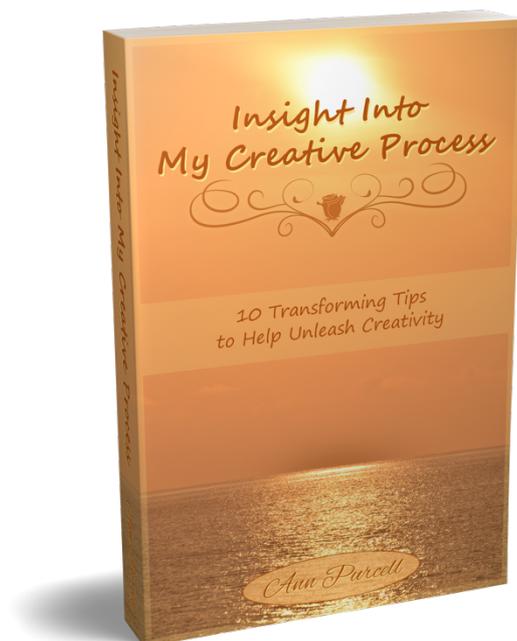


Insight Into My Creative Process— 10 Transforming Tips to Help Unleash Creativity

By Ann Purcell



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I often get asked: “What is your creative process?” This is a fascinating question that I often ponder myself. Everyone has their own process for realizing artistic expressions. Although I can identify some of the situations that inspire my creativity, it is often a magical mystery.

Over the years, through writing a book, many songs, poems, and blog posts, I have developed ways to help myself in the creative process. I have compiled a summary of what I learned in **Ten Tips to Unleash Your Creativity** at the end of this short book.

Over the years poems have emerged that also express my creative process, which I have included here to help illustrate my points. I can often express more in a short poem than in a whole essay.

A Vessel For Creativity to Flow Through

Sometimes I feel I am a vessel and the words to a poem or song automatically begin to bubble up inside, seemingly out of nowhere. This is the purest form of the creative process, when I feel I am not doing anything, and I am just witnessing the process.

Following is a poem I wrote that expresses this experience:

Am I The Poet?

Am I the poet of this poem
each expression rising effortlessly from within?
Silence stirred, an impulse heard
beyond all meter, beyond all word . . .

Am I the writer of these lines?
Each phrase suddenly appearing on my screen
is just a seed sown for silence to flow
in any wave the wind blows . . .

Am I the composer of this song
of the sounds of silence singing?
Wholeness bent, on self-intent
for me to be silence’s instrument . . .

Can I claim popular authorship
when I am just a joyous witness?
Of each lyrical notion in the swelling ocean
of pure silence in tender motion.



Silence: the Basis of Creativity

As the last sentence in this poem expresses, thoughts do come from somewhere. They emerge from a field of silence within. What has helped me to enhance the experience of silence is meditation. I was fortunate to learn Transcendental Meditation in 1972. The Transcendental Meditation technique allows me to experience the source of all creativity—the deepest level of silence within.

Before I learned to meditate, I did not think of myself as a creative person. I did not excel in any of the arts. After a few months of meditating, I had all this extra energy that needed a direction. I took up cooking, which was my first creative outlet.

Song and Melody also Emerging from Silence

In time, I began to hear melodies and lyrics in my head. Words or phrases popped into my mind like an “earworm.” I had to write them down. These phrases felt embedded in my silence and little by little they were being unleashed inside my head.

Writing music to me is the same process as writing a poem. Although poems have their own rhythm and writing schemes, music has the added element of melody and harmony. Sometimes I hear a tune inside and then later add the lyrics. Other times I hear lyrics and want to write music to go with them. When both the lyrics and melody come together at the same time, it is truly magical. When this happens, the resulting songs are usually my best ones. Whenever I try to write a song, it usually is not very good and feels contrived.

Following are two poems that express my process of writing songs.

Music in Silence

Striking the tones of silence
music gently starts to flow.
Silence is purest harmony—
all frequencies in synchronous glow.
Self stirring this tender stillness
sound subtly begins to hum.
In superfluid gentle swings
silence strings softly strum.
As Self hears its own song
consciousness begins to dance
to the music of its own nature —
the melody of blissful resonance.



Music

Music takes you to a place
larger than you—
a vast, vibrant space—
magical and true;
where tender emotions
rise and swell
forming musical notions
from the divine well.
The more delicate your heart,
the purer the sound,
the more effective your art,
deeper and profound.
Music takes you to silence
where God sings.
Floating in His alliance
eternal music springs.



Silence, as I mentioned earlier, is the space from where all creativity ultimately emerges. In the following poem, I am asking silence to dictate to me words from the level of stillness.

In Silence I Hear

Tell me your wise words,
Dictate them sweetly to me.
Let them come like a rushing herd,
Or waves rolling on the sea.

My mind is still and clear,
Like the depths of a crystal pond.
In this silence I gently hear
Your words softly coming on.

In metaphors, in rhythmic rhyme
They flow like a stream.
Rising in my awareness they climb
Forming the poetry of the Supreme.

God is silence, the Absolute —
The beauty of Heaven's kingdom.
Here His words flow like a flute,
In my peace, I hear His wisdom.



In the following poem, I am again asking Silence to speak to me from within, and particularly through the channel of nature.

Silence, Speak To Me

Silence speak to me,
let me hear your words,
singing through the birds,
buzzing in humming bees.

Silence, what are you saying?
I can hear you murmur.
Your words become firmer
in the leaves that are swaying.

I hear you in the wind
blowing swift and free,
calling me to just Be,
by simply going within.

I hear you in the field,
in all things that pass,
“Life is your looking glass”
is the message you wield.

I hear you in the clouds
that softly dust the sky,
saying, “You are the reason why
I speak my words aloud.”

I hear you in the streams
whose rushing is your mutter.
“Flow like the river,” you utter,
“to live life’s happy dream.”

Silence speaks with care—
one must only listen—
silence is in sky that glistens—
hear the silence everywhere.

Your words may I heed,
may your voice ring clear.
In my heart may I hear
your universal creed.

Your whispers are soft thrills
tickling my every porous cell.
I can hear them gently tell,
Silence heard is God's will.

Can God's will be vocalized?
It speaks in your feelings
as purest truth revealing,
God's will— silence actualized.



The Sound of Silence

In the following poem, I equate silence with sound. After all, silence is a soundless sound. It is a field in which and from where all frequencies and sound emerge. In this poem, I am again expressing the importance of experiencing silence as a basis for creative expression.

Hear the Music of Poetry

Think deeply and hear creation's song
in meter and the silence between each beat—
a soft timbre of tones, full and strong
in which all sound frequencies are replete.

Let the poet recall the depths of his mind
in words, emotions, in rhythms that dance
into imagery, metaphor, and phrases that wind
his silence into meanings condensed.

Summon your experiences fresh from Being;
evoke life's passions from your heart.
Let your words carry the sound of meaning
then the poet will have achieved his art.

Capture the music of the universe
your ear tuned to the voice of sound.
In your silence deeply immersed
Your expressions will be eternally profound.

If you think deeply, you think musically
hearing stillness in tones crystal clear—
the poetry of Self's own rhapsody—
God's song most pleasing to hear.



Spontaneous Impressions

At times something from the outside, especially nature, inspires my creative process. I can be walking on the beach and in a flash, the moment becomes frozen in time, like a photo in a camera. The beauty of what I am seeing is imprinted on my senses. Usually when this happens I can't wait to go back home to get my pen and paper out to write about what made that strong impression. I usually can recall the whole visual experience as well as what I was feeling at the time.

Spontaneous Insights

Some days I can be doing even mundane things like washing dishes or taking a shower and out of the blue, I will have a flash of truth or insight. Some people call this an "Aha" experience. At some later point, I will then express that insight in a poem.

Outer Reflections

Occasionally there is a resonance between what is happening on the outside—politically, spiritually, with friends or family—to a feeling inside that creates some spark or impulse within me. If the spark is strong enough, it ignites the desire for me to write about that particular situation.

The Need for Solitude to Write

I do need periods of quiet time and space for solitude in order to write. Walking in nature gives me time to reflect. Also it helps culture observation of the world around me. In addition, I become more of a listener, alert to the sounds of nature and also to what other people say. Most artists have expressed that time alone is necessary for them to create.

The Muse Playing

Many poets and writers talk about their muse. I can relate to this concept as well. My muse is silence, but a silence that seems to have a personal quality. Often when I go to bed at night, as I am starting to drift off to sleep, my friend—the muse—comes out to play. I love it when streams of thoughts come rushing in, and I have to write them down. At night it feels like I have all the time in the world, which gives me a sense of freedom—no boundaries. A rush of energy and bliss stirs my heart while I am writing. I can't go to sleep until the thought or poem is complete. Sometimes it is too much though, as I can hardly keep my eyes open, and would prefer to go to sleep, especially if I have something important to do the next day—the trials of a writer!

The following two poems express this relationship I have with my muse.

Muse, You Have Come Again

Oh! Muse, my dear friend,
you have gratefully come again.
Let the new day happily begin
with your words flowing through my pen.

What will you say this morn,
I need not even ponder.
I love to watch your words be born
when to my stillness I wander.

Your words come right on cue,
like an actor speaking in a play,
bringing truth in rainbow hues
when I go in and pray.

Like bubbles rising from a well,
your words flow through my hand
that write everything you tell,
in vivid color, never bland.

When I forget you for a second
and put down my writing pen,
then you always come and beckon
me, to come out of my den.

Dear Muse, today your words unfurl
like a fountain or gushing pool.
May each word be a sapphire, ruby, or pearl
containing wisdom in each jewel.

Muse, I adore it when you come,
I want to capture every phrase.
In silence you and I become
one hand, to write God's praise.



Dear Muse

Please let me rest, dear Muse,
the night is no longer young.
Yet, you I cannot refuse—
words pouring from your tongue.

They whisper such sweetness,
I can hardly bear their joy,
Your words are always kindness,
and playful like a child's toy.

But the night is getting late.
Do you want to take my sleep?
Let your flow quickly abate—
now I should start counting sheep.

Darkness has set in, it's after ten,
but you are tireless, wanting to play.
Please let me lay down my pen,
do not keep me till the sun's rays.

Dear Muse, my adoring friend,
I love it when you come.
Your entertainment is without end,
I delight in your whispering hums.

If I am to bring you full glory,
I must get my night's rest,
then your words will be purer allegory
And I will feel my best!



The Journey of Discovery

When I start a poem, I often have just an inkling of an idea, or one or two phrases going through my mind. Sometimes it can even be one word. Part of the creative thrill is in seeing where the poem ends up. Each poem often seems to have a direction of its own and sometimes flows in unexpected revelations.

This next poem expresses the joy of watching the process take its own direction once the writing begins.

Poetic Flight

The page is staring at me—
blank, lifeless, and white—
waiting for my thoughts to fly free
and my pen to take poetic flight.

I see before me all possibilities—
the bubbling of pure delight—
Silence is unlocking its mysteries
like stars clustering in the night.

The direction is not yet clear
but do I need to know the way?
At this stage I should not fear
for silence over me has sway;

always guiding me from its empty sphere—
its eternal inward play.
My tender feelings I need to hear
as they begin to unfold like a golden ray.

Silence sings its own song
from its ancient flowing hum.
Here the poet's mind belongs
from where the stirring of sound comes.

His words will then burst like the dawn
filling the page with gentle rhythms
and meanings that leap like a fawn
from one's heart into silence's hymns.



The Many Creative Processes

In the next poem called “Divine Artist,” I write about what I think is the creative process of the creator, which is parallel to my own creative process—all creativity emerges from silence.

Divine Artist

Her soft brush
strokes silence into form.
From her hush
appears the Absolute unborn.
As rivers rush
her vibrant hues take vision;
Delicately lush
they manifest her inner cognitions.
Like the evening thrush
creating melody,
Yet more plush
inspiring rhapsody.
As darkness is crushed
with dawning rays
Her paintings flush
as bliss portrayed.
As water-springs gush
she unleashes her designs.
Bowing with sublime blush
purest channel of the Divine.



In the next poem I am comparing the creative process to that of a poet, a composer, and a painter.

Poetry of Silence

A poet captures moments in time—
truths, eternity, to put in rhyme—
going beyond trees into their feeling,
into his own inner depths revealing
the poetry of silence.

A painter paints life in vivid color,
poets paint words in metaphor.
Painters break form into light particles,
poets make words sing like canticles—
the poetry of silence.

Composers hear music in all sound
creating song when rhythm is found.
Poets hears life as speaking words
weaving their meter into measures heard—
the poetry of silence.

Pure white canvas is colored with paint—
in colors lucid or colors faint—
the artist reveals his inward seeing.
Forms in his heart he is freeing—
the poetry of silence.

Pure white sheet is covered in similes—
in symbolism, imagery, and reveries.
A poet bares his innermost thoughts
that rise from his depths and have caught
the poetry of silence.



A Creative Exercise to Deepen Your Writing Skills

I created the following exercise for myself to do sometimes in writing poetry or a piece of prose. Take any object or an aspect of nature like a tree, or a leaf, and write a verse or a paragraph describing what you see. Next write another verse or paragraph expressing the sensation of touching it, another verse or paragraph describing the smell, and another verse or paragraph trying to explain how it tastes if it is food.

The last two parts of the exercise are to then write down what you think about the object you are looking at and what are the emotions you are feeling about it. This short exercise helps you to culture all your senses of perception, as well as the intellect and feeling level.

After you have done this exercise, you can then pretend to be the object and speak about the object from its own perspective. For example, if you have chosen the ocean as your object to write about, pretend you are the ocean and write about what she thinks, feels, sees, hears, touches, tastes and smells.

Why Do We Create?

In conclusion, why does one create? Artists throughout time have continued to create because it is intensely joyful—the process and hopefully the result. Some artists' creativity bubbles up inside of them so much that they can't even hold back their creative impulses.

Creativity is not limited to artists, musicians, and writers. Parents have to be incredibly creative in raising children. Great business leaders establish new enterprises out of nothing. The business starts as just an idea in their heads.

One should not create for the result. It is important to immerse oneself in the joy of the process and then the finished product will take care of itself.

In the following poem, I express why I write poetry—for my bliss and for the joy I experience in seeing silence take form.

I Write for My Self

I write for my own elation—
to feel tender bubbles rise in me,
which burst into poetic creation,
rising from my silent sea.

I hear a voice that does not sound,
murmuring its meaning in abstraction.
Silence hears silence's gentle pound
from Self turning in inward refraction.

I hear a music that is not heard,
but plays my heart strings
forming melody into rhythmic word,
touching my feelings as it sings.

I write for my own Self,
for self sings its own song inside,
where sound and form wait in stealth
for me to unleash its rhythmic tide.

As voice and sound become one stream,
my heart opens to its rushing flow,
which contains its rhyming reams
from Self seeing its own glittering glow.



In this short piece, I've expressed my creative process through words and by using a few of my poems as examples. Below, I've condensed these ideas into ten tips to help you unleash the ocean of creativity that lies within you.

Ten Tips to Unleash Your Creativity

- 1. The most important tip** is to experience the source of all creativity within by accessing the silent state of transcendental consciousness, for example through practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique.
- 2. Take time every day to be in nature** by yourself. Being alone helps you to start observing more, it also gives you the time to culture the ability to reflect and think more deeply, as well as the ability to listen more astutely to nature and to people.
- 3. Start writing, painting, or practicing music**—whatever your chosen artistic outlet—every day for at least 10 minutes. Some days you will feel like you are doing the same old thing, but other days the creative flow will unexpectedly start pouring in, and you will enjoy it so much that you will not want to stop.
- 4. If you are a poet, read other poetry.** If you are a writer, read great books. I get so inspired to write poetry when I read other poets' work, and likewise with songwriting. When I hear a piece of music I enjoy, it uplifts my heart so much and creates a desire in me to write a song.
- 5. Don't force the creative process.** If nothing is coming, take a break and completely let go of what you are trying to do.
- 6. If you have an idea** for what you want to write, compose, or paint, write down that idea. The idea will sink into your consciousness, percolate in the silence and at some future point, it will sprout into the artistic expression that you desire.
- 7. Be around other creative people** who inspire you.
- 8. Never question if what you create is any good.** If you love it, then it is perfect.
- 9. Don't try to write, compose or paint what is popular** or what other people like. Be true to who you are and what is in your heart to create! If it touches your soul, the essence of your work will penetrate into the hearts of others.
- 10. Staying rested and fresh** is essential for the spring of creativity within to effortlessly flow. This final tip is vitally important and often overlooked.

If you enjoyed this e-book and are interested in Ann Purcell's book of poetry, *Tender Flower of Heaven*, please subscribe here (www.eepurl.com/MxEZr) to be updated when the book is available.



About The Author

Ann Purcell is an award-winning author and musician. She has been teaching Transcendental Meditation around the world since 1973, and currently oversees the teaching of Transcendental Meditation in girls' schools and communities in several countries in Africa. In addition, she has worked on curricula and course development for universities and continuing education programs. She has been featured on many podcasts and radio shows about enlightenment and conscious living, and blogs regularly for the Huffington Post.

Her award-winning book, *The Transcendental Meditation Technique and the Journey of Enlightenment*, was published in March 2015 and her seventh album was released in July 2016. She is also the author of a book of poems: *Tender Flower of Heaven*.

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