

35 Ways to Tune-up Your Creativity

By Kenny Miller

Have you ever wondered why some people are so creative? Is it really a gift or can you learn how to be more creative? I believe you can and here are a few ways to “tune up” your senses and light a creative spark in your life.

1. Listen.

You have two ears and one mouth. Use in proportion.

2. Touch.

Pretend you are blind and learn about life in an entirely new way.

3. See.

You have the gift of sight. But most people seldom use it. Go for a walk and try to find 10 different and new things on a familiar street that you have never noticed before.

4. Observe.

There is a difference between a glance and an observation. Remember the phrase...doesn't have a clue? Part of the solution is to really understand what you are seeing. Take time to observe things.

5. Remember.

Take notes. Take pictures. Create an idea “swipe file.”

6. Pad & pen everywhere.

Your mind is like a computer with the “print” key selected. That means it could print out anything at any time. The only problem, you don't get a hard copy. Have note pads everywhere. There is nothing worse than the gift of a good idea with no way to remember it.

7. Take notes.

Don't rely on your memory to recall meetings. Take notes. Develop your own version of idea shorthand using underlines or a star.

8. Doodle.

Doodling is a great way to free your mind. Just do it. Do it when you are on the phone. Do it when you are waiting at the airport. You will be amazed what “comes to mind.”

9. Create and mental “in-basket”.

You don't have to do everything but it might be nice to investigate. If you see or hear about something that interests you. It will make you more curious.

10. Chill twice a day.

Take a break. Go for a walk. Find a coffee shop. Stop at a pet store. Stop at the children's museum or zoo. Find smile places!

11. Never nap negative.

Naps are good but not when you are in a bad mood or have something negative on your mind. That will just ruin your chance to be more creative. Let stuff go first. Write what is bothering you on one of your note pads and ask yourself...will this be important in a year? Why are you surrendering to other people? Let them stew in their soup. Now go nap.

12. Always have something to learn.

Keep learning. It doesn't matter what, just keep learning. Gardening. Karate. Painting. Photography.

13. Play fair.

Like to take advantage of other people? No wonder your life is a mess. Remember, what comes around goes around. It's called Karma and good Karma shows.

14. Share your toys.

Don't be the kid who hoards the toys. Share them. Teach. Make somebody smile today.

15. Paint once a week. (Finger painting is OK)

I know, this one is close to doodling but I am adding more color. Color creates heat in the mind. That's good.

16. Load and go. (But carry a pad & pen!)

Trying to solve a big problem? Load all of the facts into your head. Pick up a pad and a pen that works. Go. Get ready for a print out. It's coming.

17. Keep a positive journal.

People who journal tend to write negative things. Journal about positive things. In fact, close your entry with a section called "Gratefuls." List some simple thing you are grateful for TODAY. A good cup of coffee? A gentle rain? A pen that works good? Little gratefuls turn into a happier life.

18. Take weekend mind stretches.

Do something different on the weekend. Your weekends should turn into time off ruts. Do something different. Ride a bike to a little town and have a piece of pie at a local café. Climb a tree. Put your golf clubs in the garage once in a while. Go watch storms. Rent a canoe.

19. Be nice to an animal daily.

When you meet a little hound on the street, say hello. Baby talk is fine. Bend over a little and let the little guy know that it is all about him. Watch the tail wag. Watch the grin. Watch the instant excitement. Now apply what you have learned to humans.

20. Be nice to an old person daily.

Help them get around. Open a door. Help them get their things on and off the bus. Help them get something down from a shelf they can't reach. Just help them. You've got time.

21. Be nice to a kid daily.

Ask a teen what he thinks. Make eye contact. Make the teen feel important. Let the teen use his personality. Open expression for both of you.

22. Be nice.

Enough said. There is a shortage of nice today.

23. Exercise daily. (But carry a pad & pen!)

Walk. Ride a bike. Jog. Lift some weights. Do something for 20 minutes. But have a pad and working pen nearby.

24. Learn to laugh.

No, a snicker isn't good enough. Learn to laugh. Don't be bashful about laughing. It's infectious!

25. Read good humor.

Find something funny to read. No, I don't mean dirty email. I mean find a funny writer like Will Rogers or Erma Baumbach and read. It will make your day better and it helps load that computer above your shoulders with a positive point of view.

26. Read a biography every month.

A life worth lived is probably in print somewhere. Get in the habit of finding out how someone else lived their life. Maybe they can help you with some of your problems.

27. Use good mind oil.

Crossword puzzles. Find the word games. That numbers game. Next time you are in one of the W stores, buy a book of them and have it handy when you need to oil your head.

28. Listen to jazz when you need to create.

Jazz is suppose to inspire creativity. Learn to like it if your don't. Remember what I said about trying something new?

29. Trust your instincts.

If you have made it this far and still find these steps interesting, chances are good you are on the way to developing good creative instincts. Trust them. Go with a new idea. Let it develop. Don't let someone talk or bully you out of it.

30. Believe in something.

There is something bigger out there than you. Investigate philosophy and belief systems. Find something right for you. Learn to meditate. Create a special place where you can learn about thought.

31. Develop a statement of personal gratitude.

It was an incredible journey for you to become a human being. You won. You were born. You are here. What do you bring to life? What is at your core? Write it down.

32. Go on vacation.

You earned it. It will help you get fresh. You will discover new things. But, go on a "new" vacation. Sell your timeshare. Find a different lake. If you haven't been on vacation in a few years--a real away vacation--no wonder you're stale and grumpy!

33. Share what you know.

You have spent a lifetime learning things. Share what you know. Write stories about it. Post the stories online. Help people grow. You are smarter than you think!

33. Don't get into gossip sessions.

Nothing good ever comes from it and if gossip is your way of making yourself better than someone, you need to do and inventory and start concentrating on things that will help you grow as a person.

34. Shut off your cell phone for a half day a week.

Just get away from it. If the call is important, they will leave a voicemail.

35. The biggie! Go computer free for an entire day a week.

Now you have time to read one of those books. Why let the computer run your life? Find a day and go computer free.