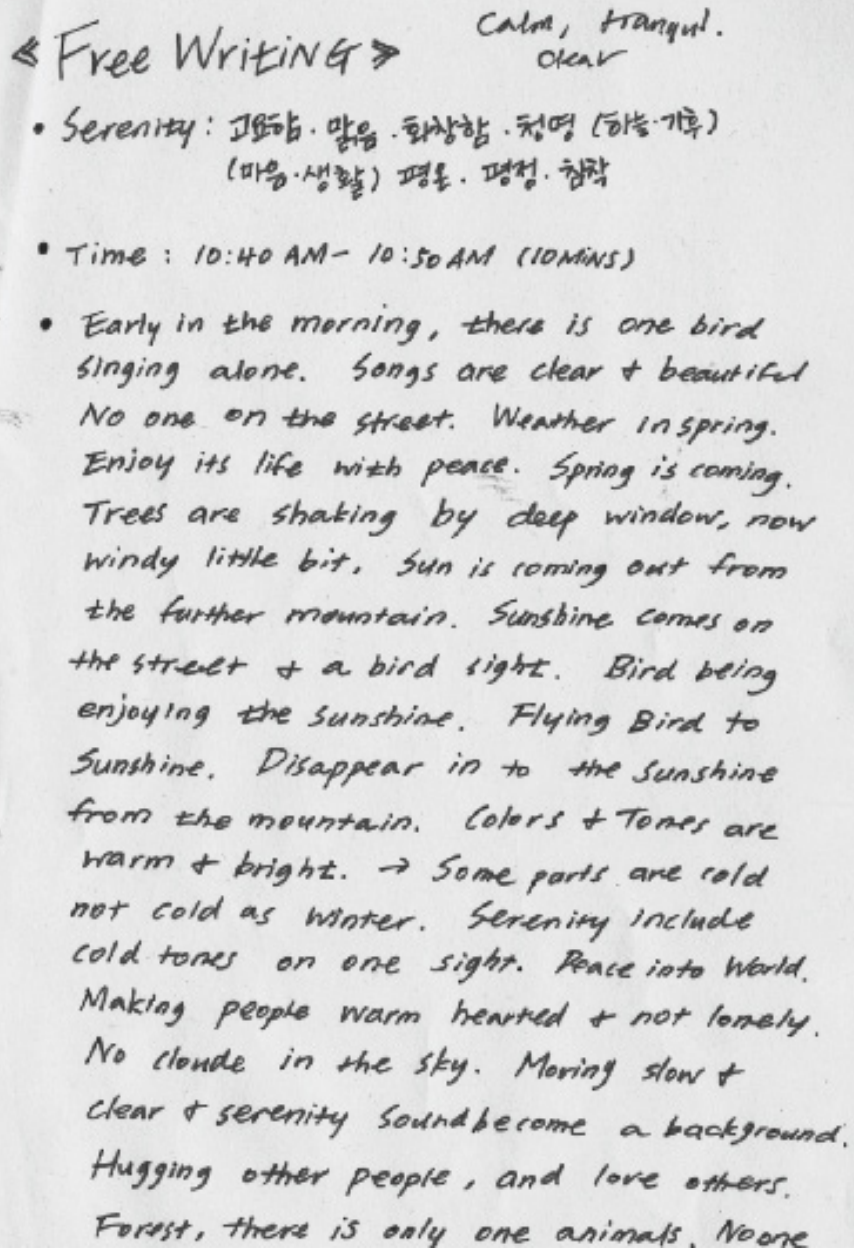## Concept Development Warm-Up

This exercise allows us to start broad, keep an open mind, and not rule out any ideas or concepts early on.

It is important to do this before we focus in and narrow our concept development towards a final outcome.

This series of exercises are just warm-ups for our mind.

Stay curious throughout the process.

Freewrite

We are going to start with a **single keyword** to brainstorm around as a jumping-off point for concept develpment. Choose a **provocative, challenging, abstract, or inspirational word** that relates to your project brief.

Free writing is an unedited flow of your thoughts.

· Write down everything that comes to mind about the keyword. Even if your mind wanders, write that down too. Record everything uninhibited.

· Be in the moment. Let go of outcomes, and just explore the chosen keyword.

· Once the timer starts, do not stop writing until the end of the free write.

· Do not worry about grammar, spelling, or even making sense.

Image by Hyemin Hailey Lee from "Design For Motion," Austin Shaw.

Freewrite

free write – Grandma

When I think of her, i think about innocence. i think about her culture and the war she survived. i think about when we folded 1000 cranes together. When i was 3, she would baby sit me and I only knew how to do the first 3 steps and i would always pass it to her to finish. recently mom, her and I sat together and folded. it was a moment I will never forget. I want to know why 1000 crane, what does that truly mean to her. She has 1000 cranes sitting above her TV. when Kris was little, they started folding 1000 cranes as a gift for my mom. the project took 20 years and i took it upon myself to finish it when I was 14. Now my mom has 1000 cranes in her kitchen. recently, when i got to college, i started folding my own collection of 1000 crane. I think im at 400. i wonder when grandma learned how to fold? why did she learn and who taught her?

At first, it may be difficult to let go of the internal editor.

· We spend a lot of time in our daily lives editing ourselves.

· Although free writing may be uncomfortable at first, it can help jump-start the creative process if you stick with it.

· Do not worry about what comes out in your free write. It can just be for you if you want. You don't have to share it.
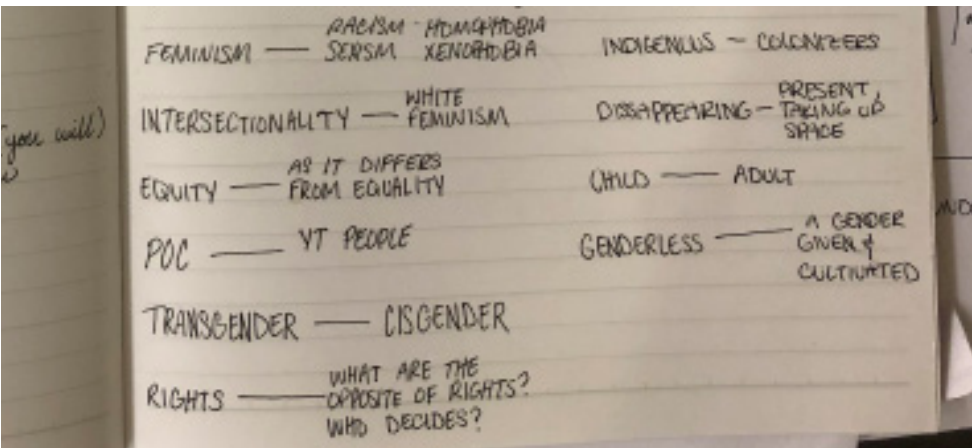
Freewrite

There will often be unexpected ideas or associations that arise during a free write.

When an idea, image, or emotion unfolds during a free write, try to see where it takes you.

These are the kinds of discoveries we seek.

Don't think about the final outcome at all or how it relates to your project yet. Only focus on the word itself.

Word List

After the free write is over, identify the words or ideas that most resonate with your project and the creative brief.

**Seek keywords that have meaning and depth in relation to your project.**

Create juxtapositions by including the **opposite definition of those keywords as well.**

Key Words

Movement // Stasis
Evoke // Oppress
Dreamlike // Realistic
Sensation // Mundane
Relaxation // Stress
Momentary // Eternity
Beauty // Disgust
Frozen // Ignite
Escape // Enter
Envelope // Release
Mist // Stone
Soft // Hardened
Space // Enclosed
Docile // Aggressive
Euphoric // Fearful
Thoughtful // Brain dead
Life // Death
Seconds // Decades
Fade // Appear

Lack // Excess
Internal // External
Buddhism // Atheist
Chant // Silence
Exhale // Inhale
Peace // Chaos
Mind // Body
Equilibrium // Imbalanced
Conscious // Unconscious
Positivity // Negativity
Fresh // Decay
Bliss // Hell
Harmony // Discord
Lift // Fall
Pure // Imperfection
Enjoy // Distaste

Image by Peter Clark from "Design For Motion," by Austin Shaw
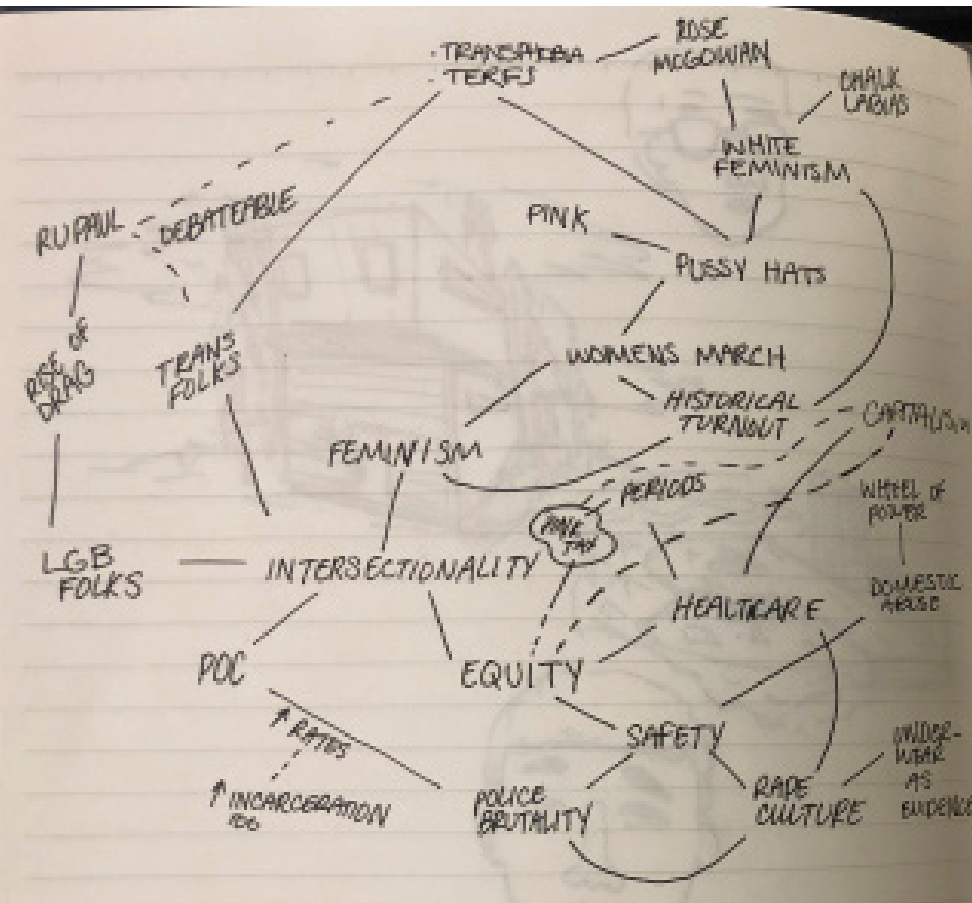
Mind Map

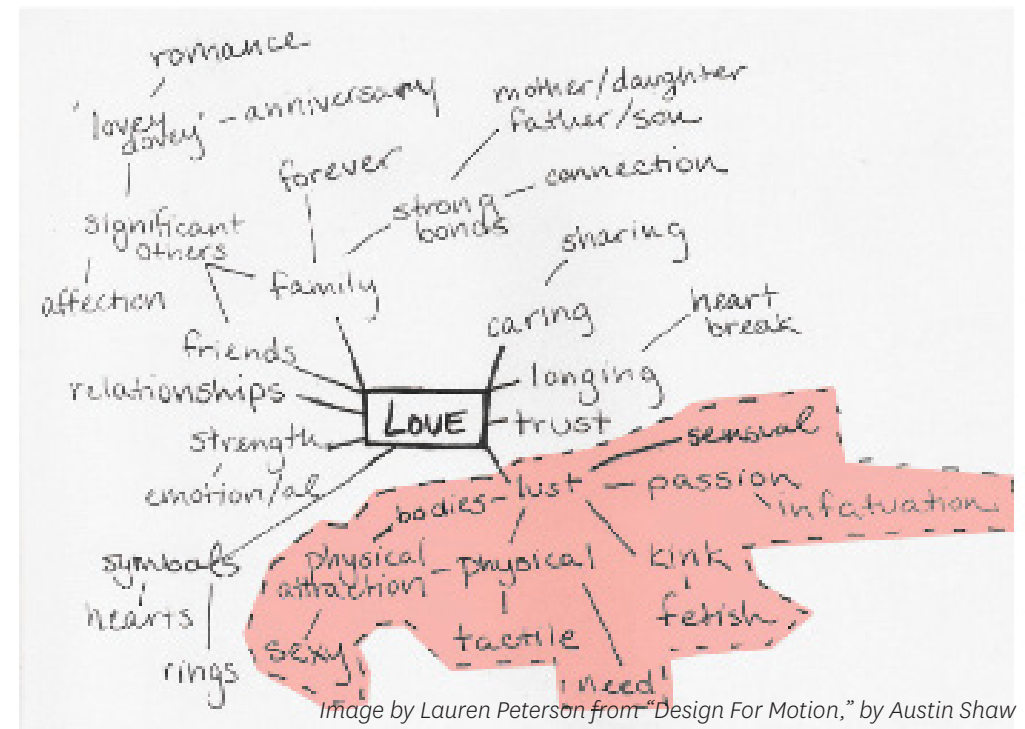Now **translate the word list into a mind map.**

Mind maps help to organize our keywords into various associations or thought structures.

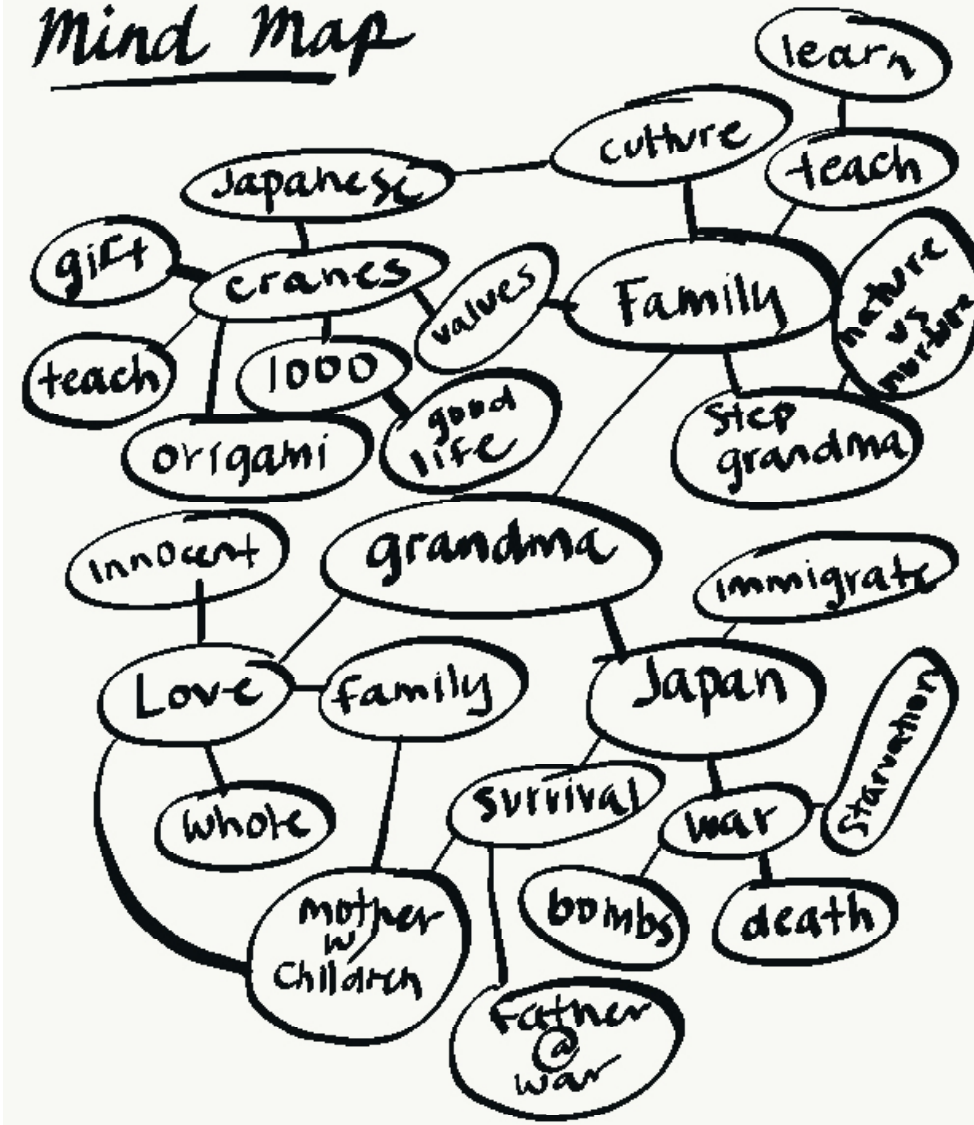The previous exercise focused on refining and selecting keywords.

The mind map expands ideas and creates new connections.

At this stage, concepts and different directions usually begin to emerge.

Image by Lauren Peterson from "Design For Motion," by Austin Shaw

Concept Development

Mind Map

**By the time the mind map is completed, you may be having flashes or glimpses about what the concept is becoming.**

Ideas, emotions, images, or narratives that emerged during the previous stages are beginning to orbit around the creative brief.

However, try to maintain a flexible attitude as the concept is still forming.

· We aren't married to one idea just yet.
· We are still exploring and making discoveries.

Do's and Don'ts List
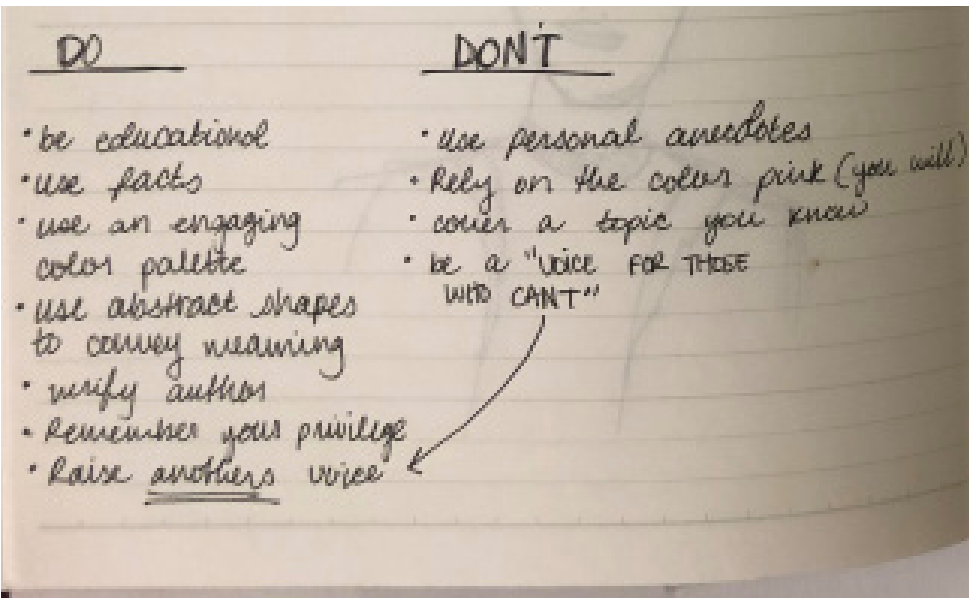
The DOs & DON'Ts list organizes intentions and creative choices about the direction of the project.

Putting these choices down on paper begins to define the borders of the concept.

The goal is to loosely define what we want the concept to be and equally important–what we want to avoid.

Consider listing qualities—such as **visual style, emotional tone, ideas, themes, technical aspects, audience identification, personal growth**.

List loose guidelines that help keep you focused on what you want to communicate, and the kind of story you want to tell.

Check back and look at this list as your progress through the project as a reminder. Even this list isn't set in stone but provides a nice framework for you to try and follow.
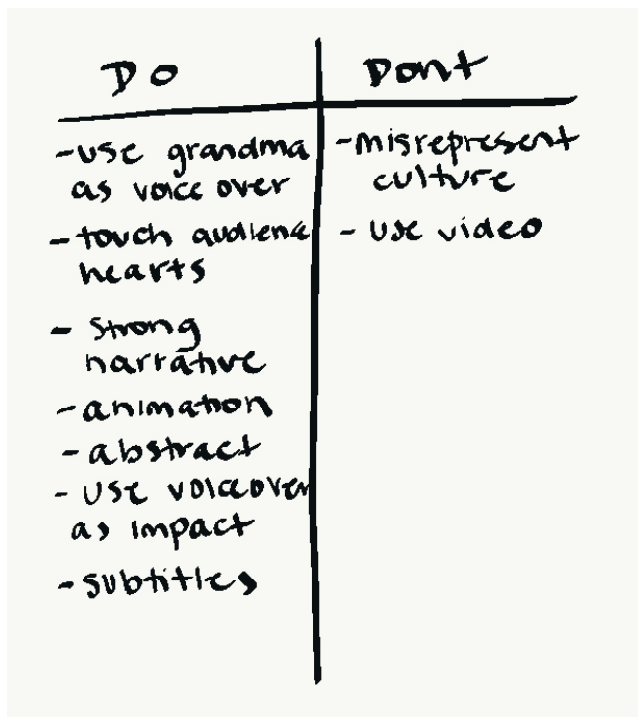
Internal Search

These exercises encouraged an **internal search for ideas and inspiration.**

Ideally, you are arriving at an initial shape for your concept.

The initial shape of a concept is a jumping-off point into the next stages of concept development.

DO
- Rely on optics and real footage rather than digital methods
- Create something seemingly disjointed
- Leave people somewhat confused at the end of viewing the project
- Rely on heaving finishing and color grading
- Make this an editing piece
- Allow people to help you
- Using different techniques

DO NOT
- Use 3D unless you can make it look photorealistic and be comped perfectly into a scene
- Go MTV on this shit
- Forget you may not be able to do this kind of stuff for a while

Image by Joe Ball from "Design For Motion," by Austin Shaw

Intended Audience

To help focus the intentions, goals, and design of the website, briefly define your target demographic in a short statement. Try to explain what type of user may visit your site, including age range, technological usage, interests, how they find your site and what they get out of it.

Target Audience

User Persona

Eli - 22 - He/Him/His

Target Demographic Statement

The target demographic for this website is existing fans of the show who are looking for external creative content, and potential fans of the show who are looking to gain a better understanding of the content before committing to listening.

Bio

Eli is a student designer and illustrator who enjoys quirky, suspenseful, and funny content.
He is an art and comic lover and has been a fan of Welcome to Night Vale (WTNV) for the last seven years.

Goals

Eli wants to enjoy a WTNV themed immersive, visual experience.

Target Humans

MFM has a broad range of listeners; all kinds of humans from different backgrounds and life-styles. My representation of their Minisodes is targeted more directly at a younger audience (24-33) who are already fans, with a dark sense of humor and a love of extravagant sass.

Female-identifying listeners might vibe more with my page as the podcast consistently jabs at toxic masculinity and touts feminist praises. These users would come across my page in their research of the MFM site, fan cult, live show schedule, and/or in their general podcast research.

After interacting with my site, users will walk away with a new appreciation of Hometown stories; whether they're about the real murder stuff, finding stuff in walls, badass grandmas, or funny drug stories, they'll be less likely to skip Minisodes after having an engaging visual experience with them. For listeners who already love Hometowns, don't have anything to write in about, but want to engage in ways other than listening, my site provides a different experience with the content. And maybe they'll buy some merch after seeing the adorable way MFM sayings are displayed on my site!

Moodboard

With this shape in mind, we can start our **external search for inspiration.**

Mood boards serve to as containers for inspiration.

Inspiration can be **visual, emotional, conceptual, or narrative.**

Visual components could include color, typography, texture, style.

Written Concept & Goals

"If you can write down your idea in a paragraph, and it makes sense, I think that is a great foundation for what you are going to do visually. It helps you distill an idea into something simple enough to execute. I encourage designers to do that because it helps get to the core of an idea."

~ Beat Baudenbacher, Designer/Director

Setting goals for both the user and the narrative will help you write your concept. What do you want the user to get out of the experience and how do you want the story communicated/percieved?

Written descriptions summarize and convey the story and vision of a concept through words in addition to your moodboards and sketches.

It helps define and frame the **goals, feeling/tone, intended audience, style, as well as the breakdown of the narrative structure.**

This could also be considered what is called your **"elevator pitch."** Can you explain your project in the time it takes to ride in an elevator with someone?