



## What is the Breakthrough Tattoo Project?

Have you been through a serious trauma or painful experience and survived?  
Not only survived but expanded and thrived?  
Have you always wanted a tattoo to mark your journey from hard times to happiness?

I would love to hear and share your story.

I'm Shelly Dax, a writer, artist and tattooer. I'm very enthusiastic about inspiration, creativity and growth. It's been my pleasure to have my own studio and be able to make a living doing art. I'm especially honored to hear client's personal stories while they are in my tattoo chair. Now it's time to share some of those stories.

My team will choose several people with unique transformational stories to receive a custom tattoo based on your story. Your tattoo will be done by me, Shelly Dax, on a donation only basis...in other words, just pay what you can afford. I'll then take your transformative story and tattoo and include them in a full-color book to be published at a later date.

## Why am I doing this?

It came as a bit of a shock to me when I first started tattooing how incredibly open and genuine people can be while they are sitting for a tattoo session. I've had the privilege of listening to folks share their heartbreak, losses, health issues and even their struggles with addiction. But my favorite part is hearing how they overcame these tragedies and transformed their lives! One client, whose wife dropped him off for his session, chatted with me for over three hours about his painful childhood, his stint in jail, his fervent recovery from drug addiction and the delight of becoming a father. His wife came back towards the last hour of his session, and when he got up to use the restroom, she shared, beaming through misty eyes, "He's NEVER been that open with anybody and I've never seen him talk that much in my life. Thank-you." I was floored and humbled. It was just another day tattooing to me. I had no idea how just being a good listener and sharing my own authentic story could be so meaningful to others.

Back in 2010, even as I was struggling to make ends meet, I began toying with the idea of offering inexpensive tattoos to those in need. Ironically, it was a marketing book I read, "Free Prize Inside" by Seth Godin, which planted the seed of "donation only tattooing", but I just couldn't quite figure out how to pull it off when I could barely afford to pay my studio's electric bill!

And of course my business advisor and partner weren't so sure this was a great idea. But something kept niggling at the back of my mind, and though it seemed strange to others, I had a deeper feeling I would be taken care of ten-fold if I could offer this gift to struggling yet forward-thinking clients who couldn't afford to invest much in tattoo art, but who deserved a helping hand. My own crazy struggles through life have shown me what we can accomplish if we never give up and keep looking for the light! (another story!)

And finally a concept hit me: what if I offered custom tattoos to a select group of people who have amazing tales of growth and change to share, and instead of charging my normal rate, I just say "pay what you can afford". And I then publish those stories and tattoos, to encourage and inspire others?

The Breakthrough Tattoo Project was born. It's taken me several years to get to a place where I could afford to do this and work out the details of how this project could come together. And after a few fits and starts, I'm ready to jump and trust the net will appear!

Heaps of gratitude for your interest and please sign up for my email list and/or blog if you'd like to follow the progress of the project. It's gonna be exhilarating! ~Shelly

[www.gardenofinktattoo.com](http://www.gardenofinktattoo.com)

## Criteria for Application:

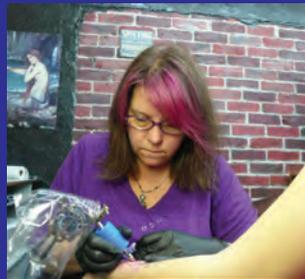
Before completing the application candidates are advised to consider the objectives of The Breakthrough Tattoo Project and to be aware that the selection committee is seeking clients who show

- Ability to communicate the hardships you have overcome
- Individual determination to succeed
- Self-motivation to inspire and encourage others
- Need for financial assistance

## ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY:

- You are over 18 and you have government issued photo ID.
- You've been through a serious trauma, tragedy, difficult or painful experience and have not only transcended these circumstances but have used them to transform your life and ignite your happiness! You've had a BREAKTHROUGH that has turned your life around!
- You are excited to receive an original, custom "tip only" tattoo to mark your journey through the darkness in to the light.
- You are willing to let Shelly Dax share your very personal story with the world.
- You can arrange to travel to Garden of Ink Tattoo Studio in Cottage Grove, Oregon to have your tattoo appointment within 60 days of being chosen.
- You are able to sign a release form for you and the tattoo to be photographed and reproduced, permission for our conversations to be recorded, as well as the right to share your story in a published book.
- You are willing to accept a tattoo design based on both your story and a questionnaire in which some input will be gathered from you but final design is chosen by the artist. This gives the tattooer artistic freedom to work their own brand of magic! In other words, you trust the artist to "engage the artistic muses" and create a design unique to you!
- If you are chosen, you agree to be at all scheduled appointments, unless there is an emergency.
- You will sit for at least FOUR hours per tattoo session without complaint. (Bear in mind, it may take multiple sessions to complete your tattoo based on the final design.)
- If you have health issues that may complicate healing, please consider speaking to your physician before applying.

Along my artistic path, I realized there's something unique to the tattoo process; somehow the intense physical pain of the needles and close proximity of an artist sharing their energy, enhances, uplifts and transcends emotional pain. It can help process hurts, distract from trauma or physical illness and relax and unwind old wounds. Whether it's the rush of endorphins, the sense of relief or the accomplishment of the tattoo experience; there's something fairly amazing about permanently inking a person's skin in recognition of their unique pilgrimage through life!



"...pain may be experienced as pleasant if something worse has been avoided."-

*Siri Leknes, psychologist, University of Oslo in Norway*

