

THE ARTIST'S WAY CREATIVITY TOOL: THE MORNING PAGES

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What are Morning Pages?

"Morning Pages" is a term used by Julia Cameron, author of *The Artist's Way*, for a primary creativity tool. It involves writing 3 stream-of-consciousness pages, longhand, every morning. Doing the process is so important that Cameron calls it "non-negotiable." These pages are private- nobody else is to be allowed to read them except for you- and then, not until you have done them for 2 months.

What is the purpose of Morning Pages?

They are not supposed to be "art" or even "writing." They are to help recognize and release the critic (Cameron's 'Censor') inside. So the pages are often stilted, filled with self doubt, angry, whiny, and petty- and that's a good thing. Why is that good? Because that stuff is what's in the way of creativity, and you want to bring it out to the light of day.

Cameron states that, "Morning pages do help us get to the other side: the other side of our fear, our negativity, of our moods. Above all they get us beyond our Censor. Beyond the reach of the Censor's babble we find our own quiet center, the place where we hear the still, small voice..."

We get to see the stream of negative, discouraging things that critic says and we learn to see that those subversive comments are not the TRUTH. We learn to distinguish the critic from the voice of reason. We learn to detach from the constant stream of ridicule which shames us and paralyzes us.

Many people find it helps them override the critic if they find or make some kind of image that represents the critic to them. Say, for example, a dragon, or a Viking. They then put that image, perhaps with a gag, or an x on it, near them while working. This process can help by externalizing the critic, making it separate from the Self.

I differ from Cameron in that I believe that, despite appearances, even the critic has high positive intentions for us. It however, mistakenly goes about trying to 'help' us by trying to discourage us from taking risks. The critic, who ridicules, is terrified of ridicule.

In my master life coaching, I have methods of working with the critic that help us recognize and release the positive power behind it.

How to do the morning pages

Go to a private place with a spiral bound book, or legal pad and listen to the voice inside your head. Just write down, longhand, what that voice says. Do 3 pages worth. Every day. No matter what your mood is. No excuses. Don't read the pages for 8 weeks. And enjoy your new found creative vivification.

Reference:

Cameron, Julia (1992). *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Perigree Books.

Dr. Jane Bolton, a marriage and family therapist, master results coach and contemporary psychoanalyst and is dedicated to supporting people in the fullest self expression of their Authentic Selves. This includes Discovery, Understanding, Acceptance, Expression, and Empowerment of the Self. Call 310.838.6363 or visit www.Dr-Jane-Bolton.com