

# CAP TAIN

*Of your own life*

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TUNE IN TO A  
HEART CENTRED LIFE



LIFE SAVING INSIGHTS FROM HEART-WORKING LADIES



## ANGELIQUE DESIREE

*Initiator of this e-book*

What started out as an inspired hunch, turned out to be the most heart warming collaboration I have ever participated.

All these lovely ladies, who are part of Susannah Conway's community of heart centered entrepreneurs, accepted my invitation to shine their light on 'How to be the captain of your own life' and wrote beautiful inside stories, sharing their knowledge and life saving insights from their personal and professional perspective.

How blessed I feel with their stories and how grateful I am to be able to share these gems.

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# HOW TO BE THE CAPTAIN OF YOUR OWN LIFE

**Who we turn out to be in life** depends on numerous factors. As we mature, we come across all different kinds of mechanisms that shape us into our adult self. Social and cultural expectations offered to us by our parents, tutors, friends and society make us develop different personas and coping and defence mechanisms that keep us safe in particular situations. In some cases these are lifesaving attitudes, protecting us so we can keep our heads above water when life itself is threatening us. The trouble begins when these adaptive attitudes keep us from being who we really are and doing what is planned for us to contribute to the world.

In my case this led to burnout; I thought I was doing really well, leaving a well paid job to start my own company after going to art school on my 25th birthday.

I was working as a videographer and art teacher making all kinds of inspiring videos, animations and lessons for others to enjoy. I thought I was steering my life in the direction I wanted, being creative and self managing and inspiring kids to be creative as well. I was happily feeding others and their needs, but I was neglecting a very essential part; *the vulnerable me who wanted to work autonomously, who felt a spiritual connection with something greater and who just wanted to have soul connections, but didn't know how.* Who was I to want to share something creative with the world and what would people think if I were to talk about soul and spirit? Let alone opening up to strangers and share my heart and soul with them. But then this burnout came and it forced me into reflection on who I truly am and what is truly important to me.



## HOW MANY CAPTAINS ARE ON YOUR SHIP?

It also gave me a power tool: my hypersensitivity intensified and started to function as a very precise compass. When I am heading in the right direction, feelings of joy and enthusiasm swirl inside my body and if I am on a course that isn't suiting me I tended to become moody, angry, irritated and short tempered. The burnout has not been a quick fix though: It has taken some years and this constant whirlwind of different states of being flustered me to a great extent. Often, I was afraid of actually losing my mind.

Things started to change slowly when I began to illustrate my states of being; my fears, frustrations and anguish but also my transformations and dreams. By actually giving these states a physical form they all started making sense. The parts of me that were screaming for attention finally were heard, seen and even got figurines and illustrations as proof of acknowledgement. During this time I began an education at the institute for creativity and personal

development "De Kleine Tiki" and here I discovered the body of thought known as Psychosynthesis.

Psychosynthesis is a journey into the self, to your inner wisdom that teaches you how to become captain of your life. It assumes that the "I" consists of different sub-personalities living in three fields of consciousness; areas that make us do what we do, without being aware of these motives. The daily self lives in the middle field; here we are in charge of our lives. This is the actual captain of your life, the objective, 'real' and most conscious part of you. In the lower field we take on sub-identities in our lives that make us -unconsciously- behave differently and more subjectively in particular situations. We develop these sub personalities as a coping strategy in the course of our lives, through trauma and the expectations we encounter. Think of Priscilla the perfectionist, or Peter the pleaser, Tomas the thinker and Carine the care-taker as aspects of yourself.



The chaos begins when one of these sub-personalities want to take over the Captains' role of navigating your ship (read: your life). For instance; you have a burning desire to write a book and you are determined to stick to your time table of 4 hours of writing a day. This is your captain speaking, heading in the right direction. Before you station yourself for dedicated writing time, you quickly check Facebook and notice that a post you have wholeheartedly wrote, did not get any response. At this point 'turned down Tina' steps into the place of the captain and convinces you that it's not worth the effort and takes away your inspiration.

To become aware of all the sub personalities in one self and mapping them out with all their traits, habits, triggers and pitfalls, is an unmeasurably valuable process. It gives you clear insight into what is happening inside of you: why it sometimes feels like you lose control of the steering wheel and why you act in a way that doesn't feel like the 'real' you. You will recognise the different states faster and regain control; putting the 'real you' back in the role of captain behind the wheel.

**But there is more.. In the super consciousness field there is a Divine plan.**

Here lives the transpersonal self, the soul, the spirit, the intuition, your higher self. You name it - all and none of these terms apply as it is something beyond comprehension. This is the area where our inspiration comes from, where our bliss arises and where innate wisdom and gifts originate. In this area your purpose is crystal clear and are you guided by significant people in your life who turn you in a different direction, or by a blessing in disguise like a series of events that lead to a burnout, an irresistible urge to do something completely illogical. And.... this is also the place that you connect to through meditation, art, visualisations, journalling and all of the areas the lovely ladies describe in their touching essays. This is the source from which I created these figurines and illustrations, that showed me my sub personalities, my dreams and my processes.

I regained and anchored the power over my life by listening very carefully to the soft whispers of my drawings, the teachers that came across my path, the urges I had to follow, the bliss I feel at particular moments and the connection I felt and feel with likeminded heroines.

I wish that for you too.

Happy reading!

Love, Angelique Desiree



*Seek the wisdom that  
will untie your knot. Seek the path  
that demands your whole being.*

~ R U M I ~

Buried inside the word Yoga is the Sanskrit root word *yug*, meaning to yoke (or join, or connect). O-kay ... so ... connect what to what, exactly?

I have lived and breathed this question and worked with it and loved it and, at times, struggled with it until it has turned inside out and unfolded its answer right at the centre of me, as a Knowing I can feel. A realisation of the profound connection at the heart of everything. A peek behind the curtain, or beneath the busy surface to the still, eternal core.

Just like a fairground ride, our demanding busy lives fling us to the periphery of ourselves and have us whirling around, chasing sensation, or riding a rollercoaster of emotions and ups and downs. Sometimes we feel trapped there by circumstance or habit, and sometimes we seek the ride ourselves through boredom or because it keeps us busy, or because everybody else is doing it.

Sooner or later however, we question what else there is and what we might be missing. Sometimes an external shock, like illness or divorce or losing a job, throws us off and leaves us wondering who we are and what we should be doing with our lives. And sometimes we climb off voluntarily – unfulfilled, unhappy, and go looking for answers. I hope you find some in this booklet, or at least a set of signposts for your journey, wherever on it you are. My guess is you already have all the answers you need, you just don't know it yet. And your wounds and your worries – rather than things to hide - may be the big flashing neon sign pointing where to look first.

For me, Yoga has been a path of self-discovery that started in my body (with all its hurts and history and hopes), led into my head and heart

(and all the ways I make sense of myself and the world, or confuse and lose myself totally!) and then opened my eyes to how much more I could grow. The big beyond.

Yoga gave me a map and a manual for connecting myself inwardly, outwardly and upwardly. A way to join:

- ❖ me into a well-functioning, comfortable whole (mind, body, breath)
- ❖ me to others in an authentic, meaningful way (both in relationships and in community)
- ❖ me to something bigger (energy, Life, the Divine, our higher self)

The kind of Yoga I do makes me real and resilient, not otherworldly. It's not about achieving non-stop Zen-like calm, it is about becoming fully present and able to respond effectively to whatever is going on around you.

A visual way to understand yoga is to imagine a lake. On stormy days the water surface is rippled and churned, on cloudy days it is grey and dull, in high summer it might glitter blindingly under the full sun. Only on a perfectly still, clear cool day will the surface of the water be smooth and transparent, allowing you easily to see deep down into its depths.

You could say the postures and breath practices are what settle the weather conditions (the thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations) and allow the water's surface (the mind) to become clear and transparent so that you see into it, to what it contains, and through it to what is beyond it. From this steady space we can accept who we are and see more clearly who and what we can become. We develop self-acceptance and self-compassion, the perfect ingredients for growth.



Once we get a taste of that connection – however fleetingly - doing Yoga becomes both an art and a science in which we practice the everyday miracle of transforming ourselves and creating a healthier, happier, more awake and aware Self.

Mary Oliver, the American poet, says it perfectly:

*This is the first, the  
wildest  
and the wisest thing I  
know: that the soul exists  
and is built entirely out  
of attentiveness..*

~ MARY OLIVER ~

So how do you build yourself out of attentiveness?

I would suggest by holding a Big Question and becoming curious about the answer that lies folded inside it. Then to go searching for the activity that suits You as the perfect vehicle for that curiosity, the thing that totally absorbs you and allows you to focus with all of yourself. The answers you seek are buried inside the questions you hold so start where you are, with who you are now.

The method that worked for me was Yoga. For someone else it might be Art or Aromatherapy or Journaling. It'll be the one thing that brings you alive or that you're drawn to again and again. I truly believe that what you are looking for, is looking for you also. When we start on a path of centring and connecting there is a kind of magnetism and magic at work that leads us home. We become 'full of ourselves' - in the nicest possible way - more at ease in ourselves and more visible in the world.

Yoga is my chosen way and the practice I teach. The art of Being Whole with your Whole Being.



**Susanna Grace** is a yoga teacher and Energy Coach in Sheffield, England, who offers classes, workshops, retreats and 1-1 mentoring. Her superpower is empathy and her mission is to take yoga off the mat and into our lives.

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*Art Journaling is one of my favourite ways to explore chi and get messages from the higher self. Using collage elements, you don't have to be an art expert to create an image that helps you discover your story.*

# CHI IS THE KEY

## AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity, from a chi perspective, means remembering that your body is the smallest part of you - that your true self, your authentic self is as infinite as the universe. It's accepting that you are that infinite energy even though you're not perfect and life is very "warts and all". It's in the accepting of yourself that the divine flow opens. You can feel it in your body right now. You are as you are, a perfect part of the flow of chi. If you sit for a moment, accepting everything as it is instead of struggling against it, embracing the "warts and all" of your existence, you can feel yourself start to come home to the real you. You can feel your mind begin to ease. Tension in your body releases. A naturally healing adjustment occurs because you join that larger part of yourself. You are truly here at last - your authentic self, deeply and divinely flowing; strong without being hard. It's important to feel into this because you need access to your whole self in order to live fully.



## ENERGY LEVELS

Growing up as an empath, I often felt lost in the sea of energy that was my family environment. What has helped me regain my self is realizing that energy works on two levels. There is a surface level of energy that is always changing and then there is a much deeper level of energy, an internal reservoir you can enter that connects you with another world, another way of being. On the surface you experience a million different things – the changing seasons, stimulants and pollutants, exhilaration and fatigue, other people's unprocessed emotions. It's easy to get caught up here, feeling overwhelmed or chasing one thing after another. At the deeper levels, the experience is less busy yet somehow full of more life. Here you find a sense of oneness and freedom without boundaries. You tap into an internal well of pure positive energy that is not dependent on external circumstances. Finding your way here and cultivating this connection is really the key to resilience. Every time you enter this deeper place, you are strengthened and nourished at your core, united with your true self. Through your practice here and now you create a reservoir of bliss you can call on your whole life.

*I feel like its the common  
thread we all share...*

*"We all need to support each  
other to bring a new  
vibration into the world."*

~ MARGOT DUNCAN ~

## YOUR SOUL'S PURPOSE

I sometimes wonder if there is a difference between your soul's purpose and your soul's expression. Maybe life is simpler than we think. Maybe at heart everyone has the same soul purpose – to be, love and grow. Perhaps it's more in the soul's expression that you find your uniqueness. Your expression is the art of the moment. It arises from your innermost self as you mix with your environment. It changes with you as you grow. It's what calls you, what inspires you. It does not have to be just one thing. It is fragrant, beautiful and worthy of being honoured. The more you align with the simple energy of being, the easier it is to find your true expression. You have to be careful that searching for you soul's purpose is not just another way to avoid the 'now' of being you.



Give your soul the opportunity to communicate.  
Make time to listen to the still, quiet voice  
and pick up the messages waiting for you.

## ENHANCING YOUR SOUL CONNECTION

Enhancing your soul connection requires quiet time, inner time and subtle listening. For me, these activities are the practices worth investing in. You can recognise these practices because of the qualities they produce in you – warmth, expansion and joy; clarity, knowingness and inspiration; completion, right action, right timing and right relationship. It's always good to check in with your life and look for what you are currently doing that produces these qualities, the activities that develop your soul connection - then make sure you do more of those things.

## HONOURING THE MASTERS

I was born into a world that contrasted with what I now know to be true. Finding my path started with a seed of energy I picked up from the ancient writings of Taoist and Buddhist Masters long passed away. It wasn't their words that moved me, although their words were beautiful, it was a taste of pure energy held beneath the words that I instantly recognised and longed for. I was 15. Since then I have practiced and travelled for many years with a living master, a Chinese Quantum Chi Master known as Master Yang. I first recognised who he was because the same pure energy passed between us without words, just as I had experienced from the ancient writings. The capacity of his direct chi transmission to profoundly change energy has shown me how important it is to practice; to learn to communicate with energy; transform its quality; clear and open the body's channels and build the reservoir within. I am forever grateful to him and to all the masters, male and female, that have come before us who have left us such clear guidance and examples.



# CHI IS THE KEY

## BEING IN BUSINESS

In the Taoist tradition they say that when you were born only half of you came to earth and the other half stayed in heaven... and that's why we practice - to stay connected with that other half. I love this story. It captures my experience and describes what I love to do in my work - help people find this connection to the greater part of themselves. I do this work through sharing chi practices, wisdom messages, inspiration and art - through private readings, classes and talks as well as online courses, writing and creative products, and hopefully just through being me. The cornerstones of my work are about balancing energy and opening the channels of chi communication through energy mindfulness; channeled messaging and direct chi transmission; body knowing practices; and exploring specific sources of chi through location and nature-based practices. In the tradition of my Chi Master, it's about drinking in quality chi and deeply enjoying the natural unfolding of pure positive energy in your life.

**Margot Duncan** (Phd) is an author, artist and designer who lives in South East Queensland, Australia. She specialises in creative mindfulness practices that help people connect with energy and inner body knowing because "mindfulness is much more than you think".

[www.margotduncan.com](http://www.margotduncan.com)

[www.facebook.com/Mindfulnessisfun](https://www.facebook.com/Mindfulnessisfun)



## WHAT IF I TOLD YOU THAT I HAD A PORTAL THAT ALLOWS ME TO LOOK INTO MY HEART, INTO MY SOUL?

A portal that leads me into my own innate wisdom, a way to navigate through the inevitable obstacles that arise during my days. This portal shows me the way to both the light and the shadows, helping me to gently work at uncovering my hurts, tending to them, and becoming whole again.

It works, like most magical portals do, with intention, with questions; the clearer the intent, the more focused the question, the clearer the pathway through the portal.

This portal has 78 keys - beautifully illustrated, encoded with deep wisdom, with transformational magick.

Yes, these keys to the portal of my soul are my Tarot cards. Armed with the wisdom of the Tarot, an art journal, a pencil and some paint, I connect with my higher self, seeking wisdom and guidance when the way seems dark and scary.

Combining the wisdom of my soul with the intentionality of paint helps me to distill the

timeless wisdom into a tangible, visible map that serves as a reminder of the messages any time I feel alone, afraid, or unsure of what to do next.

More often than not, I turn to a simple 2-card Tarot spread to gain some deep insights into a problem that I am facing. Once I have my message, I take it to the art journal.

There's no single formula for how I translate my insights into art. Often, I start by writing my thoughts straight into the art journal. Any fears that arise, any insights that came up from the cards, I write it all down. Then I cover it all with a coat of gesso. While I wait for it to dry, I look at the cards I drew for any inspiration. Sometimes I use them to choose the color palette, at other times, a symbol may call to me, and sometimes, I may look at the overall energy and know just how I want to represent it - through a portrait or as an abstract or maybe, simply, with colors and doodles.





## CARD 1:

*WHAT I AM THINKING ABOUT MY CURRENT SITUATION*

## CARD 2:

*WHAT MESSAGE DOES MY HIGHER SELF HAVE FOR ME ABOUT THIS SITUATION*

One thing to remember is that the message from your higher self is always positive, supportive, and provides guidance. So even if you get a card like The Tower, it simply means don't fear the chaos; after the chaos comes a chance to rebuild. That rebuilding is what will take you higher. So embrace the chaos, and look for the opportunity to build something new.

When I do this process, my focus is rarely on creating pretty art; it is on feeling the message, bringing it into my body, and then moving that energy outwards as I paint. I focus on the hope, on the wisdom, on the path forward as I play in my art journal. And I also keep my journal close by so I can write down any more insights that I get along the way.

This is how I combine the deep wisdom of the Tarot with my art practice - using it as devotion, as active meditation, as a portal into my authenticity, into a deeper connection with my soul.

I invite you to try it too. Here's a simple 2-card Tarot spread that I use for guidance from my higher (soul) self.



You can use any Tarot deck for this process, though it would be best to use one that you are already familiar with...the one that you are most comfortable with. If you're new to the Tarot, you could try a Tarot app - the Golden Thread Tarot (on iTunes) is a good, free app. It offers an option for a daily draw and has the meanings of the card within the app itself.





You could also try this with your favorite Oracle card deck. Colette Baron-Reid's *The Wisdom of the Oracle* is a good one to use for this process. She has drawn on the Tarot, the I Ching, and Norse runes to create these cards, which makes it a good alternative to the Tarot for this process.

Once you have drawn the cards and interpreted the meaning, I invite you to bring it to the journal page. If you don't art journal and don't have paints, try coloring with color pencils or crayons. The idea is simply to use the magick of symbols and color to feel into the message you receive so you can gain even deeper insights.

Allow yourself to intuitively pick the colors you are drawn to as you think of the message. And as you color, let your mind slowly go blank, focusing only on the color, shapes and marks you're making.

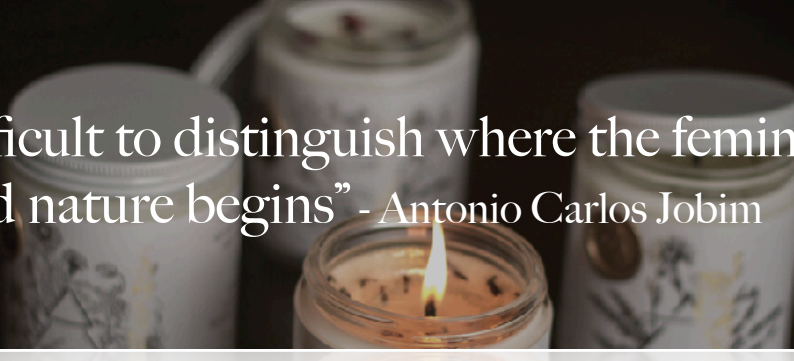
In this liminal, creative space, deeper insights will start to bubble up. Make sure you have a journal close by to write them down!



**Shinjini Mehrotra** writes about art, Tarot, and soulful living; and offers online Tarot readings, and art journaling and tarot ecourses via her website: [www.moderngypsy.in](http://www.moderngypsy.in).

While you're there, sign up for her newsletter, *Gypsy Wanderings*, to download a free ebook on art journaling! You can find more of her art and Tarot on Instagram at [instagram.com/moderngypsy.in](https://www.instagram.com/moderngypsy.in).

# ELEMENTS OF THE SACRED FEMININE



“It is difficult to distinguish where the feminine ends and nature begins” - Antonio Carlos Jobim

When I reflect on the sacred feminine and my journey to welcome her more fully in my life, I always look to nature and the elements. We can witness the moon and lunar phase as it builds up to full illumination and then retreats for a period of darkness. The cycle of life and nature's seasons showcase how there is a time to seed, tend, harvest, and release. All aspects are necessary and equally important.

THE SACRED FEMININE PERMITS US TO TRUST OUR OWN RHYTHMS.

The myth we are force fed is that we should always be “doing”, but there are seasons for all aspects of life. Taking time to rest and “do nothing” leads to a healthier immune system, opens us up to creative inspiration, and allows for contemplation.

In the women's circles I facilitate, we work closely with the four elements; air, fire, water, and earth, as a means to settle into a more receptive and reflective state. The elements provide such a rich context, as nature is deeply healing. I find connecting with each element allows one to begin understanding our own peaks and valleys, thus permitting us to honor the ever changing cycles within our lives.

AIR REPRESENTS THOUGHT, PERSPECTIVE, AND CLARITY

**The element of air** reminds me of spring. I love welcoming the winds of change, they can be both gentle and fierce. Air represents thought, perspective, and clarity. It is always changing. Sinking into the wisdom of air is as simple as visualizing a crisp spring day, noticing how the breeze might run through your hair as you walk. Perhaps the sensation of inhaling the cool air on your nostrils brings a renewed pathway of thought, instilling a sense of clarity and allowing you to take action on a situation or challenge you might have been requiring some guidance with. Think of a bird taking flight and seeing the big picture.

***What are some ways you can gain a broader perspective and make space for new beliefs in your daily life?***

FIRE REPRESENTS CREATIVITY, INSPIRATION, AND CONFIDENCE.

The element of fire reminds me of summer, it's indicative of the seed or spark. Fire represents creativity, inspiration, and confidence. I love visualizing fire as the sun shining brightly, feeling it's warmth on my skin.



Gathering with friends or family around a fire and sharing stories or music. When we tend to our spark and creative power, we are able to stoke our inner flames into something more substantial, something that can warm and sustain us for the long term.

***What are some projects or hobbies you are longing to tend to as a way to feed your creativity?***

WATER REPRESENTS FLUIDITY, INTUITION, AND EMOTIONS.

The element of water reminds me of fall. The damp autumn rains provide cleansing before the dark of winter takes hold. Water heals and nourishes, whether it's gazing over a pristine lake or feeling the salt spray from the ocean on our face.





Water represents fluidity, intuition, and emotions. The seed or spark that is planted with the fire element, requires regular nourishment in order to truly flourish and bloom. Have you ever had a hard day and jumped in a warm bath or shower, only to emerge feeling like a new person? This is the power of water. It cleanses, supports, and moves us in ways that we often take for granted. When you tap into your feelings, are you honoring the full range and flow within? ***What would be some safe and constructive ways you could cultivate more gentleness when it comes to honoring your intuition and emotions?***

EARTH REPRESENTS STABILITY,  
GROWTH, AND STRENGTH.

The element of earth reminds me of winter and of harvest. This season provides rich fertilizer through release and decay. Earth represents stability, growth, and strength. The quiet power of earth grounds us. Think of the smell of rich, dark soil or the strength of rocky boulders. Earth is sustenance. It is the foundation upon which we grow. Just like a mighty oak that started from a seed and sprouted roots. Those roots gained nourishment from the soil. With time and patience a seed incubates, grows, and emerges. Earth reminds us that growth and evolution take time. Even when we think we are stuck, we are still making incremental progress. Nothing is static. ***What foundation are you building? Reflect on your roots and sense of belonging, perhaps you notice the strength and resilience in all that you have overcome.***

BY CONNECTING WITH NATURE  
THROUGH THE ELEMENTS  
we are able to gain perspective, create new patterns of thought, cultivate our creativity, honor the full range of our emotions, trust

our intuition, and finally, understand the power of our own strength and tenacity. This can then act as a catalyst for us to embrace and embody the sacred feminine even further so that we might inspire other women to do the same.

"WOMEN FORGET HOW MUCH WE  
CAN INSPIRE ONE ANOTHER. NO  
ONE UNDERSTANDS US LIKE US"

**ALEX ELLE**



**Alauna Whelan** offers products that assist women with unearthing and embracing their unique femininity. She believes we can embody beauty and elegance while having a positive impact on our world. By creating luxury handcrafted goods that assist women to feel connected, supported, and empowered, Alauna strives to provide an experience that is beautiful and natural; one where all elements of you are celebrated.

**Website:** [www.alaunawhelan.com](http://www.alaunawhelan.com)



# ANCHORS OF SELF-LEADERSHIP IN SEAS OF CHANGE

OUR BODIES AND OUR PERSONALITY ARE VESSELS, AND LEADERSHIP LIKE CAPTAINCY, IS A FULL INHABITATION OF THE VESSEL.

DAVID WHYTE, CROSSING THE UNKNOWN SEA

## Challenges of change

As we undergo significant personal change, it can feel like we are in swirling seas with uncertain weather conditions and a destination that constantly feels out of reach. We might be changing jobs, creating a new business, moving to a new place, going through the trauma of grief or making changes to the key relationships in our life.

Whether it's one change or many coming at us simultaneously, whether we initiate the change or it is thrust upon us, it can all feel very confronting and destabilising. Our overall view of where we're heading can keep shifting, but we know we want to feel more wholehearted, more ourselves, as we move through it all, one way or another.

As I negotiate a major life transition from a long-term role in the government sector as a leader and teacher to a self-sustaining creative life focused around writing and life coaching, I'm also supporting a loved one who is very unwell. Life is uncertain in so many respects and my once structured daily routine is unpredictable. There are sharp ups and downs and I've had to work and think differently each day. It's a time when I've had to dig deep into the resources of my personality and experience.

## Solitude and self-leadership

As a leader, I've learnt over time that self-leadership is the most important aspect of leading others, especially when times are unclear and in flux. Personally, I've had to develop new anchors of self-leadership as I work towards feeling more whole in this current climate of uncertainty. Making time for solitude and listening to my intuition is the best thing I can do now. This is not unique to me. As Raymond M. Kethledge and

Michael S. Erwin remind us in '[Lead Yourself First](#)': "Anyone who leads anyone—including oneself— can benefit from solitude."

### My anchors of self-leadership

The anchors of self-leadership I have relied on to navigate this time are:

1. Personality and knowing myself
2. Valuing solitude
3. Writing as a touchstone for clarity
4. Using my gifts and applying them practically

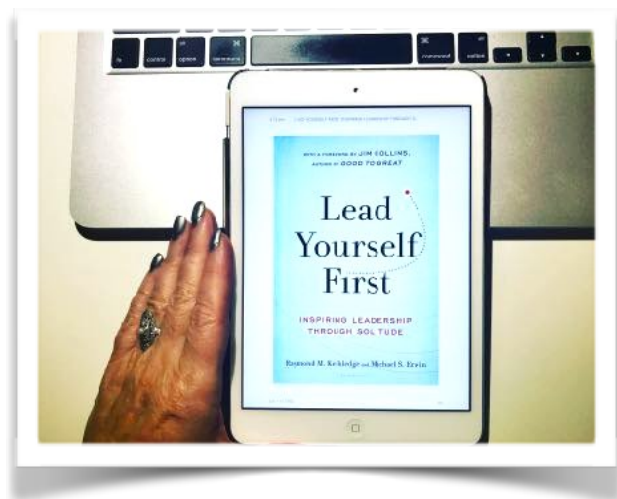
Here is how I have worked with these anchors, individually and in combination, to support me at this time of transition and challenge.

### Personality and knowing myself

Firstly, personality and knowing myself is a critical initial step in negotiating this time effectively. In Jung/Myers-Briggs terms, I am an INTJ, so [Introverted Intuition](#) is my dominant preference. Understanding my personality has helped me manage the conflicting challenges of the current situation. Going within and spending time alone to reflect is a valuable support right now and is central to my self-care. Each personality type will want and need different things. Our preferences are innate, but our personality as a whole evolves within its type over time and circumstances might ask different things of us. Knowing yourself will help provide the safest shelter from which you can manage any stormy times you might be facing.

### Valuing solitude

Secondly, valuing solitude is important now given as Kethledge and Erwin's book 'Lead Yourself First' demonstrates, solitude is central to all leadership including self-leadership. This applies whether you are

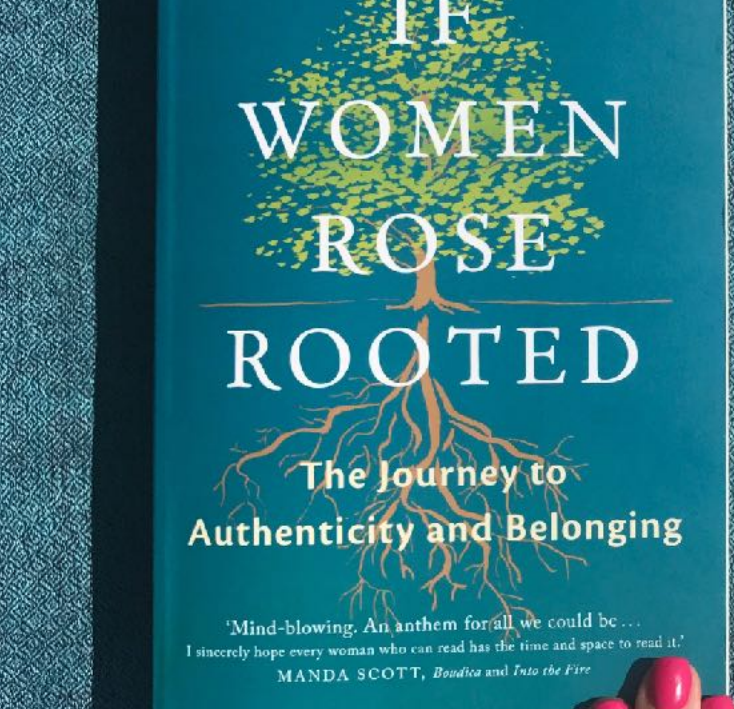


an extravert or introvert. Finding a way to access that personal cocoon of quiet and insight is vital at times of challenge and uncertainty. There are many ways to do this such as writing, walking, swimming, running, artwork and photography. For me, it's been swimming and writing. Each person needs to find their own preferred way of accessing solitude. Anything that helps you find space to collect, switch off from technology and connect with your own rhythms and inner wisdom will be an oasis of calm guidance.

### Writing as a touchstone for clarity

Thirdly, writing as a touchstone for clarity and settling thoughts is a valuable priority during change. I've recently returned to the practice of [Morning Pages](#), made famous by Julia Cameron. The first thing I do each day is make a cup of tea and sit down and write three pages. Whatever comes out on the page, I feel so much clearer from getting my thoughts and emotions down on paper. Kethledge and Erwin explain that Dwight Eisenhower wrote memos to himself, saying: "I'm just collecting my thoughts in a structured way." This is what writing can do for you - help you realise and structure what is rolling around and then place it where you can work with it.





It's a valuable tool however you play with it: morning pages, blogging, unsent letters, making lists, memoirs or journaling.

### Using my gifts and applying them practically

Finally, using my gifts and applying them practically, has been a personal way to navigate this time. I mentioned [Introverted Intuition](#) as a preference and I've been working to understand it more deeply. The key way has been through working with tarot and oracle cards. I've developed a personal daily practice that helps me tap into my intuitive wisdom. This often links with what comes out of my morning pages. Over time, I started sharing this on Instagram as a [Tarot Narrative](#) each day and they also link intuitively to another major love, books. These narratives are an insight to guide and steer my day and they are connecting with others' journeys of self-leadership as they evolve.

### Final thoughts

So, I encourage you to work with your own anchors of self-leadership in your journey of navigating change. Everyone will find their own style of ways to settle and shift with grace through challenge. I hope these

thoughts from my experiences provide stimulation for listening to and connecting with your own valuable anchors and supports so you can positively cross the waters of change.



**Terri Connellan** is a writer and life coach, interested in wholehearted self-leadership and certified in personality type assessment. She loves helping people gather the threads of their unique story so they can shine. You can find Terri at [QuietWriting.com](#) and you can find more about her [here](#).



# ART AS MY LIFE BOAT

**It's four years ago that I capsized.** I can swim and yet I've always had a fear of drowning. All of a sudden my boat disappeared and I sank. I remember this feeling of falling backwards down a deep deep well, not knowing whether there was a bottom.

On 8 January 2013 I woke up unable to move. I'd spent the previous 3 or 4 months feeling tired and by the time Christmas arrived I felt exhausted. I thought I needed a holiday and all would be well again. I never returned to my job as an HR Director, in fact I didn't work for another 18 months. During that time I gave up my job and I had to sell my house because I ran out of money.

I was told I had clinical depression and acute stress. I spent three months in denial about this, even now I struggle to accept it. I certainly had burn out of epic proportions. Just doing the washing up was a major event. Even now I find it incredible that I didn't realise I had insomnia for months and that guzzling nytol tablets by the fistful and glugging chamomile tea at 4am to help me sleep didn't work and wasn't normal. I didn't feel depressed, I felt exhausted and spent. So my body decided to stop working and force me to lay down. Most of the time I didn't know if I was sinking or floating. I was being given a lesson in the art of S-L-O-W. And even though I wasn't busy on the outside I was very busy on the inside, with the endless chatter of my monkey mind. When would it ever stop?



My lifeboat arrived in the form of a dear friend who had retired to Dingle on the West coast of Ireland. 'Come and stay', she said, and so I did, for a week at a time every few weeks. And so began my love affair with Ireland. I discovered the magnificence of the mountains, the sea and the sky and how I loved the sound of the Atlantic gales, the power of the wind. I stood on the clifftops and felt I could breath. All that spaciousness in the landscape and the seascape gave me peace. And what a joy that no-one knew who I was, to the local folk I was simply Lynn. In my dead and drowning energy I began to feel alive in Ireland, and I felt a belonging to a place that was missing in my other life.





In the slow months of recovery, as I made my descent and ascent, I realised that I needed to change my life. I recognised my workaholism for what it was, the numbing of pain and unhappiness. I thought meditation would help and was very surprised when my counsellor, who was also a Mindfulness teacher, told me that I was too ill to meditate. 'What you need is relaxation, not meditation' she said, and she gave me a meditation CD to prove her point to me. She was right, the monkey mind was having none of it, and as she said, I couldn't concentrate long enough to work with the visualisation. She had told me that meditation would require too much mental energy from me and she was right. Wise woman.

*“What you need is  
relaxation, not  
meditation”*

**~ A WISE WOMAN ~**



~ IF SOMEONE HAD TOLD ME IN 2013 THAT IN 2015 I WOULD BE EXHIBITING AND SELLING ART I WOULD HAVE LAUGHED ~

What I found was colouring books, long before they became so popular. I would colour kaleidoscopic patterns for hours and my head chatter would sleep, much like standing on the cliffs at the edge of the world at Dunquin. As I made peace with my body I became curious about how the geometric patterns were made and looked for a class. I couldn't find any so I bought a book on sacred geometry and a pair of compasses and began to teach myself. This interest became a passion and drawing mandalas became my meditation. Little did I know that these were my first steps towards becoming an artist. If someone had told me in 2013 that in 2015 I would be exhibiting and selling art I would have laughed. I hadn't held a paintbrush since school and that was nearly 40 years ago. I now have a website to show my art and I've taken many commissions. In February 2017 I completed my teacher training in California in expressive and intuitive art and I now hold classes and workshops. I was due to hold a week long retreat in Italy in September and that is now on hold.

Art has sustained me through a transition into a very different life. As much as I tried

to return to a full time job in the corporate world the universe was having none of it!. An old work colleague contacted me out of the blue and within two weeks I was facilitating a team development programme which turned into an 18 month coaching assignment. I began taking personal clients and using my training and experience as a psychotherapist and as a coach. I trained others in facilitation skills and group processes. And I took on consultancy contracts in Human Resources and change management.





## THE PROCESS OF MAKING ART HAS TAUGHT ME A LOT ABOUT LIFE

I am now the Captain of my Life in a new vessel, steering a different course. Maybe I had to become lost at sea, woman overboard, in order to find myself. I now pay attention to my physical, mental and emotional energy and I follow my heart in saying Yes and saying No. I have learned that saying Yes to the unexpected that shows up in life can bring the most amazing experiences. And the process of making art has taught me a lot about life, the blank canvas is a metaphor for life, and as the Captain or the Paintress it is up to us what we put on that canvas, we can always paint over it.



**Lynn Hanford-Day** is an artist, coach, facilitator and therapist working with women in transition and organisations going through change. She is especially interested in creativity and intuition, positive psychology and strengths, helping people to access and express their inner wisdom. She helps people bring clarity to their world so that they can be the Captains of their lives, even when the destination isn't yet clear or on the horizon. Her art and more about her as a strengths coach can be found at:

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# The Healing Power of Writing Your Story

“WHEN A WOMAN REDUCES THE EMPHASIS ON THE OUTER HEROIC QUEST FOR SELF-DEFINITION, SHE IS FREE TO EXPLORE *HER* IMAGES AND *HER* VOICE.”

~MAUREEN MURDOCK, THE HEROINE'S JOURNEY~

What does it mean to be the heroine of your life, and how can the practice of writing lead you there?

My journey began journaling as early as I could write. I still have my first “Snoopy” diary with a broken lock and missing key! It was the way I processed the world around me and made my inner experience real.

This early connection to the page has led to a lifelong practice, and eventually to guiding others in discovering and writing their life-based stories, often working with deeply personal material. In my early workshops, people would often blurt out, “This is better than therapy!” which was unsettling since I’m not a therapist. It prompted me to reach out to colleagues for advice, who in turn introduced me to the vast array of scientific research that links writing to an increased sense of well-being. I quickly recognized the healing benefits that had sprung from my own intuitive practice. This excited me, and so my studies deepened.

Over the years, I have come to understand that when we write about our lives, we are taking the fragments—those unconnected, seemingly random memories—and out of them creating coherent narratives. You might start with the plot of your life, which is simply the sequence of events—this happened, then this happened, and so on. This is the raw material. The story is revealed when you attach meaning to those events and discover your emotional truth and journey through them. You show how you’ve moved through the rocky terrain and emerged on the other side, transformed. In this way, we begin to see that the DARKNESS is connected to the LIGHT, that they are part of the same story; and in that, there is a healing, an integration, and a wholeness of one’s Self that emerges.

This process is illuminating and deeply empowering, as we are free to interpret what we have experienced and why it matters.



*Spirit* OF STORY



But this work is not for the feint of heart. It takes courage. In diving into our stories—like ‘diving into the wreck’ as Adrienne Rich evocatively describes in her eponymous poem—we take a deep plunge, an immersion. You are required to re-imagine and examine events of the past, and this at times can be painful. So there is a need for self-care, which can take many forms—perhaps building in time for a walk, a warm bubble bath, or connecting with a loved one. You might even thrust your face into an open freezer as a visceral trigger to shock the body back into the present moment.

If you’re new to this kind of writing, I suggest you begin by making a list of moments or events from your life—those images that are embedded in your memory, the ones that stick with you and perhaps haunt you. Lists offer an easy ‘way in’. They don’t require full sentences or pretty language. Simple bullet points, like a grocery list. And then, depending on the day and your inner readiness, you tackle one or two, allowing yourself to explore it on the page. Start with 10 minutes a day. The idea is to make it accessible and doable—less daunting, less scary. This ‘writing ritual’ looks different for everyone. I know one friend who has a beautiful desk and spacious place to write, but over time realized that her best writing came from sitting in the car while her son was in karate class. She wrote an entire book that way! There is nothing perfect-looking about this practice. It is about getting to know and trust your own creative process. As you go about ‘getting it out on the page’ you are mapping the territory—letting your subconscious root around and make connections, following the train of

thought, and hopefully even surprising yourself.

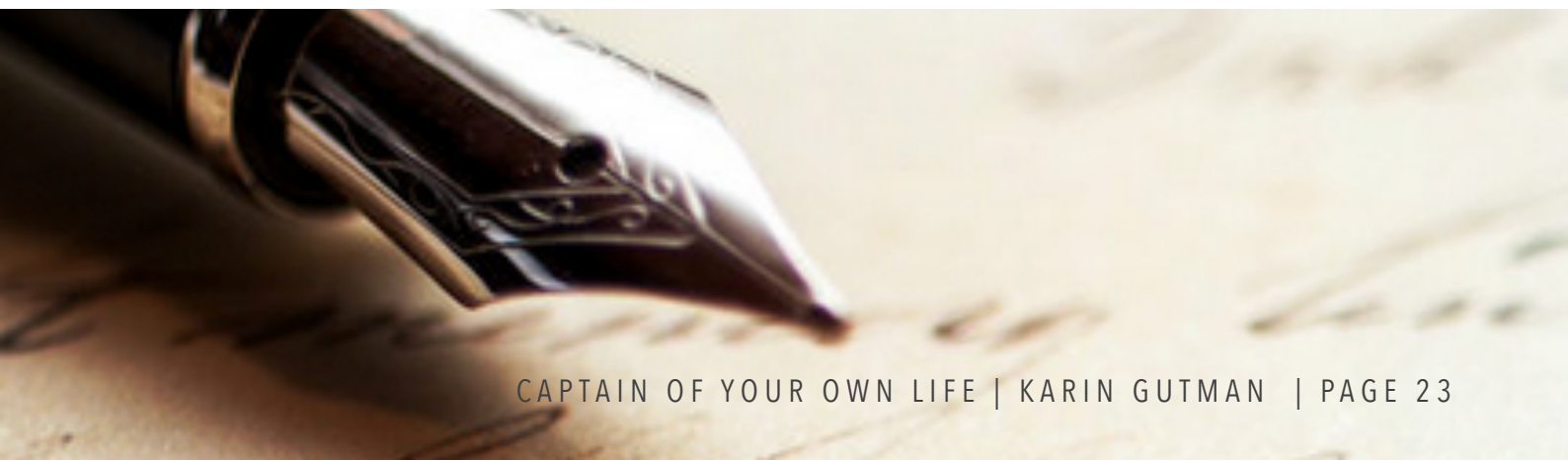
Of course those pesky voices may start their chatter. *Who are you to be writing? You’re a worthless piece of crap! What if so-and-so reads what you’ve written? You’re doomed! Not to mention, your grammar sucks!*

To which I say: write anyway. I am giving you permission to write your story. To put a stake in the ground and say, “This is my experience.” It is your truth. It is valid.

And it will change your life, for the better.



**Karin Gutman, MFA**, is the founder of *Spirit of Story*, a creative space that guides people in discovering and writing their personal, life-based stories. To learn more, visit: [www.spiritofstory.com](http://www.spiritofstory.com)



# RECLAIMING WHOLENESS

– a photo essay by Elizabeth Milligan

My path to wholeness started, like most people, with a vague itch that was difficult to scratch. Something at the back of my mind. An odd sense of longing, but for what? A distant voice calling my name, but why?



I had turned to complementary and alternative therapy, self-help books and texts about living as our wild, free selves. Feeling frustrated and misunderstood I longed to set myself free. I had studied massage and aromatherapy because I wanted to help people. Little did I realise the person I really needed to help was myself. But the oils calmed me and spoke to me of far-off lands and distant ancestors. Something opened up inside of me. A warm deep space. I inhaled the oils and started to feel at home in my body.





Working with the body on the outside made me more curious about the inside and I started to re-evaluate what I was putting into my body. How was I nourishing myself? Where was the thought behind what I was putting into my mouth? The realisation of my less than careful diet came at a crucial time. I got ill and was offered surgery. I chose food as medicine instead. Clean, simple, organic, fresh food. As close to its natural state as possible. I got better and felt great. Better than I had for years.



Suddenly brimming with energy I took up running again and entered a half marathon. I started cycling and swimming again and I realised what my body had been missing out on without proper regular exercise. My exercise routine had been in fits and starts over the previous decade or so as injury followed by recovery followed by re-injury had put me in fear of using my body. As someone who is naturally physical, this had left me feeling bereft.





But this new vitality gave me the courage and inclination to seek a new kind of life completely. With pollution levels in the city at an all-time high, my partner and I decided to take a risk and start a new life in the country. What I was not expecting was the total life change I would experience from living so closely with nature every single day. Feeling and living the seasons. Seeing myself as just another organism in the grand scheme of life. Feeling a part of something bigger. Connecting in my own way to the vastness of the universe. This reconnection with nature has altered my view on life and work drastically.



Living in the middle of nowhere and experiencing a different pace of life has somehow sparked my creativity. A side of myself that I had kept hidden for over two decades for fear of not being good enough. Starting a [blog](#) to document our new life, I used photography and writing to express myself. Since then my creative pursuits have expanded to include painting and collage making which are both totally driven by my wild intuitive self. This is my true soul communicating.



In all of this, one of the most important things I have been able to give myself is time. The time for real rest and relaxation in a peaceful natural environment. I know there can be a lot of guilt around about taking time for ourselves but it is so important if we want to allow integration of mind, body and soul and connect to the wider world outside of ourselves. Switching off and sitting in silence and allowing ourselves to just be.

“YOU ARE A CHILD OF THE UNIVERSE,  
NO LESS THAN THE TREES AND THE STARS;  
YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE HERE.  
AND WHETHER OR NOT IT IS CLEAR TO YOU,  
NO DOUBT THE UNIVERSE IS UNFOLDING AS IT SHOULD.”  
~ **MAX EHRMANN (DESIDERATA)**





These small but vital changes over time have allowed me to rebuild my life into one of wholeness. I now see not only the way all elements within me are interconnected, I also see my own connections to the outer environment and the world around me. And this to me is a truly holistic way to live.

"YOU ARE NOT A DROP IN THE OCEAN.  
YOU ARE THE ENTIRE OCEAN IN ONE DROP"  
~ RUMI



**Elizabeth** is an aromatherapist and quiet creative. She is currently redesigning her life and work around her own wholehearted values of creativity, positive interaction with nature, and slow and simple living. You can find Elizabeth online at [www.elizabethmilligan.com](http://www.elizabethmilligan.com) or on [Instagram](#) and [twitter](#) @libbylibellule

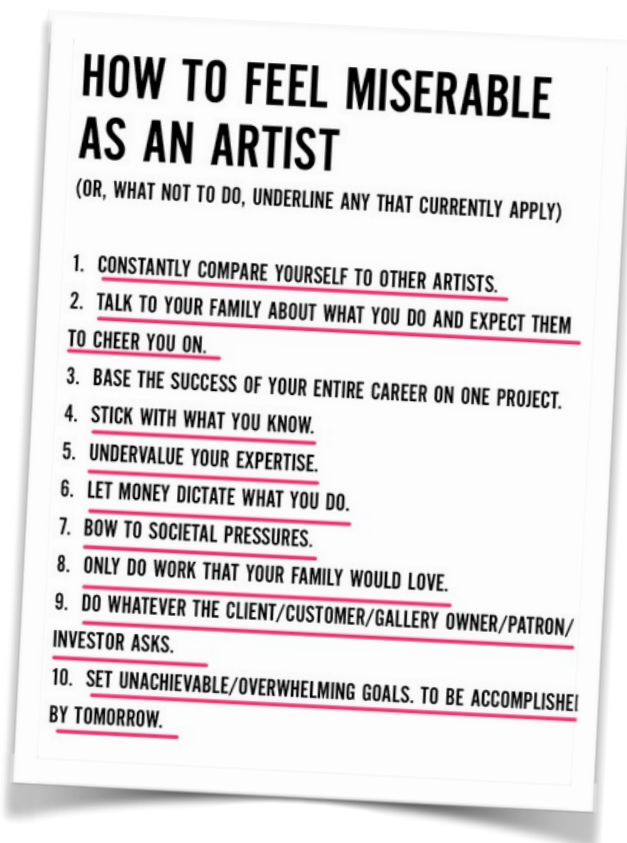


# HOW TO FEEL MISERABLE AS AN ARTIST

(OR, WHAT NOT TO DO, UNDERLINE ANY THAT CURRENTLY APPLY)

"How to feel miserable as an Artist" is a concept developed by Keri Smith and served as my mantra around 2004, right after graduating art school, as I built a new practice as digital media designer and art teacher. It helped me make the right choices and my practice soon flourished. For about 9 years I worked with great pleasure, creating beautiful video productions and helping adults, teens and kids develop their creativity. Then the economic crisis came and the budgets for creativity dried up. Suddenly I had to make business choices that were not in line with my own vision. Eventually I burned out because I had too much work that did not make me happy and on top of that, my father got ill.

I decided to change course and return to my quiet and spacious childhood countryside that I had swapped 25 years previously to live in a big city, to be closer to my family and gradually build a new practice where I could work more from my heart, soul and hands. I found a part-time job, started an training course to become an artistic coach and simultaneously enlisted on [Susannah Conway's "The inside story"](#). I was very impressed by her approach to running a Heart-centred business. That was exactly what I wanted. Almost everything



Susannah shared felt like an "Of Course!". During my coach training, I started giving workshops and art classes and kept building my business with the thought of heart centeredness always in the back of my mind. At the time of graduation, Susannah launched a summer school with all sorts of wonderful ideas to fuel your business. As a result I came up with the idea to compile an ebook together with fellow summer school students about 'How to be a heroine, or captain of your own life.'



I had just written a lovely e-course on this subject, created a gem of a website, and set out with the best intentions to help others become the heroine of their own life, just as I felt I had done. Collaborating with women who, like me, wanted to live from their hearts and slay their own dragons felt very empowering and good!

Out of impatience, I chose to hire an expensive business coach as well, to help me with business strategy (despite being warned in the Inside story Facebook group). This coach asked me to develop a whole new approach, that would focus on marketing and sales funnels. I worked hard to implement her program, but the harder I tried, the further away I seemed to chase my normally pretty interested bunch of people. And on top of that: There was no time left for my own creative work. My starting point became earning money, yet my mission was to allow creativity, flow and healing in the lives of creative empaths like myself. My company had to grow faster and better and my progression did not feel enough. Viewed from the point of the Law of Attraction: if your mind is set on 'not enough', you will attract 'not enough'.

Long story short: things collapsed, I again became overwrought and could not even finish this e-book, which I had worked on with so much love. The entire magazine was ready, made up and done, but my own article refused to write itself because I no longer felt like the captain of my own life.

I felt **miserable!** And this particular term precisely reminded me of Keri Smith's document: It seemed like a good idea to go over her list again.



I could almost tick off the entire list! Not only as an artist, but also as a coach and person. No wonder I felt miserable. I had to get back to the state I had forgotten:

## Happiness is an Inside story:

Being the captain of my own life has nothing to do with being successful according to the current norm in the outside world. *I am on the right course when I like myself, what I do and how I do it.* Only in this instance I am aligned with my own crystal line; that energetic line that connects me with my inspiration, my heart and soul and my grounding.



If I stay tuned to this line, which I envision as a kind of tube allowing inspiration and vitality to flow through me, I am at my most powerful and have abundance to offer. The key is to stay true to one's heart's desire, focus on the things that make you truly happy and dismiss the fear of what others might think and expect. Grant yourself the ease, joy and strength of the *genuine* you.

I knew that creativity made me happy, but at that point I was in so deep, that I could not find the inspiration anymore. I treated myself to a "wanderlust" course, hoping this would be my creative juices flowing again. And by god, it did!

I granted myself a 'creative expedition'; time to explore and wander this new sea of creation and techniques, without any purpose, goal or money objective. Almost instantly my strength, happiness and joy re-appeared. I felt in charge again, because I was the only one orchestrating the colours, structures and meaning I was giving life to. This feeling of autonomy flooded into different

aspects of my life as well, making me more confident and able to remain true to my personal wishes.

My soul had been very clear in telling me to STAY TRUE! All this turmoil, resulting eventually in this creative expedition, brought me back to my initial dream course of living an autonomous creative life, which I embarked on when I was just a kid.

I recently decided to focus mainly on my own creative process for an undefined period of time, instead of facilitating and coaching this process during live sessions. That last bit feels like a side track at this point in time. I find it very scary, not to be of obvious use to society and not to work towards more financial security, but I have chosen to listen to the the joy and relief this autonomous work gives me.

With all this in mind, I decided to make a complementary list to Keri's, focusing on the positive side of feeling wonderful as an artist. (>>)



## HOW TO FEEL WONDERFUL AS AN ARTIST (/ PERSON)

UNDERLINE WHAT DESERVES NOURISHMENT.

1. Appreciate the artist that you are, in all your uniqueness.
2. Only share your dreams and wishes with those who will support you.
3. Dare to experiment, grow, connect and *kill your darlings*.
4. Wander the creative fields and let the flow lead you to new approaches.
5. Trust your expertise and your personal preferences; these form your unique golden formula.
6. Let your heart and joy be your guide to what you do.
7. Stay true to your heart's wishes, do **not** betray your soul's purpose (ever).
8. Do the things that make you happy: like what you do.
9. Dare to say no to the client / customer / gallery owner / investor.
10. Work in the gentle pace and manner that suits you best.

### Some additional notes to the self:

- Make time, show up and be creative, it makes you happy
- Trust the process.

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**Angelique Desiree** is an artist, designer, storyteller and artistic coach, with a passion for creativity, energy work and Peruvian shamanism. She shares big themes in small stories and lets art serve as a healing- and connection tool for the soul.

She illustrates and writes about captainship of your own life and offers e-courses in creativity, and creative energy- and soul nourishment courses. Find her work at:

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<http://bit.ly/captainofyourownlife>