

**Consider Cézanne 3/2020**  
***Looking to Great Artists for Inspiration***  
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What qualities create a dancer? Curiosity. Desire. Focus. A devoted investigative brain. Consider Cézanne. As I finished reading an article\* that recalled the enormity of this artist, I recognized his unquenchable need to practice is his life-long love: his art. A persistent inquisitiveness and commitment kept him inspired and yes, determined. Even six days before his death, bedridden, he complained to his art dealer that he had not received his paints! The exploration into an art form can never be completed in a lifetime. Would we want it to be? It is an ever-widening circle of not only discovery but also giving forward. It is vital to understand that this enduring knowledge, from our heroines/heroes, can flow into us. This energy transforms into creative evolution. A valuable way to hone your artistry and dance technique involves studying your heroines and heroes with a passionate, discerning eye.

Cézanne was an iconoclast. He questioned. He found *his* way to creative expression. It is of the utmost importance to remember there is no one set of rules when it comes to creating your vision. The iconoclasts will always be the ones bending the rules, questioning audaciously and visualizing the details of their dreams. Discovery of personal expression is exhilarating and rewarding, and often times hard won. The process is paved with will power, and it can be painstaking to follow through with your ideas. But if you NEED to express your art, your dance, you WILL find a way.

Courage initiates change, growth. Do not be afraid to relinquish yourself to the frequent shifts of your development. The negative voices that could tell you to stop, to save the questions for later, to make excuses, might surface, but know they are quieted by courage, perseverance and action. You most probably will be in constant negotiation with the possibilities of your art. And this IS the magnificent journey!

Cézanne boldly said he would astonish Paris with a still life of an apple. Imagine the delicious focus within that idea. Dance is a study of meticulous detail. We sense, we analyze, we ponder. We keep folding into art that we so love. The journey to the apple is more profound than the attainment of perfection.

We read about the accomplished – the recognized. We strive for recognition ourselves. There IS someone who will recognize each one of us. It might not be the person we want it to be at that moment, but someone will see us, support us, and love us. Sometimes you must draw this support from memory. When you hear a voice of encouragement, store in your being so that it can placate the inner turmoil or doubts. Call up this voice if you feel defeated, so you can continue your art. And look to the human beings you revere. Delve into the lives of your heroines and heroes and you will find struggle and courage and, yes, success. You will be inspired anew through their examples.

This is a call to all dancers/artists to continue boldly, without compromise, so that you may express your dance/art however, whenever, wherever you must, for as long as you need to. You are the energetic current in the stream waiting to surge onward. This is the magic of your dance/art. You are the future.

\*Paul Trachtman, “The Obsessive Genius of Paul Cézanne,” [The Smithsonian](#) (January 2006), Pgs. 80-88