

From Stuck to Finished Song

A Practical Guide For Turning Ideas Into
Finished Songs

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Introduction

Most songwriters don't struggle with ideas—they struggle with finishing.

Does this sound familiar:

- “I have too many ideas”
- “I don't know where to go next”
- “My songs feel unfocused”
- “I start strong but never finish”
- “I don't know how to turn this into a full song”

It's frustrating.

You know there's something there—but you can't seem to get it across the finish line.

Here's the truth:

It's not a talent problem. It's a *process* problem.

Knowing songwriting theory doesn't fix this. Neither does waiting for inspiration to arrive.

And collecting more ideas won't help if you don't know how to develop them.

What you need is a simple way to take an idea and move it forward—step by step—until it becomes a finished song.

That's what this guide is designed to do.

In it, you'll find a clear, repeatable process for turning rough ideas into complete songs—so you can stop second-guessing, start finishing, and begin building momentum as a songwriter.

Throughout this guide, you'll also find *simple exercises* designed to help you apply each chapter directly to one of your own songs. Rather than just reading about the process, you'll be actively moving an idea forward as you go.

By the end, you won't just have a better understanding of songwriting—you'll be closer to breaking through creative blocks, finishing more songs, and building real momentum in your craft.

Let's get started!

What's Inside:

Decide to Finish: Build the Habit

Learn how to move past internal resistance and start finishing what you begin.

Find the Story: Create Direction

Give your song a clear sense of movement so you always know what comes next.

Clarify the Idea: Know What You're Saying

Get to the core message so your song stays focused and meaningful.

Build the Structure: Shape Your Song

Understand how each part works so your song flows naturally from start to finish.

Develop Your Song: Repetition, Contrast, and Movement

Use repetition, contrast, and movement to turn your idea into something that connects.

Finish the Song: Let Go of Perfect

Break out of perfectionism and start completing songs consistently.

Grow Faster: Use Community

Use feedback, accountability, and collaboration to accelerate your growth.

Keep Going: Your Next Step

Bring everything together and learn how to keep improving through repetition, feedback, and community.

Decide to Finish: Build the Habit

Most songwriters don't finish—not because they can't, but because they haven't fully decided to.

Finishing a song isn't just a creative act—it's a commitment.

It's the shift from:

"I'll work on this when I feel like it"

to:

"I'm going to see this through."

If you're reading this, you probably already have ideas. What you're looking for now is a way to actually turn them into finished songs.

That starts with a decision.

What Gets in the Way

The moment you try to finish something, resistance shows up.

Here's what it usually looks like:

Perfectionism

You keep tweaking and second-guessing—trying to make it better before it's even done.

Procrastination

You avoid the harder parts—the parts that require focus, decision-making, and effort.

Fear of being judged

Finishing means saying: "This is what I've got," and that can feel exposing. As long as a song is still unfinished, you can hide behind the *idea* of it for a long time (I know this from experience).

But once it's done, it becomes real.

The Shift: Done > Perfect

A finished song isn't a final statement.

It's not a representation of your self-worth, either.

It's simply a snapshot of where you currently are.

And ironically, *finishing songs* is the very thing that actually makes you better.

Better at writing, better at performing, better at finishing.

Finish → learn → improve → finish better

If you get stuck polishing the same idea, you don't grow.

If you finish a song, you do.

If you finish ten songs, *you're not the same writer anymore*.

Know Your Why

Before you move forward, it's worth asking a simple question:

Why do you want to finish songs?

We're not talking about the surface answer, but the *real reason*.

Maybe it's:

- To express yourself and how you feel about life
- To create something you can leave behind in the world
- To connect with other people through the love and joy of music
- Because you love writing songs and want to feel like you're making progress in something you enjoy

Whatever it is, *get clear on it*.

Because when resistance shows up—and it will—that reason is what will carry you through.

Quick Exercise — Find Your Why

Take a minute and answer this question:

"I want to finish songs because..."

Then, take your answer, and ask *"why"*.

Repeat this again at least 3–7 times.

You don't need to overthink it—but try to move past the first obvious answer and get to something more *honest*.

Once you have that, write it down somewhere and keep it handy.

You'll come back to this later.

Exercise — Choose Your Song

For the rest of this guide, you're going to work on **one song**.

Pick something you've already started.

It doesn't have to be new, your best idea, or even your most important one.

Just a song that's *incomplete*.

This will be your working song.

As you go through each chapter, you're going to:

- clarify it
- structure it
- develop it
- and finish it

applying what you learn directly to this song.

By the end of this guide, you'll have a finished draft that you can take into the studio, jam space, or a stage—whatever the case may be.

Conclusion

Building the habit of finishing doesn't come from inspiration or motivation—it comes from deciding to *become the type of songwriter that finishes songs*.

That means:

- Working through resistance when it's there
- Learning to be okay with “good enough” for now
- And moving forward instead of endlessly tweaking

You don't need a perfect system. You just need to make the decision to *start finishing*.

Knowing your ‘*why*’ is huge—but it doesn't show you how to move your song forward.

That's what the rest of this guide is for

In the next module, we'll look at how to give your song direction—so you always know where it's going and what comes next.

Find the Story: Create Direction

Most songwriters don't struggle with ideas. They struggle with knowing what to do with them.

As we already saw in the [Introduction](#), songwriters often cite the same struggles:

- "I have too many ideas"
- "I don't know where to go next"
- "I can't finish songs"
- "My songs feel unfocused"
- "I don't know how to stay on topic."

We often think the answer to these problems is *technical*—studying the craft, writing better melodies, more interesting chords.

Or that it's *stylistic*—being more original, more poetic, or "deep".

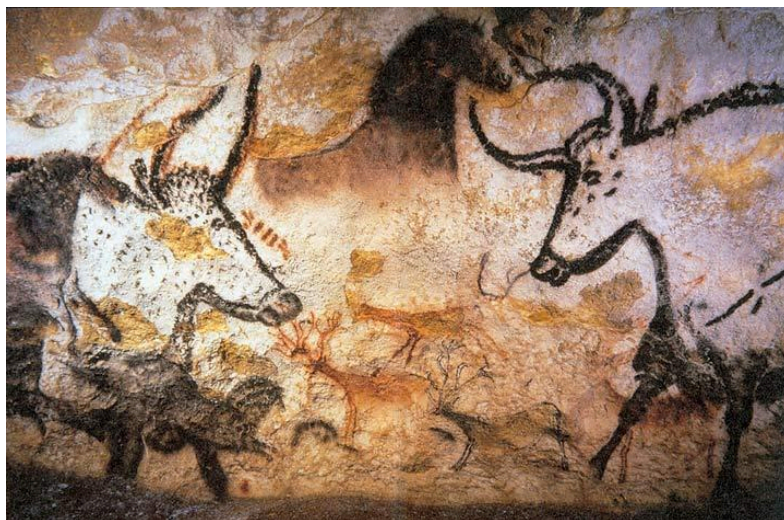
But that's really not the issue.

When a song feels stuck, unfocused, or hard to finish, it's usually because the story isn't clear yet.

People don't connect to songs because they're technically impressive or the most "original".

They connect because they *feel something*.

And one of the most reliable ways to make someone feel something—is through **story**.



Stories have been around since the dawn of man—we're hard-wired for them.

It's how we understand the world, how we share information, and how we connect with each other.

That's why the best songs feel like an *experience*.

We start off in one place, something happens, then we end up in a new place—but *we've learned or understood something along the way*.

When you understand the story you're trying to tell, it makes writing powerful, memorable songs *a lot* easier:

Too many ideas → **Story gives focus**

No structure → **Story provides direction**

Stuck on verse 2 → **Story tells you what happens next**

Can't finish → **Story creates an ending**

No inspiration → **Story gives you something to say**

So, if *story* is the thing that gives your song direction, *how do you actually figure out the story you're trying to tell?*

The Story Engine

These are the core pieces to any story—and it's how you move forward with your song.

When you can answer these questions clearly, you're no longer guessing your way through your song—you're giving it shape and direction.

Ask yourself:

1. What's happening?

What's the situation or moment? Think of it like a scene in a movie.

2. What's the problem?

What tension, conflict, or desire is present? Why should the listener care?

3. What changes?

What's different by the end? If nothing changes, it's just a situation—not a story.

And your answers don't need to be literal, either.

They can be emotional, abstract, metaphorical... they just need to be clear to *you*.

Because even songs that aren't "story songs" still have a feeling of movement underneath them.

There's:

a situation → tension → change

With that, let's look at a real example of a song that answers these three questions and tells a compelling story.

You Should Probably Leave — Chris Stapleton

Apart from its solid production and stellar performances, *You Should Probably Leave* is an excellent example of how a simple story can carry an entire song.

At its core, it's a story about an on-again, off-again couple who can't resist returning to each other even though they know it will end badly.

Verse 1 (The Situation)

*I know it ain't all that late
But you should probably leave
And I recognize that look in your eyes
Yeah, you should probably leave*

Right away, we understand the situation: they're together, there's history there, and a tension is present.

This is the **inciting moment** in the story:

They're in a situation together, and something might happen—that probably shouldn't.

Chorus 1 (The Problem)

*'Cause I know you and you know me
And we both know where this is gonna lead
You want me to say that I want you to stay
So you should probably leave*

Here, we see the conflict laid bare:

They both understand what's at stake, what the consequences are, and at the same, recognize an underlying desire.

Verse 2 (The Change)

*There's still time for you to finish your wine
Then you should probably leave
And it's hard to resist, **alright, just one kiss**
Then you should probably leave*

Here we see something *shift* in the song:

He gives in.

This is where the story actually moves.

Before it was just tension—now there's *change*.

Bridge (Internal Perspective Shift)

*Like a devil on my shoulder, you keep whisperin' in my ear
And it's gettin' kinda hard for me to do the right thing here
I wanna do the right thing, baby*

This is where the story deepens.

It's no longer just about what's happening externally—it's about what's happening inside of him.

He's aware he's crossing a line, and struggling with it in real time.

This is textbook bridge writing, right here.

Verse 3 (The Outcome)

*Sun on your skin, 6AM
And I been watchin' you sleep*

We've arrived somewhere *new*.

It's the next morning, they've spent the night together, and they're waking up with the consequence:

***And honey, I'm so afraid you're gonna wake up and say
That you should probably leave***

Final Chorus (The Reversal)

*I want you to stay but you'll probably say
That you should probably leave*

Change is critical for moving any story forward, and by the last chorus, we see a complete reversal in the main character's perspective:

At first, he wants her to leave. Now, he wants her to stay, but he fears that she'll say the very same thing he said to her before—that *she should probably leave*.

The dynamic has flipped, and this is where the emotional shift *lands*.

That's what makes it a story.

Why This Works

This song works because it follows a clear story arc:

Something happens → They're alone together

There's tension → They both know where it could lead

A decision is made → He gives in

Something changes → They cross the line

There's an outcome → The dynamic has shifted

If nothing changed, this would just be a situation. But because something changes, it becomes a *story*.

Now, let's look at another example of a lyric that *doesn't* tell a story.

A “Non-Story” Lyric

It's the middle of the night, I'm feeling so lonely

There's something inside that I can't control

I'm thinking about you, and it's driving me crazy

I don't understand it, I'm losing my soul

That *sounds* pretty emotional, but *nothing is happening*.

There's no scene, no situation, no tension or conflict.

It's just a feeling, repeated in various ways.

If you compare that to a song like *You Should Probably Leave*, you can see how there's a setup in the first verse, tension in the chorus, and then an eventual change.

The difference isn't that one song is more emotional.

It's that one song gives the emotion a story to live inside—the other doesn't.

We could even revise our “non-story lyric” idea into a more story-based version:

It's the middle of the night, I'm tossing and turning

Your side of the bed lies empty and cold

I think about calling—all clumsy and stalling

But you don't pick up, and I already know

Same emotion—but now there's a moment, something happening, and the seed of tension that we understand what's going on.

Exercise — Find the Story in Your Song

Look at the song you chose in [Chapter 1](#), the one you're committing to finishing.

Now we're going to give it direction.

Answer these three questions:

1. What's happening?

Describe the situation or moment in 1–2 sentences. Where are we? What's going on?

2. What's the problem?

What tension, conflict, or desire is present? Why does this moment matter?

3. What changes?

What's different by the end of the song? What changes—emotionally, in terms of perspective, or situationally?

Now, look at your answers

- Were you able to clearly describe a specific moment or situation?
- Is there a recognizable tension or conflict?
- Does something actually change somewhere in the song?

If the answer to one or more of these questions isn't clear yet, that's not a problem—*that's the work*.

And now you know exactly where to focus.

We'll be going deeper into each of these in the next modules—clarifying your idea, strengthening your structure, and developing your song so it lands.

For now, just notice where the song feels unclear, underdeveloped, or unsupported.

You don't need to solve everything immediately. Often, simply becoming aware of what's missing is enough to start uncovering the answer as the writing process unfolds.

So pick one area to pay attention to:

- Make the situation more specific
- Clarify the tension
- Or decide what changes

That awareness alone is enough to start moving the song forward.

Conclusion

Songwriters often think the answer to their struggles is learning more technique, or being more original—but these alone don't solve the *real problem*.

Nor do they help a listener connect to your song.

The most compelling songs tell a story—and people connect to stories.

When a song feels stuck, unfocused, or unfinished, it's usually because *the story isn't clear yet*.

When you're clear on what's happening, what the tension is, and what changes—writing songs becomes a lot easier.

But if you noticed while doing the exercise that things still feel a bit unclear—you're not alone.

That's exactly what we're going to sharpen next.

Because there's one more layer that makes everything click:

Knowing exactly what you're trying to say.

Because you can have a strong story—and still lose the listener if your message is unclear.

In the next module, we'll take your story and sharpen it into a clear, focused idea—so that every line in your song points in the same direction.

Clarify the Idea: Know What You're Saying

In [the last chapter](#), you saw the power of story in song, the core pieces behind every good story, and started piecing together the story behind your song.

Now, we're going to figure out *what your song is really about*.

This is where a lot of songwriters get stuck.

I recently worked with a songwriter who wanted a song produced. The lyrics were beautiful, poetic, imaginative, but when I asked what the song was actually about, the answer wasn't clear—and wasn't reflected in the lyrics.

Not because they weren't talented—but because they weren't clear on what they were trying to say.

And that's the issue.

You might have a great idea, strong lines, or even a full section written—but unless you know what you're trying to say, it's *really hard to move forward*—and the song risks not landing with listeners.

At this stage, the goal isn't to come up with more or better ideas—it's to make sure your idea carries a *clear meaning*.

From Story to Meaning

Stories are great for communicating a message or a feeling in song, but that alone, isn't enough.

There's one more question we have to ask ourselves:

What does it all mean?

Or in other words, *what's the **takeaway**?*

You can describe a moment, a feeling, even a transformation—but if it's not clear what that change *means*, the song can still feel unfocused.

Anybody can say:

- “Be strong”
- “Have faith”
- “Trust yourself”
- “Keep going”

But without seeing how someone gets there—and *why it matters*—it doesn't land.

Story creates the movement.

The *takeaway* is what gives that movement *meaning*.

And not every song changes for the better. Sometimes the shift is towards pain, regret, loss, or acceptance.

At the end of the day, it's not about whether things get better or worse—it's about *what changes—and what we take away from it*.

How Songs Move

Songs that land with listeners don't just give advice—they move from one state to another.

That movement is what allows the listener to follow the journey, and ultimately draw meaning from it.

Songs can move in different ways:

- **Bad** → **Good** (overcoming)
- **Good** → **Bad** (loss, realization)
- **Bad** → **Worse** (warning, consequence)
- **Good** → **Better** (growth, affirmation)

You can track this movement in almost every great song.

Let's look at a few examples:

Examples of How Songs Move:

Song	Change Type	Core Shift	What It Means
Lose Yourself - Eminem	Bad → Good	Self-doubt → decisive action	The decision to act despite pressure
Every Breath You Take – The Police	Good → Bad	Romantic devotion → obsession/control	Love revealed as surveillance and possession

Hurt – Nine Inch Nails	Bad → Worse	Pain → deeper emptiness	Descent into emotional collapse
Three Little Birds – Bob Marley	Good → Better	Uncertainty → trust and reassurance	Calm strengthened into belief

Notice that change isn't always *external*.

Often nothing changes on the outside at all. What changes is the character's *perspective*. And it's that internal shift is what makes a song feel real, relatable, and powerful.

Now that you see how songs move from one state to another—and how that movement creates meaning—the next step is applying it to your own writing.

So how do you take a vague idea and turn it into something clear enough to build a song around?

Exercise — Tools to Find Clarity

By now, you've chosen a song and started mapping out its story:

- what's happening
- what the conflict is
- what changes

But now we're going to take that one step further.

Because a story isn't enough on its own.

We need to understand what it *means*.

Here are some steps to help you find clarity:

1. Clarify the Change

Start by focusing only on the change in your song.

Ask:

- What actually changes from beginning to end?
- Is it external (situation, relationship, outcome)?
- Or internal (perspective, realization, emotional shift)?

If there are multiple changes, identify the one that actually drives the song forward.

2. Map the Change

Now go one level deeper:

- What does that change reveal?
- What truth does it point to?
- What does the listener now understand because of it?

This is where meaning starts to form.

4. Define the Takeaway

Now reduce your meaning into one clear statement:

“Because of what happens in this song, we understand that...”

If you can’t finish that sentence clearly, the meaning is still unclear.

If you do this exercise, you’ll usually find that:

- the story was already there
- the events were already there
- but the *meaning wasn’t fully extracted from the change*

And once that clicks, the song stops feeling vague—and starts feeling *intentional*, and all your decisions moving forward start to align with what your song is *really* about.

Conclusion

Most songwriters don’t struggle because they lack ideas or emotions. They struggle because they aren’t clear on what they’re trying to say.

When a song feels stuck, it’s usually not a creativity problem—*it’s a clarity problem*.

Because when you understand:

- what’s happening
- what’s at stake
- what changes
- and what that change *means*

the song becomes more intentional, easier to finish—and is more likely to leave your listener with a real *takeaway*.

But clarity alone still doesn’t produce a finished song.

Once you know what you’re trying to say, the next question becomes:

How do you shape that idea into a structure that actually flows?

That's what we're going to look at next.

In the next chapter, we'll take your song and start putting it into a framework—understanding how songs move from beginning to end, and how each section works together to carry your meaning forward.

Build the Structure: Shape Your Song

There are no hard and fast rules in songwriting—but there are patterns.

These patterns exist for a reason:

They help deliver the song in a way that listeners can follow and connect with.

We've already explored the power of story and why clarity matters.

Now we take that clarity and give it *shape*—because a strong idea still isn't enough on its own.

A song works best when its sections follow a familiar flow—each one playing a recognizable role in how the song unfolds.

The Parts of a Song

Think of your song like a journey. Each section moves the listener forward in a different way:

Verse → sets the scene

Pre-Chorus (optional) → builds tension

Chorus → delivers the main idea

Verse 2 → deepens the story

Bridge → adds contrast or perspective

When a section falls out of that flow, the listener can feel it—even if they don't know why.

Verse 1 — Set the Scene

The job of the first verse is simple: *ground the listener in a moment.*

We need:

- a place
- a situation
- a character or perspective

Verse 1 example: "Tennessee Whiskey"

*Used to spend my nights out in a barroom
Liquor was the only love I'd known
But you rescued me from reachin' for the bottom
And brought me back from being too far gone*

The goal here isn't to explain—it's to *paint a picture*.

We want the listener inside a moment with us.

Pre-Chorus (Optional) — Build the Pressure

The pre-chorus narrows focus and builds tension toward the chorus.

It should:

- tighten the emotional lens
- increase anticipation
- escalate toward a resolution

If it doesn't build anything, it's just space between sections.

Pre-chorus example: "You Got It" — Roy Orbison

I live my life to be with you.

No one can do the things you do.

(Chorus) Anything you want, you got it.

Chorus — The Payoff

This is the emotional center of the song.

It should express clearly **what the song is really saying**.

A strong chorus doesn't avoid meaning—it *delivers it*.

If your idea from [Chapter 3](#) isn't clear here, the song won't land.

Chorus example: "Straight from the Heart" — Bryan Adams

Oh, give it to me straight from the heart

Tell me we can make another start

You know I'll never go, as long as I know

It's comin' straight from the heart

Verse 2 — Deepen the Story

Verse 2 should not restart the story—it should *deepen* it.

We're adding:

- new details
- emotional depth
- or perspective shifts

The story should move forward, not sideways.

Verse 2 example: “How’s It Going to Be” — Third Eye Blind

*Where we used to laugh, there's a shouting match
Sharp as a thumbnail scratch
A silence I can't ignore, like the hammock by the doorway
We spent time in swings empty
I don't see lightning like last fall when it was always about to hit me*

(The first verse drops us in the middle of a relationship argument. Verse 2 expands on that feeling.)

Bridge — Change the Lens

The bridge breaks the pattern and adds contrast.

It might:

- shift perspective
- zoom in or out
- or reveal something new

Bridge example: ‘If I Were A Boy’ — Beyoncé

*It's a little too late for you to come back
Say it's just a mistake
Think I'd forgive you like that
If you thought I would wait for you
You thought wrong*

Section Checklist

Here’s a quick checklist you can use to diagnose your song:

Verse

- Are we in a clear moment?
- Is something happening?

Verse

- Are we driving towards the chorus?

- Are we narrowing the emotional focus?

Chorus

- Does it state the idea clearly?
- Does it feel like a payoff?

Verse 2 (and beyond)

- Does it deepen the story?

Bridge

- Does it add contrast or shift perspective?

If not, the section may not be doing its job.

Exercise — Map Your Song

Take the song you're working on and:

1. Label each section

Verse / Chorus / etc.

2. Ask:

What is this section doing?

Not what is it saying—what is it *doing*?

- setting up?
- building?
- delivering?
- expanding?
- contrasting?

Be objective and ask what job each part of your song is doing.

3. Check flow

Does each section:

- lead into the next?
- increase emotional clarity?
- move the listener forward?

If not, the issue usually isn't the idea—it's the structure.

Conclusion

Song structure isn't about rules—it's about *shape*.

It's about how your song moves, and how each section fits into a pattern the listener can follow.

When that flow is clear, the song feels natural—and your idea comes through more strongly.

If your song feels repetitive or stuck, don't rewrite the idea.

*Look at the **structure**.*

Because most of the time, the problem isn't what the song is saying—it's how it's unfolding.

In the next module, we'll take this structure and start developing it into a working song using a few core principles: repetition, contrast, and movement.

Develop Your Song: Repetition, Contrast, and Movement

At this point, you know what your song is about—and how it's structured.

Now we take the next step:

turning that structure into something that actually feels like a song.

This is where many songs start to lose focus.

Not because the idea isn't strong—but because too much gets added:

more lyrics, more sections, more ideas.

But more doesn't make a song stronger.

What does is *how you develop what's already there.*

In this chapter, you'll use three core principles—repetition, contrast, and movement—to shape your song so it feels clear, cohesive, and complete.

Principle #1 - Repetition: Make It Stick

Repetition is one of the simplest and most powerful tools in songwriting.

When something matters, the listener needs to hear it more than once.

Core idea:

If it matters, repeat it.

Why it works:

- Hooks rely on repetition
- Melodies become memorable through reuse
- Familiarity helps listeners connect to your song faster

How to use it:

- Repeat core lyrical themes and ideas—especially in the chorus
- Reuse musical motifs (melodic or rhythmic patterns)
- Avoid introducing too many new ideas

Guideline:

If you're stuck, repeat instead of adding something new.

Principle #2 - Contrast: Create Interest

Repetition builds familiarity—but contrast is what keeps the listener engaged.

If everything feels the same, nothing stands out.

Core idea:

Difference creates impact.

Why it works:

- Contrast creates emotional shifts
- It separates sections so they feel distinct
- It makes key moments (like the chorus) stand out

Simple ways to create contrast:

- Quiet → loud
- Low → high
- Sparse → full
- Calm → intense

Where it shows up:

- Verse vs. Chorus
- Chorus vs. Bridge
- Section-to-section energy shifts

Guideline:

If your song feels flat, add contrast—not complexity.

Principle #3 - Movement: Keep It Going

A song isn't just a collection of sections—it's a progression.

It needs to feel like it's going somewhere.

Core idea:

Songs need to move.

Why it matters:

- Each section should lead naturally to the next
- The song should feel like it's developing as it goes
- Without movement, the song feels repetitive or stuck

Ways to create movement:

- Add new details or developments as the song progresses
- Change phrasing, rhythm, or melodic delivery slightly
- Shift dynamics (build or pull back)
- Let the story evolve—new details, perspective, or emotional shifts

This connects directly to:

- [Story \(Chapter 2\)](#)
- [Meaning \(Chapter 3\)](#)
- [Structure \(Chapter 4\)](#)

Guideline:

If the song feels stuck, ask: where can something change?

Exercise — Develop Your Song

Go back to the song you've been working on.

You don't need to apply everything—but use these as lenses to evaluate and develop what you already have.

Repetition

- Are there any repeating elements? (a lyric, melody, or motif)
- Is your core idea being reinforced enough?

Contrast

- Do your sections feel different from each other?
- Is there a clear shift between verse and chorus?
- Could contrast be stronger (energy, rhythm, melody, arrangement)?

Movement

- Does the song feel like it's progressing?
- Does each section lead naturally into the next?
- Is the story or perspective evolving—or staying the same?

If something feels off, don't add more.

Adjust what's already there using these principles.

Conclusion

At this stage, your song doesn't need more ideas—it needs development.

Repetition helps it stick.

Contrast keeps it interesting.

Movement keeps it going.

When you use these together, your song starts to feel cohesive—like everything is working toward the same result.

If something feels off, don't start over.

Adjust what's already there.

Because most of the time, the song is closer than you think—it just needs to be shaped.

In the next module, we'll look at how to finish your songs—let go of perfection, and start completing songs more consistently.

Finish the Song: Let Go of Perfect

Perfectionism is one of the biggest reasons songs don't get finished.

It's not really about the song—*it's about what the song says about you.*

We hold back because we're afraid of sounding bad, afraid that the song won't live up to what we hear in our heads, afraid it will reveal where we actually are—not where we *wish* we were.

So instead of finishing, we tweak. We adjust. We second-guess.

We stay in the safe zone of “almost done.”

Because as long as the song isn't finished, it can still be great in our minds.

But the moment you finish it, it becomes real—and real can be judged.

Here's the truth:

You don't get better by protecting your potential. You get better by revealing it—over and over again.

And that only happens when you finish songs.

How You Actually Get Better

Finishing isn't the end—it's the process.

Finish → Learn → Improve → Finish Faster

Every finished song moves you forward.

- It shows you what works—and what doesn't.
- It helps you refine your instincts and your process.
- It gives you something real to reflect on, share, and get feedback on.

And just as importantly—it builds momentum.

- You stop overthinking.
- You start trusting your decisions.
- You move into the next song with more clarity and confidence.

Unfinished songs don't give you that.

They keep you stuck in the same loop—second-guessing, tweaking, and never seeing any result.

They feel productive, but they don't actually move you forward.

That's why "done" beats "perfect" every time—because done creates progress.

And progress is what actually makes you better.

Redefine What “Finished” Means

Most songwriters don't finish their songs because their standard for “done” is too high.

So change the definition.

A song is finished when it has:

- a clear idea
- a complete structure
- a full draft from start to end

That's it.

It doesn't need to be perfect.

It doesn't need to be polished.

It doesn't need to be recorded properly.

It just needs to be complete.

The “Finish It Anyway” Exercise

Take the song you've been working on over the course of this guide.

Step 1

Set a timer for 30 minutes

Step 2

Focus on one area of the song that needs work.

- Maybe that's figuring out how your song changes.
- Maybe it's developing the story in verse 2
- Maybe it's figuring out the chord changes for the bridge.

Whatever it is, focus on just that and aim to finish it in that 30 minute window.

No going back, no rewriting.

Just write. Just forward.

Don't get distracted or go back to rewriting earlier sections.

Focus on that one area and aim to finish it in the time given.

Step 3

Once the timer's up, you're free to walk away.

Maybe you finished something. Maybe it's messy, simple, or not done.

What matters is that you showed up, had a goal in mind, and you worked on it.

Perfectionism may still creep in—and that's okay. The goal isn't to eliminate perfectionism. It's to keep writing anyway.

Key Rule:

You are not allowed to move to another part of the song until you complete the one you chose to focus on—don't get distracted.

Conclusion

Finishing is a skill—and like any skill, the more you do it, the more you improve.

Every song you complete moves you forward. Every unfinished song keeps you in the same place.

So let go of *perfect*—aim for ***finished***.

Because finishing isn't the end—it's what makes growth possible.

And once a song is finished, it can do something unfinished songs never can:

It can be shared. It can be heard. It can be learned from.

And that's where your growth starts to happen.

Because up to this point, you've been writing on your own, making your own decisions, and relying on your own perspective.

Which is great—but there's another level to this.

If you want to grow faster, you need more than just your own feedback.

You need other ears, other perspectives, and other songwriters pushing in the same direction.

That's what the next module is all about.

Grow Faster: Use Community

Songwriting often starts as a solo process—but growth is slower in isolation.

On your own, it's easy to get stuck in your head. You second-guess your ideas, lose perspective, or abandon songs before they're finished.

And the hardest part?

You don't always realize you're stuck or where to go next with your song.

Being around other songwriters solves that.

It gives you clarity, momentum—and a way forward when you can't see it yourself.

Why Community Accelerates Growth

When you're connected to other songwriters, three things happen:

1. Feedback — You hear what you can't

Sometimes, you're too close to your own songs to hear them clearly.

Feedback helps you:

- understand what's working
- spot what's unclear
- hear your song from the listener's perspective

Even simple feedback can help unlock a song that's felt stuck for weeks.

2. Accountability — You actually follow through

It's easy to say you'll finish songs. It's harder to do it consistently.

When other people are involved, things change.

- you show up
- you share your work
- you follow through more often

And over time, that builds a real finishing habit—not just good intentions.

3. Collaboration — You grow beyond your limits

Other songwriters bring:

- new ideas

- different perspectives
- strengths you don't have

Collaboration challenges your instincts and expands what you're capable of.

It pushes you out of familiar patterns—and that's where real growth happens.

Don't Do This Alone

You don't need a huge network.

But it does help to have *someone*.

Start small:

- share a song with one trusted person and ask for honest, specific feedback
- find a space in town or online where people are actively writing and improving, and share what you're working on there

The goal isn't perfection.

It's connection—and momentum.

Action Step

This week, share the song you've been developing throughout this guide with someone you trust.

Ask them:

- "What stood out to you?"
- "What do you feel the song is about?"

You're not looking for praise or reassurance that it's a "good song." You're looking to see whether the emotion, story, or message you intended is actually coming across to another person.

That's it.

Conclusion

Songwriting often starts alone—but it doesn't have to stay that way.

If you keep doing everything on your own, you'll still improve, but your progress will be slower, and you'll miss the perspective that comes from hearing how your songs actually land with other people.

When you bring others into the process, things shift quickly:

- You get perspective.
- You get momentum.
- You get closer to understanding what your songs are actually communicating—and where they need work.

And that's where things start to compound.

Because at this point, it's no longer just about writing one song. It's about how you keep improving from here.

That's what we'll focus on next.

Keep Going: Your Next Step

By now, you've seen that finishing songs isn't about talent—it's about having a process you can return to again and again.

Here's the loop:



Every time you go through it, you get faster, clearer, and more confident.

How You Actually Improve

Finishing one song is progress.

Finishing many songs is what changes you.

Not because each song is perfect—but because each one teaches you something.

The goal isn't perfection.

It's repetition.

Keep the Momentum Going

You can keep doing this on your own.

But at this point, you know what that looks like:

- slower progress
- less clarity
- more second-guessing

Growth speeds up when you have:

- feedback
- accountability
- connection with other songwriters

That's where things start to compound.

Your Next Step

If you want real, genuine support with your songwriting, that's exactly what I built Songfarm for.

Songfarm is a space for songwriters, artists, and music producers to learn, share, and grow together.

Inside the community, you can:

- Share your work-in-progress songs and get real feedback from myself and other songwriters
- Join weekly live calls for direct, actionable feedback on your songs
- Connect and collaborate with other writers, artists, and producers
- Stay accountable so you keep making consistent progress with your music

This isn't just a place to post your songs. It's a space to actually move your work forward—get feedback, stay in motion, and keep developing as an artist.

[Check out Songfarm here](#)

Final Thought

The goal isn't to write one great song. It's to become someone who finishes songs—consistently.

Keep going. Keep growing. Keep writing.

— Dave

If you found this guide helpful, I'd genuinely love to hear from you.

A few things I'm curious about:

- *Was anything unclear or confusing?*
- *What did you find most helpful?*
- *What felt like it might be missing?*

You can reply directly to david@davidbgaskin.com. I read every response.

Thanks for reading—and I hope this helps you keep moving forward with your songs.