

40-Day Art Journaling Challenge

with Teaching Artist Rachel Stokes



Art Journaling is a wonderful tool for healing. Just a little writing, drawing, painting, pasting, folding, or anything else your heart desires within the covers of your journal each day can nourish your inner self by giving substance to some of your deeper thoughts and emotions. The goal is simply to pull our introspection outward. You may find yourself surprised by the results, once you let your “inner you” start to flow out into the world around you.

Why make art in a journal? Like anything, creativity is not something you just magically have or don't--it gets easier with daily practice. Art journaling lets you exercise your creative muscles without fear of ruining a canvas or other expensive art materials. It allows you to experiment with your creativity in a way that never inhibits you. And it gives you permission to play and make mistakes. With art journaling, you can explore anything going on inside yourself. There are no rules or boundaries; anything goes! You can use your art to boost your mood, focus on something that's on your mind, or to bring out and examine complicated or even unsettling feelings, emotions, or thought patterns. It's entirely up to you.

But what if I'm not an artist?

Some people may think that they're not creative in any way. This just isn't true. Everyone has an imagination and is fully capable of opening their creativity. The more we exercise this part of our mind, the easier it comes to us. Try to refrain from judging your own artwork, as there is no requirement to be “good” or even to improve over time. What's most important is simply that you do it.

If you prefer, you can keep your art journal 100% private – viewed by you and only you. Knowing this may help to alleviate any fears of being judged or criticized. It can be quite liberating! Once you let go of the need to control or be perfect, it's incredible what comes out of you.

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It's because of all of these things that I'd like to invite you to join my 40-Day Art Journaling Challenge! This is a really beautiful and healing endeavor that I think everyone can benefit from, no matter who they are.

There are only a few guidelines for the challenge:

1. Self discipline: You have to journal every day between the time you wake up and midnight. 12:01AM is a new day. The amount of time you spend each day is up to you.
2. If you miss a day, start over at day one. (It's not failure, it's take two.)
3. You cannot tear a page out. (It's not failure, it's data.)

Some of you may be thinking, "Who has time to do art journaling every single day?!" The answer is: *you do*. We all do. It doesn't have to be an enormous project that takes several hours to complete. You can spend as little as five minutes a day doing this challenge.



I do this myself, so remember you are not alone. Personally, I like to carry a bag full of supplies with me wherever I go. I put things like glue sticks, pens, pencils, erasers, colored pencils, scissors, markers, and googly eyes in my bag. That way, when I have down time, I can work on my art journaling no matter where I am. I could be waiting at the doctor's office, on hold on a call, riding the bus home, or any number of things. It can be done in a group or by yourself—whatever makes it most enjoyable for you.

The most important step is to start. The more you think about what to do, the longer you will put it off. Think of it as an experiment—have fun and see what comes out!



About the Artist

Rachel Stokes has been a GAC Teaching Artist since 2016, leading weekly workshops for clients at ADA Women's Recovery Center. As a multimedia artist working primarily in painting and mosaics, she has shown and taught at various regional galleries. Rachel is also a certified Life-Health and Wellness Coach and has a private practice in Galveston.