

I miss the days when we were terrified of Romaine Lettuce.

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Mindful Mondays

04/27/2020

We've reviewed a lot of information over the past few weeks, I figured it would be beneficial to take a moment to pause, breathe, and put our minds to work on something solely dedicated to you, your feelings, and your thoughts.

Some of you may feel uncomfortable, some of you may feel excited. There may be parts of you that will try to shy away from this, and parts of you that flat out reject it. That is okay, it's all part of this process.

The goal today is to bring your focus to the here and now, engage in some self-processing, and ultimately express what you discover through art while using your innate creative abilities (we're all naturally creative, btw). Make this an activity just for yourself, include your partner, or make it a family activity. I'll discuss some ground rules a little later, they'll be important to follow to ensure you get the most out of this.

Why focus on creativity? It's been a vital aspect of our entire being. When times get tough, when we get stuck, when we get knocked down, we often rely on our creativity to guide us to a new, unseen, unknown solution.

Think about our current situation, doctors, nurses, virologists, chemists, etc. are all dedicating their minds towards treating and preventing a virus we knew very little about 3 months ago.

Creativity will get us through this time in history, just like it has gotten us through other stressful and traumatic times in our past.

The other benefit of engaging in our creative side is the fact that in order to get there we need to let go. We need to let go of the restrictions our minds place on our thoughts that prevent new ideas from coming into existence. Creativity is freedom, and we could all use a little bit of freedom at this point.

Examples of the activity are provided at the end of this newsletter, if you feel stuck, feel free to use them as a demo or inspiration.

Enjoy!

Contact Me

Greater Lakes Child
Advocacy Center

95 Water Street
Laconia, NH

603-499-7504

Awolff@cac-nh.org



Ground Rules

- **It will be important to create a safe space to get the most out of this activity, follow these rules whether you do this on your own or with friends or family:**
 1. You are creative, no matter what you think
 2. There is no right or wrong way to complete this activity
 3. There is no such thing as “good” or “bad” art
 4. Be respectful to your/each other’s emotions, experiences, and art
 5. If you do this with others feel free to share what you’ve made, or don’t, sharing is a choice that needs to be respected
 6. Leave the interpretations to the one who created the art
 7. Comfortably challenge yourself, but know you can always stay within your limits
 8. Outside of following the activity prompts, there are no other rules, have fun with this!

Activity

- **Materials needed:**
 1. At least two pieces of any colored paper you’d like (preferably card stock, but printer paper will work fine)
 2. Pencils, pens, colored pencils, markers, crayons, etc.
 3. Scissors (if desired)
 4. Glue stick(s)
 5. Music (optional, but it makes it fun!)
- **Steps:**
 1. We’ve all been experiencing a wide range of emotions over the past 6-7 weeks. We’ve all noticed different frustrations and stressors creeping in as a result of this pandemic. Take 5 or so minutes to think about how this pandemic has directly affected you, whether emotionally, physically, relationally, spiritually, etc.
 2. Once you’re ready, take your first piece of paper and begin drawing the effect(s) of this pandemic in any way you see fit. Your drawing can be as simple or complex as you’d like but take only 5-10 minutes to do it. It can be of shapes, swirls, or even words. Don’t get too attached to this piece, you’ll be getting rid of it a little later 😊
 3. Stop for a moment, and, if you’d like, take time to share what you’ve made or take a break and allow yourself to be present in the moment. Consider what it felt like to put the effect(s) on paper. Some of you may find that it felt good to get it out onto paper, others may find the experience cringe-worthy; that’s okay, all your feelings are valid!
 4. **Optional:** Flip your paper over and write a letter to the Coronavirus. Express any frustrations you have towards it, and then say goodbye.
 5. After you’ve had an opportunity to share, write, or pause, come back to your art and begin ripping it to pieces (as big or small as you’d like; as gentle or aggressive as you need). These pieces will turn into a collage, so keep that in mind while you rip it up 😊

Memos/Tweets for Distraction

Small weekend is over.. now entering big weekend 😞

me: can i have fun

2020: no

me: ok

"i can't go because of coronavirus"

- whiny
- boring
- weak

"i've sworn an oath of solitude til the blight is purged from these lands"

- heroic, valiant
- they will assume you have a sword
- impossible to check if you really have a sword because of coronavirus

Family devastated when pet chews up life savings



ONLINE MEETING
With Video Audio Only



6. Next, you will be using the ripped pieces to create a new image, an image of hope, excitement, happiness, etc. You can build the image out of the ripped pieces, or you can draw the image and use the ripped pieces to add to it. This is when the glue stick will come in handy as you'll need to glue the ripped pieces to your second piece of paper. Allow yourself 20-30 minutes to complete this step.
7. When finished, take some time to share (if comfortable) what you've made with others, consider a title for your artwork and sharing that title, or take a moment for yourself to be in the moment and breathe.
8. **Optional:** You wrote a letter to the coronavirus saying goodbye, think about or write a letter from this piece of art to you, what would it say, what would it want you to know?

Examples

Step 1, 2, & 3



The above example shows a person struggling with being socially distant from friends and family. This is represented by the person being confined to the cage. The cage is shown to be on a piece of driftwood in stormy waters while the "COVID-19 Shark" is out hunting for food.



"It feels like the coronavirus has been filling my head with information in one way or another. I've seen pictures of it on the news with all its little bumps. I turned each bump into a different thing that has been stressing me out since this all started. I made the sky gray and the ground brown-green because everything has felt kind of dull lately"

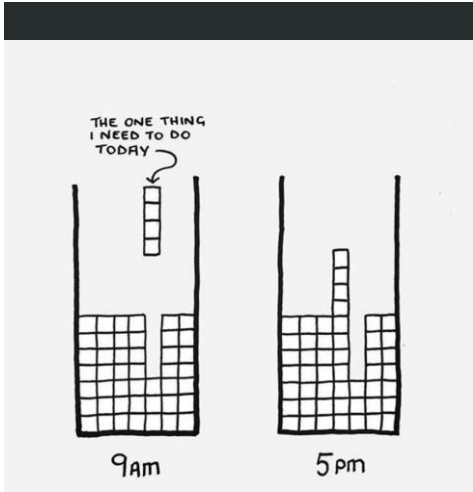


When we come out of this and I ask you where you want to eat, I do NOT want to hear "I don't know". YOU HAD 45 DAYS

me joining the work conference call:



The year is 2075.
 "Grandma why do you like sitting outside"
 Me: There was a time this was illegal.



Step 5:



This example shows how you can tear your paper into longer shreds



This example shows how you can rip your paper into many different sizes. It also shows how you can use scissors to make precise or smaller pieces for step 6

Step 6 & 7



This example above takes the stormy waters from the initial picture and transforms them into mountain tops overlooking a lake. The cage was torn up and flipped over to show friends taking a scenic hike on the mountains.



“I had a hard time thinking about what to do next, and then I realized that summer is around the corner; it made me think of ice cream, so I made myself eating ice cream using the Corona bumps as colorful scoops. I’m hopeful things will get better regardless of when. I also flipped over the corona face and parts of the sky to make a sun and clouds to symbolize returning to our regular way of life. Let’s flip the script!”

Final thoughts:

I hope you were able to enjoy this little dive into your creative side. What was it like for you to put what you’ve been feeling or thinking onto paper? How did it feel to rip it apart? And, what was it like putting the pieces back together?

If you’re feeling comfortable, take pictures of your process and of what you made and share it. Share the story behind your art, about your experience, or, if you completed the optional piece share that; my contact information is provided above. I’d love to include some in next week’s newsletter. Our shared experience can be very powerful in helping us all feel validated and connected during these uncertain times.

Until next week!

*Andrew Wolff, M.S., LMFT
Mental Health Clinician*
