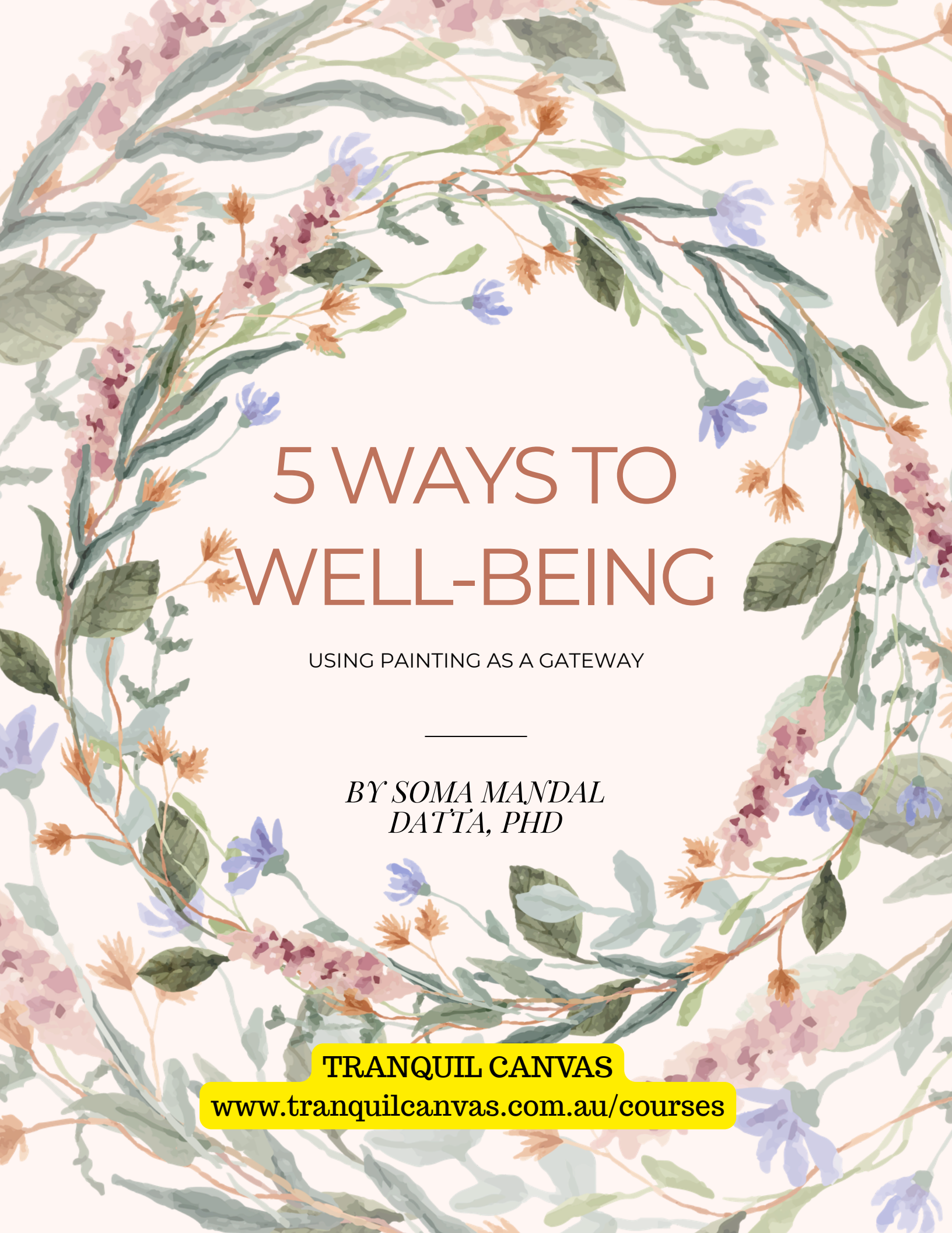




5 WAYS TO WELL-BEING

USING PAINTING AS A GATEWAY

*BY SOMA MANDAL
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TRANQUIL CANVAS

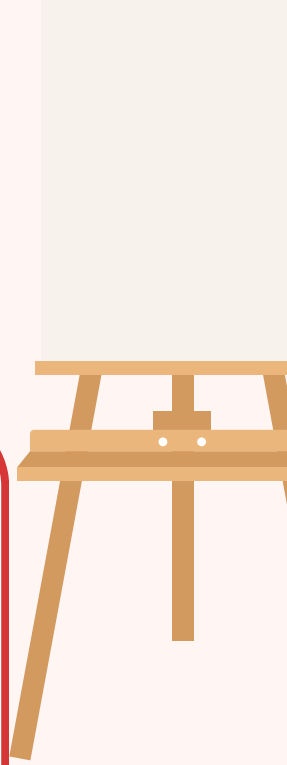
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NOURISH YOUR WELL-BEING

Hi, I'm Soma — an architect by training, and a painter by calling. After 15+ years teaching art and design, and helping over 1,500 students find their own creative confidence, I've learned that creativity isn't a luxury — it's one of the simplest paths back to yourself.

Evidence shows creativity helps reduce stress and improve memory and retention. Spending creative “me-time” keeps us in good form to handle life's challenges — after all, we can't give from an empty vessel. We need to take care of ourselves first, so we can take care of those we love.

Here are 5 easy ways I use painting to shift mindset and find well-being. Pick one and try it this week.



TIP #1

Be Spontaneous, Adventurous and Playful in Your Decisions

Avoid overthinking while painting — be spontaneous and playful in the choices you make. From selection of tools to techniques and how you mix and match them, have fun and watch things emerge. If it's an absolute mess, so be it. Allow yourself to make a mess and mistakes. Treat these mistakes as 'happy accidents.' Painting with no fear of consequences feels very liberating.

It leads you to feeling happy, carefree and adventurous. And that is a good headspace to be in every day.

try this!

Grab three colours you wouldn't normally put together, and make one brushstroke of each. No plan. Just see what happens.



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TIP #2

Let It Go



Many ask... What does this even mean? In the context of art-making, this idea urges you to let go of any section of your painting that does not match the future path of the painting. This could mean sections of your painting being painted over, blocked, or faded to perhaps define a shape and allow newer shapes or patterns to emerge. You may have fallen in love with these sections, but you will need to decide at some point to 'let them go' or recede to the background, only so you can move further in your painting process. This key value actually translates to letting go of negative patterns, habits, thoughts and behaviour in our lives so we can move forward to better things.

try this!

Look at a painting — yours or someone else's — and pick one section you'd let recede into the background. Notice what that single decision does to the whole piece.

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TIP #3

Avoid Any Planning or Directing of the Final Outcome

For any creative process to work as a self-care activity, you'd need to silence your 'inner critic' and any negative messages as they arise — such as fear of failure and achieving perfection. It may be challenging initially, but that's OK. Try to set them aside. With practice this step will become intuitive and integral to how you paint. For now, try to set such thoughts aside and avoid any compulsion to create a perfect end product or 'good art.' Emphasize to yourself the value of painting for relaxation — always trusting and enjoying the process of creation.



try this!

Before you start, resist naming what you're painting. Let the shapes tell you what it wants to be, a few minutes in.

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TIP #4

Develop and Practice Curiosity

Allow your creative process to be led by emotions and feelings. And then, when you find yourself with many ideas but undecided which ones to use... ask yourself 'what if' I did this? What if I painted over this area, or teased out this shape, or used this over that... Be curious and adventurous with your approach — remember, there is no right or wrong way, just your own way, of a narrative as expressed through paint on canvas.



try this!

Next time you're stuck between two choices, do both — split the canvas conceptually, or paint two versions on scrap paper — and see which one pulls you in.

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TIP #5

Walk Away



No, it doesn't mean walking away from a mistake — remember, there are no mistakes, just happy accidents (a quote by famous oil painting artist Bob Ross). So what this means is: when you hit a creative hurdle, or just a feeling of indecisiveness, take a break and avoid forcing yourself to create any further. Walk away, let the paint dry, have a cuppa, and leave it on the easel. When you return to your painting, you might find yourself seeing things in a different light — a bit like in life, too, isn't it? So if the process is not doing it for you, the best thing to do is to walk away and take a break. You might surprise yourself by then starting on a completely new path, and finishing at a point beyond your imagination!

try this!

Set a timer for your next project. If you hit a wall, put the brush down for at least 20 minutes — no phone, just a walk or a cup of tea — before deciding whether to continue.

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3 Ways to Transform Your Life Through Painting

A short, guided course to help you take charge of your well-being — no experience or "talent" required.

- ✓ Video lessons you can watch in one sitting
- ✓ Simple prompts to help you paint intuitively, without a plan
- ✓ Created by an architect-turned-educator with 15+ years teaching over 1,500 students

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**Creativity is
not a luxury —
it's a path
back to yourself.**

Thank You for Reading

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