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*The Joy of Focus*

## Thoughts on the Art of Drawing Together the Conscious and Unconscious Mind

by

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*NOTE: If drawing is new to you, please be gentle with yourself. Instead of comparing your drawing with other people's, put your energy into following the directions that YOU see in nature. YOUR point of view is one of your most sacred possessions. Your artist's-eye (or child's eye) helps you to feel connected to the Present Moment and to the world around you. You may not have used this eye for a long time but it is still part of you and can be awakened through practice. Ten or fifteen minutes is all you need to begin the practice.*

### DRAWING REPORT 4

#### 10/2/04 THOUGHTS

It has been seven years since I have placed a brush loaded with oil paint onto a surface of any kind. With new teaching credentials under my belt and a modest amount of time available I have a subject for my first painting: A corner of our property. We constructed a three-corner gazebo and faux rock wall over and around a terra cotta fountain depicting an indian woman pouring water. It is a lovely spot.

Today I drew 5 thumbnail sketches of the spot. I repeatedly drew the indian woman too large and drew the gazebo too small. Why? My heart's focus was on the fountain. The gazebo was just a frame for the fountain. I realized a simple metaphysical truth: *Your focus of attention automatically enlarges whatever you are looking at.* To draw or paint the material world "realistically" you have to be willing to work with this tricky tendency.

I get out my *viewfinder* (an empty 35mm slide holder), focus on my subject area, and begin measuring. I let go of my old focus and begin paying attention to the primary intersections and relationships of the whole setting. Ahhh, I love the shift to right brain thinking!

#### CONSCIOUS PRACTICE

- 1) Judith Cornell's book, *Drawing the Light From Within*, describes how to construct your own viewfinder or focusing frame on page 122. I highly recommend her book. In addition to many wonderful exercises, it has an indepth exercise for drawing the corner of a room.
- 2) For today, I would like you to observe the corner of an interior room. Select the room and the corner. Situate yourself far enough away from it so that you can see part of the ceiling where the two corners of the room and part of the floor meet.
- 3) Notice the angle at the top of the ceiling that is formed by the two walls coming together. Notice the angle where the two walls come together on the floor. Notice the vertical line connecting these two angles.
- 4) As you are observing, think in terms of space, shapes, angles, rather than in terms of objects. Let go of *things*. Instead think connections, relationships, intersections. Notice if you *feel* a little different.