

Align Your Practice

Exploring the importance of self-knowledge in the growth of your creative practice.

In this workbook you'll find 18 reflective questions to help you re-align your creative practice looking at:

- **your natural strengths**
- **how well you know yourself**
- **and your values**

Workbook by Lizzie Reid

Commissioned by Arts Student Union, UAL

Natural strengths

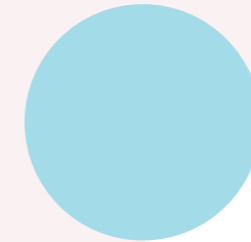
Your natural strengths and ways of working should form the foundations of your career. Getting to know these and feeling empowered by them will help you fight moments of doubt, especially when comparing yourself and your path to others.

Have a look for your natural strengths in your personality, your talents, methods of working and learning style.

If you need help, call a friend or google some prompts!

- Are you a natural listener, observer or talker?
- If you prefer to listening to podcasts over reading maybe you're an auditory learner.
- If your inbox is full of online workshop tickets maybe you're a kinesthetic learner.
- Do you come up with or inspire ideas through conversation? Then talking should be considered part of your process.
- Or do your ideas flourish better through activities that require solitude such as writing?

All strengths will overlap, but knowing how you work best is a sure fire way to make the most out of your process.



List your natural strengths

A large white rectangular box intended for listing natural strengths, set against a light pink background.

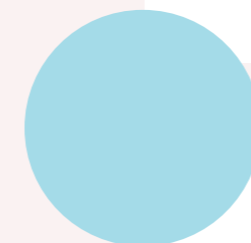
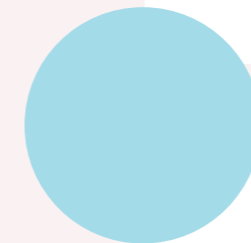
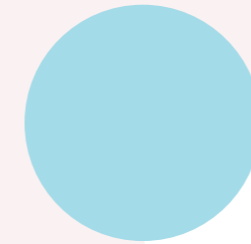
How can your natural strengths help?

Understanding these will not only guide you in the way you work but also in the things you create and the platforms you collaborate with, for example:

- A natural reader with a good memory for citing facts might be a natural at writing academic style essays and articles for formal, statistics-focused platforms.
- A people-person and social observer of behaviours and emotions may find speaking on podcasts or being the one asking the questions to be more up their street for platforms engaged in social issues with a psychological lens.

We can always learn and improve but as Katie Lydon (*Managing Director at M&C Saatchi Merlin*) once said **“never doubt your skill set!”**

Choose three of your natural strengths and write some things you may enjoy applying them to:



Blank white space for writing the first response.

Blank white space for writing the second response.

Blank white space for writing the third response.

How well do you know yourself?

When I first asked this to an audience back in March 2020, I asked everyone to close their eyes and answer 'how well do you know yourself' on a scale of 1 to 4, (one being I completely know myself to four being I don't know myself at all).

I was surprised and saddened to see such a large number of hands go up for number 4.

I put it down to potentially not understanding or overestimating the gravitas of the (very abstract) question because I strongly believe that everyone could share at least one thing that makes up part of who they are, even if it was just a food they've really disliked.

So I've reworded it and would like to clarify that this isn't a test to interrogate how close to your inner-chakra you are.

If you and 20 other people were described by your non-physical attributes, would you be able to pick out which one was you?

1: 90-100% confident in the knowledge of who I am

2: 60-90% pretty sure I could pick myself out

3: 30-60% I wouldn't say I knowwww who I am but I think I would recognise a few key features

4: 0-30% chance of me choosing myself

Why does knowing yourself matter?

There are so many elements of ourselves that we are naturally aware of yet still feel the need to prove - it's natural.

We take personality quizzes to confirm who we are, we say yes to another uncomfortable event to try make ourselves feel differently this time, and we compare engagement statistics to define our next move.

We make so many decisions to meet the expectations of others, or out of a sense of obligation, or to satisfy a perceived need to be part of a something seemingly universal, when we could be choosing to do the things we actually want to do in a way we actually feel comfortable doing it.

This is what having a confident level of self-knowledge gives you the power to do.

Tick the boxes you feel would change for you with greater self-knowledge and awareness.

I would be more consistent following a routine that felt natural to my way of working.

I would feel more connected to the work I produce.

I would be more confident promoting what I have to offer in regards to my natural strengths.

I would feel more freedom to produce work regardless of external validation or expectation.

I would feel as though my life had greater purpose and I was more fulfilled.

What else would change for you?

Define Your Values

Everyday we subconsciously and consciously act in alignment with our values, yet despite this they can still be extremely difficult to pin point as they often go undetected within our automatic behaviours and thoughts.

They tend to stem from extremely personal and emotionally connected experiences, so defining them can lead to very deep self-reflection. This is an activity which should take place in a *safe space where you can delve into the following questions openly without fear of judgement or pressure.

Welcome the uncomfortable because it's usually through the uncomfortable that we end up finding the little bits to ourselves that make our practices all the more unique, niche and personable.

*A safe space means choosing a time and environment you feel comfortable in and ensuring you feel supported by the company around you.

Incase you need help, here are some examples of values by Brené Brown



List of VALUES

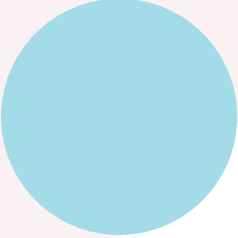
Accountability	Diversity	Intuition	Safety
Achievement	Environment	Job security	Security
Adaptability	Efficiency	Joy	Self-discipline
Adventure	Equality	Justice	Self-expression
Altruism	Ethics	Kindness	Self-respect
Ambition	Excellence	Knowledge	Serenity
Authenticity	Fairness	Leadership	Service
Balance	Faith	Learning	Simplicity
Beauty	Family	Legacy	Spirituality
Being the best	Financial stability	Leisure	Sportsmanship
Belonging	Forgiveness	Love	Stewardship
Career	Freedom	Loyalty	Success
Caring	Friendship	Making a difference	Teamwork
Collaboration	Fun	Nature	Thrift
Commitment	Future generations	Openness	Time
Community	Generosity	Optimism	Tradition
Compassion	Giving back	Order	Travel
Competence	Grace	Parenting	Trust
Confidence	Gratitude	Patience	Truth
Connection	Growth	Patriotism	Understanding
Contentment	Harmony	Peace	Uniqueness
Contribution	Health	Perseverance	Usefulness
Cooperation	Home	Personal fulfillment	Vision
Courage	Honesty	Power	Vulnerability
Creativity	Hope	Pride	Wealth
Curiosity	Humility	Recognition	Well-being
Dignity	Humor	Reliability	Wholeheartedness
	Inclusion	Resourcefulness	Wisdom
	Independence	Respect	
	Initiative	Responsibility	
	Integrity	Risk-taking	

Write your own:

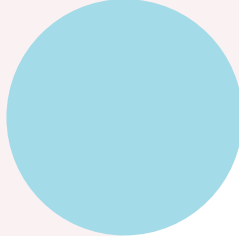


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Values



List the things that make your blood boil:



List the things that make your heart sing:



Values

Choose one thing that really makes your blood boil:

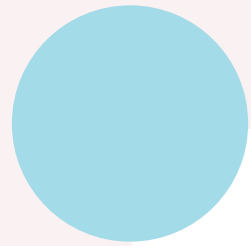
Choose one thing that truly makes your heart sing:

Which values are being compromised for this to happen?

Which values are being embraced to make this happen?

What do you value in...

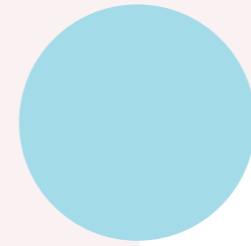
Yourself:



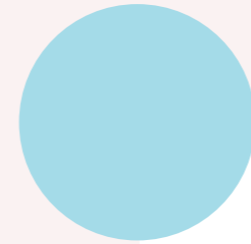
Family and friends:



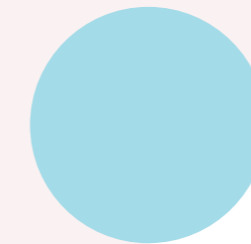
Your practice and career:



Clients and customers:



The world:



Values

Which three values feel the strongest or reappear the most?

How can you embody these values in your practice and through your work?

Why do you think this is?

My aim throughout this workbook has been to raise awareness about the power of self-knowledge, and aligning your practice with who you are as a person depends on it.

Be excited by change and when you identify gaps in your life where you are living in a space of lack because it is only from that moment on that you can begin to consciously fill them.

This is why people set intentions and personal goals. Some call it manifestation in a spiritual sense but I believe it's simply the conscious acknowledgement of something you want to change in order to improve your life and that awareness leads to conscious and subconscious progress to make it happen.

I hope you can continue to use self-reflection as a tool to find your unique answers to the questions you hold, to inform your direction and continue aligning your practice forevermore.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch!

All the best,

Lizzie

x

Email: lizziereidarts@gmail.com

Website: www.lizzieslines.com

Instagram: [@Lizzies_Lines](https://www.instagram.com/Lizzies_Lines)