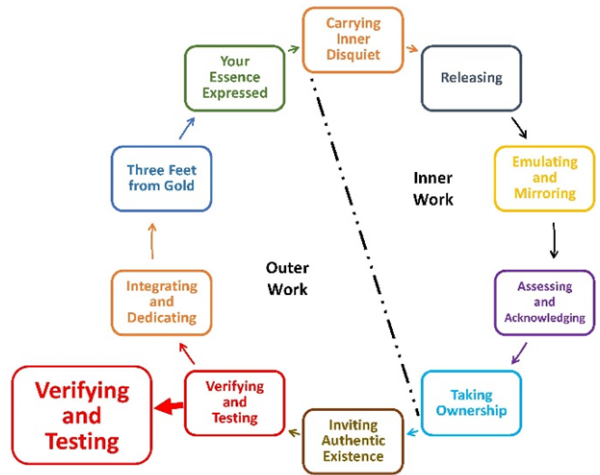


Verifying and Testing

This guidepost involves some of the same work started in the [Assessing and Acknowledging](#) stage, but at a deeper level. Your creative voice continues to be refined. You can see which skills still need to be developed, while also looking back to confirm the growth you've experienced.

In this stage, you are more outwardly living into your creative life than in [Assessing and Acknowledging](#), so the challenges, while also similar, can feel more intense. Opportunities to receive feedback, judgment, and criticism are abundant. Your supporters and the skeptics of your creative endeavors begin to reveal themselves. You will notice who in your world 'gets' you, who doesn't understand what you're doing, and those who choose not to try.

Check your [boundaries](#), as others will test your dedication to your creative work. Recognizing trustworthy sources and the right timing to ask for/receive feedback are valuable skills. Resilience, self-honesty, and self-awareness are also key in navigating this stage and moving forward into **Integrating and Dedicating**.



1. Based on this description of **Verifying and Testing** and our discussion about it in [Episode 34](#), have you ever been in, or are you currently in, this stage of the creativity cycle?

2. What does **Verifying and Testing** look like in your life? How do you experience it? How does it show up in both your day-to-day living and in your writing practice?

Be sure to tune in to Episode 35 to hear Melody A Scout's perspective on how **Verifying and Testing** are evident in each of the five seasons.

3. What do you believe this stage has to teach you? About yourself? About your writing practice?

4. Do you feel “stuck” in this stage? If so, what would it take for you to move forward? Or do you already feel ready to move on?

5. Sometimes we repeat a particular stage or we “loop” back to it because we haven’t yet learned, experienced, or come to believe something that we need from this stage in order to move on.

If you’ve experienced this stage before, why do you think you’ve come back to it again? Did you try something last time (perhaps a new way of thinking or doing) that did or did not help you move on? If it didn’t work, why? If it did work, do you think it might work again? Or do you need to try something else?

You may not have the answers in this moment, but I invite you to journal about your current circumstances related to this stage. Include your external situation (think people, places, things in your life), as well as your inner landscape (your emotions—good and bad; your beliefs; your values). Be open to the possibility that allowing yourself to explore all aspects of your life as it is now will uncover what you need to do or think next to move forward.

Creativity, the writing mindset, and this journey are not linear. But, for simplicity, we are exploring them as a 10-stage cycle or quest. Be sure to tune into the [Around the Writer’s Table](#) podcast for our discussions about each stage/guidepost. Next: **Integrating and Dedicating**.

