

The Great Big Lie About Being Creative

by Chazda Albright -

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As a teacher and writer and someone who likes to design things and create art (especially for stories), it always saddens me when I hear someone say, “I have no artistic talent,” because I know what it really means. It means that in their childhood, they made something or drew something and someone devalued it. That other person, an adult, may have said something like, “...but clouds are not purple!” or maybe, “What’s that supposed to be?” Maybe that adult even drew over what the child had drawn - or even, simply, threw it away. And because the emerging, experimental artist was a child, they listened and watched the adult - a careless, unobservant adult - and unfortunately, believed.

The child believes the adult who says that clouds aren’t purple - which is a lie, because sometimes they are!

The child pays attention to the adult who asks, “What’s that supposed to be?” -which presupposes that a thing is only valuable if you can immediately recognize it and name it without using your brain. Another lie.

The child feels the mark of their work being devalued when an adult marks it, “correcting it,” yet another lie, because there are no mistakes in art.

The child understands that their creativity has no value at all when they find it in the trash. The biggest lie. And the child who believes this naturally grows up into a teenager filled with angst and the need to be flawlessly cool, and then the kind of bravery needed to experiment in art takes a backseat along with Sesame Street and magic and firefighter red bikes and peanut butter cookies dipped in chocolate milk.

The teenager too fast becomes an adult, and that adult meets me and tells me how they always wanted to write an illustrated storybook but that they have no creative / artistic talent. I want to scream! **Yes you do!** I cannot even count how many people have said these words to me: “I always wanted to paint, but I have no talent...” or, “I always wanted to draw, but...” or “I always wished I had your kind of talent.”

It is criminal, this lie that defeats the creativity and imaginative expression of children so deeply that they still believe it as an adult. Don’t believe it! **It’s all a total lie, the idea that so many of us are not creative.**

It is true: I have been told many times that I have no Real Talent. I don’t care. I can just use Pretend Talent. Whatever it takes. I’ll just use that, the whatever it is inside of me or outside of me. I’ll do that.

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We are all creative, it's inherent. We are tool users. Neanderthals could do it, splashing and smearing images on cave walls. We do too. Do not be afraid or ashamed of imperfect scribbles on the page. Free yourself from that idea, because naturalized, imperfect lines are more appealing anyway. This isn't my opinion. No. I argue it's a fact. I should write it up officially: The Imperfect Theorem of Beauty in Imperfection.

People don't think you're a Picasso? Well, um: not even Dali was Picasso. A lot of people are "No Picasso." **You are you, a particular individual with a particular voice and you can share it, that voice. Draw something for me. I want to see and I'd really like you to explain it to me; tell me a story. That is human. This is our humanity. Tell me a story.**

Tell me a story. *Use your Pretend Talent.*
