

# 100 HEARTS for Joy & Inspiration

*How to get started with your own Heart-A-Day challenge*

## **Are you feeling inspired to create your own Heart-A-Day challenge?**

Read on to learn how to get started and create a challenge of your own.

## **What is the Heart-A-Day Challenge?**

It's a fun and easy creative challenge anyone can do.

All you have to do is create a different heart every day for as many days as you'd like. Create a goal for yourself. You could start with 10 days. Keep going for 30. Challenge yourself to 100. Or set a record with 365! It's completely up to you.

## **Why hearts?**

Hearts are a universal symbol that anyone can draw. They symbolize love, of course, but also our feelings. The possibilities of what you can do with hearts is really quite endless. All you need is a little bit of imagination and a desire to create.

## **Who is this challenge for?**

This challenge is for you if...

- You like being creative.
- You are looking for ideas and inspiration for how to be more creative.
- You'd like to establish a creative practice: something creative you can commit to doing regularly over a period of time.
- You want to create a series and explore a theme.
- You want to fill up a sketchbook but don't know what to put inside it.
- You want to enjoy the benefits of being creative.
- You want to grow your creative skills.

## **What are some things I could create using hearts?**

Given the symbolic meaning of hearts, you can use them to illustrate how you are feeling each day of your challenge. Or to connect with something you love each day. Or something else symbolic for you.

They are also an interesting shape that is perfect for creating doodles, patterns and designs.

Once you get going with your challenge, you'll discover your own favorite ways of creating with hearts.

## **What art materials do I need for the challenge?**

Any material at all. Keep it easy. Use whatever you have already. In my original practice I used printer paper and colored markers. But you could use anything else that you think would be fun to use: colored pencils, crayons, pastels, paint, collage, mixed media...or something else. You can also use more than one material and technique during your challenge.

## **Do I need a sketchbook?**

It can be helpful to have a designated place for your hearts, like a special journal, sketchbook, or piece of paper that you fill up with your hearts during the challenge. Deciding how big you want to make your hearts, and the types of art materials you will use to create them, can help you decide the type of paper or sketchbook you will use. If you like working small, you can use a small sketchbook or a single piece of paper divided into quadrants for each day. If you want more room, choose a larger format. If you are using dry media you can really use any kind of paper. If you are using wet media you will need a thicker paper that won't tear when it becomes damp, like mixed media or watercolor paper.

## **How did you create your hearts?**

Here's the process I used to create my own HeART A Day Challenge.

First, I committed to creating 100 hearts. That was my goal at the start of the challenge. I also wanted to make sure the practice was quick, so that I could fit it into my day no matter what. So I kept it very simple and small. I used regular printer paper and created small folded books from it so that I had one rectangle to fill up each day with my heart.

To inspire the idea for my heart each day, I would first take a few moments to sit still and get quiet. I would then put my hands over my heart, tune in to how I was feeling in that moment, and just wait for the feeling and associated word to come to mind. Once it did, I would write down that word, and on a scrap piece of paper quickly sketch out some ideas for how to express that feeling using the heart as my symbol. Sometimes I would give the hearts arms and legs so that it became almost a character to help it illustrate the feeling. Other times I would choose colors or symbols to bring out the meaning of the word, or play with the size, scale, shape or environment of the heart.

Once I had the idea sketched out, I would create a light drawing in my sketchbook of my heart design. I also liked including the word of the day associated with the heart in the drawing, so would pencil that in, too. My medium of choice was colored markers, so I would then proceed to color in my drawing with the markers.

## **Was it easy for you to stick to your challenge?**

It was the first time I succeeded in reaching my goal with a creative challenge. All the elements I shared in my process helped me succeed. I made sure it was simple, easy, and quick to do. I made sure it felt fun for me so that I looked forward to creating my heart each day. And I made sure it had meaning for me so that I could always remember why I was doing the challenge to help me stay motivated. For me, the meaning behind this challenge was 1) To learn how to start and keep up a creative practice with consistency. 2) To stretch my imagination and practice coming up with creative ideas. 3) To develop my own style.

The other essential element to help me succeed with my challenge was having a creative accountability group to report to. I announced my goal to the group, shared what I was creating, and posted my drawing each day in the group. This really helped me keep going and ultimately succeed with my challenge. We often feel more committed when we share our goals with someone else.

If you would like to join my creative accountability group to support you, too, during your own challenge, you are invited to become a member of the Sketchbook Revival Facebook Group. It is a fun and welcoming space open to creatives of all levels, and is a great way to get connected with other people interested in daily creativity, building their skills, and growing their own creative practices.

## **How did you feel at the end of the challenge when you reached your 100 day goal?**

Of course I was extremely happy and proud of myself. But I was also surprised by how much I had learned along the way. I gained so many insights about how to start and keep up a creative practice. I also discovered how much you can learn when you create a series around a single subject. It really helps you see your own progress over time. It's like with any practice, the more you do something, the better you will get. I found this to be very true with my challenge. I got more creative with my ideas over time. I became more and more comfortable coloring in my designs with markers. I found my favorite colors and favorite ways of creating hearts. Since I was using my own feelings as inspiration for my drawings, I also found that my hearts were a visual diary of how I was feeling during the 100 days. When the feeling was positive, the drawing became an affirmation of the feeling. When the feeling was less positive, it was a creative way to release the feeling and start to move into a more positive place. So the challenge also had a therapeutic element. I felt better when I created something everyday, and I felt better having connected inwards with how I was feeling.

If you have any more questions about how to start your own HeART A Day Challenge please feel free to contact me directly at [karen@karenabend.com](mailto:karen@karenabend.com) or on my Instagram account @karenabend.