



Saint Philip's IN THE HILLS

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Dear Student,

It is my hope, as the instructor, that every student will learn and practice hand-building ceramics techniques and have a lot of fun along the way. I do, however, invite you to place an emphasis on your internal “process.” This means that I ask you to become increasingly “mindful” of the judgement you place on yourself and to place less emphasis on outcome.

It is natural to care very much about how things look. We want what we make to be pleasing to ourselves and to those around us, and we want to feel proud and accomplished about what we make. Please consider that there is a greater “product” here. By taking this class, I hope you gain a greater freedom from self-judgement and judgement of others. I hope you will discover the pleasure in the process, by simply working with the clay, regardless of how it may look when finished.

In addition, I hope you develop a greater sense of patience with yourself, and know that, in time, like all things we do, your skills will build. I hope that you will enter a new generosity with yourself, in spite of inevitable problems that the clay (or life) can present.

Please ask for help when you need it and openly accept it. The alternative is to experience that frustration that we all feel from time to time—which is counter-productive. It takes time to learn ceramics techniques and it takes time to set realistic goals. Please allow me to help you with those moments.

I like to say that clay is the most forgiving medium to work with in art. Just like clay, we all need to be forgiving with ourselves in order to begin this journey. So, please, settle in, suspend your judgements and contemplate what your imagination can cultivate while working with clay!

When we pay increased attention to our inner process, the pieces we make will eventually and inevitably become meaningful items of great pleasure, satisfaction and beauty.

Sincerely,

Eric Johnson