

## **Creative Personal Journal**

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### **Author Note**

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**Abstract**

Creative Art Therapy is a fun and different way to process feeling and emotions. This paper will explore my awareness of imagery, symbols, colors, and space. The paper is a compilation of personal and experiential experiences with creative art in journals.

### **Creative Personal Journal**

Creative Arts Therapy is an approach that exists to externalize feelings and emotions in mental health counseling (Gladding,2020). In this paper, I plan to demonstrate my exploration of music, dance and movement, imagery, visual arts, literature and writing, drama and psychodrama, humor, and play therapy techniques in a chronological timeline. Also, I will see how self-awareness of imagery, symbols, colors, and space can help me self-discover my identity. The journal reflects my chronological life and exploration of creative arts.

Creative arts therapy is something that I love to do with my clients. I love creating their stories with symbols, images, shapes, and colors. Each client has their storytelling and creative arts therapy. Clients come to therapy to create with their emotions and artistically process the meaning. Creative arts are a space to discover one's weaknesses and strengths to achieve soul care. Creative art is also a journey of self-discovery through various forms of expression other than talk therapy.

My love for Creative arts therapy began as a children's pastor. I had to do many creative things for the kid's ministry dance, arts and crafts, drama, and skits. I also did talent shows, shows and tell, visuals, and humor in kids' ministry. I will forever treasure those years. I then moved my knowledge of 20 years into my counseling office. I began exploring creative ways to practice techniques with children and adolescents. Finally, I worked in a community center with groups of all kinds of backgrounds, ethnicities, races, ages, and languages. Creative arts successfully gathered the community of all ages into a place of hope and healing. Finally, I decided to utilize my creative arts therapy techniques for couples therapy. Two stories are built as one in couples therapy, and they can utilize many therapeutic techniques to develop communication.

I am a lover of creative arts therapy, and I am looking forward to telling my story in the following journals.

08/25/2023

**The Island that birth me!**

The sand tray is a symbol of the island where I was born. I was born in Puerto Rico, a 100 by 33-inch island in the Caribbean. The island gave me my identity as a Puerto Rican. Being born in Puerto Rico means pride, a working soul, and compassion towards others. Being from Puerto Rico also means I cook Spanish cuisine (rice with pigeon and roast pork). Also, the rhythm of pleneros, bomba, plena, and salsa is excellent—a native language of Spanish and a collectivist culture. The coqui, a tiny frog that sings "coqui, coqui" every night, is so vivid in my mind.

I grew up by the beach. Playing with the sandbox reminds me of Puerto Rico as a child. I would play with the sand on the beach. I would also collect seashells at the beach and make necklaces. While playing with the sandbox, I can hear the waves, smell the sand, and see. Playing with the sandbox and feeling a small quantity of yesterday was lovely. I had a smile on my face; I felt joyful and renewed after playing with the sandbox. It has been a long time since I visited the island, but I will return soon like an old folk song that sings to the island and its beauty. It has been an excellent reflection time.

*Debbie Long-Ramos*

08/28/2023

### **I Found Joy**

The sand symbolizes the joy I felt when I found Jesus in my heart. I remember it like yesterday, even though I was a child. I was seven and went to a home where the children and pastor Chiqui sang, danced, and played with me. She also did arts and crafts and told us a fantastic story about Jesus. I was captivated by the miracles of Jesus; even though I was young, I wanted healing. I was an eight-year-old in pain over my mom and dad's divorce. My life needed a savior. I accepted Jesus as my savior, and my life began the incredible journey one can imagine.

I felt joy. I studied the bible. I danced in the church and loved arts and crafts. My pain about Mom and Dad's divorce was somewhat present. I felt light at the end of the tunnel. My relationship with God helps me overcome my fears and sadness. Little did I know that joy and happiness began with the salvation decision. I used red as a symbol of salvation and green and a symbol of life. I had a new beginning. Joy is forever present in my life.



*Debbie Lopez-Ramos*

09/24/2023

### **Worship and Form of Art**

The video is a symbol of asserting God's lives through worship. As a child, I danced in the church. I grew up close and personal with Jesus through worship. Worship was food for my soul. I would always worship. To me, worship is connecting with God. Worship is also a symbol of honor and praise to our King Jesus. I always need to improve in the lyrics and dance movements. I love to dance, sing, and connect to the presence of Elohim.

When I have troubles and cannot find hope, worship always brings me back to serenity. As I danced and worshipped to this song, I felt hope. The lyrics praise a risen king. I can connect my soul to those who have risen and changed my life. Psalms 150 is about worship with all yourself. I feel joy and peace when I worship. I am forever grateful to have this form of artistic expression to my heavenly father.

[https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1\\_ozbyiamj](https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_ozbyiamj)

*Debbeye Lopez-Ramos*

09/11/2023

### Uncomfortable feelings

Creating this art today means so much to me. The bandage is a symbol of uncomfortable emotions. Uncomfortable emotions are part of this world. Often, time, uncomfortable feeling, and I do not get along. Thoughts become feelings, and feelings become behaviors. How could I externalize the uncomfortable feeling that I endeavor healthily? I decided to utilize bandages because everybody knows they mean healing after hurt.

What stood out once I finished my activity was my word selection. Each word is connected to an event, a painful event. What I have learned about uncomfortable feelings is that they are not my enemy. Also, I have learned that uncomfortable feelings are not here to destroy me. Uncomfortable feelings are a reminder that I care about such things in life so deeply and profoundly that sometimes, just sometimes, uncomfortable emotions linger. God gave me spirit power, love, and self-control; therefore, I can endure uncomfortable feelings through Jesus Christ.



*Debbeye Lopez-Ramos*



9/18/2023

### Promises from God

This picture of a sheep is a symbol of God's promises to His children. The cotton is soft and appears to be like a sheep. I drew eyes with a marker. A fast and hands on activity to think about been the sheep of Jesus. There are many promises in Scripture. I like to reflect on His promises. I must meditate on His word day and night. I have never felt forsaken or abandoned by God. I have always felt His presence even when I have strayed away from Him. In my rebellious moments, He lights the way so I can find my way home.

Choosing this picture reminds me that Jesus persuades me. He constantly seeks me, not because He needs me but because I need Him. He pursues me to remind me of His plans for me. He pursues me to heal my soul and continue the works of transformation in my life. I have so much joy to know that He pursues me. I am the sheep and Jesus is the Pastor.



*Debbie Lopez-Ramos*

9/25/2023

### **Empty Nesting**

The video symbolizes my grieving my children living in the nest. One of the most challenging times in my life was empty nesting. My children, some younger than I expected, decided to leave the nest. My heart was broken, crushed. I could not understand this moment of my life. I felt abandoned once again. I felt fear. I felt hopeless.

In this season of my life, I decided to worship and worship Jesus some more. I found a scripture that says that God is close to the broken heart and crushed in spirit. I knew Jesus was close to me. I found the promise that said that this, too, shall pass. I found comfort in knowing that God was close to me in the middle of my pain and that the season would have an end.

As I look at the video, I thank God for healing and restoring me. I have a beautiful family, and I give God all the glory. The video demonstrated life happening. Family unity and gatherings. My children grew up in this video. I am so grateful to be chosen as their mom. As I have an empty nest, I think about getting closer to my husband. Now that I do not have the mommy responsibilities, I can take more time for my husband and myself. Putting the pictures together helped me grieve the old things and welcome the new.

[https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1\\_cnmjjno7](https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_cnmjjno7)

*Debbie Lopez-Ramos*

10/2/2023

### Marriage Renewal

The marriage renewal picture is a symbol of God with us. A marriage is a covenant between God, husband, and wife. A twenty-year-old marriage can share many stories. My marriage is not exempt from the perils and hardships of life. I love my husband more than yesterday. I want to continue to say I do. Returning to God for our next chapter of life seemed the best way to reaffirm our faith in Him.

I love my husband for the man that He is. We have overcome many challenging moments together. Sickness, infidelity, distrust, poverty, education, childrearing, ministry, and acculturation have been part of our love story. We had to learn that only with God we can endure all things and hope for all things. As I glance at this picture, I see our commitment to continue the journey with God. I see the honorable men who swept me off my feet but are now older. I see the women who chose to love but now unconditionally. I see grace forever more.

Thank you, God, for teaching me about grace and unconditional love with my spouse. I will treasure this lesson all my life.



*Debbie Lopez-Ramos*

10/9/2023

**Granma Coming Soon!**

The knitting activity is a symbol of the baby on the way. Grandma, coming soon, has the picture of what I knit for my expected grandbaby girl. I knitted a dress, panties, and booties with red sandals. I am still trying to figure out why I chose red. As I did the clothing, I feared for a moment. My son, young me, is having a baby. I know how challenging child rearing is, so I fear. I also prayed and thanked God because I knew that only in Him could I find the courage to let fear go. Perfect love cast out fear; I love this verse. I then felt joy because I was going to be a grandma. My family is expanding.

I do not know what this bundle of joy will bring. I do know that I already love her. I already sing to her in her mommy's womb. I already pray for her. I pray that she is healthy. I pray that I can teach her to sing and dance to God. I pray that I can do fun things with her. I will meet you soon, Joy Marie Melendez-Rosario.

*Debbye Lopez-Ramos*

10/11/2023

### **The Journey Awaits**

The boat symbolizes a journey of my life and the principle that I guide myself in life. 1 Corinthians 10:31 Let everything that I do be done for the Lord. I plan to be a living sacrifice, a testament to the Kingdom of God here on earth. I strive for ever more to love my neighbors as I love myself. I am simply doing self-care that restores my soul. I plan to reflect Jesus' love with my character and demeanor intentionally. I also plan to be a good steward of my finances. I realized that every provision that I needed has been supplied.

I plan to live a life of worship. A life of worship is me praying, fasting, reading Scripture, singing, and dancing. A life of worship, making life's journey with His will at heart. I plan to be a disciple and follow Jesus for the coming days. I plan to smile more and think less. I plan to see Gods glory each day of my life. I plan to serve Him diligently, knowing He has made all the possible ways for me and wants to prosper and not harm me. I plan to be forever a child of God.



*Debbeye Long-Ramos*

10/13/2023

### PhD Graduation

The graduation cap is a symbol of hope for the future. I am currently awaiting the completion of the raise of a doctoral student. The journey was long and more days and hours for sure. The cap reminds me to fix my eyes on Jesus, the author, and perfecter of my faith. It represents my trust in Jesus, who has destined me for higher education. As I continue to do papers, essays, reflections, and benchmarks, I get closer to wearing my cap. A physical cap helps me when doing homework, and time flies.

When I was an undergraduate and in my master's program, a cap helped me to keep resilient. I would put on my cap and pretend I was walking on the graduation stage. There was so much laughter and tears to get to that particular finish line. In my doctoral program, doing this cap to study for the upcoming celebration is vital to staying driven. Each time I think about graduation, I feel much joy. I want to keep the momentum as fuel for all that is to come. A cap is a great way to dream out loud.



*Debbie Lopez-Ramos*

### **Conclusion**

The creative journal experience allowed me to explore creative art ideas while processing life. I did a chronological journal to tell some stories of my life. In the journal I dealt with comfortable and uncomfortable feelings. I realized God was and is always present, no matter the stimuli. I truly enjoyed this reflection through the course of several weeks and can see the benefit of creative arts to tell a story.

I do not have a certification or extensive training in Creative Therapy. After learning about Creative Therapy, I plan on getting a certification to help my clients process their feelings and emotions.

**Reference**

Gladding, S. T. (2020). *The creative arts in counseling*. American Counseling Association.