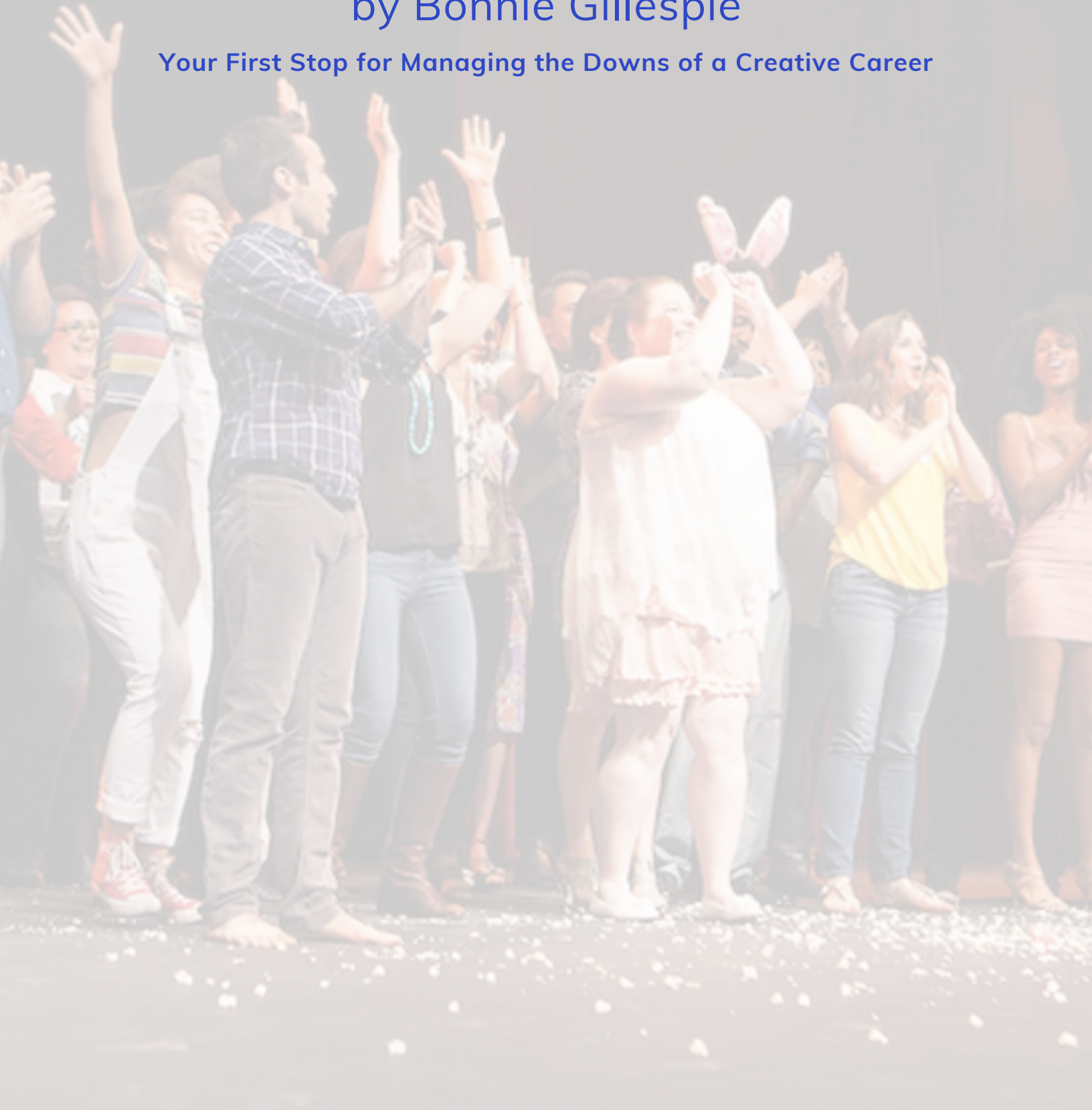


SMFA Dip Kit

by Bonnie Gillespie

Your First Stop for Managing the Downs of a Creative Career





SMFA DIP KIT

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Thank you for grabbing your very own copy of my **SMFA Dip Kit**!

This is a treasure I built for creative storytellers in our flagship membership, **Get in Gear for the Next Tier**, and this resource has had such a positive impact on the quality of life of so many folks that I'm thrilled to be able to share it with you today.

Be sure you begin by listening to the MP3 that accompanies this document — also check out the bonus MP3... it's a wee peptalk from me, should you need it — and *then* dig in on customizing your own Dip List so you have it handy when you need it most.

Remember, gorgeous, you've GOT this and **you are enough**! You've believed in yourself and you've known the depth of your enoughness before and you will again. Knowing you have the ability to weather the downs — combined with your goal of getting better at moving through them *faster* — is what makes these dips less of a thing in the big picture. This rollercoaster ride of a creative life is so much fun when we see the dips for what they are: temporary slow-downs of momentum before the climb that takes us to ever-greater tiers ahead. The greatest gift you give to the world is your inspired storytelling, so get back at it when it feels right. **We need you!** :)

Come jam with us in the official Bonnie Gillespie instructional dojo to go deeper with this badassery. Join in the convo at a my blog. If you're out on social media, toss up the **#SMFAninjas** hashtag to get on our radar (it's like the Bat Signal, but cooler) so we can support you and celebrate you as you're doing this work.

Oh, and if you find this or any other of our free resources of exceptional value, we'd love a photo of you with your copy of **Self-Management for Actors** for our awesome gallery or even a nice review at Amazon! And of course, thank me when you hold up something gold and shiny someday. You KNOW I'll be watching.

Cannot wait to cheer you on as you continue to live your dreams!



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Why Dips Happen

First off, dips are an entirely natural part of life! That's why it's "dip management," not "dip elimination" we're going for, here.

As artists, we need the downs in order to enjoy the ups... and to relate with those whose stories we were born to tell. There's no greater sign of growth than experiencing the downs in that rollercoaster ride, so it's important to remember: When the dips hit, don't rush to think there's something to FIX.

Acknowledge the dip, be grateful for the indication that you're growing, then choose an item from your Dip List to start turning things around. While I don't want you to *wallow* in dips, I also don't want you to rush through them. They have their purpose!

One big tip that will serve you well: Unless it's just super obvious or it's an issue that deserves therapy, don't try and figure out WHY any particular dip came along. We tend to try and figure out why dips hit because we believe that we'll feel better if we could just understand **how** we got into this "bad" place.

Welp, since the point of trying to figure that stuff out is to feel better, just grab something from the Dip List that you know helps you feel better... then sometime later *maybe* try to figure out why you got into the lower spot you've just left behind. It'll be far easier to figure out the "how you got there" thing when you're no longer in a dip (if you even still care by then).



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When Dips Happen

You may have entirely different reasons and seasons for dips than other creatives you know.

I personally know I'll always have a dip around my mother's birthday and another around the anniversary of her death. It's just a reality of my life that those days require a lot of extra love and patience and breathing and naps in my schedule. I don't judge myself for this; I simply plan ahead for it!

Of course, there are dips we can't plan for — ones that happen due to facing a breakup, being dropped by our reps, having financing fall through on a project, not getting that promotion, or at that moment we see the actor who **did** get the part on that last gig. Just knowing dips DO come means we can prepare ourselves with ways to move out of the dips so at least after recognizing we've entered a dip, we can get to movin' on up without delay.

As you tune in for this kind of work, begin to notice your unique early warning signs that a dip is on its way.

For me, that's stuff like becoming more easily offended or reacting more defensively about comments that normally wouldn't upset me. Things like taking it personally when someone is a reckless driver or a demanding patron at the post office. Any online spat I just can't leave alone. Just noticing that I'm clocking in for some ego-centered emotional dings is my way of knowing it's time to grab my own Dip Kit! (Yes! I have one too.)



Honor Wallow Time without Slashing Your Tires

Decide how much airtime the dips will get in your life. Make this decision while you're NOT in a dip.

I've gotten so practiced at this that I allow myself an hour, tops. Yup. When news comes at me the wrong way and surprises me with a trip to the downs, I get an hour to feel helpless and behave as if I live in the Pit of Despair, and then onward I go! The hubs? He gets a day.

You may decide a fight with your roommate is reason for five hours in the downs, a released avail is worth two days, an agent dropping you gets a week, losing your job deserves a fortnight, and your pilot concept getting stolen by a colleague and picked up by a studio earns a month (and a visit to your badass attorney). Great! Set up that timeline *before* you're in the downs and then stick to it when a dip hits.

Know the difference between activities that feed the dips and those that provide a temporary cure for the dips. Definitely don't choose a "feel good" item from your Dip List that you have a tendency to use as a reason to beat yourself up (like calling an ex who initially makes you feel great but later leaves you asking yourself what went wrong, or like way overindulging in a treat so that you go from enjoying having given yourself the sugar to being cruel to yourself about your willpower).

(continued...)



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(...continued)

Important: The definition of poison is *anything* to excess. Be honest with yourself about what on your list has the potential to act as a poison in your system. REMOVE those items from your list when you're performing maintenance on it over time! (And yes, I recommend you perform maintenance on your Dip List to be sure it's still representing what lights you up, over time.) Know the difference between what's a quick fix and what's quicksand.

As you're moving around in your life — especially when you're *not* feeling low — pay attention to what turns you on, what thrills you to your core, what excites you for no good reason. Add those items to your Dip List so you have 'em at the ready when you need a go-to to help you out of a dip. Especially if they're never-fail items!

Whatever you do, don't slash your tires by choosing "make it worsers" in your life! Things that make it worse won't serve you! They'll only keep you in a dip longer than is necessary and you'll be well on your way to the most unpleasant of all places: **Bitterville**.

(I explain the tire-slashing metaphor in the MP3 that goes with this PDF. In short, it's the idea that you don't come out to your car, notice a flat tire, then immediately slash the other 3 tires! Don't make it worse with "make it worsers" that made their way onto your Dip Kit! Keep your list clean and your enoughness high. You've got this!)



Tackle This List in (at Least) 5 Ways

The power in coming at this list in various ways is that you'll never be at a loss for a way to dig in! The time to figure out how to maximize your energy is **not** while you're in the middle of a dip. ;)

Far better to have a go-to for the times you're in a dip and also looking to do something alone that costs very little just by checking out your list from those directions! Revisit the MP3 that came with this PDF for the juicy details on organizing the list.

What I love about adding that 6th way — How Long Since Last Done — to my list is that it makes it clear that I have activities that always help get me OUT of a dip that I could do way more frequently and, hey, **why would I deprive myself of activities that make me happy?!?** Whether I'm in a dip or not, these are things I start making a part of my regular schedule once I remind myself how effective they can be.

Our ideal day gets much more in focus when we do more of the things that bring us joy as often as possible! So analyze your lists by Free to Expensive, by Solo to Group, by Spontaneous to Planned, by Quick to Longer Duration, and ultimately by Easy to Difficult. When you need to start in on your Dip List from a point of affordability, you've got it! If others' energies are what you're in need of, grab that group list! If you want to work ahead and have regularly-scheduled dip-prevention playdates on the books, start planning! And when you only have a half-hour to devote to your dip work, that quick list is your friend. :)

(continued...)



(...continued)

Overall, this list in these various sort-orders should ensure that you aren't in the midst of a dip STARTING to figure out what to do to begin climbing out. It's like establishing your NO line before a compelling but sketchy showbiz offer is in front of you. That setting dispassionately created *before* you're in the moment of all that emotion is a gift for future you that simplifies everything.

Once you've played with the list in a few different sort orders, hit it with a highlighter so the most effective items are the easiest to find! Pop a couple of the biggies on sticky notes around your workspace. Create reminders to go off weeks and months from now in your calendar.

Have things on hand that you know add to your pleasure. For example, I know a LUSH bubble bath is a great fix for my dips. Welp, if I've run out of LUSH bubble bath bars and it's 3am when a dip hits, I'm screwed for using a very effective (and very 3am-appropriate) method for cheering myself up. So, I make sure I'm always well stocked in LUSH goodies. You may wanna keep your favorite songs in a backed up playlist rather than having to figure out your music-streaming password at a crucial dip moment that a great playlist would've fixed.

If you've got close friends or accountability buddies who are game to help you in your quest to move through dips with grace, equip them with copies of your top-ranked lists so when you reach out to them for an assist, they know exactly how best to inspire you when you may be feeling like wallowing a little longer (or slashing another tire). And of course, you can offer to provide the same support for them!



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<u>last done</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>population</u>	<u>plan</u>	<u>duration</u>	<u>ease</u>	<u>activity o' joy</u>
						arrange flowers
						attend an online musical or concert
						attend online church/temple/mosque services
						bake something yummy
						bask in the sunny spot like a cat
						be of service
						blow bubbles
						book a float tank experience
						break out the journal
						break out the LEGOs
						build a self-care syllabus
						buy flowers
						challenge bonniegillespie on the Words With Friends app
						clean out a closet
						clear clutter
						contact a buddy who has agreed to help
						create a character
						create an "intention" slideshow of images
						create something... anything
						cut out paper dolls
						dance
						do a self-care mini-challenge
						do an '80s movie montage-style wardrobe quick-change party
						do an hour (and only an hour) of worry o'clock
						do cartwheels and summersaults
						do some arts and crafts



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<u>last done</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>population</u>	<u>plan</u>	<u>duration</u>	<u>ease</u>	<u>activity o' joy</u>
						donate (time or money) to a charity
						donate blood
						draw
						dress up fancy and go nowhere fancy
						eat a favorite meal
						exercise outside
						explore EFT/tapping
						flip through an old photo album
						fondle a worry stone
						freewrite
						get a massage (chair massage, self massage, foot massage)
						get lost in a great book
						get takeout from a great restaurant and set the table for it
						give yourself a facial
						give yourself a mani-pedi
						go for a short walk
						go on a digital detox
						go on a nature hike
						go to a favorite restaurant and order a fabulous treat (to go)
						go to a lake
						go to a museum
						go to a river
						go to church/temple/mosque
						go to the beach
						go to the park
						have an aromatherapy shower



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<u>last done</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>population</u>	<u>plan</u>	<u>duration</u>	<u>ease</u>	<u>activity o' joy</u>
						hit the day spa
						ice skate
						indulge in a bubble bath
						invent a mocktail
						jam to a dip-proof playlist
						join a drum circle
						knit
						listen to 432 Hz tracks on YouTube
						listen to podcasts
						listen to Abraham-Hicks
						make a friendship bracelet and send it to a friend
						make a gratitude list
						make a vision board
						masturbate
						meditate
						paint
						pick flowers
						plan some travel
						play a dip-proof YouTube playlist
						play a favorite song
						play an instrument
						play Bonnie's <i>SMFA</i> Dip Kit bonus peptalk MP3
						play in a coloring book
						play Tibetan singing bowls (your own or via livestream)
						play with animals
						play with stickers



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<u>last done</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>population</u>	<u>plan</u>	<u>duration</u>	<u>ease</u>	<u>activity o' joy</u>
						pop on a bright color (makeup, nails, drawn-on tattoo)
						practice bilateral stimulation
						practice mindful mindlessness
						practice with the LAX-VOX apparatus
						practice yoga
						pray
						punch into the air
						put on a dip-proof piece of clothing
						put together a scale model
						put your web browser onto a nature scene and enjoy silence
						read for pleasure
						read (via Zoom) to children in the hospital
						ride a bike
						roller skate
						schedule time for a massage
						scream into a pillow
						sculpt
						send an email of gratitude to someone who's on your mind
						sing karaoke
						sip hot tea
						sit in deep gratitude
						take a breathwork class
						take a nap
						take a nature hike
						take an online class in something new
						throw a virtual potluck party



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<u>last done</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>population</u>	<u>plan</u>	<u>duration</u>	<u>ease</u>	<u>activity o' joy</u>
						transcribe a monologue
						try a new recipe
						tune up the bike
						visit a list of wins you created while outside the dip
						visit a museum website for a virtual tour
						visit an animal shelter and cuddle some cuties
						visit inspiring hashtags (but don't overstay on social media)
						visit a non-stressful online social group
						visit virtually with civilian (non-showbiz) friends
						visit your "ponies for everyone money" list
						volunteer at a soup kitchen
						wash the car
						watch a tear-jerker movie
						watch TED Talks
						wear a favorite outfit
						wear a hat
						wear a lovely scent
						work a word puzzle
						work out
						write a scene
						write in a "bitch book" until the angries are out
						write someone an old-school "pen pal" letter (by hand)
						write with a favorite pen



Dips: Acute vs. Chronic

Something really major happens in the human brain when a pain we're experiencing goes from acute to chronic: A whole new level of brain chemistry starts activating.

When something is **acute**, the brain is aware it's a temporary condition. Chemicals flood in to handle the emergency, to help us endure the threat, to keep us in peak performance for weathering the stress of it all. More importantly, there are protections in place to keep the acute situation from building neural pathways that change who we are. Our brilliant brains are protecting us from becoming victims of that emergency state; they're wired to help us be survivors.

When a condition becomes **chronic**, however, the brain moves things over to a whole other management center, where a different set of brain chemicals flood in. Hormones that depress the system — since we're now in the "this is the way it IS now" state — take over. Since we're not meant to weather extreme stress for extended periods of time, there are systems in the brain to *normalize* the chronic condition. **Who we are changes.**

Anyone who has ever experienced profound loss (a parent dies, a child dies, a spouse dies) knows the shift that happens at the first anniversary of the loss. There's a new normal.

Please visit my blog post linked below and read the tremendously generous comments shared by our community. Share your tips for enduring the dips and the downs that become a part of our lives too!

[Visit the Post](#)



ABOUT BON...

Bonnie Gillespie is living her dreams by helping others figure out how to live theirs. As a weekly columnist, she began demystifying the casting process for actors in 1999. Her most popular book is *Self-Management for Actors*, the curriculum upon which much of her teaching is based. As a producer and Emmy-honored casting director, Bonnie specializes in indie darlings. Whether casting, coaching, or putting the WOO in Hollywood via **Chart Harmony**, she is passionate about leaving this world better than she found it. Bonnie lives by the beach on unceded ancestral Tongva land with her partner, Keith Johnson, the luckiest man in the world.

*Enoughness is an inside job...
and sometimes you need a
guide to find your way there.*




IG: BONNIE.GILLESPIE



YT: BONNIEGILLESPIELIVE



BONNIEGILLESPIE.COM



EVERYTHING WE
FEEL IS TRYING
TO TEACH US
SOMETHING
ABOUT WHO
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