



Bridges was a safe place

where I didn't feel judged or criticized; my sensitivity was embraced. Being in the Mentoring Program offered a door for me to see my gifts and strengths as an artist. Completing the program was powerful. Now I can stop looking at all the things I haven't completed in my life and offer my gifts to others; art is my language.

The turning point for me was participating at Bridges 2012 International Women's Day (IWD) Luncheon where I held my first solo show. Since then I've participated in numerous art shows in the community. From the IWD experience I developed the confidence to see myself as a true artist. It was thrilling to be invited into a room with

women I saw as "high-powered." It symbolized for me that we're all breaking our own glass ceilings (including the impact of abuse). I see that we then put the pieces back together as stained glass, more beautiful and stronger than we originally were. When I've struggled with depression, it's as though my colours were covered in black and now I've got my colours back.

My Mentor was also an example of a high powered woman I was afraid of. I soon discovered that I didn't have to worry about "measuring up"; we were walking together. As a businesswoman she showed me what it meant to be in business; I developed the sense that I could take the next step into business for myself. The experience was about looking forward at what was possible and choosing to walk through a new door. I didn't run away as I've done in the past because I was accountable to the group and to my mentor. It was a reciprocal relationship and it helped to know that the mentor would learn from the experience too. I've learned to listen to myself and what I need and the wisdom within me.

When I graduated from Bridges the journey didn't end but was a sendoff to something else. I'm currently participating in a self-employment program where I focus on my art as my business. Besides producing art I am exploring teaching art, illustrating children's books and educating and raising awareness regarding mental health and anxiety disorders.

In my art I explore line through movement. Whether it's drawing, painting, printmaking or sculpting, I love capturing the fluidity of the figure in motion. I am currently creating a body of work inspired by the dancers of The Canadian Pacific Ballet, who reside here in Victoria. I see myself as the ballerina in my art pieces attempting to balance on point and then letting go and feeling the freedom of the dance. As in my favourite song, 'if you get the chance to sit it out or dance, I hope you dance...' I am dancing.

Nancy Murphy, Artist

Bridges Program Graduate, 2012