

# 8 Things You Can Do To Manifest Your Creative Dreams



Your Creative Life

You have a GREAT idea.  
It's better than great.  
It's BRILLIANT.

It's something that you haven't seen anywhere else – at least not the way you envision it. This is a story you want to tell – it's at the center of your heart and soul and you need to make it happen. There are so many ways you can see it: as a movie, a television show, a web series, a short story, a play.

Deep down you know that people will respond to this work. It's your chance to create something resonant and powerful. You can't stop thinking about it.

But then your phone rings, or you have to go to work, or your mother calls. A volunteer project emerges, or a financial crisis, or your car breaks down – and you don't work on the project at all.

You take a deep breath, move through that crisis, handle those obligations and now you're tired. You need sleep – so you sleep, promising that when you wake up you'll finally get to work on your brilliant idea.

But when you wake up more stuff happens: there's email, the dishwasher breaks, you forgot a dentist appointment – again you're putting out fires, but not getting to your work.

Sound familiar? Artists across the world face these challenges every day.

You feel shame for not getting to your stuff. It's draining. It's awful. How can you be the artist you want to be if you can't get to the projects you love?

The truth is, you can't.

Working on your great ideas, your brilliant visionary projects, is not an option - it's a necessity. When you show up and do that work you will feel joyful and engaged. You'll be doing what you were born to do and it will be a

transformative experience. This is your way of contributing to yourself and making the world a better place.

It's time to step into your power as a creative person – no matter what else is happening in your life.

How do I know?

I used to struggle in that way – never getting to work on my stuff. Each night when I went to bed, I'd be full of regret and self-loathing. This went on for years – decades.

I don't struggle anymore. What grad school didn't teach me and professional success didn't show me I had to discover some other way. With the help of coaches, mentors, therapists and fellow artists, I distilled these 8 keys to making forward movement in my creative work. They work for me on a daily basis and for the people I help.

They can work for you, too.

Do these 8 steps to find the way forward. You owe it to yourself. And the world. It's easier than you think.

# ONE

## Assess

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It's incredibly important to define and clarify where you are in the scheme of things. You can't get there from here if you don't know where "here" is. Take out a sheet of paper and figure it out.

What's going on now?

Are you super busy at work? Showing up in your creative life only when a deadline emerges and you're forced to? Are you working on your stuff, but only once in a while?

The more you can uncover about the reasons things are progressing (or not progressing) the more you can manifest change in how you operate. You know your blocks and your habits better than anyone. It's time to tell on yourself.

Do it on paper, on your computer or in your head. But do it. I recommend writing it down – partly because I'm a writer, but also because being able to see an accounting of what's happening in black and white is of use to me. If it's only in my head, who's to say I'll remember it later? The more I can put it out in front of me, the better.

This will be an easy prospect if you make a vow not to get attached to anything you write down. This list is not about judging yourself. It's about observation. In the same way that you notice the colors of the cars that drive down your street, notice what your work habits are – and what is happening with respect to your creative projects.

Make a list. Write a paragraph. Create a drawing. Find your way of making note of where you are in the process of being fully creatively self-expressed. The more honesty you bring to it, the more useful it'll be.

# TWO

## Brainstorm

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Once you know where you are, you can begin to imagine where you'd like to be. What's the ideal version of your creative work life?

When I use the word ideal – I mean your ideal. This is not about what Picasso would do, or Oprah, or your mom. This is your dream version of your work. Everybody has a dream – those dreams are wildly different. This is your dream. Your dream of how you'd like to work.

There are two parts to this brainstorm.

One is about how you want to work. What work style is ideal for you? Is there an image that comes to mind that is most appealing. Do you want to work with a constant flow, like the ocean? Would you like to drop in and explode with creative energy in short bursts like a water balloon bursting? Find an image that captures the energetic mojo you're after. Take out some crayons and colored pencils and draw it, if that helps. Does your creative work mojo involve stars and rainbows, or is it more like a purple neon bulldozer? I encourage you to connect deeply to a new vibe through imagery and energy.

The other part of the brainstorm is about what you want to work on. If you're like me, and many of my friends, you've got dozens of potential projects that live in your heart and fire up your soul. If you've been overwhelmed by them in the past – running around and metaphorically screaming “How will I do all this?” – it's time to put the running aside. This portion of the process is just about making the list. You don't have to DO anything with any of these projects, yet. You only need to list them. Take a piece of paper out (or your computer) and catalog the beautiful, juicy, amazing creative projects that you're dying to get to. The list can be as long as you want it to be. Give yourself some time and let them pour out of you. No judgment – just a catalog of your future greatest hits.

# THREE

## Choose

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Now that you know how you want to work and what you'd like to work on, it's time to narrow your focus by choosing the next right projects for you.

Move through your multiple options and make a choice about which ones are going to happen right away. It may be challenging. Take heart, you can, indeed, get to many of the things on the list in your lifetime. But for now, you can only do one. Or two. Or three.

My day-to-day creative life revolves around three project areas. I believe yours can to. Again, leave your logistical brain behind for the moment. You don't need to figure out how you're going to do your three things. The task right now is simply to choose them. Go to your list and circle the three projects that are the next right projects for you.

The truth of our lives is that we can only do one thing at a time. If you're eating, for example, you'd be hard pressed to eat two things at once. Try shoving in a forkful of chicken and a forkful of mashed potatoes in your mouth at the same time. Yes, it's possible, but you may not taste all the juiciness of either one. Our best chance at focus is in approaching one thing at a time.

By narrowing our scope to three things (rather than 23) we stand a better chance of giving each creative project its due. No more running around like a chicken without a head. (And no more chicken images from me for the rest of this document!) There's a better way to do things and you're discovering it right now.

# FOUR

## Map

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Mapping is an essential part of the process. Quite often, artists will live in the brainstorming and choosing phases. They'll consider one project, then the next, then go back to the first. They may be in an endless loop of imagining what might happen – without actually doing any work.

The mapping step separates the adults from the non-adults. It's the essential piece to figuring out how you will get things done. The mapping phase is all about the methodology.

There are two steps to this phase:  
Breaking it down and Charting it out.

For each project on your list that you want to tackle, break it down into 3 - 5 (or more) components. For example, if you decided you were going to write a play, you might break it down into coming up with ideas, creating characters, choosing settings, outlining, and writing.

If you're planning to do a project that is outside of your comfort zone – something you've never done before, ask yourself what you don't know. If I'd never written a musical I might imagine I need to know more about how musicals are structured and about how people who write musicals create the material. I might be feeling fear about what I don't know.

Those two things become the first two things on my list: research the structure of musicals and research how musical writers write. Everything I don't know how to do, everything that gives me pause, is an item on my list. As I transcribe the scary stuff, I'm actually breaking down my project.

Lean into the opportunity take your large vision and segment it into bite-size chunks.

The charting it out phase is next and it's highly personal. This is where you decide HOW you want to move through this project. What's the framework?

If you're working on 3 projects, you may decide to show up for each project every day. Or you may choose to show up for one project on Monday, one on Wednesday and one on Thursday. Or you might do the 3 projects over the course of the week – making sure you work for 6 hours total on all of them. Another option might be working for 15 minutes a day for 7 days a week. Or touch each project even for 5 minutes a day.

Get it? Charting it out is the part where you decide how to get it done. You set an intention around how you're going to show up on a daily or weekly basis.

# FIVE

## Execute

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Execution is where the rubber hits the road. It's all about the doing. Once you've set your goals and made your lists and decided how it's going to happen, it's up to you to do that thing you do.

Simple, huh?

Only if you're focused and willing to show up and do it.

How do you do that, you say? (Excellent question.)

Tools are a huge help in the game of execution. Without help from other things (household items – I'll explain) and people you're less likely to do the do.

Here's an example: I have a spreadsheet that I fill in each week as I move through my work life. The spreadsheet is a tool that allows me to keep track of my progress. It allows me to record what I do and make note of my accomplishments day by day, week by week.

My spreadsheet is in Excel (another tool) and each time I work I set a timer (another tool) so I know how long I've been working. You get the idea. Tools make it easier for me to keep my commitment to myself as I move through the execution of my creative projects.

Here are some of the awesome tools that you can use to keep yourself on track. Use the ones that sound user-friendly to you.

Calendar	Timer
Phone	Computer
Chart	Spreadsheet
Meditation	Photos
Mentor	Group
Podcast	Books
Notebook	Music
Incentives and rewards	

About the last one on this list: Humans are motivated by rewards – so set up some ways to honor yourself as you move through your work. Perhaps at the other end of a work session there's a trip to the gym, a vegan low-carb cookie or a movie. Use those things to motivate you as you create.

How do you use these tools? It's up to you. There are a million ways to use a post-it. I won't go into them here. Bottom line, if you think it might be fun to work with something – invent a fun way to work with it. You'll know more about your comfort zone and your preferences than I could ever know.

And of course, feel free to add to the list of tools.



# SIX

## Forgive

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What if it's not perfect?

I've had many people ask me that. Many of us are determined to look for the loophole in creativity. It has to be excellent or it's not worth doing.

Where did that come from?

The truth is (and I say this a lot) perfect doesn't exist. Everything we do and see is wonderfully flawed. Unless you're using the word to describe how a baby is perfect (perfectly herself) or a flower or something like that, the word is useless. I know movie reviewers and critics (and Olympic judges) use it all the time: "Perfectly acted! Perfectly executed!" Maybe it works if you're a gymnast executing something at the highest level of human ability. But in art – "perfect" is a lie. There is no ideal standard of– it's in the eye of the beholder. One man's perfect is another man's "not quite". You know this is if you've ever disagreed with a fellow artist about a piece of art.

So forget the perfection thing.

As you move through your creative life, you're bound to have good days and not so good days. You'll do exactly what you want with the time you have and

sometimes you'll do less than exactly what you want. Don't get caught up in a spiral of shame. Forgive yourself as you go and love yourself anyway.

It bears repeating: Forgive yourself as you go. Love yourself anyway.

Practice treating yourself like a 3 year old. Would you yell at a child after he did something less than "perfect"? Or would you celebrate what he managed to do and forgive him the rest. You might offer him a gentle corrective along with a healthy dose of encouragement. You deserve the same.

Allow forgiveness to enter your process. Rejoice as you get work done (even 5 minutes of work). You're moving ahead.

And, be flexible. I love a good deadline. But it's not life or death. If something doesn't get done right now, it might get done later. This is not license to trash it all and do nothing. But it is a plea for a humane approach to productivity. You're not a robot, you're an artist. Or at least that's my assumption until you show me your battery pack.

Cultivate a healthy way to move through your work and be proud of each little accomplishment. If you won't celebrate your work, who will?

# SEVEN

## Find Your Peeps

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Going it alone is for – people who go it alone. Hermits? Maybe.

That doesn't have to be you.

One of the myths of the artist is that we're all loners and crazy people – wrestling around, tormented, wearing black (or white) in our private rubber room. We twist and shout and emerge with a masterpiece. We don't do group stuff. We don't do collaboration. We have to go it alone.

Buck the trend.

There are artists just like you all over the world. They've struggled just like you. They've celebrated just like you. Find them. Talk to them. Lean on them. You can learn from other artists. They're there to provide support and share ideas. And if you don't want ideas, they'll happily commiserate over the same creative struggles you're facing. (Not that it's all about complaining).

You can use other artists to check in daily by phone or email. Bounce ideas off of them. You might mentor some of them and be mentored by others. You might offer peer support or be supported. Let them know when you're starting your work and when you're finished. Turn every solo moment into a sister act. There's someone to reach out to – and they're waiting.

Chances are your fellow artists are the folks who can help you find your next job. They can hold up in the lean times and they may be able to hire you in the busy times. Or you might hire them. But not if you don't keep in touch. Not if you're not top of mind. It's another reason to hold your creative friends close.

So do it.

# EIGHT

## Keep Hope Alive

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There's nothing sadder than a bad attitude. Well, maybe a sad attitude is sadder.

I know a ton of artists who, while they work on their stuff, trash their efforts at the same time.

"Yeah, I'm working on my script, but it sucks and no one will ever buy it."

"I'm going to auditions, but I know no one will ever hire me."

Yuck. Some people are so busy beating themselves up they don't leave room for any one else to have a say.

I talk a fair amount about affirmations: positive statements about you and your work. I've heard people push back against the concept – suggesting it's a false way to bolster yourself up. It's artificial! It's weird!

It's no weirder than trashing yourself all the time.

If you're going to think about yourself at all (and you are) you might as well cultivate some positive thoughts. Is it more "realistic" to insist on your incompetence than to imagine that things will work out? You decide.

As you tackle your creative work: moment by moment, day by day, year by year – I believe it will be a more fun, more freeing, less tortured process if you affirm good things. It could be as simple as - "That's good!" after you tackle a piece of work. Or it could be an elaborate meditation around the abundance that's coming your way.

Because abundance is coming - if you think it is.

Scientific studies show that our thoughts matter. They resonate. Put up post-its that celebrate you. Make a vision board. Play happy music. Dance. Sing songs to yourself. Cultivate a hopeful outlook. Believe there's good in yourself. Believe there's good in the world.

There's a simple reason I'm committed to helping people like you show up in your creative work. I believe it makes the world a better place if we're all fully self-expressed. That's my positive vision for your work and mine.

And outside of actually getting our work done incrementally and with love, what could be better than that?

# Those are the 8 things!

If you follow them, I believe you'll be manifesting like mad!

Let me know how it goes. No, seriously, let me know.

I love sharing information and inspiring other creative people. I do it through documents like this, weekly free calls, an e-blast, live workshops and coaching people one-on-one. And I want to get better and better at helping people like you.

So let me know what's going on. How is this material working for you? And can I help you further?

Send me an email: [coachsteve@yourcreativelife.com](mailto:coachsteve@yourcreativelife.com) or give me a call at (917) 232-8879. I'm easy to talk to.

If you're not ready for talking, sign up for the e-blast on the front page of [yourcreativelife.com](http://yourcreativelife.com). Click the link at the bottom. And check out the blog page to read some of my other stuff. The tips and tricks are all over the site. (So much abundance!)

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