*[Remember you can capitalize or lowercase letters any way you would like.]*

Step 1: The Hunch

Any project starts with a hunch and you have to act on it. It’s a total risk because you’re just about to jump off a cliff. You have to go for it if you believe in it.

Step 2: Talk About It

Tell your family, tell your friends, tell your community. They’re the people who are going to support you on this whole treacherous journey of the creative process, so involve and engage them.

Step 3: The Sponge

I’m going to tons of art shows, watching a lot of movies, reading voraciously, and sponging up information to try to formulate my own idea about the subject.

Step 4: Build

And it begins. Everything out on the sketchbook first, run through the mental filter of does this work. Then more ideas. The "I can't stop the background noise in my head while I'm going through my daily life" amount of ideas. Then run them quickly through a mental filter questioning how the solution fits the objective to kill off the way-too-crazy or just-too-pretty. The strong will survive.

Step 5: Confusion

Dread. Heart of Darkness. Forest of fire, doubt, fear…

But as hard as it is — and it is really hard — any project gets infinitely better after I’ve rumbled with all of my fears.

Step 6: Just Step Away

Take a breather. Literally just step away from the project Let it marinate. Don’t look at it or think about it.

Step 7: "The Love Sandwich"

To give constructive feedback, always snuggle it in love because we’re only human, and we’re vulnerable. Set expectations for where you are in the project, then ask questions in a way that allows for “the love sandwich”:

First, “What works for you?”

Then, “What doesn’t work for you?”

Then, “What works for you?” again.

If you just ask people for feedback, they’ll go straight for the jugular.

Step 8: The Premature Breakthroughlation

You’ll find in a project that you’ll have many small breakthroughs. You have to celebrate those breakthroughs, because they’re ultimately going to lead to the Big Breakthrough.

Step 9: Revisit Your Notes

I always do this throughout the project, but especially during that last home stretch. I revisit all my notes and think back, and always find a clue, that missing link that brings it all home.

Step 10: Know When You're Done