



Frequently Asked Questions about my Artist's Way Classes

Thank you for your interest in my Artist's Way classes! The Artist's Way is a powerful process that has helped millions of people worldwide connect with their creativity and move forward with their goals. Whether you want to write a novel, start a business or simply be more creative in your daily life, the Artist's Way will help you rediscover your natural creativity.

I have facilitated six Artist's Way groups in the past two years and I'm going to offer a seventh class at Soul of Yoga; 681 Encinitas Boulevard, Suite 306; in Encinitas this spring. The class will run for 12 weeks.

Thursday afternoons beginning April 9 from 2:00-4:30 PM, ending Thursday, June 25.

Here are some questions you might have about my Artist's Way classes:

What is your background? What makes you qualified to lead Artist's Way groups?

I have a masters in counseling psychology from Hofstra University and completed a two-year certificate program in *Expressive Arts for Healing and Social Change* at Saybrook Graduate School where I studied under Dr. Natalie Rogers, a pioneer in the field of expressive arts. I've also studied creativity coaching with Dr. Eric Maisel, a pioneer in that field. I've kept a journal for 25 years and taught journaling classes for both children and adults. If you want to know more about me, please go to my website www.excoveries.com and click on the link titled *About Judy*.

What is *The Artist's Way* and how did the movement begin?

Julia Cameron, the author of *The Artist's Way*, is a writer, playwright and composer (three of her many talents) who began teaching creativity workshops to people in the arts and entertainment industry over 20 years ago. Her workshops were of great help to people in getting past their creative blocks. People in her groups supported each other as they moved forward with their creative goals. Her workshops evolved into the book, *The Artist's Way*, which has now helped and inspired millions of people worldwide.

What is the format of your Artist's Way groups?

In my groups, I use *The Artist's Way* as a basic text. We cover one chapter each week for 12 weeks. During the first hour of my classes, we follow the traditional Artist's Way process of checking in with each other and sharing whatever is appropriate for each person. During the remaining time, there is an expressive arts activity designed to go along with the theme of the chapter and to meet the needs of each individual group. This makes my classes different from other Artist's Way groups.

What do you mean by the term “expressive arts”?

Expressive arts activities might be drawing (think image making, NOT creating a work of art), working with clay, writing, movement, guided visualization, role-playing or any combination of these. **But this point is very important: No artistic talent is required!**

Expressive arts activities help promote insight and self-knowledge. They help access the right hemisphere of the brain, which of course is where our creativity resides.

Expressive arts activities also help you gain deeper personal understanding and overcome the issues that are blocking your creativity. As an example, we do some work on the inner critic (you’ll never see him or her quite the same way again!), and there are activities to help you connect with the creative childlike spirit that is within each one of us.

For more information on expressive arts, please visit my website and click on the link titled *Creativity Classes and Coaching*.

What is the cost of the class?

The cost of the 12-week class is \$360 with a discount of \$30 if you sign up by March 27. There is a payment plan if that would work best for you. If you choose to make payments, you would pay \$50 to hold your space when you register, then half the remaining fee on the first day of class and the remainder at or before the fourth class. I ask each person to bring \$10 in cash for supplies to our first class meeting. This covers all materials for the course.

Who is this class appropriate for?

The class can be helpful to anyone who wants to rediscover and develop his or her creativity. The people in my groups are often people who have done other personal growth work; sometimes they are even coaches or therapists. Other people are either in some kind of transition or making a transition, often in their careers. Still others are people who would like to use their creativity in some specific way—to write a book, develop their photography or start their own business. In all cases, people are eager to explore what’s held them back and how they can move forward.

Will I feel comfortable in your group?

If you’re familiar with the book, you know that *The Artist’s Way* process goes deep. The depth of the process is what makes it so powerful and helps people to overcome their past programming, which is often why they are creatively blocked. My top priority is creating a safe environment for my classes. I set the ground rules in the beginning. Throughout the 12 weeks we share, laugh, reflect and sometimes cry. No one is ever judged. Each person’s individual process is honored, and no one tries to “fix” anyone else. You are always free not to share or not to participate in any activity if it doesn’t feel comfortable for you.

How much time does *The Artist's Way* process take, what's required, and what will I get out of it?

I will answer first with a question to you: What do *you* want to get out of the class?

The Artist's Way program can be transformational, but like anything else, the more effort you put in on the class, the more you will get out of it. Many people in my groups would tell you that the experience was life changing for them—please read the quotes on *The Artist's Way* page on my website.

Other than attending each class, the only hard-and-fast requirements of *The Artist's Way* class are daily journaling, called “morning pages,” and a weekly “artist's date.” The morning pages are three pages of writing each morning. This is stream of consciousness longhand writing. Julia Cameron describes them this way:

“You should think of [the morning pages] not as ‘art’ but as an active form of meditation for Westerners. In the morning pages we declare to the world—and ourselves—what we like, what we dislike, what we wish, what we hope, what we regret and what we plan.”

People often ask if they can use a computer for this journaling. I strongly urge that you do not. There is something about the tactile experience of writing by hand that makes the process very different than pounding a keyboard. Hand writing gives you time to think and reflect. I'm as much into the computer as anyone, having spent 20+ years of my career in educational technology, but I have never kept my journal on the computer.

If you have never kept a journal, please ask me to send you my six-page handout on starting and keeping a journal. The most important rule is, “Do not censor yourself as you write!”

The artist's date consists of doing some new activity once a week for at least one hour *by yourself*. This could be something as simple as going to a greenhouse (walking around, looking at the different plants, smelling the dirt) or going to a museum. This break from your normal routine will help jumpstart your creative juices. The reason for doing this on your own rather than with someone else is because when you are alone, you can focus totally on the experience rather on the person you might be with. The chapters of the book are rich with self-discovery activities for you to choose from, and I will also present ideas that you might like to try. These are all optional. You can pick and choose what seems interesting or juicy to you. It's all a smorgasbord!

What materials do I need to buy if I'm going to join your *Artist's Way* class?

All you really need is the book, *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron. I often suggest that people who feel they have a strong inner critic buy the book *Embracing Your Inner Critic* by Hal and Sidra Stone. You do not need to buy any of the other *Artist's Way* publications such as the workbook or the morning pages journal. You should choose a journal that feels right for you whether it's a leather bound book or simply a spiral notebook.

What do I need to do to enroll? How can I learn more?

If you are ready to enroll, please contact me to pay your deposit and reserve your space. I would love to talk with you personally about your own creative goals and whether *The Artist's Way* is right for you. Please feel free to call or email me.

I hope you can join us for *The Artist's Way*. It's a very special safari into self and spirit!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Balian". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Judy" and "Balian" being capitalized and prominent.

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