

Creative Collaboration

with Caryn Dahm

10 Creative Truths

Do things that scare you.

Art and creative pursuits make you vulnerable because they are so subjective. Embrace this vulnerability and fight through the fear. When we stop fearing failure, we are free to start being creative.

Your mistakes are part of your process. Learn what to keep and what to erase and recognize that it is all part of learning.

Quit trying to fit.

No matter how much you may want to, you can never completely divorce yourself from your own style, nor should you try to. It will follow you everywhere. You can get better and change your mediums and methods but your own unique style will always shine through.

Learn to accept criticism.

Ask for feedback and develop thick skin to be able to receive it. Understand that most criticism can be used constructively. Begin to recognize what feedback is helpful, and flush that which is not.

Call yourself what you are.

If you create art, you are an artist. If you love to write music, you are a musician. Being the best of the best, or getting paid for your work does not make you those things. Your passion does!

Recognize that God made us to enjoy our work.

“ I have noticed one thing, at least, that is good. It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life. And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life--this is indeed a gift from God.”

- Ecclesiastes 3:18 - 19

Compare your work to your own work, nobody else's.

Yes, it is good to be inspired by other's work that you love, but when you are comparing, look to see how much your own creative work has grown and changed. Keep all of her old paintings so that each year she can go through her notebooks and see how far she has come!

Keep some white space.

Just as white space is important in art and design, it is also important to keep on our calendars as well. I'm still learning not to book up every moment, but when I leave some days unplanned and unscheduled, it leaves open space for refreshment and inspiration.

Take the next right step

Don't wait to have it all figured out before you prayerfully do work you love. This quote by Agnes De Mille says it well, "Living is a form of not being sure, not knowing what's next or how. The moment you know how, you begin to die a little. The artist never entirely knows. We guess. We may be wrong, but we take leap after leap in the dark." For me this means faithfully moving forward.

When you think you are embarrassing yourself, keep working.

As we begin to make progress learning something totally new and outside of our comfort zone, the self-doubt kicks in hard. We think, who am I to do this, or why did I even think I could try this! This is where it is easy to get stuck. If not recognized for what it is, the fear of embarrassment can become an unconscious form of self sabotage. Don't let that happen.

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“ Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage”

- Anais Nin

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