

Creativity is a Process that Anyone Can Learn

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In today's fast-paced world, the ability to think creatively and come up with innovative solutions is highly valued. From business to the arts, creativity has become a vital skill for success. However, many people believe that creativity is a gift, and that they are not creative because they find it difficult to generate new ideas. The truth is, creativity is not an inherent talent, but a process that anyone can learn.

The creative process involves several stages. The first stage is preparation, where the individual gathers information, researches, and examines the problem they need to solve. The second stage is incubation, where the brain processes this information subconsciously, allowing new connections to form. The third stage is illumination, where the "aha" moment occurs, and the individual comes up with a new idea or solution. The final stage is verification, where the idea is tested and refined to ensure its feasibility.

One of the biggest misconceptions about creativity is that it's a gift that only a few possess. However, research shows that everyone has the potential to be creative. The key is to understand that creativity is not just about

coming up with new ideas, but about the process of generating and refining them. By cultivating a growth mindset, anyone can develop their creative abilities.

Many people are held back by self-doubt and fear of failure. They are overly self-critical and judge their ideas harshly, which hinders their creative process. To overcome this, it's important to let go of perfectionism and embrace the process of trial and error. By accepting that not every idea will be successful and that mistakes are a natural part of the creative process, individuals can free themselves to take risks and generate more innovative ideas.

Another way to stimulate creativity is to expose oneself to diverse perspectives and ideas. By engaging with people from different backgrounds and cultures, individuals can gain new insights and perspectives that can inspire their creativity. Reading books, watching movies, and attending exhibitions are also great ways to expose oneself to new ideas and experiences.

This article will explore how creativity is a process that anyone can learn. By understanding the creative process,

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- Purpose Discovery
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- Creativity and Innovation
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cultivating a growth mindset, and exposing oneself to diverse perspectives, individuals can unlock their creative potential and come up with innovative solutions to the challenges of today's world. With creativity, we can break away from the limitations of sameness and move towards a more exciting and dynamic future.

The Many Problems Surrounding 'Being Creative'

While creativity is a valuable skill that anyone can learn, there are several problems that individuals often encounter when trying to be more creative.

One of the most significant problems is assuming that great ideas will just "come to you" because that's how it seems to happen to other people. However, the reality is that coming up with innovative ideas requires effort and a deliberate creative process. The process of generating and refining ideas involves exploring different possibilities, experimenting with new approaches, and taking risks. Without putting in the effort to engage in this process, individuals will likely struggle to come up with truly innovative ideas.

Another problem that individuals face when trying to be more creative is self-inflicted pressure to come up with an idea quickly. The fear of not being able to come up with an idea can be paralyzing and prevent the brain from naturally connecting dots and traveling the creative path. This pressure can make it challenging to stay focused on the problem at hand and can hinder the creative process. By giving themselves time and space to explore different possibilities, individuals can reduce the pressure and allow their minds to work more freely.

Ignoring smaller ideas that you think aren't good enough is another problem that can prevent individuals from being creative. Creativity is a continuous and iterative process that involves building upon and refining ideas over time. Sometimes, what may seem like a small and insignificant idea can serve as the foundation for a more significant breakthrough later on. By dismissing these smaller ideas too quickly, individuals may miss out on the potential for creative breakthroughs.

For example, Leonardo da Vinci, one of history's most creative thinkers, was known for his extensive use of notebooks to record his ideas, observations, and experiments. His notebooks reveal that he often explored a variety of seemingly unrelated topics and allowed his mind to wander freely. He would also refine and improve upon his ideas over time, often revisiting them years later with new insights and perspectives. This approach allowed him to develop his many creative

innovations, including flying machines, robots, and anatomical drawings.

Another example of a highly creative thinker is Nikola Tesla, who was responsible for many of the technological advancements that we take for granted today. Tesla was known for his intense focus and ability to visualize his ideas in great detail before beginning to work on them. He also believed in the importance of collaboration and worked closely with other scientists and engineers to develop his ideas. By combining his visionary thinking with a disciplined approach to experimentation and collaboration, Tesla was able to develop groundbreaking innovations such as the alternating current (AC) electrical system and wireless communication.

So what are some 'Thinking Processes' you can use?

1. Divergent versus Convergent Thinking:

Divergent thinking refers to generating multiple ideas or solutions to a problem or question. This technique is useful in the brainstorming or idea generation phase of a project. Divergent thinking encourages individuals to come up with as many solutions as possible, without judgment or evaluation. For example, a team at a marketing agency might brainstorm a variety of possible ad campaign ideas for a new product launch.

Convergent thinking, on the other hand, is the process of evaluating and selecting the most promising solution from a list generated through divergent thinking. This technique is useful in the decisionmaking or problem-solving phase of a project. Convergent thinking involves analyzing the various solutions generated through divergent thinking and selecting the best one based on specific criteria. For example, after brainstorming ad campaign ideas, the marketing team might evaluate each idea based on factors such as target audience, budget, and timeline, and then select the most effective idea to move forward with.

2. Thinking about the problem versus thinking about the solution:

When trying to solve a problem, it is important to first understand the problem and break it down into smaller segments. This allows for a wider range of solutions to be generated in greater detail.

One way to do this is to use a technique called "chunking", which involves breaking the problem down into smaller, more manageable pieces. For example, if a company is experiencing a decline in sales, they might

break down the problem into smaller segments, such as targeting a new demographic, changing the pricing strategy, or improving the quality of the product.

By thinking about the problem in this way, a wider range of solutions can be generated. It also allows for a more detailed evaluation of each potential solution. Once the potential solutions have been evaluated, it is then easier to select the best solution to move forward with.

3. Giving your mind time to wander:

Scientific research has shown that our brains need time and space to subconsciously make connections and generate novel ideas. This is why taking breaks and giving your mind time to rest and wander can be important for creativity.

For example, many people have experienced coming up with great ideas while in the shower or going for a walk. This is because when we give our minds time to wander, we activate the default mode network in our brain, which allows for creative thinking and making connections.

It is important to note that this technique does not necessarily mean doing nothing. It can involve engaging in an activity that doesn't require much conscious thought, such as taking a walk or doing household chores. This allows your mind to wander and make connections subconsciously, which can lead to creative insights.

4. Thinking of other concepts or principles from unrelated fields and trying to apply them to your field:

This technique involves looking for inspiration from fields outside of your own and applying those principles to your own work. For example, Steve Jobs was inspired by a calligraphy class he took in college and applied those principles to the design of the first Macintosh computer.

This technique can lead to innovative and unique solutions, as it allows you to think outside of your own field and consider different perspectives. It can also be a useful technique for overcoming creative blocks, as it can spark new ideas and approaches.

In summary, these creative thinking methods can be powerful tools for generating unique and innovative ideas. By using techniques such as divergent and convergent thinking, breaking down problems into smaller segments, giving your mind time to wander, and looking for inspiration from outside fields, individuals

and teams can approach problems with a fresh perspective and generate more creative solutions.

Overcoming the Fear of Failure

One of the biggest obstacles to creativity and innovation is the fear of failure. People are often hesitant to take risks or pursue new ideas because they are afraid of making mistakes or being judged harshly. However, it is important to recognize that failure is a natural part of the creative process and can actually lead to greater success in the long run.

For example, in the tech industry, many companies practice a process known as "iterative design," which involves building prototypes and testing them with users in order to quickly identify flaws and improve the product. Google is a great example of a company that embraces this approach. While they are known for their many successful products and services (like Google Search, Gmail, and Google Maps), they have also had their fair share of failures, such as Google Glass and Google Wave. Google Wave was a collaborative platform launched in 2009 that aimed to merge email, instant messaging, and social networking into one interface. However, it was discontinued in 2012 due to low adoption rates. Similarly, Google Glass was a wearable device launched in 2013 that aimed to revolutionize the way we interact with technology. Despite early hype, it failed to catch on and was discontinued in 2015. However, both of these projects provided valuable lessons for Google that informed the development of more successful products, such as Google Docs and Google Home.

Elon Musk is another example of a successful entrepreneur who is not afraid of failure. Musk is known for taking on seemingly impossible challenges, such as revolutionizing the space industry with SpaceX and building a sustainable energy future with Tesla. He has also faced setbacks and failures along the way, such as the explosion of a SpaceX rocket during a test flight in 2016 and the production challenges faced by Tesla's Model 3. However, Musk has been able to learn from these experiences and continue to push forward with his ambitious goals.

While it's true that the cost of failure in terms of time and money can be high in the modern workplace, it's important to remember that failure is often a necessary part of the creative process. In fact, some of the most successful companies and individuals have embraced the concept of "failing fast" in order to learn and iterate quickly.

While the cost of failure may be high in some industries, it's important to remember that the cost of not innovating can be even higher. By creating space for failure and embracing it as a necessary part of the creative process, we can unlock our full creative potential and achieve greater success in the long run.

The key takeaway is that failure should not be feared or avoided, but rather embraced as a necessary part of the creative process. By taking risks and learning from mistakes, we can ultimately achieve greater success and innovation.

In Conclusion what would this look like for your daily life?

1. Try to focus more on the process than the output: This means valuing the process of generating ideas, rather than just the end result. It's important to give yourself time to explore different options and try out new things, even if they don't immediately lead to a successful outcome. This approach can be particularly useful when working on creative projects where there may not be a clear "right" answer. Instead, focus on the journey and enjoy the process of discovery.

2. Try to be less self-critical of the ideas you come up with: Self-criticism can be a major roadblock to creativity. When we are overly critical of our own ideas, we tend to shut down the creative process before it even has a chance to get started. Instead of judging your ideas too harshly, try to adopt a more curious and open-minded approach. Be willing to explore new possibilities and embrace the unexpected.

3. If you are a manager/leader/teacher or parent, try not to shut down ideas early on: This is particularly important in a team setting, where you want to create an environment that encourages creative thinking and collaboration. When someone brings up an idea, try to be open-minded and encourage others to build on it. Even if the idea isn't immediately feasible or practical, it

may spark a new and innovative approach that leads to success in the long run.

4. Give your brain time: It's important to give yourself and others time to think and process information before jumping to conclusions. This is especially true in situations where you need to come up with creative solutions to complex problems. Rather than trying to force a solution, take a break and allow your brain time to process the information and make new connections. This might involve stepping away from the problem for a little while or coming back to it later with fresh eyes. For an example at a team meeting don't expect ideas as immediately as you identify problems, maybe pick it up again at the end of the day when team members minds have had time to work out the problem from different angles.

5. Never be afraid to share something you think is 'stupid': Sometimes, the most seemingly insignificant ideas can lead to major breakthroughs. By sharing your ideas, even the ones you think are silly or trivial, you are opening up the possibility for new connections and insights. This is why it's important to create a safe and supportive environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas, no matter how unconventional they may be.

By implementing these strategies in your daily life, you can become more open-minded, flexible, and creative in your thinking. You can learn to embrace failure as a natural part of the process, rather than fearing it, and be more willing to take risks and try new things. By encouraging creative thinking in yourself and others, you can foster a more innovative and collaborative work or personal environment.

Remember, creativity is not something that comes naturally to everyone, but it can be learned and developed with practice. So, don't be afraid to experiment, explore, and have fun with the creative process!