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Introduction

I love being an artist. I love the art form of quilting and the work I am able to create. I love to work with people. Besides art, my other passion is to travel. I am very blessed in my life to combine all my loves into a single profession, the calling of being a quilt teacher.

While nature is the primary influence for much of my artwork, nothing inspires me on a personal level more than my students. My students are a joy. I may be the teacher in class, but what I learn from them in return is invaluable. They motivate and stimulate me. They encourage me with kind words when I need to hear them most. Their enthusiasm inspires my enthusiasm. Their creativity stirs my creativity. My give-and-take connection with my students is a beautiful and nourishing relationship. I've developed and maintained many wonderful friendships with my students all over the world.

Over the years, my students have expressed an interest in my life, the symbolism behind my quilts and the personal stories discussed in my lectures. They urged me to write my thoughts and experiences on paper. Because of their encouragement, *Nurture Your Creative Spirit* was born.

After working in various art mediums, I found my niche in quilting. Although told from a quilter's point of view, the lessons in *Nurture Your Creative Spirit* pertain to all art forms. I write about the wisdoms I learned from quilting, traits of creative people and the significances of my quilts. I discuss inspiration, how emotions affect our artistic productivity and numerous subjects that relate to all manner of art.


Nurture Your Creative Spirit is a labor of love for me; it rewards with feelings of joy and fulfillment. Writing this book has been a dear learning experience, giving me a chance for introspection and realizing knowledge of self. The following pages allow me the opportunity to share my knowledge and insights with you.

I reached deep within my heart and soul to write *Nurture Your Creative Spirit*. When you work from the heart and soul in any art form, whatever is in you, *everything* that is in you, emerges. As with my quilts, some of my most personal thoughts and spiritual feelings surface in these pages. In some passages throughout the book, I talk about my spiritual insights and mention "God," the spiritual deity in my life. Spirituality is deeply personal and we live in an ecumenical society with diverse forms of worship. As you come to these passages, please substitute the deity of your faith or "higher being" or "universe."

I pray that you see yourself in these pages. As you read *Nurture Your Creative Spirit*, give thought to your own experiences. What can you learn about yourself and your art? How have you blossomed over the years? What stories and knowledge can you share with others?

As you consider your own artistic journey, it is my hope that *Nurture Your Creative Spirit* will enable you to flourish creatively, filling you with inspiration, insight, and pleasure.

With love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vikki". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.A close-up detail of a quilt titled "Passages of the Spirit". The quilt features a complex design with various colors including teal, yellow, green, and blue, and patterns that suggest movement and depth. The fabric appears to be a mix of different textures and weights.

Passages of the Spirit (Detail)



Rhapsody in Pink (Detail)

Creativity

The generic dictionary definition of creativity is the capability to develop original and imaginative thought. My personal definition of creativity in art is utilizing individual thoughts, points of view and life experiences to interpret an idea or design so that it becomes one's own. The way an individual sees and interprets an idea, color, design, or an object such as a flower, tree or the ocean can be opposite from another's perspective. Each of us is unique with our own quirks and idiosyncrasies. We react to our surroundings in a different way. If one hundred people created a quilt using the same live tree as a subject, each would vary from the other ninety-nine. This is a valuable opportunity for us. This diverse interpretation of nature or life in our artwork makes it distinctive and visually interesting to others. Speaking personally, I'd rather see how an artist conveys an image in a quilt, a flower perhaps, using her or his perspective and self-expression rather than realism. One can see realism in a snapshot. Visually, a flower conceived through another's eyes, spirit and imagination is far more exciting and captivating than a flower perfectly reproduced from a photograph. Self-expression is a far more satisfying experience for the artist as well.

It is diverse beliefs, viewpoints and personal life events that give art individuality. When we find the courage to combine all these concepts, strive to express them freely and incorporate them in our work, we acquire a creative touch we can call our own authentic style and approach to art. We put ourselves, what we are, our entire being, into our art. You can copy another's design or look, but if you want to develop your own distinctive style, you must portray your subject matter using your individual slant, perspective and interpretation. Your artistic style is unique and yours alone.

By incorporating favorite techniques, colors, lines, objects, etc. in quilting we develop our own originality and characteristics that become easily recognizable to others and set us apart as imaginative. As with our bodies, imagination and creativity become stronger the more we exercise them. Ultimately, the definition of creativity is the ability to immerse our hearts, minds and spirits into interpreting ideas or designs in our art.

I believe the uniqueness each one of us possesses is a special gift from a higher being. We should strive to take advantage of our diversity and incorporate these individual perspectives into our art. Recognize that our personal thoughts are interesting to others and they can be meaningful to people who view our work.

Each of us is a creative person, but in many different ways. Talents and abilities, gifts from the Divine, vary widely from one person to another. The ways we use our gifts and to what extent also differ. Many times I will hear from one of my students, "I'm not a creative person." That is simply not true. Perhaps this person's talent in

visual art is not on a level that allows her or his work to hang in a museum with world acclaim. Talents, and the passion to use them, are not equal in all persons. But the creative gifts and abilities the individual possesses in other areas may far surpass those of the artist whose work is hanging in the museum.

Everyday life is creative: gardening, writing, cooking, journaling, throwing a party, helping others, caregiving. Even routine housework or decision-making can be inspired ventures. The list is endless. You probably do not realize how resourceful you really are. You may not consider what you do during your busy day as imaginative, but it is. You are creative all day long but do not acknowledge it.

From this point forward, choose to think about everything you do from a different perspective. Rather than seeing the daily actions you perform as simple, mundane tasks, instead focus on the skill, inventiveness and energy you need to perform these activities. In short, be conscientiously aware of your creativity. Awareness gives you energy. Be mindful of when and how you are creative. No matter how seemingly unimportant or small the task at hand, recognizing your creativity allows you to appreciate, be grateful for and cherish your wonderful abilities and talents.

Honor your creativity. Nurture and feed it with energy. Afford it the power of movement and momentum. One idea will flow into another, then another. So take time now to make a list of your creative endeavors from the past few days on these pages or in your journal. Be attentive and be grateful.

