GENERAL

keri smith wreck this journal

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Unleashing Creativity: Keri Smith's "Wreck This Journal"

In a world where digital screens dominate our daily routine, the tactile experience of a physical journal offers a refreshing escape. But what if that escape could be turned into a playful, chaotic, and deeply creative adventure? That's exactly what Keri Smith's "Wreck This Journal" invites you to do. This guide explores the book's concept, how it sparks imagination, and practical ways to incorporate its principles into your own journaling practice. Whether you're a seasoned writer, a visual artist, or simply curious about a new way to engage with paper, "Wreck This Journal" offers a unique blend of guided chaos and personal expression.

Who Is Keri Smith?

Keri Smith is a celebrated author, illustrator, and creative catalyst known for her interactive books that encourage readers to break boundaries and experiment with art. With a background in fine arts and a passion for teaching creativity, Smith has written several bestsellers, including the popular "Art & Fear" and "The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity." Her work consistently emphasizes the importance of play, risk-taking, and the removal of self imposed limits. "Wreck This Journal" is a natural extension of her philosophy: a structured way to let go and explore the unknown.

What Is "Wreck This Journal"?

"Wreck This Journal" is not a conventional guidebook. Instead, it's a series of prompts that ask you to intentionally damage, transform, or reinterpret a blank journal. The goal is to break the conventional notion of a journal as a neat, orderly record and to invite spontaneous, sometimes messy, creativity. Each prompt is designed to challenge a particular habit or mindset, such as perfectionism, routine, or the fear of failure. By physically altering the page—burning, tearing, drawing over, or even incorporating found objects—you engage with the material in a way that stimulates new perspectives and ideas.

Why "Wreck This Journal" Is a Game Changer for Creativity

- Encourages Risk Taking – The prompts remove the fear of making mistakes by turning them into intentional acts of creation.
- Promotes Mindfulness – The physical act of tearing or scratching a page demands focus, grounding you in the present moment.
- Breaks Routine – By disrupting the standard journaling flow, you open doors to fresh ideas and unexpected insights.
- Fosters Playfulness – The book's playful tone invites you to experiment, making the creative process enjoyable rather than stressful.
- Builds Confidence – Seeing your own work evolve through deliberate "wrecking" can boost self esteem and confidence in artistic expression.

Getting Started: What You Need

Before diving into the prompts, gather a few basic supplies. While the book itself is a powerful tool, having the right

materials enhances the experience.

1. Journal – Preferably a thick, high quality paper journal that can withstand tearing, scratching, or even burning if you choose to go that extreme.
2. Art Supplies – Pens, pencils, markers, watercolor, acrylic, charcoal, or any medium you enjoy.
3. Tools for “Wrecking” – Scissors, a paper cutter, a razor blade (use with caution), a small hammer or mallet, or even a simple kitchen knife. Safety first!
4. Optional Enhancements – Stamps, stickers, glue, washi tape, or found objects like leaves, ticket stubs, or old photographs.

How to Use “Wreck This Journal” Effectively

Below is a step by step framework that ensures you get the most out of the book while keeping the process fun and stress free.

1. Set Your Intention

Before you start, decide why you’re journaling. Is it for self reflection, creative brainstorming, or simply to explore a new art form? Clarifying your purpose will help you choose which prompts resonate most.

2. Choose a Prompt

Pick a prompt that feels intriguing or challenging. If you’re new to the concept, start with something simple, like “Scratch the page with a pen until you can’t see the ink.” As you grow comfortable, move to more elaborate prompts such as “Cover the page in a collage of found objects.”

3. Embrace the Process

Don’t overthink the outcome. The beauty of “Wreck This Journal” lies in its unpredictability. Allow yourself to experiment, make mistakes, and let the page evolve organically.

4. Reflect

After each session, take a moment to reflect on what you’ve created. Write a short note about how the process felt, what surprised you, and any insights that emerged.

5. Store Your Work

If you wish to keep a record, photograph or scan the page. This can serve as a visual diary of your creative journey, and you can revisit it whenever you need inspiration.

Sample Prompts and How to Execute Them

Below are a selection of prompts from the book, along with detailed instructions and creative variations. Feel free to adapt them to suit your style and materials.

Prompt 1: “Tear the Page Until You’re Satisfied.”

Take a piece of paper and tear it in any pattern you like. Use your hands, a scissors, or a paper cutter. The goal is to create a visual representation of your inner state. Variations:

- Use colored paper for a vibrant collage.
- Layer torn pieces to create texture.
- Incorporate torn edges into a larger piece of art.

Prompt 2: “Write a Letter to Your Future Self and Burn It.”

Write a heartfelt letter, then carefully burn the page using a small, safe flame (like a candle). Capture the ashes for a later “memory jar.” Variations:

- Use a heat resistant paper like parchment.
- Record the burning process with a video.
- After burning, write a new page describing the experience.

Prompt 3: “Cover the Page with Found Objects.”

Collect items such as dried leaves, ticket stubs, or fabric scraps. Glue them onto the page, creating a tactile collage. Variations:

Use a different medium each time (e.g., watercolors, charcoal).
Create a theme, like “Nature” or “Urban Life.”
Incorporate the objects into a narrative or poem.

Prompt 4: “Draw a Scene and Then Erase It.”

Sketch a detailed scene. Then, using an eraser or a soft brush, gradually remove elements, leaving only the essence. Variations:

Use a digital eraser if you’re working on a tablet.
Blend the erased areas with watercolor to create a ghostly effect.
Write a short story about the “erased” scene.

Prompt 5: “Write a Poem, Then Scramble the Words.”

Compose a poem, then cut out each word or line and rearrange them into a new, unexpected order. Variations:

Use different fonts or colors for each word.
Turn the rearranged poem into a visual art piece.
Read the scrambled poem aloud to hear its new rhythm.

Integrating “Wreck This Journal” Into Daily Life

While the book encourages spontaneity, you can also embed its principles into a regular routine. Here are some ideas:

Morning Mindset Ritual

Start your day by choosing one prompt and working on it for 10–15 minutes. This sets a creative tone for the day and helps you break mental blocks.

Evening Reflection

At night, revisit a page you previously “wrecked.” Write a short reflection about how your feelings toward that page have changed over time.

Weekly Creative Challenges

Assign a different prompt to each day of the week. By the end of the week, you’ll have a diverse collection of experimental pages.

Group Sessions

Invite friends or colleagues to a “wrecking” workshop. Share prompts, materials, and results. This fosters community, collaboration, and shared learning.

Why “Wreck This Journal” Is More Than Just a Book

Beyond its practical use, “Wreck This Journal” embodies a mindset shift. It encourages:

- Impermanence Acceptance – By physically destroying pages, you confront the idea that all creations are transient.
- Creative Freedom – The book removes constraints, allowing you to experiment without judgment.
- Self Discovery – The process can reveal hidden emotions, desires, or memories that surface when you break through the usual patterns.
- Mind Body Connection – The tactile nature of the prompts engages the senses, grounding you in the present.

Common Questions About “Wreck This Journal”

Is it okay to use a cheap notebook?

While a high quality journal enhances the experience, you can certainly experiment with a cheap notebook. Just be aware that the paper may tear more easily or not hold up to certain media.

Do I need to finish every prompt?

No. The book is designed to be flexible. If a prompt feels too intense or not relevant, skip it and move on to another.

Can I use digital tools?

The core concept relies on physical interaction. However, you can digitize your wrecked pages, create digital collages, or use apps to simulate the process.

What if I’m scared of burning pages?

Burning is optional. You can use other destructive methods like tearing, scratching, or dissolving with water. The key is intentional disruption.

Creative Variations for Advanced Practitioners

If you’ve mastered the basics and are looking for more depth, try these advanced techniques:

- Mixed Media Fusion – Combine painting, collage, and digital prints on the same page.
- Time Based Projects – Set a timer and see how much you can “wreck” in that time.
- Collaborative Collage – Work with a partner, each adding elements until the page becomes a shared narrative.
- Therapeutic Journaling – Use the prompts to process emotions, trauma, or grief. The destructive act can be cathartic.
- Environmental Art – Incorporate natural elements like moss, sand, or river stones.

Building a Personal “Wreck This Journal” Archive

As you accumulate pages, consider creating a portfolio or a digital archive. Here are a few ways to preserve and showcase your work:

Physical Portfolio

Use a binder or an album to store

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