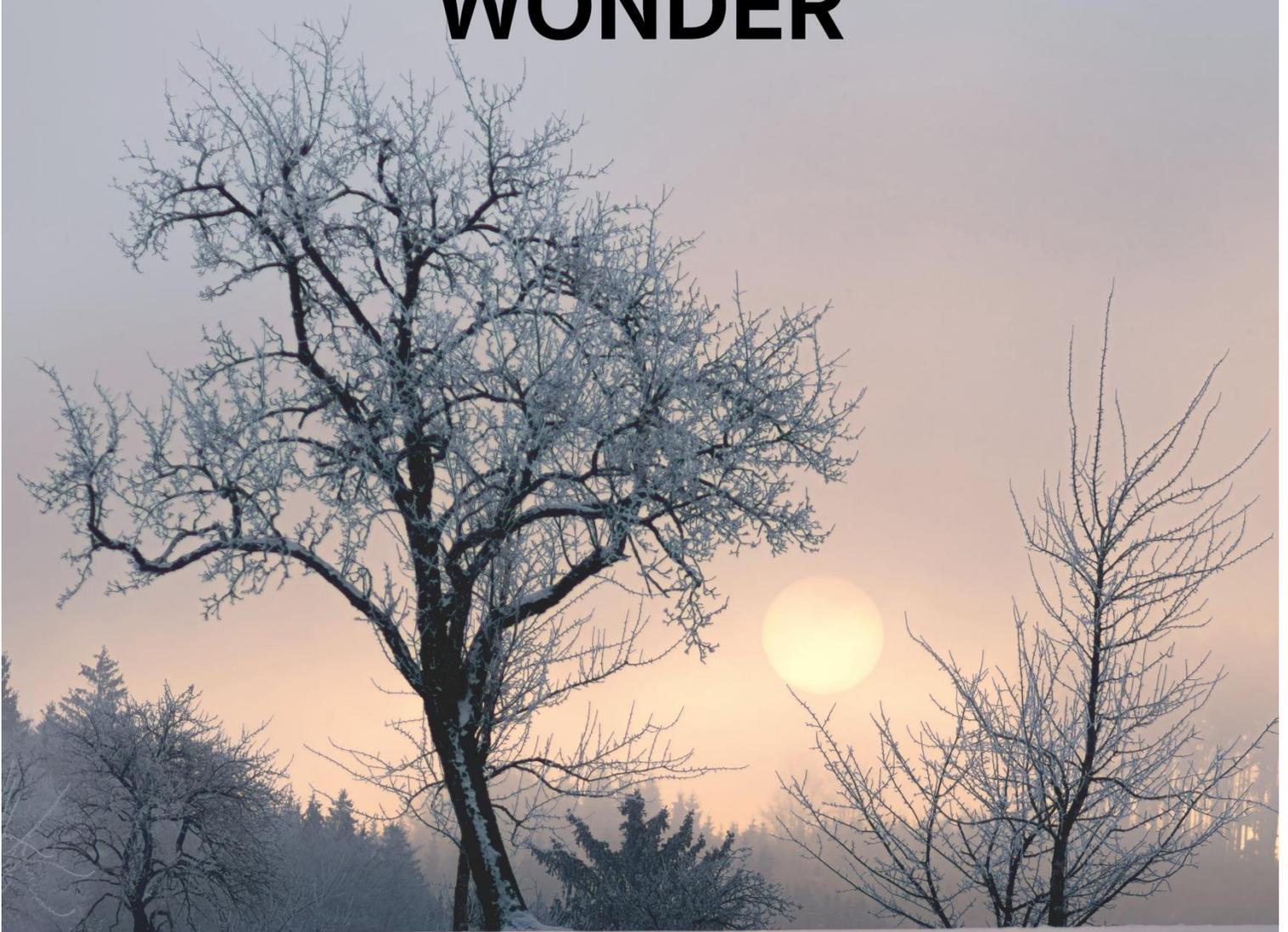




Creativity Matters

The Path of
WONDER



December 2022

Welcome to The Path of Wonder

“Nobody sees a flower really; it is so small. We haven't time, and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.”

– [Georgia O'Keefe](#)

“Were the sun to rise but once a year, we would all cry out...How glorious! Our hymns would rise up, our thanks would ascend. O God...Give us new eyes... and vision to see the world anew.”

- A Jewish Prayer Book

New eyes. Yes! We want them. We need them. We struggle to find them.

It's a reminder of why art and creatives matter so much. We creatives offer people – including ourselves - new eyes!

We so easily go numb. Our eyes adjust to the wondrous world around us and it all becomes “ordinary.” Yet, creatives and artists know that there is no such thing as “the ordinary.” As the Hindu guru, Nisargadatta Maharaj, said, “The other world is this world rightly seen.” In other words, there is nothing that can't be experienced as wonderful or “other-worldly,” if only we have the eyes to see it.

So this month, friends, let's pay attention to *how* we are looking as much as *what* we're looking at. Yes, this month is about finding wonder out there in the world, but maybe the equally important work is rediscovering our ability to reorient our sight, to cultivate wonder-filled eyes.

The beloved poet, [Mary Oliver](#), beautifully captures this work of orienting ourselves toward wonder. She [writes](#),

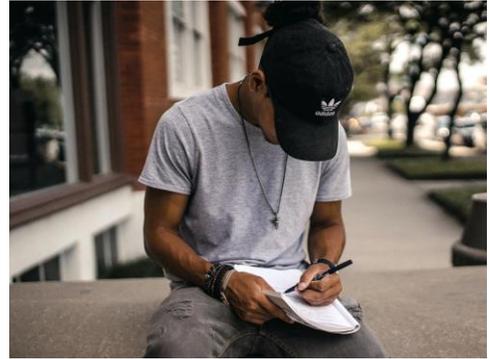
*“Let me keep my mind on what matters,
which is my work,
which is mostly standing still and learning to be
Astonished...”*

May we all be blessed with this gift of learning again how to look!

Your Creative Journal

Our packet starts with question prompts for your creative journal. Journaling is about “priming the pump” and slowly working your way into our monthly theme. It will likely also give you some fodder for whichever monthly project you pick.

And most importantly, by doing this monthly journal practice, you will end up with an amazing documentation of your work and ideas throughout the year. Your 2022-23 themed journey will be captured all in one place!



Here’s a video tutorial to get you excited about our regular journaling practice, with some tips about how to get the most out of your engagement with it:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5D9VDQ07h8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IMApFYGklw>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ngicx8jJrTg&list=RDCMUCAHLBmtOpveszM50Tm4zpmw&index=3>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWRki37iOzg>

Creative Journal Prompts for The Path of Wonder

Pick whichever questions capture your imagination. Answer with words, images, collage, colors, whatever form of expression that the question or prompt evokes. Come to your group ready to share where your wonderings lead you.

1. How has wonder changed as you’ve gotten older? What do you know now about wonder that you didn’t when you were younger? Has age impeded or assisted your experience of wonder?
2. Who has taught you the most about how to experience wonder?
3. Do the winter holidays bring/offer a distinct type of wonder for you?
4. What kills wonder for you? Judgment? Analysis? Anxiety? Perfectionism? Repetition?
5. What’s your secret for savoring wonder? How do you prevent experiences of wonder from quickly moving on? From quickly slipping through your fingers?
6. Do you surround yourself with wonderful things? Why or why not?
7. Is it possible to love someone without being – in some way – in awe of them?
8. When was the last time you stood in wonder at yourself?

Project Prompts

Take your pick! At least one, maybe more! Go as deeply as you desire. To make it easier for you to do a creative project during the month, the project options have varying levels of complexity and time commitments.

Remember to practice letting go of self-judgment and any expectations of professional or “artistic worthy” quality. The quality that matters is the quality of the experience and the richness of your personal journey. These projects are here for you and your journey of discovery.

Option A

The Wonder of the Ordinary & the Overlooked

One way to open your eyes [to wonder] is to ask yourself, “What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?” - Rachel Carson



Is wonder inherent in an object or is it given to an object by the way we view it? No matter how you answer that question, we all know that the ubiquity of something can drain the wonder right out of it. For instance, who falls to their knees with awe in the presence of those dandelions? Or your partner sleeping? Or a common shell on the beach? Or the sound of rain?

Rachel Carson’s words offer us a path to wake us up - again - to the wonder of such ordinary objects. For her, it’s all in the looking.

So this month, use your creativity (photography, paint, pencil, collage, video, etc.) to honor one of the wondrously ordinary things in your life.

Don’t rush into it. Instead, spend a day - or more - looking at your environment through the questions Carson suggests: What if I had never seen this before? And what if I knew I would never see it again?” Those questions will surely lead you to the object you want to return wonder to. But if you are looking for a little bit of extra inspiration, check out this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNVPaINZD_I



Option B

The Wonder of Pain and Joy Woven Fine

Brian Doyle was a creative Catholic writer who definitely knew how to notice wonder, especially when it was tangled up in loss and pain. This prompt has very little guidance. Instead we suggest you just read Doyle’s piece “[Two Hearts](#)” and let it take your creativity where it will. This will be an emotionally challenging exercise for many of us, so be gentle with yourself. Here’s his piece:

Two Hearts, by Brian Doyle: <https://lagweer.wordpress.com/2013/04/09/two-hearts-brian-doyle/>

Option C

The Wonder of Alcohol Ink

This prompt invites you to tap into the wonder of the season by working with a new and wonder-filled medium: alcohol ink. Specifically, we invite you to make alcohol ink holiday ornaments, either for yourself or as a gift to someone who is dear to you. If you're not into holiday ornaments, click [here](#) and [here](#) for beginner tutorials about working with it on paper.



Here's a how-to video: <https://hopalongstudio.com/fun-and-easy-alcohol-ink-christmas-ornaments/>

And here's an alternative: making alcohol ink candles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIJOsDxLyPo>

Enjoy!

Option D

Paint the Sky!

Want a dose of wonder? Look up! The sky has been a source of wonder for humans from the beginning. So this month, tackle the challenge of capturing the wonder of the sky, with whatever medium calls to you! Below are some links to inspire and guide you.

The wonder of...

- **A star-filled sky:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5sFeRnle5I>.
How to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NITa6pzaUS4> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHVdN9aQYUU>
- **A sunrise:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clOUoSlkZ9A>.
How to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVUPH7sn1iE>
- **Clouds:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vfmjf310HUo>.
How to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAQUgdMWYpk> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyknCVczn3Q> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Si649u1PEHk> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBJCYKeu8P4>



Option E

The Hidden Wonders of Fore-Edge Painting

Fore-edge painting? Never heard of it? This prompt invites you to learn about the wonder of it and try your hand at it.

Begin by exploring an amazing fore-edge artist: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4_2xGZy6Jk&t=56s

Then explore these how-to videos and give it a try!

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ySl6z5ChZY&t=174s>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ertzJYYjgdk>

Option F

Make a Wonder Video or Slideshow with Your Phone

The technology on our phones is a huge gift to creatives. So this month you are invited to use your phone to capture moments and images of wonder and then turn it into a slideshow/video easily on your phone. Here are two of our favorite online tutorials to help you on your way:

- On an iPhone: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7jFpSEKSdI>
- On an Android phone: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/eElfv1j0ntY>

Important note: You can enrich this exercise by asking yourself, “Who do I want to make this video for?” and/or “Who will I want to show this video to?”



Option G

The Difference Between Child-like Wonder & Adult-like Wonder

Recently, Gretchen Rubin, founder of [The Happiness Project](https://www.gretchenrubin.com/), teased out two distinct types of wonder: child-like wonder and adult-like wonder.

For her, child-like wonder is connected to novelty and experiencing things for the first time. In contrast, she says adult-like wonder arises from understanding an object or experience more deeply and appreciating its complexity. Here's the blog post where she gets into the distinction in more detail: <https://gretchenrubin.com/articles/do-you-prefer-childlike-wonder-or-adultlike-wonder/>. And here's the podcast where she discusses it:

<https://gretchenrubin.com/podcast-episode/podcast-105-childlike-wonder/>

We love how this distinction opens up space for your creativity. So many ways to play with these two types of wonder in a project this month:

- Using your favorite medium, juxtaposed numerous examples of child-like and adult-like wonder side by side.
- Take pictures of you enjoying both types of wonder this month. For instance, a picture of you making a snowman and another with you looking through a telescope at the stars.
- Make a timeline with small drawings or symbols of the type of wonder that dominated your imagination over the years.
- For two weeks, journal at the end of each day, capturing the type of wonder you stumbled upon that day. At the end of two weeks, add up how many of those were moments of child-like wonder versus adult-like wonder.

Option H

Let a Dose of Wonder Work its Magic on You

To help everyone explore this month's theme, we put together a playlist of videos lifting up wonder in its many forms. Here's the link to that playlist:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvXOKgOQVYP7kGFJOQQHnr-OnCJWSf_eC



Use it as your creative partner this month, by watching it and trying to find the one or two videos that impact you the most. Then create an art piece that captures or plays off that impact.



Option I

I Wonder How to Use _____?

One way to reconnect with the sense of wonder, awe, and astonishment is by disrupting normal patterns. Many creative people have a weakness for art and/or craft supplies. It looked so appealing in the store but has been sitting unused on the shelf. Is this an experience you've had? If so, this month, dig around in your supplies and find something you haven't used or have neglected.

If you have more self-restraint when it comes to purchasing supplies, look around your house for something you could re-purpose for creative expression. Does that piece of junk mail or last month's birthday card or old holiday cards have images you could use for collage? Could you paste that old envelope into your journal and fill it with poems or photos? Could you carve patterns in that potato for block prints? Experiment with unfamiliar supplies and try something new!

(Thanks to Janet Salmons for this exercise! [Click here](#) to see some more prompts from her on Wonder.)

Option J

Engage in "The Path of Wonder" Using Your Favorite Modality

This is our standard, open-ended option. Simply use your favorite modality (i.e. form of creative expression: drawing, painting, collage, movement, film, taking pictures, etc.) to represent your take on the monthly theme: The Path of Wonder

For instance, it might be about representing what you've learned from life about the path of wonder. Or maybe it's something that captures your struggle with it.

Don't feel hemmed in. Let the general theme of Wonder take you where it will. Come to your group ready to share not only your end product but also your process and what new insight/perspective you gained from it!

Grab Bag: Some Extra Sources of Inspiration:

- Put a jolt of musical inspiration into your creative work. Turn on **our Soul Matters music playlist** on The Path of Wonder as you create! Listen on [Spotify](#) or [YouTube](#). We also have a [special playlist on Stargazing](#).
- Open yourself to [the wonder of fruit](#).
- Remind yourself about what [a wonder our body is](#).
- From the time we are babes, we know [the art of music is wonder-full](#).
- Remind yourself that, through the eye of an artist, there is nothing ordinary about [a piece of paper](#).
- Explore the wonder of sand art [here](#) and [here](#).
- Part of wonder is noticing the depth and complexity of the thing in front of you. We love [this illustration](#) of how artists pick up on the wonderful nuances of things.
- Reclaiming wonder depends on [an eye for beauty](#).
- Dive into the [awesome power of the ocean](#).
- Maria Popova on [Georgia O'Keeffe on the Art of Seeing](#) the wonder of life.

Reminder: New Approach to Online Engagement: Creative Cafe

Over the past couple of years, we've experimented with a number of ways to connect and share online. None of them have really taken hold. Luckily our Creativity Matters Consultant, Elizabeth McKoy, has invited Creativity Matters folks to join in on the Facebook page she runs for creatives. This is not an exclusive UU space, nor an exclusive Creativity Matters space. But it is a wonderfully inspiring online space. So if you are interested, join by typing in "Creative Cafe Group with Elizabeth" into your Facebook search bar or go directly there with this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/648413942466985>



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