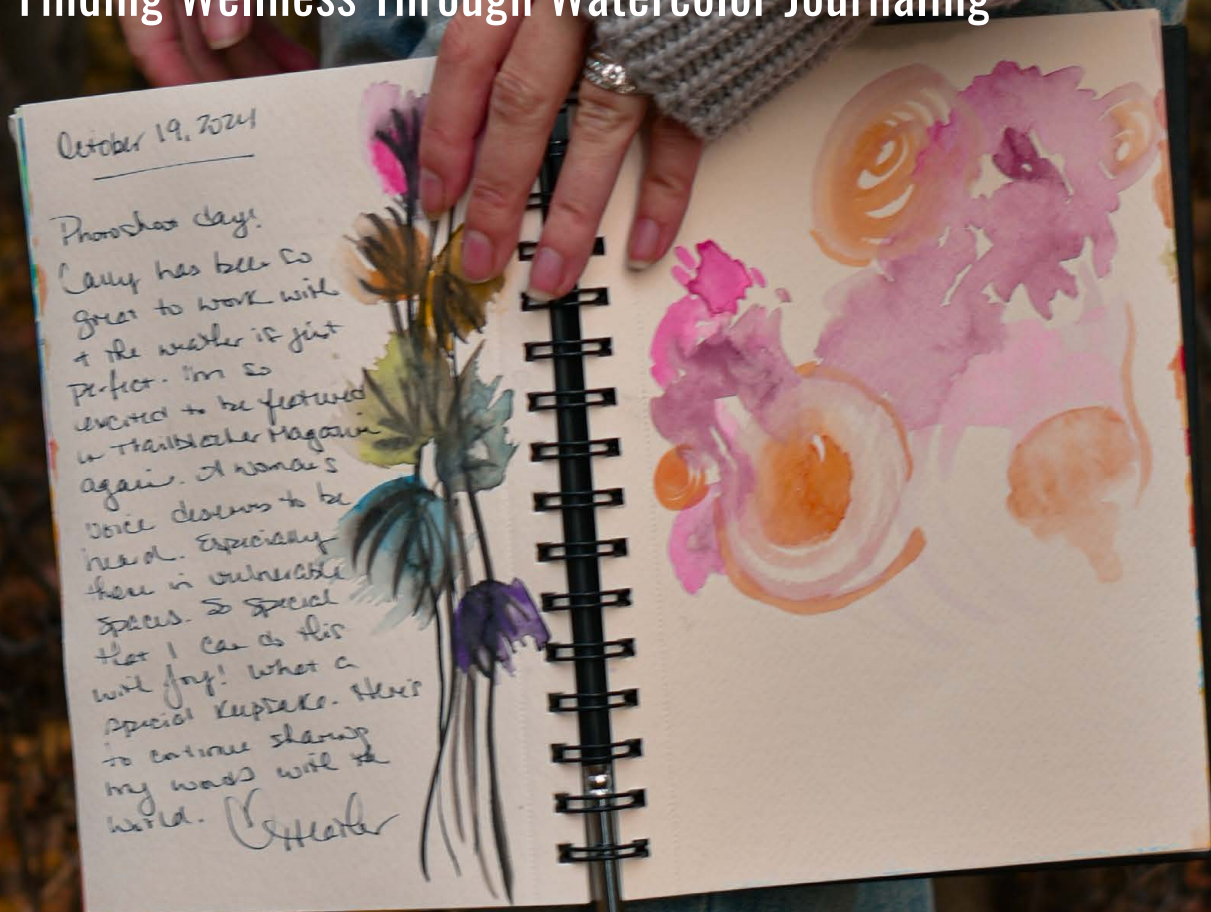


THE ART OF stillness

Finding Wellness Through Watercolor Journaling



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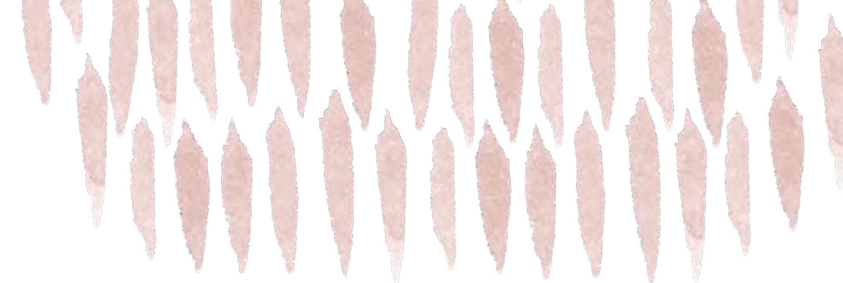


So much of our health and well-being is intricately tied to the element of water.

It hydrates us, cleanses us, and invites us to play. There's a magic in the soothing sounds of the ocean, the nourishment of rain. Water weaves itself into our lives, enriching our sense of wellness in countless ways.

I first dipped into watercolor journaling during my undergraduate studies. When my professor encouraged us to embrace creativity, I found myself searching for a new way to express myself—a way to nurture my self-care journey. Armed with a spiral-bound notebook, its pages designed for watercolor paints, I dove into online inspiration, searching for tips and techniques on Instagram. Over the course of the semester, I filled those blank pages with images that captured my learning. I quickly discovered the calming power of painting, especially after a three-hour Zoom class, as it helped me ease into the transition from student to mother and wife. It became a moment carved out just for me—a rare and precious find when juggling so many roles as a woman.

This practice became a cornerstone of my self-care, one I couldn't leave behind. My second watercolor journal is filled with the colors of my emotions and experiences: the ache of grieving my grandmother, the fatigue of burnout, the delight of embracing pleasure, and the journey toward understanding myself. Watching water and pigment swirl on paper is a gentle process that can calm the mind, soothe the heart, and center the body.



Supplies

- Watercolor journal (with heavy-duty paper)
- Variety of brushes
- Glass jar (connect further with nature by melting snow, scooping water from the ocean, or collecting rain)
- Watercolor paints
- Sharpie

Watercolor journaling offers so much more than just beautiful pages—it blends the relaxing, imaginative world of art with the introspective nature of journaling. Here are some of its many benefits:

STRESS REDUCTION AND RELAXATION: The act of blending colors and watching them flow on the paper can be soothing, helping to melt away stress and tension.

MINDFULNESS AND PRESENCE: This practice encourages a state of mindfulness, inviting you to focus on the here and now. Observing how water interacts with color becomes a meditation, grounding you in the present moment.

EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION: For those moments when words fall short, watercolor journaling offers a way to express feelings visually. Colors, shapes, and marks can convey emotions that are hard to articulate.

CREATIVITY BOOST: It invites a sense of play and experimentation. With watercolors, the unpredictable nature of the medium sparks new ways of thinking and creative expression.

SELF-REFLECTION AND PERSONAL GROWTH: Combining journaling with art allows for a richer, layered form of self-reflection. It can deepen your understanding of thoughts and feelings, offering a new dimension to traditional journaling.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT: For beginners, watercolor journaling is a gentle introduction to art. It's a forgiving practice that encourages experimentation and growth, helping build artistic confidence.

CONNECTION TO NATURE: Many who journal with watercolors find themselves drawn to paint scenes of the natural world—landscapes, plants, the sky. This practice fosters an appreciation for nature, even when you're indoors.

Watercolor journaling brings the outside world in, connecting us to nature's elements. My children have even crafted colorful backgrounds for me before I embark on a trip, gifting me with pages that carry a piece of their creativity. Writing on splashes of color adds a whole new layer to the journaling experience, inviting thoughts and emotions to blend with art.

The practice offers a unique invitation to slow down and embrace stillness. In a world that often feels fast-paced and demanding, let's create space to pause, breathe, and simply be. As you dip your brush into water and watch the colors spread gently across the page, time seems to stretch out. The careful, deliberate movements of the brush encourage a slower rhythm, quieting the mind and allowing for a gentle focus.

This act of slowing down cultivates a sense of inner calm, providing a welcome respite from the busyness of life. It's a time to let go of expectations, to be patient with yourself as you experiment and observe. Watercolor journaling becomes a practice of mindfulness, where you're invited to notice the subtle shifts of water, the blending of colors, and the quiet joy in creating without rush or pressure. In this stillness, we find room to reflect, reset, and reconnect with our inner selves.

Engaging in expressive arts practices like this reconnects us with our inner child, inviting playfulness and curiosity back into our lives. These creative practices can be both healing and restorative, offering opportunities for deeper connections—with ourselves and with others.

Instructions

PREPARE YOUR PAGE: Start by wetting your brush with clean water. Lightly brush water across your entire page, covering it evenly.

ADD COLOR: Choose a color and dip your brush into it, adding extra water. Gently apply the color to your wet page and observe how it flows and spreads.

EXPERIMENT AND PLAY: Feel free to stay with one color or introduce another. Try using different-sized brushes or varying your brush strokes. Explore how each change affects the flow of color.

TUNE INTO YOUR SENSES: As you paint, pay attention to your body sensations and immerse yourself in the experience. What do you hear as your brush moves across the paper? What do you see as the colors blend? What do you feel in your body?

LET IT DRY: When you feel that your page is complete, set it aside to dry. You might find it enjoyable to work on two pages at a time, giving you two different entries to reflect on later.

REFLECT WITH WORDS: Once the pages are dry, use a Sharpie to write down any thoughts, frustrations, or emotions that arise. You can also make marks or doodles that capture your current mood or state of mind.

By following these steps, you'll create a meaningful space for self-reflection and creative expression!



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