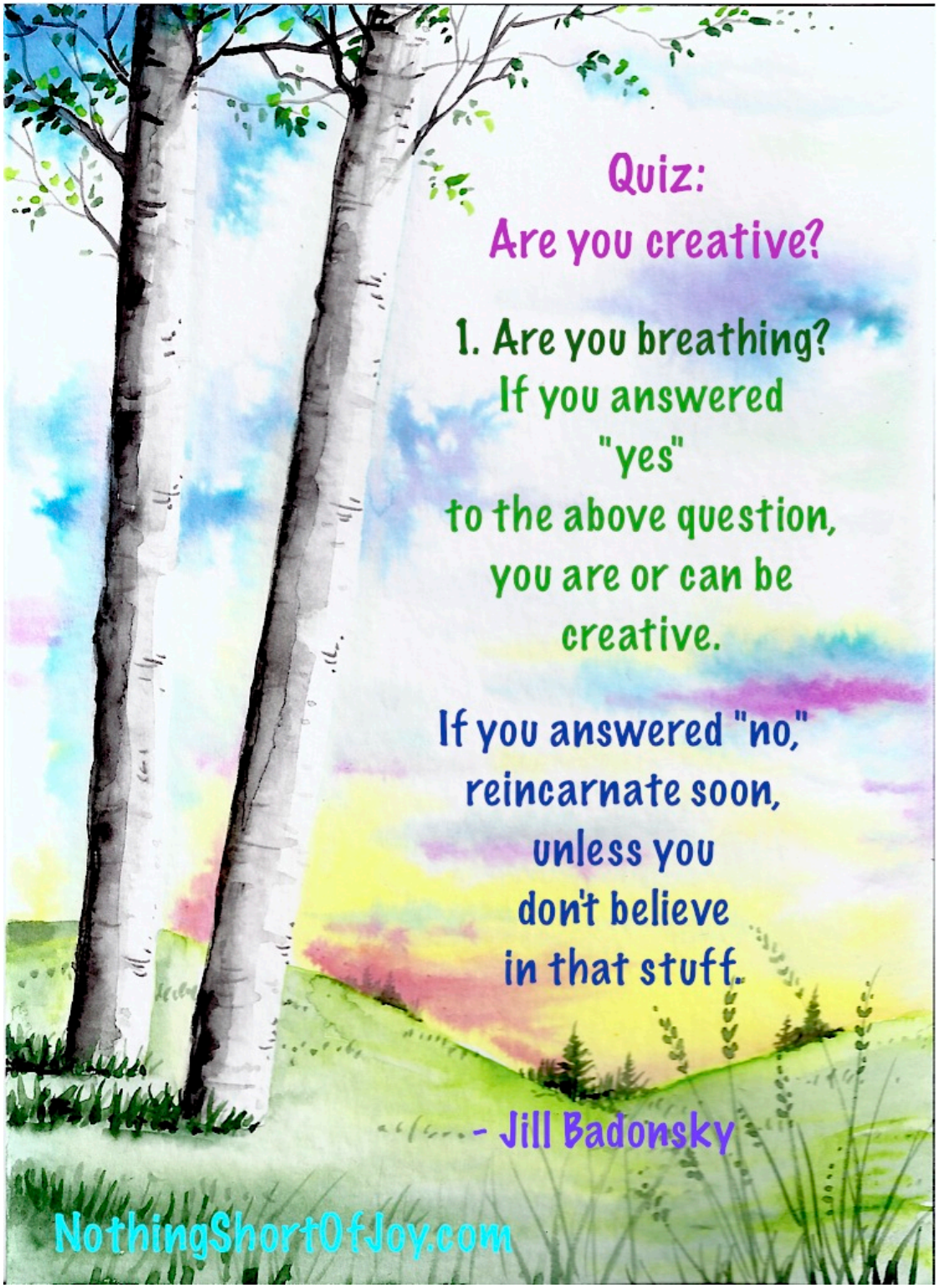
Release the Blocks SO CREATIVITY ROCKS!

A Spiritual Pep Rally for
Breaking Up with Your BS
(Belief System,)
Ditching Polly-Perfectionist
& Energizing Ginormous Joy

Julie Bond Genovese

Creativity
is piercing the Mundane
to find
the
Marvelous.
- Bill Moyers
NothingShortOfJoy.com


Quiz:
Are you creative?
1. Are you breathing?
If you answered
"yes"
to the above question,
you are or can be
creative.
If you answered "no,"
reincarnate soon,
unless you
don't believe
in that stuff.
- Jill Badonsky
NothingShortOfJoy.com

Aloha fabulous angel,

I'm so honored that you're here ❤

WELCOME Welcome to my Spiritual Pep Rally

to Clear Creative Kryptonite,
Ditch Polly-Perfectionist
& Energize Ginormous Joy

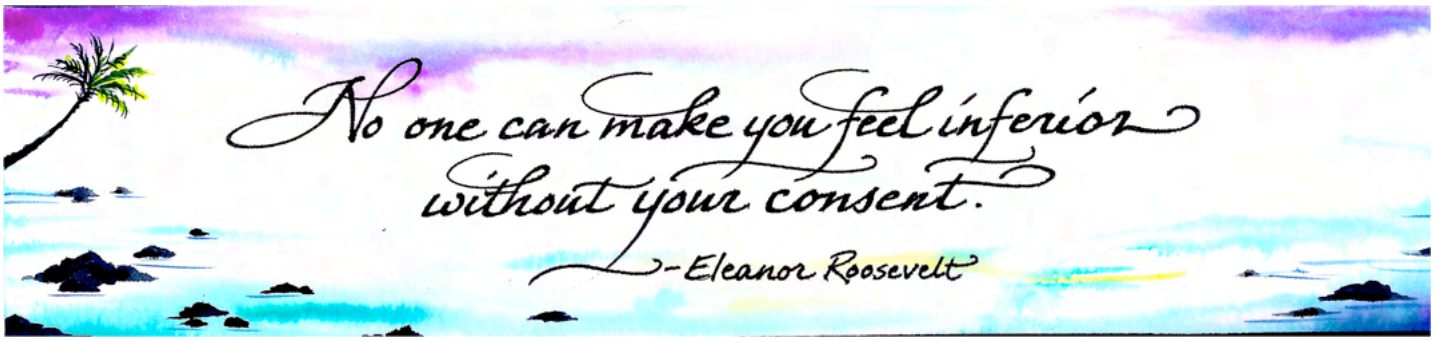
If you're an earthy-crunchy-creative, spiritual explorer, mystical messenger, rainbow warrior, wounded healer or wild waker-upper, (well, you go by a lot of peacenik names, but you know who you are...) get ready to . . .

release the BS blocks so your creativity rocks!

As you know, creativity is not just crayons, canvas or charcoal. The true masterpiece of your life is to rally the real YOU, pump up the empowerment and resparkle your exuberant spirit.

Packed inside this ebook are loads of inspiration-quotations, colorful calligraphy, whimsical watercolors & lotsa wisdom to help you (that's the code word for "me") kick some big time BS buttowski. Got challenges & fears? Vulnerabilities & scars? They're your spiritual springboard to heal, transform & do your damn dream ❤ This is a creativity-on-crack party--> dive right in.

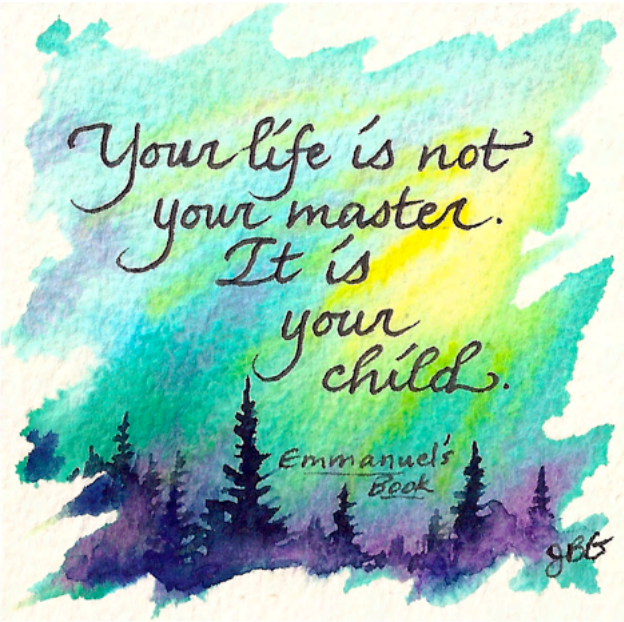
Banzai!



You
are a
Creator
so go
create!

The most visible creators
are those artists
whose medium is life itself.
The ones who express the inexpressible -
without brush, hammer,
clay, or guitar.
They neither paint
nor sculpt.
Their medium
is simply being.
Whatever their presence touches
has increased life.
They see,
but don't have to draw...
Because they are the artists
of being alive.

~Donna J. Stone



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P.S. On page 55 read more about my self-paced e-course on MP3's!

"CPR for the Creative Soul"

As you've already figured out, life on earth can feel like an All-You-Can-Hurl type of roller coaster. The best part (and the toughest) is that the JOY of it, is kinda riding on one BIG thing. Our Belief System.

Our BS is our powerhouse creative motherboard.
It can either usher in our dreams or obliterate them.

Whether we worry about our losses, or visualize our gains, we create what we focus on. You know this. (I just need regular reminders because I've this hilarious habit of forgetting. And since you're human, you got the amnesia bug, too. Frankly, I've ordered up some whoppers I never recall putting on my vision board . . .)

But I did. Sorta.

You'll never rise any higher than the way you see yourself. -Joel Osteen

That ol' baggage we've got stowed away in the basement of our minds - is chock full of crack-pot creators, if we forget to unpack 'em. With love, of course. (I'll be turning fifty in July, 2013, and I'm still finding old carry-ons I thought I left sunbathing in the Caribbean.)

We are such freakin powerful (and often camouflaged) creators that we can end up making a mighty big mess. Life starts to look a bit like finger paints gone feral. We splash all over ourselves, our home, our work. Everywhere we look, we only see the muddy madness of our minds. If we tell ourselves it's "just the way life IS," conveniently, we don't have to change!

Meanwhile our BS baggage is in control. No problem. Whatever we 'mistakenly' mangle, our spirit is psyched to transform that sh**. It makes for the greatest movies. We turn tragedies into triumph. Messes into messages. The plot thickens and we are hooked. Popcorn anyone? Don't tell me the ending, it would totally spoil the fun.

As we become co-creators of our lives, instead of creating from our old BS, we create from our passions, love, faith, FUN and inspiration.

(Go straight to p. 44 if you need any immediate BS busting ideas.)

Your creativity (aka your full-out YOUness) is your TICKET out of the blinkin BS. It's the remedy within that pulls you from overwhelm, disconnect, desperation & despair. It stitches up your woundedness.

Your colorful one-of-a-kind fingerprint is not only your party-path to joy, it's a universal balm, all in one. It's a much needed billboard for the throngs of folks who are hiding and scared to show their true selves. In your soul-search for peace, joy, & abundance, you are uncovering those gifts for me, too.

Creativity is just another name for Enthusiasm. Soul. Life. You. Me. When the nectar is plugged, we feel pissy, petty & pessimistic. (And doesn't that make us a sheer delight to be around?)

Back in the day, (July 23, 1986, to be exact) when I was turning 23, some jamoke told me that those double 23's made it my golden birthday. A special one-of-a-kind year. Whoa. Since I was born with a type of dwarfism called spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia (and a side order of degenerative arthritis,) I instantly imagined two razzle-dazzle dreams gift-wrapped on my doorstep:

1.) Prince Charming. A love-is-totally-blind happily-ever-after kinda ending/ beginning.
2.) Flexible pain-free joints. Delicious deep knee bends. Or just picking a pencil up off the floor without pain.

None of those materialized. I promptly decided there was no such thing as a !@#$ golden birthday.

But life, in all its grace, brought me something 100x more transformational. It was . . . (drum roll . . .) a metaphysical bookstore. I know. Mr. Right or a spontaneous healing would've been EPIC.

BUT.

In that tiny bookstore, in my golden year, an incredible feast began. My starving self devoured those stories of hope & healing. Of recovery & redemption. Embers I barely remembered, burst into flame.

On the wall was a poster of the earth that said, *" We Are One."*

My brain didn't exactly understand, but my heart did. My soul got it. It was a homecoming. An awakening. I realized I wasn't alone. Spirit was seeping out of every dark crawl space.

Those authors (unknowingly) became my friends & compadres. They encouraged me to embrace and express the very self that I'd been so ashamed of - the one I'd been hiding far away from everyone (including me.)

Alone in my room every night, reading and reaching, I didn't go anywhere . . . & yet I left. I was leaving the old BS behind (actually, I would return to it & try it on

again and again.) But it was an awesome start! For the first time I recognized that somehow, someway I'd chosen this place of pain & separation. And I could choose differently! Can I have an amen on that one...

I read about *INNER PEACE* . . . & bawled.

I read about AUTHENTICITY & was awed.

I wrote ENLIGHTENMENT in my journal and my soul smiled.

My heart was breaking open. Why hadn't I ever heard these terms in school? What kind of "education" forgets about how to unlearn the harebrained habits of the world?

The authors' pains and heartaches were shocking because . . . I heard my very own story in theirs. Here I'd always thought I was the only one! Holy headtrip.

In hiding my 'weaknesses' and wounds I'd been keeping myself down. It wasn't my circumstances that were irreparable, it was the way I had seen them. It was the way I'd seen myself.

There was a power within me (and you) that had been trapped. When I finally honored my grief and acknowledged the hard journey, those vulnerabilities transformed into strengths. (Not all at once, you understand. Still lookin for the pixie-dust.)

In our shared humanity, I suddenly belonged. Shut the front door.

My life's sadness & humiliation was the same as yours. Different circumstances, but really just the same, same, same. An eternal bond. We all shared the darkness and it was gifting us with compassion, connection & remembrance of the Light. That was worth the hefty price of admission.

I began to slowly move out of my petrified private world, finding my way, step by step, into the heart of Us All. I'm still walking with you.

When we meet within the Oneness, we recognize each other.

And because of our human baggage, our sad stories, & our courageous plunge into the pain, our spirit grows BIGGER. Together. It's so exciting! It's why we came.

Soooooo all the relief & insights had me thinking I'd made it out of the dark for good! The spiritual path was my saving grace & I was on easy street!

EVERYTHING would be bright and beautiful now!

Um, I was kinda mistaken.

My heart got the message loud and clear. My ego-mind (cue Polly-perfectionist) has been a lot slower on the uptake. Freaked out, even. Change meant lack of control. Surrender. Oh boy. Polly is no ones puppet.

I had a poop load of habits, armor and walls that didn't crumble in one night. Or one year. Or one decade. This little fact is just jet-fuel for Polly-the-pulverizer. She's never satisfied with a little pathetic "progress." She wants the whole magilla done TODAY, perfectly, or don't bother. Give it up. Be done with this whole scary scenario

& stay home. Under a quilt. Blinds closed. Watching TV. (Preferably, So You Think You Can Dance or Survivor.)

Polly-pure-bread has uber high standards, as you can imagine. She likes to remind me (often) that I will finally Make the Grade if I just work harder: "Concentrate. Do better. Be serious. Don't make mistakes. Be nice. Don't let your defenses down. Stay on your toes. Do it yourself. Be vigilant. Don't ask for help (lazy loafer.) Stay alert. Don't trust the world. And for Pete's sake DO NOT trust "joy" - that means you are not working hard enough. Got it?"

Polly is such a drill sergeant.

But she never got the memo on how commandments & critics are creativity crushers. Frankly, she's too exhausted & dazed by her duties as my protector. She desperately wants, at all costs, to keep the past pain from ever happening to me again. She's having a tough time letting go of . . . the nightmare. (I feel for her on this point. ❤)

She had learned that fear, punishment and control was the warden - it could squelch the **inner badness** right out of you. It was used in school. It worked for Dad. Without power and control, well, you're fair game. You're a sucker. A back-boneless mess at the mercy of the meanies . . . God help you.

Polly is also a bit of a drama-queen.

And some numbskull (Polly's pet name for moi) nervously agreed that there was only one way to be Unhurtable. Unconquerable. Acceptable. Lovable. In Control.
The answer was . . . to strive for Perfection.

Well, THERE'S a hopeless cause. With seven billion people in our human family, who's to say what way is perfect?

This point just drives Polly over the effing edge. "There's no p-p-perfection? No standards? WTF? There MUST be a strict right & wrong, good and bad!? Come on people! Otherwise . . . all. WILL. be. lost."

Polly has a lot of bad hair days.

As you may have guessed, spirituality is not Polly's strong suit. "Letting go" is not in her vocab. She is a personal-growth perfectionist, however.

You gotta forgive your Polly - she's been dancing in the dark solo, for a long, long while. Let her eyes adjust. She's a work in progress.

I get a glimpse of that place of soulful surrender in meditation. Out in nature I get totally peace-ified. But indoors, I tend to be a sitting duckling.

Funny thing, by fearing the critics, the bullies & the naysayers, I handed them the septor. I joined the ranks. I did. I invited them all in for chips n dip. I bullied, criticized and naysayed myself all over the place. I figured, if I could just whip myself into shape, THEY couldn't do it to me, ever again - "Ha ha fooled you! You can't get me! I'll do it to myself!"

Oi.

Ever catch yourself in this saboteur drama? Do you fall on your own sword & punish yourself so no one else can do it to ya? Well, Baba Looey, you're not alone.

Take a deep breath.

Step away from the sword.

Tell pale Polly that she did a super-duper pooper-scooping for you, but you've found a better way. (Don't use the "e" word though - she doesn't trust anything "easy" - she's all about hard work, only.) It's gonna take some repetition to talk her down off the cliff. You can do it though. You know how she operates.

To practice any art, no matter how badly,
is a way to grow your own soul. So do it.
- Kurt Vonnegut

In Polly's defense, she took on this mobster protection gig at a very young age. She hasn't had time to grow up much. So I want to be patient with Pol. Gentle. Kind. That makes her melt. She'll give up the reigns some days and grab 'em back violently on others.

Tantrums are normal.

Try to love your inner Polly (or Pierre). Smile and remember why you put her in charge in the first place. The world seemed so overwhelmingly awful. She had some

excellent ideas about how to keep you in one piece. But they're outdated now. Kaput. Listen to your higher self, your noble soul, instead.

Your Spirit is amazingly magnanimous.

It doesn't matter how long you've stayed away from its call, it never gives up on you, leaves or criticizes. If you hear any comparisons going on in your noggin, be sure that it is Polly (or her first cousin once removed, Frieda Control-Freak . . .)

Your soul's message is steadfast & true.

Underneath your worries, doubts, complaints and struggles, is a wild exuberant spirit. Woo-hoo. Even after the crushing blows that life hands you (or you handed yourself) the deep memory of bliss remains. ❤

Your Wonder can't be snuffed out.

Even when you became the victimizer of yourself, it's still there. It's eternal. It's bigger and more beautiful than any worldly assault. BIGGER than that measly 10% of the human brain in use. (Your super-soul has the other 90% covered.)

Nothing that is haunting you right now is more powerful than spirit.
Take a deep breath on that one.

Old habits of thought and action, plus that pill of a Polly, will make it FEEL like life is not within your grasp. That you need to fight the world and fight your own impulses.

Stick to a juicy sweet compliment protocol, instead. She'll be putty in your hands.

You are sublime.
You are needed here.
You are an inspiration.
You knock my socks off.

This life, this body, this world does not have prime directive over us. A divine and unimaginable power is moving through us. We can use it to build walls or walkways. Sometimes we choose really high treacherous walls because the climb is rather

exhilarating. Sometimes we choose walkways because the walls totally kicked our butt. But we get to choose.

Often our old BS creates situations that look so freakin foreign, we don't even recognize our own fab fingerprint on them. It sure as heaven feels like someone else is in charge. But we've just forgotten our soul's plan - the important & courageous choices we made before birth at the Spirit Pub, where you and I met. (More about that on my blog...) The belief that we are accidents or puppets is just giving our power away.

Back in sixth grade, I recall a certain cheerleading try-out that had my BS in the high beams. Although my friends were dying to make the squad, I pretended I was not. (I did a lot of pretending back then...) Actually, I believed that those cutesy outfits, pom-poms & fit bodies were the giant gateway to life's goodies - acceptance, popularity, admiration . . . love.

Saddle-shoes could fulfill my dreams.

But my dwarfism, arthritis, and horrible self-esteem always nixed any high hopes. I didn't fit and I knew it. I couldn't even sit comfortably on the floor let alone do a split. Still. At home I secretly practiced those cheers and jumps and poses. But I didn't try out.

The years passed, but the BS stood like a cemetery slab. (There were a lot of factors, mind you, and my memoir will give you the full picture, hint hint. The cheerleading is just a classic chickStar metaphor.)

My BS quietly droned on, "I'll never be good enough, normal enough, or capable enough." Deep down I believed my differences would always dash my dreams. Sound familiar?

Thankfully, my spirit didn't buy into any of that crappery. Yours didn't either.

Soul kept on cooing that any darkness could be transformed into a spiritual springboard back into the light. Geronimo.

Canoodling with that ol' victim mentality is, well, normal (if there is such a thing.) But it won't sing out with a solution.

"When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."
- Wayne Dyer
(I adore him & he endorsed my book, yay!)

I'll paraphrase what Abraham-Hicks says about this issue (but do click the link if you haven't already delved into their cosmic coolness.) When we believe (and fear) that our soul did NOT choose whatever we're experiencing, the pain floods in. We figure the 'bad' stuff that's happened means we're wrong. Ruined. We messed up. Or someone else did.

The real reason that any situation sucks is because we're looking at it, and at ourselves, in a way that our supercalifragilistic-soul would NEVER look at us. Ever.

Despair & powerlessness is not, not, NOT who we are. So anytime we believe and align with Who We Are Not, our soul signals back with discomfort, fear, anger etc. Those lovely emotions are just Mayday calls from spirit reminding us that we're out of synch.
(Apparently, we enthusiastically agreed to this touchy-feely Braille method before birth. Brilliant diversion.)

So life DID come with an instruction manual. It's not in hardcover yet . . . but it is downloadable. Moment to moment. Our emotions are the accurate BS barometer, which let us know whether we're headed toward our desires or away from them. We gotta make our Belief System glorious! (P.S. creative thinking & just 'being' rewires the BS nicely. You know what works for you.

When we change & empower our thinking, our soul-signals follow suit. When we reconnect, and see ourselves from our soul's perspective, there is rockin relief. Peace. And joy. It's our choice. Spirit adores us whatever we create. ❤

I'm preaching to the choir here, but a shift in our BS, can remedy any sitch, but-quick.

One of my most fateful & creative shift-the-shit episodes started

back in 1997. The arthritis in my right shoulder, (and I'm a rightie,)

had become so painful that I had to GIVE UP my freelance art business. I t. W a s. C r r r r r u s h i n g ! Lose my heart?? My income?? My dastardly dwarfed body was

acting like a ninety-year-old. It was always failing me! (Note the BS. My organs were functioning splendidly, in fact. The use of words like 'always,' 'never' and 'dastardly' are ruby-red flags for Biblical sized BS.)

I'd already had both hips and both knees replaced by age 30 (trauma with a capital T,) and I could NOT face a shoulder replacement. Or two, by age 34. How would I ever be safe in my own skin? Make a living? A life?

I'd adored art ever since I was a wee bairn. As an adult, it had continued to bring me a feeling of comfort, value, and contribution. Did I mention joy? Oh that teensy detail? I'd left that childish BS behind when I made ART my 'serious' living.

My devastating reaction to my shoulder allowed my BS mantras to rush back in. (Ex-BS just does NOT understand the word goodbye!) I felt desperate & hopeless one moment, furious & raging the next. I was a hot BS mess.

The brutal loss . . . was asking me to believe. Again? The nerve. Open farther? Keep the faith? Polly was having none of that crap. She can peg a massive pity-party when she spots one.

So Polly and I partied hard. We invited the regulars: "Why Me." "I'm Not Enough." "Defective Dwarf." "I'm Broken." "Being Punished." "Totally Not Fair." "No Rhyme or Reason." "Never Gets Better" and last but not least, "Life Sucks."

As you know, these radical shindigs can be VERY difficult to break up.

It'll take an army.

A mother of a miracle.

And one arrived . . .

in the form of . . .

(wait for it . . .)

❤

It was a Miraculous Macintosh.

In the midst of my drawn-out poop-party (about a year long rave, I believe) my dad suggested I learn computer graphics by using my left hand on the key board. Damn he's good. He even offered to loan my hubby Bill and me the moolah for a computer. Dad said if I never made money as a graphic artist, we didn't have to pay him back.

That broke up the pity-party pretty quick. HOPE will do that.

Bill & I bought a popsicle-purple iMac (guess who picked the color!?) But before I could get into graphics . . . something fateful fired me up. You'll never guess what I got hooked on. (Go ahead, guess. It was 1998 so it wasn't facebook.) Yup. It was EMAIL. Rare, I know.

I started writing to friends and family and, safe behind the anonymous computer screen, I began to share . . . and to admit to the insecurity roller coaster I'd been pretending I wasn't on. Reaching out was painful and desperate, at first. (I did it with only one eye open.)

Then, when the responses were so kind, (and I realized they wouldn't all go screaming far away from crazy moi,) I started to feel . . . lighter. I began to share and share and over-share until I no longer needed to hit 'send.' I wrote for the sheer joy of expression and release and healing! The writing filled in where my art had stepped out.

The ups and downs of my life started to look rather recycled. Hmmm. The metaphysical authors were so right. I was responsible for the rocky ride in the first place. It was NOT about blame (that's Polly forte,) it was about owning the opportunity to change and grow. It was my own inner movie and I could rewrite, reinvent and reshoot. Unlimited inner budget.

As I revisited my most agonizing experiences and my deepest fears, my right arm started to forget its complaints. It started jumping into the typing tirade. Hai-ya! The fear of the shoulder pain began to lessen (nerve spasms are uber painful!) and I started to use my arm more. Each day I woke up and wrote & reread & cried & wrote & grieved & re-storied & healed. (Polly was stoked. She played Eagle-eye editor.)

It was the most powerful therapy, ever.

Silver linings began lighting up. (A woman in one of my workshops called them "Blessings that Suck." ❤)

The poison became the antidote because I was ready to believe. (Yes, again.) "Again" is a big spiritual theme here. We hard-core humans like to re-visit our old caca. We double back to check if we're really "over it" and not still stepping in our own !@#$.

Polly will insist that there are stampeding dust buffalos under the bed. (And you know how impressive their cow pies are.)

Well, I'd been re-looking and rehashing my old story over and over and recreating exactly what I didn't want. I don't like hash. (Or dusting.) Law of attraction 101. I'd been dishing out what I didn't want to eat.

I didn't believe in me, so I didn't expect anyone else to either.

Then it hit. If reframing my life was THIS fabulously cathartic for me, my experience might help others transform, as well. It also might ease my family finances. It was a hail Mary win-win.

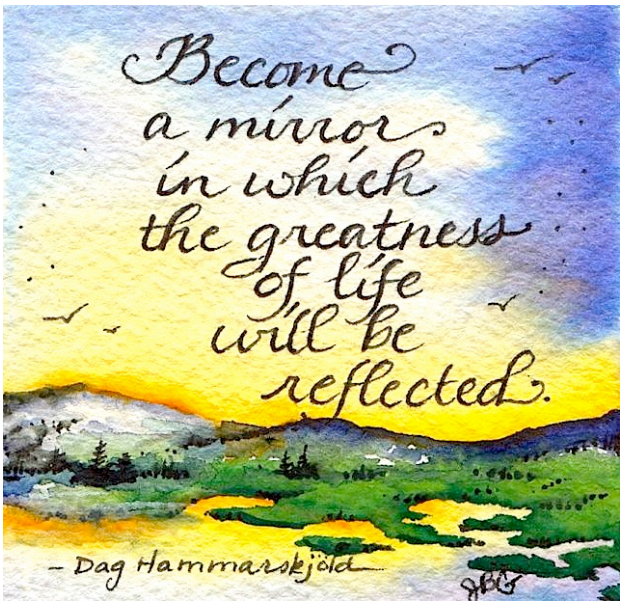
The book gave amazing purpose to my pain. Are you recording your Art & Soul story?

A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us.

- Franz Kafka

Out of all of it came my memoir, **Nothing Short of Joy**, which has led me to some amazing things like being on stage with Wayne Dyer (OhEmGee) and being on TV, radio and speaking gigs (so scary!) One of the biggest lessons of all has been discovering how universal my story is - that shocked the bleep outa me.

As I wrote & remembered & rallied my strength, I wanted more. I was lonely for my tribe. My spiritual community. I wanted to tell you that my story was YOUR story and vice-versa. I wanted you to feel the freedom I was beginning to touch. Maybe you already did!?



I was ready to step up and be ME. And go & find you. I once thought you'd kicked me out. But heck, I was the one who'd given myself the boot. Plus, I was still very human & prone to overlook my own goodies & gifts (which we all got.) I needed inspiration & reminders. So I started giving them.

Those block-buster personal growth books had said that if we give away what we don't think we have, we discover we had it all along.

Reminding you of your magnificence helps me remember my own. We're mirrors. We're warriors. We're in this together. Thank you, angel-face 0 :)

(FYI Any 2"x2" squares of art in my ebook like this --->> are my watercolor magnets for sale at my site!)

What we give away, we get to keep. - Tony Robbins

I started to see myself as an uplifter. I was getting pretty good at it (not every day, or all the time, but I was trying . . .) Sometimes it was to distract attention from myself (God forbid people get to know the real me.) Then sometimes it became something more - the Oneness I longed for. I wanted to remind others (aka myself) of their strengths, their victories, their beauty. In whatever way they blossomed, I could too. I wanted to be there for them in their sadness and losses too. We could remind each other that our heartache was just unrecognized wholeness.

I wanted to help the healing. To be connected. To root, root, root for everyone I knew. I wasn't so great at doing the rah-rah for myself, but I could do it for others. If not in person, I'd send prayers & angels to cheer them on.

Then the ah-ha.

I'd become . . . a cheerleader.
A small cherubic one ¤ but it still counts.
And I didn't need to fit my chubby caboose into the cute outfit.

I was born for this team.
So were you.
*´¨)
¸.•´ ¸.•*´¨) ¸.•*¨)
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Even Polly

is on board.

We do not become writers... dancers...
musicians... helpers... peacemakers.
We came as such. We are.
Some of us are still catching up to what we are.

We do not learn to love in this sense.
We came as Love. We are Love.
Some of us are still catching up to who we truly are.

~ Clarissa Pinkola Estes

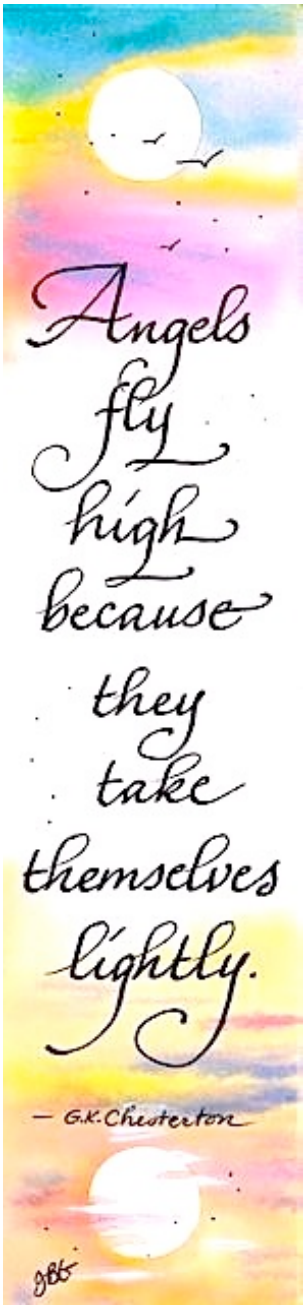
What art offers is space - a certain breathing room for the spirit.

~John Updike~

**An artist has been defined as a neurotic
who continually cures himself
with his art.**

~Lee Simonson

Psssst - any long & skinny art like this ---->
are my bookmarks, for sale at my site too!



Recently, my goddaughter said to me, "I never realized until I left home and went to college, that adults were just faking it, too." Seriously. The same thing had shocked me. "Grown-ups" were just so convincing, weren't they? Parents, teachers, coaches, caretakers, celebs etc. They seemed to have it all together. Maybe a few did. But the majority were just bound by the war-torn hand-me-down dinosaur rulebook from the conformity convention.

It wasn't really written for them. Or us.

Honestly, I tried so hard to stick to the pack-protocol for half my life - what a prison sentence. Sometimes, I still peak through those big ol' convention doors, though, to see if they're talkin about me.

Like yesterday, as I'm retrieving our jubilant yellow lab, Merlin, who has escaped into the neighborhood, Connie-conformity (within me) starts cluckin away, "you're wearing those horrid old elastic sweat pants, there's a grease stain on your shirt, you have no make-up on and your hair isn't clean OR brushed. DO NOT let them see you like this! What will they think?! They'll feel sorry for you, steer clear of you and never like you. And we'll be all alone. Ugly. Rejected. Miserable."

Oh the problems that little Connie can still stir up. She is the queen of meanie-mantras.

You know what my super-sized soul (in her cherubic cheerleading outfit) has to croon to her, over and over again?

I'm your champion now, sweetcheeks.
I know exactly what you went through. Every scary step.

I was there. I'll always be.

I see your unkempt hair, freckled face, arthritic joints, freaky high forehead, surgery scars, cherub belly, bubble butt, muffin flubber, pimples, wrinkles and smelly pits. I know you think your head is big as a pumpkin and your back is as curved as a question mark. But you can't ever scare me away.

I'll never leave you. Ever.

You're not broken.

I know sometimes you feel like you are. They told you that.
It's part of the clever earth curriculum.
Keep unlearning. It will get clearer.

You are Whole.

You are the s-hero of this story, sistah.
You are the blueprint we imagined together.
I am the best YOU, you can ever imagine.

You're safe now.

You pulled through. You didn't give up. I know you really want to sometimes. But you've persevered. That is the awesomeness of the real you. So you say you don't have it all together yet? No worries. You weren't meant to GET anywhere. You were made to journey on.

You're a survivor. You're a rock star.
You're more creative for the climb.

You hold all the joy you've ever known, inside you right now.

As you can imagine, Connie is not buyin the bull.

She thinks this free-spirit stuff won't help anyone live in the REAL world where others have ALL the power. The money. The strength. The smarts. The love. (The word "all" is the BS breakout here. As if.)

The world's reaction to my dwarfism taught me that I wasn't good enough. I was defective. I was disadvantaged. I didn't fit in & it was not safe to go it alone. (I didn't know about my spirit or my angels yet, so I bought the lies.)

The Con-ster and I figured, broken as we were, it was imperative to constantly prove ourselves to the pack. Fly with the flock. Stay anesthetized. Do not zoom outside the lines.

As kids, we were quick to buy tickets on the Connie-cruise. That's when our fresh juicy juju started to dry up. The tie-dye colors began to fade. Connie conformity begged me to steer clear of the fru-fru, woo-woo, guru creator within.

The pack pressure at school was fierce and enforced. We had to do what went against our joy and natural instincts. For many of us, school kicked the joy of learning right out to the curb, a little more each year. This was Connie's birthplace (and all the crotchety characters that followed.)

FYI there's a fantastic alternative - a new (but actually older than dirt) way to live and learn. It goes by different names - unschooling, child-led learning, self-directed, natural or life-long learning, etc. It's allowing our kids (and ourselves) to trust our natural interests and follow joy instead of standardized tests and curriculum. Society has seemingly forgotten that we are hard wired to love to learn! Creativity and productivity simply soar in this paradigm of partnership and passion. If you want to explore more, check out John Taylor Gatto, John Holt & Pat Farenga, or Nicole Olson for starters!

Unfortunately, school reinforces that learning (and life) is, for the most part, unpleasant, hard work. We were trained that what felt good to us, was NOT good for us. We learned to distrust what brought us joy.

So since creativity came naturally to me, and made me happy, it could not be useful in the 'real' world. The opposite is true.

Frankly, how many people do you know who feel safe tapping out their own tune? And being really really REAL? Warts and vulnerabilities out for all to see, doing what they love without fear of the world disavowing them as a flake. (Polly's word.)

It wasn't my dwarfism or arthritis that held me back in the end. It was my huddling with the herd. It's not separation from the pack that's profoundly painful, it's the separation from our own soul.

Trumping up our trueness might make a lot of people uncomfortable - it's taboo not to follow the code, the norm, the cardinal rules.

The Connie's of the world are panicking, "if I can't be free then YOU are not allowed to be free either. It's just NOT DONE."

Oh but it is. Go ahead. Dr. Seuss had it right without a doubt,

"Why fit in when you were born to stand out?"

Many radical real-sters checked out of the conformity convention long ago. I left too, but . . . I didn't exactly announce it on the loud speaker, fraidie-cat that I am. I still kinda liked the convention folks thinking I was with 'em. If you're a fence-walker like me, you're a real-ster, in training. (I even went with-out make-up all last week. I'm such a rebel.)

But I'm making my way. I'm not caring so much about the naysayers because I'm gettin busy loving my real life, not a phoney-baloney one. (Don't let the Tofurky's get you down.)

"The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are."

-Joseph Campbell

Keeping up with the Joneses is actually just our Oneness, deeply derailed. Our spirits are forever entrained no matter the course. But somewhere along the trip, the togetherness-train went from cooperation to comparison & competition. We just got a little confused about how to be ONE while we're still on earth, all decked out in our 'separate' earth suits. (I picked an especially cool costume, dontcha think?) The loneliness was hard to shake. We figured our best bet for belonging was to cross our fingers, close our hearts and pretend like all the rest.

When fear strikes, (and girl, does it ever) we kinda cling to Connie. If you want to throw away the map & strike out on your own, she'll be all, "that is just RIDICULOUS & RISKY to go all FLITTING about just being all UNIQUE and FREE. You wanna land on the street alone? Fuck that noise. It's SAFE in numbers, adhere to the horde!" (Fear gets even Connie swearing.)

When I recognize the Connie-curse upon me, I break out the colored markers & turn up the music ❤♫" * •. ,♫ , . • * " ♫ (Go for your cure. You know you want to.)

Let the angels sing lullabies to ConCon night and day. Music soothes the savage bitch. (Just kidding. She's actually just really, really frightened.)

It takes BIG Love to undo the messy BS-y. Here's what my soul says to soothe her:

You were craving a ridonkulously tough earth challenge. The Oprah of all Olympics. There is no where in spirit where you can get this kind of up-close, gripping, on-the-edge-of-your-soul drama.

In choosing this life, you knew:

1. You'd be born into a seriously insecure earthbound crowd. Check.
2. You'd soak up "their way" like a super-duper sponge. Check.
3. Feel lost and powerless. Check, check.
4. Abandon your soul and listen only to the harsh human herd. Check mate.

Moving far away from Spirit would be earth-shattering. Perfect. You'd be right on track. The pain would be so unbearable that you'd start to believe there MUST be another way. You'd feel a faint cry . . . of hope. A distant memory . . . of joy.

And you'd start to claw your way back to the courageous YOU who wanted to play the game in the first place. The one who wanted to find out for yourself that you had the power all along.
To realign with your soul. To listen for angels.
To touch God (the one of your understanding.)
To create your life with awareness instead of pain.
To remember the Love you were born to forget.
You came with outrageous commitment. Unbreakable Love.
You see, you can't lose at this game, cupcake.

You came to transform the bitter blackness back into Light.

I am your unstoppable Soul, safe in eternity.
I am in every direction you turn. I am your heart of hearts.
Your truth. Your deep stillness.
I am your treasure trove of goodness, gladness & grace.

(Tomorrow you will forget all this. No problem. I'll still be here.)

I love you,

Your sensational, sticking-like-glue, Soul

And so that was how it was supposed to go down.
Hack into the herd and then get the hockey-puck out. Metaphorically, that is.

It kinda works out rather swimmingly in the end.

I'm so proud of us. And Connie is gellin like a fellon. (For now anyway.)

Everything
will be okay
in the end.
If it's not okay
then it's not the end.
JBond
- John Lennon
NothingShortofJoy.com

"We belong to each other."

~ Mother Teresa

Any one ever tell you that your creativity could never be a 'real' job?

When my dad was young and showed interest and talent in art, his dad said to him, "There will be NO artists in THIS family."

Dad went into marketing research. But he (and Mom) turned around and supported my art in a big way :)

For most creatives, it's THE super-scary challenge to follow our heart, to develop, share, & earn a living doing what we love. Can we be paid for being & enjoying who we are? YES yes and yes. Will it be easy? The jury is out on that one...

The biggest blocks for creative creatures is not actually outside ourselves (the talent pool 'competition,' the economy or the fiendish family pressure.) I'll sum it up with the worst four letter word, ever. (If you're squeamish, turn your head and scroll to the next page. Polly close your ears.)

Hold on to your sombrero.

Here it comes.

* SELL *

(Cue chirping crickets. . .)

This one clears the creatives from the room every time.

Over the years, I've had a hideous time screwing up my courage & confidence to ask for moolah.

Please, anything but THAT. Crunchy-creatives would much rather just give it away! We are so above material concerns. Right.
But sometimes a beautiful thing comes over me (actually, it has to run over me a few times . . .) I remember that I'm not alone. I am just like the other feisty freedom seekers who want to follow their passion, but worry how far out-of-the-pack (and pocket-book) it will take us.

All those years I thought that happiness lay in figuring out how THEY did it. What was acceptable to THEM. What made me lovable in THEIR eyes. Merciful heavens. Who were these giants anyway? The answer was NOT for me to follow their Belief System, but in embracing what spoke to my soul.

Why and when did recreation (re-creation) get relegated to the kids curriculum only? Why did becoming an upstanding adult mean putting away the play things? Drats. In all our seriousness, we left joy behind. That's when our miraculous manifesting hit the dirt, too.

If the fun is gone, your creativity is F******, too.

Listen sunshine, if you're kicking yourself for becoming an awesome accountant when you would've really preferred sword swallowing, cut yourself a fat break. We had a lot of "critical" hard-knock-training from day one. The situation didn't start with you, but you do hold the creative cure now.

Remember back in school? Art, music, etc, was not a required course - it was an elective. A soupy side-dish. In college, creative classes were called "gut" courses. An easy grade. A low-effort curriculum stuffer for the hard-working pre-meds and pre-law students. Hmph.

I decided (subconsciously, anyway) that if art was just fluffernutter between two starving slices, then yuk, I'll pass. If it was considered a "hobby," and a dubious "career" on the scary-hairy edge for free-spirits, fringe-dwellers & hippy-dippy fruit cakes, it would NOT be my main meal, either. No, ma'am.

A lot of parents encourage their kids to be doctors or lawyers or respectable business bankrollers (mine did not, yay!) But yoginis and hula-hoopers? Um, no. "THAT won't pay the bills, dear. You can do that on the weekends." (No offense to loving parents out there. You thought those professions would be the best thing, i.e. financial security, for your kids. I get it.)

It took me until my junior year to publicly declare my art major, (very meekly, in the back corner. At midnight.) I first picked psychology. Then philosophy. Then later, sociology. All very cool. But all smoke screens.

I so hated being a dwarf - a born nonconformist - that my full time obsession was figuring out how to fit in. I'd been laughed at from an early age - I desperately wanted to be taken seriously. Art was not in Connie's conservative vocab. So I was trying to be all stealth-like, hangin with the left-brainers, just hoping to blend in. The universe, however, had radically different plans.

My heart would NOT stop calling. Texting. It friended me on FB. (Well, we didn't have cell phones or computers yet, but you get what I'm sayin . . .) I could NOT escape ME no matter how badly I feared being outed. Guess where my art and me finally hooked up? That metaphysical bookstore. Yup. While working there, I saw that the

hand painted greeting cards were selling well. And fetching a good price. Weird. I didn't think art & money ever got along.

Here's a shortened excerpt from my memoir on how my artsy career unfolded:

Unlike oil and acrylic paints, which could be harnessed and controlled, watercolors had an aqueous lil mind of their own. It was the exact reason I'd never played well with them {Frieda Control-freak was stalking me even back then . . . } But since they were the most logical medium for making hand-painted greeting cards . . . I wanted to give them a whirl.

You know what? Those watercolor washes unleashed the beast. They shifted around on the paper in movement & majesty I hadn't anticipated and could not stop. Hours passed. Years dissolved. As the colors danced, I felt something inside me start dancing, too. It was therapy. It was reunion. Sunrises emerged under my hands. Turquoise, fuschia & daffodil yellow rode across an open sky. They greeted each other in harmony and healing. They spoke to me of joy.

I grabbed a calligraphy pen and pulled out my journal jammed with quotations. In the two years I'd been in Boston, I'd nearly filled it. As I wrote Richard Bach's words . . . the ink laughed out loud. I swear.

{The watercolor below is the original card from 1986. Sally-Saver just refused to sell it.}

I sat back and actually admired my creation. For the first time in a long time, I saw myself in its flowy freedom. It wasn't perfect and I was still . . . happy. Whoa. After a week of practice, my desk piled high with cards, I tried to cough up the courage to ask Carol, my boss, if she would sell them at the bookstore. But the thought of putting my work, and a piece of my soul, out into the world sent my previous enthusiasm into a steep nose dive.

What if people hate my cards? I don't think I could handle it.

Finally, after madly sorting through the doubts, I collected a stack of the ten best cards & stuffed 'em into my backpack. I remembered that today, only Crystal, the other employee, would be in the shop. I could secretly put the cards out and see what happened. As the bus bounced me and my contraband toward the store, the scary plan rattled around in my goodie-two-shoes head. What if Carol finds out? Will she be mad I didn't ask first?

"Hello, Julie of the sweeping rainbow," Crystal sang out. "How are you on this luscious day of days?" Crystal was a fellow student of metaphysics and macrobiotics. Her flamboyant style was the exact reason why the New Age had a flakey reputation.

"It was a full moon last night," she hummed, "and we drank sake at our Goddess Circle of Ecstasy. Afterward I was so yin - I was absolutely overpowered by the desire for some salty yang this morning." She held up the bag of barbecue potato chips she was munching.

"Those chips have M.S.G and hydrogenated oil," I said. I actually wanted to devour them in the worst way, but I was afraid. Following the macro diet would bring me a miracle, I thought, and if I was perfect in my quest, maybe God would undo all the punishment from the past. Then I'd be free from pain. The haunting fear of losing my willpower, meant losing my dream.

Then I saw the worried look in Crystal's eyes. "I'm sorry," I said. "Not very zen of me to judge, huh? I like those chips, too."

Crystal nodded cheerfully and skipped off for her break. I seized the chance. Casually, I wobbled over to a card rack and slipped my cards in.

A few customers streamed in and out, and each time they drew close to my cards, I felt as if they were about to trip a nuclear weapon. A stern-looking woman in a

somber green business suit stopped at the card rack and began flipping through the selection like a tax auditor. She had on low, sensible shoes and a matching bag, both buffed to a harsh shine.

She doesn't belong in a groovy store, I mumbled to myself. Suddenly, she spotted the artistic warheads. I froze in my seat, waiting to be blown to bits.

"These are lovely," she said. "They're new, aren't they?"

"Yes," I coughed, now viewing her as royalty.

"Are they hand-painted? I don't see a signature."

"Well, um, I made those."

"Really? You're very talented! You must sign them. I dabble in watercolor and I know how hard it is. You clearly have it mastered."

A white picket-fence grin slammed into my face. Her praise lifted me out of my small, doubting self. I started to ring up the bill as Crystal breezed over, her gauzy red skirt moving like flames across the floor.

"Where are the new cards from?"

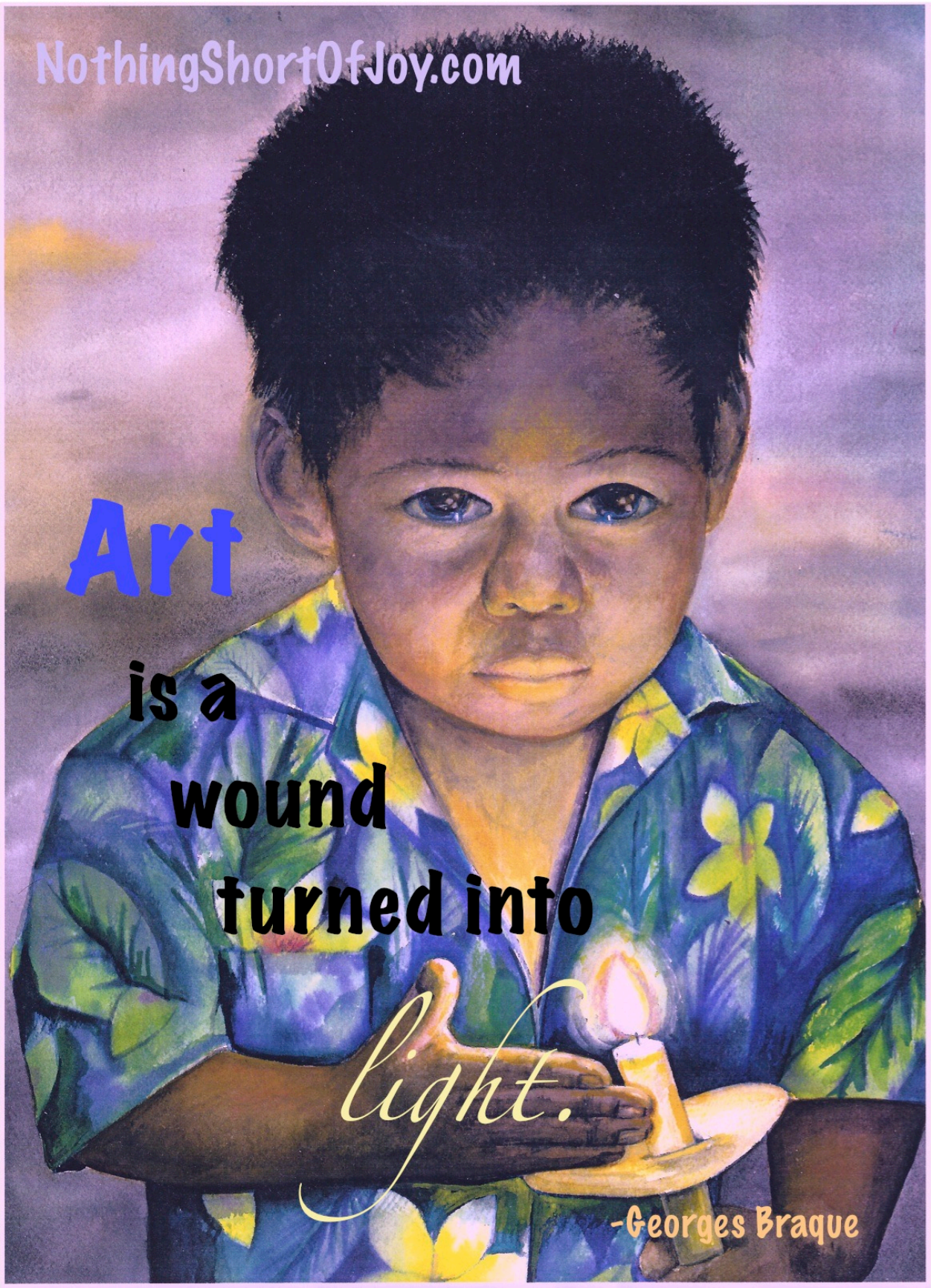
"You're standing next to the artist," said the customer proudly.

"Holy Mother of Mercy," Crystal said, her religious upbringing slipping out like a bra strap.

"These are pure light!" She threw a massive bear hug around me.

"Can I have your business card?" the customer asked. "I'd love to commission a painting for my girlfriend who's going through an awful divorce."

Thus, my 'career' in art had begun...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Art
is a
wound
turned into
light.
-Georges Braque

Among the other free-lance projects that came my way, I became a wedding calligrapher (can you tell how much I looove wielding words? I'm also addicted to alliteration. For me, artsy calligraphy is an ideal left-brainer/right-brainer marriage of heart and head.)

So you never know where it will come together. Or even how to get there. (Let the angels take care of mapping that marvel out.) You just gotta show up. Do your thing. Express your heart, in the way only you can do, and put it out there. Let people know who you really are. Scariest & bravest thing you'll do.

"E.L. Doctorow said once said that 'Writing a novel is like driving a car at night. You can see only as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way.' You don't have to see where you're going, you don't have to see your destination or everything you will pass along the way. You just have to see two or three feet ahead of you. This is right up there with the best advice on writing, or life, I have ever heard."

- Anne Lamott, Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life

I'm an artist, whether my shoulder works or not (it does work now, but I'm just sayin...) I'm an artist. The arthritis led me into writing my book (well, it kinda clubbed me over the head and dragged me, crying.) But Thank Goddess. I had no idea what I was doing. Branching out into the unknown felt heinous & horrible. (I'd limited myself in my creativity, as well, to pencil, pen & paint. Period.)

I was afraid of anything new - a techno-phobe. And yet that purple-nurple iMac opened a dynamic door. We are artists in seven billion different and wild ways. With a brush or a mouse or a building or a bag. Pick one and go for it!

You get to choose how you'll create. And although Polly, Connie, Frieda (& all those vampy voices that say NO WAY JOSE,) may try to turn your head, aim for the heart, instead. They can't crush your creativity if you stay awake. They have to try, of course (give them a little credit for doing their job.) They're your old armor, after all, and they do NOT want the REAL world to take you out. They'll do it first.

When you fall down that rabbit hole again ('cause your inner cast of characters is THAT good) just promise me this - try to smile and giggle and use the fall as fodder for your creativity. Or for your grandkids, whichever comes first. Welcome to the bumbling human race, crum-bunny. The place just wouldn't be the same without the magic of YOU.

The other day, for instance, it happened when I was reading a blog by Leonie Dawson, (whom I just adore - go give her a holla.) Polly was pitchin quite a hissy fit. I fell hard. Listen to the horse-$@#* she was shoveling -->

"Leonie is WAY better at this than you are. She's been doing it for YEARS (and she's 20 years younger AND much more energetic.) She's soooo successful, productive and fun! You'll neeeever be able to do it as well as lovely Leonie. (Note to self, "never" is a royal-red Polly-flag.) Why would anyone like your stuff when they can have hers? AWKWARD. It's a gargantuan waste of time! What were you thinking??"

Lord, Polly is such a pisser.

But I listened that day. I crammed my inspired, wacky, moody, miraculous, rainbow-sized lil self under a bushel and cried. When it comes to business, & my light is low, Polly takes the alpha role. What a pal. She thinks I'm not physically, emotionally or intellectually capable of handling being an entrepreneur. Ha.

You can imagine how she's been squawking while I write this airy-fairy ebook. "You're going to tell them WHAT? And in bright colors?" She particularly abhors the swearing. The contractions, missing comma's and slang, well, they just make her shudder.

I was once a very hardworking "A" student who graduated with honors from Hamilton college (talk about a proud Polly.) But there was no joy in Mudville for me. I tackled my business with the very same sort of grunting & gasping effort I'd learned in school. I generally pushed all the fun waaaay away.

Hence this ebook. I am in Franny Fearful territory here, though. At night, (when the crack-pot crew come a callin',) they insist that, "colorful, light-hearted stuff is for kids, not for serious matters. Let's just keep this little childish pleasure trip to ourselves, hmmm?"

Because I'm the size of an eight-year-old, you can imagine how often I've been patronized and patted on the head. Words like "childish" or "not serious" really get my grizzly. The crew knows this. They will use any method to keep me from getting "out there" and possibly being criticized or shamed for being who I am. My mind says that is love. My heart knows it is fear. My soul says, the crew doesn't speak for the real me.

Honestly, I get a kick outa merging the silly & the sacred. I don't wanna take life so seriously any more. I'm pooped. So here I go - I'm listenin' to my courage instead of the crackpots. (They're actually kinda cute. They hate the word cute. I know this.)

Writing in this whacky way helps me rescue & remember the joy.

I'm actually learning to laugh at my BS! Are you? When my writing and art is imperfect, it totally ticks Polly off. But it's a considerable coup for me. (Wild applause please!) I am dangling participles all over the place.

Sue me.

BTW, if you notice any typos, mispellings (heh, heh) or run away sentences, they are totally on purpose, just to tease Polly. She'll thank me later. Then we won't have to agonize about it when we notice the 'mistake' - 'cause we meant to do it!

By the look of things, you might conclude that I'm a silly-hearted funster in my biz. Well, I'm not. Never been. But I want to be one when I grow up.

Polly has forbidden it. Loud music helps drown her out. I'm currently listening to Brighter Than the Sun on iTunes. Click the link if you want a catchy tune in your head instead of the parliament-according-to-Polly. (P.S. She may try comparing you to the sultry singer's golden good-looks. Pol temporarily hogtied moi on that one.)

Creativity, and pretty much everything else, grinds to a screeching halt during a Polly parade or Connie convention. I get crabby, critical and cling to the **comparison crapola.** (My husband isn't very fond of this spectacle either. Nuf said . . .) The expression, the freedom, the light heart, the wildness, the peace, the JOY says 'sayonara' sucka. (My fear speaks Japanese.)

Remember the trick?
Take a break, buttercup.

Polly needs pampering. Stick and move. Pour on the gratitude. You're on to her. Smile and beam about her brilliance. Remind her of the wonderful things in your life. Tell her that you're ready to take the wheel now. To come out of the creative closet. To give her a break. She's worked so long and hard. She hasn't had a siesta in a coon's age.

Read some inspirational stuff, to that perfectionist Polly, about how having fun improves productivity (and creativity.) You're the only one she'll believe. Show her some YouTube videos from Hay House or any uplifting authors, speakers & jokesters you know. TED talks are loaded with creative juice! ("Funniest Home Videos" can get my family howling.) Or if Polly's in a big hurry (she loves breakneck speed . . .) just read her some quickie quotes. Here's one that might slow her down for a sec . . .

Just sit there right now.

Don't do a thing.

Just rest.

For your separation from God

Is the hardest work

in this world.

-Hafiz

Polly needs permission to just chill. Daily. Otherwise she is crippling as kryptonite. She really doesn't trust that it's actually okay (and healthy) to just BE in the now. She's all about do, do, shooby dooby Doing.

But, as some wise soul said, we're human beings not human doings.
Abso-bloody-lutely.

If you are busy working hard trying to get 'everything' done instead of doing the ONE creative thing your heart is hungry for, then your super-powers are leaking out. You're a tad disconnected from your life-giving creative joy. No wonder you're so tired! It's exhausting not being who you are.

Let's celebrate your magnificence instead, shall we?

Quick. Redirect. Polly's just following your old BS instructions, after all. Give her bright shiny new ones to obsess over . . .

Some of the best shortcuts to break up with your BS -->

1. Haul your heiney (& halo) out into the light. Get thyself to a greenery.

BS totally fritzes out when exposed to full spectrum color. It can't hold up under righteous rainbows. Woods, water, mountains or meadows - magnificent Mother Nature is the best BS blaster I know.

2. Journal w/2 tubs of colorful markers (Calligraphy markers are rad too.) It's how this ebook started.

3. Music, Singing & Dancing (privately, if necessary.) And don't forget to hoot & laugh thy @ss off.

4. Post loving sticky notes to self (liberally place on mirrors, refrigerators, computers & foreheads.)

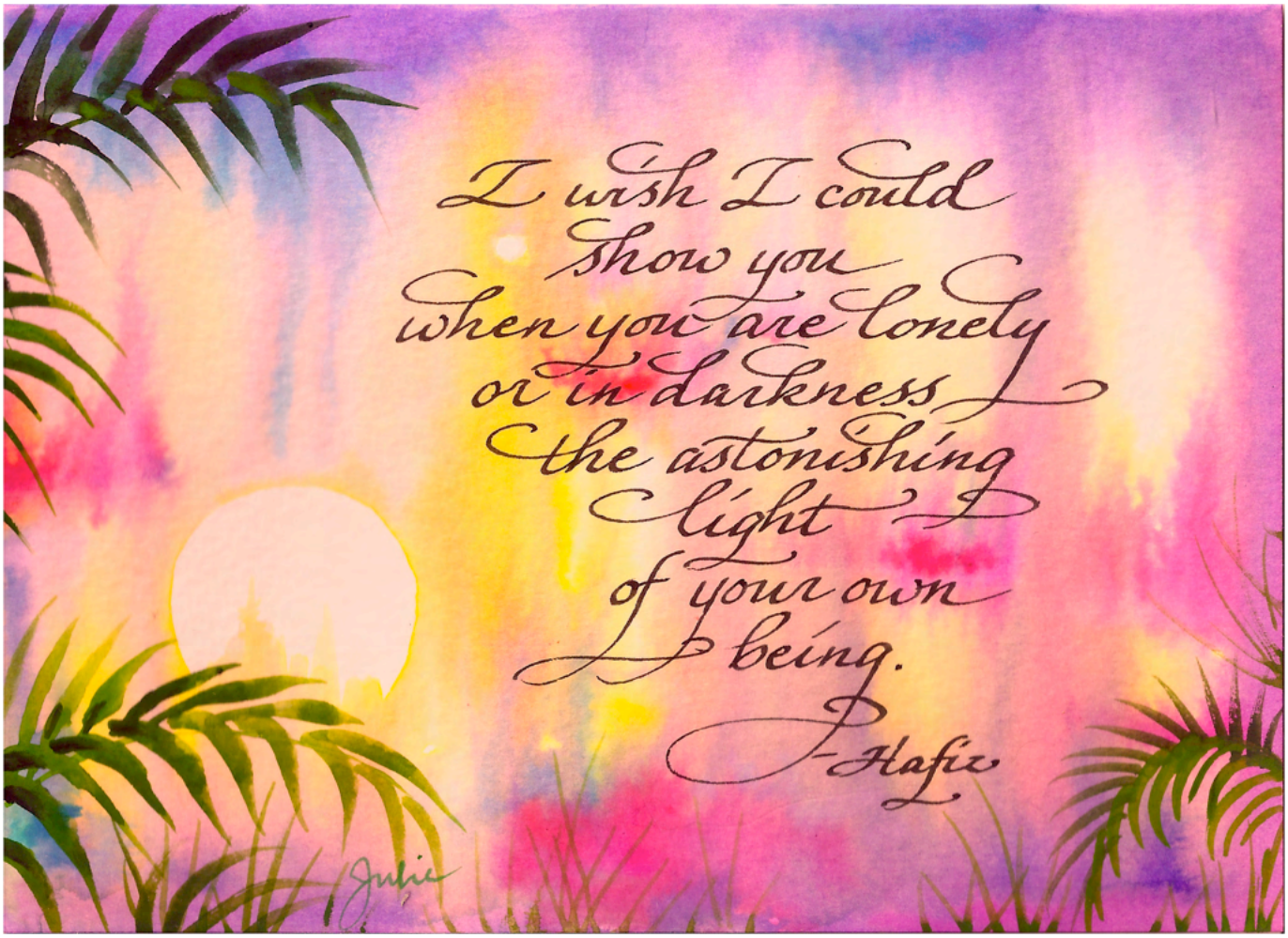
5. Write gigantic affirmations (like "Lighten Up!" Relaxation + a light heart = mucho creative mojo)

6. On Sundays, Tune in to 'Super Soul Sunday' on Oprah's channel, OWN. Do NOT get out of your pj's or take a shower. Do take notes. (That isn't Polly slippin' in. Write down all inspirational words and quotes you hear!)

7. Meditate (light a candle & breathe DEEP . . . d e e e p e r . . . K e e p b r e a t h i n g . . .) Do this forever . . . Your creative life needs tons n tons of oxygen. (Thank you trees!) Important side note - BS loves to play its dramatic drums at quiet time. Congrats, this means you are human. Just watch the BS calmly & ask the angels to cart it away. Done. Go back to b r e a t h i n g until the next drum solo. Rinse and repeat daily.)

8. Visualize! For extra inspiration on how visualization can rearrange your world (literally) please check out my Huffington Post blog post (I just accidentally typed "my blob post" . . . hee, hee. My angels are Lightening Things Up.) The blob is at --> Dancing at the DMV: How to Transform Drudgery into Joy

9. Have you heard of Dr. Masaru Emoto? With his cool inspiration, make a creativity-coaster. Take a sticky note & write an awesome phrase like "RADIANT HEALTH" or "FINANCIAL ABUNDANCE." Use fat clear tape & cover the whole note, to 'water proof' it. Use under your water glass or bottle daily. Drink in the dreams. Expect miracles . . .


I wish I could
show you
when you are lonely
or in darkness
the astonishing
light
of your own
being.
-Hafiz
Julie

Other ways to painlessly undoodle the BS mind control -->

Hug a tree or chat with your plants.
Cuddle your kid (or your pup
or a pillow.)
Blow bubbles. Take a bath.
Light candles.
Cry. Take more deep breaths.
Jump into your journal.
Doodle on your desk.
Play music.
Burrow into a Book.
Grow a gratitude list. Laugh.
Dance a hula.
Remember your sparkly spirit~
Look at yourself
as your angels do, Boo.

The choices are infinite. Throw yourself into your antidote, art and scroll...

And if you're plastered to your computer right now (as I am!)

for heaven's sake -

change the color,

find a festive font, and then go . . .

You are a contagious & Colorful Creator

...some of
Your sparkle
Is the glitter from the parts that got
Broken.

We've seen you fall and get right back up & assumed
that it must not have been that much of a
Tumble but the truth is

You alone have

the Strength to Rise.

--Samantha Bennett

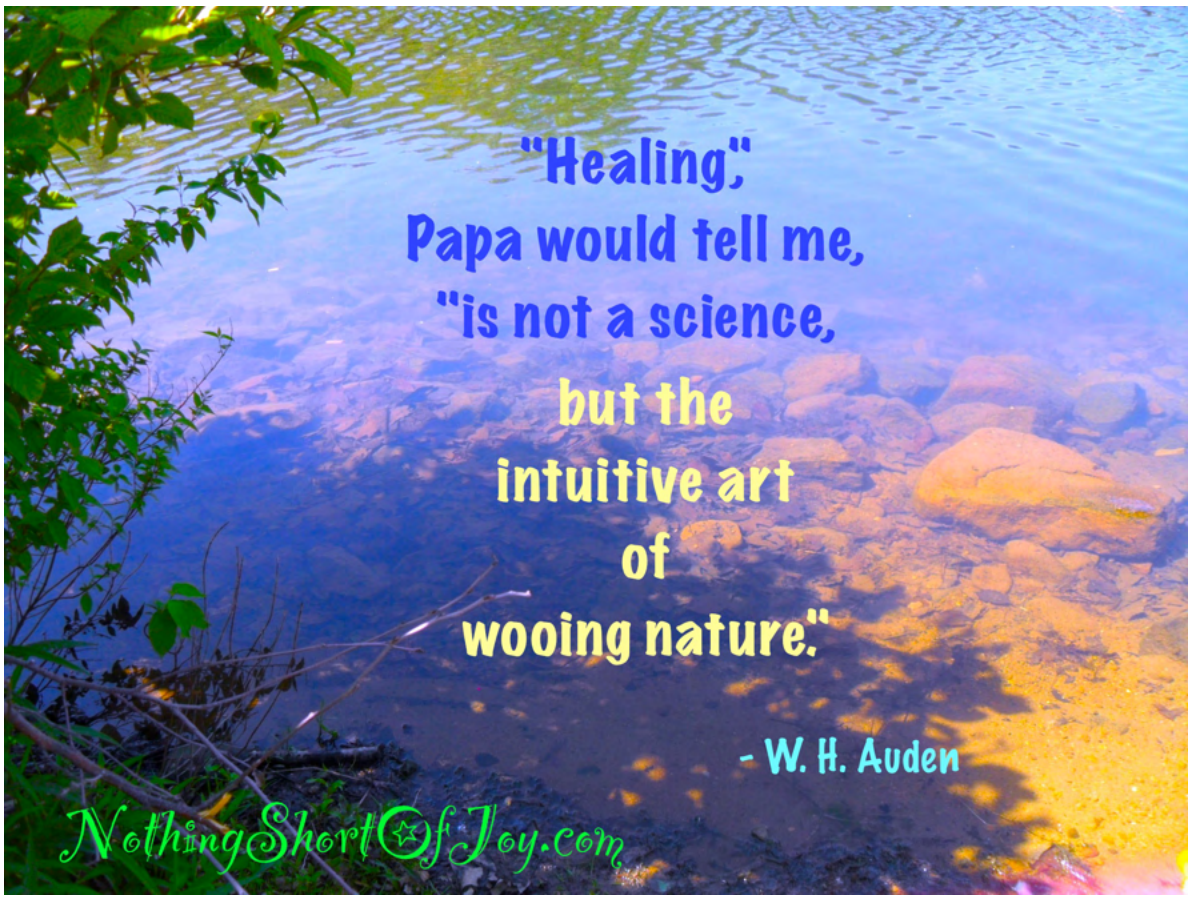
What are your challenges asking of the true rockin' YOU?

After writing my memoir, I was slowly able to return to my fine art (obviously, it's in here.) Although I've had to be careful of my shoulders, it's now been 16 years and I haven't had them replaced. Phew. They are impressing the snot outa me. (Can you tell I live with two boys?)

My body couldn't help but come along for the creative joy ride. Just when I'd thought I was doomed by my freaky-creaky cherub bod, I found there was more of me in the wings. There always is.

As I began to heal my mind & claim my voice, my joints began to rejuvenate, too. The losses in my life always pushed me to look deeper. Writing untapped a flippin creative cascade. Who knows what amazement will be created out of your "curse"!?

Challenges are the medicine to ignite our magic. It's just our spirit sneakin up all ninja-like, asking us to live more fearlessly. Adversity is a wise way-shower to far out features (or cleverly hidden sides) of our soul's expression. No need to erase the obstacles - embrace an empowered response instead (after you're done wailing and resisting, that is.)



If you can follow your challenges lead (as best you can,) with even the teensiest bit of hope, your soul will surprise you with a whole new, wide-open range spectacular pissah of a vista. I pinky swear. It sure shocked the helephant outa Polly and me.

"People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness.
Just because they're not on your road
doesn't mean they've gotten lost."
Dalai Lama

The glorious variety of people, in all their shapes and sizes, beautiful colors and cultures, nations and orientations, religions and races, keeps life so darn interesting.

Sure, there are folks who'll downright oppose our choices. Learning to love who we are without the acceptance of the swarm is the holy grail of empowerment. It gives Connie heartburn. Just get her some digestive enzymes and keep going.

Having some awareness that we ARE, in fact, worrying what the world will think, is the KEY to moving past it. It helps our spiritual muscle gets meatier. Our creative core grow stronger.

There's an indomitable love waiting within. Whatever happens, our spirit cannot be handicapped. Ever.

You're a gift. You've got gobs of goodness. Throw off the nerves . . . and start takin' names. Put some glitter in your git-up. Live larger than the labels. Bring on the oddballs and ring in the renegades. Because, oh my goodness, how this world needs you. Just the way you are.

The willingness to transform your mindset will be your greatest power-tool (and your greatest challenge.) Just beyond the pain, though, there's so much love. Love for yourself will pull you through and transform your heart. You can do this.

If you've ever felt on the outer lip of life, you have seen them - those huge hollows where the world needs to wake up. The blind places, the loneliness, the despair that holds entire countries captive. Step up your soul. Take up the reigns of your jaw-dropping weirdness. Get real. Dive deep. You're a trailblazer now. A pioneer.

Shine your light where boatloads of folks are suffering in darkness. How many other strugglers will be uplifted when you cultivate your courage and just be pure, vulnerable YOU?

A Godzillion. Your unique life's artistry will give others the great green light to celebrate their own.

And listen Angel-toes, in those times when you forget your magnificence, or I forget mine, when the wounds of forgetting feel so raw and so wrong, remember one thing. (Okay I'm gettin all dramatic on you . . . there is never only ONE thing.) But there's this - no one who has ever lived, or will EVER live, has your one-of-a-kind effing fingerprint. NO ONE. I don't know about you, but I'm kinda WOWed by that divine detail.

No one will ever bring to this life, or show this world, **what you can.** You Light up the freakin sky.

Remember who you are. No matter how crazy things get, you belong. You are needed. You are home.

We wake, we dream, we hurt, we heal. We're the same. It's the old BS that separates us. Go find that Home within - it's where everything you think you must hide, is totally-otally lovable. It's where your creative currency resides. You will never spend it all. You can withdraw it to infinity. Bank on that one, bubbles.

Polly might should-all-over you. Your Spirit never will.

We are meant to be neon signs of Hope and Healing. Picket signs for inner peace. We're rockin with resilience. We've been on the other side of separation and sadness. There's a better way.

What's your passion? What makes time fly for you? What makes food & porcelain-bus breaks seem like a nuisance? What did you love as a child? What brought you glee? Puhlease make room for it again. Put a play date on the calendar. Let your original joy sit soul-side with you. The child within will remind your seriously-stuffy-adult-self to put on some comfy clothes and follow your fun. Your truth. It's within. Not without. Those inner kids are so darn awesome. Look to their light to remember your spirit and purpose. They haven't forgotten it. If you stop resisting your realness, the dreams you are dreaming WILL catch up to you.

You are such a trooper. I know you've gotten yourself up off the floor, over & over again. You've wiped your tears & bandaged your boo-boos. Wounded and worried, you still put one foot in front of the other and keep moving forward. Look at you, sugar-booger. Willing to start again. Whatever it takes.

You're gathering yourself up to create a spectacular mosaic out of the many (often messy) pieces of your life. Together, they will start to make sense. Your soul is stoked to take 'em on. The puzzle pieces are beautiful, mysterious, colorful, and they are YOU.

You know that you wanna make a difference in this world (& actually, you already do.) In every way, you are steadying yourself in your own soil & growing your inner groovyness. The truth that's rooted within you can't be weeded out. Please don't wait til everything is green either. Get out there with all the other bud-heads (like me.) You may think they "have it all figured out." (That's Polly-prattle, if I ever heard it. Change the station!) Tell a friend about your doubts and ask for HELP. Or just compliment yourself generously. Therapy & coaching is also awesome. (Polly would never sign on for THAT nonsense, but YOU know she needs it bad.)

A certain day became a presence to me;
there it was, confronting me – a sky, air, light:
a being. And before it started to descend
from the height of noon, it leaned over
and struck my shoulder as if with
the flat of a sword, granting me
honor and a task. The day's blow
rang out, metallic, or it was I, a bell awakened,
and what I heard was my whole self
saying and singing what it knew:

I can.

– Denise Levertov

It may be groovin' in your garden, divining in your dance shoes, or breakin' out on your bodacious blog. It may be a kickin' canvas or scrumptious scrapbooking - it doesn't matter how or where you shine, but that you **consciously unblock your bad-ass beaming =)**

C'mon! We're all waiting for that ridonkulously REAL YOU!

If you'd like more, more, MORE creative & spiritual inspiration, please check out

my 6 week self-paced MP3 ecourse -

CPR *for the Creative Soul:*

Breathe out Stress, BS and Creative Kryptonite and
Breathe in Healing, Enthusiasm and Your Super Soul Powers

Here's what's included in your CPR package:

- A 6 hour instant downloadable e-course
  (6 separate 1 hour MP3's - see titles below)
- 1 hour session of **one-on-one coaching with me,** by phone or skype (audio,)
- Support in identifying & releasing the old BS & inner critics
- Cheerleading, affirmations & exercises to keep your momentum going strong
- Accountability with your cool ideas, genius projects & spiritual practices
- Inspiration for a new project or CPR resuscitation for an 'old' project
- email check-ins & support

MP3 #1 -- What Incarnation Was I Thinking? The Creative Re-storying of our BS
MP3 #2 -- Being Human is a Handicap with a Heavenly Plot Twist - Releasing the Past
MP3 #3 -- Creative Courage & Going Soul to Soul - Healing Relationships
MP3 #4 -- Using the Creative Mirror - The Epic Journey to Recover Our True Self
MP3 #5 -- The Universe is Listening - How to Usher in Our Creative Dreams
MP3 #6 -- Offering Love Bombs - The Power of Mindfulness, Prayer & Self Care

"
If you want to move forward in a gigantic way to being the creative, joyful soul you are - CPR for the Creative Soul is the perfect prescription!! Julie is an amazing, inspiring, radiant, awesome, soulful coach and cheerleader with an incredible bag of jewels to help you uncover your treasure. I've taken many coaching programs, and this is worth far more than Julie charges - each session is worth the cost of the entire course. Thanks Julie, I am eternally grateful for the shifts that occurred working with you!!! ~Norma Reid (BC, Canada)

The CPR package was created to help:

- bust through BS blocks & jump start your spirit-led heart
- use struggles as spiritual springboards & creative curriculum
- clear creative cobwebs & Google your greatness
- embrace the inner critics and turn their talk into material
- calm the control freak - get out of your head and into your heart
- unleash your natural creative juju & recharge your exuberant spirit
- ignite that playful spirit that got left behind after you...
  1) started that job
  2) got married
  3) had kids
  4) or _____ (fill in the blankity blank.)

"
In these muddled days of so much technology and overwhelming responsibilities, Julie will inspire you to snap out of your head and back into your spiritual heart. You can hide from yourself, but you can't hide from her ~ with love and humor she will reintroduce you, straight on, to your own soul. Julie is a wise sounding board who has helped me sift through the muck and highlight my creative calling. Working with her has brought out my courage, creativity and faith. If you want more inner peace, freedom from your fears and connection to the light within you, Julie's your gal!" ~Judy Prescott, actor, advocate & author of Searching for Cecy: Reflections on Alzheimers

What passion heals *your* tired heart?

Creativity is the soul awakening, laughing, dancing, becoming.
It's a celebration of every crazy road we've wrangled.
The things we've lost. And the spirit we've won.
Our life and our challenges have made us more real, more wise.

Our heartaches and handicaps are unrecognized wholeness -
a beauty that can emerge from brokenness.

For all the divine deets or to purchase click here ❤

I'm also offering a **free 60 minute call** to talk about your specific situation & see if this program will inspire your spirit. We can find out where you're at, where you wanna go & if this package will help you get there. There's a 30 day money back guarantee. Email me at choosejoy@optonline.net to set up a time to talk :)

"I will shout from the rooftops how wonderful it is to work with Julie. Her enthusiasm and wisdom are fabulous catalysts for resuscitation. I have been writing with Julie for years and it is always a deep, inspiring and joyful experience. She is able to listen totally, tell me what I don't hear myself saying and, in doing so, light up the path before me. If your intention is to ignite, recharge and release your creative spirit I cannot think of a better partner for the journey." ~Kathy Kane, Kaizen Muse Creativity Coach, writer at www.kanecreativeconsulting.com

"I met Julie Genovese when we shared an author panel on inspirational works. I connected with her immediately based on her genuine approach to sharing her personal struggles and successes in her memoir, *Nothing Short of Joy*. I then had the privilege of participating in a creative writing workshop she led - I found her very encouraging, inspiring and the type of facilitator that provided an environment that allowed all attendees to participate free of self-criticism, thus allowing them to bring forth their best work. If you have the opportunity to work with Julie, I would not miss it. It will empower you in ways you may have not thought possible."~Renee Gatz, author, *Wise Words & Witty Expressions*

~Together we can magnify
your creative magic~

I salute you, you lovable earthy-crunchy-creative, wise waker-upper, courageous change-maker & victorious visionary. I know your super-spirit is ready to bust a move and blow your own damn mind & heart wide open. Come soak in the encouragement & stay committed to your creative soul - it's so eternally proud of you.

"When Julie Genovese was a speaker at an International Women's Writing Guild conference at Brown University, she shared openly and honestly about her challenging experiences in writing memoir. I loved her authenticity. She did not sugar coat the creative experience; but she did stress it was the best therapy ever. Julie inspired me to begin writing my own memoir. I later participated in a workshop, co-facilitated by Julie. I felt safe with her - she knew how to listen and knew when to offer insights. She was clearly doing her own inner work and wished to support others on their journey. I would highly recommend Julie as a facilitator and coach." ~Joan Haywood Heleine, forthcoming author, *The Soul Keeper, a Mother's Journey of Joy, Loss and Love that Lives On*

"I am honored to offer my highest recommendation to Julie Genovese, the inspirational writer, coach and speaker we were lucky enough to host here at St. Francis College, in Brooklyn Heights, NY. Julie brought warmth, humor and kindness — along with more than a few tear-filled eyes — to the campus. Her spirit and enthusiasm touched everyone and sparked lively conversations about the role of memoir in the healing process, the importance of family and friends, the definition of "disability" and the potential sources of strength in ourselves. I encourage anyone with the opportunity to work with her to do so at once." ~Timothy J. Houlihan, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs, Academic Dean, St. Francis College

P.S. For all links to my art and my creativity-cyber-city, please scroll to "the end" :)

Expediting angels in your direction -
so you can . . .

Go! Do! Your! Dream!

with lotsa love & ginormous joy,

Julie

If you haven't seen the following by Clarissa Pinkola Estes, please read. It is a great pep rally cry! Wouldn't it be awesome to recreate a world of grace and joy, together.

You Were Made For This

By Clarissa Pinkola Estes

My friends, do not lose heart. We were made for these times. I have heard from so many recently who are deeply and properly bewildered. They are concerned about the state of affairs in our world now. Ours is a time of almost daily astonishment and often righteous rage over the latest degradations of what matters most to civilized, visionary people.

You are right in your assessments. The lustre and hubris some have aspired to while endorsing acts so heinous against children, elders, everyday people, the poor, the unguarded, the helpless, is breathtaking. Yet, I urge you, ask you, gentle you, to please not spend your spirit dry by bewailing these difficult times. Especially do not lose hope. Most particularly because, the fact is that we were made for these times. Yes.
For years, we have been learning, practicing, been in training for
and just waiting to meet on this exact plain of engagement.

I grew up on the Great Lakes and recognize a seaworthy vessel when I see one. Regarding awakened souls, there have never been more able vessels in the waters than there are right now across the world. And they are fully provisioned and able to signal one another as never before in the history of humankind. Look out over the prow; there are millions of boats of righteous souls on the waters with you.

Even though your veneers may shiver from every wave in this stormy roil,
I assure you that the long timbers composing your prow and rudder
come from a greater forest. That long-grained lumber is known to withstand storms,
to hold together, to hold its own, and to advance, regardless.

In any dark time, there is a tendency to veer toward fainting over how much is wrong or unmended in the world. Do not focus on that. There is a tendency, too, to fall into being weakened by dwelling on what is outside your reach, by what cannot yet be. Do not focus there.
That is spending the wind without raising the sails.

We are needed, that is all we can know. And though we meet resistance,
we more so will meet great souls who will hail us, love us and guide us,
and we will know them when they appear. Didn't you say you were a believer?
Didn't you say you pledged to listen to a voice greater? Didn't you ask for grace?
Don't you remember that to be in grace means to submit to the voice greater?

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once,
but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach.
Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul,
to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely.
It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom,
will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good.

What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts,
adding, adding to, adding more, continuing.
We know that it does not take everyone on Earth to bring justice and peace, but only
a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale.

One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul. Soul on deck shines like gold in dark times. The light of the soul throws sparks, can send up flares, builds signal fires, causes proper matters to catch fire. To display the lantern of soul in shadowy times like these – to be fierce and to show mercy toward others; both are acts of immense bravery and greatest necessity. Struggling souls catch light from other souls who are fully lit and willing to show it.
If you would help to calm the tumult, this is one of the strongest things you can do.

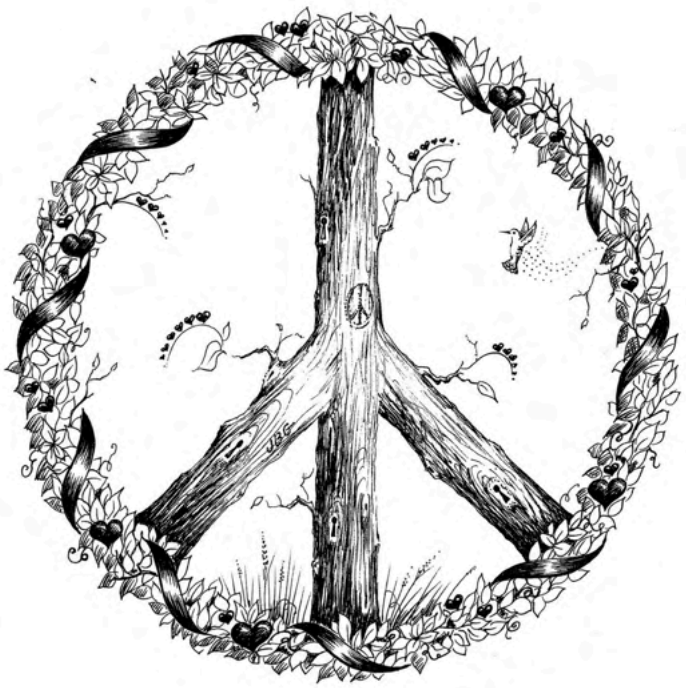
There will always be times when you feel discouraged.
I too have felt despair many times in my life,
but I do not keep a chair for it. I will not entertain it.
It is not allowed to eat from my plate.

The reason is this: In my uttermost bones I know something, as do you.
It is that there can be no despair when you remember why you came to Earth,
who you serve, and who sent you here. The good words we say and the good deeds we do are not ours. They are the words and deeds of the One who brought us here.
In that spirit, I hope you will write this on your wall:

When a great ship is in harbor & moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt.

But that is not what great ships are built for.

Julie Bond Genovese is an inspirational speaker, artist, mom and best-selling author of her award-winning memoir, Nothing Short of Joy, endorsed by Wayne Dyer, Dr. Christiane Northrup & Dr. Bernie Siegel. Julie has been featured on TV & radio including Anderson Cooper Live, NBC LX, Strategy Room, The Aware Show & Oprah.com with Gayle King. Being born a dwarf, with degenerative arthritis, was not the poison Julie originally believed - it was the cure. After desperate years of humiliation & shame, medical studies & operations (including two brain surgeries,) Julie found relief & inspiration in self-help books! Happiness, she realized, wasn't dependent on circumstances but on her



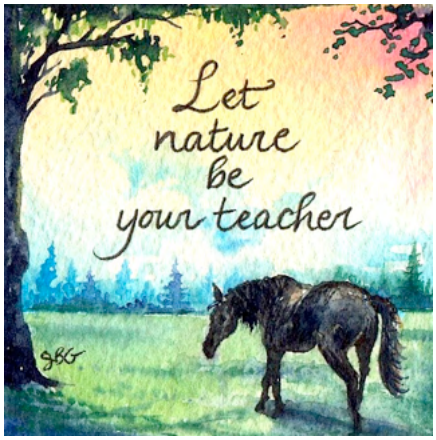
response to them. As she began to view her challenges as sacred choices made by her soul, everything shifted. The handicap of being human came with a heavenly purpose - the growth & glory of remembering the Love we were born to forget. Julie partners and coaches spiritual seekers, earthy-crunchy-creatives and wise waker-uppers to transform life's grief, let spirit lead, and woo our hearts back toward the Light. ❤

❤ You can Jump & Jive with Julie @ her web site www.nothingshortofjoy.com

❤ Cha-cha over to her Creative Soul Coaching HERE

❤ Disco on down to buy her artwork on the fabulous FLY clothing line (and stationary) ❤ The peace sign above is one of the mucho designs

❤ Hop on over here for:
Julie's handmade bookmarks & magnets -->



❤ Hula here for Hand-painted Inspirational Watercolor Cards

❤ Hang out Here for Hand-painted Holiday Cards

❤ Boogie over to her BLOG here

❤ Rumba over to RedBubble to buy some printed Art in this ebook (as greeting cards)

Or find Julie on -
Facebook
Twitter
Julie's YouTube channel
Julie's Huffington Post blog

❤ For a post on the Art of Synchronicity -
Lessons in Letting Go: A Lost Brother & a Missing Caravaggio

Don't ask what the world needs.
Ask what makes you come alive and do that.
Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."
~Howard Thurman

The secret of happiness lies
in taking a genuine interest
in all the details of daily life,
and in
elevating them to art.
~William Morris

Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

~Mary Oliver

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