

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

essays on intuition and the creative path

MATEJA SARAJA

Copyright © 2024 Mateja Saraja

All rights reserved.

For all those who journey in life holding
just one thing in their hands -
a compass called intuition.

1. THE CALL OF THE SEA

The journey begins with a calling. Everyone senses the call to adventure, just like any hero in a fiction book does. The call means danger, uncertainty, and maybe even death, but we venture forth because we heard it. Not to be dramatic, but true to the call, we may plan and decide, but in the end, the call keeps nudging us until we completely surrender all we have to it.

The call may be to write our long prolonged book, that's been on our mind and heart to write since childhood. The call may come to improve our health, get back to exercise regularly, and watch our food intake. It may start as a dream to open our business, our shop or just to pick up that pencil and start drawing again. The call may make us uncomfortable at first because it's the first time we hear our intuition speak to us again. For me, it started with this book. I wanted to write something true to myself and help others. The call might make us plan our future, be joyful about our life again, pick us up when we are down, and speak positive things in our lives. The call is the return of oneself to what's true, intimate, pure, and joyful. It's our soul singing again with that childlike vigor. It's the dance of our younger self and the playfulness of a person open to life. The call is like a ticket we purchased to a long-awaited journey, that would make us love life again, no matter how difficult it will become.

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

We say yes to the call, or nod our heads “Not yet”, we say. We postpone the journey our soul wants to take us on, because of fear of unfamiliar places. We want our comfort, our bed, our toys. Not yet. But when we say “Yes”, we are saying it because we had enough of lies, pretend, and soft places. We want the journey, not because we are braver than others, but because everything else seems like a lie, compared to the journey.

2. LETTING GO OF THE PAST

We have all heard how our past holds us back in life when we want to trust our intuition and start building trust in ourselves. Nothing holds us back more than ruminating over failures, past mistakes, or setbacks. You can't forgive yourself for making mistakes, so you hold yourself captive by repeatedly playing the scenarios in your head. This is self-destructive, and it leads you down a dark path. Letting go is easier said than done. Choose freedom. Choose to free yourself from the cage you hold yourself in. The doors are open, but you have to choose to walk out and live. The past is in the past, and you can't change any of it, no matter how much you try. So, let it go. Choose to focus on things you have to do today, right now. Listen to your intuition and start by accepting that you are enough and that you did the best you could, with the time and resources that you had at that moment. Set yourself free. Walk out. Live life.

Letting the past go, and forgiving others and yourself takes time. You learn as you go, and you have compassion with yourself. We don't forget the things done in the past, but we choose to let them go, like an old memory that no longer serves us. Like a letter from an old friend, we cherish it, but we don't have to read it every day. We are grateful for the lessons it taught us, and we move on.

Focus on the now. Your intuition is alive and breathing, you

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

just need to learn how to trust it again. Maybe you no longer need to talk to the person who hurt you, because she or he makes you feel uncomfortable and you always leave drained when you are with them. Let them go. Don't feel guilty for doing so. Life is too short to engage with people who only focus on the negative things in life and don't appreciate you. You will find your people. Your intuition will guide you to them. Trust it.

3. GUIDANCE

Guidance comes to us in a human form. Our teachers can be our parents, siblings, grandparents, and so on. Guidance is important because it can put us on a path not designed for us but for someone else. Our parents want the best, but their opinion influences our decisions, and they sway us onto a path that looks good, but it's not for us. It's boring, we are easily tired and we procrastinate. Our path is different. Our path makes us feel excited because it aligns with our purpose in life. Not to say that it's easy, because it's not, but the path itself clicks within us. We feel alive and joyful, despite the hard times and the setbacks. Our path sings within us, while other people's paths feel familiar, stale, and not exciting at all. We feel trapped; we feel like there is no way out and we lose hope that things will turn out for our good. We lose the joy. We lose the passion. We become soulless.

When the guidance is right, the path is filled with truth, joy, and peace. When it's wrong, we have a restless spirit, and it leaves us with confusion and fear. When the guidance is right, we feel it with our whole being. We smile, we are open to newness; we don't blame anyone for our mistakes; we embrace boredom and we cultivate creativity.

Our true guidance, though, comes within. Our intuition is the true Guide. When we sharpen our intuition, it can pick up a slight change in the emotional state of a certain individual and more

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

than that, it can tell us what's wrong and how to avoid situations and people who don't care for us. When we sharpen our intuition, we navigate life masterfully, like a ship during a huge storm. We trust ourselves, and that's all that matters.

4. CREATIVE BOREDOM

I call it “creative boredom”. Most creative people are rarely bored, or might I say allow themselves to be bored. We are constantly chasing work. When we are not working, we are doing something else just to keep the fear of boredom away. Work excites most creatives, and daydreaming is rare on those occasions. If you’re not one of those people, good for you, and keep on daydreaming. I worked when all I needed was to daydream. Creativity needs refilling. And one of those methods is daydreaming. Be bored. Sit in a chair and let your mind wander. It might be difficult at first, so try for a few minutes. This is not to be mixed with meditation. Although I think meditation can be useful, in this case, we want to let the mind go to places it rarely does in our waking moments. We want it to imagine stories, concepts, and ideas. By asking “What if” questions, we can jump-start the mind and let it figure out things on its own. Let your intuition guide you in this. Ask yourself “What if there is a device for calculating how many calories you eat in a day”, and if there is such a thing, think how you would improve it. This is only an example.

For writers and artists, daydreaming is a fertile ground to come up with original ideas, ideas true to oneself. Original to you, not others. Someone said a long time ago, that original ideas don’t exist anymore, and that all has been said and done. Maybe. I will not object to that. But, ideas can be true and original to you. Your

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

intuition is original, and it will guide you to ideas worth exploring. When you daydream, let the mind wander to ideas you never thought could work, or to you are not worth exploring. Be alone for a while, and later, jot down every idea that came to you while daydreaming. Maybe later, or a few years down the road, some of those ideas will ring true to you. What you can do is to let them come to you, through your intuition, and don't judge them as good or bad. Tell them "Not yet" or "I need more time on this". This is a way of gently saying to yourself that you need time, and time is what you will get.

In a time where social media apps call for our attention, and our focus diminishes each time we spend scrolling, boredom sounds like a stupid idea. But sometimes, stupid ideas will get you to listen to yourself more. Boredom can make you attentive, sharp, and full of ideas that will astound you. If you are ever creatively blocked for any reason, try it. Sit down, first let your mind wander for a few minutes, and jot down if any idea comes to you. You also need to be patient with yourself on this. Years of listening only to other people, choosing to block yourself out of ideas by copying others only and not paying attention to your intuition will make this harder. You need to let go of the expectation that this will come easily if you have been on a journey of forgetting who you are. Not that you chose this journey, but maybe someone chose it for you. Maybe someone guilt-tripped you into this. Maybe you did it to yourself by thinking of others first, and yourself last. Maybe you have had a

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

hard life, and the last thing you want is to be true to yourself because that means you need to be brave and accept that you weren't who you were meant to be.

Boredom can bring up unresolved issues in you, but you know that every day you can start over. Every day is an opportunity to be yourself. Being yourself, step one, is trusting in your feelings, your inner being, and your wants and needs. Sometimes, this will require you to put others second. Be comfortable with that. With time, this can be easier. Sometimes, this means saying "No" to a friend, family member, or spouse. Sometimes, this means walking in the morning in your garden, sipping tea while it's raining outside, or reading a book when the laundry is piling up. Sometimes you need to paint that picture, not because it will be a masterpiece, but because you need time off on perfectionism and all you need now is to express yourself. Boredom can be a catalyst, that will bring a change into your creative practice. Boredom can become a need, not something you have to do because without it, you will forget yourself. Without it, you are stuck too much in your work and the competition with others. When you embrace your boredom time, you allow yourself to be you. You look at others as unique people, with their intuition and ideas. You are looking at them, and although jealousy may rise, you ground yourself by saying to yourself that the only thing that matters in this is expression true to you. The only thing that matters is not the competition, but the expression of who you are and what you can bring into this world. You compete with

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

yourself, but you do not bring yourself down. You compete to be better each day, to express yourself more fully and authentically. This is the whole secret of life. Here, now. Today. Express your creative self.

5. FINGER PAINTING

You did it as a young child. Finger painting is one of the most freeing exercises I have ever done. You are in the flow much faster when you let your preconceived notions go. Hearing that still, small voice becomes easier and easier as long as you don't judge yourself. "This is stupid" thoughts can stop the intuitive process. Not only the act of painting with fingers is freeing, but imagine yourself painting with fingers in your own life. What does that mean? It means, you are free and your Guide is leading you down a path where you discover more of who you are and you become more passionate, open, and full of acceptance. You see others as people who are on their unique journey, and you don't judge them. You take care of your needs and wants. You are responsible, true, full of integrity and joy. Painting with fingers, regarding life, becomes the thing you do on an intuitive plane. You don't hide your light. You show it proudly! You ask the questions, you research the things you're interested in, and you help people. Helping people becomes a thing that completes you as a person. You are not needy, but you are full of compassion for others. When you meet your needs and wants, you become open to others. Your "no" stands on its own. Your "yes" has a greater impact. People can trust you, people can sense your freedom of expression and they respect you. When you're no longer hiding, people can see your truth. When you're no longer pretending, people can connect to you. When you stop wishing to be someone

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

else, you stop wearing masks in public and you guard yourself against those who don't wish you well. You become your best friend first. Painting with fingers frees you to be a little odd, a little different. And that's okay. It's okay if people don't like you. When you show up in life, people won't like you. But, those people who will, become a part of your earthly family. You will build your own family, and that's the freedom you need.

6. FEAR

When we fear something, we cower back. We instinctively deem it dangerous, bad, or even evil. Not all fear is bad. Fear shows us where our boundaries are. It shows us what we fear losing, and what we deem important. It shows us where our real values are. Fear of people or fear of success can be thought of as bad, but it shows us we value other people's opinions far more than our own. Fear of success can lead us to sabotage the efforts we are making toward financial freedom. If we think we are unworthy and have some kind of impostor syndrome, where we think we are not valuable enough to have money or success, we will sabotage anything leading us towards our goals and plans for the future. Fear shows us where to look, then we have to gather up information and fight it with research, looking at our lives and examining it closely. Maybe in this, we will gather people who will help us. If we want to stop fearing and sabotaging ourselves, we will need people by our side who will speak life and who will assess what needs to be done. Professional help here counts too. If you have no people who can help you, try to read books on the topic, and research what strategies you need to implement to stop fearing.

Fear is like a stop sign, where we need to stop for a moment, check ourselves, and ask "Why do I fear this?". Answers always rise within. Asking the right questions will help you overcome

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

fear. Every time you fear, ask a question and look at your feelings, body language, and the words you express out loud. When I fear going out in public, or even for a walk outside, I ask myself why. I know I fear people's opinion of me, and that this fear will stop me from living the full life I want. It stops me from going to a library, where I can read books and educate myself. My emotions pick it up, and I decide that this is an irrational fear and that I can't stop people from hating me, not liking me, or thinking I am just a stupid woman. Or, who am I writing this book? This question bothered me at first. I postponed writing this book, but when I tried to examine the claim that my fear told me, I realized I could help people and if I made it past my fear, I could help myself too. We live in a society where everyone has an opinion, and those who want to express it, are usually regarded as opinionated. Wise people though, know when to have an opinion and when to shut your mouth. Sometimes silence speaks more than words can.

I am not a professional speaker or psychologist, so why do I write about things like intuition, fear, and creativity? Because of the human experience. I lived through some traumatic experience. I lost a loved one. I lost the love of my life, and it was my fault. I cheated, lied, and did things to my family, and although I apologized, the trauma is still there. I am not perfect. I am human. I also need to express myself. I wrote a fiction book with my sister, and I still love writing fiction to this day. Illustration and drawing is my true passion though, and I am working every day

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

to improve my skills. My creativity demands to be expressed, and so do yours. No one in this world wants to do just anything with their lives and exist as a plant. We all want to succeed. My success looks different from yours. I want peace, creativity, family, and financial freedom. You may never want children or a spouse. Your success story may look different. You may want to live in the woods by yourself and do art for a living. Maybe you want to be a nurse, a stay-at-home mom, or a dad. Your success is written in your soul. Pictures you sometimes see, like a premonition of your wants and desires show you your truth. They show you what you want and you better listen to them! Spending your time listening to others will only leave you sick. Not that listening to others is bad, but when they demand or suggest that you follow their path, beware. I repeat - this life is too short to live it in a fake way.

We do our best creative work from a place of love, excitement, amazement, and joy. Even if we create painful works (memoirs, autobiographies), we channel them from the place of surrender and peace. We learned the lessons; we are now in a place where we can help ourselves and others. If we feel fear, it blocks us from creating honest work. When we fear what others will say, we live a closed-off life, and we create from “I must”, not “I want to”. Fear of what others will say keeps our manuscripts in the drawer, our paintings hidden under the bed or in the attic, and our original inventions only in our minds. Fear is a dragon living in your mind, and you have to defeat it. People are fickle. They love

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

you today and hate you tomorrow. Decide if you want to depend on fickle people. Stability comes from recognizing the truth. The only person who matters when you create is you. When you create, you are free from their judgments. You are free from opinions, and thoughts like “I don’t like this” “This is weird” or “Who would buy that?”. Pick your favorite music, and create. You are an artist. Be free.

I welcome constructive feedback, not criticism. My intuition can always pick up a person who wants to give me an honest opinion about my art. I have nothing against this, but if it doesn’t improve my art or I feel it doesn’t contribute to anything positive, I disregard the comment. And you should too. You should decide if the comments make you a better artist, writer, or person. If not, it doesn’t matter, and just shake it off. At the end of the day, your opinion is the only thing that matters. Don’t stifle your intuition. Sometimes all you can say to others is “Thank you for your comment” and move on.

7. PURPOSE

We can find our purpose in the things we love to do. It's that thing burning in you, and you find yourself excited when thinking about it. It's like your soul is saying "Yes" to it. When we feel lost in our journey through life, we find that confusion sets in, and we are left wondering what is our purpose, passion, or calling in life. I believe our passion is linked to our purpose and calling. Why would we dread doing something that is our purpose? So, when we feel lost, we are blind to our purpose. We haven't discovered what we love to do. When we feel overwhelmed and we stick to the familiar, it's really difficult then to find it. We have to go on a discovery journey. The plan in this case is to play. Dance. Sing. Make things. Try different hobbies and jobs. Give yourself two weeks or however you want to go all in, and try things. If after two weeks you feel drained, depleted, and not interested, then cross over that thing on your list and try something else. You are seeking. You are searching for that thing that will excite you, or at least make you interested for a longer time. When you find that thing you are interested in, start investing in books, courses, and workshops. You don't need to spend a lot of money, but enough experience will set you on a path of lifetime-long learning.

Let's pretend you choose to be a cook or a nurse. You

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

spend your time learning, going to school and you find during that time that this is no longer what you want, and you want to be an artist. You can't stand being a nurse anymore. By learning more about who you are, you change and your interests change too. Don't be afraid of change, but embrace it. Life is an ever-changing thing, not a stagnant pond. I will tell you this - every experience in life is good for something later on. Your experience as a nurse can help you in your artistic endeavors. Your experience as a lawyer or detective can be helpful in your writing career. My college degree in graphic design has helped me create my book covers. Nothing is wasted. Ever.

Don't expect yourself to be always the same. Purpose, though, never changes. Yes, it's linked to your job or a hobby, but it's constant. Purpose or a calling is something you do to help yourself and others. You fill a need that is ever present in this world. Your purpose can be to entertain (movies, books, music), to bring beauty to the world (art), to help people (a nurse, police, firefighters, repairmen), to raise children, to educate (teachers, motivational speakers)...etc... You decide what kind of need you want to fill. There are a lot more callings in this world, I only named a few to give you a picture of what yours might be.

When we find our purpose, we feel fulfilled each day. It might not be easy, and most times is not, but we feel joy that cannot be explained. We work hard; we push

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

ourselves to excel when needed, and then we rest when our intuitive self tells us to relax. The intuitive journey is one of listening to oneself, not others. First, we listen to our being. When we are on this path of discovering who we are, we are on the path that shines with integrity, truth, and values that make us better people.

Purpose makes us happier people. We shine with the newfound energy. It gives us the strength to endure hard times and help other people. Purpose makes us humble and grateful.

8. LIFE

Life is unpredictable, dangerous, wild, sad, and complicated. But it's also beautiful, moving, artful. To be alive means to play this game the best way you can, with the cards that life dealt you. You are past complaining and bargaining. You work. You work to make the most of your life, and you rest when it's appropriate to rest. You invest in your self-worth and you work hard on your dreams. You're a mature being. Life doesn't owe you a thing. You work hard on your craft; you spend hours honing it and to achieve some kind of success. It doesn't come easily, and it shouldn't. Most of the time, success comes by working on your craft. Not everyone who works hard achieves massive success. Luck and being at the right place at the right time also play a role. But, those things you can't control. The only thing you can control is you. If you want to live an authentic life, then work on that. Work on the things you can control. You can read the rules on how to succeed in a book, but it may not work for you. Wake up, start doing the work, and never give up.

Intuition is like a compass, pointing you in a direction that is wrong or right for you. Your body shows you the signs - closed-off feeling, uncomfortable sense of being trapped, and nausea. This is your intuition saying "No". If you feel the excitement, openness, and love, and you catch yourself saying "I would love to do that" or "This sounds so good", this is a "Yes" from your intuition. Your soul knows the right direction for you. Trust it.

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

Trust the intuition saying “Yes” to you. Intuition never lies. You can ignore it, and it may pass away from you for a moment, but it will always remind you of your purpose. It won’t shut up. It is a fire ignited by your experience of hearing “Yes”, and now it will always remind you of who you are and whom you are meant to be. Even if you’re scared, and your family and friends think you’re baffling, it will never stop reminding you who you are.

That spark, that desire to achieve something is burning in you for the sole purpose that it wants to be expressed by you. You are the only one who can birth it into existence. Your unique experience can help others live their purpose. By living who you are, you are touching many lives. Maybe you’re afraid of being bad at something. Everyone is bad at the beginning. But if you don’t give up, you keep going and looking at your compass, you will achieve what you want. Would you rather wait until you’re on your deathbed and regret the fact that you didn’t even try? Trying keeps you alive. You will never feel ready. Feelings fluctuate. Sometimes we feel like doing something like art or writing, sometimes we just want to sleep all day. You can’t trust those types of feelings. Yes, rest is important, but sometimes it’s a thin line between rest and depression. Trust your intuition. It will nudge you to “Start” or “Try one more time”. Intuition can show you which feelings you should listen to, and which feelings you should ignore. Start working on your dream. Intuition will help you with finding the right people, resources, and ideas to achieve what you want. You have to trust yourself.

9. IDEAS

Intuitive ideas come from a place of deep knowing. They are personal, slightly painful and their job or purpose is to open us up to people. Wise people also know when to be silent and to guard our hearts. Openness doesn't mean foolishly speaking about everything on our minds. You can be open to people and be silent most of the time, observing others and judging and contemplating if someone needs your advice. Unsolicited advice is a big no. Ideas that come to us, that are too personal, will go away until we are ready to deal with them. To connect to others, and help them in a meaningful way, we have to show our true selves. The author/painter/creative person embeds his beliefs, his life experiences, and his loves/hates... to tell a story as truthfully as he can. Integrity, telling the truth, and not going against one's conscious hones the intuition in us. Intuition is always working for the best of humankind. If you steal, lie, manipulate, or hurt others, you are ignoring your intuition. It doesn't mean it never speaks. You have heard it too many times by now, that you disregarded it altogether. Your corruption leads you now on a different path, the wrong way toward destruction, depression, self-doubt, and confusion. I know it all too well. I've experienced it myself. Go back now, you still have time. Adjust your compass to the true North. Once back on the right path, you can begin trusting yourself again, and for that, it takes courage and time. Time to unlearn the lies you told yourself about what you need to do - "I need to lie, steal, manipulate because I won't get...". I

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

found that resources and help come unexpectedly, when you're on the right path, when you live truthfully. You can find free books, videos, testimonies. People like to help you when you're honest with them. Things align, they click. When you live like this, peace is your shield. You are in alignment with your core beliefs. You even sleep better. You know you can't control everything, but what you can control is your ability to do your best.

10. LOSING YOURSELF

When you lose yourself, you become confused. You don't know where to turn, what decision is the best? Should you give up on your art? Should you start art school or work full-time something less demanding? These questions bother you and steal your peace. Where did you lose yourself? People who know themselves, decide more easily. They are in tune with their intuition; they know what is right for them. They listen to the inner voice nudging them to do this or that. But, more often, those who have lost their true self, just ignore it with "I should" instead of "I want to". They can't find their path anymore. They are lost at sea, wondering which direction to take, because every direction looks the same. So, what happens if you choose the wrong one? Most times, nothing. Some decisions have more weight and carry more responsibility. Sometimes, if you decide to move to the wrong city or neighborhood, it can cost you much more than if you moved to a city that is the right choice for you. The answer is simple - start trusting yourself. Take a day or two off, and sit in silence, or ask yourself some questions, and want honest answers from yourself. You learn by making mistakes. They are a part of our life, a part of our growth. Mistakes shape us as much or more than our right decisions do. They show us what we don't want, and who we are not. They point us to our truth, and we learn that intuition is now a part of our daily decision-making process.

THE INTUITIVE JOURNEY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mateja Saraja is a writer from Croatia. She has a bachelor's degree in Multimedia, design, and application. In her spare time, she paints with watercolors, brainstorms by walking in her garden, or watches a movie on the weekend. Her goal is to inspire people to create, express themselves artistically, and trust their intuition in the process.

Cat person.

Notebook hoarder.

INFP.