

# *Dialogue* **Exercises**

Sean  
*Ward*

*Dialogue*  
Exercises

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# Preface

A scribbled note found  
tucked away in a book  
owned by my grandfather:

**“What does  
the artist do?**

**The artist watches  
the outer life.**

**He discovers the  
inner life.**

**He liberates the  
human life.**

**He manifests the  
divine life.**

**He fulfills the  
supreme life.”**

~ C.K.G., Sri Chinmay

The exercises gathered here have been digested from experiences with others who have persistently worked to redefine selfhood, living, ways of being, and have invited others to do the same. It is from these generous approaches to being an artist and educator that these dialogue exercises are derived. They are meant to be simple and easy to do, with minimal materials and effort needed to carry out. In other words, they're not only for those who call themselves artists.

Each exercise is designed to start a conversation with a self, an "other", and, of course, the work being done. Each exercise has a set of instructions as well as a debrief. Some can be

done alone, while others require a partner. Dialogue exercises can be combined and structured into a curriculum. They can be done in order, but the most natural pathway might be flipping the pages until you find one that inspires you in the moment.

One goal of these exercises is to help the reader maintain an agile mind, to be able to openly embrace what one has before them in the moment. Not unlike snatching a floating dandelion seed as you cross paths, pondering it gently in the hand then releasing it to follow its course again. If we do this regularly, we may no longer need to grab hold.

### **How-to**

Some exercises can be done on your own and others may require a partner or group. Some will have debrief options that give guidance on how to involve a partner in a solo exercise while others may offer the inverse. They are meant to be malleable, so if you discover a way to do a group exercise as an individual, feel free to modify it. You can also combine and design a curriculum using exercises as foundation pieces.

### **Structure**

Each exercise has two sections. The main section contains the core activities. Below this, a debrief section. In the debrief section you'll discover modifica-

tions to the activities either to include or exclude partners, how to extend activities or ways to reflect on the activities.

The activities are meant to benefit anyone. Those who call themselves artists, those who don't, or those who want to. A reset to your mindset is the aim.

### **Dailies**

You will also find a list of questions called "Dailies". Use one to kick off a dialogue exercise. Use one to simply journal for the day. A daily can be used to continue your practice when time or materials are a factor. And if a question comes to you that can not be found in the list, add it.

## **Materials**

Here is a list of suggested materials to get you started working on some dialogue exercises. But feel free to use others instead or in addition.

- Pencil
- Colored pencils
- Pen
- Letter-sized paper (A4)
- Scissors
- Camera

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# Drawing from the Pool

*Get a small group together - 2 to 5 people is good.*

*Grab some sheets of letter-sized paper (A4).*

*And give everyone 10 sheets each.*

## **What are we going to do?**

Draw on them. Make simple drawings. Nothing recognizable like a car, a tree, a face. Fill the entire sheet of paper before moving to the next. Concern yourself with just making marks.

## **What happens after everyone has filled all 10 sheets?**

From the drawings you've created, pick 3 you like and 3 you don't. Place the remaining 4 in the middle of the table— we'll call this the "drawing palette pool".

## **Ok, done. I have my '3 likes' and '3 don'ts'. What's next?**

Pick 2 from the likes and 1 from the don'ts. Throw the chosen ones into the "pool". And pick up 3 drawings out of the "palette pool" that aren't yours.

So you should have 1 like, 2 don'ts, and 3 from the "pool".



**This feels like a bad card game.**

Well, it kinda is. But use those 6 drawings to create your collage. Don't fret - you can return to the "pool" as you need more pieces to complete your collage. But never use your drawings from the "pool".

**What if there isn't anyone around to do this with?**

It's more fun with others, but you can modify the process as a solo activity too.

**To start:**

- create 5 drawings
- choose 2 likes, 3 don'ts
- place 1 like, 2 don'ts in the "pool" (3)
- use 1 like, 1 don't remaining to create a collage (2)

**Next step:**

- create 3 new drawings
- choose 1 new like and 1 from the "pool" (2)
- place remaining 2 don'ts in the "pool" (4)

**Repeat this step...**

# Debrief

## Dialogue with others:

- Place collages on the wall. Look at them. Write about what you see, how you decided to use each part, making certain cuts or tears. Tell yourself the story of how the collage was made. Share with a friend.
- Each person other than the artist says one word that they think describes the artist's work. "What words come up for you when looking at 'so-n-so's' work?" Artist notes each word. Then the artist answers "Which word feels true?" A single word. They don't need to explain. This will inform a new piece.

## Dialogue with yourself:

- What did you enjoy?
- What was difficult?
- Why did you make certain decisions?

- What would you do differently?
- How can you transfer these skills to a new piece?
- What kind of skills do you want to focus on next time?
- What kind of invention can you think of that relates to this exercise?

# It's Not Only What You Think

*Pick an object or image, not necessarily a piece of art,  
but this exercise can be applied when looking at art-  
work.*

**Okay, picked my object. Where should I put it?**

Place it somewhere, like a table or floor where you can easily look closely at it. You'll be writing about it, so grab some paper and pen, or your computer.

**I have my object placed on a table and have my computer open. What are we gonna write about? The object?**

We are going to observe your object using two mindsets. Objective and Subjective. Always begin with the objective.

**Objective? Can you define what you mean by that?**

From the Merriam-Webster dictionary, focusing on the first and third definitions:

## Objective

(adjective)

ob·jec·tive | \əb-'jek-tiv, äb-

1a : relating to or existing as an object of thought without consideration of independent existence — used chiefly in medieval philosophy

1b : of, relating to, or being an object, phenomenon, or condition in the realm of sensible experience independent of individual thought and perceptible by all observers : having reality independent of the mind

1c : of a symptom of disease : perceptible to persons other than the affected individual

objective arthritis

1d : involving or deriving from sense perception or experience with actual objects, conditions, or phenomena

3a : expressing or dealing with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations

3b : of a test : limited to choices of fixed alternatives and reducing subjective factors to a minimum

**Begin writing using objective language about your object.  
For example, “the yellow vase is a cylinder shape with a**

flat bottom that currently is on the wooden tabletop".  
Not, "the yellow vase's shape creates an atmosphere of melancholy as it sits on the forlorn and rugged wooden table".

Describe the object itself in detail. Record only things you observe. Just the facts. Not what you think, feel, or imagine about the object. Aim for about 300–500 words.

**Well, that was exhausting— now, what about the subjective?**

### **Subjective**

(adjective)

sub·jec·tive | \ (,) səb-'jek-tiv

2 : of or relating to the essential being of that which has substance, qualities, attributes, or relations

3a : characteristic of or belonging to reality as perceived rather than as independent of mind

3b : relating to or being experience or knowledge as conditioned by personal mental characteristics or states

4a(1) : peculiar to a particular individual

4a(2) : modified or affected by

personal views, experience, or background

4b : arising from conditions within the brain or sense organs and not directly caused by external stimuli

4c : arising out of or identified by means of one's perception of one's own states and processes

5 : lacking in reality or substance

Now let all your feelings, biases, opinions, imagination, and thoughts roam free. Describe your object from your perspective using subjective language. Letting what you see do something to you. Again aim for 300–500 words.

**Can I do this with a partner or group?**

Of course, but instead of each person getting their own object, everyone uses the same object as their focus for writing. Share some writings aloud to hear what another's perspective is like. Listen to what they saw, thought, felt and imagined.

## Debrief

Collage your objective and subjective writing together. Cut up your objective writing into separate facts. Comb through your subjective writing and cut out the pieces of writing that relate to each fact separately. It might look like this: one objective fact accompanied with three subjective ideas.

Continue to use this ebb and flow of objective and subjective to build a new piece of writing. Notice the pace of observation with the race of thoughts. Once you have completed cutting and pasting, ask yourself:

- Does it weave a story? What kind of story?
- Does it create vignettes? How?





# Build It in the Light

*Locate the best light source in the space you currently are in. Begin building a sculpture out of your belongings and everything in the space so that the light can cling to it. You want the light to help create a dynamic contrast.*

## **Should I include all the furniture?**

Stack it, balance it, shift it, place it.

Move as much as you can. Create a form. Then take a picture of your new sculpture when everything settles into place.

**Hope this wasn't all just for a picture....someone is going to be looking for me because of this unauthorized monument!**

Then grab some letter-sized paper (A4) and make a drawing of your monument to light. But don't draw lines or be drawn to the details (pun intended).

## **How do I draw it then?**

Use the side of your pencil to follow the shadows and light. Build the drawing with blocks of shadow, use an

eraser to let the light in. Use the full sheet of paper.

## Debrief

### Dialogue with others:

This is a great group exercise. Decisions are made through conversations that require negotiation, compromise, and collaboration when building the sculpture. Sometimes roles are given. Questions emerge, such as:

- Where's the best light?
- What should be included in the sculpture?
- How should we stack the items?
- Who is the director?
- Who are the builders, gatherers, etc?

At the end of the drawing session - display the drawings somehow. On the wall, or organized on the floor. Have everyone tour the impromptu gallery. Ask others to call out things that they notice were drawn differently - no judgments allowed. Simply state, "I notice in this drawing...".

### **Dialogue with yourself:**

After your drawing session, reflect on this process with this question:

- How do you see yourself in terms of light and dark?

### **Going further:**

Try to do a drawing of the sculpture at different hours of the day (if using natural light) to see how the light changes your sculpture, drawing, and perception.



# A Room Asks for

*Let's design a useful object that has a specific purpose in your home. Is there a place in your home that wants something?*

**I have a space that needs a chair. But what do you mean by 'wants'?**

It is about whether or not the space asks for it.

**How do you determine this?**

It is hard to identify. It is hard to listen to the space. Remain silent, not doing anything in the space. Just listen and observe.

**Ok. I'm here. Waiting.**

What does the space ask for? A stool? A table? A chair? Let it tell you.

**Is this like a form of meditation?**

Hopefully an area of your home has called out. Measure the space. Height, width, length. Place your body in the space. Feel the space. Kneel, squat, lay, jump, stretch. Take

notes, jot down words, make drawings. What does the space allow you to do?

### **I know the space now - what do I do with the measurements and movements?**

With these measurements and the feel of the space, sketch ideas for objects that your space has asked for. Choose one. Keep it simple. Make sure you can build it in a day. Draw blueprints. Gather materials. Cut, saw, bend, scrape, fold, whatever material into the shapes needed. Then place the object in the space. Use it. Decorate it. Make it home.

## **Debrief**

### **Dialogue with others:**

Invite others over to use the object. Have a dinner. Have a conversation. Listen to music. Design an experience based on the object.

Ask your guests "what is a home?"

Have them write their answers down, share with each

other. Maybe frame their writings and place around your home.

**Dialogue with yourself:**

Free write what “home” means to you.

Share this with others. Post it somewhere. Send it to someone. Call and share.





# Kneaded Ground

*Make pencil rubbings of your home's flooring - hardwood, tile, carpet. Use letter-sized paper (A4) with a pencil (HB/B+ type best). Lay the paper flat on the floor and begin with gently rubbing the pencil over the paper. Cover the entire paper in pencil.*

*Take this activity outside too, make some rubbings out of interesting bits of ground.*

## **Is this like a tombstone rubbing?**

The activity is similar, but our goal is a little different. Once you have about 3-5 different types of ground, pack them up in a folder. Try not bend them. Bring the folder along with you. Maybe on a walk, trip, wherever you may go next.

**What should I do with the folder of the rubbings along the journey?**

Take the rubbings out of the folder, one by one, in an area that has distinctly different ground. Place your rubbing flat on the ground. Take out a camera, smartphone, whatever you may have to snap a photo of the rubbing and the surrounding ground. When framing your shot, give some clue to context. This exercise is meant to give a sense of what it means to bring different places together. Seeing and feeling them together.

## Debrief

### Dialogue with yourself:

Once you have photos of your rubbings on new ground, print them out. On the back of the photo - write about the place the rubbing was made, the journey you took to get to the place where you laid down the rubbing, and about the place you took the photo.

**Dialogue with others:**

Ask others to make rubbings in their homes and surrounding outside areas. Exchange rubbings. Let them take your rubbings to unexpected areas, expanding the sense of ambiguity. Share with each other photos of the rubbings in their new contexts.



# Mirror Mirror

*Grab a table or pedestal. Find or make an object to place on the table or pedestal. Set yourself up so you are able to move around, but able to draw on a letter-sized paper (A4) using a pencil or pen.*

## **Mobile drawing? Where are we going with this?**

Just around. Sit or stand, find a spot to draw your object. Draw the object from the perspective you settle into. Focus more on the object and less on its context. The amount of detail is up to you.

## **OK. Done.**

Once you finish drawing the object from that perspective - go to the side opposite from where you were just drawing. Draw the object again from this new perspective.

## **Next...**

Place both drawings side by side on a wall. Or even in a corner of the room “>|<” simulating a mirror.

# Debrief

## **Dialogue with yourself:**

Consider collaging multiple drawings from multiple perspectives to create a drawing-collage that represents the multiple perspectives at once.

## **Dialogue with others:**

With a partner, stand on opposite sides of the object and create drawings. After completing your drawings from your own perspectives of the same object, place side by side on a wall.

Notice and share with each other the differences between your styles of observation:

- How did they choose to describe certain parts of the object?
- How hard did they press their pencil into the paper?

- Where did they choose to focus most?

After discussing or writing about these things, begin another round of drawing. But now draw from the perspective held by your partner before, and then from yours. After, hang your drawings up. Converse.





# For Your Neighborhood

*We'll begin by writing:*

- describe your house
- describe your neighbor's house
- describe your block
- describe your neighborhood
- describe your town
- ask yourself what does your block, neighborhood, town need now?

**My neighborhood feels like it needs a lot of things. How do I pick what to focus on?**

Think of this like an exercise in civic design. You may prioritize what you think people in your neighborhood would value most. What would have the greatest impact.

**What is civic design?**

It is a practice that focuses on creating outcomes for the common good of our communities by using the institutional tools within our communities, instead of relying on government alone.

**I like where this is going.**

After identifying the needs, values, and ideas with the greatest impact, grab a piece of letter-sized paper (A4) and a pencil or pen. Design a structure or building that addresses the needs you've cited as most pressing.. Sketch it out, create blueprints, build diagrams, think of how it would work, function, help your neighbors, how people would enter/exit...

**Here is the plan for the building that would support my neighbors.**

Referencing your plan or drawing take a stack of letter-sized paper (A4), tape, and scissors. Now build your building. A model version on a smaller scale of course.

**It's a bit precarious, but it is standing!**

Make a drawing of your model. Be as detailed as you like. If you'd like to add color feel free to do so, but don't get too distracted in decorating.

After completing your drawing, head out to your neighborhood. Wander around. Find a location where your building could exist. Snap a few photos of the area from different angles.

You can scan your drawing or print out your location photo. Make a digital collage or physical collage of your building in the location.

## Debrief

### **Dialogue with yourself:**

You can continue this process with your other ideas until you have multiple buildings and locations. Map out your new neighborhood and design how it might function now. Write a story of yourself living in your redesigned neighborhood.

### **Dialogue with others:**

Working with a group creates an opportunity to share insights into ways neighborhoods differ in culture, function, and needs. Use the same exercise process, but pause at the step of taking a photo in your neighborhood.

After completing your drawing.

Use everyone's drawings to design a new neighborhood. Share your designs, talk about your building, tell us the story of your building and why it is needed.

Either use a big table and paper models or a wall and drawings to map out locations for everyone's structures. Discuss why and where each person's building should be located. Move them around freely during your conversation. How do you get from one building to the other? Design the roads together. Draw on the wall or use paper to construct them.

Once your community is built (paper models or drawings), take photographs of your neighborhood.

Each group member should write about a person walking through this newly erected neighborhood. Describe it. What can this person see, hear, smell, touch? Give that person a name. Construct a narrative about an event in your neighborhood where this person needed one of these new structures.

# Designed Listening

(paper version)

*First,*

**Writing Prompt: “How did you get here today?”**

- i. Go through writing looking for loud/soft sounds, circle them
- ii. Do they produce feelings? memories? Think to yourself about them, jot down notes if necessary

*Then,*

**A Soundscape (Journey– Produced/Recorded Sound)**

- i. Listen to recorded soundscape, preferably one that simulates a journey, take notes while listening through writing or drawing.
- ii. Go through your notes, circle things that stood out
- iii. What did you notice? qualities? feelings? a memory? pace? anything bubble up?

*Next,*

### **The Room (Listen to the Sounds in the Room)**

- i. Take notes as you listen, writing or drawing
- ii. Go through your notes, circle things that stood out
- iii. What did you notice? qualities? feelings? a memory? pace? what bubbled up?

*Now,*

### **You (Listen to Yourself, Body, Breathe)**

- i. Take notes, writing or drawing
- ii. Go through your notes, circle things that stood out
- iii. What did you notice? qualities? feelings? a memory? pace? what bubbled up?

*Return to your first piece of writing, answering the question: "how did you get here today?" Review the sounds you circled. Take each individually and write them on its own index card. Place the index cards in the order they appear in your writing on a flat surface like a table.*

### **Gathered, written, and sequenced.**

Now, along this sequence, identify those sounds that you don't like to hear along your journey. Mark or remove them from the sequence.

### **I've picked the rotten ones out.**

Think of sounds that might replace the discarded sounds to make your journey more [insert adjective] (i.e. pleasant, dynamic, red, weird, beautiful). Make a list of sounds that would do this. There might be sounds you can borrow from the other listening activities. Then write them out on their own index cards.

### **Have new sounds that are ready to journey with me.**

Place them back into the sequence. Feel free to reorder the sequence. Make records of the different sequences you create by taking images of the index cards.

### **Is that it?**

Go outside and try to find this sound journey from one point to another. Record its audio.



# Debrief

## **Dialogue with others:**

You can do this exercise in a group. After each activity stop and share things noticed and insights gained.

## **Dialogue with yourself:**

Using one of your new sequences that doesn't differ too much from the first: "How did you get here today?" The starting and end points should be the same. Write about this new journey by answering the question: "How will you get here now?" Reflect on this sequence, and what could create these new sounds along your journey.

# Designed Listening

(audio version)

*First,*

**Writing Prompt: “How did you get here today?”**

- i. Go through writing looking for loud/soft sounds, circle them
- ii. Do they produce feelings? memories? Think to yourself about them, jot down notes if necessary

*Then,*

**A Soundscape (Journey– Produced/Recorded Sound)**

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*Next,*

### **The Room (Listen to the Sounds in the Room)**

- i. Take notes as you listen, writing or drawing
- ii. Go through your notes, circle things that stood out
- iii. What did you notice? qualities? feelings? a memory? pace? what bubbled up?

*Now,*

### **You (Listen to Yourself, Body, Breathe)**

- i. Take notes, writing or drawing
- ii. Go through your notes, circle things that stood out
- iii. What did you notice? qualities? feelings? a memory? pace? what bubbled up?

Look through your notes from each activity, and make a list of all the things you circled. Create a sentence, story, poem or some form of composition or soundscape using the circled items.

**Have my composition all planned out.**

*Then,*

### **Begin collecting sounds to create this soundscape**

i. Keep in mind qualities of sounds to consider when developing your soundscape: tempo (fast/slow), dynamics (loud/soft), texture, resonance, pitch...

*Go,*

### **Collect Sounds**

i. Use objects, the space around you, your body as instruments to create or find sounds to collect that build your composition.

*Listen,*

### **Your Sounds**

i. Review the sounds you've collected. Draft ideas on how you might use them (take note if there are any sounds you feel might be missing, you will have time later to collect more)

Choose a tool to construct your composition or soundscape like computer software, live performance, etc.

ii. Began building your composition and feel free to edit, rearrange, or go off course as you develop it.

## Debrief

### Dialogue with others:

You can do this exercise in a group. After each activity stop and share things noticed and insights gained.

During the composition section - have the group or a member give feedback on your sounds. This is helpful in understanding what others are hearing in your composition.

### Dialogue with yourself:

Post-production, listen to your composition or soundscape in different contexts. Like at a park, on a train, driving in a car, etc. Reflect through writing about its presence, and what does it do in these contexts.

# In the Kitchen

*How would you cook a sound?*

**Fried? Boiled? Sautéd?**

**What might it sound like after being cooked?**

**Ear of Corn by DJ Well Done?**

Take a moment and listen to your surroundings.

Choose a sound you hear. Grab letter-sized paper (A4). Write or draw and answer the question “How might you cook it?”

**Marinated and slow roasted?**

Create a recipe on how to alter the sound, how to “cook it”. Write it out as step-by-step instructions. Include: Ingredients. How-to. Tips and tricks.

**Ready to whip something up.**

Record the sound you originally heard.  
Follow your recipe. Cook it: In software, sample it,  
twist it with analogue. Invite over some friends to enjoy  
it.

## Debrief

### **Dialogue with others:**

Give your sound recipe to someone else to follow. Let  
them find the original sound in the wild for themselves.  
Once they're done cooking, enjoy the results together.  
How does it taste on the tongue?

An alternative is to partner up and exchange recipes.

### **Dialogue with yourself:**

Create a cookbook of recipes. Make an album of sounds  
following it.

# Getting Here

*Head outside for a walk. It should be a round trip.*

## **Should I bring anything on this roundabout?**

Bring a notebook and a device to capture photographs.

## **What should I do on this jaunt?**

Along the route choose 3 stops. At each stop answer the question “How did I get here?” in your notebook, then take a photo of what is directly in front of you. Continue your trip until you have stopped 3 times. Then return to your starting point.

## **Arrived. What to do with these jottings and images?**

Create a document that can be shared easily. An email, word processor document, a blog post, a piece of paper with photographs taped to it. In the document include your starting/ending point and your 3 stopping points (writing and photos) in the order you stopped.



# Debrief

## Dialogue with others:

Four ways of sharing this exercise with others:

- 1 Go on the walk with someone. Exchange documents. Have a conversation about what each of you wrote and saw.
- 2 Send your collected document to someone. Include the exercise steps so they could take their own journey to share with you.
- 3 Share with someone your trip's route. Not your writing and images just yet. Ask them to go on this walk. Exchange documents.
- 4 Ask someone to recreate your expedition using your document. They should create their own document. Exchange documents at the end.

## Dialogue with yourself:

Do the same exercise a few times over a year, over a few years, however long you decide. Compare the documents, write about the differences and similarities of the journey across time.

# Drink out of

*Write about the very first thing you drink out of today.*

A glass, a mug, a bowl, whatever it may be.

Consider it your centerpiece.

Allow things to develop naturally as you write about this. If a narrative comes, that's great. If tangential thoughts happen, that's great too. It can be objective, simple facts, what materials are used.

**Now I'm thirsty again.**

Grab another piece of letter-sized paper (A4) and draw your drink vessel from observation.

## Debrief

### Dialogue with others:

Ask a partner to share their writing and drawing with you. Share yours. Compare and discuss your routines, your favorite mugs, etc.

Alternately, exchange just your writings. Ask your partner to draw the item described. And you theirs. Going further, recreate the item from words as a sculpture using materials like clay, papier-mâché, play-doh.

Or exchange just your drawings. Your partner should write about the object drawn. You, the same from their drawing. A step more, reproduce the object from the drawing as a sculpture using materials like clay, papier-mâché, play-doh.

# To Hold a Need

*Imagine a need. Something tangible, intangible.*

A need is:

- a requirement, necessary duty, or obligation
- a lack of something wanted or deemed necessary
- urgent want, as of something requisite

**I have it in mind. Now?**

Imagine how you might hold this need. Grab a piece of letter-sized paper (A4) and a drawing tool. Design a container that holds this need. Think of it as a gift to share. Keep the drawing simple.

**Can it be like a vase or a box?**

Yes, but make sure it can be easily handled by someone else. Because the next step is to use your drawing as reference to build the need's vessel. You can use materials like clay, papier-mâché, play-doh.

**The need is contained.**

Give this container as a gift to someone. Write a note about the need, and how this vessel stores it. Place the note in the container.

## Debrief

### **Dialogue with others:**

Another way to enter this exercise is to ask someone about their specific needs. Then design the container around one of these. And give it as a gift. Ask them to write about why they have this need. Place this writing inside the container.

### **Dialogue with yourself:**

Continue this exercise as needs arise for you. Create a collection of need containers. No need to gift them. Create a shelf to store them. Occasionally write about why you have this need and place it in the appropriate need container.

# Dear-

*Go on a short adventure. Take a walk in your neighborhood. Take a walk in your backyard. Drive somewhere to see something. Take transit to discover something new. See something other than a city, artificial, or human. Something that you are drawn to, something that elicits care.*

## **I'm standing in front of it.**

Take a photo of it. Make a drawing of it. Remember it somehow. Record that moment.

## **Captured it.**

Bring that record home. Sit down with it. Write to that something. "Dear" diary, a poem, a song.

## **Wrote a song to sing to it.**

Now, travel back to that something with your written words in hand. Recite, sing, shout your words to that something. Record this moment in video.

**That was slightly embarrassing. But it was easier the third time.**

Share this adventure. Post the video on social media, on your website, attach it to an email with your written words.

## **Debrief**

### **Dialogue with yourself:**

Request, when sharing your video, for responses/comments/feelings/memories from your peers. Collect them. If the opportunity arises, return to your “something” and recite these.

This is an exercise in gratitude which requires practice. Do this again. For the same “something” or “something” new.

### **Dialogue with others:**

It is always fun to travel with a partner. Go out and discover that something together. You each find something along the journey. And travel with your words. Having someone to video is very helpful.





# Walking Household Monument

*Search your house for items that you no longer want, need, or that no longer have potential use for someone else. Gather them together. Examine them. Brainstorm how they might fit together, how they might be used to create a monument.*

## **A monument? Like a garbage sculpture?**

Exactly. Create a sculpture with these items that you can easily hold or fits the form of your body. For example, it can be held in your hands, hung from your body, carried, dragged, rolled. Think of adjectives that might go well with the different actions you could perform with this homemade sculpture.

## **I think this can be draped over my shoulder...**

While still inside your home, set up a photoshoot. Find an area to take some photographs of the sculpture like a still life. Then take some photos of you using or posing with it.

**The sculpture was a good model. But I was better.**

Next, walk out your door with your sculpture. Carry it as you have designed it. Perform with it in public. Answer questions from the curious. Don't be shy because of the eyes that show bewilderment at your adventure. Take your homemade object for a walk. Ask people you pass to use or hold the object. Record this public performance in images, video, interviews, whatever works.

## **Debrief**

**Dialogue with yourself:**

List the items that went into creating the object,

Write about:

- What might these objects collected tell us about your home?

From the walk,

Write about:

- What happened on the walk?

- Who did you talk to? What did your object and you do?
- How did you feel during the adventure? Why?

**Dialogue with others:**

Working with a partner, each of you create a sculpture at home following the exercise. Make a plan to meet somewhere with your objects. Join each other for a walk. Have lunch together with your sculptures. Grab a coffee with your objects. Record this outing on social media.



# Dancing in the Dining Room

*Search your home for an object. It can be a very ordinary, everyday object or something special.*

*Once you have this object, find a space in your home where it can be the centerpiece. Allow room to move around the object.*

## **The room is set and my object is settled.**

Design a dance for or about the object. It is an intimate dance. Between you and your object. Express what you need to. Whatever stirs you.

## **Like dance around it?**

You can begin, if bodily movements don't come naturally to you, by writing about the object first. Also, try drawing the object as a still life to help build the relationship.

## **Ok...I think I'm getting better acquainted.**

Once you feel like you have shored up your personal

connection to the object, it can help to draw out the space like a blueprint, marking where you will do or begin a certain movement.

Some things to keep in mind when designing movements:

- Levels (how high or low are your movements)
- Speed (how fast or slow are your movements)
- Shape (what types of shapes will you create with your body)

**Game plan is ready.**

Practice your design a few times. Allow yourself to improvise and revise your design as you move. It can help to record these rehearsals to note adjustments.

Once you have finalized your movements, setup your video recording device in a position that centers the object in the frame.

Record your dance. Review it. Redo as many times as you feel needed.

# Debrief

## Dialogue with yourself:

After the dance is completed, recorded, ask yourself:

- What does the dance express?
- What does it express about the object?
- How does it reflect your initial thoughts about your object?
- Do you notice a story emerging?
- How did you feel during the process of designing a dance?

## Dialogue with others:

Exchange objects with a partner and make a dance for each other's object. It is recommended that you do one object by yourself to understand the process and feel comfortable. Once you exchange objects and create the video, share the video with each other.



After viewing each other's recording, share your responses to these questions with each other:

- What does the dance express?
- What does it express about the object?
- Do you notice a story emerging?

# The Inner Rectangle

*Take a sheet of letter-sized paper (A4) and a pencil. Draw a rectangle within the borders of the paper. It should look like a rectangle within a rectangle. Do not use a ruler.*

*Now take your pencil and begin to fill the inner rectangle in with graphite. End when the inner rectangle is full of graphite.*

## Debrief

### **Dialogue with others:**

With a partner or group, each fill in their own rectangle. Hang them up on a wall. Have a round-robin style conversation. Each person - other than the maker - says one word that comes to mind when looking at the maker's rectangle. The maker collects all the words. Once every one tells the maker their word, the maker reflects on the words asking, "which feel true?" Choose one word that feels true. Tell the group. No explanation needed.

### **Dialogue with yourself:**

Take a look at your marks that filled the inner rectangle.

Free associate, what word comes to mind looking at those marks?

Do this activity again, on different days, and log the different words that accumulate with each drawing.

At the end of the timeframe you set, find a place to hang them all up.

# A Rustic Rag Rug

*Clean out your closet or any room of unnecessary clothes or fabrics. Cut the discarded clothes into long strips. Research how to use the rustic braided rag rugs technique. Create a unique and personal rug. Place in a room to be used and seen.*

## Debrief

### Dialogue with others:

Give it away as a gift. Write a letter to the person you have gifted the rug to. Include with this letter instructions on how to make a rustic rag rug.

Ask them to photograph the rug in use, in the room in which it has found a home.

### Dialogue with yourself:

This process can be seasonal or ritualized depending on your life practice. With each rug you create, take a photo of the rug in-situ. Share it with family and friends.

# A Color a Day

*Write down colors that you see throughout your day. Try to describe them in detail. Give life, tell us where they live. What's their personality like, hot or cold? How do they breathe? Do you have a connection to them? Maybe take a snapshot of them to make your collection more vivid.*

## **Met. Captured. Catalogued.**

Gather the basics like paint or colored pencils. Pre-stretched canvas or letter-sized paper (A4) as a foundation. Choose a color to get to know better from your journaling. From edge to edge, complete your foundation with that color.

## **Filled.**

Place them on display in your home. Introduce them to your guest.

## Debrief

### Dialogue with yourself:

Continue this practice daily or once a week, once a month.

Give them away as gifts to others; include your writing about the color.

### Dialogue with others:

Exchange a list of colors with a partner. Create the colors from your partner's list. Exchange these colors.

### Going further:

Reflect by yourself or with a partner:

- What does this color do?
- What does this color do to me?
- What does this color do to you?

# Local Tourist

*Take a walk around your  
neighborhood.*

*Bring a device to record images with.*

*Find an area to frame yourself  
in.*

*Give a local your camera and  
ask them to take a photograph  
of you framed in that space.*

*Mark the location of the space  
on a map.*

*Share your mapped locations  
along with your photographs.*



# Debrief

## **Dialogue with yourself:**

Study your portraits in the neighborhood.

What does seeing yourself in these local spaces do?

## **Dialogue with others:**

Ask a partner to come to your neighborhood.

Give them your map of spaces.

Have them wander your neighborhood and take photos in the mapped spaces.

Have them share the photos they created.

What does seeing your partner in these local spaces do? Compared to your own?

# Building Bridges

*Design an object that connects two adjacent or opposite walls in your living space. More than just a string going from one wall to the other.*

**Does it have to be functional like a bridge?**

No, it doesn't need to bear any weight.

Once designed, gather materials. Build it.

## Debrief

**Dialogue with others:**

Invite a partner to come to visit your object. Ask them to pose as a model in the space. Maybe have them pretend they are living in the space with the object.

**Dialogue with yourself.**

- A few reflection questions to write or draw about:
- What is it like living with the object?
- How does it change your behavior?
- How does it add/subtract from your living space?
- What do these new connections do to the space?
- What does it do as it divides while acting as a connection?

**Going further:**

- Write a narrative story about living with the object.
- How might you expand on the object? Design and build.
- How might you expand into another space? Design and build.

# Double Mug

*Design and create a pot or cup in  
clay.*

*Paint it, decorate it once it has  
hardened.*

*Use your pot or cup as a still life.  
Create a still life painting of your  
pot or cup.*

*Place both pot or cup and painting  
on display near each other in your  
home.*

## Debrief

### Dialogue with others:

Invite a partner to create their own pot or cup in clay.

You both now have a pot or cup.

Use each pot or cup as a still life painting study, individually.

One item at a time. A single item per painting.

Each person should have an individual painting per object.

Display each person's painting for the same object next to each other.

Repeat to build a collection.

Discuss and write about how each person observed each pot or cup.

### Dialogue with yourself:

Repeat to build a collection.

# Framing a Landscape

*Go outside and take a 5 minute long video of a landscape. Hold your video device steady in place, use a tripod if needed.*

*Review the video after you're done shooting. Watch it with no distractions. If you get distracted watch it again from the beginning until you make it all the way through.*

## **Focusing...**

Decide how you might frame, crop, compose the video differently of the same landscape. Go out to the same landscape and shoot another 5 minute video. Review.

## **Focusing...stay focused...**

Repeat this exercise at least three times.

...

String these videos together. Review the compiled video.

# Debrief

## **Dialogue with yourself:**

How do the composition adjustments change your perspective? What do they do to the landscape? Does the video generate a story? Write a narrative. Record yourself reading it. Add it to the video as a voice over.

## **Dialogue with others:**

Ask a partner to create a video. Exchange your videos.

Using each other's video, write a narrative for it. Record a reading of the story and add it to the video. Return the videos with the audio added to each other. View and listen to the story your partner has told.

# Sitting on Your Bed

*Lay down in your bed with a pen/  
pencil and a notebook or some let-  
ter-sized paper (A4).*

*Describe your room from your bed.  
Describe what you can see. Describe  
how things sit next to each other.*

*As you write, allow objects that you  
observe to reveal their stories. Write  
those down too.*



## Debrief

### **Dialogue with others:**

Ask a partner to do this activity in their room. Send your writings about your rooms to each other. Create a drawing of each other's room based on the written description. Return the writing and drawing to your partner.

### **Dialogue with yourself:**

Take a picture of your room from your bed. Attach this photo to your piece of writing. Do this activity as frequently as you'd like, daily, monthly, yearly. Catalogue the writings and images. Watch how the room evolves.

# One Mark

*Set up multiple individual sheets of letter-sized paper (A4) next to each other.*

*Place them in a row on a table or multiple easels.*

*Grab some type of utensil to make a mark, like a pen or pencil.*

## **Paper wall is built.**

You can approach the next step in two ways. Set up a still life for an observational drawing or make an abstract drawing. Either way, the technique is to make the same single mark across each sheet of paper.

## **Like draw a line on one sheet, then draw the same line on the other sheets?**

Yes. One mark across all sheets before you make another type of mark. You can either take your time or move quickly like a dance.

## Debrief

### **Dialogue with yourself:**

Once you have completed the set of drawings make photocopies of them. Display them in and out of a corner like a mirror of each other.

### **Dialogue with others:**

Invite a partner to do this activity with you. Either do your own drawings or work on the same series of drawings. If working together on one set of drawings you will need to negotiate where and how the marks are made.

# Magic Flower

*Imagine a flower or plant you have  
never seen. Give it a magic power.  
Draw it on letter-sized paper (A4).  
Name the flower or plant.*

## Debrief

### **Dialogue with others:**

Frame the drawing. Write out its name and its magic power– include with the drawing. Give it as a gift to someone.

### **Dialogue with yourself:**

Repeat this exercise. Design a garden that includes your flowers and plants. Imagine how the magic powers may interact. Write a narrative about the garden.

# Dailies

*Prompts for any day.*

**Where do you  
find support?**

**How do you see  
color?**

**What does color  
do to you?**

**What is your  
burning desire?**

**How does sound  
affect you?**

**What does sound  
do to you?**

**What is true?**

**What are you re-  
sisting?**

**What do you care  
about?**

**What is neces-  
sary?**

**What do you know for sure?**

**Where do you see/feel heat?**

**How do you make something invisible, visible?**

**What do you need?**

**How do you love?**

**What do you want to see?**

**What do you fear?**

**Does this show you yourself?**

**What does a gesture give?**

**What do you own?**

**Where do you see yourself?**

**What is the difference between a part and a whole?**

**How much heat?**

**What do you see  
that I am doing  
here?**

**What is going to  
come from us?**

**How do you show  
a truth?**

**What do we need  
to do to make it?**

**What do you  
love?**

**What does it  
mean to be a ...?**

**What is it to be a  
person of faith?**

**What does one  
believe in?**

**How do you find  
truth?**

**What does one  
have to believe in  
to be a person of  
faith?**



**How are we going  
to make it?**

**How do we see?**

**What few things  
matter most  
during the next  
24 hours?**

**What does it  
mean to be here?**

**What does it  
mean that I do  
this?**

**What does water  
do to you?**

**What does it  
mean to you?**

**How often do you  
look up?**

**How can it be  
both?**

**What is a home?**

**Where else is  
there to go?**