

# Stay Unstuck in Action

---

[www.ERICAMIDKIFF.com](http://www.ERICAMIDKIFF.com)

# WHAT IS STAY UNSTUCK?

---

Getting stuck is a natural part of being a creative. And really, of being a *human*. But it's not getting stuck that matters. It's how we get *unstuck* that truly makes a difference.

---

Getting stuck is inevitable, but getting *unstuck* is not. That part is up to us.

Way too often, stuck-ness stops us in our tracks—and stops our progress on the things we truly want to bring to life. We fumble around, feeling uncertain, unable to see how to move forward. Sometimes we even abandon the thing we were working on because we just can't see how to proceed.

Why? Why do we struggle over and over with something that's inevitable? *Because we don't plan ahead for the messiness that's sure to come.*

Stay Unstuck: A Guide to Awareness and Action is designed to help us prepare for the inevitability of encountering messy situations, tough decisions, and total stuck-ness while working on creative projects...and really, while living our lives.

First, you'll create two powerful lists of tactics to use when (not if) you get stuck—so you don't have the added frustration of trying to figure out what to do when you're already feeling down. (One will help you when you know what you're struggling with, and one will help you when you feel a general malaise that you can't explain.)

And then you'll work through an in-depth, four-part process to raise your *awareness* around when you're stuck—because those lists won't be much help if you're not using them.

Once you're done, you'll be able to move through creative projects more easily—as well as make decisions with less stress, make conscious choices about when to ditch projects that aren't right for you, and more!

---

Here's an example of how you could use the Stay Unstuck work in a creative business!

On the following pages, you'll find an example (pulled straight from the guide) of what using these tactics could look like. I know that often I understand things better when I can see them in action, and that's exactly what I'm sharing with you here. Enjoy!

## SEE IT IN ACTION (AN EXAMPLE)

---

So let's imagine you've been working along within your business for a while, and you absolutely love the client projects you get to do. You look forward to most parts of your business, and you've found a way to push through the parts that aren't quite your favorite. Like everyone, you struggle here and there, but overall, you're pretty happy.

But lately, things have felt a little...off. Nothing you can quite put your finger on, but you're feeling more drained than usual and you aren't quite as excited about working.

After a few weeks of this feeling building, you decide enough is enough. You thought the feeling might pass, but that's not happening, and you don't want this to be your new normal. You realize you're stuck somewhere—you're just not sure where. So you turn to your General Malaise well.

---

Tactic tried:  
Intentional writing

You decide to start with some *Intentional writing*. You clear a little room in your calendar, clean up your office a little so there's no lingering outside mess, and you start writing *I'm feeling less than excited because....* As you write, you start to realize that you don't feel like you have quite as much time for the fun parts of your business as you used to. A couple of months ago, you felt comfortable sitting in your favorite chair in the sun, drinking tea and taking your time as you sketched out ideas for your clients on paper. These days, you feel more like you need to just sit at your desk and get things done.

You're not sure why yet—but you've identified that this lack of time feels like a problem. You'd feel more joy again if you had a little more space for that relaxed working pace, but you don't know what to do to get it back.

---

Tactic tried:  
Brain dump

You look back at your General Malaise list and decide to *Do a brain dump* of all the things you're responsible for. You write fast and furiously, and when you write down the words *respond to emails*, you feel it—the problem is around here somewhere. You finish the

list, but nothing else really comes up; everything else feels pretty much the same as it has.

You sit back and realize that, now that you think about it, you're spending more time on email than you usually do. *Hmm*. But why?

You think about it for a few minutes but don't really come up with anything. So you decide to take a break for a bit—make some lunch, walk your dog, and let the problem rest for a bit in your mind.

---

Tactic tried:  
Go item by item

Once you return, you decide to *Go item by item*—in this case, email by email. With a blank sheet of paper by your side, you start scrolling through each email you've sent, tallying them up into categories (current clients, reader questions, client inquiries, collaborations, past clients, friends) and noting how many you're sending each day and week...and as you go, you start to notice something.

You're spending a good amount of time answering questions from past clients who are ready to take additional steps with the work you've created for them, whether that means working with you again or simply expanding a bit—maybe even working with someone else, which means they're looking for a referral.

As you look through all these emails at once, you notice that these clients are asking very similar questions each time, which means you're sending similar responses—sometimes answering simple questions, sometimes letting them know what else you could do for them, and sometimes referring them to other creatives. And as you work with more and more clients, the volume of questions is naturally increasing.

Now that you see the problem, and you know what it's costing you, you're able to come up with a solution.

First, you'll set aside some time the following week to create standard responses to the most common questions. You'll save these in a readily accessible place so you have a base template to respond from. This should save you time *now*.

But you also have another idea that gets you really excited—you'll create a product designed to help your clients even more effectively use what you create for them, based on the more detailed questions you've received from past clients.

You'll plan to offer it as an option within your services package, and offer it to all your past clients. Then when those who haven't chosen the add-on come back with questions, you can offer it to them again. That way, only the clients who truly need this extra help are getting it.

You'll also create a simple Next Steps document that you'll send at the end of all client work together. This document will include answers to the most basic questions, information about how else you could help them down the line, and referrals to the creatives whose services they're most likely to need next.

This way, you can save yourself from getting at least *some* of the emails in the first place, and with the product, many clients will be able to help themselves in less time than it would take to email several times with you.

Over the next few weeks, things start rolling more smoothly, and that *off* feeling has totally gone away. You're back to hanging out in your chair, drinking tea and working on client projects *and* your own product.

---

The General Malaise list  
worked. Celebrate!

By working through some of the items on the General Malaise list, you figured out your problem and solved it. Hooray!

Now let's fast forward a bit. You outlined the project in a rush of creative excitement, and then over the last few weeks, you've been spending time creating the product and making steady progress. Having the email templates ready to go has saved you some time, and you're happy to be back at a working pace that feels good.

So now you're moving again, and it feels exhilarating! You're back in that place of feeling good about your progress, knowing for sure that this is the right project for you to spend time on and feeling excited to get it out there.

Then one day, as you're working on a section of the written guide you're creating, it hits you: maybe *video* would be a better way to present this material.

Everything comes screeching to a halt as you realize immediately that you're stuck. You've made a lot of progress on the written guide and feel really good about it, but now you have doubts. *What if you should be focusing on video content instead? Does that mean you have to rewrite everything? Won't it take longer and cost more money? Isn't it worth it, though, if it provides the most value for your clients?*

What do you do?!

---

Tactics tried:  
Examining the story  
Intentional writing

After a few stomach-churning moments, you pull yourself together and turn to your Specific Strategies well. After reading through your list of strategies, you decide you'll start with *Examining the story you're telling yourself through Intentional writing*.

So you get out a trusty notebook, head to your favorite sunny spot, and start with, *I feel like I need to switch this product to video because....* After a few minutes, you realize that several other business owners you respect highly have created videos for *their* clients, and you worry it makes them seem more legitimate than you. Aha!

Now that you get where the idea came from, you know that *this alone* isn't reason enough (for you) to make the switch. But now that the idea has come to you, you want to make sure you're not ignoring what would be best for your clients—after all, they're the ones you're creating this for.

---

Tactic tried:  
Go back to the basics

So you decide to *Go back to the basics*. You open the folder (physical or digital) where you keep all the details about your ideal clients. You looked at this when you began the project, but now you're searching for more clues. You look at the list of past clients you've worked with that you truly loved, and try to think about who would prefer video and who would prefer something written. You feel like some would prefer to hear you talk about the ideas and others would prefer to see them written down. Now you know

that both versions could be helpful—but you still don’t have an answer.

---

Tactic tried:  
Take a break

So you decide it’s time to *Take a break*. Your brain is melting (the worst feeling, right?!) and you just want to think about something else for a while. So you decide to sign off work for the day, spending the evening cooking a delicious meal (or ordering takeout—we don’t judge here), and reading on your couch in front of the fireplace.

The next day you come back to your office feeling rested after a good night of sleep and a few minutes of stretching.

You jump back into this getting-unstuck business—after all, you had the morning blocked off to work on this project. The sooner you get unstuck, the more you’ll be able to do.

You mentally review the pieces of info you’ve gathered so far. You know that you don’t want to change your entire project *just* because other business owners have created similar resources using video, but you also know that about half of your clients would probably benefit from hearing you talk about the ideas rather than just reading about them.

---

Tactic tried:  
Pros and cons list

A clear decision hasn’t hit you overnight, so you decide it’s time to make a good old-fashioned *Pros and cons* list. You follow the steps for that tactic, and once you’re done, you still feel like there are good reasons to do both options.

---

Tactic tried:  
Intentional writing

Instead of feeling frustrated, though, you decide to turn once more to *Intentional writing*. You know that you’ve gathered enough details by now to make a decision; you just need to pull the decision out of you.

After a few minutes of writing, you realize what’s best for your project. You’ll complete the written guide you’ve been creating, and then you’ll purchase a podcast microphone and create an audio recording of the guide. Anyone who prefers to listen can do so, and for the couple of diagrams or illustrations you plan to include, they can simply refer to the written guide when needed.

---

The Specific Struggles tactics  
worked as well. Yay! Relief!

Relief comes immediately. Not because you don't have to derail your entire project—you would have been totally willing to make big changes if it was best for the product and for your clients—but because you have an *answer* and you can now spend the rest of your morning working on the project, just as you had planned!

I hope this example helps you see the power of having both kinds of creative wells set up and in place. These kinds of situations come up often for creatives, and having a way to handle them without going completely off the rails is *the best feeling*.

# READY TO GET STARTED?

---

Stay Unstuck is available for you to begin right away!

---

[ericamidkiff.com/stayunstuck](http://ericamidkiff.com/stayunstuck)

When you purchase Stay Unstuck, you'll get a 68-page self-paced guide that includes the following:

- A detailed list of 25 tactics you can use right now to get unstuck on any creative projects or decisions
- Another list of 7 tactics that can help you when you feel a general malaise and you're not sure what's going on
- Step-by-step instructions for choosing which tactics to try, adding in others that work for you, and setting up your own personalized lists
- A powerful four-part process to help you raise awareness around when you're stuck
- Instructions for keeping up with your lists (so you don't slide back into old, comfortable-but-unhelpful patterns)
- Guiding worksheets (8 of them to be exact) that will help you carry out the ideas in the guide
- The confidence you need to get back to work!

If this sounds like just what you've been needing, head to [ericamidkiff.com/stayunstuck](http://ericamidkiff.com/stayunstuck) to learn more and sign up.

And if you have any questions at all, please reach out:  
[erica@ericamidkiff.com](mailto:erica@ericamidkiff.com)!

Don't let the inevitability of future stuck-ness defeat you. Take action now!

With much love,  
Erica

# WHO CREATED STAY UNSTUCK?

---



Hey there! I'm Erica Midkiff, and I created Stay Unstuck.

I started out as a copy editor, and eventually added content coaching to my repertoire. Over the years, I offered a *lot* of advice to writers and business owners about how to get unstuck when some creative block or other came up.

Eventually, I decided to collect all the different tactics I'd been suggesting into a simple guide to help more than just the one-on-one clients I'd worked with.

But of course, as I dove into the project, that "simple guide" became so much more! I realized that while I had this incredible list of ways to get unstuck, *I wasn't using these ideas when I got stuck on my own projects.*

And that didn't feel good.

So I began to dig deeper, trying to figure out how to help us all (me included) *use* these tactics much more regularly. I decided that we could do that by intentionally gathering them into lists that we can easily access and then becoming more aware of all the times we're stuck, which would then help us turn to those lists more often. And that's how the current version of Stay Unstuck was born.

I still do some content coaching here and there, but these days, I'm really diving deeper into the ways that we as creatives can make space for the things that will truly make a difference in our businesses and lives—the important-but-not-urgent work that helps us get all our ideas, knowledge, wisdom, and more out of our heads and into our lives.

It's a fun journey, and I hope you'll join me! [ericamidkiff.com](http://ericamidkiff.com) / [@ericatmidkiff](https://www.instagram.com/ericatmidkiff) on Instagram

*Photo of me by W&E Photographie*