

Let the Crayons Out of the Box Lesson #3 - “Doodling on Steroids”



Our lesson this week asks us to just doodle. Similar to last week's lesson where we were coloring out our stress and coloring in relaxation, this week we will be putting pens, markers and other materials to paper in a fun, relaxed and non-intentional way.

The point is to remember that we are all innately creative – even if we think we can't draw. Doodling is relaxing, it can be a form of meditation and it can help you focus.

This activity is adapted from the book *Drawing Lab for Mixed Media Artists* by Carla Sonheim. I picked up this book at Michael's on a whim one day and am so glad that I did, it is full of fabulous ideas to inspire creativity and help you overcome your fears around drawing.

I selected her “Doodling on Steroids” activity for a couple of reasons:

1. It captures the meditative feel that I want to capture in each of your sessions. That connection to quiet contemplation helps us focus on the process of creativity and forget about the outcome.
2. Today's lesson frees you from the restraint of the size, color and encourages you to be very playful on the page. That element of play is very important in relieving stress and opening to your creative source.

3. Finally, this is another activity that is portable, can be done anywhere and with almost any materials. All you need is a few drawing utensils, an mp3 player (love my iPhone!) and some paper or a journal.

The dictionary definition of “doodle” is to move aimlessly or foolishly so approach this activity with a spirit of play.

Supplies needed:

- An audiobook or podcast
- Any type of paper or substrate (material to work on). You might try a paper bag or piece of construction paper from your kids' collection. Card stock is great or a large manilla envelope. It's okay if it's used, printed on already, etc. Use what you have at hand. You will only need one piece to start!
- Ten preselected drawing utensils. This is the fun part, make them different and try to use an assortment of whatever you have (and I know some of you have been happily collecting new utensils.) For example: ballpoint pens, Sharpies or other markers, regular pencil, colored pencils, paint pen, crayons. Pick only ten but try to get a variety of colors and textures. You can see my sample in the image above.
- A journal or blank piece of paper and a pen.

Okay, now some simple instructions.

1. The first step is to select an audiobook or podcast. Your local library will have a collection that you can check out. Or look on iTunes if you have it for free podcasts. Do not use video, the goal is to free your hands to doodle while you are focused on listening. The topic doesn't matter. I love listening to non-fiction audio books, especially ones with a spiritual focus but I also enjoy listening to fiction. Right now I am listening to a Michael Connelly murder mystery. Make sure it is something you will enjoy! If this feels like a challenge, listen to music.
2. Gather your materials, something to drink and turn off any other distractions like your phone or email. If you have limited time, you might want to set a timer or have a watch near by. Commit to at least 20 minutes to do this, 30 to 45 would be even better.
3. Sit quietly for a moment and just check in with your body. Are you feeling excited, anxious, worried about something else, joyful about the fun to come? Take a few deep breaths and allow your body to relax. Feel yourself connected to the moment. Look at your utensils and your paper and allow yourself to enjoy this abundance and this perfect, quiet moment. When you are ready, start your audio. I
4. Pick up one utensil and start drawing.
5. Sonheim writes, “Just draw and scribble absentmindedly, making any shapes, lines, squiggles, patterns, designs, or images that your subconscious mind brings out (remember, your mind will be engaged elsewhere). Keep switching drawing tools every minute or so. Use all ten utensils in your drawing.
6. Keep your journal nearby. If thoughts, brilliant ideas or to-dos interrupt, write them down and release them for the moment.

7. When you feel complete or you are out of time, put your tools down. Admire your doodles, take some time to study what you have drawn. “You will likely learn some things about yourself,” says Sonheim, “such as that you like purple or are drawn to patterns and shapes more than identifiable objects.” Her goal is to help people tease out their individual creative style. In our case, I want you to just notice the beauty of what you created. In your journal, write about this experience for a few minutes. What do you notice or see in your doodles? How do you feel after completing this activity? What would you want to do differently the next time?

Most of all, have fun with this. Remember, there is no right or wrong. There is just you, your utensils and endless possibility!

Here is a link to Sonheim's book on Amazon.com if you are interested:

http://www.amazon.com/Drawing-Lab-Mixed-Media-Artists-ebook/dp/B004R1PVRA/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1369945350&sr=8-1&keywords=sondheim+drawing+lab