

Eight Tips to Keep Creativity Alive

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1. Think of children and remember that they are all imaginative and creative in their own way—some with construction toys like Lego, some with silly word riddles, some crayoning a mass of colours on paper and some turning a cardboard box into an airplane, house or castle. So were you and so are you a creative being. If you have lost the feeling of it, decide to rekindle an attitude of curiosity and exploration.
2. Notice how others enjoy the creative process. Let yourself be inspired. There are people who create prose like my friend Ria, visual delights like my daughter-in-law Chandra, scrumptious lunches like my friend Elissa, songs like my friends Judy and Patty, a blossom filled garden like my mother, fun wardrobes like my friend Melanie, cartoons like my friend Ted and so the list goes. Notice how your friends and family create and then catch yourself in creative moments too.
3. Allow yourself to dream, to fantasize, to imagine and ask what if? What if I took an oil painting, singing or a stand up comedy class? What if I visited my friend in the hospital wearing Groucho Marx glasses? What if I rearrange the living room furniture?
4. Decide that creative clutter is just fine. Real dangerous dirt seldom resides in our homes. Creative projects often require messiness—a glorious muddle. When I create personalized cards I have paper shreds, markers, glue, magazines, glitter, and all sorts of matter on the dining table spilling onto the floor.
5. Give yourself time to live creatively. It will fuel your energy for life. My mother used to fret and feel guilty that she spent time gardening. She told herself “I *should* be helping at the church.” Yet her garden brought enormous joy to her and everyone who visited it. Even more incredulous was the fact that for years and years every Sunday and on special occasions she beautified the church with her blooms and greenery. I found the perfect T-shirt for her. It had flowers on it with the saying: “I Garden. Therefore, I Am.” Find your own “I (creative activity). Therefore I Am” and book time to express.
6. If you fear what the neighbours or your mother-in-law will think pick up a copy of Susan Jeffers’s ***Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway***. In my presentations I encourage people to act “weird” and “silly”. I give permission to let the creative self out. “Weird” is from the derivative “way,” or as I say “to have found my own way” and “silly” means “to be blessed.” Anyway, what your neighbours think of you probably isn’t any of your business.
7. Don’t end up doing an internal judgmental and critical putdown off “what will the neighbours think?” If you are drawn to a particular creative outlet allow yourself to be a beginner, repeatedly. Life long learners are desired by employers

and live longer. Better to begin and explore than make a stifling decision of “I am not a creative person.”

8. Go explore. Creative expression is about engaging in the world with a playful, light and imaginative spirit. It becomes a spiritual activity when you lose track of time, energy flows and you have a feeling of loving life itself.

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