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Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Please Read This First..... | 2 |
| <i>Terms of Use</i> | <i>2</i> |
| <i>Disclaimer</i> | <i>2</i> |
| Contents | 3 |
| About the Author | 5 |
| Introduction..... | 6 |
| Your Life and Thoughts..... | 7 |
| Start Where You Are | 9 |
| Gaining Confidence and Competence | 11 |
| What is Your Art Journal About? | 13 |
| Writing in Your Journal | 15 |
| Use Your other Hand | 16 |
| Where to do Your Art Journals | 17 |
| <i>What Time is best for You?.....</i> | <i>17</i> |
| <i>Using Your Bedroom to Create Your Journal</i> | <i>17</i> |
| Quick Sketching..... | 19 |
| <i>Sketching tips</i> | <i>19</i> |
| Materials for your Art Journal..... | 21 |
| Techniques for Your Art Journal | 22 |
| <i>Collage.....</i> | <i>22</i> |
| If Your Journal won't stay Closed. | 24 |
| Decorating Your Art Journal..... | 25 |
| <i>Your Background.....</i> | <i>25</i> |
| <i>Add a Cool Cover to your Journal.....</i> | <i>25</i> |
| <i>Storing Your Supplies</i> | <i>25</i> |
| What Colors to Use?..... | 27 |

No Bad Mistakes 28

Mind Map Your Ideas 29

More Simple Ways to add Eye Appeal! 30

Using Decorated Capitals30

Stencils30

Stamps31

Amazing Dots31

Cut-outs and other Surprises!31

Touch and Smell! 33

Keep Your Eyes on the Future!..... 34

About the Author

Suzanne Gallop loves art but never thought of herself as an [artist](#).

Now she draws something almost every day.

She had tried to keep a regular type of journal a couple of times, but her enthusiasm waned before she'd filled in even a month of entries.

But, that changed when she was told about Art Journaling.

Susan said, "I decided to try it when my friend told me she had found it [fun](#) and more interesting than just writing text in a paper or digital diary."

"It's more interesting because you can use whatever techniques you like and no-one is judging you. If you make a mistake, paint over it or say that's what you meant to do (grin!)"

"If you don't like [writing](#), you can use photos or found artwork or draw simple pictures to tell most of the story."

"I started by just decorating some of the words I wrote.

Each person does it their way and that makes it much more personal."

Susan added, "Artists use these Art Journals to try new things and some get quite fancy. But, it's a great way for anyone to dabble in art and improve our creativity."

"Kids often make this sort of journal and the couple I was allowed to see are full of ideas and [energy](#)."

Susan said, "We can all do it. When you realize that we're all creative beings, we gain more confidence and energy."

We can explore our worries and find ways to stop them holding us back from enjoying life as we are meant to!"

Introduction

An [Art](#) Journal is a personal journal which is enhanced by the owner's own artwork and, quite often, some found material as well.

You don't have to have any art [training](#) to create the art highlights and features for your pages.

They can be as simple (like decorating letters and words or photos) or complex (the sky's the limit!) as you want.

I'll share some ideas to get you started.

I used to just do normal written journals and that was fine.

But, when I started adding the art, I remembered the material better and I needed to think up and write less words.

The special people I shared my Art Journal with, liked the way the art and [text](#) combined.

Some have started their own. I hope that some of them might share theirs with me later on.

Art Journaling comes naturally to kids who decorate a lot of their stuff.

If we can be as enthusiastic as they are, we'll make a great journal and have fun.

Some readers will probably be inspired to do more [art](#) later on.

The simple steps to making your first Art Journal will help you overcome any doubts about your creativity or ability to draw.

Once you start, you'll find yourself getting more confident and willing to experiment.

That's when the fun really starts!

The materials I suggest cost less than peanuts and the results will amaze you.

You enjoy yourself, become calmer and create a living testament about your [life](#) and the people around you. Your Journal could become a family treasure!

Your Life and Thoughts

The first objection I hear about someone starting a personal Art Journal is, "I don't do much that's interesting!"

But, you don't put everything you do or see in the journal, just the bits that excite or you want to remember and perhaps share later on!

If you don't have any new ideas, you have memories, dreams, plans, family and [pets](#) which you can write and create some art about.

Getting your thoughts about those events, people and possibilities or challenges on paper can help you to clarify them, improve your response to them and make you feel more confident about your future.

The second objection is, "I've no drawing ability!"

Neither have I! But, I can draw a simple outline and fill it with colors I choose.

If I want to include something more detailed, I can use a piece of a photo or decoration. Using that artwork, I can trace it, photocopy it and then color or decorate it to fit with the rest of the [design](#) and text.

That's all you need. I can guarantee that many people get better at drawing and creating ideas after a few months of focused doodling - my art technique of choice!

I started just decorating some letters and words like some graffiti artists do. I found that helped me to remember what I was writing about better.

That's proven by [research](#) which confirms that pictures and decorations improve our ability to absorb and retain information.

It's more fun to read the decorated stuff than plain text even when you wrote the original.

The major benefits will reveal themselves when you have been journaling for a while.

People with little confidence in their ability or the value of the material they create often find they do much better work than they ever imagined because

their imagination became stunted by their daily grind at work and in life in general seemed much duller than it really was.

When they start to realize what they are capable of, the horizons for their journal and their lives improve together.

We all change our focus as we continue to develop our Art Journal and the extra confidence and creativity will enhance our lives even more!

Start Where You Are



Many people invest in expensive [art](#) materials and equipment for use with their Art Journals.

I suggest you keep your [investment](#) to a minimum but get good quality materials.

Art paper is good because it will accept a variety of inks and paints

without damage.

You can buy it in sheets and cut to smaller sizes which are easy to handle.

Cardstock (about 110 lb) is favored by many because it takes paint and is easy to handle.

Colored pencils are a good way to start. Name brands may give better results when you are blending colors etc., but any will do for you at this early stage.

You don't need to use paint just because almost every book and [teacher](#) of Art Journaling says that you should.

It's your journal and you decide what you do.

Marking pens are easy but it's harder to cover mistakes. Gel pens will give good results.

Many Art Journalists use rubber stamps, either some they've bought at a [store](#) or ones they've made.

There are other materials which help produce and protect your art.

Wax paper is good for preventing liquids bleeding through the page you are [working](#) on and damaging the next page. Just slip a sheet between the two pages.

But, waxed paper is becoming scarce. As less home cooks use it, supermarkets are not stocking it as much. I suggest you get some and put it away as it is very cheap insurance for your art Journal pages.

Gaining Confidence and Competence

We all face criticism about some things we do or say.

And everyone has some doubts about their ability to handle something new at times.

The biggest, and often the most damaging critic, is the inner [voice](#) we all have feeding information and impressions from our [brain](#) to our subconscious every second of the day.

Many people lose their self-confidence because of mistakes they've made, opportunities they've missed or criticism in comments from people they regard as authorities. That may be their parents, teachers, older friends and peers, clients or bosses at work.

After a while, their internal dialog is almost completely negative.

This influences their subconscious which accepts whatever it is told without any judgment of the quality.

That affects how well we perform, interact and learn the material.

But, we can change the information by feeding positive comments backed by evidence.

Our Art Journal can be used as part of that input.

Actually [making](#) our own Art Journal will be a positive demonstration that we can take on and succeed at new activities.

Then, we can add material to the journal about other successes and positive interactions in the past and as more occur in the future.

Then, when we have disappointments or are just stressed, we can review those parts of the journal to help restore our growing [confidence](#).

That will help us [deal](#) with future challenges better and they in turn will become fodder for more positive pages in our journal!

The most damaging limits are those which we set in our own minds.

Our journals can help us by storing details and pictures of our successes and

happiest experiences.

Just comparing our early artwork and then looking forward to later [successes](#) can reassure and inspire us to try something new in the future.

What is Your Art Journal About?

I have focused this [book](#) on creating a Journal where you record your thoughts, goals and ideas.

It's not a diary. You don't record everything that happens in your Art Journal. It's for those events, people and ideas which you want to express your thoughts and dreams about.

I've tried to describe the ideas and methods I've shared here in a way that any reader could use most of them if they make their Art Journal (or one of them) a [diary](#) or about any topic which is of special interest..

I found that many people use the Art Journal form in an incredible range of interesting ways.

Some keep more than one Journal at the same time. They have different topics, formats and designs which are appropriate to each topic.

Some relate to their hobby. I have many ideas for different Art Journals I want to make.

But, I am sure that readers will have many different and even unique ideas and methods themselves!

I include a brief [list](#) of topics which might be useful for you even if it just suggests something you might start after you have got a basic Art Journal going.

Gardening is a subject which could contain details of your activities, successes and problems or pictures of what you grow or would like to in the future.

Your family is a wonderful topic to create an Art Journal about. This would be a marvelous keepsake to pass down in years to come.

You could also offer to help an older relative to make one if they have not created a diary or memoir of their lives.

Any creative interest, such as [music](#) or **poetry**, would make a great topic.

[Fishing](#), [golf](#) and other **sports** would fit well into an art journal.

Making a journal about **your travels** would be another great [idea](#).

Decorating and enhancing these topics with photos, clippings and other relevant materials would make them more unique and interesting too.

Writing in Your Journal

Many people have qualms about starting an Art Journal because they think they don't draw well.

There are also many people who decide to start a journal and have problems writing entries.

They may feel there is nothing very interesting in their lives or thoughts, or can't decide what to write about first, or they may have writer's [block](#).

I tell them that they own the journal and can keep it private if they want to. "So, just write about something which is important or interesting to you."

But, that isn't enough sometimes.

The best fix for [writer's](#) block is to write. It's not important what you write.

If you have this problem, you need to establish the habit of writing.

You will overcome it if you set a regular time and [location](#) for writing in your journal.

When you are there, if the impulse to write in your journal is dormant, take a spare sheet of paper and start to write whatever comes into your head.

Keep in mind that this is your journal time being used up as you continue to write for at least five minutes.

You will usually find that your mind is starting to get into proper journal writing mode.

Don't discard the stream of unconscious writing which you have just done. Put it aside until after you've finished your journaling for that day.

Then, read through it and mark any parts which you can use in the journal.

This material might contain hints of things to write about or indications about problems which are hidden just a little below the surface of your [mind](#).

If you are unable to think of material to write about, you may find it useful to do more [reading](#) and socializing to prime you mentally with material for you to write your experience or opinion of.

Use Your other Hand

This is probably the most demanding suggestion I've put in this book. But, it is a proven way to improve your fitness, dexterity and also provide some fallback if you should ever injure your dominant arm!

An uncle had a stroke several years ago and had to learn to use his other arm for many tasks which he'd always done with his dominant arm. He was determined and learned to do many things that way.

I realized this was something which would be worth doing to build up my other arm and its abilities.

There is a [theory](#) that using that hand will help improve your level of creativity. Studies show activity in both sections of your brain when you use the other hand while using your dominant hand only involves activity in one part!

That may be because that's where your habitual use has burned deep pathways.

When you start doing this, try daily casual tasks like [cleaning](#) your teeth, shaving or peeling an apple.

[Writing](#) will take a while but is a game-changer.

When I started sketching, I used each arm and found the [exercise](#) worthwhile.

Scientists know that learning to use your other arm and hand as much as possible produces improved neural pathways in your [brain](#).

Some say that it will create new pathways as well.

You may never get as adept with your other hand but, over time, you will develop it to a useful level.

Other tasks for [training](#) up your less-dominant hand would be:

Preparing sandwiches.

Tying a tie or your shoelaces.

Where to do Your Art Journals

If you want to put very personal material in some of the Art Journals you create, you must have some privacy while you are working on them.

Having a room which is exclusively for your use is the ideal situation.

If that's not possible, you need to sort out somewhere private and arrange to be undisturbed while you are journaling.

If you [dare](#) doing your Journaling in a room where other people are doing their thing, you will not be able to concentrate. You also will be distracted if other people are in the room and using entertainment or computer equipment.

And you will get interrupted by people who will naturally want to [check](#) out what you're doing when they see you using the art materials and other stuff.

I suggest that you get a backpack or file [box](#) in which you can keep the gear you use for your Journaling, so you can put it away when you are not working on it.

What Time is best for You?

Some parts of the day will be better for you to use for your journaling. You need to be undisturbed as far as possible and not interfering with other family members' use of the area.

It helps if you are rested and alert. But, I usually find my journaling sessions make me feel better afterward even if I've been tired when I set everything up.

Using Your Bedroom to Create Your Journal

If you use your bedroom to work on your Journal, you may be tempted to work very late on your Journal to the point that you cut into the amount of rest which you get.

That is okay if it only happens occasionally. But, don't let it become a regular habit because you need to have at least 7 hours of uninterrupted [sleep](#) each night.

Otherwise, your [body](#) will not be able to complete its essential repair work. Research confirms also that your [ability](#) to remember and recall anything which you have been studying will also be reduced.

Quick Sketching

I don't call myself an artist but I like to add quick [sketches](#) to some entries in my Art Journals.

My first attempts were hard for even me to recognize but I left them as they were. They are a source of encouragement for me when I compare my later sketches to them, even though I'm still not an artist.

I found I liked to sketch and started to draw in a blank pocket book when I was waiting for someone in a coffee [shop](#) or anywhere else I had a few spare minutes.

I don't [claim](#) to be better at drawing but it is good mental and physical exercise.

I find it easier to draw recognizable sketches quickly and it's also started a few interesting conversations with people that see me doing it.

Sketching tips

Sketching involves making a representation of something with as few lines as possible.

Draw your large shapes and add only the most important details. A common mistake is to add too much detail.



Watch how young [children](#) draw things. They usually draw an outline and then add color and only essential features.

Don't worry about making mistakes – everybody does!

You can usually think

some way to rescue your [drawing](#),

And, it doesn't matter if you have a mistakes anyway. This is a Journal entry, not an exhibition or a contest.

The more you draw, the sooner you will become better at it. Some scientists claim that people learn to put in at least twenty hours of work to learn any new [skill](#).

You can do that in a few weeks or take a bit longer, whatever suits your circumstances.

I draw something every day. I only do any one sketch for no more than ten minutes.

I used to do my quick sketches with a pencil. But, then I used too much time trying to fix them. So, I switched to a [pen](#) and do more sketches instead of fiddling with some mistake.

If you find something difficult to draw, check for sketches by artists in books at your library and [copy](#) their way several times. That is what art students do.

After a while, you will be able to draw that better and then you will start adding your own touches to it. Your drawings of that object will be visually different from those by the artist whose examples you learned from.

Materials for your Art Journal

The [freedom](#) you get by not having to use a particular type of paper, drawing implement or color substance in your art journal gives you freedom to try any techniques and use any materials you have or can obtain which reduces your expenses.

Calligraphy brush pens.

India Ink Artist pen.

Markers (Sharpie are my favorites for my journals and most other work.)

Water container. Many art materials need to be moistened or diluted. Make sure your container is not easily knocked over and has as small as possible opening.

Sponge Pad. A sponge pad lets you moisten items with a minimum of water.

Glue stick. Find a brand which works and stick with it!

Pencils. Soft for broad strokes and shading, hard for lines, colored for emphasis and [decoration](#).

Watercolor pencils are an arty accessory but many people [love](#) the effects they can get with them.

Scissors. I have a couple of sizes. Be prepared to pay a little for quality tools with sharp edges and points. That way, you get clean cuts and not frayed edges.

Watercolor paint. This is a very popular way to decorate and enhance the text in your Art Journal.

Some people prefer to use the watercolor blocks in pans because it is convenient.

Others prefer the watercolor in tubes. These are usually richer but you do need to have a palette to mix the colors.

Techniques for Your Art Journal

Almost anything can be part of your Art Journal if it is what you want.

You can also use any technique, however simple or advanced.

Don't worry about [learning](#) new techniques unless they have a particular appeal for you with your project.

You are the creator of the journal and also the primary audience.

The techniques I mention in these pages are simple, but most have the potential to be used for more advanced [work](#) when you are comfortable with the results you're getting and want to explore the "outer limits".

Collage



Collage is the art of combing a number of different materials in a new way.

It is very popular as an art form and an easy way to decorate pages of your Art Journal.

Use a collage as the whole page or as a highlight with other art and text on the rest of the [page](#).

You can use almost anything as part of your collage which is relevant to your subject and will not damage the pages of your journal.

Some things which can be used are:

- Newspaper Headlines
- Pictures from magazines or your own work.
- Junk [Mail](#).
- Labels.
- Pieces of fabric.



- Paint.

Scrap Art: A friend uses a sheet of [white](#) newsprint to protect the surface of her desk when she is assembling pages for her art journal.

When she finishes for the day, she puts that sheet aside and, cuts out any interesting sections when it is completely dry for use in later collages and other journal pages.

She said that the spilled paints make designs that help her to make new pages later on.

With junk mail, cut out and [store](#) what you want before you recycle the rest or you will build up a pile and never be able to find the few useful bits).

Sometimes, just part of a [picture](#) is all that is needed.

If a picture is too bulky, you might photocopy or scan it with your [computer](#) and then decorate it in a way which suits your theme before using it in your Art Journal.

Apply your glue on the flat items with a sponge brush. Rinse the brush out immediately after use or it will fill up and you'll have to buy more.

If Your Journal won't stay Closed.

When the contents of one of my Journals was so thick, I couldn't close it properly, I used a [method](#) which I'd seen my Mum use on her recipe [book](#) many years ago.

I fixed a button to the open edge of the cover.

Then, I poked a hole near the open edge of the back cover and glue a washer around the hole.

Next, I tie a length of thick cord through the hole.

I cut the cord off a couple of inches past the edge of the front cover and just loop that end of the cord around the button.

That stays shut just through friction between the cover and the pressure of the pages in the Journal..

Use a cord which fits with the colors and theme of the Journal.

Decorating Your Art Journal

Artists use collage, found materials and other techniques as part of their artwork.

Many Art Journals have benefited from these as well.

Your Background

Start with your background. This can add a lot to the effect the page has on people who read it.

Make sure that the colors in the [background](#) are not so strong they overpower the main material on that page.

Use borders around some or all the pages to provide contrast to the main material on the page.

Add a Cool Cover to your Journal

For ideas of color combinations, check some of the art books in your [collection](#), at the library or look for examples online.

Placement of the text and any pictures on your cover is just as important as which pictures and text you use.

Printed books can teach you a lot about what makes a good cover design.. The traditional publishers mostly still use [expert](#) designers and test color combinations for some of their top books before general release.

So, just by browsing the shelves or catalogs, you can get inspiration from some highly paid and qualified cover designers!

I don't suggest you copy the words and fonts, but check their choices of colors and patterns, and try to work out why they made those choices.

Storing Your Supplies

Some people put an envelope inside the cover of each of their Art Journal for storing items likely to be useful for decorating future pages in that Journal.

I prefer to keep all the small treasures which I store for possible use in my Art Journals in envelopes of similar items in a shoebox. That [box](#) will hold

different sized envelopes or zipped plastic bags and I can quickly find the items I want.

What Colors to Use?

With your own art journal, you can use any colors which you want to.

There are some suggestions in this chapter about what colors might be appropriate and what the effect of some colors is.

I don't say you need to follow them, but be aware of them because they're based on many people's experience and experimenting for years.

Then, you can make our own designs work better because you'll know why the combinations you choose have the effect they do.

The effect of certain colors is very well known.

Red is an energetic or angry color.

Pink is [light](#) and happy.

Yellow is bright (sunny) and

Blue is the color for re-assurance.

The color experts insist that it is the effect of colors in combination which is most important to be aware of.

Make a dull background with one or several shades and then put a small bright picture on it and everyone will [notice](#) the picture more than if there were other equally colorful items on that page.

If you had several brightly colored highlights on your background, viewers would skim over the [picture](#) because of all the items competing for their attention.

No Bad Mistakes

Mistakes are inevitable when we are learning new techniques.

Don't let yourself stop trying new ideas or materials because of early stumbles..

Mistakes are nothing to worry about, unless you keep making the same ones!

We just have to focus on [learning](#) from our mistakes.

Sometimes, a mistake actually produces a new idea which can be better than whatever we did before.

The biggest mistake is to let a mistake be an excuse for not trying any more.

Or, we dwell on it and feed it to our subconscious as an example of our poor judgment!

Starting now, let's turn that [action](#) around and find ways to benefit from it.

When you aren't happy with how something turned out. don't tear that page out of your journal.

Leave the page there even if you can't find a way to rework that part of the page.

Just add a note next to it saying how you would change it.

Be specific, like changing the color or [tool](#) you'll use when you do something like that again. Writing the note will help store the information better into your [memory](#).

Most mistakes can be altered and improved. Failing that, cover it with a stronger color which complements your [design](#).

Remember Thomas Edison, who said the hundreds of light bulbs he made that didn't work, weren't failures, they were just proof that those designs would not work! He emphasized that he learned things from them which helped produce the successful design!

Mind Map Your Ideas

[Mind](#) maps are used to lay out the parts of a project in a way which has sections for particular parts and lines which show the connections between each part.

This helps people recognize how the different parts are supposed to work together and often see where possible problems may arise.

Mind maps probably work best when you allow a whole page for it. This gives extra space for additions and changes to the map and connections between parts.

Start your mind [map](#) by putting a shape in the [center](#) of the page and labeling it the most important part of your project or subject.

Take your time and start adding a shape with the name of another important part a short distance from the central shape.

Draw a line between the shapes. Do the same for other parts which are equally important as the second one around the central shape at an equal [distance](#) in the first ring.

Then, continue by adding more shapes and labels around each of them.

Some shapes will have more subordinate shapes connected to them than others.

You can use different colors for various shapes and the lines to clarify their relationships and importance.

Using this for story outlines and other creative projects is fairly common and very enlightening.

More Simple Ways to add Eye Appeal!

As you add more material to your Art Journal, you will want to find some interesting variations to add to the pages and what you put in them.

This section suggests some simple ways to add interest to your pages.

None of them will cost much. When you use them, add your own flourishes so they are unique. If something doesn't work out, no harm done.

I suggest that you don't use too much [eye](#) candy to any particular page unless that's the effect you want to have.

Using Decorated Capitals

If you look through old books or some current magazines, you will see a large capital [letter](#) at the beginning of the first paragraph.

They are usually decorated in the old texts and fairly plain in current publications.

They were in use before movable type was developed. The scribes who produced the handwritten texts used the decorated letters as an extra ornamentation for their unique productions.

We can use them in our Art Journals by hand-drawing them or producing them as a stamp. Use examples you find for inspiration, then decorate or alter them to make yours unique and more appropriate for your project.

Don't overdo them, just use them as an occasional highlight and they will have more appeal.

The ornate capitals which have their base below that of the rest of the line of text are **Drop Caps**. Those which share the same baseline as the rest of the text are Standard Caps.

If you hand-decorate your caps, make sure that the artwork on them is large enough to be recognized for what it is and not so large as to obscure the capital letter itself.

Stencils

You can buy stencils with all sorts of lettering, [animals](#) and almost every

other imaginable thing.

Lettering stencils are a great [help](#) for anyone who needs good lettering. You can, if you wish, color the background and overlay various designs to get tricky effects easily.

Stamps

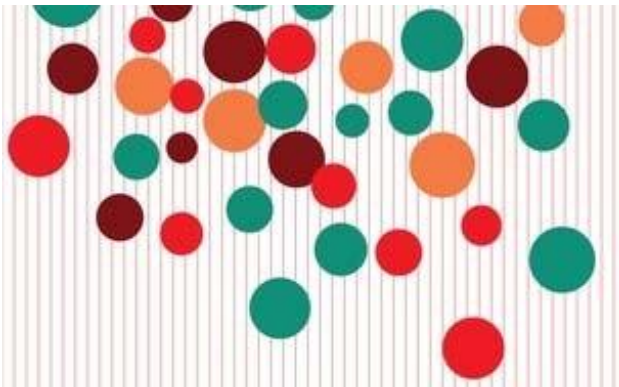
There are a great variety of commercial stamps available too. You can [start](#) with the basic stamp and decorate the print with your own flourishes to make something more personal.

All your stamps need to be cleaned while the ink you use is still wet.

Many people make their own stamps.

If you make your own, remember to carve a mirror image of the design or it will look reversed when you print it!

Amazing Dots



Dots can be used to make a background or darken an area. Experiment with using different techniques and instruments to make dots in some of your [Art](#) Journal pages.

This can make your pages more interesting than if you use the same type of dots for most of your pages.

Increase the size, density and shape of your dots, or some of them, to vary the effect on the viewer.

Use different materials; watercolor, soft pencil and even charcoal sticks.

Cut-outs and other Surprises!

Many Art Journal creators use ideas which have been common in greeting cards and children's books for many years to add some extra eye-appeal too.

Cut-outs are one [method](#) which can add some extra interest.

You make a design where your reader will see part of the next page when

they are looking at the current one.

Of course, that will intrigue them. But, for maximum effect there should be some sort of surprise when they actually lift the first [page](#) and see the whole design on the page underneath.

You can also have pages which have panels glued and folded on them.

This gives you more options to increase the reader's interest in the material with just a single folded piece of paper and some glue.

Touch and Smell!

I know I've emphasized that your Art Journal is a private document but that's not always the case.

If, like me, you really appreciate the benefits of Art Journaling, you will probably use the techniques you learned to make your private journals to produce other journals containing information and ideas of more general interest and intend some to be sharable with your friends and your [family](#).

When you are making an Art Journal which you intend to share, there's no reason why you can't add ways to involve readers' other senses such as touch and smell.

You could use a [fabric](#) cover and add more items with different textures and colors to that for more impact on your readers.

You can also add a dash of natural [oil](#) to the cover or even some of the pages to engage the readers' other senses.

Others add envelopes to some pages which are to be opened by the readers who find small surprises inside.

[Texture](#) is another thing which can add to the readers' enjoyment.

You can add gesso to some pages which stiffens them, sand which gives a rough feel or a feather for [eye](#) appeal and touch as well.

The sky is the limit when you are preparing your Art Journal for sharing!

Keep Your Eyes on the Future!

I hope this [book](#) will be a stepping stone for you to a more colorful and successful future.

I've focused on simple but expandable ideas and methods which should help you create your own wonderful Art Journals.

You will find many more advanced ideas on the Internet and I'm sure that you will be able to develop plenty of your own now you have more confidence and experience with your own creative abilities!

Suzanne Gallop

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