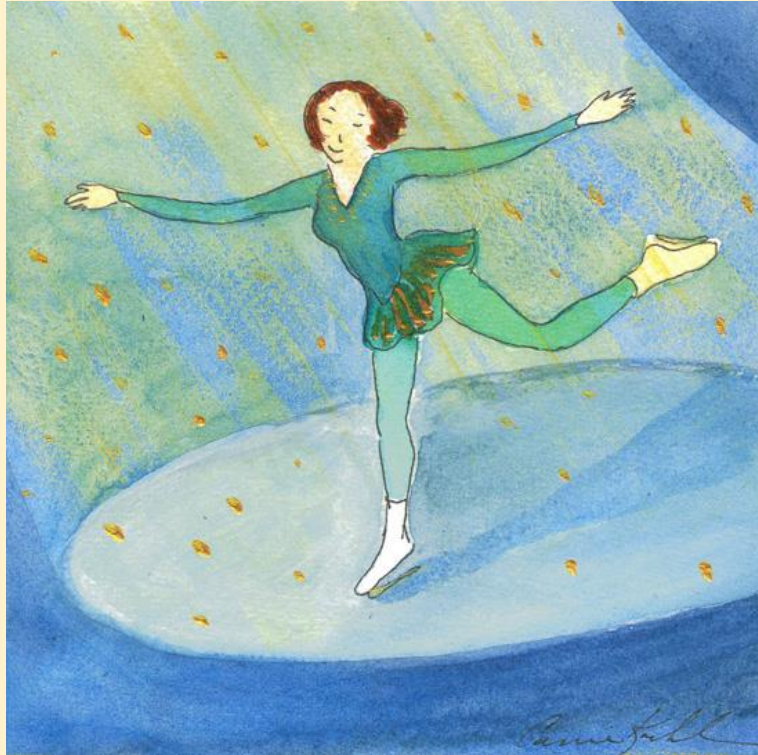


Mindful Pretending



The process of clearing your clutter requires some qualities—courage, persistence, and self-compassion—and some skills—the ability to make choices and to release what no longer fits or supports you. If you feel you're lacking in any of these areas, I invite you to engage in some Mindful Pretending.

I'm not talking about cheating or pathological lying. I'm talking about using your imagination as a tool to grow yourself. Sometimes pretending, combined with awareness and positive intention, can help clear away limiting beliefs that have become clutter for you. It can help you towards a fuller expression of your truest self.

Children are experts at pretending. It's an effective way for them to try on roles and possibilities and to experiment with new personas and behaviors. In the imaginary worlds they create, as astronauts, Olympic skaters, and horses, they act bigger and braver than they are. It helps them to grow into themselves.

Adults do the same thing. As a young woman, whenever I encountered a situation that required being assertive, I borrowed the voice of my straight-forward, courageous older sister. Each time I got a new job, I acted the part of someone who knew what she was doing. And recently, when faced with the challenge of writing a book, I practiced acting like a dedicated writer until I started genuinely feeling like one.

Each time, I felt a little sheepish about “faking it.” But each time, that process allowed me to navigate, and sometimes even master what, at first, felt daunting.

There are many journal-writing processes that can give you practice in effective, Mindful Pretending. Here's one that takes about ten minutes.

Borrowing Competence:

1. *Think about one aspect of clutter-clearing, organization, or time management that is especially daunting for you.*
2. *Make a list of people you know, have seen, read about, or imagined, who would be able to handle that challenge with ease.*
3. *Circle one whose style appeals to you. Then imagine that you are getting an infusion of that person's skills and energy in exactly the right dose to help you meet your challenge. You are still you, but with some additional ingredients.*
4. *Spend five minutes writing a description of what it feels like to successfully address what was once so challenging. If you like you can use this entrance meditation to guide you into the writing. Then read over what you wrote and write a quick statement about what you notice.*

Sending you gentle support,



Carolyn

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