

WEEK TWO:

*Our
Stories*

WEEK TWO: WHAT ARE OUR STORIES?

*"There is no greater agony than bearing
an untold story inside you"*

~Maya Angelou

So you have your notebook and your suggested supplies. You've carried it around for a while. Have you sat your coffee or wine on it? Stomped in it? Smooshed some paint? Or had some kids scribble or draw in it?



My notebook came to pick up the terrible trio from school today!

And now that you have done that what are you going to do with your ugly marked up notebook? Well, I promise I will come back to that in just a moment!

But firstly I want to ask you:

Why haven't you listened to, or tried to discover your creative squeak before now?

What has held you back from embracing your creative side? What is it about now, this moment in time that makes you want to embrace it?

I believe that your individual history has a lot to do with the answer to this. And I believe that everyone has his or her own stories that they have written about their creative selves. I wonder what yours is?

So what do I mean by **STORIES**?

I am talking about a story that you may have about why you may **believe or act a particular way**.

When I was 6 years old I over heard an adult say that I swam like a fish. Today I still believe that I swim like a fish, I love it, but I rarely use my summer swim pass. But at 6 I was told I swam like a fish, so my story is that because of that I should swim often in the summer.

But it may be a story about why you **cannot** do something.

I came last in a running race when I was 10ish. I thought that I was a great runner, but obviously I wasn't because I came last!
And even though I loved the idea of running I sucked at it, so I swim instead. Because I told myself (and because I was told by an adult I loved and trusted) that I am a fish in the water!

Sometimes both **time or memory will corrupt your story**. Sometimes the story you tell yourself is a protective one, and maybe the story you have was once based in fact, but is no longer true today.

At 35 I got up every morning at 5.30 to swim laps for exercise. Now I am not a morning person and I think running would have suited me better, but I swam because I can't run. I couldn't even make it down the end of my street before I collapsed in a breathless heap. So I swim. Because again, I swim like a fish...

And yet the simple truth behind **my story** in this instance is this:

I was taught to swim at a young age. Most Australians are. We are surrounded by water, and it can be life and death if we do not know how to swim.

I also took swimming lessons over many years. And I practiced.

But I was never taught to run, never had lessons and I never practiced.

Since that realization, I took action: I took a couple of lessons, listened to some experts and had an app on my phone, which took me gently from walking to running over a series of months! I am not a great runner (at the moment I am not running at all!) but back then I could manage 10 minutes before collapsing in an exhausted mess!! ;)

And I really enjoyed it, and bonus I didn't have to be up at 5.30am to do it!

So very simply that is a story I have told myself and an example of how I held myself back.

Coming back to our Creative Squeaks and thinking specifically about the times where you've heard your Squeak (last weeks reflection exercise), were there ever times when you thought "I wish I could make/ draw/ create that" did your subconscious (or your little bitch!) ever reply the following?

- But I'm not creative.
- But I don't have any talent.
- But I don't have a creative bone in my body.
- But I can't even draw a stick figure
- But my parents/ grandparents/ teachers told me not to pursue art. That it was not an acceptable career choice.
- But someone laughed at a drawing I did
- But I don't have time
- But I could never make that
- But I couldn't draw a tree/ dog/ cat to save myself!

Did any of these resonate with you? Or was it something else? You've read my story. I told myself I wasn't creative, I wasn't good enough and I

couldn't draw anything out of my head. This **was** my story. It **was** my truth for a very long time.

But it **wasn't** true.

And maybe just like my running story, I just needed to nurture my Squeaks, to learn, to take a few lessons, to gently move myself out of my square!

I believe everyone has a story, and I believe the key to changing your story is to first figure out what story is being told. So what is yours? Lets find out.



PLEASE REMEMBER.

Unless I have specifically stated otherwise, please do not use the first and last couple of pages in your notebook. In fact I encourage you to use random pages most of the time!

2.1 REFLECTION: What is *YOUR* story?

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Your notebook
+ your pen.

Find a quiet and comfy spot, put on some music, have a cup of coffee handy. Grab your notebook and a pen. Set a timer for 5 -10 minutes if you want.

Open up your notebook to a **RANDOM** page.

For five to ten minutes think about what the story is that has surround your creativeness.

Try answering the following questions:

1. Why can't you be a creative person? What has your little bitch said to you in the past?
2. Did something on the list resonate with you? What was it? Does it trigger a memory? What is the memory?
3. Has someone ever told you couldn't be creative? Do you remember what they said to you? How old were you?
4. What was it about discovering your creative squeak that appealed to you?
5. Why is discovering your creative squeak so important to you now?
6. What does being creative everyday mean to you now?

Alternatively print out the 'Listening to your story' sheet (found at the end of this chapter) and stick it in your journal if you'd rather.

DO NOT OVER THINK YOUR ANSWERS. Just write what comes to mind, however it comes to mind.

For some of my other 'Squeakers' they were sure there wasn't a story. There was nothing holding them back. So I asked them, if that was the case, why haven't they been creative in the past, or if they had been creative, why weren't they now?

And sometimes in subsequent weeks, they would remember a memory that contributed to their story. Every time you think of something over the coming weeks, write it down!

Little Bitch Buster

If you are stuck you are not alone!

If you cannot think of anything, I want you to write down these words.

“I am not sure of my story yet, but I will keep asking.” “I am not sure of my story yet, but I will keep asking.” “I am not sure of my story yet, but I will keep asking....”

Write this sentence a couple of times and try to ignore the little bitch that tells you this is stupid. This is like homework. This is boring. This is crap. This Kirstin has no idea what the hell she is talking about....

Over the coming week, as you are going through your daily exercises, think about this question again.

Every time a memory or an answer pops up - jot the thought in your notebook.

I can almost guarantee that if you haven't met your little bitch before now, you probably will during this exercise.

2.2 ACTION: Your Notebook is still your Baby Egg!

TIME: Every Day

Remember this notebook is your baby egg. Keep it near you as you move around the house. Be sure you pack it in your purse, backpack or briefcase when you leave the house.

Make it a fun challenge - Where is the most interesting location that you have taken your notebook? Shopping? To the pool? On a walk? On a road trip? Somewhere else?

Take a photo of it, print that photo out and stick it in your notebook.

Why not share it with other Creative Squeak journeyers? Post a pic in our Facebook group.



My notebook came to pick up the terrible trio from school today!

2.3 ACTION (part two): Learning to hold your pen again.

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Your creative squeak notebook + a pen.

Something I realized when I started discovering to my creative squeak and began exploring, was that I needed to relearn how hold my pen!

Now this may sound silly - truly how hard is it to make a few lines on a page and seriously most people hold a pen in their hands everyday!

But actually there *is* a difference in the way you hold a pen to draw compared to how you hold it to write.

Pick up your pen and pretend to write. Notice where you hold your pen, where your grip is, is your pen upright, or sloped.

Think about how easy it is to sign your name, how you do it with out actually thinking about it. Signing your name is something you do automatically while multi tasking, talking on the phone, having a face-to-face conversation, etc.

Or like me, while I tell my kids for the 20th time to sit down in the freaking shopping trolley before they fall and hurt themselves, while putting my wallet away and signing the credit slip and loading up groceries.



So firstly, open up a random page in your notebook, holding your pen as you would normally do and make some marks:

- sign your name
- write your name
- draw a zig zag
- draw a few circles, etc.

Now change it up a bit - recreating the same list as above:

- hold your pen half way down the barrel
- hold it right on the nib
- use your non dominant hand
- hold it like a five year old in a fist
- for a laugh try your foot!

Each variation will make different marks when you apply them to paper.

Notice the different marks, the different pressures on the page and how different each position feels.

2.4 FUN: Doodling, Doodling, Doodling.

Time: 5 minutes each

Equipment: Your creative squeak notebook
+ a pen.

I found the best way to ‘relearn’ how use a pen was to spend five minutes a day doing a doodle.

And I bet doodling is something that you do or have done at some point in your life. I remember doodling all over my schoolbooks, meeting notes and telephone pads.

Even someone who swears up and down that they are not creative will have doodled on something at some point. Mac is this kind of person, and yet he doodles his little triangles all over his notes during meetings and telephone calls! ;)

Doodling should be easy! They are after all, just random marks on your paper and normally is done subconsciously, with out any thought. I could doodle all day if I didn’t think about it, but when I actually sat down to consciously doodle I found myself paralysed with indecision.

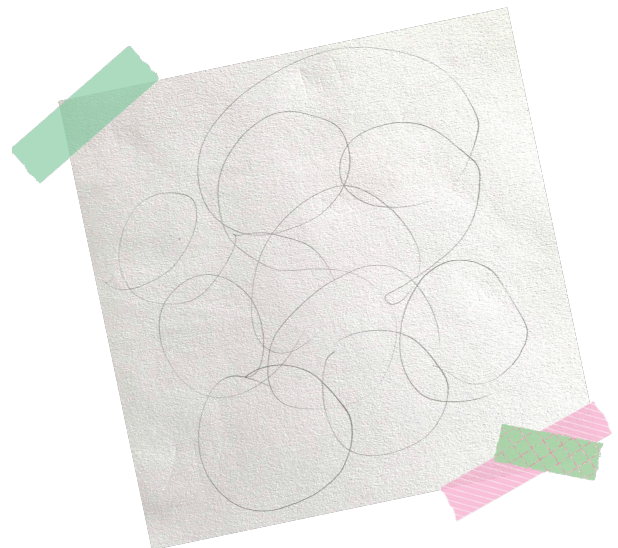
Especially when I was faced with a blank page.

So I want to make it very easy for you, so you do not have the same problem! And I have five different doodling exercises for you to do this week - any of which you can do in just five minutes a day.

DOODLE EXERCISE ONE: MAKE A SCRIBBLE DOODLE.

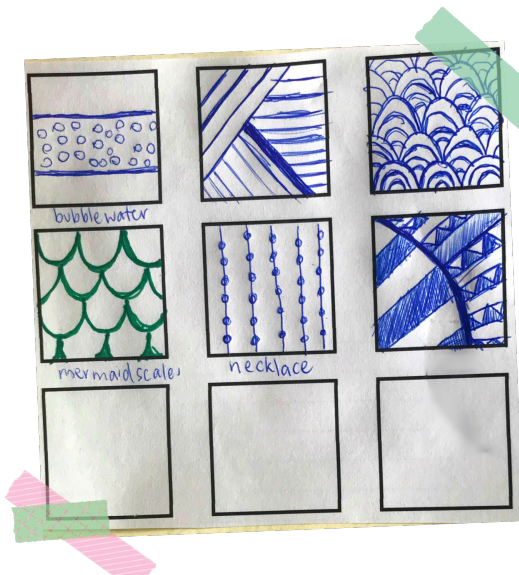
Your very first instruction for this week is to make sure you **don’t** have a blank page. A blank page can be overwhelming. So open your notebook to a **random page**, grab a pencil and scribble like a two year old using some the techniques you tried above!

I found making loopy circles a great way to start. Mark your page with a tab of some sort so you can find it for exercise three.



DOODLE EXERCISE TWO: PATTERNS ARE EVERYWHERE.

At the end of this worksheet there is a page called ‘YOUR PATTERN SHEET’ Print that out and glue it into your notebook or just draw boxes in your book on a random page.



Look around your environment and draw any patterns you may see, as well as some you don't. If you fill up your sheet, print out another copy and repeat.

While you are out and about, notice the patterns - brickwork, tree bark, your pencils in a tin, your keyboard, etc. Draw those patterns into your notebook

DOODLE EXERCISE THREE: FILL IN YOUR SCRIBBLE.

After you have started compiling a collection of patterns go back to your first scribble doodle. And start filling up your scribbles. Fill them with the patterns you have collected or try stars, triangles, lines, stripes, circles, dots, zigzags, cross hatches, etc.

Make the lines thin, thick, wavy, consistent, inconsistent, or loopy. Try different pressures - what happens when you try a light touch or a heavy one. Hold your hand in your non-dominant hand and make some marks. Have FUN!



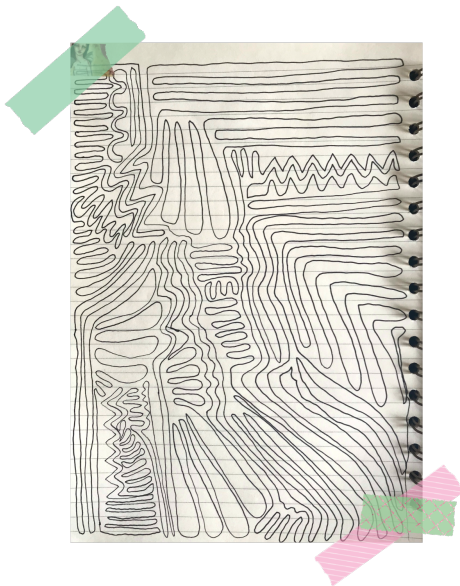
Little Bitch Buster

In those first moments you may feel self conscious or silly - but as a famous blue fish once said, “just keep swimming!” or in our case just keep doodling!

To distract yourself, think about what you have to do that day, what you’re going to make for dinner. What’s happening in the latest episode of your favourite tv show, and just fill in your lines.

Set a timer. And when the timer goes off, you can keep going or put it aside for the next day.

DOODLE EXERCISE FOUR: THE CONTINUOUS LINE.



Before you start this one there are a two rules for you:

1. You must not lift your pen off the page - this is a continuous line
2. You should fill up the whole page.

Find another random page and starting on the right hand bottom corner, start filling your page with your continuous line. Don’t over think where you are going next, or where you have been, keep going.

If you notice you are making a lot of the same lines, consciously try a different direction or a different pattern.

DOODLE EXERCISE FIVE: A CONTINUOUS LINE WITH OBJECT.

Try this variation: Grab a leaf or a flower and glue it into your book. Using the same rules from exercise four, fill in the entire page, remembering not lifting your pen from the page, but using your object as inspiration for the pattern.

Again, if you notice you are making a lot of the same lines, consciously try a different direction or a different pattern.

I hope you’ve enjoyed this week’s workshop and thinking deeper about your creative story. Next week we are thinking about our soul deep why!



learning your story

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR 'REASON' FOR NOT BEING CREATIVE BEFORE?

DID SOMETHING FROM THE LIST RESONATE WITH YOU? WHAT WAS IT? WHAT MEMORY DID IT BRING UP?

WHAT STORY DO YOU THINK YOU ARE TELLING YOURSELF ABOUT BEING CREATIVE OR CREATIVITY IN GENERAL?

WHY IS DISCOVERING YOUR CREATIVE SQUEAK APPEAL TO YOU AT THE MOMENT?

WHAT DOES BEING CREATIVITY MEAN TO YOU NOW?

finding patterns sheet
