

Be Creative

By: Danielle Galow

There are more than 60 definitions for the word creativity throughout literature however the most common theme for the word creativity is a newly developed idea or newly derived connection between ideas (Creativity, 2008).

Although some may believe that only creative people are creative, most creativity actually stems from trying to create a solution for a problem (Baumgartner, 2007).

The first step to being creative is to turn your problem into a challenge so that you are developing creative solutions for your problem rather than getting off task and developing solutions to the wrong problem (Baumgartner, 2007). To start generating ideas, follow these steps:

1. Write down your problem (Baumgartner, 2007). If you write your problem down, you can refer to it easily and share it with others as you are trying to come up with the solution.
2. Break the problem down to find out why it's even a problem (Baumgartner, 2007). Make sure you are only dealing with one problem at a time.
3. Ask "why" until you can't ask it anymore (Baumgartner, 2007). Make sure you ask "why" a minimum of 5 times because the original problem is rarely the true problem (Creativity, Innovation, and Problem Solving, 2005).
4. Don't criticize ideas until it's time to evaluate their effectiveness (Baumgartner, 2007). Try to keep your mind as open as possible. You can always tame down a creative idea easier than making an obvious idea more creative. Plus you never know when one of your creative ideas might spark a new series of thoughts.
5. Don't stop at the first solution (Baumgartner, 2007). The first solution is usually the one many people can think of but if you take that idea as a starting point and keep brainstorming, you might come up with something original.

Because daily life can constrain our thoughts, sometimes it takes awhile to get the creative flow of thoughts going. There are activities that you can incorporate into your daily life to rev-up your creative thoughts.

First, always carry a notebook and a pen with you everywhere you go (Baumgartner, 1996). Write down every new idea you get. Most ideas may not be all that worthwhile, but you'll be glad you remembered the good ones. Don't forget to keep a notepad and pen beside your bed too.

Secondly, practice brainstorming (Baumgartner, 1996). Pick a topic or word and practice coming up with ideas associated with the topic.

Next, limit your television intake especially if you know you need to be using your creativity (Baumgartner, 1996). Television can mold the brain into a basic set of thoughts rather than letting your imagination run wild.

Finally, engage in brain exercises regularly (Baumgartner, 1996). Challenge yourself in puzzles, crosswords, word searches and board games often.

It's important to realize that creativity is a learned habit and that anyone can be creative, not just a select group (Baumgartner, 2005). Although some people do have more creative ideas than others, they are not always creative (Baumgartner, 2005). To continually be creative, one must practice at using their creative skills. Remember there is no such thing as a stupid idea (Baumgartner, 2005), some ideas just may need tweaking.

And finally, remember that, "True creativity and innovation consists of seeing what everyone else has seen, thinking what no one else has thought, and doing what no one else has dared (Creativity, Innovation, and Problem Solving, 2005)."

References

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