

Consider Creativity

When was the last time you thought of yourself as creative? Never? Don't be too hard on yourself. Many people in our society have a mistaken view of creativity in general and are often quick to point out their own creative shortcomings. Listen to some of the most common misbeliefs about creativity.

- *Only some people are creative, usually followed by, and I'm not one of them.*
- *There is a connection between creativity and artistic ability and I can't carry a tune in a bushel basket or draw a straight line with a ruler.*
- *Ok, maybe I am creative sometimes, but not when I need it.*

These beliefs about creative ability need to be corrected before each of us will be able to believe in our own creative gifts. The truth about creativity paints a much prettier picture. We all have enormous creative ability, most of which we haven't really used since we were young children. There is no correlation between creative ability and artistic talent. In fact, there isn't even a connection between anything beyond basic intelligence and creativity. Creativity is a skill, learnable by anyone who's interested in taking the journey.

Creativity is simply the ability to produce new, novel, and occasionally useful ideas. The creative individual is someone who looks at the same thing everyone else looks at, sees something different, explores the possibilities, and then does something with their aha. You can see yourself doing that, can't you? So why aren't we all more creative?

There are many barriers to creativity, some personal, some societal, all avoidable if you put your mind to it. Fear is a major barrier to creativity. Whether you fear breaking the rules, success, or other people's opinions, those fears will keep you from trying. Creativity demands taking a chance. Think back to coloring as a child. Were you chastised for coloring outside the lines or were you supported when you made the sky orange and the grass blue?

Maybe it's your environment that gets in the way of your creativity. Is your world too noisy, too sterile, or too disconnected from nature? Creative thought flourishes in special spaces filled with rich colors, smells, tastes, and soft sounds. Windows that look out to trees, oceans or mountains are wonderful, but if you don't have a window, fill your walls with pictures of your favorite nature scenes.

Your creativity might be compromised by the culture around you. How do you and your organization feel about failure? Creativity requires that you try new things and doing something new demands that you get out of your comfort zone. Failure lurks outside your comfort zone. Success lies there also, but most of us focus on the failure and overlook the possibility of success. Creative people make getting out of their comfort zone normal behavior.

Discovering which barriers are holding you back and making some changes might just help you gain confidence in your creative thinking. Once you've got the confidence, there's no end to the creativity you can share with the world.

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Sidebar

Change Your Mind

Most of us fall into patterns of thinking. With some effort and well-chosen activities, you can enlarge your thinking patterns and surprise yourself with your newfound mental agility.

If you're usually a logical, left mode thinker try the following.

Doodle, draw, hold the phone to your left ear, hum, sing, visualize, daydream, explore possibilities, take a stroll, breathe deeply, look at the whole rather than the parts, print rather than write, put off making a decision

If you're usually an all-over-the-place, right mode thinker, try these ideas.

Make a list, hold the phone to your right ear, keep track of time, take notes, set priorities, consider consequences, take a timed walk, count while doing an exercise, examine the parts, write rather than print, make a decision

These new behaviors will feel uncomfortable as you try them out. With a little practice, you should start to see how a different behavior can lead to new ideas. Once you've tried and mastered these keep looking for ways to pull yourself out of your comfort zone and increase your creativity.