



# IGNITE YOUR CREATIVITY!

*Energizing Your  
Imagination Artistically*

*Written and Illustrated by  
James Bennett*

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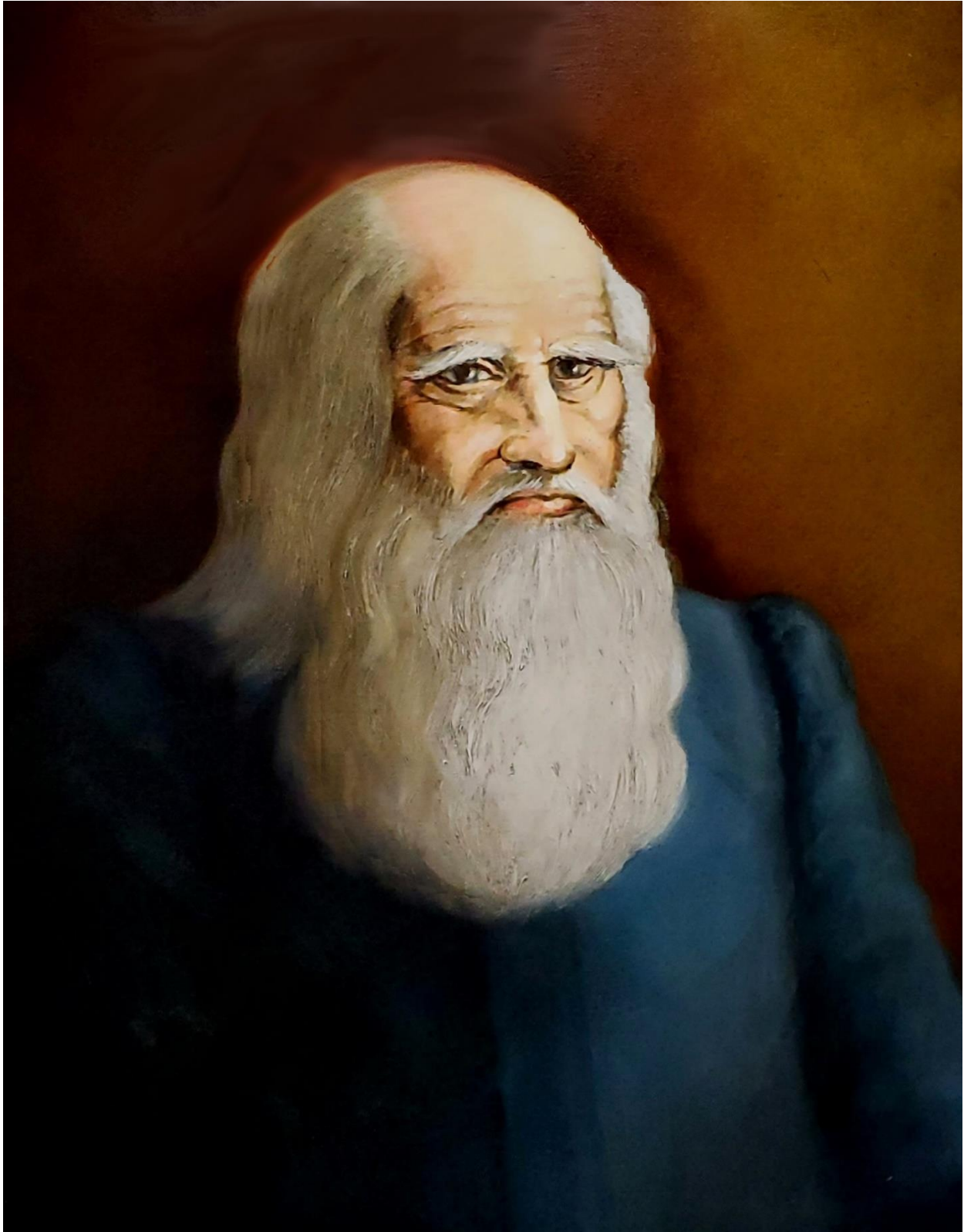
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This book is dedicated to all who love and pursue the creative life.

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Leonardo da Vinci by James Bennett. Leonardo is widely regarded as the archetypal creative genius.

# LEONARDO & CREATIVITY

Leonardo was an illegitimate child born in the tiny, provincial village of Vinci. Nothing in his culturally isolated childhood or his meager early education would indicate that he was prepared in any way for the meteoric rise to the pinnacle of success that he achieved as an adult.

Leonardo da Vinci would go on to change the thinking of his generation and, in turn, every generation to follow. He would redefine art, science, invention, and engineering, and in doing so, help establish the Italian high renaissance movement of the 15th century as a high point in the history of art. His most famous painting, the Mona Lisa, is arguable the most famous painting in the world today.

Indeed, Leonardo stands as the iconic archetype of a genius, and certainly, Leonardo was a bona fide creative genius – a true polymath. It is entirely appropriate for us to think of Leonardo as the personification of creativity.

Unfortunately, we often measure ourselves and our own (meager) achievements against a “super star” like Leonardo. It would be much better all the way around if we appreciated the talents and abilities that we have, instead of minimizing their significance. Minimizing our creative abilities tends to stifle their further development, but recognizing and appreciating the creativity we have will enable it to grow and develop.

Rather than feeling discouraged by comparing ourselves to a “super star,” we can be inspired by seeing the “super stars” as examples of what can be achieved, even when one’s early life, very much like Leonardo’s, seems completely inadequate.



One of the biggest myths about creativity is it is a special talent that only a few very talented individuals possess. But that idea is blatantly false. The truth is everyone is naturally endowed with creativity. There is no one who is not creative. You don’t even have to be an artist to express yourself in creative ways!

Have you ever known a young child who was not creative? Of course not, and neither has anyone else. All children are creative. Maybe you can recall some of the creative things you did as a child.

In addition, neuroscientists have conducted extensive research on creativity and have validated that indeed everyone possesses creativity in one form or another. Yes, creativity can take many forms.

# A LIST OF POPULAR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. Writing
  - 1.1 Poetry
  - 1.2 Memoir
  - 1.3 History
  - 1.4 Fiction
  - 1.5 Children's literature
  - 1.6 Instruction guides
2. Drawing
  - 2.1. Pencil
  - 2.2. Colored Pencils
  - 2.3. Pen and ink
  - 2.4. Pastel
  - 2.5. Chalk
3. Painting
  - 3.1. Acrylic Painting
  - 3.2. Watercolor Painting
  - 3.3. Gouache Painting
  - 3.4. Airbrushing
  - 3.5. Acrylic Pouring
4. Papercraft and Stationery
  - 4.1. Art Journaling
  - 4.2. Origami
  - 4.3. Paper Quilling
  - 4.4. Scrapbooking
  - 4.5. Bullet Journaling
5. Sculpting
  - 5.1. Pottery
  - 5.2. Clay Sculpting
  - 5.3. Wood carving
  - 5.4. Metalwork
  - 5.5. Concrete Craft
6. DIY
  - 6.1. Upcycling
  - 6.2. Decoupage
  - 6.3. Candle Making
  - 6.4. Wood burning
7. Textile Arts & Crafts
  - 7.1. Sewing
  - 7.2. Crochet
  - 7.3. Cross Stitch
  - 7.4. Hand Embroidery
  - 7.5 Knitting
  - 7.6 Design
8. Digital Hobbies
  - 8.1. 3D Printing
  - 8.3. Photography
  - 8.4. Animation
9. Outdoor & Gardening Hobbies
  - 9.1. Flower Arranging
  - 9.2. Terrariums
  - 9.3. Flower Pressing
  - 9.4. Bonsai
  - 9.5. Topiary
10. Culinary
  - 10.1 Menu planning
  - 10.2 Everyday food preparation
  - 10.3 Special occasion dinners
  - 10.4 Desserts/candies
  - 10.5 Beverages
  - 10.6 Baking
11. Teaching/Tutoring
12. Entrepreneurship

This list, even though lengthy, does not include every possible way that creativity can be expressed. Even so, the list does indicate how creativity can be expressed in a wide range of activities.

Two things are apparent from looking at the list: first, art accounts for only a small fraction of the many creative activities; and second, the list shows clearly that all creative activities involve skills that can be learned and improved upon.

Because all the activities on this list involve skills that can be learned, does that mean that creativity is something which can be learned? The short answer is yes. Creativity is a skill. It is not some unfathomable talent that you either have or don't have. In fact, every one of us has all the ability that is needed to cultivate this skill.

There's no such thing as "I'm just not creative." Instead, there's only "Well, actually, I'm just as creative as anyone else, I've just not spent much time developing that particular skill yet."

A similar misconception is when we reach a certain age, we might think we are too old for creative activities. Actually, when we reach our senior years (usually with more time and fewer responsibilities), it's a perfect time to take up a new creative pursuit.



Living a creative life is full of new possibilities, discoveries, exploration, experimentation, self-expression, and invention. It's a habit, a way of being, a way for us to realize our true selves.

There are numerous benefits in living a creative life. Creativity enables us to express ourselves in positive ways. It also expands opportunities for learning new things. It promotes healthy cognitive processes, problem solving, and relieves stress and anxiety. Creativity allows us to enter our "happy zone" and have fun. It is a way to connect with others and gives us a sense of purpose. Creativity enhances feelings of accomplishment, pride, and self-esteem. Creativity improves the ability to focus. Creativity often includes a degree of risk taking (Can I really do this?) and inventiveness. Creativity encourages us to be lifelong learners. Creativity often has a spiritual connection. Creativity can reward us with the assurance that we are making a worthwhile contribution to our community.



Before we consider ways to stimulate the imagination and become more creative, it is important that we assess our present situation.

On the next two pages is a form. Please fill it out before we go any further. It will serve as a record of where you are as you begin. It will help you gauge your progress.

# PERSONAL CREATIVITY INVENTORY

Describe your current involvement in creative activities.

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What creative activities did you enjoy doing when you were younger?

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What are some of the creative things your friends and family like to do?

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If there were absolutely no barriers (financial or otherwise), what are some creative things you'd love to do?

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What is holding you back from doing these things now?

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Before explaining my method, I believe it would be helpful for me to lay out my credentials.

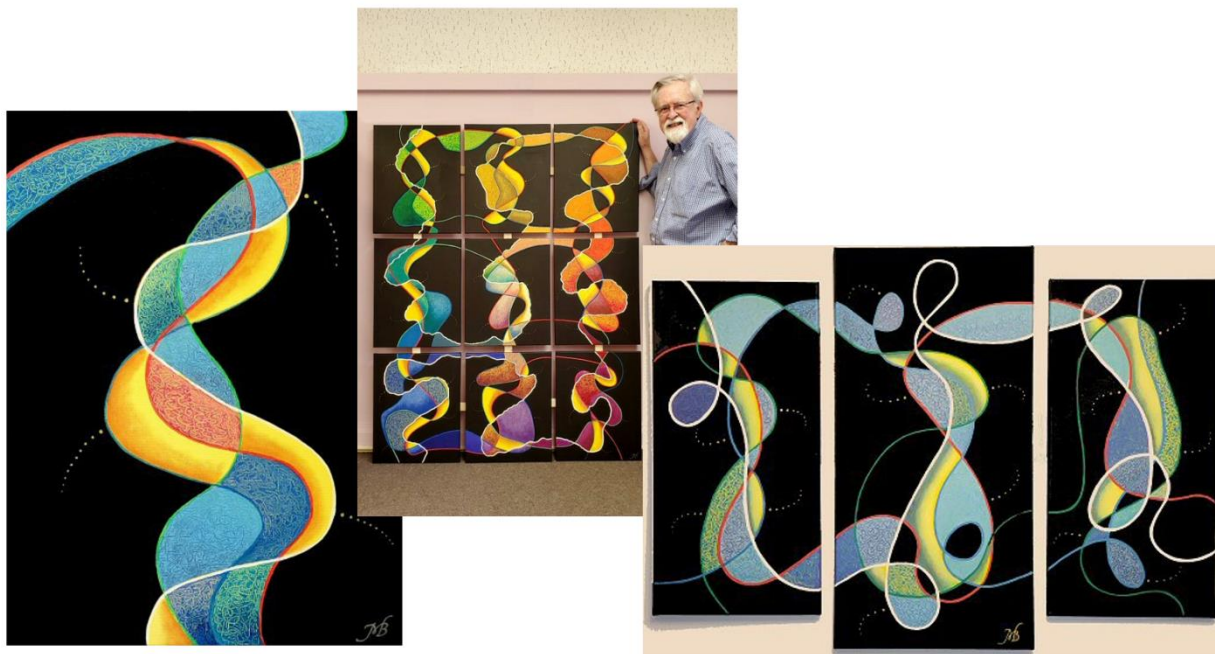
I have bachelor's and master's degrees in Fine Arts and have won several awards including a prestigious Virginia Artists Certificate of Distinction and Distinguished Educator for Art Education in Southwest Ohio.



I have forty-five years teaching experience during which I created some award-winning, innovative educational materials for making learning math exciting for students. I have also authored over twenty books and have written a few articles that were published in a computer magazine.

From 1972 until 2017 (the years when I was teaching full-time) I avoided exhibiting my art partly because I was focusing my creative energy on teaching but mainly because I had concluded that art as a cultural standard had lost its way and had reached a dead-end.

In 2020, inspired by a dream, I believe I had found the way out of that dead-end. It involved a return to the transcendental.



The result was a series of paintings which are archetypal images portraying the forces and rhythms of life, music, and dance. Created spontaneously and intuitively, they are a way that I have found to connect with what we call the subconscious mind which links all of us together as one. Subsequently these paintings became instruments for deep meditation.

I created my method for using art to energize the imagination and ignite creativity in 1994 when I was struggling to discover an authentic and relevant form of art that was uniquely my own. I credit this method with enabling me to achieve that goal.

This method uses five inspiring watercolor paintings: The Door, The Desk, The River, The Children, and The Light.



Each of the paintings was created to address a specific aspect of enhancing creativity. They accomplish this by engaging and energizing the imagination.

I created these paintings and developed the accompanying system of visualization several years ago solely for my personal use and development.

Now I am happy to share my method with others. I believe it is incredibly helpful in igniting creativity.

# WHAT MAKES THIS METHOD UNIQUE?

Any time a person wants to make significant, lasting, positive changes in their life, he or she must first make changes in their thinking. Numerous books and "success courses" teach this very fundamental principle. Everyone agrees on that. However, the question is, how can a person change the way they think?

This method explained here provides a practical as well as effective way to bring about a significant inward change. I found that using the power of your imagination is the answer.

Imagination and creativity are inextricably connected.

The exercises which I'll describe actually trigger the amazing power of your imagination to provide you with all the ability, motivation, ideas, persistence, or whatever else you need to strengthen your creative abilities.

Here is what some noted writers have said about the power of the imagination:

"The time will come when we shall realize what a tremendous subjective power the imagination has upon life. We are beginning to see that imagination is not mere fantasy of the brain, but in it lives the ideal." - *Orison Swett Marden*

"The imagination is literally the workshop wherein are fashioned all plans created by man. The great leaders of business, industry, finance, and great artists, musicians, poets, and writers became great, because they developed the faculty of creative imagination." - *Napoleon Hill*

"All improvement in your life begins with the improvement of your mental pictures!" - *Brian Tracy*

"Change the way we represent things so that they empower us to feel and to produce the kinds of behavior that support us in the achievement of our goals." - *Anthony Robbins*

"The picture we paint in our minds is likely to be fulfilled." - *Zig Ziglar*

"Imaging is the process of seeing within your mind. It is one of the most powerful principles available for creating your future." - *Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen*

Almost all world-class athletes and other peak performers are visualizers." - *Stephen R. Covey*

My method will provide you with a powerful technique for discovering and releasing your strengths and abilities. It will help you identify and eliminate the obstacles that might be standing in your way and holding you back.

Reading the instructions, practicing the exercises, and completing a journal will involve you in a process of self-discovery which is unique for each person. What you will gain from applying this method will be exactly what you need to move ahead and become more creative.

You are about to embark upon an exciting adventure—the discovery of your talents. To do this you will learn a special imaging technique. The images used with this technique will stir your imagination and evoke ideas which can literally propel you forward toward your goal.

## TWO FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

**TRUTH #1** - If you desire to make lasting changes in your life, you must first change yourself mentally — which means you must alter the way you think, feel, and react, to events. Only when these mental changes have taken place, will there be lasting changes manifested in your experience. This applies to all areas of life whatever our background happens to be.

Using sheer will-power and determination people can make temporary changes, but eventually they will slip back into their old ways. Habits of thinking and feeling are incredibly difficult to break. The expression, "Oh, he (or she or even I) will never change" acknowledges this truth.

**TRUTH #2** - The most effective way (if not the ONLY way) to eliminate undesirable habits is to activate and focus the power of your imagination upon achieving the desired result. When the imagination has been directed toward a task, there is no need for us to apply will-power to force ourselves to do the things necessary to attain our goal. We won't need will power, because we will have the internal "drive" that will propel us forward toward our goal.

I'm sure you can think of instances in your life where you have imagined yourself in the position where you were enjoying something you wanted, and later you were actually in that position.

I can think of several examples in my own life – one where I wanted a particular make and model car. At the time, I was unable to afford the car, but within a year I was driving it!

Please don't be so foolish as to discount the power of the imagination. Use its power to accomplish the things you want to do.

Avoid thinking that daydreaming is a waste of your time. All truly creative people are “experts” in daydreaming. It's part of the creative process!

# HOW POWERFUL IS YOUR IMAGINATION?

The imagination is so powerful that when applied negatively, it can be quite destructive. It can paralyze people with fear or cause them to fall gravely ill.

Phobias have their root in the imagination. Fear and worry gain their power through the imagination.

Nothing has a more powerful effect upon the subconscious than the imagination.

If there were no imagination, the psychiatrists would all be out of business. Yes, the imagination is a powerful thing.

So, if the imagination can cause all these destructive things to happen to people, think for a moment how much good might be achieved if all the force of the imagination is applied in a constructive way.

I don't mean to sound like I'm speaking hyperbole, but the truth is, your imagination can revolutionize your life! Indeed, your imagination is the key to your becoming the creative "super star" that stands waiting "off stage" ready to step forward and perform!

An example in American history of the power of the imagination is the creative genius and true visionary, Thomas Edison.

Edison as a child was a daydreamer, even labeled "addle-brained," and was kicked out of school. But fortunately, his mother believed in his potential and home schooled him. As we all know, he became one of the most forward thinkers and prolific inventors of all time.

# HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK

On the following pages are color photographs of the five watercolor paintings together with instructions on how to use those paintings to energize your imagination and ignite your creativity. Each painting addresses a specific issue. Look through the book and choose the one or ones that you believe will help you the most.

*The Door* has to do with stepping out from circumstances that might hold you back. *The Desk* has to do with organizing your efforts. *The River* is about making realistic plans. The subject of *The Children* painting is working with others. *The Light* is a picture about recognizing a higher power in life.



There are 4 steps to the special technique for using these paintings.

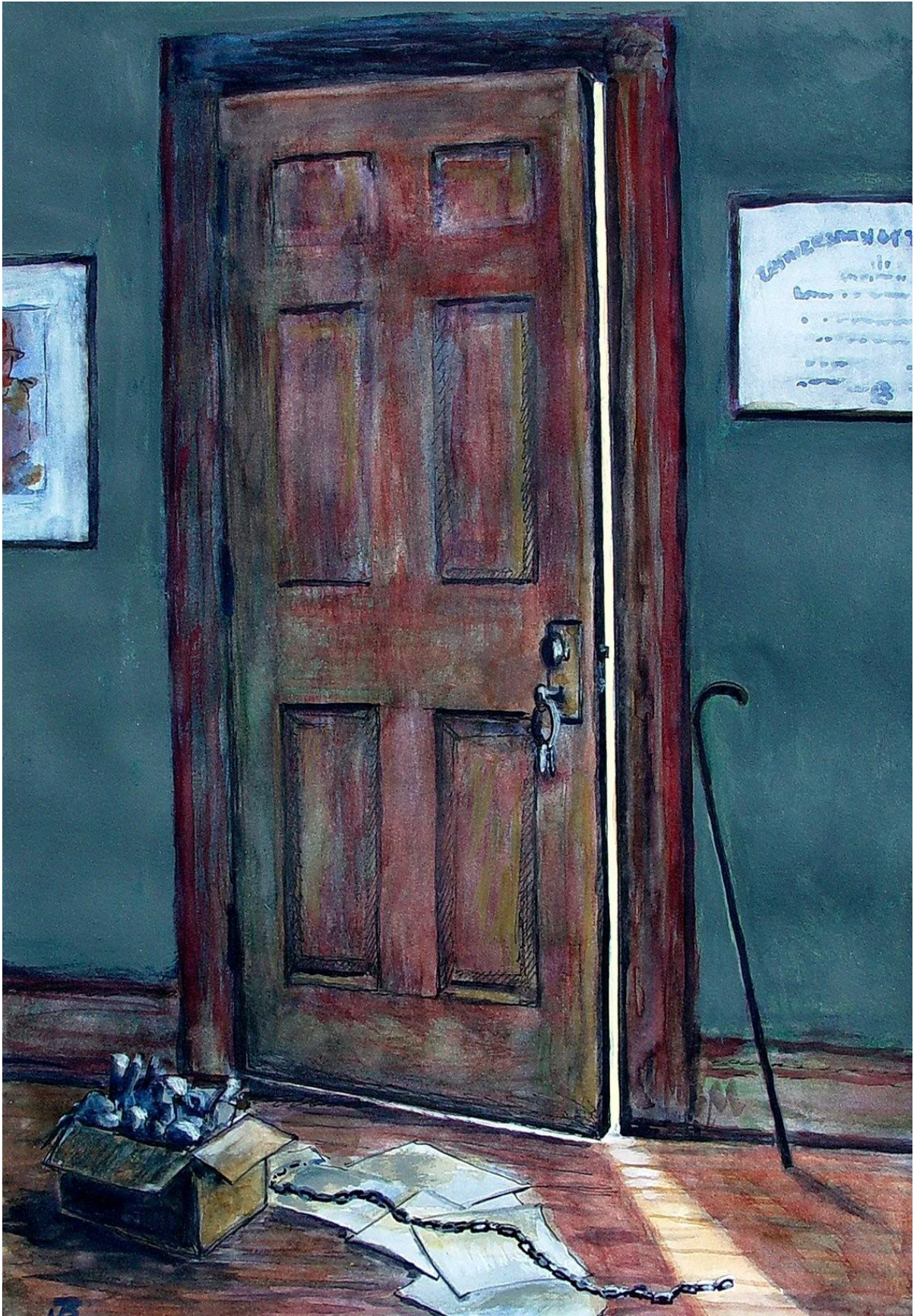
The 4 steps are: Look, Interpret, Visualize, and Experience.

Remember these 4 steps by the acronym "**LIVE**"

**Look - Interpret - Visualize - Experience**

As you apply the L-I-V-E method in your day-to-day life, I strongly encourage you to keep a journal in which you record your progress and jot down the creative ideas that will come to your mind.

As an example, Leonardo kept numerous journals over his lifetime. Undoubtedly, this was a key to his outstanding creativity.



*THE DOOR* by James Bennett

# ***THE DOOR (Eliminating Problems that Can Hold You Back)***

## **Step 1 - Look**

Relax and study the picture quietly for a few moments.



What do you see here?

Describe the picture.

What sort of room is it?

What do you think is on the other side of the door?

Does it seem that any of the things in this picture have special significance or meaning to you?

Does this picture provoke any feelings?

What thoughts come to your mind as you look at this picture?

## **Step 2 - Interpret**

We are looking at a door from across a very dark room. The door is not closed but open just a tiny crack with a thin sliver of bright light shining through onto the floor of the room.

Hanging on the walls of the room on either side of the door are a picture and a diploma. Leaning against the door frame is a black cane. On the floor in front of the door are a box full of unidentifiable items, several papers strewn carelessly on the floor, and a chain. There is a ring of keys in the lock of the door.

This picture is all about making a definite decision to step forward to pursue being more creative in your life. The benefits of creativity are represented by the bright light that is shining on the other side of the door.

The room is a dark place. This is the place where total boredom resides. It is a place of unfulfilled dreams and disappointment. It is a place of loneliness. It is dreary, dull, and dark. It is not a place where life flourishes. This is a place where life stagnates and withers.

What is on the other side of the door? Hope for the future is there. All the opportunities for growth and for the realization of one's aspirations lie on the other side of the door. That's where the enjoyment of the benefits of creativity is a reality.

This dark room is not a physical place – but a state of mind. The room represents anything which could hold you back from enjoying a wonderful, fulfilling, creative life.

The room is a dark place. It represents anything in your life that might hold you back from experiencing all those enjoyable things you wish for.

It represents past failures, weaknesses, disappointments, discouragement, feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, anger, uncertainties, and fears. It represents anything that has the potential to hold you back – that can be an obstacle.

We do not want to dwell on the past, but the point is, when things from the past continue to have a negative influence on what we are doing in the present—if there are things which exert a hold on us and stand in the way of our happiness—we want to find a way to overcome those obstacles and be free to enjoy life.

The light coming from the crack in the door represents the opportunity for you to grow and live a truly creative life. It represents life and vitality—hope and confidence.

The door is not closed but is open just a crack – others who have gone before you have unlocked the door. They have shown the way, and that is a source of hope. The door is not closed or locked. You can choose to swing it wide open and walk through and into the light.

Could there be disappointments and discouragements on the other side of the door? Perhaps there are, but whatever you might encounter on the other side in the light is certainly worth the risk in order to enjoy the tremendous reward. It is far better to face the possibility of danger than to remain in the stagnant, lifeless darkness of the room. Personal fulfilment and happiness lie on the other side of the door.



There is a cane by the door. The cane in this instance has nothing to do with a real physical disability. This cane represents false support that a person may be tempted to employ when facing the world. It represents making excuses. It also represents artificial stimulants, drugs, cigarettes, alcohol. You may be tempted to use this cane, but in the end, it will only hinder you instead of help you.

The papers on the floor are scripts or letters from a time that is past. They represent activities which bring you no reward. They are just a bunch of words gossip - old outdated thoughts. They represent things you have said and things that others have said to you. Some of these words may have hurt you. Some of these words may have angered you. Some of these words may have caused you to be fearful. You no longer need them. You have no need to indulge in such unfulfilling activities.

The chain represents emotions that can weigh a person down. It could be a chain of guilt and fear and feelings of unworthiness, inadequacy and self-indulgence. It represents hate and anger. You're better off leaving that chain behind you.

The box contains trash from the past that you have held onto, but it is trash. The trash is the memories of events from the past which might hinder your ability to move forward. You don't need that trash. You can leave it behind you and do much better without it.

The diploma is another image that represents the past. It represents accomplishments from the past and is a comfort only to someone who wants to stay in the room and take consolation in the past. Dwelling on the past will not help you move forward. Leave this behind as you prepare yourself for greater achievements.

The picture to the left of the door represents fantasies that hinder your perception of reality. They are pure escapism. Fantasies of this type will not help you move forward. They will only hold you back.

The keys in the door are the one thing of great value that you should take with you. They may be used to unlock other doors. The keys represent knowledge that will "open doors" for you..

As you view this picture, please realize how much you dislike the thought that you would have to spend even a second in a room such as this. It is a stifling place to be. You don't want to have anything to do with it. You feel certain that almost anything will be better than this dark, ugly, lifeless room. This room is a horrible place to stay. It represents hopelessness. You are ready to leave.

You know that if you were to stay in this dark room, you will not move forward; you will stagnate. This room is a horrible trap.

The room represents all the things that could hold you back from being involved in fulfilling creative activities. There is no future for you in this room. You must decide to leave this room without any delay.

You can simply go to the door, take the keys, swing the door wide open and step forth boldly. All you must do is make the decision to take decisive action. You have the certainty of why you are leaving the darkness of the room behind; you despise this room and all it represents.

You are ready for something much better. You want to step out into the light.

You feel a growing sense of urgency welling up inside you to escape from the stifling atmosphere of this room. You are ready! You charge out of this room and leave it behind you forever!

### ***Step 3 - Visualize***

Sitting quietly and comfortably, without any distractions, and relax. You may close your eyes if you like. Take a few minutes to relax yourself completely and to picture the following in your mind.

Picture yourself walking over to that door, stepping carefully to avoid getting tripped or tangled in the chain, the papers, or the trash. You also want to be certain not to knock over the cane.

Imagine that you take the keys and then swing the door open. See yourself stepping forth boldly and decisively from the dark room of despair into the bright light of hope and opportunity. Imagine yourself doing this. Picture the details. Feel the emotion of walking out of the dark and dreary room into the warm, energizing light.

You have done it! You have claimed your freedom! You have taken the action that will lead you to success!

The more vividly you can picture this scene in your mind and the more emotions you can associate with it, the more effective the technique will be. At first, this may not be easy, but practice it until you can "see" the details and begin to feel the emotion.

Some people are so disgusted with the image of the dark room, that they see themselves not just walking out of the room but running out into the light!

### ***Step 4 - Experience***

This is where the fun and excitement really begin, because this is where you'll see real results.

What you are going to do is connect the vision of "The Door" to the real world. You are going to establish links between the image in your mind and your everyday experiences.

Look for two things: situations and circumstances that "mirror" or "parallel" the dark and dreary room and its contents and also situations that "mirror" your stepping out into the light.

Are there any situations in your life that give you the same feelings as you experienced when you thought about the picture of the dark and dreary room? Are there situations that give you the same positive feelings you experienced when you visualized yourself walking out of the room into the light? Be on the lookout for these.

Look for instances when you feel the same emotions you have associated with the dark room.

Do you ever feel like you're in a "rut" or a "slump" or "running up against a brick wall?"

Are there any situations where you can make a connection between your actions, your words, your thoughts, your feelings and the image of the cane? The chain? The papers? The box of trash? The diploma?

Do you see any situations where you are not being completely honest with yourself or others - where you're making excuses and taking the easy way out? That's the cane.

Or, perhaps you know of a situation where you're relying on someone or something else to provide a way for you. That's also a cane.

Do you feel guilty or fearful or inadequate? Do you worry? Do you have trouble controlling your temper? That's a chain. If you let others take advantage of you or upset you, it's because you're caught in a chain.

Do you ever feel sorry for yourself and wish things would somehow get better. Do you ever gossip or share your "sob story" with your friends. That's the papers.

Do you blame others for something that happened? Do you find it difficult to forgive? Do you ever find yourself yearning for the 'good old days?' That's a box of trash.

Do you ever "toot your own horn" about your past accomplishments? That's a diploma.

Do you find yourself ever wasting your time on unrealistic fantasies, schemes, "soap operas," romance novels, TV shows, movies, magazines, etc. That is the kind of thing represented by the painting hanging on the wall of the room.

How do feel when you do any of these things? Do you ever have a feeling like you're trapped in the dark room – that you're going nowhere?

As these situations come to mind, can you think of ways that you might begin to step forth boldly and make changes in how you react to these situations? Have you ever stepped forth boldly in the past? What can you change about yourself that will make a difference - that will free you from those things that can hold you back?

As you begin to practice the "Experience" step of the technique, be looking for basically two kinds of situations in your everyday life: the "caught in the dark room" situations and the "walking out into the light" situations. As you begin to identify these, focus on increasing your "stepping into

the light" experiences and decreasing your 'caught in the dark room' experiences. You'll start to see real positive changes, starting to happen for you.

Note: Don't make the mistake of thinking that the solution to a difficult situation such as a strained personal relationship is to walk away from it and end the relationship. Walking away from situations is not what we are talking about at all. That is not leaving the room.

Use this page to record your results using The Door picture.

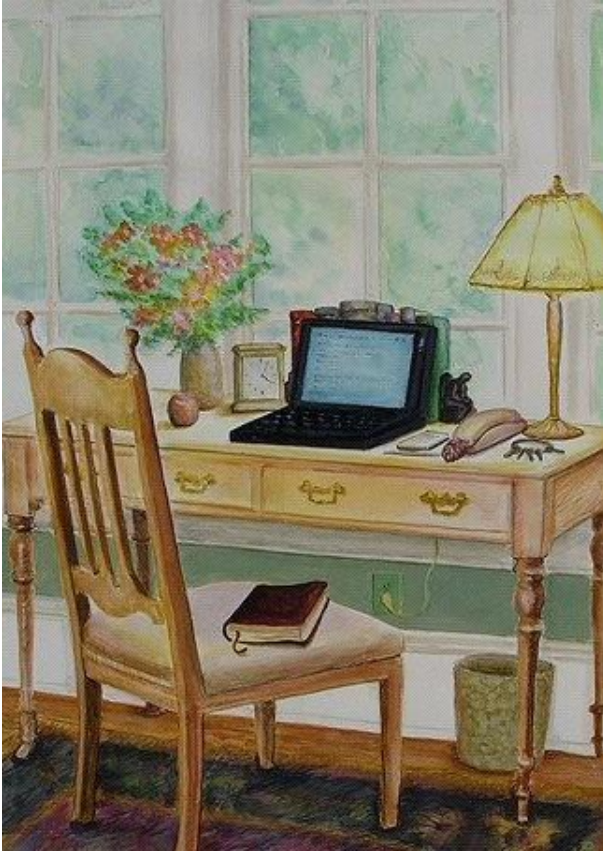


*THE DESK* by James Bennett

# ***THE DESK (Getting Organized)***

## ***Step 1 - Look***

Relax and study the picture of the desk quietly for a few minutes.



What do you see in this picture?

Describe what you see.

What sort of place is this?

What do you think about the desk?

Does it seem that any of the things in the picture have special significance or meaning to you?

Does this picture make you feel a certain way?

What thoughts come to your mind as you look at this picture?

## ***Step 2 - Interpret***

(Read carefully. Think of specific ways this interpretation might apply to you.)

We are looking at a desk. It looks like it could possibly be an antique desk. It has two drawers in it with several things arranged neatly on top.

The desk is positioned in front of windows which look out upon a warm, sunny view of trees and bushes. Perhaps the window looks out upon a garden or a lawn.

In front of the desk is a chair that is pulled out slightly at an angle. On the seat of the chair is a book.

On the desk we see a vase of flowers, an apple, a clock, a laptop computer, some books with book ends, a notepad and a pen, a telephone, lamp, and a ring of keys.

On the floor is a rug, and under the desk is a wastepaper basket. We can also see an electrical outlet and cord.

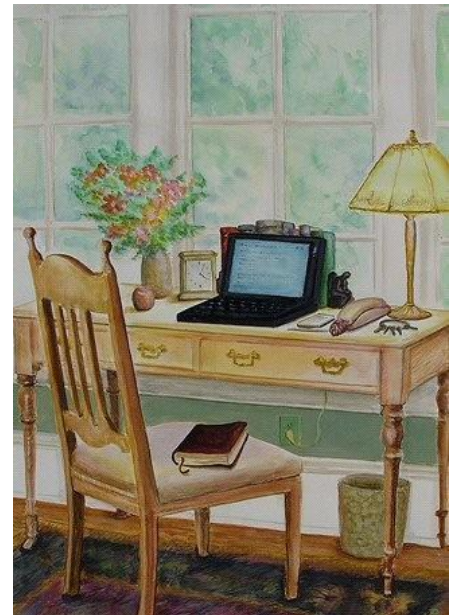
What this painting represents is organization and preparation. Organization and preparation are vital in cultivating creativity, and this image will help strengthen these skills. If you already have these skills, "The Desk" will help reinforce them.

A lack of organization and preparation has been the downfall of many a talented person. They are important when you get started and vital along the way. Without organization and preparation, we are liable to waste a lot of efforts.

Organization begins in the mind. This image will enable you to create better organization outwardly by first organizing your thoughts inwardly.

The desk is a warm and inviting place to visit. The chair is pulled out slightly just waiting for you to come and take a seat.

On the seat of the chair is a book which represents the 'book of truth.' Contained in this book is the knowledge of ethical and moral conduct. It contains the truths which show you how to live and act in accordance with the laws of the universe. If You are a person who believes in God, you should think of this book as the book of your faith.



Notice that the book of truth lies on the seat of the chair. This is significant for two important reasons. First, it is where you will sit. It is on the place that will be your foundation as you sit and work at the desk. Second, you will have to pick it up before you can sit down in the chair. Thus you have before you an image which impresses upon your mind the idea that the book of truth needs always to be the foundation and the beginning of all your organization and preparation.

The computer represents access to the latest, up-to-date information on a worldwide scale. This computer gives you instantaneous access to people from all around the world. Through the Internet and email you can communicate with experts and get their advice on virtually every subject. You can use this to help you acquire information about creative pursuits.

In addition, this computer can organize complicated information in a database and enable you to access this information quickly and easily. You can use the computer for this purpose too.

Behind the computer is a set of old books. These books represent knowledge and history that preceded the computer. The "Thinker" bookends represent the great thoughts of all ages. You have access to all this information at this desk.

The telephone is also a means of accessing information and for instantaneous communication with people worldwide.

The small notepad and the pen which are lying between the computer and the telephone represent keeping notes and making daily schedules.

The ring of keys represents "keys to creativity." These keys are first of all, the instruction in this book. They are also the many excellent books, videos, and instructional programs that are available. Using these keys can help you progress.

The lamp shines a bright light. It represents the illumination of knowledge and the spirit which points the way.

The clock represents the management of time during a day. Each of us has twenty-four hours in a day. What we do with that time makes the difference.

The apple represents being conscious of physical needs - taking care of the need for good nutrition and a healthful diet composed mostly of fresh fruits and vegetables. Without good health, nothing else is possible.

The vase of flowers represents life itself. The blossoming floors represent the blossoming of your talents and abilities which can happen with organization and preparation.

The two desk drawers represent your hidden talents and abilities.

The waste basket represents the fact that the beginning of organization is to throw away clutter and trash. The rug represents confusion and disorder which you can put under your foot.

The electrical cord and outlet represent the fact that we are not totally self-sufficient—that we must always be able to depend in some ways upon others. Just as the electricity comes from a source outside the room, we also need to rely on others in our community and/or family. We cannot be totally self-contained in every possible way.

Study the desk in detail. The desk is a warm and inviting place to sit and to decide how you are going to proceed. Think of this as your desk. No one else uses this desk except you.

Think of how much pleasure you could have sitting at this desk looking through the book, exploring what the computer can do, calling people on the phone, and, in general, putting everything in order. When you have finished working at this desk, everything will be neatly organized and you will be prepared to take action that will enable you to overcome any obstacles and show you the way to success. "The Desk" is a picture that gives you a good, positive feeling. This is a picture that gives you a sense of strength and confidence.

## ***Step 3 - Visualize***

Sitting quietly and comfortably, without any distractions, relax and close your eyes. Take a few minutes just to relax yourself completely and to picture the following in your mind.

Picture yourself walking over to the desk. Pull out the chair, pick up the book of truth, and sit down. You might decide to read some of the book or just glance through it or simply set it aside for the moment.

If you decide to visualize yourself reading the book of truth, realize that you are strengthening yourself morally, ethically, and spiritually. When you finish reading, make sure to leave the bookmark at the place where you stop reading so you can continue another day reading from the place you stopped.

Now visualize that you are looking at the computer. First check to see if you have any messages. If you do, take a moment to read them now. (Incidentally this computer is specially programmed to filter out all "junk" mail so that all your messages are only the most important ones.)

When you've read all your messages, next imagine that you input all the data that you currently have on your mind into the computer's database. Input all your concerns and worries and the petty and weighty things that seem confusing and even upsetting at the present. Just type them all into the computer database. Imagine that the computer will sort through and organize all this data for you. You don't even need to think about those things any longer. You will be able to make decisions on these issues when the computer gives you its summary.

Now think carefully of a question or questions about how you might organize your time. If you have obstacles to overcome, think of a question about how you can overcome them. Imagine that you type your questions into the computer and send them out to all the people around the world who are experts in the fields or subjects that you are interested in.

Now imagine that you pick up the phone and call a friend or relative. See yourself saying positive, encouraging things to that person about working on a creative project. Imagine yourself having a great conversation with the friend or relative.

After you finish the conversation, you can also imagine that you call someone with whom you have unresolved conflicts. Perhaps it is someone with whom there are 'hard' feelings.

Again, picture in your mind that the conversation is entirely positive and encouraging. Visualize that as you talk with this person, the old grievances are getting cleared up and a new, friendlier, more positive relationship is being established.

Now, see yourself jotting down on the notepad a few notes of important things to do today. Imagine that you are brief and to the point. See yourself tearing off the top note from the pad, folding it and taking it with you.

If you feel hungry for a snack, see yourself eating the apple or just taking it with you to eat later.

Also, see yourself taking the keys with you as you go about your activities. They will open doors for you.

Finally, before you leave, throw away any trash. See yourself putting everything back just exactly the way it was so the desk will be neat and organized the next time you use it.

## ***Step 4 - Experience***

We want to connect the vision of "The Desk" to the real world. To do this, you are going to establish links between the image in the painting and your everyday experiences.

This is one of the most important steps in the method. This is the step where you will develop and refine your ideas and preparation for pursuing creative activities.

As you practice visualizing yourself using the computer and consulting with your team of experts from around the world, your imagination will turn your questions over to your subconscious mind which will begin to provide you with the ideas and plans that you will need. When you imagine consulting the experts, your own subconscious mind will respond using its incredibly vast knowledge and resources to answer your questions.

Once you have begun to use the image of "The Desk," the most important thing you want to do is be on the lookout for the new ideas that are going to come to you. These ideas will present themselves to you in two ways.

First, ideas will come to you in moments of inspiration. "Out of the blue," you will suddenly have a hunch or maybe an idea will come to you in a dream.

The second way that new ideas will come to you will be in the form of opportunities. The subconscious mind, through means that we cannot fully explain, has the power to somehow influence actual events. Perhaps you will see something or someone will mention something to you in conversation that would be a great opportunity for you. Maybe the opportunity will come to you from something you read or hear or hear about. Welcome these opportunities. Don't ignore them. Write them down, and act on them.

Be patient. Don't become discouraged if ideas or opportunities do not begin to come to you immediately. Give the process time to work.

Don't prejudge the ideas that come to you even if initially they might seem crazy, far-fetched, outrageous, unrealistic or even impossible. Be open to receive new and expansive ideas. Accept them with the expectation that the "experts" who gave you these ideas will also explain to you how to implement them.

Organization is important and begins in the mind. The order and organization that you picture in your mind will begin to spill over into the outer world of the senses.

If you suddenly feel an urge to clean out that old closet or reorganize your desk or do some other similar task, by all means, do it ! Respond to those thoughts and feelings that come to you.

Whenever you encounter stressful situations in which you tend to worry or get upset, you might imagine filing these things away in your computer database and letting the computer process it for you.

If this idea is something that you think will be helpful to you, then whenever you encounter a stressful situation, just take a moment, and imagine going to your desk and inputting the data.

Use the chart below to get an idea what kinds of tools and what sort of space you will need.

### Creative Activities that Require Only a Few Tools and Minimal Space

Drawing  
Calligraphy  
Writing  
Flower Arranging  
Journaling  
Carving Small Objects  
Playing a Small Musical Instrument  
Singing  
Knitting/Crocheting/Beading  
Paper Crafts  
Candle Making  
Leather Crafts  
Scrapbooking  
Sewing  
Digital Arts

### Creative Activities that Require More Tools and Space

Painting  
Weaving  
Woodworking  
Ceramics  
Sculpture  
Furniture Refinishing  
Dance  
Metal Crafts  
Bookbinding  
Playing a Large Musical Instrument  
Glass Crafts  
Gardening/Landscaping  
Photography  
Printmaking  
Audio/Video Production

My Ideas and Preparation:



*THE RIVER* by James Bennett

# ***THE RIVER (Creating a Realistic Plan)***

## **Step 1 - Look**

Relax and study the picture quietly for a few minutes.



What do you see here?

Who do you think is the person in the boat?

Describe the details.

Where is the boat going?

What do you think about the river?

Does it seem that any of the things in the picture have special significance or meaning to you?

Does this picture evoke any feelings?

What thoughts come to your mind as you study this picture?

## **Step 2 - Interpret**

(Read carefully. Think of specific ways this interpretation might apply to you.)

In this painting, titled 'The River,' we are looking out upon an expansive landscape. There is a river winding through the landscape from the foreground into the background. In the foreground is small boat with an individual sailing it.

Some parts of the river appear calm. Other parts appear to have rocks and rapids. The river forks in a couple of places. Along the river are several features: a group of trees, a cave, a barren area

with a dead tree, a large building with a wall around it, a factory, and a city that lies in the far distance.

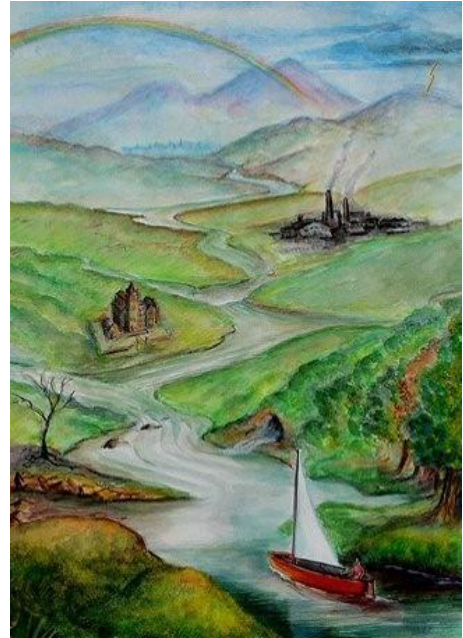
We can also see a rainbow in the sky and a storm with lightning in the distance.

The river symbolizes or represents your voyage from the point where you are today to the successful realization of your creativity potential. You are the person in the boat.

The sail of the boat provides the energy to move the boat forward. The sail represents your determination and commitment to achieve your goal. Determination and commitment provide the energy that will move you forward.

The rudder of your boat is your plan. Just as a boat without a rudder will wander aimlessly, without a plan you will wander aimlessly. Your plan is what gives you direction.

Some people ask, which direction is the boat traveling - up or down the river.? And, that is a good question. If the boat is traveling up river, the voyage will be a constant battle against the current. We hope that in this case, our boat is traveling down river in the same direction as the flow of the current. For the flow of the river represents a person's talents and innate potential. It represents the fulfilling of one's unique purpose or destiny. To go against the flow" - to fight the current would mean that a person is not being true to themselves but is putting on a phony act trying to be something they really are not.



To the left of the boat, there is a spur of rocky land jutting out into the water. It has a barren tree on it. If we look carefully, we will see the remains of wrecked boats and even a skeleton there. You want to be careful to steer your boat far away from that area.

This area represents the negative influences of any detractors who will criticize you and tell you horror stories of disaster and misfortune of people just like yourself who have failed at what you are seeking to do. They will try to discourage and dissuade you from achieving your goal. But, like the barren tree, these attitudes of 'gloom and doom' are unfruitful; they will never produce anything worthwhile. This is an area of danger. Their influence could rob you of your dreams and ambition. Their intent is to wreck your boat. Don't listen to them. Steer wide of that area.

Just ahead and to the right is a calm cove that is back among the trees. It looks peaceful and quiet. If you pulled your boat into that space, you would certainly be safe and protected, especially when you can see that it looks like a storm might be coming your way and not too far down the river are some rocks and rough water. The cove would be a safe haven to retreat into.

The only problem with doing that is you will never get anywhere if you stay in the cove. You will never get to your destination.

Of course, the peaceful cove represents the temptation to "take it easy" and avoid difficulty. The peaceful cove can be just as deadly as the rocky dangers on the other side. You will never achieve your potential by "playing it safe" and avoiding difficulties.

Now, it is perfectly fine to stop and rest for a short time if indeed rest is needed. The temptation you need to avoid is the desire to remain there even after you're fully rested. The peaceful cove can be an escape from reality.

Up ahead you see a cave. It is located right above an area in the river that looks like it will be difficult to navigate with rocks, swift water, and a couple turns.

The cave represents two things. First it represents a mysterious attraction which could potentially divert you from your course. It represents those things which could pull our attention away from the task at hand. The cave also represents the allure of a possible shortcut around the difficult part of the river. Some people are always looking for shortcuts - the easy way, and that is what the cave symbolizes. Don't waste your time going into the cave, because, indeed, it is a waste of time..

It may have occurred to you that you would have to take down the sail in order for your boat to enter the cave. Since the sail represents your commitment and determination, taking the sail down makes a compelling analogy for what happens when a person is looking for a short-cut and thereby compromises his or her commitment to succeed.

Ahead are some rocks in the river, some swift water, and a couple turns. These represent the difficult times that all of us must face on the way to achieving anything worthwhile. With a steady hand on the rudder (planning) and careful navigation, you can make it through that area. Once you have navigated through that area, you will certainly be a more experienced and skillful sailor!

Notice the large building at some distance down the river. This is the "castle-cathedral." Notice that the river forks just before this building. This certainly looks like a safe and unthreatening place. In fact, the fork to the left looks as if it is a calmer way to go. Also, the building certainly looks impressive and interesting.

But what this building and the fork in the river represent is far from being safe. They stand for tradition, dogma, prejudice, and all forms of self-righteousness. They offer security but at the price of relinquishing self-determination and one's ability to think for himself or herself. Avoid that fork in the river.

As you look farther down the river, you see that some portions appear smooth and easy while others appear to be more difficult. This is exactly how your voyage toward your own success will be; sometimes smooth and sometimes not so smooth.

Farther down the river you see a factory which looks dirty and dreary. It is a shocking contrast to the beauty of the natural landscape.

The factory stands for a bureaucratic, institutional machine which could swallow us up and enslave us. Many people give up on their individual dreams and give their entire lives over to become a

"cog" in a bureaucratic machine. The sad thing is they sacrifice their own dreams while working to make it possible for the owners of the factory to achieve their dreams. They are enslaved to a system which stifles their individuality. They give up on achieving their own dreams because the factory promises them security – the security of a good job, perhaps status in the community, promotions, respectability, and a steady income. That is the deception of the factory. The wise and ambitious person is not enslaved to the factory system even if they temporarily have to work in a real factory! The wise person always allows room to express their individuality.

In the far distance, nestled among the mountains, we see a city and a rainbow in the sky over it. This, of course, represents the achievement of your goals. It is the hope and vision of reaching this glorious destination which keeps you going – which enables you to handle the difficulties because you can see past them, and they are small in comparison to the realization of your dreams.

It is the vision of what is possible that keeps us headed in the right direction downstream and enables us to avoid getting side-tracked. It enables us to weather the storms and to navigate the difficult parts of the river.

### ***Step 3 - Visualize***

Sitting quietly and comfortably, without any distractions, relax. Take a few minutes to relax completely and to picture the following in your mind.

Picture yourself as the person in the boat.

Visualize the city that lies in the distance. Think of your goals. Imagine that when you reach the city, you will have achieved those goals. The city and your goals are one in the same. Imagine how it will feel to have reached that place of successful achievement.

Now focus your attention back on the river. See yourself as the determined sailor of the small boat. You can reach the city through your skill, determination, and resourcefulness. Picture yourself as being focused on successfully navigating the river and reaching the city.

See yourself steering clear of the rocky shores which represent anyone who would try to discourage you, the critics, and "nay-Sayers" who would like to sink your boat.

Picture yourself sailing right past the temptation to retreat into the safety of the peaceful alcove. See yourself as a person with courage, determination, and resourcefulness - a person who doesn't have time to be lazy and take it easy.

Picture yourself sailing past the cave and laughing at the temptation to find a short-cut to your goal. For you know that short-cuts can be false illusions.

See yourself successfully navigating the rocks, rough waters, and hazards. Should your boat sustain some damage as you travel down the river, you are confident in your ability to do the repairs and then resume your journey. Imagine that you are gaining skill and experience as you proceed. Surmounting the obstacles makes you stronger and more able.

Picture yourself making the choice to turn right when you approach the castle/cathedral. See yourself as a confident and self-reliant person who does not need to think like the rest of the crowd. You value your independence and your right to think for yourself.

Imagine that you sail through more challenges, but with each one, you become a stronger and more skillful sailor.

Picture yourself sailing right past the factory without stopping or slowing down. A life as a cog in an industrial machine has no appeal for you. You are your own person.

Picture yourself seeing the city getting closer and closer. Imagine the excitement of getting close to your destination.

Feel the emotion of reaching the completion of a successful journey. And as you reach your destination, realize too, that it was not just the destination alone which kept you going, but you also enjoyed responding to the challenges during the voyage itself. You enjoyed the sights along the river and you enjoyed learning how to become an accomplished sailor. Indeed, you understand the truth of the statement that success is a journey - not a destination.

## ***Step 4 - Experience***

It is important to establish links between the images in "The River" painting and your real world. Without those links to the real world, this picture might be no more than an entertaining fantasy. The links will make this painting have real meaning. Begin to look for connections between the images in the painting and your life.

Begin to use the sailing terminology of this painting to describe the events and circumstances in your life. Use the words, "river," "bend in the river," "set sail," "navigate through the rapids," "hand on the rudder," "headed downstream," "sailing into rough water," etc.

If the sail of the boat represents your determination to succeed and the rudder represents your plan, what could you say about your sail? How strong is your determination? Is your hand steady on the rudder guiding your boat downstream?

What is your plan?

The river is unique for each person. No two people sail the same river.

Ask yourself the following questions about your river.

Are there any people who criticize you and the things you're interested in? Is there anyone who discourages you? Identify these people as symbolized by the rocky, barren spur of land. Realize that they might sink your ship. Steer clear of their influence.

Is there anything in your experience that tempts you just to relax and take it easy? Identify whatever that is with the peaceful cove among the trees.

Are you ever tempted to take a short-cut? Remember that there are no short-cuts to real success. They are only false illusions. Don't be enticed by them. If you are ever tempted to "cut corners" or take short-cuts, identify those temptations with the cave.

Whenever you encounter difficulties (not every day is going to be sunny and not every place in the river will be smooth), just look at them as rough spots in the river. They are temporary and you can handle them. When you've hit a rough spot, think of it simply as navigating through the rapids.

If you should hit a rock and your boat is damaged, simply pull ashore and do whatever repairs are necessary to get your boat sailing again.

Are there people in your life who try to control or manipulate you? They might be opinionated, self-righteous and closed minded, and in order for anyone to be accepted into their group, the person must believe exactly as they do. These are examples of people who are represented by the "castle/cathedral." Avoid them.

This does not mean that it is bad to belong to a group. The question is, does the group encourage you to think for yourself – to follow your own river – or does the group try to steal your right to think for yourself?

Keep your boat sailing down your own river – not someone else's river.

Remember, each of us has our own unique river to travel. We must each discover how to navigate that river for ourselves.

The factory image can be easily misunderstood. The factory does not mean that a person should not have a job or should not work for a corporation. The point of the image of the factory is that we must avoid spending our lives as a mere cog in a corporate machine. Avoid letting your job take over your entire life where it totally consumes you.

Ask yourself the question, is my job enabling me to go forward down my own river toward the achievement of my dreams, or is my job stealing all my time and energy from me? Only you can answer that question.

Are you trying to travel upstream against the current or are you sailing with the current? Sailing with the current means that you are discovering and developing your talents and abilities; you are true to yourself. Sailing against the current means that you are trying to act like someone or something you really are not. Which way are you sailing?

Realize that the river has a length and there are many bends in the river. Some places are smooth and other places are rough. Realize in your own life how this relates. Remind yourself that you can get through the rough spots, you can weather the storms, because there are goals that you want to achieve that are worth the effort.

Outline your plans here. A mind map would be excellent.



*THE CHILDREN* by James Bennett

# THE CHILDREN (Working Creatively with Others)

## Step 1 - Look

Relax and look at the picture quietly for a few minutes.



What do you see here?

How does the picture make you feel?

What are the children doing?

Where do you think they are going?

Does it seem that any of the things in the picture have special significance or meaning to you?

Can you identify in any way with what is happening?

What thoughts come to your mind as you look at this picture?

## Step 2 - Interpret

(Read carefully. Think of specific ways this interpretation might apply to you.)

This is a picture of a group of children climbing up a hill. There are seven children altogether. They are all holding onto a rope, and some of them are carrying things in their other hands. One child has a flag, another has a wreath of flowers, another has a piece of paper, and another one is carrying a shovel.

This painting is all about teamwork, working with other people productively, and finding excitement and delight in doing the things that are going to achieve your goals. This is a happy painting and is the favorite of several people.

The fact that the children are going up the hill represents moving upward toward the achievement of goals. As we look at this painting, we also get the sense that the children are having fun – that they have set out on some kind of exploration – perhaps they are on a treasure hunt. In fact, this picture could just as well have been titled “The Treasure Hunt,” because that is an accurate description of what is taking place

The rope that the children are holding symbolizes working together. They are a team. They are helping one another. The rope is a way to make certain that no one falls or gets left behind.



Notice where the rope goes from the last child at the bottom of the picture. The rope does not fall to the ground. It is apparent that the last child shown in the picture is not the last child on the rope. There is another child. The implication is that you, the viewer, are also holding onto the rope and are part of this group.

The colors of the children's shirts – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet – are the classic color sequence of the rainbow. This is another way that the image represents harmony and working together. The children are individuals, but they are working together harmoniously as a group. They are helping one another.

Each child in the picture represents a different personality trait. Let us interpret what traits are represented by each child.

The child in the red shirt, at the top of the picture, is the leader. He is the chance-taker and the visionary. He points the way for the others to follow.

The child in the orange shirt who is carrying the flag represents the pursuit of a worthwhile goal. This child calls us to take pride in excellence. The motivation here is the personal satisfaction apart from recognition or profit which comes only from knowing that one has achieved success through a valiant effort and has made a meaningful contribution. The pursuit of excellence for its

own sake is what this child represents. The flag which has either a sun or a bright star on it is an emblem for this attribute. This child will plant the flag when the summit has been reached.

The child in the yellow shirt who is waving a garland of flowers, and he or she represents the rewards of honor and recognition that accompany successful achievement. This child is an encourager. The idea that this child represents is related to the preceding child. They both have to do with achievement, but this child has more to do with all the rewards that come as a result of the achievement. This child will celebrate and congratulate the others in the group when they have reached the goal.

The child in the green shirt is the thinker and planner. This child is holding a piece of paper which might be a map or an itinerary. This child represents the value of adequate planning. He will help keep the group on the right path, headed in the right direction.

The next child – the one in the blue shirt who is wearing the hat - has both hands firmly on the rope. This is the careful and cautious one. There is a time and a need for balance and to exercise caution, and that is precisely what this child represents. This child provides a balance for the chance taker. When the others in the group have gone too far, this child who has both hands on the rope will be able to pull them back to reality. This child has a "firm grip" on things.

Notice that the careful child is not holding the group back or slowing them down in any way. That is not the purpose of the careful one. The role of the careful one is to keep the group safe. Although the careful one is temperamentally different from the others, this child is nevertheless an essential part of the group.

The child with the shovel is the hard worker. Not only is he or she willing to work hard, but also this child has come prepared to do the work. This child symbolizes "digging in" and getting the job done. This child symbolizes the willingness and the preparation to do what has to be done to get the job done.

If the treasure they are seeking is buried, they will have to dig it up. This child is indispensable. Without him or her, they will never uncover the treasure!

The last child holding the rope near the bottom of the painting portrays a sense of wonder and positive expectation. This feeling pervades the entire painting but is most evident in this one child. Wonder and positive expectation is the attitude portrayed here, and this is an attitude that we very much want to have for ourselves.

Finally, you will notice that there is a path going up the hill, but the children are not really walking strictly within the confines of that path. We see that they are stepping outside the path. Although they are all headed uphill and are all part of the one group, they are also very much individuals.

This shows pictorially that we can each be individuals. We can be true to ourselves and also be an important part of a group. We do not have to necessarily fall in line and follow the same path that others have walked in order to reach the summit.

### ***Step 3 - Visualize***

Sitting quietly and comfortably, without any distractions. Take a few minutes to relax completely and to picture the following in your mind.

Picture yourself as part of the group that is going up the hill. Think of yourself as a member of the group. If it helps, you can imagine that you are a child again. The children in the picture are your friends.

Think how great it feels to be outdoors with your friends. This is a wonderful, fun time. The group is going on an adventure – a treasure hunt. Feel the sense of excitement!

Now picture yourself in the role of the leader. You are showing the way. You are courageous. You are ready to forge ahead!

Next, see yourself as the one carrying the flag. You will plant the flag of success when the group arrives at the goal. You are excited about achieving success.

Now see yourself as the one with the ring of flowers. You will be ready to congratulate others and receive congratulations yourself. You enjoy basking in the limelight of success. You delight in sharing the recognition for achievement.

Picture yourself also as the planner. You appreciate the value of plans. You keep the group on track.

Imagine also that you are the cautious one who keeps the rest of the group safe if they risk falling into danger.

Then picture yourself as the hard worker who is ready and eager to jump in and do whatever has to be done to accomplish the task. You are ready to dig in!

Finally, see yourself looking up the hill with wonder and excitement. Remind yourself that the hill represents that attainment of your goals.

See yourself going up that hill – achieving your goals with an attitude of fun and excitement. This is your adventure! Your goals and dreams are the treasure you are about to discover today and in the days that follow!

## ***Step 4 - Experience***

Now we come to the fourth step where we connect the vision of "The Children" to the real world. To do this, you are going to establish links between the images in the painting and your everyday experiences. There are several ways to do this.

First, be looking for ways to approach your activities with a positive sense of expectation. The sense of excitement, and child-like wonder is really a positive thing. Being child-like is different from being childish. None of us wants to be childish, but we do desire to retain that sense of wonder and positive expectation that we experienced as a child.

Perhaps you, like so many other people, have become cynical in some ways. Practice replacing your cynicism with an attitude of positive expectation. This is particularly important when it comes to how you think about the goals you want to achieve. Positive expectation is a healthy attitude.

Sometimes people take pride in their sarcastic form of humor. No matter what it is called, sarcasm is generally not positive. It will not help you or others reach any goals. Cynicism and sarcasm do not build people up or encourage them. Cynicism and sarcasm tear people down. If you have developed the habit of being cynical or speaking sarcastically, work on forming a new habit of thinking and expressing thoughts of positive expectation.

Think of ways to make your work and your work place more fun for yourself and for everyone around you. Play music that will liven the spirits. Avoid being so serious or so busy that you don't have time to have any fun. Enjoy a good joke. Smile and laugh.

A second way that 'The Children' painting can be linked with the real world is to practice developing the seven traits that are represented by the children in the picture.

All of us will be stronger in some areas and weaker in others. Consciously pursue developing the traits where you are weaker.

Exercise the traits of:

- The visionary leader
- The one who pursues excellence for its own sake
- The one who pursues achievement for its rewards
- The planner
- The cautious one
- The hard worker
- And overall, the one who sees the situation with childlike wonder and excitement

In which areas are you strong? Continue to use those strengths. In which areas are you weaker? Try to develop those traits. Every day try to do something to build the traits where you are weak.

The third way to link 'The Children' with your real world is to purposely select people to work with you – people who will help you achieve your goals – who exhibit one or more of the seven traits

depicted in the painting. You want to look for balance and harmony among the people who will be on your team.

Having a team of people to work with you, to lend their support and advice is a powerful way to approach the achievement of your goals.

You should begin now to look for those people who you would like to be on your team. The number of people that you select to be on your team depends upon the job that needs to be done and upon the people themselves.

Your team certainly does not have to be composed of exactly seven people. You may choose to work with only one or two people. On the other hand, you may need to organize a group that is larger than seven. The number of people that you will need depends entirely on the job or jobs that need be done and the people's attitudes and skills.

Everyone possesses several of the traits. Each of us has one or two dominant traits and some portions of other traits. It's entirely possible that you can have just one partner with whom you share all seven traits between the two of you. The key here is always strive for balance and harmony.

As you make progress, you may want to add new members to your team. Likewise, you may decide to drop others from the group. Don't think of your team as necessarily remaining static; it's a dynamic entity.

Use this space to record your ideas about working creatively with others.

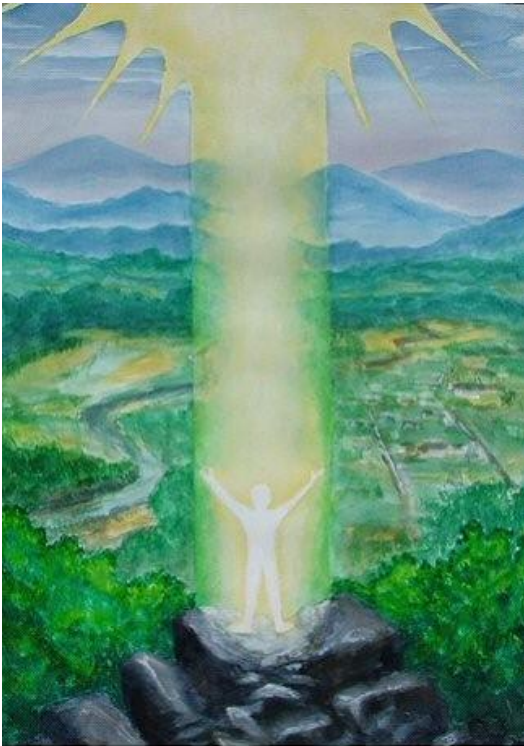


*THE LIGHT* by James Bennett

## ***THE LIGHT (Recognizing and Connecting with a Higher Power)***

### **Step 1 - Look**

Take a few minutes just to look at the color reproduction of the picture.



What do you see?

Describe the scene.

Do you see the person who is standing on the rocks?

Describe what you think this person is doing and feeling.

Does it seem that any of the things in this picture have special significance or meaning to you?

What is your reaction to this picture?

What thoughts and feelings come to your mind as you look at this picture?

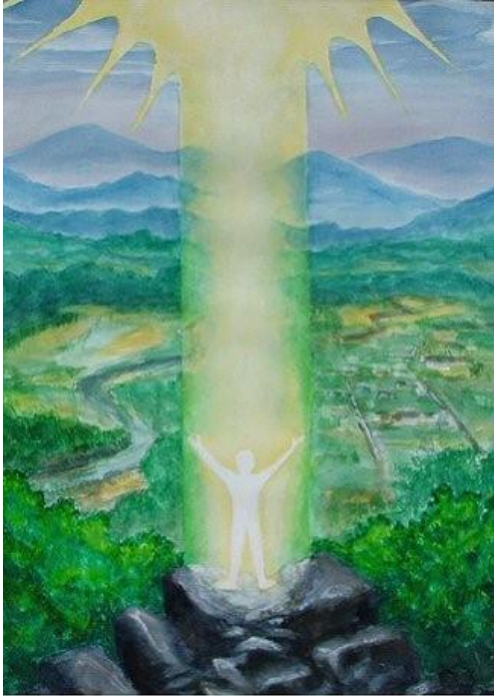
### **Step 2 - Interpret**

**(Read carefully. Think of specific ways this interpretation might apply to you.)**

“The Light’ is a very mysterious picture. At first glance, it is not entirely clear what is happening here.

This picture is all about putting yourself in the position to receive the knowledge and power that is necessary for a happy and fulfilling life.

Perhaps you believe that there is a divine creator who is the source of all your strength, power, and energy. If this is the case, the "Light" picture will help you see yourself receiving all that the creator has to give you.



If you do not believe in a deity, perhaps you acknowledge that there is a creative intelligence or a collective unconscious or some other universal force at work. Whatever is the case, please interpret this painting from your own point of view.

Perhaps you acknowledge that there is energy operating within the world of which all life is a part. If this more accurately expresses your belief system, then please interpret the painting from that perspective.

Whatever belief you hold, interpret the painting accordingly.

Note: A significant number of artists and other creative people have expressed their belief in a higher power which inspires them and gives them ideas for their creative work. I have this sense myself. However, if you do not share in this belief, then please disregard this painting.

Continuing...

In the lower portion of the painting, we see the image of a solitary figure standing upon some rocks. From this place the person can look down upon a vast expanse of landscape. The rocks rise well above the land below affording a panoramic view of the land below.

In the distance there are mountains, forests, a river winding through the fields, and even a town with streets and houses.

In the sky we see an explosion or burst of bright, yellow light from which a single beam of light descends and envelopes the person standing on the rocks. This light is so bright that all we can see of the person on the rocks is a pure white silhouette.

The figure standing at the summit of the rocks represents you. You have climbed to the highest point of a mountain, and you are looking down upon the world below. Climbing to the summit is symbolic of your effort to achieve a worthwhile goal – the realization of a fulfilling creative life.

Overlooking the world below is symbolic of the fact that you are much more than a small part of the physical world. Inwardly you are much more than that.

You can mentally take a moment and remove yourself from the cares and challenges of the world and go to a place where you can be refreshed and revitalized.

In this place, you can open yourself to receive energy, strength, and power from the source of all that is. Your body, mind, and spirit can be refreshed so that when you descend the mountain and return to the world once again, you are equipped to meet the challenges.

Of all the paintings in this series, this one painting can be of the greatest influence on your way to successful achievement. If, indeed, you are open to receiving the awesome power of the infinite, there is no limit to what you might accomplish!

### ***Step 3 - Visualize***

Sitting quietly and comfortably, without any distractions, relax completely. Take a few minutes to picture the following in your mind.

Imagine that you are climbing alone to the top of a mountain. Having reached the summit, you stand on some rocks.

From where you stand, you are high above the world. You can see far into the distance. The world is below you. From this vantage point everything below looks small. You can see fields and rivers, forests and towns below you. It all looks very small.

The day-to-day, mundane problems of the world below seem truly insignificant to you. You realize that we all tend to get absorbed in the importance of our daily lives and our individual challenges, but within the total scheme of things, looking down upon it all from the top of the mountain, you realize many of these things pale in significance. You realize how important it is to keep everything in our lives in perspective and not give petty things more importance than they deserve.

As you see yourself standing on the top of the mountain, imagine that you turn your eyes upward and gaze at the vast expanse of blue sky above you. You feel a deep appreciation for the vastness and the order and the design of all this.

At that moment, as if in response to your deep feeling of awe and appreciation, you see a spot of bright light high above you in the sky. You watch as it expands into a magnificent explosion of pure light filling the sky directly above you.

As you continue looking upward, you see a beam of the light beginning to descend toward you. You lift your hands upward to receive it and to feel its warmth.

As the beam of light envelopes you, you can feel its warmth covering you completely. Imagine feeling the warmth beginning from your hands and arms to your head and shoulders, then your torso, and your legs and feet. Feel the warmth of the light surrounding you.

As you picture this in your mind, imagine that the light is bringing healing power to all the parts of your body – beginning with your head, your eyes, your nose, your mouth, your ears, your throat, feel a healing power spread over you and through you. Feel your heart, your lungs, your stomach, and all your internal organs being touched. Feel the healing power through your legs and down to your feet.

If you normally experience pains anywhere in your body, picture that the healing warmth of the light is bringing comfort to those areas.

Visualize that the light is bringing clarity and insight to your mind. Feel that it is bathing away any worries or concerns that you might have.

The light inspires you and awakens your mind to the creative potential you have. You see clearly that there is design and purpose in your life.

Breathe deeply and take in all the light that you can. Feel its refreshing and revitalizing power. Feel the power and strength that your body is absorbing from the light.

Continue to bask in the light for a while. Be open to receive all the benefit there is for you. See your body glowing from the light.

Now imagine that you are turning your eyes downward once again to look at the earth below you. Imagine that you now want to share this light with the world. See yourself reaching your arms out toward the world below. Imagine that you are sending forth the power of the light to the whole world.

Now picture yourself walking down from the mountain. You feel refreshed, revitalized, and empowered. You have the knowledge that there is design and purpose in your life and there is a definite mission in your life for you to fulfill.

## ***Step 4 - Experience***

I believe that the Imaging part of this exercise embodies profound truths which, when you apply them to your everyday life, can bring about amazing, positive changes.

To realize the benefit of beginning to experience "The Light," you should look at each of the four previous images. Every one of the paintings has to do with the light.

The power and energy represented by this fifth painting is the light that is on the other side of "The Door." It will empower you to overcome any obstacles. It will enable you to shake off anything that might be holding you back from realizing your dreams. The light represents the realization of your dreams.

The light provides the energy and impetus behind all the organizing and preparing that you do at "The Desk." It is the light that comes in from the windows in front of the desk.

It is the sun which creates the rainbow in "The River" picture. It is an important part, if not the most important element, in the planning phase of your voyage. It is the culmination of all your effort.

"The Light" is also present in the painting of "The Children." They are climbing the hill toward the mountain top. One of the children is carrying a flag with an image of a burst of light on it.

As a creative individual you have something of value to give to the world. All you need to do is let the creative energy flow through you and out into the world.



You may be interested to know that ***The Light*** was the first painting that I did in this series. It was an inspiration and, only after using this painting in my own meditations for a few years, did I feel the need to add the four other paintings.

For me personally, these five images have been a source of inspiration, and I am excited to share them with you. I hope they are as meaningful and helpful for you as they have been for me.

# ***ADDITIONAL RESOURCES***

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"The Children" Full-Color  
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"The Light" Full-Color  
11 X 17 Mini Poster  
\$10.99

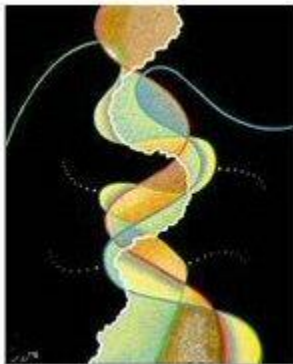
(Note: Prices are subject to change without notice.)



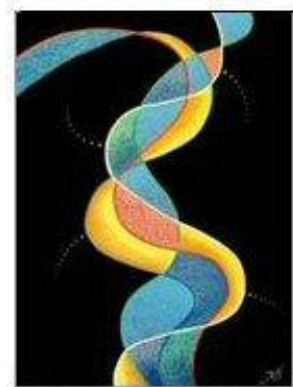
If you would like to explore the use of the L-I-V-E visualization and meditation process further, you will certainly want to consider my recent artwork, titled “Luminous Streams.”

These paintings are amazingly therapeutic for mind and body and an effective way to expand our awareness of reality beyond the realm of the five senses. Indeed, the “Luminous Streams” paintings, when viewed properly, have the power to inspire, enrich, and trigger profound experiences which includes instilling relaxation and peace of mind. These paintings will transport you to a new world -- a world that is different but somehow curiously familiar.

“Luminous Streams” transcendental art by Bennecelli (James Bennett) is a perfect aid for advanced visualization and deep meditation. Visit my website [bennecelli.com](http://bennecelli.com) for details and additional information about how you can use these paintings therapeutically and to increase your perception of reality. There is a free meditation guide and a free, 20-minute video in which I guide you through a L-I-V-E session of 4-dimensional visualization and meditation. All the information is free.



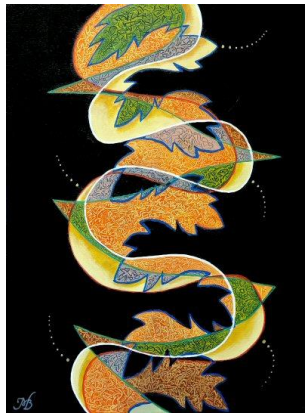
"Angelic Presence" excellent for relieving stress.



"Running With the Wind" excellent for achieving success.

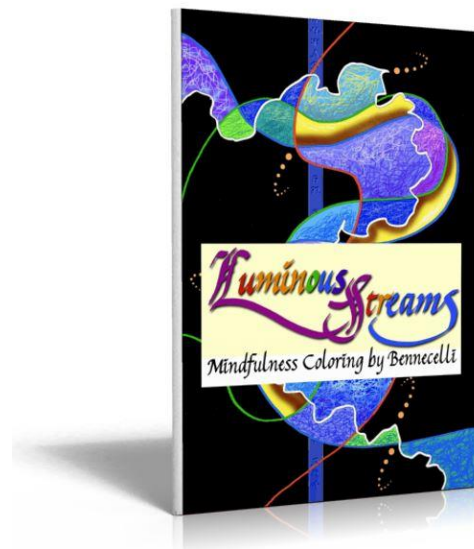


"Heartbeat" excellent for health & longevity.



"Rustling Autumn Leaves" excellent for embracing changes.

I also have a free to download mindfulness adult coloring book.



For complete details, please visit [bennecelli.com](http://bennecelli.com).



“Joyous Celebration” by James Bennett  
Nine canvases. The entire piece is composed of just four lines!

My art, [bennecelli.com](http://bennecelli.com)

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