

# **Sustenance and Creative Exploration In Chaotic Times**

**Lauren Vanett, MA, Instructor**

**OLLI@Berkeley Winter 2022**

## ***Course Description:***

Since the pandemic, we've all had to grapple with many unknowns and still make our lives function in the best possible way. In this interactive, experiential and supportive class, you'll look back at what you've done for sustenance so far and move forward by doing an experiment which will expand your vision by creating something new for yourself—a practice, an experience or a project (something concrete). We'll use guided meditations and other techniques along with principles of creativity and evidence-based strategies from positive psychology, neuroscience, and mindfulness to help us gain more flexibility, choice and ease with the challenges of living in chaotic times.

## ***The Importance of Participation & Engaging with Assignments:***

This class builds community along with individual exploration and development. Your willingness to share your stories, questions and discoveries in the group and with each other along with doing the assignments outside of class heightens engagement, usefulness and fun as we take this journey together. As with most things, the time you put in will impact the depth of the experience you have. That said, you can choose to participate at a light, mid or deep level, meaning you can spend anywhere from a half hour a week to an hour a day (or more!) on assignments and the experiment you conduct to expand your vision.

***Instructor:*** Lauren Vanett, MA, (415) 233-8859; [Lvanett22@gmail.com](mailto:Lvanett22@gmail.com) *(If you need to get in touch with me, please note that I am on Maui. Hawaiian Standard Time is two hours earlier than Pacific Standard Time.)*

***Dates and Time:*** Wednesdays, Jan. 19 - March 9, 2022, 2:30 - 4:00 pm (PST)

***Course Format/Method of Instruction:*** Presentation, questions & discussion, individual and group activities, and large and small group sharing

***Course Expectations:*** Participants are strongly encouraged to:

- attend all class meetings
- download the course workbook from the OLLI website and have it available at each class session; we will use it every week!
- actively participate in class
- experiment with strategies, complete assignments & share discoveries

**Note:** If you have to miss a class, please contact Lauren prior to the class meeting at. [lvannett22@gmail.com](mailto:lvannett22@gmail.com)

### **Weekly Activities:**

- A guided meditation, breathing exercise or gentle movement to get present and focus energy so we can do our best work
- Homework Follow-Up: Questions, Insights and Challenges

### **Topics:**

#### **Week One:**

- Course Overview
- What Truly Sustains Us?
- Wants Vs Needs

#### **Week Two:**

- What Anchors Us?
- Recognizing and Using Your Strengths In New Ways
- Introducing the Experiment: A Practice, An Experience or A Project

#### **Week Three:**

- Guidance as You Begin
- How to shift from Judging to Learning
- Finding, Deepening or Expanding a Practice

#### **Week Four:**

- Using your strengths to create engagement and meaning
- Creating a strengths-based experience for yourself or others

#### **Week Five:**

- A Progress Update on Your Experiment
- Doing a strengths-based project for yourself or others

#### **Week Six:**

- A Little Self-Compassion
- How to Persevere: What to do if you get stuck or lost

#### **Week Seven:**

- Tying Up Loose Ends

- Sharing Discoveries: Part I

**Week Eight:**

- Sharing Discoveries: Part II

- Endings and Beginnings