

The Deliberate Creative Workbook

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WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

Creativity is “the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful defined with a social context” (Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, 2004, p. 90). More simply creativity can be defined as novelty that is useful or valuable.

**CREATIVITY IS NOVELTY
THAT IS VALUABLE.**

WHAT IS INNOVATION?

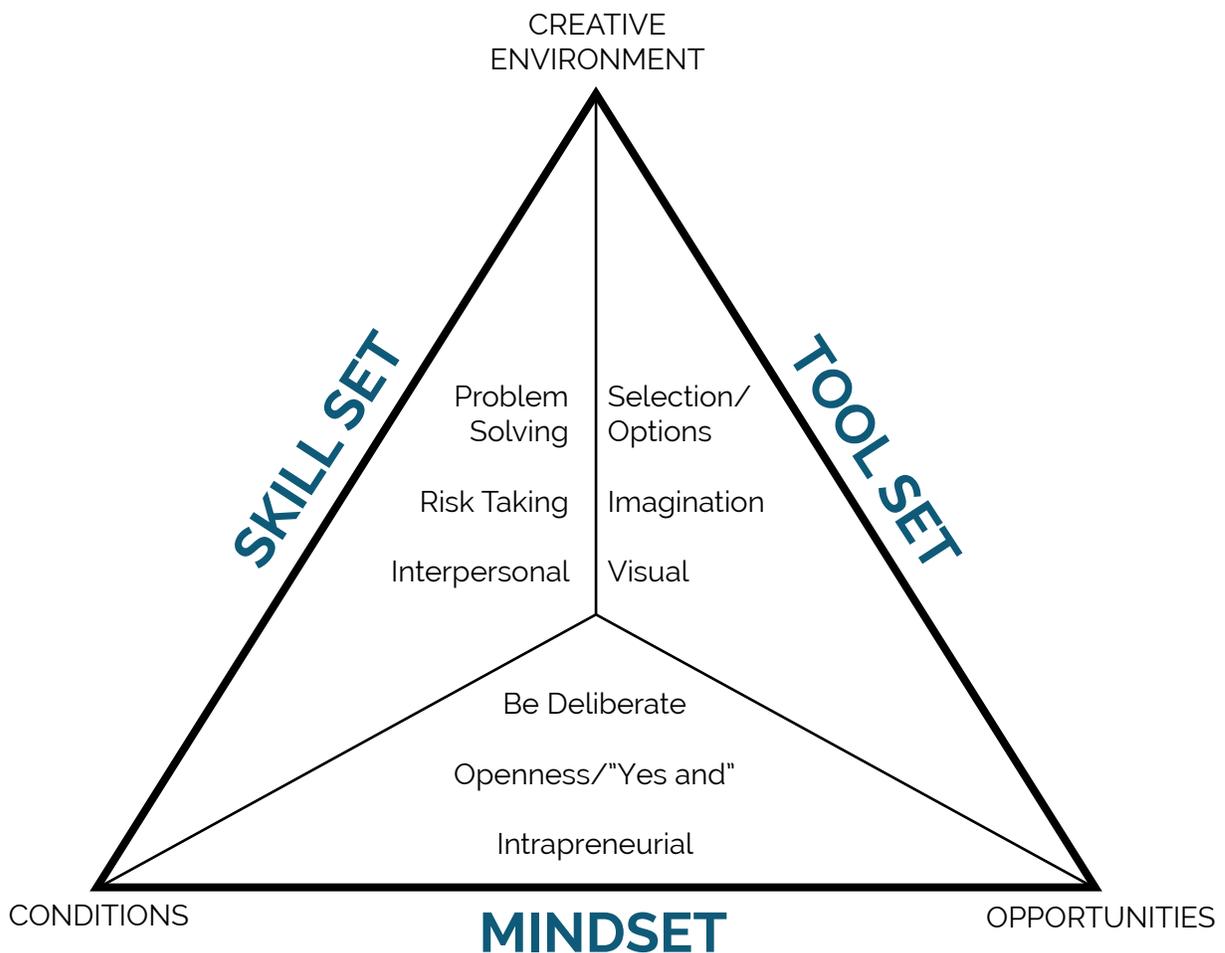
Innovation is defined as “the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, service or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace” (Baregheh, Rowley, & Sambrook, 2009 p. 1334). This is similar to creativity, but with a focus on organizations instead of an individual or team and the added element of financial impact (i.e., marketplace). To simplify, innovation could be defined as creativity with economic gain (Green, 2013), which would explain why innovation seems to be used more often in the business and engineering fields, whereas creativity is the term used more in the humanities, arts, and education. The terms may be used interchangeably in many contexts.

**INNOVATION IS CREATIVITY
WITH ECONOMIC GAIN.**

DELIBERATE CREATIVE COMPETENCIES

Creativity does not happen by accident. It is only through intentional work that creativity and innovation flourish within an organization. Deliberate creativity is simply being intentional, thoughtful, deliberate about individual, team, and organizational creativity.

In order to be a deliberate creative, three main competencies are critical for success: your mindset, skill set, and tool set related to creativity.



CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Background

There are several different creative processes including Creative Problem Solving, Design Thinking, Human-centered Design, Synectics, TRIZ, and more. While all these processes are valuable, the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) process is one of the most researched. Numerous studies have shown that teams and individuals are more creative when using CPS. Companies and organizations have saved or made millions by applying CPS to their specific problems.

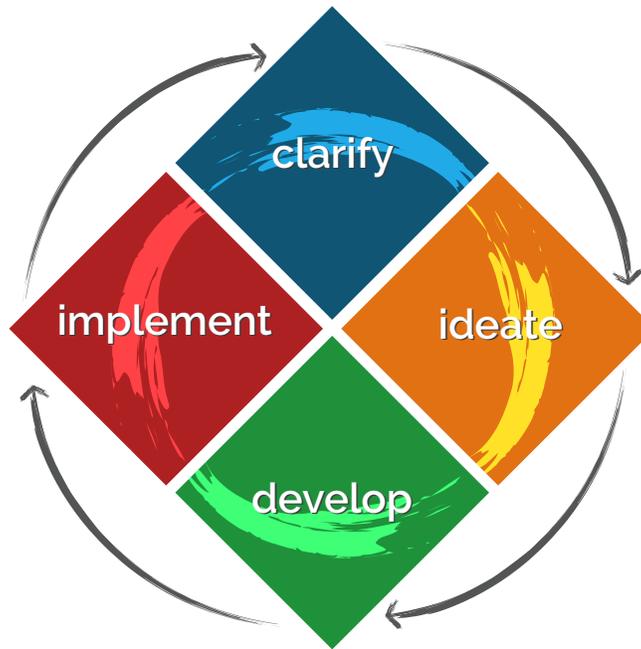
Purpose of Creative Problem Solving

The purpose of CPS is to detail the process we naturally go through when solving a creative challenge. It deliberately sparks creative thinking leading to new solutions and change. It is applicable to a wide range of contexts and fields. Since it is based on our natural problem solving process, it feels familiar and intuitive to most people.

There are four stages to the CPS process. These stages are:

1. **Clarify.** Clarifying is about narrowing in on the specific goal, wish, or challenge that will be explored. This includes gathering data and determining the questions that will invite solutions.
2. **Ideate.** Generating ideas to solve the challenge.
3. **Develop.** Selecting and further refining the few ideas that may lead to promising solutions.
4. **Implement.** Identifying resources needed, actions to be taken, and how to overcome hurdles related to implementing the best idea(s). Implementation may begin with prototyping and testing ideas.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING



Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011)

CLARIFY

Purpose

Explore the Vision

Identify the goal, wish, or challenge.

Gather Data

Describe and generate data to enable a clear understanding of the challenge.

Formulate Challenges

Sharpen awareness of the challenges and create challenge questions that invite solutions.

IDEATE

Purpose

Explore Ideas

Generate ideas that answer the challenge questions.

DEVELOP

Purpose

Formulate Solutions

To move from ideas to solutions. Evaluate, strengthen, and select solutions for best “fit.”

IMPLEMENT

Purpose

Formulate a Plan

Explore acceptance and identify resources and actions that will support implementation of the selected solution(s).

TWO TYPES OF THINKING

There are two types of thinking your brain needs to engage in throughout the creative process: divergent and convergent thinking. Divergent thinking involves generating as many ideas as possible and thinking about new, unknown answers to a problem. It is about thinking big and broad, looking at issues from different angles, and exploring novel approaches. It involves radiating, veering, branching out, and being open to new ideas, even the bizarre ones. Brainstorming is the most popular tool for engaging in divergent thinking. However, there are hundreds of other tools for generating ideas quickly as you will learn later in this workbook.

DIVERGENT THINKING IS GENERATING MANY IDEAS.

In contrast, convergent thinking is about seeking the one right or best answer. At a certain point in the creative process, you need to hone in and select the best idea(s) for the situation. This is where convergent thinking is needed. Think about divergent thinking as filling a bucket full of ideas and convergent thinking as filtering out the best ones.



Both types of thinking are critical to being creative. You will use divergent and convergent thinking in each stage of the Creative Problem Solving process. The key is to not use the two types of thinking simultaneously. For instance, do not try to generate new ideas and evaluate them at the same time. It does not work well.

CONVERGENT THINKING IS SEEKING THE ONE BEST ANSWER.

DIVERGENT THINKING RULES

1. SUSPEND JUDGMENT
2. SEEK WILD IDEAS
3. COMBINE AND BUILD ON IDEAS
4. AIM FOR QUANTITY

CONVERGENT THINKING RULES

1. BE DELIBERATE
2. CHECK THE OBJECTIVES
3. IMPROVE THE IDEAS
4. BE AFFIRMATIVE
5. CONSIDER NOVELTY

CLARIFY: EXPLORE THE VISION

Write down 20 or more different iterations of your problem. Try to look at it in different ways. Start with “I wish...” or “Wouldn’t it be nice if (WIBNI)...”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

CLARIFY: DATA DUMP

Think about what you already know about your problem, what you need to know, and what would be nice to know. Generate questions that will lead to more data. Consider assumptions, feelings, experiences, impressions, information, and concerns. Use the questions below or create your own.

Who? & Who Else?

Who are we solving the problem for?

What is important to them?

What are their perceptions?

Who do they trust?

When do they hesitate?

When do they have this problem?

What do they think about this problem? Do they think about it?

Who else has strong feelings about this problem?

What? & What Else?

What types of observations can I (or others) make about the situation?

What information is most important? What information is least important?

What is misunderstood?

What would you have to change in order to address this problem?

When? & When Else?

When are impressions formed about this situation?

When is this problem worse? When is it better?

Where? & Where Else?

Where can I get more information about the current situation?

Where does this problem take place? Or should be taking place, but isn't?

How do other activities in this environment affect the problem?

How might the environment complicate or simplify the problem?

Why? & Why Else?

Why has this problem evolved?

How? & How Else?

How do the experiences of our customers (clients, staff, stakeholders, etc.) impact their decision?

CLARIFY: ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEWS

The goal of the interviews is to learn more about the participants' perspective, experience, and insights in relation to the particular problem or situation you are exploring. As the interviewer, you want to plan thoughtful questions that provide a platform for participants to share their story. Bring a mindset of curiosity and openness.

At least two people should conduct the interview together. One as the interviewer/question-asker and the other as the note taker/observer.

Before the Interview

- Determine what you want to learn from the interview.
- Plan several open-ended questions that will help you gather the information you need.
- Decide on a quiet location where the participants would feel most comfortable. Consider the participant's office, home, or jobsite. Telephone or video conferencing interviews may be conducted if in-person interviews are not an option.
- Decide who will be the interviewer and who will take notes. You can rotate roles if doing multiple interviews.

During the Interview

- Bring the list of questions and a note pad. Try to avoid typing notes during the interview. Do not summarize or interpret responses during the interview. Instead, capture direct quotes and observations.
- Ask open-ended questions and feel free to go off-script. Follow the flow of the conversation while also staying focused on your goals.
- Avoid leading or loaded questions.
- Give room between questions. Participants may need a quiet moment to think about their response.
- Repeat key words or summarize their response as a way to check for understanding.
- Use inclusive language.

After the Interview:

- Clarify and finalize notes.
- Develop an Empathy Map by sorting the data you gathered based on the participants' perspective. What are they doing, saying, feeling, thinking? See chart to the right.
- Use the Empathy Map to gain further insights about the problem.
- Send a thank you note to the participants.

DOING	SAYING
FEELING	THINKING

CLARIFY: FORMULATE THE CHALLENGE

The Challenge Statement will lead the rest of the CPS process.
Reengineer problems into questions that inspire ideas and action.
Construct the question like this: **Question starter + Actor + Action + Goal.**

Question Starters

In what ways might we/I...

How might we/I...

How to we/I...

Your challenge should be...
One you “own” and can work on, and
one where you want/need new ideas.

Make challenge statements broad, brief, and beneficial.

Write your challenge statement in the space below...

Now, circle the best one - the one you think best addresses the challenge.

SUPPLIES for IDEATION

Before you begin the Ideate process you will need a few supplies.

- Sticky notes or a virtual tool such as Mural, Jamboard, or a shared writing app
- Thin markers for writing on sticky notes
- Scrap Paper
- Flipchart(s)
- Markers for flipcharts - Mr. Sketch, Sharpie Flipchart Markers, or Neulands are ideal
- Climer Cards (virtual app or physical deck), magazine images, or postcards



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IDEATE: STICK 'EM UP BRAINWRITING

Brainwriting generates ideas while balancing quiet, reflective writing with active sharing.

Step 1: Write down as many ideas as you can on sticky notes. One idea, per note.

Step 2: Share ideas with others in the group, placing the notes on the wall or table.

Step 3: Continue building on each other's ideas and aiming for quantity.



IDEATE: SCAMPER

SCAMPER is an acronym that can help you generate ideas from existing solutions. Look at your existing solutions or the common, familiar solutions for your challenge. What changes can you make that would be more innovative?

Use the prompts below to trigger new ideas.

SUBSTITUTE: What procedure, process, ingredients, materials, place, approach can be substituted for current ones? Can rules be changed? What else might you substitute?

COMBINE: How can this be combined with another procedure, program, ingredient or idea? Can we combine elements or purposes?

ADAPT: What can be adapted? What could be copied? Who could be emulated? What ideas outside of my field can be incorporated?

MODIFY, MAGNIFY, OR MINIFY: How can this be altered? Is there a new twist? What can be enlarged, extended, exaggerated, duplicated, or minaturized? New shape, color, expression, experience, order, form, strength?

PUT TO OTHER USES: What else can this be used for? What other extensions or markets are there? New contexts?

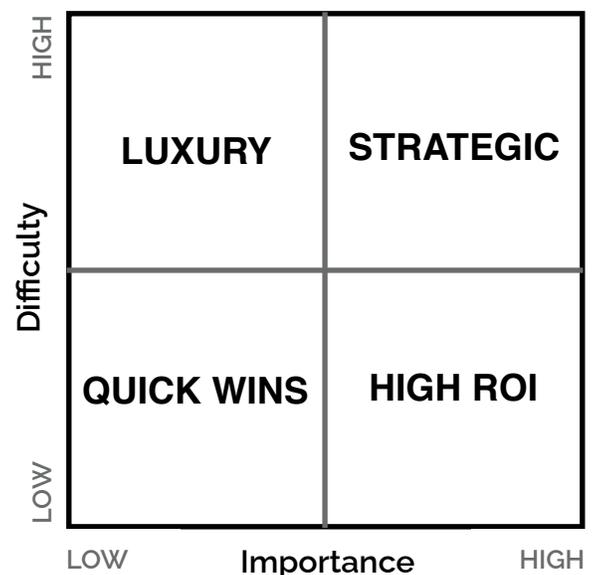
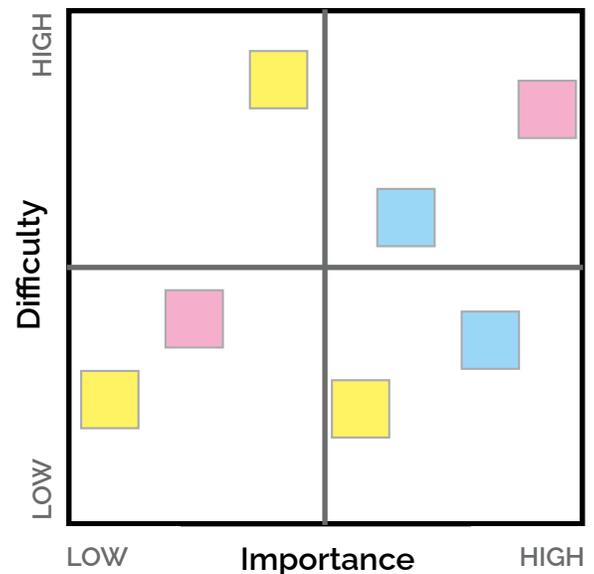
ELIMINATE: What can be omitted, streamlined, deleted? What's not necessary? Can there be fewer parts? Lower, shorter, cheaper, or understated?

REVERSE OR REARRANGE IT: What other arrangement might work better? How can the schedule, pace, frequency, sequence be changed? Would the opposite work? What would be unexpected?

IDEATE: IMPORTANCE-DIFFICULTY MATRIX

Purpose: The Importance-Difficulty Matrix is a convergent-thinking tool to help you prioritize your ideas and determine where to focus your implementation efforts. It is to be used after you have generated many ideas.

1. Draw the Importance-Difficulty Matrix on a flipchart as shown in the diagram.
2. Select 10-12 of your most promising ideas. If with a team, invite each person to select 2-3 of the ideas to contribute. Each idea should be written on a separate Post-it Note. Randomly start with any of the ideas and place it in the middle of the chart.
3. Take the second idea and determine if it is more or less important than the first idea. Place it left or right along the continuum as appropriate. Then, take the third idea and decide how it compares in importance to the first two. Adjust the sticky notes as needed. Continue this process until all ideas are placed horizontally along the Importance continuum.
4. Next, continue the conversation about each idea and its level of difficulty. Move the ideas up or down the chart as needed to distribute them along the Difficulty continuum.
5. Each idea will now be in one of the four quadrants. Each quadrant has specific characteristics.
 - a. Quick Wins:** These are low difficulty and low importance. The ideas in this area may be worth starting with since they will be the easiest to implement. They can help generate momentum and move you forward quickly.
 - b. High Return on Investment (ROI):** These will result in the highest value with the lowest investment. These are worth doing, often after the momentum gained from the Quick Win category.
 - c. Strategic:** These will lead to high impact, but will require significant investment. These can be worthwhile if you have the resources to invest in them.
 - d. Luxury:** These ideas will require costly investment with little return. Focus on this quadrant last, if at all.



DEVELOP: PPCO

PPCO is an acronym that can help you further develop your ideas.

For each idea, focus on Pluses, Potentials, Concerns, and Overcoming Concerns. Focus on one idea at a time until you have done PPCO for each of your top ideas.

PLUSES: Make a list of 3-6 pluses or strengths of the idea. Think about what is good or unique about your idea.

PPOTENTIALS: Make a list of 3-6 opportunities that would arise if this idea was implemented. Start the statements with “It might...” Consider spin-offs, speculations, collaborations, and future gains from the idea. What could this idea ultimately lead to?

CONCERNS: Make a list of 3-6 concerns you have about your ideas. No idea is perfect. Think about potential challenges or downsides of the ideas. However, instead of listing them as problems, write them as questions starting with “How might...,” or “How to...,” or “In what ways might...” This way of phrasing invites solutions and helps the brain think of possibility and new ideas.

OVERCOMING CONCERNS: Referencing the list of concerns, write ideas for how to overcome each concern.

Use the table on the next page to develop one of your ideas.
Make additional copies if needed.

PPCO

The idea used for this PPCO: _____

PLUSES: What do you like about this idea? List at least 3 pluses, strengths, and likes about the idea.	POTENTIALS: What might result if the idea was implemented? What are the unique potentials?	CONCERNS: No idea is perfect. What concerns, downsides or limitations does this idea have? Write them as "How to..." questions.	OVERCOMING CONCERNS: What are all the ideas you can imagine for overcoming the concerns from the previous column?

IMPLEMENT: ASSISTERS & RESISTORS

Assisters and Resistors can help you identify people who are important to the successful implementation to your solution.

Assisters

Generate a list of assisters and include how they might help you execute your idea. Consider people who might be collaborators, connectors, team mates, and resources for you.

Resistors

Generate a list of resistors and include how and why they might resist the idea. Then list how you might help them overcome their resistance and become assisters.

IMPLEMENT: THE ACTION PLAN

The precursor to developing an Action Plan is to do a brain dump of all the steps needed to move your challenge towards action.

Step 1: Write down as many action items as you can think of and place on Post-it Notes. One action item per note.

Step 2: Sort the ideas into short-term, mid-term, and long-term action items. If working in a team, share the items verbally at this point. If there are repeats pile the notes on top of each other. This is a good indication that it is an important step.

Step 3: Transfer your items into an action plan (see grid below) and decide who will be responsible for each item, when it should be done by, and who will help with accountability.

What	Who	By When	Who checks

DELIBERATE CREATIVE TEAMS

Teams are the #1 source of innovation in organizations. In order for a team to be innovative, team members need to know how to be creative together. They must be deliberate about fostering creativity and driving innovation. When a team is deliberately creative they have the potential to solve difficult problems with innovative solutions on a consistent basis.

The team's behaviors may either support and foster creativity or discourage and sabotage it. When a team identifies and understands their behaviors it gives them an opportunity to make changes to optimize their performance.

A team is “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.” (Katzenbach & Smith, 1999)

WHAT AFFECTS A TEAM'S CREATIVITY?

Three elements affect a team's ability to be creative. Do they have a clear, shared purpose? Do they have strong team dynamics? Do they know and use a creative process? The Deliberate Creative™ Team Scale measures these three elements for teams and provides valuable feedback to help a team recognize their areas of strength and areas of growth.

TEAM PURPOSE:

The team's collective focus, their shared goals, and their commitment to reaching the goals.

TEAM DYNAMICS:

The behavior and interactions within a team and the relationships between the team members.

TEAM CREATIVE PROCESS:

The team's use of the tools, techniques, & strategies of a creative process (e.g. Creative Problem Solving).

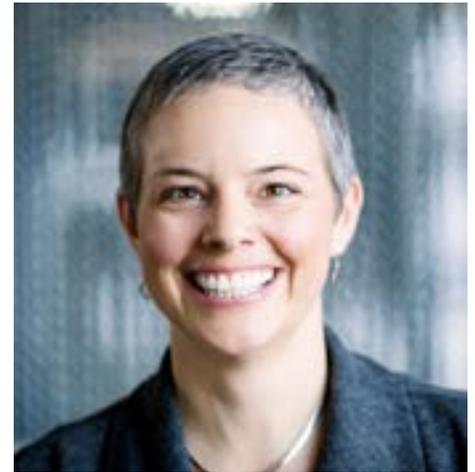


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ABOUT AMY CLIMER, PH.D.

Dr. Amy Climer works with small to medium-sized companies who want to be amazing, collaborate at a higher level, and solve problems creatively. Her clients describe her as approachable, inspiring, and transformative. She has a Ph.D. in Leadership & Change from Antioch University and a Master's degree in Outdoor Education from the University of New Hampshire. In 2018, she gave a TEDx talk on her research on creativity in teams. She is trained or certified in Creative Problem Solving, Immunity to Change, and the FourSight Thinking System. In 2016, she developed the Deliberate Creative™ Teams Scale to help teams recognize gaps in their creative skills and mindsets. Amy is the host of The Deliberate Creative™ Podcast, which is part of the C-Suite Radio Network. She is the designer of Climer Cards, a creativity and teambuilding tool used by thousands to deepen team conversations and generate ideas. In 2016, she won the Karl Rhonke Creativity Award from the Association for Experiential Education. You can learn more about Amy and her work at climerconsulting.com and climercards.com.



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The Deliberate Creative Podcast & Blog

Learn more about creativity, leadership, and teams from The Deliberate Creative Podcast. Hosted by Dr. Amy Climer.



NOTES

“Creativity is not a selfish act or a bid for attention on the part of the actor. It’s a gift to the world and every being in it. Don’t cheat us of your contribution. Give us what you’ve got.”

- Stephen Pressfield

be curious

YES AND

Use Post-Its

GENERATE

Ask: What else?

lots of ideas

listen

practice

To be creative

be deliberate.

HOW MIGHT WE...?

SEEK wild ideas

Start with yourself

Fail fast to succeed sooner **Take risks**

SUSPEND JUDGMENT

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