10 Tips on Making Creativity a Habit

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Contact Me

If you have any questions at all, please contact me at elle@everydayelle.com. You can always visit my website at www.everydayelle.com too!

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10 Tips on Making Creativity a Habit

1. The Brain Dump.

Before you can make creativity a habit, you need to be able to focus. You can read my article about [stress](#) for some ideas, but one area that is really key is a process called the *Brain Dump* (and it has nothing to do with studying all night for exams!). I have an [article](#) specifically dedicated to this process that you can read here. Be sure to download the [Brain Dump List](#) too as it aids you in the process.

2. Kill the noise.

Before you can really take on creativity as a habit instead of just something you do every now and then, you need to learn to kill the noise. Above, I mentioned killing the noise in your brain. I want to now mention the noise in other places. Here are few that seem to be a big distraction for me:

Family

I love them, but they are distracting to me when I try to be creative. So I have to arrange my day in order to make time for creativity (see my next point). Sometimes it requires that I be firm about my alone time. Sometimes it means leaving the house.

Social Media

If a lot of your creativity ends up in the digital stage, you might want to use an app or browser tool to eliminate the distraction of social media. I use programs like Adobe Illustrator, but somehow I always end up on Facebook! Make a plan before you get on the computer to kill that noise. Google Chrome has some extensions for things like this you can download, so do a search and see what pops up.

I've also gone to the extreme and completely deleted social media for a time. Mainly because I found myself not only distracted by it, but it seemed to affect my mood. There's been [claims that social media can put you in a bad mood](#). There was even a discovery that Facebook initiated [social experiments](#) in order

to see how they would affect a person's mood! Crazy. So I use Facebook for my blog only and limit my interactions otherwise.

Messes

Is the mess in your house limiting your creativity? Sometimes you need to eliminate the noise of a messy house before you can create good creativity habits. If you find this is the case, there are many websites dedicated to helping you get organized. I suggest using [ToDoist](#) for setting up a cleaning schedule. I'm not a perfect housecleaner, but I find having a checklist to mark off easier than just winging it.

Technology

Turn off the tech. It really does help. I prefer to listen to music and some might like background noise from a TV, but if it doesn't encourage creativity, shut it off. There's nothing worse than trying to set aside time for creativity and then the phone rings or you get a text or your app is beeping at you for a notification. Just do yourself a favor and turn it off. You will survive. Trust me.

3. Make an appointment with creativity

The hardest thing to do is to set up a time to actually dig in and be creative. With our schedules maxed out and stress levels through the roof, we put creativity on the backburner and we don't prioritize it. But, we should. Creativity is something that matters to your mental health. I'm of the opinion that creativity can actually improve your mood and mental stability, so to me, it's like breathing air.

So how do you make an appointment with creativity? Simply, set aside a time that you are able and can commit and then stick with it. You wouldn't miss a doctor appointment and then show up a day late, would you? I'm asking you to set aside time. Maybe it's only once a week. That's fine, but then stick to it. I get that goes against my motto of "Create. Every day" but I'm hoping if you stick to it once a week, it will be 2 times a week, then 3 times a week, and hopefully every day.

If you find your schedule too full, then you need to evaluate what should go. Be ruthless with your schedule and decide what things you need to kick to the curb.

4. Be your own advocate.

I have found that creativity doesn't get much support. Other creatives will support it, but you might not find much love from some people. This is when you realize you have to be your own advocate. You have to remind yourself that creativity brings you joy. When you are comparing yourself to others or feeling like you suck, remember the word FAIL. No, I'm not asking you to call yourself a failure. FAIL stands for <u>F</u>irst <u>A</u>ttempt <u>I</u>n <u>T</u>rying. If you can remember that we all start somewhere and that not every attempt will be good, but eventually you will get better and better, then you will find a peace about the days you do suck. Just remember that you are learning and give yourself the grace to just try. Change your outlook and that's half the battle.

5. Find your tribe.

From online communities, to friends, to family—we all have people who genuinely want to encourage us to do better, stand by us and support us, and spur us on into greatness. Not everyone has people like that in their lives, so sometimes you might want to look online to find people in your niche. For instance, the brush lettering community on Instagram is very helpful in learning that skill. People post videos and photos and you can watch how others form letters. They have giveaways. Others comment when you post and offer encouragement and support.

Your tribe might look different and not be online, but whatever it is—it's important to find the people that will shed positivity on your creative ideas. Not only will they encourage you, but you can be inspired by them as well. Instagram, Facebook groups, message boards, community education classes or even meetup groups are good places to start.

6. Evaluate Your Values.

Think about your values, work space, and the way you show importance to what matters to you. If you value art, does your work area show it? If you value graphic design, do you invest in yourself and in the programs to use it? If you value books and reading, it would go without saying that you surround yourself and your family with lots of reading materials and you read to your kids and are an avid reader yourself. To be creative, you must design a creative life for yourself, whatever that means to you.

Most creatives are self-learners so it's important to ask yourself some questions. Are you excited to approach the creative process? Why or why not? What's causing you to feel that way? What could you change about your life, living conditions, relationship, etc., that will encourage creativity?

> *Being the person that always knows and always has an answer, doesn't leave a lot of room for learning. — Andrew Zuckerman*

It's also important to cultivate curiosity. If you are a person who always looks up answers on the internet, but never thinks through the why's of life, you aren't doing yourself any favors. Cultivating curiosity comes from valuing the creative process. Creativity can be found in the journey to finding your own answers. If you want results right now, you squash curiosity. Allow yourself to ask questions and think through ideas and imagine. The best ideas are ones that are unexpected.

7. Learn to Ask Questions

When working on a project and you aren't sure what to do next, try asking some questions. Here are some you might try, but think up your own:

- What do I like/dislike about what I've done so far?
- Do I need to research? If so, where can I find what I need? (Library, online, classes, ask someone, etc.,)
- Do I need to ask for feedback? Who can I ask?
- What have I tried that has worked so far?
- What isn't working?

- Where can I find creative inspiration?
- What is the look, theme, feel that I'm trying to achieve?

You can think of other questions and ask them too. It's a good idea to write your answers in a journal or notebook and keep it around. Go back and evaluate your answers throughout the project. (Note: [Here's a great article about journaling ideas](#) meant for parents who homeschool, but can be used for yourself as well.) If all else fails, walk away and take a break. Sometimes you just overthink things and it becomes stressful. So taking a break can help you reset your brain.

8. Expand your creative skills.

To keep your skills up-to-date, it's important to not only try new things and engage your curiosity, but also to find ways to learn and up your creativity game. I enjoy the classes on [Skillshare](#) and [Lynda](#). I also enjoy reading whether that is on a blog or in a book. There are also many classes you could take in your local community. The point is to never stop learning and to keep trying new things.

As I mentioned in the last section, you will learn a lot from asking yourself questions during a creative project. This is a way to expand on your skills, but also setting aside time to learn just for fun is also important.

9. Show off.

Sometimes the best thing we can do with our art, writing, or other creative ideas is to show them to others. Whether it's on social media or to a friend, it seems that input is a good way to learn and to grow in your creativity.

It's a good idea to share your ideas at different stages, not just when it's finished. The best feedback is from people who've seen parts of the process. Allow others to give input and don't get upset when it's not the kind of input you want. Even negative comments can help you grow as a creative. I really believe that we are to share our creativity with others in a real and impactful

way. If you never share it, then you can never know the joy it brings to others when they experience it.

10. Give it away.

Some people create to make a living. Some people create as a hobby. Some do both. Have you ever met a person who used to love their job and now they hate it? Maybe at one point they were fascinated with computers, but after long hours at work and years at their job, they just don't enjoy it anymore. You might hear them say, "If I only made more money.." It's because their focus was on money and no longer on the thing they once loved to do. This can be true of creativity too. And if we only ever see dollar signs when we are creating, we are missing out.

One important aspect of any kind of creation is to use our talents and gifts to be a part of a community (either online or locally) and to contribute in that community. Online bloggers do this and excel at it. They know how to network and also how to share their resources, time, and energy to help others grow even if they also monetize their blogs. The best blogs are ones that give away information, teach a skill, or give away products. These blogs are more interested in growing their community than in making a dollar, although many can do both. The same is true of offline communities. They make an impact because they contribute.

If you are serious about being a creative, the best way to help yourself grow and learn and become better is to be involved in helping others and to do that, you need to give what you know away.

There you have it! I hope this is a good start for you to grow in your creativity, whatever that is for you! If you have any questions, please drop me a line at elle@everydayelle.com and I'll respond when I can.

Elle