



MENTAL HEALTH

EVERYONE CAN BE CREATIVE; FIND OUT HOW

Yes, that includes us all. You don't need to compose music or be an artist to be creative. In an article for *The Conversation*, Penn State University assistant psychology professor Roger Beaty describes creativity as "the ability to come up with new and useful ideas" and "a trait everyone possesses in some capacity."

How does creativity work?

Beaty notes recent evidence suggesting that creativity results from a connection between "spontaneous and controlled thinking" – when we spontaneously come up with ideas, then "deliberately evaluate them to determine whether they'll actually work."

Proven ways to increase creativity

A Human Brain Mapping journal study lists evidence that suggests that it's possible to reshape the brain through creativity training. Science and research platform Science Direct says:

- "Exposure to the ideas of others has been shown to enhance creativity; and
- Training that emphasizes idea generation, problem finding, and conceptual combining (when the brain constructs a concept out of bits and pieces of past experience) were particularly important for promoting creativity."

In Indeed.com, US career coach Jamie Birt says creativity exercises can help develop our creative vision and allow us to see objects, ideas and problems in new ways. Her suggestions include;

1. **Dictionary story:** Choose a random word from the dictionary and make up a short story using this word, the word above it, and the one below it. Combining random words to form a cohesive and engaging story can enhance our skill of connecting and linking unrelated concepts to create new ones.
2. **30 circles (group activity):** Work on a page with 30 round shapes and take 10 minutes (maximum) to draw inside as many shapes as possible. When finished, compare the group's completed circles and see if any similar ideas or drawings are emerging.
3. **Turn simple shapes into complete pictures:** Start with a simple scribble (a semi-circle or loop) and use it to form a drawing (of anything). If you're in a group setting, get everyone to use the same scribble, then compare your drawings. Seeing how people interpret the same scribble can enhance our creative thinking skills.

Use these creative exercises to enhance your creativity in your personal and work life.

Creativity exercises to try