

# Enrich Your Life with Visual Journaling



Grace Mendez, creativity coach, Certified Zentangle® Teacher

## Enrich Your Life With Visual Journaling

**Who** benefits from keeping a visual journal?

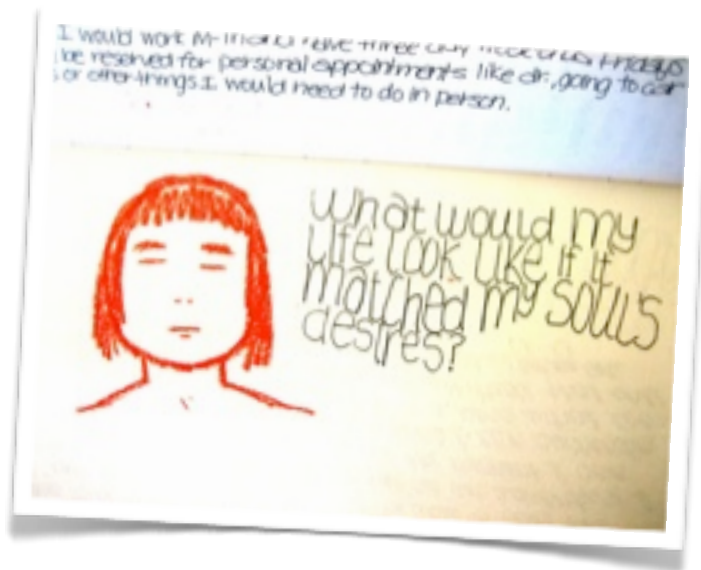
You will and the people in your life will because you will have a place to express yourself in a safe manner, free of judgment or blame. If something is troubling you, it can come out on the paper instead of through your behavior. You will begin to feel lighter because you will have a space to express yourself in a free or uninhibited manner. When you start to become clearer about who you are, a positive ripple effect starts happening in other areas of your life.

If you want to awaken creativity, or are looking for an outlet for your creativity this is a perfect way to do it. Visual journaling does not take a large investment in supplies, it's portable and it's easy to start. Journals don't require much space to be able to work in them.

It's is a fun activity that you can incorporate into family time, too. Get everyone involved. Share ideas and supplies.

Keeping a visual journal is about believing in your self, celebrating your life, having adventures and feeling a part of the universe.

I believe using creativity, especially through journaling, can help you to discover your path.



## **Why** does journaling help you feel more alive and connected?

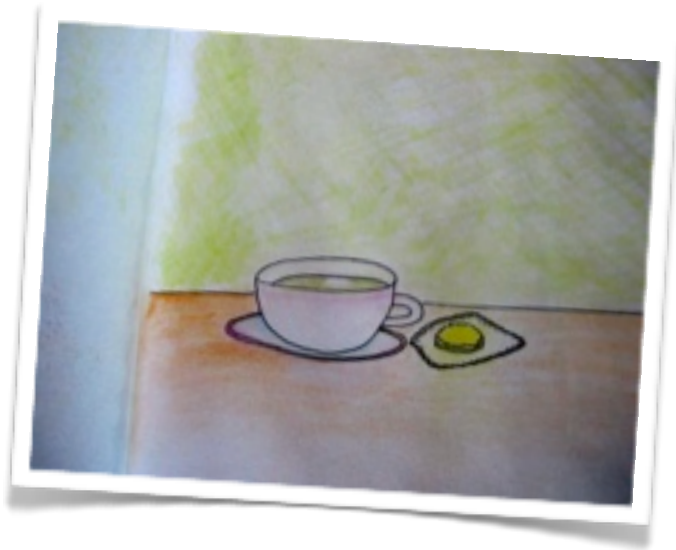
As you create in your visual journal you tap into the five senses:

**S**ight: You see what is on the page and you can see the events in your mind about what you are journaling.

**S**ound: You hear yourself talking to yourself about what you are doing. You can make this an even greater experience by talking out loud as you make your entries, if you dare. Do you want to have music in the background as you work?

**T**ouch: Feel the paper, the pen, and the art supplies. Your hand moves across the page. You may stand, sit or move around as you work.

**S**mell: You smell the art supplies. A scented candle can be lit if you want to integrate this as part of your journal time.



**T**aste: what ever you drink or eat while make your entries. How about a cup of green tea or a glass of wine while you create? How about a lemon cookie?

Having a creative outlet connects you with your essential self especially when you listen to your heart as you create.

Visual journaling is fun. When you are having fun, you feel more alive.

## **When** is the best time of day to journal?

Some people like to journal the first thing in the morning when they wake up, fresh with inspiration for the coming day. Some people like to work in their journal right before they go to bed to reflect on the day's events. You will discover the time of day or night that works best for your journaling.

More important than when, is how often. Just as working out daily builds muscle and keeps you in shape, daily entries, even just a few sentences or a quick sketch will keep your creativity in shape and in motion. If you skip a day or two, it's all right, start again. If you skip a week, start again. If you skip a month, start again.

## **Where** can you work on your journal?

At home, in a dedicated space, or you can take your journal on the road with you to work wherever you go. When you change your surroundings your entries may be affected by that and new ideas may emerge in your journal.

You can do the writing on the road and the artistic portion at home or the other way around. For example, if you create several pages with visual elements or backgrounds while at home, when you are ready to pour your words out onto the pages of your journal, the pages have already been prepared and are eagerly anticipating your writing while you are out. Working in this way allows you to take just the journal and a pen with you instead of toting along additional art supplies.

So even if you have are having a busy day, you can still get in a few sentences or doodles while waiting at the dentist's office, waiting in the car when you pick up the kids or on your lunch hour.



It's something you can do when or where ever you find a few moments.

## **How** to start your visual journal in the most basic, simple way:

- Buy a blank journal, sketchbook or notebook from an art supply store or a bookstore. Don't get a super fancy one if it keeps you from starting because you are afraid of messing it up. This is supposed to be fun, not intimidating.
- You will need pens, pencils, crayons or markers. No need to get pricey. Use what feels right for you. I love to use watercolor pencils, Sakura Pigma Micron pens and a watercolor brush pen.
- If you are intimidated by the thought of drawing, stencils or even cookie cutters can be used to get basic shapes and silhouettes onto your pages. Even simple abstract borders can be used to dress up a plain page.



## **What** to put in the journal:

### **General topics for journals entries:**

- **Gratitude:** This can be done in a list, as a narrative, a visual representation or a combination. Take time to recognize the things in your life that are right rather than what is wrong.
- **Lists:** These are fast, fun and easy -- perfect for days that you don't feel like forming sentences.
- **Doodles:** Just let your hands create random squiggles, lines, dots, dashes, circles, or squares. What do you see?
- **Quotes:** What are your favorite quotes? Use the quotes as a jumping off points for journal entries.

- **Write Backwards:** Hold your page up to a mirror to see how you did. And for extra credit, how about upside down? Extra, extra credit – backwards *and* upside down. I'm still working on that one.

### Some prompts to get you started:

- What makes today a fine day?
- What is the best thing about your life right now?
- What's your dream?
- What do you want these days?
- If you had unlimited resources, what would you most want to do with them?
- What's your greatest joy right now?
- What would you like to change?
- What is most important to you in life?
- What's best about you? List five things you love about yourself.
- What do you have the greatest need for right now?
- What problems or challenges do you most want to overcome right now?
- Where do you feel stuck?
- What is on your agenda today?
- What am I thankful for this week?
- What challenges are you facing right now?
- What's going on in life that's got your attention right now?
- What do you want more of in life? What do you want less of?
- If you got really courageous today, stopped fearing the consequences and launched out to be what you were born to be, what would you be doing?
- What would be most helpful to focus on right now?
- What area of your life are you most motivated to improve?
- Imagine that at age 75 you are telling your life story to a grandchild. What would you like to be able to tell him or her about how you met the challenges in your life?
- Where do you want to be in your life?
- What is your current life like?
- What is stopping you from getting where you want to go?



## Just in case:

What about creative block? (In case you never get creative block, just skip this part and go have fun in your visual journal.)

The reason you get a creative block is because you are listening to your inner critic. Listening too intently to the inner critic gives it the space and time to divert your attention away from getting things done.

How to move forward:

1. Acknowledge that your inner critic has shown up. This is perfectly normal and common. Just because you are listening to the thoughts doesn't mean you have to believe them.
2. Notice any feelings that come with the thoughts. Do you feel sad or angry about having a creative block? Do you feel too tired to create and you decide you can do this stuff later when you are in the mood?
3. Remember the original intention, which was to work on the visual journal.
4. Decide to do it anyway. Just for five minutes. If nothing comes then write, "I can't think of any thing to write or draw." Doing that counts as working on the visual journal, so technically you have broken the block.



Know that what you imagine and what your hands produce on the page in front of you don't always match up, and you will have discovered the secret of being creative. Being okay with not having these two parts -- what the brain wants and what the hands create -- coordinate perfectly, is a fun part of the process and makes the creative blocks disappear. These are the magical moments of creativity. The

surprises that come from creating a visual journal, or any type of creative endeavor, are the sweet, juicy rewards that come from making things happen.

The phenomenon that happens somewhere along the way between the brain and the hands is true creativity.

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## Coaching

Do you need help clarifying your creative intentions? Sometimes you might need to just work on a specific issue. Or you might have a question. You might just need some feed back. Or maybe you're just be stuck on something. That's when coaching comes into play.

I offer individual coaching by phone or Skype. If you're ready to take a look what is holding you back from living your best life please contact me.

To schedule or to learn more, email me: [grace@gracemendez.com](mailto:grace@gracemendez.com).

Zentangle

Grace is a Certified Zentangle Teacher and teaches this fun and easy to learn method of drawing in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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Grace's favorite quote:

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines... Catch the trade winds in your sails...  
Explore.  
Dream.  
Discover.”

~ Mark Twain



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