

Pre- Instruction Drawing

*A walk into the
unknown*

To get started you will make a record of your current drawing skill level.

This is super valuable, and it gives you a keepsake and reminder of just where you started this journey. It will be something you can go back to later and compare your later drawings with to see your progress. If you are an experienced artist this might be easy for you, but if you are a beginner it might be both scary and exciting. Let me encourage you to jump in with both feet because the you do the earth will move beneath you to support your next step! Expect it to be awkward but do it anyway. You will learn a whole bunch I promise :) After you have been drawing for a while you will forget where you started, and this will be an encouraging and realistic reminder of your progress.



What you'll need:

- Paper to draw on—plain white bond paper or 9" x 12" charcoal paper is fine
- A #2 writing pencil, 2B pencil or charcoal pencil
- Your pencil sharpener
- A small mirror, about 5" x 7", that could be attached to a wall, or any available wall or door mirror
- A drawing board or something to use as a drawing board—a breadboard or a sturdy piece of cardboard,
- An hour to an hour and a half of uninterrupted time

What you'll do:

You will do two drawings. This usually takes an hour and a half to do, but feel free to take as long as you wish for each of them. First are the drawing titles and then the instructions for each drawing follows.

- "Self-Portrait"
- "A Person, Drawn from Memory"

Pre-instruction drawing #1: Your "Self-Portrait"

1. To provide a better drawing surface draw in your drawing pad or tape a few sheets of paper to your drawing board and draw on that. This will cushion the surface and will be nicer to draw on than a harder surface.
2. Sit at arm's length (about 2 to 2+1/2 feet) from a mirror. Lean your board up against the wall or counter resting the bottom of the board on your lap.
3. Look at the reflection of your head and face in the mirror and draw your "Self-Portrait."
4. When you have finished, title, date, and sign the drawing in the lower right-hand or lower left-hand corner.

Pre-instruction drawing #2: A person, drawn from memory

1. Call up in your mind's eye an image of a person — perhaps someone from the past or a person you know now. Or you may recall a drawing you did in the past or a photograph of a person well known to you.
2. To the best of your ability, make a drawing of that person. You may draw just the head or a half-figure
3. When you have finished, title, sign, and date your drawing**

If you are a beginner please be gracious with yourself and don't criticize the drawings harshly. Remember that these drawings are done without any instruction. Just look for the areas you did well and congratulate yourself. **You just hit it out of the park!!** Buy yourself a treat, get your favorite coffee or yummy snack—something that will make you feel good. If you have more experience go ahead and notice the things you did well as well as the areas you could improve. **Don't forget to treat yourself too :) The rewards are important so don't skip them!**

The reason for doing the memory drawing

I want to quote from Betty Edwards, *“Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, “I'm sure that drawing a person from memory was very difficult for you, and rightfully so. Even a trained artist would find it difficult to draw a person from memory. Visual information from the real world is rich, complicated, and unique to each thing we see. Visual memory is necessarily simplified, generalized, and abbreviated—frustratingly so for artists, who often have only a limited repertoire of memorized images. “Then why do it?” you may well ask. The reason is simply this: Drawing a person from memory brings forth a memorized set of symbols, practiced over and over during childhood.”*¹

This is very instructive because, she goes on to say, this symbolic drawing, going all the way back to childhood, is almost automatic and has a kind of tyrannical control over the hand and the marks it makes. What I want to help you do, among other things, is to help you put aside the childlike symbolic drawing and begin seeing the way an artist sees so that you can draw more precisely what you see around you.

Sound like a deal?

I can't wait to see your progress so let's get started!

1. Edwards, Betty "Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain." (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1999) pp. 16-17