



THINGS YOU CAN DO TO BOOST YOUR CREATIVITY

Many people believe you're either creative or you aren't. That isn't true. Even the least creative person can sharpen their creative skills with focused effort, and creative types can get even more creative. Following are five ways to boost your creativity, whether you feel it's at zero or just not as developed as you'd like.

Commit to creativity. Decide to become more creative and start thinking of yourself as a creative person. Don't shy away from creative risks, and don't be afraid to share your creative endeavors. By doing creative things, you'll become more creative.

Move. Physical activity stimulates creative thinking. Move your body and creativity will follow.

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Mix up your human connections. Spice up your way of thinking by connecting with new people. You will feed off the diversity of fresh ideas and get your creative juices flowing.

Ask good questions. Creativity begins with questions: "Creativity begins with questions. What if? How could I? How does that work?" The better you get at asking questions like these, the more creative you'll become.

Generate lots of ideas. When it comes to creativity, quantity yields quality. Generate ideas with no limits and play with those ideas: Put them together, take them apart, look at them from different perspectives and boil them down to the best ideas. Then do something with them. That's creativity.

Smart Facts

75%

of people feel they are not living up to their creative potential.

70%

Americans feel creativity is crucial to economic growth.

46%

of Americans use creative activities to relieve stress.



HOW TO BE A CREATIVE GIFT GIVER

There are two types of people on your holiday gift list: Those you have to get a gift for and those you want to get a gift for. For the first group, it's a matter of grabbing something and checking them off the list. For the second group, it's a different matter entirely. There's agonizing and worrying. There's shopping and shopping. And then, too often, there's feeling like you've failed.

How can you eliminate the stress and feel more successful with that second group? Get creative. Following are a few ways to go beyond the basics and give a gift that will let your recipient know you weren't simply checking them off the list.

Know your recipient. It might seem obvious, but think first about what you know about the recipient. "I've always believed that literally anything on earth, any object, any piece of trash, anything you find in a store, can be a perfect gift," New Yorker food writer Helen Rosner told [Vox.com](https://www.vox.com). "It can be a Tootsie Pop or a \$10,000 diamond-encrusted cocktail shaker. What's important is matching the right thing to the right person."

Take it up a notch. So, you know your recipient loves a certain author. Don't just get a copy of a book; get a special edition. Your friend likes elephants? Don't buy a figurine; arrange a visit to the elephant enclosure at a zoo. This doesn't have to mean spending more; it just means thinking more.

Get an assist. Don't be afraid to ask someone else for insights – a spouse, a sibling, a co-worker. They might spark an idea that truly surprises your recipient.

Give experiences, not things. One more thing won't be memorable. But an experience? That can be memorable. Consider things like tickets to an event, a fun class or a behind-the-scenes visit to a favorite haunt. An experience will always be better than one more scented candle or another gift card.

Make it rather than buy it. Nothing says "creative" like something you make yourself. Sure: It requires some time and risk. ("What if it turns out awful?") It will be worth it: You'll enjoy the time spent creating the gift, and even a less-than-perfect gift will be more memorable than something with a price tag on it.

Go for the heart. The bottom line with all of these options: Aim for the heart. Whether you strike a nostalgic chord, demonstrate how well you know the recipient or simply reveal that you care, your heartfelt creativity will make the gift memorable.



"What's important is matching the right thing to the right person."
Helen Rosner

THE EAP: POWERFUL AND OVERLOOKED

One of the most powerful parts of your employee benefits package is something you probably aren't taking advantage of: an employee assistance program, or EAP.

A typical EAP provides support for everything from common daily challenges to serious family hurdles. Whether it's mental health issues or parenting problems, financial worries or a legal question, the EAP is a great resource.

Can't figure out how to save for your first home? Need help dealing with stress at work? Looking for someone to care for an aging parent while you're working? Seeking some basic legal advice? An EAP can help you connect with resources for these and countless other challenges you might be facing, and it's all free of charge.

So, if EAPs are so great, why is their utilization rate only about 3-5%? One big reason could be concerns about confidentiality. Many employees worry that talking to someone at the EAP about personal issues or financial problems will get back to their boss, or they might think HR will be informed about their reasons for reaching out.

That isn't the case. Contacting an EAP is a completely confidential process. Nobody where you work has access to any information about EAP usage. So, if you're stressed about finances, struggling with parenting challenges or simply feeling overwhelmed at work, you can get confidential help without spending an arm and a leg for a counselor or therapist.

But don't think you have to be in the middle of a crisis to tap into these resources. According to the Society of Human Resource Management website, EAPs also help employees with matters like wedding planning, preparing for a new baby or even vacation planning.

And, again, these services are free of charge because your employer pays for it, typically as part of your benefits program.

How can you make use of these services? Start by learning about your company's EAP. You likely receive information about it every year with your benefits package, but you can contact your HR team to learn more. From there, it's typically a matter of calling a phone number or going to a website, where you'll explain your needs and be connected to someone who can help. It's that easy.



Safe Toy and Gifts Awareness Month

Nobody wants to give a life-changing injury as a gift, but thousands of children receive toys every year that end up causing them serious eye injuries, or even blindness. To reduce this danger, Prevent Blindness America has declared December Safe Toy and Gifts Awareness Month, encouraging gift givers to think twice before giving something that might hold hidden dangers. Key considerations: Buy age-appropriate gifts, show a child how to use a gift properly and watch kids when they're learning how to play with something. Learn more [here](#).

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: CRANBERRIES

It takes a flood to bring cranberries to a holiday dinner table.

It's true: In what might be the most interesting harvesting process of all, cranberries grow in fields like most others, but when it's time for bringing in some of the crop, the fields are flooded and the cranberries are "beaten" from their vines. Because each berry contains air pockets, they float to the top of the water, where they can be corralled and scooped up. (Some cranberries are harvested through a "dry method," but it's far less common.)

This flood-harvest process typically occurs in September and October, just in time for Thanksgiving and Christmas, when most fresh cranberries are served. Of course, berries also are consumed in juices and other forms all year round, but we do tend to associate the cranberry with the holidays.

Most of this watery harvesting occurs right here in the U.S., where about 75% of the world's cranberries are grown. Wisconsin produces about 60% of the nation's cranberries, which equates to more than half of all cranberries produced in



the rest of the world. Only about 5% of Wisconsin's crop is sold fresh. The rest is made into sauce, juice, dried fruit and other foods.

Whatever form you choose, cranberries are not only good but also good for you. They're known for giving a boost to the heart and urinary tract, and also are linked to cancer prevention, diabetes treatment and more.



Recipe: Nantucket Cranberry Pie

Ingredients:

2 cups (heaping) cranberries
¾ cup pecans, chopped (measure, then chop)
1⅔ cups plus 1 tbsp. granulated sugar, divided
1 cup all-purpose flour
½ cup unsalted butter, melted, plus more for greasing
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 tsp. pure almond extract
¼ tsp. salt
Vanilla ice cream or whipped cream

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Generously butter a cake pan or pie pan and then add cranberries to the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle on the chopped pecans and then ⅔ cup of the sugar. In a mixing bowl, combine flour, 1 cup sugar, melted butter, eggs, almond extract and salt, stirring gently to combine. Slowly pour this batter over the top of the cranberries and pecans in large ribbons to evenly cover the surface. (If necessary, spread gently.) Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, sprinkling the top with the remaining tablespoon of sugar 5 minutes before removing from the oven. Cut into wedges and serve with ice cream or freshly whipped cream.

Nutrition Information (10 servings):

CALORIES: 341; SUGARS: 36G; FAT: 16G; CARBOHYDRATES: 46G; FIBER: 2G; PROTEIN: 3G; SODIUM: 73MG; POTASSIUM: 80MG

Sources: Accessed November 1st, 2023

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