

**IN THE
MOOD**

ON A ROLL

**BIG
BLOCKS OF
TIME**

**KNOW THE
WAY**

**GREAT
FIRST
DRAFT**

**SHOULD
BE EASY**

**SIX
CREATIVITY
MYTHS**

The majority of us believe that we need at least four hours to get our materials out, equipment turned on, and into a flow in order to make any progress whatsoever on our creative endeavors. But for fun — and for the possibility of transforming your whole dang creative life! — let's challenge that idea.

The fact is that when we really focus, it is remarkable what we can accomplish in sessions *as short as* minutes. It is beautiful and empowering to watch short work periods come together and build on one another into something quite significant.

When you bust the myth that you need big blocks of time to make your art, it opens the door to having a **sustainable, satisfying creative practice**. Research shows that creatives who work in short consistent bursts accomplish more in **55% less time** than those who do marathon sessions. Stop bingeing. Rebuild trust with yourself and it will be easier to return to the practice.



MYTH 1

BIG BLOCKS OF TIME

“I need significant blocks of time to get anything done.”

Underneath the myth that "if I'm on a roll, I got to keep going" is a scarcity mindset. It's a lack of trust in your creativity, that your creativity is sporadic and unreliable. And therefore when it's there, you've got to leap on it.

Here's how it usually goes: you get on a roll. Things are awesome. You're flowing with it. And then four hours go by and you haven't gone to the bathroom and you haven't eaten lunch and you have a huge headache. So when you finally do stop, you're exhausted. You're not in touch with your body. And the next time you want to show up to the studio, you (perhaps unconsciously) dread it. Your body says "No! Because last time you worked me into the ground!"

Instead, try out working in short focused blocks. At the end of each block, actually stop. Take a moment to check in. "What do I need? What would be helpful? Oh, I could step outside, just get some fresh air, a little sunlight and come back in." That practice then brings a freshness and presence to your creative process. And it makes it more enticing for the muse to stay with you: you're a more tuned-in and awake vehicle for her.



MYTH 2 ON A ROLL

"Once I'm on a roll,
I should keep going."

This is quite related to the previous one. We need to just cut through this idea because it is also based in scarcity.

Huckleblose, the wonderful painter famously said "We don't get inspired to work, we work to get inspired." The more we write, the more we will write. The more we paint, the more we will paint. The more you show up and build in yourself a consistency of showing up to your creative practice, the more you will be able to do that and the more the muse will know that you are going to be there and that the muse can count on you.

So hold up your end of the tin can with the string on it by continually showing up whether or not you're in the mood.

Some days it's going to be inspired and some days it's going to be kind of a dud, but there's a lot you can do when you're so called not in the mood.

Just show up and give it what you've got. It's amazing how fast that mood can change once you're there.



MYTH 3

IN THE MOOD

"I need to be inspired or in the mood."

Ooh, the discomfort of not knowing! Not knowing where this is going and not knowing how we will get there. Our discomfort with not knowing is strong. And on top of that, there can be a feeling that it is somehow *wrong* to be in a state of not knowing. I live on the bleeding edge of this one cause I fall for it all the time. I fall for the idea that it is possible to figure it all out ahead of time.

I am working on a tarot deck. I really want to know what this tarot deck is going to look like, or even what media I'm going to use. And so I have avoided working on it for years. I'm called to do this project *and* it feels confusing and daunting. So I avoid it. But the fact is, **we find out what we're making by making the work.**

We find out what we know by writing.

We find out by doing.

This wanting to know ahead of time is completely 100% understandable. And that's not really how life works, and it's definitely not how the muse works.



MYTH 4

KNOW THE WAY

"I need to know what I'm creating and how I'll get there before I start."

Decorated author Anne Lamott sings the praises of producing a "shitty first draft". She says the first version is pretty much always gonna be not-that-great.

To require a great first version is like placing a giant hurdle that you must clear without even building up any speed.

Instead, start where you are.

Start with just a little shred of an idea: "It's something like this..." or "It's going to have something to do with this..."

Start with what you have and muddle your way in. Then the next time you return, you're that much closer. And you muddle a little further. The greatest works in the world started with shitty first drafts. It's a humble process.

You do not need to produce an excellent first draft. In fact, I warn you against it.



MYTH 5

GREAT FIRST DRAFT

"I must produce an excellent first draft."

The myth that it should be easy has shame running through it. When this one bites, it bites hard and it hurts.

The fact is, creative work, work that matters to us, is not easy. "Not easy" is not a sign that you're on the wrong path.

It takes time to build skills and we need to cultivate self-compassion and self-forgiveness the whole time.

I'm oh-so-susceptible to this myth when I'm packing paintings to ship out. I'm terrified the piece is going to get injured on the journey. "I should know how to do this by now. If I were a real professional, I would have a system for this." I need my self-compassion to remind me "You actually do have a system that you're continually refining. You're allowed to be nervous. You're nervous because you care."

Discomfort is not a sign that something's wrong.
Discomfort can be a sign that we're growing.
Discomfort is a prerequisite for growth.

It can be very slow and sometimes it feels slower than it is.
Catch yourself thinking this myth and recognize it as a myth.



MYTH 6

IT SHOULD BE EASY

"I'm too slow.
It should be easier.
I'm not a real artist."

Which one do you have the most resistance to?
(That's a great one to start getting curious about.)

Which one are you like, "Oh yeah, I do that one all the time, that one's super familiar?"

Be aware of which ones are your habits, which ones you touch on most often. Practice staying aware of what's happening and which one you're most likely to engage in. Try to catch it while you're in it.

May the Six Creativity Myths serve you in your creative making. May this awareness open your mind, your heart, and the way.



For more tips & practices for unleashing into total creative freedom, join us at the Art Monastery.

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