



MORNING PAGES EXERCISE

Reading & Worksheet

What are the Morning Pages?

- The Morning Pages are a foundational tool of Julia Cameron's famous book on creativity called *The Artist's Way*, first published in 1992. The idea is to do 3 pages of stream-of-consciousness writing first thing in the morning as soon as you wake up.

Welcome to the 90-day Morning Pages Challenge!! Woo-hoo! This is going to be fun. I hope you're ready for this. This is going to be transformational. This is going to help you get up on stage and take over the room.

So what the heck are the Morning Pages?

The morning pages are a foundational tool of Julia Cameron's famous book on creativity called *The Artist's Way*. The idea is to do 3 pages of stream of consciousness writing first thing in the morning as soon as you wake up.

Before moving on, I want to talk a bit about *The Artist's Way*.

When I moved with my family 3000km from Vancouver to Ottawa, I was in a space where I knew I had given myself every opportunity in the world to get somewhere in music, and I hadn't gotten anywhere.

We kinda needed money, so at that time I worked green whatever-jobs. I drove around the countryside doing merchandising for energy-saving appliances as part of a government coupon program. I did door-to-door canvassing for green energy legislation. And I did street canvassing for donations to the World Wildlife Fund. And of course, I ended up doing regular ol' office temp work.

But one night I came across an ad for a career coaching service and I decided to do it. Heck, I figured, if I got a real job out of the deal that I actually liked, I'd end up ahead. I was basically on the dream boomerang.

A major part of the program was to set up 'information interviews'. The key here is to have a conversation with someone actually doing the job you want, and to ask questions of genuine interest. The more authentic you are, the more suitable the job you will eventually get. I set up some 12 interviews in 3 or 4 different fields, including one in music. I had a great conversation with a local artist called Megan Jerome, whose music I'd checked out and liked and who had been playing some of the larger stages around town. The more genuine your interest, the better the conversation, so the theory goes. She recommended I read a book called 'The Artist's Way' by Julia Cameron. I quit the career coaching shortly after that interview. By the time I got through the book I had written a new album.

I can't recommend this book enough. With it you start becoming aware of all the things that are inhibiting your creativity. And all the things that are inhibiting your creativity are by and large the same things that are keeping



you from connecting with your audience. Becoming aware of these things that are getting in the way is half the battle in transcending their influence on you and defeating them. As you go through the book, your inner voice gets stronger and you become validated in letting it shine. That is, you get stronger in knowing who you are and sharing from that place.

If you get *The Artist's Way* and finish it, chances are you will write a new album along the way. And that is priceless. But now let's get back to the Morning Pages...

Why do the 90-day Morning Pages Challenge?

- To gain a space of freedom from your recurring thoughts and automatic reactions.
- To strengthen your authentic voice and get past your 'censor'.
- To access new insights, ideas and solutions and get new inspiration for songs.
- The Morning Pages get you in touch with who you really are and what you really want.

The morning pages bring you clarity on how you feel about things AND get you past those feelings to your core self - who you really are and what you really want. This shines through and you start to recognize your patterns of thoughts and feelings from a new perspective, and get fresh ideas on how to move past them and take the right kind of actions to get what you really want.

You may find that what comes through finds its way into the lyrics of the new songs you write.

By doing the morning pages you start becoming aware of all the things that are inhibiting your creativity... And all the things that are inhibiting your creativity are by and large the same things that are keeping you from connecting with your audience. Becoming aware of these things is half the battle in defeating them. In transcending their influence on you. Your inner voice gets stronger and you become validated in letting it shine. That is, you get stronger in knowing who you are and sharing from that place.

Here are some quotes from *The Artist's Way* that speak to the Morning Pages experience:

"An experience of wholeness, rightness, and power."

"The tools may free creative areas you have long ignored or even been blind to."

"The morning pages teach logic brain to stand aside and let artist brain play."

"It is very difficult to complain about a situation morning after morning, month after month, without being moved to constructive action. The pages lead us out of despair and into undreamed-of solutions."



“Fresh ideas and insights that come as if from nowhere.”

"Anyone who faithfully writes morning pages will be led to a connection with a source of wisdom within."

OK, So how do I do this exactly?

- Use pen and paper (must be handwritten).
- Don't stop writing until you've filled 3 pages.
- Do this first thing in the morning as soon as you wake up.
- Don't show your morning pages to anyone.
- You will need 30 minutes.

The idea is to do 3 pages of stream of consciousness writing first thing in the morning as soon as you wake up. What is stream-of-consciousness writing? Well, you just write whatever comes into your head, as fast as it comes into your head. Your thoughts usually come faster than you can write, so you should just be writing as fast as you can. Don't pause in your writing if you can help it. Just write whatever comes to mind. Nothing left out.

First thing in the morning is the best time to do it, and this usually means starting half an hour before you would usually get up. But this also seems to be the main reason why people don't get started or they don't keep it up! I'm going to give you some tips that will help you to do it first thing in the morning, but even more so, I encourage you to do it every day, whenever. No, I don't encourage you, I say... do it. Well here you are, you're in, right? Do it starting tomorrow, everyday, for the next 90 days. If you just can't do it in the morning on some days, do it later in the day. And if you miss a day, don't beat yourself up about it, just do it the next day. You'll be amazed where this takes you.

The morning pages must be done with a pen in hand, it simply won't work in the same way on a computer. Don't worry too much about the size of your handwriting or the size of the page if this varies a bit from 8.5 X 11. It doesn't matter if you always write in the same book or if you write on whatever paper is handy at the time. You may want to keep the pages though so you can look at what you wrote again later at some point. Personally, I've kept all of mine.

No one else is allowed to see them though. It's purely for your benefit. You're going to feel inhibited if you intend for someone else to read your Morning Pages sometime in the future. And if you let someone else read them even once, this future possibility will always be in your mind's eye and getting in the way of the free flow of your pen. So don't let anyone else read them - you don't even have to read them. There's no right or wrong way to do the Morning Pages and this is what allows you to get past what Julia Cameron calls your Censor - that



critical inner voice that's always talking you down. By doing the Morning Pages you get to hear and know your *own* voice.

You may write something like - "damn I've got to go to the bathroom, I'm tired, my leg hurts, I hope I don't wake anyone up, tired, tired, tired, this sucks, oh my god, what am I doing here, blah, blah, soon it will be time for breakfast, it's garbage day I've got to take the garbage out, I wonder what my mom thinks about the picture I sent yesterday, I've got to write a bio for my Bandcamp profile..." and it goes on. You're basically writing *whatever* comes into your mind, and that's ok. Keep going until you've filled all three pages.

You'll find that filling 3 sides of paper with a pen will take about 30 minutes. Yes, that's 30 minutes every day. It's the best 30 minutes you can spend.

More quotes from the Artist's Way:

"Nothing is too petty, too silly, too stupid, or too weird to be included."

"We tend to criticize ourselves mercilessly. Always remember that all the negative self-criticism is not the truth."

"Who wouldn't be blocked if every time you tiptoed into the open somebody (your Censor) made fun of you? The morning pages will teach you to stop listening to that ridicule. They will allow you to detach from your negative Censor."

"Because there is no wrong way to write the Morning Pages, the Censor's opinion doesn't count."

What should I expect?

- Physical hardship / amazing results.
- You need to be prepared.

I did the morning pages religiously every morning for a 4 month stretch the first time I tried it, and it was amazing what came out on the page, and how it freed my mind - I never looked back. You have to do it to know for yourself.

I had two kids - it was the summertime at least and not freezing cold in the house - but I had two kids - one a toddler and one a baby in a room just down the hall that I couldn't wake up at any cost, and I quietly, oh so quietly edged out of bed and hunched over next to the window with a pen and paper and wrote my 3 pages. And of course, I got interrupted sometimes.

The problem with the morning pages is that they're physically demanding. You've got to get up early. Then you're hunched over this page, nose dripping, back and neck aching, arms and legs falling asleep. In a daze.



And then suddenly you've got to go to the bathroom. Praying that you don't wake up the house. It isn't easy!! It's a nightmare. It isn't physically easy to do this. I mean, what self-respecting musician gets up half an hour early! That's why this is a challenge. The 90-day Morning Pages Challenge. I challenge you to do this! You won't regret it.

It takes a little bit of planning. You have to have a pen that works ready to use. You have to have 3 pages of paper ready to use. You have to plan where you're going to do it so you're free from any kind of pressure - guilt that you might be disturbing your partner, or anyone else in the house, so that there's enough light to see by. You have to plan to have enough time. There's really no way you can do this in less than 20 minutes. You'll definitely be done 3 pages in 40 minutes, though you may want to keep going. 30 minutes seems to be the average for me.

So there it is, 30 minutes of your day for 90 days, that's 45 hours of your life. Totally worth every second.

But if you miss for whatever reason doing this in the morning, then do it at some other time of the day. Do it. It's still worth it. You can fit it in. You're still a part of the challenge. It doesn't count against you. But miss 3 days and you're out. :) No seriously, this is up to you, this is for you, and it's up to you to make it all it can be.

Some days you may feel that not much comes out on the paper. Other days you get halfway down the first page and the most amazing insights start to come. You follow where your thoughts lead and they really take you somewhere. Then they get chopped off by some unrelated idea, and you just keep writing.

The plain truth is that the Morning Pages suck even if they're probably the best possible thing you could ever do for yourself, for your creativity and for dealing with your shit. When I say dealing with your shit, I mean all the things keeping you from actually doing music, actually following your dream, all the things you think are so real that are preventing you from taking the next step. Guess what? They're as real as every other thought in your mind. No more real and no less real. Is that so hard to get?

When your thoughts change, your relationships change. When you believe you deserve to follow your dream, when you truly believe you deserve this, other folks in your life start believing it too. And they accept it. But don't take my word for it...

But it's not right away that you're going to be able to defeat all the reasons why not. It's not right away that you're going to come into your power and let yourself grow. Living your dream, getting up on stage and taking over the room, loving your audience and having the best gig you've ever had, that helps motivation and belief. Because every gig done right is maximal. You play to love. It's maximal. You live your dream every time, it doesn't matter how big the crowd is. And you do it again. But that's not going to happen if you're bringing all your self-consciousness up on stage with you. If you don't liberate yourself from it. I didn't realize any of this until it happened for me. And it happened at least in part because I somehow got myself to do the morning pages every morning.

But it's a process. I'm here to help you accelerate that process, but at the end of the day, there's really no



substitute for you getting to that place that the morning pages and other forms of meditation take you.

What I'm asking you to do is do this every morning, first thing in the morning, for 90 days. This is your challenge.

Once you start doing this, once you get through at least 90 days, and doing some of the other stuff in this program, you're going to be able to make leaps and bounds. But if you don't have this experience, it may be that you don't bound along quite as fast. So do this. Nobody told you it was going to be easy or that it would happen overnight. We're getting rid of your self-consciousness here, we're taking you into the present moment. We're putting you in a position to connect with your audience, truly. And not just onstage. Willingness to share goes beyond that. It's going to take a little bit of work. Don't worry, I'll be here to make sure you get there. It's worth it. It's worth everything.

Make It Easy On Yourself

1. Pick a day to start... tomorrow for example. And then fill in the blanks below:

I, _____, will do my morning pages for at least 90 days starting
_____ (Date).

What to do the day before:

2. Think about where you are going to do the morning pages, considering light, heat, comfortability and ease of access. (For example, under a window, in the bathroom, on a desk, on the kitchen table, in the bed, beside the bed, any of the above. If you have two roommates, the bathroom is probably not a great choice).
3. Think about what you can wear as soon as you get out of bed half an hour early and put these clothes in a convenient location (bathrobe, socks, hat, blanket, glasses, whatever).
4. Get at least one pen that works along with a notebook, or a binder, or just 3 blank pages of paper and put these exactly where you're going to use them.
5. Think of some other nice things to have handy: something to wipe your nose with, glass of water.
6. Tell people in your house that you're going to be doing the 90-day Morning Pages Challenge and then get over the idea that you will be disturbing them in some way. Don't let this idea stop you. Do your best not to disturb them sure, but don't make up that story!

Good Luck!