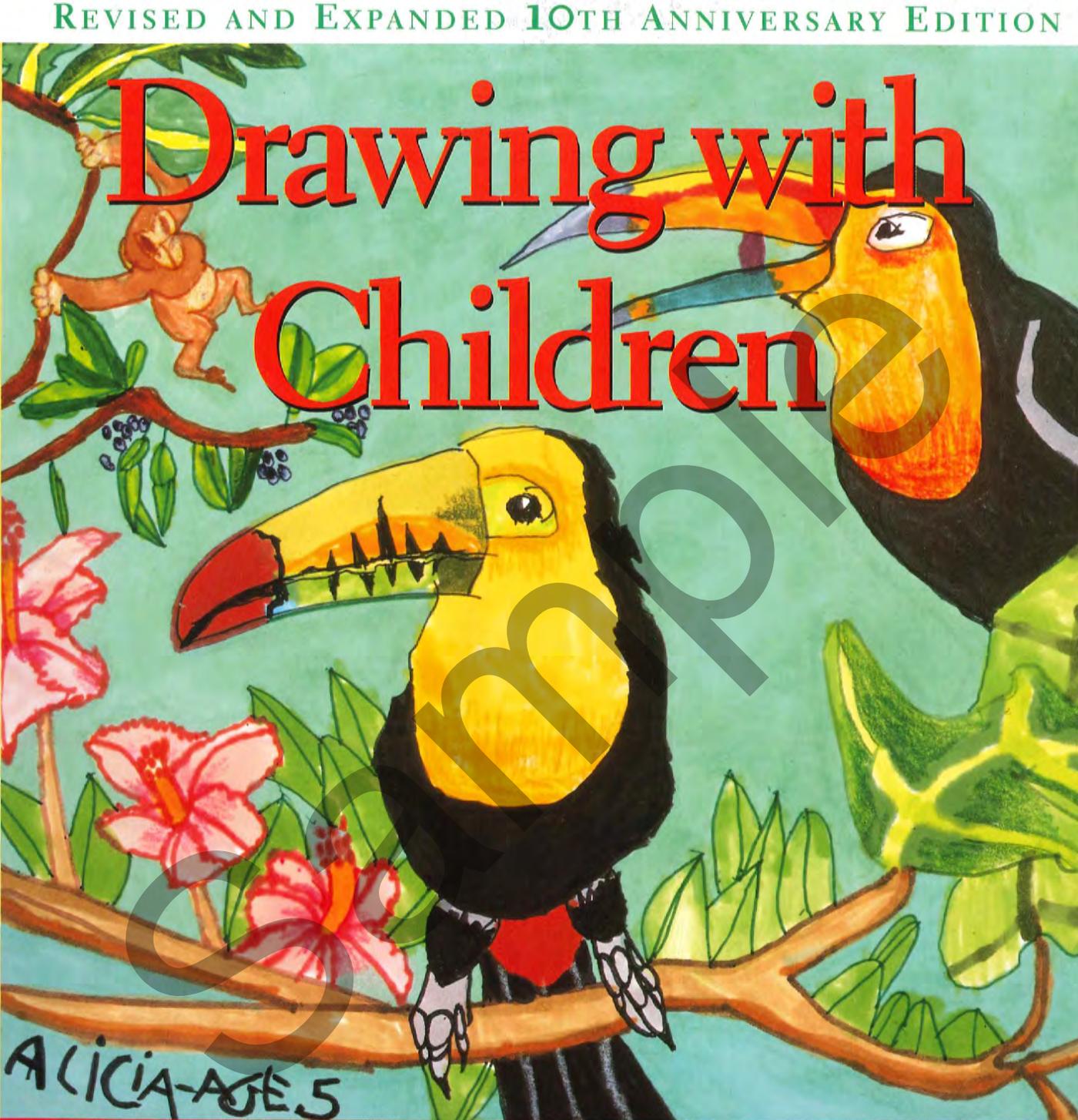


REVISED AND EXPANDED 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Drawing with Children



ALICIA-AGE 5

A Creative Method for Adult Beginners, Too

MONA BROOKES

author of *How to Draw for Children & Teens*

Drawing with children

*A Creative
Method
for Adult
Beginners,
Too*

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Before You Draw

In order to develop yourself as an artist and be able to teach others, you need to consider your feelings about your own drawing and your opinions about drawing in general. The adults who take my training say that their drawing ability is strongly improved by this preliminary work on their opinions; they are surprised to find it as beneficial as the drawing experiences themselves. This section will help you explore your feelings, provide you with a preinstruction drawing experience, and assist in the unfolding of your full potential.

How You Feel about Your Own Drawing Ability

If you feel confident about your drawing but want a vehicle to teach others, approach this method with a fresh and open outlook. If you don't feel confident about your own drawing or your ability to work with children, let me assure you that this can change. The drawings by beginner adults that you see in the color section exemplify the kind of work that was achieved by worried and unconfident beginners. None of these students knew whether they could draw and were surprised at their results. If you want to improve your own drawing and don't intend to teach anyone else, simply become your own teacher.

How often have you heard someone conclusively state, "I can't draw"? It is accepted that only a few are blessed with the gift of drawing and that no excuse is necessary for not being able to draw. You can even hear successful painters, designers,

and artistically inclined people make this statement, but with additional embarrassment and frustration. This attitude can change, whether you want to teach yourself or others. One gentleman, shaking and sweating at the beginning of a one-day workshop, admitted to the group he was shocked to display such real fear over the idea of possibly being unable to draw. He said he was sorry he had come; he was sure he'd fail. By the end of the day, he was beaming with pride at his accomplishments and said that if he could draw, anyone could. He couldn't believe I had witnessed this same phenomenon many times.

WHERE YOU STAND NOW

Read the list of five statements and pick the one that best fits the way you feel about your drawing. Make the choice according to the way you feel now, rather than past opinions.

1. I am very confident and satisfied with my current drawing ability.
2. I can draw, but I would like to draw better.
3. It has been so long since I've drawn, I don't know if I can draw anymore.
4. I can't draw, but I think I could learn.
5. I can't draw, and I don't think I could learn.

WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT DRAWING

Let's see how you feel about drawing in general. Read these eight statements and notice how many you tend to agree with.

1. The ability to draw is inherited.
2. There is a right and a wrong way to draw.
3. Drawing is simply for pleasure and has no practical use.
4. Art lessons should be given only to those children who show talent and may become artists when they grow up.
5. Structured drawing lessons are inappropriate for children; they should develop their ability through free expression and exploration only.

6. People who can't draw realistically, with accurate shading and correct proportion, aren't real artists.
7. Real artists draw from their imagination and don't need to copy things.
8. Real artists are pleased with most of what they produce.

Most of us feel that certain of these statements are true. I now believe that none of them are true. As we consider these falsehoods, we begin to relate emotionally to our frustrating childhood drawing experiences. Reevaluating those memories with updated information will help us make the shift toward success. As we proceed we'll be discussing these ideas in more detail.

LET'S DRAW

You can make the most progress in your drawing by establishing how the eight issues you just considered affect your current drawing ability. Take the next few minutes and see how you draw today. You want to evaluate how you feel about your drawing the way it is, so there is nothing to gain by trying to attain any particular effect. Just do as well as you can without worrying about it.

- Find a quiet space where no one will interrupt you for at least 30 minutes.
- Unplug the phone.
- Find a flat surface to draw on, and make yourself comfortable.
- Use plain paper and a black felt-tip marker or ballpoint pen with a regular to fine point. If all you have is a pencil, don't use the eraser.
- Have paper for note-taking next to the drawing paper.

Draw a Scene with . . .

a house

a person

a tree

some bushes and flowers

at least five other things of your choice

A Few Tips

- Relax and enjoy the process.
- Don't start over or erase if you don't like something. Make some kind of adjustment and continue until you finish drawing all the subjects.
- Don't allow yourself to be interrupted.
- As you notice your thoughts and emotional reactions, stop and write them down on the note paper. For the sake of the exercise, try not to analyze them yet. Simply note your feelings and jot down a few words to remind yourself of them.

When You Have Finished

- Get up and take a stretch, but don't allow yourself to talk to others or be distracted from the process.
- Come back, prop the drawing up, and take a long, hard look at it.
- Add any additional comments to your notes.

How You Felt

Now you can analyze your feelings and comments. Take a few minutes to let the memories that go with the feelings surface. Here are some things to consider as you learn what it all means for you.

How did you do, compared with how you thought you would do?

While you were drawing, did your thoughts reflect any of the opinions or experiences you had as a child? What can you remember about those early drawing experiences?

Were any of your thoughts related to the eight statements about drawing that you considered prior to the drawing experience? If so, how did you come to have those opinions?

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If you found yourself being overly critical about your performance, don't worry; you're not alone. I find that even people who do quite well will malign themselves. Once I heard a ten-year-old quietly tell another student, "I don't even believe the awful stuff I say about my drawings anymore, I must be fishing for compliments," and they both burst into knowing laughter. If you experienced any self-doubts while you were drawing, it would be normal for you to feel reluctant to let others see your drawings, to feel that you would not be able to improve easily, or to feel uncomfortable with the idea of teaching someone else. None of that is necessary. If you can hang in there for just a few days of discomfort and are willing to change your opinions and expectations, you can quickly see amazing growth.

Changing Your Attitudes and Abilities

Exposing yourself to new information about the drawing process will make a more dramatic change in your current ability to draw than will any other factor. Changing your expectations about what is acceptable and possible can be the key to unlocking the door. So let's take the eight statements you considered about the subject of drawing and see if we can shed some new light on them.

NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

1. *The ability to draw is inherited.* This is one of the main reasons people believe they can't draw. If you don't have an artist in your immediate family, as many of us don't, you might have decided it was impossible for you to draw after a few minor attempts. Once you've bought the idea that drawing is an inherited talent, you are probably too quick to give up when you don't achieve immediate success or your beginning attempts feel uncomfortable. Can you imagine how many people would learn to roller-skate if they took this same approach?

Drawing is a teachable subject and artistic talent can be developed. When I first faced packed schoolrooms of thirty-five restless and doubting preteens, I wasn't quite sure they would

“Broadens our conception of learning in the arts and the mastery of other disciplines.”

HOWARD GARDNER

Professor of education and author of *Multiple Intelligences*



MALLARY BYERS, AGE 7



LEAH DAVIS, AGE 11



LINDA KELSEY, ADULT

Now in a revised and expanded edition, this perennial best-seller is the definitive guide for parents and teachers on how to encourage drawing.

Mona Brookes's easy-to-follow, lesson-by-lesson approach to drawing has yielded astounding results with children of all ages and beginning adults. Her unique drawing program has created a revolution in the field of education and a sense of delight and pride among the thousands of students who have learned to draw through her “Monart method.”

This revised edition includes the following new materials:

- Information on multiple intelligence and the seven ways to learn
- An inspirational chapter on helping children with learning problems
- An integrated-studies chapter, with projects geared for reading, math, science, ESL, multicultural studies, and environmental awareness
- A sixteen-page color insert and hundreds of sample illustrations

This invaluable teaching aid not only guides readers through the basics, but also gives important advice on creating a nurturing environment in which self-expression and creativity can flourish. Both practical and enlightening, *Drawing with Children* inspires educators and parents to bring out the artist in all of us.



MONA BROOKES is an internationally acclaimed art educator and founder of the Monart Drawing Schools. She is a keynote speaker at educational conferences and gives workshops in school districts nationwide. Her second book, *Drawing for Older Children & Teens*, has been adopted in many public school upper-grade-level art programs. She lives in Ojai, California.

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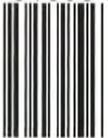
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