

“Artist's' Workshop Provides Direction”

By Maggie Downs, The Desert Sun, December 17, 2006

The first time I saw the piece of paper about this thing called “The Artist's Way,” I felt like it was talking directly to me.

“Are you ready for more joy, support, adventure?”

Well, yeah.

But I was skeptical.

I've been scammed by words before: “Drop 20 pounds by summer!” “Thinner thighs in just 7 days!” “No money down!”

Obviously a 12-week workshop couldn't tap into my creativity, conquer self-destructive tendencies, turn me into an artist.

Or could it?

But I'm not really an artist anyway.

Artists are old, European men who have paintings hanging in museums.

Artists ooze creativity and wear cool clothes and hang out in jazzy galleries.

Artists starve and suffer for their work.

But what if an artist was simply someone who lives life fully and openly and deliciously? What if I were an artist?

For a couple weeks, I waffled about signing up for the class.

I finally called an hour before the first session began.

I'm so thankful I did.

The Artist's Way changed my life. And I am not exaggerating at all.

This workshop has been one of the most fulfilling, inspirational, courageous things I've ever done.

This class has given me an unbelievable amount of clarity.

It feels like the first time I got a pair of eyeglasses. Suddenly the orange squiggles at the grocery store have gone from fuzzy to carrots.

And it's not just about the art, although that has been a fabulous side effect. (I now have two full journals, a well-used sketchpad, sculptures, poems, collages, two paintings on the wall ...)

The class meets for 12 weeks in Palm Springs and is facilitated by two local life coaches, Trent Blanchard and Leslie Gebhart.

The sessions follow the structure of Julia Cameron's book, “The Artist's Way.”

I had seen the book for years - I've even picked it up a few times.

Now I know that I couldn't have done it without everyone who made the journey with me.

My classmates have become my most trusted community: Eleven new friends who support me, comfort me, encourage me.

They inspire me to live a more open, more vibrant, more passionate life.

And it turns out the Artist's Way is this: I don't just recognize each day as a gift - I'm tying ribbons around it.

For more information, call: Trent Blanchard, 481-4445; Leslie Gebhart, 320-2688.