Emotional Management through Expressive Arts for children®



Facilitation guide for parents

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Who is it for

Aimed at children from 3 years old and their parents.

What you will find in this guide

Artistic activities* for children and guide to apply the creative process as a tool to identify, express and self-regulate their emotions.

Artistic* and recreational activities to be carried out in groups, in order to improve cohesion and communication between family members.

** It is not necessary to have artistic knowledge, the use of art in this method is only a tool **

About Expressive Arts

What are they used for?	Benefits	Why do we use Art to express?
Expressive arts are used as a tool of expression, they are not crafts, nor do we seek to learn artistic techniques. Art is used here freely to express our mental, emotional and physical world. The result is NOT important, what matters is the process.	- Self-knowledge and emotional management - Relief of stress - Improvement in relationships with others - Increased autonomy and self-management	Sometimes it is very difficult to express in words what we feel, think or the sensations of our body. Art offers different forms of expression and works as a mirror to better understand ourselves. Furthermore, we connect with our innate creativity, which reveals internal resources to improve our daily life.

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4. Activities

For children	For the Family	Extraordinary Activities	Intention
1. Happiness Mandala	2. Giant Happiness Mandala	3. Camping in the living-room	Connect with positive feelings.
4. How do animals feel?	5. Animals in action	6. Adventure in the jungle	Identify and express emotions.
7. Fantastic characters	8. Improv storyteller	9. Costume party	Identify internal resources.
10. Happy face, sad face	11. Doodle mural	12. The upside down day	Recognize emotional needs, ours and those of the other.

1. Notes for parents as facilitators of creativity and emotional management

"Children who are allowed to express themselves freely become creatively free adults, those who are controlled when they play tend to grow up as people who question their own instincts' 'J. Cameron (Author of "The Artist's Way")

By nurturing their creativity we foster their self-esteem, we as parents become mirrors of their creative capacity and limitless potential. Our job is to let them explore freely and appreciate their efforts in the experience of **doing something out of nothing, which is precisely the definition of creativity**. It is good to remember that children only want the people they love to feel proud.

1.1 Things to keep in mind before starting

1. Limits and structure

Children need limits to feel safe, but they must feel that there is freedom to express themselves within those limits. It is not about setting rigid rules, but explaining them with love, since they have been less time than we in this world, and they are still exploring it. The structure must be flexible and we must offer a framework of security and acceptance to allow for creative and free expression.

It is also important to establish **flexible routines or rhythms adapted** to our needs as a family in our day to day.

2. Emotions

Emotional work is based on the fact that all emotions are valid and it is valid to feel how we feel. There is no emotion better than another and all of them are necessary for our evolution as human beings. However, in this guide we will work with the emotions that make us feel good (which we will call positive) and those that make us feel bad (called negative). Our task is to provide a safe place to express them and thus learn to manage them. In addition, it is important to give them value in their proper measure, that is, without ignoring them or, on the contrary, giving them too much importance..

3. To avoid: focus on the result, interpret or judge

It is very important that **we avoid focusing on the artistic result** as well as interpreting, criticizing, labeling, pressing, comparing, enhancing rivalry, laughing, mocking, etc. We must avoid JUDGE, in any of its forms, the result and our children. That is, what they do is neither right nor wrong, nor is it necessary to compare it with what their brother did, or with what we suppose it should look like. In the same way we must **avoid any label** regarding his artistic creation, body expression or his feelings, **however innocent it may seem**. Labels can create limits on your personal evolution.

To know what to avoid, it is enough to put yourself in the child's place and ask "how would I feel if I was or my creative work were judged, if they made fun of what I did or expressed, if they criticized it, if they showed displeasure, they shamed me ...?". Now multiply it by 100, or by 1000, depending on the age of the child (the younger, the greater the magnitude). Children are all emotions and, therefore, they are much more sensitive than us, what happens is that sometimes we do not remember. If they feel hurt, that wound can last for years inside and will be difficult to heal. We must treat this issue with care and do everything possible to sensitize ourselves to it.

It is not about lying to them so that they are happy, that does not help them at all, but of **being honest with respect and admiration.** Remembering, at all times, that

what is valuable here is not to create a perfect work but to create for the simple fact of creating.

4. Movement every day

The developing brain of children needs physical movement so that the prefrontal part, in charge of learning, develops normally. When **they don't have time or space to move or there is emotional overload**, due to stress or inability to manage their own emotions, the prefrontal brain is affected. Think about any time in your life where you were emotionally overwhelmed and how it affected you in your daily tasks, it is something similar. It is important to provide a place for children to move. The younger they are, the more necessary it is.

5. Free time to create or dance

Boredom is not bad, it is a call to action. Creative actions repeated over time, allow them to develop their initiative in search of artistic creation as a wellness tool without needing the adult always present. In addition to promoting their own resources to combat the much hated boredom. Feeling free to create, in whatever way a few minutes a day, will provide them with an essential outlet valve and benefit the whole family.

1.2. Parents self-care

"All the adults were children one day, even if they hardly remember" Antoine de Saint Éxupery

1. Creative recovery

Forgetting to say or think "I am not creative". If we give that message to our children they will learn that there is non-creative being and that does not exist. All people are, creativity is an innate quality of the human being. What is different is that we have stopped using it or lost connection with it.

2. Availability

We cannot always be available. Moments for us are vital, otherwise we would only lead to extreme tiredness and that would be useless. The creative experience can only take place in a climate of freedom and calm, an exhausted father or mother cannot facilitate anything. Explaining our needs to our children, we not only take care of ourselves, but we also teach them that setting limits for personal care is healthy and necessary.

3. Having fun with them

We can take advantage of this experience to reconnect with our own creativity but, above all, to have fun with our children.

2. Resources

2.1 Materials

- 1. To write: paper, pencil, pen ...
- **2. To color:** oil pastels (especially for the little ones), colored pencils, markers, paper sheets for drawing and coloring, kraft paper for group coloring.
- **3. To paint:** we recommend tempera or children's watercolors; since acrylic is not washable. Paint brushes and sheets, or cardboard.
- **4.** For collage: magazines, stamped papers, old pieces of cloth, scissors and glue (stick or white glue), tape, card stock.
- **5. Portfolio**: Folder or box to store the works of art. * See "Art Gallery" in the Spaces section.
- **6. Diary:** For the elder children, to record their impressions after reflections. Optional, for parents, a journal to write down what is remarkable for us (reflections of our children or ours, emotions, ideas, notes, images, cutouts, ...)
- 7. **Any other** creative material that inspires us as: materials for recycle, objects for 3D creations, wool ... there are no limits to creativity:)

2.2 Spaces (suggested)

1. Creativity Space

It is recommended that children have a space to always create in the same place, like their own studio. If we do not have enough space at home we can put all the material in a box and take it out every time we go to do the artistic activity. The advantage of having **the** 'ready to use' creative space is that it will favor Spontaneous Activities (see 3.1 Types of Activities).

2. Art Gallery

Can be added in the wall of the creative space, on a board or cardboard as an **artistic gallery** to place the created works. If we do not have a place, we can save them in a folder or box, which will be their artistic portfolio.

3. Space to move

Any place to move, dance, cartwheel ... in short, let their energy run. Carpet, cushions, passageways, ...

If you do not have a space only to move, which is normal, and you must use a common room or the living room, it is very important to indicate them that this space of movement is used at specific times of the day, that is, we cannot jump on the sofa when we want and must respect common places. Decide when is the best time to move, which can last between 10 and 20 minutes, or more, depending on your needs depending on the day.

4. Personal Shelter

A small place for their privacy, their own refuge where they can feel safe with themselves. Designed by them, it can be something simple, like a cabin made with a sheet or a house with a cardboard box. Anything that makes them feel that this is their private space.

2.3 Other resources

Music: We recommend choosing music for dancing and moving, the one they like best. And another for calmer moments, like creating or relaxing.

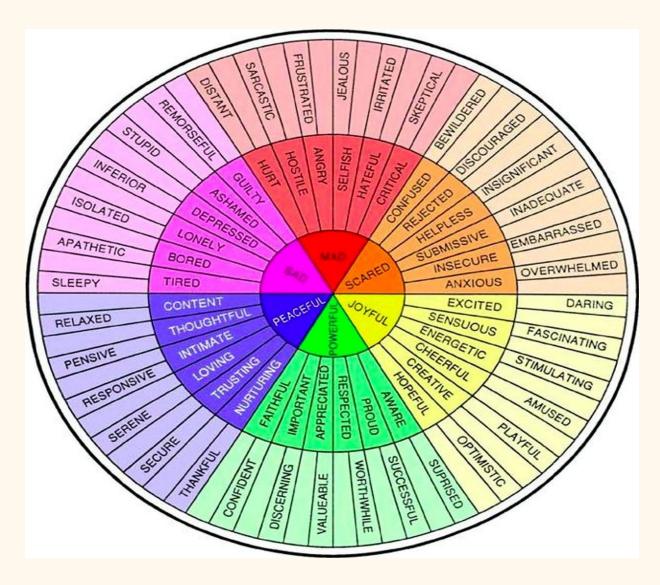
Links for images: If you do not have magazines or books with images, you can go to the internet image banks. Here are two, there are many more.

https://pixabay.com/en/

https://www.pexels.com/en-en/

www.expressart.org

Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions: This wheel helps us identify more specific emotions.



3. Notes on activities

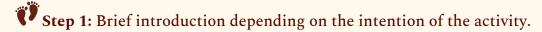
3.1 Types of activities

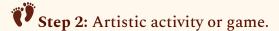
Three types of activities are proposed in this guide:

- 1. For children
- 2. To do as a family
- **3.** Extraordinary activities: these ones are optional, although we also recommend doing them to work on cohesion and communication between family members.
- **4. Spontaneous creation activities:** also optional, it is about encouraging our sons and daughters to create spontaneously in their free time. We seek to promote their initiative to create autonomously. By doing this, they develop not only their creativity, but also their capacity for self-care *. Therefore, we propose the creation of a **space of creativity**, so that the possibility of creating is available at any time that the child wants or needs to create. In addition, it is important that the safe creation materials are available for their access (appropriate for their age), other materials, we will give them when requested.

3.2 Structure

The proposed activities follow a simple formula. They are divided into three steps:





Step 3: Express and reflect.

^{*} In creative action, an internal communication is established with themselves that provides well-being and relief from emotional stress.

3.3 Ages

They are activities designed **for all ages**. Obviously, as they are free in artistic expression, without addressing a specific result, **each age will create according to their abilities**. All creations are valid, it is about making and expressing.

The little ones will need adult help for some notes and games. For the older ones, we can encourage them to write down in a diary after the activities, the reflections or whatever they consider. This tool encourages the habit of keeping a written record, and therefore a visual one, of your emotions, so that you can better manage them. It is totally optional.

3.4 How to distribute them over time

The activities are designed to be done **flexibly and at your own pace**. There are 12 activities divided into four blocks. You can do one block per week, that is, 3 activities, one for each group, per week (leaving the extraordinary for the weekend or not). This is a suggestion, I recommend distributing them as best suits your daily life.

The first activity of each block is for the children. If you feel, for example, that it is necessary to do two activities in a row for them from two different blocks, do it. Then you can do the family activities later.

As parents and facilitators, you will see, according to the intention of each activity, what your children need. Also, you can create your own adaptations.

Before starting each activity, remind your children that EVERYTHING they do is OK. There is no bad or good.

This is not a rigid guide, all the activities are proposals that you can modify or adapt to your liking according to the characteristics of your family. Be flexible, creative and let your imagination run wild.

4. Activities

If you have not already done so, please read the parent notes before facilitating the emotional management exercises.

1. Happiness mandala	Children activity
Intention: connect with inner joy. The mandala will be a visual symbol to reconnect with our joy when we need it.	Note: This activity can be done by themselves, or with us. That is, each member should make their mandala.

1. Name 10 things that we love and make us happy. Parents can write them down, if they still can't write. They can be things, places, things we like to do, smells, sensations ...

2. On a sheet of paper with a circle already drawn, color a mandala while we think about those things. It can be abstract or they can draw them. For older children or adults, it is possible to color from the outside to the center or the other way round.

Cut and paste (or hang with a thread) where we can see it. It can be close to our creativity corner.

To make the circle you can use the bottom of a plate. It should not be too big or too small.

- 3. Share the experience.
 - 1. How did you do it? It is important that they tell how their creation process was.
 - 2. How you felt? Let them put into words how they felt while coloring.
 - 3. What did you like the most? (Of process).

2. Giant Happiness Mandala	Family activity
Intention : Communicate through art, without using language.	Minimum 2 persons

1. Name or write 10 things that we love and make us happy, individually or together. (See previous activity).

2. On a larger sheet (type A3 or kraft paper) color a previously drawn circle all together and create a giant group mandala. Each member of the group chooses a single color. They can be making shapes or drawings, whatever we want. It ends when the entire circle is filled.

OYou cannot talk while drawing. We can play quiet music if we want.

Variation: If you want you can go around the mandala every 30 seconds so that the colors mix more and the experience is different. Or it can be done freely.

3. Share the experience.

At the end, each participant, in turn, shares how they felt during the experience.

- 1. How have you felt? Express both the positive and the negative. Encourage them to say if something bothered them or made them feel uncomfortable when someone colored or added things to their part of the mandala. Being able to respectfully talk about what bothers us in the context of a creative activity offers them the opportunity to learn to express themselves even when they think it can upset others and lose their fear of doing so. If there is nothing negative there is no need to insist.
- 2. What did you like the most? (Of the process).
- 3. Observe the elements of the mandala, leaving space for everyone to comment on what they see without judging or interpreting. Just mentioning what is there and what catches your attention or surprises you. When you finish, look for a title among all and write it behind.

You can hang it somewhere in your home.

3. Camping in the classroom	Extraordinary activity
Intention: To do something out of the ordinary to break the routine, plan something together and have fun.	Note: Optional activity.

- 1. Propose a camping night in the living room. Plan together which day, things we need: sleeping bags, blankets, mattresses, flashlights, snacks, fridge, possibility to build a tent, games (songs, letters,) ...
- 2. The day of camping: Prepare it all together as if you were really camping.
- 3. On the camping you can tell funny stories, sing songs or make up games. The important thing is to have fun doing something different.

4. How do animals feel?	Children activity
	Note: the emotions they choose for each animal are fine, it doesn't matter if we think differently.

- 1. Choose 6 or more images of different animals and say how each animal feels according to the photo, without repeating the emotions. If you don't have magazines, look for images on the Internet. Verbalize the emotion of each animal starting with the phrase "I feel or I am ..." to express how they think each animal is feeling.
- 2. Collage: cut out the photos of the animals from the magazine to make a collage or mural of the emotions by writing the emotion below each one. If the images are from the internet they can draw the animals themselves. It doesn't matter if the emotion is really represented or not, the important thing is that they identify the animal with the emotion that they associated.

3. Express and reflect.

- 1. With the collage finished, they can go animal by animal telling their experience and pointing out where in their body they feel the emotion. They can start by saying "When I'm ... I notice it in ..." For example, when I'm angry I notice it in my belly. It can be specified if you want, I notice a ball in the belly. This helps them identify emotions from the sensations in their body.
- 2. We can ask them to tell us when they felt or how each animal in the collage feels. Listen as if we were listening to our best friend, and see what happens.

5. Animals in action	Family activity
Intention: express our emotions bodily and differentiate those that make us feel good and those that make us feel bad. Recognize the emotion in the other, and that different emotions can be felt in the same situations depending on the person.	Note: Mime game. All games where we are exposed to the sight of the other require an extra sensitization on our part. Our job as facilitators is to prevent anyone from judging or making fun of the other.

1. Briefly recall the emotions of the animals collage from the previous activity. Write them on pieces of paper or draw each animal associated with an emotion (for the little ones). Add more emotions, if necessary, that do not appear in the collage (or collages, if there are several children) trying to have the 6 basic emotions. *See wheel of emotions. Make a list of positive and negative situations in daily life. For example, go to the beach or fall when I run. Write them down on papers for the third round.

2. Mime game: We put the folded papers in a bowl or cap and in turn, each player will come out in three different rounds. In the first round, take a piece of paper at random and represent the animal without speaking, only with gestures and sounds. In the second round, mime the emotion. In the third round, we change the pieces of paper for those of the situations of the daily life and we mime the emotion that we

would feel depending on the situation that touches us (for the little ones, an adult will read the situation to their ears).

This is not a competition game, to avoid it we can write down on a sheet the points earned by each player, as a single team and tell them, for example, that if we reach X points, we all win a special 'reward': like eating ice cream or something we love to do and do not do regularly. Make the score accessible to be able to get the reward;)

- 3. Talk about the last round, that of the situations of daily life.
- 1. Are there any emotions that have surprised you regarding another person? Which and why?
- 2. Is there a situation in which you would feel different from how another person felt? What and how would you have felt?

6. Adventure in the jungle	Extraordinary activity
Intention: Use the body and its possibilities of movement. Awaken the imagination in the home they are used to, looking at it with different eyes.	Note: Optional activity.

1. Imagining that we are explorers we are going to walk around the room or throughout the house, parents decide. We can find clothes to dress up as explorers before we start. The goal is to move in funny ways around the space while finding possible materials * to create a sculpture later on. Of course with the permission of the expedition leader, mom or dad.

In turn, each member will be the leader of the expedition, it can be one for each room in the house or by time. This one will go ahead and it will move as if it were in the jungle, that is: jumping obstacles, crawling, climbing, removing branches, etc. They can be real obstacles (the sofa, under the table ...) or we can imagine them 'showing them' with our movement .. The rest must follow by imitating the movement. As we go, we are collecting objects for sculpture.

① Establish safe rules before you start, although not too rigid.

*The materials can be chosen by them, with your permission, or they can be small wrapped treasures or any other distinctive, which we will have previously hidden.

2. Go back to base camp and take inventory of the objects or materials to create that you have found. Together, without speaking, create a sculpture with them. You can use scotch or ribbons to tie, or simply create a composition all together. When you finish, all together put a title to the sculpture and take a photo to remember your adventure.

3. Share one by one what you liked the most and what you liked the least about the expedition. Tidy up he sculpture all together, as a team, and distributing the task of returning the objects to their places to all the participants;)

7. Fantastic characters	Children activity
Intention: create the habit of expressing emotions and find resources for the ones which make us feel bad.	

1. Remember the activity of animals. Go naming the different emotions that we have already identified and write them down. New ones may arise. Between 6 and 10 is fine. * Later we can continue adding if new ones are identified.

2. Cut out cardstock or paper the size of flash cards. A measurement reference is a A4 sheet of paper folded into four equal parts, and cut it out. Draw a line below **before drawing** to outline the space, leaving space to write the emotion with a black marker under the character, NOT behind it (later we will use the cards to play). They draw and color a fantastic character or monster* on each card to represent each emotion.

* Being fantastic characters they can have any aspect. Let their imagination run wild. We can also use the word monster as long as they don't associate it with something that scares them.

Sample card
Anger



3. Express and reflect.

- 1. With the cards finished and facing up, let children show them to us one by one and explain the associated emotion.
- 2. Make two groups with the cards: one for the 'positive' emotions (emotions that make us feel good) and the other with the 'negative' emotions (emotions that make us feel bad). Invite them to choose one or two cards from the negative emotion group and tell you what they do to feel better when they feel this way. If they don't know, ask them, what do you need when you're ...? For example: "What do you need when you are angry?" Possible answers: "calm down, kick ..." So a resource to get through that emotion can be to seek calm or kick a cushion. It is about finding specific resources that they can use.
- 2. Then ask them how you feel today? * And have them choose the card that represents their emotion for today and why they feel this way (if they know it, if not, it is not necessary). We can also, if we want, show a card that represents how we feel today and share it with them.
- * We can propose that they choose a card each day according to how they feel, putting all the cards facing up first. For the older ones, propose that after choosing the letter they can write in their diary the emotion or whatever they want related to it, a poem, a short story.... This invites them to create the habit of keeping a written, and therefore, visual record of their emotions and to be able to identify themselves with them.

8. Improv storyteller	Family activity
Intention: Identify emotions in different real-life situations.	Note: I play with the cards they created

1. Prepare the cards of the fantastic characters they made. If necessary, go back to review each one and its associated emotion.

2. Place the cards face down. Each participant takes one and looks at it without showing it. One begins by telling a story with this character, placing his/her card facing up. You can make up a name if you want and start with "Once upon a time there was a monster (or made-up name) that felt... (emotion) because... (made-up situation)". The next participant launches her/his card and continues the story by adding the emotion and an action that suits or completes the situation of the previous one. And so on until all players have played their card.

The story may be a little crazy or make no sense, that doesn't matter. The important thing is to narrate with imagination and putting the emotions in context. **Example:** First narrator: Once upon a time there was a martian named Klin who felt very happy (emotion) because he had played with his favorite toys all day (situation). Next narrator: When his friend Lot suddenly appeared, he was very sad because he had fallen while running through the garden. Next narrator: 'Don't cry', said martian mother, I am going to make you a chocolate cake so that you feel better and happier ...

3. When finished, each one can share with the others a real situation that has happened to them and that it has made them feel the emotion of the card that touched them. If it is a negative emotion we can ask or invite them to explain what they would need in that situation to feel better.

^{*} You can play as many times as you want ;)

9. Costume party	Extraordinary activity
Intention: Have fun playing at being imaginary characters.	Note: Optional activity.

- 1. Prepare the party. The costumes can be inspired on the fantastic characters on the cards or they can dress up as they like. Decide also the decoration, music, or snacks we will have at our party. And distribute the tasks to prepare it.
- 2. At the party we can dance, sing, play games, take funny pictures, improvise theatrical stories with the characters we have dressed up as, whatever you fancy the most. The important thing is to have fun. When tidying up, remember to do it as a team and distribute small tasks.
- 3. The next day, while we had breakfast, lunch or dinner together, ask them how they enjoyed it and what they liked most about the party.

10. Sad face and happy face	Children activity
Intention: Relationship between emotion and need.	Note: We call them negative or positive emotions to tell if they make us feel good or bad.

- 1. Briefly recall some of the negative and positive emotions together.
- 2. On two different paper sheets ask them to make a face on each paper (they can choose to color or paint). One face represents a positive emotion and the other negative one. When finished, ask them to transform the two faces to their opposite emotion by adding more elements to the drawing (coloring or painting).
- 3. Express and reflect.
- 1. Which drawing do you like the most and why?

- 2. Is there anything that was difficult for you to do? If so, what solutions have you found to overcome it?
- 3. Title each drawing.
- 4. Ask them how they feel today. If they want, they can choose a card from the fantastic characters that represent their emotion. If you have a negative emotion, ask them what they need to feel better or to transform it.

11. Doodling Mural	Family activity
Intention: Explore the encounter between our emotional world and that of others. Express our needs.	Note: In couples or all together. Minimum 2 persons.

1. Prepare an A3 sheet or kraft sheet for two people or a larger one if you are more than two participants. Place yourselves in front of the blade, with a black marker or black color in your hand. For two minutes or so and in silence, close your eyes and feel in your body, or from your mind, how you feel at this moment. No need to put words, just feel.

You can play quiet music throughout the exercise. The less you talk to each other the better. It is about communicating from creative intuition;)

2. Without speaking, start drawing lines, like doodles on the paper, all at once. The more continuous teh lines are the better, meaning that you have lines that cross among them. At the end, when you feel that you are already satisfied, it is time to paint. With colors or paint, as you like, go painting the shapes you find to your liking.

3. Express and reflect.

I recommend that all participants answer all questions and share with others.

- 1. What did you like best?
- 2. How did you feel doing the exercise?
- 3. Did something bother you? If so, what and why? With this question we invite to self-reflection to make us more aware of what things can bother us and to share them with respect and appreciation for the other.
- 4. Put a title all together. You can hang it in your Art Gallery or in a common place or keep it in the portfolio. Decide it together.

12. The upside down day	Extraordinary activity
Intention: Put ourselves in someone else's shoes. Take decisions on everyone's behalf.	Note: Optional activity.

1. Decide together which will be your family upside down day. Prepare it. Write down on a piece of paper what rules it has. That day, the usual things turn upside down. For example, the breakfast can be a dessert, the children 'make of' parents (with some limits, of course), we can dress with the clothes upside down,... These are examples, you decide what can be reversed in your routine as a family and lay the foundations of the game together.

I recommend that it be a day when parents do not have to work and are available to do the things previously decided. It doesn't have to be all day, it can be punctual moments.

It's about helping our children make consensual and fun decisions that affect the whole family.

2. The upside down day: have fun.

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3. After the day upside down. The next day, you can ask them if they had a good time. Share what you liked most and what less and how you felt.

If you liked it it could become an annual family tradition. What would you take away or add for next year?

I sincerely hope that you have enjoyed this guidance and that it has served you to improve your emotional world and to enrich your family lives.

If you have 2 minutes, here is a very short survey, I would love to know your opinion about this guide and it will help me to improve.

Thank you in advance!

https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/S7VD7WK

For any feedback or inquiry do not hesitate to send me a message to:

veronicaexpressivearts@gmail.com

Many thanks for trusting this guide and keeping creativity alive.

Cheers,

Veronica

