



Foreword

Elke Scholz is a woman who is passionately committed to the arts. Her gift is to translate her own experiences of self-discovery for others—in her different roles as a therapist, teacher, artist, poet, creator of expressive arts experiences, and writer—to produce the book *Loving Your Life: Becoming Who You Are and Loving It Through Passionate, Creative Living*.

What began as a workbook with beautiful illustrations and vivid vignettes of what people encountered after experiencing Elke's step-by-step guided use of the arts is now in its second edition. Without question, Elke Scholz is an artist who understands intuitively the power of the arts as a means of gaining insight and clarity into untapped emotions.

Through her own personal journey, and her wish to connect her understanding of her work to a theoretical foundation, Elke enrolled in ISIS Canada, a three-year expressive arts therapy program, and went on to complete a master's degree at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. I have been fortunate to follow her growth as she created a script for her life that expanded her love of the expressive arts from that of an artist into the world of academia. Her MA thesis advanced the professional application of her book to include a body of theory in expressive arts therapy.

The second edition of *Loving Your Life* includes selected aspects of expressive arts therapy theory. As a result, laypersons, artists, and professional therapists are given a deeper understanding of the process. The personal stories, illustrations, poetry, and other images are contextualized within a theoretical framework to describe the phenomenon of creative self-expression and self-awareness. Valuable information about the progression of thoughts, emotions, and behaviours revealed through the practice of expressive arts will be useful to mental health professionals, change management coaches, and community facilitators working with individuals or groups. Elke skillfully describes the outcome of such activities and how readers may reflect on their own journey through journaling and transitioning to other art modalities.

Loving Your Life: Becoming Who You Are and Loving It Through Passionate, Creative Living, with the inclusion of expressive arts theory, has successfully drawn us into a more profound understanding of the expressive arts as therapeutic and an effective mode of therapy.

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Melanie Nesbitt has known Elke as a teacher, supervisor, therapist, and thesis advisor. Melanie is a Dance Movement Expressive Arts Therapist (private practice for over thirty years), Adjunct ISIS Faculty, Supervisor Trainer and Coach, writer of articles on Dance Movement Therapy and Expressive Arts Therapy, book reviewer, community arts facilitator, writer and director of a film, Surviving Stroke—Dance Movement Therapy (Baycrest Hospital), and expressive artist.