



The Heart of It

CREATING CHILDREN'S BOOKS THAT MATTER

with Maya Gonzalez

Renegotiating "Creative Blocks"

... The way of the Book ...



Often we think of creative flow as this fantastic high of great productivity and inspiration pouring out of our being. This can seem like the 'goal' for many of us, the ultimate, the whole point! *But how do we get there and what does it mean if we're feeling the total opposite?*

I remember in college, creativity seemed wild and out of control to me. It would hit and then vanish. I made sure to ride it as hard as I could while it was in town because it might be gone by morning!

The very nature of the experience, and seemingly of creativity itself, fascinated me. *Why did it hit when it did? Where did it go? Could I still access it? How? What is creativity? Why are we so compelled by it? Is there a limit?*

All these questions led me to look closely at what I did know about my moments of creative expression.

The experiences had the enormity and power of nature; they often contained wildly intuitive connections, meanings and understandings and they could make me feel everything! elated, devastated, ascendant, free, empty...

Over 30 years of concerted study and practice, I learned that our greatest, most honest and transformative power lies in our creativity. This is a power we are each born with and flows through all being. Tapping into it and learning to let it flow with grace, in a sense, is no less than the secret to life.

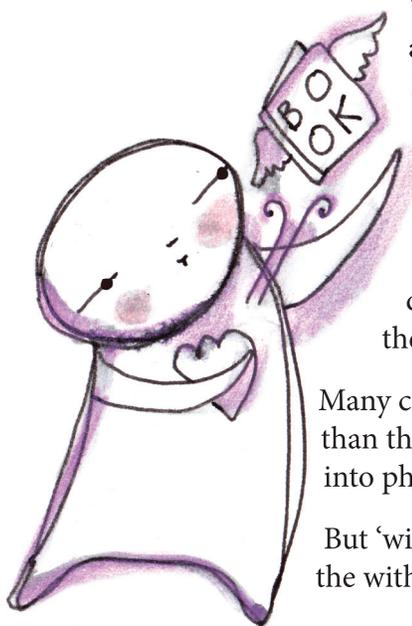
Our creativity is connected to nature, spirit and our hearts as well as our bodies and our minds. It is also connected most definitely to the unknown. Creativity is all about the unknown.

When we begin to engage with our creative force with this level of awareness, everything within us rises to be transformed, to naturally join in the process and create wholeness within us and without us, placing us inside and outside in the perfect creative position to fulfill the meaning of our life.

With this framework in mind, we can better understand ourselves and how creative energy is flowing through our whole system and what different experiences mean. Becoming aware of our creative flow on all of the levels is key.

Many creatives talk about the non-making time. It is often as vital if not more so than the creative act. Everything is born within and from there moves outward into physical reality. So much of the creative process happens within.

But 'within' is a vast and often unknown terrain. There is no known limit to the within.





When I experience what is commonly called a ‘creative block,’ I have found that a very deep, unknown layer of my inner being, my within, is beginning to create. I have learned that having this level of awareness of my creative flow changes everything. I do not see block. I see depth. I do not focus on the more superficial or recognizable levels of creative expression, but attempt to discern the deeper source from which my creative expression arises.

Creativity can integrate our whole system if we allow it. Slowing down and bringing awareness to our multiple levels of experience supports our creativity to move through us and not remain at these core places of origin, often unacknowledged. This process literally allows creativity to come into its true purpose in our lives: Integration of our entire being, healing on all levels of experience and fluid creative thinking and expression to live our best lives, which is why we are here.

When I experience what can be called ‘creative block’ I assume a deep aspect of my being is rising to come into expression and balance. So I slow down and attend to all levels of my being, essentially in this order. I’ve found following this order helps develop a strong container using my own being and creates a pattern of stability in how I approach everything. I return to it again and again and it always holds me.

1. Begin with the body (physical)

Slow down, pay attention, feel.

Super important and not supported or modeled in our current culture which is why a lot of us don’t know how to navigate this piece.

If you’re feeling heavy, then feel the heaviness. Let it be there. Don’t try to make it go away. It’s ok to feel heavy. There is a wisdom and a purpose to it. Just pay attention to it. Notice everything about your heaviness, or whatever other body feeling you’re having. Trust that it is your creative force moving at such a deep level that you must slow down enough to be aware of it. This awareness is what supports it moving.

Another common body feeling is ‘down in the mouth’ or the feeling that you can’t speak or that speaking is a huge effort. Of course there are many other feelings too. Panic or the edges of panic is a big one! Slowing down and being present with all levels of anxiety is extremely powerful.

2. Make room for emotion expression, not dwelling on, but pure expression (emotional)

There are feelings and then there emotions. We are often unfamiliar with the true nature of our emotions.

[\(http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/02/new-research-says-there-are-only-four-emotions/283560/\)](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/02/new-research-says-there-are-only-four-emotions/283560/)

There are four “basic” emotions, according to this study:

happy, sad, afraid/surprised, and angry.

If you’re ‘feeling’ *Overwhelmed* or *Stuck*, see if you can get to the underlying core feeling. Being present with the body really helps with this part.



Feeling feelings can seem tricky, but to begin with, if you feel fear, play with “feeling” it, like shivering! Or if you’re “feeling” stuck, be curious what’s at the heart of it. Fear? Anger? Sorrow?

With anger, you can begin small. Clench your fists. Feel the tightness.

Fear, Shake a bit!

Sorrow, hang your head, touch your heart, frown.

Your body will also naturally express an emotion if you relax into it enough.

Your body is here to support you.

3. Remove judgment from the mind and become aware of self (mental)

We often have small stories that we tell ourselves internally. Try to hear what these are. What are you constantly saying to yourself? *There’s no time. I can’t do this. I need more education. No one will listen.* And on and on.

As you become aware of these, take a step back. Notice that these are judgments and begin playing with the concept that you can see through them. Don’t try to make them go away. Don’t even consider them as bad. Just notice them and see through them. The rest will take care of itself.

4. Listen to your inner self, intuitive connections (spiritual)

We all get hunches and knowings that seem to come from someplace beyond our regular understanding of something. Learning to listen to our wise inner self can take some practice. Sometimes we have to filter out some of the judgment so we can hear what is true at our deepest level. **Intuition and inner truth belongs to everyone.**

5. Trust that your bigger creative mind will guide you (unknown)

The more familiar we become with the creative process and allow ourselves to really drop into it, the more we learn the shapes and patterns that our creativity takes. We begin to develop our own understanding of our creative flow and experience which leads to trust in our self, our creative power and the way things move through us and our life.

I make it a point that whenever I am experiencing a strong feeling of discomfort, disorientation, feelings of pressure or overwhelm to pay attention to the deep creativity that is moving through my entire system. The more I see all of my self and all of my life as part of my own unique creative flow and manifestation, the more creativity I have access to and the more I can use my creativity to integrate and heal me. As I do this, I naturally create stories and images that reflect my experience, myself, my power, my natural flow and belonging.

When I’m in this state, I follow any and all inclinations toward creativity if and when they arise. Once I begin creating again, there will often be a noticeable shift or even a great leap in my creative expression. What might have initially been perceived as a block, becomes quite the opposite. Learning to understand our deep creative currents always opens us up to an overall feeling of greater creative flow in all areas of our life.