

TEN TIPS FOR PARENTING YOUR INNER ARTIST AT WORK

Sandy Nelson

OVERVIEW

After years of working alone in my studio I've become my own parent to my inner artist. Like all parents will say, there are certain rules worth repeating and often. Every creator has their own manner of working at their craft. Over time developing a creative practice of what is helpful and works is essential. You won't know what you can do until you understand what you can't, and why. Along this journey certain tenets emerge like little mantras that we begin to adhere to get our work done. I have many useful tips that I use in my own creative work and when I coach clients. These may sound silly, however that's what makes them easy to remember. Here are my top ten:

TIP ONE: DON'T MESS WITH THE DOG

You've heard the saying, "let sleeping dogs alone." Well it's true because if you disturb them, they'll want to go out or play or something. So if you want to work, leave the dog alone.

TIP TWO: DON'T PLAY ON THE STAIRS

I used to say this one to my boys when they were young because they were always focused somewhere else when they used the stairs, which often lead to them falling. You will too if you're not paying attention to walking up or down them. I'm a big advocate of playing, just not on the stairs.

TIP THREE: PUT DOWN THOSE POKEY THINGS!

I can't tell you how many times accidents have happened when I'm caught up in my creative thoughts. I've even sat on my scissors left open nonchalantly on my hand. No more holes in canvases or toes please. Consciously hold those pokey things only with intent.

TIP FOUR: DON'T EAT MELTED CHEESE OVER YOUR KEYBOARD

A no-brainer maybe, but how many times have you accidentally spilled something on your keyboard? Just don't eat or drink there. You probably need a break if you find yourself doing needing to munch there. Go enjoy your snack or meal at the correct table.

TIP FIVE: DON'T TAKE PHONE CALLS WHEN YOU'RE CREATING

I don't know about you, but I don't like to be distracted or interrupted when I'm in my creative flow. Every time the phone rings I'm pulled out of my trance. If I answer it, I'm not working, so I've found it's best if I don't answer, turn off the ringer or unplug it all together.

TIP SIX: WRITE USEFUL POST IT NOTES AND POST THEM WHERE YOU WILL SEE THEM

Sometimes having that extra nudge to stay focused or get a little reminder of why I'm in the studio making my art is a real help. We all need a pat on the back and often so give yourself some and plaster them where you need to be reminded the most.

TIP SEVEN: EAT CANDY OFTEN

My age has given me this wisdom, and I mean business about it. Take some time to enjoy your creative spirit and savor its sweetness. You are the only one who has been given the gifts you have, and if you can't enjoy them, how will anyone else? The sweetness of candy will remind you of just how wonderful talent is so nibble it often.

TIP EIGHT: KICK OUT THE ANNOYING THE CAT

These furry creatures are incredibly annoying when you want to work. They climb, rub, leave hair and lay all over you and your masterpiece. I even had one walk all through a wet painting leaving tracks all over it and everywhere in my studio. This may sound cute and the thoughts of paw prints charming — it wasn't! Find kitty another spot outside your workspace.

TIP NINE: CLEAN UP YOUR MESS

When your work is complete and the project done, make it the last step to clean your space. Put everything away and get rid of the stuff you won't use again. To get real creative work done your work area needs to be available to accomplish what your talent demands. If you don't make your space ready for new work, how will you accomplish future projects as they arise?

TIP TEN: WRITE YOUR REVIEW

I like this rule because it holds me accountable to the work I've completed. I'm not saying you only compliment your work. No, a truthful review will let you evaluate your creative process and assess what worked and the parts that didn't. Writing it out creates a record of your progress and over time you can develop a nice creative practice in this way.

RESOURCES:

Ask: Power Questions for Coaches, Managers and Other Creative People, author Sandy Nelson (Coming Summer 2011) also available at www.meetyourmuse.com

The Muse News, a free newsletter and the Nine Masters of Learning certification course about the many ways we learn using play. www.meetyourmuse.com

Becoming Resilient, a 16 week telecourse teaching you how you can bounce back from anything. www.dailyom.com

ABOUT SANDY NELSON

Sandy Nelson is an artist, creativity and life purpose coach, speaker and inspirational writer. She maintains a coaching practice in the Minneapolis area and around the world, and leads Creativity workshops and Self Empowerment retreats. Her book Ask: Power Questions for Coaches Managers and Creative People (summer 2011), is based on her practical approach of questioning to get the results you want. Her course Becoming Resilient is the culmination of more than 20 years experience and can be found at www.dailyom.com and she's been interviewed on Blog talk radio. She also created and instructs the Play Wizardly School including her Permission to Play Now courses, available at: www.meetyourmuse.com.