



Peer Perspective

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“I can’t sing to save my life.” “I’m a terrible dancer.” “I can’t draw.”

We hear these responses all the time and many of us say them ourselves. But what do we mean when we say we can’t do these things? When it comes down to it, the majority of people *can* physically do these things. Usually, what we mean by “I can’t” when it comes to creativity is “I’m not good at it.” When we break it down, though, where does that belief come from? Many of us drew things and colored pictures and sang songs and danced when we were young children.

I would also guess that most of us had someone along the way tell us we were bad at these things, that we shouldn’t do these things, or laugh or make fun of us in some way. It could have been family, friends, classmates, teachers... really anyone who had any influence in our lives.

It’s also possible that we began to compare our creativity to that of our peers and we started telling ourselves we aren’t one of those “gifted” people and we just aren’t destined to be creative.

Pretty soon we were telling others and telling ourselves “I can’t.”

In my immediate and extended family while I was growing up, there was always someone smarter, funnier, more talented, more creative. Because of this and many other factors, I stopped trying to be creative and in doing so, forgot about some things I really like to do. Recently I decided to try some creative things again with an important rule for myself – **no judgment**. I started writing when I thought of things to write about. I started sketching things that popped into my head. Good, bad, whatever – it didn’t matter. I just put pencil (erasable is important for me – less pressure!) to paper and see what comes of it. And what I learned is that I actually am creative, even if what comes out isn’t something I love or something I want to share.

We are *all* creative, whether we believe it or not. Our brains use creative thinking all the time – putting words together to form sentences, solving problems we encounter, doing something spontaneous when things don’t go according to plan. If you have a voice, you can sing. If you can move all or a part of your body, you can dance. If you can hold a writing utensil – whether with your fingers, your fist, the crook of your elbow, or in any other way – you can draw. And ultimately it is entirely up to you whether to practice these abilities or share them with anyone else, but I encourage everyone who thinks they can’t do something they actually *can* (literally) do to give it a try without judging yourself. You might discover (or rediscover) something you enjoy!

We are the evidence; We hold the hope.