

THE Creative Joy WORKBOOK

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Introduction



“While the hero journeys for external fame, fortune, and power, the heroine tries to regain her lost creative spirit.” ~ Valerie Frankel, *From Girl to Goddess*

What if creative joy was the quality you're searching for, the treasure to be found buried in the dragon's lair, the magic elixir to be stolen from the evil king, the animating glow that was lost when you set out to do what you had to do?

Imagine journeying with others to find what has been lost. Imagine women helping each other, offering a hand when tired, a strong word when faltering. Imagine the intense and holy healing that might flow as creative joy flows back into the world. Please join us in this exploration of Creative Joy.

Huge thanks to our amazing contributors for their wisdom. Please do explore their blogs and websites – you will be so happy you did!

What is creative joy to you?

Play with the following questions by writing as quickly as you can – first thoughts are best thoughts -- and do so ***before*** you read the responses that follow. This is a way to build self-trust in your own experience and savor what you know.

If you hate to write, go take pictures, doodle, make a video but respond via your creative heart first. Ready?

Your **MAGIC TICKET** to creative joy and a chance to win free tuition at the retreat is on page 65!

THE QUESTIONS

When you hear the words *creative joy*, what springs to mind? First thoughts best thoughts, all are welcome, forget censoring.

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What did your creative joy look like this week?

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What is creative joy to you?

What do you wish it had looked like?

What are 5 moments of creative joy from any time in your life - yesterday to 4 years old? Let whatever comes to you be enough.

What gets in the way of your creative joy?

What else?

What else?

What feeds your creative joy?

Jen Louden

“LETTING THAT LOVE BE HERE NOW,
NOT WAITING TO EXULT IN IT.”

When you hear the words creative joy, what springs to mind? First thoughts best thoughts, all are welcome, forget censoring.

Freedom from my stories of what is art, what is marketable, what is good enough. Freedom from my To Do list. Freedom from being less than wholly here.

Also: color, texture, being in my body with a giant YES!, ease and a very alive peace.

What did your creative joy look like this week?

It looked like making a few art marks in an art journal right after meditation first thing in the morning. It looked like arranging flowers for my desk and exulting in their garden-fresh beauty. It looked like sitting on a bench in my favorite meadow and watching the dogs go crazy with joy at the smells and the sunshine and the freedom. It looked like framing three postcards I bought in Mexico last year of Huichol mandalas. It looked like creating a new altar to greet me at the top of my studio stairs.



It looked like sitting down with my notebook and an idea for a book, wondering if there is anything there.

What do you wish it had looked like?

I think I can mostly say that the way it looked was perfect. There is a part of me that so wishes I could easily write another book, and that a book outline had sprung fully formed from my head this week. But mostly now days - thanks to leading the retreat last year and steeping myself in more creative joy - I KNOW that play and filling up my well without an agenda is the doorway to so much that I want in life. I just can't push myself relentlessly anymore.

More and more I believe the door to the bounty we wish for is allowing ourselves spacious time and space for pure creative joy - without any agenda or secret need to get something out of it.

What are 5 moments of creative joy from any time in your life – yesterday to 4 years old? Let whatever comes to you be enough.

Climbing a tree in the front yard of our house in Boca Raton when I was 8. Climbing as high as I dared, and then jumping, all the while pretending to be a parachuting spy or a flying squirrel.

When I was 10, pretending to be Harriet the Spy and spying on my neighbors and keeping a notebook that gave voice to all my young angst.

So many millions of moments of writing strung together like fat shiny beads on a necklace fit for any goddess.

Any walk in the woods with my doodle dogs – sheer animal glory.

Planning my wedding - imagining the eyes of my beloved looking into mine, surrounded by so many of the people we love, the mountains behind us... and then letting that love be here now, not waiting to exult in it.

What gets on the way of your creative joy?

Wanting to be good, funny, creative, done. My mom needing me. Busy work. Email!!!!

What else?

Wanting people to love my work and by extension, me.

What else?

Not saying no enough to other people's projects. Not making my own learning a priority.

What feeds your creative joy?

Love. Patience. Slowing down. Oil pastels. Smoothies. Keemun tea with heavy cream. Rumi. Golden light. Spring. Adventure! BBC TV series. Reading about other people's creative process. Dancing, slow mindful yoga, walks around my island through the fur scented magic. Teaching others what I have learned and showing them my process. Encouraging others, helping them see their gifts. Health. Letting go of my story about anything including who I have or haven't been. Giving the Dragon of Product a house of cards to build on a windy day - keeps him busy so I can go play. Doing anything to get out of the box of my own shoulds, can'ts, why would I? Color and making art messes. Intense conversation. Self-forgiveness. Taking in and receiving goodness and love. Silent retreats. Creating retreats for other women. Reading glasses. Stories of all kinds. Krishna Das. Bob. My dogs. (Notice Bob came first). Friends who get my darkness and light and love both. Bob's faith in me.

INVITE FOR YOU

When you read this last list, did anything spark in you a "I love that too!" or "I haven't done that in awhile." What are you waiting for?



Marianne Elliott

"I GET SO MUCH JOY FROM DANCING."

When you hear the words creative joy, what springs to mind? First thoughts best thoughts, all are welcome, forget censoring.

Dancing. Laughter. Play. Flow. I get so much joy from dancing, and the experience of dancing, when I really give myself over to it, it feels a lot like what I imagine people are talking about when they talk about 'being in the flow'. When I get stuck in my writing, or any kind of creative work, I sometimes just put on some great music and dance. It seems to help!

What did your creative joy look like this week?

A yoga session on my lounge floor. A walk on the beach with my friend and her dogs, including a four month old Border Collie – joy incarnate. An early morning walk on the beach by myself, with cheesy dance music on the iPod and a skip in my step.

What do you wish it had looked like?

I'm pretty happy with how it looked. But I would always take more time to laugh, more time to write. Actually, I would have loved a little bit more writing this week. But yoga, dog walks and dance music are not bad. Not bad at all.

What are 5 moments of creative joy from any time in your life – yesterday to 4 years old? Let whatever comes to you be enough.

Dancing at a gig by the Wellington International Ukulele Orchestra two weeks ago. I did an interpretive dance to a cover of 'Total Eclipse of the Heart' by Bonnie Tyler. It was very creative and very joyful. Teaching an outdoor yoga class, in the sun, on the grass – because I'd left the key to the yoga studio at home. Writing a very silly story about a little magic mouse who lived in a mushroom – inspired by Spike Milligan's *Bad Jelly the Witch* – and making myself laugh out loud as I wrote. Inventing an entire world inside a hay-barn with my cousin over the school holidays, complete with our own language and weekly newspaper. Talking to a room full of people about my book last night, and feeling their questions, their experiences and my story weave into a new story, a story that belonged only to that place, that group of people.

What gets on the way of your creative joy?

Being in a hurry. Rushing to get things done.

What else?

Comparing myself to other people.

What else?

Letting my inner critic (who thinks I'm not good enough, and that I'm not really entitled to have any fun) run the show.

What feeds your creative joy?

Moving my body. Getting out into nature. Collaborating with creative people who I love. Reading for the love of it. Space. Music, dance, laughter.

INVITE FOR YOU

Time to put on some music and dance.
Even better, dance outside!

Tracey Clark

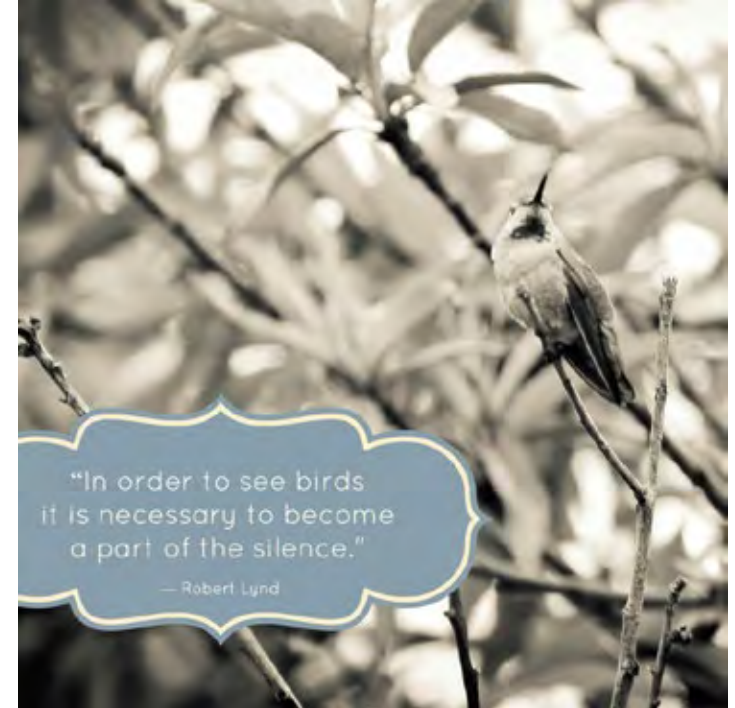
“HOW CAN I DO THAT KIND OF THING MORE OFTEN FOR MYSELF?”

When you hear the words creative joy, what springs to mind? First thoughts best thoughts, all are welcome, forget censoring.

All the creative things I love to do but with nothing attached to them except joy itself. It sounds simple but it's pretty profound. It reminds me of being a kid and being creative just...because it made me happy. I love remembering that feeling. It inspires me to tap into that more often.

What did your creative joy look like this week?

I found a hummingbird's nest in my yard and without hesitation I rented a lens to document the process just because I wanted to experience it through my lens. It ended up being one of the most wonderful creative experiences I can remember!



What do you wish it had looked like?

The better question for me in this case would be, “How can I do that kind of thing more often for myself?” It was a creative joy life lesson and a model I would like to follow for myself. Getting up each day with a purpose to do something I loved (like listening for the mama and watching those babies) is such a positive way to start the day!

What are 5 moments of creative joy from any time in your life - yesterday to 4 years old? Let whatever comes to you be enough.

Open House, 3rd grade. Our whole classroom looked like a waterway and all of our wooden boats were on the floor for the parents to see and enjoy. I LOVED working on that boat and having that final reveal at Open House.

History project, 5th grade. We learned how to embroider so we could stitch a message on our covered wagon canvas. It was one of my favorite projects I've ever done.

High School, cheerleading. We had to paint spirit signs to cheer on our school's sports teams. Painting huge “break through” signs for the football players to run through was my favorite!

Blogging, Jan 2006. When I started my blog and realized that the blogging platform could be easily customized and created. I loved picking pictures, colors, fonts, etc to create my online space.

Creative Retreats. Over the last few years I've stolen away time with special friends. Lucky for me, those friends bring paints, papers, canvases. I have more fun doing art like that with my friends than anything else. Just playing, laughing, and creating, for no other reason than pure joy!

What gets in the way of your creative joy?

Time constraints. Deadlines. Responsibilities. Taking on too many things at the same time. Not scheduling in time for creative joy. Not considering it a priority when I know it should/could/can be.

What feeds your creative joy?

Following my whims and my bliss. Allowing for downtime. Giving myself permission. Being with other creative friends. That kind of support can make all the difference.

INVITE FOR YOU

Do one thing today to follow your bliss. Feels good, right? Why not make it a daily ritual!

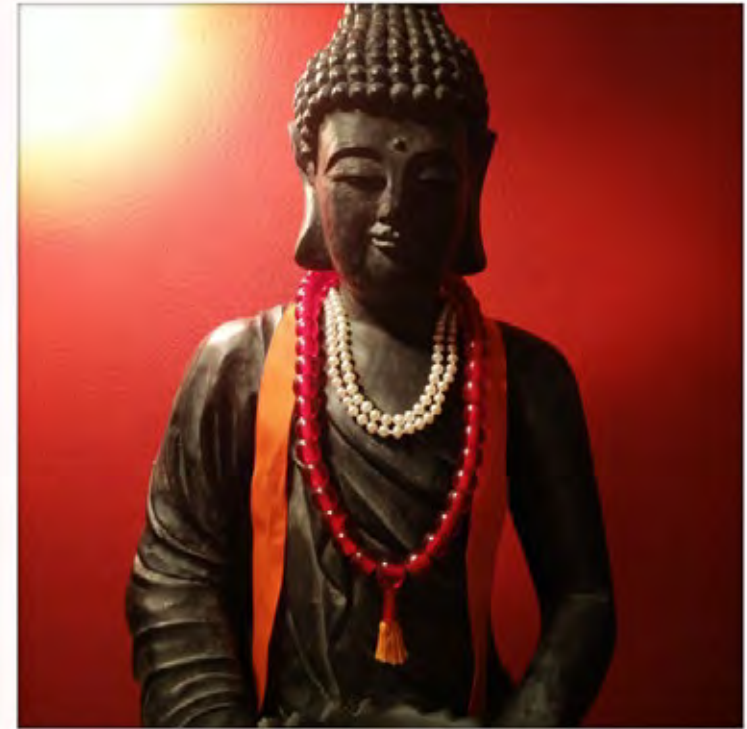
Danielle Birch

“EVERYWHERE I WENT I MET JUST THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO GIVE ME THE HELP I NEEDED.”

When you hear the words creative joy, what springs to mind? First thoughts best thoughts, all are welcome, forget censoring.

Creative Joy is being completely myself and feeling totally alive and in love with life. It's long walks on the beach, or in a forest. Soaking in a hot candle-lit bath. My creative joy needs a clean, tidy house with a fresh workspace – that's my portal to creative joy, my way to tap into it.

And dancing! There is nothing more joyous than cutting up in your living room, alone, listening to your favorite songs.



What did your creative joy look like this week?

My creative joy felt a little cramped this week because we live in a very small apartment and if it gets too messy it becomes suffocating, and that's no environment to grow creativity.

What do you wish it had looked like?

I wish there had been an opportunity for a walk on a beach or in a forest! I live in New York City, and I find it challenging to make escapes into nature. But I know how imperative those moments are to sustaining joy and creativity in my life.

What are 5 moments of creative joy from any time in your life - yesterday to 4 years old? Let whatever comes to you be enough.

Dancing in the living room of a house that I lived in with eight other people. We were very young and free and I knew at that moment that this was going to be one of the most precious times of my life.

Making a lightbox picture frame for an ex-boyfriend. It was a pretty complex endeavor and I had to travel all over town to get parts, and everywhere I went I met just the right people to give me the help I needed. I remember thinking 'so this is what it means to be in the flow!'

Being on vacation with about 20 of my friends. Creating meals together in that relaxed environment, for that amount of people, is such a wonderful dose of that community feeling that I think we're all so hungry for.

Making chutney from my Mama's special recipe. This fills the house with a slightly acrid vinegary smell, which I've grown to love.

Any time I have ever been for a swim in the sea. The ocean has magical healing powers.



Danielle Birch is the assistant teacher at the Creative Joy Retreat. She works in film, is a meditator and a yoga practitioner, and is also a 200hr Certified yoga instructor.

And she loves ginger cookies!

What gets in the way of your creative joy?

So much! Small cramped spaces in my life and in my head especially. Crippling self doubt and the inability to just GET STARTED!

What else?

Tiredness, working too much on things that pay my bills but don't fill me up with creative joy.

What else?

Not really believing I deserve to make time and space for creative joy and needing things to be perfect before they've even had a chance to grow.

What feeds your creative joy?

Friends and laughter. Enough sleep, yoga and meditation. Clean open spaces in my environment and in my head. Sunshine and leaves on the trees. Time alone to tap into what's at the heart of me and time with loved ones so we can tap into what's at the heart of each other.

INVITE FOR YOU

Is there something you need to change in your environment right now, to help you tap into your creative joy?

Kelly Rae Roberts

"YOU ARE STILL ON FIRE, INSPIRED,
AND IN LOVE."

When you hear the words creative joy, what springs to mind? First thoughts best thoughts, all are welcome, forget censoring.

Losing time in the midst of a project that has your full, enthusiastic, can't stop or put it down attention. That moment when you look up and you've realized that hours have passed and you are still on fire, inspired, and in love.

What did your creative joy look like this week?

When I woke up only to realize that I had created a painting the day before that I really loved. I had forgotten about painting it when I initially woke up but remembering it, in that split second moment, felt like how it felt the day after Christmas when I was a kid - when I remembered the new toy that was waiting from the day before.

That feeling of surprise, over and over again is what creative joy feels like. Like, "Oh, I get to do that again!? Sweet!"



What do you wish it had looked like?

Starting is always hard - like going to the gym. Once I'm painting (or afterward), I'm all good, but getting started is my struggle. So, I suppose that I wished getting to the canvas wasn't a struggle to start with.

What are 5 moments of creative joy from any time in your life – yesterday to 4 years old?
Let whatever comes to you be enough.

Stumbling on old work that has new meaning.

Experimenting with words + photography (a new thing for me).

Writing for hours only to be finally done and a bit proud of showing up and getting it out.

Collaborative painting session with 10 other painters. 10 paintings, 10 painters, 10 minutes. It was creative joy unleashed!

What gets on the way of your creative joy?

Comparison + Perfection.

What else?

An untrue story that I don't have enough time to create.

What else?

A bad attitude!

What feeds your creative joy?

Music. Connecting with other creatives. Time to experiment and play without being attached to the outcome.

INVITE FOR YOU

What happens when you tell yourself you do have enough time to create and then allow that space in your life?



Photo Credit: Vivienne McMaster

5 years ago, Kelly Rae Roberts decided to set aside her “sensible” career as a social worker and pursue a thoroughly “impractical” dream: to become an artist. \$10 million dollars in licensed artwork sales later, it’s safe to say that her tender style of truth-telling and possibility-driven approach to life, work & art has paid off. Today, she’s the bestselling author of *Taking Flight: Inspiration & Techniques to Give Your Creative Spirit Wings*, author of the popular e-book series *Flying Lessons: Tips & Tricks To Help Your Creative Business Soar*, and the co-creator of Hello Soul, Hello Business.

Visit Kelly at www.kellyraeroberts.com

Christine Mason Miller

"THIS IS THE STUFF OF LIFE. THIS IS WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS."

What is creative joy for you?

Time * Space * Silence

What did it look like this week?

It looked messy, truth be told. It involved tears, and quiet, and a willingness to let my emotions BE rather than try to push them away. Even in these messy moments, there is transformation happening, which is always a creative act. Ultimately, deep down, this is a joyful experience, even if it doesn't look like it on the surface. This is the stuff of life. This is where the magic happens.



Christine Mason Miller is a writer, artist and explorer whose aim is to inspire others to live a meaningful life. Her latest book, *Desire to Inspire: Using Creative Passion to Transform the World*, is available at bookstores everywhere.

Visit Christine at www.christinemasonmiller.com

What gets in the way for you?

My tendency to over-think things.

What feeds it?

Time * Space * Silence * Deep Breaths.

If your creative joy had a voice, what would it say about what it loves, needs, and hates?

It would say it loves this moment and the possibility of every moment in front of me. It would say it needs plenty of water, plenty of quiet, and a lot of laughter. It would say it could do without the pressure I often put on myself to be SuperWoman.

What's your learning edge with creative joy these days?

These days I am learning to turn on the faucet. To just let the words come without so much worry about getting it right.

INVITE FOR YOU

Take out a pen and paper and for the next 5 minutes turn on the faucet of your creativity by writing down whatever comes to you - without any self censorship or judgement.

Kim Klassen

"THIS IS PERFECT. THIS IS AMAZING.
THIS IS JOY."

When you hear the words creative joy, what springs to mind? First thoughts best thoughts, all are welcome, forget censoring.

In the zone, making art...ideas...flowing freely...a sense of 'this is it...'

What did your creative joy look like this week?

This week was a bit mixed. I was a little up and a little down. The highlight of my week was a Skype conversation with a friend. She gets 'it'. We talked about all the pieces of a creative life...excitement, joy, uncertainty, fear. We bounced ideas and shared our latest wishes. My, oh my, I needed that.

What do you wish it had looked like?

Monday morning, 7 am...in the studio, at my desk...its all just flowing. In the zone. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday...straight through to Saturday; more of the same. That's a perfect week to me.



What are 5 moments of creative joy from any time in your life - yesterday to 4 years old? Let whatever comes to you be enough.

Definitely Camp Shutter Sisters 2011. It was there that I met people like me, people who get me. My life was transformed.

Three days at Huntington Beach with my friend Xanthe...taking pictures, laughing, brain storming, collaborating, soaking up the sun...true BLISS. Walking through my favourite local shop taking pictures. It feeds my soul, I feel renewed and almost always inspired.

Taking photos in a field, with a dear friend. The light was perfect, warm summer air. Everything was just right.

Palm Springs California at the Shutter Sisters Oasis retreat. I was sitting amongst a group of women, sharing anything and everything. I don't remember the details, but I remember the feeling of ahhh...this is perfect. This is amazing. This is joy.

What gets in the way of your creative joy?

Definitely family stress. When my family is hurting or struggling it runs deep, my heart aches, and sometimes it stops me...blocks me...and I am stuck.

What else?

Stress, from things I really do not like to do...like bookkeeping and taxes...ugh...seriously...sucks me dry.

What else?

Chaos can rob my creative joy very quickly. I'm an introvert. I need lots of down time...just me and my thoughts, making art.

What feeds your creative joy?

So many things...here's just three:

Sharing my work. I feel incredibly blessed to share my art with others. There's nothing better than hearing you've inspired someone on their own creative journey.

Books and more books full of pretty pictures and inspirational words. Oh my, just holding them in my hands...pure JOY.

There's something about simple, pretty things that feeds my soul. I know they say 'things are just things', but for me, they are bits and bobs of lovely inspiration, just waiting to be photographed.



Several years ago Kim Klassen decided she wanted to learn Photoshop so she could expand her licensed art line. She had absolutely no clue how to use it, so she just started playing. The programme took a little while to get acquainted with, but eventually they became the best of friends. Kim now uses Photoshop and her trusty Nikon to teach classes to thousands of people all over the world - a job she considers to be insanely awesome.

Visit Kim at www.kimklassencafe.com

INVITE FOR YOU

Have you created some time and space just for you lately? How can we make room in your day for some down time?

Jeffrey Davis

"UNWRAP THE GIFT OF SOLITUDE."



Jeffrey Davis works with creative innovators, scholars, teams, and social change-makers to help creativity flourish in times of challenge and change. Delight and wonder are his super-powers.

Visit Jeffrey at www.trackingwonder.com

INVITE FOR YOU

Put some music on and do the goofiest dance you possibly can. Feel the world honking back!

Sense that what you create helps raise the sun.

Help the sun laugh the sky wide.

Carry wonder in your pack. She's light and spacious.

Lay out a path of breadcrumbs for others, step away, and become a Delight Maker.

Soften your eyes, listen, and braid new patterns.

Find yourself in a clearing (or secret orchard) outdoors.

Run this moment wild so the wind can remember how grand it is.

Visit the underground. Remember: Most of the mind is there. And the mind can be kind of cool and cozy where it's dark.

Embrace your Inner Goofy with love, and the world will honk back.

Open up more than size up.

Unwrap the gift of solitude.

Hold the space between. Then, let it go.

And 1 Core Reminder:

There is more day to dawn than dawn.

There is more Self to you than you.

Jen Lemen

“THERE'S NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT ON EARTH THAN THIS TINY MOMENT.”

When you hear the words creative joy, what springs to mind? First thoughts best thoughts, all are welcome, forget censoring.

That feeling you get when you realize you don't care about time anymore, that there's nothing on earth more important than this tiny moment, this little thing you're doing that you just can't stop doing, no matter who needs what, when or where.

What did your creative joy look like this week?

This week creative joy was lying on the couch with both kids cozied in beside me. Each one was trying to outdo the other in making me laugh with made up jokes and stories. My job was to laugh at all the punch lines and add my own one liners here or there to make our impromptu improv complete.

What do you wish it had looked like?

I really cannot trade that moment for the world. Probably the only thing that would have made me happier is if we were creating something while we did it. Our dining room is set up like a sitting room with desks and an art station, so one person can be working on something creative while someone else can look on and lounge from the couch. When we're all in the same room painting, drawing or piddling around, I'm in bliss.

What are 5 moments of creative joy from any time in your life - yesterday to 4 years old? Let whatever comes to you be enough.

I love to make tiny paper scrolls to record my hopes, wishes, prayers or dreams. This is one of my regular daily spiritual practices and makes me incredibly happy.

I love to set up altars in my house with photographs, vintage vases, artifacts from the natural world and found objects from the junk piles of memories in various drawers around my house. Setting up a new altar is pure creative joy to me.

I love the art of making my hair spiral and curl after I wash it. Flipping my head over and twirling in those curls one by one with my fingers so they stay is the most seductive and silly meditation, but it means something to me.

I love the creative joy of being undone and unraveled by a lover who understands the body is a temple that must be tended and worshipped in its own way.

I love the ritual of setting up a table for a feast...the collection of mismatched plates and silverware, the fresh tablecloth from the thrift store just out of the dryer, the little bits of leaves and flowers and stones arranged as a natural centerpiece. The candles that make the whole thing shimmer and glow.

What gets in the way of your creative joy?

Worry. Fear. The sadness of being alone and being unsure of myself in ways that would bring people towards me instead of drive them away.

What else?

Thinking I might not deserve it.

What else?

Being hard on myself. Going over my flaws and failures and faults instead of all the ways I'm so lucky to be here.

What feeds your creative joy?

Affection. The farmer's market. The shower. Lying in green grass without a blanket. Dancing in the kitchen. Sleeping naked under one sheet while the windows let in the breeze of warm nights and cool mornings.

INVITE FOR YOU

Write a list of 3 reasons why you know you're lucky to be here, living this wonderful, juicy, joy-filled life.



Photo Credit: Patience Salgado

Jen Lemen is on a continual quest for the kind of feast that feeds the soul and nurtures the spirit. One part troubled doubter, one part expansive dreamer, Jen still manages to make magic happen under the most difficult of circumstances. Her most endearing quality just might be her ability to deeply listen, not judge and laugh when all hope is gone. She also makes a mean quesadilla.

Visit Jen at www.hopefulworld.org



Amanda Oaks

"IT'S THE FLOWERING OF YOURSELF."

Creative Joy

Creative Joy
is finding poetry
in everything

twisting the words
to carry vision, to
evoke a sense
of feeling in your
gut, the plumbing up
of goose bumps on
your skin

watching, the way
the wind flirts with
the grass, collides
with my breath, sends
a leaf tumbling down
the road, turns the
hair on my arms into
marionettes spinning

noticing, that sometimes
I get in my own way

seeing, when I
am the silk cocoon
wrapped around
the hungry caterpillar
of my own
heart

knowing,
that the sinew
sometimes binding
me to fear doesn't
weather rebellion
well, that the hull
of heaviness can
either be added to
or abated from
the whole,

that it only
can be loved
into action

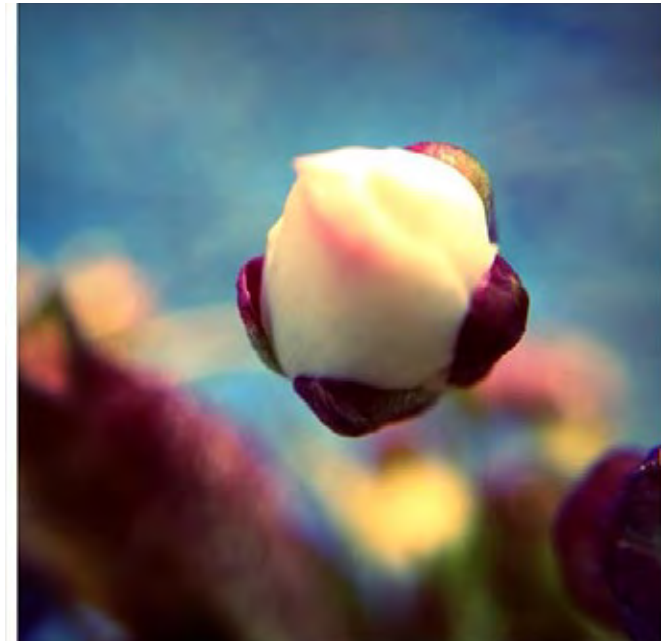
it's the chase,
running down an
inside revolution,
footfalls on a
sidewalk at night,
chest heaving, heart
at a full-tilt tick,


the pull
of the pin

the release

the opening & closing
of the shutter, five, ten,
twenty times before you
are at peace with the
portrayal of the moment,

it's capturing it on the
first click,





the last brush stroke
sliding across the canvas

ruled lines
waiting for the warmth
of your fist resting
between words

hitting your stride,
stumbling, giving in,
letting go, celebrating
your victories
& learning &
loving yourself
through your
defeats

it's the seed,
the roots & the bud

it's the flowering
of yourself

it's the process

it's the meaning
& the means
to a meaningful
life

INVITE FOR YOU

What are some of the ways in which "getting in your own way" might be preventing you from experiencing creative joy in this moment?



Amanda Oaks is a curator of connection and provisioner of benevolent beauty. Mama. Lover. Spiritual Rebel. Poet. Multi-Passionate Solopreneur. Kindness Advocate.

Visit Amanda at www.kindovermatter.com

Liz Lamoreux

"I AM GENTLY PUSHED TO SEE THE BEAUTY OF
SIMPLY BEING HERE."

My daughter is discovering ways to move sand with rocks and sticks as she plays with her grandparents along the shore of Lake Superior. I stand at the water a few feet away, eyes closed, stomach and heart holding a few heavy pieces of this life. I listen to their laughter, the lapping water, and then for just a moment I hear only my breathing.

I take a few deep breaths right here, feeling my feet beneath me, the sun warming my body, and the wind gently holding me. I focus on the space I create with each breath. Space inside me. Space around my heart. And with an exhale, I let pieces of what I do not need to carry slip out of me and sink into the earth.

Seeking a tactile reminder of this moment, I open my eyes and take a photo of a woman standing in the quiet joy that is creating space to move out of her head and back into her heart.

Slowing down and noticing my breathing is one of my access points to joy. When I quiet the chatter in my head by sinking into the moment, I am gently pushed to see the beauty of simply being here. I notice the world around me, and my senses so often guide me to joy. And when I open up to joy, I feel myself mending and shedding the pieces inside me that no longer serve.

But it is a practice, this seeking joy stuff. It is something I have to cultivate and create space for. Coming to the page and writing about the moments where I find it (and documenting those moments through photos) help to remind me to listen to what I know and to keep on practicing.



Liz Lamoreux hosts the Be Present Retreats, teaches creative self-care workshops in person and online, and shares stories and other good things on her blog several times a week. She is also the author of *Inner Excavation: Explore Your Self Through Photography, Poetry, and Mixed Media*, the artist behind the Etsy shop Soul Mantras and Other Stories, and part of the kindred soul party over at Chickadee Road.

Visit Liz at www.lizlamoreux.com

INVITE FOR YOU

Sit quietly and take 10 deeps breaths. Notice how this effects your access to creative joy.

Bridget Pilloud



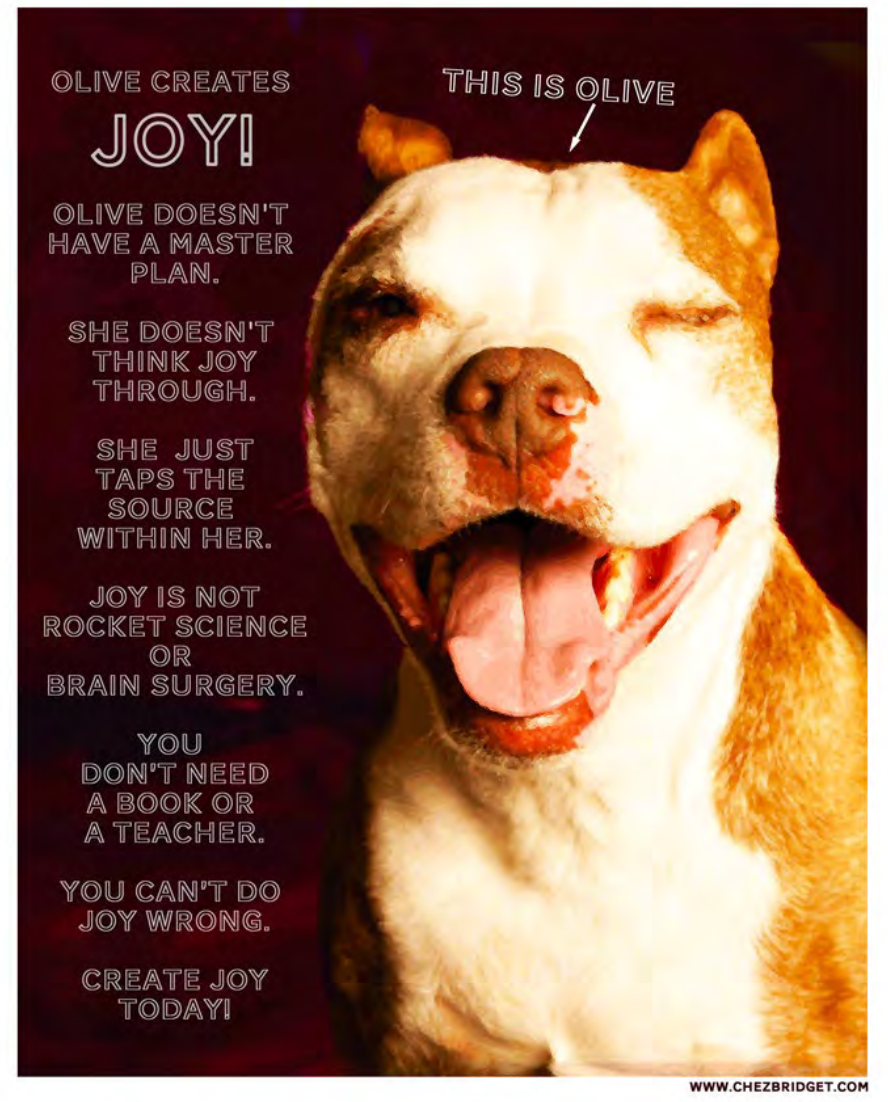
Bridget Pilloud is a writer, an intuitive guidance counselor and an energetic healer. She regularly speaks and writes about the human experience, spirituality and enacting positive change. She lives in Portland, Oregon with her partner, her two kids, three dogs, two cats and three chickens.

Every little thing we do has the potential to be magic. Every intentional act can move us towards the light.

My goal with Chez Bridget is to mix the holy with the tangible. I'm here to experience spirituality in the world, not in spite of it. I'm here to connect. Here, I share my daily experiences, the things I do to stay connected with my spirit and engaged with life. I would love to hear from you! To reach me, write to bridget@intuitivebridge.com. Or find me on twitter @intuitivebridge.

Love,
Bridget

Visit Bridget at www.chezbridget.com



INVITE FOR YOU

For the rest of the day, try bringing your full attention to everything you do. Relish each moment and find the magic within it.

Susannah Conway

“I WAS CREATIVE AND IT MADE ME JOYFUL.”



When you hear the words creative joy, what springs to mind? First thoughts best thoughts, all are welcome, forget censoring.

A camera in my hands, a sunny day, a new place to explore. Noticing what's always around me in a new way. Paying attention and looking beneath the surface. Making Play Doh elephants with my nephew. Glitter and glue stuck to my hands as we made Christmas cards. The smooth page of a lined Moleskine notebook. Ink that wants to spill all over that page. Wearing perfume oils and lipstick, and walking into town listening to my favourite mixtape. Inventing new recipes.

What did your creative joy look like this week?

A friend and I taking a day trip to Glastonbury and taking photos of everything we saw with our iPhones. Waking at 7am to go walk through the park listening to loud dance music. Writing in my journal every night. Getting to the last day of my blogging ecourse and reflecting on the previous six weeks with contentment and satisfaction. Reading. Always reading.

What do you wish it had looked like?

I was creative and it made me joyful. I wish I'd had more time to rest, though. Too much to do and only two hands and one head to do it.

What are 5 moments of creative joy from any time in your life - yesterday to 4 years old? Let whatever comes to you be enough.

Finishing the manuscript for my first book. Learning to read. Singing karaoke in Dublin. Teaching Unravelling for the first time to a room full of women. Every single time film ejects from my SX-70 Polaroid camera.

What gets in the way of your creative joy?

Fear. Being over tired. Lack of trust. Comparison.

What else?

Sadness. Depression.



Susannah Conway is a photographer, writer and e-course creator. A Polaroid addict and very proud aunt. She's the author of *This I Know: Notes on Unraveling the Heart* and co-author of *Instant Love: How to Make Magic and Memories with Polaroids*. She's passionate about helping women reconnect to their true selves, using photography as the key to open the door.

Visit Susannah at www.susannahconway.com

What else?

My own expectations.

What feeds your creative joy?

Imagination. The excitement of the new. Sunlight. Vintage cameras. The realisation that there are so many things in the world to be photographed, so many moments to record, so many places to explore. Kissing. The promise and possibility of falling in love again. Hope. Family. A two-year-old boy called Noah. My eyes — the art and practise of SEEING. Emotions, and allowing myself to feel them. Being truthful about how I feel. Wanting to get it down on the page. Books, piles and piles of books. Blogging and the community it builds. My women friends. How my sister and I inspire the best in each other. Being an aunt.

INVITE FOR YOU

Grab your camera, go outside, look up and shoot the sky. What are the clouds doing? The rain? The sunshine? The snow? Then look down and shoot your shoes. Where do you want to stand? Who do you want to stand next to?

Tara Mohr

"THEN TAKE THE QUESTION, IS IT GOOD OR
NOT? AND SEND IT TO THE RIVER TO FISH."

Art-Making

Your gifts are shy,
and stand behind you,
like a child peeking out
from mommy's leg.

But you already know that.

You've seen it a thousand times
as you tucked and buried them
wondering what was wrong with you.

It wasn't you. Gifts are bashful.
Most live hidden, and die
in alleys or crumble into broken stones.

What to do?

*How to entice them to open the door
and step out?*

A mad love for the thing itself
is the best remedy that's been discovered

a love so wild you are willing to step
into the middle of a circle and dance.
You won't know if the witnesses around you
are the neighbors
or the world
or just the critics from within



but you'll go there
for the feeling of your foot sanding the floor,
for the flight in your chest when you jump.

That's the best prescription:
a kind of foolery, a mad love.

But what if the fear has won out, you ask?

First, sink down to the floor and kiss
your feet.

Fall like someone has just
popped the balloon of you.

Then hug yourself into stillness.
Know that, sweetie, it will be alright.

Next build a fort in your bedroom,
a soft and covered space.
Pitch blankets, prop pillows,
bring a firefly inside for light.

Then take it out, whatever it is
your flute or your pen or your clay,
and say your prayer of thank you
for this everything: vessel for your thoughts,
ceaseless companion, adventure-bringer, peace song.

Then take the question, Is it good or not?
and send it to the river to fish.
Let it catch your dinner while you work.

You are not making to be good.
You are making because
it is the great romance of your life.

Then make something. A little thing.
Look at how it loves you
how it woke up the earth to you
and gave you the life-heart back

how the days are growing long again, as in childhood,
as if time is being given back to you
as you learn how your soul wants to fill it.



Tara Sophia Mohr is an expert on women's leadership and wellbeing. She is the creator of the Playing Big leadership program for women and the author of *Your Other Names: Poems for Wise Living*.

Visit Tara at www.taramohr.com

INVITE FOR YOU

Make a little something right now. A circle in the sand, a mandala of dirty laundry, a smoothie that makes your mouth come alive. Keep it simple.

Amy Weintraub

“WHEN I CAN STEP BACK INTO COMPASSION FOR ALL MY PARTS, I STAY PRESENT TO ALL THE CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES.”

What is creative joy for you?

Creative joy is being an appreciator of whatever life brings. Like you, I can experience moments that feel anything but joyful. But if I can step back from the constriction of the pain or pleasure into a remembrance of who I really am — limitless, unbounded joy — then that joy can embrace whatever is arising in the moment.

What did it look like this week?

With a lot of self-compassion this week, I was able to truly sit with a problem and send healing energy and love to someone who was acting out of what she later saw as displaced anger. Our exchange led to a healing for us both and a desire for further creative collaboration.

What gets in the way for you?

When I forget that I am more than the story I am telling myself about the world, or the emotions showing up in the moment, I can get bogged down in worry. That worry constricts the natural flow of my creativity and joy.

What feeds it?

My daily practice of pranayama breathing, chanting, poses and being in nature clears away whatever is blocking the free flow of my creativity and feeds it with clarity and vitality.



If your creative joy had a voice, what would it say about what it loves, needs, and hates?

My creative joy says, bring it on! Life come and hit me. (It's going to hit me anyway, so I may as well welcome it, right?) Let me know that I am alive! My creative joy says, Amy, shut down this laptop and go out for a walk, breathe deeply and marvel at the lushness of spring in full flower. My creative joy says, Amy, don't stay up too late tonight and pass on that glass of wine at dinner. You'll feel brighter and more lively in the morning, and I'll be there, shining through your appreciative eyes as soon as they open.

What's your learning edge with creative joy these days?

My learning edge with creative joy is to know that just because I have practices to clear my inner space in the morning, that doesn't mean life challenges won't block the flow of creative joy by noon. When life hits, I need to cultivate compassion for the parts that feel blocked. This way, I don't fuse with the blocks. I can observe the places of constriction, knowing I am so much more than those gripping places in my body-mind. When I can step back into compassion for all my parts, I stay present to all the creative possibilities. I don't have to impulsively leap into fixing the problem right away. This can be scary because it means slowing down and tolerating the discomfort of not knowing how the problem will be resolved. This means holding an intention to breathe creative joy and clarity through me even when problems seem insurmountable. If I try to fix something too quickly, I can be operating from my anxious need not to feel uncomfortable instead of the reservoir of creative joy within.

INVITE FOR YOU

Imagine thousands of people reading this and deciding together to slow down and tolerate the discomfort of not knowing. Imagine all of us holding an intention to breathe creative joy and clarity in, no matter what. Imagine that together we are tapping the reservoir of creative joy within.



Amy Weintraub, director of the LifeForce Yoga Healing Institute and author of the bestselling *Yoga for Depression* and *Yoga Skills for Therapists* is a pioneer in the field of yoga and mental health. Her LifeForce Yoga protocol is used in treatment centers, hospitals and by health care providers around the world.

Visit Amy at www.yogafordepression.com

Fabeku Fatunmise

"BUYING LASER GUNS + A DARTH VADER MASK."

What is creative joy for you?

Creative joy is unapologetic aliveness. On fire. Tuned in. Completely engaged + completely free.

What did it look like this week?

Drumming so long that my palms throbbed. Letting the pen go where it wanted. Flirting with scary possibilities. Buying laser guns + a Darth Vader mask. Wearing red shoes, even when they didn't match my outfit.

What gets in the way for you?

I lose my creative mojo when I work too hard for too long. When I pretend like breaks aren't essential. When I forget to regularly toss out the maps + look for something more.

What feeds it?

Red shoes. Deep drum-ey grooves. Immersion. Letting go. Punk rock. Trusting my bigness. Doing it even when my hands shake.

If your creative joy had a voice, what would it say about what it loves, needs, and hates?

My creative joy loves honesty + boldness, hates constriction + stale stories, and needs both clear containers + wide open spaces.

INVITE FOR YOU

Get yourself a creative joy outfit. How about some creative joy props and toys? Fabeku allows himself to utterly be himself and express that unapologetic aliveness in so many silly, profound and beautiful ways. And so will you.

I'm Fabeku. (Hi!) Business awesomizer. Suck exorcist. Sonic alchemist. I work with creative entrepreneurs + thought leaders + world-changers to turn up the awesome in their business through conjuring states of total coherence. All of you. On the same page. BOOM!

Visit Fabeku at www.fabeku.com



Rachel Cole

"IT LOOKS LIKE ALLOWING MYSELF
TOTAL PERMISSION TO DO NOTHING."



Rachel Cole is a certified life coach, retreat host, instigator of ease, and hunger-satisfier. Rachel is a mission to guide women towards knowing and feeding their truest hungers.

Visit Rachel at www.rachelwcole.com

INVITE FOR YOU

What shoulds could you let go of right now - not later but now - that might lighten your load? Name a few and go flush them down the loo or bury them in the compost pile to become the ground for new beliefs and joy.

What is creative joy for you?

Creative joy is the process of following a spark - my spark. A fleeting whisper. Letting it toss and turn me. Incubating. Dodging fear and doubt. Seeking the moments when time stops. Giving birth without holding back.

What did it look like this week?

This week? It looks like allowing myself total permission to do nothing. When I release my contraction on having to be productive and cut the shackle of my to-do list I enter into a state of ease and that is where creative joy arises from.

What gets in the way for you?

If I create for anyone else but me what is produced is flat and lacks the magnetism inherent in creative joy.

What feeds it?

Paying attention to what turns me on - even if at first glance it doesn't make sense or seem connected to my work. Eventually the things that spark me find their way into the recipe for anything I make with creative joy.

If your creative joy had a voice, what would it say about what it loves, needs, and hates?

It loves time off the clock. It needs to run wild. It hates 'shoulds'?

What's your learning edge with creative joy these days?

That there are no mistakes.



Michele Lisenbury Christensen

“IT’S A WILY WOMAN WHO CAN
UNEARTH AND NAME HER TRUTH.”

Creative Joy for me means...

Integrating motherhood and work. Before my son was born four years ago, my business was my baby and work was my drug. Now, my son and my newborn daughter are my babies, and my drug is... sleep. The act of shifting gears – between nurturing these little people and nurturing my writing and clients – is, in itself, a creative act. Sometimes I grind the gears (cue the brain-bending screech) but when I get it juuuuuust right I get to express myself, take great care of me, and give the littles just what they need. High art, indeed.

Turning myself on. Lively banter with other witty and wicked people. A board game well-played. A few minutes on etsy or Pinterest, soaking the beauty into my pores. Or exploring sensual pleasures, like a walk through the forest, a bubble bath, sweet touch from my man.

Writing truth. In a sense, I suppose, telling the truth is the least creative thing there is: you’re merely naming what is. But to do so, we must engage in the highly creative and often excruciating act of peeling away the layers of untruth, distraction and fear that overlay our truth. It’s a wily woman who can unearth and name her truth. Whenever I write something and see that, “Yes, Michele, you have named your experience” I get a little jolt of creative joy.

Delighting my darlings. If I'm honest (and didn't I just say that was one of my creative joys?), j'adore the applause. Sue me, I'm a Leo! Sometimes it looks like my husband and son (and sweet self) enjoying a meal I conceived and/or cooked. Other times it's the comments on a blog post or retweets of a quote or a client emailing to say, "you rocked my world." Creative joy comes from those interactions where my creativity's radar hears the "ping" that signals its message of love was received by the people who matter most to me.

What does creative joy mean to you? Do you yearn for more? Three of my creative idols and colleagues are hosting the Creative Joy Retreat. There is no better gift you could give your creative joy than this dedicated time. And your creative joy is a magnificent path to turn-on and to being full. And THOSE are the keys to changing the world. Check out the Creative Joy Retreat.

INVITE FOR YOU

Where might applause or "the ping of love received" feed your creative joy? Breathe it in and receive.



Michele Lisenbury Christensen reclaimed her marriage from the throes of mediocrity. She is revolutionizing 21st century relating through her writing, speaking, retreats, and transformational programs.

Visit Michelle at www.lovingwithpower.com

Chris Zydel

"SHE JOYFULLY ENCOURAGES US TO BOLDLY STRIDE."



The Love of the Muse

Her invitation is always the same
 "Come and play" says she
 Let's explore and uncover together
 Another of the many vast worlds
 That you hold inside your wild creative heart

She knows the way
 Her compass is unfailing
 She is eager to lead us
 On deep diving expeditions
 Into the watery dreamtime
 To places like
 The Ocean Of Iridescence

Where we soon find ourselves bobbing back to the
 surface
 With armfuls of oil pastels
 Clutched tightly and greedily to our bodies
 Melting into our bellies and fingers
 With the heat of our longing to create

Or with rainbows of paint
 Streaming in many hues brilliant rivulets down our
 arms and legs
 Dissolving every last bit of us
 Into tributaries of magenta, and turquoise and
 chartreuse

At another time
 She joyfully encourages us to boldly stride
 Into the Crystalline Castle of Words
 Inviting the magic spellcasting of appellations
 Such as "transcendence" and "luscious" and
 "wormhole" and "squabble"
 To swirl around us

Entering our eyes and our ears
 As sparkling points of radiant light
 Swallowing them whole in big gulps of nourishing
 wisdom
 Taking them deep into our bones
 Where they alchemize into something holy and true

And come tripping across our tongues
As story and poem and sacred inspiration

She is insatiable, this one
Our heart, our muse
Always hungry for another chance
To bring together startling images
Multi-layered feelings
And celestial sound
Into dazzling new patterns never before seen

She doesn't understand why we once again refuse her
call
"What do you mean?" She asks incredulously
How could answering that email
Running that errand
Or proving your value
By being dutiful and responsible yet again
Be more enticing than these worlds of delight and magic



Chris Zydel is the founder of Creative Juices Arts, and she is on a mission to prove to the world that everyone is creative, which she does by providing nurturing, joy-filled retreats and teacher trainings of encouragement, permission and trust.

Visit Chris at www.creativejuicesarts.com

That are your all too human birthright?

How can you so often rebuff my summons to enter
Into these luminous landscapes of artistry and
adventure
Of imagination and enchantment
Of invention and innovation
That are always just one brushstroke, one keystroke,
one lilting breath of melody away
From the hurried fretfulness of your anxious life

"But I will never give up" says she
I have a sacred task to perform
You can count on me to be relentless
And constant
And ever present in reminding you
That your true home has always been
And always will be
In the lands of creative joy

INVITE FOR YOU

What would you do today if you
were listening to your Muse's
whispers and enticements?
What would you do if you were
listening to "never give up?"

Lisa Rough

"CREATIVE JOY IS THE SACRED, MAGIC
FLOW EXTRACTED FROM THE CURRENTS
THAT WE FACE DAY IN AND DAY OUT"

The Unexpected Simplicity of Creative Joy

When my dear friend Jennifer Loudon invited me to participate in a **creative joy** EXPLOSION, I was getting ready to visit my in-laws in the flatlands of Indiana. While I looked forward to the adventure, I also figured that it would pretty challenging to keep my creative fires burning while I was away.

So I brought a camera with me, thinking that might be a wonderful creative outlet... but unfortunately, I was so busy that I only remembered I had it a few times during the entire trip.

I brought a journal and a sketchbook with me with every intention of filling up a page each night before going to bed... but each night, exhausted, we marveled at this peculiar thing called cable television in our hotel room instead (this is what happens when you don't have television at home!).

The artsy, soulful me, lay forgotten on my bedside table along with a bottle of water and a tube of Burt's Bee's lip balm. So much for celebrating **creative joy**!

Or so I thought.

But then there was one night when the folks in the next room rolled in around midnight, and with them was a tired and cranky child who made it perfectly clear that there wouldn't be a whole lot of sleeping going on.

I lay there staring at the ceiling wondering what to do with myself as chaos ensued next door. I thought about turning on the light to write, but knew that I'd risk waking up my own kiddos. So instead I decided to get **CURIOUS** about **creative joy**... in the dark, noisy, middle of the night.

Being an artist, a creativity catalyst, and a women's tribe builder, the first assumption that naturally moved through my noggin was that creative joy had everything to do with purple markers and splashes of paint and glitter and fancy words put to paper.

But the mere act of choosing to happily stew on this rather than whining and growling and banging on the walls made me realize that I was limiting myself with these assumptions.

Joy in and of itself is a *creative act*... a product of both our desires and our imaginations, woven with a hefty dose of self-trust. It's a journey of MAKING MEANING out of the ordinary, feasting on the juiciness of existence, stepping into the fullness of each moment that passes us by (even the challenging ones). *It's a choice.*

What tends to get in my way of claiming that choice is that niggly, inner-critic notion that there's a right and a wrong way to do everything... that there is some set of rules I must follow in order to experience authentic, sustainable happiness. And by all means I must do so to a point of impossible perfection.

And yet a huge part of what feeds my **creative joy** is the practice of LETTING ALL THAT GO. Breathing through it, moving my body, and simply **being** with whatever is happening around me, staying grounded in my own **sovereignty** and WILDNESS rather than a sense of giving in or giving up.

Creative joy for me this week didn't involve crayons or paint brushes or carefully placed words. It didn't involve meditating or twisting myself into bizarre yoga poses.

INVITE FOR YOU

Where is sacred mv flow available to you right now? Yes, right now

Don't get me wrong – all of these things hold a precious place in my life.... and had I been writing about any other week, you would have surely read more about them...

But this week, it involved *slowing down* and resting, being **deeply present** with family, walking through a forest hunting for morels, offering Mamaw a bite of fresh spinach, trying to talk Papaw into hoola-hooping, lots of laughter, and making room for unexpected waves of tears. It involved getting up early and walking on a Holiday Inn treadmill to get the blood flowing, **speaking our truths** even if it rubbed others the wrong way, sharing awkward silences and smoothie recipes, giggling at ourselves for being sucked into HGTV and Wii games, difficult conversations about aging parents, and restless nights in noisy hotel rooms.

Creative joy is the *sacred, magic flow* extracted from the currents that we face day in and day out... and our own innate choice to be **inquisitive and open** to it, regardless of the circumstances.

Lisa Rough is a TRIBE BUILDER, dream incubator, mIsChleVoUs MuSe, wild woman, and self-taught artist and writer living in the mountains of North Carolina.

Visit Lisa at www.sacredcirclecreativelife.com



Eric Klein

"THE FIRE OF AWARENESS DOES ALL THE WORK. YOUR ROLE IS TO STAY PRESENT."

Are You on Fire?

We recently took three days off and went to a hot springs. There's one bath there that's hot enough to boil an egg. When I first step into the molten water, I cringe. I'm only in up to my knees but already it seems impossible to go deeper. My whole nervous systems is shouting "Get out of here!"

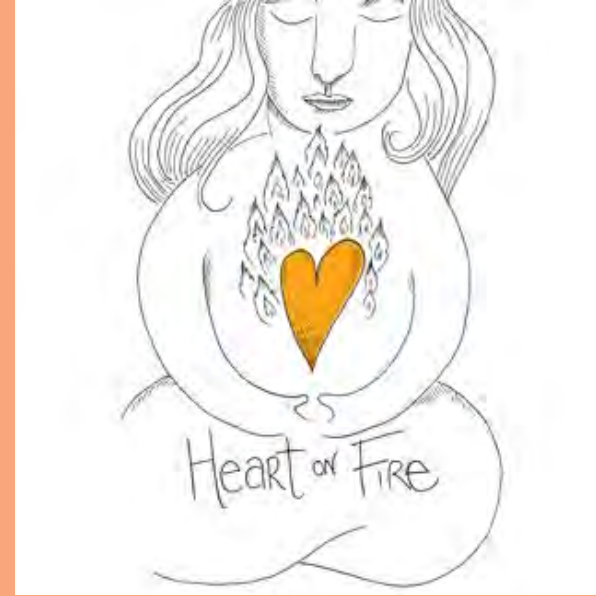
That's what it's like when you're moving deeper into your life.

Everything heats up. Your mind, emotions, body, relationships... everything's on fire. In the ancient language of Yoga, this fire is called *tapas*. It's what's burning in times of transformation when you're moving to a deeper level of authenticity and embodied wholeness in your life.

You don't light this fire.

The fire of transformation or *tapas* arises not through effort, will power, or goal-setting—but through awareness. Effort, will power, and goal-setting generate improvement not transformation.

Transformation takes less effort and more awareness.



The fire of transformation is stoked by the naked, uncontrived awareness that sees— *without blinking*—that your old patterns of thought, speech, and action are outmoded.

Seeing this can *feel* like stepping into incredibly hot water.

It generates a burning sensation all the way to the bottom of your soul.

And rather than allow the *tapas* to burn and the transformation to proceed—there's a tendency to pull away. How? By moving into action.

By doing something to fix, modify, or improve the patterns of the past. These strategies can be very useful. If what you want is to improve. But it's not transformation.

To transform, you don't have to know what you want.

You don't need clear goals. Or steps. Or programs. Or even a vision. You only need to *rest in the fiery awareness* that emerges as you see that the patterns of the past no longer serve you.

The patterns of the past are... past.

That's the simple—*burning*—message of the fire of *tapas*. Your past patterns have taken you this far but can't take you deeper. Naked awareness heightens your sensitivity and illuminates the tension between the well-honed patterns of the past and the fiery imperative of your soul. Awareness turns up the heat.

And your whole system reacts.

Your mind starts spinning and kicking up dust, pebbles, thoughts, and emotions. You want to move out of the fire. The burning awareness that *the life you have known is over*—can feel too hot to handle.

It's true. The old patterns of identity cannot handle the fire. Your old way of being has had its day. Now it's time for the fire to do its work.

The fire is there to teach you, purify you, and transform you.

This teaching, purification, and transformation occurs as you stay steady. You don't have to do the transforming. *You* can't. The fire of awareness does all the work. Your role is to stay present. To allow that which is burning away to do so.



Eric Klein is one of the few people on the planet who is both a lineage holder in a 5,000 year old yoga tradition and a best-selling business book author.

Visit Eric at www.wisdomheart.org

What's burned up in the fire?

Your outmoded self-images— ways of imagining who and what you are. As these self images dissolve away, the fire reveals a deeper teaching: *You are not your self-images, not your personal or cultural history.*

You are not the ideas, projections, hopes, or fears you have had about yourself.

As self-images fall away...you do not disappear.

But the you that remains is not an idea or projection. It's a living presence that has more in common with the fire of awareness than with thoughts of self.

Discovering this fiery self, beyond words and ideas, you suddenly find that the hot spring isn't boiling you alive. It's healing you. So, you eagerly step in deeper. Deeper than you ever imagined.

(Adapted from [50 Ways to Leave Your Karma](#) – a multi-media spiritual transformation program created by Eric Klein.)

INVITE FOR YOU

Repeat after me: "I am not my self-images. I am not my stories about creative joy. I am not my fears. I am not my hopes. I am burning in the light of awareness." Try saying it out loud.



Darrah Parker

"IT'S MY MISSION TO FIND
BEAUTY IN MY LIFE, EVEN ON
THE HARD DAYS."

Creative joy shows up in new ways for me these days. It looks different. It feels different. And sometimes, I have to dig deep to find it. As a new mom of a 5-month-old daughter, I am navigating new territory. I'm used to my time being *my* time. I'm used to freedom showing up in many ways that it doesn't show up anymore. Freedom to relax, eat, shower, and yes, even create are now on her clock.

Just yesterday, I had my whole day planned out in my head. There were blog posts to write, photos to edit, and maybe even a latte to drink leisurely in a café. All of these things were dependent on naps being on schedule. I giggle as I write this because if I've learned anything in the past five months it is that you can't depend on anything when it comes to babies.

So when the first nap only lasted 45 minutes and my plans were thrown off, I had two options: resist or let go. I chose to let go. My plans flew out the window and instead I went with *her* flow. Her flow is now *my* flow, after all. The more I realize this, the easier and more fun life is.

It turned out her plans were better than my plans. We found ourselves at storytime at a local bookstore, singing with other babies, perusing the aisles. Later, I wanted so much for her to nap at home so I could get work done. Instead, I had to act fast and found myself walking her around

the lake to get her to sleep. At first, my teeth were gritting, thinking about where I wanted to be, what I thought I *should* be doing. Then I let go, opened my eyes, and picked up my camera. Ahhh...I could breathe again.

When I resist the new rhythm, I feel myself closing off, gasping for air, getting resentful and tired, and losing sight of the beauty around me. As a photographer, it's my mission to find beauty in my life, even on the hard days – even on the days that don't go as planned. When I let go, I find myself more in touch with my creativity, more able to see the beauty around me, and much more likely to pick up my camera to photograph it.

Where do I find my creative joy? Hearing my daughter laugh. Sitting on the floor, singing “The Wheels on the Bus” for the 900th time that day. Watching my husband light up as he gives her her first cooking lessons. Seeing her sit up for the first time. Witnessing her discover new things every day – raindrops, birds, trees, her own feet. Walking around the lake to make sure she gets a nap, only to notice that spring has arrived and what a wondrous thing it is that I get to witness new life grow before my very eyes.

INVITE FOR YOU

Your creative joy has a rhythm. What is it?
Could you describe it? Could you live it for a
day? A weekend? A week?



Darrah Parker is a portrait and family photographer, new mama, and cookie connoisseur. Armed with her camera, she is on a constant search for the beauty in everyday Slices of Life.

Visit Darrah at www.darrahparker.com



Ronna Detrick

"IT IS CREATIVITY'S JOY
THAT BRINGS ME HOME"

When I think of creativity, I cannot help but go immediately to Genesis 1 and *the* Creation Story. It doesn't matter (at least to me) whether you believe it literally, figuratively, mythically, archetypally, or at all. That's not the point. It's a gorgeous story that gives us imagery, license, and blessing to go forth and do the same: to create with wild abandon and call it good!

It's the beginning of all that is. Only nothingness exists. Things are formless and empty. *Sound familiar?* And darkness hovers. *Even remotely close to describing the sometimes-state of your brain, your heart, your world? Uh huh. Thought so.*

From a swirling state of nothing, creativity bursts forth.

- god creates light and says *it is good*.
- god creates separation from the waters and spaces of dry land and says *it is good*.
- god creates plants and vegetation that burst forth and says *it is good*.
- god creates day and night - separate from one another - and says *it is good*.
- god creates the glorious creatures that fill the seas and skies and says *it is good*.
- god creates man and woman in divine image and says *it is good*.
- god rests. *it is good*.

The acceleration of the story, the quickening pace, the life that spontaneously explodes with each stanza, the exponential layers of growth and creativity and creation, cannot *not* bring forth a response of joy.

Creation (and creativity) summons forth joy. No matter your religious or spiritual proclivities (or not), the act of creating is *the thing* that connects us most profoundly to who we are at core; to who we are as individuals made in the image of god; to god's self as creator.

For me, the opposite is also true:

When I feel furthest from my truest self, from my deepest heart, from god, it is creation (and creativity) that brings me back; it is creativity's joy that brings me home. When in my darkest places and off' swirling spaces of nothingness, the slightest ray of hope peeks in when I will allow that god created from the same. And if I can hold on to even a shred of belief that I am god's creation...well...then that means I've got the same DNA.

I can stay in nothingness a little longer. I can hold on to faith. Creation - light, beauty, pure and gorgeous humanity, and unfathomable joy is on the way. It is good. It's all good. Rest.

INVITE FOR YOU

Next time you are in the darkness of the void, what would remind you to call on creative joy to bring you home? What bread crumbs could you scatter today to help you when you next forget?



Ronna Detrick gets hired to provide Spiritual Direction. Picture a hybrid of the iconic Oprah Winfrey and the slightly-irreverent Anne Lamott and you'd have a glimpse of both Ronna's conversational passion and faith-writing style.

Visit Ronna at www.ronnadetrick.com

Julie Daley

"MY CREATIVE JOY LOVES
FREEDOM AND FIRE."

Anyone that knows me even a little bit knows that I love to photograph flowers, because I love seeing sunlight through the petals or capturing how the petals circle themselves in an organic way around the stamen in the center. The joy I experience is beyond words. I know this because people have asked me to explain what I love so much about taking pictures of flowers, and I can't explain easily in words. It's about love and beauty.

I also love taking pictures; when I capture a composition that feels right, something clicks inside in a way that says, "This is it." It's a feeling of rightness, of a knowing inside me that has absolutely no words to it.

One of the aspects of Essence, according to the Sufi tradition, is Joy. Essence is the source of our creativity. When I feel this feeling of rightness of composition, I feel a quality of joy that is simple. When I dance, openly and fully, I feel many different qualities of joy; sometimes it is full and orgasmic, sometimes soft and tender, and sometimes fiery and fierce. When I write, I feel a joy that is more like wonder and knowing.



Fierce Joy.
Fiery Joy.
Soft Joy.
Tender Joy.
Orgasmic Joy.
Simple Joy.
Feminine Joy.

I wonder how many words there are for joy in other languages, because as I describe all of these ways of feeling when I create, whether in my work, dancing, writing or photography, or I am simply playing with my grandchildren (a very creative act!), there is a subtle difference in the quality of joy I experience.

What feeds it?

Freedom from my mind, freedom from fear, freedom from constraint.
Love fuels unabashed expression.

What gets in the way?

My mind, mostly. Over-thinking. Stressing about the outcome or finished product. Constraints that I put on myself.

If your creative joy had a voice, what would it say about what it loves, needs, and hates?

My creative joy loves freedom and fire. It loves music and bodies, color and texture, adjectives and verbs. It hates constraint and directions and it needs a strong container and a daily practice. It craves love and a deep connection to the sacred. Its voice is throaty and passionate and come up out of the deepest parts of my body.

When it's fired up and let loose to weave its magic, time is nonexistent and there is no right or wrong.

When the creative spigot is opened, I never know what will come out, from one minute to the next, and it is this that brings the greatest joy.

When I dance, I dance from my body, and I'm so in my body that my head gets quiet and my soul sparks.

What's your learning edge with creative joy these days?

These days my creative edge is to work consciously and invitingly with my sexual energy. Creative and sexual energy are two sides of the same coin, so to speak. I've been consciously creating with this idea to see if something else comes forth.

I know that so many people don't have the opportunity to have sex on a regular basis. I also know that many people who are celibate by choice find that using this energy for creation brings them closer to God. I'm not saying that's my choice, but I'm curious what will come from channeling it in ways I've not yet done.

INVITE FOR YOU

Connect the pathway between creative and sexual energy for yourself. What might that look like? Where might you go, explore, give voice to that you never have before?



Coach, teacher and writer, since 2003, Julie has led hundreds of people from all walks of life to take an inward journey of the creative heart—the source within each of us that guides us to answers, healing, and personal evolution.

Visit Julie at www.juliedaley.com

Tanya Geisler

"I WANT YOU TO BELIEVE THERE
IS UNTOLD AND UNEXPRESSED
BEAUTY WITHIN YOU YEARNING
TO BE RELEASED."

"Creative" and "joy" were at one point in my life, mutually exclusive concepts for me.

On the mean streets of advertising, you were from one side of the track or another. You were either a Suit or a Creative. (Like the Sharks vs the Jets but with far less fancy dance moves.)

Depending on your vantage point: Suits = out of touch stiff. Creatives = out of touch flakes.

Admittedly, I was a Suit. But I secretly harboured the belief that I was a Suit with a side of Creative. And no, not the kind that thought adding clipart to my .ppt presentations meant that I had a good design eye. (That sort of self-deprecating talk about my kind helped raise my stock with the Creatives, you see). No, I believed in the power of creativity, and that it was for all of us. And, armed with my ideological ways and Libran charm, I believed that I'd be the first one, ever, to bridge the two sides. I could see the value in both camps and knew our best work would come from bringing harmony to the creative process. And dare I say it, joy?

Umm. Not so much.

This work wasn't about joy. It was about work. The industry is built around creativity was a transactional endgame. Get an idea. Get people on board. Cook it or be cooked. Someone's not doing something right and with all that firepower, people get burnt.

That was then.

As I tripped and traipsed through the next stages of my life, I couldn't shake my Pollyanna belief that I could be a Suit AND a Creative. That burnt as I felt there wasn't a way to have it MY WAY. To be a powerful force in this world AND to be deeply rooted in a richly sustained and creative way. That I had something to be expressed.

It started with a new belief. That creativity may be about output, but it's not about outcome. And that the process was the point. Not the product. So I decided to "try" to commit to a belief in the okayness of creating for creating's sake. For the pure joy of it.

I started to see this: Advertising is a transactional endgame. Creativity is not.

And so, testing this new theory and buoyed by a desire to see some original art hung on our walls, my husband and I started painting. Just for fun. Just to see.

{We saw, and we happened to like what we saw. But that's hardly the point.}

For the most part, I get the new approach right. And then without warning, I start to treat my writing, painting or other creative pursuits as transactional, and, like clockwork, I shut down.

But now, I have a powerful ally. When I stop writing because I've allowed myself to measure my words with metrics like Facebook shares, likes and RTs, I have one fail-safe:

I sit down to draw with my seven-year-old daughter. She surveys the blank

page, for but a moment, then fearlessly attacks the paper. She has yet to throw a picture away in a moment of "it's not good enough". Immersed in the pure love of her process, she just makes it better. For her and her alone. And there are rainbows. And kitties. And peace signs. And joy.

So, my desire for you is this, you Creative, you.

I want you to believe that you were born to create. I want you to believe there is untold and unexpressed beauty within you yearning to be released. It needs to trust that you will not judge its imperfections, nor try to force it into something it's not. That you will love it for what it is. And that in time, when you have nurtured this tender new growth into the fulsome being that it wants to be, that you will lovingly release it into the world, so that others may rejoice in the beauty: of your words. Of your song. Of your silverwork. Of your adornment. Of your art.

That your "good enough" can move mountains, launch ships, set hearts free.

That your yes is someone else's yes.

I want you to create for you. And THEN spread it around. With joy and abandon.



Tanya Geisler is a certified business and life coach who simply cannot and will not shake her indomitable belief that if everyone knew and lived their values, they'd hold the key to shining in their life, in their work and in their life's work.

Visit Tanya at www.tanyageisler.com

INVITE FOR YOU

When you throw away "good enough" and "what will this get me?" and sit in the open space that creates, what arises?

Heather Plett

"JOY RESPONDS WELL TO INVITATION."

How to Create Joy

First, you need to stop.

STOP!

Stop trying to make Joy your bitch.
Peel your fingers off the hem of her cloak.

She doesn't respond well
to your frenzied attempts to master her.

"Oh, but the letting go..." you say,
"My heart is torn open
And I don't know when this river will stop
Flowing from my eyes."

"Will she ever come back?" you cry,
Desperate, lost, lonely.

I'm here to tell you that she will.
In the most unexpected ways.
But only when you extend the invitation.
And leave the rest up to her.

Joy responds well to invitation.

Grab a paintbrush and write the invitation on a big
bold canvas.
Joy will meet you there in the middle of the mess.
Sink down on the floor and welcome her.

Wrap the invitation around your body.
Dance like a wild woman or run through the woods.
Joy will emerge with the sweat through your skin.

Let the invitation flow with your funeral tears.
Joy will be there in each remembered story
You share with the loved one lost.



Whisper the invitation into the wind
As you stand at the roots of an impossibly tall tree.
Joy will be the breeze that rustles the leaves.

Plant the invitation in the moist Spring earth.
Joy will grow in the compost made up of
Many deaths from seasons past.

Crumple the invitation into a ball and toss it
Into the circle of friends who gather to support you.
Joy will be the fire in the middle that keeps you warm.

Send the invitation off on the wings of a butterfly
Joy will flutter past and remind you that her
presence
Can only come through the caterpillar's surrender.

There is only one way to create joy.

Stop trying.

Extend the invitation.
And then prepare your heart for her arrival.

INVITE FOR YOU

Repeat often: *Creative
joy is not your bitch.*



Heather Plett is a speaker, teacher, and facilitator whose specialties lie in the areas of creativity, leadership, storytelling and community. She teaches about the creative/spiritual practices that have helped her including mandalas, contemplative photography, and body art journaling.

Visit Heather at www.sophialeadership.com

Andrea Scher

“CREATIVE JOY FOR ME IS BEING IN THE ALIVENESS OF THE THING, AS OPPOSED TO STANDING ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN.”



Through her award-winning blog Superhero Journal and e-courses, Mondo Beyondo and Superhero Photo, Andrea Scher will inspire you to find your passions, dream big and say YES to the life you've always wanted.

Visit Andrea at www.superherojournal.com

What is creative joy for you?

Creative joy for me is being in the flow. It is being inside a project, a creative task, even going to the art supply store for the right tools. Creative joy for me is being in the aliveness of the thing, as opposed to standing on the outside looking in. Often, this simply means beginning. It means, stop thinking about it sister! and get into action. It means, stop trying to make it perfect and just do it. It means, let it be messy, unformed and full of energy.

What did it look like this week?

This week my creative joy looked like getting back in balance. It looked like filling out tax forms, registering my son for kindergarten and de-cluttering my house. It looked like making space for my creativity to show up. It was about creating the best conditions for creativity to naturally come through.

What gets in the way for you?

Wanting to do it perfectly, obsessive email checking.

What feeds it?

Quiet time, long showers, travel to somewhere new, color, moving my body.

What's your learning edge with creative joy these days?

These days I am learning to turn on the faucet. To just let the words come without so much worry about getting it right.

INVITE FOR YOU

What are the best conditions for your creative joy to flow?
What are the good enough conditions? What are you ready to just accept is the condition and still let it flow?



Jamie Ridler

“MY CREATIVE JOY HATES
COMPETITION AND JUDGMENT.
SHE WITHERS UNDER AN OVERLY
CRITICAL EYE.”

What is creative joy for you?

My creative joy emerges when through an artistic medium, be it dance, writing, blogging, photography, entrepreneurship, collage or painting, I connect with aliveness. Experiencing my own aliveness, another artist's, the Universe's or the project's, this is what makes me fall in love with the world, with the Universe, with art, with all of us, over and over again.

What did it look like this week?

This week I went on a 24-hour creative vision quest. Giving myself this extended space and time to delve deep into my artistic practice was just what my heart was yearning for.

What gets in the way for you?

My love of so many mediums generally means there are opportunities for joy everywhere but it also means that often some of my favourite creative expressions are neglected. Running my own business, entrepreneurship tends to the top of the list, while I rarely get to painting.

What feeds it?

Following my creative rhythm. As a person who spans the line between introvert and extrovert, I'm sensitive to when I need to be by myself with

a pen or a song or a camera or an idea and when I need to get out into the world, to connect with creative playmates and to see what magic we can stir up together!

If your creative joy had a voice, what would it say about what it loves, needs, and hates?

My creative joy hates competition and judgment. She withers under an overly critical eye. She doesn't like to be pushed. In fact, she's pretty fierce about that. She needs to be free and expressed and nourished with ideas and experiences and sleep and connection. And she's not above kicking me in the shins when I haven't provided! She wants to have fun and think and explore and try and wonder and grow and she would just love for everyone to jump into the creative pool together and play!

What's your learning edge with creative joy these days?

I seem to return to this edge, dancing on it again and again: tending to myself (my body, my spirit, my mind, my heart) so that I am fully available to the creative joy that wants to be expressed through me. This is my practice of devotion and in this moment, it's feeling rather new.



Jamie Ridler is a creative living coach and the director of Jamie Ridler Studios. Jamie's work helps women find the confidence and courage to discover and express their creative selves so they can be the star they are.

Visit Jamie at www.openthedoor.ca

INVITE FOR YOU

Describe your own 24-hour creative joy vision quest. Let your imagination run wild. Now, when will you give yourself this gift?



Janet Goldstein

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: The “Joy” Ingredient of Good Work and Good Ideas Writing, growing our businesses, making a difference can all seem more and more overwhelming and elusive in the noisy, hyper-speedy, competitive, and very public world we live and work in. The worry, confusion, and sheer pushing we do can make us forget that at the heart of our work is our creative spirit.

Yet what happens when we forget (*knock, knock*) that we ourselves are the joyful, creative heartbeat at the center of our work, our ideas, and our connections. How do we tap into and really listen to that joyful heartbeat? How can this joyful beat give us clarity and a lighter, happier step for even the hardest things we’re trying to do?

I’ve thought about this a lot over the last couple of years when I’ve felt like I was stuck in the drudgery or wasting time. I discovered that when I consciously connect to some creative, joyful element everything shifts for me. The extra half hour I spend finding a piece of art for a presentation, the bad drawing I make, or the moments of sharing some new insight with the right friend seem absolutely right.

So, when I when I received an email from my friend Jennifer Loudon asking me to write about Joyful Work, I got the idea to imagine a Joyful Heartbeat

“AT THE HEART OF OUR WORK IS OUR CREATIVE SPIRIT.”

Checklist to capture some ways to connect to this joyful beat. Below is this very provisional list.

I get a joyful heartbeat and a smile inside when...

“...I have a great conversation and am exchanging ideas about my work?” Who?

For ex: Bubbling exchange where I talk something through, see what I know, what I don’t, getting new angles and ideas.

“...I experience the pleasure of learning, even if some of it might be a side track.”

For ex: Looking for a perfect quote, a reference, roaming the library, interviewing someone.

“...I’m engaged in the actual making of something – cutting, folding, cutting, cooking, photoshopping, drawing.”

For ex: I love the crafting and shaping part of laying out a book, creating a vision board, making an artistic version of my idea, having a display, testing recipes or patterns for a blog post.

“...I get to the completing part and know it’s done.”

For ex: I'm so satisfied and driven to meet deadlines, have that Tada! feeling, keep a promise (to myself or others).

"...I feel some sensuous connection."

For ex: I'm out of the abstraction and physically connected with scents, touch, beauty, sound in my environment or the work itself.

"...I feel a sense of purpose and serving."

For ex: I really feel connected to my work when it matters, when it feels like it's part of some need or community, or good in the world.

"...I love it when I sense that people will want what I'm working on, that I'm getting feedback that it's good."

For ex: There's nothing like the thrill and creative joy that comes from connecting my work with an audience.

"...I love that sense of connecting with nature."

For ex: Imagine yourself sitting with a notebook or sketchbook at the beach

or in the woods. (According to recent research, forests have healing properties and reduce anxiety, along with lots of other amazing things. Makes sense, doesn't it?)

"...I always feel connected and joyful when I'm in a private, safe space and letting it flow."

For ex: Get your critical grandmother, naysayer teacher, or boss off your shoulders so you are safe, at ease, and in a private space with your ideas, beliefs, words, and the story you need to tell.

Do some or all of these resonate with you?

What's missing?

Which do you most turn to already?

How could you add one these elements into your work overall or one specific project?

INVITE FOR YOU

Use Janet's joyful checklist to find what resonates for you.



Janet Goldstein is a publishing and strategy consultant with more than 25 years of experience at three of the largest U.S. publishers. She is the co-author of *It's Not About the Coffee* and a frequent speaker on publishing, entrepreneurship, and good ideas.

Visit Janet at www.janetgoldstein.com

Kyeli Smith

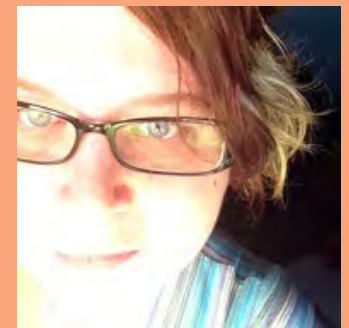


[CLICK HERE TO SEE KYELI'S VIDEO!](#)

INVITE FOR YOU

Kyeli's enthusiasm for creative joy is contagious. Breathe in her message to you and then take your creative energy and get it up and out into the world – in anyway – today.

Kyeli Smith (that's me!) is co-leader of the Connection Revolution, teaching people to change the world through connection. My wife is also my business partner - which is awesome - and together we work to foster love, tolerance, healing, communication, and personal growth. I'm a writer, a witch, a lesbian, and an unschooling mom. I also sing in the shower, wear fantastic stripy socks, and believe in faeries.



Visit Kyeli at www.paceandkyeli.com

Lianne Raymond

"THEN LET THE FIRE OF MY DESIRE TURN
INTO THE DANCE OF WILD PLAY."



Lianne Raymond, M. Ed. is a certified life coach, educator, and yogini. She also has been called a free spirit, a ruthless questioner, and a giver of delicious hugs. In her coaching, her teaching, and her life, she is guided by the question "What if you let your heart move you instead of living a life of forcefulness?"

Visit Lianne at www.lianneraymond.com

An invocation to restore creative joy

Before I create, allow me to be part of creation – to be re-created with the sweet breath of the wind and the spark of warmth from the sun above and the fire that burns deep in the heart of the earth. Let me rest until the birds visit me with their songs. Let me feel the patience of my being in the stones polished by the rain. Let me rest until the rest is done. Let me rest until I can feel the flames of the wild fire at the core of everything licking me tenderly – tickling my desire.

Then let the fire of my desire turn into the dance of **wild play**. Let me laugh spontaneously at the miracle of life. Let me climb the trees under which I once rested. Let me smell every flower that has burst into bloom on the forest floor. Let me throw away any attempts to control and become a full participant in love. Let me transcend effort, striving and ambition and unleash freedom, imagination and the wilderness within. Let me dare to love first and dare to love more.

Let deep rest and wild play lead me into harmony with creative rhythms. Let me be receptive, responsive and attuned. Let me abandon the tensions that keep me stuck seeing the small bits and raise me up and let me see the wholeness. Let creative joy inhabit me as much as I inhabit it.

Deep rest + wild play = creative joy

Hallelujah and Amen.

INVITE FOR YOU

Deep rest + wild play = creative joy. How can you pray those qualities today?

Marney Makridakis

"HOW MIGHT I MAKE THIS MOMENT MORE FUN?"



The biggest thing that seems to get in the way of creative joy is stress about time. I suggest creating a new clock based on the things that bring you joy by replacing all the old “hours” with a different element. In *Creating Time*, I suggest replacing the hours with “ours”; the “ours” represent all our cherished states of being, the beautiful things that are globally important to all of us. After all, time is not “hours”, time is ours!

You can use your new clock to tell time in a joyful, nonchronological way. For example, my “our” for 1:00 is “FUN.” So, instead of seeing that now it’s 1:00, I see that now it is FUN!

This reminds me to measure the moment in fun, asking myself questions like these:

- What is fun about this moment?
- How might I make this moment more fun?
- Where is fun hiding in this moment?

INVITE FOR YOU

Name your *ours*. Reclaim your creative time.



Marney K. Makridakis is the author of *Creating Time: Using Creativity to Reinvent the Clock and Reclaim Your Life*, and the founder of ArtellaLand.com, the groundbreaking online community for creators of all kinds.

Visit Marney at www.artellaland.com



Samantha Reynolds

"CULTIVATING CURIOSITY ABOUT
THE MOST MUNDANE THINGS."

What is creative joy for you?

Creative joy is words dropping out of me like ripe cherries. It is so fast and magical that I am hardly the writer at all; I am mostly the bird, devouring them, wondering in awe at their sweetness.

What did it look like this week?

This week, I wrote a poem about something that made me weep. I almost crumpled with the tenderness of it all. And strangely, finding the words to echo that memory restored me to a deep and exquisite joy.

What gets in the way for you?

Thinking about what will please people gets in the way of my creative joy.

What feeds it?

My creative joy is fed by sitting in the seat of the present moment. Savouring the details of my day. Cultivating curiosity about the most mundane things.

If your creative joy had a voice, what would it say about what it loves, needs, and hates?

My creative joy needs both chaos and quiet.

What's your learning edge with creative joy these days?

My journey these days is to read books I would never normally read. Work a different muscle. Be braver. I'm aware that I need to cross-train my creativity to experience a full palette of joy. It's a bit scary but I also sort of love the feeling of my stomach dropping into my knees. It means I'm still engaged, still sparkly and alive.

Ransack your dreams

Hustle the dictionary
for the precise word

ransack your dreams

lift dialogue from that couple
who broke up
on the bus.

There is no virtue
in digging in the dust
for water.

The world is sopping
with creative bounty

you are standing
in the fat rain

throw your head back

drink
drink.

INVITE FOR YOU

Today pick up a book you wouldn't normally read to mine the pages for inspiration. What words catch your eye? How do they make you feel?



In 2011, Samantha Reynolds pledged to write one poem a day to train herself to savour the world around her. Her popular poetry blog, bentlily.com, has inspired readers around the world to slow down and take notice of their lives. When not racking up reams of poetry, Reynolds runs Echo Memoirs, an award-winning storytelling firm specializing in personal biographies and company history books. She lives in Vancouver, B.C.

Visit Samantha at www.bentlily.com



'Digging Deeper' Questions


What other words or phrases mean creative joy to you?

Who do you imagine experiences a ton of creative joy everyday?

Names of actual people, types of people, professions...

Who do you consider your creative joy mentors? (you need not know them nor do they need to be "real" people nor alive).

What sucks about creative joy?
What's hard or scary or just not possible for you?



What medium or expression for your creative joy are you pining to try or experience again?

What medium are you afraid to try?
How about sure you could never actually do?

What is your learning edge with creative joy right now?



The Creative Joy Retreat

SO HERE'S OUR THEORY:

Reclaiming and nourishing your creative joy gives your life meaning.

It puts you in touch with your why - your reason for being, and it does it through experience rather than a complicated seven-step plan.

It helps you develop resiliency – the super vital skill we all need.

It infuses the repetitive stuff of life with a rosy glow that isn't new age hackneyed positive thinking but rather the knowing that this is your life and you are making it *matter*.

And it makes your brain and body feel – and function - a whole lot better.

We'd like to invite you to

The Creative Joy Retreat

Thursday October 24th – Monday
October 28th

Here's what you will experience:

- Self-trust – the gateway to so much goodness
- Deep rest – far deeper than mere sleep
- Creative flow & focus – through writing, photography, intuition mining, small group dialogues and lots more
- Renewed energy – through all-level yoga, breathing, nature, delish healthy food
- Business acumen – through Q & A with us three - you ask, we tell. We are all three published authors (9 books between us), self-employed teachers, and have blazed unconventional paths – how do we make it work?
- Connection – connect with glorious, imperfect, open-hearted women and know you are never alone in your struggles and questions
- Your own rhythm – to be yourself, to retreat to your room, to follow what beckons
- Magic – three devoted teachers, writers, artists, activists bringing our all to create an experience that you will cherish forever (that's our heart-felt intention)

The Creative Joy Retreat

The retreat will flow through yoga, meditation, writing and photography each day with all sorts of small surprises and a community of like-minded people and love love love. Our time together will be a lovely balance of learning, hanging out, connecting, resting, and reflecting. You will be...

Writing into JOY with Jennifer Louden

Writing is both a way to notice joy, a way to remove the obstacles to joy, and yes, it's possible to write with joy. Everyday we will play with writing, with words, for the sheer joy of self-expression – not product! We are also going to use writing to help us understand our personal style of joy, our limits and edges and fears, and how to love ourselves into more self-love.

There will be a mix of personal journaling techniques, observation, deepening and thickening a piece of writing, and time to talk about structure, writing practice, and blogging.

We will also be mixing writing and photography this year – letting each practice inform, liberate, illustrate and give birth to new insights.

JOYful yoga with Marianne Elliott

Yoga sometimes gets the reputation of being terribly earnest and serious, and there is a serious side to yoga. But for this retreat our focus will be on JOY. Can yoga help us reconnect JOYfully to our bodies? Can it help us play more freely and joyfully with our writing, and our photography? And can it support our meditation practice? The practices at the JOY retreat will be designed to do just that. Marianne will lead a series of joyful yoga practices suitable for all levels of experience and all bodies. You don't need to have any previous experience of yoga; if you are an experienced yogi, come along and play with us as we rediscover the joy of the fundamentals.



Capturing JOY with Tracey Clark

Learning to see the beauty around us is the first step in finding our JOY. By observing the world—color, space, shadow and light—we are able to create and carry a perspective that is rooted in appreciation and gratitude. As we move forward, we can tap into creative outlets to further heighten our awareness. Photography is an ideal tool to use to translate what our heart and mind see into a distilled and tangible expression of what is authentic and true to each of us. Exploring the woods and grounds of the Garrison Institute, sharing stories and capturing JOY as we go, you'll gather the insights and inspiration to picture your life in a whole new light (literally and figuratively). No previous photography experience is necessary. DSLR, point-and-shoots and/or iPhones are ideal for this work. Bring your laptop if you have one.



FAQ about the Creative Joy Retreat



What outcome will I achieve?

Nothing and everything. Seriously, please don't come to the retreat if you want to accomplish something. Creative joy is shy and agendas make it go underground. That is why so many of us feel dried out and brittle – we always have to be accomplishing, finishing, producing. Creative joy needs nurturance, time to play, support, beauty, music, color, and companions to return its gifts to you. Which is where the everything comes in.

Do I have to be slim and bendy to do yoga?

We sure hope not! Yoga invites you and your body into creative joy. The most important aspect of the retreat is to give you an experience of creative joy that you can return to forever, and build on. Yoga – the body in general – is a very fast way to do that but it can be scary to do alone. We are often cut off from the body and need the energy of like-minded women and the container of a retreat to let go into our wild feminine nature.

What about writing? What will we actually do?

You will play with words, with free writing, with seducing the logical brain into loosening its grip on the Muse – not so you produce a work of art (although you may well find yourself flooded with great ideas for projects, business plans, books, stories, poems) but so you can be fed and restored, inspired and held.

And photography? What if I suck?

There is no suck. There is texture, color, shape, emotion, and the direct encounter with the world. Photography is a way to make love to the world and to yourself, and thus to invite more energy and inspiration in. You will get some tips and ideas of making the technical side work but just so you can play with more ease. We'll use our cameras to find and create joy for ourselves.



The Creative Joy Retreat

This is your Creative Joy Invitation!

Play once or every day to increase your creative joy AND be entered to win free tuition for the retreat. Between May 15th and June 14th, share what brings you joy or feeds your creative joy. It can be a photo, an art piece, a dance, poem, description of a moment... anything - and we mean anything - that gives you creative joy or feeds your creative joy goes!

So you might make something and then document it, or you might snap a picture of a moment that inspires you...it's what feels good!

Share whatever expresses your creative joy on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, your blog or Tumblr, skywriting, smoke signals, sand sculpture...

So we know you played and so we can add your name to the hat for a chance to win free retreat tuition (room and board not included) please:

- on Instagram use #mycreativejoy
- on Twitter use #mycreativejoy
- share a link or upload your photo or artwork to Jen's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/jenlouden.writer and include the words **MyCreativeJoy**

DON'T SWEAT THIS - pick a way to share that makes you happy and go play. Our aim is to inspire as many people as we can with creative joy. Feel free to share this link to download this book, too!
www.jenniferlouden.com/workshops-retreats/the-creative-joy-retreat

About the Retreat Leaders



Jennifer Loudon is a personal growth pioneer who helped launch the self-care movement with her first book *The Woman's Comfort Book*. She's the author of five more books on well-being and personal wisdom including *The Woman's Retreat Book* and *The Life Organizer* that have inspired more than a million women in 9 languages. She helps creative people who want to change the world get to it, and that includes herself. She believes self-love + world-love = wholeness for all.

Visit Jen at www.jenniferloudon.com




Marianne Elliot is a writer, human rights advocate and yoga teacher. She created 30 Days of Yoga to help people take care of themselves so they can do their good work in the world. She's the author of *Zen Under Fire* about her work with the UN in Afghanistan, where she found joy in yoga even in the midst of war. She is RYT 200 with the Yoga Alliance, and Regional Leader for Off the Mat, Into the World.

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Tracey Clark is a photographer, author, teacher, and the founder of Shutter Sisters, the online collaborative photo blog for women with a passion for photography. With a creative career spanning 20 years, Tracey brings her experience and enthusiasm to everything she does; from shooting to writing to teaching. Tracey co-wrote *Expressive Photography: a Shutter Sisters Guide to Shooting From the Heart* and is the author of *Elevate the Everyday: A Photographic Guide to Picturing Motherhood*.

Visit Tracey at www.traceyclark.com



If you were to make a
commitment to creative joy, a
devotional vow, what would it
look like, sound like, shine like?

If you were to continue in
your current relationship with
creative joy, what would it look
like, sound like, shine like?