

Title:

You Must Be An Artist

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676

Summary:

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Article Body:

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We are, all of us, meant to create. We are creat-ures, thus it is evident in the world around us that as a spider spins a web, a bird builds a nest, humans are possessed of a spiritual and biological mandate to spin and build a world of beauty and function. The human distinction is the ability to make symbols. Symbolism is the art of investing the world around us with meaning by expressing the invisible or intangible through visible or sensuous representation. This is the simplest, the least unsettling definition of art and creativity. From this definition, we have come to believe and to thoroughly accept without question that art belongs to those who paint the paintings, write the words, and mold the clay, into those representations of the intangible and the invisible. Art has therefore been divided into those who do and those who don't.

The reinstatement of art into every one of our lives, both in our ability to receive and to recreate it, is to return to living with meaning. Creativity is, like evolution, like all growth and change, an irrepressible force in nature. Thus far, only humans have attempted to turn away from this call, and a case can

be made that it is this turning away that is the cause of so much of our pain, suffering, and longing. This suffering, however, is the result of confusion and misdirection, not hapless circumstance.

Art, like science, philosophy, and civility, is our best defense against the insupportable weight of all that we don't know. If we could disperse the weight among us citizen artists, come up with a more inclusive outlook, we could lighten the formidable load of ignorance. In the broadest sense, art is a response in whatever form it takes--an expression of the love and beauty and terror as it is given to us through the visible bounty of Nature--that pulls us further out of the mire. Creativity is anything that fosters that indwelling spirit, any creation or activity that advances the progression of the unimpedable energy of growth that is life. The replication of that love and beauty, the balm that soothes the terror, or the release provided by the recognition of that terror, is our task, is the way of art and creativity, a whole-some response to existence.

Whether you are a fireman, a pathologist, a babysitter, or a banker, you must be an artist. Must be means, first of all, the recognition of this as your identity, as in, "Oh, you must be an artist..." Secondly, must be makes it imperative. You must respond to the dignity evolving out of creaturehood toward a greater man, toward God, and remain fearless as well as awe-struck by the vast implications. In the meeting of this challenge, you will be recognized by a light in the eye of those you encounter, as extraordinary.

The commitment to creativity, like any other commitment, will become an integral, necessary, part of our life once we realize that not only does our art spring from and define the core of, yes, our own identities, but more importantly, that it is an expression of that which is greater than ourselves. Thus who we are becomes linked with the world, and it is given meaning and purpose by what we do with this link. Creativity is the purveyor of meaning.

We begin with a sense that there is something within us that must act and express. We begin by going beyond the sadness we have experienced at having this something repressed, discouraged, buried. We begin with the thin person with the fat body, the sober, healthy being underneath the addict's skin, the lover inside our neglected hearts. We begin with the hope and the longing of the creative force within ourselves.