

★
THE MUSE SPA

WEEK 6

EXPRESSION

Inspired Productivity

turning lows into productive flows

INSPIRED PRODUCTIVITY

Many of the world's most creative people; artists, musicians, writers, leaders, entrepreneurs etc., will advise you to not wait for the muse. They suggest that this is procrastination, amateurism and the enemy of productivity.

While I would agree that passively hoping for inspiration, and doing nothing in the meantime, is unlikely to create a substantial body of work, I believe there is a happy medium.

Taking steps to induce the muse.

The entire body of The Muse Spa is designed to integrate the subtle lifestyle changes and perspective shifts that will bring your muse closer to your life, more of the time.

But it's what we do when we don't feel inspired that can have the biggest impact on our creative output. Our actions during these 'down-times' will also decide whether or not the muse will put in an appearance when we most need it.

So here are a few muse-wooing activities that you can play with, rather than idly awaiting her inspired ladyship's arrival.

Action!

If you're keen to tend to your creative project and make some progress, but you're just not 'feeling it' - bear in mind that the muse loves to find you working.

Even though there's undoubtedly a time for rest and quiet and inactivity - in the interests of inspired productivity, you'll find it more beneficial to your self esteem and self-image if you spend your dedicated work hours in some kind of action.

However seemingly fruitless or futile, taking action brings a degree of satisfaction, which is not only one of the markers for happiness, it's also a powerful muse magnet. Whereas inaction can result in frustration and confusion, which are much less appealing to the muse.

The muse is attracted to action - so just start. Anywhere, it doesn't matter.

The point is to just get the wheels turning, the juices flowing. These initial actions don't need to result in anything of worth, they just have to get you started.

Consider it a warming-up of your creative muscles.

And action can also lead to clarity. Doing something - *anything* - leads to clues of where to go next. If you find yourself stuck in a mental loop of confusion, taking some kind of small action will be far more enlightening than staying in analysis paralysis, trying to imagine or think your way out of it.

It's also a declaration of intent. You are showing intention and commitment - two things that the muse loves to see. (And can't ignore).



There is a power in showing up, showing willing. It displays directed attention and activity and it gains momentum.

Even if you feel that you can't find your flow, or that nothing valuable is happening, you're making a declaration to the muse that you're serious about this, you're doing what you said you would and turning up, following through on your intention.

The muse will respect that, pay attention, and if you sustain your commitment, she will begin to meet you there more reliably.

So for the days when you're ready and willing to get to work, yet the muse is conspicuous by her absence, remember this;

Anything = something

And you can always practice your muse-connection skills, by tuning in and sensing which action you would most like to take.

Then act!

Move

Einstein famously said that nothing changes if something doesn't move.

So, if you want something to change, start moving!

You can move yourself or the things around you.

Move your body. Move your papers. Move your furniture if you feel inspired.

Go for a walk, dance, run, swim.

Move to a different room or building.

Moving shakes up the energy and resets your mood and emotion and frame of mind.

Feeling uninspired is a form of stuckness, and moving is a great remedy for getting you unstuck and more open to a happier connection with your muse.

Ticker Tasks

It can also be good to get moving with any simple tasks that don't require inspiration.

For example, tidying your office, sorting papers, making lists, organising files, collating notes, typing up scribbles.

In the interest of productivity, it can be helpful to have a running list of easy dip-in-and-out-able tasks, the mundane support work, all the things that are required to finish projects and stay productive - to 'ship' as Seth Godin would say.

I call these Ticker Tasks, because they're those things that keep your project *ticking* along, and you also get to enjoy the lovely boost of *ticking* them off on your To Do list.

These dull yet important tasks need doing at some point anyway, so you get to enjoy the sense of still making some progress, even if you can't tap into your flow just yet.

But this TickerTasks tactic actually has a double-whammy of benefits...

Firstly, you get to check off a few of the less inspiring items from your To Do list (which always feels good, and feeling good is a powerful muse magnet).

You may also find, though, that as you remove the pressure to connect with your muse, she may start showing up anyway. (She can be capricious, like that.)

As you stop trying to force that elusive and unyielding inspiration (which is never the way to woo the muse) and you focus on what you *can* be getting on with - this is precisely the kind of non-resistant lull that will tempt her to appear.

Don't be surprised if watering your plants or decluttering your desktop, actually sparks an idea or two for your project, at which point you can resume the more creative work as you rediscover your flow.

So in your bid to engage in productive effort, as well as sparking more creative inspiration - get busy with the busy work!

Tools of the trade

In the interests of inspiration, productivity and the sheer enjoyment of your creative life - give some attention to the tools of your trade.

Quality tools, that are a pleasure to use and make your work easier, can be a magnet to more inspired productivity.



Resources, devices and instruments that light you up - they thrill you for a reason!

They'll help you with your work, they will ease the process and facilitate the expression of what is within you. They are the perfect midwives for your creative delivery - that's why you are drawn to them.

So if you can, invest in the best tools and equipment you feel you need to do your best work. When you are delighted and inspired by the tools alone, any work will be easier and more enjoyable. As a result, you'll be more likely to do it and put in the hours, which inevitably boosts productive output.

Indulge in those exquisite notebooks, or that software that makes work feel like play, Splurge on that collection of books from your wishlist. Treat yourself to that new instrument you've been dreaming of. Upgrade your supplies to feel like the dedicated creator that you are.

You know what appeals to you and your craft. Explore those tools. Invest in them as and when you can. Give the tools of your trade some attention and love, and see how that sparks your inspiration and sets your productivity on fire.

If the tools you love are beyond your current budget, that's no excuse to put your creative dreams on hold until you can afford them. This is an occasion where you can actually use your connection to your muse to increase and improve your ability to summon her.

Harness the power of imagination. Window shop. Research. Plan your ideal workspace. A powerfully magnetic visualisation will definitely perk up your muse. Create a scrapbook of that dream addition to your studio or the latest technology that will ease your workflow.

Give some thought to acquiring or investing in the tools and props that feel playful and fun and blissful to work with.

There is joy to be found in the use of great resources. Not only will the pleasure make you more productive, but the enjoyment itself will enhance your life, your vibration and your attraction to the muse.

When work is a pleasure, life is a joy.

So explore the tools that will make work a pleasure, and then watch how much you and your muse enjoy them.

Follow your bliss

Feeling good is highly conducive to your muse.

One of the fastest ways to get her attention is to do whatever you need to do in each moment to feel good, or at least a little better.

It's difficult to take inspired action, or even notice the subtle nudges when you're mired in a cloud of negative emotions.

So there are times when doing whatever will raise your energy or mood can be the most productive route.

Following your bliss as a muse-friendly route to the muse.



The Muse Spa Way

To sum up, the Muse Spa philosophy for Inspired Productivity is this;

You don't need to push, strain, force - in fact, these are definite no-nos when it comes to wooing the muse. Productive and creative is not the same as struggle or hard work.

But if you want to make progress, you do need to keep taking action of some kind.

Don't stress the absence of the muse, just keep moving forward, keep doing whatever you can do or know to do, until you're blessed with that precious flash of creative genius or a dose of inspired action.

Try not to give into despair and doubt. Acknowledge disappointments if you find that helpful, then move on.

Hold the faith that your beloved muse will reappear. Do whatever you can, wherever you are, with whatever you've got before you - and she won't be able to resist you for long.

Note: If you find that you're regularly struggling to reconnect with your muse, I have a couple of recommendations.

Firstly, go back to basics. Revisit your earlier Muse Spa material to check in with your health, energy levels and wellbeing, as well as your bigger vision - the real reason you're pursuing this path.

Secondly, if you're increasingly feeling uninspired to take any action, take some time to tune in to why you're doing this particular project.

Ask yourself; is this what I *really* want to do?

Projects and goals that come from your soul are fuelled with passion and excitement and enthusiasm - they don't need to be extracted or forced.

The above tips are for the inevitable dips during any creative process, the natural ebbs and flows of creative energy.

But if you find that your resistance runs deeper than this, that's a clue to examine your motives behind it.



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The Muse Spa Recommendation:

Hone a practice of inspired productivity