

INTRODUCTION

IDEAS AS MONEY, MONEY AS IDEAS

INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL—ideas as money, money as ideas—is today the real currency of the business world. This capital is more than technical knowledge or bits and bytes of data. It is a wide range of social, emotional, intuitive, and interpersonal skills that together comprise the creative spirit. It is our goal to bring those skills to fruition, integrate them, and reawaken that spirit.

THE DRAGON'S GATE

THIS BOOK IS called *The Artist's Way at Work: Riding the Dragon* because the creative spirit, like the dragon, is a thrilling, joyous, chaotic, and powerful force that deserves and demands respect. The act of creation, whether it's a new idea, a new business, or an old business revitalized, can feel like both a high-altitude ride and a free fall. Learning to engage and channel this creative force is the key to remaining vital and enthusiastic in our professional *and* our personal lives.

In the ancient Chinese tradition of Taoism, the 'Tao (the Way) is the most elemental force in the universe, considered beyond description or explanation. It is the life-force itself, our animating breath, found in the always changing yet eternal and immutable laws of nature. It is in the spirit of this great mystery that we have chosen Chen Rong's famous thirteenth-century painting of the *Nine Dragons* as the organizing metaphor of this work. The dragon's nine transformations in the painting have for centuries been interpreted as a symbolic representation of the enlightenment of Taoism's founder, Lao-tzu. They serve as an emblem of the emo-

The business of America is business.

—CALVIN COOLIDGE

The best thing about the future
is that it only comes one day at
a time.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

We cannot really separate our
lives into a home part and a
work part.

—EDWARD SHAPIRO AND
WESLEY CARR

tional, mental, and spiritual journey that is *The Artist's Way at Work*.

As in all journeys, there will be advances and setbacks; there will be times of soaring and times of retreat, times of rest and times of teaching, times of learning and times to let new knowledge settle into silent wisdom.

For each of the nine dragons of the scroll, we have assigned a specific set of teachings and tasks aligned with the focus of each of the twelve weeks of *The Artist's Way at Work* program. We ask that you keep an open mind and let the dragon serve as a metaphor for your own journey. You'll find no dogma here, no articles of faith, only a window for your imagination.

We present these images, metaphors, and ideas as guideposts along a course we have carefully mapped. They are the means to an end, the tools of a potential transformation, a way to make meaning of the changing and growing self—a self embedded in a social world.

FROM "I" TO "WE"

WE LIVE IN a fractured culture. We have learned to think of ourselves as separate from others, as "us" and "them." Because our world is compartmentalized, so are we. We speak of our "work world" and our "real life" as though they were two separate things. Often we long for more meaning in our work and in our lives, but we do not see how the two can be integrated to deepen our satisfaction.

It is the aim of this book to give you a more satisfying, fully creative life in which you feel a sense of wholeness, not fragmentation; a sense of camaraderie, not competition. This book will make you more creative not only in your business life, but in your life as a whole. One result of this creative emergence will be a heightened sense of authenticity. Many of you will feel that you are becoming more your "real" self—a self that perhaps too often feels muffled, discounted, and discredited in the work world as we know it.

While this book is grounded in state-of-the-art ideas on creativity, leadership, innovation, and organizational behavior, and will be in that sense quite modern, it may also seem in some ways simple and timeless, as you reconnect to your own values, history, and integrity, often using techniques that are thousands of years old.