THE 4-WEEK SONGWRITING CHALLENGE

WEEK 1: THE HOOK

I'll admit, this is how the vast majority of my songs start: with a lyric hook.

But for this challenge, I want you take it one step further than just finding a hook and writing a song. We're going to really explore that hook and try to keep the lyrics tightly related to the hook.

1. The Hook

You probably know what a hook is but just in case you don't:

A hook is usually a word, phrase, or sentence. It's often a play on words, a metaphor, or a catchy expression. It's usually the title of the song, the theme of the song, or the most memorable lyric line from the song. If you're a songwriter, you probably have several hook ideas you haven't used yet, so feel free to use one of those!

2. Word vomit

If you already have a melody in mind for your hook, that's fine. But I want you to ignore it for now. Focus solely on lyrics.

Now grab a sheet of paper and write down every single possible phrase, sentence, or word that could possibly be related to that hook. Don't worry about making it pretty or singable. Just write until your brain is empty. And then write some more. Explore different directions the song could go. Different situations the hook could be referring to. There really are no rules in this part!

I love this word-vomit approach to brainstorming because it takes the pressure off. None of these words have to become your final lyrics if you don't like them! Just write and then don't think too much about it.
3. Outline/Summary

Now that you've got all your ideas on the table, it's time to give your song some structure. Decide what you want the song to be about and write (in normal paragraphs) what each section of the song is going to be about. Make sure you clearly define each section (verse 1, verse 2, chorus, bridge) so you'll know exactly what you're trying to say when it's time to write the actual lyrics.

This step is important because it's SO easy to get lost in number of syllables, rhyme scheme, and rhythm when you're writing your lyrics that you lose sight of what you're trying to say! (Speaking from experience here...)

4. Final lyrics

Now let's turn this baby into a song! Grab ideas and words from your brainstorming sheet and try to fit them into the different song sections. If you're a natural melody writer, now's the time to start fitting the melody in, too. Try playing along with your instrument if that helps!