

*Stress relief and emotional self-care  
resources through Expressive Arts for  
adults<sup>©</sup>*



*Mini Guide for self-facilitation*

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## Who is it for?

Addressed to adults seeking to free themselves from stress and take care of their emotional world through Expressive Arts

## What you will find in this guide

Four artistic activities\*\* with self-reflection questions to identify and alleviate difficult emotions and find resources for stress management and self-care . And four (optional) activity proposals for personal well-being.

**\*\* It is not necessary to have artistic knowledge, the use of art in this method is only a tool \*\***

## About Expressive Arts

What are they used for?	Benefits	Why do we use Art to express?
Expressive arts are used as a <b>tool of expression</b> , they are not crafts, nor do we seek to learn artistic techniques. Art is used here freely to express our mental, emotional and physical world. <b>The result is NOT important, what matters is the process.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-knowledge and emotional management</li> <li>- Relief of stress</li> <li>- Improves communication with ourselves</li> <li>- Improvement in relationships with others</li> </ul>	Sometimes it is very difficult to express in words what we feel, think or the sensations of our body. Art offers <b>different forms of expression and works as a mirror to better understand ourselves.</b> Furthermore, we connect with our innate creativity, which reveals <b>internal resources to improve our daily life.</b>

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## 1. Notes on self-facilitation with Expressive Arts

*“If your own reflection becomes sharper, so will the world you draw”*

*Jeanne Carbonetti, 'The yoga of drawing'*

Dealing with emotions and thoughts, that is, being able to identify them and be able to do something about it, is how to take care of a garden where we remove weeds, sow what we want to grow and water. Taking care of it from love, our interior garden will be the result of conscious and kind work. Best of all, when we take care of ourselves, everything around us changes too.

Happy adventure.

### 1.1 Things to consider before you start

**1. This is not a therapy**, nor a substitute for therapeutic work, it is a tool for self-care and emotional self-management to work with yourself. Keep in mind that emotions are worked on and therefore, we must treat ourselves with great affection.

#### **2. Emotional expression tool.**

Expressing what we feel, frees us. Therefore, the relief of emotional stress occurs by giving us the opportunity to express ourselves, in any way.

When we use Art as a tool for expression, we are giving voice to emotions so that we can deal with them, knowing that emotions, like thoughts, are transitory and that you are not your emotion. Giving them a voice to express themselves puts us in a position of power. Which means, it offers us the possibility of dealing with our emotional world from knowledge and stop being victims of changing emotions.

#### **3. Pay attention to critical thoughts.\***

Any judgment towards the creative result or towards yourself only restricts your expression. We seek to give ourselves opportunities to express. Judging ourselves or the result of what we draw, paint, write or dance only hurts us the most. Instead, try unconditional acceptance, exploring your inner world from the permission to be yourself naturally and with kindness.

*\*Writing them down can help you be more aware.*

**4. Avoid interpreting the result.**

Become a witness. Observe as if the work belongs to another person, this helps to disidentify and be able to look for more creative resources for our well-being. Furthermore, this openness offers the possibility of recognizing ideas that go beyond the limitations of our mind.

**5. Trust the process.**

Leave room for spontaneity, that is, letting go of control when you do the activities. The mind must be present more as a witness than as a captain. In addition, I recommend you not to read the entire activity before starting, but scroll down as you go on. Losing the spontaneity of each step can make your controlling mind go ahead and the expressive process will be conditioned.

**6. Rescue your creative part.**

*"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to continue being an artist once you grow. "*  
*Pablo Picasso*

Forget the 'I am not creative', we all are at birth. What happens is that sometimes we forget it on the way of becoming adults, or worse, we banish it because we think we are not good enough. That is not important, the important thing is to create.

## 2. Resources

### 2.1 Materials

#### Creation and writing materials

Paper sheets of various sizes, A5, A4, A3 for drawing and painting.

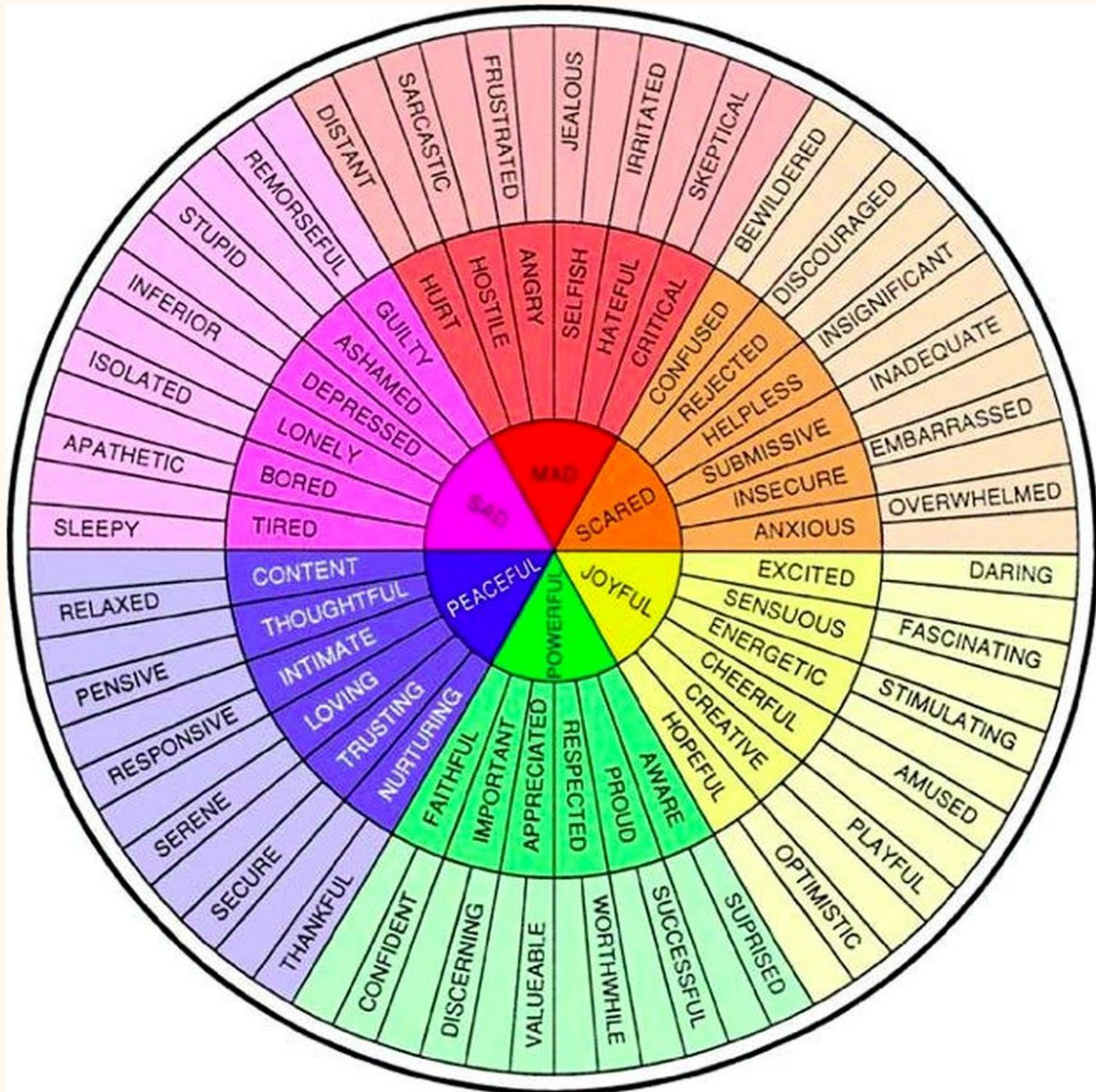
- Material for drawing and coloring: pencils, black marker, oil pastels, markers, colored pencils.
- Material to paint: tempera, watercolor, acrylic ... (to choose) and brushes.
- Diary or notebook to write, for reflection questions.
- Notebook for morning pages (optional).

### 2.2 Other resources

- **Words** (books, poems, quotes, stories, magazines, ...)
- **Meditations or short visualizations** (optional): to relax and let go of the 'judging' mind.
- **Movement** (optional): to connect with the sensations of the body, which houses information about our emotional world.
- **Space to create:** Your creative space should be a place of privacy and calm. If there are people or distractions around, the work will be very difficult to do. **It is a place to be with yourself.** If you cannot leave the material ready to use in your space, I recommend that you put it in a box or small suitcase so that it is very easy to get ready and tidy up, and that preparing your session does not take long. The more accessible our creative space is, the better.



- **Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions:**helps This wheel help us identify more specific emotions, if we need to.



### 3. Types of activities

In this guide there are two types of activities. My advice is to do one per week but you can do them at your own pace.

**1. Four creative activities:** approximately 10-15 minutes.

They answer the question: **What do I need to express today?**

The intention of these activities is to have a fast channel of expression to be able to identify our emotional state and to be able to look for forms of relief in case of identifying negative emotions \*.

Of course, you can do them every day if you want or when you feel it.

*\* We refer to a 'negative' emotion that makes us feel bad.*


**2. Four extraordinary activities (optional):** They are wellness proposals, a kind of dating with yourself. These proposals are just ideas, you can do other things that bring you closer to the feeling of well-being and inner joy.

**3. Extra Activity (optional):** Proposal for daily writing activity.

**The morning pages:** This tool is proposed by Julia Cameron in her well-known book "The Artist's way". **It is about writing three free writing pages every morning, leaving everything uncensored.** It doesn't have to be well written or beautiful. They serve to relieve us, as a drain to complain, or for our doubts. Whatever it is, is fine. No one has to read it. If you have time alone in the morning, or while having coffee, I recommend it.



## 4. Activities

	Creative		Activities Extraordinary Activities (optional)	
1st week	1. Intuitive drawing	p.9	2. Indulge your body: take a bath or anything that relaxes you	p.9
2nd week	3. Doodling	p.10	4. Watch a movie that makes you laugh	p.10
3rd week	5. Body scan	p.11	6. Dance, sing or both	p.11
4th week	7. Words that choose you	p.12	8. Go on a date with yourself and do something you love	p.12

**\*\* Please read the notes for self-facilitation, if you have not already done so, before you start ;)**

1. Intuitive drawing	Creative activity
<b>Intention:</b> Express ourselves intuitively and get rid of critical thinking. Identify our emotional state and self-care resources.	<b>Note:</b> Before starting, leave the material (that you want) ready to draw directly after the meditation.

1. Close your eyes and ask yourself, **What do I need to express today?**
  
2. **Short meditation** (5 min): Breathe deeply to let go of the tension of your body, you can imagine that it is going away through the feet. Take a deep breath again and notice the 'judgmental' thoughts come out of your head and float through the air. Take another breath again to release both at once, the tension and thoughts of your inner critic. Stay a moment with your mind free of judgment and feeling a deeper connection to your body.
  
3. **Draw:** Imagine now that you have just arrived from another planet and that what you are perceiving is completely new and draw what comes out intuitively.
  
4. **Reflect:** Look at the drawing and ask yourself: What emotion does it evoke in me? If it is a negative emotion \*, what can I do to relief it? Write down ideas of things you can do. \* We refer to a 'negative' emotion the one that makes us feel bad.
  
5. **Give it a title.**

2. Indulge your body	Extraordinary activity (optional)
<b>Intention:</b> Give priority to our body well-being, thus supporting our emotional and mental well-being.	<b>Note:</b> Our bodies are impacted by a busy life, and sometimes we don't give it the attention it deserves. Also, from the impact that comes from our emotions and thoughts. This is a way of telling it we think of it.

Do something you like to relax and take care of your body. Take a bath, a hot shower, a massage ... Whatever you want, while being relaxing and pleasant. Doing sports does not count ;)

<b>3. Doodling</b>	<b>Creative activity</b>
<b>Intention:</b> Connect with our interior through art and express what we need in the present moment quickly.	<b>Note:</b> You can choose the sheet size you want. The bigger the more time you will need to color it.

1. Close your eyes and ask yourself, **What do I need to express today?**  
Breathe deeply until you release the tension from your body. You can repeat the meditation from exercise 1 if you wish.
2. With your non-dominant hand, draw scribble with a black marker or pencil on a sheet.
3. **Color it or paint it.**
4. **Reflect:** How did I feel while painting? What emotions, thoughts and images were revealed? Was there something that surprised me? Write it down.
5. **Give it a title.**

<b>4. Watch a movie that makes you laugh</b>	<b>Extraordinary activity (optional)</b>
<b>Intent:</b> Laugh, because it is great medicine;)	<b>Note:</b> Alone or accompanied, as you like, but you choose the movie ;)

It can be a movie or a series. It does not matter if you have already seen it, the essential thing is to laugh.

5. Body scan	Creative activity
<b>Intention:</b> Connect with our body and its sensations, let it express itself. Find ways to transform our states of emotional and physical tension.	<b>Note:</b> you can choose with or without movement.

1. Close your eyes and ask yourself, **What do I need to express today?**
2. **Body: for 5 minutes scan your body**, lying down, sitting or standing with your eyes closed, moving the body without while standing (meaning, no moving through the space).. Observe: Where do you notice tension or pain? What sensations do you perceive? What is your emotional and mental state?
3. **Draw with colors or paint** what comes out, while remaining connected with your body, emotional and mental sensations.
4. **Reflect:** Look at the drawing, Is there something in your drawing that catches your attention? Or, is there anything that reflects some tension in your body? Or any emotion or thought that may be causing you physical or emotional discomfort? How could you transform it? Write down what you can think of.
4. **Give it a title.**

6. Dance, sing or both	Extraordinary activity (optional)
<b>Intention:</b> Connect with our child side through the body in movement and fun.	<b>Note:</b> You can do something else that connects you to your fun side. It is about doing just for doing, as children do.

Put on your favorite music and start dancing ... and / or singing. It can be half an hour, one or whatever you want. Above all, have a good time. You can do it alone or invite someone with whom you want to do it. Make sure you are not ashamed.

7. Words that choose you	Creative activity
<b>Intention:</b> Express in words in an intuitive way and identify through language which emotions, or thoughts, predominate in our present moment.	<b>Note:</b> write without fear of doing it right or wrong. It is an intuitive writing exercise to see what you want to express through language.

1. Close your eyes and ask yourself, **What do I need to express today?**
2. Open a book or magazine and underline the first words that catch your attention, 5 to 10. **Write a poem or a mini story** with them. Don't think too much, just let the words flow while being inspired by the ones that 'chose you'.
3. **Give it a title.**
4. Optional: You can illustrate your poem or story if you want.

8. A date with yourself: do something you like	Extraordinary activity (optional)
<b>Intention:</b> Take care of yourself from unconditional love.	<b>Note:</b> it is a date with yourself and as such, it has to be very special.

Think of an ideal date. Invite yourself to it. If you can't leave home, be creative.





**I hope that you have enjoyed this guide and that it has served you both as a stress relief tool and to improve your emotional world.**

**If you have 2 minutes, I would be very grateful if you participate in the following survey:**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/P7SMJ28>**

**This way you help me to improve and you guide me to design future guides. If you want more information or support in carrying out the activities, you can contact me here:**

**[veronicaexpressivearts@gmail.com](mailto:veronicaexpressivearts@gmail.com)**

**Thank you very much for your collaboration and for trusting in this guide.**

**See you soon,  
Veronica**

## **5. References and recommended reading**

~ *"The artist's path"* Julia Cameron. Ed. Aguilar, 2011

~ *"The yoga of drawing"* Jeanne Carbonetti. Gaia Ediciones, 2004

[www.expressiveartworkshops.com](http://www.expressiveartworkshops.com)

[www.freepik.es](http://www.freepik.es)