



HOW TO PAINT FROM YOUR SOUL



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Paint From Your Soul Facilitator™



Painting From Your Soul is:



- Bypassing the mind and the idealized way your mind wants art to be
- Connecting to deeper truths inside yourself that are then expressed onto canvas
- An interaction between you and your art
- A reflective process - it's always mirroring back YOU
- Finding something personal and authentic to make art about
- Creating something that will be deeply meaningful to you
- Experiencing how art can reveal deeper truths about yourself
- Creating a new relationship to art making



Soul Art is art that has come from deep inside you - it's an authentic expression. The canvas acts as the bridge, helping you communicate with what's inside.

What comes through in your art making is always a reflection of YOU. From the way you begin to the fears or worries that arise to the way the process unfolds and what shows up on the canvas, it's ALL a reflection that can help you know yourself more deeply.

When you create from this place, it will have deep meaning for you and you will find that your relationship to art changes. It's not about making something pretty, it's about connecting to your SELF.



Painting From Your Soul is NOT:



- Not about technique
- Not about making art for a museum
- Not about how *other* people like it
- Not even about thinking your painting is beautiful



The main focus of fine art is making objects and people look realistic – that is about technique. Soul Art is focused on authentic *expression*. It doesn't mean you can't use shading or glazing – but technique is not the main focus.

In fact, the focus isn't even on making something beautiful! It actually doesn't matter if anyone else (or even you) thinks your art is beautiful. Instead, what matters more = is that your art is deeply meaningful to you.

When art is meaningful, it's because it's reflecting that deeper connection you made with yourself while creating it. Likely you will find that beautiful but again, that's not the main focus.



**"If you're not willing to do it in art...
You're never going to do it in life."**

This is the motto Michelle Baker, the Founder of Paint From Your Soul™ uses in her programs. What it means is = YES, you might feel worried about messing it up or ruining something you like...BUT the art is like a playground for you to practice being who you want to become.

If you want to be more *bold* or more *free* or more *authentic*, do it in your art first! The worst thing that will happen is you don't like it.
That's it.

The stakes are MUCH higher in life. If you're not willing to push past your comfort zone on a canvas or piece of paper, you're certainly not going to do it in life, when there's so much more on the line.

Your art is the place where you can be the most you (if not there, WHERE?!). Use it to be real and honest and authentic with yourself. The benefits will waterfall into the rest of your life like magic :)



How to Paint from Your Soul



Step 1) Set an intention

Intention is the end result you want to obtain. It's the feeling you want to have when this piece of artwork is finished.

It's VERY important to set an intention because it keeps you on course. Most people have a lot of ideas of what art "should" be about and what it "should" look like.

Your intention is what will keep you focused on the authentic Soul Art you want to create and keep the mind from taking over.



Write your intention on the backside of your canvas or paper so that you cannot lose it.

Anytime you feel a little stuck or lost in the process, go BACK to the intention and use that as the barometer to help you find your way forward.

It's very important to be able to state your will clearly. Do NOT skip this step.



How to Paint from Your Soul



Step 2) Paint the mood

The next step is to dive right in and create the background feeling or the mood of your painting. I recommend working in acrylics because they can be layered on top of each other and you can easily change course later on.

The forgivable nature of acrylics lends itself well to Soul Art because you can get started and then listen and follow as the painting unfolds.

➔ To create the mood – ask yourself how you want the painting to FEEL when its finished. Then ask yourself what color(s) have that feeling for you. There are no rules, people relate to color differently – so go with your gut knowing.

JUMP IN – do not wait to begin. The white canvas is your enemy, get some paint on there and suddenly...everything changes. There's something to work with...something to feel with...

You are not committing to anything, you're just creating a mood so that your painting starts to evoke a feeling.



How to Paint from Your Soul



Getting Started - Pro Tip

You're gonna think I'm crazy when I tell you this but 1 pro tip I can give you for making Soul Art is to actually start by painting the ugliest thing you can.

WHY??! Because it really bypasses the mind and everything the mind thinks art should be about. It opens up a different pathway and many people find a freedom when they create this way.



You don't keep it this way - it's just the 1st layer. It's a jumping off point to give you something to work with. You'll be amazed at what you might find inspiring when you start by painting ugly first. (And many people also end up creating something they actually like on accident!).

Remember, what's the worst thing that can really happen?
Just that you won't like it...that's it.



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Step 3) Big Marks

Now that you have a background on your painting, go back to your intention. What did you want to have happen?

It's time to start to bring that intention to fruition by translating it into big marks or shapes or movements.

For example, if your intention is: "to express myself authentically" then connect with how you feel right now in this moment, pick a color for that feeling and start to move your brush in a way that mirrors that feeling.

➔ Continue to work big - you just painting the entire background, keep working with the background and the overall feeling by adding in more lines or movement that align with your intention.

Don't try to "make anything." What I mean is = don't worry about what the painting will be about yet. It's not time for details or figures yet, just allow yourself to enjoy the smooth gliding feeling of the brush and the colors that you feel drawn to in this moment.



Soul Art Fun Things to Try

Working Big to Begin - Fun Things to Try

- Drips - would it be fun to make some paint really liquid-y and drip it over your canvas?
- Flips - try flipping your canvas so that you work on it from all different sides and angles.
- Darks - try bringing in some dark values in a few places - these can become shadows or contrast areas later on.
- Lights - try bringing in some light values - play with light and dark - contrast is attractive for the eye.
- Dry brushing - if you have just a teeny tiny bit of paint on a dry brush, you can create a soft, hazy or scratchy texture on top of dry layers of paint that can be fun.
- Glazing - you can add water to your paint to make it thin and then "glaze" on top of an area of the painting. Glazing will let the layer underneath show through while changing it's color or tone slightly like looking through tinted glass.
- Texture - any other types of texture that would be fun to add right now?
- PLAY! - if you haven't realized it yet, this is about having fun and experimenting. You just follow what feels good.



How to Paint from Your Soul

Step 4) Likes & Don't Likes

Now you should have a background that is interesting and inspiring to you. There are probably parts that you *like* and parts that you *don't like* (that's totally normal and will help you get to your next step.)

Sit down somewhere that your painting can be across the room from you with your journal. You want the painting to be far enough away that you are seeing it as *whole* rather than the details.



In your journal, make 2 columns. On the left hand side write down what you **don't like** about the painting. Be specific and descriptive.

On the right hand side, write down what you **do like** about the painting. Be specific and descriptive. It's totally fine to go back and forth between the columns writing likes and not likes as you think of them.

Once you're complete with that list, notice what themes there are between what you like and what you don't like. For example, you might notice you like the "flow-y" parts and you don't like the "heavy" parts.

Spend a little time journaling about what you like and how you could do more of that AND what you don't like and how you could transform that into something you'll like. This is brainstorming - nothing is off the table!

GOAL - find *1 step* you want to take on your painting. That means just 1 small area that you plan to make a change to and you know how you want to make that change.



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Step 5) One Step Then Listen

Go back to your painting and take the 1 step that you know you want to make.

A BIG mistake I see people make in the middle of their painting is wanting to know *all* the steps to the end. They wish they had a vision of what it was going to become.



That is not how Soul Art works! Soul Art is an ongoing conversation with yourself through the painting. You must take a step and then listen.

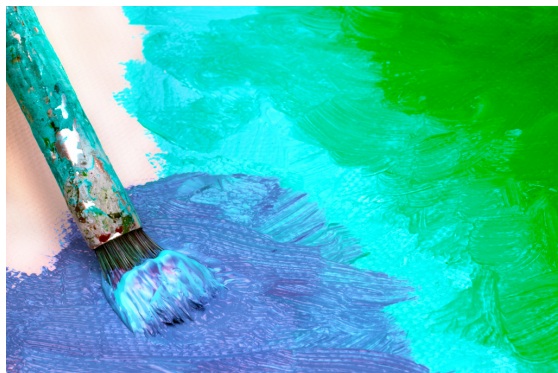
How do you listen? Sometimes you "just know" what happens next. Trust that inner nudge.

Sometimes you sit back, away from the canvas again and talk to it. That could be literally talking out loud, thinking to it OR journaling about it.

Listening means you are following what *wants* to happen. There's a pull in one direction that tugs at you. It might be VERY different than what your mind thinks *should* happen, so you may have separate out the 2 voices that are speaking. We want to follow the softer, inner soul voice.



How to Paint from Your Soul



Step 6) Enhance

Now you have quite a bit happening on your canvas, you can start to see if anything wants to emerge as the centerpiece of the painting – like a figure or an animal or something that would become the subject.

You'll take what's already there and enhance it to become more dominate or defined.



Go back to your intention and see how what you wrote down can start to come to life on the canvas.

For example, if my intention is "to express myself authentically" I might see a face and a mouth in the background of the painting and want to bring those forward to create an abstract me.

If my intention was "to feel more confident making art" I might ask myself what confidence looks like and see if I can represent that on the canvas – maybe with strong bold lines that move from the bottom to the top of the canvas in one strong swooping motion.

Use what's already on the canvas as the jumping off point for the moves you make now. Connect to your intention to make sure you're on track with your original desire.



How to Know When it's Done

How Do You Know It's Done?

This is a very common question. I think of every painting as a relationship with a beginning, middle and an end. In the beginning I feel that excitement of newness and get inspired by what's possible.

In the middle the new-ness has worn off and there can be some ups and downs. (I love you, I hate you, I never want to see you again...you know :)

In the end, there's a sense of resolution. A completion of what needed to happen.

That DOES NOT mean that I love it and think it's the greatest painting I ever made.



It means that **I no longer feel compelled to work on it**. I am settled into what it became.

Just like relationships with people, not everyone is your soul mate but they all teach you something about yourself and about life. It's good practice to learn when you've gotten what you needed from a relationship and to come to completion.

If you think you're done, sit down to journal and ask yourself:

- what journey has this painting taken me on?
- what lessons did I learn along the way?
- did my intention come to fruition?
- is there anything left unsaid?



How to Paint from Your Soul

The Most Important Tip

You only ever need to know the next step.

It sounds so simple but I promise, you will find yourself pausing even though you already know your next 1 step forward.

The problem is, the mind thinks "That's not enough. I need to figure out more." And THAT will keep you stuck.

Truly, taking 1 step forward is the key. Because when you make a change (even a small change) to your painting - the whole feeling of the painting changes too.

Everything is in relationship to everything else. So one change over here means that everything surrounding it has been impacted. And that helps you find the *next* step after that.

This is how you LISTEN to what wants to happen and create Soul Art instead of making it happen from the mind level. The benefit is that you will surprise yourself by what comes through and deeply meaning and personal and authentic it feels to you.

Cheers to your next painting adventure,

~Molly Van Rijssen

