

BRIGHT STORY SHINE: CREATIVITY

What's your bright story?



CREATIVITY IS KEY

By Caroline Beidler

BENEFITS OF A CREATIVE RECOVERY

Read on for my next
free **Bright Story
Shine Toolkit!**

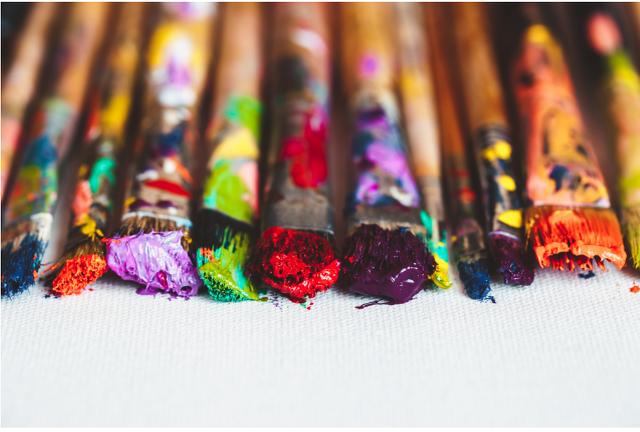
When I was a little girl, before I could read or write, I whispered stories to my grandfather and he'd sit in his brown corner chair under lamp light and write down my musings. Princesses and castles, dragons and deserted Islands—the topics were probably otherworldly, I don't recall now, but I just remember the feeling: like I had worlds bubbling up inside of me that needed to get out and on to paper.

Fast forward several decades later and I am sitting with my lap top when my kiddos are napping or late at night when the world is sleeping (or watching Netflix) and I listen to the click of the keys. It's a pretty amazing and life-giving gift: creativity.

For me, creativity is expressed through writing, but it is also a part of my life in so many other ways. There are other artistic activities I love like painting with my kids, decorating for the holidays or arranging cutesy things like bird houses in the yard around the flowers and trees.

Read on...





Creativity has also shown up in unexpected ways in my professional life with community building, grant writing, and program development work. I'm so grateful when I get to be a part of detailing a vision for a new recovery support service or other program or ministry and I get that same burst of energy and excitement.

Living a Creative Recovery, I think, is about first recognizing our own abilities and gifts; and then, taking an active role in re-imagining our lives after we put the alcohol, drugs or [fill in the blank] down. It is, for many of us, confronting the lies that we may have believed for a long time that we don't have any choice or control. I've learned in my creative recovery that life doesn't just happen. I can do more than respond--I can partner in creating.

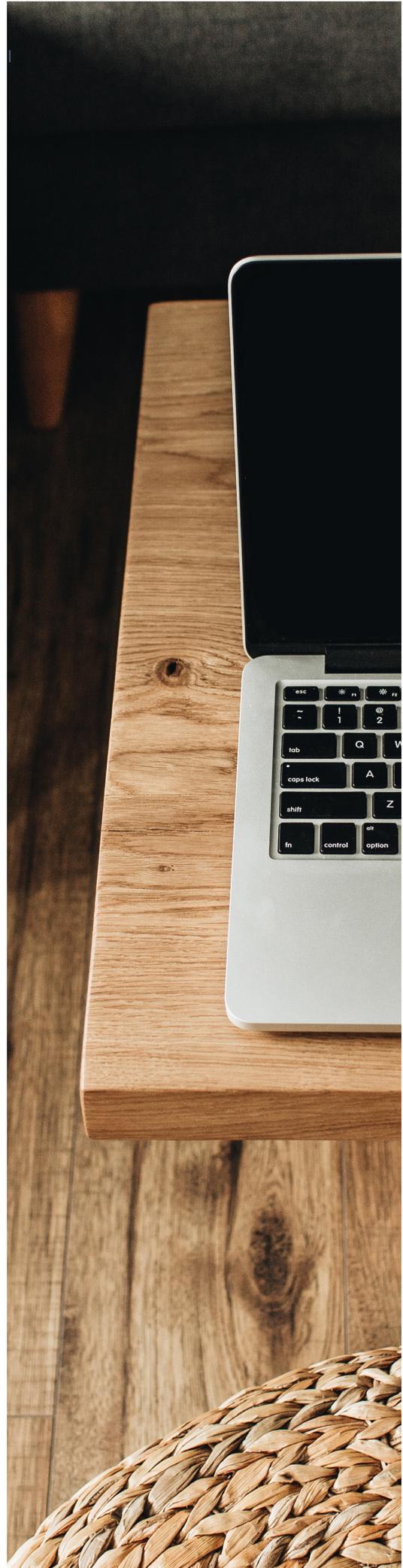
Over the next month, [Bright Story Shine](#) will explore the concept of Creative Recovery and feature ways that people in recovery live creatively, whether that is through their own chosen creative paths or the ways that they might help encourage a fellow creative's journey.

I hope you find the following toolkit: **Benefits of a Creative Recovery** helpful for your own bright story and check out our featured guest blog posts if you'd like to learn more!

Much love,

Caroline

*I'd love to hear how this toolkit
worked for you! Email me
at brightstoryshine@gmail.com!*



Benefits of Living a Creative Recovery

Research and my own personal experience shows how creativity can be a healing outlet for those of us in or seeking recovery from addiction and other challenges like trauma or stress. In this toolkit, you will find some of the important ways that having a “creative recovery” can help support your journey and the creative recoveries of others.

#1 Creativity is an Outlet

Many of us have things in our past we'd rather forget and things in our present that are tough to face head on. Everyone needs coping strategies and ways to help promote resilient recovery and just plain old resilient living! Research has found that creativity can help to regulate emotions, work through shame, and process trauma and loss. For me, writing about some of my most challenging or joyful experiences has helped me to process them, feel them, and heal from them.

#2 Creativity is an Option

You might be in early recovery or working with those in the first days of their journey. I remember, especially early on, how much I needed something—anything—to fill the precious time that alcohol and other drugs had held hostage for so long. It took me a while to learn new skills, gain new hobbies and social supports and in the meantime...I had LOTS of empty hours to fill! There are a myriad of ways to get creative! Here's just a few examples that could help you fill some time and get your healing on: visual art like drawing, painting or photography; performance art like dance or theater; music, including song writing, singing, being in a band or starting one; creative writing (my fave!) like poetry, fiction or non-fiction; needle crafts, DIY projects, gardening, and cooking!



#3 Creativity can help Reduce or Manage Cravings!

If you are like me (a few 24 hours past early recovery), the concept of cravings might feel far away. In reality, it doesn't matter if we are one day or ten years or thirty years from our last use of alcohol or other drugs. We might be just "one drink or drug away" from falling back into unhealthy patterns and our old ways. Whether a thing of the past or a present concern for you, it is very important to keep in mind those things that help fight cravings.

#4 Creativity is Fun!

Fun—what a simple concept, right? Well, not exactly. For many of us in or seeking recovery, our idea of "fun" may have been pretty one-dimensional. I remember the first time I realized (again) how much I loved being in nature. It hit me like a lightening bolt. And I've been walking and hiking and enjoying God's beautiful creation ever since. I'm a big fan of switching things up! (maybe you've see my [video on Prioritizing Self-care](#)). If you need some ideas about how to get your creativity flowing here are some ideas:

- Take a class (virtual or in-person) on a new art or creative expression like dance
- Try [Michael's Free Online Zoom Art Classes](#) on anything from making cupcake toppers to floral lamps!
- Host a [Fill in the blank] Workshop for friends or colleagues (journaling, music, painting...)
- Try an art medium that you haven't tried before (for me, this would be sculpture!)
- Let go of having to "do it right" or perfectionism
- Learn more about different creative outlets by going to your local library or checking out YouTube tutorials.



#5 Creativity can Boost Joy!

During early recovery, it takes some time before the brain starts to produce “feel good” chemicals like dopamine. Now, you may be like me (not a neuroscientist!), but you likely can relate to this. You may be familiar with the concept of 90 meetings in 90 days or 3 month long residential treatment programs. Research shows that after 90 days, the brain does start to heal from addiction (what a miracle!). It just takes some time. Creativity, can help bring joyful and happy experiences and activities while our recovery grows.

Creativity doesn't mean we have to produce a masterpiece, it simply means we are tapping into a lost part of ourselves through things like art, singing, making music, journaling, or dance/movement, to name a few. Creativity can bring with it almost child-like feelings of silliness and/or healthy abandon, which enhances our recovery while bringing joy into our lives.



- St Joseph Institute

Looking for Additional Resources? Want to share ways that you'd tapped in to your creative side? I'd love to hear from you! [Email me](#) anytime. I look forward to exploring the topic of Creativity this month with blog posts, additional resources and staying connected.

