

Creativity: Thinking Outside the Box (continued)

- Because of time constraints, you only have a minute to find out one thing about every person you meet. What would you ask each person – and why?
- The government has asked you to come up with a new holiday that will be celebrated by everyone in the country. What day would you choose? Why is that?
- Say you worked for Nickelodeon or the Sesame Workshop, creating educational programming for kids. What character would you like to create? What would that character’s purpose be?
- If you had the opportunity to choose a thought that would go into thousands of fortune cookies, what would it be? Why?

Creative Techniques

Here are a few tricks of the trade for your consideration as you move toward incorporating even more creativity into your life...

Blank Stare. For a moment, just try staring at a blank wall to clear your mind. Project images of dreams, thoughts, and musings onto this wall to help yourself get back in touch with imaginings beyond the everyday.

Go Left-Brained. Often times, when we’re trying to do something creative or right-brained, we may feel stumped. That’s why researchers suggest doing something left-brained for a bit to help stimulate creative thought. For instance, if you’re having a tough time thinking of how to creatively begin a paper, do something logical for a while such as balancing your checkbook. The different activity will help you go back to the right-brained task with a fresh perspective.

“Creativity is like a muscle. You either use it or lose it.”

~ Roger von Oech

Play with Words. If you need a creative boost, try playing with words. A good pun can make you feel like a creative genius! Or taking someone’s name and coming up with an adjective for each letter can help you think a bit differently.

Change Your Filter. Draw a squiggly line and look at it carefully. What is it? If you say, “A squiggly line,” your filter needs a change! Instead, think of all the things it *could* be, such as a piece of Alaskan spaghetti shivering in the cold, a clothesline dancing to a conga beat or a string of dental floss awaiting its next tooth encounter with unbridled glee. Now try this same thing with any other shape you can imagine.

Make Comparisons. In his well-known *Creative Whack Pack*, Roger von Oech invites readers to try all sorts of techniques, including making comparisons. He gives the example of comparing a cat and a refrigerator. Both come in a variety of colors and have a place to put fish! Think about the similarities between two other seemingly dissimilar objects to help you think outside of the box.

Creativity has to begin with you. Learn to trust and appreciate your innate abilities. Have fun tapping into the creative sides of yourself that are present but just need some urging to come out. Creativity can help you in your leadership position, sure. Yet, leading a creative life can give you even more in the long run – possibilities, humor, self-confidence, and an ever-interesting life! So, let yourself out to play regularly, either with others or on your own. Make the “I’m not creative” myth just a figment of your imagination.