



Daily Life of Art, by Nina Wise

Since the inception of the human species and until only decades ago, daily life was infused with art making. We crafted our own tools, we sewed our own clothing, we built our own shelters, we cultivated our own food. We sang songs that we made up, songs that were passed down

to us, and songs that were given to us by the gods. We danced together matching our steps to the steps of our companions. We built musical instruments out of hides and sinew, twine and bent wood. We painted on walls and on our bodies and our implements. These creative acts enhanced our well-being as individuals, strengthened family bonds, knit communities together, and provided access to states of being that invoked insight and wisdom. We as a species cannot reside in psychological and physical health if we abandon the very activities that maintain well-being.

Everyone is creative. Creativity is our very nature. But for many of us, the creative impulse has gone into hiding. "I can't draw, I can't sing, I can't dance," we confess to each other, and we plant ourselves in front of the television for the evening. But the creative impulse that is at the core of all being remains robust within us.

Creativity is about having the courage to invent our lives--to concoct lovemaking games, cook up a new recipe, paint a kitchen cabinet, build sculptures on the beach, and sing in the shower. Creativity is about our capacity to experience the core of our being and the full range of our humanness.

The question of how to become more creative is not about learning anything, or even doing anything, but about allowing whatever arises to gain expression. To do this, we must bypass the voice inside of us that says stop. The censoring mind is clever and has an entire litany of reasons we must refrain from expressing ourselves: You are a bad dancer so sit back and watch while the skillful ones dance. And you certainly can't paint so don't even try because you will embarrass yourself. You sing off-key and you can't hold a rhythm--you will disturb everyone within earshot if you open your mouth. And if you happen to disregard this sage advice, you will make a total fool of yourself and no one will ever love you or give you a job. We obey this voice as if being guided by inner wisdom; but when we tune in, we hear a quieter voice calling out to us to express ourselves freely. This is the voice that can liberate us. If we listen and respond, our lives become rich with the pleasure creative freedom provides.

--Nina Wise, in A Big New Free Happy Unusual Life
[<http://www.ninawise.com/writings.html>]

