

## January 2009: Boost Your Creativity

Creativity is the ability to use your imagination to develop new and original ideas. This skill is valued by employers, clients and parents.

It is estimated that one in five workers said they would leave their job to join a workplace where they could be more creative, even if it meant earning less money.

A bit of creativity is often all it takes to come up with solutions to your personal problems, better ways to manage your time, and even start up that business of your own.

Indeed, Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort."

Yet, as productive and beneficial as creativity can be, it is often a difficult skill, one that seems to disappear just when you need it most. Fortunately, you can actually boost your creativity by doing something very simple: sleeping.

### Sleeping Your Way to Creativity

There's a reason why innovative companies like Google, Cisco Systems and Procter & Gamble have installed Energy-Pods -- leather recliners with hoods that block noise and light -- to give their employees a bit of shuteye during the workday. Sleep has been found to increase creativity by 33 percent, according to Dr. Jeffrey Ellenbogen, a neurologist at Harvard Medical School.

Sleep not only enhances performance, learning and memory, but it also assists your brain in making connections between unrelated ideas, which increases the chances that a new thought or answer will come to light.

It turns out that thoughts need a type of

"incubation period" during which your brain can process the problem.

"It's more that sleep brings a change of approach," Mark Holmes, an art director at Pixar Animation Studios who worked on the film "Wall-E" told the New York Times. "You can get tunnel vision when you're hammering away at a problem. You keep going down this same path, again and again, just tweaking, making incremental changes at best. Sleep erases that. It resets you. You wake up and realize -- wait a minute! -- there is another way to do this."

### What Else can you do to become more creative?

If you need to get those creative juices flowing so you can solve a major problem at work, get started on your book, come up with a new way to earn money or any number of other potential reasons, the following tips will help.

#### 1. Don't leave home without a notebook.

This way you can jot ideas down whenever they enter your mind. Many multimillion dollar ideas have come while driving or in the shower, most of us say "that's a good idea", and then forget it, only to be amazed a few years later someone else had the same thought but did write it down and made a million.

Continued ....



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### Testimonials

"Your session was incredibly well received." - Sandy Hobbs, FPA

"The students were interested & engaged. His words were aspiring and inspirational. He offered students vital points for success and words of wisdom. He broke down each section and didn't overload the students with too much information. The overheads were concise and straight to the point. 'where there is a will, there is a way!'"

- SA Great, Catherine Battiste,  
Project Coordinator

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**2. Change your atmosphere.** Taking a walk outside, switch rooms, visit an art gallery or go to the gym.

**3. Learn to love reading.** The more you read -- magazines, books, newspapers, Web pages -- the more ideas you'll be exposed to, and the greater your chances are of reading something that will spark an idea in your mind.

**4. Brainstorm.** Take five minutes and write down everything that comes to your mind, even if it doesn't seem like a good idea at a time. Later, look over your list and see if any ideas are triggered.

**5. Get into a positive frame of mind.** Being happy may "free your mind" and increase your creative thinking abilities. So make an effort to curb negative thoughts or self-criticism as often as you can.

**6. Put on some music.** Music is known to elevate your mood and positively influence your brain function.

**7. Try the "Six Question" method.** This technique can help you to get thinking about a problem from different points of view, which may inspire creative ideas. For any given problem, examine it from the perspective of the:

- **Question 1:** Look at the situation emotionally. What do your feelings tell you?
- **Question 2:** Look at the situation objectively. What are the facts?

- **Question 3:** Use a positive perspective. Which elements of the solution will work?
- **Question 4:** Use a negative perspective. Which elements of the solution won't work?
- **Question 5:** Think creatively. What are some alternative ideas?
- **Question 6:** Think broadly. What is the best overall solution?



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"Very interesting and informative  
- S.Southey, HFS Financial  
solutions

"It was Awesome" - Ramah  
Masterson, Mannatech

"Stimulating Session" - Ken  
Clelland, NBC Capital

"Wonderful content, terrific  
information" - Norma Jean  
Gasking