



# Painting For Life

A weekly workshop

with

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**Painting For Life** provides a safe and powerful learning container that uses community building and a “mindfulness painting” practice to foster healing, spiritual awakening and personal transformation

# **PAINTING FOR LIFE**

## **THE MANUAL**

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### **THE WE-SPACE & BUILDING COMMUNITY**

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Painting For Life creates a powerful learning container where we build community by safely exploring parts of ourselves and of our consciousness. Together, we create an expansive energy field called “we-space.” We connect and listen deeply to each other as we all intimately share what’s on our hearts. Resonating with each other in this way creates a group coherence and harmony whose energy holds powerful healing qualities.

You are invited to work from the heart and express yourself in forms and colors. As you paint, you process your emotions and liberate yourself from the psychological and physical dis-ease they may cause. The Painting For Life (PFL) practice includes techniques such as Mindfulness Meditation, Shadow Work, Amplifying Joy or Identifying with Archetypes. The aim is to help you heal your wounds, wake up to your true self, and manifest your life purpose.

We play in our dreams at night but don’t dream of doing so when we are awake. PFL invites you to bring dream consciousness back to your ordinary life. Demand what you want from your unconscious. Let suffering be a thing of your past. Old energy wants to change. Trust yourself. Don’t be fooled by old systems. These are new times where we need to operate not from thinking but from feeling. Feeling with every parts of our being.

## **WHO IS PAINTING FOR LIFE FOR?**

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Painting For Life is for anyone. You don't need to think of yourself as an artist or have any special talent. Everybody is an artist. You don't need any previous experience in art, only to have an open heart and mind. By placing healing within a spiritual context, Painting For Life offers a holistic approach which speeds up the process by providing meaning and purpose.

Painting For Life targets "healthy normals" eager to respond to their human urge to grow psychologically and awaken spiritually; people who value group experience as a dynamic "we-space" that enhances motivation and facilitates healing through creating healthy relationships. It also targets people who seek to use art as part of their meditative practice; people who practice sacred ceremonies with an entheogen and want to integrate their transcendent experiences; people interested in enlarging their experience in the art-therapy field; people who suffer from mild depression or PTSD conditions. It is not for people diagnosed with a mental illness.

## **WHAT WILL YOU GET FROM ATTENDING A PFL WORKSHOP?**

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PFL uses art as a catalyst for psychological and spiritual growth. This is a community-building workshop that addresses our need to come out of our sense of separateness and isolation, share our commonality, and experience our interconnectedness. Central to the teachings is "Presencing" or experiencing and accepting the present moment as is. Sharing our experiences reveals itself to be an intrinsic part of our healing and awakening journey. Investigating the imagery of our paintings together brings unforeseen links between various elements of our lives. We learn to forgive, have compassion for ourselves and others, and be grateful for all the gifts of life.

Unconscious wounds and traumas are actively impacting our everyday thoughts and actions, even if unbeknownst to us. PFL invites you to enter a meditative state, express yourself from your deeper nature, and dig into your subconscious to do what Carl Jung called Shadow Work. The revelatory power of art helps you bring back to consciousness wounds that have been denied or traumas that have been frozen in memory for years, if not decades. By sensing your body and giving form to biological issues, painting helps you to process your wounds and liberate yourselves from their grip. The courage required to bring darkness to light is rewarded with transformative insights, insights that shift traumas into doorways to Spirit.

The PFL teachings are mainly—but not exclusively—rooted in Buddhist wisdom and Carl Jung’s Archetypal psychology. We use Jung’s Active Imagination technique as a bridge between the conscious "ego" and the unconscious. The contents of one’s unconscious are translated into images, which constitute a narrative in and of themselves, while over time the paintings create a larger narrative that may bring insights, especially about the meaning and purpose of your life.

The work is not linear. We circle round and round from one technique to another, deepening our grasp of them as we go. This makes it possible for people to come in and out of the class without feeling lost.

## **THE WORKSHOP PROGRAM**

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The workshop is programmed as a two-hour session consisting of a one-hour painting session bracketed between a half-hour Opening Circle and a half-hour Closing Circle. Classes are capped at eight people to give everyone a chance to share in each circle.

**Opening Circle** Being the leader/facilitator, I begin the Opening Circle by offering a brief prompting with a suggested exercise. I then invite you the participants to share what’s on your heart in this very moment while everyone else listens deeply. The workshop offers a safe container where you can share without being judged or criticized. I may interact spontaneously to draw out issues and give support, but cross talking is limited. When everyone has spoken, I lead a three-minute meditation, giving everyone an opportunity to access a calm, clear state of mind, at once relaxed and alert. Meditation helps you to get in touch with your deeper self where intuition and creativity abide. I invite everyone to paint from this state of mind and work with passion.

**Painting Session** Before the pandemic, participants came to my studio where paints, paper and brushes were ready to go. With the Zoom workshop, you paint in your own space with whatever materials you have. I invite you to work from a place of presence. Being present is the beginning, the middle and the end of this process. You must approach the white paper without any preconceived idea of what you are going to do. “The product is none of your business!” as my own teacher Michele Cassou used to say. Now, this doesn’t mean that you work aimlessly. No. You get in touch with your emotions and feel how they are connected to thoughts or memories, recent or distant. Each line, each color, each blot of paint is to be respected for having meaning, even if you aren’t conscious of it when you paint. You allow everything to change as you go.

Your work will speak to you and reveal its meaning later, but you aren't concerned about meaning when you paint. You strictly focus on what's going on emotionally. Painting must come from a place beyond the thinking mind. When you let go of thought, you automatically access a deeper place, a place where you are connected with your foundational nature, a place where you get a sense of being at one with the whole. Energy flows. You aren't creating the painting, the painting is creating itself.

**Closing Circle** When the painting is over, you sign and date your paintings, take a picture of it, text it or email it to me, and reconvene on Zoom for the Closing Circle. You are then invited to share your artwork and your process—as much or as little as you wish. It's important to respect everyone's capacity and boundaries. Feedback is strictly conceived to give support, never to judge or criticize. Sharing invites to further inquiry. What happened in your inner being as you painted? What came up? Memories? Visions? Did you touch a traumatic place that had remained secret until now? What insight did you get? How do you feel now in comparison to when you started? Did the painting activity energize you? Did it release you from physical or emotional tension? Or perhaps you didn't go to a painful place, you found refuge in joy instead. Joy is a virtue that needs to be developed. Joy is a radical act. It puts our consumer's happiness in perspective. Painting gives you an opportunity to give form to joy, to give form to the sublime, the sacred, the formless.

## **SETTING UP YOUR STUDIO AT HOME**

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Since the pandemic, I'm holding the workshop on Zoom, so you need to prepare your own materials at home. I suggest Tempera, acrylics or watercolors on poster boards, with good calligraphy brushes. Since the focus isn't on the product but on the creative process itself, you may also use Crayolas, charcoals, pastels, color felt-points, pens ... whatever works for you is OK. Here are a few tips on how to set up your studio at home.

Chose a 3-foot space on a wall. Protect the wall with cardboard or plastic and tape on it a 20" x 26" poster board (I get them from Michael's). On a side table, set a couple of ice-cube trays with a variety of pre-mixed Tempera paints—add white to rainbow colors for pastels; brown or black (be careful, a drop of Black goes a long way) for various tones. (Blick is my favorite Tempera brand. Prang is OK. Avoid Sargent Art-Time). Add three good calligraphy brushes, a bowl of water, some rags, and you are ready to go!

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