

The Life Cycle of Creative Projects

(According to Chris Kay Fraser)

- Stage 1: Hibernation.** We have no ideas, and no ideas about ideas. This is a time of deep rest.
Ask yourself: How do you live with hibernation? Do you get stuck here? Do you enjoy it? How long can you stay in hibernation? (Note: Making a living from the arts doesn't always allow for this stage. If this is the case for you, how can you find the hibernation you need?)
- Stage 2: Fertility.** Inspiration begins to bloom in us. Ideas come, often unexpectedly. We see the world with an air of delight and openness.
Ask yourself: What brings you to a place of creative fertility? What lets you stay there? Things that work for some people are: Taking in other people's creative projects, being in nature, getting time alone or, conversely, immersing in community.
- Stage 3: Idea.** Something is assigned to us. A project or goal or vision arrives. We may not know how we are going to see it through, but we feel compelled to.
Ask yourself: When you have an idea, what do you need to see your idea through? This is a good moment to create some structure, such as joining a group, telling a friend what you want to make, or working with a coach.
- Stage 4: Chaos.** The idea expands and expands. It's unwieldy, exciting, borderless, and hugely creative. You have no idea how or when it will come down to earth.
Ask yourself: How do you cope with chaos in your life, generally? Is this a comfortable place, or a challenging one? If it's comfortable – how will you make sure to move through it, into production? If it's challenging, how can you sit with it, so that your project can gain creative steam?
- Stage 5: Production.** We begin to produce. We type words or move brushes across canvas or buy bulbs for the garden. We create. The chaos begins to shrink away and it becomes, slowly replaced by form.
Ask yourself: How can you nourish this stage, so that you don't burn out? Do you need a pillow on your desk chair? Do you need alternative places to work? Who is checking up on you?

Stage 6: **Refinement.**

We finish a first draft and begin to edit, cut, change. We ask for advice, we move things around. The end is in sight.

Ask yourself: What does refinement mean in your craft? How could you approach this, in order to end up with a product you are deeply thrilled with?

Stage 7: **Birth.**

We let our idea out into the world. An audience is found. We return to hibernation.

Ask yourself: Who is your audience? How does *your project* want to be seen? Does it want to be whispered into one special ear or written across the sky? What is the best and most exciting way to move your work outward?

Thanks to Jamie Ridler for inviting me on her podcast!

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