



draw
practice
shape
be

By Brandy Agerbeck,
Loosetooth.com

BRANDY FESTO

Please print this document and grab something to write with. Connect your ideas to mine.

I've got a (not-so-secret) weapon.

I'd rather call it a tool, because it helps me make and do great things.

Some say it's my special power.

But I want it to be **your** special power too.

↓ overwhelm ●
↑ focus ●
accessible ●
portable ●
cheap ●
never needs recharging ●
deal w/ complexity ●





**It is
drawing.**



Woah.

Take a deep breath.

Don't panic.

I hear you.

"But I draw like a five year old."

Sure, you probably stopped drawing when you were 5.

"I can't even draw a straight line."

Do you need to? Do you own a ruler?

"In third grade, my teacher told me I didn't draw the zebra right. I stopped drawing."

There is no "right zebra." And you can always **start** drawing again.

"Yeah, you say that, but you know how to draw."

Yup. And I want you to broaden your idea of drawing and discover how **you** draw.

Please grab a pen, pencil, marker and keep reading.



Hello, welcome.

I'm Brandy Agerbeck. My company is Loosetooth.com. In these 25 pages, I'll share with you what revs me up. Since I can only speak for myself, I call it my Brandyfesto.

It is vital that I share with you what I most care about. If you read this document, you'll understand the core of all of my work and how I'm hoping to help you with my knowledge and experience. After 15 years of service-based, work-for-hire business, I'm venturing into some new offerings: books, videos, workshops. Everything I build lives on this foundation.

I'll start with a bit about my bizarre + fantastic job as a graphic facilitator. I'll give you very broad brushstrokes on how I got here. I'll talk a bit about being a visual, spatial and kinesthetic person. My four favorite activities follow: drawing, practicing, shaping and being. I'll talk a big chunk about drawing, and then touch more briefly on the other three. I'll wrap up with an invitation. I'll share what I know in my bones from a lifetime of drawing and a career of drawing in service of other people.

Drawing is a thinking tool.

I want you to draw.

I'd like to help you redefine and reclaim drawing and use it in a way that works for you.



Drawing & Thinking

I am very fortunate person. I do my two favorite things for a living: drawing and thinking. I am thrilled that I get paid to do the things I love. The thrill is magnified by how my work helps my clients.

So what do you do?

I've got a very odd job. I am a graphic facilitator. When a company is having an important meeting, workshop or conference, I come in with a giant roll of paper and my markers. I hang a big sheet of paper on the wall, up front where everyone can see. I listen hard, organize and synthesize what I hear and then draw it out. My role is to map the conversation. This allows people see what they are saying. I make their important conversations visible, tangible. This enables my clients to have more powerful, engaging and productive meetings.

My listening, thinking, drawing skills help groups make more meaning of their meetings.

Through this role, I see the power of getting one's ideas or a group's conversation onto paper. I see the power of listening thinking, synthesizing and drawing to serve others.



How I got here

I've been drawing since I was 2 years old. Never stopped. Thankfully, I had family and teachers who fostered my drawing and my own self-will to keep drawing. Thousands and thousands of drawings.

Here's a picture of me drawing at my grandparent's cabin when I was seven years old. This is my absolute favorite photograph of me as a child. It completely captures my love of drawing and my intensity. Look at those Index and Pinkie Fingers of Determination.

When I think of how I got here, three activities stick most strongly in my brain.

First, I vividly remember taking standardized tests when I entered school. Remember the ones where the page showed you an assembled box and then you had to choose the flattened box that made it?

Some of you just broke out in a sweat. Others hum with interest. I la-la-loved those tests.

The **next** activity was moving furniture. When I was quite little, I would crawl under my desk to lift it with my back. I'd plant myself on the floor and push dressers around with my legs. I loved figuring out how to best use a space. I care about flow, balance, comfort. I'm lucky I was never smooshed.



The **last** activity was drawing. And making things from clay. And cutting up construction paper to make crocodiles with white pointy teeth. And sewing. And you get the idea.

All three of my strongest memories are about being **visual**. And **spatial**. And **kinesthetic**. I'm someone who learns by doing, through my hands. I need to touch stuff to understand it. I need to see to make sense of *things*. *Pushing things around, arranging helps me make* meaning of the world around me.

Why am I telling you these stories?

You may be one of these handsy learners too.

You may be one of these visual thinkers.

You may be a spatial superstar.

Here I start asking you questions. I hope you'll make this document your own by writing and drawing your responses.

What stories of your own school age self come to mind?

How do your childhood activities connect to what you most love to do today?

Methods of making meaning

We are meaning making machines. It is a most basic human trait to want to understand and be understood.

Some of us were raised with methods to understand ourselves, others, the world around us that worked for us. Some of us discovered better ways. Some of us are still looking.

We have different ways of using our bodies, minds and surroundings to make meaning for ourselves. Two models have given me a lot of clarity around how we think: Multiple Intelligences developed by Howard Gardner and VAK Learning Styles. I share the images on this page and the next as a summary and invite you to explore each more.

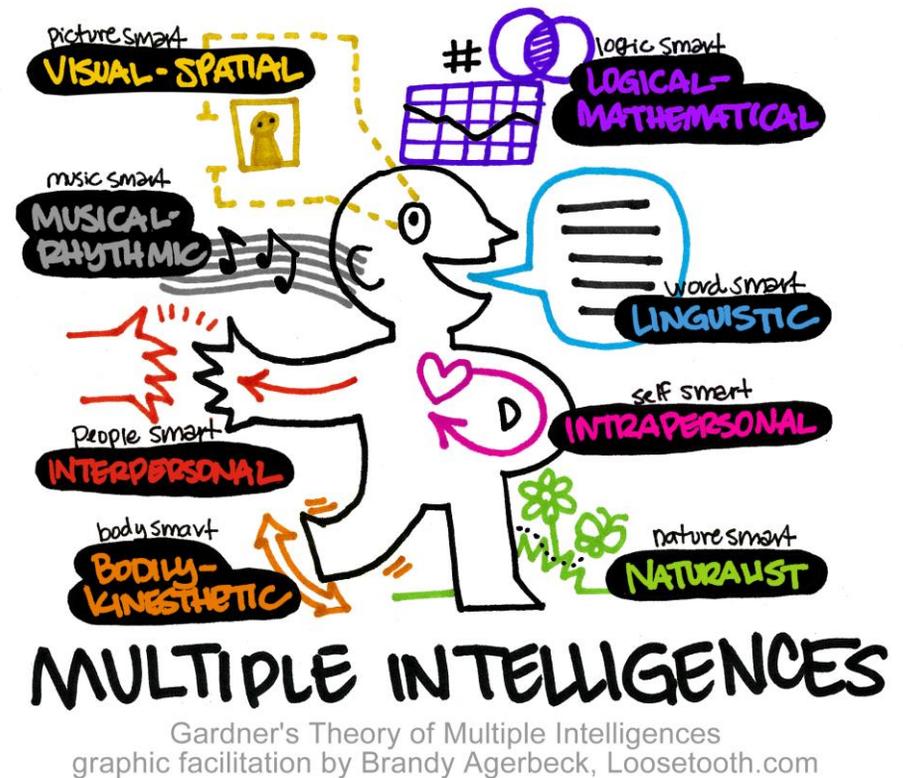
We take in and process our surroundings in a variety of ways.

We are never one single type.

We each have ways that come easily and others are harder.

We use different methods at different times under different circumstances.

No method for making meaning is better or worse. The opportunity is to understand which methods work best for us and know when to employ them.



My own methods

I went to plain ol' public school in Minnesota, in the USA. After being tested and prodded, school people saw I was a bright bulb. They gave me what I needed to thrive. I wasn't in special classes. Sometimes my teacher gave me a specific assignment that was more creative or hands on, letting me putter at the back of the class. My fifth grade teacher let me skip gym to design his bulletin boards. Those times along with the empty cork board (and no dodge ball) was pure bliss. I'm sure he was thrilled to have decorated boards too.

More often, I morphed the assignment into something that challenged me. It usually meant making more work for myself. It was clear I wasn't trying to avoid the assignment. I was well behaved. I didn't disrupt the rest of the class.

I was lucky. Very lucky. I had teachers who gave me a lot of space and leeway. They could look past the letter of the law, to see how **I was making the work work for me.**

Life is lived forward and understood backwards. Not until I was an adult could I understand why these experiences stood out for me. My strongest meaning-making methods are visual, kinesthetic and spatial. This is why I loved hands on assignments and science labs. Or why I nearly never read a book start to finish.



Fleming's VAK Learning Styles, overlaid on Multiple Intelligences
graphic facilitation by Brandy Agerbeck, Loosetooth.com

Your experience

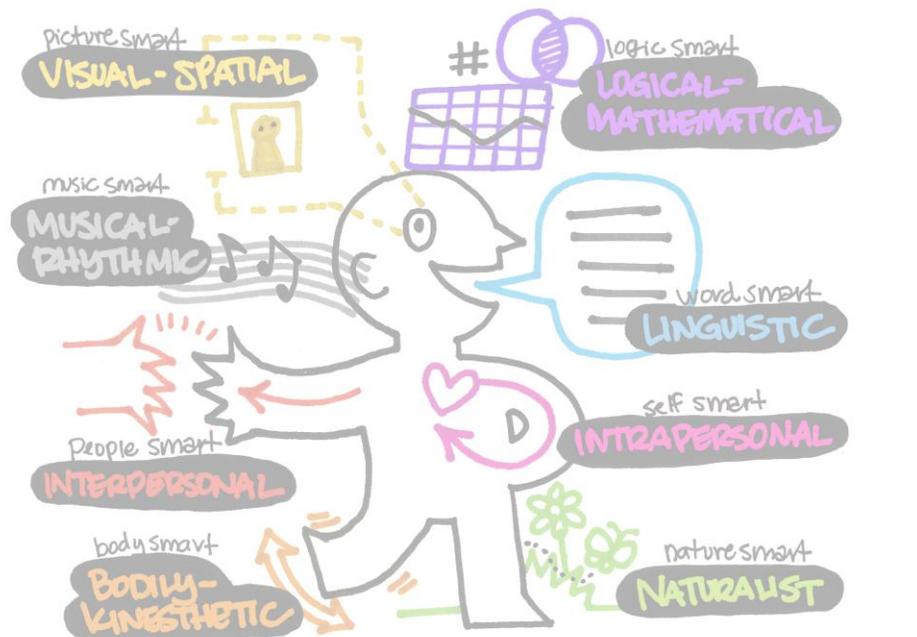
I'm sharing my experiences because I was lucky to have school work for me. Here's more likely your experience:

- You were raised by adults who didn't understand how you learned best.
- Or had teachers you didn't click with.
- Your life may have turned on one single negative comment from someone who meant the world to you.
- You may have had to endure endless bullying, abuse, neglect.
- You may have been one of those regular kids that got lost in the shuffle, neither a disruptor nor a superstar.

A lot of us can lose our own ways of working best when the world around us isn't working.

This is not about the educational system per se. This is about **rediscovering and reclaiming the best ways you learn, process and make meaning, so you can develop skills and obtain tools that help you now.** To move forward.

Which intelligences and styles resonate with you? Which make you bristle? Feel free to make notes on the copy at right.



MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences
graphic facilitation by Brandy Agerbeck, Loosetooth.com

Visual + Spatial + Kinesthetic

My own preferred modes of making meaning and working are visual, spatial and kinesthetic. This is where my passions and experiences live.

If you want to tap into these modes, join me. I know I can offer you great tools. Not inclined to use these methods naturally? Consider stretching yourself and find new ways of working. Or confirm that these tools aren't for you.

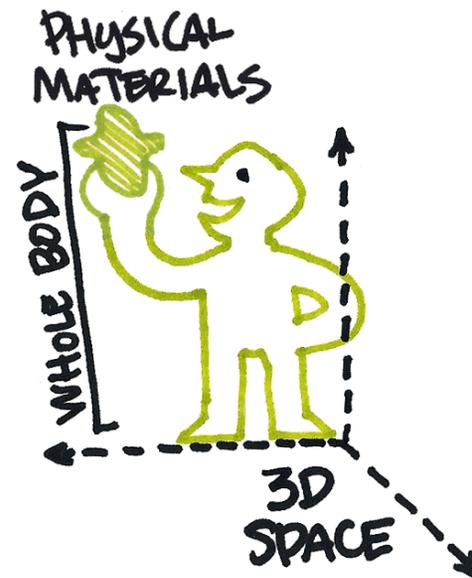
Note on language:

Some words are perfect. Like “skyscraper.” Other words fail me. Drawing is one. When I think about drawing it holds so much that the word “draw” bursts at the seams. Conversely, most folks’ define drawing so narrowly, that it has no place in their lives. I struggle with “visual, spatial, kinesthetic.” Each word has a distinct meaning; I lump those three into one whole. VisKinSpat? It is about working in our 3D world with physical materials. Using our whole bodies to learn.

Ooh, perhaps I can make my fortune coining a new term, sticking a TM on it and getting people to call themselves VisKinSpatonauts. Er, VisKinSpatonauts™.

I'm onto something...

Enough ™silliness. Join me now as a share my four favorite verbs with you.



Draw

Drawing at its most basic is about making marks. **Don't we all want to make our mark?** Well, you can pick up a marker, a pencil, a tube of lipstick and make a mark on something. Grab something and make a mark on this page. I am AOK if you draw something on my writing, drawing, photos.

Seriously. Grab something and make a mark on this paper. Scribble. Draw some plaid. Make some lines. Some circles. Some loop-de-loops if you're feeling loopy.

How did that feel?

Jot down your gut reaction alongside the marks you made.



Whether you feel liberated or nauseous, please read on.

Please dissolve your definition of drawing. Likely, it is not serving you. It probably only applies to a tiny fraction of people who can draw the zebra that looks like a zebra. I've got absolutely nothing against the zebra drawers. Look past that one way of drawing.

Here's my favorite reason: **Drawing is a thinking tool.** When you tell yourself you can't draw, you rob yourself of this simple, accessible tool. I want you to reclaim drawing as a thinking tool. I want you to use it to think more clearly, solve a problem with a new perspective, communicate with others more fully.

If you adopt a broader definition of drawing, you can find a space for yourself and your work within it.

I see three broad modes of drawing: Private, public and professional.

You can use drawing as an entirely **private** act. You can pick up a pen and use it to get your own ideas out of your head and onto paper. It will free up space in that crowded cranium. It will give you a new perspective. I would be thrilled if you used drawing for yourself, even if you never, ever, ever, ever showed those drawings to another person.

Sharing your drawing is **public**. This may strike fear in your heart. The good news is that nearly everyone else who doesn't draw is scared of it too. Most folks would be impressed with

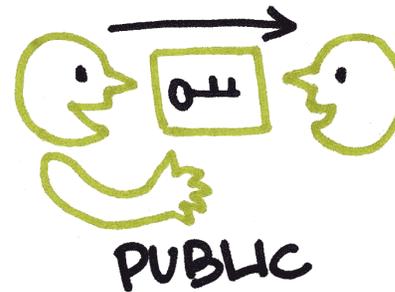


your courage. People want to find common ground and will look past your level of drawing experience.

I will tell you 99 out of 100 people who *do* draw want to see you draw too. They know how rewarding it is. That 100th guy? His ego is caught up in being the king of drawing. He's a jerk.

Beyond private drawings and public drawings are what I call **professional** drawings. Not the best term ever, but it describes when you take on the responsibility to draw on behalf of other people. Paid gig or not. This is what I do as a graphic facilitator. Drawing makes the intangible tangible. It allows for complexity. It is live and direct and people can interact with it. All these reasons create a growing need for graphic facilitators. And for more and more people with other job titles to develop graphic facilitation skills to help those in their offices, classrooms, circles do better work. I develop tools, courses, resources for all three circles: private, public, professional.

To dive deeper, let me share a model. I call it the **Draw Quad**. Years ago, a favorite facilitator introduced me to Ken Wilbur's Four Quadrant Model. It's a two-by-two matrix that contains two binaries: Internal/External and Individual/Collective. I think it's a powerful tool and highly recommend learning more about it. On the next page I'll show you how I used it as a base to create the Draw Quad to organize my thinking about drawing. It describes four fundamental reasons or motivations for drawing.



The Draw Quad

Individual Internal, upper left quadrant

THINK drawing to think through ideas

Here is drawing to work out your ideas. Getting your ideas, thoughts, feelings out of your head and onto paper. These drawings are personal; they don't have to be for anyone but you. These images can be fast, messy, temporary.

Collective Internal, lower left quadrant

SHOW drawing to communicate

These are drawings you create to speak to a specific audience. You are crafting a message to share. Often because these images are conveying something specific, they need to be more refined. Get your point across.

Individual External, upper right quadrant

SEE drawing to represent

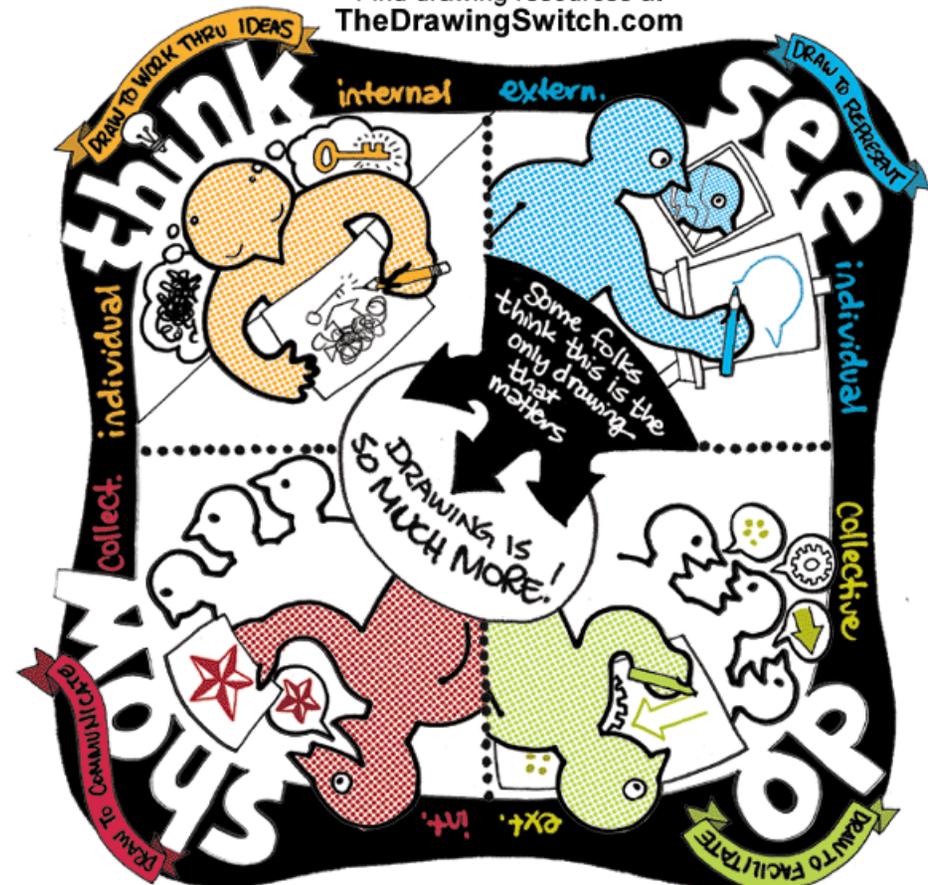
This is observing and making a drawing look like the object or subject you're drawing. I.e. The zebra that looks like a zebra. Even within that objective, there's a zillion styles, ways to draw that zebra.

Individual External, lower right quadrant

DO drawing to facilitate

This is about bringing your drawing skills to a group to serve their work. This is where graphic facilitation lives. This is about using paper, post-it notes, markers to do better work because you can visualize what they're doing. The group can all be on the same page. These are works in progress, in process.

Find drawing resources at
TheDrawingSwitch.com



As I noted in the **SEE** quadrant above, many folks think that drawing to represent is the only drawing that matters. The only drawing that is "right" or "correct." It is **25% of the picture**. I think there is loads of value to developing the **SEE** skills of drawing an object accurately. To represent something as others see it. Through this work you observe the world differently, develop great strengths between your hands, brain and eyes. AND you can do fantastic drawings in the **THINK**, **SHOW** and **DO** spaces too. I hope this model will widen your horizons about drawing.

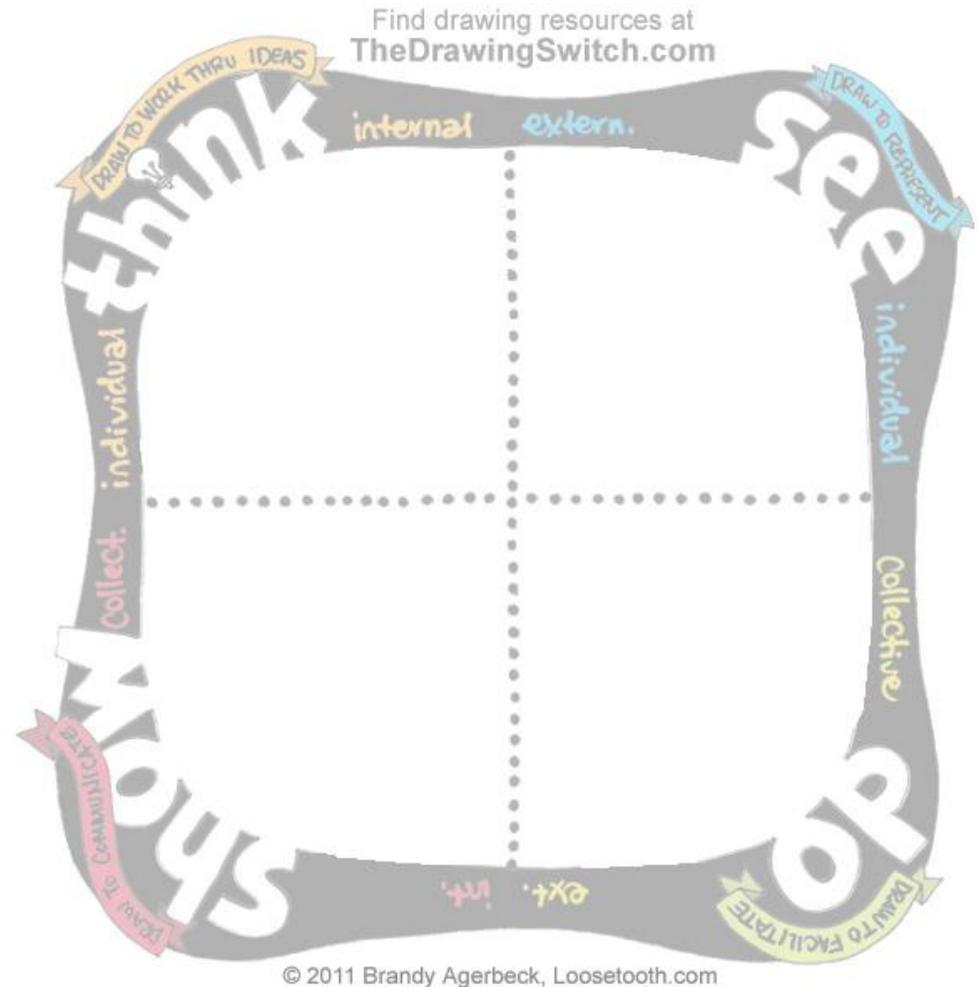
It also helps to draw two diagonal lines through the model, creating an X through it. One line goes through the **THINK** and **DO**. These two are generally more about process. These two quadrants generally use fast, messy drawings. The **SEE** and **SHOW** diagonal line is more about product. These drawings are slower, more refined, more accurate to a subject to serve their functions.

I'll admit, my passions are the **THINK** and **DO** quarters.

How have you seen drawing in the past?

Where do you see yourself using drawing in the future?

Please feel free to write down your answers on the open Draw Quad



Permission to draw

If you're waiting for permission to draw, I give it to you.

Yeah, but how?

Pick up a pen, crayon, hunk of charcoal, eyebrow pencil.

Make your mark.

Yes, it really is that simple. The discomfort you feel now has everything to do with the next verb.

I, Brandy Agerbeck, give you,

_____ ,
permission to draw.

Draw on!
Brandy



Practice

What did we learn about practice?

Practice makes perfect.

Scratch that. Practice makes *progress*.

Perfect is not the goal. You'll never get there. Sorry to deliver this harsh message. You and I? We're imperfect human beings. We are learning, growing beings.

As a graphic facilitator, I draw in front of people for a living. It's new, colorful and fun. More importantly, I make people feel heard and validated. Both reasons bring people up to me on breaks, over lunch. They often say, "You have such a gift." It really is a lovely thing to hear, *and* behind those words lurks two pieces of subtext:

1. I have the gift, *but they don't*.
2. A gift implies something *given* to me, not worked for.

I'm thankful to do work that uses the skills I've practiced my whole life. As graciously and quickly as I can, I mention the **lifetime of practice** that allows me to look so effortless in my work today.

I was recently drawing with a 12 year friend. She was comparing her drawing to mine and getting exasperated. I said, "Give it 25 years." I was where she is when I was 12. I can draw the way I do now because of piles and piles of

Practice makes
~~perfect.~~ **Progress.**

Practice makes
~~perfect.~~ **Progress.**

Practice makes
~~perfect.~~ **Progress.**

Practice makes
~~perfect.~~ **Progress.**

Practice makes
Perfect.

Practice makes
Perfect.

papers filled with many messy marks slowly getting more refined.

Think about the activity you've mastered. A musical instrument, game, craft, hobby? Jot down something you do with ease and enjoyment.

How did you feel when you first tried that activity?

How did you feel when you began to get the hang of it?

How did you feel you feel about it now?

Okay, maybe you took to a certain skill like a duck to water. More likely you first felt like I do putting on eye makeup. I feel like a cat in water. It feels so wrong. And I know it's because I have yet to practice it. If I was putting on eye makeup every day, I'd paddle along like that duck. That's muscle memory.

The more you do something, the more you learn about doing it. The more you learn what to do and not do. Next time you do better.

Practice makes progress. Through your practice you'll discover what processes work for you. Practice, progress, and process result in product.

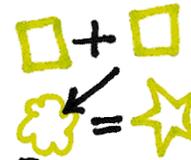
We get far too hung up on product. It's only one part of the whole. Build a practice you enjoy. Do the work. Do the work some more. Observe and admire your progress. Develop processes that challenge you. The product will follow.



PRACTICE



PROGRESS



PROCESS



PRODUCT

Consider the practices in your life.

Which come easily?

Which could use a little time and love?

What activity would you love to master?

How can you make the time and space to develop your practices and processes to make progress on it?

Shape

I am smitten with shape. I love shape as a noun and shape as a verb.

Shape as a noun is about form, contour. It's about edges, inside and outside. It's about definition and organization. Shape as a noun is about observing. **Seeing the shape something is.**

As a noun, I listen to a conversation and look for its shape. When I think of my relationship with someone, I consider our proximity to each other, how we connect or don't connect, how we relate as two shapes.

Shape as a verb is about forming, emerging, constructing, morphing. Something taking shape. Actively shaping something. Shape as a verb is about changing. **Seeing a shape for what it can be.**

Shaping is about two crucial acts:

1. Understanding the inherent properties of something. What it can and can't do.
2. Your agency. What you can or can't do to that something.

This can apply to physical materials – and in the more abstract sense. How do I shape my time? How do I shape an idea?



I don't like to take anything at face value. I always look at an object, a material, a concept and think what can I do with it? How can I shape it? How do I make it my own?

And I love the limits. I think the constraints of a given problem, material, situation are incredibly freeing. I love understanding them and seeing how to work with them or around them.

All this observing, questioning and testing the shape of something has taken me far. I've got an apartment so full of things I've modified, hacked, repurposed that it is the BrandySphere. I've shaped a career that has served me and my clients well. I now look at my knowledge and people's needs to look at how to shape new products.

Taking so much initiative and agency lures me into a trap. I often confuse control and influence. The simple model to the right helps me snap back into understanding what I can shape. The smallest circle is what one controls. The next, wider ring is what one influences. And then there's everything else.



What do you shape (verb) in your life? What is the shape (noun) of your life?

**What are the properties of a situation you're in?
What can you shape? What do you control?
What do you influence?**

Be

After all this doing, doing things over and over, and doing stuff to other stuff, let's just be.

[Inhale]

[Exhale]

I've got drawing, practicing and shaping down. I am really not great at being. My mind chatters with the endless ideas and future projects. It gibble-gabbles looking back on past actions. I try to be present. I'm learning. I've got far more to learn than teach here. Still, it's important to me as one of my four fingers/verbs.

One very simple tool I use is a Whim Day. It started out as a birthday tradition. Set aside a day. A freebie. Make zero plans. Wake up and think, "What do I want to do today?" Follow those whims. I've also applied the idea to an afternoon, a free hour. Just trying to be more present.

When is the last time you just let yourself be?

How can you be more yourself?

Is it time for a whim day?



Tools & Models

Always working with new clients, new facilitators and learning new models, tools and processes is a huge perk of my work. In my graphic facilitator infancy, I worked with the processes of MG Taylor. A rock solid set of axioms would introduce every change management workshop. A favorite is –

“The only valid test of an idea, concept or theory is what it enables you to do.”

I hope the ideas, tools, models held in this Brandyfesto help you ‘fest in our own way.

What can drawing, practicing, shaping and being help you make and do?

I create tools, books, videos, workshops to help **you** to do something. **To tap into your best ways of working. Making your work work for you.**

Again, my personal experiences are around doing my best when I’m working visually, spatially, kinesthetically. If you think you work best in these ways, I hope you’ll join me, VisKinSpatonauts™.

Thank you + invitation

Thank you for the time you took to read this Brandyfest. Creating it helped me better understand my own work. I hope it opened up some more possibilities for you in your work. And I hope you marked this puppy up with some great notes and drawings.

I develop tools to help you tap into your visual, spatial and kinesthetic modes. These often connect to these four, foundational verbs that give me the most oomph: drawing, practicing, shaping and being. Some tools are specific to the role of a graphic facilitator. Some are for everyone and anyone who wants to make meaning for themselves with physical materials, in 3D space, with one's whole body.

Please view my current offerings of visual, spatial and kinesthetic tools here:

<http://www.loosetooth.com>

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Thanks again, and **get drawing!**

