

Open Your Mind to Creativity

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We often get so jaded and stuck in our ways that creativity is all but shut down. It's frustrating because we know how important it is to be creative, but we just can't seem to find a way to let those ideas in. You expect them to just come to you, but you're stressed, out of practice, and unsure of the next steps.

The first step is to *decide* to become more creative. You've already done that by nature of reading this book—the decision has already been made. You're wondering if it's possible, and I'm telling you it absolutely is, as long as you're ready to open your mind to it.

Don't Turn Back Now

You can go through life ignoring the value of creativity, or you can embrace it. I know you'll embrace it, because it's important for your future and the future of the world. You already see the value in being more creative in your life and in your business.

Make today the very first day on your journey. Today is the day you're going to embrace new ideas and become one of the great thinkers of your generation. You're going to let your thirst for life drive your creativity forever. You're going to tap into the creativity you had as a child. When you do this, you'll be able to take your business, your life, your income, your family, and your future in any direction you want it to go.

Life Holds You Back, So Push On Anyway

It's important to acknowledge that you let life get in the way of your creativity sometimes. It all seems so draining and takes so much effort that

it's just not important anymore—it's too hard to do anything that requires extra energy.

It's not that you're ever completely devoid of creative thoughts-- you most certainly have them. But, you don't work your "creativity muscle" enough to strengthen it. You don't respect and trust your ideas and you don't have the confidence to carry them through.

Being creative and trying new things is scary. It's definitely the road less traveled. But, if you don't have a little bit of fear and go out of your comfort zone, you're point-blank doing it wrong. This is a process of mental and emotional growth. You're forming connections no one else has formed before—that can be a scary thing.

With that said, you need to be confident enough to move forward with your great ideas no matter what life throws your way. Believe in what you're doing, find your motivation, and nothing will stand in your way.

Also remember this: just because no one else has thought of an idea in quite the same way as you have (at least to your knowledge) doesn't mean it's an idea not worth having.

Ideas Come from Other People

One of the most helpful ways to start opening your mind to creativity is to realize that great ideas come from other people. It's not like you suddenly have to change the world from scratch. In fact, it's not even possible to do that. The world's greatest thinkers didn't start from nothing.

You're going to start listening to other people to open your mind. You're going to soak up their ideas and way of looking at the world. Whether you meet people online from different places and with different ideas, you network locally, or you start to listen to people in your daily life with renewed vigor-- you're going to start to *listen*.

When you listen, your worldview will expand. Right now, you have one way of looking at things based on your experiences. It makes sense, then, that you need new experiences with other people to form a new worldview. Soak up the essence of how other people experience the world, and better ideas will come to you.

Some businesspeople find themselves in near constant solitude. They feel it makes them more productive and keeps the time wasting to a minimum. There absolutely is something to that at certain points of the creative process—but it's not something you can or should adhere to most of the time. Spend a lot of time listening to others, bouncing ideas around, and examining things from a perspective other than your own.

Don't Censor Your Ideas

As you start to open your mind, the ideas will start pouring in, as if by magic. Does this mean you're more creative now? It does, but only if you follow your ideas through. To be creative, you have to create. To create, you have to give your ideas time to mature and follow through with them.

It's important you learn not to censor your ideas before they reach that point of maturity. I'm a huge advocate of brainstorming and mind mapping problems and ideas so you can make connections you wouldn't have made otherwise. However, I find that many people feel the need to erase and edit as they are brainstorming. That's a terrible idea. By its very nature, brainstorming means letting everything out that comes to you...*everything*.

The Phenomenon of the Creative Flow

There's an incredible phenomenon that occurs when you get into a creative flow. Have you ever been working on something you weren't so sure about first, but then you really got into it without even noticing? Working became effortless and involuntary; your mind entered "the zone." You looked up at the clock, noticing several hours had

passed...even though it felt like it had just been a few minutes. That same phenomenon happens when you're in the creative flow.

Editing and over-thinking kills that kind of flow. It closes off paths and connections so your network of ideas is stunted before it even has a chance to form.

Brainstorm and get in the zone and you'll make great connections. Allow yourself the freedom to make, what you previously called, mistakes. No idea is a bad one. Free up your brainstorming and you'll be full of creativity.

If you're constantly worried about your ideas or edit them as you go, you'll never get into that creative flow. You have to realize that no idea is too silly, or wrong, or bad. Stop editing your brainstorming sessions and don't hold back. Follow this advice and your creativity will instantly skyrocket.

Your Best Ideas Will Come When You Least Expect It

With all this talk about mind mapping and brainstorming, I have to mention that your best ideas will likely come when you least expect them. Brainstorming is a wonderful way to get your mind going. But, it's often not until you put the pencil down or turn off the computer and start thinking about something else that the very best idea may come to you. We'll talk about why that is a bit further on. For now, I just want you to know that this is how your mind works. You feed your mind information and inspiration, start to make connections, and then give it a rest. Your mind will naturally do the rest for you—it's an amazing thing.

Have you ever had a great idea but forgot to write it down? Don't let that happen, because those ideas will float in and out. You're an explorer of ideas now. You are in control of the future of the world's most important ideas. Forget to write it down, and you're letting the greatness slip through your fingers. Be ready to take notes on your great idea when it hits you. Otherwise, it might become lost in the abyss.

Open up Your Senses

One of the best ways to become more creative is to open up your senses. People are, by nature, sensory creatures. We have 5 senses—and some believe we have even more. We use these senses to explore the world—taste, touch, hearing, smell, and sight. But, how often do you pay attention to what you're sensing in the world?

As a whole, our attention to our senses has dulled. This is especially true for busy businesspeople who feel pressured in life and don't feel they can take time to stop and smell the roses. Most of life passes us by, which dulls our mind, body, and spirit.

The trick is that you can't become more creative until you open up your senses. That's why you should strive to become more mindful of them. It's a life-changing experience. Being mindful of your senses means enjoying and *feeling* life even more.

Have Fun with It

Go to a wine and cheese tasting and savor the food and drink. Note the food's texture, taste, and smell. Enjoy friendly conversation and really live in the moment.

Go to an art show for an artist you've never heard of before. Choose the piece you are most drawn to and really explore *why* that is—what is it about the art that draws you in visually and emotionally?

Take a walk and notice how the wind tickles your skin. Feel the hot beam of the sun warm your skin, forming tiny beads of sweat. Hear the birds sing and the freshly mowed lawn.

See? Even reading about those things gives you a sensory experience.

Start to do things you've never done before—things that will really open up your senses. This is a great way to exercise your body's natural ability to

draw information in through your senses. This input will contribute to your ability to be creative in major ways. Tapping into your senses will work for you even if you consider yourself to be a more logical and analytical type of person.

You Can't Do the Same Things...

You can't do the same things you've always done and expect to be creative and come up with new ideas. You have to try new things and look at the world in a new way. If you stick the same old, same old, you'll be working with a limited set of information with which to form new connections.

There's something about trying new things that really gets your body and mind pumping. It's a little bit out of your comfort zone, it's something you haven't done before, and it's a sensory explosion.

How does this relate to ramping up your creativity? It's all part of your life experience. Trying new things does a lot for you physically, mentally, and emotionally. It exercises the part of your brain that leads to increased creativity. Trying and learning new things helps your brain form new connections.

Live Life with Childlike Wonder

Take an afternoon off from work and dedicate yourself to living an afternoon with the wonder of a child. Go outside, sit on a park bench, and draw what you see—you don't have to be an amazing artist. Take a walk through your neighborhood and examine the different colors. Then, focus on how everything smells. Close off your other senses and think about what you hear. How would a child think about and perceive all of these experiences?

This accomplishes a couple of things—by actively trying to think like a child and be creative like a child, you'll be tapping into what is inherent to you but what you've long forgotten. You will also be giving your mind a rest

from your usual routine. Giving your mind a rest and doing things “off course” is one of the best ways to become more creative.



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