



124 Tips to Unleash Your Creativity (For Business and Life)!

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Creativity is an unusual thing. Most people think of creativity as something for artists and writers. However, creativity can be used to help you solve problems, get farther, and just enjoy life.

Use this booklet to unlock your potential, get the juices flowing, and effectively use your creativity in any area of life. The tips are as applicable in the workplace as they are at home.

Thanks, and remember to keep creating!

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Unlocking your creative potential

- 1 Ignore the "little voice in your head" that criticizes your ideas. Practice bypassing the voice and getting your ideas out.
- 2 Don't evaluate ideas while you generate them. Spend some time just generating ideas, and then go back and evaluate them. Both processes will be more effective this way.
- 3 Keep a journal of all of your ideas. Writing down all of your ideas in one place frees your mind to keep creating.
- 4 First thing in the morning, fill three pages of paper with free association writing. This will help to clear the 'gunk' out of your mind.
- 5 Spend some time (even if it's just five minutes) everyday sitting quietly with your eyes closed with no distractions. Try to push thoughts out of your head as they come up.
- 6 When you are out in the world, remember to look around you. There is always something outside to inspire your creativity.
- 7 Make sure you are having some fun. Don't let a day go by without doing something fun for yourself.
- 8 When creating ideas, go as fast as possible. Keep the words flowing out of your mouth, or keep the pen moving as fast as possible.
- 9 Try to keep an empty and open mind. As you go about your day, try to listen and pay attention to things without thinking or judging.
- 10 Be honest with yourself. Accept your strengths and weaknesses. This level of honesty will open up creative doorways that will let you express yourself.



11 Bring happiness into your life. Fire up your creative juices by making sure you are doing something everyday that makes you happy.

Everyday activities to improve your creativity

12 Spend some time watching people. Remind yourself that they each have entire lives, and let your creativity wander around what their stories might be.

13 Sing along with songs, and make up new lyrics. Don't try to be good, just try to have fun and make up your own words.

14 Periodically, when it's safe to do so, let your mind wander. You don't always have to be focused all the time!

15 Play rhyming games. Take a sentence you have heard or read and try to come up with an appropriate next sentence that rhymes.

16 Free associate on paper. Just start writing, and write whatever comes out without judging.

17 Seek out things that inspire you. Read inspiring texts, watch inspiring movies, or just be in the presence of someone or something that inspires you.

18 Laugh for no reason. Laugh often, and laugh out loud.

19 Remember to smile, even when you are alone.

20 When you are thinking about ideas, talk to yourself by starting phrases with the words 'yes and'

21 Catch yourself every time you start a sentence with the words 'yes but' Try to rephrase it with 'yes and'



22 In your own head, re-write endings to movies, books, and television shows. Make up endings that satisfy you.

Prepare the mind to be creative

23 Be willing to express yourself. Creativity at its truest form is self-expression. Don't try to be like anyone else - just let your own personality flow.

24 Appreciate your foibles. No one is perfect. Understand that your limitations make you who you are, and that you don't have to be perfect to be amazingly effective and creative.

25 Stay positive. Keep your energy up by staying positive. Don't dwell on the bad things in life. Focus on what is good now and what will be good in the future.

26 Put right and wrong in perspective. Especially in the creative stage, be sure you understand what right and wrong is. There is very little that is 'wrong' during the idea generation phase.

27 Tell yourself there is a way. Don't get bogged down in hopelessness. Believe that you can come up with a creative idea, and you will.

28 Play games. Even at work, approach situations as games. You can fool the mind into thinking you are playing, and this unlocks your creative potential.

29 Stop looking over your shoulder. Let go of embarrassment. Don't worry about what others might think about your ideas. You are doing this for you!

30 Fake it until you make it. If you are not feeling particularly positive, try pretending to be. Act as if you are - you will probably feel yourself becoming more positive just by faking it.



31 Watch your focus. Focus on solutions, not problems. Focus on results, not on being right. Focusing on fixing situations, not assigning blame. This will really unleash and direct your creative energy.

32 Be silly. Even with the most serious of problems, a little bit of silliness and laughter can get the juices flowing.

33 Return to childhood. Most people are at their most creative when they are children. Be more childlike, and watch your creativity grow.

34 Think on good things. Everybody always has good and bad things going on in their lives. Spend your time thinking on the good. Don't dwell on the bad. Life's too short.

35 Find creativity in 'uncreative places.' Creativity isn't confined. You can see examples of and inspirations for creativity anywhere - at the dentist's, on the subway, or in line at the grocery store. Keep your mind open.

Prepare the body to be creative

36 Get some exercise. Get your blood pumping, get the endorphins going, and get your creative juices flowing.

37 Try deep breathing. The simple act of taking a few deep breaths can clear the mind and get your creativity focused on the task at hand.

38 Don't have time or clothes to exercise? Then try doing some simple stretches. In the worst case, you can even do some stretching in your chair.

39 Warm up. Before launching into any idea-generating or problem-solving endeavor, take a few minutes to warm up the body and mind. Walk, stretch, breathe, be silly, or have fun.



- 40** Move in your chair. If you can't get up, try to get some blood flowing while you sit. Move a little in your seat and do some neck and shoulder stretches.
- 41** Get out of the seat. If you feel stuck on an issue get up out of your chair and try to continue while standing. Standing brings a sense of urgency and excitement and gets the mind going.
- 42** Watch what you eat. Overeating or eating bad quality food can make you sluggish - not the best state to be creative!
- 43** Turn your eyes upwards. When you get tired or negative, your eyes will drop. Force yourself to look up. This will actually refocus you and you will a quick hit of energy.

Ways to apply your creativity

- 44** Within the limits of safety and common sense, take a chance and trust someone, knowing that you can handle whatever might happen.
- 45** Be willing to fail. Take some chances and remind yourself that great progress usually comes after great failure...
- 46** Prioritize your attention. Keep your mind and creativity focused on the critical things that are vitally important in your work and life.
- 47** Get started! Don't always wait for ideas to be fully fleshed out before you act on them. Nothing spurs creativity like necessity!
- 48** Explore bad ideas. Don't discard an idea because you know it's 'bad' Have some fun thinking about it and seeing what you can do with it. This often leads to newer, better ideas.
- 49** Let go of outcomes. Focus on having fun and try not to stress over whether what you are doing will work.



- 50 Do things poorly. Don't be a perfectionist. Give yourself permission to do some things (especially the ones you've been procrastinating) less than perfect.
- 51 Stay in the moment. When creating, don't think about the past or future. Keep your mind in the present and focused on what you are doing.
- 52 When writing anything, finish draft 1 as fast as possible. You can go back and edit later, but by doing draft 1 fast you get it done and tap into your creative power.
- 53 Try something new. Don't do the same things everyday. Spur your creative mind in new ways by doing new things - eat a new food, take a new route to work, or read something you would never read.
- 54 Take a class. Open your mind to learning. Not only will you learn and grow, but also your mind will have more resources with which to create new ideas.
- 55 Develop your intuition. Pay attention to your gut feelings. That's your creative subconscious giving you signals.
- 56 Be an inspiration. Take actions as if the most important people to you were watching. What would you do if you knew they would follow your example?

Make your creative endeavors more effective

- 57 Write your ideas down on paper. Keep the pen moving.
- 58 Say your ideas out loud. Even if you are alone, it helps to get the ideas out of your head to make room for new ones.
- 59 Create a safe environment. Be creative alone, or make sure everyone participating understands that you're splitting the generation and evaluation phases. No criticizing while generating!



- 60 Give yourself permission to be silly, stupid, or wrong. Don't hold back because an idea seems bad.
- 61 Always remember that you will be most effective in creating ideas if you can separate generating ideas from evaluating them. Get your ideas out of you now, edit them later.
- 62 Record yourself. Whether writing down on paper or recording with a tape recorder, make to sure to capture the process. This releases the pressure of having to remember the ideas and frees the mind to create.
- 63 If you are running meetings, keep them short to make sure everyone's creative energy stays up.
- 64 Invite only needed people to meetings. Rather than a two-hour meeting with 20 people, hold four 30-minute meetings with 5 people each. This will improve both creativity and productivity.

Attack problems from different directions

- 65 Look at the big picture. Take step back from the problem and look at the whole story. It's quite possible that you won't even need to solve the problem because in the grand scheme of things, it doesn't matter.
- 66 Look at the small details. If a problem seems overwhelming, break it down into small pieces and use your creativity to tackle the smaller parts.
- 67 Add constraints. Sometimes having too many choices can make it impossible to choose. Try limiting your choices, even if your constraints are arbitrary. This will spur on your creative mind.
- 68 Try to think of ways to use the problem to your advantage. Not all obstacles need to be smashed through.



- 69** Take a break. You don't have to stay at it until the problem is solved. A five-minute break can recharge the mind and re-vitalize your creativity.
- 70** Listen to common sense. Sometimes you get so caught up in a problem you lose sight of the common sense solution. Make sure you ask yourself, 'what's the obvious solution?'
- 71** Think about the opposite of common sense. If conventional wisdom doesn't work, explore the opposite. Even if it seems silly or stupid, explore that possibility because it will get your mind working in a new direction.
- 72** Think about what's good with the problem. Don't just focus on the dreaded consequences of your problems. Get your mind going by asking 'what's good about this problem?' or, 'what can I learn from this?'
- 73** Most problems can be reduced down to a few (or just one) limiting steps. Identify them, and then focus your creative power on resolving those steps.
- 74** Believe you can solve your problems. Make sure you enter problem-solving activities with the belief that you will succeed. If you don't, your creative subconscious won't help you.
- 75** Distract yourself. Put your conscious mind on something else. Your subconscious will keep working on your problem. You will probably get a solution in the most unexpected of places.
- 76** When your creativity gives you a 'bad' idea, focus on what parts of the idea might work. Don't spend an inordinate amount of time focusing on what's wrong; try to pull out what might be of benefit.
- 77** Explore the silly and impossible ideas. They might not solve your problems, but they will get your mind working in a new way and open up your creative flow.



78 Get curious. Rather than complaining about how bad the problem is, get curious about it. Let your mind flow around all the different aspects around the problem.

Group Brainstorming Keys

79 Formulate good questions. Don't be vague. Have a very clear question written out and let people brainstorm solutions. This will keep everyone's creativity focused.

80 Create a strong environment where people are supporting each other. Make sure everyone understands that while generating ideas they should not criticize.

81 Set up rules and guidelines to ensure that people are being supportive. State them explicitly or write them out - people will forget if you don't!

82 Do not let anybody supply two ideas in a row. This will keep everyone involved and make sure you are tapping into the group dynamic. It will also prevent one person from dominating.

83 Add toys! Have people toss around inflatable or stuffed balls to keep the energy up.

84 Reward participation. Give rewards for people using the brainstorming process, even if their ideas don't seem to help. This will reinforce the creative mind and create a stronger, more trust filled environment.

85 Reward failure. Applaud people for being willing to say crazy, silly, stupid, or impossible ideas out loud. These ideas are the ones that will spur the creative mind the most.

86 Be open to input from all levels. Age, experience, and background are immaterial at this point. Everyone has a creative mind that can be inspired to generate a great idea. Be open to everyone's input.



Clear your mind to open your creative flow

- 87** Get stuff out of the way. Take care of the stuff you plan on doing 'someday' now so that the mind can stop worrying about it and focus on better things.
- 88** Stop procrastinating. Putting stuff off? The more you do this, the more things the mind focuses on, and the less attention it can give to generating ideas and solving problems.
- 89** Take care of little stuff. We all have lots of little stuff that is easy to put off. Take care of it quickly and immediately so that a) it doesn't become big stuff and b) your mind can move on.
- 90** Organize your environment. Cluttered environment = cluttered mind. Get organized and your mind will be much clearer.
- 91** Use an organizational system. Buy, learn, or create an organizational system that allows you to enter future task and forget about them. This will clear the mind and will also reduce stress, as you will stop missing payments, birthdays, and other important events and tasks.
- 92** Take a few minutes of meditation before starting. Closing your eyes and spending five minutes emptying your head will get you completely focused on what you have to do. This increases efficiency and focus will easily make up for the five minutes.
- 93** Scream! If something is bothering you and your environment allows, then scream (or just express yourself in a large, external way). Stop repressing your feelings and your creativity will definitely increase.
- 94** If you have a big problem you may find yourself thinking about it all the time. Give yourself permission to take some time off from it where you don't think about it at all.



Customize to your own personal style

- 95** Group your time. Find out your optimum time chunks. Do you like to work for blocks of 15 minutes, half an hour, one-hour, or more? Everyone is different. Find what works for you and schedule your day to take advantage of it.
- 96** Find your limits. Everybody has weaknesses. Focusing on improving areas you are weak in is admirable, but for maximum rapid results set yourself up to focus on your strengths.
- 97** Find your strengths. Be honest with yourself. What do you do exceptionally well (and what do you enjoy) Try to maximize the amount of time you spend doing these things.
- 98** Use music. Find what kind of music inspires you. Listen to this music to get your juices flowing. Also remember that different styles of music can be good for different tasks. (i.e. classical while working, rock while exercising, etc)
- 99** Use your environment. Are you most creative when you're outdoors? In the gym? At a coffee-shop? While driving? There's no right answer - find what works for you and use it.
- 100** Pick your friends. Maximize your time with people who support you and help your creativity flow. Minimize your interaction with negative and critical people.
- 101** Find your time of day. Do you do best in the morning or evening? Afternoon or late night? Find what works best for you and do your most important work at these times.
- 102** Do what you love. Make sure you have some passion in your life. Even if you don't do it full time for a living, make time in your day to do things you love.



Great Questions to Spark Your Creativity

103"What else can I do?"

104"What's great about this situation?"

105"What's good about this problem?"

106"What can I learn from this problem?"

107"What would 'X' do?" where 'X' is someone, real or fictional, that you know or don't, who you think would be very effective in your current situation.

108"How else can we do this?"

109"If I *could* solve this problem, then what would I do?"

110"How can I use this?"

111"What am I missing?"

112"Who can help?"

113"How can I get the result I want and have fun getting it?"

114"What am I grateful for?"

115"When have I effectively used my creativity in the past?"

116"What benefits will I get from this?"

Get out of your own head



117 Put your awareness outside of yourself. There's a great big world out there. Stop focusing so much in you own head and start paying attention to what's going on right around you.

118 Look at other people. Watch people and see what they do. Get a sense of how they are feeling, and what's going on their heads.

119 Listen openly and truly. Empty your mind when someone's talking to you and just hear every word they say.

120 Don't pre-judge. Wait until you have heard the entire story or proposal. Keep an open mind - you can always decide later to judge.

121 Watch TV, watch movies, or go to the theater. The key is to not just do these things for distraction, but to watch and keep an open mind. This will get your mind going. Inspiration can be anywhere, even on the boob tube.

122 Appreciate nature. Take a walk and really look at nature. Remember how creative the world already is, and remember that it is *natural* to be creative.

123 Take a moment and think about the concept of infinity. Remind yourself that ideas are infinite; all you need to do is open yourself up to them by putting your awareness on the world around you.

124 Let go of control. Stop feeling the need to be in control. Practice flowing. Let others make some decisions, and be willing to go along with it.



How Avish Can Help

Speaking at Your Annual Meetings

Presenting these ideas to a large group of people in a short period of time (45-90 minutes). Avish's presentations are fun, engaging, interactive, motivational, and designed to **open-minds** and get people started down the path of adaptability and innovation.

Training at your Workplace

Working hands-on with a smaller group of people for a longer time where the focus is on **skills-transfer**. Giving your team the skills and practice to implement these ideas in the real world.

Consulting with Your Leaders

Working with your leadership or executive team to **analyze and advise** on how to create a more agile culture and organization.

Facilitation at Your Next Leadership Retreat

Taking your leadership team through a process that helps them **create a plan** of their own to increase creativity and innovation throughout the entire organization.

Contact Us Now

To get started creating a more creative, agile, and innovative organization, give us a call (484-366-1793) or send an email to avish@avishparashar.com.

Check out our website, www.DingHappens.com to see results our other clients have enjoyed.