

For the Procrastinator.

—
We need your art.



About the Author	3
Introduction, To my dear Procrastinator	5
Chapter One: The Stories That Keep Us Small	11
Chapter Two: Give Your Art Permission to Be Shit	18
Chapter Three: Procrastination Breaks Up Relationships	24
Chapter Four: Mothering Yourself	30
Chapter Five: Finding Your Why	36
Chapter Six: We Need Habits	42
Chapter Seven: Quitting	48
Chapter Eight: A Note On Workspace	53
Chapter Nine: Your Own Unique Pace	57
Chapter Ten: Daydreaming	61
Chapter Eleven: You're Lazy Baby.	65
Chapter Twelve: It's Time	71
Acknowledgements	74

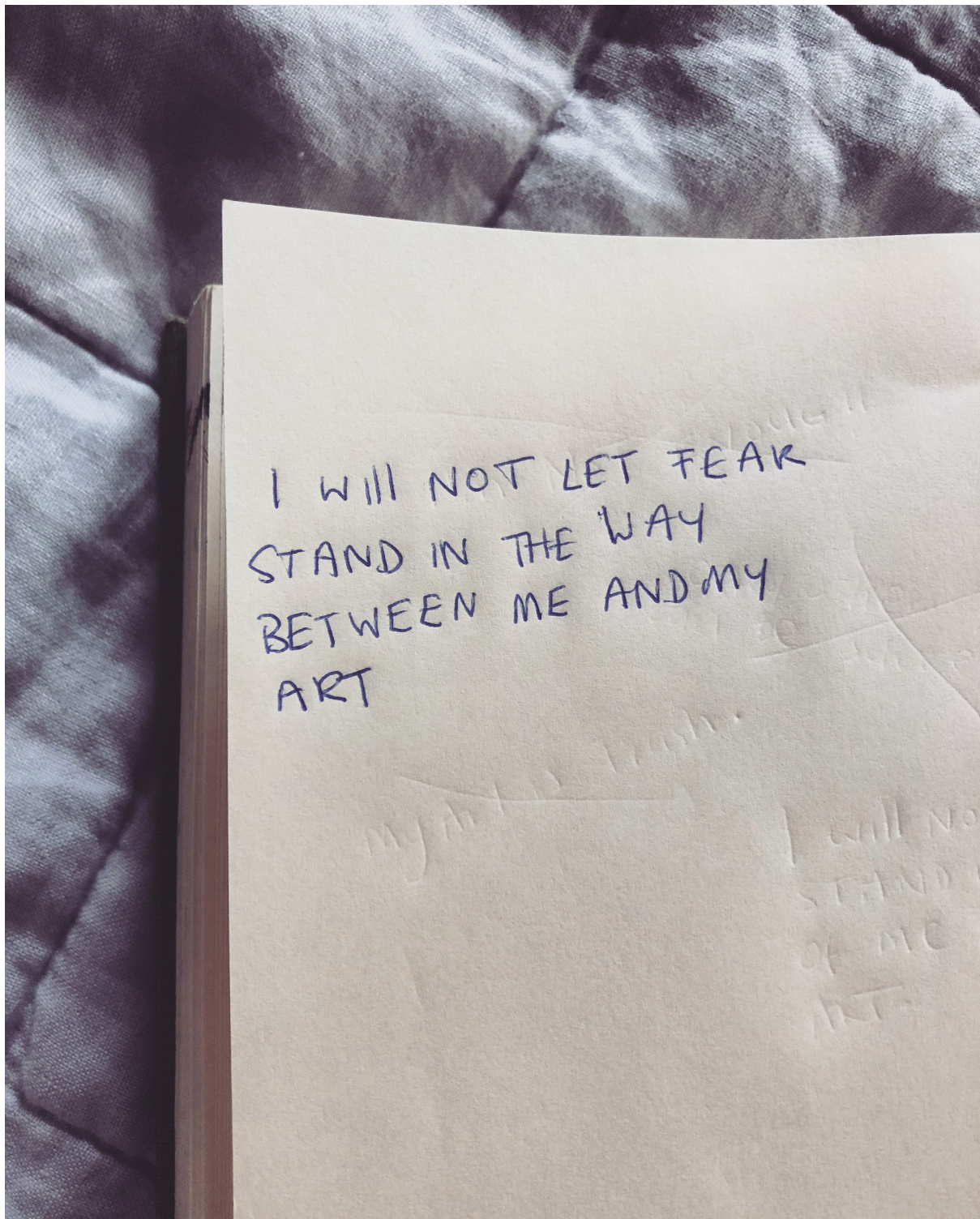
About The Author



I'm so honoured to get to write to you, and to have these important conversations with you. For those who don't know me, I am an author, a creativity coach and a book doula. I've been sharing my own creative journey and writing about the practise of art for seven years. I teach creatives and witness them and support them as they come into their magic, share their art and live creatively abundant lives. I teach, speak, and run workshops on creative living. Most importantly, I write my books, historical fiction novels and my love letters, to Us, The Artists. The ones who make this world sparkle, the ones who bring new ideas, unique stories and change into this world.

This book is written for us. It is written with my creative clients in mind, it is written after talking to thousands of creatives who message me sharing their story, but most importantly, this book is written because of my own experience with procrastination, my own experience with hustle culture, self doubt, avoidance and fear. We are so much more than we realise. We have so much to give.

Introduction, To my dear Procrastinator



To my Dear Procrastinator,

I have written us a little book. This is not a "how to" guide; this is an invitation and permission slip to seek a life of creative abundance. This is about breaking down the stories we are told and sold about being creatives. This is a call to action, as I remind you that we need what you create. If you are willing, this book is a revolutionary reprogramming of everything we are taught and told about art and being an artist. It's time to put aside our patterns of distraction and destruction and lean into the magic that is calling our name.

Does reading a book about procrastination count as procrastination?

Maybe. Either way, I'm glad you're here.

I want to be totally transparent and let you know that currently, as I have been writing these very words, I've minimised this document and gone on Instagram three times and counting.

Procrastinating and Art are sold as a package deal. You can't speak to a creator about this topic without them having a personal experience with distraction, dawdling, and doing anything but the art itself. I too am a procrastinator and I'm frequently pulled in and out of focus as I write my books and make my art. This book isn't about eliminating procrastination. It's about investigating it, getting chummy with it. Why do we do it? When is it harmful? When is it beneficial? How can we make sure that procrastination doesn't stop us in our tracks? We need your art. We don't want an obsession with cleaning our houses to get in the way of that. This book is going to

dive deep into our avoidant behaviours. We are going to get curious about what lies behind our procrastination, and remind ourselves of the importance and sanctity of what we do as artists. This book is an opportunity to re-write your relationship with your art and with yourself. To guide us through this transformation, throughout this book there will be 'reflections'. These are an opportunity for you to turn the words inwards, and contemplate you, your art and the way you choose to create.

Why do we procrastinate?

This question is going to sit at the heart of this book. We don't need a bandaid, techniques or tricks to solve our unwillingness to create, we need to understand **why** this is happening. Let's face it, we're not procrastinating because we actually really love cleaning. And even though social media gives us all the endorphins, and Zuck has us in his clutches, procrastinating happened well before we had socials, and they aren't the crux of the problem.

Why you procrastinate will be entirely unique to you, your life, your mental and physical health and the particular project that you're working on. As you read this book and commit to being curious about your own creative practise, I invite you to be honest about what is actually happening when you do the laundry you've been avoiding for weeks just as you decide to start writing that book.

Hemingway never had to put up with this bullshit.

Hemingway didn't have to deal with social media or streaming but he had his thing. In fact, the dude was an addict and, though we love to romanticise the 'write drunk, edit sober' life, I don't dare to imagine how many more creations he would've made if he hadn't been passed out on his chez lounge after getting 'distracted' by his serious alcohol problem. Da Vinci was also a procrastinator, famously only finishing twenty paintings in his life, and a few of them are technically still unfinished. Victor Hugo supposedly wrote entirely naked to avoid the temptation to go outside, and his servants were only allowed to return his clothes when he had finished his work for the day. Google: famous procrastinators. You'll find some great stories of the ways the 'greats' used to distract themselves without socials.

If we want to find a way to create abundantly and with flow, it is critical that we recognise where our procrastinating behaviour is stemming from. After we've done, we'll start looking at how to support ourselves with techniques, habits, time management and boundaries.

We can't talk about procrastination without talking about the myths and pressures around productivity.

Later on in this book, we're going to be looking at the cultural pressure surrounding productivity and how our obsession with hustling and producing often exacerbates our avoidant behaviour. We're going to be looking at permission to stop, to slow, to

postpone. Because art isn't factory work, it isn't meant for the production line, it's not a product of the industrialist era, and we need to treat it accordingly. I spent some time, (arguably, some procrastination time) researching A.I and art -- machines telling stories, machines painting pictures. Some of them make sense, some look pretty, they understand language, but their art has no context. The computers haven't spent time daydreaming, they haven't been through a break up, lost someone they love. Their characters aren't infused with the horrifyingly wonderful frustration of being an artist. That all comes from being human, from taking breaks, from letting yourself move through pain, from experiencing connection. Here's an excerpt from *I the Road*, the first ever novel written entirely by AI:

"It was nine seventeen in the morning, and the house was heavy... it was seven minutes after ten o'clock in the evening. The station was deserted. The path was already in the sun."

There's lots to say about creativity and A.I, but the point I'm trying to make here is that the sentences make grammatical sense but there's nothing contextual here. You are not a machine, you are so much more full and wild and wonderful than a machine. Your stories come from your context, not from discipline and knowledge itself. At the end of this book, we are going to be focusing on and reflecting on what it means to be a human creating art, and how we can create space for ourselves to make the art, but honour our process, our pace, our pain. This book will not focus on output and output alone. You are so much more than that.

A word before we get into it.

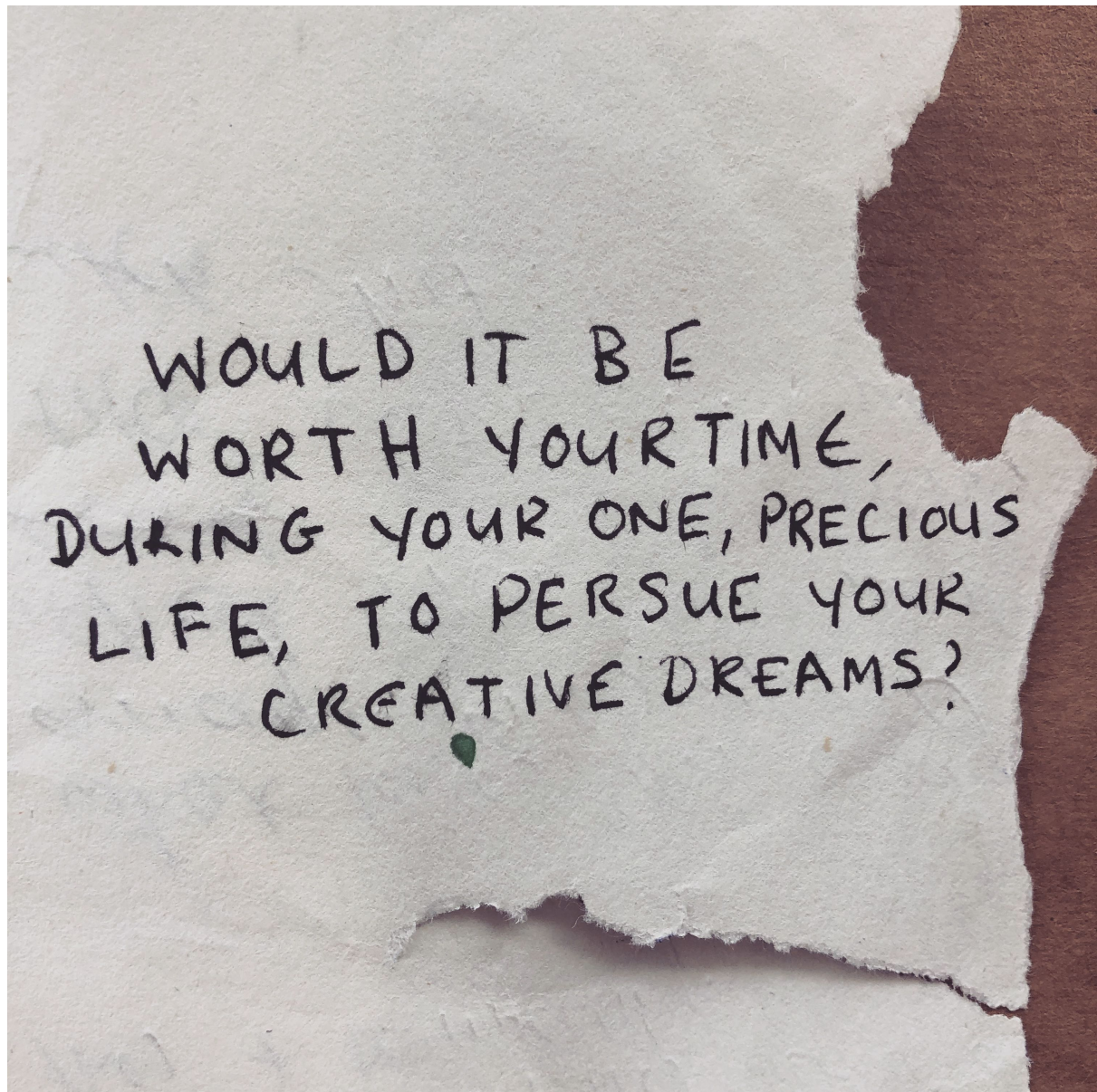
Go gently. I want you to be honest about where you're at and what is happening but go easy on yourself. We are called to create art and that is not an easy road.

Overwhelmingly, art is self motivated work. No one is there telling you to do this.

Even if someone is expecting your art, if you've got an agent, or a publisher, or a label expecting things from you - it's still difficult. We are not creating our art in an open plan office with a manager peering over our shoulder, with an HR mandated firewall blocking our socials. We are on our own. This is self driven work. It's hard as fuck. So while we investigate these topics, I want you to focus on how you can serve yourself, and serve your art. I don't want you to seethe, bully or grow steadily more and more angry at yourself. You do not deserve that. This book is about healing wounds, trusting ourselves, respecting ourselves and giving ourselves space to fuck up, get back up, try again and thrive.

Finally, thank you for going on this journey with me. It's such an honour to be navigating this wild and wonderful journey along side you. Please feel free to reach out to me if you want to discuss anything that comes up for you as you read this book. It is also an honour and delight to get to witness you creating. I love when you tag me in your art, or in your process. So please feel free to tag me in writings or stories as you move through this journey with this book. We may be procrastinators but boy, oh boy do we have stories to tell and art to make.

Chapter One: The Stories That Keep Us Small



The stories we tell ourselves.

As we begin this journey, I want us to spend time considering the stories that we tell about ourselves. How we think about ourselves impacts the way we show up for our art. So it's important that we put our stories under the microscope. What stories are tripping us up? What script is playing as you put down your instrument, and pick up your phone? A good way to identify these limiting beliefs, these stories that keep you small, is examining your inner critic's language in the moment of procrastination, in that moment of frustration. What are you thinking about yourself? For a long time, my story was that I was lazy. I can still feel my inner critic's ears perk up as I write this. She recognises this limiting belief, she likes it, she knows the script by heart. I would be writing my book, a few sentences deep, and then I wouldn't know what to write next. *Eugh fuck this!* I would think. *This is so difficult.*

"You're so lazy," whispered the inner critic--I would turn to my phone. *She's right. I am lazy. I'm lazy because I want to write books for a living, and I am even lazier because I can't even write the books.* The story develops, the internal dialogue strengthens, the neural pathway becomes well worn. Then the next time I feel like procrastinating, the story replays itself. I bow to it. Let it wash over me. I'm lazy. This is who I am.

As I take on this character trait, even though there is nothing inherently Amie about it, I become it. Not only that, but this story that keeps me small, now keeps me safe. I felt comfortable with this label, therefore it is harder to question and harder to

reprogram.

What if we procrastinate because, when we "inevitably" fail, it will re-affirm our stories about ourselves?

I once had a conversation with another artist who, just like me, had a strong belief that they were lazy and were never going to achieve much. This internal story was so strong within her, everything she did in life affirmed it. She would watch T.V. instead of going out for a run. When she was young, she would skateboard instead of doing her homework. Her teachers called her lazy, and so did her parents. Being lazy was a part of who she was. It was safe in there, where all her stories of herself were affirmed by her actions. Her internal voice went unchallenged; nothing needed to change. She may have been miserable, but she was safe. Every time she felt a draw towards writing her poetry collection, she would procrastinate and procrastinate. She was too lazy for this! She would never be able to follow through. Her stories about herself were self fulfilling prophecies. She would sabotage any attempt to create her art, because it did not fit with her vision of who she was, and that vision, in its own way, became a comfort to her. It meant she never had to step up, to put herself out there, to risk losing.

I'm so thankful that this creator shared this part of their story with me, because that's when I started seeing this pattern of behaviour within myself, and within many other creators. Humans love to label things, most of all ourselves. It gives us a sense of control. It helps us feel like our world is explainable and stable. But it's dangerous,

because when we don't recognise and question our own labels we limit ourselves.

You've got to know your stories, to reprogram them.

What would happen if you got out of your own way?

You would have to confront the fact that you have lots to give to this world, but you've been playing the small game. You fucked yourself over in order to stay comfortable, to be without risk, to be right about how you are 'lazy' / 'too busy' / 'untalented' / 'an imposter'.

I understand this. It's so much easier to stay within the boundaries of who you think you are. It is so much easier to have our actions confirm our stories about who we are. But the truth is: you don't know the half of it. I don't know the half of who I am. I can hardly comprehend my potential and I've done a lot of work trying to figure it out. I have so much to give, and so do you. You have so much to give. We are so much more than the small boxes we put ourselves in. We are so much more than what our school teachers or parents told us we were when we were young. We are ever expanding and endless in our potential.

Reflection:

Welcome to your first reflection. When you get to these sections, pick a couple of questions that resonate. If you want to journal about them, great. If you're not the journaling type, consider going for a walk or talking through the topic out loud, either

by yourself or with a trusted friend. This is a time where I invite you to really look inwards and get curious about how you are showing up in your own life. As always, go gently, this is not a time for judgement or harassment.

It is time to start noticing when we have put ourselves into a box.

What adjective do you use to describe yourself that could potentially be holding you back?

- Lazy?
- Selfish?
- Arrogant?
- Unintelligent?
- Unlucky?
- Unworthy?
- Too busy?
- Unimportant?
- Untalented?
- An imposter?
- Too broken?
- Weak?

Here are some further questions to ponder:

- Where did these stories come from?

- And is your attachment to them, your attachment to those stories - getting in the way of your Magic?
- Is your belief that you're untalented the thing that coerces you into putting down your guitar, a few moments after you chose to pick it up and have a play?
- What words could you use to describe yourself that lift you up, and nudge you in the direction that you're being called?
- Does the thought of destroying this label make you feel uncomfortable? Why? Question that discomfort, it's the key to expansion.

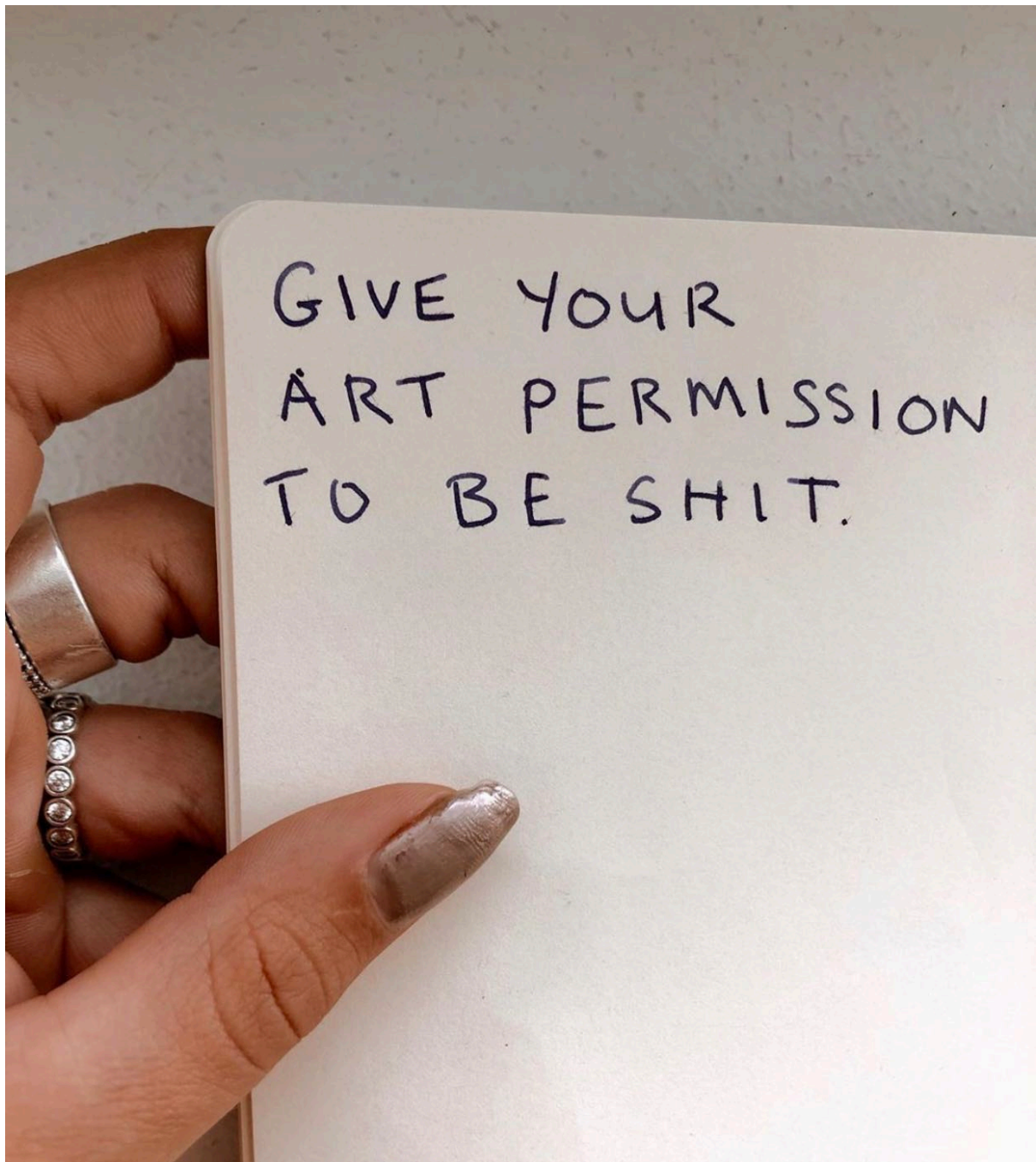
Moving past our comfort and moving beyond the stories we believe about ourselves is one of the hardest things we will do in this life. It is also our most important work.

A really good way to start identifying the ways in which your stories are keeping you small is by journaling. By journaling, we witness our internal monologue. We can see how we are talking to ourselves and, if we pay close attention, we may be able to pick out the stories that are blocking us from our creativity. Through this new understanding of the way we see ourselves, we might start being able to link the fact that we didn't submit our poetry to the competition, with the way that we speak about our worthiness and worth. Once we've noticed it, we can start deconstructing the story. Did I inherit this story from a parent? Who has affirmed this story throughout my life? Society? My Culture? A particular person? We can start asking ourselves: what if this isn't true? What if this story is holding me back? What if I am more than my actions?

What if I have the ability to evolve? What if I am more than I can ever understand?

As we move through this book, keep coming back to the stories you're telling yourself. Keep questioning. Keep giving yourself room to grow.

Chapter Two: Give your Art Permission to be Shit



What if all this happens, I get out of my own way and I do the work ... and I am shit?

Fear is the root cause of wanting to stay small. Because it's scary out there. There are a million things to fear, especially when we are talking about making and sharing your art. What if I make my art, pour my heart and soul into it, love it, and then no one else likes it back? What if you come face to face with the "truth" that you're not good at the thing you want to do? The fear of not being good enough, is the perfect reason to procrastinate and sabotage all the possibilities that come from creating art.

My first book took me six years to create. I wrote the first three chapters over several years, combing through them over and over, again and again. Never wanting to leave the opening of my book in a state of imperfection. I did not want to let it be shit. This is procrastination. I was procrastinating by making the art I didn't need to be making. I procrastinated writing my book by only writing the first three chapters and refusing to move on to anything else. That's sneaky procrastination, and I didn't realise I was doing it. This avoidance tactic was playing out because I believed that if I couldn't make the first few chapters good, I wouldn't be able to make the rest of the book good. So fear kept me caught in a loop of pointless editing, swapping out words for synonyms and back again. It did nothing to improve my novel and it ate up years of my time.

My second book took me six months to write. I was committed and I showed up consistently. I wrote 500 words minimum each day. The main thing that changed from book one to book two was I gave my art permission to be shitty. And by giving myself

the permission, I wrote a far better book, in 1/12^h of the time.

We need to give our art permission to be shit. We need to lean into the shit and recognise that our magic lies within our mess. We need to look at the our perfectionist wounds and we need to start deconstructing those stories, because perfectionism and procrastination go hand in hand, and play into each other intimately.

I want to make this really clear, your art will never be perfect. It will never be exactly as you envision it. If you want to make perfect work, it will never be made. The greatest gift you can give yourself, my dear procrastinator, is to let your art be shit.

A side note: I have a fear of being mediocre, unseen, unnoticeable, neither bad nor good, but just not enough. If I let this fear play out, I will push myself away from my art. We need to let our art be mediocre too. It's allowed to be average. Give it space to be anything but thrilling. Dive deep into the lukewarm magic, the more time you spend there, the more she'll heat up. Staying away from your art because you fear you'll be medium is a self fulfilling prophecy. You'll become mediocre as fuck. Never finishing. Never trying. Ordinary. Middle of the road. Unremarkable. That's not for you. You are very remarkable. You have so much to give.

Okay. So here's the good part. Once you've been brave and made the shitty, maybe at best mediocre art, you can go back and make it that little bit better. You learn and grow and discover what you do and don't like. Go back again. Edit, play, try something new. You can make it more vulnerable, more honest, more of a reflection of you.

Now, it might be worse than before, but you've learnt even more, and you can try something different, and alter it in another way. Your taste for art improves, you know what you want, you experiment and fiddle and you make something that intrigues you. If you're brave, you share it, it connects. You witness it touch people's souls. You go back to the studio of your soul and you make something else, with all the learning, all the understanding all, the mess and all the magic. This isn't a neat, clean journey. This is messy and experimental and sometimes shit blows up. This is the path. This is what art is. This is what being human is. And if you deny yourself this process, then you deny yourself creativity.

When you make shit art, I want you to pull your knees to your chest, kiss them, get yourself a cup of tea or even a god damn glass of champagne, take a big sip and a deep breath and congratulate yourself. This is the part of the journey no one wants to be in, but you're here, doing the work. And this piece of shitty art, this absolute trash chapter of your book - it doesn't have to stay trash, and even if it does, she's taught you something. She's let you know that you are still worthy, still important and powerful even when you make something that you don't like. She's taught you about your taste, about what you want to create, and she is the stepping stone to magic. Finish your tea, shake it off, keep going. There is more at play here. There is magic in the trash.

Reflection:

In this reflection, I am going to introduce the use of affirmations. Affirmations are a way of wielding words that empower us and reprogram our old beliefs. For me, it is

spell casting. For others, it is meditation. It is unique to each individual. I say mine in the shower and write them through my journal. I know people who post them up on their bathroom mirror, some chant the words to themselves in a ritual. Others just like to read them, nod their head, and think, 'yes - this speaks to me'. They're there to serve you, in whatever way resonates. You do you, baby.

Questions to consider:

- Is my fear of being shit playing a part in my procrastination?
- Did I have any authority figures in my life pushing me to be perfect? How did this affect me? Do I have stories around perfection that are inherited from others?
- What happens when I make shit art? What is my internal narrative like? Write it out. Write out how you speak to yourself. Or perhaps say it out loud, and really listen to what you're saying.
- Do I believe I am an imposter?
- Am I afraid someone will find me out?
- Is jealousy of other people's work fuelling my belief that I am less than?
- Do I believe that I am capable of making art that connects with others? If not, unpack this. Why not? Why are you so special, that you cannot create art that connects?
- Do you believe in improvement? Does it frustrate you to have to learn? Why?

Affirmations to use:

- I allow my art to be shit.
- Just because I make shitty art, does not mean I am a shitty Artist.
- I am constantly improving.
- I believe that my work is needed.
- I show up to my art even when I know it doesn't look quite right.
- Even if I think my art isn't great, I'm on the path.

Chapter Three: Procrastinating Breaks Up Relationships

IF WE CONTINUE TO
IGNORE OUR GOALS +
DESIRES, WE ARE
ACTIVELY TELLING
OURSELVES THAT WE
DO NOT RESPECT OURSELVES
+ WE DO NOT TAKE OUR
ART SERIOUSLY.

Procrastinating breaks up relationships.

I'm talking about the deterioration of your relationship with yourself. I have witnessed chronic procrastinators turn themselves into their own enemies. I've witnessed it worm its way into artists' lives and grow mouldy with deep self loathing. If we leave procrastination unchecked, it can be incredibly dangerous and a form of debilitating self sabotage.

When we promise to make and create, and then we fail to follow through, it's upsetting. When we promise to chase the thing our heart calls for thousands of times over, and we never show up for ourselves, it ruins our relationship with ourself.

If somebody else was treating you this way, you would've gotten rid of them years ago. If you hired someone to do a job and they repeatedly refused to turn up - you would fire them, probably after the first day. If they showed up but were on facebook the entire time, they'd maybe last a few days. If you had a friend or a partner who repeatedly bailed on you, put someone else before you, or betrayed you - you wouldn't or shouldn't maintain that relationship, it's a bullshit relationship and you deserve more

When we ask ourselves to write a chapter of our book for ninety days straight, and we never show up, even though this is something we really want to do - we are fucking ourselves over, and doing damage to the way we relate to ourselves.

Persistent Procrastination is a breach of trust and sign of a disrespect.

Over time, if we continue to ignore our goals and desires, we are actively telling

ourselves that we do not respect ourselves, we do not take our art seriously, we do not take our goals seriously. Arguably worse than that, we lose our ability to trust ourselves. The trust is broken when you say you're going to do the work but again and again and again you half arse it or completely ghost yourself. If this was another human, you wouldn't be a part of this relationship anymore. It's rude, unreliable and bullshit. But this isn't another person, this is you. And we have to repair this relationship, because you're with this person for the rest of your life.

Say I go to an exhibition and see an awe inspiring collection of photography. I decide it's time. I want to do what they are doing. I am going to get up early tomorrow morning, go on a walk and take some pictures and start an instagram to share my work. Incredible. The problem is that I've said I'm going to do this a dozen times before, and I have never followed through in the past. Or I did it once and never bothered to do anything with the images I took. Doubt creeps in. I don't trust myself. I've not shown up for myself in the past, so why would I show up tomorrow? The initial warm glow of the idea of creating is dimmed. In its place is a sinking knowledge and anger at myself, I know I'm not going to follow through. The trust is broken. The cycle continues.

Procrastination is about respect for yourself. If you respected yourself and your art, you would show up. So what's happening here? It's time to start asking the difficult questions. It's time to start journaling about this, talking about this, thinking about this. Do you respect your desire to make art? Do you respect your artistry? If not, why not? What stories are you buying into? We need to distinguish between the idea that

making art is hard and Netflix is alluring, and the possible truth that you don't respect your desire to consistently make your art, and in extension you don't respect a part of yourself.

So, it's all very well designing a desk for yourself with minimal distractions, and finding an app that blocks you from instagram, but if you don't address these issues seriously, these techniques will only ever be a band-aid to the real deal that's happening inside your soul. These are hard questions to ask, but they are important ones.

Rebuilding trust.

If we want to recover from a consistent pattern of betrayal, we need to prove to ourselves that we can show up in our own name.

This cannot be done in some big grand gesture. This is overcompensation for your inability to meet your expectations in the past. This isn't about yet again promising yourself that today you'll write 5000 words, today you'll finish the painting in the garage, today you'll finish your whole website and put your poetry collection up for sale.

I repeat. Rebuilding trust cannot be done in a big gesture.

This is not the way to repair your relationship, yet it is consistently what I witness creatives doing. Goal setting, especially big goal setting, gives us a massive endorphin hit. It feels great to set a fucking massive goal for the day; it combats all those negative feelings you've been having about your consistent inability to show up

properly. But it basically never works. It certainly never works consistently. In order to rebuild trust, we need to do something super duper unsexy, we need to start really, very small.

Give yourself small, achievable tasks that will slowly rebuild the relationship. Sit with your guitar and play for five minutes before dinner each night. Get out your pens, put them on your desk, and doodle with your cup of tea. Commit to writing one hundred words a day or reading five pages of research. Then acknowledge what you've done. Remind yourself that you are the sort of person who keeps the promises you make to yourself. I know, it doesn't feel incredible to set a 100 words writing goal but when you achieve that 100 words a little bit of that trust is rebuilt, and when you've written 100 words a day for five days in a row, that's something to be proud of. When you've written 100 words, five days in a row, ten times, you might just start believing that this is the real deal, and that perhaps you're going to show up tomorrow to do the exact same thing. The relationship is healing, your faith in yourself is being restored. Making a goal to write a bestseller and sitting down and writing 5000 words a day is not a sustainable way to heal this relationship. It isn't. Go slower. Be kinder to yourself. Give yourself a fair chance.

Reflection:

- How can I show up in my own name?
- When have I truly shown up for myself? This could be a habit you have. Or it could be an instance in which you did something for yourself that scared you. Let's

recognise the moments when we have been there for ourselves.

- It what ways would I like to show up for myself?
- How can I action this?
- What boundaries do I need to put in place to make sure that my actions are protected?

Can I enforce them right now, in this moment. With a text to a partner perhaps? Or a family meeting?

- Did the boundary question bring up anxiety or stress? What's behind that? Are you scared to put yourself first? Are you scared to ask for space? It's okay if you are, be kind to yourself.

Chapter Four: Mothering yourself



I want you to consider that your inner artist is your inner child.

Rebuilding this trust, does not happen via bullying and harassment. It's an easy route to go down when you're fed up with your patterns, and you just want to step up, get out of your own way and do the work - I know. But you wouldn't rebuild any other relationship with hard words and punishment, so let's not resort to that now.

When you create, imagine your inner child doing the work. I really want you to picture them. I like to imagine my ten year old self. She was highly imaginative and told lots of stories. Some people like to go a bit younger than that and envision their four year old self, some might choose to go a little older. There's no right age for your inner artist, they can ebb and flow between the years.

Now I want you to collect some of the phrases you use against yourself when you've had a particularly bad day of procrastinating.

Here are some of mine:

- You've done nothing today.
- You are a waste of space.
- You are lazy, embarrassing and entitled.
- You should give up and go and do something an actual adult would do.

Would you use this language against an actual real life child? Yelling it at them? Speaking to them in the way you speak to yourself? If you would ... I need to write you a whole other book.

I'm going to go ahead and assume that you would never speak to a child the way you speak to yourself. I use this technique regularly, and have a picture of my younger self by my laptop to make sure I watch my language and internal voice. The worse I am to her, the less likely I am to show up. The crueler I am to myself, the more likely I am to give up and spend the rest of the day procrastinating.

That sort of negative thought spiral might look like this:

- You are lazy, embarrassing and entitled.
- You've wasted 3 hours today. It's despicable.
- What's the point? What's the point of this? You might as well give up.
- *Gives up*

A child is not likely to return to the paint pots after being made to feel stupid, lazy and small. The rebuilding of trust needs to happen in little steps, and it needs to happen kindly. It's okay to get frustrated and it's okay to want more from yourself. But watch how you treat yourself and watch your language.

Mother Yourself.

Instead of directing this highly critical language at our inner child, we need to learn to mother ourselves. I started this practise of 'mothering' through journaling, and over time this practise has spilled over into my real life and into the way I speak to myself day to day. You might be thinking that mothering ourselves has literally

nothing to do with procrastination, but finding the voice within us that takes care of us, nurtures us, and brings us back to our own magic is incredibly important as we create. Especially when we are dealing with a procrastination problem.

Here is an excerpt from my journal:

I have spent the last three days straight doing anything other than writing my book. Every time I sit down to write, I feel overwhelmed and I don't even know where to start. There is too much to change. I feel like a fraud. I feel lazy. I haven't even been procrastinating with anything productive, I've just been fucking around. Take a deep breath. It's okay. What you're doing isn't easy and it is okay that you struggle. This is a journey. Your worth isn't dependent on your productivity. Your worth isn't dependent on what you do in the day. You are magic even when you struggle. You are the sparkling sun on a winters day. You are english countryside and forested glades magic. And no amount of 'productivity' changes that. I trust that we will return to Maude (my fiction book) and that we are able to coax her out of this confusion and do the work that needs to be done, but we will approach her gently, with a big cup of tea, and a soft heart. There is no reason to stress or be angry at ourselves. All is happening exactly as it should.

Can you see the way I address myself here? Creating this mothering dialogue, this supportive voice, has been essential in my own journey of procrastination. She allows me to take a few steps back. She wraps me up, and reminds me of my worth. She reminds me of my inherent worth, with or without procrastination, and then finally she

reframes what has to get done in a way that seems comforting.

When we are shedding old skins, moving out of our comfort zones and doing the scary thing it can be helpful to reframe our adventures in the most comforting, cozy way possible. And that's exactly what I am doing here. My mothering-self nearly always tells me to get into my pjs, get some yummy food, a cup of tea and approach my creating from the couch. Yours might look different. However it is you self-soothe, however you make yourself feel comfortable and safe - try it. This practise has been at the core of my creativity, particularly in reference to resistance and procrastination with my work.

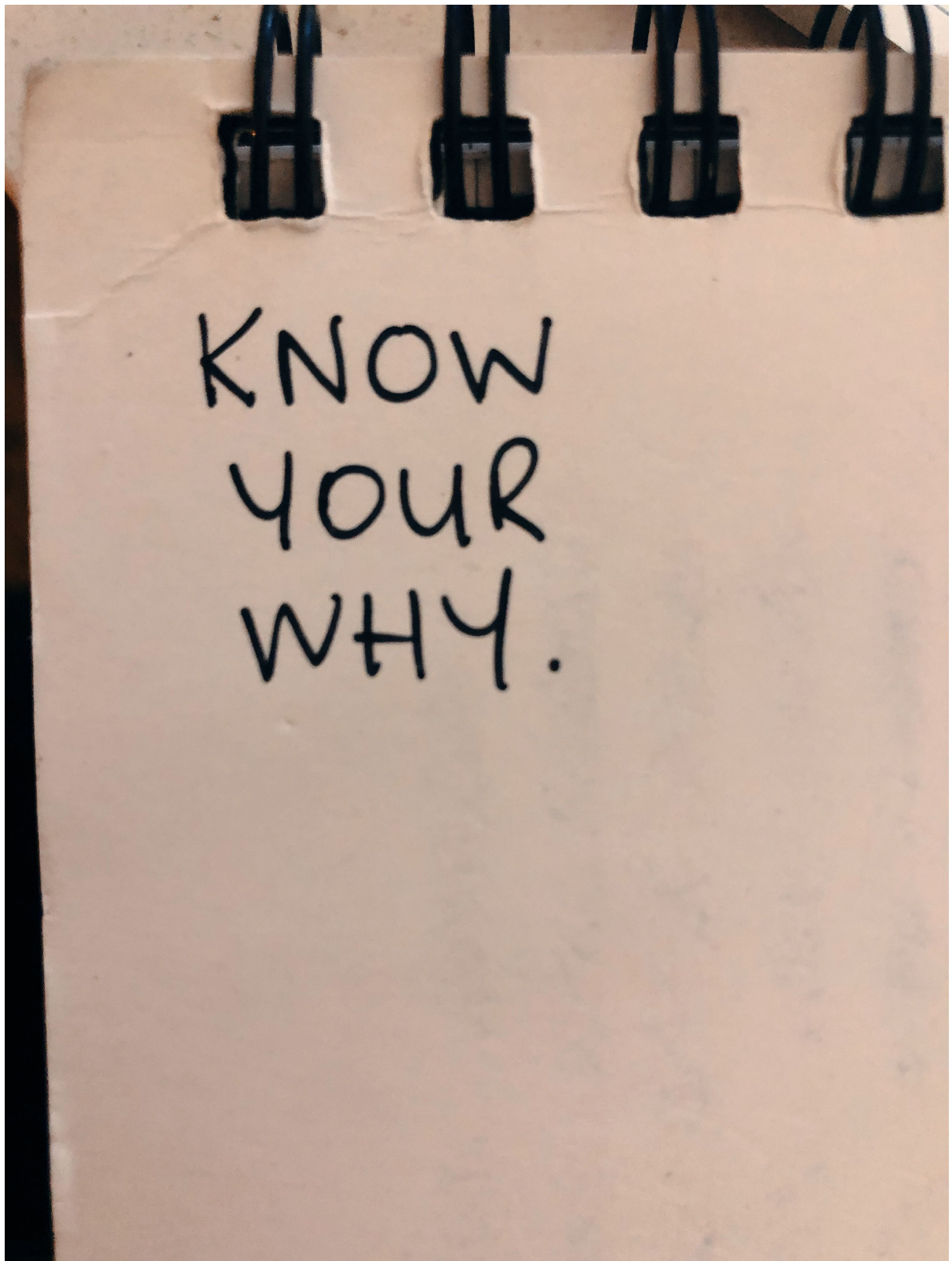
Reflection:

I am going to encourage you to find space for this voice in your life, it's not easy. We are not taught to speak to ourselves in this way, especially if no one in our life has ever given us this gentleness. If you're struggling with finding this voice, I would encourage you to explore how you would treat a child who has hurt themselves or lost something they love. Coddle yourself. Get down on their level. There is a high chance that the way you need to be cared for, is not the way you were parented as a child. Acknowledge that. That is okay. I allow my inner child to do whatever she wants in order to find equilibrium. I give her a free pass. She can cry. She can get angry. I give her permission to do whatever is calling her, and I witness her pain and let her be upset. Then slowly, I coax her back to her magic.

The solve to a procrastination problem isn't solely discipline. It's gentleness,

softness and a recognition of our magic, with our without productivity.

Chapter Five: Finding Your why.



In order to feel committed and consistent we have to understand WHY we are making our art.

What is your why? Why do you create? Procrastination is a million times more alluring when we don't know why we are doing what we are doing. So let's talk about your why.

I want to clarify what I mean by this question. Let's start of by what you do. **What** do you do? Or what do you want to do? Detail it all out.

Then you can look at how. What're your processes? Is it working for you at the moment? What are your desired processes? **How** would you like your practise to look in the future?

What **results** do you want from the practise? A connection with your reader? A connection with the viewer? Money? Comfort? Holidays? Revenge? None of these answers are wrong, although revenge creating probably isn't a sustainable creative practise.

Okay, now let's start looking at the Why.

Why are you creating art? Why do you want to write the book? Make the movie? Start the business? Sell your art? Play with paint? The 'why' might be connected to your desired outcomes, or it may not. Once again, I encourage you to try and refrain from making judgements.

If you're struggling with this question, I want you to be gentle on yourself. Just because you don't know what your why is right now, doesn't mean you don't have a

why. We just have to do a little digging and poking around in our souls. Take a deep breath. Go get yourself a hot drink and settle in. There is no pressure here, we are being curious. Often our why is unconscious, and we do the what and the how without recognising it. Take the pressure off.

I want you to consider the following question:

What makes you angry? Or what makes you annoyed? Or frustrated?

So often our 'why' comes from a place of injustice, or a place of 'there's something not quite right here and I want to make it right'. Richard Branson's why comes from frustration. Every time he comes across a system or product that doesn't work or that pisses him off, he is inspired to create it better himself. His why is about creating businesses that alleviates distress and takes away frustration. Write it out. What makes you angry. Feel free to go wild, your answer doesn't have to relate to your work or creativity. Just write about what makes you angry, frustrated, annoyed. See where it takes you.

Here's an example from my own journal, about why I do the work that I do:

It's about liberation from the rules. I want to give people permission to ask themselves what they really want, and then stand guard by them, protecting them and loving them, as they inevitably endure the resistance that comes from breaking all the rules. I want to do this because for so long I was alone, hemmed in by the rules, without any support, and without knowing there was a way out. I want to be there for these creatives when they are in the midst of their internal wars, as they combat the stories

they've believed for the entire lives and break free of chains that have been holding them back. I want to be the person who I needed for so many years.

I do my teaching work because I needed this teaching and I want to be the person who I needed back when I was younger. This took me a very long time to understand, and it was only recently that I could see that I had become who I had needed the most. I encourage you to reflect on this statement, have you become someone your younger self needed? Have you become someone your younger self would have admired?

Reflection:

I recommend getting out your journal and exploring this on the page, but some people might like to let it percolate over in their mind for a while, or go on a walk and talk about it with someone you trust. As always, you do you.

Some other questions to consider, to help you get to the centre of your why:

- What about this practise, business, art delights you?
- Why did you first choose to begin this practise? What led you to it?
- How do you want this to impact others?
- Is there someone who does a similar thing to you, that inspires you to persist?
- Does your work feel in line with who you are?
- Does it feel in line with your skills?

- Is there someone who you see in your industry that you actively disagree with? Do you find - yourself wanting to things differently to others? Why?

The purity of your motivation.

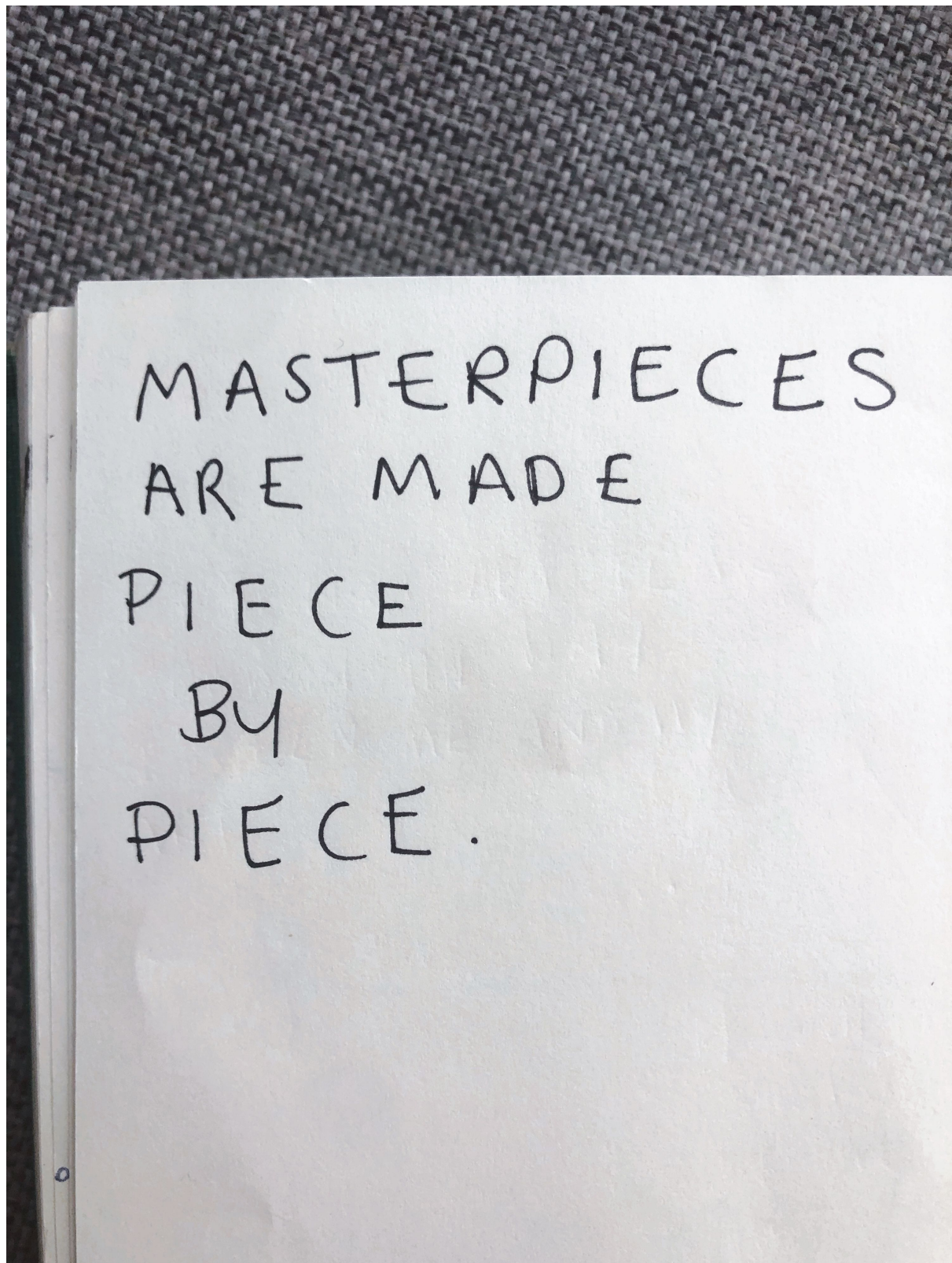
I have known creators whose drive to make art has been clear. They had their why. But the why was unsustainable, and it was derived from places of hurt and dislike of the self. Throughout this reflection it would be a good idea to keep an eye out for our 'whys' that are birthed from a place of pain. I once spoke with a writer who had spent three years working on their screenplay and their single motivation to get the project done was to make sure that the last three years hadn't been spent in vain. He was obsessed with validating the time he had spent on it. Every time he turned up to his art, it was from a place of anger at himself. His relationship with himself got worse and worse every time he wrote. Creating from a place of 'should' is difficult. Pay attention to any language that surrounds an external obligation and your art. For example: "I feel I should be creating". Or: "my muggle work doesn't have an impact, so I felt I should do something meaningful". Or: "I am such a lazy piece of shit I felt I should do something worth while with my life". These are not bad motivations, they are often really effective at getting us to do the work. We just want to examine whether they are going to be sustainable, and whether they are going to support your relationship with yourself. If language like this is appearing as you investigate your why, I don't want you to think that you've done something wrong, or that these motivations are somehow immoral. They are not. Truly, they're not. But they are

worth questioning, it's worth really investigating and making sure that your desire to create and make the art is coming from an internal desire not an imposed external expectation.

If you're still struggling with your Why by the end of this section, I don't want you to throw in the towel or give up. Let the question sit with you.

If you felt like you had absolutely nothing to do, no purpose, no calling - again, I want you to go make yourself a big cup of tea and relax. You are made for so much. You have so much to give. And it is more than okay not to know what that might be right now. Our world is productivity driven and we are told repeatedly that we must know what we are doing at all times. It is not true. You are enough as you are, right now.

Chapter Six: We Need Habits



We need habits, discipline and a routine to support us.

Most books that I've read about procrastination focus a lot on habit making: how to make your work space serve you, hammering down an excellent routine and minimising distraction. It's important. We're going to talk about it now. But I put this section in the latter half of the book because I truly believe that understanding why we procrastinate, and repairing our relationship with ourselves, is more important than the tricks and methods which we use to support ourselves through the creative process. The methods we are about to talk about can either be used to serve us in conjunction with the inner work, or else they are a bandaid over a wound that will not heal and will keep weeping.

Habits strengthen your creative muscles.

We've already touched on habits, the small goal making and consistent showing up to repair our relationship with ourself. But let's really get into the practicalities. We don't have the will power to write entire novels or sustain businesses for years. We can't MAKE ourselves do it each day. We are not strong enough. You might think you are, but eventually, on that 5th edit of the novel that requires you to reread your work AGAIN, and edit a character arc that needs intervention in every single chapter - you won't have the will power. That shit is too boring. What we can do, is make habits which alleviate the need for will power.

Don't get me wrong, I witness a few creatives honouring their wild and wonderful nature, creating spontaneously, when they want, how they want. And for those who

can do that with consistency - it's magic. If this is what you need to do to feel in alignment, honour that. Move in flow state. I'm in awe of you. But do not wait to become this person. They're rare. People who can rely on a random but consistent compulsion to create art, are cool but unusual and I would never bank on somehow coming across that ability. Perhaps, the flow state artist is where we are going down the track, but the majority of professional artists create their work through habit and schedule and I feel that most of us, especially as we begin our journeys, need structure to support our vision. We need to fall back onto the predictability of routine, so that when we're feeling tired or unmotivated we don't have to go to war with ourselves. We can just do what we've been doing for the last one hundred days. There is no, 'Should I? Shouldn't I?' You just - do. And when you have built (or rebuilt) that trust within yourself and you know that you can show up for yourself consistently, then you have the power to take days off, with the faith and knowledge that a day off doesn't fuck you. You're going to return to the art. You know you are. Suddenly, when plans go awry and your morning painting session is cancelled, you do not need to stress, you don't need to 'make up for it', because your habit is engrained in your very being, and you know that you'll turn up tomorrow, and the day after that, and the next.

As we spoke about before, habits should be small if you're just starting out.

No, you shouldn't exempt yourself from that rule.

No you're not allowed to have a 'two thousand word a day' goal for your book. Don't do it! You're playing yourself! Make it small. Make it embarrassingly small. Yes,

you're allowed to go over your quota, if you have an inspired day. But it's not required. The bare minimum is required. Listen to the thoughts your ego and inner critic have to say about your 200 word a day goal, your one photo a day goal, your 5 minutes of guitar - listen to what they say. Take note. Write it down. Question it. Your ego's word is not law. Making habits is about consistency, not the amount of work you get done. This is about cementing the practice into your life, you can increase the amount of work you get done as you move forward and grow the faith in yourself (and get better at your art!). After you've picked your embarrassingly small goal, pick the days you're going to create, and commit to them. Put them in the diary. Tell the people who might mess with you. Express your boundaries. Make rules. Don't leave it to fate.

Some people call these small consistent goals, microbursts. Little baby bursts of creativity. They tend to work because, for most of us, we can't dedicate hours and hours to our craft each day. Small is achievable. This is the rebuilding of faith. I used to not write my novel unless I had an entirely free day to write. It was absurd. I was obsessed with the purity and space of having a whole day to write. I wanted full focus. I wanted to feel like a professional writer. I wanted nothing to tarnish the magic of art. I understand why I made those choices, but they played me. It took me six years to finish that book. The sporadic schedule made my writing worse. I was never entirely connected to my art. It took me so much time to reacquaint myself with the story because the time in between my writing sessions was too long. Micro bursts of work is the way to go. It might not seem super aesthetic in your mind but in thirty minutes you can write five hundred words. In thirty minutes you can take dozens of photos,

you can paint, sing, write music, put up a blog, make a post, there is so much potential for art in such little time.

Batch your tasks.

This is an interesting technique that I've found useful when I am entrenched in a procrastination phase. The idea of batching is that you literally batch together activities. So, I batch writing creatively with journaling. My journal habit is concrete. It never waivers, so I've attached my fiction writing (which is less concrete) to my journaling practise. They go together now. Another example of this might be: I practise my singing scales when I am in the shower. I assume showering/bathing is a pretty solid habit for you! Or, I play guitar while my partner cooks dinner/I wait for Uber Eats. Eating, after all, is something we all do regularly. What habits do you already have? Can you attach the habit you want to make to the already concrete practise?

For me, I have found batching to be the most useful when I pair an externally accountable task with a task I have to keep myself accountable for. For example, batching my emails, (which I must do each day otherwise people get confused / annoyed / wonder where I am) with writing this book, which nobody knows about and relies on my own motivation. The real trick to this is that emails must go SECOND. I cannot do my emails until I have written five hundreds words of this book. See what I've done there? I will almost certainly get my emails done in the day, because people depend on them - meaning that I will almost certainly get my five hundred words done

each day too.

Play around with this idea, see if it serves you.

Reflection:

- What habits have I kept in the past? Why do they work?
- What habits have I tried to make, but have failed. Investigate why they failed.

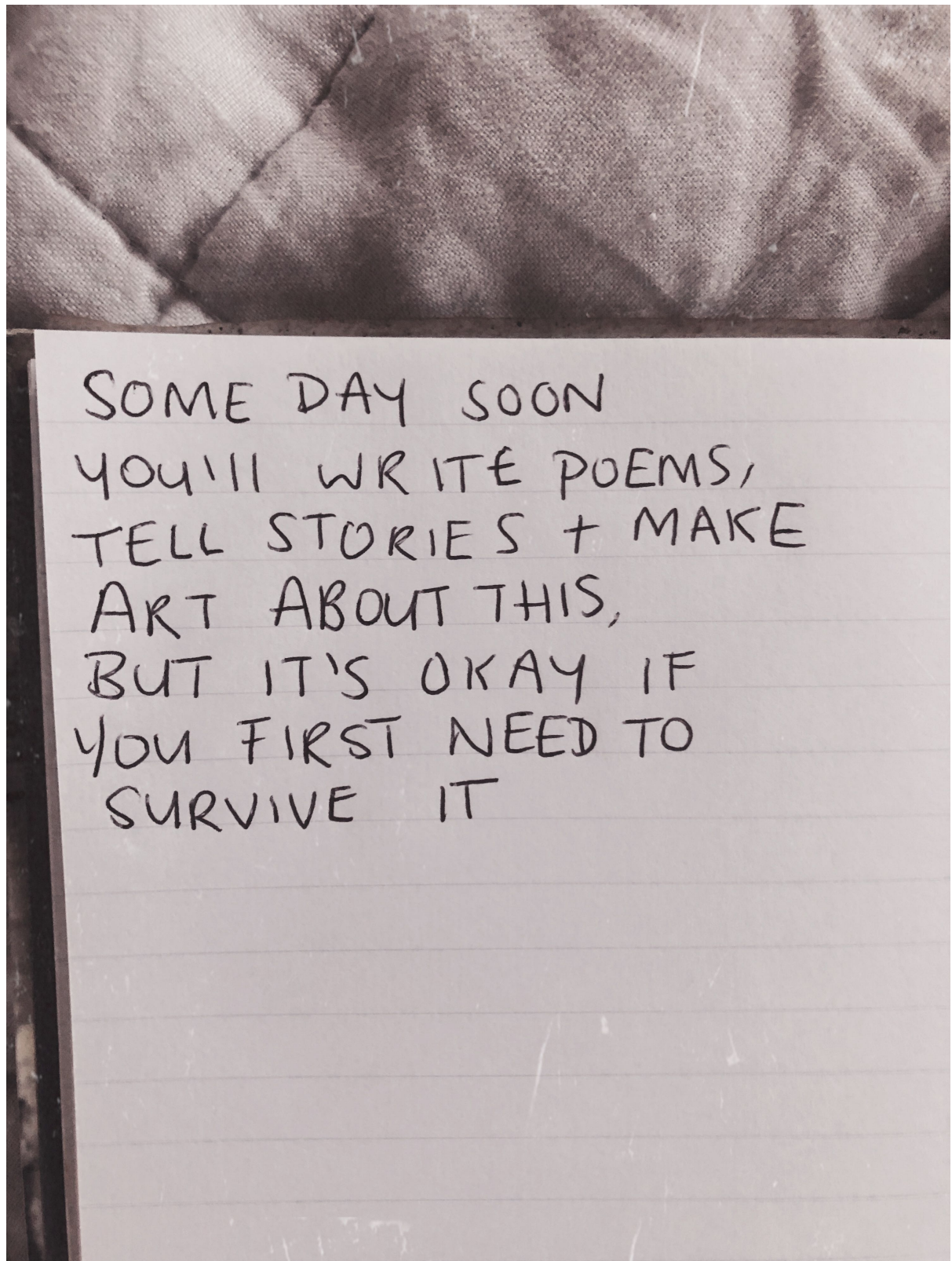
What stories are going on there, what fears were playing out?

- What habits do I want to create now? Can I implement them in this moment?
- How small can I make them, how easy can I make it for myself?
- Do I feel I deserve to make it easy for myself?

Affirmations:

- I am someone who keeps habits.
- I am someone who shows up consistently each day.

Chapter Seven: Quitting



SOME DAY SOON
YOU'LL WRITE POEMS,
TELL STORIES + MAKE
ART ABOUT THIS,
BUT IT'S OKAY IF
YOU FIRST NEED TO
SURVIVE IT

I know you want to do it all, but you cant. I'm so sorry

I just want to interject here and chat about one of the sneakiest forms of procrastination. This one slips under the radar: the new project. A new project, can look sexier, sleeker and be very seductive. Especially when we are faced with a current creation that is making us feel scared, frustrated or less than. Be wary of ideas that suddenly arrive for other projects as soon as you start another. Notice when other ideas start to rear their heads and question the motivation behind switching projects. Is this a grass is greener situation? This breed of procrastination is tricky to identify, and we often do it unconsciously. On the outside it looks like we are constantly creating and making, we might even have a consistent habit. But we are never finishing anything. We have a dozen started novels, three screenplays and seven canvasses that are all incomplete. We might even have shot, edited and compiled a collection of photography, but we swap projects because we don't want to share it, or put the finishing touches on it - what if it's not perfect at the very end? This is just as much of a problem. Procrastination comes in lots of different forms and we need to be able to recognise when it's showing up in its sneakier ways. Question the stories at play, are you keeping yourself small?

Question distraction in all its forms. Question it gently, kindly, without judgement, but question it.

It's wonderful having lots of ideas, and I think there is room to have multiple projects on the go if you have a tight routine and a disciplined creative schedule, but it's

always important to notice the motivation behind the dumping of projects and the moving on to new 'shinier' things. Write the new ideas down. Trust that they will stay with you if they are meant to be. But more importantly, have faith and trust in the art at hand. It needs you to follow through. We need you to follow through.

Conversely, we also need to know when to quit.

God this ain't easy is it? Follow through, don't follow through, it's a kick in the dick and there is no easy answer. At the end of the day, this is about you. This is about knowing ourselves and understanding our internal stories and questioning what's going on within us. Distraction and the alluring seduction of the new project needs to be managed, but we also need to know when to quit.

This is a really difficult conversation that needs to be had in our creative communities. Most books on creativity don't talk about this, because it's not motivating and it can trigger a bombardment of inner critic bullshit but we need to acknowledge that sometimes creative projects should be put to the side, even if it's just for a little bit. We need your art, we need you to follow through and share your creations, but sometimes a project might not be serving you and you might not be serving it. Sometimes we might need to make room for the new project calling our name, or to make space for rest, healing, learning.

When we start thinking about quitting a project, we need to take deep breaths, mother ourselves, and start asking questions. Why do I want to quit? Examine your limiting beliefs, your fears, your relationship with yourself. Are you getting in your

own way? Or would quitting give you space for even more creative abundance, healing, love, connection? These are big questions, I recommend spending time journaling about them, and talking about them with trusted friends.

Don't play yourself here, but give yourself permission to step back. Quitting is very necessary, and a power move that can lead to incredible creative abundance. Don't underestimate it's potency, but wield her wisely.

Some day soon you might make art about this, but sometimes you just need to survive.

This is important. If you find yourself procrastinating making art when you are in the fire of life. When you are in pain. When you are experiencing, or recovering from Trauma. When things have gone wrong. You do not have to alchemise your pain into art straight away. Art will reveal it all, it will coax out all the healing that needs to be done, it will prod at wounds that are not healed and it will hurt. It might also feel fucking incredible, and it might be a part of your healing process. But it doesn't have to be and you're allowed to wait until you're on the other side of this to create art. You're allowed to quit your art, in order to focus on surviving.

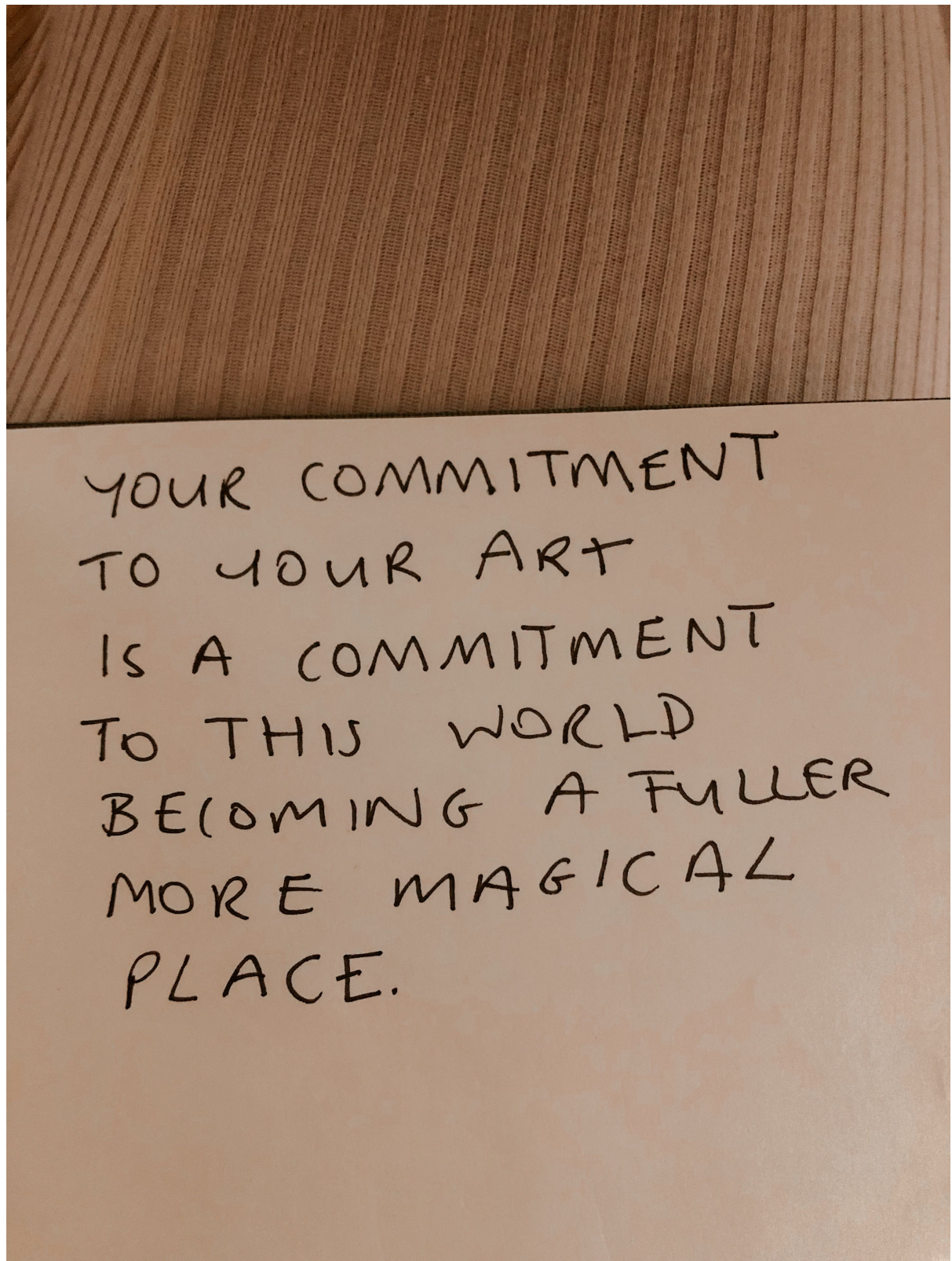
That pain, from whatever shit storm you're experiencing, might be the reason you're getting up and moving away from the art each time you try to approach her. You don't want to look at those bright flames burning in your soul. And that's fair enough baby. That's totally fair enough. Art is inherently vulnerable and vulnerability requires us to look within. If each time we look within we find pain that we don't yet have the words for, it's no wonder we are walking away and doing the dishes every

time we try to create. Know yourself. Treat yourself with compassion. Is art what you need right now? Or do you need to heal in another way, it's okay to give yourself time. It's okay.

Reflection:

- How sneaky can I get? Do I have distraction that seems legitimate, but is actually fear or my stories in disguise?
- Am I able to identify the difference between an idea I want to action and idea that is there to distract me.
- Am I able to understand when I need to quit a project, and when I need to keep going? Can I identify thought patterns that distinguish these two concepts?
- Have I ever quit something and it felt really good? Why did it feel so good? What part of myself did I connect with when I chose to let it go?
- Have I ever quit something and it felt shit? Can I identify the stories that were at play here?
- Do I know and understand when I need time to heal and recover?
- Does art support my healing? Or do I need time off? Does it change?
- Do I allow myself to quit? Am I dogged in my commitment? Can I see how quitting may at times serve me?

Chapter Eight: A Note on Workspace



A note on workspace.

I want to remind you that your workspace is important, it is. Space is important. Where we exist should feel supportive and in alignment with who you are and what you're creating. But if you are blaming your workspace for your lack of productivity, I want you to take a breath, and return to the questions we have been asking ourselves throughout this book. I used to blame my workspace for all my creative misgivings. It definitely played a part, but I needed to take more responsibility for what was happening for me internally.

That being said, workspace has been a big part of my journey, and I truly do not want to underestimate the power of having a space that supports your creativity.

Making sure that you have what you need in your space seems trivial, but is important.

I know many creators whose procrastination is strongest before they start work, because they never quite have what they need. They potter around the house gathering things, wondering if they need that book for research, or that one? Two whole hours later ... they're angry at themselves and that anger stops them from making progress. Preparing your workspace before you sit down to create is important.

Conversely, I personally have a habit of getting out too much stuff and I would sit down with ten books I want to read, a printed off essay, and my four current projects and they all just stare at me. I get choice fatigue and end up exhausted and completely unable to do anything. This compulsion to gather everything I was working on comes

from a desire to do everything at once and it only ever made me panic and freeze.

Make sure your workspace and the things within it support your ONE project, and reduce friction in terms of having to get up and grab things in the middle of a session.

You deserve to be surrounded by things that make you feel comfortable and safe.

If you are able to, I encourage you to adorn your space with a candle, a plant, or a painting. Something that reminds you of your own magic.

It is also important to put boundaries up around your space .

Even if it is at the kitchen table, let people know that when you get your candle out and sit there with your laptop - that's your time on the table, and everyone else must find another space for their activities. This isn't selfish, this is a divine act of generosity. Never forget that your commitment to your art, is a commitment to this world becoming a fuller, more magic place. We need you. We need you to have boundaries with your kids, family, housemates and friends. Make your art a priority.

If you find yourself in an environment where those around you do not support your creativity, demean you, or make you feel stupid, I want you take the time to acknowledge how difficult this is. It's not an easy situation to be in. But we cannot let those who are hurting, those who are creatively repressed, get in the way of making our needed art. Get creative. Whether it's creating later at night in your room when everyone's gone to bed, or going out to create, explore your options. You have options.

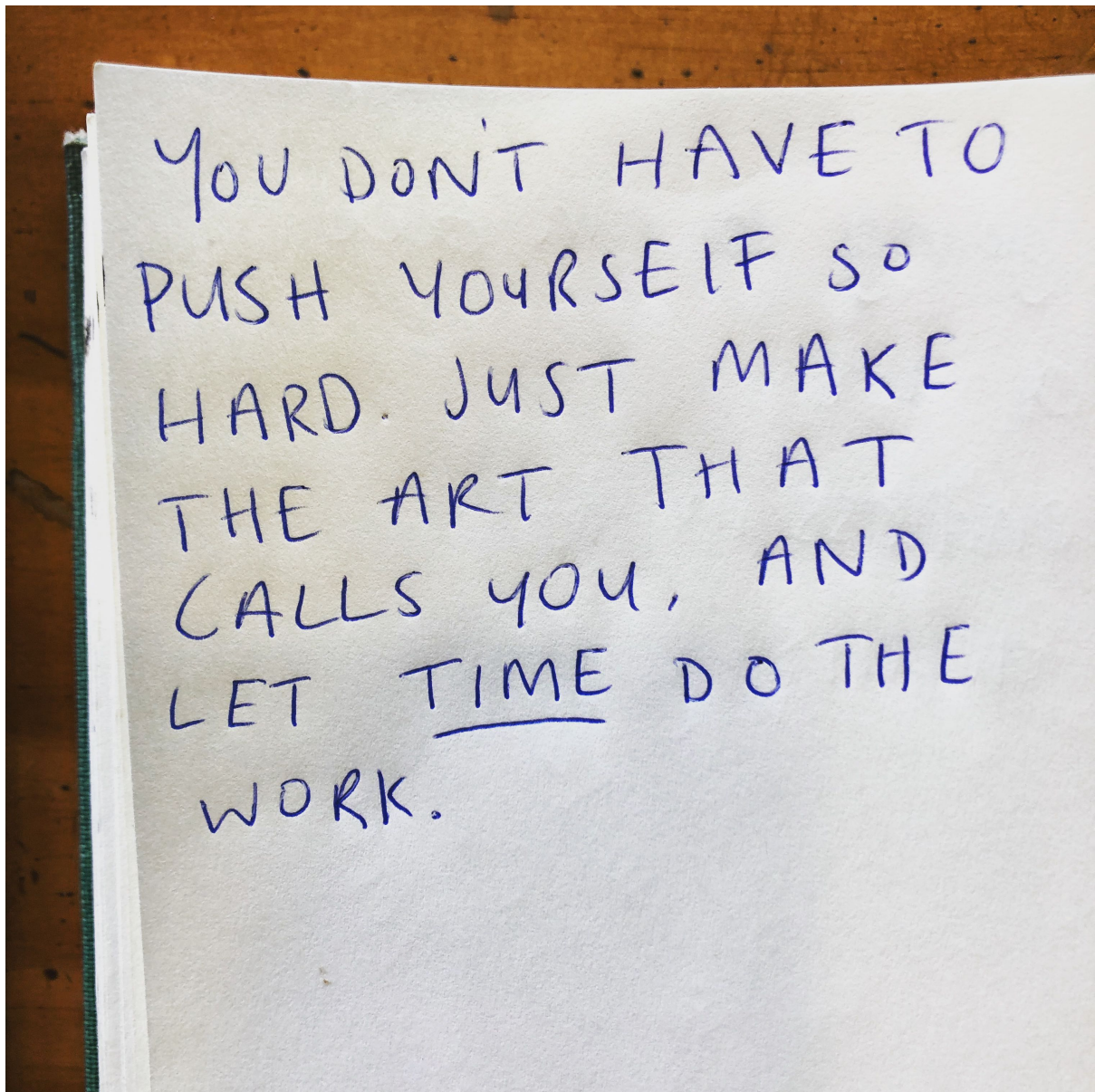
I personally choose to alternate my workspaces. I do all my creative work first, at the cafe down the road. Then I write my non fiction and run my business from my kitchen table. Changing it up helps me shift my state of mind. That's what works for me. You might not need a designated working space, you might find that the muse can find you in all corners of your home, your area, the world. If thats the case, respect that. You're unique, and you need to trust your own process.

Reflection:

Some questions to consider:

- Do you have a cluttered workspace?
- Are there distractions?
- How can you minimise distraction? This could mean installing one of the previously derided website/app blockers.
- Do you have what you need?
- Do you have way more than you need?
- Is there natural light. (This made a massive difference for me.)
- Are there people around that do not support your creativity? Make you feel unsafe? Make you feel self conscious?

Chapter Nine: Your Own Unique Pace



Understand that you and your art have your own unique pace.

It's an act of self care and service to minimise friction in every way possible, to get our work space set up, our habits ingrained and baby goals in place. These practises are important. But now comes the really essential shit, because this book isn't about maximising productivity. Your life shouldn't be about maximising productivity. You don't need to go as fast as you possibly can. Nor do you need to create as much you possibly can. Your art doesn't have to be made in great quantities or in a rush. There's such a fine and beautiful balance between making sure that procrastination isn't getting in the way of our art, and recognising that we are allowed to take our time in our creative processes.

Art has its own pace. Each book, painting, piece of pottery has its own divine timing. And it's nearly always longer than we think. It's never as simple as sitting down and just doing it. There are so many differing components to our practise that mean that it takes longer than we think or would like. Doing research takes time. Getting tea before we sit down takes time. Our muggle lives go wild and we have to pull back from the creating which adds time. Our main character has an unplanned love affair or our plot just doesn't make sense and that, let me tell you, takes time. Getting angry or frustrated at ourselves because we wanted a nice, neat three month project is cruel and unfair. Tread gently. Stay the course. Show up consistently. But know that your art ultimately has a timeline of her own, and it must be respected.

We also need to respect the fact that every single creator has a different internal creative pace.

You can spend your whole life beating yourself up for being a slow writer, reader, painter, dream maker but if it's your pace, then it's your pace. We are taught, by capitalism, our politics, our culture, that fast, plentiful production equates to value. It's a legacy of industrialism and it damages our perception of worth. It's left lots of us feeling resentment towards our own creative pace. A lot of us feel shame if we are not factory line fast. "If we are going to do something as 'indulgent' as create art, it better be done fast, productively and make you lots of money!!" This is the story we are told, and it can form an iron grip on our souls if we are not careful.

I for one, found myself in a deep depression for many years because I was choosing to prioritise my art (taboo) and I was taking a fucking long time to create it (unproductive = lazy = taboo). We are working against the system, and I want to acknowledge how difficult that is. Because we face deeply ingrained societal stories to do with productivity, we must be gentle here.

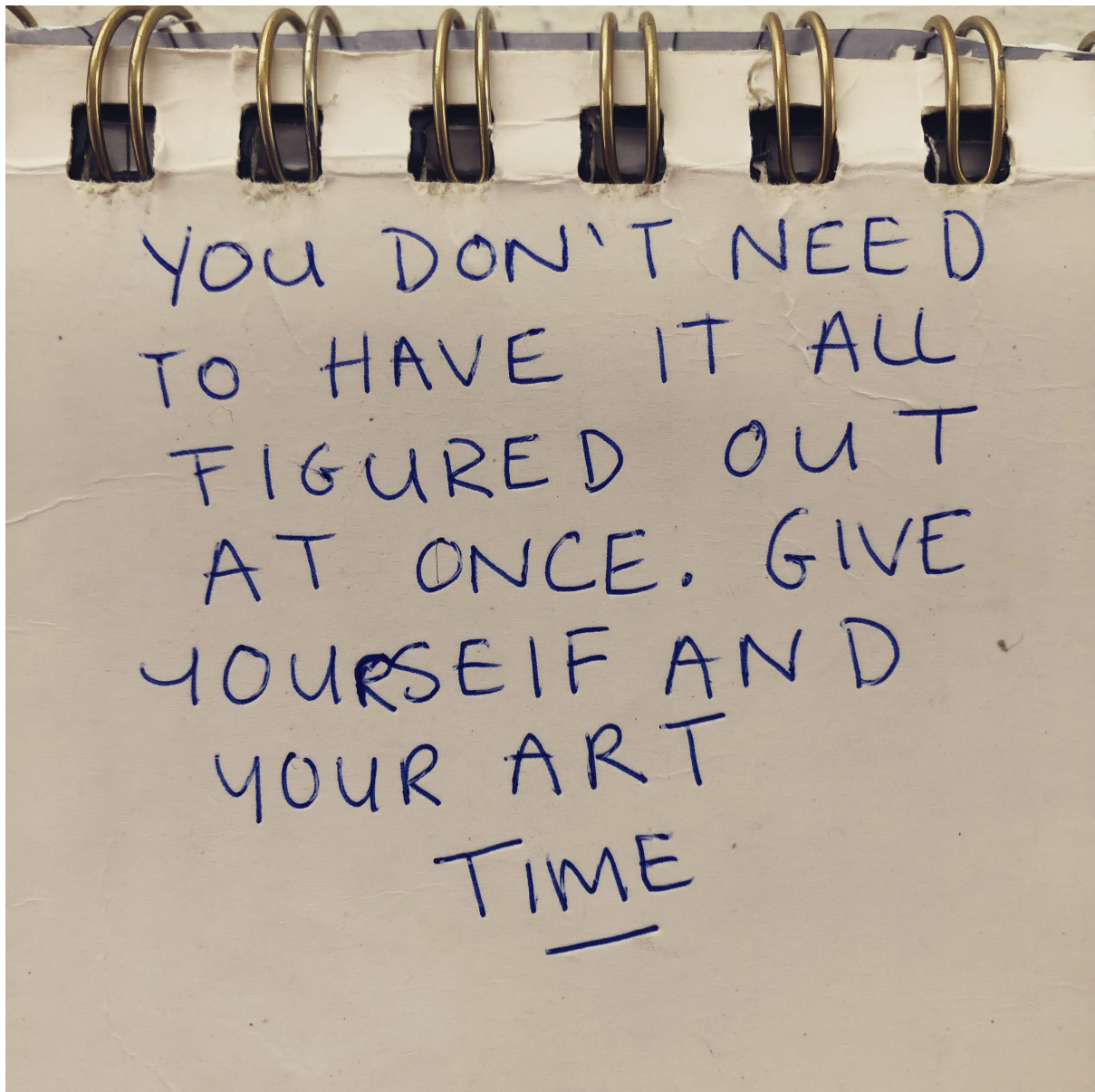
Your pacing is unique. It will not look like Picasso's pacing, or JK Rowling's pacing. Your pacing will not look like my pacing. And that is okay. It is okay. Your flow state might be faster than mine, or it might be slower. It's not morally bad or good to go fast or slow. Productivity doesn't equal worth. Show up for yourself, not for society's view of what is acceptable. You are not an art making machine, you are human artist.

The magic thing is, even if you take things really slowly, as long as each baby step is regular and moves you forward, you will finish your project and you will do it according to your own pacing, your own desires, your own unique way.

Reflection:

- Do I know my own pace? What pace do I like to work at? Or have I been taught to work at a certain pace by others?
- Is this something I would like to re-program?
- Do I have inherited stories from others about pace and productivity?
- What is my ideal pace of creativity? How many paintings / books / songs / screenplays would I like to create a year? Or would I like to have no limits at all!
- How do I treat myself when I take a long time creating my art? What words do I use against myself? What words would I like to use?
- When I am taking a long time, how would I like to treat my inner child?
- How can I balance my desire to show up consistently and hit my goals, with my knowledge that I have my own unique pace? What language can I use to support this duality?

Chapter Ten: Daydreaming



Daydreaming and distraction is integral to the artist's journey.

The rebuilding of trust is important. Proving to yourself that you respect yourself is important. However, taking breaks, whether it is a six month hiatus or sixteen minutes on your phone, is not the end of the world. It's not the end of your art either. We do not need to be spending six hours straight writing our novels each day. We do not need to be spending day after day in a concentration stupor, never breaking, constantly producing. We do not need to be making content and art all the time. You are not a machine. We are not made to produce. Our worth is not connected to our output. Plus, there is magic in these moments in-between.

Giving ourselves time in between tasks, even leaving art mid-task to do something different is an important part of creation. As artists, we are lucky. A lot of creating is done while we are not technically 'working'. The muse doesn't just visit us when we have paintbrush in hand, she visits us when we are doing the laundry, driving, trying to go to sleep. Having time for our subconscious to chill the fuck out and muse over our art is important.

This goes against the general idea that work must equate to product. It goes against the culture of the typical work place. Your manager wants to hear the keys clicking away. They want to see work being done. To-do lists must be ticked. Money must be made. We are taught that productivity needs tangible proof. We are taught that productivity needs monetary value. With art it is different. With art everything is different. It doesn't look quite like working in an office, it doesn't look quite like manual labour. It's ethereal, a little bit spiritual, a little bit not of this realm. Work gets

done in the cracks in-between. We need to learn to honour this truth. It's going to go against our regular programming. We are taught that distraction is weak, but we need to start making room for distraction and honouring it as part of the process.

As always, it is about balance.

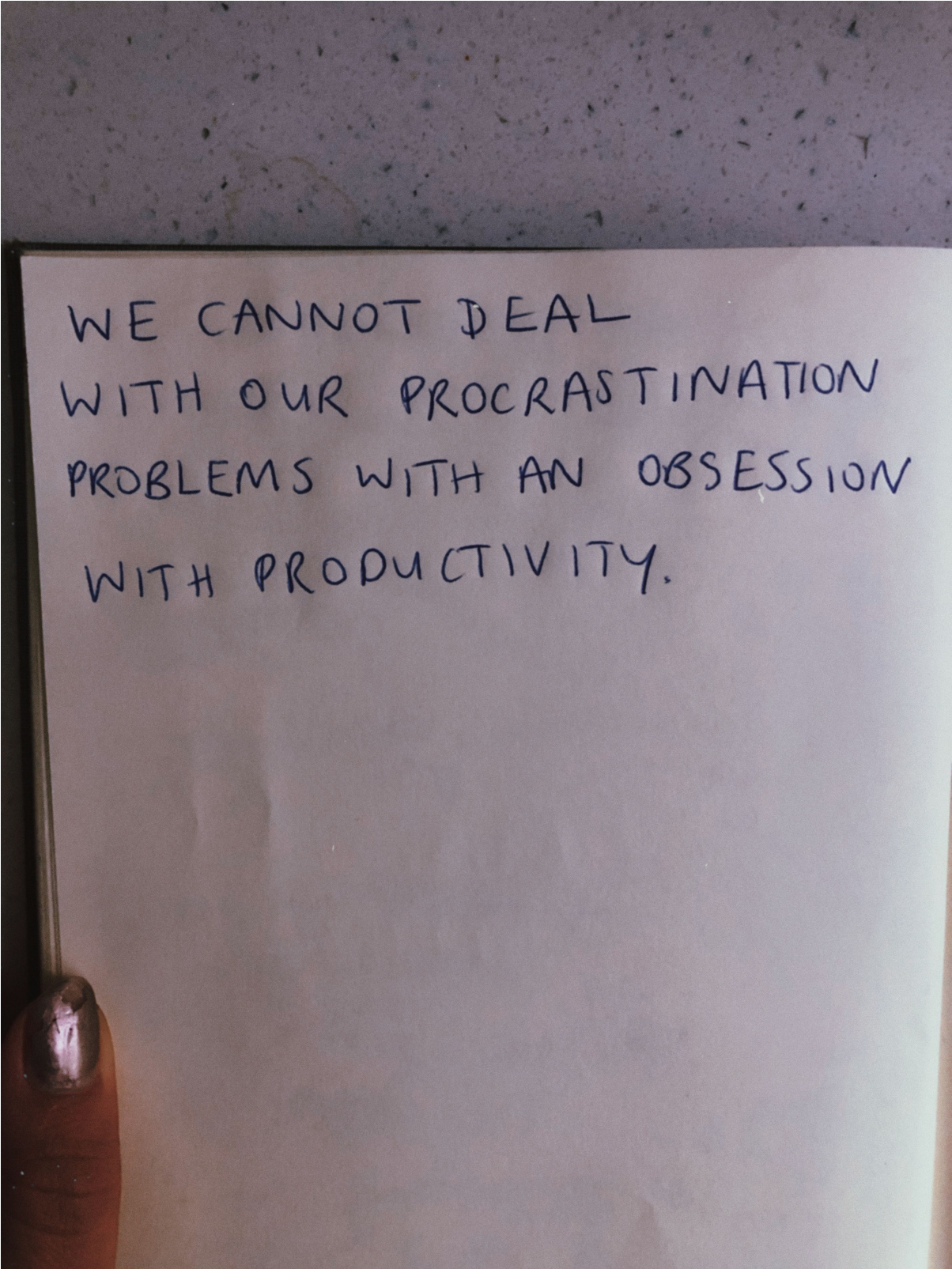
We need to trust ourself, respect ourself, know that we are the sort of person who shows up to do the creating, but we also need to know that staring into space for thirty minutes isn't a betrayal, it's a part of this journey.

Reflection:

- Do I allow myself to day dream?
 - Did I like to day dream as a child? What did I used to think about? Would my inner child enjoy day dreaming like we did when we were young?
 - Do I critique myself being absent? Or do I honour the day dreaming as part of my process.
 - Does day dreaming take up too much time in your opinion? Do you get lost in your thoughts? How can I support myself so that I honour this sacred time, but do not get carried away?
 - How do I respond to the idea that art isn't all about tangible output? Can I honour that? Or is it hard to feel worthy without actually DOING the art?
- Examine these beliefs. Where do they come from? Is this learnt? Does this

come from muggle work? Do you want to believe it?

Chapter Eleven: You're Lazy Baby

A photograph of a hand holding a piece of paper with handwritten text. The hand is visible on the left side, with a thumb holding the edge of the paper. The paper is white and has the following text written on it in black ink:

WE CANNOT DEAL
WITH OUR PROCRASTINATION
PROBLEMS WITH AN OBSESSION
WITH PRODUCTIVITY.

The background is a dark, textured surface.

The L Word.

You're Lazy baby. The L word is my trigger word. It is the word I fear. It is the label I have worked to avoid my entire life. We can't talk about procrastination without talking about laziness, and the complex cultural stories behind the word. The glorification of busy is an epidemic. Busy is a badge of pride. Hustle culture is mainstream and burnout is super sexy. I am still battling with my own rest stories. Every day I face them. I love the feeling of being tired after a massive day of work, because I've been taught by our culture that it means I am worthy. Rest must be earned. Laziness is entitlement. Going slow is a sign of passivity and weakness. These are the stories we have to face every single day and if we are to fall in love with true flow state and alignment within our creating, we have to reprogram our beliefs about laziness.

For me, the issue behind my own procrastination problem wasn't just the fact that I was distractible and my art was taking a long time. It was the fact that procrastination made me feel lazy, and being labelled lazy made me hate myself. The more I procrastinated the more I labelled myself lazy and the more I believed myself lazy, the more I believed I wasn't worthy. If I wasn't hustling hard to make my art, then I didn't deserve to make art at all. And because I felt I didn't deserve to make art, I procrastinated more and more. It was a horrific, vicious cycle.

The healing of my worst procrastination habits came from healing my stories about my productivity and my worth. I have to work on them every day. It is a total reprogramming of the way I live and the way I understand the world. Right now, as I

write this, a huge ripple of frustration runs through my body. I have been writing this chapter for over an hour, getting distracted, reaching for research - unsure of what I want to say and how I want to say it. I've written a sentence. Just one sentence. Now old programming kicks in. It starts with the feeling of irritation. I notice myself become very sensitive to sound. My breath shallows. I begin to feel deeply frustrated. Why isn't this writing going faster? My husband says something perfectly reasonable to me, but to me his volume is too loud and I just stare at him incredulously as a response.

"Nothing is getting done!" I say eventually.

I'm angry now. Innocuous tasks appear in my mind, and they feel threateningly huge. Panic sets in. Then comes the tears. Emotion. So much emotion. All of this was triggered by the thought that not enough was getting done, and that I was being unproductive. I have a fucking strong reaction to feeling unproductive. This is learnt behaviour and an entrenched neural pathway that I sprinted down thousands and thousands of times throughout my life. It takes a great deal of effort to stop myself taking that road. And a lot of the time, like just now, I take the exit without even realising it. My whole body physiologically reacts to stress of feeling unproductive.

I would make a bet that yours does too. It's making us sick. I know it's making me sick. It is not procrastination making me sick. The stress and pressure to be productive is. Not long ago, I ended up at the doctors, shaking crying, thinking I was dying. My whole body had flipped over into a constant state of fight or flight, because of my addiction to wanting to feel productive. That's burnout, baby. And it's trash. I am

writing this with one foot still in the flames. We cannot deal with our procrastination problems through an obsession with productivity. It will only hurt us further. I am covered in the scars.

If we want to create the art we know we are born to create, if we want to impact and connect with others through our creativity and story telling, we must deal with our procrastination gently, with compassion and with an understanding that our worth is not derived from our output. The management of procrastination should not be a punishment. It should be a dance, a wooing of your muse. It is an indulgent nap and a consistent practise, all married up in one fallible, undulating creative process.

It's not just our procrastination that makes us feel lazy, just the act of being an artist can make us feel unworthy and unproductive. Societally, we are told stories about artists being cop outs, we don't choose to participate in the approved, 'adult' world. We never truly grew up. We've got wild unrealistic dreams.

That's what it felt like for me. I thought I was being child-like, and irresponsible for wanting my art as my main source of income. I labeled myself lazy because I felt like society saw me that way. Everyone else had a big boy job, but here I was playing for a living. That was me buying into another story. It took some deep excavation to recognise the lie I was being told and sold. This story was knitted into my DNA. One of my deepest held beliefs. The reprogramming and reteaching of my own self worth has been a mammoth and magic mission. What I know now is this: deviating from the norm and saying no to mediocrity is not lazy or entitled it is revolutionary, brave and magic. What I know now is this: Art is an act of generosity like no other. We need

you. We need your art.

We need you rested.

We need you full of your magic. We do not need you to burnt out, martyring yourself to the art, to your muggle job, to your kids. We need you well and rested. Rest is not procrastination. It is imperative that we find ways to draw a line between the two. As we move towards managing our procrastination, we need to consider intentional, wonderful rest. Even unintentional rest. A nap when you planned to write isn't a fucking war crime.

As you move towards more and more consistent practises of creation, we need to also move towards more and more consistent practises of rest. They are symbiotic and they need one another. You want abundant art? You need abundant rest. I'm talking about indulgent, 'unearned', 'lazy' rest. Whenever you feel like it. Not just when you're tired. Not just when you've been productive. Whenever. You. Fucking. Feel. Like. It. Deny yourself pleasure, rest, joy, in the name of productivity and you are playing the small game, you are getting in your way, and keeping yourself and your art from true magic evolution.

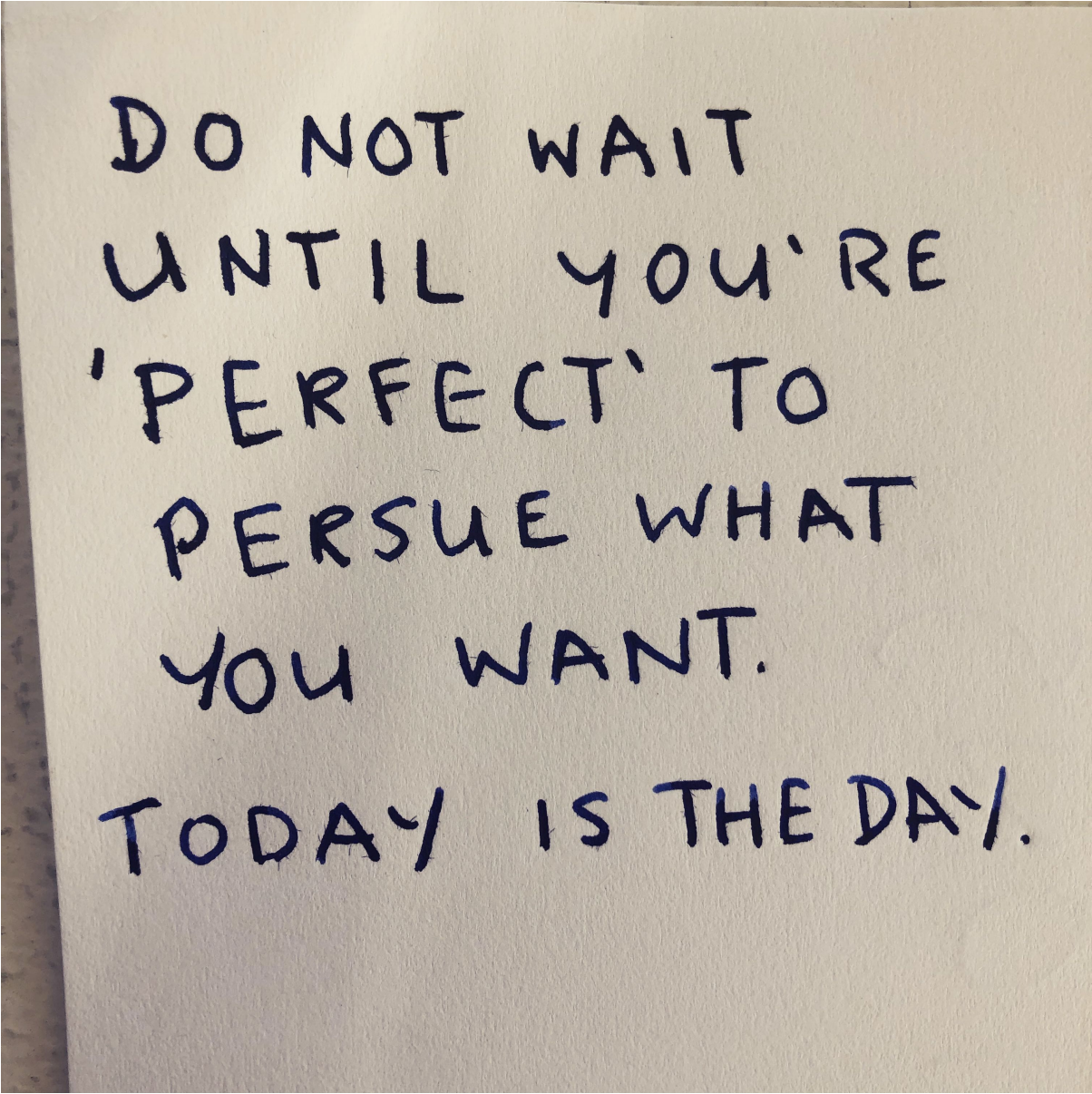
Reflection:

- Is your worth connected to your productivity?
- When have you felt really proud of yourself in your life? Do these moments all surround productivity? When was a time you felt proud of yourself that wasn't

productivity related? I'm not calling for judgement here. Just observation. For example, when I finished my first novel I was very proud and justifiably so (productive) . I am also proud of my relationship with my husband (not productive).

- In what ways do you feel your creativity has to mimic the outside world? For example, do you feel the need to create in a 9-5 time line with weekends on Saturday and Sunday? To fit into old expectations of what work should look like? Do you feel like you need to hand in work at the end of the day? Do you always need to feel creatively productive? Does it help you? (It may.)
- What stories have you inherited from authority figures in your life that have made you feel that worth = productivity and achievement?
- How do you feel after a day of nothing getting done? How does rest make you feel? Is it an indulgence? Why? Unpack your relationship to rest.
- Do you feel like you deserve good things, even if you're being unproductive? Unpack your reasoning behind this. Question every belief. Allow space for your pain and grief.
- How would you choose to rest and work if there were no restrictions upon you?
- Get curious for any inherited beliefs, cultural stories or anything that doesn't belong to you.

Chapter Twelve: It's Time



DO NOT WAIT
UNTIL YOU'RE
'PERFECT' TO
PERSUE WHAT
YOU WANT.
TODAY IS THE DAY.

I hope that this book has given you space to look at the stories that you've been telling yourself for so long, and given you the courage to question them.

I know it feels like a book about procrastination should be an opportunity to look outwards, to move into a space of external productivity, but I hope this book has been an invitation to look within. I hope that this book has allowed you to get down on your inner child's level, and take those little hands and tell them that they're not a bad person for getting distracted and procrastinating. Do I need to say that again?

You're not a bad person for getting distracted and procrastinating.

I encourage you to come back to each topic we have discussed. Contemplate the trust you are building in yourself, identify self sabotage-y behaviours, give yourself unprecedented, revolutionary amounts of kindness as you recognise those behaviours. Your instinct will be to get angry when you notice yourself getting in your own way. You're allowed to be angry. But I encourage you to use it to fuel your action, not to shame your inner child or tarnish your relationship with yourself.

Take your time with whatever has resonated on these pages.

Allow yourself to re-read the parts that struck home, the parts that triggered you and the parts that soothed you. This is not a quick fix, but it's is a portal for healing and creation. When we truly commit to art, we commit to a life long practise of healing and self work. There is not one without the other. Art forces us to go inward to explore

our stories that we have about ourselves. It's the magic of creativity. The muse gives us our ideas, and then she points, with those beautiful long fingers, at the parts of ourselves that are getting in our way. It can seem rude, intrusive, sometimes downright aggressive.

But she knows something.

She knows we need your art.

Acknowledgements

As always, to my husband Jimmy. Jimmy is not a procrastinator, which is annoying - but he supports me and reminds me of the balance between procrastination and productivity every day of my life. Thank you for always reminding me to rest and be gentle with myself.

To every precious soul who has followed me on this journey, who knows what it is to be a creative and who has witnessed me as I navigate my own artistry. I am so grateful for you.

A note about sharing For The Procrastinator.

I am so grateful for your patronage and that we can go on this journey together.

You are always welcome to share words from this book, as long as I am credited clearly.

Thank you for respecting and understanding the work that went into creating the this book. I ask you not to steal or pass on my work without paying for it. This is the culmination of years and years of work. Thank you for respecting that and for seeing me.

www.amiemcnee.com | ig: @inspiredtowrite | Podcast: Unpublished | Twitter: @amiemcnee