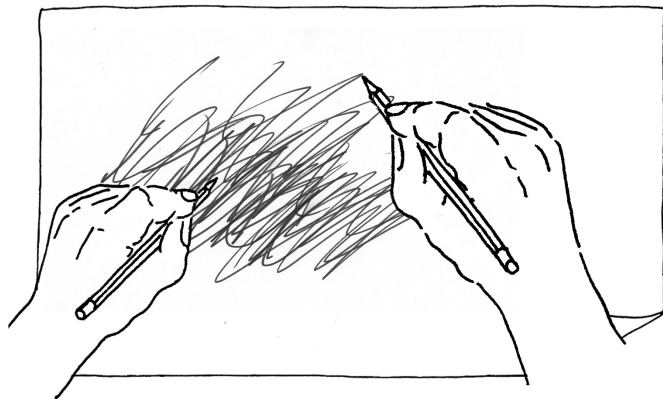


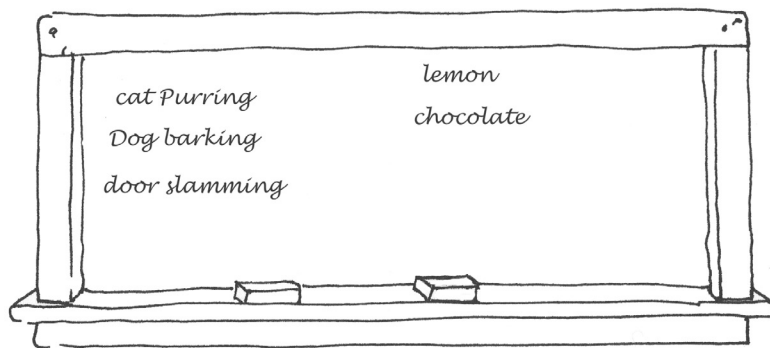
Exercise Three: *Senses*

Senses is an expansion of *Explore and Ponder*. In this exercise, we move away from drawing random lines and circles with the focus on how the movement of our pencil and arm affects us. The purpose of *Explore and Ponder* was to introduce inquiry into the drawing process. The purpose of this exercise is for the student to uncover the underlying truth about all images and life—that form is vibrational. When we draw, we are really trying to capture and render the subject's core sound or vibration. This is the reason that

abstract art can convey a story or emotions. The artist has observed and captured the “vibrations” of the thoughts, ideas, or emotions he or she wants to convey in line, color, texture, and dimension. When this is accomplished, realism isn’t required to produce the desired effect.

The aspect I like best about this exercise is that through the process of drawing their responses to the external stimulation they can also uncover a deeper understanding of how they feel and respond the world.

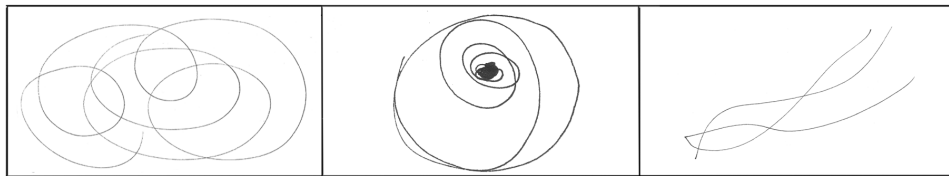




Instructions:

1. On the blackboard or a piece of paper begin listing 10 different sounds, such as stomping feet, a door slamming, car brakes screeching, a cat purring, an audience clapping. Try to get a large variety of sounds, some soft and warm, some frightening, some encouraging, and some startling. Realize that each sound will reproduce a series of memories within the child. This exercise is about allowing the body to render that physical response on paper in an uncensored manner. This is not about drawing symbols (such as hearts, smiling faces, and so on). This is about allowing the students to uncover the underlying language of line—that lines drawn are the rendering of vibration.

2. Make a list of 10 tastes. These can be chocolate, lemon, vinegar, or pizza. The possibilities are endless.
3. Then make a list of 10 smells. Make some pleasant and some disgusting. We want graphic physical reactions so the responses will also be graphic. After you have done this exercise several times you can move into the more subtle tastes, sounds, and smells.
4. Provide each student with a piece of paper (half sheets of paper are best for this project).
5. Ask the students to close their eyes. Then while eyes are closed, choose one of the tastes, smells, or sounds off of the blackboard and ask the students to imagine tasting, smelling, or hearing the sound you have chosen. When they capture that feeling ask them to let their pencil make marks on the paper that expresses their first reaction. (Keeping their eyes closed in the beginning helps them keep their focus.) Go slow because you want to give them the time to first visualize the situation, then react and render a line or series of lines that conveys their reaction. (Their response can

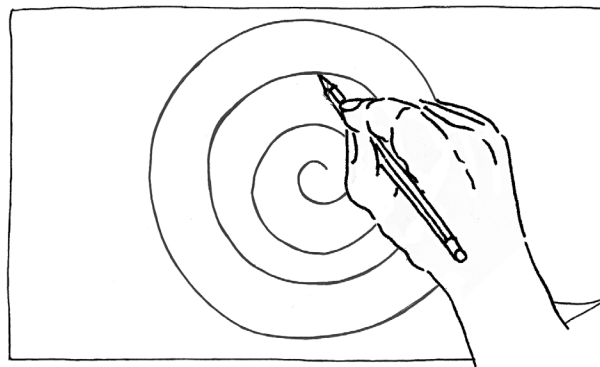


happen very quickly.) We are not drawing symbols! This is strictly a right-brain response. When they are done they can open their eyes and label those marks so they can remember what it was the response to.

6. At this point you can have them share their scribbling and answer questions or turn their paper over and do a second sensation before giving them a chance to share their experience.
7. If you feel it would be helpful, you can also demonstrate on the blackboard how you would approach this exercise first. Have a student choose a taste, sound, or smell. Then close your eyes, face the blackboard and wait for the student to tell you the “sound, smell, or taste” he or she has chosen. Feel it in your body and allow any memories to arise, as this will heighten the experience. Then let the line—which will magically express the feeling—flow from your body. This approach allows the students to view the process before immersing themselves into the experience. Be sure to choose a different sound, taste, or smell from what you have just demonstrated because there will be a tendency to try to duplicate what you did instead of following the directions from their own right brains.
8. After several drawings are done, be sure to allow time for students to view each other’s renderings. This could be accomplished by having everyone place a drawing face up on their desk and letting the students stretch their legs and walk around for a few minutes to view the different responses.
9. The final step of this activity is to discuss the similarities and differences in the drawings.

*“The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect
but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity.”*

—Carl Gustav Jung

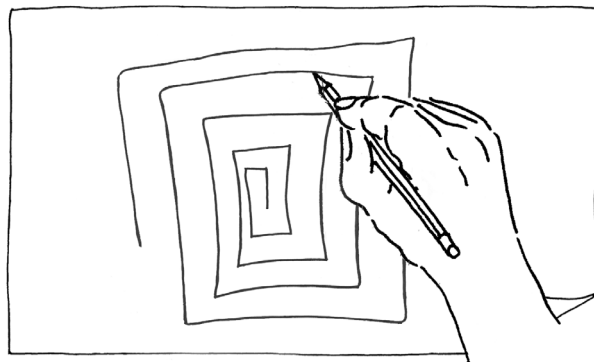


Exercise Four: *Labyrinth*

This exercise has its roots in yogic breathing and labyrinth walking. It can relax the body, balance the brain, increase the sense of well-being, and develop the focusing capacity. It also develops hand-and-eye coordination. In this exercise the focus needs to be on the *tip of the pencil*, not on the design that is emerging. The pencil is *only* moved on the exhalations. The depth of their inhalation and the speed of their exhalation will decide how far their pencil can move with each breath. I recommend doing a little preliminary deep abdominal breathing before adding in the pencils and paper.

Preliminary Breathing:

Have participants place one hand on their belly and one hand on their chest. Then have them inhale in through their nose and bring the breath all the way down into their belly. (Their belly should move outward like a balloon filled with air.) When the belly is full, slowly squeeze the abdominal muscles to exhale the air. The hand on their belly should be moving in and out with their inhalation and exhalation. The hand on their chest should move very little. Once they are clear on the way to breathe with this drawing exercise, you can have them pick up their pencils and do the exercise.



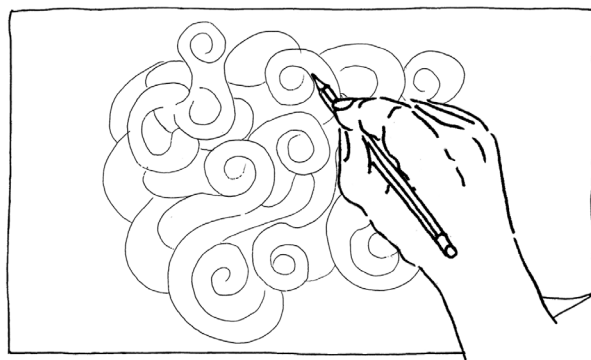
Instructions:

1. Place your pencil on the paper. Now take a deep breath. Remember to bring your breath all the way into your belly. When your belly is completely filled with air, slowly squeeze your abdominal muscles and exhale out your nose. Remember: it is your exhalation that is moving your pencil, so if you stop breathing your pencil should stop moving.
2. Inhale a second time bringing the breath all the way to the belly. When the belly is full let the exhalation propel the pencil into an inward spiral. If the concentration is on letting the breath propel the pencil, it normally takes about three breathes to reach the center. Then guide them through three more breaths to spiral out from the center to the beginning.
3. In the outward spiral, they can either draw new lines or travel on previously drawn lines.

Note: This exercise can be done with either or both hands.

If the parent or teacher is focused on bringing their breath deep into their abdomen and moving their pencil only with their exhalations, it will help any “timid” or resistant student get a sense of the exercise quicker. Once they have an experiential sense of this exercise and its benefits they can do it on their own.

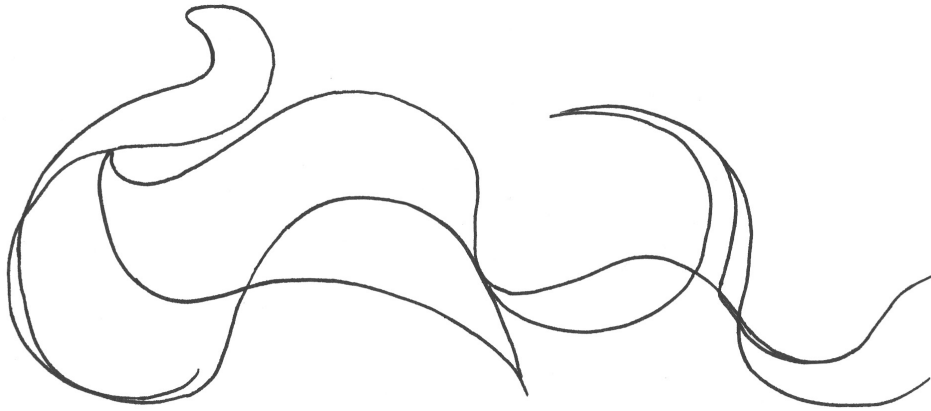
“Creativity is a type of learning process where the teacher and pupil are located in the same individual.”
—**Arthur Koestler**

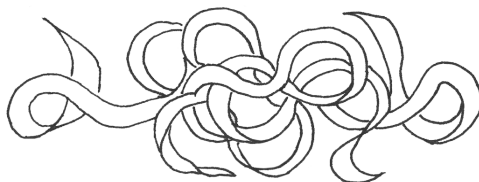


Exercise Five: *Improv*

This exercise is the compilation of the four preceding exercises and is the heart and soul of this program. Improvisational dance teaches the dancer to move and organically respond to the energy of the music and the other dancers. Improvisational theater is also based on the concept of identifying the underlying energy or concept and spontaneously connecting with the other players through that “in the moment” reality. Improvisational art or automatic drawing creates the same “in the moment” experience within the artist. The amazing part of this process is that it actually creates a “hook-up” and taps you into your subconscious

mind, thus allowing you to unravel confusion and reconfigure inaccurate beliefs. The experience is similar to doodling, although when many people doodle, their focus is on the emerging pictures and many times the images are “thought” driven (I think I will draw a flower) instead of “feeling” (just watching how a flower appears through randomly drawn lines).

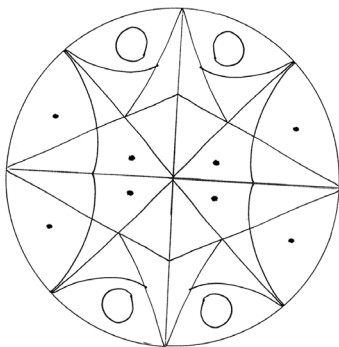




Instructions:

1. You can either provide an external stimulus, for example, listening to a piece of music, or you can ask the students to close their eyes and remember a single event where they were very happy, sad, excited, bored, and so on.
2. When they are clear about the event they are going to focus on, have them begin laying down lines, color, or texture that expresses how they felt in that particular moment. I sometimes provide a smaller piece of paper (a half or quarter sheet), because the smaller canvas is less intimidating in the beginning.
3. Instruct them to turn their paper over as soon as they feel they have captured the moment. Then write a sentence or two about what the drawing (or scribbling) was about and if they remember something about that event they had forgotten.
4. I recommend a short break following this exercise to allow time for internal processing and integration. After a short break, the group can share and discuss their drawings and experiences.

“When the ‘weaker’ of the two brains (right and left) is stimulated and encouraged to work in cooperation with the stronger side, the end result is a great increase in overall ability and...often five to ten times more effectiveness.”
—Professor Robert Ornstein, University of California

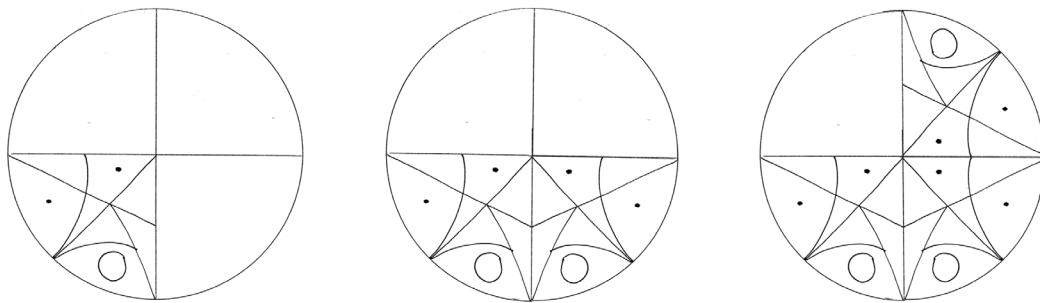


Exercise Six: *Reflective Circle*

This exercise is a slight deviation from pure, uncontrolled exploration. I have seen some five- and six-year-old children fall in love with this exercise, but normally it tends to be a developmental challenge for children before age nine. When you introduce this exercise, remember to pay close attention to students' frustration level. This art is about *destressing* students, not stressing them. If the child is really develop-

mentally ready for this exercise it tends to have a very calming effect because it requires the shifting into the right brain and using its expertise—spatial relationship. Before I introduce this exercise to students, I always have them do some scribbling or several versions of *What Do You See?* or *Labyrinth* to relax their bodies and open their minds.

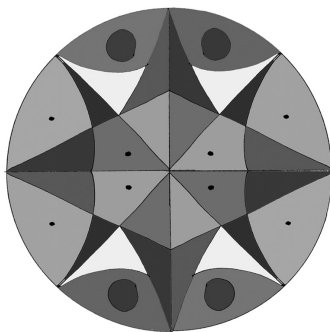
Note: When I see a child having difficulty redrawing the pattern or the mirror reflection of the pattern, I just compliment what they are doing in a positive manner. Usually they will see the imbalances themselves. In response to their observation, I usually say, “I like this version too!” This sets up an acceptance and enjoyment of what is unfolding today.

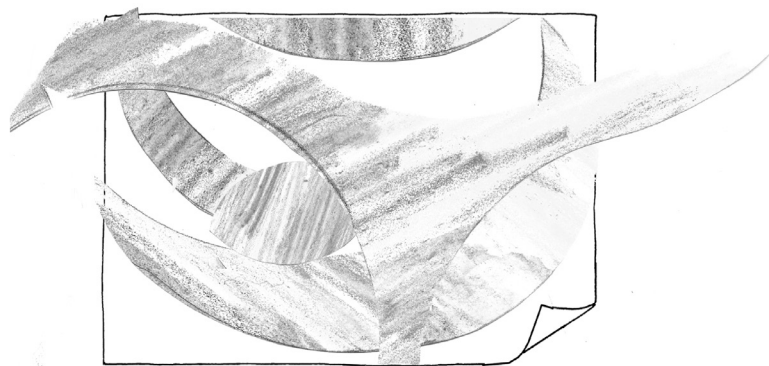


Instructions:

1. Draw a large circle in the middle of the page.
2. Using your ruler, divide the circle into four equal parts. For young children, I usually do this ahead of time so we can just focus on the creating process.
3. Tell them that they are going to draw in only one quarter at a time. In the first quarter, draw three straight lines in any direction that they want, but be sure they fill the space. (We don't want tiny little lines—we want them to go from one edge of the quarter to another edge or from one line to another.)
4. Now draw two curved lines (like an upside-down or right-side-up smile) in the same quarter. At this point you should still have three blank quarters and one quarter with three straight and two curved lines.
5. Now draw a circle of any size in the same quarter.
6. Next have them add two dots—large enough to see—to the same quarter.
7. In the quarter opposite the quarter that has all of the lines, dots, and the circle, draw its mirror reflection. Now, depending on their age and development level, they will create their own version of this exercise. ALL VERSIONS ARE PERFECT!!!

8. Once they (and you) have done the mirror reflection in the adjacent quarter turn the paper around and draw the mirror reflection in the other half of the circle.
9. Once the design is finished, have them color their mandala. They can also photocopy their drawing and make several color versions as a way of exploring color.





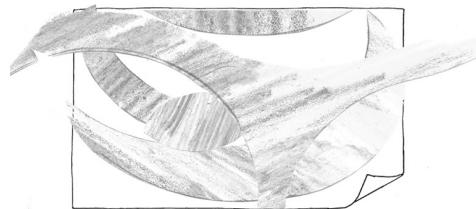
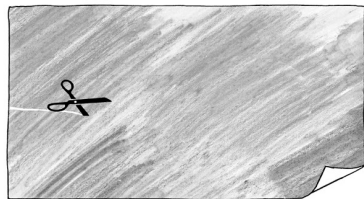
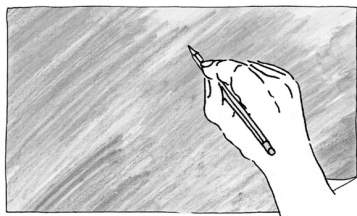
Exercise Seven: *Color and Form*

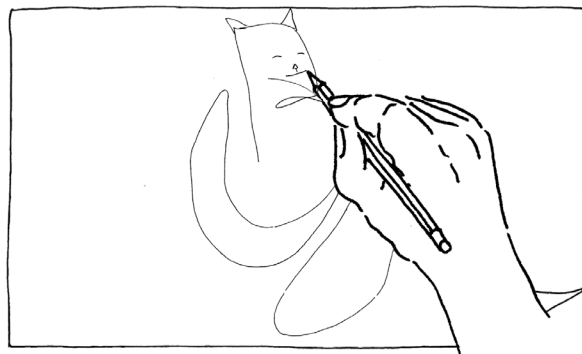
Some children love cutting. In fact I have had several students over the years that just sit cut paper into small pieces for over an hour. Watching them reminds me of my grandmother sitting and peeling potatoes or apples—a very centered and meditative activity. To encourage cutting I want to introduce an activity that Matisse created in the later part of his career. Since there wasn't any colored paper, he would have his apprentices paint paper to his color specifications. After the paper was dry he would cut out shapes and have his apprentices tape them on the wall. From his bed he was able to create murals and patterns

for stained glass windows. He felt that this pure use of color and form was the foundation of some of his greatest works.

Instructions:

1. Begin by filling paper with color. This can be done with scribbling or by taking the paper off the crayon and rubbing the paper with the side of the crayon.
2. Once the paper is filled with color begin cutting shapes. Let it be a random unfolding. If you have a large window or sliding glass door, it can serve as a canvas where the shapes can be placed and moved around in any way that pleases the child. Remember that we are not focusing on symbols or realistic rendering; we are just playing with color and shape.
3. If you don't have a large window or you are doing this activity in the classroom, then a large piece of paper or a large grocery bag with the bottom cut off can serve as a canvas. `





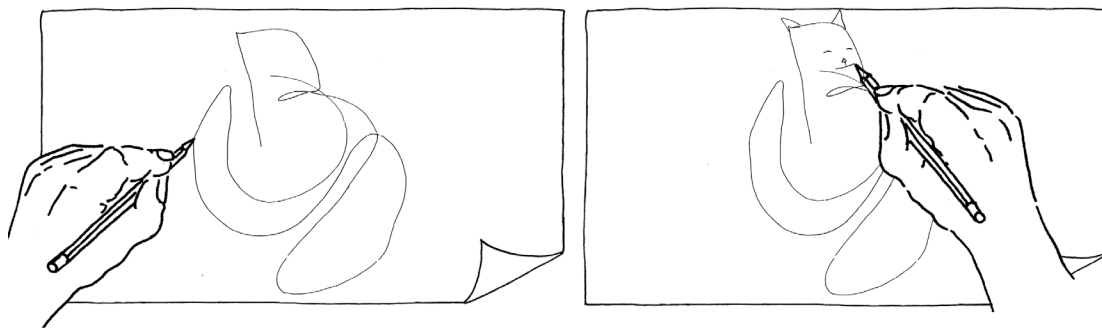
Exercise Eight: *What Do You See?*

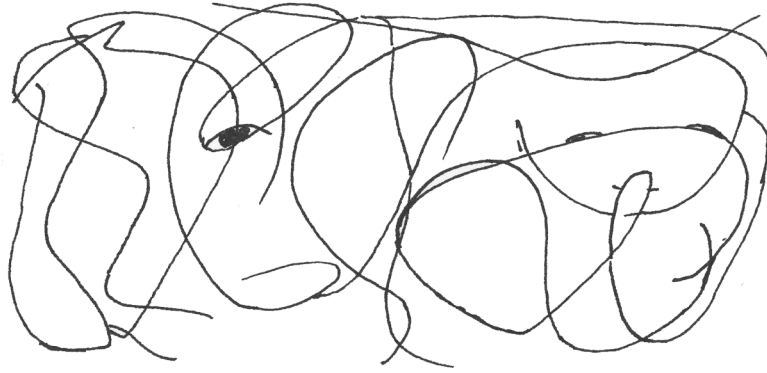
This exercise tends to be very freeing and quite magical. I have seen children, much to their surprise, draw whales, dolphins, hearts, dogs, cats, faces, and many, many more things with this exercise.

In the family context, I have used this exercise to connect more deeply on a nonverbal level with my children. I found that the playful, nongoal-oriented aspect of this exercise puts the child and adult on a level playing field and inspires wonder in both. I have also played this game in restaurants while waiting for

food with just my children, and also with multigenerational groups who were all firm believers that they couldn't draw. Since drawing requires inward focusing and slowing down it can relax the body and provide an opportunity for authentic connection to take place anywhere.

This exercise can be approached as a one- or two-person project. In the two-person version, one person scribbles and the other person extracts the image. In the one-person version, you scribble with your non-dominant hand (eyes closed). Then with your eyes open and the pencil in your dominant hand, you highlight or extract the images you find.





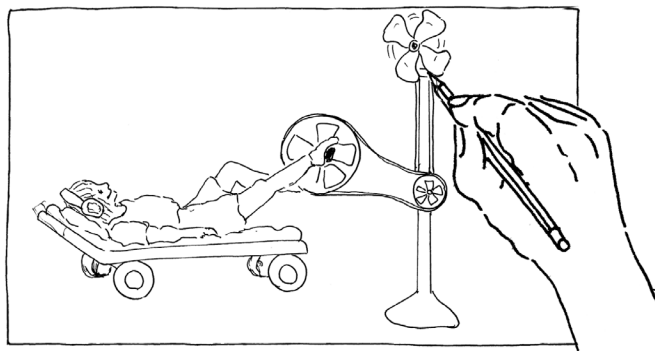
I played this exercise by myself for years and then I introduced my daughter to the game when she was two. In the beginning she would scribble and I would extract the images I saw. But by the time she was three, she was also able to see and extract the images too. We spent many hours playing this game. I always carried a pencil and small tablet of paper with me so if we found ourselves in a stressful situation we could immerse ourselves in the magic of the game and let the external stress and chaos just pass over our heads.

In the classroom I have done this exercise on the blackboard. One student does the scribbling with their eyes closed while the rest of the class gets to see and share what they see in the unfolding. This can be a very wild and expansive experience for everyone. I think you will notice an increase in energy and interaction with this exercise.

It is also important to note that some children will scribble very little, while others will do a lot—even fill the whole page. I never judge or show any preference to the amount that they scribble, because scribbling, especially with the nondominant hand is a great stress reducer.

Instructions:

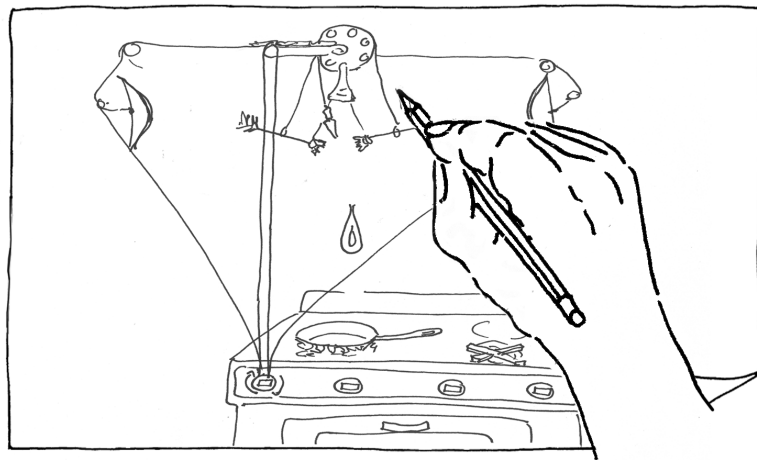
1. Place a felt pen or colored pencil in your nondominant hand (the hand you don't normally write with). And with your eyes still closed, let your nondominant hand scribble whatever it wants to scribble.
2. When you feel done, open your eyes and place the pencil or a felt pen in your dominant hand and begin highlighting or pulling out objects and/or shapes that you see emerging from your scribbles.

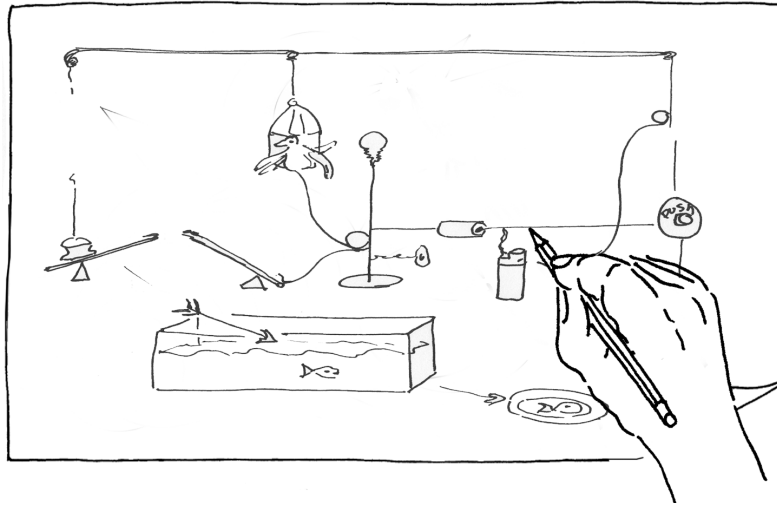


Exercise Nine: *What Does It Do?*

Of all the exercises, I feel this one has the ability to catapult students into imaginative and creative wonder. Who hasn't imagined a "magical" machine that would do our most disliked tasks? Perhaps a ridiculous Rube Goldberg-type machine that made the simplest task into a complex marvel? I feel within each child is a "magical" genius and inventor of the future. This exercise can help unleash that "magical genius."

In this exercise we want to link logic with bold imagination. In truth, the machines they create don't have to really work. It is the incorporation of movement, interconnected cause and effect, and creative problem solving that is important. Begin by presenting the problem and some possible steps you have thought about to the students. (Place them on the blackboard or a piece of paper as you speak.) Invite the students to contribute their ideas and write these on the blackboard also.

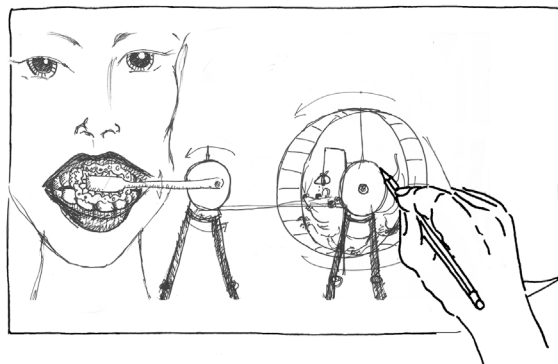




In this first “brainstorming” step, be open to and encourage everyone to offer and accept all possibilities, no matter how ridiculous. During this step, *no* idea is discarded. After a large number of solutions have been discussed, have them draft a version that appeals to them. They could also draw a completely different solution for the task or problem or use some of the ideas on the blackboard. This can also be a great family activity.

For the older grades, suggest that students include some written instructions on the back of their paper. (This can help integrate this exercise into multiple subjects.) Remember: linear logic is not the guiding force in this exercise, imagination is! I have seen students who have difficulty with most subjects really “shine” in the exercise, so encourage and support them and let yourself be surprised by what they create.

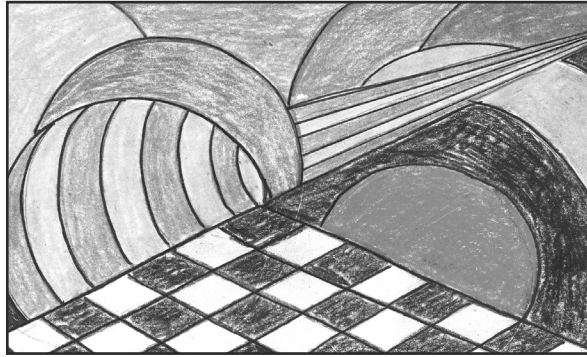
You can approach this exercise from the traditional “Rube Goldberg” perspective—creating the most complex machine to do the simplest task or creating an imaginary machine that accomplishes the desired task in a very silly manner. (Including the family dog or bird, or a habit they have—like spilling milk—is a wonderful addition and conveys the message that we are all doing “silly” here.)



Instructions:

1. Introduce the problem to the class and the concept of creating an “imaginary” machine to solve the small problem or specific task.
2. Ask for ideas and suggestions. Write each suggestion on the blackboard.
3. When the group seems to have exhausted all of the possible solutions, provide each student with a piece of paper.
4. Ask them to draw the solution that appeals to them the most. Please encourage silly, ridiculous, and surprising. They can use the ideas on the blackboard or add their own ideas. Depending on their age, suggest a minimum number of steps.
5. For the older grades, you can request that they include step-by-step instructions. But please encourage the “ridiculous” because that is the driving force of this exercise.
6. When the project is done, have students show and explain the “silly” logic of their solutions. (This is better than *Comedy Central*, so get ready to laugh.)

“Imagination is more important than knowledge.”
—**Albert Einstein**

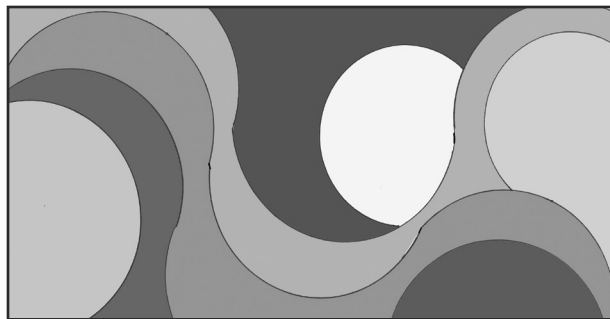


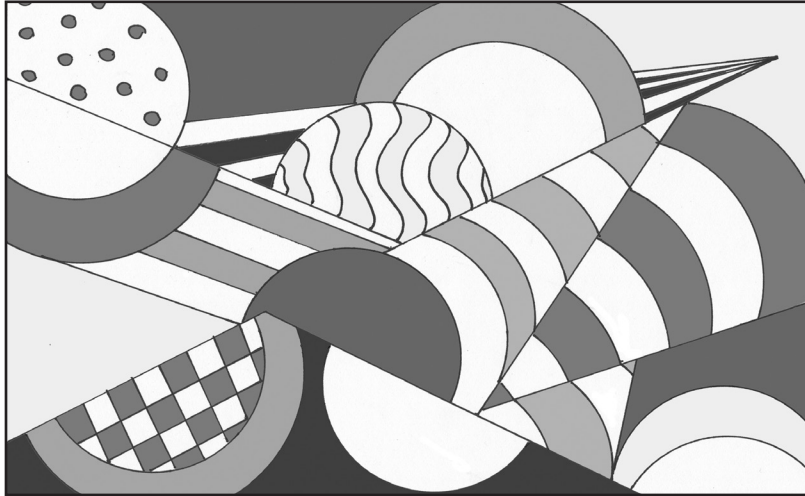
Exercise Ten: *Textures and Dimensions*

This is not an instantaneous project, but rather one that can be worked on over a period of time, either individually or as a group project. Even though this project can be approached with a central theme such as “things I saw today” or “signs of the fall,” I recommend that the first time you do this exercise, just do a random collection of color, shapes, and designs, which can be extracted from fabric, nature, or anything else you can think of. This allows the children to focus first and foremost on how they want to break up the paper into different shapes. This first seemingly small step can strengthen their sense of self because

with no focus on composition, this exercise becomes a pure exploration of life.

Depending on their mood and/or personality, some children divide their paper into big sections, while others prefer tiny little spaces. It is also important to note that some children fill in all of the spaces and others will only want to fill one or two. Noting, allowing, and supporting these differences helps the student identify how they uniquely see and experience life. Some of us move slow and steady and some of us leap with boldness. Neither is right or wrong, they are *just different*. When students have the opportunity to experience and identify their preferences, we help them identify the “self.” When we convey the message that all approaches are good we also encourage them to love and embrace their own differences.

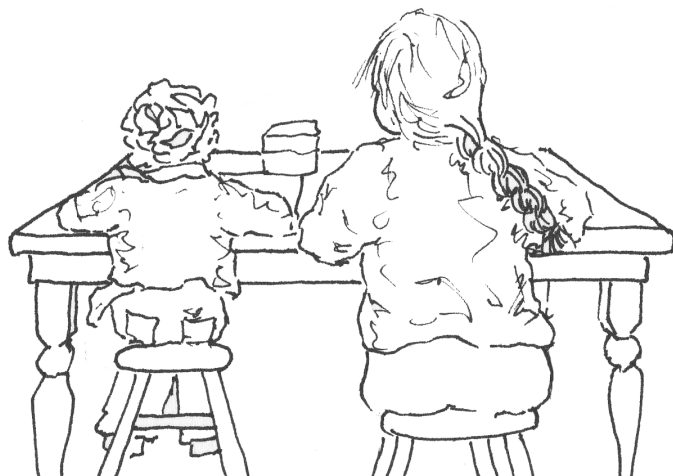




After children have done several versions of the random collection, if they are interested, I then introduce the “theme” concept. This is a large artistic leap for some children, because you are also introducing the concept of organization through connection. I have found this project to be very calming and contemplative for some children.

Instructions:

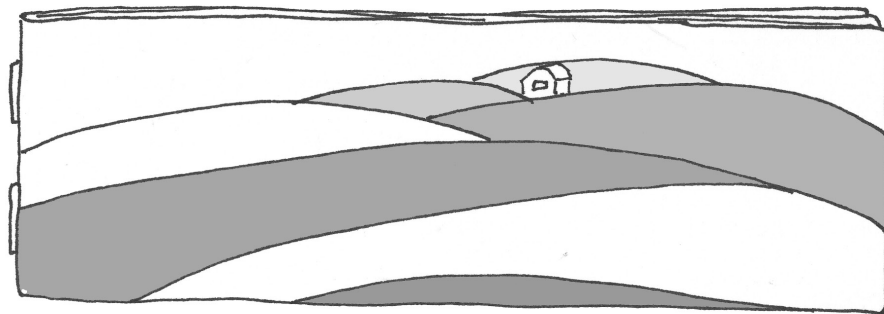
1. With your ruler, divide up your paper with three straight lines. Some children actually prefer doing this free-hand, which makes a more freeform presentation—which is a wonderful approach! If the child is unsure, you can offer several suggestions for them to choose from. “You could draw a line from here to here. Or you could possibly draw a line from here to here. Which do you think you would like better?”
2. After the paper has been divided with three relatively straight lines, it is time to draw circles. I usually begin with instructions to draw three circles, but remember that this is a free-form unfolding kind of project. Some children are content with one circle while others end up with 12 or 15. There are no rules here, just a trusting of their inner barometer.
3. Once the page has been divided into the sections, begin filling each small (or large) space with color, shapes, texture, patterns, or with a picture, creating a drawing collage.
4. I have seen children get so involved in this project that they spontaneously begin gluing objects onto their paper. (I never suggest or discourage this step.) It is also important to remember that some children won’t want to fill all of the spaces. Never encourage them to follow your impulse or approach, but rather support them following their own inner desires. This is the beauty of you both doing your own version of the same simple project together.



If you see a child doing something on their paper that you like, ask if it is OK to use their idea in your creation. This sets up a wonderful creative relationship—one of sharing ideas and transforming them to make them your own. This process strengthens children’s creative nature and helps them differentiate between what they like and what others prefer.

“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.”

—Albert Einstein



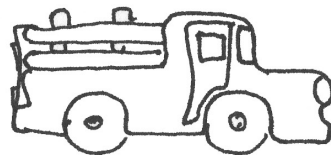
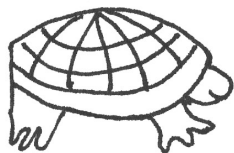
Exercise Eleven: *Books*

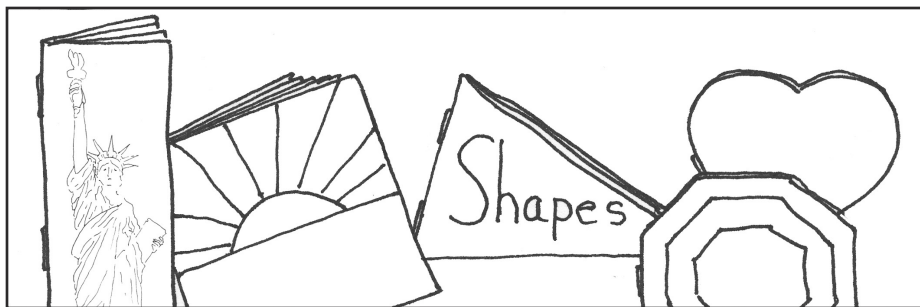
In my experience of teaching art both independently and in the classroom, I have found that most children's creativity and learning fascination is ignited by size and dimension. I have seen children who previously showed little interest in a subject become very engaged by the opportunity of creating a book about that subject. This renewed interest is greatly magnified if the size and dimension of the book is unique and intriguing.

Small is less threatening than large and for children who are having difficulty with a subject, the smaller the better. I have created books as small as 1" x 1" out of plain photocopy paper (stapled on the spine) for children who were blocked—no matter what the reason. The feeling of accomplishment—the filling of a whole book—can stimulate self-confidence and a renewed desire to create and learn.

Dimension is everything in this exercise, so explore and brainstorm with an endless number of possibilities. A long, skinny book can serve as a vehicle for studying about numbers, roads, snakes, or trains. A tall narrow book can be a great vehicle for exploring tall letters, buildings, rockets, or giraffes.

I also limit the number of pages to six in the beginning: two for the front and back cover and four for the inside. The child can then use only one side and have a four-page book or use both sides and have an eight-page book. Whatever they choose to do, just observe and praise their accomplishment.

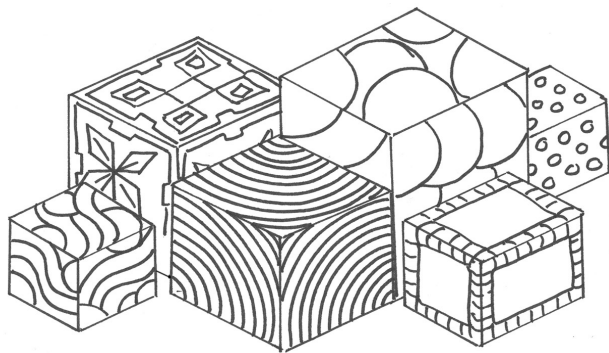




Instructions:

1. Take two sheets of paper and fold them in half and cut it on the fold. You will then have four pieces of $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$ paper.
2. You can then fold them again and cut to make an even smaller book. Or you can fold the pieces you have in half and staple them into a book, which will make a book that is $4\frac{1}{4}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$.
3. Explore as many different shapes and sizes as you and your children or students can imagine. The possibilities are endless! I have made triangle-shaped books, heart-shaped books, frog-shaped books, and cat-shaped books (to name a few).

“Art evokes the mystery without which the world would not exist.”
—***Rene-Francois-Ghislain Magritte***



Exercise Twelve: *Boxes*

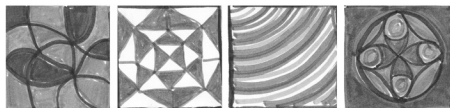
Children love boxes! Taking a flat piece of paper and creating a three-dimensional shape opens the mind and delights the spirit. I have had children turn the boxes into little houses, treasure boxes, boxes to hold secrets, and memorial boxes for a passed animal or human. I have also had several children turn them into question-and-answer or math games, then use them in a “rolling of the dice” manner.

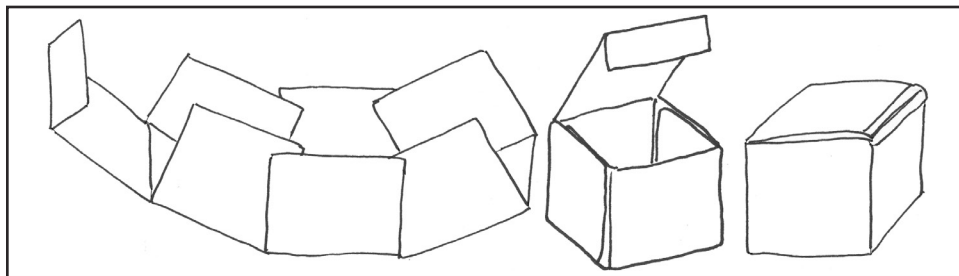
You can begin by asking the students to create any kind of box they want, or provide them with a theme.

You can also create a group-building project where each block is a unique part of a building or wall mural. This allows them to follow their own creative voice and work toward a group whole. It is important to remember that our focus is helping them see and authentically express what each of them sees.

One of my favorite projects is a “me-box.” This project needs a bit of discussion to get the concept across to some students, but I think it is a great classroom project because it introduces the concept of how things affect us—both inside and outside. The way I have used the box is as follows: things outside of you that make you feel happy and alive, and things inside of you that make you feel happy and alive. Or things outside you that make you angry or mad and things inside of you that make you angry or mad.

Remember: It does not have to be realistic; in fact, some children will express everything just with color. There really is no right or wrong way to respond to these projects, we are just encouraging them to develop their nonverbal language skills. Be aware that this project can open up strong emotions and be extremely profound for some children, so edge into it carefully, be very supportive and also encourage a supportive climate in the classroom.





Instructions:

Sample box pattern is included. I recommend copying it onto card stock and possibly pre-cutting the box for the younger students.

1. Decide which side is going to be the outside and which is going to be the inside. (Note: the “X” marks the flaps that will not be visible when the box is stapled together.)
2. When they are finished embellishing the box, fold and staple it together.

Some children want the box fully closed, while others like to have a flap that opens and closes. Since it is hard to staple the flap closed, have some tape on hand.

“We will discover the nature of our particular genius when we stop trying to conform to our own or to other people’s models, learn to be our selves, and allow our natural channel to open.”
—**Shakti Gawain**

Acknowledgments

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Author

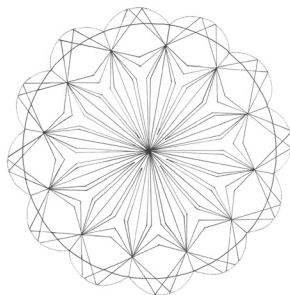
Nancy Marie is a driving force for self-actualization and the author and illustrator of three books: *Out of the Box and Into Yourself!*, *Passage of Change, A fable based on the research of Bruce Lipton, Ph.D.*, and *The Beckoning Song of Your Soul, A Guidebook for Developing Your Intuition*. She is also the creator and director of *I Create What I Believe! Self-Awareness Art Program*.

Nancy is a firm believer that creative self-expression can help you gain a greater sense of self and help

you understand how you uniquely see and experience the world. From her own personal experience, and her work with individuals over the last 30 years, Nancy found that once someone understands how they see and realize its irreplaceable value, that new self-awareness can help them take a quantum leap in all aspects of their life.

To schedule a workshop for your community or schooling group, to view Nancy Marie's current speaking calendar, or to order her books contact:

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