



DRAWING
FROM
WITHIN

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DRAWING FROM WITHIN WITH INNOCENT EYES

Do you think you can't draw people with any life inside? Maybe you don't believe you can draw at all beyond stick figures. I'm here to tell you that it doesn't have to stay that way. Here's a way you *can* draw by learning to see.

An Invitation to Draw.

There are many methods of drawing, depending on your goal. If you wanted to draw the blueprints for a bridge construction, you'd probably go the architect's route, being primarily interested in accuracy.

There's even a system for artists to draw animals and people that reduces bodies to ovals and ellipses. This sounds quite mechanical and rather sterile. If you've never drawn anything without feeling awkward, or you've been trained in one approach that seems to leave your own uniqueness out of it, take heart.

You may have seen some highly perfected, realistic art which is admirable in its skill, but fails to move you on a heart level. A teacher of mine told us: **"You don't have to be perfect to be effective."**

What would be *effective* in your life or work ?

- If you'd like to draw things with *life, feeling, and character* in them, that reveal something of your humanness, then your talent lies closer than you might think.
- If you want to make drawings to help clients learn visually, you can draw from within on your intimate knowledge of your subject, and communicate that feeling or heart.
- If you want to explore your deeper connection with all things, you can learn to see with innocent eyes.

There is an artist inside you waiting to awaken. Give me your hand and trust your own heart as we walk this path to drawing from within.

Introduction.

There are basically only two ways of doing anything, including drawing. One way is from the outside, and one is from the inside.

Drawing from the outside involves looking at an object as an observer, remaining detached and objective, to replicate it or capture its likeness.

Drawing from the inside involves seeing into a subject as a participant, to experience the essence of it without expectations; and not incidentally, moves the viewers to feel the connectedness of all things too.

And yet, even though you may have drawn only from the outside before, still this tends to happen :

Once you notice, or care for something, you're no longer an observer, you're a participant. Yet, until you have drawn a thing, you don't really know it.

Of course you can learn to analyze and achieve perspective, for example. As a living, working method this is rather useless. It kills all grace, spirit and liveliness. Analytical approaches are all 20-20 hindsight, after the fact, and are all "mind driven" objects. What we're interested in here is hands-on, warm-blooded, "heart led" experiences.

My name for this way of drawing is **Drawing from within with innocent eyes.**

- It is not in any way self-expression. It is letting the subject express itself *through* you.
- It is about seeing into the Essence of things with *essential innocence*.
- It is about opening the eyes to connect the heart with the world.
- It is about becoming more present.

We aren't going to be "creative" or make "art". We are simply going to draw what we see. What you call it is of no importance.

This way of drawing was not my invention. It was developed by Frederick Franck, a Netherlands born, American who died in June of 2006 at the age of 97. He was a physician first to satisfy his parents' wish, and he worked in Africa with Albert Schweitzer. He drew portraits of the famous doctor too.

Frederick became a sculptor and a painter following his life long wish, but his biggest claim to fame was his "**Seeing-Drawing.**" He wrote some 30 books, some hand written for the immediacy effect, and he was very spiritually enlightened. His drawings have a quality like no other, utterly fresh and alive, not technically manufactured at all, and not like photos either. The presence of the human hand is part and parcel of their charm.

Drawing from Within.

Drawing from within - seeing-drawing - is an impossible effort as long as the ego tries to **do** it. Once the ego lets go, it becomes effortless.

This is not learning to draw --- you're off the hook ! It is **learning to see**. Training the eyes takes practice.

Your hand doesn't need training. If you can write words, you have plenty of fine muscle coordination to draw.

And your pencil doesn't need training. It goes wherever it's pushed.

It's the eyes that need training.

Have you ever tried tight-rope walking ? Or watched someone do it ? You know if you were to look down at your feet, you'd lose your balance and fall. Your feet don't need watching - they know how to walk. It's your big blues/browns/greens that need training to stay focused on the place you are going.

It's the same with riding a bicycle. Wherever you look, the bike tends to go. I used to hold the provincial senior championship for road racing. This is one lesson I never tested, but took on say so. Descending a steep hill with a deep drop into a ravine over a corner, is the place where many serious accidents happen, when riders can't resist looking over the edge. Their bikes naturally tend to go wherever they look.

I've seen a roomful of artists drawing from a live model. Ninety percent of the time, they're looking at their drawing, not at the model. I've done it too. You look at a thigh and think you know what a leg looks like. So you draw what you **think you know**. In fact, this is all about me, the artist - what knowledge I have.

Drawing from within is fun to the extent you can keep your judgmental mind happy. It's challenging to the extent your ego mind gets over on you. So, we'll give this part of your mind a job to do to keep it busy.

Many first timers get a big surprise. Not because the results are very realistic, though sometimes they are, but because they are so unlike anything you could have made on purpose. . . unexpected . . . even revealing.

Your results have nothing whatever to do with being born with talent. I have watched untrained and seemingly non-artistic clients take off and draw like angels from their first try, leaving me in the dust, if I were to listen to my judgmental mind.

One secret is to drop all expectations.

So, are you ready to give it a try ?

It takes courage to let your heart have its say, but unlike tight-rope walking, or falling off a bike, you can't get hurt.

Instructions.

Have a few sheets of regular letter-sized paper handy, and a pencil. Some masking tape would be handy too so the paper doesn't travel under your pencil. Tape down a piece of paper off to the far side of your dominant hand so you can reach it, but can't see it facing front.

This is the simple beginning. There will be some modification later once you've got the basic idea.

Here we go - - -

Sit comfortably. Close your eyes. . . (No, not to draw, silly.)

Take a couple of full breaths.

Go inside, and drop down in connection, into your heart, however you connect with your Source. Take your time to feel connected through your heart.

Focus your breathing in rhythm with a slow heart beat until this is natural.

Slowly, open your eyes, keeping the breathing-slow-heart-beat connection going.

Put your other hand, the one not holding the pencil, in front of you. Have the palm up, and let the fingers curl and relax and be still.

Keep breathing steadily in tandem with your heart beat.

There are two rules:

1. No looking at your pencil, after you have placed it on the paper.
2. No talking, especially to yourself. Hint: Don't name things like your knuckle, nail, etc.. That's the mind taking over.

Your eyes will lead, your hand will obey your eyes' every move, like a slave.

Let your eyes caress, s-l-o-w-l-y, mm by mm, smoothly, patiently following the lines around and within your hand. You can start anywhere.

Start now.

Really see into every little wrinkle and crevice.

Explore the amazing labyrinth of lines there.

You don't have to draw every pore, whorl or crevice, just feel them being there.

Let your eyes tell your pencil hand what to record; where to alight.

Keep breathing steadily in tandem with your heart.

When you come to a dead-end and need to jump over to an adjacent line, just jump with your eyes. Your pencil will follow exactly.

If your pencil wanders off the paper, just put it back.

Drink deeply from the fountain of your own hand. How amazing the endless worlds there !

If your eyes start to wobble, stop, rest them, then start up again. In time, your eyes will move more smoothly without squiggles of panic, effort, or distraction.

When you've explored your whole marvellous hand, stop.
Then you may look at what has hatched !

Your first drawing from within may be quite curious. Did you draw this ? Your ego mind did not. Could your usual mind have made this drawing on purpose ?

You tapped into your true nature. Most of us don't recognize it as ours at first.

Of all the things artists draw, the human body is the most challenging. Of the human body, the hardest thing to draw is the hand. So, you started with the hardest thing. It's all easy from here on.

Some Interpretation Guidance.

However your result appears to your judgmental mind *at first*, remember to respect it for the precious thing it is.

*** Does it look all straight lines and sharp angles ? This usually shows your went too fast, and your mind thought it knew what your hand looked like.

*** Is there a gap between where you started and where you ended ? This is very common at first, and quite refreshing really for a first try. Leonard Cohen wrote: "A crack, a crack in everything; that's how the light gets in."

*** Does your mind see mostly inaccuracies ? Well, remind it of its job - to keep your breathing steady and slow. Your pencil hand drew an exact trail of where your eyes moved. Your eyes worked very hard to learn smooth seeing.

*** Can you find even a small area of likeness, in a quirky sort of way ? This is called character. Rejoice. Laugh. And, if you cannot see anything that looks like any part of your hand, that's okay too - we'll climb back on again right away and try another.

*** Eventually your everyday mind will get in cahoots with your heart mind. I think it gets critical when it feels put out by not having been in the driver's seat. It'll get used to it. Your eyes will really enjoy leading.

*** My first attempts to draw my hand were like a Rorschach. My ring finger kept coming out twice as wide and half as long as it is. Finally I realized why. My marriage was going through a rough patch, and my husband had just cut his wedding ring finger off in a band saw accident. Talk about an obvious message !

*** If your results are still puzzling or disturbing, let them rest while you go on. Everything doesn't hold a deep message, or need interpreting. If it's meant to tell you something, you get it eventually. If it's just a first attempt, don't be disappointed. Every first try deserves a round of applause !

Modified Drawing from Within.

The next step is this: You can look at your pencil whenever you want ! *Just as long as it isn't moving when you look.*

If you've ever ridden a bicycle, you know that you sometimes have to look to the side to see if a car is coming, for example. But you know you're going to take a quick glance, and your body holds the bike straight while you glance. It's the same thing that happens automatically with drawing.

If you want to move to an adjacent part that doesn't connect, stop drawing while you place your pencil in the appropriate place. Then you can start up again. Eventually, this is done so quickly that you hardly notice.

This time, take a new subject, like a cat or dog, a plant or tree out the window. Or, take off your shoes and socks and draw your foot. Or, place your hand in a different pose.

Try this modified drawing for awhile until it feels a little easier.

Then try drawing a person from a photograph, a magazine, or a newspaper. Turn the picture upside down and draw it that way. This helps to stop your recognition of different parts, so your mind won't name things and inch into the driver's seat. Again, guard against the telltale sign of naming parts. Instead, think of the geometric nature of - how far over from there, - what angle, etc. if you must think.

Keep breathing in tandem with your slow heart beat all the time to stay in connection.

Some days, it takes 30 minutes to an hour before my hand-eye reflex gets grooved. Other times it's right there. It depends on how often you practice.

If you were to practice drawing from within, 15 minutes a day for 2 weeks, you'd get pretty fluent, I'll bet. Your eyes would enjoy being the boss ! This also calms a critical mind.

You could draw under the table, and make a portrait of a friend, then give it to him as a gift. Eventually, even moving things won't phase you, they'll just show movement.

The process prickles with excitement in anticipation of surprise. Every time it's different.

There's a Sufi saying:

"Take in the world with your heart, and then understand it with your mind."

You cannot get injured tightrope walking with a pencil, and your confidence can be enlarged. What have you got to lose ? You've got a whole world to gain.

In Summary:

You may remember at the beginning about two ways to draw; one from the outside as an observer, and the other from the inside seeing into things as a participant. In preparing this guide for you, I found the perfect parallel in James Keeley's book "Walking with God":

"Instead of focusing on the outside and what we feel is expected of us, we turn inside and care first and foremost for our experience."

This is also a metaphor for how we can approach life and work. Because we are human, we can't help but see things from the outside as well as the inside. We see with two eyes in 3-D, while we draw with one hand in 2-D. Just as the eyes led the hand in drawing, so we can lead our lives first from within, and let the outer view obey the inner biddings, just like the hand obeys the eyes.

Once you've taken part along with the mp3 recording, you can see the drawings of the others who took part in this class in the Gallery pdf. These drawings came through them from their subjects, because they were participants rather than mere observers.

Drawing from within is an act from the heart, an experience of commonality with the Essence of all things.

I waken
And nothing is the same.
For the first time,
I open my eyes,
These eyes of mine
I long believed could see
And find that all I knew as true
Was nothing but a false dream.

Miguel Angel Ruiz