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## Art and Healing

By Richard Carpenter

I was asked to write an article about art and healing. First of all I want you to know a little about me and my credentials. I'm an Artist, I live in the country. I'm self taught. I don't have any degrees. I don't consider myself to be professional, a master artist, or anyone special in the field of healing art. All I can do is give you my common mans opinion, in common words.

		<p>Buttons were my bread and butter for five years or so. I must have carved close to a thousand different buttons. They are carved from many different materials: Antler, horn, Ivory, Bakelite, Lucite, rubber, lead, woods, metal, and more.</p> <p>I also added embellishments such as rhinestones, inlaid stones, glass beads, porcupine quills, Shell, and much more. Most would average 1 1/4" to 1 1/2". Some smaller, some larger. I carved everything from an Anteater to a Zebra, including the Kitchen Sink. I sold most all my buttons on ebay to collectors - prices ranging from \$10 to \$300 a button.</p>
		
		

Personally, I have rarely been sick or seriously ill or injured. Don't get me wrong. I'm not the picture of health either. I really need more exercise. I believe it is mostly my positive attitude, despite the pain, frustration, and the like, that keeps me going. I've heard that if you are looking at something and it moves you in some way, it's Art. However, it can move you either way, like a kind word or a cruel word. If you are attracted to a work of art and admire it for a period of time, then it has already affected you physically, whether you realize it or not. The longer you can admire the work of art. the better. I believe the moment you are attracted to the art piece, your mind sets itself in a healing mode. The longer you admire the work of art, the more readily your mind will connect with the heart. That inner connection is the key to putting your system back in balance. Good Art is like a form of self-hypnosis or meditation. It puts your mind in a peaceful place. If it's heartfelt art, you've opened the healing channels in your body.

Stress, frustration, aggravation or discomfort of any sort all block your healing channels through your system. Your mind is busy dealing with everything but the real problem. Stress is worrying. it is not good. It is a form of panic. It is like falling in a lake. The more you panic, the more likely you are to sink. The more you relax, the more you find yourself floating and all is calm and peaceful. Art helps you relax on different levels.

And how about frustration? I think it's like a stepping-stone to stress. I believe frustration is only the lack of ability to understand. One should accept the fact that as humans we don't understand everything. Don't take your frustration to the stress level. Let go of it! RELAX! You don't have to understand everything. Find a work of art that really moves you. Focus on every aspect of it and how it affects you. Your frustration will go away and your healing channels will flow more directly.

I'm not an authority on this subject. I just know what I know; believe what I believe; think what I think, and explain it the best way I know. I reckon I may not make any sense to many, but if I make great sense to one person, which allows that person to alter his train of thought in a positive way, then I'm doing okay.

I've always wanted to be an artist. So I made up my mind one day in the year 1991. I started making things and haven't stopped. I don't try to complicate life or my art. You can admire the simple beauty in it. It may leave you in awe, but it's not complicated. This computer is more complicated and frustrating than anything, but it's business. I must say, I'm glad I have my art to put me back in the right frame of mind.

I've learned more about my art in the past couple of years than I have the previous nineteen years. A couple of years ago an email went out with pictures of my Pine Needle Bears, and my Moose Antler Carvings. It started from friend to friend. I put my email address on it for those who might have any questions.



Within two months I was getting 500 emails a day! STRESS!!! I have a hard time reading that much, let alone chicken-pecking this keyboard to answer. They were all so wonderful, though. They kept me going. I never realized the effect my art really had on so many people. I must have answered over 30,000 emails from all over the world, and still counting. The letters I've received have all been positive. From seven year olds to ninety-seven year olds. My art has inspired so many others to pick up their artistic skills again. So many have asked God to bless me because of my art. So many have written about their illnesses, saying that just seeing pictures of my art had brightened their day.

For whatever reason, they were able to relate to my art.- whether the subject reminded them of a wonderful time in their past, or the skill and originality involved in making my art amazes them. My work reassures them that there are endless possibilities. That translates to endless possibilities of ways to be healed. Putting one in the right frame of mind allows the mind and heart to connect. I believe true art does this. I don't believe my art has healed anyone. Not physically anyways. I do believe it has helped many mentally and spiritually to put them back on track for healing themselves faster.



**Mounted on a pine burl, this is a special non-typical antler.  
The fishing Pole is made from wire, paint, and fishing line.**

Your mind keeps your body going. It knows what your body needs to heal, even if you don't consciously know. When art sets your mind and heart together, it can channel what your body needs to where it needs it, more effectively.

Well, this is my opinion, as humble as it is. I'm not a writer, I'm not scientist, I don't do major studies on the subject of healing. I only know what I feel and believe. Art makes me and others feel good. That's positive, and you want and need as many positives in your life as possible during the healing process.

So, go out and look for art that moves you in a positive way. Do so as often as you can. I believe it will help. Remember eye candy is good for you, real candy is not.

Sincerely, from an old artist in the mountains of Idaho.

Richard

**Richard Carpenter**



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