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Creative Practices for Emotional Overwhelm

Transforming Your Inner Child



Introducing Something New Each Day

Emotional pain keeps us thinking the same kinds of negative thoughts over and over again. The following list of creative practices are simple enough to commit to on a daily basis, even in the midst of intense emotional overwhelm. The purpose of these exercises is to inspire windows into higher perspectives, so that you can introduce movement and inspiration into the density of your emotional pain.

Any one of the following creative exercises, done consistently, for 30 days in a row or more, can interrupt patterns of emotional pain and allow your repressed inner child a chance to express. Even a ten minute daily creative practice can be enough to entrain your thoughts and emotions away from anxiety and distress.

Each creative practice only takes ten minutes to complete each day. Choose one of the following practices or invent an uplifting daily ten minute creative practice to commit to. While these exercises seem very simple, over time they will interrupt self-defeating

patterns of thought and emotion so that you can begin to create something new in your life.

To create a positive change, introduce something creative and life affirming each and every day. Practice committing to one creative daily practice to keep your energy moving towards authentic self-expression and emotional release.

1. One Magazine Picture a Day - *This exercise will support you to invite something fresh to enter into your awareness each day.*

- a.) Each day choose one picture out of a magazine. Cut or tear it out, and paste it with a glue stick in your art journal.
- b.) Choose an image that has the strongest emotional charge - positive or negative. One picture in the magazine will always stand out the most each day.
- c.) Contemplate your image deeply for several minutes, and spontaneously write a word or sentence to describe how it makes you feel.

2. Spontaneous Doodling and Writing - *This exercise will support you to siphon off repressed emotions in a daily free-flow of self-expression.*

- a.) Choose a felt pen or crayon, and doodle on your journal page for 5-10 minutes. Don't concern yourself with making a "good" or "pretty" picture.
- b.) Your drawing need not be recognizable. You might just doodle circles, crosses or lines, but with daily practice your visual expression will become more expressive.
- c.) As you draw, invite five random words to come into your mind.
- d.) Choose one of the random words that emerged and write a spontaneous sentence near your drawing.

3. Appreciation Walk in Nature - *This exercise will support you to practice "switching" from inner overwhelm into outer inspiration.*

- a.) Take a daily walk in or near nature. If you live in the city, find a peaceful neighborhood to walk in.

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- b.) Take your attention off of your emotional pain. Focusing your attention outside of yourself, look for something that you find inspiring or beautiful.
 - c.) When negative emotions arise, notice how your attention loses contact with your surroundings and collapses inward.
 - d.) Practice switching your attention from your emotional pain to your outer surroundings by finding something in your environment to appreciate.
 - e.) Practice amplifying your appreciation steadily for ten minutes daily.

4. Body Drawings - *This exercise will support body awareness, and help you to learn more about where your emotional pain "lives."*

- a.) Settle and quiet yourself for five minutes and deeply "listen" to your body.
- b.) How do you feel physically? Where do you feel good? Where do you feel numb? Where do you feel sore?
- c.) Choose the area of your body that "calls" to you the loudest, and ask it to guide you to draw an abstract picture of how it feels.
- f.) When you finish your drawing, spontaneously write a title for your drawing that describes how you feel.
- g.) Do one body drawing daily.

5. Write a Short Poem - *This daily exercise will support you to learn the language of your heart which is more healing than the language of your rational/critical mind.*

- a.) Poetry speaks a "heart language" that is more inclusive of all of the feelings that we have inside.
- b.) Center into your heart-space, and write a short, free-form, honest 3-4 line poem about how you feel each day.
- c.) If you feel stuck, meditate on the question, "What does my heart want to say?"

6. Feeling Better List - *This listing/action tool will support you to commit to finding a daily way to feel better and empower you to take action to move through an emotional mire.*

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- a.) Each day, write down a "feeling better" activity that you will commit to following through on with a checkbox beside it.
 - b.) Your list might say things like, "Today I will draw or write one page in my journal. Today I will take a long hot bath. Today I will walk or ride my bike in nature for 30 minutes.
 - c.) Take committed action on your promise for better self-care and check it off of your list, even if you feel heavy, depressed or reluctant.

7. Daily Self-Portrait - *This daily creative practice will help you see yourself in all of your personality parts, shades and colors.*

- a.) Draw a face each day that expresses an "inner portrait" of your feelings.
- b.) Your face can be abstract or unrealistic. It may or may not have a mouth, nose or eyes.
- c.) Underneath your portrait, describe in one paragraph who you are today as though you were speaking to someone who does not know you.

8. I Remember - *This exercise supports you to see which memories feel important to you right now.*

- a.) Our memories provide clues to our emotional state.
- b.) When we have strong negative memories, we will always find the information we need for our emotional healing.
- c.) Each day, reflect upon the memory that stands out strongest in your mind. It might be a happy memory, or a sad or traumatic memory.
- d.) Write one paragraph detailing your strongest memory for the day.
- e.) How does this memory offer you a clue about what you need to heal today?

9. Personality Parts - *This exercise encourages you to recognize the different personality aspects in your mind so that you can witness them instead of "becoming" them.*

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- a.) We all have many personality parts that come forward to express themselves at varying points in our day.
 - b.) Each day choose a different "personality part" to focus on, and name and describe its positive and negative characteristics.
 - c.) Create a name that represents the inner quality that is dominating your day, and describe this aspect of yourself in a few sentences. For example, "Sloppy Sue is relaxed. But, she leaves cupboard doors open and clothes and books on the floor."

10. Higher Aspiration Journal - *This daily exercise encourages you to find a higher quality to "live into" each day in order to overcome lower-self functioning.*

- a.) When we are stuck in emotional overwhelm we can get lost in heavier negative thoughts that do not seem volitional, even though they are chosen on an subconscious level.
- b.) Usually we "practice" thinking in self-negating ways until it feels "natural" and "normal."
- c.) At first, it can take enormous energy to reverse the tide of our self-negating "normal."
- d.) Each day pick a higher aspiration that you have for your life.
- d.) For ten minutes each day, imagine yourself walking, talking, and acting as though you are already embodying this higher aspiration.

SUMMATION

Practicing one of the above creative practices, for 30 days in a row or more, can interrupt patterns of emotional pain and allow your repressed inner child a chance to express.

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