



Ascension

Ascension WI EAP

Meditation and Bible Art for Mental Health

Creating has proven health benefits!

Jennifer Miller Houtz MA LPC

At the end of the day, you're tired, you're stressed, and it's too easy to reach for a glass of wine, watch tv, or get caught up for hours on social media. While brainless activity is sometimes important for letting go, when it's your only go-to for winding down, it can make you feel more empty and bored than when you started. This is where creative self-care comes in.

Being creative does not mean you are artistically gifted. Creativity takes many forms and has benefits even for those who are not Picasso or Martha Stewart. Humans are creative processors by nature. When we feel out of balance, creative acts can help. Being creative does not mean you are an eccentric genius. Again, all humans are creative despite their common ordinary appearance. All persons can benefit from creative practice.



Finally, being creative isn't just for yogis and monks. All humans are spiritual even if they are not religious or in regular meditative practice. All humans have mental health that is fluid and can be improved.

The creative process has been proven with scientific rigor to cause brain change and improve mental health! If you don't believe it, check out some YouTube videos, like this one by Jodi Aman: [How Art Improves Mental Health: 4 Ways Creativity Helps The Brain](#).

One easy way to try some creative exercise is meditative or Bible art journaling. The research supporting the benefits of meditative doodling is plentiful. The brain is a muscle that can grow and change in response to how we use it. In addition to many physical and creative benefits, these are just some of the mental health gifts of mindful creating:

- Increases emotional regulation with patience, focus, and articulation of feelings
- Increases concentration, memory and problem solving ability
- Increases dopamine causing pleasure and positivity, increasing self-esteem and mood
- Increases intelligence, reasoning ability, critical and divergent thinking
- Helps uncover emotions and increases personal insight
- Increases language skills and communication, and empathy for others
- Allows a safe natural space to feel strong and uncomfortable emotions
- Creating art reduces anxiety, increases relaxation, and relieves stress

Ready to try it?

Allow yourself at least 15 minutes to create. Put on some relaxing music (try the Spotify app on the EAP website!) or pick a nice spot in nature, and make a cup of tea. Grab some paper, a journal, a Bible or book of wisdom, a gel pen or Sharpie.

If you would like, focus on a few verses of Scripture and ponder them as you draw. Use a daily devotional or draw right in your Bible. Maybe your drawing is hearts as you think about “Trust in the Lord with all your Heart” (Proverbs 3:5-6) and what it means to you. Or think about what wisdom you can take from a devotional reading while you draw shapes. Don’t strive for perfection or get frustrated if the drawing takes an unexpected turn. Actually, imperfections make things more visually interesting.

Try one of the doodle ideas below:

1. Bubbles
2. Triangles
3. Wavy lines of varied widths
4. Leaves
5. Horizontal and vertical lines with or without a straight edge
6. Simple flowers
7. Spirals
8. Squares
9. Short lines, long lines, curvy lines, zigzags
10. Dots
11. Overlapping rings or chains
12. Repeated “V” shapes, “C” shapes, “L” shapes, “U” shapes
13. Skinny ovals or fat ovals
14. Grids with alternately colored squares
15. Black and white, or adding various colors in all one hue, all pastels, or a colorful mix



See?! That was easy! Now try it again!

Ideas for this article were taken from these resources with great information about creating art and mental health:

Mindfulartstudio.com

Whataportrait.com

Theashlog.com

For some free Bible journaling printables:

Garmentsofsplendor.com

Pitterandglink.com

BloggersfortheKingdom.com

Pinterest.com has tons of ideas- check it out!

