

Hello beautiful creative friend!

Hello Hello. :) Did you know that empathy is an amazing quality in humans that many of utilise a lot when it comes to *other* people but we rarely use it for/ on ourselves when we're in psychic or emotional pain?



Self-empathy can be an amazing tool to create self-connection and self-understanding. I find it helps alleviate suffering through being heard/ seen/ understood *on a deeper* level by myself. Pretty magical, no?

This month I want to share a simple self-empathy exercise with you influenced by nonviolent communication (Marshall Rosenberg). I hope it helps you to be your own best friend in times of need and that it creates a deeper awareness and understanding of your inner workings and inner world.

Art-wise we will use my 'paint-over-collage' technique that I love so so SO much. The technique gives you a really great and different starting point to your page, allowing for new and fun surprises and takes you on a journey of transformation! :)

Let's get started! X

Tam X





Supplies used in this week

Please note, below are the supplies I used, but you can substitute the supplies if and where needed if you don't have what I've used.

- 140lbs watercolour paper
- Collage papers:
 - One 2.5" - 3" collage image of a face, could be from a magazine or a print out of your own face
 - Other collage papers for the background, think book pages, patterned paper, napkins, music scores etc.
- Gel medium for gluing (I used impasto gel)
- Clear/ transparent gesso
- Watersoluble Crayons
- Water & Brushes
- White Gesso & Brayer
- Washi Tape (optional)
- Fluid Acrylics for the hair
- Graphite pencil/ Derwent Black/ Stabilo All
- Tombow markers (optional)
- India ink + ink pen (optional)
- Black & white paint pens (posca or other) for doodles & writing I used 1 medium sized one for each colour and 1 fine-nibbed one
- Blending stump



Optional First Step: Do the Self-Empathy Exercise (see other PDFs + video part 1)

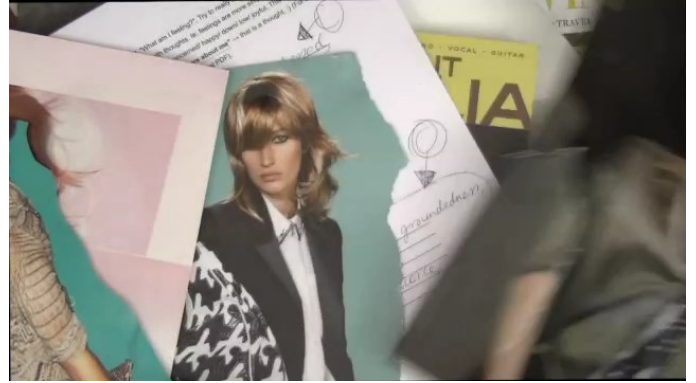
If you feel for up for it, pls first do the self-empathy exercise as demonstrated in the [part 1 video](#). Some of what you're learning in this exercise can/ will be incorporated into the painting later on.

If you don't do this exercise: **no problemo batman.** ;) You can use different words later or not include words at all. :) It's all cool. X



Creating your Collage

Step 1. Start gathering your collage pieces, you're looking for a face that is about 2.5 – 3 inches in length, try not to go smaller, it's harder to work on a small face. If you don't want to use a magazine face, you can use a photo print out of yourself. The idea is that the figure will represent *you*. But they don't have to look like you, at all. It's up to you, how you want to represent yourself.



Collect other collage papers like music scores/ patterned papers/ book pages etc to add to the background.

Now 'compose' a collage that you like the look of. I don't always collage a 'proper' body in, instead I use pieces of collage to create an 'idea' or vague outline of a body.



Glue down your pieces of collage with good gel medium, make sure to use a card or other hard implement to 'scrap' away any wrinkles and air bubbles.

IMPORTANT: When you finished your collage: **TAKE A PHOTO** of your page before you start adding paint, it's useful in case you need to reference your previous image and it's super fun to see the transformation later!



Step 2. Let your collage dry thoroughly. Then add a layer of clear gesso over your collage. Let this dry too. Clear gesso dries transparent, so you can see your collage through and work over it. The clear gesso creates a new receptive surface with a nice tooth you can start working on again.



Darn it, I forgot the **washi tape** as part of my collage background, I SO love washi tape! Nevermind, I can add it now. :) I love adding washi tape as a layer, it has a real knack for adding pop and interest to a layer.



washi tape

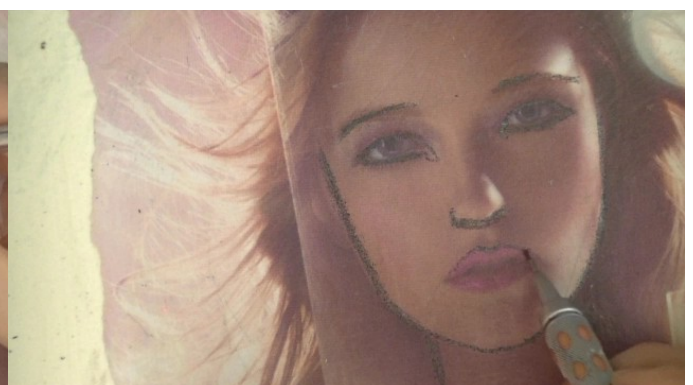
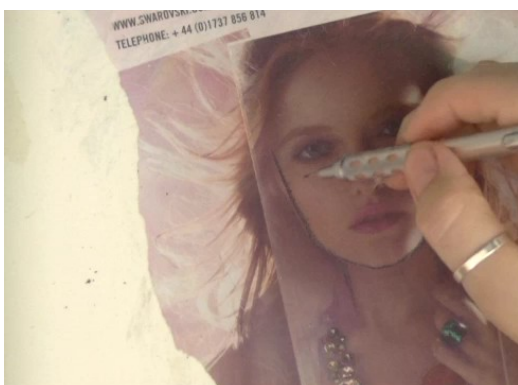
makes
tam
happy



: -)



Step 3. Ok once all collaging is done and dry, start drawing over your existing face. Keep or change the previous features to your liking. I like changing the eyebrows and other features to look like 'my usual' style. If a mouth is partially open I draw it 'closed'. You can choose to stay close to the original or make some changes to the shape of the face.

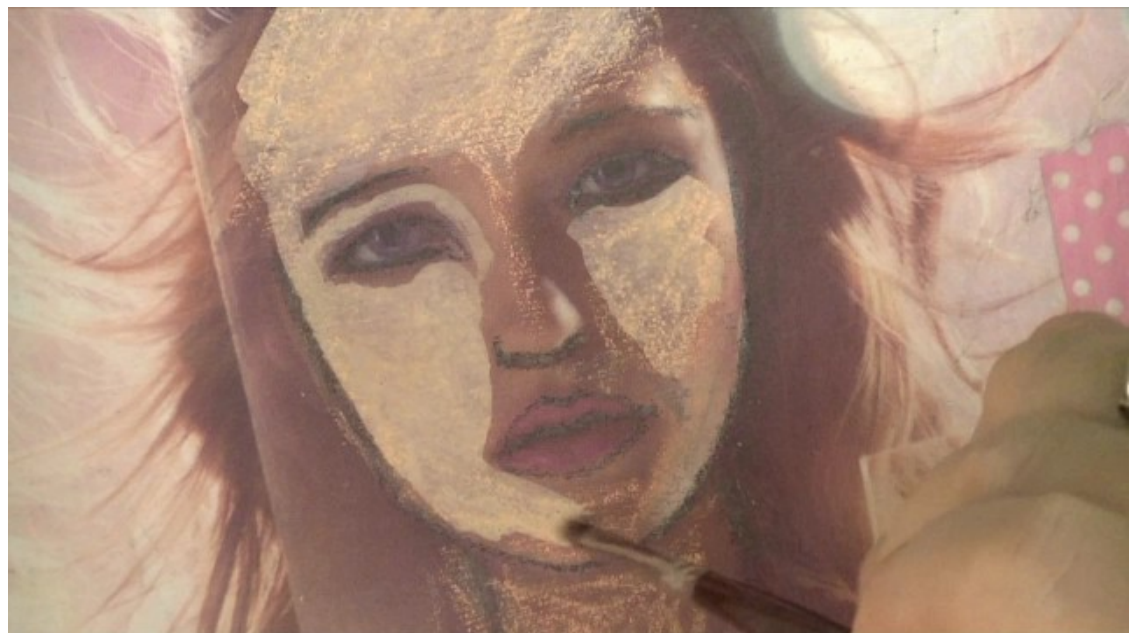




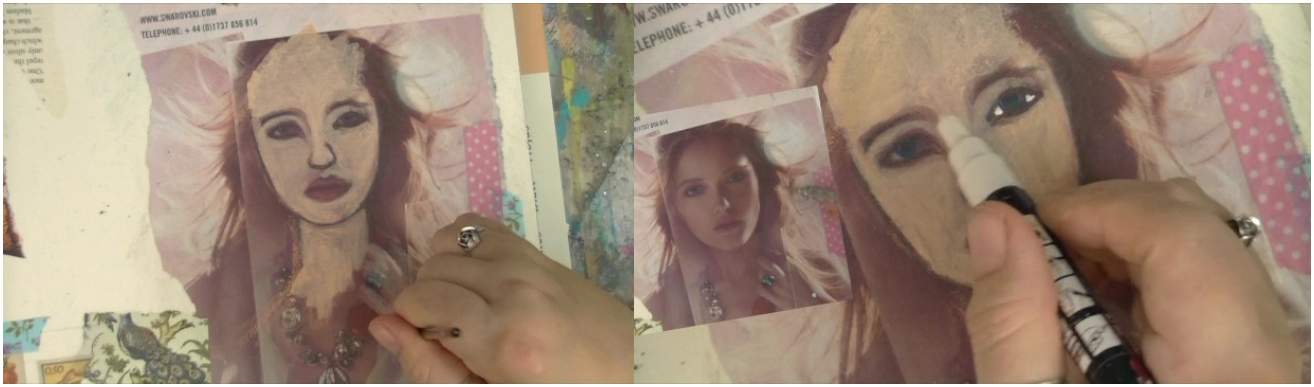
Painting the Face & Background

At this point we're going to start adding paints over the collage. Clear gesso dries with a really strong tooth, so it's quite different to work on top off compared to working on watercolour paper. Just keep that in mind when you start working.

I shade the face in my usual way; by adding a first layer of watersoluble crayon in a flesh tone (salmon colour). I activate the crayon with water and as you can see, because there is clear gesso, the colour is more potent/ vibrant than if you were to apply it on paper. This is ok for me. **Note:** I'm not shading in keeping with the original face's shading. You can choose to do that but I wanted my own kind of shading. Up to you! :)

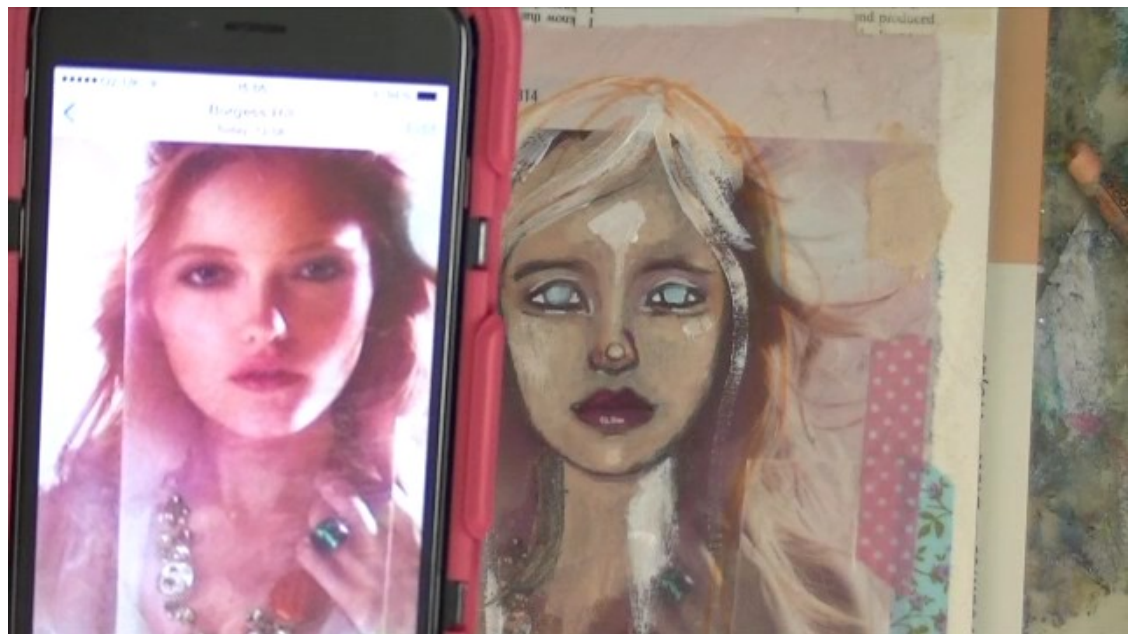


Continue to add paint to the neck area and any other body parts if you have them. Once the first layers are in place, start adding darker and lighter tones in the area where you expect the darker and lighter tones to be.

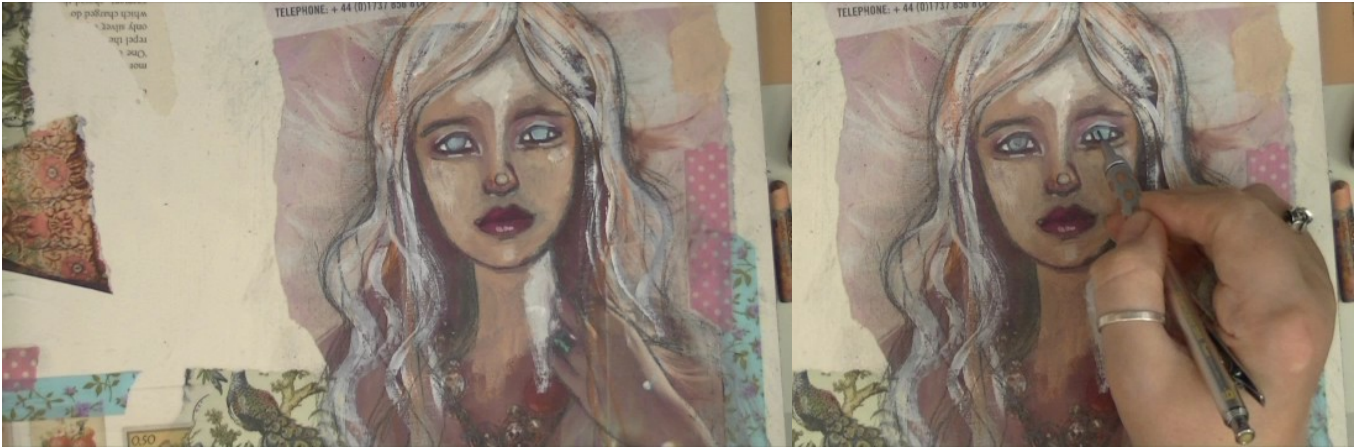


I used Tombow markers, my graphite pencil and a white posca pen to add shading and highlights. At this point I also started to vaguely sketch in a hairline and a vague body shape.

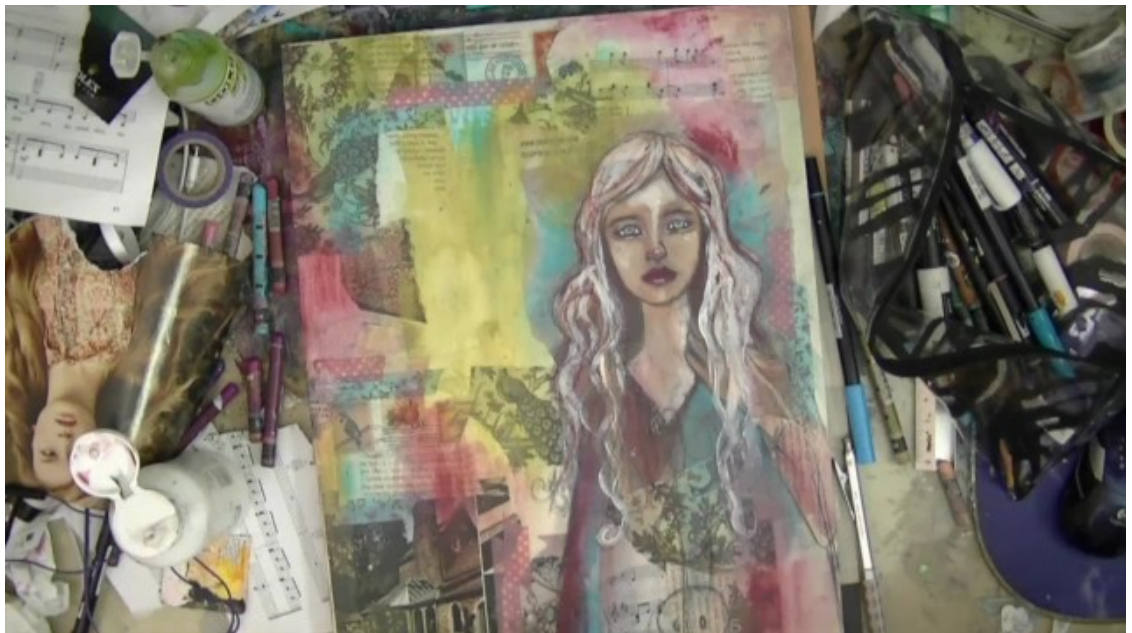
If you can't remember how your previous, collaged images looked and you need it for a reference, look back at the photo you made right after finishing your collage. It's also fun to see how much your painting is already transforming from the original.



I continued adding small a finer details. I wanted to lighten up the eyes so added some white acrylics to them and then used my graphite pencil to add the finer details like pupils.



Then I started on the background by adding a layer of watersoluble crayons in about 4 different colours.



As a 3rd background layer I wanted to add some words/ writing. I referred back to my self-empathy exercise and looked at what needs stood out during the exercise. Amazingly 'power in my world' was important in the exercise and I found that the lady had a strong/ powerful/ fiery look to her (this was unintentional). I thought it was pretty amazing that this lady appeared and that I could see the need 'met' in the painting. I decided to choose words in relationship to my need, like:

You are Brave
You are Strong
You have wings
You are Powerful





When the background starts to look a bit 'too much' to me, I like to mute down the background and create some more cohesion by using white gesso and apply it with a brayer.

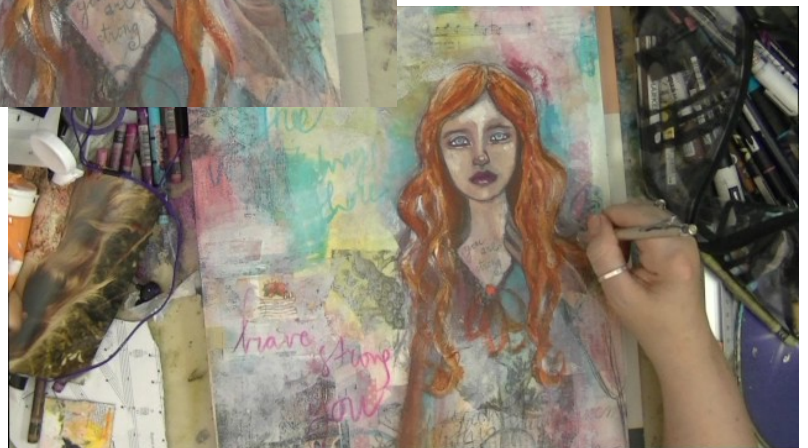


Brayers are LOVE! ↷



I love brayers, they create this great grungy pull-me/ push-you effect! :)

At this point I started to create some contrast by bringing in some darker colours in acrylics. I wanted the girl to have red flaming hair which I added with acrylics.





Building up the Background

For the background I added whimsical shapes that speak to me. You can choose to add shapes that speak to you. They can either affirm and relate to the self-empathy exercise, or not. Use imagery that you love, that speaks to you and your soul.



Much like we did in the 'Seeds of Love' lesson, I then started adding 'colour blocks' around the imagery to bring the shapes forward.



With an ink pen and India ink I added dark accents in the eyes (pupils) and in some other places like the nose, mouth, clothing and hair.



Using a pencil that isn't graphite (like a dark watercolour pencil by Derwent, charcoal pencil or Stabilo All pencil) I re-defined some of the lines of the other imagery to make them stand out more.



Finishing Touches

Don't skip over the finishing touches! More and more do I find that the last part, the finishing and caring for the painting just before it's finished, is one of *the most* crucial parts of what makes a painting come together for me! :)

The little white splatters/ twinkles, the tidying up of messy lines, the tiny details in a flower, a swirl/ twirl added her or there, it all makes a difference to the feel of the overall page.

So as part of the "my finishing" I added:

- white dots/ 'glitter' to her hair
- little doodles and shapes around the flowers
- coloured in some of the hanging hearts & stars
- whitened the cloud
- added a 'triangle-web' to a particularly 'empty space' in the background
- added doodles/ detail to the wings

Most of the above were done with a white marker paint (posca and posterpaint).





And voila, now it's finished! :) Here are the collage and final painting side by side:



isn't the transformation amazing? :) Here are some more detail shots:





Here is the final complete page once more without collage comparison:



I hope you enjoyed playing with the lesson today! Thanks for being here and trying out my suggestions. :)

I appreciate you!

Much love

Tam x

