

The Wholehearted Creative

by Emily P. Freeman

She sees limits as opportunities. She's put excuses aside. She understands her real life, her real budget, and her real amount of time is not keeping her from her creative work. Whole-hearted creative women know our limits can be gifts if we let them be. We simply have to do what we do best: receive the gift of the present moment with all of its limits and potentials and be creative with what we have.

She integrates her creative work into every part of her life. Because she has to. She is not just one thing. Wholehearted creativity means embracing our whole lives, refusing to compartmentalize. We bring our creative selves to each situation, open and ready and generous.

She believes there is enough to go around. Other people's success does not freak her out. She doesn't hide behind comparison or excuses. Instead, she champions the work of others and hands out her support with grace and compassion.

She knows her art is the evidence, not the goal. Art is not simply the work of her hands. Her truest artistic work is being fully herself in the presence of others. The book, the painting, the meal, the presentation are all simply evidence of a deeper art happening within the soul of the artist. Because art is what happens when we dare to be who we really are. Whatever comes out as a result of that – whether you teach, sing, build, write, love, help, or calculate; if you cook, parent, lead, clean, organize, or listen, well the way you do those things as yourself is evidence of a person who has come fully alive.

She doesn't wait to feel qualified. When she's tempted to think maybe she got this whole calling thing wrong, she remembers that catchy phrase Mark Batterson said, that "God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called." She remembers Moses, Esther, David, Mary and Joseph. Oh yeah, she says to herself. I am equipped because God is with me.

She no longer fears the silence. She has made her peace with the silence she sometimes hears when she asks what is next. She trusts the inspiration will always circle back around again. She listens in the darkness and creates her way through it because sometimes that's the only way out.

She understands the soul and the schedule don't follow the same rules. The days of trying to force her soul to sync up nicely with her schedule? Those days are past. Now she understands the deep work happening in her soul cannot be rushed, it cannot be simplified or systemized. That is not her job. Instead, her job is to pay attention. She listens to the gentle heartbeat of her own life. She refuses to try to force clarity out into the open before it's time.

She knows she's an artist. Though we may not all be artists by profession, we are most certainly artists by design. She accepts her birthright with a humble confidence. She is made in the image of a creative God and this means she has a job to do. Her job is to show up in the world with her whole heart and do her next right thing in love.