

Week 1_The Artists Way_2026/02/22

Summary

Abigail Barnes welcomed participants to the "Artist Way 12-week course" review of Week One, discussing course administration, the importance of physical progress trackers for dopamine hits, and the process of completing daily morning pages and an artist date, while emphasizing that time management is a matter of priority. Participants shared their Week One experiences: Keith Hare realized their tendency to embellish stories for an audience, leading to a discussion on the book's spiritual references; Sarah Mason recognized a persistent lack of self-worth causing self-sabotage and felt their unconventional artist date (a deep conversation) was fulfilling; and Beverly (Beverly) struggled with initial resistance, negative self-talk ("blurts"), and doing activities alone, prompting Abigail Barnes to discuss the challenge of recognizing positive feedback and the concept of neuroplasticity. The assignments for Week Two, themed "identity," include reading pages 41-59, continuing morning pages and artist dates, and prioritizing the most resisted task.

Details

- **Course Introduction and Administration:** Abigail Barnes welcomed participants to the "Artist Way 12-week course," clarifying that this is the review of week one, though it is the second meeting. They highlighted their background as an entrepreneur, transformation coach, international speaker, and author, focusing on time management, productivity, assisting with authorship, and business strategy ([00:00:00](#)). The course structure includes a setup call, 12 weekly meetups (45 minutes, with half training and half Q&A/hot seats), an online training portal, and a weekly progress tracker that encourages physical tracking for dopamine hits ([00:01:34](#)).
- **Dopamine Hits and Morning Pages:** The use of a physical tracker is highly recommended because ticking off accomplishments, such as completing morning pages or an artist date, provides an easy dopamine hit ([00:02:43](#)). Abigail Barnes explained that morning pages are beneficial because the daily writing process helps clear space in the brain for more information. The course also provides AI weekly notes, access to a WhatsApp community, pre and post self-evaluations, and email support ([00:03:55](#)).
- **Course Structure and Required Reading:** Participants were reminded to purchase the book, noting that an ebook can be useful for quickly reviewing chapter tasks while traveling. The training area has been reorganized to place the setup call separately, followed by Week One materials, including the AI notes and the progress tracker. For the prior week, participants were assigned reading pages XI to 40, signing the contract on page 23, completing morning pages daily (three sides of notes), and going on an artist date ([00:06:15](#)).

- **Prioritizing Tasks and Scheduling:** Participants were advised to prioritize the tasks at the end of each chapter, particularly focusing on the task they "don't want to do" first, as resistance often indicates importance. Abigail Barnes emphasized that time availability is a matter of priority, not scarcity, noting that if a million pounds were to be transferred, they would make time ([00:07:32](#)). The recommended schedule includes reviewing the week on a Saturday, meeting on Sunday, and consistently writing morning pages for five days (Monday to Friday) ([00:08:35](#)).
- **Process and Mindset for Morning Pages:** Participants were encouraged to trust the process, have fun, and avoid overthinking or self-judgment when writing, even if the first sentence is "I don't know what to write" ([00:09:41](#)). If they have not listened to their inner voice for a long time, it might be abrupt or rude initially, which was the experience of Abigail Barnes, who felt constant anger for the first few weeks. The content of the pages is unpredictable, ranging from old memories to business ideas or "absolutely nothing," and it is essential to remember that "progress beats perfect" ([00:10:42](#)).
- **Week 1 Theme: Recovering a Sense of Safety:** The focus of Week One was "recovering a sense of safety," addressing the notion that artists, writers, and musicians do not make money, and encouraging participants to recognize that what is resisted persists ([00:11:43](#)). The discussion touched upon the historical context of artistic sponsorship, such as Caravaggio being financed by a patron ([00:13:01](#)). The chapter also focused on self-worth, reframing "horror stories" as external events, and practicing observing problems rather than being consumed by them ([00:14:18](#)).
- **Personal Experiences and Discussion Questions:** Abigail Barnes shared their personal experience of completing the daily tasks, including daily morning pages (which are often illegible and scribbly, a recognized form of free writing) and an artist date. They noted their initial tendency to deprioritize the artist date, such as viewing a breathwork and yin class with friends as part of their life rather than a solo artist date ([00:15:33](#)). The four questions posed for the group discussion were: what was their biggest realization, what that means for their career/business/life, what the most challenging parts were, and what they will do differently next week ([00:16:45](#)) ([00:19:18](#)).
- **Week 2 Assignments and Overarching Themes:** Week Two involves reading pages 41 to 59, completing morning pages (three sides daily), going on an artist date, reviewing the week on Saturday, and doing the most resisted task first. The overarching themes for the 12-week journey include safety (Week 1), identity (Week 2), power, integrity, possibility, abundance, connection, strength, compassion, self-protection, autonomy, and faith, with each theme layering upon the last ([00:21:31](#)).
- **Keith Hare's Reflection on Identity and Storytelling:** Keith Hare, who accelerated the week's coursework due to a holiday, described their biggest realization during their first "early afternoon pages" as the unexpected track their thoughts took, recalling an experience in Paris ([00:24:01](#)). They recounted an incident at Shakespeare and Company where they told a fictional story about a cancer diagnosis that others mistook for truth, leading to a realization that they tend to embellish stories to please a crowd ([00:25:55](#)). They are now questioning if this magnification of drama is beneficial or if they need to be more cautious about it in their business life ([00:28:19](#)).

- **Spirituality and God References:** Keith Hare mentioned that the book feels distinctly American and that some of the terminology, specifically the references to "God" and an "overarching power," felt more religious than spiritual ([00:29:18](#)). Sarah Mason responded by sharing that to overcome this feeling on their own journey, they chose to substitute "God" with "the universe" or "the energy" to make the text easier to consume without feeling that they were embarking on a religious journey ([00:31:27](#)).
- **Sarah Mason's Realization of Self-Worth and Visibility:** Sarah Mason's biggest realization was that despite years of self-improvement, an unhealed lack of self-worth that leads to self-sabotage and procrastination is still present, which they are now able to observe without self-judgment ([00:32:25](#)). They connected this to their career, explaining that this issue has historically prevented them from being visible due to the fear of rejection and judgment. The most challenging parts were tackling the tasks they did not want to do, such as the "editor's letter," and realizing they could not recall a single person who had championed their creativity ([00:34:51](#)).
- **The Concept of "Deleting" Positive Feedback:** Abigail Barnes interrupted Sarah Mason's reflection to point out that they had previously championed Sarah Mason's creativity, suggesting that Sarah Mason had deleted the positive feedback by responding with "Yeah, I know that". This exchange led to a discussion about how the phrase "Yeah, I know that" can cause the brain to wipe out incoming positive information ([00:37:17](#)). Sarah Mason agreed that their response likely stemmed from a place of not believing in themselves ([00:38:25](#)).
- **Sarah Mason's Unconventional Artist Date:** Sarah Mason found the artist date task interesting, noting they had planned to visit an exhibition about Camille Claudel but missed it after an unexpectedly deep two-hour conversation with a friend ([00:39:22](#)). This intuitive and deep conversation felt like an artist date to them, especially after the friend messaged them afterward expressing thanks for the time and "thinking with me," which was a rare experience for them. Abigail Barnes affirmed that creativity comes in different ways, and deep conversations can also "fill up the cup" ([00:42:00](#)).
- **Beverly's Resistance and Struggle with Creativity:** Beverly (Beverly) shared that they experienced massive resistance and self-doubt at the beginning, initially questioning their presence in the course ([00:43:07](#)). They were surprised to write four pages on the second day after feeling they did not know what to write on the first day, and they are beginning to realize that creativity takes many forms, challenging their long-held belief that they are not creative. They struggled with doing things alone outside of the house, noting they felt immediate guilt and discomfort when trying to take a 20-minute walk on the beach without their dogs ([00:44:14](#)).
- **Beverly's Artist Date and Negative Self-Talk:** Beverly's artist date was a one-hour solo trip to a market an hour away, which felt productive but not necessarily enjoyable as a "date" ([00:45:27](#)). They found the solitary walk on the beach difficult and eye-opening. When writing morning pages, Beverly began noting "blurts" (negative self-talk like "I'm not worthy" or "I'm not seen") and intended to list them to create positive affirmations, but they found it challenging to convert the negative blurts into positives for themselves ([00:47:37](#)).

- **The Challenge of Recognizing Positive Feedback:** Beverly noted the difficulty in thinking of champions for their creativity, echoing Sarah Mason's experience, despite Abigail Barnes reminding them of positive comments they have made. They questioned why the brain defaults to the negative and how easy it is to list negative events from the past ([00:49:43](#)). Abigail Barnes explained this behavior using the concept of neuroplasticity, noting that the brain has been wired by life experiences and must now be "gaslit" or flooded with positive "delusion" to counteract the "malware and malicious code" of negative narratives ([00:50:48](#)).
- **The Importance of External Feedback and Honesty:** Abigail Barnes described their recent realization that they were outwardly saying things were "not working" even though they knew they were, and how important it was for someone else to point this out for the message to land ([00:53:23](#)). Keith Hare suggested that while a cheerleader (like a spouse) is supportive, having a "running partner" or a creative partner who can give honest feedback, like telling them something is "rubbish," is also crucial for growth ([00:54:33](#)). Keith Hare emphasized that shared values and honest feedback from a trusted creative counterpart are vital, as they help build a supportive "tribe" ([00:56:35](#)).
- **Reciprocity and Support Systems:** Keith Hare discussed the concept of reciprocity in relationships, suggesting that while everyone may need a "running partner," not everyone desires a "cheerleader". Abigail Barnes agreed with this assessment, connecting the idea to the support system available in their shared WhatsApp group, where members act as cheerleaders for each other and share vulnerable experiences ([00:57:48](#)).
- **Discussion of Julia's Affirmations and Nuances:** Abigail Barnes noted that Beverly was effectively identifying the nuances of what Julia was expressing, such as the "blurts" and other elements. Abigail Barnes also reviewed Julia's list of affirmations, mentioning a potentially triggering affirmation related to artists being "drunks" who will not make money, indicating the depth of the book's content ([00:57:48](#)).
- **Concluding Week One and Preparing for Week Two:** Abigail Barnes announced they were concluding the discussion for the current session and moving into week two's material. They confirmed that support is available and directed the participants to the final slide regarding the work for the upcoming week ([00:57:48](#)).
- **Final Remarks and Contact Information:** Abigail Barnes expressed appreciation for the time spent with the participants and for hearing about what came up for them in week one. They mentioned looking forward to meeting again for week two and provided the email address orders@successbydesigntraining.com and the WhatsApp group as ways for participants to submit any questions ([00:57:48](#)).
- **Adjournment and Farewell:** The participants exchanged goodbyes and well-wishes for the upcoming week. Keith Hare thanked Abigail Barnes and offered farewells to the others, and Beverly and Sarah Mason also offered parting words ([00:57:48](#)).