

## A Diploma Work Schedule-plus



Schedule?  
Do I really need a  
schedule? Can't I just  
keep working when I  
feel like it?

**A permaculture design by Cath Johnstone**

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Portfolio Design # 7**

**Framework: CEAP.** Stages of the process highlighted **THUS**, on pages 3, 4, 7 and 11.

**ETHICS:** Primarily people care, but all were considered and their relevance described on pages 3, 7, 10 and 12, highlighted **THUS**.

**TOOLS** used: Client interview, page 4; the Analyst's Couch, page 4; the Feelometer, page 9; mind mapping, page 9; web of connections, page 10. All highlighted **THUS**.

**PRINCIPLES** used: 6 of Holmgren on pages 7, 8 and 9, and 2 of Mollison and Slay on page 10. All highlighted **THUS**.

A design **GOAL** was set at the beginning, page 3, highlighted **THUS**. It was tweaked during writing up; see p 14.

My **REFLECTION** and **EVALUATION** are at the end, on pages 15 - 18.

# THE BIRTH OF A DESIGN

One day, Cath was having a little chat with herself.....

I wonder if we should have a diploma work schedule...

I don't see why. We're perfectly happy without.

But the weeks can slip by without any diploma work happening.

True. And then we panic and overdo it, I know.

And people do keep saying how useful it would be.

But only super-organised people have schedules. That's not us.

Schedules are boring. And restrictive.

But maybe we could try it out...maybe it could help us.

OK, OK! we'll do a schedule, if you insist. Monday, Thursday,

Saturday, Sunday. OK?

Well, OK, but why those days? And do you really want to do both weekend days? And is it all afternoon, just an hour or two, or what?

Err.....



***Hey!! We could do it as a design!***

Oh come off it! It's just a simple decision. Which days, for how long. You're getting melodramatic...

But we could try, it might work. We could make it a speed design, like we did in that workshop. And we do need a new design idea...

Well, you're right there. OK! I'm convinced, let's try. Shall we start next week?

Ah! Typical! You kidding? We're gonna do it right now!

## AND SO, DESIGN #7 WAS CONCEIVED

So, where do we start?

We need a **FRAMEWORK**

I knew that! Which one, do you think?

Well, we've used Design Web, SADIMET, OBREDIMET, and Patrick Whitefield's process, so...

What about CEAP? Only 4 letters. It'll be quick!

Good idea. We'll use CEAP. Let's make sure our readers know....

We're using **CEAP**. Furthermore, we're going to finish it today!

(Readers? Readers?? Really???.....)

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But first, we need to know what we want from this design.

Well duh! We want a schedule!

Yeah, but...I mean, it's got to help us get to the end of the diploma, for example.

True. And it's got to be realistic.

That too. So, what about setting a goal?

My turn for a bright idea. How's this...

**A workable schedule that supports me  
in reaching my diploma goals.**

Sounds like a **GOAL** to me!

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Then we need to consider the **ETHICS**.

Easy! It's about helping us. That's **PEOPLE CARE!**

Great! What about Earth Care?

Err... It's a schedule. I don't know how that can affect the Earth!

Hmm. Me neither. And Fair Shares?

Gimme a break! How can we share a schedule?

OK. No problem. Let's make a start. Maybe they'll become obvious later on in the process.

OK. But how, exactly, is it going to care for us?

Good question. I guess that's for us to design :)

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So, first things first. We have to **COLLECT SITE INFORMATION**.

I guess that's the **C** in **CEAP**, yeah?

You got it!

But we haven't got a site...oh, right. We're the site!

Yep, and as we're the site, we'd better interview ourselves.

**And this is what Cath and Cath found out when they conducted their**

**CLIENT INTERVIEW:**

- ✧ we often have no plan for the day/week outside of the day job and appointments, so we can pass whole days (even weeks) somewhat aimlessly
- ✧ sometimes we don't do any diploma work for a few weeks, feeling guilty about not doing it. And it's not that we don't have time...
- ✧ ...and when we get down to it, it's not always very focused or productive
- ✧ we have resisted having a schedule, even though lots of people advise that it really helps.
- ✧ we're not great at decision-making
- ✧ we're doing long term WWOOFing, so we don't know where we're going to be or what our WWOOF schedule is going to be much in advance.

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Right. That's all true. So what do we do with this information?

That's where the **E** comes in. We have to **EVALUATE THE INFORMATION**. Any ideas how to do that?

As it happens, yes! I think we should use the **ANALYST'S COUCH** tool.

You get on the couch, I'll ask the questions, if you don't mind.

Fine by me...

**And that is exactly what they did. They found out a lot of interesting stuff...**



Q1 Do you think having no schedule is helpful? Why/why not?

A Not really.

- ✧ the aimlessness and lack of a plan leads to time wasting (wondering what I should do, faffing)
- ✧ things don't get done or are left till last minute
- ✧ I sometimes feel discouraged
- ✧ I can feel overwhelmed by the amount to do, and the lack of a plan to do it
- ✧ it can lead to overworking, not allowing enough free time
- ✧ it can lead to a feeling of always having stuff hanging over me.

But on the plus side, it allows maximum flexibility! I do like flexibility.

OK, we can make sure we build flexibility into it later.

Q2 How could a schedule help you?

A It could:

- ✧ reduce the amount of time I waste
- ✧ give me the satisfaction of getting things done, seeing steady progress instead of progress in fits and starts

- ✧ reduce my sense of overwhelm
- ✧ increase my connection to my goals
- ✧ lead to personal growth through pushing at the edges of my comfort zone

### Q3 What is your resistance about?

A Well, it's not completely clear. But these are some of the things:

- ✧ my image of organised people is that they are inflexible, boring. Their efficiency leads to lack of caring
- ✧ my image of myself is that I am not organised, and I'm a bit proud of that, lol!
- ✧ and it all connects also with my deep self-belief that I can't make decisions
- ✧ I don't want to be constrained

### Q4 How could you reduce your resistance?

A I could:

- ✧ think about some of the people I love and respect, who I perceive as very organised, and ask a few questions:
  - ✧ does their being organised reduce their lovability? **No!**
  - ✧ does it constrain them? **Doesn't seem to!**
  - ✧ does it help them? **Yes, they seem not to get bogged down by their work.**
  - ✧ are they inflexible, boring and uncaring? **No, definitely not!**
- ✧ recognise that a schedule would help with my difficulty in making decisions; there would be no need for decisions about when to work. I just follow the plan
- ✧ take a reality check and remind myself that if I were more organised, I would gain all those benefits in Q2.
- ✧ I could work on my self-image, remembering not to label myself as unorganised. That's not who I am. It's a belief, which may not be entirely accurate, and a behaviour pattern which can be changed.

### Q5 If you apply a reality check, is the WWOOFing lifestyle really a

reason not to have a schedule?

A Umm...I suppose not really. That was a bit of a red herring!

- ✧ I have enough experience to know that WWOOF work almost always happens in the morning
- ✧ anyway this schedule is supposed to be flexible. I could think of it as made out of Lego. It can be taken apart and put back together again as necessary.

Fab! Now we're really getting somewhere. Some of those answers are a bit embarrassing though, hey?

Let's not worry about that. Everyone's got issues! We just need to address the issues in the design.

Yeah...OK...and how are we going to do that?

By moving on to CEAP's **A: APPLY THE PRINCIPLES, AND DESIGN!**

**So they looked through their list of all the permaculture principles and immediately found 5 they thought would address their issues.**

Obviously, we must **obtain a yield**, most importantly we need:

- ✧ a schedule that leads to feeling satisfied with progress, that's realistic and not overbearing, that leaves plenty of time for other stuff
- ✧ a sense of having more time
- ✧ increased connection to our diploma goal

OK. And I think we can **catch and store energy**: quite a lot of it! Think of this:

- ✧ all the time we waste by being unorganised, we can capture that
- ✧ and the energy we waste on the negative feelings around that. We're gonna change that!
- ✧ the good energy of motivation we'll get from seeing progress, and moving onwards and upwards!
- ✧ if we had a few minutes meditation at the beginning of each work session, focussing on freeing ourselves from those resistance issues, we could capture meditation energy.



And I think we've hit on the **Fair Shares** ethic here: if we catch all that energy and time, we'll be able to spend it on other projects, with other people. Sharing that time and energy.

Good ideas! And I'm thinking, if we have a goal for each work session, and we check in with ourselves at the end of each session or maybe once a week (did we achieve the goals? are we seeing progress? etc), we'd be addressing a lot of those issues from the couch. We'd be **applying self regulation and accepting feedback**.

True! And I've observed that for us, the task always grows to fill the time available, specially if we're not staying very focused. So, **observe and interact**; we'll cut the time up into smaller chunks and allocate chunks of work to chunks of time. And let's put some rosemary oil on a tissue every session to help with staying focused.

And I think we can **integrate, rather than segregate** by seeing how all this fits in with some of our other designs:

- ✧ by implementing a work schedule design, we'll be moving our ALP forward. And that design talks about
  - ✧ putting the phone in flight mode when we work,
  - ✧ displaying useful little sayings to keep us on trackLet's use those ideas.
- ✧ and it fits in with our Healthy Life design:
  - ✧ make sure we don't sit for too long: get up and move around, work part of the session standing or squatting.
  - ✧ have plenty to drink
  - ✧ rest the eyes often








So... I suppose we've reached the **design stage**. Why isn't there a D in CEAP? I suppose CEADP doesn't sound very nice...

Right, duh! Let's get a move on...back to basics; this is a design for a schedule, so how many sessions per week? That's where we first came in, hey?

I think a **tool** would come in handy here. How about a **feelometer**?



So they thought about how they would feel if they expected themselves to work for 1, 2, 3 sessions per week, right up to 7.

The Feelometer		
Number of sessions per week	How do we feel about this?	Any comments?
1		Don't be ridiculous! You want us to be at it for another 10 years???
2		Not really much of an improvement.... it might only take 5 more years...
3		I think we'd be happy if this were enough. It might be possible to hit the ALP goal of accrediting September 2022.
4		Hmm...might be necessary but it feels like a lot!
5		5 sessions a week? I really don't think that would feel very nice....
6		And when do we get all that time and energy we're going to share fairly?
7		You want to kill us???

OK, so if we think **small and slow solutions**, we could go for 3 sessions per week and be willing to increase to 4 if necessary. Yes?

Err... OK then! And which days? And how long is a session? And do we need to specify what time of day?

Perhaps a **mindmap** is a handy **tool** here?

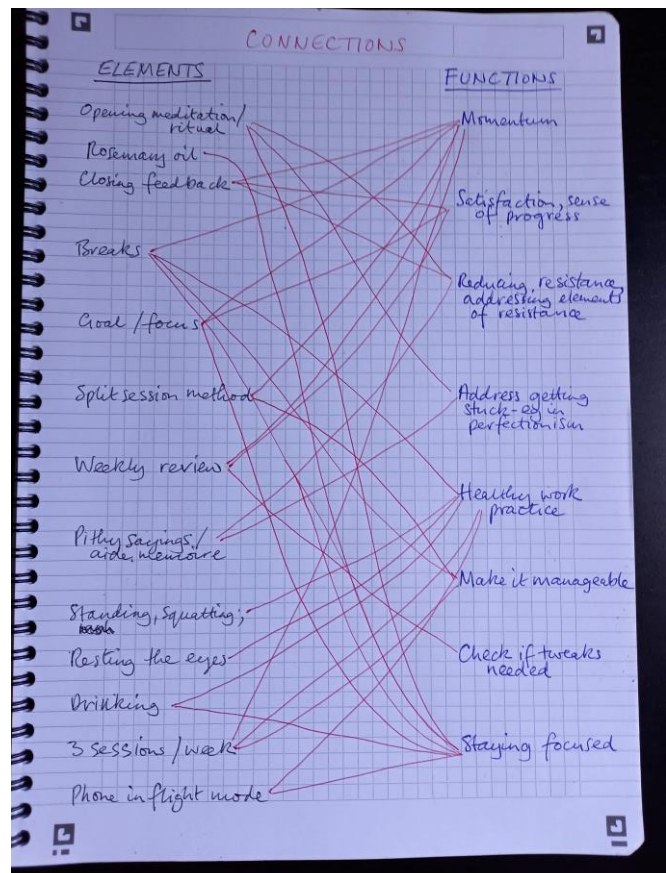
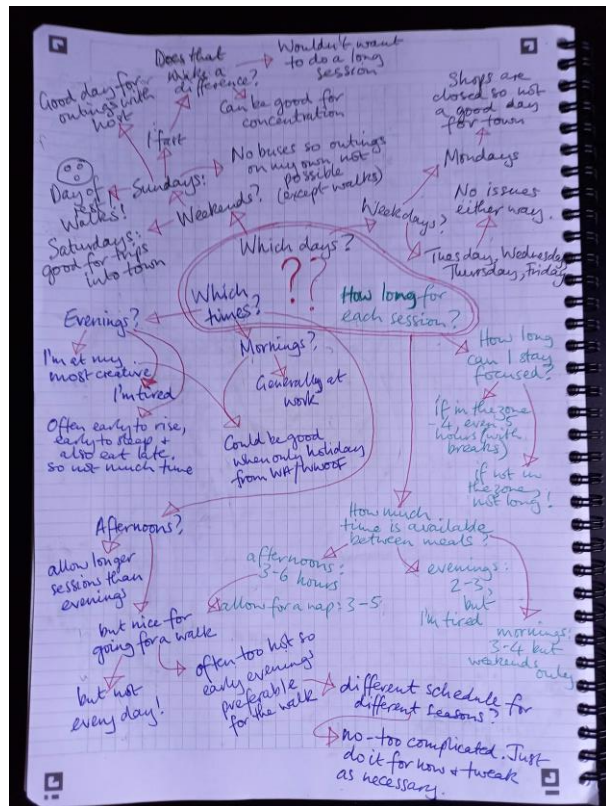
So they did a mind map looking at those questions, and came up with their preferred schedule.

OK, so I think we're done! The schedule is: work on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons, with plenty of flexibility to change both the days and the times when necessary. It's Lego, remember?

But hold on! You're forgetting something! What about all those ideas we had for addressing our issues from the couch? I know they're not strictly part of a schedule but they've got to be in there!

Of course! Otherwise what was the point of all that thinking?!

And they realised that those ideas were actually potential elements, which address functions of the design. They decided to make a **web of connections** to see how they all relate.



So, it looks like all those ideas are useful! Look how most of the **elements support more than one function**, and how **many functions are supported by more than one element!** I think if we put everything together, we have a design!

Yes, and that web of connections also highlights the **People Care ethic**, showing very neatly how we'll be caring for ourselves when we implement the design. Cool, huh?

## THE DESIGN

- ★ We do our diploma work Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons, 3 - 5 hours per session, written in the diary. With flexibility of course!
- ★ Each session will have an identified goal.
- ★ At the beginning of each session we have a nice little 5 minute meditation, recognising the benefits of having the schedule, using affirmations to counter our resistance and focussing on the session's goal.
- ★ Also at the beginning, we set up some rosemary oil, turn the phone to flight mode and put the pithy reminders card on the desk.
- ★ During each session we have several short breaks, rest the eyes, spend some time standing and/or squatting to work, and make sure we have plenty to drink.
- ★ When appropriate we use Carla's split session model.
- ★ We finish each session with a brief feedback, set goal(s) for the next session and update the activity log.
- ★ Every week, as part of our mini ALP review, we have a check-in about how it's going, whether it's meeting the goals, or needs tweaking.

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Phew! We're reaching the end. CEAP's **P... Plan implementation, maintenance, evaluation and tweaking**. Let's take them one by one.

OK: **implementation** first. I reckon that in order to make sure we follow the plan (ie implement it)

- ✧ we need to put the schedule in the diary, and
- ✧ we need some way of reminding ourselves about all those different elements

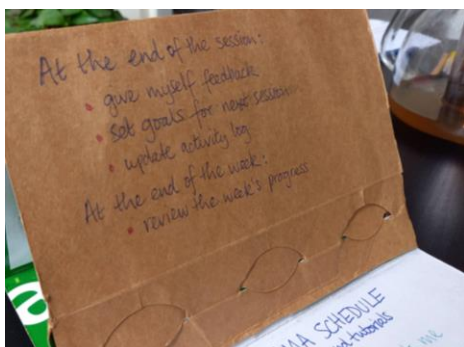
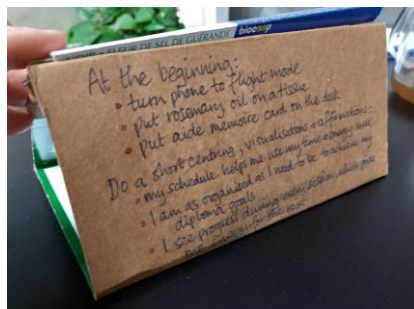
And I don't think we need to implement it bit by bit, it can just all happen at once. Keep it simple.

Agreed. And to remind ourselves about the details, we could buy some nice coloured card, write it all out and put it on the wall..

But let's think about the **Earth Care ethic** here. Let's

- ✧ use bits of card from the recycling box. Not very fancy, but more earth friendly than new coloured card
- ✧ put it on the desk instead of the wall so we won't need to buy Bluetac, which I guess is made of petrochemicals...yuk, not very earth friendly!

And in the recycling box they found a Heineken 6 pack carton, a cardboard chocolate wrapper and some white card. Their inner children enjoyed themselves making these:





They'll do the trick! We put them on the desk every work session. So, onward to **maintenance**.

Those last two bullets in the design, they're about maintaining momentum. They are the maintenance plan, already. So just to clarify (for all those readers!):

the **maintenance plan** is:

- ✧ **we give ourselves feedback after each session**
- ✧ **we set goal(s) for the next session**
- ✧ **we keep our activity log updated**
- ✧ **we do a weekly check-in, tweaking if necessary.**

That feels a bit too easy, but I think you're right. Simple can be good! Anyway, I can't think of anything else we could do to maintain it. So we move on to **evaluation**. How do you think we should do that?

Well, we can't evaluate the design till we've used it for a while. A week would be too short. A month should give us enough time; the novelty should have worn off. So we evaluate after a month?

Agreed. And I have an idea for how to evaluate it. We do the analyst's couch again, with questions about how it's all going, like, Are all the design elements useful? Is it helping on all those issues from the first time on the couch? Is it meeting the design goal? You know the sort of stuff.

Great, so to recap, **evaluation will be done after a month of following the design, through questions on the analyst's couch.**

And now we've reached the very last step! **Tweaks**. Like we said, we tweak both **as we go along**, and **when we do the evaluation**. If something isn't serving us, we cut it out or change it. And we consider if there are other things we could add to make the design more effective.

OK! So, have we finished? I mean really finished??

I think we really have!! (Well, there is the little issue of writing up, doing a reflection, tweaking...). But basically, yes, we've done it!!!

And the two Caths gave each other many pats on the back and felt very satisfied with themselves for having completed a design in 5 hours! They even had a little party, remembering how good it is to celebrate one's successes.



And they started using their new schedule-plus the very next day :)

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And that very first day, as they were writing up the design (which was the goal for many of their scheduled sessions to come!), they came across the first tweak: they realised that they had gone a lot further than their original goal demanded. They thought about the goal again, and tweaked it to this:

*A workable schedule-plus that supports me in reaching my diploma goals healthily and happily.*

They realised that it was a bit back-to-front to create a goal at the end, but that's just the way things happen sometimes :)

**THE END**

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## Reflection

This was a very interesting design for me. My process was exactly as I describe in the write up (though with somewhat less of a split personality!) At the beginning I really thought it was a crazy idea. How could something as simple as a schedule lend itself to the design process? Surely I would just end up with a schedule that would tell me how many sessions per week and which days? But I had done a tiny “speed designing” workshop with Carla Moss at a PA gathering earlier this year (Northern Tutors?) and wanted to try it out with a real design. If it didn’t work out, at least little time would be lost!

So it was only as I got into the process, using the tools (especially the Analyst’s Couch), that I discovered how much the design could offer. In my previous personal designs (Healthy, Happy, Long Life and my ALP) I had used client interview on myself but just recording thoughts and feelings that I was already aware of. Using direct, specific, thought provoking questions through the Analyst’s Couch tool was quite illuminating and led to a much more detailed design than I had thought was likely to emerge.

I’m also happy with the Feelometer. The list of tools that I’m used to doesn’t offer anything about feelings, and in a personal design I think it’s essential to take them into consideration.

Deliberately doing a quick design really kept me focused. All my previous designs had taken weeks or months; this one took five hours from the first idea of doing the design, to the end (excluding making the table top cards, which in reality were done the next day, but which also did not take long.) I didn’t get bogged down in too much detail, and moved quickly from one part of the process to the next, without overthinking. I don’t think all designs could be done like this, but for this one it was great. And the lessons about overthinking and getting bogged down in detail are good for me in all design situations.

At the end I wondered if taking more time would have led to more useful details, but actually each step along the way had felt complete. Having said that, feedback from Carla has shown me that in the web of connections I did miss the connection between the function of momentum and the elements stand/squat, rest the eyes and drink, which support it. I think I would likely



have made those connections if I had spent more time mulling, so this is an example of this potential drawback of speed designing.

This was the first time I'd used CEAP. At first I was sceptical about it, thinking it lacked detail and that I needed more guidance through the process, but I'd read other people's designs using it, and wanted to check it out. I enjoyed using it. I found it in essence very similar to SADIMET, although sometimes with previous designs I've been unsure where and how to apply the principles. The A of CEAP spells this out.

(After feedback from Carla I understand that how I've understood the 'A' of CEAP is not quite as it's generally understood. I can't remember where I originally saw it as 'Apply principles, and design', but a quick Google found two other permaculture websites using it like that. I would love to see a list of frameworks on the PA website, with the preferred interpretation! However, understanding the A like this does address what I see otherwise as a drawback of the framework: that it lacks a specific mention of designing.)

For the Earth Care and Fair Shares ethics, I did feel like I was scraping the barrel. But I realise that what's needed is to consider how the ethics could apply to the design situation. If, on reflection, one or two don't apply, or only apply in a minimal way, surely that must be OK. They can't be forced (can they??)

So, my main learnings from this design were:

- even the least likely-sounding situations can benefit from applying the design process
- using my own tools can be really useful (actually I'd already learned this in a previous design, but this was a good reminder)
- doing designs does not need to take ages; there are distinct benefits from applying a speedy process
- not all the ethics are necessarily relevant to every design; what's necessary is to really consider their relevance
- CEAP is a nice framework (despite it lacking the D for Design!)
- writing up can be a very enjoyable process if I apply a little more imagination than I usually do :) It can also take a lot longer than the design process itself!

## **EVALUATION 25/08/2021**

I did the evaluation 6 weeks after finishing the design, by considering a series of questions (on the analyst's couch!):

### **Am I sticking to the schedule and following the process for each session?**

- ★ I'm largely sticking to the weekly schedule; some days have been missed or changed for various reasons but that feels OK (it's flexible).
- ★ I'm largely following the beginning, middle and end of session processes: have occasionally forgotten some aspects but it's mostly good. The standing/squatting ideas and split sessions have not come into their own yet.
- ★ I've tweaked the table top card; it's now a fold out in the front of my notebook. Takes less space and feels more comfortable.

### **Am I achieving what I identified as possible outcomes on the original Analyst's Couch?**

- ★ in almost all cases, yes. (Reduction in wasted time, increased sense of satisfaction, seeing steady progress, reduction in feelings of overwhelm.)
- ★ I have not noticed an increased connection to my diploma goals (see below for more on this)
- ★ I feel like I'm stretching my comfort zone, just a little. I'm sometimes tempted to skip some of the elements (eg the centring at the beginning, and taking breaks); forcing myself to do them can be a bit uncomfortable, but always worth it. Recognising that leads to less reluctance, ie the comfort zone must be expanding at least a bit.

### **What do I like about the design?**

- ★ I find the pre, mid and end of session routines useful. They do what they were intended to do :) There are only a couple that I haven't used, but I'm happy to leave them in as I think I will use them at some point.
- ★ I feel more focused on what I'm doing.
- ★ Putting the mobile phone to flight mode is really good!
- ★ The fold out card works very well. I'm sure I would be forgetting some of the details without it (once or twice I forgot to consult it > phone stayed on > distractions.)

- ★ I also like the useful reminders card. I'm using it in my centring time at the beginning of each work session (not usually affirmations and visualisations as designed), and find that most of the short reminders are relevant and valuable. It's also helpful sometimes when I feel a bit stuck during the session.
- ★ I like that my diploma work time is now neatly delineated, not just morphing with the rest of life. I'm feeling happier with my work/life balance.

### **Is it supporting me in reaching my diploma goals? (This was the initial design goal)**

- ★ In the sense of supporting me towards my overall diploma goal (to accredit by September 2022), yes, the design is working: I'm working on my designs, so I am moving towards that goal.
- ★ Having said that, I realise I didn't connect the design clearly with specific diploma goals (ie my plans for each month as identified in my ALP). This seems like a very obvious omission now (maybe because I was doing the design so quickly?)
- ★ I'm going to tweak the design to make that connection more real (see below).

### **Is there anything I'd like to change? Tweaks...**

- ★ To connect it more clearly to my goals, at the end of each month I'll write the coming month's goals from my ALP mind-map into my notebook and use that to inform the goals for each session. I'll add that as a monthly action on the "At the end" section of the fold-out card.
- ★ I had the idea to write some of the principles that I find most relevant to how I work on the back of the useful reminders card, to use in a similar way both at the beginning and during my work sessions.

### **Conclusion**

I'm really happy with the design. It feels unusual because it does a lot more than I was asking it to do at the beginning, but what it does is helpful. And with the tweaks identified above, it will be even more so.