Follow-Up to Presentation: "Loosening the Bonds of Creative Block"

Practices for Your Tool Belt

- **Mindfulness –** when you are feeling stuck, frozen or blocked, ***notice*** what you are feeling or thinking.
  - Speak supportively to yourself. Remember: talk as kindly to yourself as you would to a scared child/pet or to a hurting, dear friend.
  - Which of the 8 C's might help you at this point? Download handout here: 8 C's of Self
  - Use your imagination: picture your wise, compassionate, curious self in this moment. What would Compassion say? Do? Desire for you? What lessons might there be to learn in this tough time?

- **Change the narrative.** Instead of "I'm failing at this," think "This is a challenge which I can figure out." Take a break to remember what you love about your art.

- **Change your focus.** Instead of replaying negatives over and over in your mind, focus on what you love and enjoy. *What you focus on is what you will notice. See the small but positive things in your life – and look for them consistently.* Gratitude – not worry or fear.

- **Collect positive, affirming comments from others.** Heck, ask for them! [When Linda has gotten discouraged, she has emailed friends and asked them to write her back. "What do you see in my art?" "How does my art make you feel?" She is often humbled by the gentle, warm responses she has gotten in return.]
  Keep this collection of affirmations where you can find them! Even better, print out a few and post them where you make your art.

- **Re-cast others' affirmations into "I" statements.** *My art helps others* _____. *I am* _____. If you want to take it a further step, read your affirmations aloud to yourself. You may be surprised at how powerful that can be. *Own what a gift you are to others.*

- **Increase the frequency of creating.** Doing a little and doing it often will create change (and confidence) better than waiting for when you have time to devote a block of hours.

- **Novelty – new experiences.** Think and do outside the box. New experiences cause the brain to release dopamine, which is linked to motivation, pleasure, reward and drive to learn. Your mindset should be "practice," not "finished product."

- Use a medium you don't normally use
- take a class in an art practice that is substantially different than yours
- Create in a different space
- Use your non-dominant hand
- Listen to music that is new to you.
- Create with a friend – switch half way through and work on theirs and they work on yours.

Resources

8 C's of Self handout: https://ifs-institute.com/sites/default/files/inline-files/8%20C%27s%20of%20Self%20v1.pdf

The Artist's Way, by Julia Cameron

Art and Fear: Observations on the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking, by David Bayles and Ted Orland

Good Neuroscience – they post daily on Instagram. Helpful "how-to's" of dealing with procrastination, discouragement, etc. It appears they are developing a website also. Psychology Focus also is a good Instagram page to follow.

Podcasts: Mindset Neuroscience Podcast and The One Inside - Internal Family Systems

Each other! Talking to someone who understands and can identify with your struggles can help you feel like you're not the only one…

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