

QC0066 - When They Scribble on Your Artwork.

You've probably seen it before. Two small children are sitting on the floor creating works of art. They're fierce focused on what they're doing as they try to get each line and each color just right.

And then...out of nowhere and unprovoked...one of them reaches over and scribbles on the other ones paper. And all you-know-what breaks loose. There's anger. There's an attempt to get back at the other. There's crying. And eventually, the defamed artwork is crumpled up and tossed aside.

But...have you ever had someone scribble on your artwork as an adult?

SCRIBBLES IN LIFE

We've all seen children scribble on each other's artwork, but have you ever had someone scribble on your artwork as an adult? You might not be a painter or a sketch artist, but people can still scribble on your artwork. It can look like this...

- You put in all those years into getting your degree, only to have that degree devalued and find yourself working in an area outside your training and education.
- You've always dreamed of a happily ever after marriage, only to have your spouse leave you or make your life unbearable.
- You finally were able to get your dream home, only to have it burn down in an electrical fire.
- Your excited to finally be getting that long desired promotion, only to have it given to someone else at the last minute.
- You finally reach retirement and can now start that life of travel you've always dreamed of, only to be diagnosed with cancer.

Unfortunately, life (and people) have a way of scribbling on our art work. And when this happens, we're left feeling hurt, angry, saddened, and cheated. We feel like giving up...like quitting...like tossing aside our hopes and dreams.

But when life or people scribble on your artwork, it doesn't mean things are completely ruined and you should throw it all away. In fact, the unwanted scribble could be the stepping stone and catalyst to an even greater work.

Let me illustrate how with this simple little story...

When my wife and I were dating, I used to play a game with her mother. I would have her mother make any kind of scribble on a piece of paper. She would then hand the paper to me. I would take my time, twisting and turning the paper, and looking for something I could latch on to and use in a new drawing. Once I saw it, I would begin to make something out of the scribble...building on the scribble and adding to it until I had created something new from the scribble. Then, frustrated that I had been able to make something new out of the mess, she would snatch the paper, make another messy scribble, hand it back to me, and say "There! Make something out of that!"

Little did I know that this simple little game of making something out of scribbles would serve me well later in life, when...

- I had a great job, but an accident changed my job and my location.
- I settled into my new job and life, and then felt called to another direction and line of work.
- I went to grad school for one thing, only to find out I needed to change my major...costing me more money and more time.
- I just closed on a new house, only to total out my car 30 minutes later.

Yes, life has a way of scribbling on our artwork. But that little game I played with my future mother-in-law...that game of making something out of scribbles...taught me how to handle the scribbles in life.

HOW TO MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF THE SCRIBBLES IN YOUR LIFE.

So, when life scribbles on your artwork you don't have to crumple it up and cast it aside. Here are some simple steps you can take...

Don't Over-React.

Sometimes my mother-in-law would give me some large and intricate scribbles, and I would start to panic...thinking "I'm sunk." It's true in life also. Sometimes life can hand you some scribbles that feel too big and overwhelming. When this happens, you may feel some fear, sadness, or anger. That's natural. But don't over-react. Don't blow it out of proportion. Don't surrender right up front. Step back, take a deep breath, and tell yourself, "It's going to be alright."

Take Your Time.

Once you've got a handle on your emotions, then take some time. Look things over. Think about them. Don't just jump in there and start doing things.

I learned this from a foreman in the oil field. I was the young newbie who wanted to pull up on a job and immediately go to work fixing the problem. But this foreman would say, "Slow down. Let's look this over." Then he would walk around the job, taking his time to look at everything. But...when he finally was ready to start the job, he knew exactly what he needed, what to do, and the best way to do it. The job went smoothly.

So, when life scribbles on your artwork, take your time in addressing it.

Look at Things Differently.

A lot of times, I would have to take the scribble my mother-in-law gave me and turn it in different directions before a direction and a picture came to me. I would have to look at it from different angles to see something different.

When life scribbles on our artwork, it's easy to get locked into one way of seeing things. And that's usually the way we wanted it. The way the scribble has now ruined.

But, if you can scrap the artwork you thought you were making, and begin to look at it from a different perspective, you will begin to see different options and possibilities. How many inventors have set out to invent one thing, only to be led to something they hadn't thought about.

Try a New Approach.

When life scribbles on your art work, it's a great time to try something new and different. Often, we are creatures of habit and routine. And those unwanted life scribbles can force you to take a different approach.

When I went to grad school, I knew for certain that was what I was supposed to do. So much so that I quit my job and moved my wife and children half way across Texas to be a full time student. But after the first semester, I knew something wasn't right. The direction I had decided upon just didn't seem to fit. I agonized over what to do, wondering if I had made a terrible mistake. But it forced me to look at different degree paths and new ways I might carry out my passions. All of this led to a career path that I love and that I've been on for over 25 years.

When life scribbles on your artwork, it can throw you. But once you get over that, you can start trying something different. And this often leads you to an even better place than you were.

Build on What You Have.

Finally, don't waste your time wishing you didn't have the scribble. And don't waste your time wishing you had more or better resources. That will just waste your time and fuel your frustration and dissatisfaction.

They say restriction is one of the greatest springboards of innovation. Build on what you have rather than wishing for what you don't. It may not be what you want, but it's what you got, so figure out a way to make the most of it.

Make the best of what you have, and it will make the best out of you.

A FINAL WORD...

There's a passage in the New Testament that says, "For we are His (God's) workmanship..." That word "workmanship" is the Greek word from which we get the word "poem" or "work of art." But we're also told in the New Testament that, "in this world you will have trouble."

Translated...Life is going to scribble on your art work.

When that happens, you can either accept defeat and live life as the victim, or you can decide to make something out of your unwanted circumstance. Scribbles will come. And you don't have to welcome them, but you can work with them and turn them into something you never imagined.