

Alumni Experience

Ashley Yuan - Singapore



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I came in with no expectation and a vague hope that I could actually do this cartooning thing, this magical creative outlet that I so envy cartoonists have, but I secretly doubt it a little whether I could actually do it.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

I feel the first half could be summarised to be "a journey to start believing that you can actually do this, just watch the proof unfold in front of your eyes day after day. And in the first half, to me the most valuable thing I learnt was how to handle my own bully mind - it was a tough one but it's amazing even to myself right now how much better I got at handling it - my biggest creative road block that I know will never leave.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

The second half of the journey - with our new found confidence in cartooning - is a journey of creativity exploration. Lines, colours, shapes, I became sort of fearless when it comes to what to put on the paper/screen, AND proudly put my name to it

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

The biggest one was "hmm is it enough to be posted and let all my friends see?" I asked Ali at the beginning of the course whether it's better to post straight to my personal page on Facebook or create an extra FB/ Insta account for the course (hoping being able to hide LOL), Ali suggested posting to FB straight away and magically, I got over it after merely 3 circlly-circles posts.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

The two mantras I developed over my Da Vinci journey - "Just one more circle" when my bully brain starts saying "this looks really bad" and "anything sketched is better than a blank page" when I don't feel like doing it. And planning, roughly plan ahead what I'm gonna sketch on the upcoming day/week really takes the initial "stress" off when the day/assignment comes.

And, my desire to collect ALL golden stars throughout the course, and I did it.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your small group?

I'm lucky that although not all my group members were able to stay consistent and active throughout the course, I always have 2-3 of them been similarly consistent together with me at any time of the course, this has been encouraging and fun - Holly, Venkat, Frank, Gareth, you guys have been great. Not to mention the active members outside my group - classmates like Doug, Jessica, Vinima, Laura and Ellyse - such wonderful people to learn together!

7) Can you describe how the course is conducted?

It was conducted in a way where we really get to witness and learn how true learning really could only come from consistent small steps, day after day. And how far a group could take you forward, compared to learning alone.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

I didn't know Alison at all before the course other than the fact that she was a Da Vinci student too and she'd be our teacher.

But from the first message I got from her - reminding me to put a real photo as my course profile photo, to her comments to my last assignment, she was nothing short of warm, encouraging, fun, witty and more importantly, always being kind yet sharp in pin-pointing where I could improve and what went wrong AND how I could correct it. I asked questions, she answered; When I was confused, she explained immediately, sometimes I wonder how she manages to handle so many of us in a day!

Going deeper into the course, she started to feel like a friend, who really knows how to teach cartooning

I think Alison is the kind of teacher we all wish to have and lucky us, we really indeed had her as our teacher

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

I was like you, but come over to Da Vinci and be prepared to be (happily) proven wrong.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

ANYONE who ever thought to themselves - how nice would it be if I could draw.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons?

My friends started being confused (and remain silent) when I first started posting those weird looking circly-circles on my FB. Then day after day, they started to like, comment and react to my sketches. I've got friends who commented like "Your drawings are really lovely" and, wait for it - "You could be a cartoonist now!"

Back at home, my husband has been absolutely enjoying my drawings. He got into the habit of asking me "let me see your drawing today" or saying something like "that cartoon you drew today was really great!" Then I'd proudly pull out my paper of the day or my iPad and appreciate the work of that day with him. One of my work received so much love from him that he framed it up - with a really nice real wood photo frame

12) What else would you like to add?

Da Vinci has been one wild adventure of creation for me, I felt all time high creative wise - I can draw cartoon now and I've also (finally) launched my personal website.

I believe the magic will follow me from here and beyond, to further and more areas in my life .

“Before” cartoon:



A selection of cartoons done on the course:



Mac Solomon London, UK



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

To be honest, I didn't really have grand expectations when I started. I don't have a business so I didn't start out intending to illustrate my blog or website, like a lot of people often do. I'd tried (unsuccessfully) to start a drawing habit many, many times in the past. I have the art instruction books and the lack of consistent practise to show for it.

I'd enjoyed drawing while at school but got discouraged out of pursuing it further in favour of something 'practical' and 'sensible' despite being told I had potential. So my main expectation was just to get back in touch with my creative side and see where it led me.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

Initially, the first set of exercises didn't seem to make sense. I mean, what does drawing endless amounts of circles have to do with learning how to draw?

I quickly learned that while questioning things is usually a good thing, in this instance, it was important to simply trust the system. It was a struggle at first but I eventually managed to get to grips with it.

I also had to get my head around the fact that tracing is a nuanced tool for developing real draughtsmanship and not simply the lazy person's way out of drawing as some popular misconception suggests. Tracing has been instrumental in helping me learn to 'see' things and judge proportions properly.

By the end of the first half of the course, I felt adequate at my ability to copy popular cartoon characters with a good likeness and felt the

beginnings of my creative muscles stretch by adapting the given cartoons and putting them into 'new' and crazy scenarios.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

After the Christmas break, diving back into cartooning was admittedly a little hard. I'd travelled for the holidays and had some tech problems, which meant keeping the posting habit was a bit...sketchy.

Nonetheless, I jumped back into the second section eventually and was a little daunted by the prospect of creating an original character. I mean, it was one thing to copy well known characters and even adapt them into new scenarios. Creating an original one, though? It seemed like a different beast entirely.

Luckily, we'd been encouraged to doodle plenty and as usual, the process of finding an original character was done in tiny, manageable steps. The process of literally starting from stick men to looking for expressions to body types meant that the whole thing felt completely natural.

By the end of the second half, it's quite amazing to imagine I'd been drawing for 6 months (almost) continuously, whereas previously I couldn't even keep a habit going for 1 week.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

I'd say there were 2 main 'fears' in terms of tackling the assignments and both relate to the idea of perfectionism.

The first was not understanding the assignment properly (due to poor or nonexistent ability to read instructions) and getting it 'wrong'.

The second was judging the end product as 'horrible' (the nicest adjective possible) and spiralling into a cloud of negative self talk about my ability to draw.

In terms of overcoming them, I usually looked at what others did first (either in my group or beyond it. Oh hi, being led by others. I knew you were good for something) if I didn't understand. But those occasions

were few and far between. The explanations were usually clear enough that I didn't need to ask Alison for help.

As far as judging the end product as horrible goes, I eventually learned (thanks to Alison) that Mondays were usually the days when I'd be at my worst because my brain was still trying to wrap itself around this new thing it had to do differently from last week. So my group and I came up with a mantra - ETS or Embrace The Suckage - and just got on with it, taking away lessons from the process rather than the end result. I can't say that worked well 100% of the time, but it did the trick more often than not.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

In general, I drew in the evenings after work. Because I work rotating hours, some evenings ended up later than others. I'd say that the one thing that kept me consistent was to treat it as play time. That was really important. At the end of a long, hard day dealing with adults that had varying degrees of reason, cartooning came to be a faithful stress buster.

Of course, that's not always practical so I'd say, aim for a minimum amount of drawing time each day. Something is better than nothing.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

I was *extremely* lucky to be put into such a dedicated and supportive group. Every time I wanted to slack off or left the assignment until later, one of my team mates would be there to gently nudge me along into action. And I did the same for them. It didn't take very long for the accountability aspect to kick in. There were assignments that we all shone on and everyone was there to compliment and congratulate each other and similarly, we commiserated together through our frustrations and difficulties. There's just no substitute for a group that really gels well and is clearly invested in each other's success. The course has definitely been about the team spirit as much as it has been learning how to draw.

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

I'd say in an easy to follow and logical manner. I found everything in the forum generally easy to find and laid out clearly. The explanation for

why assignments are given on Fridays makes total sense so there is no confusion about expectations.

In terms of feedback, it was first class. Alison always took the time to give detailed feedback on what was done well and which areas need to be improved. If something wasn't clear, she'd literally illustrate it and even do a video so that any areas of confusion were covered in as much detail as possible, which I really appreciated.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

The best way I know how to describe Alison's teaching style is like this: think of this course as going on a road trip via motorcycle. You don't have much of a map and your sat nav is sketchy at best. You may have a vague idea of where you're going, but you may also be completely clueless. Alison is like the friendly companion riding along with you in the side car, warning you of impending bumps in the road and gently guiding you onto the main road if you somehow wind up off it and spin around aimlessly. That's the key element of her approach: to always keep moving forward instead of being stuck in one place. To be clear, you're always the one in the driver's seat. But she's always there to gently nudge you onwards if and when you need it. All that with a great sense of fun and humour thrown into it.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

I'd say read Daniel Coyle's *The Talent Code*. Seriously. That book will go a long way towards showing someone what they can do if they really want to learn something.

There's a giant myth that's bandied about around Art (with a capital A) and I'm all for making it accessible to everyone. I'd encourage someone who says this to not worry about being 'good' at drawing and concentrate more on learning to have fun with drawing, just like they did when they were a kid. It doesn't matter whether they think they're 'good' or not, the important thing is to focus on play. The rest will come along in its own time.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

To anyone who has trouble keeping a drawing habit. To anyone who believes that they 'can't draw'. To anyone who believes that they're not 'creative' (because this course isn't just about drawing, the benefits extend to creativity in general).

The course slam jams all three of those things together and makes drawing as it was when you were six years old -- FUN. That's the most important thing. It's cartoons. It's SUPPOSED to be fun. If it feels like work then there's no point in doing it and you wouldn't WANT to do it anyway. Get that part right and you're laughing.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

Posting my progress on Facebook was a daunting prospect at first. I mean, really? Once I got into the swing of it, the positive comments and encouragement kept rolling in which in turn had the effect of spurring me onto putting more effort into each following drawing assignment.

A few people at work have also commented on how impressed they've been with how much I've progressed. One co-worker even commented on how 'gifted' I was after looking at a particularly detailed drawing and went on to say that not a lot of people have 'it' and that I did.

While that was a nice ego boost, I've learned (thanks to the pre-course reading) that being 'gifted' is nothing more than the product of consistent and deliberate practise over a period of time. Still, it was nice to hear.

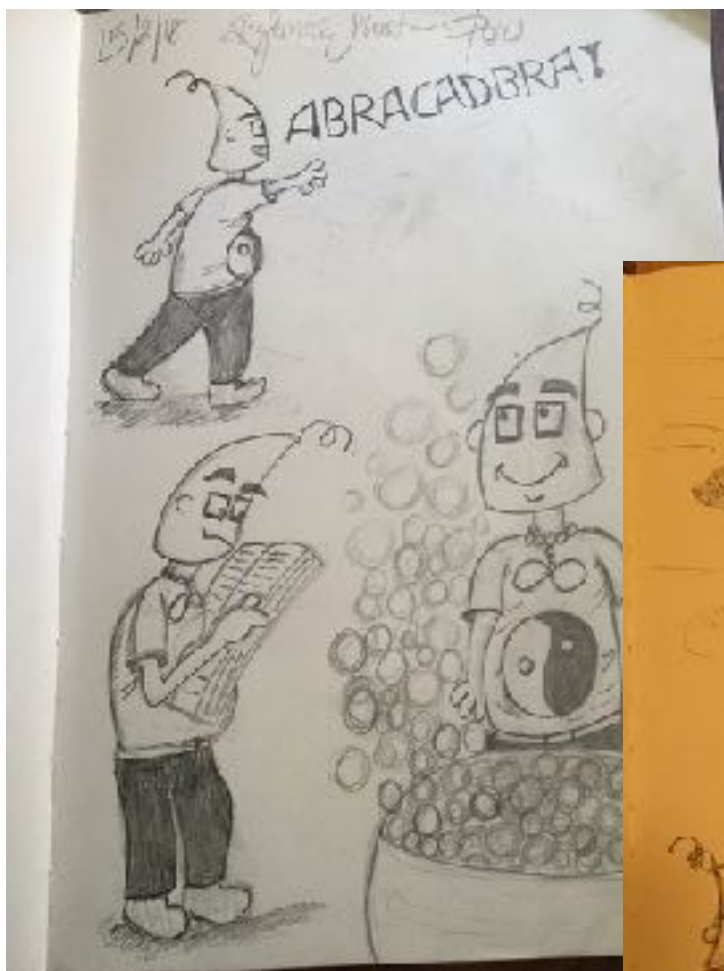
12) What else would you like to add?

Just do the course!

“Before” cartoon:



A selection of cartoons done on the course:



Jen Selman — Canada



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I joined the course because I wanted to learn to draw and sketch the things I see and hold in my imagination. I felt cartooning might be away to get there. I didn't hold too many expectations but was curious and from what I had been able to find online about it (which wasn't very much) it seemed like I'd learn from the basics up.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

This part was not only about learning the building blocks to drawing but how to manage the frustrations of being on a learning curve and not being able to draw how I saw myself drawing!

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

This was easier in a few regards - it tapped more into my imagination and that is always key to my learning and willingness to risk. I was better able to embrace the idea of making mistakes and learning from them and so it was easier. When it came to developing our own character I was able to just tell myself to let go and let it be a learning tool. In the second half the assignments took longer and that was a challenge – partly I found it was the search for something to draw that ate time up. I think having a repository of scenes we could go to choose from that met the criteria would be helpful.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

Fear of taking risks, fear of experimenting, fear of real critics or their substitute—the internal critic... I'd say three things helped me overcome:

1. I never used an eraser in the first half of the course – never ever. All mistakes stayed staring at me on the page.
2. Group process played the biggest role in overcoming them—this group was a well run group – the course reinforces the need to make mistakes, to address the bully brain, to be right at the level you are at and by nature of being in a group

together we could see how others moved through fears and roadblocks and benefit from much sharing, encouragement, feedback and learning.

3. I also did better when I finally limited who could find my posts – Public and easily found to all who know you, is not always best despite what the course suggests. Once I did, I felt safe to make mistakes and post them. Then my confidence and risk taking grew.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

Gosh, this got harder in the second half as the assignments took longer and my day job became increasingly demanding. In the second half, I aimed for finishing three assignments by Friday, and used the following weekend to catch up and start day one of the next week. I started to set my alarm for 5:45am to draw for 45 minutes before work. That was the best time on weekdays for me. I looked at the site daily. I carried my pencils and paper everywhere but have never used them.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your small group?

Fabulous, encouraging, fun, engaging – I looked first at my group's work and then beyond as time allowed....I wished I started visiting other groups earlier in the course as that just grew my learning. I wish I'd got to know everyone.

7) Can you describe how the course is conducted?

I think it's been well honed as a course led by a skilled teacher. There is structure, ground rules and clear learning objectives each week. Input from the instructor daily was key to developing skills as well as the group process. It's a course that requires a high level of engagement and commitment.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

Committed, knowledgeable, attentive, willing to answer questions and get you over the hurdles, manages to keep the energy up through a long course.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

Drawing is a skill and skills can be learned if you want it enough. Your skill got stymied somewhere along the way (likely as a kid) so you can go back and pick up the process.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

Someone wanting to learn to draw and who likes experiential learning and can commit to the length of time.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons?

I have a very small group of friends who follow me on Instagram and are encouraging. They are generally the only ones who have seen my work. My goddaughter is my biggest cheerleader and she's learned from watching me that if you want to get better at something than you best work at it. She asked if Fiona could be left handed like herself. However I have to say making the manager at work laugh over the rat cartoon was my highlight. I loved that. I love making people laugh.

12) What else would you like to add?

Doing this course has fed me – it has helped balance a really tough job by giving me an outlet – something that really required my full attention and absorbed my interest so much that I couldn't think about work. I looked forward everyday to drawing, and being engaged wholeheartedly. Thank-you Alison for all you put into this!

“Before” cartoon:



A selection of cartoons done on the course:



Nathan Lau — Singapore/Canada



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

My expectations were same as other Psychotactics courses: gain a skill. I had hoped to learn how to draw or be a better drawer. I couldn't draw a stick man before joining the course.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

It started off with drawing circles. Something so basic but profound as it formed the basis of everything else. It really changed the way I saw the world when I see things in circles. And that translates to better sketches. I discovered how to copy other drawings. That was a game changer.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

The second half of the course I really fine tuned my drawing skills. I learned how to exaggerate features and compose drawings. It was a lot of hard work but it really paid off near the end.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

My fear was people seeing I couldn't draw. I was slightly embarrassed to post my work. I overcame that by just doing it. And getting into a routine of doing it. Every, single, day.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

I had a routine to draw after dinner. After my baby is asleep, I would draw for 30mins to 1 hour.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

My group members were great. They helped me feel right at home providing constructive feedback. I also learned from people outside my group. They really encouraged me and provided helpful hints and tips.

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

Tiny increments. She helps you visualize what you have done right and points you in the right direction.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

Patient, friendly, and experienced. She has seen it all!

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

There's no such thing. You just got to do the daily work and you'll get there.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

Anyone who wants to learn a new skill that they can use in their businesses.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

I posted my daily drawings on Instagram. At first, friends were wondering what I was doing. In the end a lot of them said my drawings improved and were anticipating the next drawing.

Ellyse Bergeron — Iowa, USA



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

When I joined the course my dream was to follow in Henneke Duistermaat's footsteps by illustrating my blog and ebook with my own cartoon character. I knew that the course had everything that I needed and I committed to working hard. I wanted to finish well so that I would have no regrets. I think the cost, was another major factor, and it drove me to put the time in.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

I read through the alumni notes to our class, a few times. I even took notes. I trusted their advice. So, in the first half of the course I dug in and got the most from the lessons and then I made it a habit to look at my classmates posts. I think that I learned just as much if not more from seeing their mistakes and reading Alison's comments back to them. From the start I would look to see if anyone in my group, had finished the assignment. I could learn a lot before I started my own work and could avoid any problems that they were having.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

In the self-study that preceded the second half of the course, I was extremely encouraged by everyone that stayed involved and posted daily diary work. With all that encouragement a few of us, started working on our characters. When I got back for the second half, I felt that I had advanced from all the class work I had done. So, even though the second half was more challenging, I was ready for it and excited to get daily feedback again, from Alison.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

My fears were centered around my inexperience in art. My Inner Critic liked to remind me daily that I had nothing in my brain to pull forward and sketch from. Finally, it sunk in that I could copy. (I had been

copying for months, but did not understand that copying would build my brain's library) I could look for ideas from children's books or from Google. It was so freeing to really understand that I did not have to have the ideas. I just needed to sketch something new everyday and then I started to notice that those sketches became a part the library in my brain.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

In the second half I started my work on Sundays. This way I would be done by Thursday and benefit from reading Alison's feedback on Friday and thinking on that over the weekend. I read the assignment at least twice. I tried not to overthink. I tried to work quickly because my work was just as good if I worked quickly and then I would have a little time to look around the forum and encourage my friends. I learned to look at the "What's New" tab to see if there were any announcements or something I had missed.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

I had a wonderful support group. Peter, Charlie, Lynn and I kept together through illness, travel, work challenges, and the stress and worry of losing my cat Truman. With everyone doing their work, we could expect quick support and terrific encouragement from each other. All the classmates participated in leaving feedback and "likes" on each others posts.

7) Can you describe how the course is conducted?

The course is like nothing I have ever experienced in my lifetime. It took me a couple months to get a full understanding of how this course was impacting my life, in new ways. The assignments are given so that you have enough information to get the assignment done. But if you take time to ask questions or learn from other's mistakes, you will be able to learn more from the assignment. The information is not hand fed to you. You have to work for it and ask questions. If you ask you get a thorough answer, that could include a video or your previous sketch with Alison's improvements drawn over it. Alison may direct you to a student having the same challenge so that you can learn from them. I am certain that it is one of the many reasons that you learn so much more from this way of instruction. You become so involved in your own learning and the more effort that you put in to showing up, doing assignments, asking questions and following your classmates, the more you will excel in your sketching.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

In the first two months, I wanted Alison to explain things better. I was so used to being spoon fed information that I did not understand what she was doing. I don't think I was too frustrated, I just noticed that I was learning just as much from the forum and classmates as I was from Alison. If I ever had doubts, I reminded myself to trust the process. So, having read the Talent Code 3 times was very helpful.

Alison looked at my daily work and left detailed critiques on most days. She was a great teacher and I look forward to contacting her in the future for 1:1 tutoring when I need it.

I want to add that Alison was able to draw forth talent from each of us. She answered all of our questions. And then would ask us if she had cleared things up. She never took for granted that we would understand everything she wrote to us.

About the time that I decided I no longer needed to trace, she encouraged me to step forward on my own and follow my curiosity. She promised to reign me in if I went off course. I think that was a pivotal point in my learning and I'm thankful that she gave me permission to follow my curiosity and try new things that may not have been in the assignment.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

I had no experience with drawing and art. If you have the desire to learn and you have a good work ethic, you can learn to draw cartoons. I believe anyone could learn to cartoon with this method. It takes commitment. You have to find a way to push past life's chaos, and get your assignments done. If you do that you will become a cartoonist.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

I would recommend the course to anyone with a strong desire to cartoon, that also has a strong work ethic. Six months is a long commitment but it is so worth the effort to stay the course and finish each week of assignments on time so that you can learn the next skill and keep up with your classmates.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons?

I have been so encouraged by friends on Facebook. I reconnected with high school classmates at my 40th Reunion, shortly before starting the class and many of those new friends have stopped by to “Like” my sketchwork and leave comments. The cartoons gave them a reason to get to know me again.

The biggest surprise came from 2 of my sons. They are both artists, 21 and 33 years old. They were homeschooled. They never saw me even play with all of the art supplies we had in our home. They have been so surprised by my work and have sent me many positive text messages. When I moved over to using the iPad Pro, I experienced another surge of encouraging texts messages. They are very excited with the work I am doing.

12) What else would you like to add?

I have been very sad about finishing this course. It has changed me in ways that reach beyond art and cartooning. I now see the world through the eyes of Phoebe. It brings joy and lightness that was missing from my life. I had hoped that maybe my cartoons would be funny, but my cartoons are light hearted and encouraging and that fits my blog message well. I look forward to illustrating and feel that I am ready for the task. I know I will continue to improve by drawing 1 sketch every day for the rest of my life.

I believe that I received more than I paid for this course. I have learned more than I could have imagined and I will have it with me for the rest of my life. How do you put a good price on those skills and experiences? I am thankful for where you priced the class, because I was able to afford it.

Thank you Sean for offering this class and thank you Alison for your patience and encouragement. You helped me to become a cartoonist.

A selection of cartoons done on the course:



Peter Brash — Elgin, Scotland



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I have admired Sean's use of cartoons on his websites and another inspiration – who I knew had previously done this course – was Henneke Duistermaat. What I hoped to achieve was sufficient self-confidence to go forward with using my own artwork in online settings such as the websites I am involved with – some through my work, one through my

church and the other through my main hobby of playing the fiddle.

This was not my first Psychotactics course – I have done the article writing course self-study – but it was the first "live/full" course I have done. From that point of view, I knew from experience that while it may not be immediately clear why you are doing something at the time, the bits do all fit together in the end and you have to trust the process even in the weeks where you feel a bit overwhelmed or a bit lost as to why the particular assignment is the way that it is.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

I found it very challenging. I found individual characters we drew – whether that was the teddy bear, pig, hippopotamus, dog, Sid, KF Panda – mostly challenging. In retrospect, the first characters seemed the most difficult because even though Sid and Panda were probably more difficult to draw in terms of the relative proportions not seeming "logical", by the time I got to them, I was beginning to see that you could look for reference points within images (e.g. the intersection points of circle circles) and that would keep you on track. With Snoopy and the Pink Panther, as these were characters I was more familiar with (including their actual characters), I found it more straightforward and more fun to draw them.

I found "speed" weeks difficult because it was not my natural inclination to speed up but I did my best.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

Developing my own character - and, as much, seeing others develop their own characters - has been a lot of fun. As I've mentioned in particular assignments, I find I get on a lot better if I've worked out my theme as to what I'm going to draw - or a prop to include - before I start (which I didn't always do).

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

I was mostly worried that what I produced would look presentable. I wasn't expecting my drawings to look perfect but I was worried that they might look rubbish or silly.

At the risk of sounding repetitive, I fought that by just telling myself I had to keep showing up every day - or as often as possible - and trusting in the process. Again, see what others were doing and hearing their concerns was helpful as it very often mirrored my own. This emphasises the benefit of studying in a group and taking time to see what others are doing, encourage them and hopefully get encouragement in return.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

For much of the time, I set aside time first thing in the day (usually when I got to work at about 7am) to do the assignment and all the necessary saving and uploading. I was on analog for most of the course and to use the facilities at my work was important. The only reliable scanner I had was at my work. Often, I've spent about the first hour of the day on the assignment, including "admin". If I knew I would be away a particular day, I've tried to do the work the night before. I didn't set aside a set time every day. I found that trying to make sure I read the next week's assignment as early as possible (it helps that you post on Fridays, Alison) helped to get my brain thinking about what roadblocks there might be, what sources of inspiration I might have (e.g. cartoon books) and that really helped the whole process: you think about it longer in advance, so you have more opportunity for inspiration, a build up of enthusiasm (excitement, even) about what you want to do.

So:

- (a) read the next week's assignment as early as possible after it's published and start planning how you're going to tackle it and what things you could do to ease the process, and
- (b) set aside a specific time to do the work each day but don't be too rigid and don't beat yourself up if it doesn't happen exactly that way.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your small group?

In my mind, it became like everyone else in my small group lived in the same block of flats as me - and the other teams were in neighbouring blocks. It was therefore easier to check in on what my immediate team mates were doing and I think I did that much more often than with other teams. I would say it was a wonderful experience. I would say that it makes the difference between completing the course and not completing it. It makes it so much more fun and, of course, you learn from everyone else's mistakes as well as their breakthroughs. To me, it is as heartening and valuable to get a nice comment from another person on the course as it is to get encouraging feedback from you, Alison, though you're the expert.

I think I would have got through a one-on-one cartooning course with you, Alison, on the same curriculum but it would have been a lot more stressful and a lot less fun (which is not intended as a criticism of you).

7) Can you describe how the course is conducted?

The course is conducted by means of a series of weekly modules which build upon each other, often in ways that might not be immediately clear to you, the participant. The link from one week to the next is not always obvious but over the whole course you acquire a range of skills, again often without you realising it. It's only in retrospect that you see how far you have come - that you've reached a point where any cartooning task would be possible for you - you'd have a "system" to apply that would give you confidence you could produce something you would be happy to show to others.

Part One of the course is you developing the foundational skills you need to progress and Part Two is you beginning to apply them in a more creative and free-form fashion.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

I did not see one instance of Alison correcting or suggesting an improvement to someone's work where I did not see it as helpful. She is extremely patient. She can be relied upon to show up regularly and on time with feedback - so you never have any times when you feel frustrated by a lack of response. She has great sense of humour which was sometimes a bit too subtle for me (e.g. comment about table legs and human legs that I thought must be a criticism of how I had drawn their interaction but was a joke about getting "depth" into the image).

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

I would say anyone can be good at drawing. Although I would have said that even before the course started - about myself - based on previous experience through Psychotactics, I'm not sure how strongly I believed it in the case of drawing (as opposed to article writing, say).

The course broke down a lot of mental barriers for me in relation to perfectionism and creativity - e.g. being sketchy is essentially "not being perfect" and being allowed to copy things I found very liberating, in the sense that you're not really being creative but it feels like you are (or a wee tweak of something and you've "made a copy your own"). So, in terms of what to say to that other person, it would be: there are a lot of things that would surprise you about drawing when you are "in the know" that makes it easier you think and there are various "cheats" and short-cuts (e.g. even just using someone else's background as your basis) that help you along the way.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

I would recommend the course to anyone. It possibly helps if you have an end in mind at the start (as I kind of did) but the ability to draw better has so many spin-off benefits that it's hard to quantify.

In my own case, I would say it has improved my self-confidence and it has enhanced my enjoyment of things that gave me enjoyment already. So, for fiddle music, it's given me an alter-ego that I can have doing things I could not or would not dare to do. For marketing purposes, it's given me options to produce images to go with articles (and I mainly enjoy the process of article writing already) that are more relevant (I

often spend hours looking for photo images online that I can use with articles and they're mostly "boring" variations on clocks, handshakes and the like), personal and local than I could have had otherwise - and the inspiration works the other way in terms of image ideas producing ideas for articles.

I now look at Sean and Henneke's artwork and no longer think "It would be great if I could do that" but instead know I could produce something perfectly usable of my own.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons?

The response I've had has been overwhelmingly positive. Even at the circley circles stage, someone on Facebook commented: "I like these! They're soothing refreshment to a lot of the other s\$it* on Facebook "

The easiest way to answer is to quote comments from Facebook, which are from friends (not any family comments):

- Starting to become rather professional, Peter
- Would love to do this.
- I have come to look forward to your drawings. Well done Peter Brash!
- Peter your progress is nothing short of astonishing. Well impressed!
- When are you publishing your first book Peter?

To provide some balance, I've also had: Stick to the day job, Peter...

The incident that made me laugh most involved me using the "advanced" stick figures we learn to use on the course in a work situation where showing the exact orientation of the body in question in a diagram was very important. I was delighted with my effort in terms of it communicating exactly the body position I wanted to convey - which a simple stick figure could not have done.

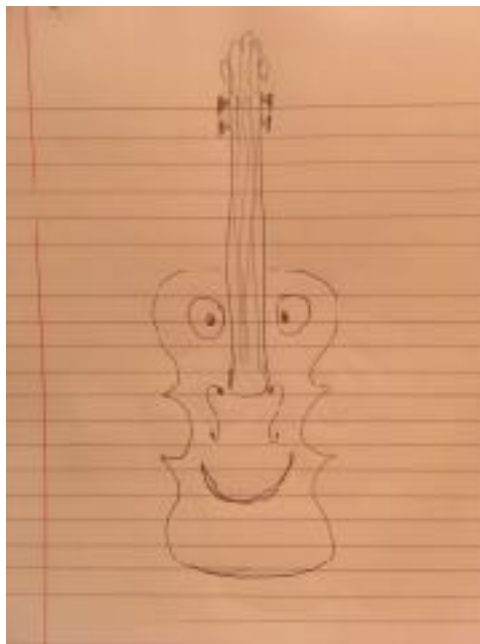
The reaction I got was: "You are perfectly correct with your diagram and your understanding of the order in which I unloaded [the items]. The 'lowry' stick figure' is positioned correctly also. It's a good job you chose your current career, as art school might have proved a little difficult I feel (hahaha). On a serious note, your understanding is spot on Peter, please progress as you intend."

12) What else would you like to add?

Heartfelt thanks to you, Alison. I count you and everyone else on the course as a good friend now and I hope we can stay in touch and continue to inspire each other's efforts.

Thanks to everyone for staying the course and playing along so well - as I've said, I don't think the course would have worked nearly so well if there was not a reasonable number of us seeing it through to the end.

“Before” cartoon:



A selection of cartoons done on the course:





Jessica Hausman — Illinois, USA



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I knew I'd have a good experience in Da Vinci because I'd gotten to know Sean through his podcasts and self-study guides. I was drawn to his philosophy of achieving skills in small steps over a defined, action-packed period of time. This promised a certain intensity that attracted me. Further, given that I consider Sean to be a no BS kind of guy, I trusted him to deliver, whether or not he taught the course himself.

As for what I hoped to achieve, I wanted to be a better, happier, more productive artist. You see, growing up, I'd taught myself to draw using my own home-grown methods. I drew consistently for years, which gave me certain abilities. But there were missing links in my knowledge, and I needed a more efficient way to go from ideation to finished piece.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

Yes, because I can be shy at first in groups, I joined the Da Vinci forum feeling both guarded (I barely introduced myself!) and certain that I was in the right place. I also hit an emotional snag early on. Namely, my inner critic, who can, at times, be a tyrant, took over. Meaning, I didn't want to post imperfect work because I was afraid of what people might think.

Fortunately, Alison and my Da Vinci teammates were very encouraging. I also benefited from being among "beginners." I'm using quotation marks because although many of my Da Vinci-ites were new to drawing, they were masters at throwing themselves into the task. They drew with abandon, and this helped me to let go.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

The more the weeks passed, the more fun I had. It was exciting for me to discover what I could do. And watching my teammates catch on was just plain fun.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

As mentioned, I came into the course with a pretty tough inner critic. But, over time, exposure to the Da Vinci philosophy, Alison's expert guidance, and the support of my remarkably kind and thoughtful teammates tamed my perfectionist tendencies. This made the creative process more fun, which, in turn, helped me to produce more work in less time.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

My method, if you can call it that, was knowing that I wanted to be a better, happier, more productive artist. This inspired me to find the time to draw.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

My experience with my group was outstanding. I was in with all levels. For example, one member was a fine artist, a painter of beautiful canvases, with enviable knowledge of artists, art history, and so on. Another, a complete novice in the beginning, had the unstoppable spirit of the determined little engine in *The Little Engine that Could*. It was a joy to watch her progress.

Everyone in my group added great value to my Da Vinci voyage. In addition, those outside of my assigned group (we visited each other's threads often) added considerably to the experience. And what an interesting community! We had experts on digital transformation cartooning on jets while traveling the world. We had a jazz-loving former lawyer who plays the trumpet drawing cartoons from cruise ships and airports.

On any given day, I might see sketches by the owner of a Northern California restaurant, multiple online marketing specialists, at least one participant whose brother owns a farm, a lively assortment of

grandparents and grandchildren, and comic connoisseurs galore! What's more, there were frequent outbreaks of refreshing wit, uplifting humor, good-natured kidding, and oodles of creative cross pollination.

7) Can you describe how the course is conducted?

The course is conducted in a thoughtful, well-organized, methodical way that makes expectations easy to understand. If, now and then, I wasn't clear on what to do, Alison kindly and patiently stepped in.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

Alison is flat out amazing. I would describe her as exceptionally grounded, focused, insightful, committed, informed, and articulate. Her spot-on feedback, on my work and that of my Da Vinci-ites, helped me to connect with my vision, take chances, and grow as an artist. To say that I feel lucky to be her student is an understatement.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

I would say in the right environment, with the right instructor, and the right philosophy to guide you, you'll learn how to draw. Da Vinci delivers all three.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

I would recommend this course to anyone who wants to learn how to draw cartoons while breaking free from the bonds of perfectionism. Whatever their skill level, they'll benefit from the Da Vinci system and the improvement that comes from daily drawing. Over a period of six months (the duration of the Da Vinci starter and advanced courses), I completed over 200 drawings. This, along with exceptional guidance and continual feedback, made progress inevitable.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

Both on the forum and off, I'm delighted by the enthusiastic response to my work, which has included a few kind offers to help me get my artwork into the marketplace. One such offer came from a particularly

generous, uniquely special Da Vinci-ite (you know who you are), and my world is opening up like never before.

Thank you, Sean and Alison!

Mark Riffey — Montana, USA



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I'm not sure I had any specific expectations about what I would and wouldn't be able to do other than the desire to come out of the course being able to create a simple cartoon (like Cuatro) for my writing. While my cartoon isn't ready for Calvin and Hobbes, I think I managed to get there.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

Part 1 was really useful to me because it helped me develop the necessary fine eye-hand coordination with the pencil (it's different from bats, balls, clubs, rackets, hand tools, etc). This part will at times seem a little tedious, but it's essential (which you eventually figure out). The upside of this part is that it doesn't take too long if it happens to be driving you crazy (like a week of circle-y circles). No, not regular circles, circle-y circles - there's a difference.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

I have struggled in the second half, mostly due to a lack of time to practice. The latter part of the course is more advanced and the assignments take longer, so this makes sense when you combine limited practice time with more advanced subjects and more time consuming assignments. The 2nd half is also where all the fundamentals from the 1st half start to gel and push you along.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

Fears - didn't really have any that I can think of. Challenges were another thing. I struggled to visualize what I wanted to do on many

occasions, so repeated reminders about references helped. This is another reason why you shouldn't wait till the end of the day to do the assignments. You're mentally toast (at least I was) and the result was that I really struggled to be creative on many of those days when I got started late at night.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

Early on, it was something I did in my "me time" (after everyone went to bed). In the early assignments, this was OK. It was a good wind down for the day and pulled me away from screens. Later in the course, the assignments take longer, so this became a challenge. For a short while, I was able to do the assignments first thing in the morning, and that seemed pretty productive. The later lessons that took longer would not have worked well in the morning for me. I'd say a lot depends on your home schedule, whether you have a mass transit commute and so on. Doing it on the train for an hour might work, unless the train is not very smooth. I work at home, so that didn't apply to me.

Some days I struggled to get the work done, other days, not so much. Don't work on the course before bed. Find time earlier in the day when you aren't tired with your creativity needle pointing at EMPTY.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

My group was awesome. Certainly there were days where I didn't have the energy to spend time reviewing everyone else's stuff and commenting, but I forced myself to on those days because I thought the feedback was really important to everyone else (and it most certainly was to me). It was also nice having folks from other small groups visit our group now and then, though I struggled to make the time to do this for their groups.

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

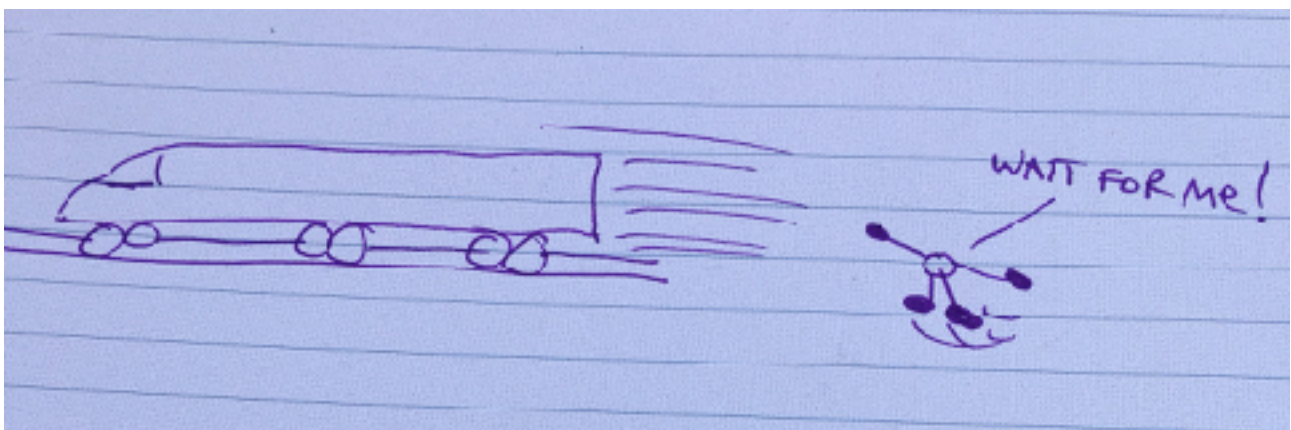
I need to think about this a bit as I'm not sure what you're looking for here.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

Alison did a nice job of balancing the boot-of-encouragement and gentle guidance, even when some of us (including me) got a few days behind. She's also really good (and experienced) at what she does, so the credibility is immediately there. She has a way of succinctly driving directly to what you are missing in a cartoon or assignment and using just enough scribbling on your drawing to zero in on what you need to learn, re-learn (or in my case re-re-re-learn). Likewise, this worked well when problem solving what went wrong on a cartoon, or what would have made it much better.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

Few people fall out of the crib and can cartoon for the New Yorker. I certainly couldn't. Check out my pre-course (day 1) drawing (below).



10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

I took the course because I wanted to add cartoons to my blog and to a non-fiction book I'm working on. Several of the folks in my group were in that mode. I think anyone looking for a foundation in cartooning who wants to dip their toe in and learn should give it a shot. I think some were surprised by the skill they found inside of them, and in some cases, crazy impressive progress appeared "all of a sudden" just like the pre-course reading said it would.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

I posted them to Twitter, which was intentional because of my intended uses of the cartoons (work related). I didn't get much feedback, but I'd randomly run into people who were loving the daily posts, would comment on my progress, express interest in the course, etc. Most didn't say much on Twitter (except for occasional likes) but they saw me, then they'd chatter away about it. I think if I had it to do over again, I'd probably double post them to Twitter and Instagram. I didn't want to spend that much time on Facebook so I didn't post them there, except to a dedicated page for my character.

The weirdest thing that happened: A former newspaper editor that I know suggested (via Twitter) that I submit a couple of my toons to the New Yorker. While that would be quite an achievement if they actually wanted one for their magazine, I chalked that enthusiasm up to "editor had one too many glasses of wine that night".

12) What else would you like to add?

Practice more. The medium doesn't matter.

A selection of cartoons done on the course:



Laura Ostrem — Iowa, USA



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

To be honest, I didn't have any firm expectations of what the end result of the course would be. I just thought it sounded fun and intriguing as I used to love drawing as a child. I am not as familiar with Sean and his courses as some others, but I heard him as a guest on a podcast a few years ago, and visited

his website where I saw a mention of the Da Vinci course. I think a year or two passed between that time and June 2018 when I was able to sign up. I remember being excited when I made the cutoff, feeling that I'd gained access to a very exclusive club.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

The assignments were very basic at first--drawing circles--but progressed to various characters such as teddy bears, Snoopy, and the Pink Panther and finally Cuatro.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

-

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

I did not have any fears that I remember. At first, I wasn't sure about posting my drawings on Facebook but I had only positive remarks to my drawings, even from perfect strangers (because the Facebook setting had to be "public"). Sometimes I drew something that I considered to be a mistake, but we were encouraged to post those as well as our "successes."

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

I tried to set aside some time in the evening to complete the assignments before I got too tired. Depending on my schedule, I sometimes worked at other times of the day, especially when traveling. Having 7 days to complete the 5 assignments allowed some leeway for either starting the week's assignments early, on Saturday or Sunday, or finishing assignments the following weekend.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

The group experience was fabulous and added an extra dimension to the course. During the early months I mostly interacted with the handful of fellow students in my small group, but during the self-study break and in the second half of the course I visited all of the other students' posts. It was so helpful to see how others were progressing and to read Alison's feedback and comments on their work. Comments from the other students who visited my posts often cheered me up and kept me going.

7) Can you describe how the course is conducted?

Alison provided the next week's assignments on the preceding Friday so that those who wished to could start over the weekend or just think about the assignment ahead of starting on Monday. Alison visited everyone's posts daily to provide feedback. During the week she copied some of her comments to another "Little Learnings" thread so everyone could benefit from that particular advice.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

Alison was very dependable in commenting on everyone's posts every day. She gave specific suggestions for improvement, such as pointing out when our copies were going astray. Her comments were always phrased in a respectful way, and if someone asked for clarification or other advice she responded quickly. She also responded in a personal way, and shared what was going on in her own life, which made the interactions feel more friendly and intimate. She was also very understanding of the outside pressures of work, family, sickness, or traveling and never made a rude comment when people were late in posting assignments. Instead, she would say something such as "Please jump back into the course when you're able."

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

This course starts at the absolute beginning. It doesn't matter if you've never drawn anything; if you can hold a pencil and draw a circle, you can succeed in this course.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

I would recommend this course to anyone who is interested in drawing cartoons or would just like to learn a new skill which can be used and enjoyed throughout your life. Beginners will do just fine. You will meet people in your online group who live all over the world and have widely different backgrounds and occupations; they soon become your drawing family.

The common thread is that they are all open to following this course's specific path to drawing and cartooning success, a path which starts with drawing circles and progresses week by week until you find yourself drawing full scenes complete with a foreground, middle ground, and background. Before the course ends, you'll be drawing your own character which you can use on your website, in marketing materials, or just for fun. The drawing practices which you'll learn in the course can become a part of your life and provide a relaxing and creatively satisfying hobby.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

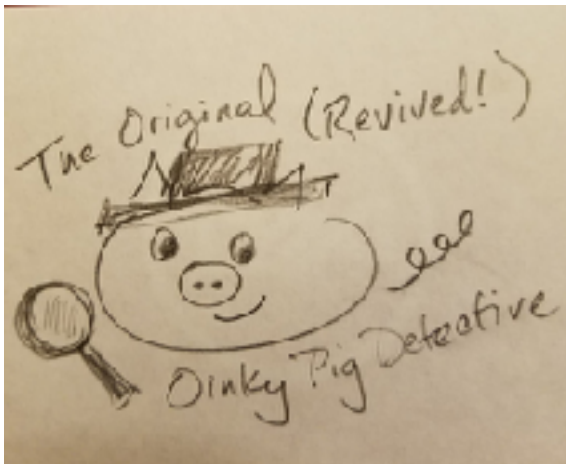
I received a lot of positive reactions from friends, family and strangers on Facebook where I posted my cartoons. I remember a friend posted that I was "amazing" in reaction to a very early post. I also had positive remarks after I posted a scene near the end of the course where I had smeared the ink outlining and the watercolors had blurred together in my drawing. One friend said "Perfect is overrated. I like the feel of it."

12) What else would you like to add?

It was a memorable experience in many ways. I reconnected with my love of drawing which I hope to continue. I felt creative and relaxed

when I drew and colored in the cartoons. I met so many very cool people in the group who I now consider friends. I'll miss viewing the daily drawings of the group and the interactions but I hope to maintain the connections. Thank you Alison for your kind and wise instruction and to Sean for creating the course.

“Starting” cartoon:



A selection of cartoons done during the course:





John Orban — Maryland, USA



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I signed up for the course because I have always loved to draw - especially cartoons and comic book characters. I did that as a kid.

I thought it would be cool to add cartoon characters to my blog posts for the company I worked with at the time. When that went to hell in a hand-basket I was sort of at a loss but needed something to

keep me active in art until I could regain my bearings and head in a new direction. While my original goal was gone, the new one was sufficient to keep me engaged.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

I'd have to say it was a journey of discovery. I was back into drawing - something I wanted to do for a long time but never seemed to have time to do it. It was kind of a slow start but I knew there had to be a reason and didn't question it. I know you've got to start slow and learn the fundamentals. Little did I know at the time how critical that fundamental would be. There were some ups and downs at first, but I knew this wasn't rocket science and I just needed to persist to get through it. I'm glad I persisted.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

The first half of the course was kind of like that climb up the first hill of a roller coaster ride. Slow, but you knew something big was coming. The second half of the course is the roaring down the other side. Everyone in the course got better and better - it was a wild ride.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

I can't really say I had any fears because I've been through all that before. I was over the "I can't do this" when I took the course. I knew I could do pretty much anything if I had the right instruction and

guidance as I went along. We got both in spades. The key to anything like this is to "do-it." Just do it! (Nike is right.) The weekly and daily assignments were perfect (for me at least) to get on a schedule and get the work done. The more I did it, the better I got.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

Well... I beat myself up all the time but I don't let myself shirk my duties. And it wasn't about the cost of the course or anything. When I commit to something, I do it come hell or high water. I just made sure that every day - every single day - I put pencil to paper. I filled up more sketchbooks in three months than I did the prior FIFTY (50) years!

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

What a great group of supportive folks in this course. Of course, I felt closest to the Michelangelo tribe (my small group) and feel bad I didn't get to know others in some of the other groups. But there are only so many hours in a day and since most of my work was done late at night, it seemed I never had time to peruse the other groups. I did a bit and should have done more. But I think the community aspect of the course is one of the things that makes it great. Any course has to have a community. I learned a lot about how a course should be structured and will be applying that learning going forward.

7) Can you describe how the course is conducted?

The course is structured as an online learning environment to teach the basics of cartooning and character creation. Weekly assignments with daily tasks began in August and ran almost to the end of March (about six months). There was a combination of written assignments augmented with video demonstrations and explanations. Feedback was provided by Alison as instructor and encouraging comments from fellow students in the course.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

What can you say about Alison? I can't think of anyone who is more qualified and competent to teach this subject than she is. As I mentioned, she was supportive when we needed it and accommodating when we needed a swift kick in the a\$\$\$. I'm glad she was our instructor. She gave me the tough love I needed, when I needed it. The support of my fellow classmates was great as well.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

Everyone is born an artist. You only need to watch a child with a pencil or crayon in her hand. Unfortunately, the artist inside often gets dimmed by others, society, work - but it never gets extinguished. It's always there waiting for someone to fan the flames of creativity.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

I would recommend the course to anyone who wants to revisit the artist they've always wanted to be. This course can be a stepping stone to something you never thought you could do. All you need to do is what Alison tells you to do.

Why?

Not only can you become a better artist, you WILL become a better human being.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

When Alison first told us to post our photos to Facebook, I was a bit hesitant. Over the course, I've gotten 31 "Likes", 2 "WOWs", and 5 "Loves." And that was just the Album. I don't know how many of them I've gotten on the individual postings. Getting that kind of support was great. I heard from people I didn't expect to hear from. That was a great idea, Alison!

12) What else would you like to add?

Well... let me just say, I'm glad I got into this course when I did. It's the bargain of the century. You folks are crazy to sell this course for this little money.

I'm taking a different art course right now and in one of the study groups I met a DaVinci graduate. He's using his cartoons in his marketing. Funny how stuff like that happens - small world.

Even though my goals changed (even before I started taking the course) I'm glad I spent as much time in it as I did. I learned a lot. It's helped me become a better draftsman AND painter. It's helped ME become a better human being.

Julia Wille — Netherlands/Canada



I can't even come anywhere close to describe, how happy I am that I took this cartoon drawing course.

The course covered an incredibly wide range of topics. Leading us from learning how to draw circles, all the way to composing a cartoon, with skilled body movements and back- and foreground elements.

Somewhere on the way between tracing Sid and drawing landscapes we even developed our own cartoon characters.

The speed of the course was especially at the beginning quite demanding, but never too fast.

Concerning the length - for me, it could go on forever. The assignments were well explained and illustrated.

The price for the course was very reasonable.

Measured by the amount of learning, the improvement of my skills and the fun I had it was actually amazingly cheap.

The feedback was great.

I am still amazed how much feedback each of us got. It was to the point, well explained and illustrated and always encouraging.

Overall a fantastic course with a fantastic teacher.

Thank you so much for this amazing experience.

“First post” cartoon:



A selection of cartoons done on the course:





John Kenworthy — Singapore



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I've wanted to draw easily and well for 45 years - ever since I was thrown out of "Art" at school with the immortal words:

"You will never be able to draw, Kenworthy! Not in a million years!"

Oh yeah? Perhaps I just need a good teacher. And I finally found one.

I have tried online drawing lessons before and whilst I've had some success, I never found it easy and often, it became less than enjoyable and I gave up... again.

Believing those words from that kind Art teacher back in school.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

The beginning seemed oh so simplistic. Circly circles! Just drawing lots and lots of circly circles. You need to understand, these are not just plain old circles, they are circularly circles.

But then you get to draw Snoopy! And the realisation that even a most famous and excellent cartoon such as Snoopy is little more than a bunch of circles and I COULD DRAW SNOOPY!!!! OK, got a little excited there. Which of course got dashed and bashed by Sid from Ice Age. Thankfully, I was not alone in finding Sid a fiendishly difficult character - of course, Sid is also little more than a whole lot of circles. But I still have nightmares about his claws.

The panther who is Pink tested all of us in some way, and Powerpuff girls had hypnotic eyes that tested circles within circles within circles. And finally the circles took on sticks and not just any stick either. Proper stick men, women, animals, children and more fanciful creations. There was the beginning of self-expression and the semblance of creating our own characters. But that has to await a little later in the course.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

A welcome self-study break first, filled with as much personal cartooniary as possible and a test of self-discipline without the gentle nudges from Ali to keep up the pace.

By now we have the notion of our own character and already we are creating a sidekick. And just as Snoopy takes over Charlie Brown, the sidekick took on a life of their own. Of course, many of the sketches I made were terrible, but thanks to the wonder of modern technology, these were easily erased and replaced with better or more polished examples.

We played with sticks some more and expressions with faces and body language as our drawings began to take on something more than a flat 2-dimensional face on perspective. And moving into a third dimension - just as we struggled with in part 1 with Po, and Sid and others - I say "we" and of course I mean "I" - other members of my group appeared to have suddenly become sooooo much better. And checking out the other groups I surmised that maybe my art teacher was right after all. At least, compared to other people. But Ali (and my fellow group members) encouraged and said really nice things about my efforts and I felt galvanised to plow on.

Now I'm beginning to draw cartoons ready for my podcasts and website. My character seems good enough, and I'm happy that they will get better and better and maybe the early ones will be replaced, or maybe not. In these last couple of weeks I've realised that there's a whole lot more can yet be done to improve.

But dear Mr Potts (old and probably dead Art Teacher from school) you were wrong. I can draw, and it took about six months. All I really needed was a great teacher and supportive classmates!

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

I was fearful that I couldn't really draw. But I trusted Ali and I trusted the process.

Some of my attempts were desperately poor. So what. That's all OK, a simple tiny correction indicated by Ali, and shockingly it really was so much better.

Some, I thought were fabulous. So what. A simple tiny correction indicated by Ali and I realised that attention to detail could be a little more important.

Seeing my classmates posting their cartoons helped me learn so much. How did they manage to make that work? What a difference to see others on the same path and everyone helping and encouraging each other.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

I'm a big fan of Sean D'Souza's Chaos Planning method and I have time carved out for total and complete chaos. I usually ended up stealing that time. On holiday I'm not allowed to use my computer or tablet, and I draw on the computer. So I tried to get a couple of days ahead before holiday, and caught up afterwards. If not, I skipped a couple of days' assignments and just continued.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

I've mentioned the group support already a few times. It is terrific to work alongside people who were, till now, complete strangers. From all over the globe and all walks of self-employed life. Of course, we all share a lot in common, but everyone was supportive and encouraging and kind.

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

Ali gives a gentle nudge and an encouraging word with practical tips - sometimes a video, sometimes a correction on your own drawing. She's looking out for you (and everyone) and drips feeds us with little learnings to take us one more step forward.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

Ali is a guide on the side, seemingly always ready to reply and then pushes you to the next step.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

Join the club.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

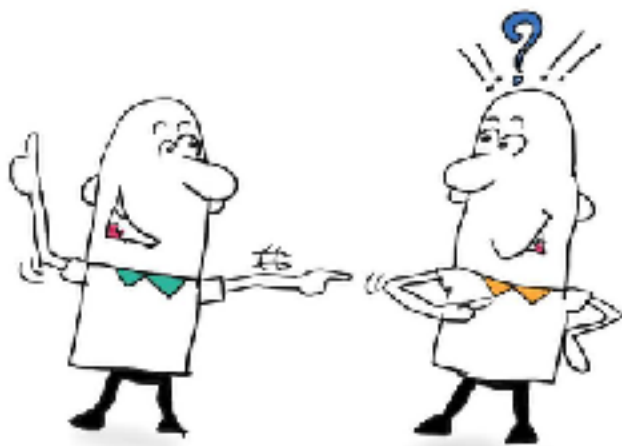
You want to add your own pizzazz to an article or a blog post or your training courses, or maybe your marketing materials. You love the idea of having cartoons and secretly always wanted to draw but just never made the time or were discouraged before.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons?

I started using one of my character's cartoons on my regular email signature. I received responses to those emails within moments, some with a smiley face and "nice cartoon", one of my partners - said "nice caricature". Apparently, my character looks like me - never realised till then. Maybe I am a narcissist!

12) What else would you like to add?

I've enjoyed this course far more than I thought that I would. I feel confident drawing my character live in my workshops (not with all the background and detail yet, but with a certain flourish) that has helped my coaching and workshops take on an extra dimension of spontaneity and fun.





I'm looking for a mentor who will show me how to succeed without actually having to do any work



Ann van Eron — USA

1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?



I was attracted to Sean's blog and book characters and my goal was to be able to create some images for my blog. I had never drawn and had hoped to sketch some basic images. I was inspired by what previous students had created. I was also curious about learning in an online course.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

I appreciate how we started with small steps (literally drawing circles) and continued to build on our learning. We traced Snoopy and other cartoon characters and then copied them. It was an eye-opening experience for me. I had to really pay attention and learned how to see in a new way. We graduated to drawing stick figures and then we developed our own characters.

A number of elements supported learning. We posted our work each day and received feedback from colleagues and Alison, the teacher. I learned the most when I received feedback on what was working and some suggestions. Each week built on the previous week. It was an excellent way for me to learn.

The assignments were always clear and examples were provided. Each week, Alison shared "little learnings" that helped me to see how small changes could enhance cartoons.

It was fun to see what others were sketching and I learned a lot from them. There was a supportive and fun environment for learning.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

I am grateful that I participated in the second half. I felt that the learning continued at a fast pace. We learned valuable skills such as including foreground, middle and background. We also focused on developing our

characters. I feel much more confident and have been creating images for my blog. I enjoyed creating scenes and building additional skills.

The daily structure of sketching and posting kept me focused with continual learning. I found that my joy in the process continued to grow.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

I was worried that I would not be able to do the sketching well or be able to keep up given my work load in my business.

A great aspect of the program is getting new assignments each week. Each assignment builds on the previous one. I told myself to “trust the process” and not worry about doing well. (This was an experiment for me.)

I found that I learned the most when I received feedback on how a cartoon could be enhanced or when I saw how others were doing it. The projects generally felt a bit challenging in the beginning of the week and they got easier by the end of the week as we practiced and learned.

It did take a commitment to do all the assignments. The accountability helped me to keep focused. I found that I enjoyed the sketching. I will admit that I got a bit less sleep some weeks but I am glad that I invested in building this skill for me. I see it as an investment in myself.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

I reviewed the assignments for the week at the beginning of each week. I tried to do some work on the assignments during a break or at lunch, if possible. However, I tended to do most of my work at the end of the day. I think it would be great to start the day with the sketching. I carried my material with me and would work on sketches when there was time between meetings. It helped me to have a target time for completion.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

I really enjoyed working with a small group of participants. We encouraged each other and learned a lot from each other. We each had different styles and experience levels. I found that I enjoyed seeing what each created and it became a part of my routine to review and comment. It was a very positive environment and I learned a lot from my peers. I also appreciated learning from the larger group. I think the process was well designed where we were assigned to a small group and had access to the whole group.

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

Alison is an excellent teacher. She provides useful feedback on a daily basis. She will even demonstrate how to enhance your cartoons. It is really helpful to receive the feedback during the week so that you can incorporate the new learning. I have learned so much from her. I had never drawn at all when I started and I am now sketching my blogs.

Each week Alison will share examples from students to highlight tips and emphasize points. She provides personal feedback and encouragement.

At the end of the week, Alison will give you a star if you complete all the assignments. It sounds funny, but the accountability helped me to complete the projects.

The course is well designed and I felt confident throughout.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

Alison is very encouraging and can zero in on how a small change will greatly improve your cartoon. I felt confident in “trusting the process” knowing Alison is an expert and an excellent teacher. She created a positive and fun environment for learning. Alison loves her craft and conveys that love which is contagious. She is very supportive and offers suggestions and provides resources. It is great to see how she manages the course. It is first class.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

I had never drawn and had never had an art class (except in high school and I was not confident.) We started simply by drawing circles and graduated to tracing. I learned how to see in a new way and trusted the process. I still have a lot to learn and the course works for different levels of skill. It is a fun experience and I encourage you to jump in if it draws you.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

I recommend this to anyone who would like to be drawing cartoons for their website or blog or who wants to explore cartooning. The course is well organized and if you are consistent and commit to sketching each day, you will be surprised at your progress.

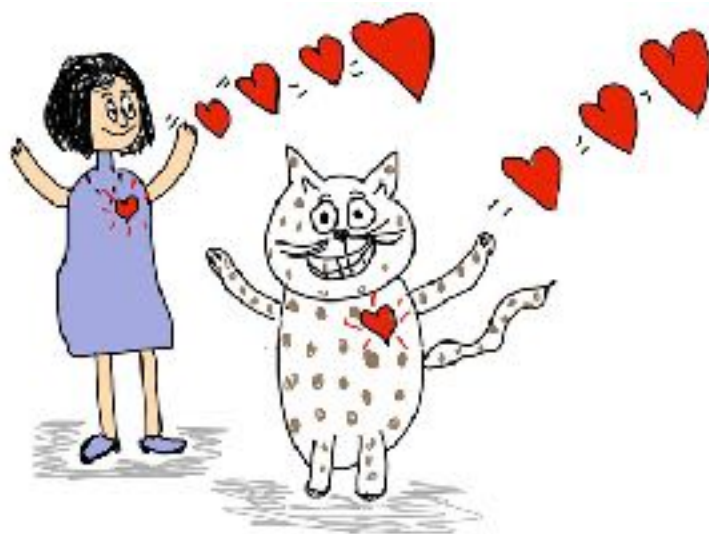
11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons?

One of my sisters asks me to send her my cartoons each week and says she can't wait to see them. My family members and friends tell me they enjoy my cartoons. They are as surprised as I am. Clients also say they appreciate them. I can't believe I am sharing them.

12) What else would you like to add?

Thank you Alison for being an insightful and encouraging teacher. Thanks also Sean for sharing your cartoons and creating the course. I loved Cuatro and was inspired to develop a character. I am grateful to have sketching be a part of my life now.





Pauline Le Rutte — Netherlands



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

My expectations were high, because all the courses and books by Sean and Renuka that I've done and read were outstanding. My goal was to be able to illustrate my own blog articles and ebooks.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

In the first half of the course I experienced 'home coming'. When I was young I used to copy many comic strips. And that was precisely what we did in the first half. There were some struggles, but at the end of the week I succeeded and made my step in the direction of the next week.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

In the second half of the course we were challenged to go beyond the comfort zone. Step by step the tracing and copying made place for creating our own figure(s). It was a great experience to see my 'Alice' see the light of day in a very natural way. Suddenly she was there. As a result of the exercises in the previous weeks.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

After a few weeks, when we got into creating our own figure I feared that I wouldn't be creative enough. With copying there is an example. I persisted and applied what I learned in the previous weeks. With drawing, and in fact every new skill, the best way to succeed is to practice, practice, practice.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

When it became clear that we had to do homework 5 days a week I physically made place for it in my agenda. Every day half an hour and later in the course even more. I do my drawings in the afternoon, while helping my son with his homework. With drawing it isn't a bother when you take your mind off it for a minute or so. Doing the afternoon drawings became my moment, it's a bit like meditating.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

The big group of students is divided into smaller groups of about 5 or 6. And that is very pleasant, especially for an introvert like me. It's clear. You visit your group members every day and say something constructive about their assignment. And you get constructive feedback. And that is part of the motivation you need to go on. When you're stuck, they are there to say something nice. You can be harsh on yourself, but it's always made softer by your group.

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

Alison is a fantastic teacher. She gives you the exact feedback you need. It's extraordinary how quick she sees what you need. Not only technically but also mentally. When there is something the whole group struggles with, she creates an insightful video which helps you go on. She's in the forum every day. Giving feedback individually and linking people who can learn from each other in the same subgroup or from another subgroup. She's a great and skilled mentor!

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

See above, I can't write a separate answer to these two questions.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

To anyone who thinks he or she can't draw I would say that they just *forgot* how to draw. That I experienced in a group of about 20 people, everyone made huge steps. Drawing is a skill that can be (re)learned without any doubt.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

This course is great if you want to illustrate your own ebooks and blog articles. If you want to help your customers 'see' what you mean instead of only saying or writing it. It's also great for people who want to experience the feeling they used to have while drawing as a child. It's kind of meditative. A wonderful break in the day.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons?

In the beginning when I started posting my drawings on Facebook, people were surprised. But almost everyone reacted positive and some even 'liked' my drawings on a regular basis. But at some point someone wrote: "2nd grade primary school?". That was tough. Also someone said to me: 'What is all that drawing, I don't know what to do with it?'. I told

her she didn't have to look if she didn't want to. By posting on Facebook you are vulnerable. You chose if you post private or public. But I explicitly chose public to create a harness against such negative feedback. It will always be there. I don't mind anymore.

12) What else would you like to add?

I never intended to become a professional cartoonist or post on a website other than my own. But at some point people from the hockey club who are on Facebook got sense of my drawings and asked me to illustrate an article for the yearly magazine. It was a big surprise that after only a half year already people find my drawings good enough to print.

I know for sure that I'm never ever going to stop drawing.

First Da Vinci image + a selection of cartoons drawn during the course:



Rob Middleton — Tokyo and UK



What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I wanted to improve my overall skills as a cartoonist to develop my craft and also to make my work more professional so that I could increase my chances of selling work.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

It was a complete return to basics. This was something that I hadn't thought about for a long time, if ever. It was good to embrace the beginner's mindset again and to question assumptions about drawing.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

A gradual increase in challenge and complexity. It was very satisfying to get into character creation, and then backgrounds and composition.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

My main concern was not putting in enough time. I overcame it by usually finding the time.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

The accountability of posting on both Facebook and the forum had a lot to do with that. I also like to have a reputation as someone who gets things done.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

It was wonderful to part of a group where everyone was sharing there work and feedback on other's work. Very rewarding.

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

Alison was very good at giving feedback in terms of adjusting it to whatever level people were currently at with their cartooning. She is very good at picking up on both obvious things that we were missing as well as very subtle details that could transform a picture.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

Excellent! I have started to work with her on a one-to-one basis. I am a teacher by profession, and I have been learning and reflecting a lot on her teaching and how I can implement some of it in my language teaching.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

It doesn't matter! Do the course if you want to! One of my small group team mates showed huge improvement over the six months, starting from just doing the basics.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

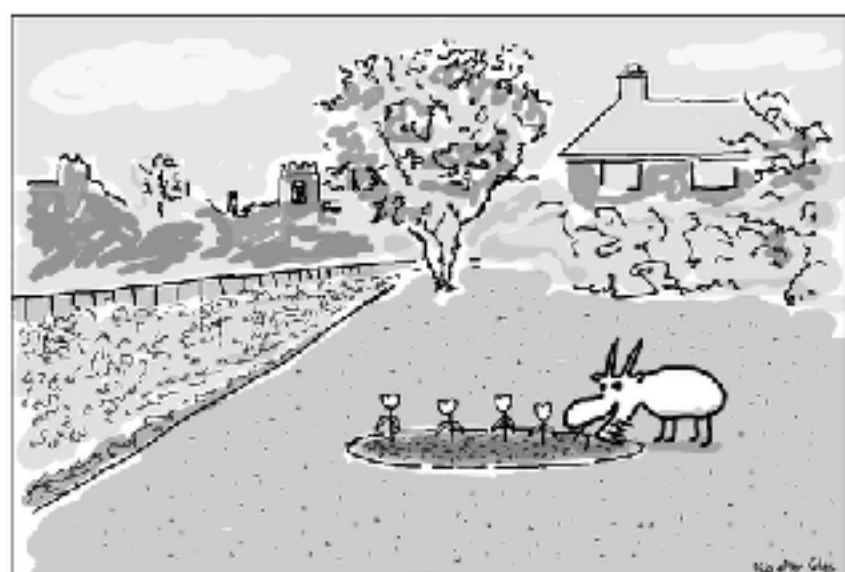
Anyone who loves drawing cartoons regardless of their current ability. There was a wide range of ability in the course participants, yet everyone was able to work on their skills and improve.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

I have had several comments that I've improved over the last few months. My output has also increased a lot which people have commented on. It was pretty cool when I discovered that Gerald the Goat has fans from age 4 to 70!

12) What else would you like to add?

The course resulted in the creation of Gerald the Goat, who is by far the most popular character I've ever drawn.



Vicky Fraser — Herefordshire, UK



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I didn't really have many expectations because I've never done a formal drawing course before. However, I have done Psychotactics courses before and they've been unfailingly marvellous, so I knew it'd be great.

I wanted to be able to sketch a few cartoons to illustrate my daily emails, my blog posts, and my newsletters. I was hoping for "vaguely competent" but wasn't really convinced I'd manage anything like the stuff DaVinci alumni were producing.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

Circley-Circles? For a WEEK? That seemed odd. And I gotta say, the circles did get a little tedious after a few days. HOWEVER, I trusted the process because I know Sean always has a reason for doing something. And when we graduated to Snoopy and other characters, it became obvious why we spent so long on circles.

Getting us to trace stuff was inspired — I would never have thought of that on my own because I had in my head that this was somehow "cheating". Of course it's not — it's teaching your muscles how to move and your eye how to see, and your brain how to think about shapes. It was incredibly useful, and I still do the odd tracing if I really struggle to draw something in particular.

Sid the Slothh was bloody difficult, but ultimately very rewarding.

And stick figures are far more tricky than they look. Although when I learned to draw them properly, it was the most useful thing of all I think.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

In the second part of the course we started looking at composition: how to put a scene together, what works, what doesn't work. And details of faces and expressions and emotions. This was all great stuff because it taught me not just that something looks wrong, but WHY it looks wrong and how to fix it.

And how to make a cartoon really interesting and fun.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

I really, really, really struggled with creating my own characters. I kept looking at what everyone else was doing and thinking it was great, but being utterly stumped as to my own characters. I was afraid I had no imagination, and that I would end up being totally derivative and just copying forever.

But the turning point came for me at the Christmas break — I started illustrating my daily emails with a few characters of my own, and that was a game changer. It meant I never ran out of ideas and I developed deeper more interesting characters.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

I made it one of the first things I do each day. Because I write my daily email first thing in the morning, it was easy to draw the cartoon to go with it. Then I'd try to do the assignment as well. If not, I'd do my assignment at lunchtime.

I realised leaving it until the end of the day often meant I got behind by a day...

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

My group has been brilliant. We have really got to know each other, and everyone's so encouraging and friendly. Compliments are great for boosting confidence, and feedback is really helpful for improving. Making small groups within the larger group course was a clever way to get us all working together.

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

Alison has created a perfect, safe learning environment. She gives us our assignments in plenty of time, and mostly “marks” them at the same time each day. And even when we’re late submitting stuff, she always checks it out and gives us feedback. It’s the perfect combination of encouraging us to get stuff done on time, and being understanding that we all have loads of stuff on outside the course.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

She’s absolutely great. Totally honest — but kind. It’s always constructive feedback, so how to fix something or improve on something that already works. She’s never been impatient or condescending, and is very understanding about time commitments and struggles. She gives credit where it’s due, and takes time to point each of us in the direction of other people or resources that may help us. And I get the impression Alison genuinely loves teaching us 😊

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

I’d say: Maybe you’re not — now. But would you like to be? If you would, you need to learn — because I couldn’t draw either, but now I can. Everyone learns at a different pace, and some are better at some things than others — but everyone on this course has learned to draw good cartoons in their own style.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

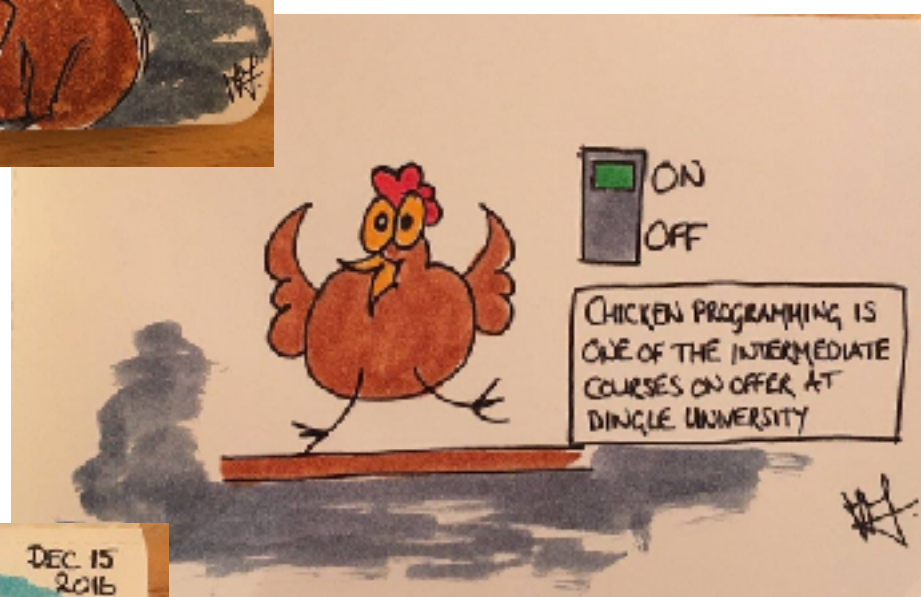
I’d recommend it to anyone who wants to learn to draw anything. Because although this is a cartooning course, all the principles apply to general drawing. I’d recommend it to anyone who wants to add a unique edge to their marketing or writing, because I can illustrate my own stuff now and that’s cracking.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

They’re astonished. I continually get comments like, “Wow! I had no idea you could draw!” And people wishing they could draw like me, which is hilarious. I always tell them to learn 😊 And I’ve had someone

Before: (just colourful sketch notes)

A selection of cartoons drawn while on Da Vinci:



Gordon Quigley — Vancouver Island, Canada



Caution! The Da Vinci cartoon course is a call to adventure, a hero's journey in an epic, change-your-life forever, kind of way...

Perhaps you have resisted this call for years, you reason that Cartooning is not for you.

You don't know how to draw, you have a serious business with serious clients.

They just would not understand. Cartooning does not fit into your life. Plus, cartooning will be an uncomfortable six month journey, full of struggles and difficulties. Besides, you have a business to run and a family life - there is no time for cartooning. Not for me, you decide.

But, the idea nags at you. You see announcements for upcoming Da Vinci classes. Cartooning is in your dreams, you like the idea, but still you resist. Silly cartooning...

Finally, one morning you wake up and say, "What the hell, I can still be serious and cartoon at the same time, besides, it might be fun."

It starts easy enough, just drawing some circles, not so bad. But then, you begin to struggle, drawing faces, drawing expressions, adding backgrounds, composing cartoons.

You begin to doubt your ability and you are sure you will never reach the end goal. "I am not an artist, why did I ever take this stupid cartooning course?", you ask yourself. I think I will quit, turn back and go home.

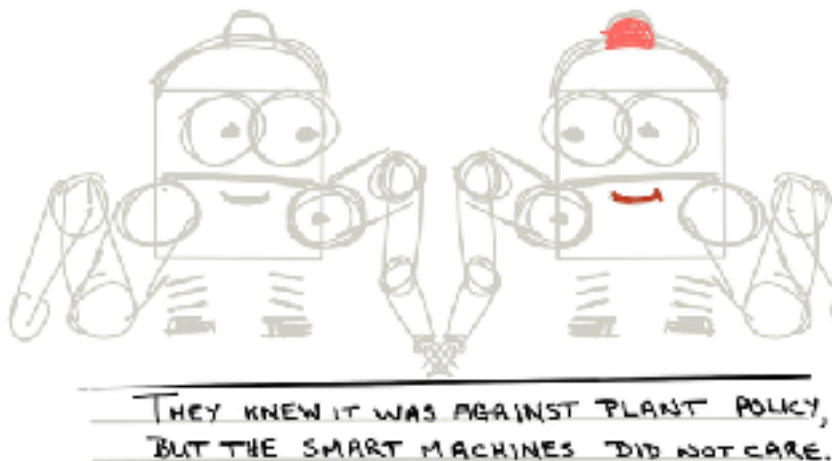
But, Alison is there to assist, mentor and guide you through the rough patches. Like Merlin or Gandalf, she always arrives just in time to avert disaster. She is a great and wise advisor who can look at a cartoon and give you ideas to move your cartooning forward.

Plus, you are not alone. You can also depend on your group to be there and help you by pitching in with advice and feedback. You all learn and proceed through the adventure as a small band, like a tribe of cartoonists in search of the holy cartooning grail.

Finally, you find the treasure, the deep pleasure of creating new worlds and characters out of thin air. You begin to get positive feedback from clients. They say your cartoons really help them understand the problems and illustrate your solutions. Cartoons cut through all the social media noise and help you find new customers. Cartoons are setting you apart and people are noticing.

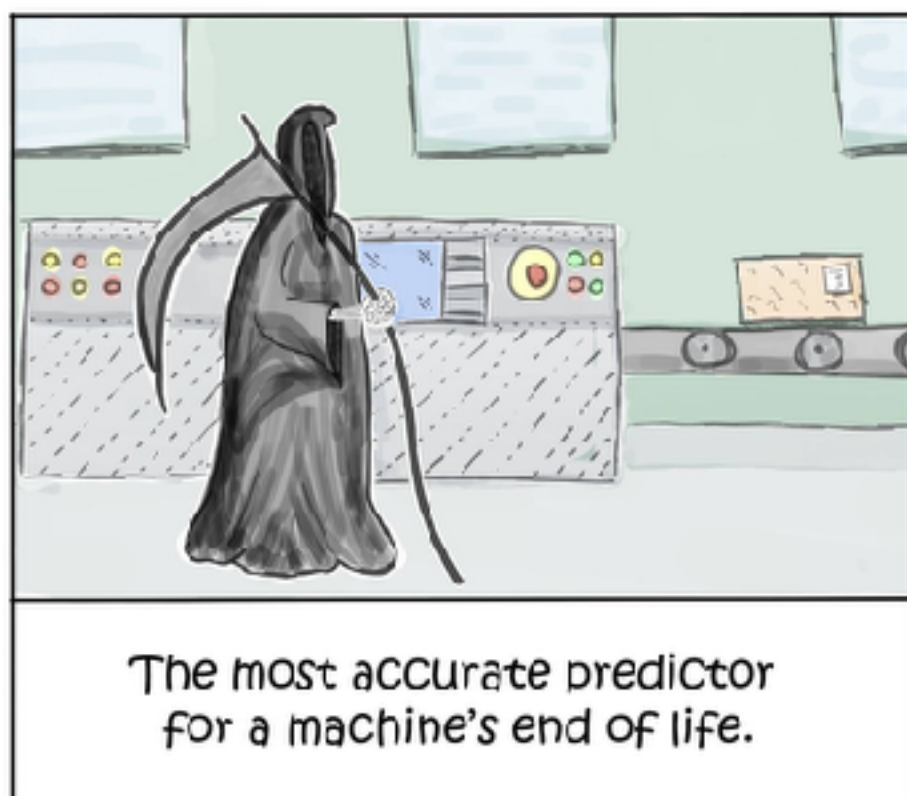
After the course, you return home. But, this is not your old life. Your perspective on your business and even life has changed. Cartooning has given you a new way to view the world and your customers. And, it is a happier, more engaged perspective that will serve you well. Most of all, you have developed a quiet confidence, a bit of a cartoonist's swagger (and now you can draw this image)! You have been on an adventure. You have faced the dragons and demons and come through alive. Most definitely alive!

You resolve to make cartooning a foundation for your new life. Strap in for the Da Vinci cartooning adventure. You will never be the same!





" You have H.A.D, High Availability Disorder.
Symptoms include a compulsion to reduce downtime, and,
if left untreated, it can lead to premature end-of-life. "



Sylvia Wonisch — Austria



1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

When I first saw the DaVinci course and what the result of a former participant was, my intention was, I would love being able to draw cartoons like he could. Therefore I registered for the waiting list.

When I joined the course later, my expectations shifted a little bit in a more specific direction. I wanted to draw cartoons for my blog and as attachment to courses, which I was going to offer.

I expected to have some cartoons ready at the end of the course which can be used for the blog and to have some ideas for cartoons and comic strips for my training materials.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

The first half of the course was an exciting journey with basics. It started with circling circles, which was a really good exercise getting confidence with pencil and paper, not trembling too much.

In the next weeks we traced and copied characters, which I partly knew well and others which I even have not seen yet. All had different shapes. It was good for getting more confidence for example with long lines, circles and roundings and many other things.

Next came stickmen, which turned out to be much more complicated than I first thought. All the exercises with the sticks helped a lot to see where the limbs and the joints of people in motion from photographs are.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

Honestly speaking I can't remember anymore, where part 1 ended and part 2 started as all participants have subscribed to both parts.

The aim of part 2 was to create own cartoon character, how amazing! At the beginning I was very much frightened of this part. I could not imagine, that I would be able to develop something own. But the fear was not necessary at all. Alison guided with weekly assignments step by step through the process. Every participant was able to create an own character and surprisingly they looked all completely different.

Then we got to know, how much influence fore-, middle- and background has to a drawing and learned something about right placement of character in the frame.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

Ups and downs crossed my fresh cartoon journey. Sometimes I wanted to give up, sometimes I was eager waiting for next assignment. Some assignments were horrible for me at the first glance. The fear popped up, that I would never be capable enough to master it or that I cannot find an idea what to draw.

A daily routine helped a lot to overcome difficulties. I found out, what's the best time for me for drawing and tried to stick to this time of the day.

Talking about the fear of missing inspiration and ideas, the hints from the teacher were really helpful. Where to search, what to look for in Google and looking to the work of other DaVinci members assisted in overcoming this obstacle.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

A personal commitment to daily work 5 days a week together with setting up a routine and finding the right time to work on the assignments. I soon recognized, that the best time for me was early morning.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

In DaVinci, the participants are divided into small groups of people. Seeing what they have done, and how they overcome difficulties had a very positive influence on my own work. Learning not only from own mistakes but also from the mistakes from others was a quite new and exciting experience for me.

Additionally their feedback was motivating to go on. But not only own group, even members of other groups crossed by very often and left comments. What a great community of people from all over the world it was!

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

She conducts the course very professional. She offers training videos, shares own work and experiences from earlier courses. She shows up daily to give feedback to the work of each person. She sums up important learnings from various groups in a special thread.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

Alison is a wonderful teacher! Her daily feedback to each participant's work is on the point, exactly matching the needs of the single person and the stage of drawing he/she is at the moment. She is respectful, very much motivating, helpful and encouraging.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

Before the course I was of the opinion, that at the most I can copy some easy drawings in acrylic if the process is shown step by step. I never thought, I could draw cartoons or I could have own ideas.

Therefore I would say: Don't worry if you think you are not good at drawing. If you are interested in it, that's enough. Trust the process. Make mistakes and learn from them. I never would have thought, that mistakes are that important.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

I would recommend the course to anybody who for whatever reason is interesting in learning how to draw a cartoon. Under the precondition, you can dedicate at the beginning about 30 minutes a day for the assignments. If you can spare 1 hour, the better in the later part of the course.

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

At the beginning, family and friends were pretty much astonished that I started this journey. Personally and via Facebook I got only positive reactions. Even strangers left their likes.

Already some weeks after the course started, a friend of mine – following the cartoons on Facebook – asked me, if I would illustrate a meditation and learning brochure for her. I was really astonished about her confidence.

Nearly forgot to mention that I started using my own cartoons much earlier than I ever thought for my blog.

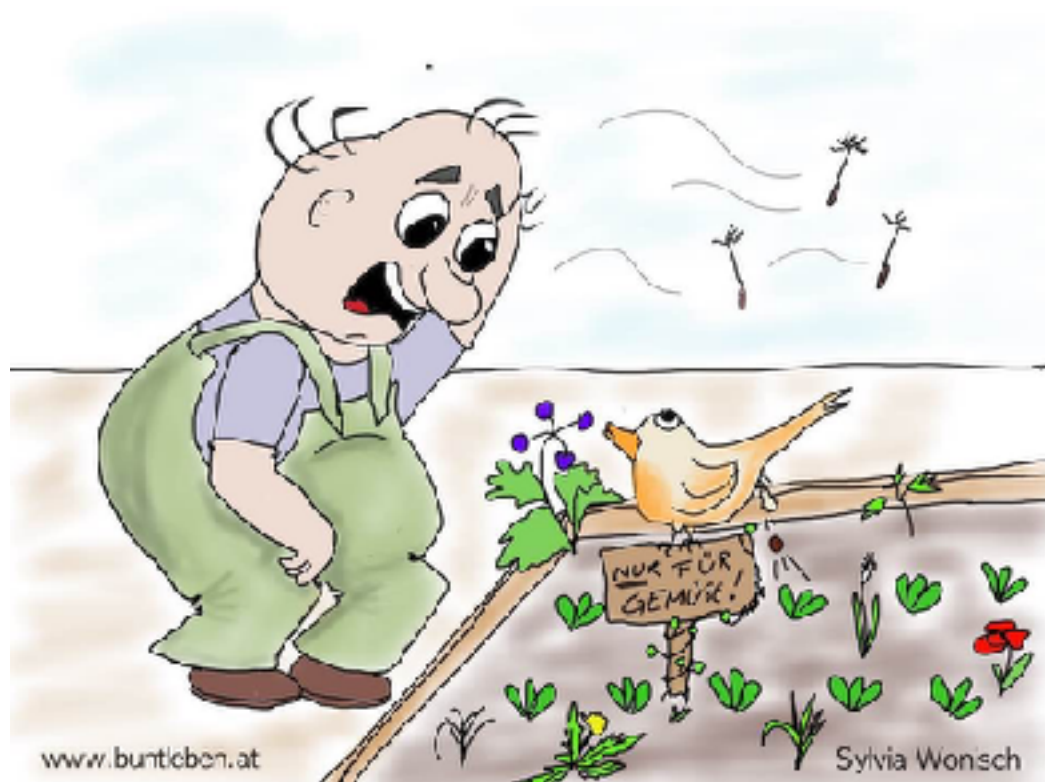
12) What else would you like to add?

Thanks to everybody who was involved in the creation of this course. Thanks to the wonderful teacher Alison, thanks to the other participants of my course.

When I recap, in how many courses to various contents I participated in the last 2 years, this one was definitely the best with the highest



If you take the challenge, you can have really much fun!



immediate value for me.



Roland Kopp-Wichmann — Germany

1) What were your expectations when you joined the course? What did you hope to achieve?

I just wanted to learn drawing cartoons to use them in my blog instead these boring stock photos everybody is using. I did some little cartoon-pictures before but I wanted a more professional outcome.

2) Can you describe the journey through the first half of the course?

It was a nice journey, mostly with pleasant, seldom boring exercises. Because I was highly motivated and took my time daily for the assignments it was good.

Ten years before as our two kids were living with us I probably wouldn't have that much time.

3) Can you describe the journey through the second half of the course?

I felt that the difficulties grew because there was a goal behind all exercises, but I didn't had real problems.

Difficult for me for a while was the developing of my character because I had some favourite cartoonists - and couldn't decide. But then I chose Dirk Meissner who has this "Sempé-style" I admire most.

4) What were your fears as you tackled the assignments? How did you overcome them?

No fear because I knew when I exercise enough there will be a good outcome. And sometimes I didn't had so much time that I needed.

5) Can you talk about the method you used to make sure you got your work done?

Well, I was committed to sketch each day and I did with some exceptions when I had to do a seminar. But I seldom procrastinate, so I did most of the assignments in the evening for the next day.

6) Can you talk about the experience with your group?

It was always encouraging and motivating to read the "likes" and comments from so many member. I also looked into other groups to get new ideas or to see how they solved a problem.

7) Can you describe how Alison conducts the course?

Alison did really great. Her feedback is always profound, helpful - and not too sweet.

8) Can you also describe Alison as a teacher?

First when I looked at her website before booking the course I was a bit disappointed because her style was not mine and I had the fear that she could influence us to draw in her style. But that didn't turn out that way. She accepted every style from all group members and gave individual advice.

9) What would you say to someone who says they're not good at drawing?

If you can draw circles then you can learn to draw. Maybe you need more time than somebody who can already draw more than circles. But nearly everything is learnable with the help of myelin.

10) Who would you recommend the course to, and why?

Everybody who wants to draw cartoons and is disappointed by all the hundred books "How to draw cartoons".

11) Can you tell us of how friends, family, kids, strangers have reacted to your cartoons? Can you also describe an incident, if possible (as it will make the answer come alive?)

My wife and my kids like my cartoons although my wife is quite perfectionistic. I had a lot feedback of my Facebook friends. There were three people who wanted to know which course it is because they also wanted to do it. So I sent them the link.

12) What else would you like to add?

It was a very good decision. Before I had bought several courses of Sean so I had a lot of trust that the cartoon course also would be great.

