

creative mindset bootcamp

MODULE 2

getting out of your head

Once you've found the space, it's time to shift from overwhelm to action.

This module is all about building the tools to manage the overwhelm cycle, without beating yourself up further about your lack of progress (because you're probably already very good at that).

Whether it's perfectionism, fear, or 'too many ideas' that has you stuck in your head, you're going to discover how to move through that so that you can take action and soar!

downward spiral of doom

Imagine this...

You come up with an exciting new idea for your business. You can almost see it fully formed in your mind, your community are loving it and you can see how it aligns with your core values.

Now you need to get down to creating it.

Which is where the overwhelm starts to kick in.

You feel that wave of insecurity rush over you as you consider whether you are the right person to pull it off. I mean, why would anyone even want that from you, so many other people could do it better.

You realise there's possibly 250 steps involved to go from where you are now to having your dream realised. Maybe even 500. You don't even know how many steps there are, let alone where to start, or how to get them all done.

Maybe you start poking around somewhere, but you're discouraged when the initial results aren't up to the unreasonably high expectations you've set for yourself. You can see all the flaws, none of the wins, and it all seems impossible.

Pretty soon you've spiraled downward so far that it all seems impossible, you're entirely paralysed and you dump it back in the "too hard basket" to deal with another day.

Been there?

I have. Repeatedly.

Sometimes it's not *quite* so doom and gloom. Sometimes I just get stuck on one particular stage in the process. I've got the idea, I can plan it out, and then I get stuck choosing branding colours. Or I make a few choices and then the "it's not good enough"s kick in and it never sees the light of day. Other times I get stuck before I even start, so many ideas I want to pursue, and no idea which one to start with!

I like to call this process of getting totally stuck in your head the *downward spiral of doom*. It never goes anywhere helpful. It always results in a lack of action, and it definitely doesn't serve me or the people I'm setting out to help with my business.

So, how do we hijack the spiral and turn it around?

upward cycle of imperfect action

Firstly, we need to realise that imperfect action is better than no action. Every time.

You cannot possibly move forward toward your goals without taking action of some sort - even if it terrifies you, even if you're convinced you'll fail, and even if it turns out later to be a choice that maybe wasn't the best one.

Once we've established that, it's time to build a toolkit that helps propel us toward action rather than leaving us stuck in our heads, spiraling towards never ending overwhelm.

I have a process that I work through whenever I find myself on the downward spiral of doom, which I'm going to refer to as the *upward cycle of imperfect action*.

Sometimes it only takes one or two steps to propel myself forward, sometimes I need to use every tool in the kit to reverse the downward spiral.

Either way, the more you practice these steps in your own creative practice whenever you feel overwhelmed or stuck in your head, the more action you will take, and the closer you will be to your creative goals!

1. Get Still

First things first, get still.

Quiet.

Take some time to just breathe. Slow, deep breathing does amazing things for calming your nervous system.

You can't even begin to work out what's going on, or how to move forward if you're spending all your time and energy distracting yourself, melting down, or just generally spinning around in circles.

If it's helpful, take a few minutes to write down what's stressing you out. Getting that stuff out of your head and onto paper is an amazing way to clear up some brain space to actually work through it.

However you do it though, you need to get clear on what the actual issue is.

Are you scared that no-one will like your art?

Are you overwhelmed by all the choices?

Are you convinced there's no point because it will never be good enough anyway?

2. Dig Deeper

Once you've worked out what the main sticking point is for you right now, dig a little deeper, get curious about the story you're telling yourself about what would actually happen if your fears were realised.

I often ask myself "so what?" at this point.

If no-one buys my new offering - so what? If someone tells me they hate it - so what?

More often than not, the meaning that we choose to ascribe to something is far more savage and hurtful than the reality of it.

But here's what's great about this. Like we said in the previous module, we have the power to change the stories we tell ourselves. If you've identified something here that's more hurtful than it is helpful, you can change it - you're the one who made it up to start with!

Make a choice here to tell a story that's helpful, not one that keeps you stuck. Write it down if you need to, say it out loud, ask someone else to repeat it back to you.

3. Reach Out

Which brings us to step 3, reach out.

Sometimes we need to seek out connection and support from our cheer squad. Phone someone you trust, whose opinion is clear, kind, and helpful and ask them for support with getting unstuck. Choose carefully who you will listen to, whose opinion will matter, and who you will be open with.

If you've created a new story, it can be helpful to hear it said out loud by someone else. If you just need reminding of a truth like "you can do this", ask them specifically to remind you of that. If you need to talk through the possible consequences, get them to ask you "so what" along the way. It's ok to train other people to be the support you need. It's ok to ask for what you know will be helpful.

Your cheer squad, or even just single trusted person, can be a vital resource in the creative business journey. Sometimes their feedback won't be what you want to hear, but it might be what challenges you to take something to the next level, to keep working and refining your offer to make it something even more incredible.

If you don't yet have a trusted person, or you can't connect with them in the heat of the moment, try and step outside yourself and view the problem from there. Imagine how you would respond to a friend with similar concerns and speak to yourself in the same empathic way you would them. Sometimes the renewed perspective is enough to reverse the downward spiral.

4 .Let Go

By this stage in the upward cycle hopefully you're feeling a little more ready to tackle the to-do list. So this is where we go back and honestly evaluate what is in front of us.

So often we over complicate the task ahead of us. Maybe because we've been told that's the *right* way to do it, maybe because we just have no idea so we've written down every possible thing we've seen someone else do, or maybe just because we're using that as a reason to not start.

Now is the time to simplify. To look at what is in front of you and consider if there's a shorter, easier, less stressful way to get to the end goal.

Yes, a website with 100 blog posts, a functioning online store, an about page with great photos of you, an amazing portfolio with 50 examples of quality work is every creative's dream. But no, you don't need to start there. And you definitely don't have to wait until you've got that all together to launch something.

A single page website that tells us who you are, what you do, and how we can connect with you is a perfectly fine place to start.

What can you remove from your list all together?

What can you simplify, or find an easier way to do?

What is the path of least resistance?

What's the one thing you're going to do to get started?

5. Take a Risk

Take a deep breath, and then take some imperfect action.

It's uncomfortable - particularly if you've spent a bunch of time stuck in your head rehearsing all the disastrous things that *are totally* (ie. could possibly, but you would deal with them anyway) going to go wrong!

But that temporary discomfort is bearable when you remind yourself of your bigger goal. And the more you will do it the more you will build your tolerance.

You will get stronger, the discomfort will lower, and you'll be closer than ever to your creative dreams because you took action, no matter how imperfect.

In the next module we're going to dive into more specifics around your personal business goals, but I wanted you to have this content up front so that you can start to integrate these strategies if you hit a wave of overwhelm.

upward cycle of imperfect action

