

**A YEAR
FOR
YOURSELF**



Working creatively on your recovery



Workbook
for Makers

Natascha Deijmann



Working creatively on your recovery

Workbook for Makers

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MAKER IN RECOVERY

"I let the little girl inside me play with materials, paint, cut, and paste. I do not feel the need to explain everything she creates. It is fine as it is. Words are also written down in little stories, and that is fine just the way it is."

I am Natascha Deijmann (1971) and I am in recovery.

I am a self-taught visual artist and writer, and as a Care & Welfare Expert by Experience, I use my recovery story to offer hope and optimism to other people.

HOPE FOR RECOVERY



If you are looking for a creative way to work on your recovery, I hope to offer you some guidance with this workbook. It is intended as a book you can use on your journey toward a different, creative way of life; your own way of life.

From my head, to my hands

For years, I was in survival mode while also having to run along in the rat race. Eventually, I was no longer able to keep up with the rest, and everything came to a halt. Physically and mentally, I was no longer able to connect with myself, others, and God. I felt as if I had lost everything and had nothing left to live for.

But somewhere, there was still a glimmer of hope. Hope for the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. I just didn't know where to find the energy to start walking and get moving. All my memories were buried deep until one day I decided to paint my feelings with a box of watercolors I had lying around. It was the only way I had to let the people around me know what was going on inside me. It was the first step I took on the path to a new life, a new identity, and life in the light.

Today I am an artist. Today I am free from all the pain and sorrow that kept me in survival mode. I have forgiven and I am forgiven. Today I live in the light and no longer in the dark.

In this book, I want to introduce you to the path I have walked because I have that hope for you too. You, too, can pick yourself up again and learn to live with your disruptive situation. Creativity can be a tool for you to explore exactly what you feel and think about yourself and the world around you. Perhaps it is a tool for you to communicate with those around you; that was and still is for me. I hope to inspire you to search for what your own way of life might be.

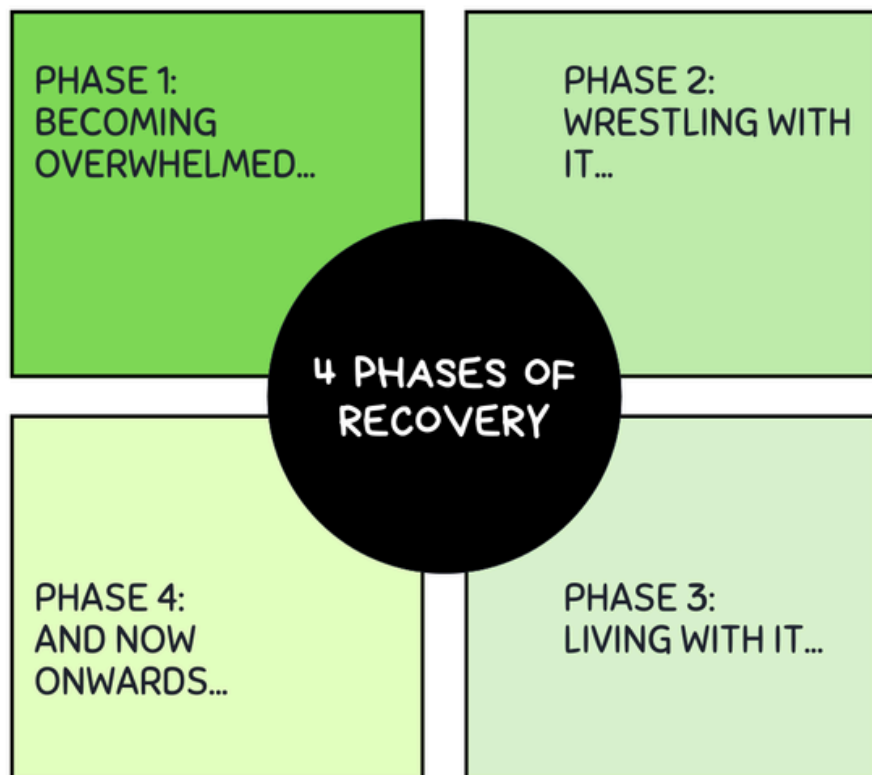


ART WITH A SMALL A

People often tell me that they are not creative. Or they find the idea of making art alienating, as if it were not meant for them. I think these feelings and thoughts stem from the idea of THE art world; an elitist world of museums, wealthy art collectors, and art academies. All very nice, but totally out of date...in this day and age, anyone can call themselves an artist!

I call the art created by Makers art with a lowercase a. Art from the heart. Art out of necessity. Art made from worthless materials and super cheap paint. Art the way I want it and art the way you want it. It is primarily about self-expression and the creative process one goes through, which can be a tool for recovery. And what is created touches us because the Maker communicates with us. The Maker seeks connection, and we communicate back.

So, dear reader, there are multiple art worlds, and in this book, you and I are entering our art world...the world of recovery-supportive art. Inspired by Gagne (2004), I have divided this book into 4 phases of 13 weeks.



Recovering from a disruptive situation

In this book, I try to find you, right where you are now. I assume that you feel hope somewhere, otherwise you wouldn't have started reading this book. I feel that hope for you too, and I want you to know that you are not alone. Somewhere in the world, there is someone who knows what you are feeling right now, who understands how difficult it is, and who wants to show you that, step by step, you can get out of this situation. This probably seems impossible to you right now, but it is possible... provided you decide to work on your recovery for a year and allow yourself to do so in a creative way.

For me, art is DIY therapy. That is how it started, and that is still how it is 10 years later. I managed to connect with that part of me that wants to play. I want to give you permission now, too, to go and play... it is allowed. Not having to be an adult for a while is perhaps what most adults are yearning for. Some people go play in the woods, play with animals, or perform in a theater, dance at a festival... you name it. For people like you and me, it becomes harder to find the energy to search within ourselves for that child part. In my case, that child was a victim of extremely violent and traumatic situations and had become invisible to the outside world. Too afraid and too sad. Making art still helps me reconnect so that the fragmented can become a whole.

Think of me as your ally and your role model. Let's build the bridge between you and the world around you together.



A YEAR FOR YOURSELF



Question 1: How do you want to give your creativity a place in your daily life?

Question 2: Where do you stand now?

Question 3: What do you want to use this creative learning process for?

How does this book work?

The book is divided into 4 parts of 13 weeks. Each week follows the same structure, in which I ask you to create something and write things down. There is a logical sequence in which I try to guide you into the world of experimenting, exploring, playing, and letting go of perfectionism and fear of failure.

Creating

Every week, you will read an assignment in which we will work with all kinds of materials. I describe the materials I used, but you are of course free to look for materials that you find pleasant or beautiful! Go to the art supply store or the thrift store and make this part of your creative process. After 13 weeks of creating, you will have learned a skill and worked on your recovery.

Writing

I discovered *The Pillow Book* by the Japanese author Sei Shonagon through a creative writing course I once took and felt inspired to share this way of writing with you as well. Every week, I give you a writing assignment where you can reflect on the things in your life. These are small blocks of text that playfully outline how things stand for you this year.

Phases of recovery

Recovery usually involves ups and downs. It is an individual process within which you learn and unlearn things. It can be very tiring, difficult, and emotional. The nature of the disruptive situation and/or the condition you are dealing with determines your challenges and possibilities. Therefore, view the 4 phases of recovery as a tool to work on your recovery, but in your own way.





Tip for makers

Save everything you make
so that you can review
your process at the end
of the year.

WEEK 1

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...



I discovered that I could say things
with colors and shapes that I could
not say in any other way — things for
which I had no words.

Georgia O'Keeffe

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

weekly assignment 1

CHAOS

Create: Try to visualize what chaos looks like on paper using all kinds of different types of paint, pencil, marker, pen, crayon, etc. How does chaos feel in your head? How does the chaos around you feel? What colors and symbols come to mind?

Write: This week, write about the things that are chaotic, the things that can cause chaos, and the things that can pull you out of the chaos.





color chart



WEEK 2

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...



“

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot
change,
courage to change the things I
can,
and wisdom to know the
difference.

weekly assignment 2

FRAGMENTS

Making: Paint all sorts of random spots on paper with water and various types of paint such as acrylics, Ecoline, ink, etc. Let it dry, and then try to emphasize the fragments with different types of chalk and pencil by turning them into shapes, drawing lines, and whatever else comes to mind intuitively. It doesn't have to look beautiful. It is about the process. Keep the finished work.

Writing: Do you want to write about the things that have fallen apart, the things you can no longer put back together, and the things needed to make a whole out of them?



WEEK 3

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...



Growth is painful.
Change is painful.
But nothing is as painful as
remaining stuck in a place where
you don't belong.

MANDY HALE

weekly assignment 3

PUZZLE TIME

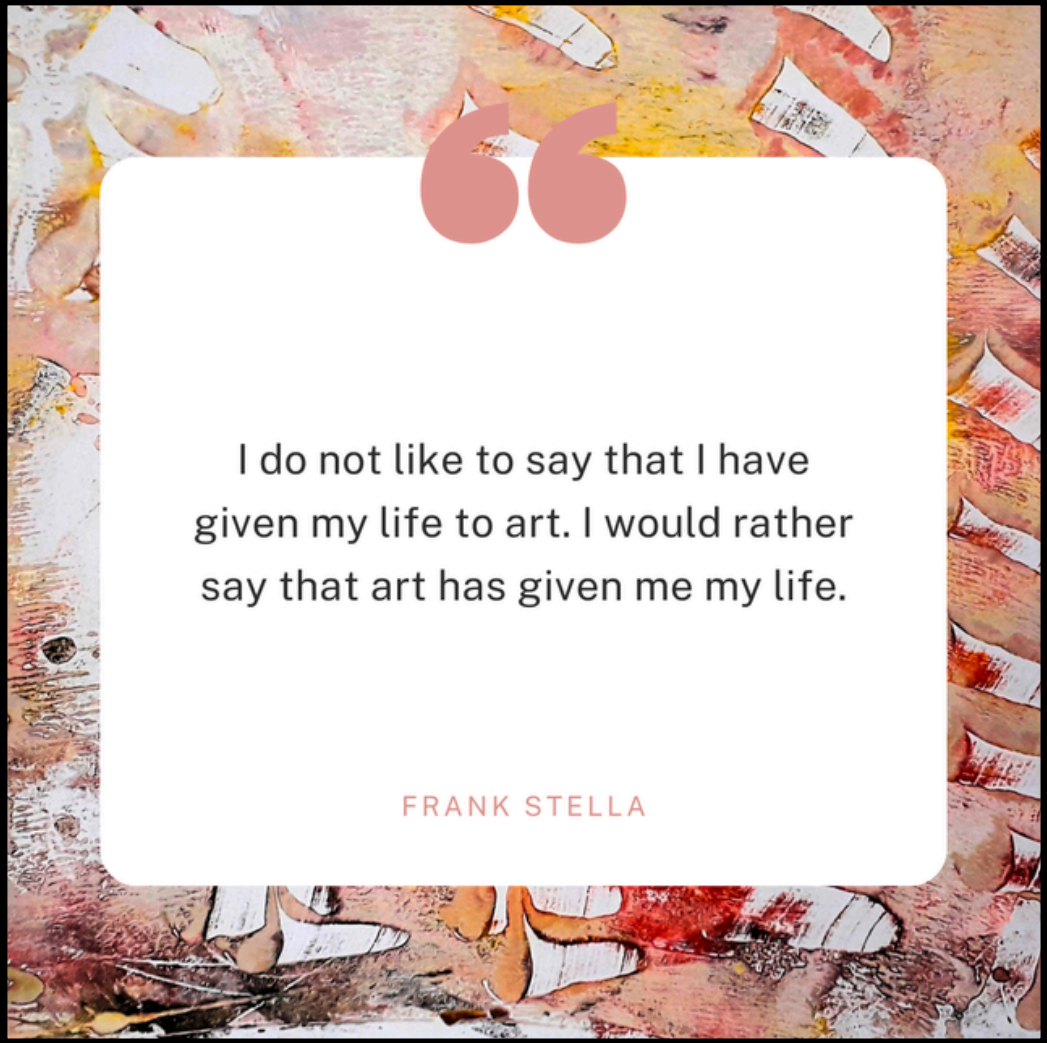
Making: We continue making collage paper. Work with all kinds of different types of paper using any materials that seem interesting to you. Experiment and don't throw anything away! Always let the paper dry thoroughly and see if you can go over it again with another material. You can also use natural materials such as sand, flowers, or tea and coffee. Save everything for later assignments.

Writing: This week we are going to write about the time you need to think about things; I call that puzzle time. Just time to think about things, to think things through, or to think back on. Would you like to write about your puzzle time?



WEEK 4

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...



I do not like to say that I have
given my life to art. I would rather
say that art has given me my life.

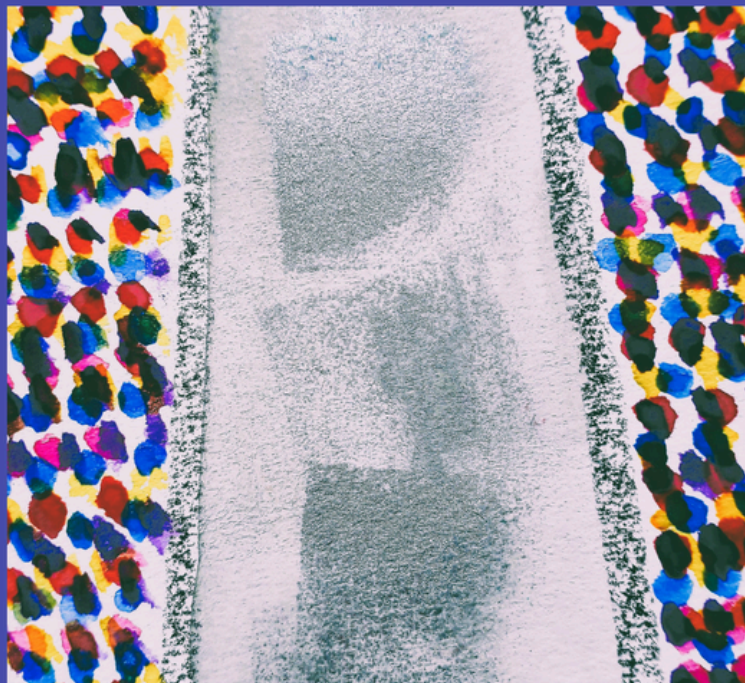
FRANK STELLA

weekly assignment 4

INNER WORLD

Making: This week, try working with paper using Ecoline in combination with chalk, marker, or pencil. What does your inner world mean to you? How can you stay connected to the outside world? Can you make yourself understood, or do you experience a separation between yourself and the things of the outside world? Just try to visualize it and keep all the work you create.

Writing: This week, we are writing about the things in your inner world. What is it like there? Are you safe? Unsafe? Are you alone? Can you access your memories? Use sensory words such as hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting.





color chart



WEEK 5

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...



“

I can choose to be a victim of the world or an adventurer in search of treasure.

It is all a matter of how I view my life.

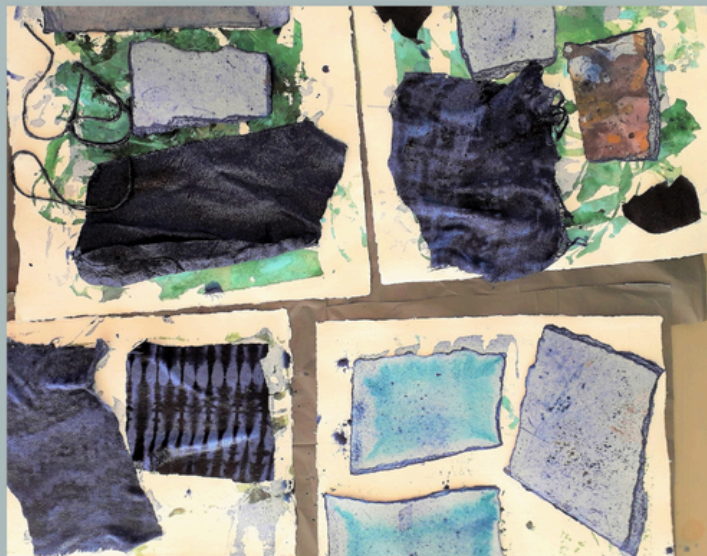
PAULO COELHO

weekly assignment 5

HIDE

Make: This week, collect fabrics and thick paper. Tear them into pieces. Mix different colors of acrylic paint with water and coffee grounds in small bowls. Place the pieces of fabric and paper in the mixture. After a while, take the pieces out and lay them out to dry on large sheets of paper. When everything is dry, you will have different colors of paper, as well as sheets of paper where the remaining paint has dried. Save everything for later assignments.

Writing: This week we are going to write about the ways in which you hide from the outside world. Sometimes you also hide feelings and thoughts about yourself and others. Where do you keep them? And when you hide, do you know why? Is it a way to give yourself peace, to feel safe, or something else... write this week about the things that are hidden.



WEEK 6

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...



A painting is not a depiction of an
experience.

It is an experience.

MARK ROTHKO

weekly assignment 6

BROKEN

Make: We are going to draw to music. Take a thick and a thin black marker. Grab a large sheet of paper. Put on a song that reminds you of this week's word. Hold a marker in each hand, close your eyes, and let your hands run smoothly over the paper to the rhythm of the music. Make several sheets this week and save everything for later assignments.

Write: Try to write about the things that are broken. Are you broken? Your heart? Has a connection been broken between you and the outside world? Have you perhaps broken something?



WEEK 7

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...

A large, stylized purple quotation mark is positioned at the top of a white rectangular box. The box is centered on a background of vibrant, textured purple and pink brushstrokes.

Artists are people driven by the
tension between the desire to
communicate and the desire to hide.

D.W. WINNICOTT

weekly assignment 7

TO FLEE

Making: We are going to make collage paper using acrylic paint and palette knives. Spread the paint thickly on the paper and mix the colors together. Create patterns and movements that remind you of FLEEING. Experiment with the different colors and remember that you can let layers dry first and then go over them again. This way, you prevent everything from turning into a brown mush. Save all your finished work for later assignments.

Writing: This week, write about things that make you want to run away, things you no longer want to run from, and things that remind you of people who have left.



WEEK 8

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...



“

Art enables us to find ourselves
and lose ourselves at the same
time.

THOMAS MERTON

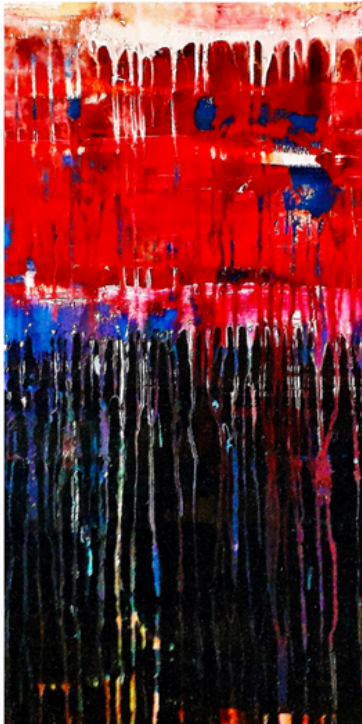
weekly assignment 8

CONFUSION

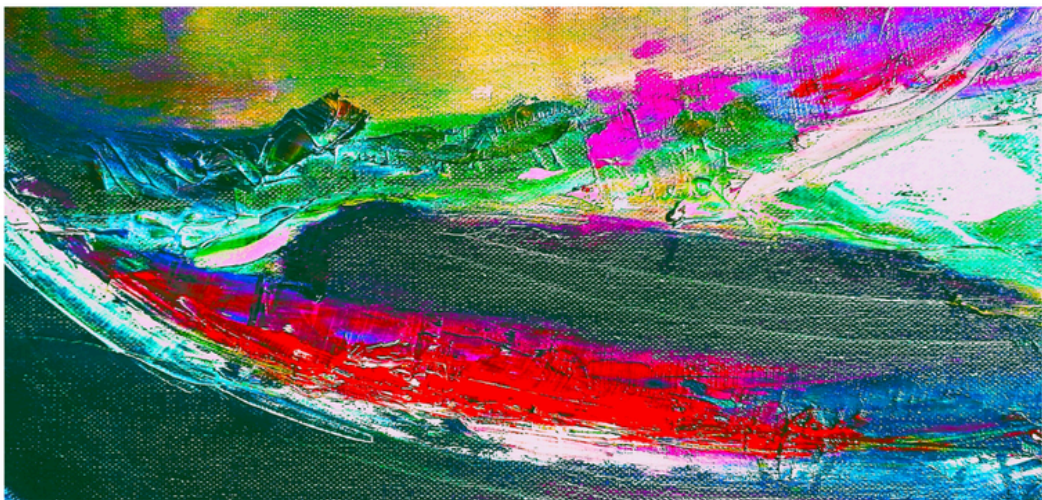
Make: This week, we are drawing inspiration from Vincent van Gogh. Paste a card or image with a text that holds meaning for you onto a piece of paper and go over it with different colors of acrylic paint in Vincent's style. Allow the different layers to dry in between for maximum effect. Working in layers symbolizes what you carry within you that is not always visible to others.

Write: This week, let us write about the things that confuse us and where we experience emotions that cannot always be properly explained to outsiders.





color chart



WEEK 9

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...



Be patient as you become someone
you have not been before.

TANYA MARKUL

weekly assignment 9

TO SURVIVE

Making: We are going to start with your first simple mixed media collage. Create a base of various materials on paper or canvas board. Also make a piece of paper with a solid layer that you will then tear into pieces. Glue this paper onto your base and your first collage is ready.

Writing: Would you like to write this week about the things that force you to survive? These can be things you have already survived or things that force you to stay in survival mode.



WEEK 10

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...

“

You must awaken the deep pain within yourself and give it a place to live that is not in your body. Let it live in the art. Let it live in what you write. Let it live in music. Let it be absorbed by building better connections. Your body is not a coffin where pain can be buried. Lay it down somewhere else.

EHIMEORA

weekly assignment 10

TIRED

Making: This week we are going to work with Ecoline and ink again. Choose paper that can withstand moisture well and first make circles or other shapes with oil pastels. Then, make stains in various colors using the Ecoline, ink, and water. Try to visualize your fatigue through the patterns you create. Allow time for drying and save your finished work.

Writing: This week we are going to delve into the fatigue that makes us stand still. Write about the things that are tiring, the things that need changing, and the things that need to be done that make us tired.



WEEK 11

Recovery Phase 1: Being overwhelmed...

A large, stylized pink quotation mark icon.

Don't think about making art, just do it. Let everyone else decide whether it is good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. Make more art while they decide.

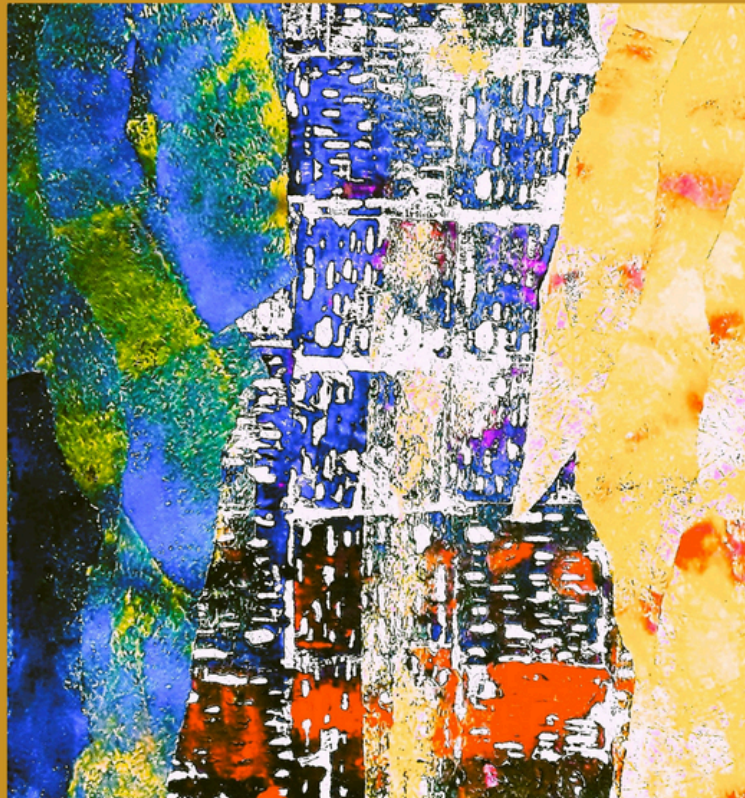
ANDY WARHOL

weekly assignment 11

SUPPRESS

Making: We are going to stamp! Search your house for worthless materials to make prints with, such as plastic waste, bottle caps, but also homemade stamps made from potatoes, cork, etc. Experiment with applying acrylic paint to the stamp and keep all your finished work.

Writing: This week we are writing about things that oppress, things that should no longer be suppressed, and pressure that makes you flee into your inner world...



WEEK 12

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...

A large, stylized purple quotation mark icon, consisting of two thick, rounded strokes, positioned at the top of a white text box.

Art is not always about beautiful things. It is about who we are, what has happened to us, and how our lives are affected.

ELIZABETH BROWN

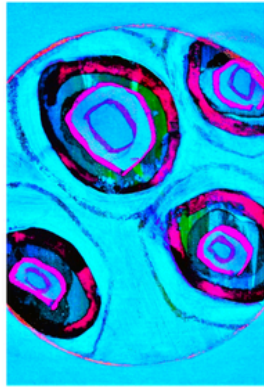
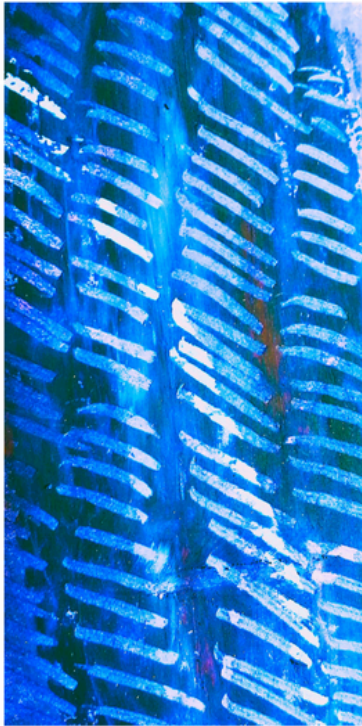
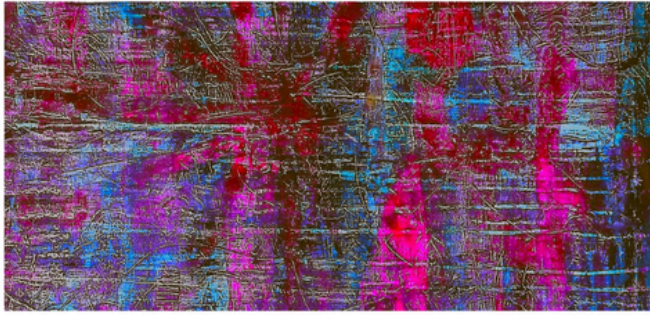
weekly assignment 12

FURY

Make: Take sturdy paper and paint it with acrylic paint. Then, use sharp objects to make scratches. Express your anger in the collage papers you create this week. What colors does your anger have? Does a symbol emerge?

Write: Shall we write about the things that make you angry, things that should lead to anger, and things that should be resolved so that the anger can disappear?





color chart



WEEK 13

Recovery Phase I: Being overwhelmed...

An abstract, colorful background with a white rounded rectangle in the center. The background features a mix of orange, purple, blue, and green hues with a textured, painterly appearance. The white rectangle contains a large purple quotation mark at the top, followed by a quote in black text, and the name 'ROB BELL' at the bottom.

“

What every artist must learn is
that even the failed pieces are
essential.

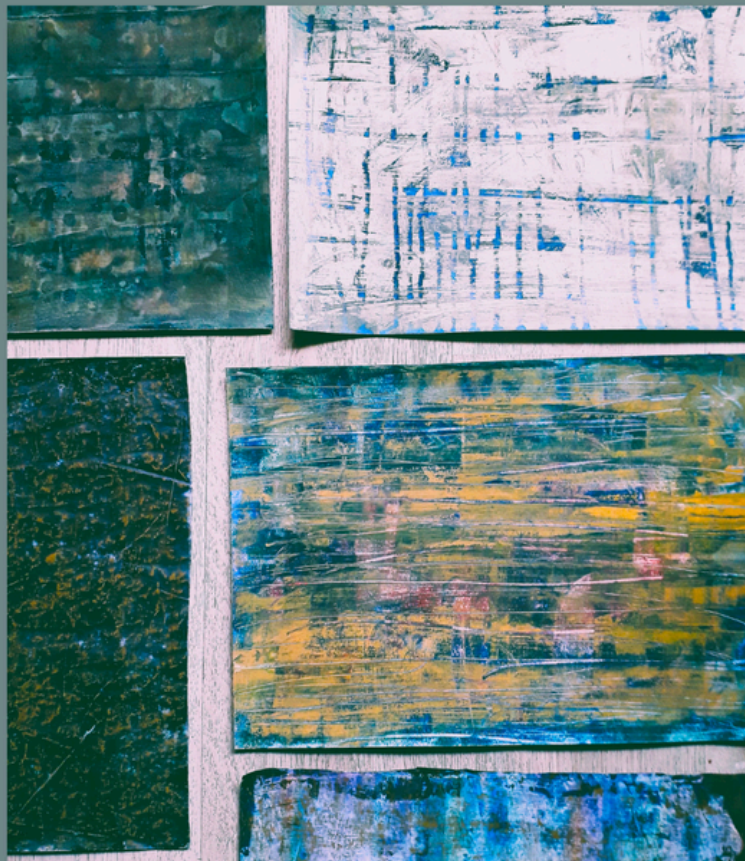
ROB BELL

weekly assignment 13

STAND STILL

Making: This week we will combine all the techniques we have learned in free work. Explore what your favorite technique is and experiment with types of paper and paint, colors, symbols, and tools you enjoy using. Make collage papers!

Writing: In the final week of Phase 1, we will write about the things that make us pause, the things you no longer want to dwell on, and the things that leave you speechless.





Tips for makers

Focus on the creative
process...not on the end
product..

WEEK 14

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...



Art is not in the tools,
materials, and equipment you
use. It is in the way you see the
world.

RICK RUBIN

weekly assignment 14

REGRET

Making: In phase 2, we will get started on creating abstract work. I experienced this as a period of solving a puzzle. All the pieces of paper symbolize the many puzzle pieces involved in exploring the past and seeking the link to the present. This week, create abstract collages in color groups. In the photo, you can see the purple-pink-salmon group.

Writing: Shall we write this week about the things that evoke feelings of regret, things that are regrettable, and things that other people should express regret for?



WEEK 15

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...

“

The creative process is a process
of surrender, not of control.

JULIA CAMERON

weekly assignment 15

TO FIGHT

Make: This week, dive into your wardrobe or head to a thrift store in search of textiles you can incorporate into your abstract collages. Immerse them in watercolor acrylics, coffee grounds, Ecoline, or other dyes to create a unique effect. Take your time to let it all dry thoroughly.

Write: This week, write about things to fight for, things to fight against, and the things that are no longer worth fighting for in the battle with the other.



WEEK 16

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...



Tikkun olam — the repair of the world.
If you see what needs to be repaired and how
to repair it, then you have found a piece of the
world that God has left for you to complete.
But if you only see what is wrong and what is
ugly, then it is you yourself who needs to be
repaired.

MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON

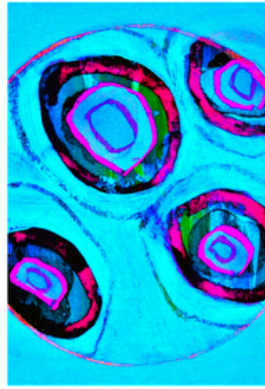
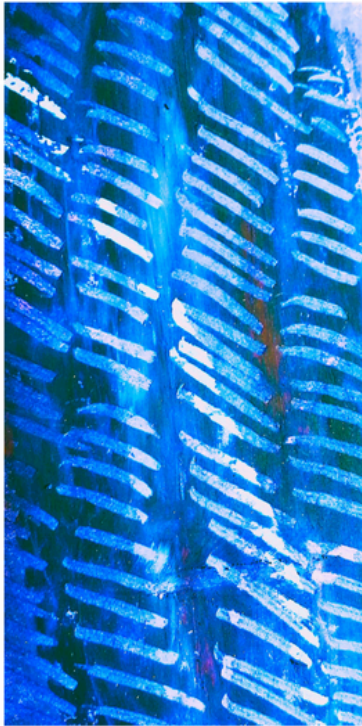
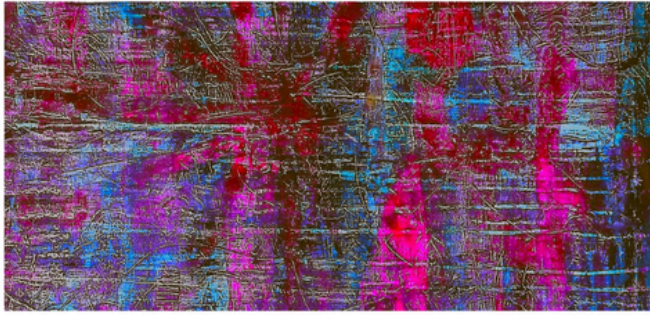
weekly assignment 16

LOSS

Make: In autumn, trees lose their leaves... a beautiful form of loss because we know that new leaves will return in spring. This week, we are going to create abstract collages based on the four seasons. Gather colors, patterns, and textures, and have fun experimenting with how you want to depict the seasons in collage.

Write: Do you want to write this week about the things that are lost and will not return, the things you want to lose, and the things you would like to find again?





color chart



WEEK 17

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...

A large, stylized pink quotation mark icon.

It is not just about creativity, it is
about the person you become
while you are creating.

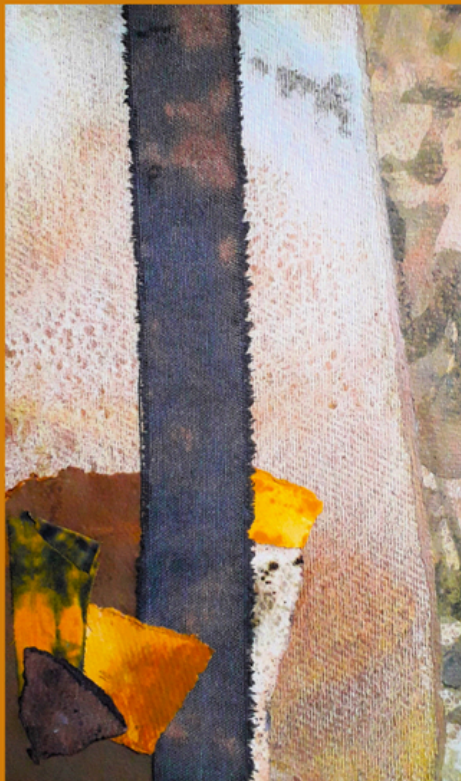
CHARLIE PEACOCK

weekly assignment 17

BODY

Make: How can we translate the experience of our body into visual language? Abstract imagination in collage is an exercise in letting go of how things ought to be. Experiment this week with making collages that revolve around your body image.

Write: Will you write along? About the things your body wants to let you know, the things that have hurt your body, and the things your body does for you.



WEEK 18

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...



You cannot go back and change
the beginning, but you can start
where you are and change the end.

C.S LEWIS

weekly assignment 18

JUDGEMENT

Make: In phase 2 of recovery, we usually also struggle with judgment. Perhaps you have a judgment about yourself or others that is currently hindering you. This week, create abstract collages inspired by your emotions surrounding the word JUDGMENT.

Write: This week, let's write about the things that need to be judged, the things that deserve a judgment, and the things that happened when you encountered prejudice in yourself and in others.



WEEK 19

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...

“

Art is the journey of a free soul.

ALEV OGUZ

weekly assignment 19

DISPLACE

Create: We can struggle immensely with memories we have lost. Events we have repressed because they were too painful to experience consciously. Some of us no longer want to relive memories and actually want to repress them... get rid of them. This week, we are going to visualize our personal quest in this process by creating abstract collages on a painted background.

Write: Would you like to write this week about the things you no longer know, the things safely tucked away by your brain, and the things that should no longer be remembered?



WEEK 20

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...



“

Art is standing face to face with
yourself.

JACKSON POLLOCK

weekly assignment 20

MASK

Making: This week we are going to work in layers to abstractly visualize how we put on a mask as soon as we are no longer alone. Who are you without your mask? Would you dare to live without a mask? You can paste pieces of paper on top of each other, but also paint over paper, as in the photo. Just go ahead and experiment with it, and if it doesn't quite work out, keep it anyway, because it is about your creative process, not a beautiful finished product.

Writing: Write about the things that are hidden, the things you cannot see in the other person, and the things that need to be brought into the light.





WEEK 21

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...



“

And the only thing that matters is that you are happy with the person you are becoming...that you are proud of what you bring into the world. You are responsible for your joy, your worth. You may be your own affirmation. Please never forget that.

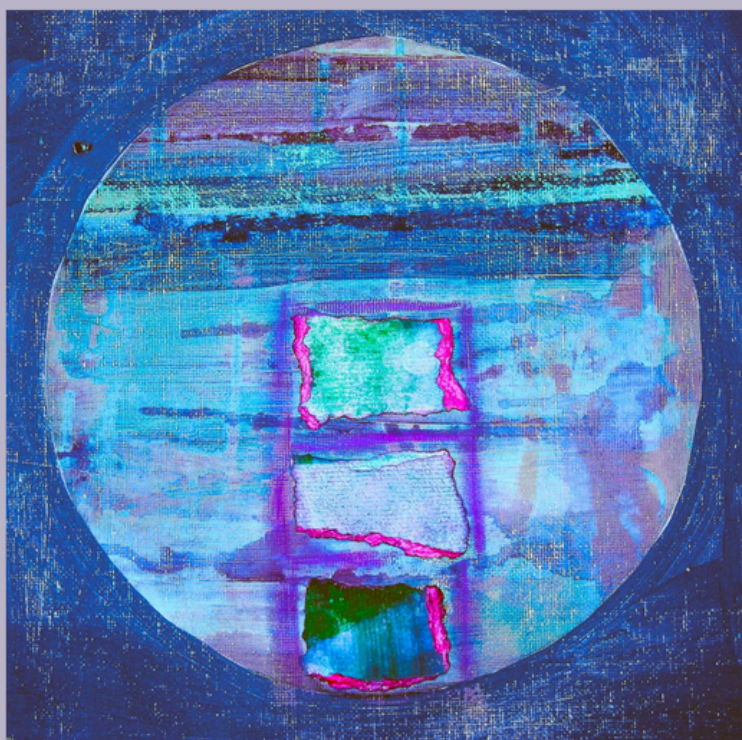
BIANCA SPARACINO

weekly assignment 21

FUTURE

Create: It is good to be aware of your place on Earth. Where are you? As an individual, you are so small in the world around you, yet as a group, we are capable of destroying everything. You have your past and your present, but what is your desire for your future? This week, create mixed media collages of your vision of the Earth and try to incorporate your emotions and thoughts into your use of color and materials.

Write: This week, write about the things of the future, the things you no longer want, and the things you would like to have.



WEEK 22

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...



Art is chaos taking shape.

PABLO PICASSO

weekly assignment 22

FREEZE

Make: Create a base layer on watercolor paper using Ecoline and water. Cut out footprints from thinner paper and place them loosely on the paper. Try to visualize what GETTING STUCK looks like to you. What do you keep running into? In what way are you repeatedly forced to a standstill? Glue the footprints down when you are ready.

Write: Write about the things that can clear the way, the things that cause blockages, and the things you would do if you could just set off.



WEEK 23

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...

A large, stylized orange quotation mark is positioned at the top of a white rectangular box. The background of the entire slide is a vibrant, abstract painting with vertical stripes of various colors including blue, green, red, orange, and yellow.

Good art is not how it looks, but
what it does to us.

ROY ADZAK

weekly assignment 23

PARTICIPATE

Making: In this phase, you can start thinking about the building blocks you need to participate in the outside world again. For me, these building blocks look like circles (things I need to live) and squares (things I still need to learn or unlearn). Create a colorful background on thick paper and use the same colors on thin paper. Cut out your symbols and paste them onto the background. Let everything dry. Then draw around the symbol with chalk and cover the rest of the background with white gesso.

Writing: Do you want to write about the things worth participating in, the things that caused you to be excluded, and the things you no longer participate in?



WEEK 24

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...



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I paint my own reality.

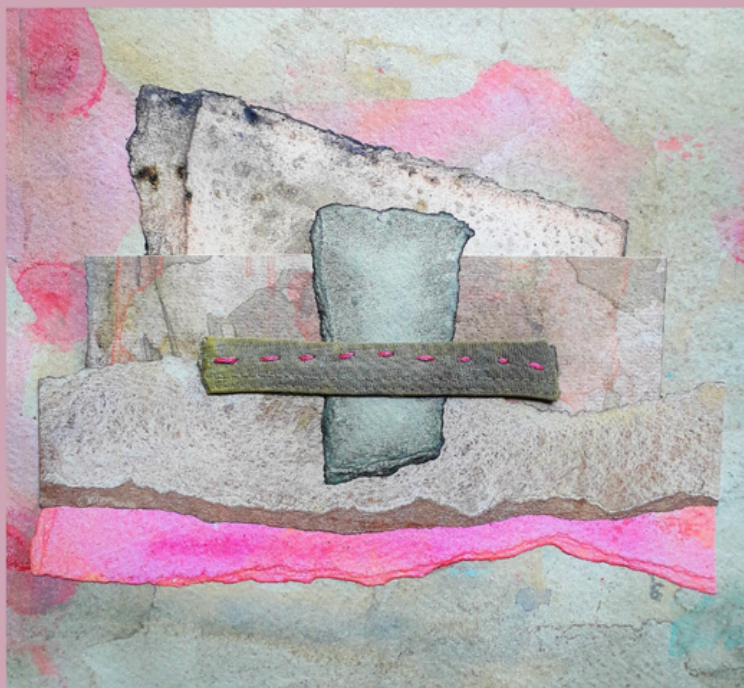
FRIDA KAHLO

weekly assignment 24

SELF-CARE

Make: Create an abstract collage using different types of painted and treated paper combined with other materials such as textiles, yarn, wool, or rope. In this collage, try to visualize what self-care looks like to you. Which materials, colors, textures, and patterns are associated with the care you give yourself or would like to give yourself?

Write: This week we are going to write about the things you would like to give yourself, the things that need care, and the things you no longer want to take care of.





WEEK 25

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...

“

The day I changed was the day I
stopped trying to fit into a world
that never really suited me.

J.M.STORM

weekly assignment 25

FAREWELL

Create: Use different types of chalk, gesso, and acrylic paint to create a landscape you care about. Try to give this landscape an extra dimension by adding painted paper. Try to abstract as much as possible. It doesn't matter if others see something in it; you know what it means. The landscape symbolizes letting go of the old and opening up to the new.

Write: Would you like to write along about the things we have said goodbye to, the things we must let go of to become free, and the things people have done that we no longer want to be involved with?



WEEK 26

Recovery phase 2: Struggling with it...

“

Creativity is the greatest
rebellion that exists.

OSHO

weekly assignment 26

TO TRUST

Making: This week we are going to experiment with creating connections between elements in the collage. How do you connect the different types of treated paper to each other and to the background so that you achieve a clear composition? Try to delve into the theory of composition this week and try out all sorts of things, just as I did by making circles with red oil pastels.

Writing: Let's write together about the things that give us confidence, the things we no longer trust, and the things that can build confidence in ourselves.





Tips for makers

The making process is a
tool to work on your
recovery process.

WEEK 27

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...

A large, stylized blue quotation mark icon, consisting of two thick, rounded strokes, positioned at the top of a white rectangular box.

May we find solace in art...

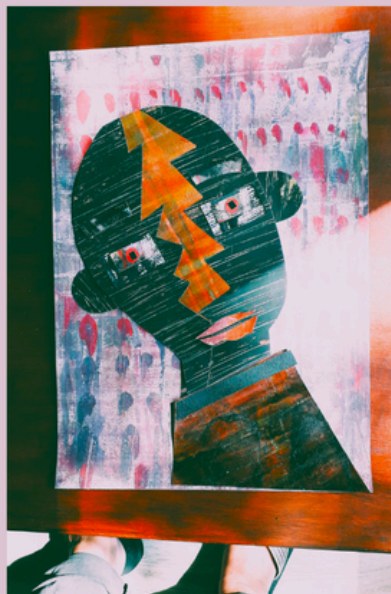
ESME WEIJUN WANG

weekly assignment 27

POWER

Making: In this phase of recovery, we are going to use our creativity to explore who we want to be. Making self-portraits has helped me on that journey of discovery. None of the portraits look like me outwardly, but are an embodiment of my inner life. Make backgrounds & collage papers this week, and then get busy cutting and pasting. The creative process is more important than your finished products. Use the collage as a means to visualize your recovery process.

Writing: Shall we write this week about the things that give strength, the things that demand strength, and the things you never thought you would be carrying around for so long?



WEEK 28

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...



“

Art must be something that
liberates our soul.

KEITH HARING

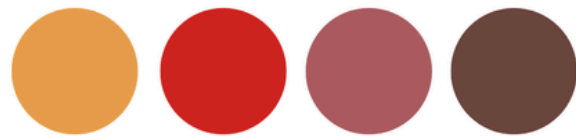
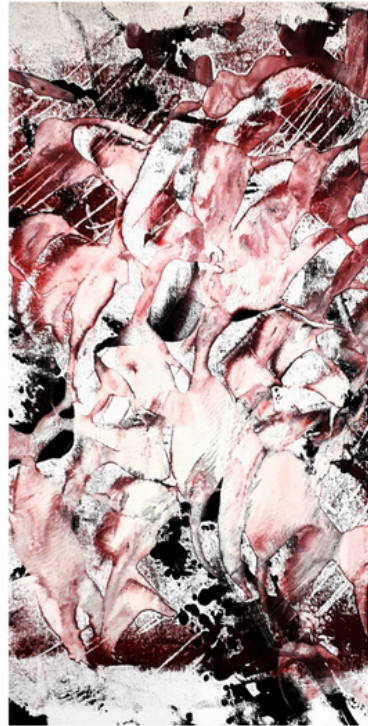
weekly assignment 28

SILENCE

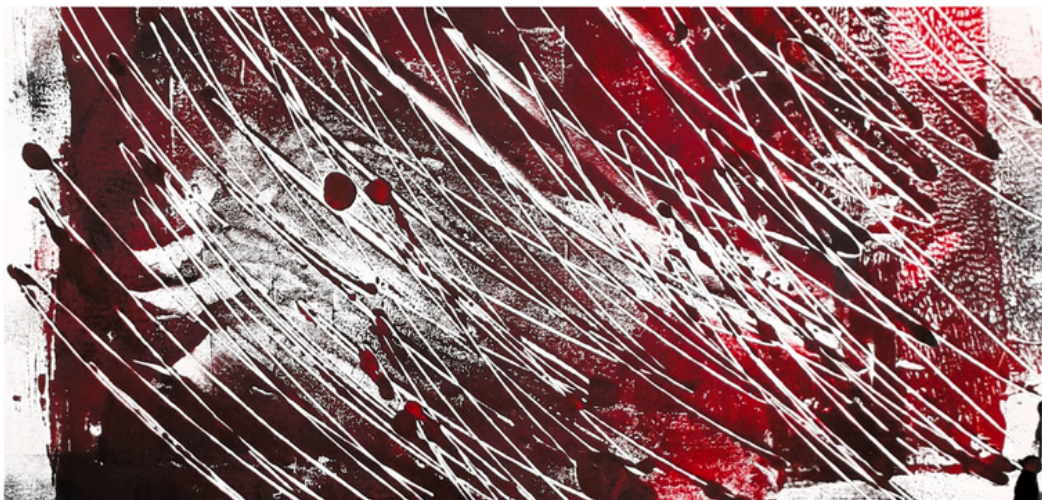
Create: Make a self-portrait in which you try to show how you had to remain silent during your childhood. Everything took place inside your head and you didn't let it come out. Perhaps out of fear, insecurity, or self-preservation. In my case, it was a way to survive. Can you show this little child in your collage?

Write: This week we are writing about the things that had to be kept secret, the things that were not seen because of the silence, and the things we will never remain silent about again.





color chart



WEEK 29

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...

An abstract painting with vibrant colors like red, orange, blue, and yellow, featuring thick brushstrokes. Overlaid on this is a white rounded rectangle. At the top of the rectangle is a large gold-colored quote icon. Inside the rectangle, there is a quote in black text and the name 'LUCAS SEAWARD' in gold text at the bottom.

“

A work of art will tell you when it
is finished.

LUCAS SEAWARD

weekly assignment 29

ILLUSION

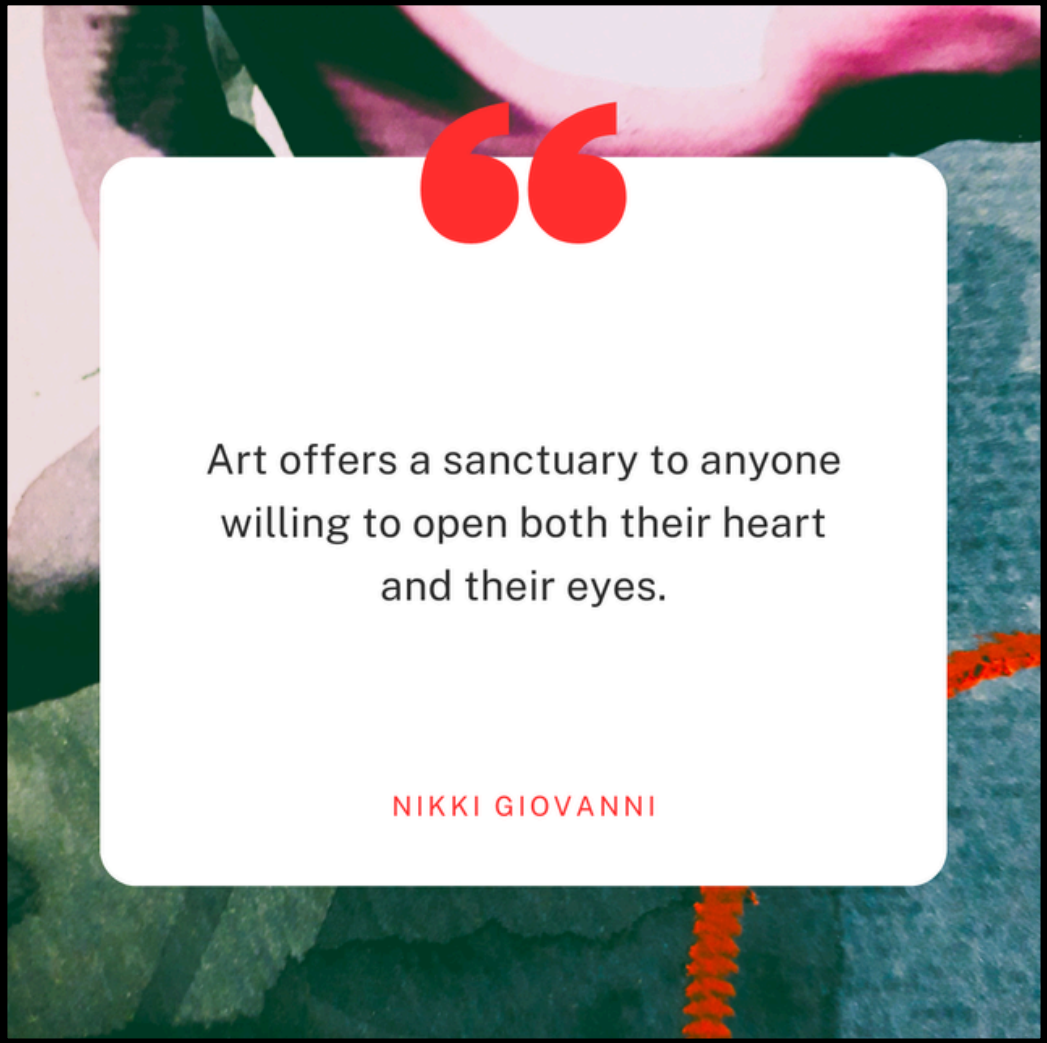
Create: In my recovery, it has been important to face the illusions I maintained about myself and the outside world. Often, things simply are the way they are. To keep hope alive, I made situations look better than they were, and it has been essential to learn to accept reality. Try to create a self-portrait in which you show how you accept reality in its truth.

Write: Write about the things that seem very different from what they are, the things you hoped would become reality, and the things you want to let go of in the hope of more peace.



WEEK 30

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...



“

Art offers a sanctuary to anyone
willing to open both their heart
and their eyes.

NIKKI GIOVANNI

weekly assignment 30

PEOPLE

Create: This week, show in your self-portrait how it feels to interact with people. What do other people evoke in you? What thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations do you experience in your contact with others? Choose your materials, colors, patterns, and textures based on your intuition to visualize how you view the outside world from your inner world.

Write: We are going to write about the things people shouldn't do anymore, the things that make people fascinating, and the things with which we would like to inspire other people.



WEEK 31

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...

A large, stylized green quotation mark icon, consisting of two thick, curved strokes, positioned at the top of a white rounded rectangle.

Go to your studio and make things...

FRED BABB

weekly assignment 31

AFRAID

Create: Make a self-portrait of someone who has scared you or whom you are afraid of. It can also be a self-portrait with someone you were afraid with, such as a sister or brother. This is an intense assignment that might help you visualize this experience without having to use words.

Write: This week we are writing about things that scare us, things we no longer want to do out of fear, and things that make the world frightening.



WEEK 32

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...

“

Nothing changes if nothing
changes.

weekly assignment 32

DREAM

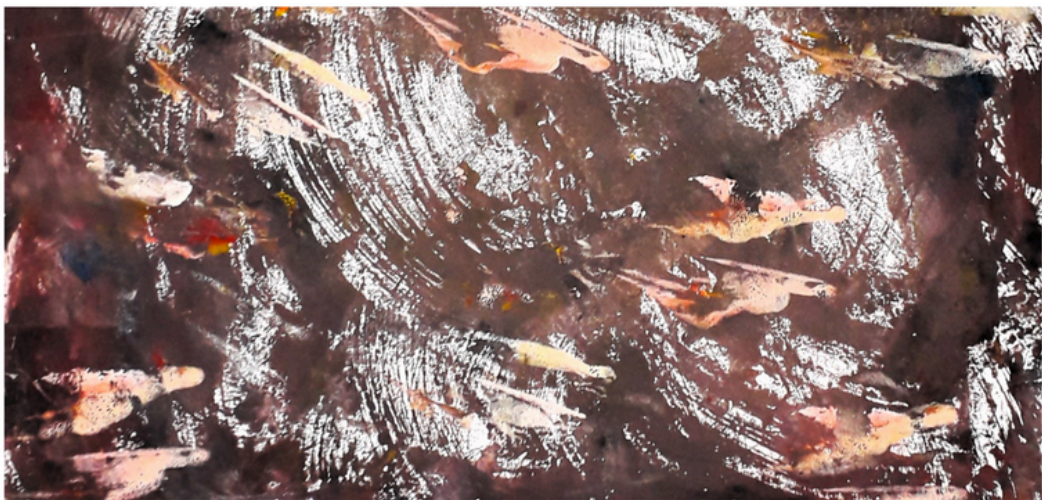
Making: Apply gesso to several pieces of paper and let it dry thoroughly. Crumple this paper. Then go over it with various colors of soft pastel crayons. You can smudge it with your fingers or with a dry brush. Just experiment and discover what you like. Afterward, you can start cutting and pasting to make a self-portrait collage.

Writing: This week, write about the things you have dreamed of, the things that feel dreamy, and the things you dare to do in your dreams.





color chart



WEEK 33

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...



“

Start now. Start where you are.
Start with fear. Start with pain.
Start with doubt. Start with
shaking hands. Start with a
trembling voice, but start. Start
and don't stop. Start where you
are, with what you have. Just start.

weekly assignment 33

CONTROL

Making: In this phase of recovery, we are going to explore how we can rebuild control over our lives so that we become 'our own bosses' again and can keep the reins in our hands. I chose the image of the robot for my self-portrait... which image will you choose?

Writing: Will you write along with me about the things that need to be kept under control, the things others do to keep us under control, and the things that can arise when we let go of control?



WEEK 34

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...

“

Recovery is a marathon, not a sprint.

JENNIFER MULDER

weekly assignment 34

ACCEPT

Create: I would like to ask you to go to the art supply store this week to pick out a number of paint colors that you might not normally choose. For me, those were shimmering colors like gold, copper, and silver. Then, create a self-portrait using your new colors and feel how you are stepping out of your comfort zone. Then, place your collage prominently on display for a few days... how does it feel?

Write: This week, write about the things you would like to accept, the things that are unacceptable, and the things you need to do to be accepted by other people.



WEEK 35

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...

“

Making art is...from your
head, to your hands!

NATASCHA DEIJMANN

weekly assignment 35

VULNERABLE

Create: When were you most vulnerable? Try to visualize this period and the associated feelings and thoughts in your self-portrait this week. What colors, symbols, and patterns go with it? For seven years, I have incorporated the tear as a symbol of recovery into my art... what will your symbol of recovery be?

Write: I would like to write together with you about the things that make us vulnerable, the things that are too vulnerable to show, and the things we would like to learn in order to become less vulnerable.



WEEK 36

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...

“

You have the power to
say...this is NOT the way my
story will end.

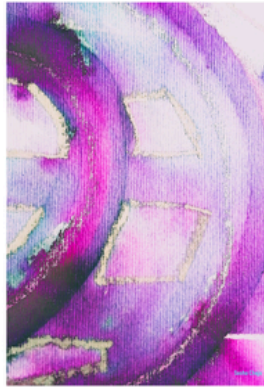
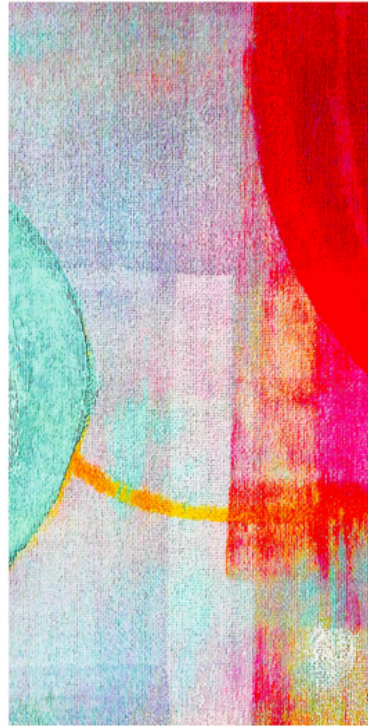
weekly assignment 36

FAIL

Making: Take mixed media paper and place it in a container of water with coffee grounds. You can also paint the paper with the coffee grounds water and explore what effects you can create. If you let it dry thoroughly, you will have beautifully textured paper, like the background in this photo. This week, create a self-portrait based on the word FAILURE.

Writing: We are going to write about the things that cause us to fail, the things others have done to us that caused us to fail, and the things we have missed out on because other people failed.





color chart



WEEK 37

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...

“

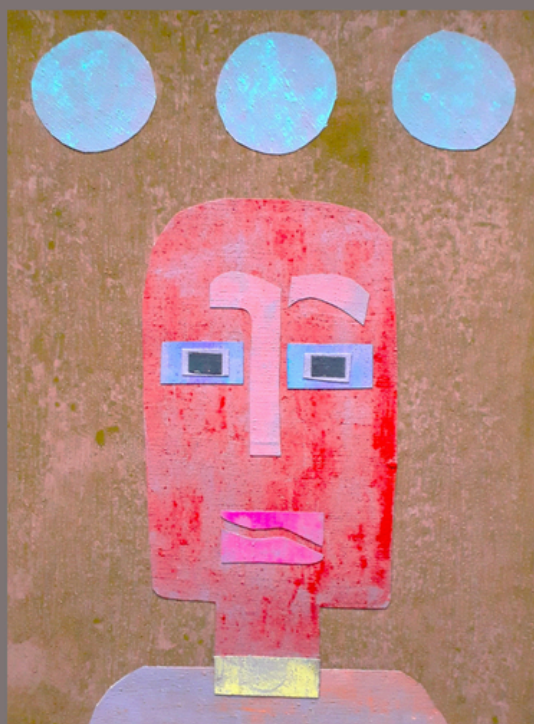
The step you fear most is the
one that will change
everything for you.

weekly assignment 37

ENERGY

Making: In this phase of our recovery, we are often more aware of what gives us energy and what drains our energy. Sometimes we have to accept that we need to structure our lives differently because we can no longer keep up in the rat race as we used to. Create your self-portrait while exploring your own way of life.

Writing: Would you like to write your little notes about the things that have wasted energy, the things that drain you, and the things others expect of you and what you can no longer give?



WEEK 38

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...



“

We are all artists painting our lives on the canvas of reality. Mix the colors in your own way and let your emotions flow. Don't be afraid to show your brushstrokes and, above all, ensure that your art has a soul.

CHRISTEN RODGERS

weekly assignment 38

MOTIVATION

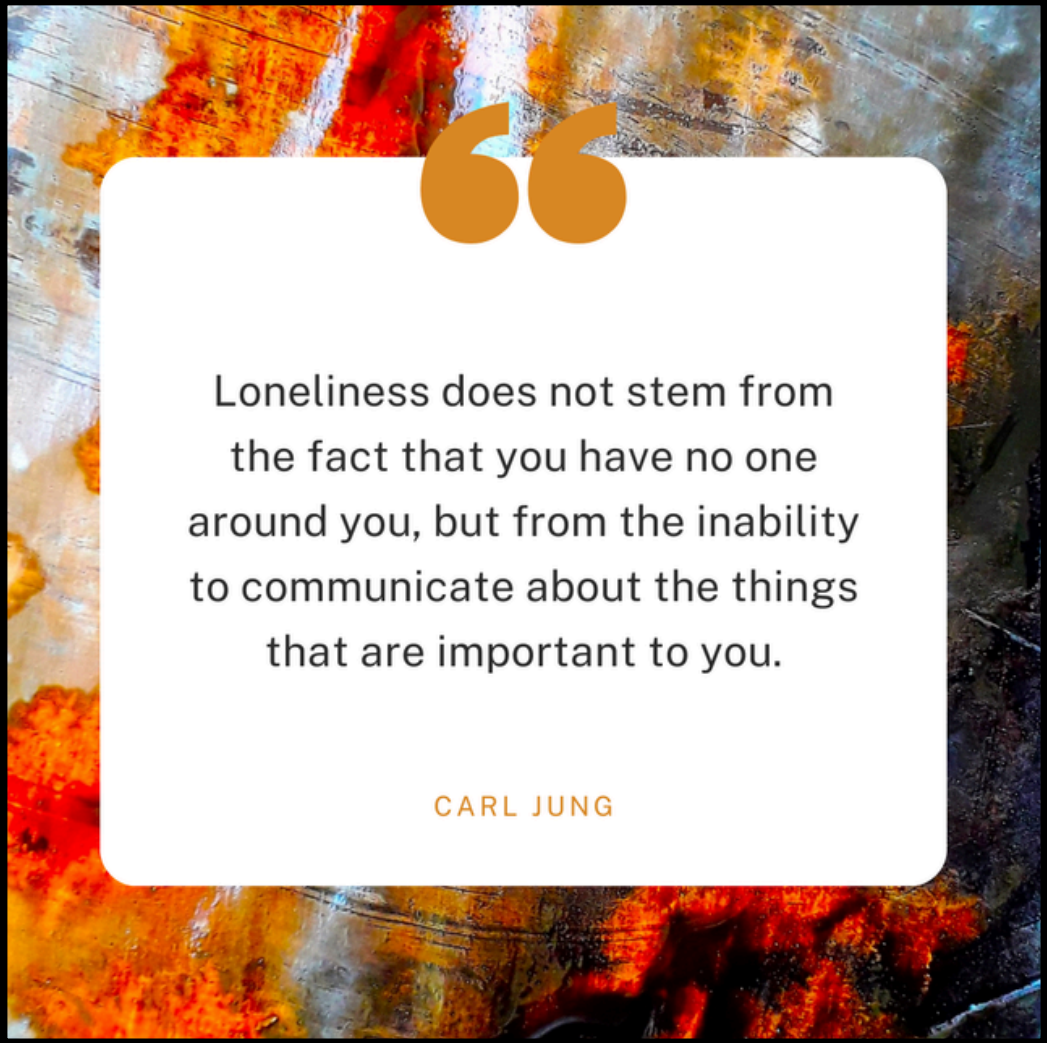
Create: This week, try to make a self-portrait showing what motivates you to work on your recovery. Think carefully about the patterns, textures, colors, and materials you choose. Perhaps you could also use textiles, as I did with the red circles in the photo.

Write: We are going to write about the things that inspire us, the things we would like to grow in, and the things we no longer want to do.



WEEK 39

Recovery phase 3: Living with it...



“

Loneliness does not stem from the fact that you have no one around you, but from the inability to communicate about the things that are important to you.

CARL JUNG

weekly assignment 39

IDENTITY

Create: I would like to ask you to create a self-portrait this week in which you depict who you no longer want to be. A (part of) your identity that you want to let go of because it no longer fits with the way you want to move forward with your life.

Write: Write this week about the things you now want to show the world, the things you are going to let go of, and the things that have changed inside you.





Tips for makers

The recovery-supportive
creative process involves
trial and error... just let
it happen.

WEEK 40

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...

“

It takes courage to say yes to rest
and play, in a culture where
exhaustion is seen as a status
symbol.

BRENE BROWN

weekly assignment 40

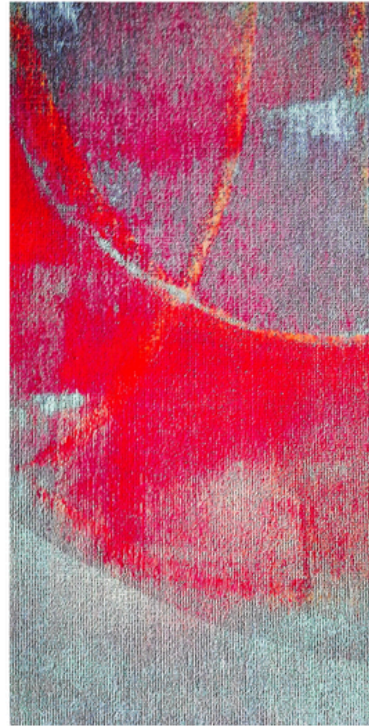
PROXIMITY

Making: In this phase, we will expand our creative skills and look for our own way of visualizing. This week, make multi-layered bases of various sizes. Go big!

Experiment with paper and cardboard. Ultimately, this week, choose which paper or cardboard you find the most enjoyable to work with.

Writing: We write about the things we want to keep close, the things that feel so far away, and the things we need to dare to be close to others.





color chart



WEEK 41

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...



“

A work of art that does not
begin from emotion is not art.

PAUL CEZANNE

weekly assignment 41

PATTERNS

Create: Turn a chaotic, colorful background into a calm whole by creating patterns within it. It is a creative way to give your busy inner life a place beneath the layer that the other person will eventually see. This gives you the opportunity to work freely and still end up in peace.

Write: Shall we write about the things that give us structure, the things that make us feel trapped, and the things we need to grow?



WEEK 42

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...

“

The act of creating something is
always more important than the
result.

weekly assignment 42

RELAPSE

Create: When I fall back into old coping strategies, I feel an intense need to flee. In my art, the bird symbolizes this need. This week, look for a symbol that can represent your coping strategy: fight/ flight/ freeze/ fawn.

Write: Write about the things that make you return to the old ways, the things you need to stay safe, and the things that help you keep moving forward.



WEEK 43

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...

A large, stylized teal quotation mark icon, consisting of two thick, rounded strokes, positioned at the top of a white text box.

Ask someone who does real creative work and they will tell you the truth: they don't know where the good things come from. They just show up and do their thing. Every day.

AUSTIN KLEON

weekly assignment 43

HOPE

Create: I have experienced that my recovery hinges on my ability to feel hope. In my view, it is an essential part of the process to look beyond suffering towards a future. Visualize your hope this week; what does it look like? Then try to visualize it in a mixed media collage.

Write: Write along with me about the things that have disappointed us, the things that gave us hope, and the things we need to do to be able to feel hope again.



WEEK 44

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...

“

Sometimes the smallest step
in the right direction can
become the biggest step in
your life.

NAEEM CALLAWAY

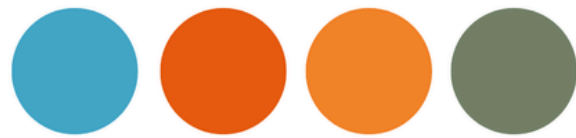
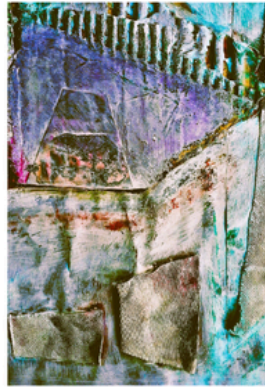
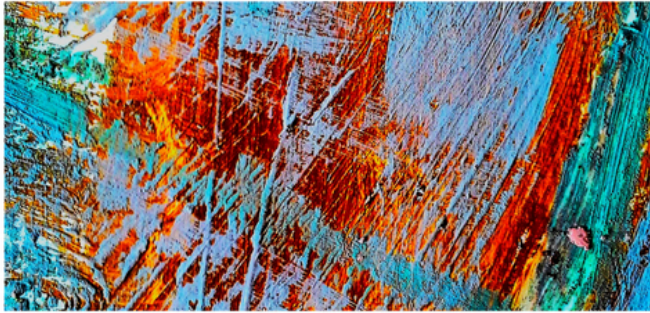
weekly assignment 44

RECIPROCITY

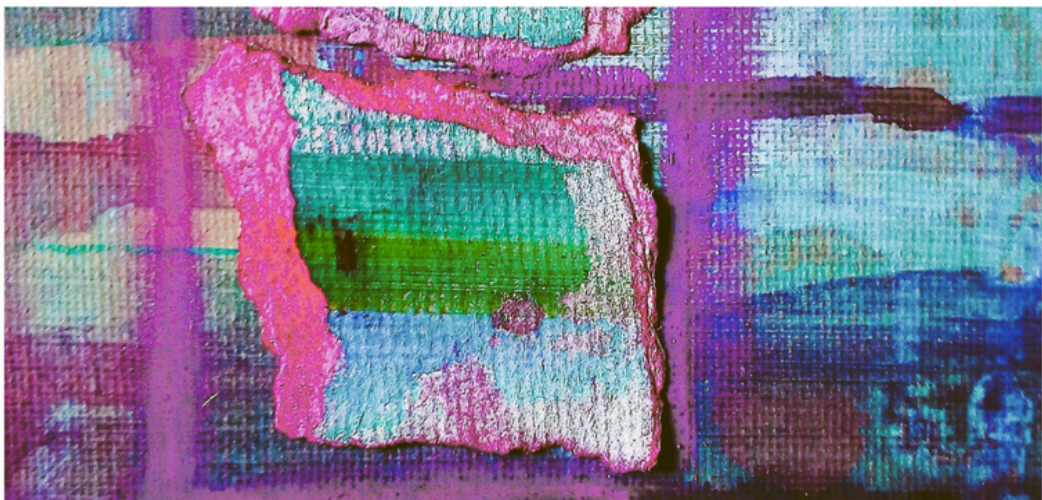
Create: Sometimes the balance between giving and receiving is lost for people in recovery; perhaps you have been unable to give for a long time. Or perhaps you gave everything away to others. What images come to mind when you think of RECIPROCITY? What symbol can you choose for it? For me, it was the tear, and I painted hundreds of them... This week, create small backgrounds with your symbol so that you can make a collage on them later.

Write: Write about the things you can no longer give, the things you need to change in order to receive, and the things you want to change in your relationships with others.





color chart



WEEK 45

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...

“

Your heart knows the
way. Run in that
direction.

RUMI

weekly assignment 45

SHAME

Making: This week we are going to experiment with painting faces. Go over a cut-out piece of paper with soft pastel crayons and smudge it. Then paint a face on it with watercolor paint. You can search Pinterest for inspiration to paint as many different types of faces as possible. Try to paint different kinds of facial expressions. They can also be fantasy faces; it is entirely up to you to explore what you like.

Writing: This time we are writing about the things we hide out of shame, the things that have been done to us that we are ashamed of, and things we need so that we no longer have to be ashamed.



WEEK 46

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...

“

Worrying is carrying the burden of tomorrow with the strength of today — carrying two days at once. It is anticipating tomorrow. Worrying does not strip tomorrow of its sorrow; it strips today of its strength.

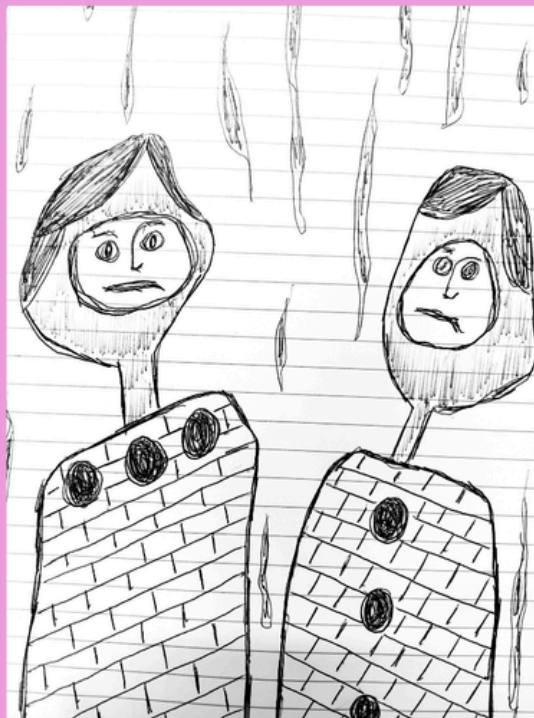
CORRIE TEN BOOM

weekly assignment 46

EQUIVALENCE

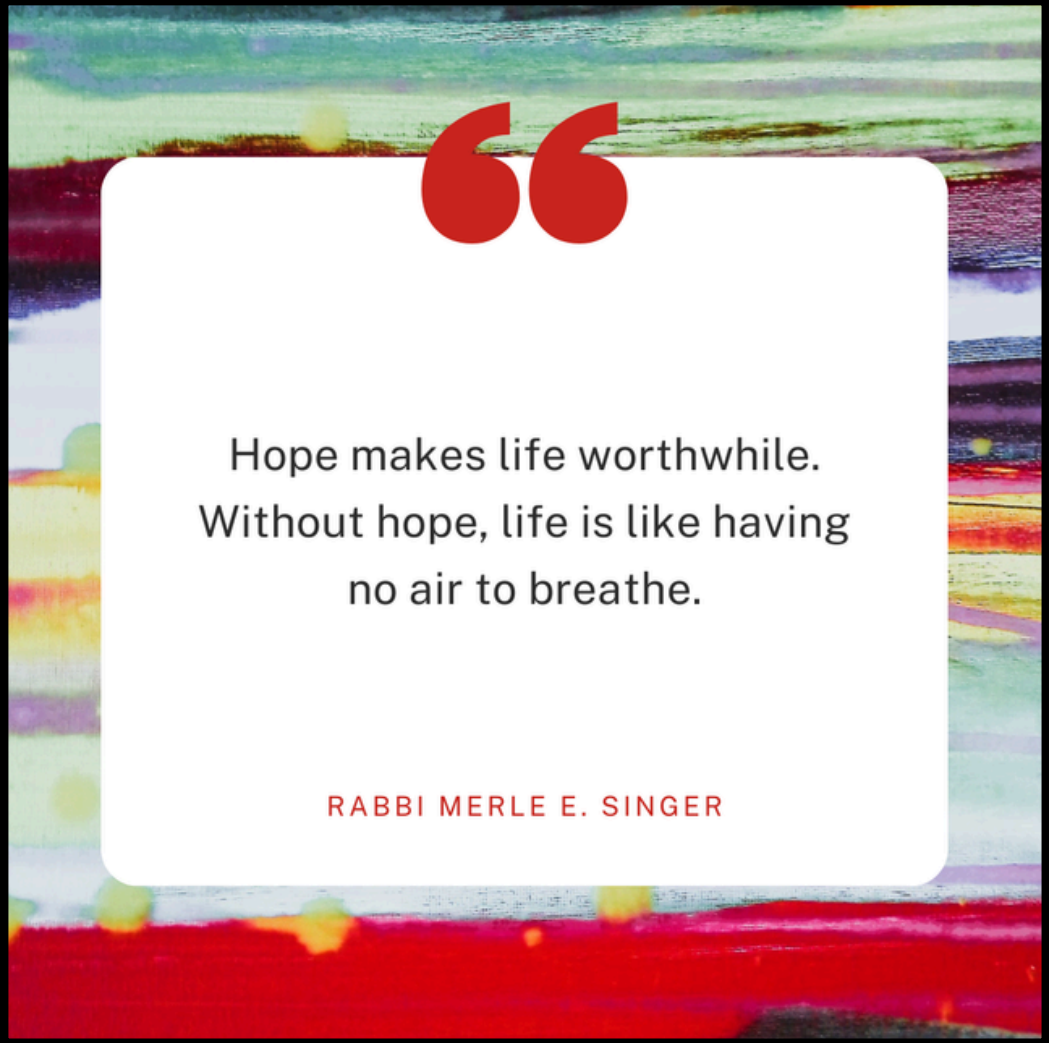
Making: This week we are going to make sketches of collages that we can create. I would like to ask you to think of collages with multiple figures, like in the photo. Sketching can spark ideas, but is primarily a way to get the process of self-expression going. What you feel or think inside can come out in the form of a mixed media collage.

Writing: Write about the things that have happened that make you feel inferior, the things that make others ignore you, and the things that have been said that keep you feeling small.



WEEK 47

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...



Hope makes life worthwhile.
Without hope, life is like having
no air to breathe.

RABBI MERLE E. SINGER

weekly assignment 47

TALENTS

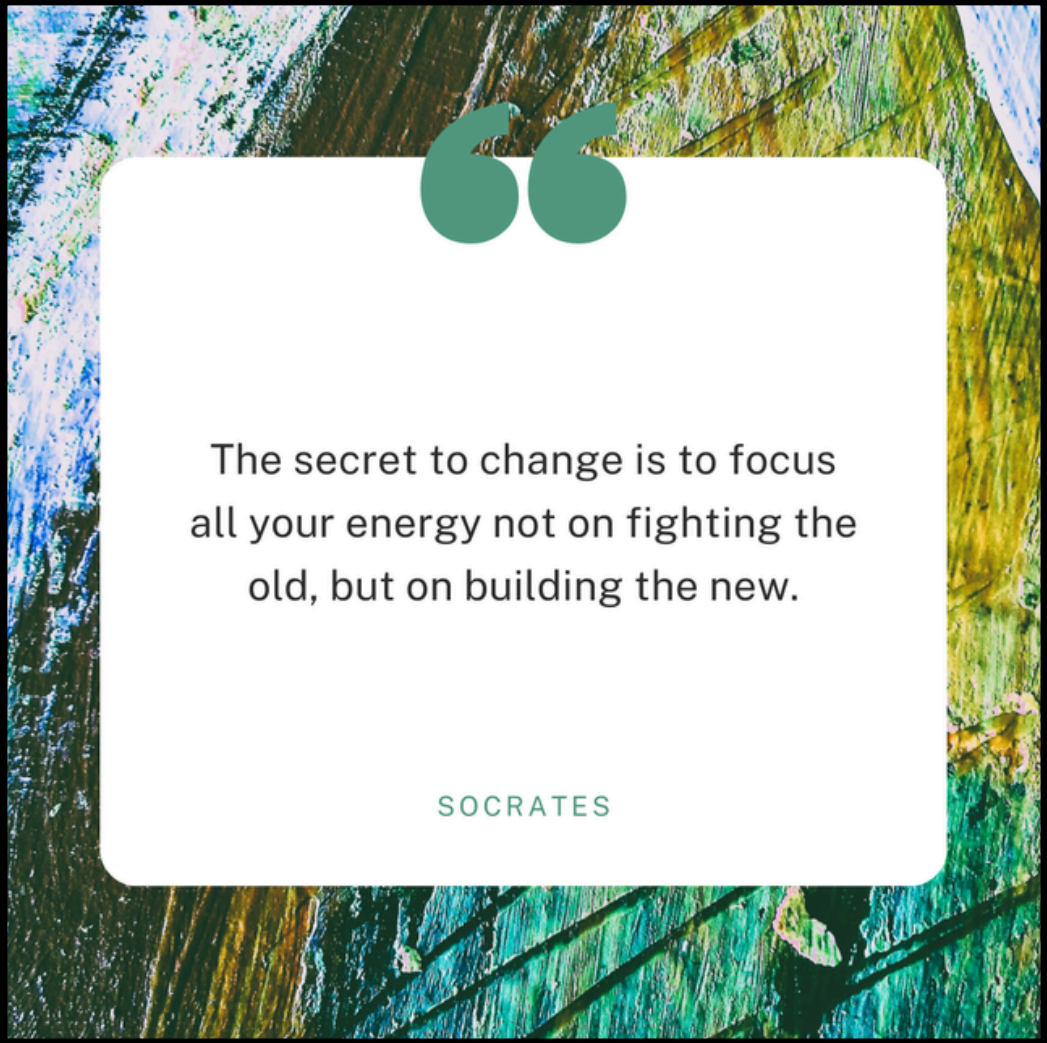
Making: This week, explore where your most important creative talent lies in the area of self-expression. Figure out how you can develop this talent. Think about how you can visualize this in a collage. Then make a series of collages in, for example, a book from a thrift store, a series of the same size, or come up with a new form. I myself have made collages on canvas, canvasboard, cardboard, and all kinds of paper, from thin to thick.

Writing: We write about the things that come easily to us, the things we would like to learn, and the things we are good at but actually don't enjoy.



WEEK 48

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...



The secret to change is to focus
all your energy not on fighting the
old, but on building the new.

SOCRATES

weekly assignment 48

AUTONOMOUS

Making: In this phase of recovery, it is important to choose your own life path, sometimes against the advice of others. Taking control of your life choices is essential to living. How do you remain autonomous in this world? This week, we are going to make a collage that visualizes your emotions regarding this subject. How do you deal with the opinions, judgments, and stigmas of others? Choose your materials, colors, and patterns, and show yourself in this collage.

Writing: We write about the things we choose against the wishes of others, the things that frustrate us, and the things we know for certain are good for us.





WEEK 49

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...

A large, stylized orange quotation mark icon, consisting of two thick, rounded strokes, positioned at the top of a white text box.

Change can be scary, but do you
know what is even scarier?
Allowing fear to hold you back
from growing, developing, and
moving forward.

MANDY HALE

weekly assignment 49

FOCUS

Making: Use the collages as a visual diary, a creative way to communicate with the world around you, or as a way to unwind. Perhaps you have also discovered other things this past year that help the Maker within you grow. In my recovery, making collages has grown into a new life in which I get to exhibit my art as an artist. From an invisible woman, I have now come into the picture, in my own way. This week, reflect on the possibilities that art can offer you.

Writing: This week we are writing about the things that require focus, the things we no longer want to focus on, and the things we need to keep the focus on making art.



WEEK 50

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...



“

Courage is not being ‘fearless’.
Courage is stepping forward on
your journey with trembling
knees, choking on your words,
and with an uncertain heart.

REBECCA RAY

weekly assignment 50

CHOOSE

Making: Create a collage on a piece of cardboard measuring 100 x 70 cm. First, apply gesso to both sides and let it dry thoroughly. Next, create your background using acrylic paint, soft pastels, and oil pastels. Work layer upon layer and then add calm. Then, design your collage using the collage paper you created, cut everything out, and glue it onto your cardboard. Wow! How does that feel?

Writing: Will you write along? We write about the things we no longer choose, the things that have been chosen for us, and the things that inspire us to start making different choices.



WEEK 51

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...



We must never forget that we can also find meaning in life when faced with a hopeless situation, when confronted with a fate that cannot be changed... when we are no longer able to change a situation — then we are challenged to change ourselves.

VIKTOR FRANKL

weekly assignment 51

NEW

Making: As we have reached the end of this year, I would like to ask you to think about a 365-day project that you can undertake once you have finished this book. Take a look at Pinterest for inspiration. If making art has been a meaningful activity, then this is the way to continue making. You can choose a 365-day project to learn something new and practice it for a year, or you can further develop your collage making until you have found your own style. Who knows what this project will bring you!

Writing: Write about the new things you want to do, the things that already feel different, and the things you are really going to approach differently now.



WEEK 52

Recovery phase 4: And now onwards...

A large, stylized green quotation mark is positioned at the top of a white rectangular box. The box is centered on a background of abstract, colorful paint splatters in shades of yellow, orange, red, blue, and green.

Art leads us on a quest
within the world, within the
work, within ourselves.

LESLEY FRENZ

weekly assignment 52

TO LIVE

Create: Thank you for making art together with me. Creating this book has been important for my recovery process, and I hope it has helped you. Make a collage of how you see yourself now; your emotions and thoughts, your desires for your future. We are allowed to move from surviving to living...

Write: Write about the things you have learned about yourself, the things that make life meaningful, and the things you need to be able to let go of surviving.





BE KIND TO YOURSELF...

I hope that working with this book has helped you in your recovery process. Perhaps creating art has now become a regular part of your daily life. Or perhaps you have now gained the courage to present yourself to the outside world in this way. I wish you all the best, and if you know someone who would also benefit from this workbook... pass it on!

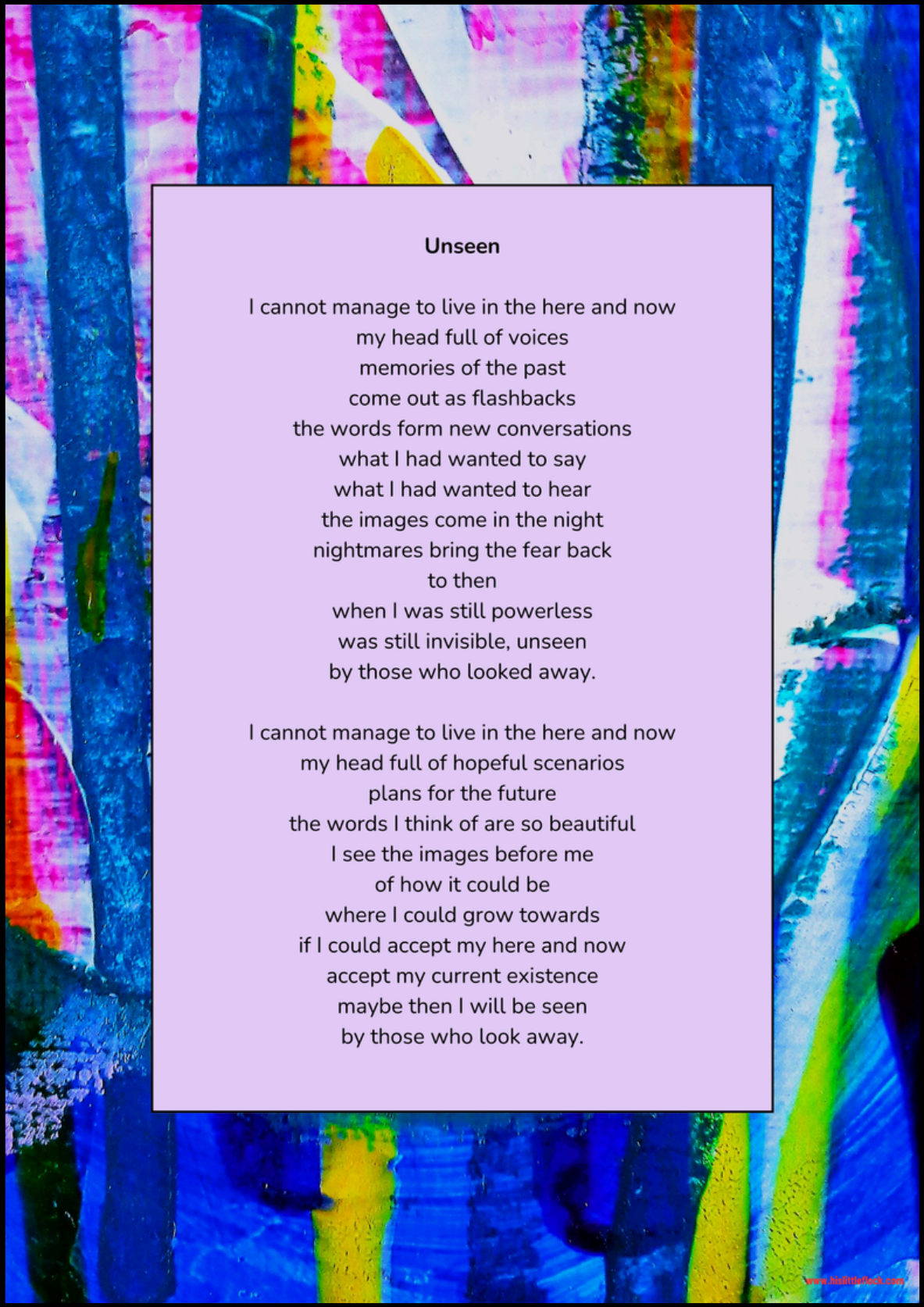
Kind regards,
Natascha Deijmann



WWW.HISLITTLEFLOCK.COM

Natascha Deijmann is a trained Care & Welfare Expert by Experience. She obtained her degree from the Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen (the Netherlands) where she specialized in recovery from grief, loss, and bereavement.

Additionally, she is a visual artist and author of faith-based DIY e-books that encourage readers to work on their own recovery from a Christian perspective. In 2026, she launched the website www.hislittleflock.com so that people can download her work for free.



Unseen

I cannot manage to live in the here and now
my head full of voices
memories of the past
come out as flashbacks
the words form new conversations
what I had wanted to say
what I had wanted to hear
the images come in the night
nightmares bring the fear back
to then
when I was still powerless
was still invisible, unseen
by those who looked away.

I cannot manage to live in the here and now
my head full of hopeful scenarios
plans for the future
the words I think of are so beautiful
I see the images before me
of how it could be
where I could grow towards
if I could accept my here and now
accept my current existence
maybe then I will be seen
by those who look away.