



# CREATIVE JOURNAL MAGIC: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

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[CreativeMagicAcademy.com](http://CreativeMagicAcademy.com)

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# Creative Journaling Techniques

Creative Journaling Techniques are like the ingredients that make up a salad. Each one is fantastic on its own but they become really special and magically delicious when they are combined. You can mix and match and discover your favourite ways of bringing them together.

And then the salad gets much better still when you add the right dressing. In Creative Journaling, the dressing is the Creative Magic.

**Creative Magic is Purpose, Spirit, Creativity, Imagination, Vision, Intention, Healing and Transformation.**

Creative Journal Magic is about how much you can open yourself up to the inner process of activating your Creative Magic.

The thing about Creative Journaling is that there is no wrong way to do it.

*[Which means however you do it - you're doing it right. YAY!]*

It's really not about the techniques. It's about the magic. It's not about how it looks, it's all about how it feels.

**So I am sharing this information not to tell you how to do it, but to open up the door to help you find the path to your own creative magic.**

When you're starting out and are not sure what to do, seeing some examples of things that are done can be so helpful. As you try out the ones that feel inspiring to you, and experiment and explore, you will find your own unique way to do Creative Journaling.

If any of these techniques sounds like something you want to try right now - stop reading this and go do it! See where it leads you and come back here when you need another new idea.

# Scribbling

Scribbling is great for when you feel upset - scribbling lets you get it out. Scribble as rough and fast and angrily as you like. Scribbling so hard you tear the paper can be especially satisfying.

Usually there aren't any rules but here is one: Scribbling shouldn't be neat or tidy. It should be messy. Get whatever it is that is upsetting you out of you by scribbling it onto the page. Be willing to get messy.

# Doodling

Doodling is kind of like zen scribbling. Draw little shapes or stick people or long curving lines or creates mazes and patterns on your page.

Doodling doesn't have to make any sense, it's simply a chance to be in your creative energy and let it flow. This helps get you into a meditative state which can open you up to new possibilities and ideas.

# Colouring

Colouring is soothing. It's a great thing to do when you are not quite upset enough to scribble. Or if you scribble for a while it might mellow out into colouring as you get the upset stuff out.

You can also colour your way into a certain mood by being careful about what colour you choose. What colours feels peaceful to you? What colours feel happy? Colouring is a gentle way to immerse yourself in your own creative energy and get into the creative zone.

# Lists

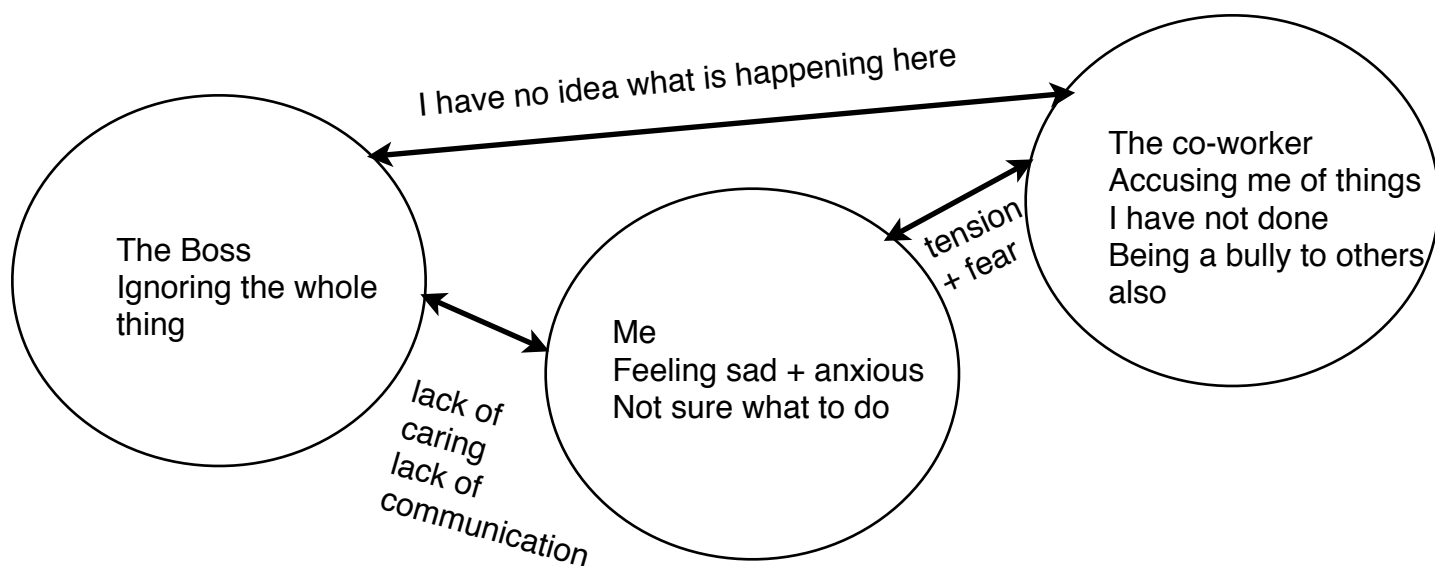
Get creative with your lists! Use different coloured pens, search for magazine images to illustrate your list, put the lists in boxes and colour them in.

Lists are a fabulous journaling tool. You can create: gratitude lists, pro and con lists for decision making, a list of your happiest memories, a list of the people who inspire you the most, a list of your greatest accomplishments, a list of things you would like to accomplish, a list of recipes you want to try or flowers you want to plant in your garden. Anything! Lists can help you to organise and clarify your thoughts and spark amazing new ideas.

# Mind map

Mind maps take lists to the next level and are super useful for complicated situations, though they are helpful in almost any situation.

I'm going to illustrate this with a scenario about someone who is unhappy with their work situation and feels like their co-worker is picking on them and their boss doesn't care.



I started by just putting a circle for each person involved. Then I start creating arrows between them and writing out what I think is happening, or what I see happening.

Looking at the situation like this you can try to put yourself in the other circle's shoes. Why is the co-worker being a bully? Why is the boss ignoring it? You can start to add thoughts and ideas and more circles.

This gives you a chance to play around with the situation with a bird's eye view.

No matter what is going on, getting out of your regular perspective and looking at the bigger picture is almost always an enlightening experience. You can do mindmaps of family dynamics, personal problems, creative projects - anything!

## Collage

Collage is a fun and creative way to explore and express your inner world. Flip through magazines and cut out the photos that appeal to you. You can add random ephemera from your life, or journal some of your thoughts, and put it all together into a collage.

Examine your finished collage for messages from your creative spirit. Are there surprises in the kinds of images you picked, or in how you put them together? Often collages reveal how you are feeling deep down inside.

## One image

Instead of collecting a whole pile of images, you can choose just one image that strikes a chord in you and stick it in your journal. Then let that image be your journaling prompt. Why did you pick it? What does it say to you? What does it say about you? How can you let it inspire you?

You can also take a photo of something from your day and use it as your journal prompt.

## Dreamboarding

A Dreamboard is a collage with a specific purpose. It is a collage that illustrates your dream. Your dream can be about a creative project you are working on, a situation you want help with, healing you want to receive, it can describe the way you want to feel about yourself, or the home you want to live in - really there are no limits here.

When creating a dreamboard, you do the same thing as a collage only you keep your focus on your dream. Choose images and words that describe your dream. Feel how it will feel to already have the thing you want as you put the whole thing together.

Creating your dreamboard gets you in the spirit of your dream and helps you open up paths that make that dream more possible for you to have. It can also teach you about your dream just like a regular collage can teach you about how you are feeling. **Study your dreamboard for clues - both in the images and words you choose and in how you put them together. These clues can make it easier for you to get what you want.**

## Storytelling

Just like a dreamboard only with words instead of images (although you can also illustrate your story) you can write stories about your dreams coming true. Get into the feeling of how great it feels to live with the dream come true!

Or if you had a bad day - you can write a story about how you wish your day had been. This can create a profound shift in perspective that opens up the door for magic and miracles to find you.

# The Magic

As I said in the beginning - this is really not about the techniques.

It is about the creative process, and the healing process. It's about awareness and possibility and transformation and activating your Creative Magic.

So I am sharing these techniques not to tell you how to do it, but to open up the door and help you get started.

**All of the magic is in your willingness to access the magic.**

It's in your willingness to use your journal as a source of healing and a awareness and possibility and transformation.

Once you get started, once creativity is flowing in your journal, your work is to listen.

Listen for intuitive wisdom.

Listen for inspiration.

Listen for little bits of magic to start to show up.

Open the doors. Invite it in.



The Creative Journal Magic Kit is full of lessons, videos and meditations that lead you through the process of turning your Creative Journal into a Magic Wand.

[>>>Click here to read more.](#)

# Creative Journaling Supplies + Materials

**There is actually not one thing that is a “Must Have Thing” that every Creative Journaler needs to have - not even a journal.**

You can Creative Journal on junk mail using an old pen. It's not about the fancy art supplies unless you want it to be. If rows of paints and tubes of glitter glue make your creative spirit sing then go for it. If you prefer to just have a few basic things then that is perfect.

I'm sharing my thoughts on supplies and materials for the people who want to know more about it, but find the whole thing daunting.

## The Creative Journal itself:

In order for your creative journal to be a space of healing, transformation and magic - it helps to feel a connection to it. That connection can open up the door for magic to come in.

The size and weight of the journal, the feel of the pages, the way it's bound. All of this needs to feel right for you.

Of course, it's easier to choose the one that feels right when you have some basic information about journals and sketchbooks so here goes:

**Moleskine Brand Sketchbooks:** My favourite. These are not the cheapest option, but the quality of the materials and workmanship sing to my creative spirit. The papers, especially in the watercolor and sketch varieties, are thick and gorgeous for painting on. I can build up lots of layers of magic and they don't fall apart. I travel around the world with them and they don't fall apart.



**Sketchbooks:** After Moleskines, I like plain, black hardbound sketchbooks (a sketchbook is different from a journal in that it uses sketching or drawing paper which is a higher quality than the writing paper that is in journals). The paper is nice enough for drawing on.

Sketchbooks available in art supply stores come in a wide variety of sizes, finishes and papers and are all suitable for creative journaling.

**Visual Journaling Sketchbooks:** This is a line of sketchbook/journals by Strathmore called Visual Journal. These ones, especially the watercolor version, are fantastic! Art papers at a low price. I don't like the coil bound just because my creative spirit likes the feel of a hardcover book. But many people prefer the coil bound books because they lay flat when they are open and can be easier to work with.

**Altered Books:** One of my favourite creative journals is an old atlas that I bought at a second hand store. It's deliciously big and heavy and the pages are strong. Also good are old encyclopedias.

Pretty much any old book can be altered into a creative journal, but you are going to have the most luck with hardcover books. Especially books like atlases or coffee table books - big strong heavy books. Children's board books are also super fun to work with. A small paperback book will start to fall apart if you add too much to it. Look closely at how strong the paper is and how well the book is bound.

In order to use a large hardcover book as a Creative Journal, you can gesso over the pages (I talk about gesso on the next page) or you can collage right over the pages. When you do this you add thickness to the book. Depending on how much thickness you add, you may need to rip out a few pages later on so the book will still shut. Or you can just leave it open.

You can also just write/draw right on top of what is there. I like to use a thick marker to journal over printed pages for my morning journaling. Since the pages are already printed I don't have to face that blank white page first thing in the morning.

**Creating your own journal:** You can also try your hand at book binding if that feels fun and inspiring for you. I love the book How To Make Books, it is absolutely brilliant and shows lots of great ways to make your own journal.

**Journals:** Using a regular journal, like the kind you find in bookstores and gift shops, may not work so well. These journals are usually not made to withstand much more than writing. When you start adding collage elements and paints and stickers and most journals will start to fall apart.

But your creative spirit just might fall in love with a pretty journal in a bookstore, so keep reading for some tips and tricks on how to make it workable for creative journaling.

## Journal Tips + Tricks

**Gesso:** If the paper in your Creative Journal is too thin, most pens and markers will bleed through to the other side, and if you try to paint on them the paper will bubble and warp.

You can solve this problem with the Creative Journaler's secret weapon: Gesso. Gesso prepares surfaces for painting. It's a thick paint-like material and usually comes in white, black and clear - sometimes you can find it in other colours.

So you paint a coat of gesso onto the thin paper and now you've got a thick creative surface for painting on. The only problem with this is that not all pens and markers are going to work on gesso - I usually use pencils on it. You can experiment and explore to see how your materials work together.

**Bleeding pens/markers:** Pens and markers will bleed into the paper and be seen on the back side of the page when the paper is too thin. Using a sketchbook made with heavier art papers will help. Or you can alternate in your journal - one page with markers that bleed, and then the next page can be all collage to hide the bleeding.

**Paper bubbling/warping:** Paper that is not suitable for painting on will bubble and warp when it gets wet, sometimes it will even tear. Since our aim here is to use the journal as a tool for healing and transformation - it doesn't really matter what it looks like so as long as this doesn't bother you - it really doesn't matter.

But if it does bother you, you need to get a sketchbook made specifically for painting in (watercolor paper is the best - the heavier the better) or prep your pages before painting with gesso.

## Pens + Markers

Art supply stores have such a huge variety of pens and markers - different colours, gel pens, glitter pens, puffy pens with ink that actually puffs up, thin markers, thick markers, markers with a paint brush tip. Most art supply stores have samples of all of their pens so you can try them out and see how you like them.

When it comes to which pen to use for basic journaling, the only thing that really matters is that you pick the pen you like best.

But if you are getting more creative with your page, if you have some collage or paint or other things going on, some pens are going to work much better than others. Some kinds of pens aren't going to be able to make a mark on some kinds of surfaces.

Given all of the different brands of pens and markers out there and all of the different combinations of things you may want to do in your Creative Journal - the only way to really know what is going to work for you is to experiment. But if you want to write on top of your painting and collaging, look for pens that specifically say that they work on all surfaces - like paint pens or pens for drawing on glass.

**Pitt Pens:** I love to use Pitt pens for writing and doodling and keep a wide variety of different sizes and colours on hand. These are waterproof so I can draw with the markers, and then paint and/or watercolour on top and the ink won't bleed. These also work well over collaged magazine images.

They also write really smoothly. Sometimes cheaper pens/markers don't work as consistently.

**Staedtler:** My other favourite is Staedtler - for pens and beautifully fine markers in a rainbow of colours.

## Pencils

**Drawing pencils:** I like to use a plain old ordinary HB pencil a lot in my journal. For drawing and writing and scribbling, on plain pages, or over gesso or paint.

**Coloured pencils:** I use coloured pencils A LOT. I love colouring with them. My favourites are Pablo Caran D'Ache because they are super creamy and the colours are gorgeous. Prismacolor are also good.

Hilroy, Laurentian, Crayola or whatever brands you find in the children's art supply section, are fine to use. They are going to cost less but the texture won't be as creamy and the colours won't be as brilliant.

**Oil pencils:** They are like pencil crayons but they are oil based. They cost more and can be harder to find (Dick Blick does have them) but are super useful in that, because they are oil, they can write on anything - magazine collages, gesso and layers of heavily painted surfaces.

**Watercolor pencils:** My personal favourite art supply. They work just like pencil crayons, only the colour they put down on the page is actually watercolour paint. So after you have finished colouring, you can go over the colour with a wet (water only) paintbrush and you've got paint!

You can use a lot of water to wash it out to light clouds of colour or just a little bit of water to make the colours stand out. Very fun to experiment with.

These come in lots of brands. I prefer the Derwent Aqua Tones because I find they have the most pigment (colour).

Derwendt Inktense are a little different than the others. Once you activate the paint with water and let it dry - it won't "re-activate". With the other brands even after it's dry, if you wet it again it turns back into paint.

## Pastels

**Chalk Pastels:** Chalk pastels are a lot like chalk from a chalkboard. They come in lots of different colours. There are inexpensive and expensive brands, generally the more you pay the more pigment they will have, which means they will have more colour, and the creamier they will be. But even the less expensive brands are a lot of fun to play with.

Since they are chalky, they can be messy, which can be fun or it can be annoying. You can draw with them, and then smudge them with a sponge or your finger. You can smudge different colours together for neat effects.

Even once smudged, the chalk will remain “chalky” and will leave a dusty trail. You can stop this by fixing the chalk with a spray fixative (like a finishing spray for art) or you can simply use hairspray. Once you have fixed the chalk the surface becomes really difficult to put anything else on top of.

**Pan Pastel:** Pan Pastels are chalk pastels reformulated into smooth powdery paints. They come in little pans with sponge brushes which are really fun. They are not as messy as chalk pastels but they do cost quite a bit more.

**Oil Pastels:** Oil pastels are a lot like crayons, except they are oil instead of wax. This means they are thicker and creamier than crayons which makes scribbling and colouring with them especially satisfying. Like chalk pastels, they are available in a wide price range and the more expensive, the more pigmented and creamy the pastels will be. But even the cheapest ones are super fun to play with.

Because they are oil, oil pastels can be used on top of almost any surface, making it a great choice on top of collaged magazine images and heavily painted surfaces.

**Water Soluble Pastel:** You can play with these just like oil pastels, so - just like crayons - but then, just like the watercolour pencils, you can dip your paintbrush into water and then paint over them. Very fun. I like to use these to create frames, or borders, around collages images in my journal.

**Shiva Paintsticks:** These are literally sticks of oil paint. Oil paint is toxic and messy - it cleans up with mineral spirits instead of water (all of the other tools mentioned here clean up with water). They are also very slow to dry which can be impractical when you want to turn the page to start working on your next masterpiece.

But even with all of those negatives - the Shiva Paintsticks are gorgeous. You can use them to smear thick creamy colour. I do use them, but very sparingly.

# Paints and Paint Mediums:

**Acrylics:** There are a lot of different kinds of acrylic paints at a lot of different price points. Generally, like with everything else, the more it costs the more pigment it has in it - so the colours become richer and brighter. So if you are using inexpensive paints don't expect them to go on thick and bright - they may be kind of thin and transparent.

I don't have a certain brand that I recommend, I use lots of different brands, both cheap and expensive.

**Watercolors:** Watercolour paints are meant to be mixed with, you guessed it, water. They come in solid pans, or in bottles or tubes. You can dip a wet brush into the watercolour and then paint with it onto wet or dry paper. If the paper is wet the colour will bleed/spread out and can create some really interesting effects.

Because they use a lot of water, watercolours are usually best only used on watercolour paper which is quite thick and can absorb a lot of water without bubbling or tearing.

**Brushes:** For Creative Journaling there is no need to get fancy brushes. If you want to start exploring art good brushes become important - but any old brush will throw paint on a page and that is all we are going for here.

At art supply stores and in craft stores, brushes come in sets and individually. To get started a set is usually your best bet. They are less expensive and have a nice variety of different kinds of brushes so you can try them out. The nicer brushes are sold individually and come in an overwhelming amount of different sizes and styles and materials.

**Gesso:** I mentioned Gesso already in the journal section. This is a really handy tool to have around. It's available in white, black, clear and some colours. I mostly use white. You can use it to prep your page and make it strong and paintable.

You can also use it to paint over something you've done to make a fresh new surface to work on. You can do things like gesso out part of a magazine image and then add your own stuff, or write out secrets, gesso over them and then turn them into something new.

**Matte Medium:** This is kind of like clear paint. I use it as glue because it is thin and flexible and not sticky and I just love it. You can also mix it with acrylic paint to thin it out and make it clear. Comes in gloss medium too.

**Gel Medium:** Like matte medium, but it's thick. There are different weights - light gels and heavy gels. You can paint a nice thick layer of gel onto your page and then create textures in it. You can do this before or after you paint on it, or mix some paint right into the gel. You can put a layer of gel on top of a collage or other Creative Journaling page.

**Other Paint mediums:** There are so many fun paint mediums out there! Mediums are meant to be mixed with acrylic paints to create new and interesting effects. They do things like turn paints into modeling paste, or add tiny glass beads or little bits of handmade paper. Art supply stores will have displays showing what all of the different mediums do so you can see if any of them look like something you'd want to use in your journal.



# Collage

Magazines, books, brochures, ephemera: This is, of course, what you collage with. You can save your old magazines or buy them second hand. While you are at the second hand shop, you can also buy old books to work with. The best collage materials are going to be about things that you are interested in because they will be filled with images and words that are meaningful for you.

You can also save brochures and various ephemera if it looks interesting or is from an important event in your life. When I travel I like to save everything - every ticket stub and museum pamphlet and add them to my creative travel journal. This helps me process the adventure while I'm having it, and remember it after I'm back home.

Glue: I like to use matte medium as glue in my collages. You can use any kind of glue of course, from glue sticks to mod podge. Or tape. There are fancy and coloured tapes out there that you can experiment with.

Scissors: Regular scissors are usually a must, though you can also just tear pages to collage together too, or use an x-acto knife.. Scrapbooking and craft stores will have scissors with different edges so you can make fancy cuts if you like.

# Scrapbooking

Scrapbooking stores, and the scrapbooking section of craft stores, have an amazing selection of creative stuff. Stickers, stencils, stamps, glitters, glimmers, gorgeous papers, trims, ribbons, fancy tape, borders, frames, kits and more! It seems like every time I look at scrapbooking stuff I see something I have never seen before.

Scrapbooking materials can get really elaborate and expensive and you certainly don't need any of that for any Creative Journaling techniques. But if some of these things make your creative spirit sing then certainly add them to your Creative Journaling supplies and use them to decorate your pages.

**And that's it! Everything you need to start making magic now.**