

IT DOESN'T
MATTER
WHAT YOU
CREATE!

...OR HOW THE TITLE PAGE LOOKS

By Lisa Foley

<i>It Doesn't Matter What You Create!</i>	2
<i>Introduction</i>	2
Fear is the Enemy of Creativity	3
Creativity is a River	4
Why is creative expression often so constricted?	4
Not Taking Your Creations To Heart	6
Detached Engagement	7
<i>12 Creative Exercises That Don't Matter!</i>	8
Award-Winning Aquarium Exhibit	9
Awkward Product	10
Letter from a Legend	11
Non Award-Winner	12
Strange Self Portrait	13
A Bottle o' What?	14
Wisdom That Never Was	15
Unlikely Love Letter	16
Design a Toy	17
Dull Conversation Converter	18
Creating on Mars	19
Your Best Ever Idea	20
<i>Thank you!</i>	21
<i>Notes</i>	22

It Doesn't Matter What You Create!

Introduction

Dear Creator/Creative,

Welcome to 'It Doesn't Matter What You Create!' The aim of this short book is to encourage you to move into deep and authentic creative flow by losing attachment to your creative processes and creative output. It is about removing the artificial importance, or artificial meaning that creative people can unintentionally place on their work. This artificial pressure usually stems from outside sources and can limit creative capacity, produce disingenuous creative output or block creative flow altogether. Yet when this pressure is released, authentic expression will flow once again.

To help with the pressure release, there are twelve creative exercises tucked inside this book that are awesome but simply 'don't matter'. If you participate in them, what you create here won't matter!

'But why would I do stuff that doesn't matter when I've got a thousand important things to do that do matter?'

If you silently asked that question you are probably in need of a solid dose of stuff that 'doesn't matter'. So, if you are feeling curious, interested, excited or even triggered, read on. Gravity is about to shift.

Lisa

Think before you speak is criticism's motto,
speak before you think, creation's' – E. M. Forster

Fear is the Enemy of Creativity

The statement, 'It doesn't matter what you create' might seem counter-intuitive; perhaps ignorant, defensive or even a little insulting. Yet the more our creations 'matter' to us, the more weight they carry and the more they press on our pain points, and induce fear. This can evoke creative paralysis by severing the fine threads of inspiration that weave our creative expression. *Fear is the enemy of creativity.*

When fear walks alongside creativity, it compels us to grasp at any passing solution, no matter how stale, inauthentic or off track, which quickly jams our creative flow. The jam-up happens because the grasped-at solution is not living and breathing through us as new, yet unimagined form. It is a recycled solution, tired and representative of something other than our own authentic expression. At best, this recycled solution is a generic brand pain-killer, at worst it's a highly addictive, brain-tampering drug.

On a subconscious level, it does not feel *right* to us, yet if we are needing solid ground to simulate a feeling of stability within, we will push ahead with the 'safe-feeling', recycled solution. Fear can easily cause us to shut down our creative freedom so that we dwell in confined self-doubt rather than open creative expression. *Fear is the enemy of creativity.*

Our creative work **does matter** to us, of course, or we would not bother doing it, but it's the external meaning we attached to it that implicates us in the life or death of our creative flow. **R.I.P. Creativity** is not a situation creative people like to experience but it happens so often that it now comes with its own catch-phrase—'I have a creative block'. Creative blocks are little thorny formations of fear—like weeds in your garden of expression.

Yes, fear is the enemy of creativity!

Creativity is a River

Pure creativity loves to flow. This is its nature. It is a river, ever-moving, ever flowing, ever swirling around jam-ups, pressing against dam walls and wearing down obstacles until it finds its path again. A river isn't afraid to flow, it flows because that's its very nature, and your creativity is a river that was born to be free, not to be confined by the obstacles or dam walls constructed by your identity-self.

Pure creativity is untameable and when you flow with it, you will glow with it. It will take you over, and birth new creative form right through you. There are no limits to what you can create from this wild, untameable, unstoppable place. Can you feel that potential within? Have you felt it before? If so, hold that familiar, irresistible feeling for a moment, let it have your memory so that your memory reminds your nervous system how to belong to that feeling.

Why is creative expression often so constricted?

When creators are bogged down with pressure, rampant thoughts and the weight of *importance* looming over their work, it usually stoppers their creative flow. This is caused by a bunch of those underlying thorny fears that the creator may not even realise they have.

Perhaps you may recall moments in your creative life when you were counting on producing creative brilliance but you were stuck for an idea, a technique, or a pathway forward in your work. Rather than chill about it, and wait to be supplied with the right inspiration in the right moment, you ran head-long into doubt or even panic (if the stakes were high enough). In that moment, you probably felt **unsafe** in your creativity, and as though **you** had to do something to sure up the foundations.

The moments when we feel unsafe in our creativity, for whatever reason, are often polarising, highly pressurised, and no fun. They can become the moments when we reacquaint ourselves with old addictions or unhealthy patterns, in order to feel some kind of pleasure or normality among the pain.

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When we feel creatively unsafe—or **lacking sovereignty in our creative expression**—we can become overwhelmed with the urge to check-out of our work. We can momentarily forget from where our inspiration springs and how to capture it, especially if we are encircled by artificial safety mechanisms. We lie bereft in the tumbleweed-filled desert of our lost creative selves. Even in a tumble-weed filled desert there are endless possibilities, but we simply cannot see them.

The weight of solving a particular creative issue, or finding the right creative inspiration for our work, can magnify the psychological importance of it, making into a brain-monster. This roaring beast can be scary enough to keep our creative solutions at bay, stuck way behind the jam-up in the river while we languish among the tumble-weeds, coughing up dust.

A cough from among the tumble-weeds...

'Heavier than air flying machines are impossible'

– Lord Kelvin, President Royal Society, 1885

Not Taking Your Creations To Heart

When the creative solution isn't covered by a blanket of pressure, and doesn't matter so much, it's right there. It will show up like magic, often via unusual avenues. This is something you have probably experienced many times—a sudden inspiration drop, a random conversation trigger, a profound coincidence, a mistake that becomes a new technique... **the ways of creative magic are many.**

Your creative solutions are always waiting in line to be received by the part of you that is open and willing. Yet so often creators block themselves from the receiving by holding onto an old belief, an attitude or a spiky fear. And because we often believe our identity selves to be in charge of our creativity, rather than trusting in our higher creative flow, we can easily stand smack-bang in our own way. This blocks our intuitive knowledge and our vast potential for free creative expression.

When the importance of what we are doing is *lowered* in our minds, the weight is lifted, the pressure is reduced and our creative flow is free to return. **This means not taking our creations to heart.** We must hold our creations and creative processes lightly, rather than clutching on like they are the last good idea we will ever have and intertwining them with our core value as a human being. Creators are perpetually supplied, and creative possibilities are limitless so why limit them with fear-based constrictions?

Examples of spiky, fear-based thoughts that interfere with creative flow:

*If you feel inspired, reword these spiky thoughts eg) **This idea is all I've got** becomes **I have endless ideas.***

- This idea is all I've got
- I don't have enough skills to make this work
- I don't have enough tools to make this work
- This creation must be perfect
- This project is make or break
- I'll never be accepted if I get this wrong
- There are so many creatives better than I am
- The audience will never accept this
- That's not the way it's usually done
- I'd be stupid to go out on such a creative limb
- How can I do something amazing?
- I'm a talentless pretender
- Other people think I'm an average creator/writer/performer/artist

Detached Engagement

Creative people, who are achievers at heart, always seek the very best from their work. Sometimes, for various reasons they can become overwhelmed with doubt-filled thoughts and self-sabotaging beliefs—the polarising brain-monsters that stem creative flow. So if this happens to you as a creator, how do you shift into a mindset that holds your creativity lightly rather than with a vice-like grip of expectation, fear and self-doubt? How do you lift the psychological weight of magnified creative importance? How do you get out of the melodramatic ‘make-or-break’ trap?

I believe it’s good practice to engage in creativity that “doesn’t matter“. When it doesn’t matter, there’s no stress and there’s an open expanse of freedom available in the creative process. This doesn’t mean limiting your expression to something small and simple, like colouring-in or writing a ‘knock knock’ joke—stuff that really doesn’t matter. It means the opposite. It means stretching into the vast creative playing field and reaching for a cosmic challenge, but still giving it no profound, weighty, external importance within you. And then bring this attitude into your real life creative work!

This means ignoring all manner of potential outcomes, and any perceived lack of ability within yourself, and stepping off the ledge—building a new world on a star, piloting a mothership, spreading your wings until the cage no longer contains them. It doesn’t matter a dot whether you sit motionless among your tumbleweeds or whether you build a rollercoaster to the moon, so why not let your creative heart explode in its wild ingenuity and take you with it, to the moon and back? What is there to lose as a person and creator?

In order to help open up that vast expanse of potential and creative freedom within you I’m going to offer several creative exercises **that don’t matter**. Nothing about them matters; not the inspiration gained, not the ideas you have, not the finished product, not the production values or any of the methods for executing any of it. Nothing matters at all! These creative exercises are to be held so very lightly, to have fun with, as though you are dancing in the playground of the universe. They offer training for your future creative life, to help you dance freely and lightly as you express, rather than trying to dance bogged down by safety vests, pants, boots, gloves, goggles and a clunky helmet you borrowed from Uncle Duct-Tape-Solution.

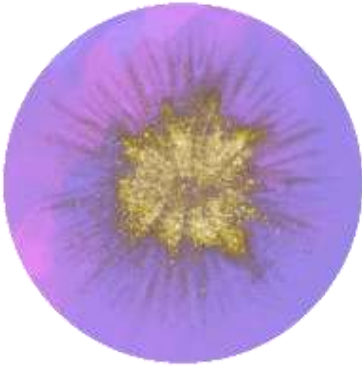
Are you ready for fun and zero pressure?

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12 Creative Exercises That Don't Matter!

Select one or more of the following 'Don't Matter' exercises, and let it have you! Use whatever medium best serves you: Write it, sing it, perform it, paint it, build it, sculpt it, craft it, bake it, collage it etc. Let your imagination escape!

'Another word for creativity is courage' – George Prince



Award-Winning Aquarium Exhibit

Your creative brief is to design the most spectacular underwater aquarium exhibit ever—the likes of which has never been seen on this side of the galaxy.

Imagine that you have no limits in resources, capacity, time or place, and you can absolutely go for it. Your exhibit will be installed in the largest aquarium in the world and will win countless awards for its ingenuity, innovation and accomplishment. It will be a marvel for visitors the world-over—the galaxy-over.

Describe your exhibit in whichever creative format suits you—write about it, visually depict it, sing about it, craft it etc. The sky is the limit!

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

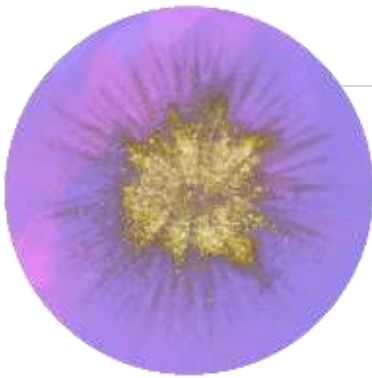
What was easiest about it? What was hard?

Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



Awkward Product

Your creative brief is to complete the silly limerick below and then design the embarrassing product your animal purchased. What does it look like? What is its title? What does it do?

Imagine this product is to be sold in a high-end department store, then design the look and feel, the packaging, the branding, the text, the product blurb, the sales catch-phrase—or whatever inspires you about this product.

Ask yourself why it suits your particular animal, why they needed it, why it embarrassed them, why they bought it regardless etc.

Silly Limerick

There once was a/an _____ (animal) _____ called Harris

Who went shopping for _____ (an awkward item) _____ in Paris,

The item in stock

Was rather a shock

But he/she bought it and left quite embarrassed

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

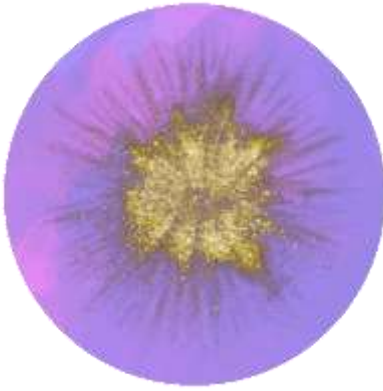
What was easiest about it? What was hard?

Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



Letter from a Legend

Your creative brief is to imagine that one of your most esteemed people on the planet, living or dead, wrote you a letter. Why did they write it? What did it say? How did you feel? Did it cause any changes within you? What did you do after reading it? How did it affect your creativity?

Write the letter from your legend, and then use it to create something that demonstrates its impact on you. Use any medium you like for your creative expression.

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

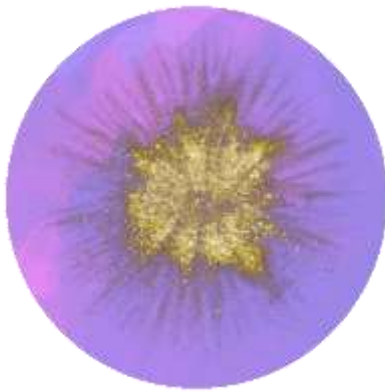
What was easiest about it? What was hard?

Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

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What did you least like about this exercise?



Non Award-Winner

Your creative brief is to create a product that definitely won't win any awards. It doesn't matter what it is, as long as it's rotten, stinking mess of a thing.

In its field of specialty, everything will be 'wrong' about it, like a water pipe made of candy or a rocket fuelled by sarcasm! Think crazy, go out there, imagine the very worst possible idea and bring it to life!

Use any medium to depict your non award-winning product!

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

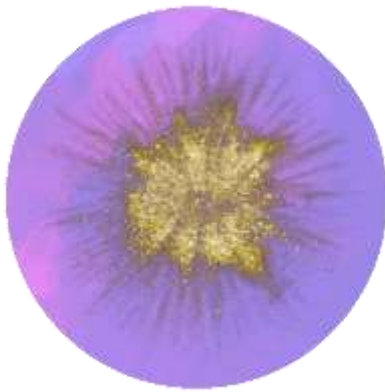
What was easiest about it? What was hard?

Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



Strange Self Portrait

Your creative brief is to create a giant-sized representation of one of your fingerprints.

Your fingerprints are a profound personal identifier, so why not honour yourself with a strange self-portrait? Make it huge and wild and absolutely you!

Use any visual medium to depict your strange self portrait.

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

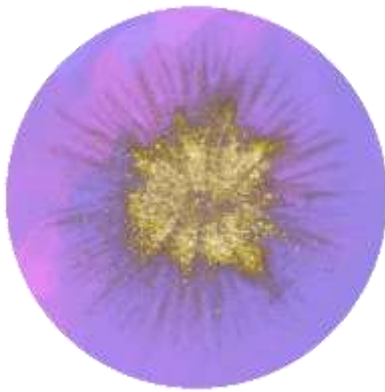
What was easiest about it? What was hard?

Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



A Bottle o' What?

Your creative brief is to create a new 'beauty' product in a bottle and pitch it to a high-end cosmetics company. The only trouble is that the bottle is filled with the first thing you see when you open your front door right now!

What is your bottle filled with? How is it going to work as a cosmetic? What are it's beauty benefits? What are it's health and wellbeing benefits? What special status does it have ie) cruelty-free, cat-free, certified non-organic, locally sourced, ethically dubious etc.

Write an awesome pitch, even create the product if you feel inclined. Have fun with it!

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

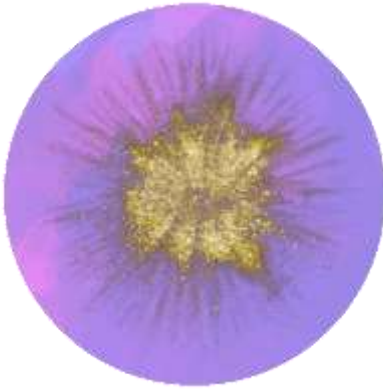
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What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



Wisdom That Never Was

Your creative brief is to write a bunch of famous quotes that never existed! (And probably never will).

For example...

‘Between the idea and the reality falls a shit show’ - B S Elliot

‘I prefer my salt stirred, not shaken’ - James Pond

Make your never-famous quotes crazy, ridiculous, profound, nonsensical, funny or whatever inspires you most. You can adapt old quotes or create entirely new ones. Print them out and stick them up!

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

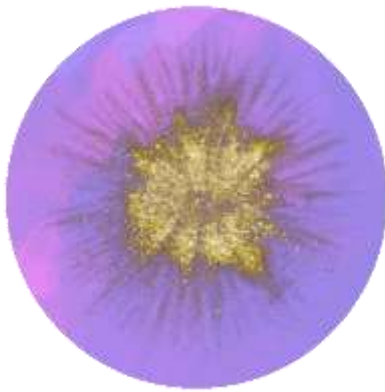
What was easiest about it? What was hard?

Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



Unlikely Love Letter

Your creative brief is to write a love letter between an unlikely couple ie) The sofa and the carpet, the postman and the letterbox, the cat and the canary etc.

When did they first meet? Was it love at first sight? Why are they in love? How deep are their feelings? What are their hopes and dreams for each other?

If you wish, write it out on paper, stick a stamp on it and send it to yourself.

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

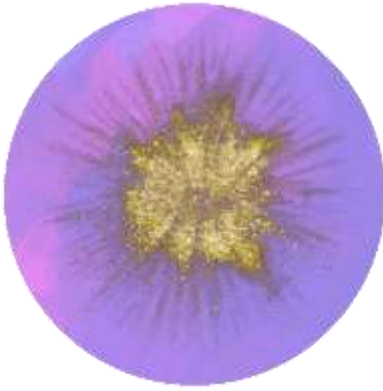
What was easiest about it? What was hard?

Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



Design a Toy

Your creative brief is to design a new toy. It can be simple and practical or incredibly unimaginable. It can be feasible or unfeasible. Realistic or fantastical. It can be a toy for this world, or another world. It can be any kind of toy you wish. You have no limits on budget, resources, time, place or skills.

What toy do you create? Why? What is it called? Who is its audience? Creatively express your toy in any manner you wish.

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

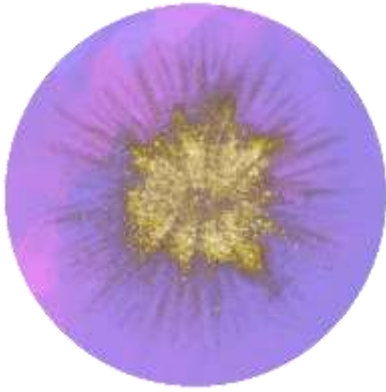
What was easiest about it? What was hard?

Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



Dull Conversation Converter

Your creative brief is to design a contraption that solves the problem of boring café conversations. Imagine there was a brilliant way to shift those dull, dreary moments where you sit at the café table in prolonged, awkward silence, stretching for the next uninspiring topic.

Make your solution/contraption funny, light-hearted, silly and outrageous, or make it a real-life problem solver!

Name and explain your solution. Creatively express it any other manner you choose.

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

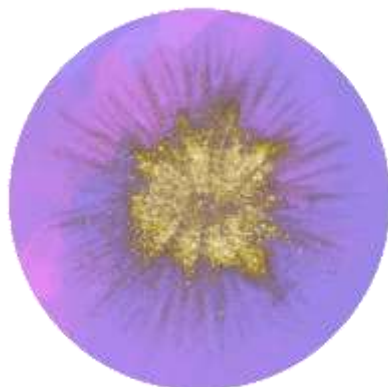
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Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



Creating on Mars

Your creative brief is to imagine you have a creative project but you are alone with very few resources - *as though you've metaphorically landed on Mars.*

Using the Creative Project Ideas list below as inspiration, describe how you would create one of those items using only stuff from around your house. You have no budget, so you can't buy anything extra. You are alone and no one can visit. You are confined and can't leave the borders of your property until it's finished.

✧ *Go ahead and do this challenge for real if you are inspired!*

Creative Project Ideas:

- ✧ Build a mini castle/fortress.
- ✧ Sculpt a life-size statue of your best friend
- ✧ Create a mini rollercoaster
- ✧ Build a large, loud musical instrument
- ✧ Create an amphitheatre - inside or out
- ✧ Make a fairy world
- ✧ Build a portal to another realm
- ✧ Create a mini city - at least 75% must be edible!
- ✧ Create a giant collage
- ✧ Build a marble run that can sit on your kitchen bench
- ✧ Create a nature soundscape
- ✧ Create an extra-terrestrial being of any kind
- ✧ Make something soft and huggable
- ✧ Create an amazing 'treasure hunt' full of interesting clues and an excellent treasure prize at the end.
- ✧ Create a 'fantasy' village.
- ✧ Build a robot
- ✧ Sculpt a mermaid
- ✧ Turn your living room into a gallery

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

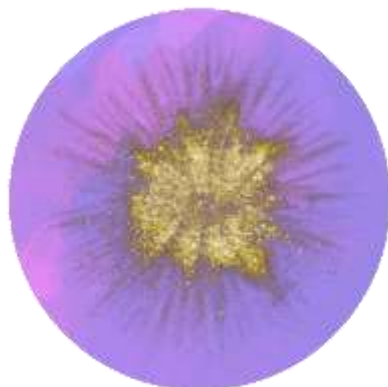
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What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?



Your Best Ever Idea

Your creative brief is to expand on your best ever idea related to your work or life. Inside of you, there's been inspiration floating around about a phenomenal idea, it might be such a tiny seed of inspiration that you need to look hard or it might be a huge seed already planted firmly within you. This seed of inspiration is the best idea you've had so far in your life and it's time to water it and let it see the light of day.

Perhaps the reason your seed is not yet growing is because you feel limited by money, time, resources, experience, capacity, tools etc. Maybe the idea seems crazy or unfeasible. For now, none of that matters. Just imagine that every single condition is right and you have every possible capacity to expand your best idea yet, to make it into a real thing in the world.

Immerse yourself in your idea. Write about it, expand on it, name it, describe its service in the world, talk about the process that can help make it REAL. And, if inspired, get going on it, or a prototype of it.

Express your best ever idea creatively in whatever format you like.

Review Questions:

How did you flow with this exercise?

What was easiest about it? What was hard?

Did you get stuck at any point? If so, did you unstick yourself? How?

What did you learn from this exercise?

What did you most like about this exercise?

What did you least like about this exercise?

Thank you!

Dear Creator/Creative Soul,

Thank you for finding your way through to the end of this E-book. My hope is that you gained something new to embellish your creative flow and breathe fresh life into your creative processes. I hope your gravity shifted!

If you participated in the 'don't matter' exercises, big kudos to you! I have faith that they made an impact in a way that is highly relevant to your creative life moving forward. If you would like to share any of the creative output you produced during these exercises, please feel free to email me at the address below. I'd love to hear from you!

If you have any questions, comments, or you wish to book a 1:1 Creative Mentoring session please get in touch via lisa@theartosphere.com

Big love,

Lisa

'A ship in harbour is safe, but that's not what ships were built for' – William Shedd

Notes: