

Completing a Creative Project

WANT IT ENOUGH. Ain't no substitute for passion.

What you intend to create is unlikely to be what actually results from your efforts. Results are basically never *exactly* what anyone intended; often they're not even close. Get used to it!

Reality can't live up to your perfect dreams, but neither can those dreams live up to reality. The *real* thing has an inimitable visceral richness. That's why it hurts so fucking bad. But nothing beats releasing your vision into the world. Nothing, when desire defeats self-doubt.

USE WHAT YOU HAVE. The material and skills that you reach for habitually, there at your fingertips, don't be afraid to act through these existing bodymind integrations with your environment! Everything is an interface, including yourself.

> In social engineering/pen testing, people see social norms and imaginary things like 'permission' and 'authority' and 'managers' which 'forbid access to facilities', but in reality, all there is, is a piece of laminated plastic or a clipboard or certain magic words spoken; the people are merely non-computerized ways of implementing rules like 'if laminated plastic, allow in', and if you put on a blue piece of plastic to your shirt and you incant certain words at certain times, you can walk right past the guards.

<https://www.gwern.net/Unseeing>

Hack your motivation systems. What do you currently *do*? Try using that "surface" to operate. No reason why you can't write a novel in Twitter drafts except that it'd be inconvenient. But an inconvenient method that you actually use will beat efficient tools that you shy away from touching.

Shoot for 15-20% more than what is achievable. This forces you to edit via execution, to prioritize the essential elements and refine your vision as it unfolds. However, there is no need to frighten or punish or banish your fantasy. Free her for further play and exploration, to gambol onward as you trail behind. To pursue her is sweet; to chain her is misery.

My friend Visakan Veerasamy says that plans are worthless but planning is priceless. I have found that to be true: As soon as you ACTUALLY START MAKING SOMETHING it no longer looks like the fantasy. It looks messy and shitty and *real*, in a banal way like grocery carts strewn across a supermarket parking lot. Incomplete. Sloppy.

Well, so it goes. The fantasy should serve the reality, not the other way around. Don't let your dreams of the project — or how it might be received — get in the way of actually making.

> I always meta-know that my ambition outstrips what I can realistically accomplish. However, the quality and magnitude of final output is still substantially affected by my excitement (or not) for a potential result that I've envisioned. So the bigger I dream, the more I can get done, at least up to a point. The scope I initially hoped for usually turns out to be naive (at best). So it's natural that I had silly expectations going into this, 100%, but I was aware that unknown unknowns are, uh, unknown.

<https://www.sonyasupposedly.com/self-examining-ouroboros/>

> Aggressively reevaluate, the plan is a map of territory we haven't reached yet so of course it's wrong.

<https://www.sonyasupposedly.com/summer-melon/>

You must learn to be satisfied with a result achievable at your skill level. Ruefully satisfied, ideally. If there's nothing you'd do differently next time, if you didn't fuck up at all, then did you learn anything? Which is fine, you don't have to push yourself every time. A slam-dunk to keep your confidence up feels good. But there are steeper peaks to scale next!

BE BRAVE. I'm good at this part. It's one of my strengths. But I'm still terrified every time. Bravery has only ever always been *doing it anyway*.

> Somebody's asking me like, what are you waiting for? And — and my honest answer is that I'm waiting for the fear to subside... And I have to accept that the fear will not subside, you have to do it while you're scared — so be it.

"A dialogue with fear" by Visa:

<https://youtu.be/Ca2WlmzF53U>

I won't lie and say that attention, recognition, and praise aren't big priorities for me. They are. But I would do it regardless — and plenty of people create without receiving or even seeking attention. Publishing an artifact that reflects your soul is a reward that can *only* be earned. Happily, it can be earned in abundance.

Accomplishment is permanently yours. Having *done it*, whatever it may be, becomes an intrinsic part of who you are. Even if you eventually want to repudiate your past work, on the deepest level it's impossible. Disavowing history does not erase it.

To finish, you have to prioritize finishing — over tempting procrastination, over that perfect vision in your head. Finishing is satisfying to the ego, but it is also a kind of ego death, profoundly vulnerable: the work leaves you, no longer a part of yourself but apart from yourself. It becomes an independent object to be experienced and assessed by others.

When it is done, the work is *of you*, begat by you, and yet foreign. The work slides out from the membrane of Self into the strange realm of Other. It is no longer contiguous with your mind. That too can be a sacrifice, a loss, though not everyone feels it as such. For some the release is wholly joyful. But many creators feel ambivalent about finishing a work. To finish is to spoil many dreams, tempting potentialities that mighta-coulda been. Mourn if you need to, there's no shame in wanting more. I always want more.



Life lessons from paper collage:

- Seek serendipity.
- Embrace and adapt to what happens.
- Work in layers.
- Accept the *discovery* process.
- Accept that creation and discovery are inextricably linked.
- Let things unfold. Find balance and harmony in the chaos.
- TRUST THE PROCESS.

The process to trust: You work and bang your head against the wall and get frustrated. And then make a breakthrough. And move forward. The process is hope and faith, the belief that something better is possible through sacrifice and devotion. The process is *trying really hard*. **Believe in magic so you can coax it out of yourself.**

- Don't get too attached to the previous vision or the vision that you started with.
- Constraints force creativity.

- Step away to take a break then return with fresh eyes.
- Internally "disagree and commit" with your objection-selves.
- Anything can be used how you want to use it, no matter what it was originally intended for – anything can be repurposed.
- See elements transformed by being combined, the combination and transformation being the very same process.
- Use your best material so you'll love what you make. There's always more where that came from, you are an infinite fount!

