

CATALYST **for** CREATIVITY & COURAGE BOOKLIST



so you can FREE your...

CRAZY **NAKED** TRUTH

Hello There!

You spoke up, jumped in and said ‘Yes! I want my voice to be heard’ or maybe ‘Damn! My story needs to be told and I’m the one to tell it’ or even ‘Oh, [this little light of mine](#) - I'm gonna let it shine’.

I am so glad you have. [The world yearns for stories](#). For your TRUTH to be TOLD. But sometimes we need encouragement and reminders to spur ourselves on in the journey of telling our tales and trailblazing into our creative landscapes.

Connecting with your creativity might feel daunting (or not) or like you’ll never find the time or maybe it feels lonely or any number of very reasonable explanations. But creativity and courage don’t live in the realm of rational thinking. It flies by you, swoops down, takes you and lets you go and then it comes again by for another pass – if you let it. The steps you take towards creativity don’t need to be grand or even graceful, they just need to be taken.

The following is a list of books that can help lead you baby step by baby [step into your creative corral](#). Whether you are an alumni of the creative cosmos and have been off the radar and out of orbit or if you are just entering this magical stratosphere for the first time, these books can inspire and encourage you. I know they do for me. Not all will resonate of course. But take a peek – don’t judge these books by their covers. See if what they hold between their paper arms, holds something for you.

FEAR. **PERFECTIONISM**. **RESISTANCE**. I've struggled, to a greater or lesser degree, with these symbiotic siblings throughout my life. Each reeking a particular kind havoc upon my creative spirit.

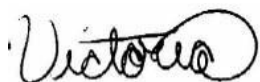
In 1992, I got my official 'crazy papers': Bipolar disorder with psychosis and anxiety along with a lovely side of disordered binge eating, all precipitated by a spiritual emergency.

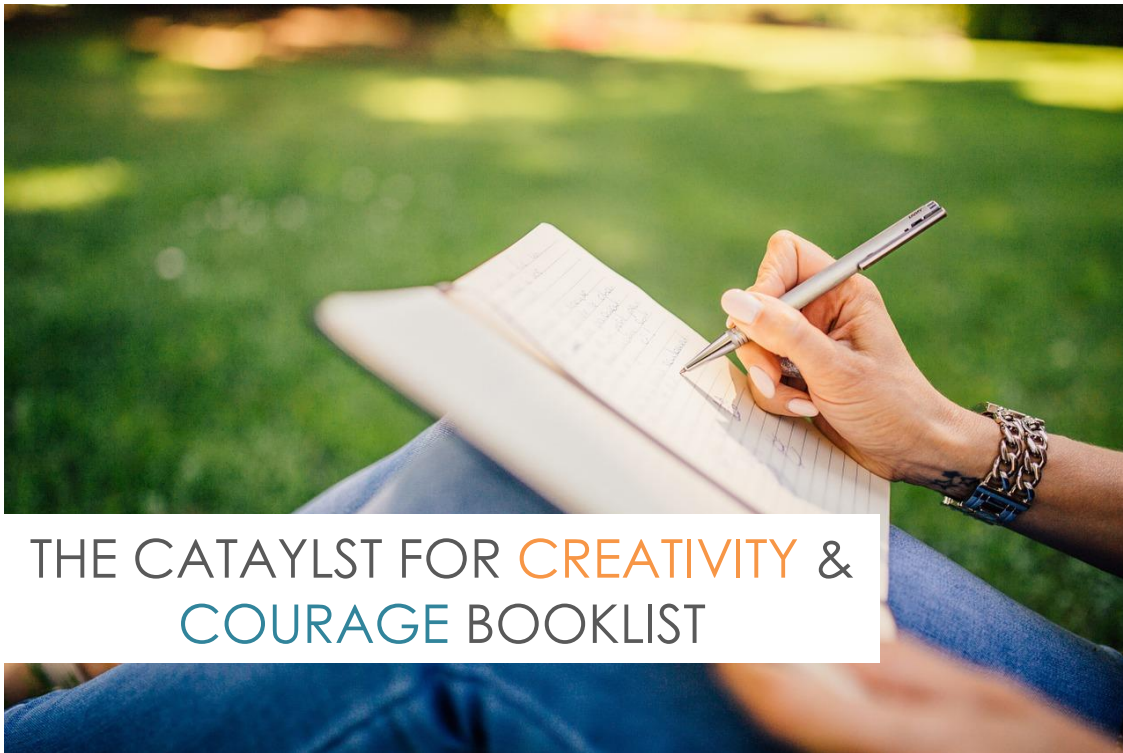
If we are **alive**, we are creative. Every choice we make is by nature **creativity in action**.

Over the course of several years, as I scabbled my life back together after two involuntary and one voluntary (sort of) stays at club medication (the psych ward), I learned tools to manage my conditions. What I discovered along the gravelly path to wellness, was that creativity needed to be an essential element of my recovery; along with others like medication, therapy and exercise (to name a few). Books like these and the exercises within them helped me reclaim my creative spark along with my sanity and sense of self.

My hope is that you peruse the books in this **CRAZY NAKED TRUTH** cheat sheet. Then inspired by said books, give a respectful acknowledging nod to resistance, fear and perfectionism, and dive into a little more courage, a little more creativity so that we have a little more of YOU in this world.

Warm wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large loop at the end.



THE CATALYST FOR CREATIVITY & COURAGE BOOKLIST

Here's my list of go-to books (in no particular order). May they help get the muse beside you, get your butt to the chair and fingers to the keyboard:

1. [Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear](#) (Elizabeth Gilbert)

Best-selling author of *Eat Pray Love* offers her own perspective on embracing creativity in life.

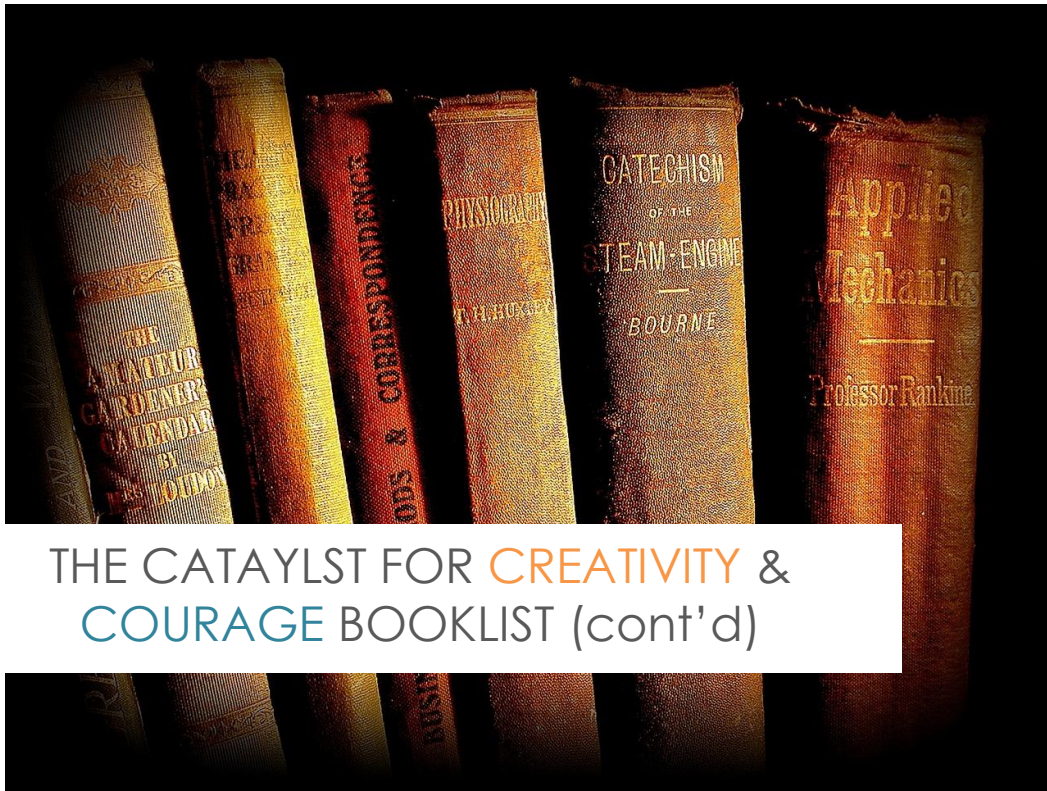
2. [Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life](#) (Anne Lamott)

With humour and practical advice, writer Anne Lamott addresses common questions most writers have.

3. [The Art of Memoir](#) (Mary Karr)

One of the foremost memoirists explores this popular literary form with wit, insight and sage advice.

We aren't born Brave. **Courage** is something we **Cultivate**.



THE CATALYST FOR CREATIVITY & COURAGE BOOKLIST (cont'd)

4. [The War of Art](#) (Steven Pressfield)
An excellent guide to help creatives overcome resistance.
5. [Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within](#) (Natalie Goldberg)
6. [Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life](#) (Natalie Goldberg)
The preceding two books offers Goldberg's iconic 'rules for writing practice' & quintessential writing prompts.

Curiosity Dissolves the Critic



THE CATALYST FOR CREATIVITY &
COURAGE BOOKLIST (cont'd)

7. [The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity](#)

(Julia Cameron)

The seminal guidebook about the creative process and creative self-renewal. Cameron has written more than 30 books, both non-fiction and fiction. All offer helpful insight into the creative process.

8. [642 Tiny Things to Write About](#) (San Francisco Writers' Grotto)

Fun quick writing prompts. They have a series of books.

9. [Now Write! Nonfiction](#) (Sherry Ellis)

Essays on writing with helpful exercises.

We **learn** as much through **laughter** as we do through tears



THE CATALYST FOR CREATIVITY & COURAGE BOOKLIST (cont'd)

10. [The Arvon Book of Life Writing](#) (Sally Cline & Carole Angier)

Writing tips and insights on all aspects of writing biography, autobiography & memoir

11. [Yes, And: How Improvisation Reverses 'No, But' Thinking and Improves Creativity and Collaboration](#) (K. Leonard / T. Yorton)

Executives of Chicago's famed Second City improv troupe describe the 7 key elements of improv, and offer accompanying exercises to apply in daily life

12. [101 Improv Games for Children & Adults](#) (Bob Bedore)

An excellent guide listing a wide variety of improv games for experience levels

Small is Big. **Tiny** changes equal **Big** shifts



YOUR TURN FOR PERFECTLY IMPERFECT
CREATIVITY

Good enough REALLY is **good enough**.

Writing Prompt. Try this. 5 minutes. Go!

I never thought I would (be)...

HERE'S TO YOU FREEING YOUR...

CREATIVITY & COURAGE



ABOUT ME

I'm a speaker, playwright, actor & researcher, but more than anything I'm a **CHEERLEADER**. My job, mission, passion – what have you, is to help you embrace all parts of yourselves: the bland, the messy, the beautiful. I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, anxiety, psychosis, disordered eating & a spiritual emergency. I learned that to get through challenges and flourish, we need to face our shame and let it go. Then accept whole ourselves with our whole heart. That is the **CRAZY**.

NAKED. TRUTH.

For 14 years I've 'hit the boards' (actor 'talk' for performed) with my one person shows & workshops about recovering from mental illness across Canada & the US. I'm a creativity and courage coach. I get my 'nerd on' by working as a peer researcher with [CREST.BD](#), an international research team that studies bipolar disorder. My writerly self gets to play when I post on my Psychology Today blog: [Crazy for Life: Escapades of a Bipolar Princess](#).

Whether you have an 'official' diagnosis or not, we can all live our **CRAZY NAKED TRUTH** and flourish. For more info: www.victoriamaxwell.com.