

5-2011

Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential: The Expressive Path to Personal Growth

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Recommended Citation

Ockuly, Marta D., "Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential: The Expressive Path to Personal Growth" (2011). *Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects*. Paper 139.

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Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential: The Expressive Path to Personal Growth
by

Marta Davidovich Ockuly

A Project
in
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2011

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

Abstract

An experiential journey into personal growth and creative expression is, by nature, transformational. Undertaken in a public platform using social media (Twitter and blogging) it reveals powerful potential as a teaching and mentoring tool for inspiring creative action around the world. This project was designed to blend my joys and passions for tweeting positive inspiration and encouragement, sharing my readings and research related to creativity, exploring expressive art, activating creative potential with joy, collecting and sharing quotes, coaching positive change and creative action, and raising awareness of everyday creativity into a learning pathway which could be accessed by anyone using the internet. My intents were to trigger interest in exploring personal creative potential by offering daily insights, inspiration, prompts and encouragement which could lead to increased creative action, joy and positive change experiences. This project was also a vehicle for building social media marketing skills to generate dramatic increases in audience, followers, and visits to my websites. As a creativity educator, it is critical to attend to my own creative process as a way of informing my growth as a creativity catalyst and creative change leader. I believe teaching creativity creatively has the power to positively change lives and our collective future. As a result of this project, I am prepared to take creativity training mainstream with the world as my classroom.

Marta Davidovich Ockuly

Date

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Dates of Approval:

Dr. Cynthia Burnett
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Marta Davidovich Ockuly

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My life has been positively changed by my decision to relocate from Sarasota, Florida to Buffalo, New York in order to earn my Master of Science degree in Creativity from the International Center for Creativity Studies at Buffalo State College. The experience has been nothing short of transformational. I am profoundly grateful to the professors and peers who have shared my journey. Special appreciation goes to my first instructor in the program and the man who opened Grad House just in time to make my move affordable, Mike Fox. I thank my advisor, second professor, and teaching-style mentor, Dr. Sue Keller-Mathers for her unwavering support and encouragement from the moment I arrived. I won't forget Dr. John Cabra whose gentle humor and creative approaches to teaching got me through the Research Assessments class, or Dr. Gerard Puccio, for guiding me into the awareness of my dynamic and creative leadership capabilities. I deeply appreciate Dr. Cyndi Burnett, the 'bright light' instructor who so beautifully brought the holistic and expressive elements of creativity into focus for me in a profoundly important way. She is my inspired Master's Project advisor, encourager of my expressiveness, and the person who has guided me through peaks and valleys of my intense encounter with this program. Cyndi also gets credit for intuitively teaming me up with my brilliant and talented sounding board partner, Amy Frazier. Amy and I have formed a wonderful partnership which offers both insight and comic relief (as needed). A special thank you goes to Dr. Ruth Richards of Saybrook University for her generous sharing and affirming friendship. What a magical journey this has been. I leave knowing the faculty, special friends Juliana, Emily, Jenna, and Jane, current ICSC peers, and past and future alumni will be part of my 'creativity family' forever.

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Section One

Background to the Project:

Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential: An Expressive Path to Personal Growth

In many ways, my experience at Buffalo State began in Barcelona. In 2009, my cousin invited me along to an educational conference where she presented a short paper. I had the opportunity to sit in on several sessions related to creativity. What I heard was distressing. One scholar spent twenty minutes discussing the importance of grading high school student's journals on grammar and sentence structure. When I asked about possible constraints on creativity and flow, she replied: "There is no room for creativity in the classroom," and went on to state, "Today's students have bigger concerns than creativity." Even more shocking, was observing the audience (no less than two hundred educators) nodding their heads in approval. In that moment, I knew it was part of my purpose to teach, inspire, and raise awareness of everyone's creative potential and the vital importance of creativity to students, educators, citizens and change leaders around the world.

My first course of action was to locate a program offering a science-focused master's degree in creativity. This led me to the International Center for Studies in Creativity. I applied, was accepted, and relocated to Buffalo, New York from my home in Sarasota, Florida, in May of 2010. My plan was to complete my studies in one year. May 14, 2011 that dream will come true at commencement. It is an understatement to say this experience has been transformational.

*“We dance round in a ring and suppose, but the
Secret sits in the middle and knows.”*

Robert Frost

There’s a lot of dancing around and supposing related to the topic of creativity. In my experience, the act of imagining possibilities coupled with creative action opens priceless doorways to self-discovery. With inspiration and encouragement, people can be empowered to activate their creative potential with joy. The purpose of this project is to facilitate a group creative learning experience using social media as a teaching and coaching platform. My virtual classroom will meet over a 10-week period (and beyond) at www.JoyofQuotesBlog.com. I will also share creativity prompts and encouragement via Twitter at <http://twitter.com/QuoteJoy>. Every week I will address a new theme related to creativity and personal growth. My ‘tribe’ of student/followers will have the opportunity to choose from a variety of creative action prompts, read reviews of relevant literature and research, and take action to stretch their creative boundaries via weekly blog postings and daily tweets.

Sharing of creative products will be encouraged, but not required. Everyone in the world is invited. The course is fee-free. I will post photos of my process products and stories about my experiences on this journey. Participants will have the option of e-mailing me with personal questions or coaching related to this experience. Twitter will be my primary vehicle for supplemental daily prompts, motivational quote sharing, and interest stimulating questions. My goal is to stimulate positive change and a chain-reaction of creative action around the world!

There seems to be a veil blocking most of us from seeing our full creative potential. I am using this experience as my own mythic journey to discover that place inside myself. I’ve selected the “Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential” (shown below) which sing to me to use as

stepping stones for wading through the uncharted waters leading to creative awakening. I promise a fun journey peppered with honest insights, lots of aha's, tweets about what works and what doesn't, along with words, videos, and links to creative work and research which inspires me along the way.

Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential

1. You are not alone.
2. Creative play is important.
3. Make room for mindfulness.
4. Use joy as your GPS.
5. Think of failure as your friend.
6. Finding your passion pays.
7. Explore the intuitive path to creativity.
8. Brain science says: believe in your creativity.
9. Teaching (and learning) creativity creatively.
10. Creativity and Potential.

Rationale for Selection:

As a Joy Coach, Creativity Consultant, and cancer survivor with first-hand knowledge of the transformational benefits of using expressive arts and movement to access buried creative treasures, I have been heavily influenced by the Third Force Humanistic movement theorists (Rollo May, 1977; Abraham Maslow, 1962) and positive psychology's Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996). My creative spirit also longs to explore research related to the roles of movement and neurobiology (Hannaford, 2005), the creative brain (Carson, 2010), and the power of activating creative passions (Robinson, 2009, 2011). Graduation from this Master's program represents a

huge milestone. At 58, I am launching myself into a new career in higher education. As a teacher of creative process, I am excited to walk the path I will ask my students to undertake. The journey inward is, by nature, unique for each of us. It must fully engage and embody the body, mind, and spirit of the traveler. With joy as my GPS, I am ready to learn about myself while enriching the lives of others along the way.

I consider myself a creative change leader with a track record of taking calculated risks. The idea of publicly walking this path, facing fears, taking risks, and sharing the fruits of my creative labors with the world both scares and thrills me. The inspiring quotes I feel guided to share reveal both my intuitive insights and parts of my soul. As an agent for peace, joy and positive change - I have no doubt there will be value delivered to all who are open to the transformative nature of this course. The enthusiasm I feel bears testimony to the profound importance of this project to my own creative potential. I embrace the gift of this experience with high hopes and joyful anticipation.

Section Two

Pertinent Literature

Narrative of Literature

Books reviewed in this section represent seven titles which played a key role in my personal process. Each will be included on my recommended reading list for students taking Creative Process, a course I will soon be teaching at Eckerd College. Selections are listed in the order they appeared in the blog series.

Richards, R. (Ed.). (2007). *Everyday creativity and new views of human nature:*

Psychological, social, and spiritual perspectives. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association Press.

Dr. Richards, Saybrook University professor, distinguished Harvard researcher and creativity scholar, addresses the importance of honoring the originality in everyday life. In a personal communication Richards shared, “It’s strange – many people still think creativity is largely about making art, and it is much more relevant to famous people than the rest of us. Not so!” This robust edited collection features a dozen scholars addressing the nature of creativity from diverse perspectives.

Brown, B. (2010). *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you’re supposed to*

be and embrace who you are. Center City, MN: Hazelden.

Dr. Brown has spent twenty years researching human behavior. I became aware of her newest book from a TED talk she delivered on the topic of accepting imperfection (<http://tiny.ly/JMz9>). It is a book about practicing self-compassion and speaks to the role perfectionism plays in

blocking full creative expression. She shares powerful insights into the way unconscious thoughts, feelings and emotions can sabotage our success.

Scalin, N. (2010). *365 A daily creativity journal: Make something every day and change your life.* Minneapolis, MN: Voyageur Press.

This book was launched with a young man's decision to create a skull a day. He blogged about the project and shared photos daily. Soon publishers were offering him book contracts and he was even invited to appear on the Martha Stewart Show. Doing anything creative, every day, for an entire year, takes persistence, imagination and commitment. It also delivers lots of practice and a huge sense of creative accomplishment. The concept is brilliant because the idea of taking one small creative action daily is palatable. In my mind, it could work as a great class project.

Hannaford, C. (2005). *Smart moves: Why learning is not all in your head.* Salt Lake City, UT: Great River Books.

I have a total fascination with the ideas introduced by biologist and educator, Dr. Carla Hannaford. I learned we can only grow new brain cells when we're totally focused on (and enthused about) an activity. This book addresses the importance of movement and joy (and finding safe ways to express all emotions) in creativity. It also introduced me to the power of simple Brain Gym exercises for increasing mental functions. The documentation related to improved learning ability is astounding. I will be putting these techniques into practice in my classroom, as well as my personal life.

Carson, S. (2010). *Your creative brain: Seven steps to maximize imagination, productivity, and innovation in your life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dr. Shelly Carson teaches a popular creativity course at Harvard University. She boldly states:

We are all creative. Creativity is the hallmark human capacity that has allowed us to survive thus far. Our brains are wired to be creative, and the only thing stopping you from expressing the creativity that is your birthright is your belief that there are creative people and uncreative people and that you fall in that second category (2011, p. 9).

That quote, I believe, is worth the price of the book! Carson communicates complex concepts in simple terms using fun illustrations, as well as action prompts and affirming assessments and quizzes.

Robinson, K. (2009). *The element: How finding your passion changes everything*. New York, NY: Viking/Penguin.

I found this book to be profoundly powerful because Robinson zeros in on the importance of connecting with personal passions and joys to activate creative potential. He advocates for transforming (rather than reforming) the education system to support individualized learning programs and includes powerful examples of schools successfully embracing this philosophy.

In my opinion this is a 'must read' book for every person on the planet interested in maximizing creativity and activating human potential.

Robinson, K. (2011). *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative*. United Kingdom: Capstone Publishing.

Robinson's newest book goes deeper into the importance of creativity in our world and addresses specific actions which must be taken if we are to survive as a species. He also speaks strongly to the fact we are all creative and cites examples of 'radical innovation' pilot programs working miracles through the use of technology coupled with group work, collaborative projects and 'thinking time.' This book has a strong creative leadership component. Another 'must read.'

Selected Bibliography

The selected bibliography which follows lists other books I read, referenced in one of the ten blogs, or used in my research over the course of this Master's Project.

Bennett, C. (2010). *The confident creative*. Scotland: Findhorn Press.

Cameron, J. (1992). *The artists' way: A spiritual path to higher creativity*. New York, NY: Putnam.

Carroll, K. (2009). *The red rubber ball at work*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Cousineau, P. (2008). *Stoking the creative fires*. San Francisco, CA: Conari Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York, NY: HarperPerennial.

Davis, G. A. (2004). *Creativity is forever* (5th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Edwards, B. (1999). *Drawing on the right side of the brain*. New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.

Ellerby, J.H. (2010). *Inspiration deficit disorder*. New York, NY: Hay House.

Gardner, H. (2006). *Muliple intelligences*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

- Gregory, D. (2006). *The creative license: Giving yourself permission to be the artist you truly are*. New York, NY: Hyperion.
- Heath, C. & Heath, D. (2010). *Switch: How to change things when change is hard*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.
- Lambert, C. (2007). The science of happiness. *Harvard Magazine*. January-February, 26-31, 94.
- May, R. (1975). *The courage to create*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.
- Maslow, A. H. (1962). *Toward a psychology of being*. New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company.
- Milne, J. (2008). *Go! The art of change*. Wellington, NZ: Steele Roberts Publishers.
- Phillips, J. (1997). *Marry your muse: Making a lasting commitment to your creativity*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books.
- Pink, D. H. (2006). *A whole new mind: Why right-brainers will rule the future*. New York, NY: Riverhead.
- Rasberry, S. & Selwyn, P. (1981). *Living your life out loud: How to unlock your creativity and unleash your joy*. New York, NY: Pocket.
- SARK. (2004). *Make your creative dreams real*. New York, NY: Fireside.
- Seligman, M. E. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. NY: The Free Press.
- Zander, R.S. & Zander, B. (2000). *The art of possibility: Transforming professional and personal life*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Section Three: Process Plan

How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes?

Upon approval of this proposal, I launched this journey into my personal (yet public) ‘Expressive Path to Personal Growth.’ My idea of taking weekends off for incubation went right out the window. So many hours went into daily mindfulness, movement, journaling, expressive art, and reading, in addition to two hours a day dedicated to social media (tweeting, sending direct messages, searching out followers interested in creativity, scrolling through posts to find messages to retweet, and well as reading Google alert articles) that weekends ended up being the only time I could find to actually write and produce the blogs. That process itself amounted to a full eight hours on average. I indicated in my concept paper the intention to spend hours some days, and minutes other days. In all honesty, the ‘minute’ days never materialized. A big part of my process was reading the literature I selected to inspire and frame this experience. These readings did become a rich source of quotes for Twitter posts, as well as inspiration for many of my creative actions.

This journey was strongly intuitively guided. I made room in my life for catching waves of flow and playing with my creative blocks as I wrote prompts, posts and blogs. For me, searching for, finding, and sharing positively inspiring quotes related to creativity and personal growth is a huge source of joy. It is also an experience in mindfulness and service. I believe sharing inspiration and encouragement is a gift of love I am honored to offer every person on the planet. It takes lots of energy and time, but following my joy fills me with boundless energy.

The timeline which follows shows the way my ‘path into uncharted creative waters’ actually unfolded.

Project Timeline:

- Week 1: Feb. 20-25 Theme: You are not alone.
- Launched kick-off blog inviting people to join my ‘creative tribe’ and this 10-week journey into uncharted creative waters. Followed my first creativity prompt: build a nest for doing collage in my bed. Read *The Gifts of Imperfection* (Brown, 2010) book from ‘top ten’ list. Posted tweets inviting people to the new blog (starting point: 1, 237 followers). Journalled insight, shared inspiration, practiced mindfulness.
- Week 2: Feb. 26-March 5 Theme: Creative play is important.
- Read Dr. Ruth Richards’ work in *Everyday Creativity* (2007). Read and reviewed *Switch* (Heath & Heath, 2010). Wrote blog and tweets. Created five creativity prompts. Made a permission to play collage and took a photo of it for the blog. Journalled/found quotes/shared tweets/practiced mindfulness/danced/played with my own creativity/looked at my resistance/bought an Arthur Murray Groupon.
- Week 3: March 6-13 Theme: Make room for mindfulness.
- Reviewed Dr. Brown’s book and TED talk. Read/reviewed Scanlin’s *365 Day Creativity Journal* (2010). Wrote blog and tweets. Started mindful eating. Took discovery walk. Created two collages. Took first Arthur Murray group dance lesson. Started Zumba classes. Journalled, shared insights/inspiration, practiced mindfulness, played, meditated & laughed.
- Week 4: March 14-21 Theme: Use joy as your GPS.
- Review *Smart Moves* (Hannaford, 2005). Wrote blog coaching readers through making a joy mandala. Went crazy creating tons of art! Completed 4 collages and

a painting. Journalled a lot. Got a coloring book and colored. Posted tweets and creative prompts. Did three Zumba classes. Wonderful one-on-one cha-cha class at Arthur Murray. Meditated, practiced mindfulness & gratitude.

Week 5

March 22-26 Theme: Think of failure as your friend.

Reviewed *The Artist's Way* (Cameron, 1992), *Sark's Make Your Creative Dreams Real* (2004), and *Beautiful Oops!* (Saltzberg, 2010) and *Creative License: Giving Yourself Permission to be the Artist you Truly Are* by Danny Gregory (2006).

Gave myself permission to miss my blog deadline. Wrote blog and tweets. Made collages, journalled, meditated, practiced mindfulness, experienced a project failure and serious sadness.

Week 6

March 27-April 3 Theme: Finding your passion pays.

Reviewed *The Element*, *The Red Rubber Ball at Work* (Carroll, 2009) and Gardner's *Multiple Intelligences* (2006). Found website to great color pie chart of my intelligences, printed it and made a poster. Got really creative with my Scrabble board. Used every letter to create a "Scrabble Story Challenge" for blog readers. Wrote blog and tweets. Journalled, meditated, practice mindfulness, did Zumba, Twitter blocked follows.

Week 7

April 4-13 Theme: Explore the intuitive path to creativity.

Reviewed *Marry Your Muse* (Phillips, 1997). Wrote blog and tweets. Followed my guidance and posted prompt about writing haiku poetry. Wrote about intuitive inquiry (non-dominant hand writing). Made collage from images I selected with my eyes closed, and had readers use it to create a story. Meditated, journalled.

- Week 8 April 14-21 Theme: Brain science says: Believe in your creativity.
Reviewed *Your Creative Brain* and *Out of Our Minds* (Carson, 2010). Created How Are You Creative? Quiz using Survey Monkey. Wrote blog to launch the How Are You Creative campaign and World Creativity & Innovation Week. Created a word/idea cloud poster using my computer, different type styles and colors. Lots of brain prompts and tweets. Meditated, journaled, danced. Hosted Collage Party Open House at Grad House.
- Week 9 April 22-29 Theme: Teaching creativity creatively.
Read journal articles and reviewed books to find great new quotes. Created and posted special quote collection. Made found object art piece. Wrote blog and tweets. Assembled tweets for e-book collection. Talked to photo department about doing shots of my ‘creations.’ Meditated, journaled, hunted for bird cage.
- Week 10 April 30 Theme: Creativity and Potential.
Wrap-up, shared final insights. Blogged about creativity assessments and shared CRS 580 product process. Wrote tweets/meditated/journaled/said a prayer of thanks for completing my project joyfully!

Section Four: Outcomes

Introduction

This project will inform the Creative Process course I will be teaching undergraduate students at Eckerd College shortly after graduation, as well as research I plan to pursue as a PhD student at Saybrook University beginning this Fall. The experience gave me the opportunity to dig deeply into my own expressive path to personal growth (creating original art, trying new things and ways of seeing and being). I allowed myself to dig into newly published work related to unlocking creative potential, raising awareness of everyday creativity and the role of neuroscience and movement and emotions in creativity. I married these initiatives with my unfolding fascination with the potential of social media (daily tweets and weekly blogs) to develop a worldwide audience for sharing information about creatively and new ways of teaching creativity creatively.

Outcome One: My Expressive Path to Personal Growth

“To fully nurture the creative potential of others requires modeling the behaviors, attitudes and actions consistent with a creative learner. Development of one’s creative expression is therefore first.”

Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers

Teaching a college-level creativity course upon completion of this Master of Science degree program excites and challenges me. Dr. Keller-Mathers’ quote is perfectly aligned with my personal philosophy. Teaching, to me, is a process of sharing stories and inspiring action. By designing my Master’s Project as a purposefully public journey into my own creative process, I built a platform for both testing and sharing my ‘expressive path to personal growth’ theories and strategies. The first step was mapping out a ten-week ‘dream plan’ for sparking

creativity around the world doing what I loved. This meant I could read, journal, research creativity, share quotes, inspiration and encouragement, take nature walks, dance, make collages, experiment with other forms of expressive art, use my intuition in new ways, practice mindfulness, be silly, have fun, and play with possibilities, while earning course credit! I used mind mapping, joy mandala making, visual journaling, non-dominant hand writing (a technique I call ‘intuitive inquiry’), crayons, markers, paint, photography, magazine clippings, and a few ‘found objects’ to bring my process to the page. All of this creative emersion inspired my first creativity manifesto (Appendix A).

The objective of expressive art is playful experimentation rather than perfection. My process was profoundly inspiring and joyful. Insights gained from the ebb and flow of my creative production were interesting for me to observe. There were days I created multiple pieces, and days when I had no interest in creating a thing. I am proudest of the fact I created freely – with no thought of other people’s perceptions of my output. My motivation was truly intrinsic and personally affirming. Photos of selected expressive art pieces created during this project are displayed in Appendix C. I also share sample pages from my Master’s Project Visual Journal in Appendix B. I have no doubt this well-documented self-inquiry experience makes me a stronger teacher/coach and creator.

Outcome Two: Tweet Success

Intuitively, I felt social media could bring this experience to life for hundreds if not thousands. I committed myself to spending at least one hour a day on tweeting and building my Twitter following. In reality, I spent two or more hours a day on this task. This included creating and posting up to 20 creative tweets and prompts throughout the day, researching important tweeters to follow, sending direct messages to new followers aligned with my objectives,

following up on Google alerts, re-tweeting relevant tweets, and driving traffic (clicks) to my blog via the tweets.

My Twitter account name is QuoteJoy. At the beginning of this journey, QuoteJoy had 1691 followers. Between February 11 (the day I launched my creativity tweet campaign) and the end of February, I posted 360 tweets and gained 309 new followers. Total QuoteJoy followers as of February 31st equaled 2372. During March, 340 posts were tweeted and 372 new followers were gained for a total of 2447 followers. In April, Twitter launched a new format and accounts with more than 2000 followers experienced problems. For the first week of April, QuoteJoy was banned from following anyone new. As a result, even though we are nearing the end of April and high levels of tweet postings continued, only 75 new followers were recorded. As of May 8, QuoteJoy's total followers increased to 2524. That means an impressive 833 new followers were added over the past ten weeks. QuoteJoy is now listed (this term refers to the ability of followers to view a certain person's tweets at the click of a button) by 133 followers.

My goal was to reach 3000 QuoteJoy followers in ten weeks. Although I fell short of this goal, the addition of 833 new followers in less than three months represents a significant achievement. It also bears testimony to what a two hour per day investment of time and creative energy can generate. The reason I commit myself to sharing inspiration, encouragement, and insight about creativity over Twitter has more to do with building awareness of the domain and stimulating interest in exploring creative learning and potential. Influence and audience are factors in creative leadership. Without followers, we cannot be leaders. I feel confident of my leadership capabilities in the arena of social media. I look forward to continuing the tweets and inspiration as long as there are people interested in using and sharing the information.

Taking retweets into consideration, many of my messages made their way to up to 100,000 people a week because of the structure of Twitter. I may have less than 3,000 followers, but many of the people retweeting my messages have tens of thousands of followers who get exposed to my posts. I have no doubt my vision of inspiring joy and a chain-reaction of creative action around the world has been actualized. Selected blog comments are shared in Appendix D.

Outcome Three: Tweet Success

Another ‘product’ outcome I’ve created is collection of 500 Creativity Tweets & Prompts. My original stated goal was 365 – enough quotes and prompts to supply a page-a-day calendar. This ‘inventory’ of 500 creativity-focused tweets and prompts will be used in a variety of projects in the future. I would like to sell the idea of a creative-quote-a-day calendar to a publisher. I also plan to a market for an e-book of inspiring tweets and quotes for people who don’t have the time (or inclination) to scour dozens of books and sources for great tweets.

In addition to the dramatic increases in QuoteJoy’s followers, my original website, www.JoyofQuotes.com experienced the largest monthly increase in visitors *ever* between February and April. It is no coincidence these are the months I increased my activity on Twitter due to my Master’s Project. Joy of Quotes’ astounding visitor statistics follow:

Jan. 40,480 Feb. 41,317 (+833) March 51,092 (+9,775) April 62,161 (+11,069)

Outcome Four: Ten Beautiful Blogs

Using the URL www.JoyofQuotesBlog.com , a new WordPress template theme called Watercolor, and a masthead declaring: Create Joy for Life! The expressive path to personal growth, my Master’s Project blog was born. Sunday, February 20th, I published blog #1 titled: “Join me on a 10-week journey into uncharted creative waters.” The design feature of opening each blog with a quote was established. Each subsequent blog post became more elaborate and

incorporated: photographs of my original art, multiple quotes and creativity prompts, links to authors, books, and quotes, fun images to illustrate the topics introduced, and much sharing of my personal creative process experiences. Creating each new blog was a full day process. It could take up to 14 hours if you included the electronic mailing set-up process. Getting a blog off the ground involves gathering images, writing copy, creating original pieces, researching topics, and actually setting-up both the blog and the mailing list notices. Even though blogging, for me, is labor intensive, I appreciate the fact the completed blogs can continue to inspire new visitors as long as I continue paying the web-hosting fee.

All posts, from the first to the last, can be viewed at URL noted above. When I set up the blog, I did not have the technical expertise (or awareness) to set up the Google Analytics feature for measuring traffic to the site. I installed a simple 'visitor counter' device recently which reports an average of 40 site visits daily. This number multiplied by the sixty-one days since the first blog posted, adds up to 2441 visitors to date. Given the number of new Twitter followers (756), the number of re-tweets and replies (23% of total tweets going out to a total audience of more than 25,000), I believe the actual number could be much higher. The objective of the blog series was to inspire joy and a chain-reaction of creative action around the world. Positive feedback, affirming blog comments, and forty registered 'creative tribe' subscribers confirm the success of this initiative.

By sharing encouraging quotes and 'creative expression prompts' with an ever-expanding audience, I increased my tweet tribe significantly. Counting retweets, many of my messages made their way to up to 100,000 people a week because of the structure of Twitter. I may have less than 3,000 followers, but many of the people retweeting my messages have tens of

thousands of followers who get exposed to my tweet. I have no doubt my vision of inspiring joy and a chain-reaction of creative action around the world has been actualized.

Outcome Five: An Unexpected Outcome

A very exciting outcome of this social media initiative is the fact it captured the attention of eminent creativity scholars (Dr. Ruth Richards and Dr. Steve Pritzker) at Saybrook University. As a direct result of my demonstrated social media marketing savvy, I have been offered a generous work-study position contributing to a various related initiatives for Saybrook University. My application to Saybrook University has been accepted, I have been awarded a scholarship, and my ICSC degree earned the maximum allowed transfer credits. I will begin my doctoral studies with a residential seminar in San Francisco, California, in late August.

Section Five: Key Learnings

Process

From the beginning, planning this project felt like a deep, indulgent journey into topics I found most fascinating. Consciously or unconsciously – I was creating a blueprint for a course I'd enjoy taking. I would dance, tweet inspiration, make collages, and read lots of new books about creativity. I wanted the process to be physical, intuitive, expressive and fun, while addressing the neurobiology of joy and the basics of brain science. I knew the act of consciously creating would be transformational, but I wasn't sure how deeply I'd dip my toes in the process.

My energy and enthusiasm for the project has stayed consistently high. I gave myself permission to play with colored pencils, crayons, watercolors and oil pastels. I even did art in the dark with my eyes closed. While experimenting with simple art supplies delivered pleasing results, I also noticed avoidance of using acrylic or working with the large canvases I purchased for the project. I've painted in the past and thought lack of time was the issue. During this experience I clearly had many opportunities to paint, so I created a new story: I am not interested in painting with acrylics. On the other hand, my interest in photography grew to the point I would not leave the house without my camera. Before going out for the day I would 'shake myself awake' by doing a wild movement dance (with or without music). I began having vivid dreams at night. I was also journaling a lot about taking risks, evolving, and being human.

Early in the process I experienced powerful aha's with mindful eating. I came to Buffalo feeling 'heavy'. Over the past year I've gained an additional twenty-five pounds. I hoped increasing mindfulness would help me to adopt healthier behavior patterns, or at the very least, to curb disordered patterns leading to weight gain. None of those things happened. Rather than lose weight, I continued to gain. I needed to forgive myself. My intuition told me the eating was

a reaction to stress. I had a heavy schedule, was far away from friends and the ‘comfort’ of my home and beloved surroundings. Sweets were adding to my sadness rather than curing it. On a particularly grey day, I diagnosed myself as being ‘in the swamp’ – a term my friends and I use for feeling sorry for ourselves. I drove to the Burchfield-Penny Museum and enjoyed an hour long mindfulness walk inside this creative space. I journaled these words as I sat and reflected: “In winter we rest and in our hibernation we grow creative seeds for Spring bloom.” My process is fed by incubation. In that moment, I had the awareness that just as ideas come to light at the right time, I would shift my behaviors in a peaceful way at the right time. When I got back to Grad House I created my first visual journal collage. Just being around nature, in the form of art, brightened my day.

Taking the Current Issues class at the same time as the Master’s Project, enhanced my experience. I made a personal connection with my creativity scholar, Dr. Ruth Richards, which continues to this day. It also led to my decision to apply to the PhD program at Saybrook University where she is a professor. Dr. Richards has provided positive feedback about my blogs and values my social media savvy to the extent she helped facilitate a generous work-study offer. This arrangement will help me with costs while allowing me to apply my social media talents and creativity promotion ideas to build Saybrook University’s growth and visibility.

The process of creating each blog has evolved from simple to complex over the past ten weeks. It’s a production not unlike giving birth. Each week I seem to forget the pain of the process and jump in excited about sharing a new message, photos and prompts. After watching the sun rise and set while I am glued to the computer, I am reminded of the laborious nature of the process– but by then it’s too late. I am far enough into production to want the end product at any cost. There are many technical details which make the process much more complicated than

it needs to be, but my 'beginner' skills do not allow me the luxury of making format changes at this stage of the game. One part of me looks forward, with relief, to the day I can relax my schedule to blogging once every other week or even monthly. The other part of me enjoys sharing the information and inspiration and knows I will miss engaging with my followers and offering them fresh content. I believe a compromise can be achieved. My 'happy dream' is to have a web master who manages all the data entry and set up challenges. This person will know how to set up Google analytics and design a comment box big enough for visitors to find. He or she will also be able to change font styles and show me how to do spell check within the blog. It is good to have dreams!

For the record, my stated intention to give myself 'weekends off for incubation' simply reflected my ignorance of the time commitment involved with the technical/production aspects of my project. Weekends turned out to be the times I pulled all-nighters to complete my blog postings and mailings. With four classes and lots of important assignments and deadlines, incubation needs to happen for me while I sleep. This semester has been tough in terms of finding the time to 'recharge my batteries.' Taking Zumba classes helped my energy level and creative production when I could fit them into my schedule. Two weeks ago I had to stop going to classes due to looming deadlines. I accept this as a fact of life in graduate school. Soon I'll be in the company of my favorite dance partners in Sarasota and getting plenty of exercise walking on the powder soft sands of Siesta Key beach.

Content

I am a teacher and encourager by nature. As an avid reader, I love the process of gleaning 'key learnings' from the books I've chosen in the form of quotes and developing 'book reviews' which highlight the essence of the information presented. I used the Torrance

Incubation Model (TIM) as a rough framework for my “Expressive Path to Personal Growth” blog series. The first blog heightened anticipation. The second blog deepened expectations. The third blog also deepened expectations, and every posting thereafter kept the learning going.

“Make room for mindfulness” (week #3) introduced Dr. Brene Brown’s research (*The Gifts of Imperfection*, 2010) into the area of self-compassion and examining unconscious thoughts, feelings and emotions, as well as Noah Scalin’s *Daily Creativity Journal: 365 Make Something Every Day and Change Your Life!* (2010), and featured a link to my review of *The Element* (2009) by Sir Ken Robinson posted on the ICSC blog (creativityresearch.blogspot.com). I used Brown’s book to introduce the concept of our inner and outer journeys. Creativity is connected to emotions. Blocks call for looking at the sources of our resistance and taking action in spite of them. The idea of doing something creative daily for a full year is fascinating to me. It seems so simple, yet it takes the persistence of a marathon runner. Tweeting (or sharing quotes) is the closest I’ve come to doing something creative daily. I’ve chosen the *365 Journal* (Scanlin, 2010) and Robinson’s *Element* (2009) as selections on the ‘recommended reading list’ for my new class.

The week #4 joy blog concentrated on biologist Carla Hannaford’s *Smart Moves: Why Learning is Not All in your Head* (2005) and Cat Bennett’s *Confident Creative* (2010). Only *Smart Moves* made it to my class reading list. I learned so much from Hannaford’s book which is important to my work. She demonstrates the science behind brain plasticity and the formation of new neural networks. Movement is essential to both processes. I am also benefiting from the Brain Gym exercises she promotes for increased learning and memory. Bennett’s book offers some interesting prompts, but *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (Edwards, 1999) does a much better job of addressing ‘fear of drawing’ issues in students who feel uncreative.

Week#5 focused on failure and led me into a very challenging period. I understand failure is a step in the direction of success, but this was the week I experienced a ‘stress induced brain failure’ while trying to produce papers for two different classes. Hopefully it will go in the record books as a once in a lifetime experience. I learned I cannot push, and push, and push, and expect my brain to work non-stop. My natural enthusiasm bounced back week #6 with the launch of my blog about passion. I love this topic and tied it together with a look at Howard Gardner’s *Multiple Intelligences* (2006) book and theory. I am highest in introspective and linguistic strengths, followed closely by naturalistic. Instead of creating a new collage, I was inspired to use every letter in my velvet Scrabble bag to form words related to creativity and passion. I took a photograph of the game board as art, and then invited readers to create a short story, song or poem using all 26 words. This prompt stimulated the most comments. People enjoyed this unusual creative challenge.

Week #7 led us into exploring the intuitive path to creativity. No books were recommended on the topic of intuition, but *Marry Your Muse* by Jan Phillips (1997) was featured for those open to creative inspiration masquerading as a muse. The post also featured intuition quotes from two scholars: Dr. Ruth Richards and Dr. Valerie Janesick.

Week #8 was about how we are all creative because of our beautiful brains. Shelley Carson’s *Your Creative Brain* (2010) is previewed along with Ken Robinson’s *Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative* (2011). Both authors stress everyone’s creativity. It was the perfect kickoff for both World Creativity and Innovation Week and the “How Are You Creative?” Campaign and quiz. I’ve shared the idea of asking people ‘how’ they are creative rather than ‘are’ they creative with ‘creativity’ bloggers. Feedback has been positive. Several have committed to starting conversations in just that way to open doors to creativity!

Week 9 offered a blog and a quote collection dedicated to teaching creativity creatively. I shared information about a ‘school for creators’ in New Zealand called The Learning Connection, in addition to an article titled, “Sowing Seeds for a More Creative Society” which demonstrates ‘creative thinking spiral’ I found very interesting. It reflects the work of Mitchel Resnick, Research Group Leader of the MIT media lab team. Readers were given a link to a PDF of the full report (<http://www.media.mit.edu>). Dr. Cyndi Burnett’s Creativity Week Virtual Dance Party via Skype was also reviewed in our Creativity Week follow-up.

The last ‘official’ blog in the series, #10, was titled: Creativity & Potential: Lessons from a little bird. It highlighted products I created for my Creativity Assessment’s class, shared an inspiring message about our creative natures, and closed with my fond farewell. I promised my subscribers I would continue posting (on a less regular basis). And with that, I am somewhat sad to announce, the Master’s Project blog is a wrap.

Section Six

Conclusion

“It’s not about ideas. It’s about making ideas happen.”

Tag Line for <http://the99percent.com>

Throughout this journey I’ve been led from ‘learning moments’ to aha’s and ‘treasure chests of awareness’ as a result of acting on my intuitive promptings. The key has been taking action - mindfully. By combining my professional interests with my personal passions, I have built a social media platform via <http://twitter.com/quotejoy> and <http://joyofquotesblog.com> to share my ideas freely with the world. I will continue blogging and tweeting for creativity. These tools have demonstrated their effectiveness for awakening creative potential and encouraging the expressive path to personal growth. I want to use social media as a way of keeping creative conversations going, networking, and making new professional connections. I also believe social media has a big potential role to play in teaching creativity creatively.

As a result of this Master’s Project experience, students and others who cross my path will hear my stories. I will speak of the fun discovery of finding a collage I created on the Google Image search page for everyday creativity. I can share my account of getting an intuitive prompt to Google myself and the excitement of finding a post by blog writer New Zealand (creativity professional Wayne Morris), who featured my Creativity and Intuition blog at <http://thecreative-edge.blogspot.com> half a world away! I will share the thrill of clicking on Google Alerts for *Joy and Creativity* and *Intuition and Creativity* and seeing my blogs on those topics featured and realizing anyone with an interest in these topics can access my information in an instant. Who can hear these stories and NOT feel we are living in a time of unprecedented change AND creative opportunity? If you have not yet reviewed all ten blogs, please make a

point to visit: www.JoyofQuotesBlog.com . I suggest scrolling down to the February 26th post and following the process up through the most recent entry. I greatly appreciate feedback, comments and suggestion and encourage direct communication to: magicalmarta@aol.com

I will teach creativity creatively at Eckerd Collage and other institutions of higher learning in the United States, and virtually, around the world. I believe creativity, as a domain, is poised for a paradigm shift. Neuroscience has shown all human brains are creative. The potential is there – used or not. I believe awakening creative potential can be a catalyst for stimulating positive change in a world still struggling with outgrown modes of thinking and acting. We must all open to new ways of seeing. This is the promise and challenge of living creatively.

I am deeply interested in formulating new theoretical models and inclusive assessments for measuring (and inspiring) creative potential. To this purpose, I made the decision to pursue a PhD in Psychology and submitted my application packet to Saybrook University for consideration. I was notified May 6th of my acceptance. I look forward to researching creativity questions which have captured my attention during this Master's Project process. My vision is building a body of work under the mentorship of Dr. Ruth Richards which brings into bloom seeds which were planted during this germinal experience. From there, I will be publishing and presenting at conferences around the world as a creativity scholar in my own right!

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SECTION SEVEN

Appendices:

- A: Manifesto
- B: Selected Pages from Master's Project Visual Journal
- C: Photographs of Selected Expressive Art Pieces Created during Marta's Master's Project
- D: Selected Master's Project Blog Comments
- E: Concept Paper

HOW ARE YOU CREATIVE?

~a manifesto by~

Marta Davidovich Ockuly

Creativity lives in you, around you,
and on every level of your experience.
It is a power imbedded in every human brain
and it is activated by attention and exercise.

Pursue a thing you find deep joy in doing –
and your true path in life will unfold.
Creative potential is unlocked with
pure passion and persistence.

Trust your intuition (inner knowing).
Be patient. Be fearless. And pay close
attention to your curiosities – they are clues
leading you to yet unimagined discoveries.

You are on a mission. Stretch your imagination.
Craft a clear and empowered vision. Reach out for
a dream that *lights you up*. Name it and claim it.
The dream and the dreamer are *always* matched.

It is impossible to have a dream without the creative
power to fulfill it. Realizing your dream demands action.
Do the work. Dance with it. Delight in being a beginner.
The journey to your mastery begins in this moment.


Blessings seen and unseen begin flowing to those who
playfully attend to their most meaningful purpose.
The world is waiting for what *only you* can create.
You have what's needed to begin. Start NOW!

Quotes, coaching & encouragement for people ready to positively change the world:
www.JoyofQuotesBlog.com www.JoyofQuotes.com QuoteJoy on Twitter

Appendix B: Selected Pages from Marta's Master's Project Visual Journal

"If you just set people in motion, they'll heal themselves." *Edriele Roth*

Sat. Feb 18, 2011 Today's affirmation:
I participate in my own healing process with joy.



Books are my puzzle pieces. They are painting a picture in my brain of potentials.

Everyone of these books fell into my lap by way of synchronizing. Each speaks to my journey - my task in this moment of exploring the nature of creative Howard Gardner, PhD

Now Books delivered yesterday...
 1 Smart Moves Carl L. Hartman, PhD
 2 The Gifts of Imperfection Brené Brown, PhD
 3 Creators on Creativity Ed. Frank Barron, PhD
 4 Multiple Intelligences - New Horizons Howard Gardner, PhD
 5 The Art of Original Thinking Jan Phillips
 6 Stoking the Creative Fires Phil Cousineau

I feel blessed by each of them and grateful they found their way into my story. I am excited to dig deeply into each. *Teresa*
 Box of words/ideas/ahahs!

In a planting seed... I'd like to go to the botanical gardens to witness my plot in flowers and the beauty of nature. My Sarasota garden club membership gets me in the Buffalo gardens for FREE. *Yeeeee!*
 I'll take my sketch book & water coloreds w/ me. It's a wonderful day!

DARE I?
 Today's Group is for Arthur Murray Dance lessons. In 10 mins. if... Yea ne!

LEAP →

Happy Happy Day *Did NOT go to Cleveland for being Roger's Christmas*

Sunday, Feb 19, 2011 *soft snail walking*

my twitter followers are going up, up, up!!!
 Maybe I should re-think my blog & make it a place to spot new guests & items of interest. I'll call the best & best people & tell them to "undo" my career.

Twitter is a great place to share via blog/links. I can try that, too.


WTF? *200-4000? 200-4000? 200-4000? 200-4000?*
 Emotional Intelligence is on my Radar. *It's on my Radar. It's on my Radar. It's on my Radar.*

Today I took a field trip to the gorgeous Victorian glass encased Buffalo Botanical Garden. It literally took me back to Florida as I walked past these Sea Grapes & mangroves. There were even to pansy alligators! In real life they look like *Loes*

but in Buffalo they are fuzzy and green looking. No matter - they gave me a dose of LL (lizard love)

I took some pictures and enjoyed relative time by a water table doing a colored pencil sketch which turned into a nice little piece of art.

I Created TODAY!



a sweet green scent for my room in Buffalo
 my glorious gift to me!
 Basic black p...
 Stunning Stephanotis aka Madagascar Jasmine

What happens when my energy is in the swamp?

February 19, 2011



It's a cold, grey day.
 I am sun deprived in
 a big way. My creative
 flame is barely
 flickering. How
 can I re-create
 sunshine in my
 Soul?

I take a
 journey into
 this painting
 and feel
 myself melt
 into the
 muddiness
 and rejoice
 in the flight
 of the
 red winged
 black bird
 hell bent on
 keeping jay
 alive!

I notice the details.
 The perfection of the
 seasons. In winter
 we rest and in our hibernation
 we grow creative seeds for
 Spring bloom. I AM an incubator.
 I build a warm nest and use this
 time to enjoy the luxury of reading all day
 in bed!

it gets too cold. the museum.

for a walk. when it gets too cold.



FREE

BE STAR
BRAIN AGE
 Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day!

IS YOUR BRAIN YOUNG OR OLD?

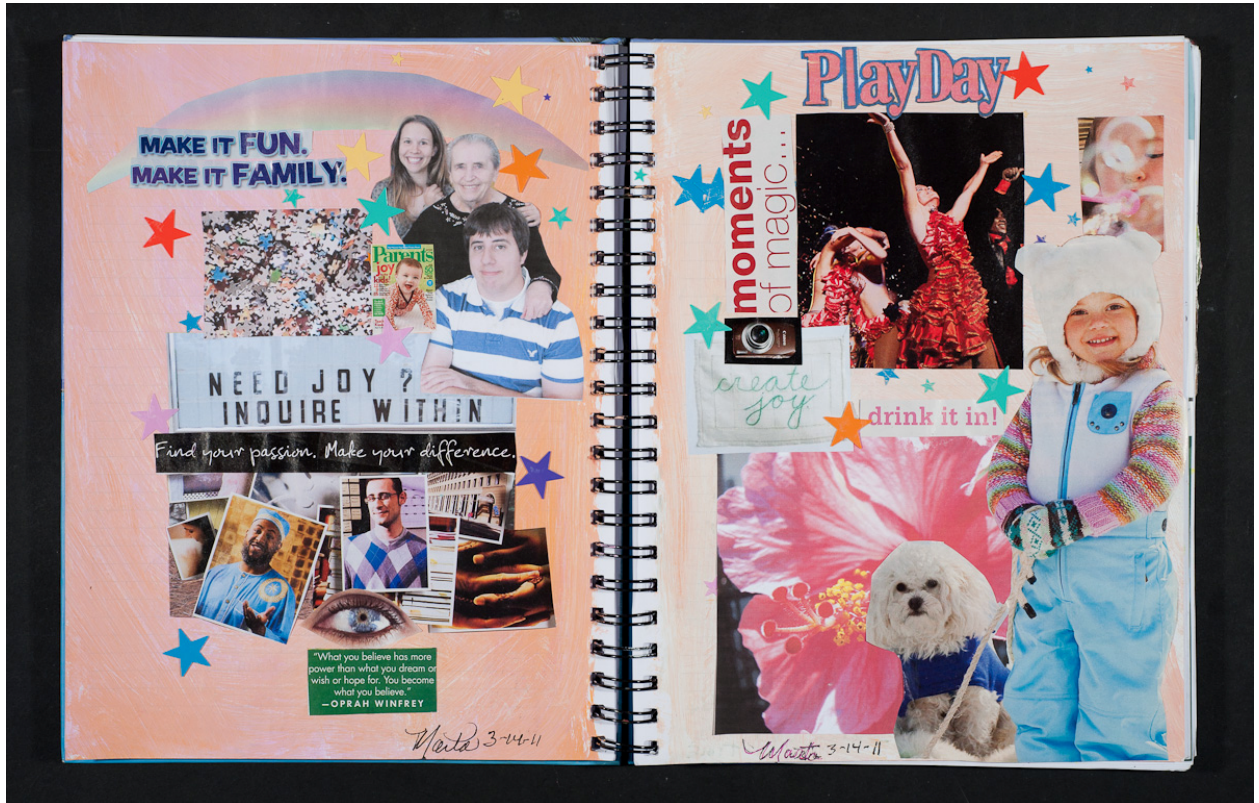
Be Extraordinary

HEAD OUTSIDE AND MOVE.
 Nature invigorates the mind and the body.

DANCE MADE ME INHABIT MY BODY IN A NEW WAY. I WENT FROM STATICALLY APPRAISING MY SHAPE TO GLORIOUSLY MOVING THROUGH SPACE.

"I had all these ideas stored in drawers—and my head. I never let go of the dream that someday I'd come back to it."

Marta
 2-10-11



Appendix C: Photographs of Selected Expressive Art Pieces Created during Master's Project





What if imagination and art are not frosting at all, but the fountainhead of human experience?

Rollo May
The Courage to Create



Birth of Awe

Gordon Wood



what
time
is
it?

WRITE A BOOK
You've thought about that memoir or novel for years. You know you'll get to it—as soon as the kids are out of the house and you win the lottery and you've bought that quiet cabin in the woods. But perhaps it's not as difficult as you're making it out to be. **How Draft 300 words a day.** Whether you prefer a notebook or a laptop, commit to writing just this much every day (about a page typed and double-spaced). In a year You'll have written more than 100,000 words, about the length of a 300-page book.

Marta Davidson Oct 2014



HOW ARE YOU CREATIVE? Claim your creativity.
YOUR CREATIVITY IS WAITING - play with it!
MAKE YOUR CREATIVE BRAIN WORK FOR YOU.
 When someone asks, "Are you creative?" answer YES!!!!
 Unlock your creative potential. *Exercise your creativity.*
 Find a creative tribe. **LABEL YOURSELF CREATIVE.**
 Celebrate your uniqueness. **All creativity starts with an idea.**
WHAT'S YOUR CREATIVE PATH? Your creative ideas count.
 Creativity is much more than art. **Share your creative talents with the world!**
Everyday creativity counts! Join the creativity revolution.
Shine your creative light. *Believe in and use your creative gifts.*
 Every brain is creative. **WHAT DID YOU CREATE TODAY?**

Marta Davidovich Okuley

Teaching & Inspiring CREATIVITY!

ONE OF MY GREATEST JOYS IS

35 LATIN LOVERS DANCING

ONE WILD AND PRECIOUS LIFE

Discover the Possibilities.

EXPLORE PLAY CREATE LAUGH

time for fun

*Creation House
 Direct House
 Collage House
 W. Marta*

Appendix D:

Selected Master's Project Blog Comments

“Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential: An Expressive Path to Personal Growth”

www.JoyofQuotesBlog.com

“I’m looking forward to this journey...” Renata Jelito (February 20, 2011)

“Hi Marta, I think you are brilliant! Sounds like you are really in the know, and making connections in a good cause (creativity). Congratulations!! Dr. Ruth Richards (March 1, 2011)

“You’re almost at 2,000 twitter followers!! Fantastic, Marta! Really, really great! Lots of great content in the blog post, which is also very strong. The quotes are well chosen and support your message...Love the quotes from Ruth Richards – love the pictures, the enthusiasm, and the warm-hearted invitation!” Amy Frazier (March 1, 2011)

“This blog really spoke to me...well, actually yelled in my ear. Thank you. It’s just so doable, 15 minutes daily!” Cherub Madden (March 6, 2011)

“Very good quotes! Excellent site and web presence. Blessings!” Jambodhi (March 15, 2011)

“Lovely, lovely job, Marta. Your blogs are getting even more aesthetic and technically sophisticated, too. ...You have great topics.” Ruth Richards (March 16, 2011)

“LOVE your blog!! Congrats! You’re so right...the world is embracing creativity! (We need it!).” Danilo Vargas (March 23, 2011)

“Marta: What a rich blog entry on creativity and passion. Chock full o’ quotes and inspiration and prompts for play. The prompt on thinking back to your favorite way to play as a child reminded me of where I’ve been the past week – in Taos leading a group of creatives through that place of play while delving into some pretty deep stuff. That’s what play does for us adults, doesn’t it? Helps us create our work through the challenges. Cheers” Jeffrey Davis (March 28, 2011) www.trackingwonder.com

“Love the Scrabble story challenge! And the caged bird...flying free...thanks Marta...you always inspire me on all levels!” Carol Rice (March 28, 2011)

“Hi Marta! Thanks for bringing joy into your reader’s lives. I’ll be following!” Torrey Shannon (March 29, 2011)

“Your quotes inspire me & keep my thoughts on higher ideals instead of challenges. Thank u!” Jenny Bryans (April 5, 2011)

“It’s very inspiring, Marta, with good points supported by citations to creativity experts.” Patrick Ross (April 18, 2011)

Appendix E: Concept Paper

Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential:

The Expressive Path to Personal Growth

“We dance round in a ring and suppose, but the Secret sits in the middle and knows.”

Robert Frost

Name: Marta Davidovich Ockuly **Submitted:** Feb. 11, 2011

Project Type: Use a Skill/Talent to Improve the Quality of Life for Others

Section One

Purpose and Description of Project:

There's a lot of dancing around and supposing related to the topic of creativity. In my experience, the act of imagining possibilities coupled with creative action opens priceless doorways to self-discovery. With inspiration and encouragement, people can be empowered to activate their creative potential with joy. The purpose of this project is to facilitate a group creative learning experience using social media as a teaching/coaching platform. My virtual classroom will meet over a 10-week period. Every week I will address a new theme related to creativity and personal growth. My 'tribe' of student/followers will have the opportunity to choose from a variety of creative action prompts, read reviews of relevant literature and research, and take action to stretch their creative boundaries via weekly blog postings and daily tweets. Sharing of creative products will be encouraged, but not required. Everyone in the world is invited. The course is fee-free. I will post photos of my process products and stories about my experiences on this journey. Participants will have the option of e-mailing me with personal questions or coaching related to this experience. Twitter will be my primary vehicle for

supplemental daily prompts, motivational quote sharing, and interest stimulating questions. My goal is to stimulate positive change and a chain-reaction of creative action around the world!

There seems to be a veil blocking most of us from seeing our full creative potential. I am using this experience as my own mythic journey to discover that place inside myself. I've selected the "Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential" (shown below) which sing to me to use as stepping stones for wading through the uncharted waters leading to creative awakening. I promise a fun journey peppered with honest insights, lots of aha's, tweets about what works and what doesn't, along with words, videos, and links to creative work and research which inspires me along the way.

Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential

1. You are not alone.
2. Creative play is important.
3. Make room for mindfulness.
4. Use joy as your GPS.
5. Think of failure as your friend.
6. Finding your passion pays.
7. Explore the intuitive path to creativity.
8. Brain science says: believe in your creativity.
9. Teaching (and learning) creativity creatively.
10. Creativity and Potential.

Rationale for Selection:

As a Joy Coach, Creativity Consultant, and cancer survivor with first-hand knowledge of the transformational benefits of using expressive arts and movement to access buried creative

treasures, I have been heavily influenced by the Third Force Humanistic movement theorists (Rollo May, 1977; Abraham Maslow, 1962) and positive psychology's Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996). My creative spirit also longs to explore research related to the roles of movement and neurobiology (Hannaford, 2005), the creative brain (Carson, 2010), and the power of activating creative passions (Robinson, 2009, 2011). Graduation from this Master's program represents a huge milestone. At 58, I am launching myself into a new career in higher education. As a teacher of creative process, I am excited to walk the path I will ask my students to undertake. The journey inward is, by nature, unique for each of us. It must fully engage and embody the body, mind, and spirit of the traveler. With joy as my GPS, I am ready to learn about myself while enriching the lives of others along the way.

I consider myself a creative change leader with a track record of taking calculated risks. The idea of publicly walking this path, facing fears, taking risks, and sharing the fruits of my creative labors with the world both scares and thrills me. The inspiring quotes I feel guided to share reveal both my intuitive insights and parts of my soul. As an agent for peace, joy and positive change - I have no doubt there will be value delivered to all who are open to the transformative nature of this course. The enthusiasm I feel bears testimony to the profound importance of this project to my own creative potential. I embrace the gift of this experience with high hopes and joyful anticipation.

Section Two

Pertinent Literature or Resources

In addition to guidance and feedback from my project advisor, Dr. Cyndi Burnett, and sounding board partner, Amy Frazier, I hope to exchange ideas with scholars doing seminal work in everyday creativity and expressive paths to personal growth.

Part 1: Literature to be included in my annotated bibliography:

- Brown, B. (2010). *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are*. Center City, MN: Hazelden.
- Carroll, K. (2009). *The red rubber ball at work*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Carson, S. (2010). *Your creative brain: Seven steps to maximize imagination, productivity, and innovation in your life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
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- Robinson, K. (2011). *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative*. United Kingdom: Capstone Publishing.
- SARK. (2004). *Make your creative dreams real*. New York, NY: Fireside.

Scalin, N. (2010). *365 A daily creativity journal: Make something every day and change your life*. Minneapolis, MN: Voyageur Press.

Part 2: Additional resources which enlivened my creative process and conclusions:

Bennett, C. (2010). *The confident creative*. Scotland: Findhorn Press.

Cameron, J. (1992). *The artists' way: A spiritual path to higher creativity*. New York, NY: Putnam.

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Section Three

How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes?

Upon approval of this proposal, I will launch my journey into “The Expressive Path to Personal Growth.” I’ve developed a 10 week action plan with weekends off for incubating. I

will journal/dance/create/play/practice mindfulness/and share my insights and experiences through tweets and blog postings. Some days I will spend hours in these endeavors. Other days it may be minutes. A big part of my process will be reading the literature I've selected to inspire and frame this experience. These readings will be a rich source of quotes for Twitter posts, as well as inspiration for my creative actions. The timeline shows one way this journey could unfold. The priority for me is catching waves of flow and playing with creative blocks when they come to my door. I will follow my joy and energy throughout this process. By sharing encouraging quotes and 'creative expression prompts' with an ever-expanding audience, I hope to increase my tweet tribe to 3,000+ people playfully exploring their creative potential. My vision: inspiring joy and a chain-reaction of creative action around the world!

Project Timeline:

Week 1: Feb. 20-25 Theme: You are not alone.

Launch kick-off blog inviting people to join my 'creative tribe' and this 10-week journey into uncharted creative waters. Follow my first creativity prompt: build a nest for doing collage in my bed. Read Brene Brown's book from 'top ten' list. Post tweets inviting people to the new blog (starting point: 1, 237 followers). Journal insights/inspiration, practice mindfulness.

Week 2: Feb. 26-March 5 Theme: Creative play is important.

Read Dr. Ruth Richards' work in *Everyday Creativity*. Read and review *Switch*. Write blog and tweets. Create five creativity prompts. Make a permission to play collage and take a photo of it for the blog. Journal/find quotes/share tweets/practice mindfulness/dance/play with my own creativity/look at my resistance/bought Arthur Murray Groupon.

- Week 3: March 6-13 Theme: Make room for mindfulness.
 Review Dr. Brown's book and TED talk. Read/review Scanlin's *365 Day Creativity Journal*. Write blog and tweets. Start mindful eating. Take discovery walk. Create two collages. First Arthur Murray group dance lesson. Started Zumba classes. Private salsa lesson at Arthur Murray. Journal insights/inspiration, practice mindfulness, play, meditate & laugh.
- Week 4: March 14-21 Theme: Use joy as your GPS.
 Read/review *Smart Moves*. Write blog coaching readers through making a joy mandala. Went crazy creating tons of art! Completed 4 collages and a painting. Journalled a lot. Got a coloring book and colored. Lots of tweets and creative prompts. Did 3 Zumba classes. Wonderful one-on-one cha-cha class at Arthur Murray. Meditated, practiced mindfulness & gratitude.
- Week 5 March 22-26 Theme: Think of failure as your friend.
 Review *The Artist's Way*, Sark's *Make Your Creative Dreams Real* and *Beautiful Oops*. Read/review *Creative License: Giving Yourself Permission to be the Artist you Truly Are* by Danny Gregory. Gave myself permission to miss my blog deadline. Wrote blog and tweets. Attended my daughter's solo art exhibition in Bowling Green. Made collages. Journal, meditate, practice mindfulness. Experienced a project failure & sadness.
- Week 6 March 27-April 3 Theme: Finding your passion pays.
 Review *The Element*. Read/review *The Red Rubber Ball at Work*. Review Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. Found website to great color pie chart of my intelligences, printed mine and made a poster. Got really creative with

my Scrabble board. Used every letter to create a “Scrabble Story Challenge” for my blog readers. Wrote blog and tweets. Journal, meditate, practice mindfulness, Zumba, Twitter blocked new follows.

- Week 7 April 4-13 Theme: Explore the intuitive path to creativity.
 Read/review *Marry Your Muse*. Wrote blog and tweets. Followed my guidance and posted prompt about writing haiku poetry. Made a collage from images I selected with my eyes closed, and had readers use it to create a story. Meditate, journal. Stressed from two all-nighters.
- Week 8 April 14-21 Theme: Brain science says: believe in your creativity
 Read/review *Your Creative Brain*. Read/review *Out of Our Minds*.
 Created How Are You Creative? Quiz using Survey Monkey. Wrote blog to launch the How Are You Creative campaign and World Creativity & Innovation Week. Created a word/idea cloud poster using my computer and different type styles and colors. Lots of brain prompts and tweets. Meditate, journal, dance. Collage Party Open House at Grad House.
- Week 9 April 22-29 Theme: Teaching creativity creatively
 Read journal articles and review books for best quotes. Create and post special quote collection. Make found object art piece. Blog and tweet. Assemble tweet e-book. Talk to photography department about doing shots of my ‘creations.’
 Meditate, journal, find a bird cage, dance.
- Week 10 April 30 Creativity and Potential
 Wrap-up, share final insights. Offer followers a favorite tweets e-book.
 Blog/tweet/meditate/journal/dance/say a prayers of thanks for finishing!

Section Four

What will be the Tangible Products or Outcomes?

This project will result in 3 important outcomes:

Outcome #1: Inspiring joy and a chain-reaction of inspiration, encouragement and creative action worldwide!

Outcome #2: A profoundly personal, expressive, joyful, and well-documented creative self-inquiry experience.

Outcome #3: Increasing QuoteJoy's Twitter followers to 3,000 in ten weeks.

Products include:

- 365 Creativity Prompts and Quotes Collection
- Photographs of Selected Original Art Pieces Produced by Marta
- Selected Pages from Marta's Master's Project Visual Journal

Section Five

Personal Learning Goals:

- Staying true to my authentic voice and personal creative path of joy
- Having fun with the process and keeping it simple
- Building partnerships/community/relationships
- Facing and examining personal blocks, fears and resistance in all forms
- Deepening my understanding of the role of neuroscience in joy and creative potential

What Criteria will you use to Measure the Effectiveness of your Achievement?

- The number of people following and responding to my tweets
- My personal level of enthusiasm and energy for the project
- Positive personal changes and ideas stimulated by my 'aha's'

- Increased opportunities to contribute to the field as a creative change leader/educator
- Feedback from peers, professors, friends and followers sharing my journey

Evaluation:

One of the most exciting aspects of this project, to me, is the ability to change and adapt to what brings me the most creative satisfaction. Self-reflection is of major importance. I am not interested in selling myself or my ideas to anyone. I offer them to the universe and delight when someone finds my ideas encouraging or inspirational. I look forward to organic blog and Twitter comments, as well as feedback from peers and people who challenge me to ‘see differently.’

Permission to place this Project online as part of the International Center for Studies in Creativity resources.

I hereby grant permission to the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College permission to place a digital copy of this Master's Project (Keys to Unlocking Creative Potential: The Expressive Path to Personal Growth) in an online resource.

Marta Davidovich Ockuly

Date