

FEAR is a Feeling

a workbook for reflecting,
writing, and making!

this book belongs to _____

FEAR IS A FEELING is an **exploration** and **conversation** about fear. This workshop is an introduction to identifying and confronting creative fears. **Let's start making!**

**A person of genius
makes no mistakes.
Their errors are
volitional and are the
portals to discovery.**

—James Joyce, “Uysses”

WORKBOOK by Rosie Struve

www.FEARISAFEELING.com



FEAR

What is fear, really? Evolutionarily, it is a response to a threat. This is a good thing! If we didn't feel fear, we would be eaten alive by predators. Aside from hungry bears, there are many serious threats that we should be afraid of. But there are also threats that we invent in our minds.

For example, take the very common fear of public speaking. Public speaking isn't dangerous, per se, but many people feel afraid and vulnerable doing it. We feel that our personal pride, self-confidence, or self-worth could be damaged if we mess up. Fears almost always involve a future projection of something happening, even though it hasn't happened yet. And often this future projection comes not from logic, but from our imaginations!

We envision scenarios where clients shake their heads at our design work, where the audience throws tomatoes, where critics scorn our hard work, readers shred our novels, reviewers rip apart our films, and gallery attendees laugh at our paintings. We might see this as the one and only outcome. Or we might see its mere possibility as a potential to hurt.

Confronting these kinds of fears involves a lot of practice and change in mindset. We have to 1) experience failure a lot! and 2) think of failure as part of our creative process, not as an outcome.

The exercises in this workbook are meant to get us making stuff, even if it's weird or ugly or gross. Let's start the process of failing and fear-conquering!

This workshop and this workbook are both safe and private spaces where we can be honest with ourselves and each other. Please share what you feel comfortable sharing, and help make others comfortable as well. Be respectful of other participants and do not share others' stories outside of the workshop without their permission. *LET'S BE NICE!*

1.

P.S. NOBODY HAS TO
SEE THIS!

This is a **stream-of-consciousness** writing exercise. Set a timer for 10 minutes, and on the following pages, list everything you can think of that you are afraid of.

Don't overthink this!

And don't judge yourself.

Think about everyday fears, relationship fears, creative fears, and existential fears.

The important part is to just **keep writing!**

I AM AFRAID
OF MAKING LISTS!

I AM AFRAID I WON'T
BE ABLE TO FILL THE
NEXT PAGE!

I AM AFRAID I AM OVERTHINKING THIS!

I am afraid of:

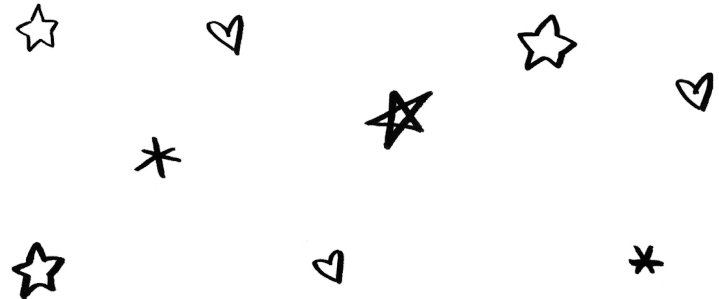
TOP SECRET!!

Keep out,
mom!

Now, go back through your list, and put a star next to 3 of the fears that are the biggest, baddest, meanest fears that you are grappling with.

Then put a heart next to 3 fears that are important AND are also small enough scale and specific enough that you could work on tackling them (not in this workshop, though).

Underline all the fears that relate to CREATIVITY and/or MAKING. These are the ones we'll be thinking about today.



If you found this exercise exhausting or stressful, draw some scribbles or eat a snack.



2.

Blank pages are scary. A blank page has such fresh potential to become amazing, and we have such potential to screw it up.

But what if we screw it up on purpose, before we even start? Draw an X through the whole next page, from corner to corner. (just like on this page)

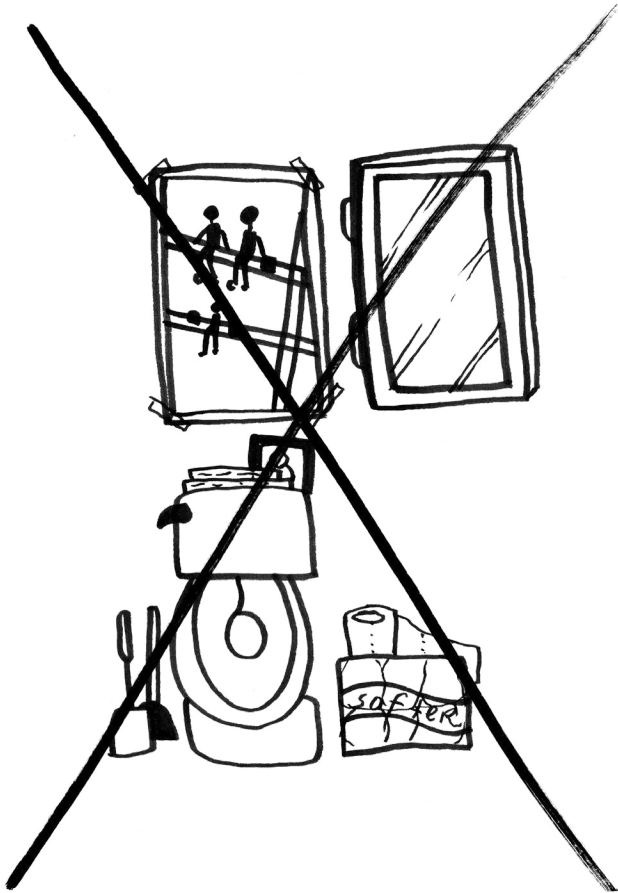
Now, using the whole page (no tiny drawings) draw your favorite room in your house. Don't forget to put in the details, like the pictures on the wall, the furniture, and the people that live there!

go ahead,
screw it up!



I like to think of **FAILURE** as just part of a **PROCESS**. Did you hate your drawing on the last page? Well, don't worry, it already sucked because it had an X through it!

Did you like your drawing on the last page? Wish it didn't have a big X through it? Well, draw it again! You have already drawn it once, so the next one could be even better.



*I WILL NOT HATE MY ART.
I WILL NOT HATE MY ART.
I WILL NOT HATE MY ART!!!*

etc.

3.

This next exercise has to do with **ITERATION**.

iteration (n): the repetition of a process or utterance

First, find an object that has a strange shape that you have never drawn before. Now draw it. This can be a simple line drawing. Don't spend toooooo much time on it!



After you have drawn it once, put the item out of sight. Now draw your drawing of the object 10 more times! Focus less on representing how the object looked in person, and more on re-representing the first drawing. This gets you drawing your own lines, repeatedly. These are your own derivative marks!

Draw
your object

and
AGAIN!

Now draw
your
DRAWING!

AND
AGAIN!

AGAIN!

↶ Last
one!

4.

With a partner, choose a **DRAWING TOPIC** and different **CONVERSATION TOPIC**.

Example:

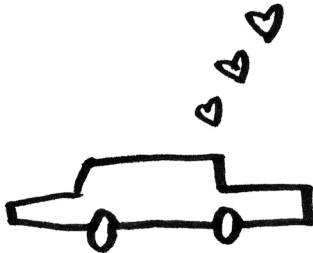
Draw **CARS**, talk about **YOUR MOST RECENT VACATION**.

or

Draw **GARDEN TOOLS**, talk about **YOUR WORST JOB**.



Sitting across from each other, try to hold a steady conversation while drawing, without straying far from either topic. Make eye contact periodically, as you would for normal conversation, but don't stop drawing!



This is a workout for your brain. This kind of multi-tasking can actually help keep you very focused!

Handwritten signature or scribble.

5.

Go back to the beginning of this workbook, and pick out one of the fears you wrote that you either starred, hearted, or underlined. Jot down some ideas on how you think you could address this fear in the future.

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

