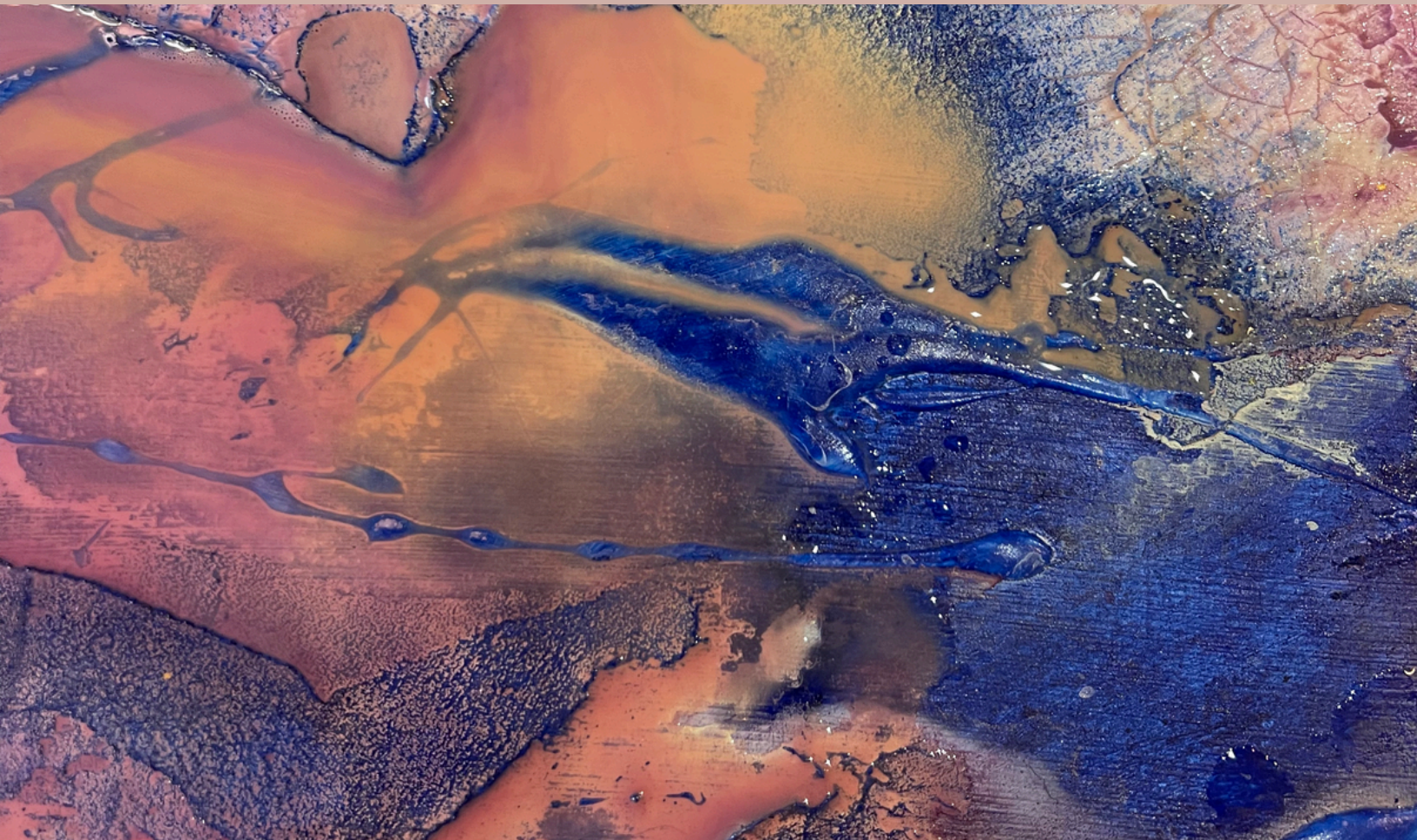


Painting From Your Soul

A Simple Beginning

This simple guide will introduce you to the process of Painting From Your Soul — a creative practice that helps you listen to your inner voice through art.



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Paint From Your Soul™ Facilitator



Painting From Your Soul is:



- letting go of the mind's idea of what art should be
- listening for what wants to emerge from within you
- allowing the canvas to become a place of discovery
- entering into a conversation between you and your art
- creating something that is deeply personal and meaningful
- seeing yourself reflected in the creative process
- discovering truths about yourself through the act of creating
- developing a new relationship with art making



Soul art is art that rises from somewhere deeper than the thinking mind. The canvas becomes a bridge — a place where what lives within you can begin to take form.

What happens in the process often mirrors something inside your life. The colors you choose, the marks you make, the moments when you feel stuck or free — all of it reflects something about you.

When you create from this place, the art becomes meaningful in a different way. It is no longer about making something "good." It becomes about discovering something true.

Painting From Your Soul is NOT:



- Not about technique
- Not about making art for a museum
- Not about how *other* people like it
- Not even about thinking your painting is beautiful



Traditional art instruction often focuses on technique — how to make objects look beautiful, realistic or how to master specific skills.

Painting From Your Soul is focused on something different: *authentic expression*.

This doesn't mean technique isn't useful. It simply means technique is not the starting point.

A Personal Reflection

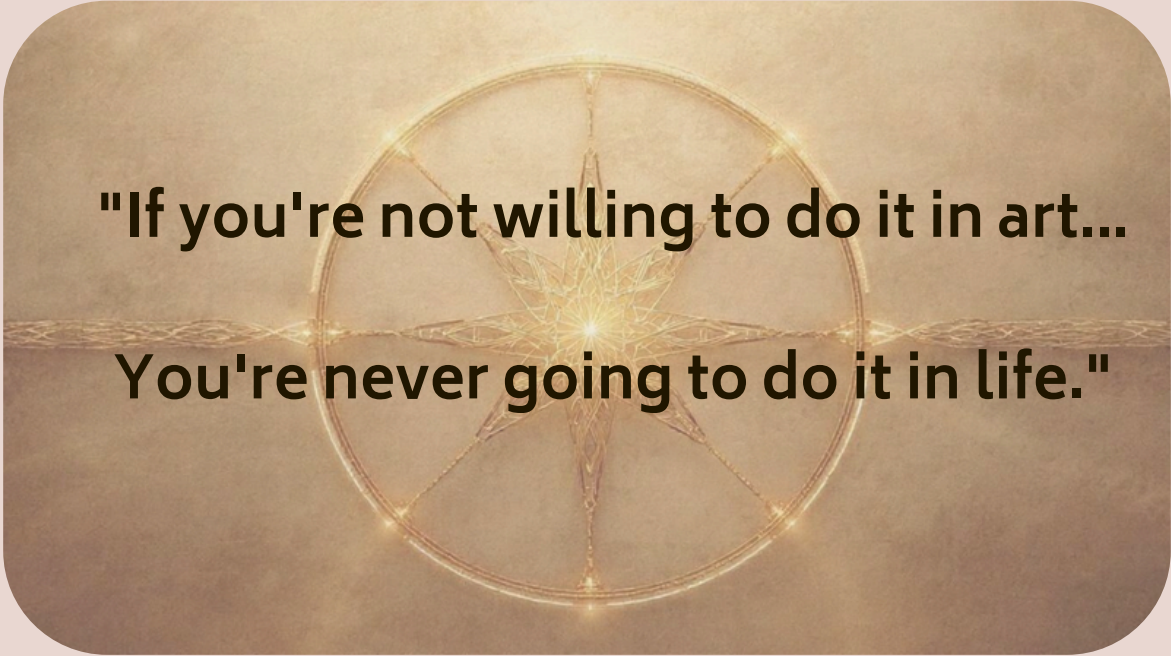


Over time I discovered that painting was not only about creating art. It became a way of listening inward.

The canvas became a place where I could meet myself honestly and see what wanted to emerge.

Again and again I found that the creative process reveals something about who we are and what we are living through.

The simple steps in this guide are meant to help you begin that same kind of conversation with yourself.



**"If you're not willing to do it in art...
You're never going to do it in life."**

This is a phrase often used in the Paint From Your Soul® community.

The idea is simple: art can be a safe place to explore who you are becoming.

On a canvas, you can take risks. You can try something new. You can express things that might feel difficult to say in words.

If you want to be more bold, more free, or more honest with yourself, the canvas is a wonderful place to begin.

The process of creating often opens doors in the rest of your life as well.



How to Paint from Your Soul




Step 1) Set an intention

Intention is the end result you want to obtain. It's the feeling you want to have when this piece of artwork is finished.

Setting an intention can be very helpful because it gives your painting a direction. Most people have a lot of ideas of what art "should" be about and what it "should" look like.

Your intention is what will keep you focused on the authentic Soul Art you want to create and keep the mind from taking over.



Write your intention on the backside of your canvas or paper so that you cannot lose it.

Anytime you feel a little stuck or lost in the process, go BACK to the intention and use that as the barometer to help you find your way forward.

It's very important to be able to state your will clearly. Taking a moment to do this can make the whole process clearer and more meaningful.




How to Paint from Your Soul



Step 2) Paint the mood

The next step is to dive in and begin creating the background feeling or mood of your painting. I recommend working in acrylics because they can layer easily and allow you to change direction as the painting unfolds.

The forgivable nature of acrylics lends itself well to Soul Art because you can get started and then listen and follow as the painting unfolds.



To create the mood - ask yourself how you want the painting to FEEL when its finished. Then ask what colors hold that feeling for you. There are no rules here - everyone relates to color differently - so trust your instinct.

The most helpful thing is simply to begin. Once paint is on the canvas, something shifts. Suddenly there is something to respond to.

You are not committing to anything, you're just creating a mood so that your painting starts to evoke a feeling.




How to Paint from Your Soul



Getting Started - Pro Tip

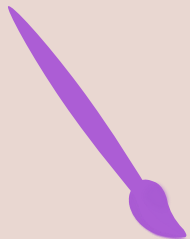
You're gonna think I'm crazy when I tell you this but 1 pro tip I can give you for making Soul Art is to try beginning by painting something intentionally *messy or imperfect*.

WHY??! This helps bypass the part of the mind that wants everything to look “right.” Many people discover a surprising sense of freedom when they start this way.



It's just the 1st layer - a jumping off point to give you something to work with. You'll be amazed at what you might find inspiring!

Remember, the worst thing that can happen is simply that you don't like it. And that's perfectly fine.



How to Paint from Your Soul



Step 3) Big Marks

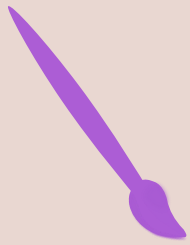
Now that you have a background on your painting, go back to your intention. What did you want to have happen?

It's time to start to bring that intention to fruition by translating it into big marks or shapes or movements.

For example, if your intention is: "to express myself authentically" then connect with how you feel right now in this moment, pick a color for that feeling and start to move your brush in a way that mirrors that feeling.

➔ Continue to work big - you are still working with the overall background and feeling of the painting.

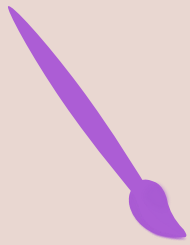
Try not to worry yet about what the painting will become. It's not time for details or figures yet, just allow yourself to enjoy the smooth gliding feeling of the brush and the colors that you feel drawn to in this moment.



Soul Art Fun Things to Try

Working Big to Begin - Fun Things to Try

- Drips – try making the paint more fluid and letting it drip across the canvas.
- Flips – try flipping your canvas so that you work on it from all different sides and angles.
- Darks – try bringing in some dark values in a few places – these can become shadows or contrast areas later on.
- Lights – try bringing in some light values – play with light and dark – contrast is attractive for the eye.
- Dry brushing – if you have just a teeny tiny bit of paint on a dry brush, you can create a soft, hazy or scratchy texture on top of dry layers of paint that can be fun.
- Glazing – you can add water to your paint to make it thin and then "glaze" on top of an area of the painting. Glazing will let the layer underneath show through while changing its color or tone slightly like looking through tinted glass.
- Texture – any other types of texture that would be fun to add right now?
- PLAY! – if you haven't realized it yet, this is about having fun and experimenting. You just follow what feels good.



How to Paint from Your Soul

Step 4) Likes & Don't Likes

Now you should have a background that is interesting and inspiring to you. There are probably parts that you *like* and parts that you *don't like* (that's totally normal and will help you get to your next step.)

Sit down somewhere that your painting can be across the room from you with your journal. You want the painting to be far enough away that you are seeing it as *whole* rather than the details.



In your journal, make two columns. On the left hand side write down what you **don't like** about the painting. Be specific and descriptive.

On the right hand side, write down what you **do like** about the painting. Be specific and descriptive. It's totally fine to go back and forth between the columns writing likes and not likes as you think of them.

Once you're complete with that list, notice what themes there are between what you like and what you don't like. For example, you might notice you like the "flow-y" parts and you don't like the "heavy" parts.

Spend a little time journaling about what you like and how you could do more of that AND what you don't like and how you could transform that into something you'll like. This is brainstorming - nothing is off the table!

GOAL - find *1 step* you want to take on your painting. That means just 1 small area that you plan to make a change to and you know how you want to make that change.



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Step 5) One Step Then Listen

Go back to your painting and take the 1 step that you know you want to make.

A BIG mistake I see people make in the middle of their painting is wanting to know *all* the steps to the end. They wish they had a vision of what it was going to become.

That is not how Soul Art works! Soul Art is an ongoing conversation with yourself through the painting. You must take a step and then listen.

How do you listen? Sometimes you "just know" what happens next. Trust that inner nudge.

Sometimes you step back and simply sit with the painting again. That could be literally talking out loud, thinking to it OR journaling about it.

Listening means you are following what *wants* to happen. There's a pull in one direction that tugs at you. It might be VERY different than what your mind thinks *should* happen, so you may have separate out the 2 voices that are speaking. We want to follow the softer, inner soul voice.




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Step 6) Enhance

Now you have quite a bit happening on your canvas, you can start to see if anything wants to emerge as the centerpiece of the painting - like a figure or an animal or something that would become the subject.

You'll take what's already there and enhance it to become more dominate or defined.



Go back to your intention and see how what you wrote down might begin to take shape on the canvas.

For example, if my intention is "to express myself authentically" I might see a face and a mouth in the background of the painting and want to bring those forward to create an abstract me.

If my intention was "to feel more confident making art" I might ask myself what confidence looks like and see if I can represent that on the canvas - maybe with strong bold lines that move from the bottom to the top of the canvas in one strong swooping motion.

Use what's already on the canvas as the jumping off point for the moves you make now. Connect to your intention to make sure you're on track with your original desire.



How to Know When it's Done

How Do You Know It's Done?

This is a very common question. I think of every painting as a relationship with a beginning, middle and an end. In the beginning I feel that excitement of newness and get inspired by what's possible.

In the middle the new-ness has worn off and there can be some ups and downs. (I love you, I hate you, I never want to see you again...you know :)

In the end, there's a sense of resolution. A completion of what needed to happen.

That DOES NOT mean that I love it and think it's the greatest painting I ever made.



It means that **I no longer feel compelled to work on it**. I am settled into what it became.

Just like relationships with people, not everyone is your soul mate but they all teach you something about yourself and about life. It's good practice to learn when you've gotten what you needed from a relationship and to come to completion.

If you think you're done, sit down to journal and ask yourself:

- what journey has this painting taken me on?
- what lessons did I learn along the way?
- did my intention come to fruition?
- is there anything left unsaid?



How to Paint from Your Soul

The Most Important Tip

You only ever need to know the next step.

It sounds so simple but I promise, you will find yourself pausing even though you already know your next 1 step forward.

The problem is, the mind thinks "That's not enough. I need to figure out more." And THAT will keep you stuck.

Truly, taking 1 step forward is the key. Because when you make a change (even a small change) to your painting - the whole feeling of the painting changes too.

Everything is in relationship to everything else. So one change over here means that everything surrounding it has been impacted. And that helps you find the *next* step after that.

This is how you LISTEN to what wants to happen and create Soul Art instead of making it happen from the mind level. The benefit is that you will surprise yourself by what comes through and how deeply meaningful and personal and authentic it feels to you.

I hope this guide helps you begin listening to your own creative voice.

Wishing you a wonderful next painting adventure,
Debra Hillard



www.dhillard.com

Continue the Journey



If this process resonated with you, there are many ways to explore it further.

Painting From Your Soul is not simply a technique. It is a way of listening to your inner voice through the creative process.

Over time it can become a powerful path of self-discovery and expression.

You might also enjoy:

- my upcoming painting workshops and classes
 - reflections and articles in my journal
- my book *Remembering MySelf: A Journey Through the Threads of Time*

Learn more about upcoming classes:

www.dkhillard.com/classes

You can also explore the full studio website at:

www.dkhillard.com