

DOORWAYS INTO THE CREATIVE

Start with Fundamentals

Your creative process wants you to be authentic. (It demands authenticity.) Therefore, make the things that YOU love and write about what you know. Immerse yourself in what your heart loves and say what you want to say. Declare what is important to you.

Make connections. Creative power is often mistakenly attributed to inborn talent. But more than anything, it's the ability to connect one thing with another. Make impossible connections.

Allow yourself to not think. Let your creative process move faster than your thoughts. There's time later to go back and edit.

Give yourself freedom to be "bad." Natalie Goldberg declared, "You are free to create the worst junk in America." The truth is, the simplest or roughest art is often the most profound. Adding unnecessary extra details doesn't give us more—what the audience wants is to see your essence shine through.

Go for the jugular. If something scary comes up, go for it. That's where the energy is (otherwise, you're avoiding the truth.) Hemingway advised writers to "Write hard and clear about what hurts."

Creative Doorways

View the world as animate. If we view the world as inanimate, we don't have the capacity to engage and interact with it. But when the world is alive, it can speak to us. Lynda Barry says, "The trick is to stand not knowing certain things long enough for them to come to you."

Look at something from another angle. Parallax is a term that refers to the apparent change of location of an object against a background due to a change in observer position or perspective shift. We each hold subjective ways of viewing the world. Try situating your work from another perspective.

Create a sacred middle. In art, a "triptych" is a work of art that has three views of the same subject. How might you provide three different views in the creative work you are making? Three is a profound number—it provides a sacred middle.

Borrow from other artistic arenas. If you're a writer, use principles of design to guide your writing, or try writing in geometric patterns. If you're a visual artist, how does dance, cooking or poetry inform or inspire your work? The cross-pollination might be literal or metaphorical. How can you make your words visual and your art narrative?

Feel what it's like to be something else. What does the breeze blowing through the cherry blossoms feel like? Or if your imagination brings you a dark tunnel, what does it feel like to be in this tunnel? Or better, what does it feel like to **be** the tunnel? Or a pond, or a broom, or a piece of cheese? Become the thing itself.

Dwell in negative space. In all creative modalities, the negative space is what creates the art. In music, the space between the notes creates the melody—the beauty is found in the in-between space. The writer Max Frisch said that “What is important is what cannot be said, the white space between the words.” And in the field of visual art, Betty Edwards writes:

...the negative spaces...require the same degree of attention and care that the positive forms require. Beginning students generally lavish all their attention on the objects, persons, or forms in their drawings, and then sort of 'fill in the background.' It may seem hard to believe at this moment, but if care and attention are lavished on the negative spaces, the forms will take care of themselves.

Write a fairy tale. The creative comes to those who allow themselves to play. Get into a childlike place where anything is possible—animals are your friends and companions, we can walk through the sky, and flowers are larger than us. There is no limit to what can happen in a fairy tale. The words “Once upon a time” open a doorway to the imaginal.

Embrace metaphor. When we speak a metaphor such as “Tom is a wolf,” our minds are momentarily confused. “Woah#\$%^!” they say, “That is not true!” But when our minds stop, our imaginations have an opportunity to enter and show us an entirely different world. Suddenly, Tom looks different to us. Perhaps he has a new energy, a new “wildness” that we hadn't seen before. When we only speak literally, these imaginative worlds are not opened up for us; metaphor takes us to new place.

Listen. Go to a restaurant, ride the bus, walk down the street—and listen for conversations. Pick up phrases, jot them down. Use them as the basis of a poem, art piece, dance. The world is always speaking to us.

And finally, if you hear a small little voice that says, “This might work.” **Trust it.**

To more deeply explore the creative in your own life, try a **Doorway Session with Kim Hermanson**. A Doorway Sessions will move you into a place of insight, shifts of perception, and breakthroughs. Go to **www.doorwaysession.com** to learn more.