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Life Coaching for Creative Women: Mixing Magic with Mindfulness

Romance your Seven Senses

“We do not put beauty or love or order into the world. We find them there.”
~ James Hillman: *The Force of Character* (1999).

♥ *This exercise is based on a piece first published by The Romance University:*
<http://romanceuniversity.org/2015/07/20/romance-your-seven-senses-by-eliza-redgold/>

One of the first pieces of fiction writing advice I received was to ‘use my senses’. To be honest, I had no idea how. As an academic of the absent-minded professor variety (as my university students will attest) I often didn’t notice what was around me, wandering around campus lost in thought. So, one by one, I decided to ‘romance my senses’ in my own backyard, by exploring the region where I live and writing about each sense. What an adventure!

The first in my contemporary romance senses series is *Black Diamonds*, set in the world of delicious truffles. It focused on *taste*. *Hide and Seek*, number two in the ‘senses series’, is all about *sight* and *sound*. The third in the senses series is a novella called *Wild Flower*. You guessed it – all about *scent*. And *touch*? Well, all romances are about exploring the sense of touch!

In my work as an academic, I’ve been influenced by a wonderful theorist and colleague, Dr Lebbie Hopkins, who coined the phrase ‘passionate pedagogy’. The word pedagogy refers to the method and practice of teaching, but I think it also refers to the method and practice of creativity. She writes of her passionate pedagogy:

“First, it is a pedagogy that draws on passions of the soul: it begins with love; it is fuelled by wonder and generosity; it has a political edge driven by respect for the self

and respect for the difference and similarity of the other; and in its embracing of poststructuralist thinking it remains fluid and open to growth. Second, it is a pedagogy that draws on passions of the body: it understands that to know is to be, not to have; it engages the imagination and the senses in learning; it acknowledges the intersections of epistemology and ontology. Third, in its movement backwards and forwards between passions of the body and passions of the soul, it is a pedagogy that allows us to be, and to become, in a continual process of storying and re-storying the self in response to new knowledges, experiences and insights. It is a pedagogy that leads simultaneously inwards and outwards towards a condition of flourishing. (Hopkins)”

So, in addition to the five senses of *taste, sight, sound, scent* and *touch*, I would add *wonder* and *generosity*.

Wonder can sound a little dreamy and aimless. It's Alice through the Looking-Glass, lovers and dreamers gazing up at the sky, searching for the rainbow connection. But wonder is charged with power. It is truly marvellous. It's more than amazement, or surprise at something remarkable. To wonder is also to want to know, to be curious, to form an opinion, to be ready to act. We can create wonder-ful fictional worlds, when we dream and do.

And a sense of generosity? Well, it means giving all you've got. Generosity is a powerful generator of change for good. The word *genus*, from which generous comes, means humanity. Giving generously as a writer means not holding back. It means sharing your ideas, your words, your emotions, your knowledge, your dreams and your stories to inspire others.

Find the beauty, love and order in your world. There are unique tastes, sights, scents, textures and sounds just waiting for you to discover them.

Begin your adventure... Romance your SEVEN senses.



REDGOLD CREATIVITY Exercise

Using your (seven) senses are crucial to both mindfulness and creativity, and to the way they work together. Engaging our senses instantly brings us into the present moment and can

relieve our sense of stress, anger or anxiety. For enhanced creativity, regularly and mindfully indulge one or more of your senses.

See. Take a few moments to gaze at something beautiful in your line of sight: a flower, a plant, a view, a passing scene. Keep a postcard with a beautiful picture handy, or put a photo on your phone or computer that uplifts you. Stop and stare for a while.

Scent. Inhale a beautiful scent. Spray your favorite perfume or room spray around you, light a fragranced candle, or use an oil diffuser. Imagine it as a cloud of protection, an invisible stress-shield. Breathe deeply.

Taste. Enjoy a burst of flavor. Keep your favorite bubble gum handy. Chew some just for fun until the flavor runs out. A sugar-free lollipop can also give you some stress free flavor. Fully focus on the taste experience.




Hear. Create a de-stress compilation on your iPod. Select a couple of favorites that will give you a relaxation trigger. Under pressure, listen to a relaxing song or piece of music to soothe the stress and drift away to another sound dimension.

Touch. Keep a tactile soother near you: a smooth crystal, a rough rock, or a swatch of fabric (you're never too old for a cuddle rug). Use it as a touchstone when you need to remind yourself to relax. Or stroke an animal's fur: it gives instant stress release.

Wonder. Ponder, Wander. Want to know. Be pensive. Be curious. "Wonder, like curiosity, can make things happen," writes author Marina Warner. "It is time for wishful thinking to have its due."

Generate. Share what you see, scent, taste, hear, touch and wonder about. Let it inspire and re-generate you. Be generous enough to share your creativity with others. Generate change for good.

In your creative practice, ask yourself:

-  Which sense is your strongest? Sight? Sound? Taste? Touch? Scent?
-  What makes you wonder?
-  What do you want to share in your endeavors?

Be passionate! Bring these seven senses to your creativity.

References:

Hillman, James. (1999). *The Force of Character*. New York: Ballantine.
Hopkins, Leckie. (2009). *Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education.



About the Author

Hello, my name is Eliza Redgold. It's based upon the Gaelic meaning of my full name, Dr Elizabeth Reid Boyd. English folklore has it that if you help a fairy, you will be rewarded with red gold. I'm an author and academic. I write fiction (as Eliza Redgold) and non-fiction (as Elizabeth Reid Boyd).

There are some exciting new releases in 2017. Out in March is *The Secrets of Mindful Beauty* to be published by Skyhorse Publishing, New York. These revolutionary techniques in anti-ageing and self-care will change how you look and how you feel - forever.

In 2017 the first in my Ladies of Legend fiction series will be released as an audio book. Listen out for NAKED: A Novel of Lady Godiva on Audible.

Also in progress is a non-fiction book about the spirit of fairy tales and how you can transform your life with a forgotten fairy tale philosophy.

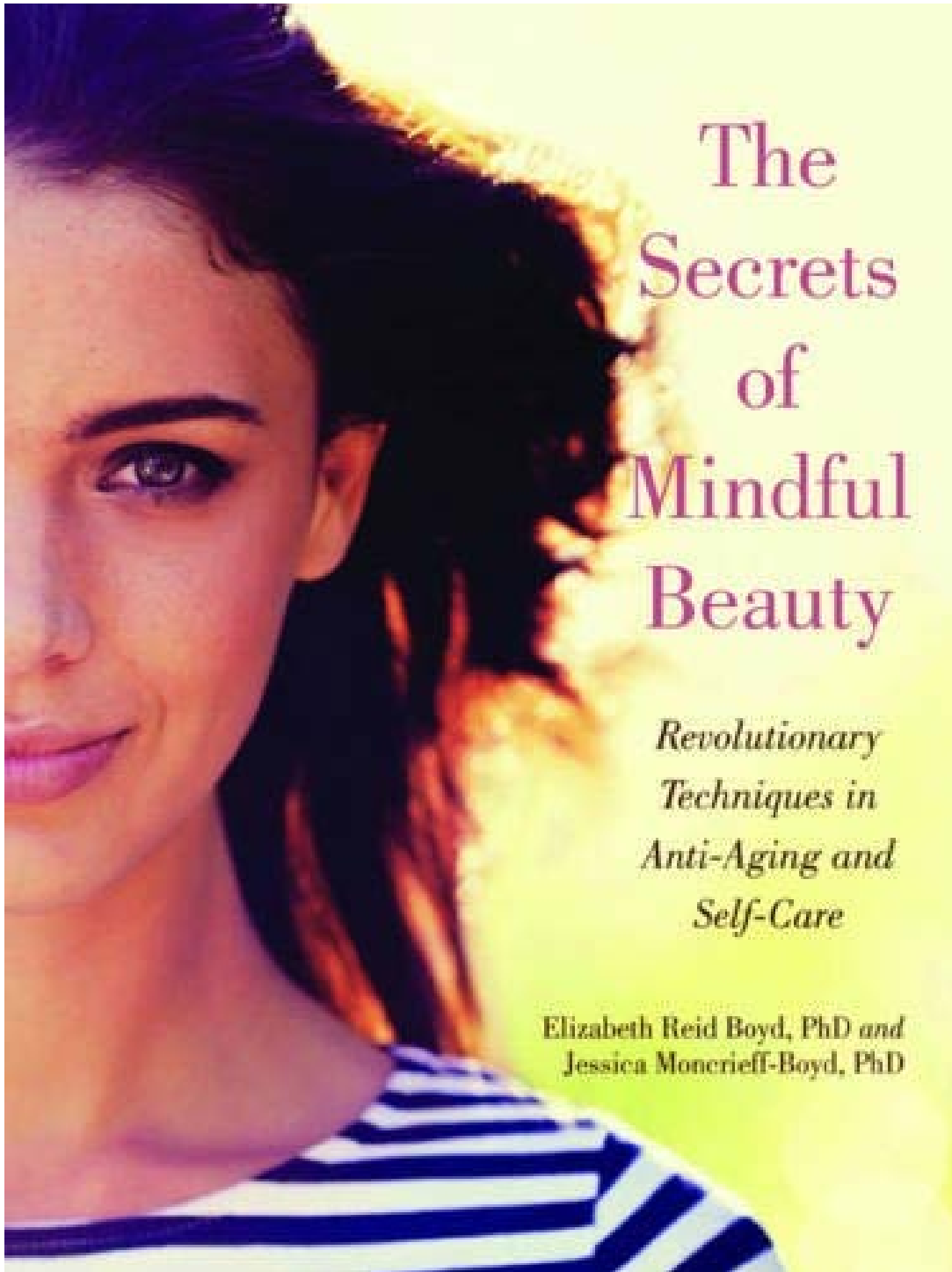
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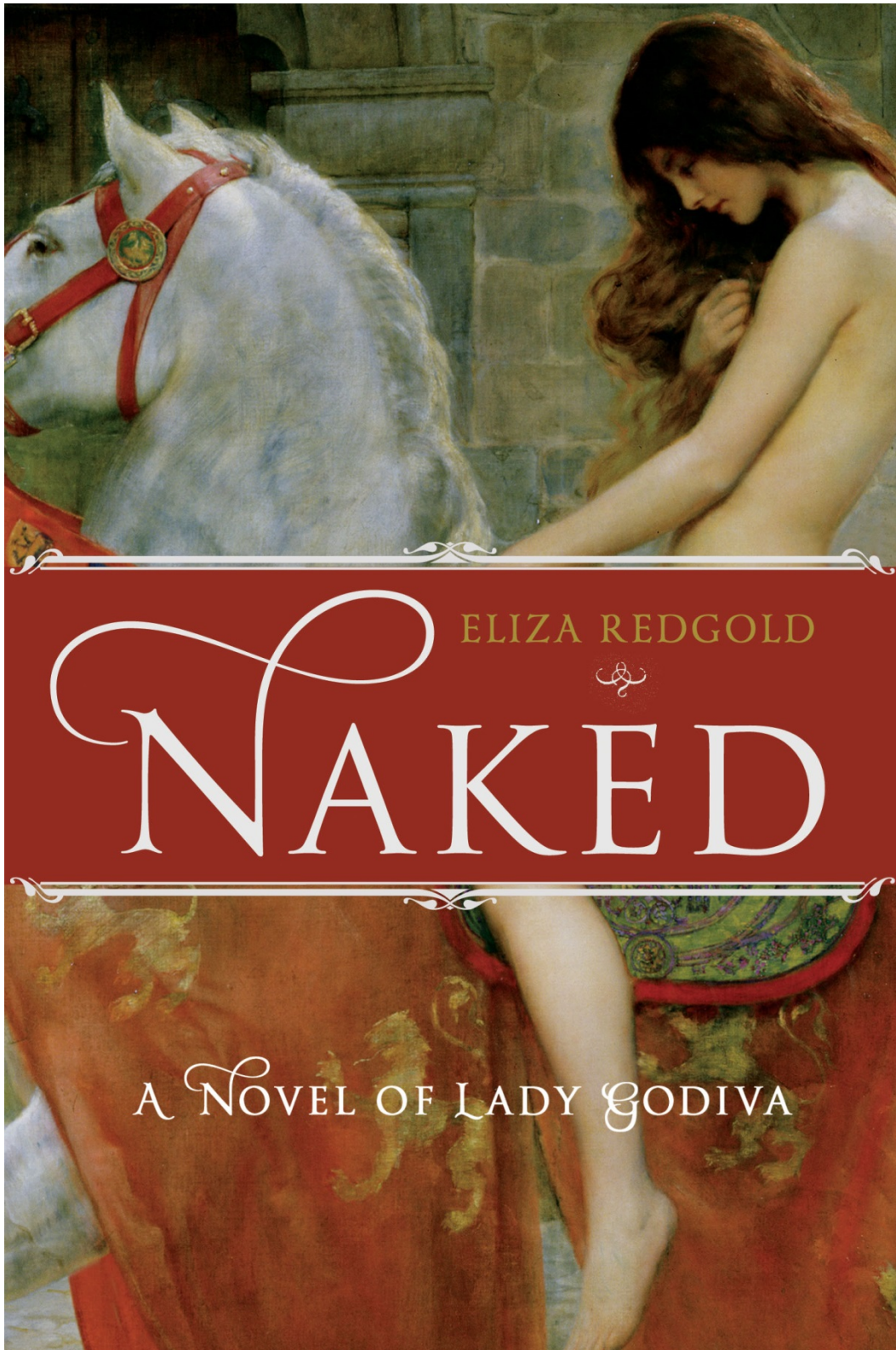
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