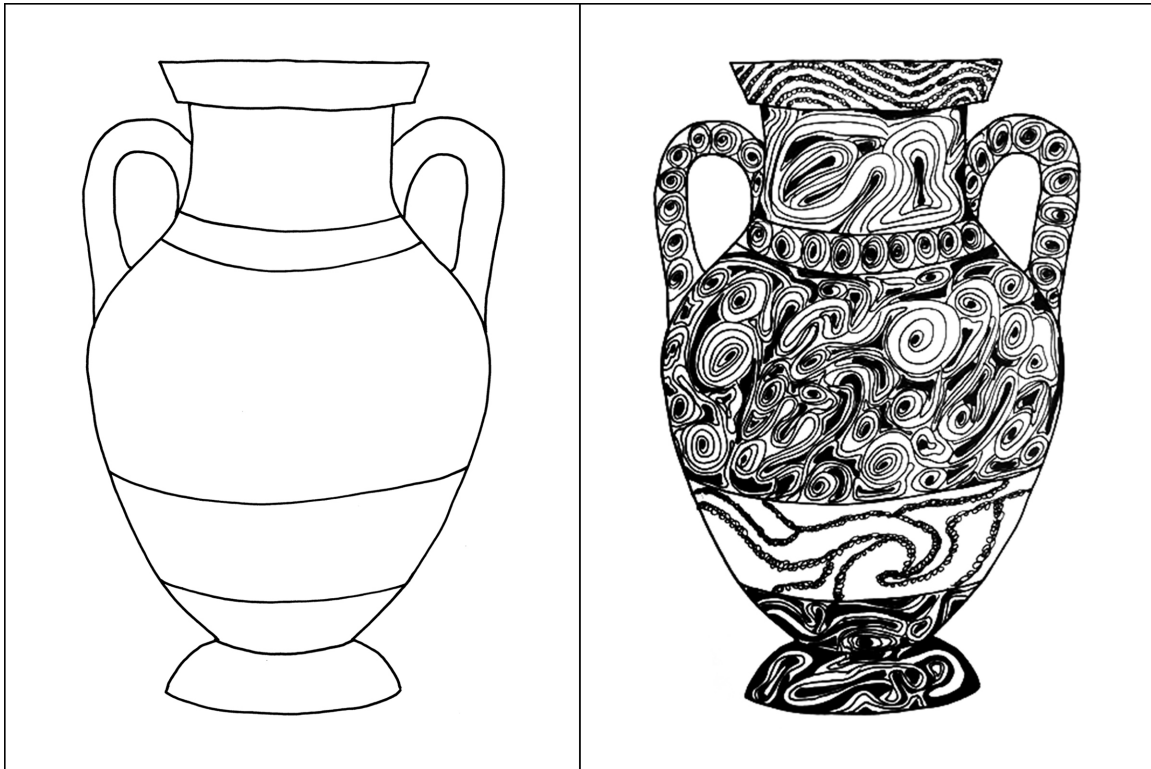


Doodling—There's more to it than you might think



Page from the Doodle-ography Journal—before and after. Doodles by Kimberly Lasser. Outline from the book by Lindy Gifford.

Do you doodle, or did you when you were younger? Did people tell you that meant that you were not paying attention? It turns out the exact opposite is true. Research shows that individuals who doodled while listening to a monotonous telephone recording retained up to 29% more information than those who did not.

Two local women, Lindy Gifford and Brady Nickerson, are collaborating to share with others the many benefits of doodling and how it can enhance and enrich one's life. They are currently offering workshops together, based on Gifford's new Doodle-ography Journal. Gifford has published the journal with Maine Authors Publishing in Rockland, where she also works as a book designer.

What is Doodle-ography? It is focused doodling and a fun way to open to the creativity and inner wisdom that is in each of us. There is no right or wrong way to do it and it is for all ages and abilities. It's a relaxing and often surprising, visual meditation—even for those who have not had success with other forms of meditation.

In January, Gifford and Nickerson facilitated a Doodle-ography workshop at the annual Women's Veteran Camp held at Camp Kieve, in Jefferson. Marta Velasco, a participant in the camp, described Doodle-ography as "a way to relax, escape from all the electronics and everyday hustle and bustle—to just do what comes into your mind and let it flow. I'm hooked! Especially when I see the finished product."

On the journal's pages are simple graphics and symbols paired with inspiring quotes—and plenty of open space for doodles. The pages of the journal are smooth, high-quality paper that accepts ink beautifully without bleeding through. The journal fits easily in a purse or briefcase and the strong wire binding and sturdy cover allow it to be opened completely, so that it can be used anywhere, without a desk or table. The new journal will be available for \$15.95 in most bookstores by April. Maine Coast Book Shop in Damariscotta is the first area bookstore to carry it and has it available for sale now.

Nickerson is well known for leading process art painting workshops or free expression painting for people of all ages. She knows firsthand the power of art and its process to release people's intuitive creativity. When she discovered the research on the benefits of doodling, she began collaborating with teachers at Great Salt Bay Community School to offer students there process art in the form of doodling, using pens and markers. The results were phenomenal, prompting her to expand the program to other schools within Maine.

When Gifford learned from her friend Nickerson about her work with doodling, it made perfect sense to her, since she has doodled all her life. Gifford created her first spiral bound doodling journal for the children of the Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Damariscotta, where she was serving as Director of Religious Exploration. Out of that grew the Doodle-ography Journal for youth, which is now widely used in UU congregations throughout the United States, as well as in other denominations.

Nickerson and Gifford's next Doodle-ography workshop is open to the public and intended for adults, as well as middle school and high school youth. It will be held at Mobius Community Center on March 22nd from 10 am–12 noon. The cost of the workshop is \$24 for participants who have already purchased a journal or \$40, journal included. This workshop is ideal for individuals who want to learn Doodle-ography themselves, or as a way to learn more about the program and see if it might be a good fit for their group. For more information or to schedule a workshop for a business, school, church or other group, contact Lindy Gifford at 563-1736 or Brady Nickerson at 633-2588. For more about Doodle-ography and the journal, visit doodle-ography.com.