



# Creativity Matters

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The Gift of  
Liberating Love

January 2024

# Welcome to The Gift of Liberating Love

He asked, “What kind of art do you love?”

I could have kept it simple and named Vincent or Warhol.

But that wouldn't have come close to capturing how color has brought me back to life more times than I can count.

Or how Monet's blurred lines help me see clearly.

And what about those dark days when that bowl with cracks of gold helped me understand that my broken heart is the way that the pain of others gets let in.

When words won't come, it is brush and pigment that enables me to give voice to my pain, or anger.

When revolution is out of reach, I hold tight to Ms. Ensler's words: “Art is how we fight!”

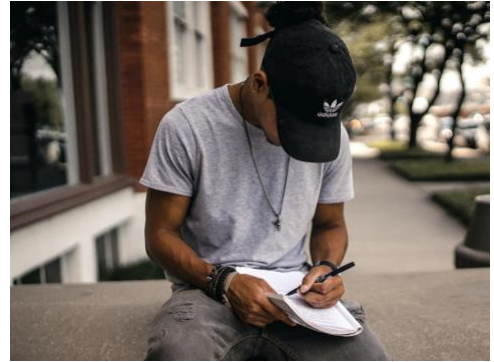
So when he asked again, I kept my lips shut. Which felt like the most honest act I could muster.

Because, of course, the problem with naming art you love is that it masks the way you've been loved by it.

# Your Creative Journal

Our packet starts with question prompts for your creative journal. Journaling is about “priming the pump” and slowly working your way into our monthly theme. It will likely also give you some fodder for whichever monthly project you pick.

And most importantly, by doing this monthly journal practice, you will end up with an amazing documentation of your work and ideas throughout the year. Your 2022-23 themed journey will be captured all in one place!



Here’s a video tutorial to get you excited about our regular journaling practice, with some tips about how to get the most out of your engagement with it:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5D9VDQ07h8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IMApFYGklw>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWRki37iOzg>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vry9\\_AycQPM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vry9_AycQPM)

## Creative Journal Prompts for The Gift of Liberating Love

*Pick whichever questions capture your imagination. Capture your answers in your journal with a few quick words, images, or doodles. The goal is to get your creative juices flowing, not lead you to a complete or complex response. Come to your group ready to share where your wonderings lead you.*

1. What role does love play in your creativity? Did love lead you to it? Does Love sustain it? Inspire it? Something else?
2. What was the first piece of art you fell in love with?
3. Which artists best represent love in their work?
4. How is love and justice connected?
5. How has love changed as you’ve gotten older? Is it softer? Quieter? Larger? Tougher? Sneakier? More central? More painful? More universal? More ordinary? More mysterious? More demanding?
6. We know that self-love and self-care are essential. But which part of yourself most needs love and care right now? Your physical self, emotional self, intellectual self, relational self, spiritual self, sensory self, hidden self, pleasure-seeking self, fearful self, childhood self, hopeful self?
7. If Love could speak, what do you think it would want to say to you?

# Project Prompts

Take your pick! At least one, maybe more! Go as deeply as you desire. To make it easier for you to do a creative project during the month, the project options have varying levels of complexity and time commitments.

Remember to practice letting go of self-judgment and any expectations of professional or “artistic worthy” quality. The quality that matters is the quality of the experience and the richness of your personal journey. These projects are here for you and your journey of discovery.

## Option A A Triptych of Liberating Love



A [trptych](#) is a piece of art made up of three pieces or panels. It is a great way to explore a topic from multiple angles or different periods of time.

So instead of simply creating a piece of art that represents love for you, create *three* pieces that represent the variety of ways you understand (or experience) the liberating power of love.

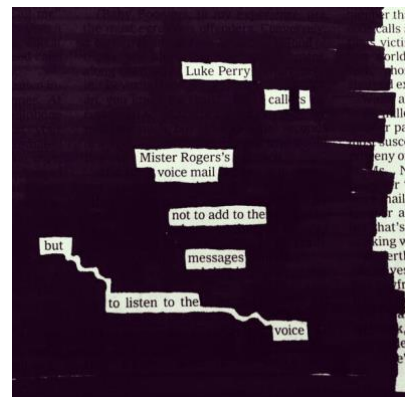
To help you on your way, check out some examples [HERE](#), [HERE](#), [HERE](#), [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

## Option B Find Love in Blackout Poetry

Love sneaks up on us. Think of all the times you’ve heard, “Love was sitting right in front of me and I never noticed it.”

With this as inspiration, use the technique of black out poetry to create a love poem. Here are some great resources to inspire and guide you!

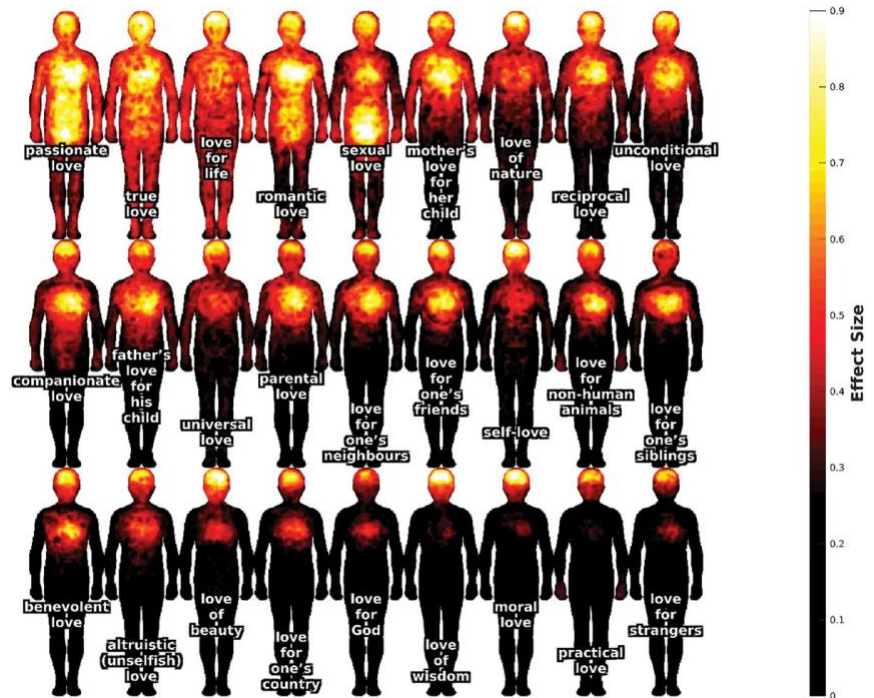
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0f5Bmq\\_oMU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0f5Bmq_oMU)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOPfyE0Ei8U>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zf6k8aW2Toc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyH0c4dB9JE>



## Option C Mapping Love

Researchers at Aalto University in Finland conducted a study to explore the connection between love and the body. They uncovered 27 different forms of love that are felt in differing parts of our bodies. You can read about their work (and see their graphics) [HERE](#).

Using this study as inspiration, visually represent the types of love that have been most important to you and where you locate them in your body.



## Option D Your Love Letter to Liberation

Activist, teacher and artist, [Charles White](#) was a prominent figure in the Chicago Black Renaissance and is widely regarded as one of the most influential African American artists of the twentieth century. [His work](#) explored and honored the ongoing fight for black liberation and freedom.

Three of his most famous pieces are entitled Love Letter I, II and III. The first two celebrate the life and impact of Angela Davis and Fannie Lou Hamer, with the third being a portrait of an anonymous woman.

You can see and learn more about these pieces at <https://glasstire.com/2022/01/17/one-work-short-take-charles-whites-love-letters-at-the-amon-carter-museum-of-american-art/>

With this as your inspiration, create your own love letter portrait, honoring someone who has inspired you with their work for liberation, dignity and justice.

## Option E

### Line Drawing, Attention & Love

*Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.*  
- Simone Weil



The artist Wendy MacNaughton would applaud Simone Weil's quote. In October, MacNaughton wrote [an opinion piece](#) for the New York Times lamenting the fractured relationships she sees in today's culture. As a way of healing that, she challenged people to use the creative technique of line drawing to help strangers connect. The idea is simple: invite two strangers to sit across from each other and keep their eyes and attention locked on each other. While doing that, participants draw each other's faces [without looking down](#). It's playful and intense at the same time. You can read more about it at [https://club.drawtogether.studio/p/drawtogether-strangers-launches-today?utm\\_campaign=email-post&r=ziezq&utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://club.drawtogether.studio/p/drawtogether-strangers-launches-today?utm_campaign=email-post&r=ziezq&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)

Use this idea for your exercise this month. You can implement it as MacNaughton suggests, but you could also invite friends or family members to do it with you. Even better, do it once with a stranger and again with a loved one. Then compare the experiences!.

Afterwards, reflect on where love was for you in this exercise and how it made you think about attention in a new way.

## Option F

### Explore in “The Gift of Liberating Love” Using Your Favorite Modality

This is our standard, open-ended option. Simply use your favorite modality (i.e. form of creative expression: drawing, painting, collage, movement, film, taking pictures, etc.) to represent your take on the monthly theme: The Gift of Liberating Love

For instance it might be about representing what you've learned from life about how love liberates. Or maybe it's something that captures your struggle with it. Or you might use a favorite quote of yours for inspiration.

Don't feel hemmed in. Let the general theme of liberating love take you where it will. Come to your group ready to share not only your end product but also your process and what new insight/perspective you gained from it!

## Grab Bag: Some Extra Sources of Inspiration:

- Inject musical inspiration into your creative work. Turn on **our Soul Matters music playlist** on The Gift of Liberating Love as you create! Listen on [Spotify](#) or [YouTube](#).
- [This photographer](#) wrestles with what it means to both love and heal in the midst of caring for someone with dementia.
- Love is woven through the work of many artists, including [Monet](#), [Marina Abramović & Ulay](#), and [many more](#).
- Who would have thought that [color rubbing](#) could be an act of love!
- Sculptural-woodturner, Ole Jakob Nielsen, writes, "To create is a way of loving. If I don't love the work I do, it is meaningless, it is just a way of making money. And money doesn't have anything to do with love." Watch him create and listen to him say more about love here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMgP76vRTd8>
- This month is a perfect time to learn more about the iconic 'LOVE' sculpture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqDstb54LeY>
- Artists Who Turned Heartbreak into Art: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-8-famous-artists-turned-heartbreak-art>
- This artist's [crocheted dolls](#) are a journey of self-love.
- Talk about a Labor of love! When those we love die, they leave unfinished projects behind. [This group](#) and [these people](#) finish those projects,
- Kudos to this [lover of the color of green](#)! And let's not forget those who have been liberated by the colors of [pink and yellow](#) and [blue](#)!

**Author Notes & Share Your Ideas:** These packets are a collaborative effort. A number of people work with our team lead, Rev. Scott Tayer, to put it together. We particularly want to recognize our Creativity Matters Consultant, [Elizabeth McKoy](#), for the many project and in-group activity ideas she shares monthly. We also appreciate the suggestions we get from participants like you. If you have ideas for upcoming project prompts, send them to Rev. Tayer at [scott@soulmatterssharingcircle.com](mailto:scott@soulmatterssharingcircle.com).

**Credits:** The words in the welcome section at the start of the packet are by Rev. Scott Tayer.



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