

Driving toward Authenticity: 2017 in Review



Cynthia Morris, Original Impulse

Some years it feels like you're on a road trip to a place you really want to be. But along the way, the things you experience change both you and your destination.

I'm learning that wherever I go, and whatever I do, the drive toward authenticity is the way for me.

Enjoy this brief annual review, with photos by Charlotte Bergan.

Cynthia Morris

From the Plateau, It's a Nice View, But...



I'm grateful to celebrate my 18th year of coaching and teaching at Original Impulse. I savor the great fortune and privilege of working alongside dynamic and engaged creative people on projects that matter.

We had over 200 students in our courses and webinars - woo hoo! I coached over 70 clients, both Original Impulse clients and ArtBizCoach Inner Circle clients.



Clients finished books, mounted art shows, and bravely put themselves out there with new ventures and adventures. As a coach, it's important that my own creative practice yields bodies of work that fuel my work with others.

In 2017, these are the bodies of work I created:

- [Visit Paris Like An Artist](#) e-book
- 365 Cups series up to 185
- 100 portraits
- Japan postcard series (22 to date)
- 13 notebooks and sketchbooks filled
- [30 videos](#)
- 24 newsletters and a steady stream of photos from Paris, Japan and my studio in Denver.

Even with all these wins, I approach the end of 2017 feeling a lingering dissatisfaction. While this was an amazing year for fulfilling my dreams, I didn't develop in big ways.

Recently, I drafted my goals for 2018. But when I looked back at last year's goals from this time, I had written pretty much the same thing. My notebooks always reflect my truth back to me.

I feel the sense of a plateau in my art. This feeling of stasis is normal in the arc of a creative life, but one can't linger on the plateau for too long. Later in this review I will share my plan for leaving the plateau for higher ground.

What about you? Where might you be coasting on a plateau? What can you do to bring forward momentum?



An Expired Dream and Inspired Wedding



The biggest surprise in 2017 was marrying my beloved, Steve. But it didn't look like I imagined it would.

I've always wanted to get married and have an outdoor wedding. There would be gorgeous flowers, great food and all my loved ones present.

So I set out to make this dream real. But when I sent a 'save the date' note to friends and family, my wedding dream rapidly became a collective wedding dream. Helpful input came too soon for me. I made gaffs, hurt people's feelings, and stumbled over wedding etiquette. Even when people say 'do it your way!' it's hard to get away from expectations.

With each decision to be made, a heavy feeling pervaded the planning. There was a sense that what we were designing didn't quite fit. It was like my long-held dream had expired.

One day, driving to yoga, I said to Steve, What if we don't have a wedding? During class, I released my fantasy of having a wedding. Suddenly, a different, energizing possibility arose.



We love spending time hiking together. What if we hiked up a nearby mountain, had a special ceremony, and then went for a lovely meal? We could celebrate with our local loved ones at our Solstice Party, which has special significance in our relationship.

The joy that bubbled up around that possibility was undeniable. What if I led my life by this joy? Doing only things that bring this clear joy would make for a very different life indeed.

So we did it. We made some plans and said our vows with a gorgeous mountain view. We stayed at the Crawford Hotel and enjoyed Union Station's many delights.

We all have obligations and commitments that may not feel like a constant wellspring of bubbling joy. I get that. But I will seek to make decisions and live from the authentic place inside that brings truth and joy to light.

*What about you? What long-held dreams of yours reached their expiration date?
What did you do this year to honor your authentic joy?*



Financial Upleveling



Many years ago, I taught myself the basics of personal finance. Through lots of reading and conversations, I managed to turn my financial health around in significant and lasting ways. The empowerment I gained from this transferred to other areas of life. The difficulties involved with dealing with my finances made for lots of transferable confidence.

But alas, like any good practice, you must stay on top of it for it to work. I had gotten lazy about saving and other financial planning. It was time to up level my financial picture.

This time, I found podcasts to be a great source of information and inspiration. Two specific podcasts are my favorites because they offer both interviews and Q&A format, which allows the hosts to cover lots of ground. They're also my favorites because they're hosted by women. It's helpful and exciting to me to hear smart women talking about money.



I highly recommend [Her Money with Jean Chatzky](#) and [So Money by Farnoosh Torabi](#).

Listening to the podcasts, reading the books and blogs of their guests and making small but significant shifts helped me to set an ambitious financial goal, make changes in my spending patterns and appreciate the power of good financial health.

I will keep listening and growing in this area because I find being financially empowered empowers all other areas of my life. I am blown away by how what I listen to/consume can have such a direct impact on my actions and well-being.

*What about you? What will you do in 2018 to be more financially empowered?
What are you consuming that's helping you up level your life?*



My Big Failure



I started the year with a big failure. I haven't publicly talked about this, largely because I wasn't sure what to say and partially because I didn't feel great about it. Here's what happened.

I got it into my head that I was the perfect candidate for the Adobe Creative Residency program. I wasn't an Adobe product user, but this seemed like a good way to learn. (Crazy or chutzpah?!)

I spent hours and hours over months perfecting my application. I got feedback from friends and colleagues. It was fun to imagine what I would do with a year to focus on a project. It was difficult to wrangle my ideas into a compelling pitch.

Fast forward to the announcement date. I was vacationing in Ireland, feverishly checking my phone for the announcement. It became clear that I wasn't going to get a notice of any kind, and my friends encouraged me to put the phone away and enjoy the moment.

I've learned that applying for things does us as much good as winning them, so I wasn't devastated, just disappointed. After the dust cleared, I asked myself this question: What did I want to make on my own steam and terms?



Writing, illustrating and publishing my own books and products is how I want to focus my creative energies. I want to make more work and have freedom to experiment. So I spent much of 2017 teasing out my new ways of creating and getting clear on what I want to make and why.

I'll keep applying for things, because it's useful to learn how to articulate and pitch your ideas. But I'll always keep the compass pointed toward my own truth.

What about you? What disappointments informed your studio practice this year?



Making Magic in 2018



I believe making is magic. Making, to me, is the best growth path. We are both humbled and elevated by our creative work, and when we complete things that matter to us, we engage our full selves: body, mind, emotion, spirit and soul.

I'm delving deeper into what it means to consistently create and live from our original impulse. Community and commitment help us feel the permission we need to create authentically.

In 2018, my way off my plateau is to express more authenticity in art, work and life. Here are some containers in which I will practice:

I will write and illustrate a book (working title: The Care and Feeding of the Artist). I've never illustrated my own book, so this is a new challenge.

We just launched the [Original Impulse Atelier](#) - a year-long program designed to foster creative fulfillment. There are still a few member spots available in this year-long program. [All the details are here.](#)

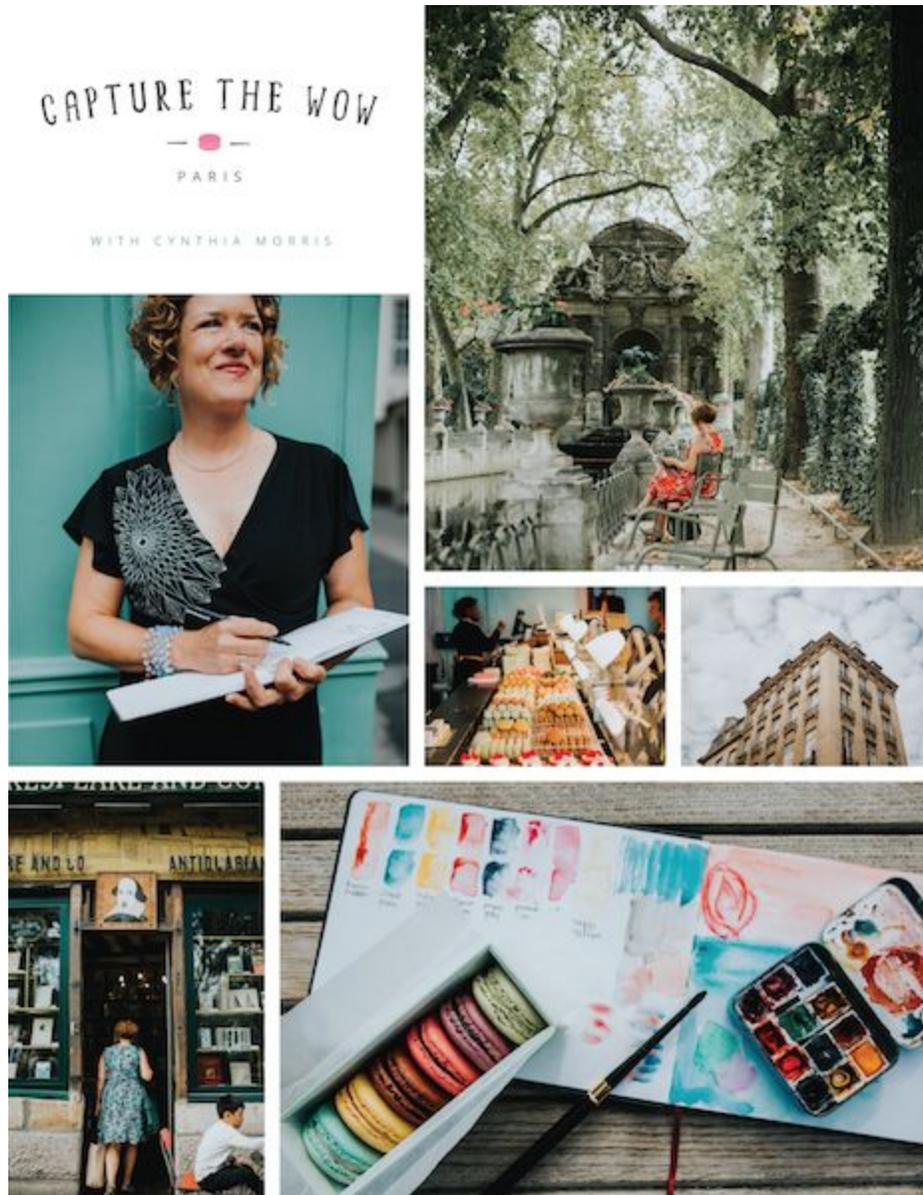
[Original Impulse](#) will undergo an exciting renovation; stay tuned for exciting changes and new offers.

More video! I say this every year. Videos feel like the most fun and truest way to express myself authentically. Making them is both easy and challenging. In 2018 I hope to bring myself out of my shell with more fun videos.



My new class, [Magic Journey, Magic Journal](#) sold out within hours at Two Hands Paperie, and my Drawing as Meditation class also fills quickly. I will look for more ways to bring these and other classes to you. Feel free to email me class suggestions.

This year's [Capture the Paris Wow](#) was one of the best! I added some fun new things and shifted the way I teach and lead. I'll be bringing those improvements and more to the spring in [Orvieto, Italy](#) and [Paris, France](#).



What about you? What magic will you make in 2018?



One True Line



Hemingway got past writer's block by telling himself to 'write one true sentence'. As a writer and artist, I crave more permission to be honest. Long ago, I decided to never post anything 'negative' online. But now I see how that has allowed me to only show the cheerful, positive parts of myself.

I want to take the muzzle off and share myself more authentically. So I am taking up Hemingway's invitation with a new series, One True Line.

Every day, I will write or draw what I consider a truth. Just one line. This project could take many forms; I am leaving it intentionally open.

Join me in your own daily One True Line. It's free and there's no need to sign up. Simply follow along on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#), using the hashtag **#onetrueLine**.

Thank you for reading my mini annual review. If something moved you or inspired you, please [email me](#). I'd love to hear from you. To making magic in 2018 and beyond,

Cynthia

