



**JUMPSTART YOUR
CREATIVITY**
...WITH JOURNALING

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Creativity is everywhere.

Whether you work as an artist, a pastry chef, a systems admin, or a truck driver, chances are you're going to be called upon to engage in creative thinking at some point in your career. Creativity abounds wherever problems arise, and without it, businesses get mired in the same old processes which caused the problems in the first place.

Unfortunately, most people aren't in the habit of thinking they're creative. They believe the use of imagination is best left restricted to the world of writers, musicians, artists, and dancers.

Ask any manager or HR person though, and they'll tell you they're looking for creative people all the time – in any position, for just about any job. That's because creative people are the innovators, the ones who make new processes and get the work done in ways no one else thought of before.

Which brings us to the next question: Can creativity be learned, or it is something you're born with?

The answer is yes; it *can* be learned. With the right tools, *anyone* can become more creative, and journaling is the way to get there.

Journaling opens your mind up to new possibilities. When you're writing, you stimulate areas of the brain-centered on creativity. What you might not realize is the act of writing things out by hand increases the effect.

Let's look at some ways journaling boosts creativity.

You Build a Library of Ideas

Do you ever feel like you never have any original ideas? That's not exactly true. Everyone gets ideas, but few people are conscious of doing so. Most ideas begin

as fleeting thoughts. If you don't act on them immediately, they tend to disappear, never to be seen again.

Journaling allows you to write down your innovative ideas as they occur. This is important because the more you become conscious of your ideas through the act of writing them down, the more you notice the ideas when you have them. It's a cool process because once you've been doing it a while, you'll start feeling like you're absolutely overflowing with ideas.

You Retrain Your Thinking Processes

A creative mind needs to be able to think freely, without restriction. This is hard to do if you're not used to it. Thankfully, journaling has the answer here too. By making a point of writing using a stream of consciousness info dump with everything in it from the day's accomplishments to your thoughts about the weather, you train your mind to roam unhindered.

The beautiful thing about journaling is you can write anything you want without fear of judgment. This is a bonus, as the one thing holding people back creatively is the feeling they'll be judged for their ideas and found wanting.

You Learn how to Refine Your Ideas

Not everything you think is ready to be shared with the rest of the world. Journaling helps by giving you a safe place to explore an idea or goal to see if it's feasible or not. While not every idea you explore is going to be perfect, through this process, you will discover those which are *possible* and are something with serious development potential.

You Know When Lightning Strikes

When you do get those marvelous ideas, it's hard to know exactly how or why they happen. When you journal, the meandering path becomes clear. Journals are a record of what's going on in your life. When inspiration hits, chances are you wrote about that somewhere, including information about when and where inspiration happened. This is great news because now you know the

circumstances which created the best ideas and can (with some practice) recreate the experience whenever you like. This makes excellent ideas not just happy accidents, but something planned and deliberate—something you can duplicate.

You Get a Break When You Need One

Sometimes we aren't tapping into our creativity because we are burnt out. Journaling is a fantastic way to relax. Here you can put your focus where you want to, and let your mind unwind. You can even use a journal for meditation and reflection. Regular breaks recharge the batteries, leaving you ready for more creative work later.

All of this sounds pretty good, doesn't it? Now it's time to look under the hood and discover just how to go about this whole journaling business so you can reap all those creative benefits.

Do a Brain Dump

Sitting down and just letting the words flow out of you in a long freewriting session. Scientific studies prove the best creative benefit comes from doing journaling by hand, so get ready to kick it old school. Set a timer for more than 5 minutes, but less than 10. Then write anything and everything that comes to mind. Don't stop until the timer dings.

Try a Prompt

Online, you'll find countless lists of writing prompts for both journaling and creative writing. Search to find an appealing idea. Use the prompt as a jumping off point to your writing. Don't be afraid to change it and make the idea more 'yours.' This is part of the creative process too.

Have a Conversation with Yourself

No, I'm not asking you to create a split personality, but I am suggesting a creative writing exercise where you address yourself in conversation on paper. This

technique is especially powerful when you feel stuck with something in your life or can't seem to make a decision. Have the first speaker be your currently blocked self. The second is the you who's already figured it all out. Set the timer and let your first self discuss with the second.

Complain, rant, and explain why you're blocked. When you're done, let your future self who already knows the answer have a rebuttal. What would this version of yourself have to say? How would they respond to the charges laid at their feet? What solution do they already have? Go back and forth in the conversation until you see the breakthroughs from what was holding you back.

Draw

It might be you're having trouble articulating your thoughts into words. Doodling can be used to focus your thoughts and express them without having to say them using letters and spaces to get the point across. What makes this enjoyable is you'll still be able to get your point across regardless. It's even been proven in various studies doodling helps to focus concentration and boosts memory function, so there's a definite purpose in it. You may find yourself discovering a way to put your thoughts into words once you've doodled or drawn for a while.

Write in Circles

Remember when you were a kid in art class, and you were told to take a word and write it in a way that reflected it somehow, like making the word "tire" into a circle when you wrote it? Here's where you get to do this exercise all over again, but on a much larger scale. Write your words up, down, sideways, in shapes, like graffiti, in any way you feel like to express how you feel about them. Get artistic and put them all over the page. It doesn't matter how legible they are; you know what they are. This is for you after all, and not meant to be shared, so go a little nuts with this and have fun.

Try Poetry

When is the last time you focused on rhyme and meter? Poetry can be wonderfully entertaining! With so many styles to choose from, you can express

yourself in a variety of ways from limericks down to free verse or haiku. Poetry is unique as it forces you to think about the words you use and how they fit together. Go as formal or informal as you like. If you want the challenge, try a sonnet or something equally complex. If you're not sure, just let the words flow and become art in how they fall upon the page. This is amazingly stimulating to your mind, and well worth the effort.

Talk to Your Muse

You've talked to yourself, now speak to your Muse. Who's in charge of all this creative energy anyway? Sit down and have a discussion on paper with the portion of yourself that fuels the imagination. What would you like to say? What do you think your Muse has to teach you?

When creativity is flowing, all kinds of magic can happen. Journaling is the key to releasing your imagination and learning how to apply it to any situation.

If you feel like this is too hard because you're not a writer, take heart. Journaling is something anyone can do. The point is to express yourself on paper. Some people draw, others make lists in Bullet Journals. There's no wrong way to do journal. The key is to practice the art of journaling regularly, making it a part of your daily routine.

Then once you reach this point, stand back and watch what happens next. You're going to discover that you, the non-creative person you always thought you were, are now full of ideas. Once this happens, the sky is the limit.

What are you waiting for? Don't you know the world is primed and ready for your ideas? Go start writing!