

May 2020, Vol. 1

Creative Care Package

A package of creative materials for you to enjoy!



OHIO
Prison
Arts
Connection



OHIO
Prison
Arts
Connection

Hello!

Ohio Prison Arts Connection is a coalition of people who are dedicated to promoting arts access for people who are justice-involved, and to creating platforms to share stories, artwork, and learning resources both inside and outside prisons.

We've put together this creative care package with the support of artists, teachers, museums, and schools both inside Ohio and also around the country who want to find a way to support opportunities for people who are incarcerated during the COVID-19 quarantine to connect with their creative selves.

People in prisons around Ohio and elsewhere will receive these prompts too. We're making it available online for loved ones of incarcerated people to use or distribute however they wish. We hope to keep them coming as long as the quarantine goes on.

We hope you enjoy it!

#creativityinprison

Here are some of the groups who have contributed!

Justice Arts Coalition
Returning Artists Guild
Columbus Museum of Art
Wexner Center for the Arts
Otterbein University
Fresh A.I.R Gallery
Underground Writing
Music and Theatre Arts

WARM-UPS: Take 5 or 10 minutes to write about some, or all of the following, using as many of our five senses as possible (smell, touch, sight, hearing and taste:

1. Think about your favorite color - what memories are connected to that color? 2. What can you remember about the smell of breads or cakes baking? 3. How about the smell of dill pickles or the taste of pumpkin pie. What do you remember? 4. What do you think when you remember ringing bells, or your mother's voice? 5. Write about the touch of velvet or silk on your hands. 6. Write about your father's hands.

Then:

1. Write about a meal you loved. Where did you eat it? Who was there? Who cooked it? 2. Write about your gifts - the things about yourself you're most proud of, the best things you have to offer. 3. What's the best gift you've ever received, and why? 4. Write about what assumptions people make about you that are wrong. 5. What event in your childhood had the most impact on you as an adult? 6. What did you learn about yourself in high school? 7. What do you wish you'd known at age 15?

Take a few more minutes to write about the following:

1. A memory of a great kindness someone showed you. 2. A memory of a time you felt blissfully happy. 3. A memory of a special day you spent with your family or friend. 4. Thank about a favorite song or piece of music. Maybe it makes you want to dance or cry or sing. Write about what moves you in that music. 5. Was there a time you felt completely loved and cherished? Write about that. 6. Write about the advice you need to give yourself right now. What answers are you seeking? 7. What can I do to nurture my mind, body and soul more at this time?

Finish the story using these first line prompts:

1. The horse came back alone. 2. I hated it when she smiled that way. 3. I was just 11, but.... 4. There were a hundred picture frames on the walls, but they were all empty. 5. I was different in a way that always set me apart.

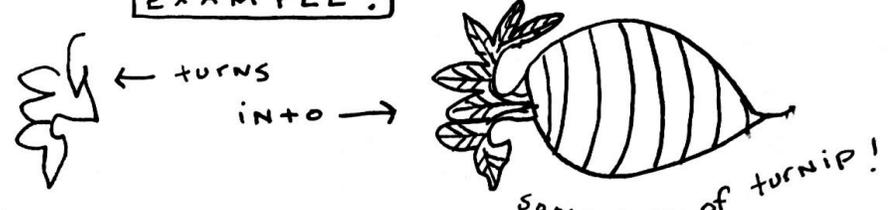
Try this:

1. What things make you feel most empowered, and why?
2. Your first kiss.
3. The smell of cinnamon.
4. A fear you carry.
5. An anger you still carry.

Stuck? Try these for a few minutes: I am thinking about.....I am remembering...I close my eyes and I can see..... Just write without judgment or editing - let it flow. It's a beginning...

MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF SCRIBBLES!

EXAMPLE!



JUST DRAW WHAT YOU SEE IN IT! LOOK AT IT EVERY WHICH WAY!



YOU CAN CLOSE YOUR EYES AND MAKE YOUR OWN SCRIBBLES + MAKE DRAWINGS FROM THOSE!

Creative Writing Prompts

The following ideas are meant to serve as guides for your writing process. There is no right or wrong way to do this. There is no right or wrong experience. The purpose is to provide a framework for using narrative to examine your experiences to gain new information, perspectives, and ways of seeing.

1. Think of a challenging incident you experienced either (doesn't have to just be challenging! Can be joyful, scary, etc. – just a strong memory)

1. Take 5-10 minutes to write the experience from your point of view, as you remember it. You may write this as a poem, or as a story, or as a journal entry, or list.

2. Think of another character in the story – was anyone with you? Was there an object nearby? Take 5-10 minutes to re-write the experience *from another perspective*.

for example: perhaps I'm writing about a challenging experience I had with a child who lived in a group home. First, I'd write about the experience as it happened for me. Then, I'd imagine the experience from the child's perspective. Other perspectives could be a police officer, a PO, a parent, a friend, a partner, or even an object like a cell phone or fork.

3. Compare the two pieces of writing. What did you learn? What do you still have questions about?

4. You can play with combining these two pieces into one, or continue working on each, or start over using what you've learned to guide this new narrative

2. Pick a word that's used in your life that carries controversial and/or heavy meaning – maybe a diagnostic or descriptive term, like “addict,” “homeless,” “convict,” etc.

1. Find a definition from a traditional source – Wikipedia, dictionary.com, etc.

2. Make a new meaning out of the word, or think of how it could be used in unexpected ways

3. Take 5-10 minutes to write a poem/story with this new definition

(see the poem on the next page for inspiration)

Ode to a Kite

by Reginald Dwayne Betts

& they rename you a kite, as if a word can make wings.
You are a piece of paper tied to a string, singing like a schoolgirl.
The paper flung into the hall & spit into another cell

or folded neatly into an envelope & dropped into a mailbox.
The envelope always has a rose drawn on the corner. Sweet weight,
your nothingness is the kind of hope that keeps razors

from plucking away at the flesh covering a vein. Tell them you're
not worthy. Whisper everything you hold back into their ears
as ink seeps into the white of you.

If the arm pressed on the table was yours, you'd want the truth about
flight. Tell those men a letter is just a letter, let them know that a name
alone can never grant wings & still say you love it: to be called kite. Yes.

Blank Page! Write, draw, create as you wish.

Here to Help

Adapted from the New York Times article, “How Students Can Write Through the Pandemic”.

By Natalie Proulx

Journaling is well-known as a therapeutic practice, a tool for helping you organize your thoughts and vent your emotions especially in anxiety-ridden times. But keeping a diary has an added benefit during a pandemic: It may help educate future generations. In an article for The New York Times titled “The Quarantine Diaries,” Amelia Nierenberg spoke to Ady, an 8-year-old in the Bay Area who is keeping a diary. Ms. Nierenberg writes:

As the coronavirus continues to spread and confine people largely to their homes, many are filling pages with their experiences of living through a pandemic. Their diaries are told in words and pictures: pantry inventories, window views, questions about the future, concerns about the present.

Taken together, the pages tell the story of an anxious, claustrophobic world on pause.

“You can say anything you want, no matter what, and nobody can judge you,” Ady said in a phone interview earlier this month, speaking about her diary. “No one says ‘scaredy-cat.’”

You can keep your own journal, recording your thoughts, questions, and experiences of living through the coronavirus pandemic. Not sure what to write about? Here are a few writing prompts to get you started:

- How has the virus disrupted your daily life?
- What effect has this crisis had on your own mental and emotional health?
- What changes, big or small, are you noticing in the world around you?

You can write in your journal every day or as often as you like. And if writing is not working for you right now, try a visual diary instead.

Acrostic Poems

An acrostic poem is a poem where the first letters of each line spell out a word or phrase vertically that acts as the theme or message of the poem. Sometimes a word or phrase can also be found down the middle or end of the poem, but the most common is at the beginning. A lot of people use these poems to describe people or holidays, and lines can be made up of single words or phrases. Acrostic poems do not follow a specific rhyme scheme, so they are easier to write.

3 Different Types Of Acrostic Poems

1. The first letter of each line

Follow
One
Course
Until
Successful

(Ohio author, not from website)

2. Using letters in the middle of the line

Poetry makes me ha**P**py
And brings j**O**y to my soul.
I can see mys**E**lf in the words,
And it makes **M**e feel whole.

3. The last letter of each line

When I'm feeling down and need a pick-me-u**P**
No other thing than write will d**O**.
It releases my emotions and makes me feel like m**E**.
There's nothing like writing to make me ca**M**.

Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com>

Try it! Use your name or a word that is important to you. Write several of them. Consider giving them as gifts to friends or family.

Faith

“Faith is a sounder guide than reason. Reason can go only so far, but faith has no limits.”

Blaise Pascal

“Faith is the function of the heart.”

Mahatma Gandhi

“Faith is the daring of the soul to go farther than it can see.”

William Newton Clark

Writing options:

- What is your definition of faith?
- What difference does faith make in how you live?
- Write a short story in which a character’s faith affects his actions.
- Write a poem in the shape of an object related to faith.

Persian Proverb

“I wept because I had no shoes, until I saw a man who had no feet.”

What message do these words speak to your heart?

A Helping Hand

“When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

Writing options:

- Do you agree with this quote? Disagree? Why?
- Write about someone who has contributed to you that made your life better.
- Write about a specific way you have contributed something – but not in a way that “toots your own horn.” Put your “gift” into a character in a short story or play.
- Write a poem about giving,

Hope

“Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.” Dale Carnegie

Dale Carnegie (1888-1955) was an American writer and lecturer, and the developer of courses in self-improvement, salesmanship, corporate training, public speaking, and interpersonal skills. Born into poverty on a farm in Missouri, he was the author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, a bestseller that remains popular today.

[Wikipedia](#)

“If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today, I still have a dream.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) was an American Christian minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the Civil Rights Movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. King is best known for advancing civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, inspired by his Christian beliefs and the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi. King led the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott and later became the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. As president of the SCLC, he then led an unsuccessful 1962 struggle against segregation in Albany, Georgia, and helped organize the nonviolent 1963 protests in Birmingham, Alabama. He helped organize the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. On October 14, 1964, King won the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolent resistance. In 1965, he helped organize the Selma to Montgomery marches. [Wikipedia](#)

Writing options:

- What is your definition of hope?
- What do you do to maintain hope?
- What do you think of these men? How are their lives similar/different – to each other? To yours? What do you admire about them? What do you dislike?
- How could these men/their words influence your life today?

Tomorrow's Promise

“Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forward.” Soren Kierkegaard

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was a Danish philosopher, theologian, poet, social critic and religious author who is widely considered to be the first existentialist philosopher. He wrote critical texts on organized religion, Christendom, morality, ethics, psychology, and the philosophy of religion, displaying a fondness for metaphor, irony and parables. [Wikipedia](#)

“The past should be a springboard, not a hammock.” Ivern Ball (American writer from the south)

Writing options:

- What do you think of these quotes? Agree/disagree? Like/dislike? Why?
- What pictures come to mind? Draw one of them.
- Write a poem or story to go with your image.

Looking ahead

“To be happy, drop the words *if only* and substitute instead with *next time*.”

Smiley Blanton (American author and psychiatrist)

Writing options:

- Do you believe this? Why/why not?
- How could you practice this today?
- Compare this to Kierkegaard’s quote, “Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forward.”
- Create a poem with contrasting lines if only/next time – use your own life lessons.

Inner strength

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”
Anne Frank (1920-1945)

Annelies Marie "Anne" Frank was a German-Dutch diarist of Jewish origin. One of the most discussed Jewish victims of the Holocaust, she gained fame posthumously with the publication of *The Diary of a Young Girl*, in which she documents her life in hiding from 1942 to 1944, during the German occupation of the Netherlands in World War II. [Wikipedia](#) [Notice that she lived in hiding - in a storeroom, with 7 other people - for over two years. From there she went to a concentration camp, where she died at age 15. Her diary was found and published 2 years later.]

Writing options:

- Considering Anne’s “world” was limited to a “secret annex,” what do you think about this quote?
- Where do you draw strength from to survive?
- What can you do to improve the world?
- Write a poem as a diary entry – in keeping with Anne’s main form of writing.

A grateful heart

“Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” Marcel Proust (1871-1922), French novelist, critic, and essayist

“Reflect upon your present blessings – of which every man has many – not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.” Charles Dickens (1812-1870), English writer and social critic

Writing options:

- Who has helped your soul blossom? Write about them – literally or in terms of gardening.
- Gratefulness can help you stay positive, especially when life is difficult. Write about a time when the simple act of being thankful changed your outlook. If you haven't experienced this, try it. Or create a story in which it happens.
- What are you grateful for? Make a list of your blessings. Could this be a poem?
- Write an anacrostic poem:

G
R
A
T
I
T
U
D
E

Your Moment is Now

“You become successful the moment you start moving toward a worthwhile goal.”

Samuel Johnson (18th century English critic, biographer, essayist,
poet, and lexicographer)

“Don’t be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated; you can’t cross a chasm in two small jumps.”

David Lloyd George (1863-1945) British statesman

Writing options:

- What worthwhile goals have you established for yourself?
- Both of these quotes imply movement is necessary. What are you moving toward?
- What chasm exists between you and your goals? Can you picture the space? Draw it or describe it in prose or poetry. Make it clear – using descriptive words and all 5 senses.
- How can you cross the gap? Or what plans can you make to do so? What action can you take today toward that goal?

One World: Together at Home was a two-hour concert broadcast around the world to benefit the World Health Organization, sponsored by Global Citizen* (Sunday April 19, 2020). Famous musicians and late night hosts banded together: Lady Gaga, Lizzo, John Legend, Jennifer Hudson, Andra Day, The Rolling Stones, Steven Colbert and the Jimmys, and more).

[***Global Citizen** is a movement of engaged citizens who are using their collective voice to end extreme poverty by 2030. On our platform, Global Citizens learn about the systemic causes of extreme poverty, take action on those issues, and earn rewards for their actions — as part of a global community committed to lasting change.]

THE QUESTIONS:

Stevie Wonder, prophetic voice and multi-instrumentalist, performed two songs at the *One World: Together at Home* concert: “Love’s in Need of Love Today” from *Songs in the Key of Life*, stevie’s brilliant, groundbreaking double album (1976), and “Lean On Me,” by the late Bill Withers (recorded in 1972). Study the lyrics included below.

Write a short essay, song lyrics, or a spoken word piece reflecting and responding to the ideas in the songs. Why might stevie wonder have chosen these two pieces? What might have been going through his mind as he thought about what songs to perform for a worldwide audience during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Why do these pieces, written over 40 years ago, feel so relevant and capture the spirit of this moment?

What two meaningful songs would you choose and why if you were performing for a worldwide audience at the ***One World: Together at Home*** concert?

For the discerning listeners, experienced songwriters or poets, what makes either or both of these songs memorable?

Can music, whom some call the universal language, unify global citizens to action around issues of healthcare and poverty?

For visual artists, can you depict, in any medium the emotions and meaning behind the lyrics of either song?

THE LYRICS:

Love’s In Need of Love Today (stevie wonder)

Spoken by SW:

"When you say that you kill in the
Name of God or in the name of Allah,
You are truly cursing God, for that is not of God.

When you say that you hate in the name of God or Allah,
You are lying to God, for that is not of our Father.
Let us pray that we see the light."

Good morn or evening friends
Here's your friendly announcer
I have serious news to pass on to every-body
What I'm about to say
Could mean the world's disaster
Could change your joy and laughter to tears and pain

It's that
Love's in need of love today
Don't delay
Send yours in right away
Hate's goin' round
Breaking many hearts
Stop it please
Before it's gone too far

The force of evil plans
To make you its possession
And it will if we let it
Destroy ev-er-y-body
We all must take...
Precautionary measures
If love and please you treasure
Then you'll hear me when I say

Oh that
Love's in need of love today
Love's in need of love today
Don't delay
Don't delay
Send yours in right away
Right a-way

^^

Lean on Me (the late Bill Withers)

Sometimes in our lives we all have pain
We all have sorrow
But if we are wise
We know that there's always tomorrow

Lean on me, when you're not strong

And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on

Please swallow your pride
If I have things you need to borrow
For no one can fill those of your needs
That you won't let show

You just call on me brother, when you need a hand
We all need somebody to lean on
I just might have a problem that you'll understand
We all need somebody to lean on

If there is a load you have to bear
That you can't carry
I'm right up the road
I'll share your load

MANDALA DESIGNS

Martha Bartfeld

Submitted by Kings & Queens of Art
Cleveland OH gwendolyngarth@gmail.com

A Member of Ohio Prisons Arts Connection
OPAC

Always know that we are here for you!

About Mandalas

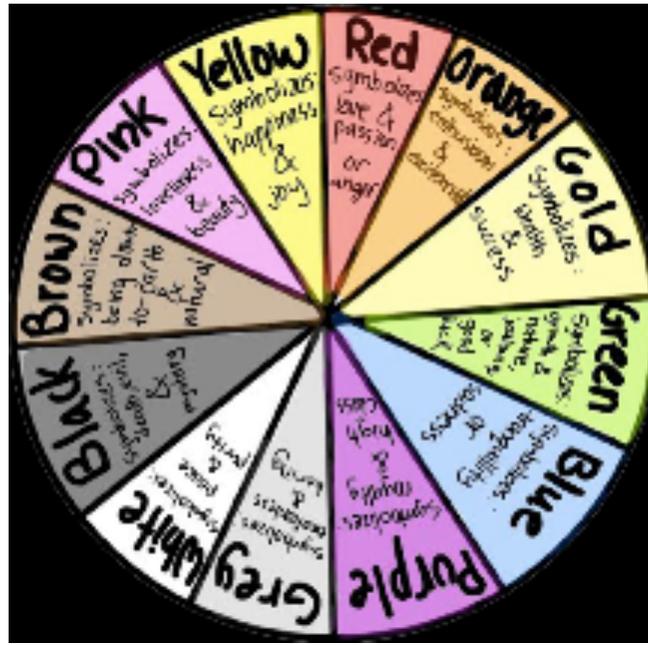
Although the forms and functions of various kinds of mandalas differ, even within the Hindu tradition, man-dalas have in common several qualities: a central point, the geometric nature of the design, the symmetry of the pattern, and the purpose of representing the oneness of the universe formed of multiple, diverse, and sometimes seemingly chaotic elements. The Buddhist mandalas of Tibet, China, and Japan are of two main kinds: the "womb-world" designs, representing movement from the one to the many, and the "diamond-world" or "thunderbolt-world" designs, expressing movement from the many to the one.

Color Associations

While no direct cause and effect relationship between color and behavior has been found, some generalizations about colors and what they may symbolize have been determined. Colors including red, yellow, and orange are considered warm colors and are thought to stimulate excited emotions.

Cool colors are found on the blue end of the visible light spectrum and include blue, violet, and green. These colors are associated with calmness, coolness, and tranquility.

Color symbolism is often employed in the field of graphic design and publishing to evoke certain emotions. Whether influenced by age, gender, culture, or not, research studies indicate that colors do have some impact on physiology, behavior, and mood in some individuals.



Mandala Coloring Challenge

Pick 3 Mandalas...please do not expend a lot of energy on your choices.

Use 3 of your favorite colors to color them.

Then share with us why you made those choices for the mandalas and the colors.

Make your own color wheel like the one above only place your own interpretations of what those colors mean to you!

