



grow creative wings

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How to Activate the Power of Your Completed Creative Projects

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Project assessments. They're for office nerds, right? As a creative, you don't need to do that kind of thing...Or do you?

If, once a project is complete, the only reason you consider it again is to decide how to market it, you're missing out on a golden opportunity.

Your completed project holds a host of insights to help you boost your future creativity, communication and productivity. In the previous posts in this series we looked at how setting objectives for your creative projects helps you:

- Clarify what your project consists of and what you want to achieve through doing it
- Discover and solve potential problems in your project before they happen
- Decide exactly what needs to be done and in what order
- Identify when your project is done

Today we'll fit the final missing piece into the puzzle: You'll assess how well you achieved your objectives, and analyse what you've learned, so that you can work even smarter in the future.

And there's one more freebie to round thing off!

How to Evaluate Your Creative Project

To evaluate your project, and assess its successes and weaknesses as a whole, you need to look at all of its different stages:

- Preparation
- Process
- Achievement of Objectives
- Communication

To begin evaluating your completed project, simply jot down quick responses to the following questions:

1. How Good Was Your Preparatory Work?

- How much reference material did you find?
- Was it enough or too much?
- Did you have all of information you needed before beginning to brainstorm?
- How good was your brainstorming?
- What alternative ideas did you explore before settling on your final one?
- What benefits did you get from exploring these options?
- Were there ways you could have improved that exploration?

2. What Did Your 'Making' Process Look Like?

- How did you develop your ideas?
- How did your work change through the project?
- Did you **discover a theme** for the project? If so, how did this affect the project's development?
- What materials did you use, and why?
- Did they work successfully?
- How have your skills developed during the project?
- Are there any skills you feel you need to develop further?

3. Did You Achieve Your Objectives?

- With hindsight, did you set the right goals for this project?
- Did anything get in the way of achieving all of your objectives?
- What did you achieve that you didn't anticipate?
- What new thing did you learn?

- What worked well?
- What would you do differently in the future?

4. How Well Did You Communicate?

- What meaning, ideas or messages did you want to convey?
- How well did you communicate these?
- Are there any ways you could have communicated them better?

(You might want to ask yourself this question again as you get feedback about the work from other people.)

Create a Blueprint for Future Projects

Now you have a complete evaluation of your project, the final and really useful step is to find a way to take those lessons into the future.

For example, as I've developed my process for making the covers of my Artist's Books, I've converted my completed to do lists into a checklist for future covers.

This not only helps me to be as efficient as possible in the process - and not miss any vital steps or do things in the wrong order - but to more accurately gauge how long it will take me to complete this part of the project.

(I work very slowly so any efficiency-aids really help!)

For example, one of my checklists is for potential hold-ups or things I need to consider before starting.

It includes reminders of things I tend to forget when tracing and cutting such as:

- Find the grain of the paper for anything that's going to fold
- Trace outlines and cut-lines on wrong side if I don't want to see the trace marks after.

3 Steps to Your Blueprint

To create your own blueprint, simply go back through the answers you wrote down. Ask yourself:

- Which of the four areas threw up the most challenges?
- Where could you make improvements in your processes?
- What exactly are the steps you need to take to make them?

So don't miss out on all that extra insight that evaluating your projects can lead to! Use this information to help you ideate, execute and communicate in your future projects.
