

THE  
*artist's*  
SUITCASE

26 ESSENTIALS *for the*  
CREATIVE JOURNEY



# Praise for *The Artist's Suitcase*

Creative people of all kinds will find a lot to love in *The Artist's Suitcase*. Whether you are a podcaster, writer, speaker, leader, coach, musician, or do any type of creative work, you'll find dozens of practical tips and lots of encouragement to help you change the world. Do yourself a favor in dive into this book!

—JIMMY BURGESS, AUTHOR OF THE  
AMAZON #1 BESTSELLER *WHAT JUST  
HAPPENED? HOW TO BOUNCE BACK IN LIFE*

This book is a fantastic resource! Kent Sanders packed this book full with helpful, useful information. If you're stuck, need encouragement or have a goal you want to accomplish, *The Artist's Suitcase* will give you direction for your journey.

—JIM WOODS, WRITING COACH  
AND AUTHOR OF *HIT THE MARK!*

*The Artist's Suitcase* is a great guide for podcasters, writers, coaches, leaders, musicians, and anyone doing creative work. Don't miss this!

—JOSHUA RIVERS, HOST OF THE  
SUCCESS ROAD PODCAST AND AUTHOR  
OF *LEAVE NOTHING UNDONE*

All I can say is "Wow!" *The Artist's Suitcase* is a book that will always be on my bookshelf as I continue in my own personal creative journey. The resources, ideas and encouragement are limitless in this short and sweet book. Kent writes in a way that any artist can relate to, giving engaging examples and advice you'll want to hold onto; his ideas are invaluable. This book is a must-read for every artist, no matter your niche. You won't regret it!

—ALLY KEATON, PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE PROJECT

As creative people, we want to fully develop in order to make our greatest contribution to the world. For real development to occur, introspection is a necessary component that is often neglected. In *The Artist's Suitcase*, Kent Sanders invites and facilitates such introspection with the perfect blend of personal and professional transparency, encouragement and advice. Best of all, Kent offers these treasures in a conversational tone that reveals the heart of a friend who wants you to thrive in your craft—and helps you know that you can. *The Artist's Suitcase?* More like *The Artist's Treasure Chest*.

—HENRY MATLOCK, AUTHOR OF  
*THE BIBLE CURE FOR ANXIETY* AND  
*DAILY DEPOSITS FOR THE SOUL*

This isn't a book to rush through. It's a book to peruse through, a chapter a day or a week, even longer. Grab a cup of coffee or tea and sit with the concepts. Move too quickly and you can miss the impact. *The Artist's Suitcase* is a reminder that creative gifts can be a source of pain as well as joy and fulfillment. I can't think of many artists who don't struggle with discouragement or the temptation to quit. If you really want to be changed by this book, grab a group of creatives and talk over the topics with them. It's important for creatives to be honest about the struggles and joys of living out our often odd and unusual artists lives.

—MELISSA AUCLAIR, AUTHOR OF  
*LAUNCH YOUR CREATIVE LIFE*

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KentSanders.net





For my junior high English teacher,  
Mrs. Mathis,  
who encouraged me to write.

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# Foreword

WHenever I post anything on my website that Kent Sanders has written, reader engagement always spikes—dramatically!

Why? Because Kent's writing strikes a chord deep within people's hearts about topics that matter to them. People immediately want to share their thoughts, ask their questions, and discuss the topics even further.

As I read through this book, I had a similar reaction. I wanted to pause and reflect on any number of thoughts that Kent shared. I wanted to camp out on one or two ideas from each chapter for days. So I did!

I encourage you to do the same. While Kent has written each chapter in a way that is clear and succinct, I hope you won't rush through this book. I hope you'll take ample time to absorb and consider how you can assimilate each of these ideas into your own life—perhaps using each chapter as a daily dose of inspiration for your soul.

On a personal note, I would like to say that Kent is not only a great writer, speaker, facilitator, worship leader, and teacher, he's also a great friend. If you don't know him already, I'm glad to introduce him to you.

I hope you'll take Kent's words to heart as if they were written specifically for you, from one friend to another. As you read through this book, you'll find that it's true.

Eric Elder

Founder of The Ranch

[TheRanch.org](http://TheRanch.org)

# Introduction

I KNOW WE'VE JUST MET, but let me ask you a question. And I want you to be honest. *Really* honest. It's just you and me.

Do you ever feel like you've lost your way as a creative person?

If so, I can relate.

I remember the day vividly. It had been a long day of teaching, and it was almost time to head home. I wanted to enjoy a few minutes of silence before fighting traffic, so I slouched down in my office chair and stared at the bookcase next to me.

I was exhausted. I was in my mid-30's and 40 lbs. overweight. I thought about the courses I was teaching: Introduction to Film, Worship Leading, Speech, Technology for Worship, Introduction to the Arts, and Guitar.

All of these courses, in some way or another, were based on creative expression. The irony was that I felt anything but creative. The energy and enthusiasm of my 20's

was long gone. I had no clear vision for my future, and I felt like a complete failure. I had lost my mojo and had no idea how to get it back. I knew I had to make some changes in my life to recapture the energy and momentum I once had.

Maybe you feel like I did that day. Can you answer yes to any of these questions?

- Do you feel like you've lost your way as an artist?
- Are you stuck in your creative life and need some inspiration?
- Do you need somebody to remind you that your creative work matters?
- Do you need to get your creative mojo back?
- Do you need permission to be yourself and follow your calling and passion?
- Are you looking for practical advice on navigating doubt and fear, dealing with critics, figuring out your priorities, and taking control of your time?

If so, this book is for you!

*The Artist's Suitcase* is a call back to the basics. Just as the ABCs are the foundation of the English language, this book is a reminder of some of the basics for artists. Whether you write, paint, act, dance, sing, design graphics, play an instrument, or do some other type of creative work, this book is for you.

*The Artist's Suitcase* has twenty-six chapters, one for each letter of the alphabet. You might notice that the

chapter titles don't all match—there's a mixture of nouns, adjectives, and even an adverb and a conjunction. In addition, don't take the "26 Essentials" in the subtitle too literally. These aren't necessarily "essential items" for the creative journey, but rather twenty-six chapters full of practical wisdom and inspiration for artists.

Just like in life, everything in this book isn't neat and perfect. I hope you'll embrace the joy and messiness of the artist's life. Wherever you find yourself on the creative journey, it's always good to remember the essentials.

I also want you to know that I've written *The Artist's Suitcase* as a person of faith. This isn't a book of sermons, but I will occasionally use verses from the Bible or make other references to my faith. It's simply part of who I am. If you are a Christian, great! But if you don't share my faith perspective, that's okay, too. You'll still find a lot of content that will be helpful to you as an artist.

Before we set sail, let me make a few suggestions about getting the most out of this book:

**1. Read it in a way that suits you.** The chapters aren't sequential (except for the order of the alphabet), so jump around to whatever sections interest you. You can read the whole book in less than two hours. On the other hand, you can read a chapter a day and interact with the material on a deeper level in less than a month.

**2. Engage with the reflection questions.** At the end of each chapter I've included a few questions to help you apply the material. This is where the real learning takes place. Keep a notebook handy to write down your answers.

Or better yet, use the free workbook I've prepared. The workbook includes all the reflection questions plus space to write down your answers. Refer to the section on "Bonus Gifts" for directions on downloading this resource.

**3. Join the Artist's Suitcase Facebook group.** Life isn't meant to be a solo adventure. The journey is so much better with friends! Join the [Artist's Suitcase Facebook group](#) to lock arms with friends who can help you reach your creative potential.

There's nothing in the world like being an artist. I'm so glad you picked up this book and am honored to be your traveling companion.

Oh, and one more thing: when you pack your suitcase, be sure to make room for a zither. (That will make sense in the last chapter.)

Thanks for taking the journey with me.

Kent Sanders

May 28, 2015

St. Peters, Missouri

## A is for Attitude

IT'S NO COINCIDENCE THAT THE word “attitude” begins with the first letter of the alphabet. A great attitude is the most important character quality you can possess. It's more important than talent, education, or titles. Your attitude will determine how high you will fly and how far you will go.

Some people are like thermometers. Their attitudes are a reflection of the conditions around them. When times are good, they are happy and cooperative. When times are bad, they are irritable and unproductive.

But successful people are like thermostats. They don't just *react* to the environment, they *change* the environment. They have decided in advance to be positive and productive no matter what's happening around them.

John Maxwell, an expert on leadership, said, “Attitude is one of the most contagious qualities a human being possesses. People with good attitudes tend to make people around them feel more positive. Those with a terrible

attitude tend to bring others down.”<sup>1</sup>

How do you keep a positive attitude when you don't feel like it? How can you start to function like a thermostat that *changes* your environment rather than a thermometer that just *reacts* to it?

The answer is that your attitude is a matter of choice, not circumstances. Here are three strategies I have found helpful in staying positive. I call it the “3G” approach:

**1. Grin.** Sometimes you have to act the part before you start feeling it. If you are in a bad mood, start smiling anyway. Talk to people as if you're happy to see them. Act as if you have energy and enthusiasm. Pretty soon, you'll start to feel happier and more alive.

**2. Gratitude.** There's nothing like gratitude to help shake you from complacency or a bad mood. Take out a notebook and write down five things you're thankful for. Pretty soon you'll realize how blessed you are. Even better, thank another person for something they have done for you.

**3. Give.** A bad attitude feeds on itself and makes you focus on your own problems. Start focusing on others and their needs. Giving to others is a great way to improve your attitude. Think of how you can help someone in a tangible way. Encourage someone with an email, text message, or a shout-out on social media.

It's hard to be positive when there are so many discouraging things in life. But your attitude is a matter of choice. When you choose a positive attitude, you'll inspire others and make yourself more valuable. A change on your inside will always show on the outside.

## Questions for Reflection

1. Do you tend to be more like a thermometer that *reacts* to the environment or a thermostat that *changes* it?
2. Who is someone in your life who has a positive attitude? How does their attitude affect those around them?
3. What are some challenges you face in developing a positive attitude?
4. What are five things you're thankful for?
5. What is a practical way you can give to another person today?

Enjoy this sample?

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and purchase from Amazon.](#)