



How to be creative

Five great ways to improve your creativity

Creativity is the ability to think unexpected new thoughts and produce unusual new things.

1

Be Organised: A tidy desk frees your brain to concentrate on the important task of creation, rather than the entirely wasteful task of finding where things have gone. An uncluttered day leaves you free to create. So: plan. Failure to plan is, as the author Effie Jones observed, a plan to fail. What is your objective? What target do you have for today? Make to-do lists - but don't be tyrannised by them. Remember, on any list, it is highly unlikely that more than one in five will be genuinely important - the kind of task that is crucial to the success or failure of your enterprise. Identify that item - and focus on it. Only then can you be sure that you will end the day having really done something.

2

Seek out criticism: People have a natural tendency to be negative about new ideas, and many an idea has been killed prematurely by unimaginative critics. Yet ideas also thrive on constructive criticism, and without a sounding-board its easy for the creator to get lost. So seek out critics whom you think you can trust and test them by insisting that they tell you what they do like about your work before they tell you what they don't like. The latter information is actually the most valuable for you; the former will allow you to take it in without feeling too humiliated or threatened.

3

Set up shop in unfamiliar places: Do you always do your creative work in the same place? Try doing exactly the same work, in exactly the same way, but somewhere completely different - at an airport, say, or on a bus. You are often more “yourself” outside the normal working environment - and that is when ideas flow most freely.

4

Interact: Is working in isolation really good for you? Many of us survive and thrive intellectually thanks to a wealth of external stimuli and information sources. Conversely, some creative work simply can't be done without getting away from it all. Make sure you get a balance of solitude and interaction. Too much of either can be stifling.

5

Value friends: People who fail to keep up a good number of friendships in middle age tend to die younger. It's likely that putting yourself about a bit benefits not just your health but your creativity. Friends can stimulate new thinking and, just as important, they provide emotional back-up, which can make all the difference in helping you to get through a difficult patch.



Get your brain into the right habits, your capacity for innovation, imagination and inspiration is limitless.

