



Pattern for Contemplative Practice

Spontaneity and improvisation arise out of structure. This is my recommended structure for daily contemplative practice. I encourage you to print out this handout and place it somewhere in your sacred making space — your *temenos* — where you can easily reference it.

- 1. *Make a commitment to show up.*** The decision to show up for the part of yourself that brings you to being a maker, to doing what you are here to do, needs cultivation, like watering a plant, on a regular basis.
- 2. *Leave everything behind.*** In order to bring out our best work, our infinite particular, we must defy the cultural trend to be "on call." This means leaving our devices, distractions, and duties behind. In this way we protect the sacred space, the *temenos*, and make room for the muse.
- 3. *Gather your materials.*** It is important to have your tools set up in your space so that you will feel invited to begin each day.
- 4. *Open your space.*** Begin with a ritual for opening your practice that makes sense to *you* — lighting a candle, filling a clear glass of water, arranging fresh flowers, etc.
- 5. *Set your intentions.*** Take five minutes to sit quietly and set your intention for your practice.
- 6. *Warm up.*** Use the writing practice with which I begin all my classes. There are three rules: keep your hand moving, stay on the paper, and write words. Use a tool you don't need to dip — like a pencil, fine-point pen, crayon or colored pencil. Experiment with closing your eyes, writing with your nondominant hand, writing at different scales and in different directions.
- 7. *Take your time.*** Not hurrying is rest. There is absolutely no hurry. This has nothing to do with how far you get. It has everything to do with how engaged you are. All mistakes are welcome.
- 8. *Reflect and make notes.*** Take time when you are done with your practice to reflect and make some notes — "welcome whatever comes." This will make a difference in your practice and your awareness of your process.
- 9. *Close your space.*** End by blowing out the candle, emptying the water, carrying the flowers out of your space, etc.