

Wildly creative women: calling forth the new female
To fear your own creativity is to fear your own magnificence.

the art of being female
june, 2005

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Greetings!

Happy June. The more I learn about people and creativity, the more convinced I am that the body lies at the heart of a full, creative, happy and successful life. It is through the body that we interact with everything and everyone around us, by way of our senses and our intuition. Knowing this, it becomes very clear that the relationship we have with our body affects how we experience our world and everything in it.

I spent a wonderful week at Esalen Institute in Big Sur last week attending a 5Rhythms workshop called, The Heart of the Matter. If you are not familiar with 5Rhythms, it is an incredible dance practice and moving meditation. As Gabrielle Roth (the mother of 5Rhythms) says:

Energy moves in waves
Waves move in patterns
Patterns move in rhythms
A human being is all of those
Energy, waves, patterns, rhythms
We are the dance
-Gabrielle Roth

As you listen to your body and allow it to move in its own waves and rhythms, you begin to feel an entirely different relationship with the world around you and those in it.

This issue of the art of being female speaks to the importance of the body in how we enjoy our lives as human beings. So much of the time, we attempt to be creative by way of our heads, but it is through embodied creativity that we find our fullness as women (and men).

So this month, send your body some loving kindness. Treat it with love and respect. Acknowledge all it does for you. Allow it to share its wisdom with you. Begin to see your body in a different light and shift your relationship with it...you will be surprised at how it enlivens you.

With gratitude,

Julie

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The Ashram Within

—Julie M. Daley

Everywhere you look these days there is mention of the new mid-life crisis...for women. Time magazine's May 16th, 2005 issue is all over the topic, including a tongue-in-cheek essay titled, Crisis? I'll take mine to go. I'd Love an Inner Journey, but who's got the time? by Claudia Wallis. Wallis speaks of how women begin to change in mid-life, with a deeper desire to begin to know oneself, but she jokingly states that she doesn't have time to get to the ashram because life gets in the way.

Well Wallis should take note: Wild Creativity is all about this. Wild Creativity is about taking this inner journey right in the middle of life, by realizing and stepping into one's internal creativity as the source of self-knowledge. You already have the ashram within...it's just a matter of learning the tools to help you find your way. For those who aren't quite sure what the term ashram means, it comes from Hinduism and means a place that houses a spiritual community and its guru. An ashram is a center used for practices and goals of a spiritual nature that lead to a deeper knowing of one's authentic Self.

As we get older, we long to awaken to our inner voice and own unique rhythm. It's as if we're a snake shedding its skin – a skin of conformity, following other's wisdom, and wanting to fit into the accepted image – so that our wisdom and self-understanding can emerge fully into their own. While we know we want this awakening, it can feel like a crisis because we don't yet know who we are. How can we be this if we don't know it or how to get there? We get there by trusting our own nature. We are naturally creative beings and we actually really enjoy being creative. While our more fearful side might argue with this, our creativity is where we find our true essential nature. It can feel daunting to find an opening into what is really true. After decades of following and living the status quo, taking care of others, and working to make our way in the world, we haven't flexed our own muscle of self-expression and understanding.

To know more fully who you truly are and to be this authentic self is the purpose of life. Your internal creativity is your own amazing ability to live a life of personal, conscious choice. In each moment, you are free to choose whether to express your essential self or to express your socialized self, the self that was taught from a young age how to be, what to say and how to act to be accepted by society's norm. Along with midlife comes an awakening to this essential self and the desire to fiercely own, speak and act from your truth. Your creativity is your natural resource with which to do so. Your creativity is the ashram within.

While creativity itself can't be easily defined, it is through your essential self-expression that your creativity is made known in the world. It is through creative inspiration and action that what is inside you churning to be said, danced, shared, drawn...in short created...is brought into the world. It is by sharing this inner you that you begin to really be you, and in turn to more fully know you. This is the creative path of self-discovery and the path is within you.

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In all human beings, there is a longing to know oneself – not the self that was taught by mom and dad, teachers and society to fit in and achieve, but the totally unique essential nature that is deep within. While this longing is felt in our adolescent years, for many of us it goes underground while we focus on achieving goals, such as our education, raising a family, making a living. This longing gets louder as we reach midlife.

It is through your internal creativity that you can invite your true voice in. As you choose from this voice, you give it ways to express and extend into the world. It is by this expression and extension that you begin to see and experience your true nature.

Finding your authentic voice is finding your ashram within. It is all there, but where do you start? Right where you are. Many of us believe that creativity is art, and that some are creative and others are not. That's what we have been taught. In truth, creativity shows up in everything we do: parenting, relating to others, business, finances, they all take some creativity, unless you are completely following established rules without allowing your unique expression to be a part of what you are doing. It takes trusting that you have your own resource inside to count on and allowing it to guide you in all areas of your life. By paying attention to this inner voice through active self-expression, you can actively begin to be and know your essential self.

So embark on this inner journey to your own ashram within. Begin to notice your own sparks of creativity, because when you pay attention to them, they ignite into flame. Notice when you choose to express your creative impulses by taking action on them, or when you choose instead to act from the status quo. It's always a choice; but when you choose to follow your own lead and have the thrill of seeing what comes from expressing what is inside, you will have opened the door to your ashram within.

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The Power of Embodiment

Embodied creativity and sensual awareness are key aspects of the art of being female.

Unfortunately, the body can be a source of discomfort and self-distrust. When we look outside of ourselves for our identity and approval, the very thing that can bring us home, our body, becomes the target of disapproval and even self-hate. By disassociating from the body and hating, berating, and deflating it, we are trying to disassociate from what we believe is undesirable. Our culture is full of messages and images of what is beautiful, especially as it applies to the female form. With this small definition of what our society sees as beauty, we quickly learn to disconnect from the one body we have when we feel we can't possibly live up to what we believe is the "acceptable norm".

But we are sensuous beings. We have beautiful bodies meant to experience pleasure in all forms. Our creative spirit flows into and through our bodies. It is here we feel a deep connection to the earth, a connection that speaks a language suppressed for thousands of years, the language of the Feminine. Without this connection, we can't develop the trust necessary to act from our own inner truth.

The body is the seat of our essence, the physical manifestation of our connection to that which is greater than us. When we deny our love for our bodies, we deny our own essence, and we deny the connection with the very thing that breathes life into our being.

Being in touch with your body brings a grounded sense of awareness that allows you to choose from an instinctive authority and intuition. One of the best things about body awareness is the delight it provides for your day-to-day experience. From this place, the world looks and feels different. When you are in your body and in touch with your desires, there is substance and genuineness to life. There is an ability to enjoy the sensuousness of the world around you. When you are connected to your body, you can hear your own truth.

Check out the play-with practice for June: Say Hello to your Body Beautiful

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Coaching - tuning in to our own voice and rhythms

I have grown wiser through my coaching practice and have been humbled by the wisdom of my clients. I continue to be amazed at what is possible when we come together in service of my client's learning and empowerment. A powerful relationship is created that allows for deep dialogue, illuminated understanding, and conscious action. As most of my clients will tell you, it isn't always easy, but it is always in search of and in service to what is true for them. This is what they are after...their truth – not mine, not society's, not their partner's, but their truth.

It can be hard to know and own our own truth. From the time we are young, we are well trained to rely more on what others tell us is true, than what we know deep in our hearts is so. At some point in each life, there is a moment when we know we can no longer follow the truth of another. This is the point when our own authentic voice becomes loud enough to be heard over the din of our Voice of Judgment, that voice that keeps us dancing to the rhythm we hear "out-there", instead of the rhythm in our own being.

I see this reliance on the rhythm "out-there" as being like an addiction. As human beings, we are addicted to feeling approval from others, to believing we can somehow live up to all the images and messages "out-there" about what it means to be happy, beautiful, successful, alive, powerful, and on and on. This is understandable because we learned these beliefs and habits of behavior from the time we were very young. But it doesn't have to be this way!

Withdrawing from the rhythm "out-there" can be painful and overwhelming as we slowly find our way to the rhythm inside. It takes liberal amounts of self-compassion and self-love. It can also take help from someone who is there for you completely. There are many ways to your truth. In my experience as a coach, I am finding that coaching is one of the most powerful ways because of the ability a coach has to shine a light for you on what you can't see yourself, repeat back to you what you can't hear yourself say, and hold you completely whole and resourceful when you don't yet know how to hold yourself that way.

As a coach, I am always looking for ways to improve my skills and add to what I have to offer my clients. To this end, I am now training in "Great Life Recovery Coaching", or how to coach someone in recovery from addiction. Addiction comes in many forms. I believe we are all addicted to something whether it be drugs or alcohol, food issues, exercise, sex, the need to be what our culture says is the "norm", or even the act of rebellion. When we attempt to fill the hole inside ourselves with something from the outside, we fall prey to addiction.

When we begin the journey home to our own truth, we begin to wean ourselves off of what has been filling this hole and feast on our own grand buffet within.

To find out more about coaching with me or to schedule a 30-minute complimentary session, write to me at julie@wildlycreativewomen.com or phone 510.644.9442.

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Play-with your Practice

Each month a new play-with is offered as an addition to your practice of *the art of being female*.

Playing-with your experience is the basis of the "creative cycle of self-discovery" used in Wildly Creative Women's coaching and courses.

Play-with for June: Say Hello to your Body Beautiful

This practice play-with is about beginning a new relationship with your body. Be curious as you do this play-with. Notice what thoughts go through your head as you do this practice. Are they kind or are they critical?

Notice how you feel about your body. Are you comfortable in your own skin? Or does it make you uncomfortable to even think about your own body? How you feel about your body may have nothing to do with how you believe you look to others.

Every day, at least once a day, find some way to bring yourself present to your body. You might try putting your attention squarely in your body, perhaps in your heart, maybe in your gut, or even in your toes. Another way to say this is to focus on different parts of your body. As you do so, notice how it feels to slow down and focus. Notice if it feels good to be there, or uncomfortable, or perhaps you feel something else. Just allow yourself to focus on different parts of your body, one part at a time.

When you feel ready, another exercise is to stand in front of the mirror with your clothes off. Say hello to your beautiful body. Speak kindly to it. Notice if you feel uncomfortable or are critical of your body. If so, note how criticizing your body makes you feel inside. Or, maybe you are very comfortable in front of the mirror. Just begin to notice what kind of relationship you have with it.

Doing this practice may bring up some sensitive issues and beliefs. Buy a journal and begin to write about what you are noticing about this all important relationship. Have compassion for yourself as you practice.

Stay with this practice throughout the month, continuing to write each day if possible.

coming in July: develop your sensual awareness

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Courses

Course Listing

All courses, both corporate and open-enrollment, are based on Creativity in Business, a course taught at Stanford Graduate School of Business for 25 years. Please contact Julie, if you are interested in having me design and teach a course for your company. Courses for both women and men are offered through Wildly Creative Women's parent company, Creative Wellspring.

Corporate Offerings:

- Introduction to WCW in Business - 1 day
- Wildly Creative Women in Business - 10 weeks

Open Enrollment:

- Women, Creativity & Female Power - 1 day
- Welcome to Your Dating World - 5 weeks

New Courses coming soon:

- The art of being female - Open Enrollment (10 weeks)
- Opening to Self-discovery (e-course)
- The art of being female - Part I (5 week tele-course)
- The art of being female - Part II (7 week tele-course)

What's New?

- Coming this August: Wildly Creative Women is offering a new dating course for women. Contact Julie if you are interested in finding out more!
- A new course schedule is being prepared for the late summer and fall months. Please stay tuned for more information.
- Check out our blog at <http://creative.typepad.com/wildlycreativewomen>
- Please post comments if you are moved to respond!
- Wildly Creative Women is on Ryze. Check it out!

Our wisdom and joy grows as we connect with others of like mind and purpose. Please pass this newsletter on to any women or men you think might enjoy or benefit from receiving. Thank you!