

12 Steps How to Get from **RESISTANCE** to *Creative Flow*

Developing the muscle and courage to navigate the creative process and face resistance with trust and confidence

It's important to develop and strengthen your creative muscle, similar to going to the gym and getting into shape. This requires repetition, commitment, trust and letting go.

When you develop this muscle, you also develop the courage to re-enter the creative process with less fear and Resistance. Resistance slowly loses the power keeping you from creating. This allows you to also develop a point of reference (ie. "I've tackled this before I know how to work through it."). Ultimately, you trust in your own ability to enter and re-enter Creative Flow. When you're faced with Resistance practice some of the following 12 Steps:

- 1. Commit to show up.** Even when you don't know where to start or what you're going to create, simply sit at your work area or creative space. Allow yourself to sit there for a minimum of 10 minutes. Use the time looking around your desk or studio before getting up to do something or leaving.
- 2. Go through the motions.** Once you've showed up and sat there for 10 minutes, simply go through the motions (ie. start working on an unfinished project, organize a pile of collage material, place a few drops of watercolor onto a small piece of paper, doodle, glue pieces of collage papers together, open up your art journal and begin slapping paint onto the page, etc.). Do this for a minimum of 30 minutes.
- 3. Check in with yourself.** If you feel any self-doubt, self-criticism, the need to quit, the impulse to leave, shame, vulnerability, fear, judgement or anxiety, simply check in and write down in your journal what you are feeling and what resistance is telling you. When you externalize negative emotions, you shine light on the shadow areas of Resistance and diffuses its power.
- 4. Practice self-compassion & loving-kindness.** Recognize when you're being harsh and judgmental on yourself. Pause, take a deep breath and recenter yourself. Place your hands on your heart and say the following words to yourself: *"I am a creative being. I was born into this world with the ability to express myself creatively. There is beauty in whatever I create. There is no wrong or bad, just beauty. I allow Creative Spirit to be my inspiration, to guide and to create through me. I am a creative being."*
- 5. Inquire with curiosity.** If you are experiencing any of the emotions in Step 3, instead of judging yourself, for how you feel, follow your curiosity. For example, if there is something that you created you are unhappy with, ask yourself, "Is there any part of it that I like and/or what can I do or add to change my piece?"
- 6. Let go of control.** Resistance can show up in the middle of Creative Flow. If the piece you are working on does not want to go any further or a technique is not cooperating, let go. Don't try to control the process. If you get to a place where you are forcing something to happen, let go and give yourself permission to take a break, or move on to creating/working on something else. If trying to control the creative process is keeping you from starting, let go and just take the first step.
- 7. Stay open to uncertainty and the unexpected.** Part of entering Creative Flow is practicing being in the present moment. This means being okay not having a plan or knowing what the end product will look like. Stay open to the unexpected surprises and magic that may result from accidents, mistakes and sudden creative inspiration.
- 8. Practice courage vs. fearlessness.** The idea of being fearless, places a lot of expectation to create without fear. When in reality, fear & resistance will always be a part of the creative process. That is why it's more about courage. Courage means feeling the fear, but showing up, going through the motions and creating anyway.
- 9. Allow yourself to be immersed in flow.** Sometimes when you find yourself in the zone and on a roll, it can feel a little scary. Creative Spirit has a way of taking over. Simply pause and take a deep breath and be present in the moment. Just allow whatever is unfolding to happen. Trust in the creative process. Trust in Creative Spirit and trust in yourself.
- 10. Embrace your creative potential & creative power.** If the creative you is a new thing, owning and honoring your artistic self may not come naturally. It is a vital part of moving past Resistance and entering Creative Flow. When you embrace your creative potential, you ignite your creative power. You have the power to take your creativity as far as you desire. Remember to say these words to yourself at least 3 times a week *"I am an Artist. I am Creative."*
- 11. Practice self-care.** Recognize when you're feeling drained. It may not be the best time to try to be creative. Although creating can often re-energize you, always practice self-care first. If you try to face Resistance when you are feeling hungry or tired, this can leave you vulnerable to self-judgment and discouragement if things don't flow. Take a nap, get something to eat or give yourself permission to start again at another time.
- 12. Trust the process. Trust You.** As you practice these steps over and over again, in the midst of Resistance and while creating, you will get better at trusting the process and yourself. Resistance will become easier to manage and Creative Flow will become easier to access.

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