

Discovering my Creative Self

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When the mind is simple, purged of all self-deception and cunning, cleansed of all accumulation, brings in the creative being.....*Jiddu Krishnamurti*

Look at children. We can experience creative energy flowing in abundance. This comes from a pure, uncluttered and innocent mind that allows the creative being within them to emerge.

Why do we lose that when we grow older?

The first task in becoming more creative is giving myself **permission** to be creative. This can be done by allowing my mind to be uncluttered and innocent, open to experiences and the emergence of my creative self. The second is overcoming my **personal blocks** to creativity. For some people, being creative involves trying not to be embarrassed by their own ideas; for others, it is a matter of being aware that things can be done in many different ways. Some people are self-aware or confident enough to have fewer inhibitions and can just let their creative natures work.

I can surround myself with people who love and support me in my creative self. Spending time meditating on my own worthiness, reading about other creative people and creative solutions, concentrating on the positive power of my own creative forces - these activities, combined with a belief in my own intuition and creative abilities, will help improve my confidence.

Creativity is not a gift of some sort; it is a state of being. Learning a creativity-increasing technique of some sort will give me some tools and help me, but will not automatically change my point of view about myself and my creativity; my belief and value systems about creativity and creativity myths must change as well.

Obstacles to creativity

Most of the obstacles to creativity can be found within me.

- Fear of criticism
- Lack of confidence
- State of mind/body (for example experiencing negative stress)

The main thing that hinders creative thinking is our belief that we are not creative. Look at it this way. If I tell myself: "I am a creative person", then I have to have beliefs about myself that support that identity. If I tell myself, "I am just an

ordinary human being", then I will have a different set of beliefs. Once I have a particular identity and set of beliefs about myself, I will become interested in seeking out the skills needed to express my identity and beliefs. If I believe that I'm "uncreative", then there is no need to learn how to become creative.

Other factors that limit creative behavior include:

- *Stress*. Stress is not only a distraction which drains energy which could otherwise be used creatively.
- *Routines*. Routines or set ways of performing tasks have their uses, but allowing them to become too entrenched in one's life causes one to limit the range of responses available and can lead to the development of the anathema of creativity, the "bureaucratic mind".
- *Beliefs*. Having a strong belief in something not only limits our response options, but causes us to limit the way in which we perceive and process information from the outside world. We may "filter out" information which contradicts our belief, and end up in our own "reality tunnel", in which we remain blissfully unaware of much that occurs in front of our very eyes.
- *Ego*. Having a strong ego identity with a particular belief exacerbates this situation and can lead to us aggressively defending it, to the detriment of ourselves, our creativity, and society. This is not to imply that one must have no beliefs, merely that one needs to be very aware of one's beliefs and consequent limitations.
- *Fear*. Fear of self expression and of the judgment of others can severely limit one's creativity.
- *Self criticism*. Negative thinking and self criticism are also limiting factors of an individual's creativity.

Action Steps

Here are a few things I can do to be a more creative person:

- *Study books* on creative thinking techniques and put them into practice
- *Attend courses* on creative thinking and put the ideas into practice.
- *Keep a daily journal* and record my thoughts, ideas, sketches, etc. as soon as I get them. Review my journal regularly and see what ideas can be developed.
- Indulge in *relaxation activities* and *sports* to give the mind a rest and time for the subconscious to digest information.
- Develop an *interest in a variety of different things*, preferably well away from my normal sphere of work. For example, read comic books or magazines I wouldn't normally get. This keeps the brain busy with new things. It is a common trait of creative people that they are interested in a wide variety of subjects.
- *Don't work too hard* -I need time away from a problem to be creative after periods of intense focus.

Practicing at overcoming irrational inhibitions will also help to improve my creativity.

When I'm still, and I witness somebody with a vital and flowing creative force, it can be intimidating. The thing that's easy to miss when I'm caught up in the magic of somebody doing something effortlessly that seems impossible is that it doesn't happen all at once.

Creativity is increased by acknowledging that it exists and by *nurturing* it. Create a sensory *stimulating environment*, increase awareness of that environment and provide sufficient quiet time to allow that sensory stimulation to be translated into external reality ... a poem, a bridge, a meal, a song, a quilt, a business report, a game, a dance, a garden.

Flood myself with information in my chosen area of creativity and then deliberately expose myself to information outside my area. Then come back to my chosen area with the new information and ideas from a completely different field. This is the method of lateral thinking promoted by Edward De Bono.

Don't allow my beliefs to distort my perceptions. One of the techniques I use is to deliberately and consciously attempt to integrate opposites at every opportunity within my mind.

Eckhart Tolle writes in the "Power of Now", "*When an answer, a solution or a creative idea is needed, stop thinking for a moment by focusing attention on your inner energy field. Become aware of stillness. Then resume thinking, it will be fresh and creative....don't just think with your head, think with your whole body*"

These are my notes to myself to discover my creative self. Hope you will write your notes now!

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