

Welcome to this Creative Practice Summer Solstice Review

Midsummer is here! A turning point of the year, and the height of the light. It feels like a natural time to take stock of the months already passed and to look forward to new possibilities.

The effects of the pandemic are ongoing, and our societies are facing unparalleled political and climate-related hardships and struggles, not to mention multiple wars and genocides that we are asked to bear witness to. Whatever you are feeling right now, moments of reflection like this can offer a good checking-in point amongst the feelings of instability or uncertainty.

The approach I take in these seasonal reviews is holistic. It's no longer solely focused on thinking about your creative practice, reflecting on how it has been going, and discovering where you would like to take it in the months ahead. Instead we'll acknowledge the shifts in all aspects of our lives right now and how we can prepare for the changes ahead.

And, I've also created prompts to help you check in with where you are right now, to listen to what your inner voice is telling you and to trust what you feel you need in this moment. This initial reflection can be done at any time, and it doesn't have to relate to your creative practice.

CHECKING IN

What have you unconsciously done
and you would like to question?

What have you ignored
and you would like to pay attention to?

What have you realised
and you would like to honour?

What has not served you
and you would like to leave behind?

What has become non-negotiable
and you would like to build into the future?



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REFLECTION

Look back at the last 3 months (the Spring season)

Acknowledge the things you have been up to. Although the days and weeks may have become a bit blurred it's important to acknowledge all the things that have been present and demanding your time.

What things have changed for you in the past 3 months?
(consider everything in your life: work, family, health & wellbeing, money, education, community, politics etc)

What effect has this had on you? Keep things simple. You don't need to go into great detail, but consider the impact some of these changes have had on other areas of your life.

LOOKING AHEAD

Think about the new Summer season ahead.

What things might change in the next 3 months? (Remember to consider everything in your life, not just your creative work.)

What are your priorities and needs? These should be broad concepts, like 'my mental wellbeing' or 'the health of my family' or 'supporting my community' or 'my business making money'.

How does your creative practice/business fit into these needs? Is your creative practice offering you support or respite from your other concerns or is maintaining it a source of anxiety in itself? Maybe managing your creative practice or business is your main priority right now- how does that affect other areas of your life?

What are your main concerns for the months ahead? These can relate to any aspect of your life, not just your practice or your business. Get specific here- use your priorities/needs and unpick the details.

What can you control? Where are there choices you can make or solutions you can dictate? How much can you take into your own hands, how much relies to some extent on other people?

It's important to acknowledge that at times like these your priorities might be different from what they were 3 months ago or 6 months ago. Maybe you created a list of goals back in January that felt right then but no longer feel appropriate. That's ok.

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It's ok if things that felt important before no longer do, or if things that were fine and no issue at all suddenly feel crucial or a source of worry. What is key, here, is to identify your current priorities in life and your practice/business and to see how they can work together, not against each other. Where there is room for some things to give or for some things to take focus. Do not feel bad for doing what feels right or necessary for you, your loved ones or your work.

GOING FORWARD

What can you do - right now? Write down small steps or actions you could take today, tomorrow, this week that might help alleviate any feelings of anxiety or that might help you get closer to feeling in control.

What can you do - in the next 3 months? Draw up a short list of tasks or goals that you feel would benefit your overall wellbeing if you started working on them. Keep it specific and manageable - your time and focus will have to be shared in lots of directions, so don't pile on too many expectations of yourself.

Is there any additional support you need to do these things? Do you need more advice or specific skills? Will you need physical support (like additional childcare or help with tasks) or will you need emotional support (accountability, a place to share).

Where can you find this support? Family, friends, colleagues, peers, online communities etc

As always, I am here to help and support your creative practice in any way you need. If there are things you are struggling with or would like someone to discuss them with, please do get in touch.

Although the months ahead may feel uncertain, I take comfort from the amazing community of makers, designers, artists and other creatives that are out there, who share their journeys with us.

Stay connected, but most importantly, look after yourself and your mental health.

Melody x

SUPPORT

Here are some people that I turn to, in real life an online, for support when I am struggling. Some are other creative people, some are coaches who don't specifically work in a creative context but help humans, so it's all good. I hope there might be someone here who offers exactly what you need.

All marked * are people I have worked with personally/ professionally and so am very happy to recommend. The rest are people I follow on Instagram and have enjoyed their content (many have excellent newsletters or podcasts).

Mentoring & Coaching for craft makers, artists & designers

Don't forget that I offer 1:1 sessions covering most aspects of your creative practice. If you have anything you'd like to talk about in a friendly, supportive space, just get in touch or visit [my website](#) for more information.

*[Ruth Singer](#) - textile artist and maker who offers mentoring to artists and makers
Instagram [@ruthsingertextiles](#)

*[Sharon Adams](#) - applied artist supporting creatives through many services including coaching
Instagram [@herdingfish](#)

Organisations

*[Design-Nation](#) - a membership-based organisation representing UK designer makers
Instagram [@design_nationuk](#)

*[The Design Trust](#) - online business school for creatives
Instagram [@thedesigntrust](#)

[Middle Years Monday](#) - a gathering place for women in their middle years
Instagram [@middleyearsmonday](#)

Other Coaches/Therapists & Individuals

*[Keri Jarvis](#) - Intersectional feminist coach & activist
Instagram [@keri_l_jarvis](#)

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*Fiona Buckland- An international coach, facilitator, author and speaker specialising in Leadership
Instagram [@fionabucklandcoaching](#)

*Suzy Darke- Soul-centred coaching & business mentoring for tender-hearted humans
Instagram [@suzydarke](#)

*Ruth Coates- psychotherapist & therapeutic writing guide
Instagram [@ruthcoatestherapy](#)

*Claire Diane- integrative somatic trauma coaching and professional training.
Instagram [@claire_diane_i](#)

*Sas Petherick- self-doubt coach and researcher
Instagram [@saspetherick](#)

Nicola Rae-Wickham- a coach who helps creative, sensitive souls & empaths be wholeheartedly themselves, be seen + heard & build meaningful brands they love
Instagram [@alifemoreinspired](#)

*Tamu Thomas- a transformative somatic coach helping women aged 40+ get unstuck, start living & experience everyday joy
Instagram [@livethreesixty](#)

*Ruth Allen- outdoor/eco therapist & writer
Instagram [@whitepeak_ruth](#)

*Jo Hooper- business mentor helping people manage their mental health at work and make work work for them
Instagram [@getwidlyfree](#)

Jenny Pace- business coach/mentor for creatives
Instagram [@thejennypace](#)

Isa Seminega- author, designer, speaker. Author of The Creative Engrepreneur
Instagram [@isaseminega](#)

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This e-flet was written by Melody Vaughan (they/them).

Melody is a curator and writer who facilitates encounters between people, objects and craft makers. Through acts of gathering people together they create spaces for sharing experiences of making and questioning contemporary craft practices.

Melody has a background in archaeology, Museum Education as as a contemporary craft maker (ceramics & metal). These experiences fuel their passion for the objects we create and use, as well as for engaging people with these objects, and translate into the support of craft makers and their creative practices.