

Creativity Is a Tool for Raising and Maintaining Hope

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Artistic endeavors can support our emotional regulation and resilience. Our creativity can help us express ourselves and manage emotional responses that might otherwise turn us away from our identified goals, pathways to achieve them, and a sense of personal agency. Artistry can also communicate how much we understand new concepts or skills.

You may be wondering, “What does this process really look like for me?” When adversity shows up, there are strategies you can use to maintain or increase hope as you work to achieve goals that matter to you. Here’s a breakdown on how these creative strategies can help you to restore hope when your reserves run low.

1. If you face difficulties setting and maintaining a clear goal and you feel hope fading, these strategies can help you regulate your emotions and find clarity as you process your feelings.

- **Pause to reassess a situation** and let yourself shift your perspective or reframe an experience in a way that feels more actionable. Try expressing yourself through journaling, creative writing, or collage with your challenge as the theme.
- **Seek help or comfort from people you trust** to find the emotional support you need to lower stress and gain perspective. Try a creative activity, such as dancing, creating music, or playing video games to connect with others.
- **Do something you enjoy to relax** instead of trying to solve a problem immediately, which can reduce emotional stress enough to let you return to goal-setting with a clearer mind. Try

a 10-minute doodling exercise in your notebook connected to a freedom dream you cherish. Or create a drawing or collage that highlights your favorite relaxation or joy-filled activities.

2. When you’re struggling to find or maintain pathways toward your goals, here are a few ways to help you reset and uncover new routes forward.

- **Think about something else that occupies your attention** to free enough emotional space for your mind to identify paths you had not considered. Try a meditative coloring page, walk in nature, or write a creative to-do list using colorful markers or doodles to turn chores into something visual and engaging.
- **Engage in a demanding activity** to refocus your emotional resources on a productive outlet. This may reveal new insights relevant to your pathway. Try dancing energetically or rearranging your bedroom or work area to create a more peaceful or inspiring environment.
- **Express your feelings about the setback through creative outlets** to find immediate emotional relief, which can make it easier to return to problem-solving. Try writing a poem that reflects your experience, painting or coloring your feelings, or using movement to express your emotional state.





3. If you're uncertain about your ability to influence an outcome that's important to you, here are some affect-regulation strategies that can increase your sense of control and agency.

- **Take an action step to solve the problem**, no matter how small, to help reinforce your ability to tackle challenges and create the future you seek. Try creating a vision board or collage that creatively and colorfully represents your goal and selected pathway.
- **Do something relaxing to recharge emotionally** and increase your ability to act with a sense of focus and determination. Try creating a playlist of calming music and listen to it while drawing or journaling. Take a walk and photograph beautiful things in your surroundings, like flowers, trees, or architecture. Or, create a collage that represents your strengths.

The Takeaway

The bottom line is this: Your creativity is your key to raising levels of hope in your daily life. No matter what challenges arise, remember that your creativity is a powerful tool you can use for emotional regulation, mental health, and resilience. Start small, stay open, and trust in the process of creating your own path forward.



About My Digital Sanctuary

My Digital Sanctuary brings information and creativity together to support soul care, a holistic approach to emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being from the Steve Fund. Created by mental health experts who specialize in serving young people of color and their families, My Digital Sanctuary shares the help, hope, and healing we need to not just survive but to thrive.