

The Creative Entrepreneur

By June Campbell

Did you know you are creative? And did you know that your creativity can contribute to your business success?

We often refer to artists, authors, and musicians as creative. But creativity is not limited to these artistic types -- in fact, all people have the ability to be creative to one extent or another. **Creativity is the ability to do old things in a new way**, or to see new solutions to problems or to figure out different ways that things can work together.

As an entrepreneur, you are being creative when you identify a gap in the market and think up a product or service to meet that gap. You are being creative when you figure out a way to work in a joint venture with another company so you can both benefit. You are being creative when you write an amazing sales letter or visualize the perfect logo for your business or come up with a catchy name for your product.

The more creative you are, the more good ideas you are likely to generate, and good ideas are the first step to business success.

However, there is a potential problem. Creativity that is not nurtured can diminish until it lies dormant and appears to have disappeared. The good news is that you can increase your creativity by nurturing it. You can also "wake up" your dormant creativity that has gone in hiding due to lack of proper attention.

To nurture your natural creativity, try the following:

1. **Avoid negative self-talk.** If you go around thinking or saying, "Oh, I am not creative," or "I have no imagination," or "My ideas are so poor," then these words will generate what we call a "self-fulfilling prophecy." When we repeatedly tell ourselves certain messages, our brain eventually accepts those messages as true and acts accordingly. If you continuously discount your creative abilities, sure enough, those abilities will diminish.
2. **Acknowledge creative ideas** when they occur and give yourself a pat on the back. Even if the idea isn't practical or can't be put to use at this time, the point to remember is that you had the idea and you can have more. Sooner or later you'll come up with something that is usable -- provided you have given yourself a little encouragement.
3. **Avoid becoming over-tired or over-stressed.** When we work long hours or focus our minds on a project for days on end, our creative abilities diminish. Creativity is believed to come from the right side of the brain -- and this side of the brain is the first to suffer when we are tired or pressured. Have you noticed that when you are tired or stressed, you can accomplish routine tasks that you

have done many times before but you have trouble with learning new things or with developing new approaches or new ideas? The routine tasks are left brain activities and the ability to generate new ideas is a right brain activity. When this happens, it's time for a break or to find a way to reduce your stress.

4. **Nurture your creativity** by exposing yourself to a variety of activities and situations. Busy entrepreneurs often don't want to take time away from work to walk in the park or to go to a concert with family. They think that time that is not devoted to business matters is "wasted." The opposite is true. By giving yourself a change of scenery and a change of activity, you give your creative, right brain a chance to rejuvenate. You will be pleased with the results. (And your health and personal relationships with benefit as well!

Nurture your creativity and you'll be able to work smarter, not harder.

Give some thoughts to the message you want to send and to the psychology of the recipient. Then choose your colors accordingly.

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