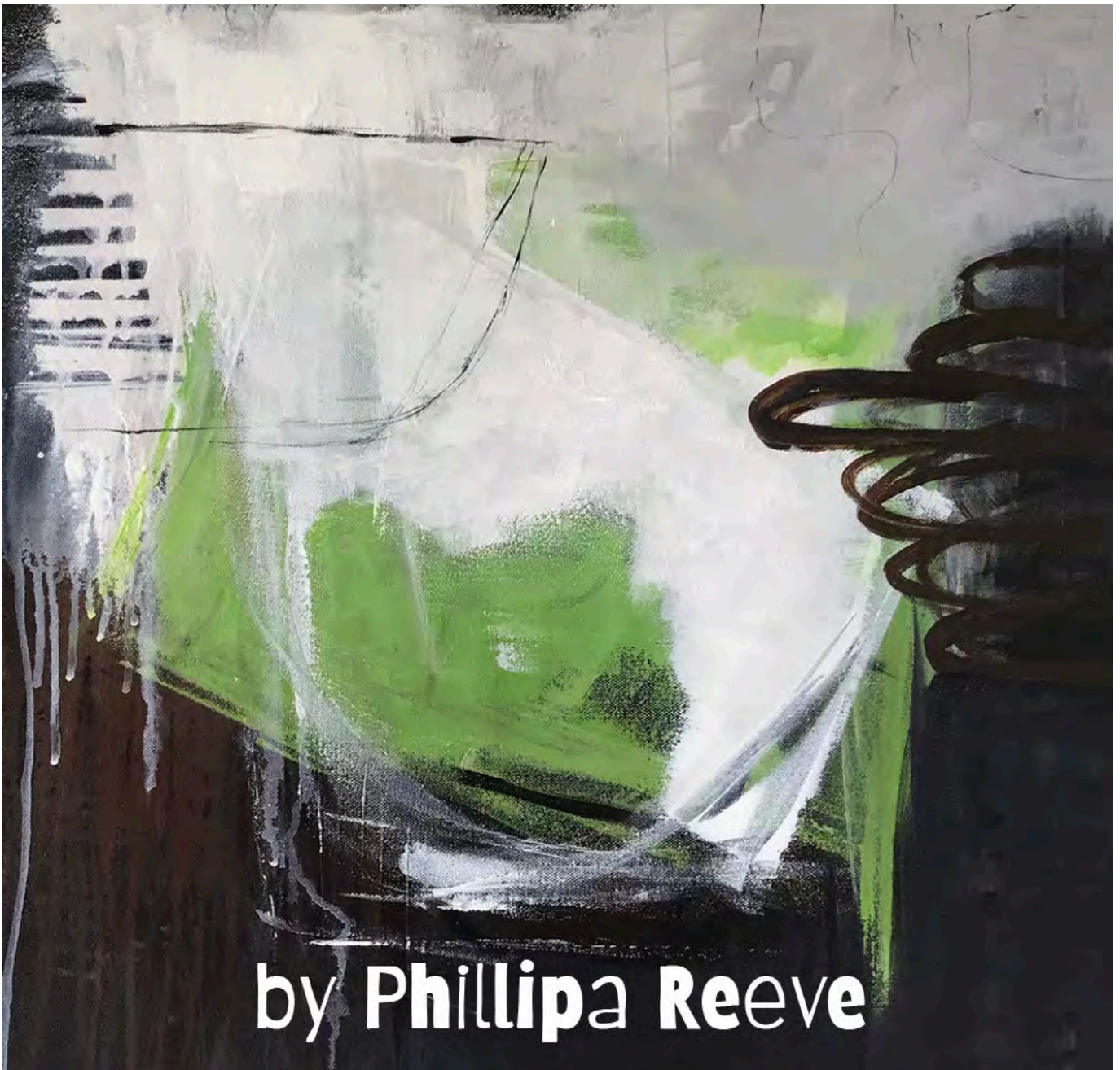


WOW: AGING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CREATIVITY



by Phillipa Reeve



Title - It may look like I am going in circles getting nowhere, but the taste is completely different.

WOW: AGING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CREATIVITY

Chapters

Creativity

Change your relationship with uncertainty

Choose to be curious

Develop an openness to new experiences

Become more aware of your frames and practice reframing

Rebuild your relationship with failure. Reframe it

Ask questions

Develop your familiarity with and trust in wider ways of knowing

Cultivate playfulness

Build, or find, containers

Claim the value of your contribution

Lessen your dependence on external validation

Comparison let it serve or let it go

Develop the idea of yourself as a work in progress

Act with purpose and intention

Creativity needs time and space. Claim it

Spend time with nature

Engage with beauty

Take action

Cultivate trust

Have ways to collect ideas

Develop a practice

Celebrate

The Creative Process

Exercises

A part of my story

And finally

WHAT IF

It's out there
lurking like the flu

so easy to catch
this idea of ageing

oldness

a shadow cage

descending
threatening
to lessen or even
disappear us

a cage laced with images
of powerlessness
rejection
irrelevance and shame

so we react

we numb
retreat
deny and fight

clasping the stories
of the no-limit-poster-people
and their heroic feats

but what if

we claimed it

oldness as ours

**a time to face
acknowledge
make space for
the losses
the limits
the strengths
the gifts and the opportunities**

a chance

**to recognise
and get to know
the more**

**of ourselves
each other
and the world**

**a space for adventure
discovery and
wonder**

what if

**we accept the challenge of the years
and dare**

**to matter
explore
listen deeply and stay wildly curious**

what if

**we were eager
to experiment**

**make mess
fail
express**

**to make those contributions
uniquely ours to make
right until our last breath**

How would that be



Title - It came more frequently these days, a sense of knowing. Or was it quiet courage.

INTRODUCTION

Although I don't subscribe to the notion that anything is possible if we just believe strongly enough, I do hold to the idea that every moment we meet is chocked full of potential. Potential we often miss because our senses are dulled by fear, busyness, or limiting assumptions.

What fascinates me, what I am choosing to explore, develop and champion, is how we might meet these moments in a way which releases more of their potential. Ways which partner with creativity. Ways that open us up. Ways which enable us to participate in an expansive future seeking to emerge.

We probably won't just fall into this way of living. After all it's likely we got trained in compliance and conformity, taught to trot out the right answer. An answer promising survival, belonging, perhaps even success and worth. An answer someone else knew that we had to learn and remember. The whispers of wisdom and sparks of curiosity, arising from within, seemed unwelcome and useless in this reality. So we deafen their calls. Becoming by degrees bound by unexamined assumptions, beliefs, and other's scorecards. Caught in fears marketed to us, along with the lotion, plan, investment, outfit, exercise, course, or pigeonhole that promised to perfect us. To make life controllable and certain again if we just tried hard enough for long enough. We developed the habit of striving to avoid mistakes, failures, and the stigma of shame that we were sure came with them. A habit which distanced us from our core Self, blinded us to our potential, and disconnected us from our authentic contribution.

The focus of this book is on restoring our relationship with Self and with creativity: both the field of infinite potential and our individuated

experience of it, our Creative Self.

I highlight capacities to develop, which can help us experience, express, problem solve, make meaning, and contribute, in partnership with creativity. Capacities that allow our wildness, weakness, flaws, quirks, tumbles, oddities, deadends, talents, strengths, and tugs of curiosity – our uniqueness - to be the portals for contributions.

Each chapter is but a glance at a capacity or activity. There are ideas on how you might develop some of the capacities in the exercise portion of the book. Another option is to research and find your own ways of developing them. The paintings and poems are interspersed because, well, that made the project more fun to do, and hey, maybe they operate as sparks for some of you. Who knows?

A FIRST

today
as I queued at the local store
a young woman
unmasked
grabbed the basket full
of groceries I was holding
and placed them on the counter

she said nothing
just beamed
act of kindness completed

I didn't tell her
that yesterday
these flabby arms were hefting 8 x 2s
as I worked
building our house

I shall watch out
for her in the future
when I am crossing roads



Title- It was all leading somewhere. A somewhere she had not noticed before. A somewhere she might not have chosen. But a somewhere of continual unfolding delights.

CREATIVITY

Creativity is easily associated with the arts but it is way broader than that. It is an energy which permeates everything and everyone. It's also a process. A dance or conversation between the known and the unknown, between ourselves and the world. It's a way of exploring and expressing. A way of opening to possibility and ushering in something new and valuable. It is available to us all.

We can express creativity in countless ways in a myriad of arenas. Through business, research, relationships, gardening, healing, cooking, creating community, social change, meaning making, and even in the way we meet ourselves, our world, the next moment, or the next breath.

Why bother

Although partnering with creativity can be frustrating, scary, messy, and demanding, it can also be alive with surprise, joy, wonder, and awe. It can increase our motivation to engage with life and we become more familiar with the amazingness of ourselves and the world.

We also get to do our bit to unleash greater creative energy into the world.

These are times of huge transition. Old structures, beliefs, and ideas are crumbling and the new are largely unformed and invisible. The problems we face are complex, requiring more than lineal, logical analysis. We need creative lenses.

Although we may not be the ones who find those innovative solutions

(or maybe we are), by partnering with creativity, we contribute to a field and culture of creativity. Making it easier for others to claim their creative core. Easier for them to access, value, and prioritise that connection.

We may never know what the downstream impact of our creative expression will be. Even seemingly insignificant contributions can touch someone who touches someone else and on it goes, weaving a fabric of inspiration, until some obvious world changing creation emerges. We might just be the tipping point.

An alive, vibrant, growing relationship with our Creative Self is a powerful resource at any time in our life. It can move us beyond fear and heighten our ability to see and realise previously invisible opportunities.

CHANGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH UNCERTAINTY

**It's loud in our society
the call
for certainty and control**

**we're after 'The Right'
the simpler the byte the better**

The unknown, uncertain, ambiguous, and unfamiliar are often held as sites of danger, or definitely unpleasantness. But it is there, in the bog and the fog that possibility is seeded and innovation is born.

To partner with creativity we need to develop our capacity to tolerate or even enjoy spending time in this place. To ignore or reassure the voice that tells us to run. The voice that demands clarity. We need to change our habit of grasping for the nearest answer and we need to let go of our desire to hurl our mind out like a rope designed to wrangle life into submission with our think, think, thinking, believing we can worry certainty into being.

Creativity urges us to sidle up, sit down, and linger with uncertainty. Get to know its good side. But how?

It might be a gradual process but there are multiple ways to begin. You might like to try the ideas in the exercise chapter. Or maybe do your own research and find ways that speak to you. Play with it. Discover what works.

MAKING SPACE

I am so over
the how tos
of life

predigested sentences
set against
inspiring photos
as if that's it
conversation closed

what I am calling for
is a lingering
a planting of feet
a grabbing a seat
in the fog

a sidling up
with tender curiosity
to confusion
or even fear

let's make a nest
a silken space
for words that don't
slide slickly from the lips

for feathers of passion
that flit across the heart
for twigs of truth
and scraps
we found in ditches

**a space to listen
to an us
that is trying to wake**

**to a world that's waiting
to partner with us.**



Title - I remember

CHOOSE TO BE CURIOUS

**Curiosity asks us
to unlearn the world**

**wave in the fog
let it saturate
everything**

**with fresh raw
possibility**

**leave holes
gaps**

**rip off some labels
so mystery might
leak in**

**The confusing, the complex, the beautiful, and the ordinary can all be
met with curious eyes, ears, lips, hands, and feet.**

**Curiosity anticipates
assumes
there will always be treasure**

**she skips down trails
tracking twinges
and glints
fragments of thought
and quirky details**

that snag the mind
or tickle the eye
which the heart thinks
it recognizes
for a second anyway

until the next turn
the next clue
the next stir in your belly

she doesn't need to know
what she's looking for
doesn't ask after destination
nor demand usefulness
from clues along the way

she just dances

keep up with her
she'll expand your life
deeper
wider
perhaps even leading to passion

NOT WELCOME

they didn't delight in the purpleness of grass

**tangles of curiosity
sidetracks
and floating outside
on clouds**

**held little space
in that place**

**pay attention
stick with the task
finish
before the bell**

**learning driven
by another's agenda**

**the what
the where
the how**

**demanding specific
previously outlined
unified outcomes**

AND THEN

it's amazing
how much I knew
in my twenties and thirties

such sharp certainty
others really needed
to hear about

now at seventy
lines have blurred
rubbed by feet
scraping over the edges
of sure

leaving questions
suggestions
options
among many

and I find myself
leaning in
quietly curious



Title - Times of Honey Cream

DEVELOP AN OPENNESS TO NEW EXPERIENCES

**explore
engage
and graze**

**new people
places
ideas
stories
images
music
and tastes**

**new ways of moving
and seeing**

**new concepts
skills
and questions**

immerse yourself in inspiration

**range wide and free
through diverse fields
which might light sparks
somewhere
sometimes**

**let curiosity lead you
just wander
everything feeds**

**innovation
and cross pollination**

**and practice noticing
the subtle flutter
murmur
nudge
or wobble
there at the edge of consciousness**

**allow them to land
like leaves
laid down
by the morning breeze**

**sense the tickle of insight
or new story forming**

**don't try to force clarity
or carve out
immediate meaning**

**you are just stocking the shelves
for some future creation**

TODAY I READ IN THE NEWSPAPER I NEED A MILLION DOLLARS TO AGE COMFORTABLY

but comfortable
to me
says maroon velour
reruns
custard
camellia and an everlasting breeze
with partial cloud cover

what I am claiming
what I am in training for
is an ageing that

arouses
seduces
surprises

an ageing teaming
with wild beauty
and unquenchable curiosity
right until
my last remaining breath

what do I need for that

BECOME MORE AWARE OF YOUR FRAMES, AND PRACTICE REFRAMING

**We assume
that what we see
is how life is**

just the facts of the matter

**but we watch through frames
we've placed around
the issues and problems**

**frames
delivering context
for thoughts
attitudes
decisions
and action**

**frames that shape ideas
weave stories
tell us what's happening here
and determine how we see
a challenge
or opportunity**

**circumstances
and states of mind
influence our choice of frames**

**assumptions are frames
metaphors are frames
stories are frames**

**shift the frame and boom
new worlds of possibility
become visible**

REBUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FAILURE. REFRAME IT.

**rip it up
bin it**

**the story
passed down the table
with weetbix and sugar**

**the one inscribed
on dull
dipped eyes**

**that scanned your masterpieces
catching only red-penned circles
and percentages
lower than desired**

**that take on failure
as something to be avoided
evidence
of your inadequacy**

**your lack of
talent
skill
effort
style
or solid judgement**

wipe it from your mind
like waves erasing
yesterday's sand-truths

reclaim the space
leave room for ripe
wild creativity

experiment
explore
screw up
and fail

again and again and again

fail quickly
begin now

let it be awkward
let yourself stumble
get used to the turning
shifting ground
the mess

and let fragments of form
birth slowly into being.

A **VIEW OF AGEING**

they talk
of time's voracious
hunger

devouring
beauty
vitality and relevance

leaving husks
hanging
on oh so heavy bones

alone
in the shadows

with a nice cup of tea



Title - Call from beyond the comfort zone

**“ YOU LOOK OLD”, IS NEVER SAID AS A
COMPLIMENT. WHY NOT? WHAT ELSE
COULD IT MEAN?**

to who it may concern
I am returning
the packages of meanings
you left
unsolicited
in my mind

whist trialling
I found them to have
an offensive odour
and be not fit for purpose

ASK QUESTIONS

there's a power in those packets of words
power to shake the senses awake
send you on a journey
unearthing opportunity

change the question
and new doors are revealed

forget the flashy answers
for a while
even thinking there's an answer
could be a trap
stick with the questions instead

but don't grab the hand
of the first
to strut brazenly in front of you
move to the next
and the one behind that

it might take fifty
to find the one carrying
your sparkling innovation

don't judge them
as stupid or raggedy
welcome them all
be gentle

and remember
some questions will last a lifetime
they are for living into

keep wandering and wondering



Title - Trying to make space for it all

DEVELOP YOUR FAMILIARITY WITH AND TRUST IN WIDER WAYS OF KNOWING

We tend to assume that all knowledge results from a process of cognitive reasoning and analysis. But there are non-conscious modes of knowing which hold a mother lode of information and processing capacity.

The unconscious can collect and process information at a rate more than two hundred thousand times that of the conscious mind. A mega sized resource.

Whilst logical reasoning and analysis are brilliant tools it limits us if that's all we rely on. Focusing in and thinking hard disconnects us from our capacity for generative thinking, our ability to make strange connections between a massive number of seemingly unrelated bits of information, our way of birthing unusual and expansive concepts and insights.

If we want to engage our creative capacity it pays to enrol multiple ways of knowing.

The following is a list of ways we could do this. More detailed ways of working with a few of them can be found in the exercises chapter. These approaches may challenge your sense of what's 'real', relevant, valuable, and trustworthy. Labels we traditionally reserve for cognitive reasoning. But I encourage you to have a play and see what emerges. I suggest starting in low importance, low risk, areas of your life. You can of course test out the insights you gain via a process of cognitive

reasoning before you act on them. Creativity is a blend of both sides of the brain.

Start With A Seed Topic Or Question

1. Explore and engage with the body sensations connected with this topic, problem, or issue. What do they suggest? Explore further.
2. Externalise the issue into a tangible object. One you find or one you make.
Then dialogue with that object. What does it suggest?
3. Use physical space to inform and release knowing.
4. Move your body. Dance a response.
5. Dream on it.
6. Meditate on it.
7. Use visualisation and dialogue with your Creative Self.
8. Dialogue with nature.
9. Free Write
10. Keep a sketch or photo journal to explore the issue over time.
11. Use random words or pictures to uncover knowing.

HAVE FUN. EXPERIMENT. TAKE IT LIGHTLY.

CULTIVATE PLAYFULNESS

play's not tied
to idea or path
nor glued
to particular outcome

it's more like chiffon
laughing with the breeze

woven with what if's
and scented with
surprise

flexing
flying
alive with the tumble
of flow

rules are nothing sacred
being right's no draw
cool and safe
don't factor in

it meets unsure
with tinkering
trying out
and next steps
and next

BUILD OR FIND SOME CONTAINERS

Containers help us hold uncertainty long enough for the fragile new to emerge. They make it easier for us to live with creative tension, instead of closing it down, by changing direction or filling up the space. They provide a structure which supports us in taking risks.

Below are some ideas of ways you could create containers. Play with a couple. As always find what works for you.

Develop daily rituals

- A ritual of starting the day in a particular way can ground and support us.
- Establish a ritual of creative practice.
- Daily meditations, mantras, centering practises, or affirmations can work

Develop or find a culture of half-thoughts and experimentation

Find a creative support network

People you can bounce ideas off.

Read, Listen, Watch.

Immerse yourself in the lives of other creative people, their beliefs, practises, and insights. Engage with their work.

Find or create supportive metaphors, stories, and beliefs.

Coaching

Certain types of coaching can support a creative approach to life. The coach can help you hold uncertainty, ask questions, develop courage and creative confidence, develop your wider ways of knowing, open to your own wisdom, and understand your own language of creativity.

CLAIM THE VALUE OF YOUR CONTRIBUTION

In a society where we celebrate the world changers, ground breakers, and already famous it can be difficult to own our own creative contribution.

But what if there is no value hierarchy? What if it's more like a network we all feed into? A grid anyone can tap, even for globe tipping transformation? What if our unique contributions are a key part of that system?

If we minimise the value of our creative expression we are unlikely to stay the distance, remain curious, and notice and develop our ways of knowing and our courage.

We need to remind ourselves that it's all valuable. The messes and clumsy attempts as well as the outcomes which switch on a light in someone's eyes.

It is all taking us somewhere.

Even if we see no frame big enough to clearly show our value now decide to trust. Accept that there is a point to it all. A value even bigger than our own learning and joy. Believe that there's a larger story that tells the value of your contribution and just keep going.



Title - The luscious, the useful, the yet to be decoded wove themselves into the fabric of her being

LESSEN YOUR DEPENDENCE ON EXTERNAL VALIDATION

It's so easy to get hooked on validation from an outside source. Especially when we are in vulnerable territory. The tick, star, smile, sale, like, retweet, follow, head nod, or positive review.

As a child eliciting the other's smile may have been essential for survival. Today not so much. Developing the capacity to self-validate is a powerful step on the way to establishing a vibrant partnership with creativity.

It might not be an easy process. Praise is like a sugar feeling. We can end up endlessly craving another hit of the feel-good instead of being pulled by our curiosity, wonder, and wisdom.

We need to create our own scale. Another measuring scale that replaces that of the other's opinion. The exercise chapter holds some ideas on ways to do this.

I reckon, part of the job of ageing, is getting to a place of enough. If you aren't there already.



Title - I reckon part of the job of ageing is getting to a place of enough

WAYS OF LOOKING AT ENOUGH

Am I enough
thin enough
plumped enough
smooth enough
muscled enough
bright-eyed enough
connected enough
accomplished enough

to what

be seen

have a place at someone's table

or
claim this space
breathe out
be still
and smile

Is it okay to stop running
like some frenetic squirrel
intent on hoarding safety
trying to outdistance
my inadequacies

barely noticing
my light or soul's tug

is there a word
I can stand on
some rock
to ground me

what about enough
imperfectly enough.

enough to begin
to sin against
the greedy god
of more
whose gaze
would deny me

enough as an out breath
a comma
allowing me to be here
for a moment anyway

is enough really
a place strung with dollars
and degrees
smelling of leather
with promises
of eternal desirability
held between tight lips

darkened streets
lamps always lighting
some other road
I've lived in the shadow
of that question
too long

**enough
like sun kissed fog
unwrapping
layer after layer
of hills and sky**

**enough to hear
the hurry
feel the breeze
of others rushing
to tomorrow
and not
sink into doubt**

**enough to drop
the stories
I've wrapped myself in
words
supposed to keep me safe
that told me small**



Title - Finding traction

COMPARISON – LET IT SERVE OR LET IT GO

Comparison can serve. It can help us recognize, and fine tune, our unique style or approach. It can provide that touch of inspiration. The feeling we have when we recognize something in another's actions, expressions, creation, or way of being that pulls us. That pulse of attraction. That wow.

If we are able to isolate what it is we are resonating with it can provide a clue about directions to go. Paths which might unleash what is seeking to emerge in us. It can highlight qualities that are important to us, help us hone our skills, and discover more about our voice, style, or the content of our unique offering.

Similarly, noticing something that turns us off can be a useful clarification on a path not to take or aspects that don't fit with our style.

Comparison can also be destructive. A way to 'not enough', shame, silence, limit, and stop ourselves. It can also pull us in a direction that is not true to who we really are.

It's important to be able to differentiate between the serve and limit effect of comparison. Get familiar with the body sensations, feelings, and energy associated with both. Have a way of letting go of the limiting kind quickly before it does too much damage.

The exercise section contains ideas on ways you might like to do this.



Title - Winning at your own game

DEVELOP THE IDEA OF YOURSELF AS A WORK IN PROGRESS

**potential unknown
unknowable**

**past limits
no measure
of future achievements**

**misses
and mistakes
just growing edges
part of becoming**

**so risk
play
have fun
and let those boundaries
become visible.**

ACT WITH PURPOSE AND INTENTION

Owning our purposes, our whys, makes it easier to live creatively. As well as a general purpose, why we are setting out to live in partnership with creativity, there may be purposes for specific projects. Purpose provides meaning. It can also keep us from getting swept away by life's chaos.

Purpose can help us –

Linger in the face of uncertainty.

Stay the course when fear turns up.

Stay independent of others' validation: the praise as well as the rejection and criticism.

Persist when nothing is happening and it feels like inspiration has done a runner.

Gain clarity about what fits and what doesn't.

Fuel our passions.

Find opportunities, resources, pathways, and possibilities.

We can add power to the creative process, by setting an intention for a day, week, or a month.

CREATIVITY NEEDS TIME AND SPACE. CLAIM IT.

**I know we extol
the virtues of busy**

**equating it perhaps
with worth
or productivity**

**proof
we're in demand
virtuous even**

**but busy's wants
can make us grab
for past predictability**

**or have us rush
to organise
before the time is due**

**what we need
for new ideas
and options fresh aplenty**

**is space away
from busy's storm
and ceaseless stimulation**

**away from rush
to show results
from deadline dread
and panic**

**pockets of time
capsules of space
and lashings of patience**

**room to noodle
with soul's sweet sound
mind wander
doodle**

**and weave true
connection magic**

**it might look like lazy
wasting time
or slack**

**but don't be fooled
it's potent work
unconscious has our backs.**

As well as taking these pockets of time throughout the day to do nothing, go sideways, or gaze into the distance, repetitive routine tasks can free our minds and give space for unconscious to do its thing.

Another way we can support the unconscious component of creativity is to build up our tolerance for solitude. If it is difficult start with minutes and work up to bigger slices of time.



Title - Tōtara holding the flat framed day and shading it soft and boundless

SPEND TIME WITH NATURE

It has been shown, that spending time with nature soothes, relaxes, and restores us.

**It springs imagination
and invites new found awe
sparking spacious thinking
in place of either/or**

**but if some 'forest bathing'
won't fit in your 'to do'
then even hearing birdsong
or watching wind in trees**

**can start the spell
and light a spark
seeding inspiration
and set your spirit free**

If you want to try something, which may seem right out there on the edge of woo-woo (or not, depending on your culture) initiate and develop a conscious relationship with nature as a partner.

Develop your listening and sensing skills and attune to nature's inherent intelligence. If you have a place in nature that is 'yours', special in some way, that might be the space to choose. Spend time there. Be with nature. Sense what nature expects of you. What does it want? What wisdom or question is it offering you? Visit regularly. Offer your caring. Share your questions and ideas. Tune in for feedback.

Take the reins off your imagination. Develop your ability to co-create with nature.

ENGAGE WITH BEAUTY

**There's something
in the resonance of beauty
that seems so bone familiar**

**a sense of belonging
calling us back
to a core
we never quite found words for**

**seek beauty
expect it everywhere**

**look
listen
engage
and let it unfold you**

**to new ways of seeing
of being
and flow**

**to increased passion
to depths untouched
and new beginnings**

it's a language

**and a quality
of our Creative Self and soul**



Title - Oh the possibilities

TAKE ACTION

you need to act
don't wait

small steps
any steps
will get you going
give feedback
and let the next emerge

nexts still embryonic
requiring action
to take visible form

or maybe you could dive

immerse yourself in situations
explore
experiment
luxuriate in the mess

however you do it
get moving now

creativity is waiting to play

CULTIVATE TRUST

Trust that better questions, creations, answers, something significant will emerge from this amorphous, riotous, exciting, boring, impish, delightful, scary, out of control process that is creativity.

Trust that your Creative Self, that playful, intriguing, generous, challenging, and wise self, is eager to partner with you. And trust that you are enough to form a relationship with them.

Trust that creativity, and your Creative Self, will keep trying to communicate in an endless variety of ways and you will develop the ability to attune to their language.

Trust enough to let go and play.

Trust you will find the gems within the rubbish you will create.

Trust that you can grow, develop, and learn and that the process will unfold you.

Trust that failures, dead-ends, about-turns, and blocks are just part of the rhythm of this curious journey. You are on track.

Trust that creativity will show up if you keep at your practice. Even though it's been absent for ages.

Trust that clues will appear on the path, even when you are feeling stupid and lost, and you will notice enough of them.

Trust that Creative Self will find a way to show you how your creativity might manifest most strongly. And know it is likely to involve lots and

lots of experimenting.

Trust that what you have to offer is unique and of value. Worth discovering and sharing even if the journey is winding, long, and challenging.

Don't wait for confidence to develop. Begin trusting now. Make a choice.

Decide. Go for faith over certainty.

And trust that the perfect time is now, even if it has been ninety years in the making.

HAVE WAYS TO COLLECT IDEAS

Remember ideas turn up as nudges and tiny tugs. It's snippets of information you are collecting. Fragments that just rush in on their own time schedule.

Refusing to wait until it suits you.

You need to have ways handy to capture and contain the flickers and gems as they move through. Phone, notebook, sketchbook, and camera all work fine.

Record the ideas, problems, words, questions, and project ideas that catch your attention. Sketch symbols. Snap photos. Tear out pictures. Collect objects. Save links. Record sounds. Anything that pulls for your attention.

Even if you don't know why (and you probably won't).

You could start an idea box to hold them all. Or several boxes, one for each project. Often it is the synergy of several ideas or objects that sparks inspiration, direction, and discovery.



Title - Allowing ambiguity

DEVELOP A PRACTICE

A regular time of creative connection, collection and expression. A time when we commit to turn up, inspired or not, to do the work. Time we have blocked out for ourselves where others know we are not available.

A practice grounds us. Gives us structure to help focus our creative energy. Cements purpose. Contributes to our creative fitness and strengthens our relationship with our Creative Self. They can depend on us being present and ready. And, maybe, just maybe, inspiration may arrive with more predictability.

Find out what time of day works best with your body clock. Express in whatever way fits you. Maybe you might choose to expand your skill base and play with different modes of expressing. Keep it simple, easy, and fun.

You could:

Meditate then free draw or write.

Work on questions, reframing, metaphors, other ways of knowing, or any of the other capacities.

Take photos. Lots of them. Maybe 20-50 a day.

Draw, write, paint, sculpt, or dance.

Make music.

Explore recipe creation.

Work on links between different pieces in your ideas box.

Or whatever creative practice you dream up.

Do it for the process, and relationship building with your Creative Self, not for the outcome. The most important part is turning up.

CELEBRATE

When you like or delight in snippets of what you have experienced or created (or whole swathes) it's important to let it sink in. To celebrate your creation.

Celebrate also the unrolling process of creativity. Notice the never ending streams of ideas. Fall in love with being in the flow. Feel it in your body.

Doing so helps our creative confidence. It strengthens our resilience and grit. It also unleashes joy which supports our motivation for future projects.

Celebration helps us claim meaning and value for the creative process in the midst of failures, mistakes, and blocks,. As well as that it grounds our identity as a creative person.



Title - I got this

THE CREATIVE PROCESS – a **simplified overview**

Although the creative process can be seen as having different phases it is not a step by step linear affair. Instead we flip back and forth between phases and thought processes in a rapid haphazard way.

Our whole brain is involved. As is our body. In the preparatory phase we collect information, explore, immerse ourselves in a situation or a topic, develop skills, and collect nuggets of information.

The incubation phase is where we calm our mind, create mental space, rest, mindwander, and go sideways. It is where the unconscious has room to work. It is a time of divergent thinking.

There is also a phase when cracks of clarity arrive. Here we create ideas, act, experiment, get feedback, and act on some. Creating and externalising our ideas.

We can't force the process, or demand creative clarity according to our time scale, it has its own rhythm. Times of flow which are joyful, exciting, wonder-filled, and addictive. Times of dullness, blockness, and immobility. And times of frustration, where the pace is so, so slow. That's just how it works. It's up to us to find ways through it and stay the course.

EXERCISES

Pick a time, when you can ensure you won't be interrupted, and a space that you feel comfortable in.

Befriending uncertainty

What is the image you currently associate with uncertainty? Maybe it is an abyss, a swamp, a minefield, or something else completely. Whatever it is allow yourself to become aware of it. And, as you bring this image to mind, notice the body sensations that accompany it. What is happening in your jaw, throat, chest, belly, legs, and hands? What is happening to your breathing?

Now let yourself consciously relax. Let your breathing begin to slow and deepen. Breathe right down into your belly. Let your breath move down into your feet. Feel the ground beneath you. Sense it supporting you. As you exhale, release any tension and let go of your image of uncertainty. Just let it dissolve or float away.

Now imagine uncertainty as the hangout of creativity. An ally. A place that's supportive, fertile, exciting, and generous. One alive with wonder, guidance, and potential. What image captures this for you? Let your imagination run free. Allow an image to arise.

Next step into that image in your mind. Notice the colours, shapes, textures, sounds, and smells. How warm or cold is it? What tastes arise? What are your body sensations now? How might you label this place?

Breathe in the energy of the place. Breathe it deep into your belly and exhale through your feet, right down into the earth. Stay a while. Let the

energy infuse you.

Next draw, paint, or make a model out of playdough, paper, or cardboard that symbolises your experience here. Let your imagination loose. Whatever comes to you is right.

Alternatively you may let yourself be drawn to an object, a touchstone, that can help you ground and hold the energy of this place.

In the future when you notice the constricting fear sensations, and realise you are facing uncertainty, remember, the weight and meaning you give to it is in your control. As long as there is no immediate physical danger become aware of the feeling and remind yourself you are reacting to your old image of uncertainty. You get to choose now – enemy or ally – opportunity or danger.

Next deepen your breathing, release body tensions, and imagine the space of fertile creativity that supports you. Bring to mind the image that represents this.

Now imagine stepping into this image. Notice the colours, smells, and sounds. Feel what it's like to be here. Stay a while. Allow your body and mind to respond to your new meaning of uncertainty.

Do this enough times and you will find that you are able to change your state and response to uncertainty by just recalling the word you chose or a detail of your new image of uncertainty.

The new state of mind and body allow you to engage with uncertainty and play and create.



Title - Maybe. Maybe not

EFT Tapping

This is another technique you could use to reduce the cortisol levels in your body that accompanies the fight, flight, freeze reaction to uncertainty.

It's a simple process of tapping on a series of acupuncture points whilst feeling the anxiety and discomfort you associate with uncertainty. Studies show it to be incredibly effective at reducing cortisol levels, deactivating triggering images or sensations, and anchoring in serving images. In effect it is providing new helpful stories to replace the limiting ones we've had locked in your bodies. This opens us to the potential for new possibilities, opportunities, and creative ways of being. We are no longer held hostage by past experiences or old meanings.

It has been shown to have significant, positive, results with treating PTSD in VETS.

The Tapping Solution by Nick Ortner is an excellent source of learning for this technique.

Making Space For Fear

This is another approach you could take.

Imagine that you pull up a chair for fear. Give it space to be in your life, to sit beside you. Learn to recognise its voice inside your head. Thank it for looking out for you. Let it know it's welcome to take a load off and hang out as long as it wants. But (unless you are in real physical danger – in which case listen and take action) let it know that you choose to retain control of your life rather than hand it the reins. You

might also like to turn down the volume on its ravings.

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CULTIVATE OPENNESS

Many of us spend huge chunks of our lives in the comfort of the familiar, operating on auto-pilot, walled off from the complexity, intricacy, and wisdom that surrounds and dwells within us. Novel experiences can often help us to cut through habituation and increase our awareness of a world beyond our boxes.

EXERCISE – Diary in something new each day or couple of days.

A new style of art, music, food, movie, podcast, or book. A new route to a familiar place, a new walk, a new cafe, or any other new experiences that jump to mind.

We can also actively choose to set aside time and create a space and mindset that supports openness. Start off with 5-10 minutes at a go and work up from there.

EXERCISE – Practice pockets of time.

Decide to engage curiosity, to open up to 'not know', to experience beyond the labels.

Expect a fresh perspective, new details, new appreciations, new threads of meaning, and touches of insight.

Pause – be still, relax and ground yourself.

Open up some space in your mind and body. With your eyes open in an easy soft focus bring your awareness to the sensation of breathing – the inhale and the exhale. Don't try to control it. Just notice. Gradually

allow yourself to become aware of any tension in your body. Now, as you exhale, let the tension relax. Just feel it dissolving bit by bit, with each out breath, as you become more relaxed and centred.

Next allow your attention to rest on what's going on around you and within you. Just gently noticing. Let it land. Notice the colours, shapes, sounds, thoughts, words, slivers of meaning, movements, textures, quality of light, and the air brushing against your skin. What are you drawn to? What calls for your attention? Allow your attention to be gently steered.

Open to whatever this sparks within you. Any ideas, images, associations.

Accept whatever comes, without judgement.

Record what you have noticed. Write, draw, paint, model, or use your phone to record. Then, or at a later date, engage with what you have recorded. Ponder and inquire into what arose for you.

You may like to start this exercise by focusing on your **intent** – some question or issue you wish to explore or increase your understanding of. Focus on this seed issue as you relax. Let go of any assumptions you hold about how, or in what form, or when, any answers should appear. Often answers will be obscure, fleeting, nudges, only revealing themselves fully through further inquiry and exploration.

There are an infinite number of questions you could hold as intent. Invent your own or use one of those listed below. Have fun. Play with this exercise.

What do I need to understand now?

What do I need to learn now?

Where to next?

How do I move forward?
What is seeking to emerge?
Which of my strengths and gifts are being called for now?
How do I contribute, here, now?
What skills and strengths am I being called to develop?
What is my next edge to explore?
What am I missing?
What do I need to celebrate now?

EXERCISE – Opening to possibility– Play with Yes/And

First recognize and accept your immediate experience, whatever it is. Don't suppress or judge it away. Just say **YES** to it. Allow it to exist. I see you. I hear you. I feel you. Do this with lots of self compassion. Maybe use your breathing to help ground the experience in your body. Breathe into it.

And be open to what else might be possible here. Be curious. What other energies, meanings, slants, or stories? How else might it be possible to see it? What might be seeking to emerge? What might this be a doorway into? What gifts might it bring?

Another way to play with YES/AND is to let yourself loosen any identification you have with a particular idea, label, image, meaning, or assumption.

“Yes, and maybe there's more I haven't seen”.

Or try holding two at once. Just staying with the creative tension that brings. See what emerges from the space between the two. Let a frame

COMPARISON – LET IT SERVE

Becoming aware of how you do it.

Get yourself a journal, or somewhere you can record your felt experience of both serving and limiting comparison. Take notice over a period of days or weeks. Record what your experience of comparison is like. You are looking to become more attuned and familiar with your physical experience of comparison and what it sparks in your mind. We all do it differently.

For me the serving kind of comparison can be disturbing at the start. There is a flicker of curiosity, a pull, or sometimes a gush of passion, that rushes up through my throat to the top of my head. I can feel vibrating all through my head as if there is too much energy to be contained. There is a lightness and a spaciousness as well. It might be tinged with humour or compassion. I am compelled because it is intriguing. It pulls me to explore and discover the aspect of the other's work that resonates with me.

The limiting variety also starts off feeling unsettling. It can be a recognition of qualities I admire. Ones I haven't developed. But I am not sure if they are qualities I authentically resonate with or merely ones I've been sold on. Often I have a sense of closing down, of tension and constriction. It might propel me into action. But here I will be using strong will. Trying to push through and dominate something. (Perhaps a sense of not enough). The feeling is tight holding. Trying to control. Maybe locking my jaw. I stop tuning into the world around me and to my connection with my Creative Self.

Comparing yourself to a past you can also have both serving and limiting impact.

Letting go of Limiting Comparison

You need to have a way to let go of the limiting kind as soon as you realise it's happening. Take inspiration from the ideas below or develop your own ways.

Maybe you could have a **phrase or mantra** you say to yourself to interrupt the shaming script. Have fun. Try out various phrases. Maybe even sing it to yourself.

“No thanks.”

“Shove off with your shaming. I'm fascinated with my way.”

“I want to find true me – not be you.”

“Thanks for your input but I'm okay.”

“There's so many ways to be and I'm exploring what's true for me.”

You could try a physical gesture. A hand flick, as if brushing a bug off, or a big exhale.

You can acknowledge the thought and then gently change focus. You can do it with a smile.

Claim space for your messes and shortcomings. Do it with humour and compassion rather than making yourself wrong. “Hey, it's a journey and this is part of it”.

Also recognize, and let go of, any tendency to make the other wrong or less than as a way of making yourself feel okay.

WIDER WAYS OF KNOWING

Daily Free Writing as a path to inner wisdom

Maybe you could start at the top of the page with a seed statement you want to explore, or a question, or maybe just write.

Write quickly without stopping for 10-15 minutes daily. Just keep your hand moving. Don't think. Write whatever comes. Write rubbish, or repetitive, words. If you can't find words, if you are blocked, write about that. Don't worry about spelling and grammar. Maybe you start writing about what you are noticing and then free association takes over. Or maybe you start writing about the sound of words. Just go with it, whatever. At the end of the allotted time, stop. Put it away without reading it. At the end of the week, or fortnight, take it out and read it. Highlight words, phrases, or rhythms that catch your eye. Collect them all together on a page. Write what arises in response to this collection. What ideas, images, possibilities, opportunities, or ways forward does the writing suggest? Maybe you can use some of these words as seed statements for next week's writing.



Wind, water, waves - Relishing Physicality

ENGAGING BODY SENSATIONS IN YOUR KNOWING PROCESS.

People who are consciously aware of their body sensations are more likely to be able to use their non-conscious knowledge.

Embodied inquiry can awaken an intelligence which you might not have been previously able to access. It enables you to include your body in your thinking process.

Exercise – Calm your mind using your breathing. Become aware of your inhale and exhale. Allow your breath to be however it is. Just watch it.

Notice the connection of your body to the ground through your feet, or your back and legs if you are lying down.

Bring your seed statement or question to mind. Notice any sensations arising in response to it. Scan your body. Become aware of areas that might be tight, loose, warm, cool, tingling, still, heavy, jangling, tangled, or clear.

How is your breathing?

Allow and accept whatever you become aware of. It might change with the noticing.

Now let yourself focus on an area of your body, or a sensation, that is calling you. Sounds, images, or metaphors connected to this sensation may arise in your consciousness. They probably won't make any

logical sense. Just allow them to be what they are. Notice them.

Which particular sensation, image, metaphor, or sound has the strongest pull for you?

You may now choose to **dialogue** directly with that sensation, sound, image, or metaphor. Suspend your disbelief and engage your creative imagination.

Ask it a question. Here are some ideas for questions:

What guidance does it have to offer?

What is it asking of you?

Where does it suggest you explore?

What else do you need to know?

What are you overlooking?

Where to next?

How do you go forward?

What resources will help?

What skills could you access or develop that will help?

What metaphor can it offer you to work with?

What strengths could you draw on?

What contribution can you make?

Ask whatever question arises in your imagination and allow yourself to hear, see, or feel the response.

Or, alternatively, you could invite the sensation, sound, image or metaphor to tell you its **story**.

Next write, paint, draw or model what you receive. Further insights might surface as you do so.

You could then **free associate** with what you have recorded. Follow the

trail of associations. Let your imagination roam free.

Immediately following, or at a later date, **reflect** on the images, ideas, and words. What do they spark in you? How might they connect with your seed topic? What do they suggest? What new insights or perspectives arise?

Sometimes insights take time to germinate. They may arrive when you are busy with other activities. Or in your dreams. Be ready to catch them. Record them.

You could put an image or word where you see it daily. It makes it easier to engage with it and receive its wisdom.

EXERCISE – Externalising into a tangible object.

Create – once you have your seed statement, question, or topic you can externalise it to make it easier to interact with. Draw, paint, collage, model, or sculpt in response to your seed. Let yourself be spontaneous. Don't strive for realism or logical connection. It's fine if it is wacky, surprising, and messy.

Your creative intelligence tends to communicate in obscure, often abstract, ways. Have fun. Keep creating until it seems done. Don't try to make sense of it yet. The process of creation itself may bring up threads of insight.

Engage – The next step is to engage with your creation. You can do this straight away however you might find that delaying this step until you have spent time in an activity that lets your mind wander, like walking, gardening, or doing dishes, makes it easier.

You could then dialogue with the object. Ask questions and be open to hearing what it has to tell or show you.

Or you could look at the whole and parts of the object. What words arise in your mind as you do so? Write them down. Now play with combining some of the words. How do the combinations apply to your seed issue?

What seems possible? What questions or actions do they suggest? How does that change your perspective? What overlooked resources do they point to?

Record the ideas and images that emerge.

What's one easy step you could take to act on what you have learned?

EXERCISE – Move your body – dance – in response to your seed statement or question

Suspend all judgement. Just let your movements express themselves through your body. Notice the speed, the openness or closedness, the scale of movements. Are they smooth or erratic? High or low? How does it feel?

Just move until you have a sense of completion.

Now record what you noticed – images, feelings, or questions.

Then free associate with what surfaced.

What answers, questions, next steps, areas of inquiry, or flashes of insight have been revealed?

EXERCISE – Using physical space to release knowing

Designate a place in the room, a distance away from you now, as the site of the optimum answer, next question, or insight associated with your seed issue.

Then slowly walk from where you are toward the optimum spot. Be aware of where you stall, want to jump ahead, or turn back. Allow yourself to feel this. Perhaps this is the place you can't go beyond at the moment. What images, feelings, and sensations arise? What do you hear in your mind?

Record what you noticed. Inquire further, or free associate, with anything that seems to call for further reflection.

What insights, directions, or guidance did you receive?

EXERCISE – Use creative visualisation to connect with your Creative Self

Close your eyes and slowly deepen your breathing. Notice the inhale and the exhale as you begin counting down in your mind from 10 to 1. Let yourself move easily into deep, peaceful, relaxation.

At the count of 1 find yourself in a safe space somewhere in nature. Begin to gently sense your surroundings - the colours, smells, sounds, warmth or coolness, and the light touch of air.

As you look around this familiar space allow your attention to be drawn to a figure, over there, in the light. A knowing registers somewhere inside you. This is your Creative Self. They have been expecting you. Greet them, and see the smile of recognition, as they invite you to sit beside them.

As you join them take a moment to enjoy their wonderful energy.

Hear them as they share their excitement at spending time with you and their readiness to co-create with you.

If you have a question now is the time to ask it. Allow yourself to hear the answer. Or maybe you just came to hang out, listen, and have fun with them, to deepen your relationship. That's fine. Let yourself spend time and receive anything they have to share, knowing you can come again any time you choose.

When it comes time to go ask them for a symbol. Thank them and bid them goodbye. Then count slowly from 1 to 5. At the count of 5 open your eyes, take a deep breath, and bring your focus back onto objects in the physical space you are in.

Now record your learnings. You may choose to anchor them with paintings or drawings.

What are your key insights? What actions do they suggest? What areas of exploration?

EXERCISE – Discovery walk

Start with your seed statement in mind. Collect objects, take photos, or do quick sketches of objects you are drawn to. Notice any sounds that

stand out for you. What colours or shapes call you? What phrases pop into your mind?

When you are home again place all these in a box or a file.

At a later time take them all out and notice any connections between them.

Free associate. Free write about them. What insights emerge?

Try different collections of objects.

EXERCISE - Random picks

To prepare for this exercise create a stock box of images – pictures cut out from magazines, photos, sketches, and collaged postcards.

Start with your seed statement in mind. Randomly pick two or three images from the box. Note what feelings, words, phrases, or images come to mind.

Record them.

Next try grouping them. Try different arrangements. What questions, possibilities, actions, or further lines of inquiry do they suggest?

What is a fun, easy, step you can take to action what you have learned?

REFRAMING EXERCISES

The frame we hold determines what we let in or exclude. It directs our focus and helps us make meaning of what we see. Questions, assumptions,

metaphors, and the stories we tell ourselves are all frames.

Questions

We often jump right into trying to solve a problem without even figuring out if we have the best question. The question we choose impacts on the options we consider. Other questions may suggest much more exciting options. So it often pays to play with other questions.

Exercise – Once you have defined your seed issue or topic ask questions about it for 5 – 10 minutes each day for a month. Towards the end of the month you may be creating questions with the power to reveal fresh creative, expansive ideas.

An example – as you age and look forward common questions are:

How do I stay safe? How do I stay comfortable? How do I stay valued?

These often lead to staying inside the known and trying to build a money buffer to throw at the unknown.

Alternative questions could be;

How do I develop my capacity to find strength and possibility in my

vulnerability?

Or how can my life stay vital, exciting, passionate, engrossing, and awe-filled?

Or how do I grow my ability to stay curious and delight in whatever shape my life and body take?

These type of questions will turn up a whole host of options, capacities, and paths to focus on.

Maybe have one question as an ongoing one for a month. Allow it to be like a container, attracting creative insights. Remember they may arrive at any time.



Title - Choosing her own story

METAPHORS

Fresh metaphors lead to fresh perspectives and options. Ones that might be impossible to see otherwise.

Exploring a range of different metaphors will produce a range of different options. It will broaden your choices.

You could play with creating a range of metaphors for ageing, productivity, vulnerability, dependence, or beauty.

For example – Ageing is often seen as a downhill slide. What if it is instead a journey into the more of you? Or a treasure? Or a connecting to stone self?

Or a becoming? Or an invitation to be you? Or a dance? Or a ...?

Keep going. See how many metaphors you can come up with.

Which feels like the most fun to live? Try using it for a while. Write it down where you can see it regularly. How does it change your mood and energy?

What ideas arise? What future projects come to mind? How does it impact your relationship with yourself? What next step comes to mind?

ENCOUNTERING BOULDERS ON THE BEACH

**stop
lean in
don't care who's looking
or what's yelling
for your attention**

**listen instead
to the soft longing
of your body**

**let hands
forehead
touch stone**

**still long enough
to sense the slow**

**let skin remember
as palms surrender
to smooth ancient knowing**

**your song of belonging
began long before
you forgot**



Title - To feel whole, to restore the complexity that was her, she headed out into nature

Assumptions

Unpack the assumptions you are holding around your seed topic or

question.

What are three assumptions you hold?

How would it be if the opposite were true?

What else could you assume instead?

Play with this. Let your imagination loose. Have fun.

What do these new assumptions suggest or make possible?

What might be a useful or fun assumption to use here?

We aren't looking for the 'right' assumption. We are just expanding our options. Seeing what perspectives and possibilities are revealed. When we change the frame how do the options change? Which of them makes you want to explore further?

Story

We all tell a story of our life to ourselves and others. How else could you tell it? What other details could you focus on? What meanings could you give those happenings?

There are endless ways to tell the same life. What other possibilities, perspectives, and meanings do new stories open up? Play with it.

Experiment. Explore a variety of stories. Which one opens up the most expansive, energising, future for you? Or whatever emotional states you desire to experience.

Then change your telling.

SELF VALIDATION

Become less dependent on what others think of you.

To lessen, or end, your reliance on external validation, others' opinions and ideas of your worth you will need a measuring system of your own. One which reflects your essence and aligns with what is most important to you. One you can use to affirm your value and remind yourself you are on the right track. Or call yourself back if you have strayed. You may like to use a selection of the questions below to help you get clarity. It might take days, weeks, or months of inquiry (and trial and error) to find what is a fit for you.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Purpose

What is your general life purpose?

What are the purposes of particular projects?

Value

The list of possible values is endless and your priorities may well change throughout your life. But at this point what are your top five values?

What are the qualities that energise you? What do you value most?

Below is a small list of possibilities to get you thinking.

Adventure, autonomy, authenticity, balance, boldness, compassion, curiosity, creativity, friendship, fun, growth, kindness, learning, service, peace, freedom, family, patience, respect, openness, caring, renewal, optimism, trust, change, participation, community, vitality, passion, warmth, honesty, knowledge, health, discovery, variety, humour.

Sometimes it can take quite a while to figure out your top values.

The list will help you clarify:

Limits or barriers you wish to challenge.

Skills you choose to unleash or develop.

Talents, strengths, and abilities you want to access.

And it will help you hold boundaries. Say no to what is not aligned.

How are you scoring now on these measures?

What are you creating that reflects those markers?

How are you honouring and energising them in your life?

Get into the habit of noticing and acknowledging how you are doing in terms of your measures. You might choose to start a validation journal to help ground yourself in your own measures of value.

Record daily, or weekly, your progress. Celebrate where you are honouring your measures. You can also use it to re-orientate your actions. To realign your energies and create focus.

The more consciously you centre yourself in your own measures the easier it will be to let other people's opinions of you be none of your concern. They can just float past you rather than control you.



Title - Intertidal times

OLD MATHS

(written before I started painting)

**I don't know
when I began
counting backwards**

**calculating
contemplating
how much life
can be compressed
in a decade
five years
two
this week**

**enough time
to explore
contribute
let delight sink in
to finally begin
my brilliant career**

whatever that is



Phillipa at play

A PART OF MY STORY

As I approached fifty I became increasingly aware of stories that had crept into my mind while I wasn't looking, even though I was a vigilant bouncer.

Stories of ending, decline, too late, missed out.

Determined to oust them, to replace them with new scripts, I set up a research project. I posted letters (it was twenty years ago) to many high profile older women asking if they, or someone they knew, related to old age as a time of power, purpose, and possibility. Some contacted me. Interviews followed as did my decision to up my writing skills. A journalism course was next, followed by a return to university to complete the degree I'd begun in the seventies. My focus switching, from anthropology and psychology, to creative writing. I loved it, did well and was seen in the most powerful way, for the first time in my life, by my English lecturer. A few masters papers came next, followed by training in counselling, creative expressive therapies, and coaching. The tug of curiosity weaves a winding path.

I revisited a passion for design and building, begun in my early thirties, when I worked with my partner and a team of women builders. This time, in my sixties, it was he and I building a home of our own on a couple of acres in New Zealand.

Then came a desire to champion possibility again. To write an updated version of the book I had begun so many years ago. This one informed by my study and experience over the intervening time as well as further research. This is the book. The more I researched and wrote the smaller and simpler the book became. Conveying just the gist.

It's strange that back then when I read of women beginning careers at 70 it seemed amazing. Now it feels like, "well, why not?" I am looking forward to a time when I am 80, and hoping for a similar response.

I have begun a career as an artist at the age of seventy. I dabbled many years ago but never viewed it as a possible career. Last week I held my first exhibition, a one-day pop up, and sold over twenty paintings. I feel I have just begun and am looking forward to the next ten years. What might I be able to experience, learn, develop, and express? Who might I be able to connect with through my art?

I don't profess, in any way, to be an expert in living with creativity but it is my learning edge. It is a focus I've chosen to champion and I feel I am getting better and better at it as I age.

It has required that I re-examine and reframe the meaning I give to productivity, value, and contribution. It has also let me see my life, past, present, and future, in a new light.

All the paintings and poems were created by Phillipa. The Figurative abstracts are part of the What If / Aging Your Way series. It was sparked by Phillipa catching a reflection of herself in the door and thinking, Oh no. I look like a square with a pimple on top. Then came the thought but what if that is exactly how I am supposed to look? I rock it. I have got it down.

AND FINALLY

I hope you have found some value in this book.

Perhaps it has planted a seed. A desire to explore the challenging, rewarding way of living in partnership with creativity. Or for those already a way down that road, maybe it has affirmed your choice and helped you strengthened your resolve.

If you are interested in seeing more of my art, finding links to future books, or leaving me a message, go to my website.

www.phillipareevecreative.co.nz

I would love to hear from you.

You can also find me on instagram at @phillipareevecreative.



Title - There was something in the pull of nature that took her deeper, yet made her feel lighter at the same time.

Acknowledgements

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Deep thanks to my parents who stood up for my right to have a voice even if they didn't understand or agree with my take on things.

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