



On Becoming an Artist: Reinventing Yourself Through Mindful Creativity

Ellen J. Langer

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“All it takes to become an artist is to start doing art.”

—from *On Becoming an Artist*

On Becoming an Artist is loaded with good news. Backed by her landmark scientific work on mindfulness and artistic nature, bestselling author and Harvard psychologist Ellen J. Langer shows us that creativity is not a rare gift that only some special few are born with, but rather an integral part of everyone's makeup. All of us can express our creative impulses—authentically and uniquely—and, in the process, enrich our lives.

Why then do so many of us merely dream of *someday* painting, someday writing, someday making music? Why do we think the same old thoughts, harbor the same old prejudices, stay stuck in the same old mud? Who taught us to think “inside the box”?

No one is more qualified to answer these questions than Dr. Langer, who has explored their every facet for years. She describes dozens of fascinating experiments—her own and those of her colleagues—that are designed to study mindfulness and its relation to human creativity, and she shares the profound implications of the results—for our well-being, health, and happiness.

Langer reveals myriad insights, among them: We think we should already know what only firsthand experience can teach us. . . . In learning the ways that all roses are alike, we risk becoming blind to their differences. . . . If we are mindfully creative, the circumstances of the moment will tell us what to do. . . . Those of us who are less evaluatively inclined experience less guilt, less regret, less blame, and tend to like ourselves more. . . . Uncertainty gives us the freedom to discover meaning. . . . Finally, what we think we're sure of may not even exist.

With the skill of a gifted logician, Langer demonstrates exactly how we undervalue ourselves and undermine our creativity. By example, she persuades us to have faith in our creative works, not because someone else approves of them but because they're a true expression of ourselves. Her high-spirited, challenging book sparkles with wit and intelligence and inspires in us an infectious enthusiasm for our creations, our world, and ourselves. It can be of lifelong value to everyone who reads it.

From the Hardcover edition.

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