

The 6 Habits of Exceptionally Creative People

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One of the most common myths about creativity is that it's something unique and only a

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few selected people have it.

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While we often think of creativity as an event or a natural skill that some people have and

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some don't, research actually suggests that both creativity and non-creativity are learned.

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“Creativity and the ability to innovate are like muscles — the more we use them,

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the stronger they get.”

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We think that it's only Einstein, Steve Jobs, and Elon Musk who have creative genius.

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In fact, that's not true!

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Today researchers are studying the heck out of creativity and much of what we think we

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know about the topic is just plain wrong.

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However, there are specific habits and traits which anyone can use to unlock their creative

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genius.

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Here are the six habits of exceptionally creative people.

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From the theoretical perspective producing more work sounds like an easy idea, however,

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it's difficult in real life.

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The main reason is that we don't tolerate ourselves to create junk.

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As James Clear says, in any creative endeavor, you have to give yourself permission to create

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junk.

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There is no way around it.

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Sometimes you have to write 4 terrible pages just to discover that you wrote one good sentence

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in the second paragraph of the third page.

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In The War of Art, Steven Pressfield explains this as follows:

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“The amateur, on the other hand, over-identifies with his avocation, his artistic aspiration.

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He defines himself by it.

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He is a musician, a painter, a playwright.

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Resistance loves this.

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Resistance knows that the amateur composer will never write his symphony because he is

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overly invested in its success and over-terrified of its failure.

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The amateur takes it so seriously it paralyzes him.”

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The problem is that we’ve been raised to think that our success and self-worth depends

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on our wins.

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For this reason, Pressfield says that we must turn from amateur to professional.

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Only then can we produce truly creative work.

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“Resistance wants us to stake our self-worth, our identity, our reason-for-being, on the

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response of others to our work.

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Resistance knows we can't take this.

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No one can.

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The professional blows critics off.

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He doesn't even hear them.

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Critics, he reminds himself, are the unwitting mouthpieces of Resistance.”

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Resilience is practically a prerequisite for creative success, says psychologist Scott

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Barry Kaufman.

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Doing creative work is often described as a process of failing repeatedly until you

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find something that sticks, and creatives — at least the successful ones — learn

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not to take failure so personally.

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“Creatives fail and the really good ones fail often,” Forbes contributor Steven Kotler

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wrote in a piece on Einstein's creative genius.

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The way to become creative is to produce a lot, and the way to produce a lot is to give

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ourselves permission to create garbage.

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Eventually, everyone will forget the garbage we make but will remember the best works.

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Commit to the process and you'll become good enough, soon enough.

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Put in a volume of work.

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Close the gap.

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If there's one thing that distinguishes highly creative people from others, it's

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the ability to see possibilities where others don't.

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In the words of Steve Jobs: "When you ask creative people how they did

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something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw

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something.

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It seemed obvious to them after a while.

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That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new

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things.”

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One must realize that creativity is to make new connections with old ideas.

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Bringing together two pre-existing ideas in a non-existent way.

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Every new idea is just a combination of old ideas.

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It's why, Austin Kleon writes that “when people call something ‘original,’ nine

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out of ten times they just don't know the references or the original sources involved.”

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Hence his recommendation — steal like an artist.

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Creative people are always on the lookout for something to steal.

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To find something worth stealing, one must look in the right places.

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Always look for the things that will connect and combine.

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The quality of the information one consumes determines the quality of work one will produce.

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One way of finding valuable ideas is by exploring the variations of an idea.

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Kleon calls this branching: “Chew on one thinker...

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Study everything there is to know about that thinker.

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Then find three people that thinker loved, and find out everything about them.

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Repeat this as many times as you can.

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Climb up the tree as far as you can go.”

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That’s not the only method of finding valuable ideas, there are multiple ways.

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Always look for the things that will connect.

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Creative people always actively seek out the best ideas from all places.

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They’re always researching and trying to find something to combine.

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James Clear says “No single act will uncover more creative genius than forcing yourself

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to create consistently.”

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Practicing your craft over and over is the only way to become decent at it.

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Inspiration will not come to you while you're waiting.

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Do not wait for the inspiration to think creatively and to produce creative ideas.

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Set a schedule for your work.

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After working regularly for some time, something comes up.

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Creativity is not just about the ideas that come to your mind, it is a process.

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Be patient to be creative.

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Don't just wait for that moment when you go into the bathroom and shout "Eureka!".

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Creativity doesn't come easily.

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It's very important that we create a schedule that we can rely on.

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The painter, Chuck Close was clear on this point:

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"Inspiration is for amateurs — the rest of us just show up and get to work.

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And the belief that things will grow out of the activity itself and that you will — through

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work — bump into other possibilities and kick open other doors that you would never

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have dreamt of if you were just sitting around looking for a great 'art idea'...

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If you hang in there, you will get somewhere.”

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Creativity is a process.

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Never forget this.

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Decide what you want to be good at, set a schedule for your actions, and stick to your

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schedule no matter how difficult it is.

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Many of the most iconic stories and songs of all time have been inspired by gut-wrenching

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pain and heartbreak — and the silver lining of these challenges is that they may have

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been the catalyst to create great art.

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You have to be more creative when you have fewer resources because you have to do more

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with less, and it kind of spurs the creativity process.

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David Burkus writes in his book: “Many of the most prolific and creative

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people understand how stifling a blank slate can be...

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All creatives need some constraints.

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All artists need structure.

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Some of the most creative poetry comes in fixed forms such as the Japanese haiku or

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the English sonnet.”

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According to Austin Kleon: “Nothing is more paralyzing than the idea

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of infinite possibilities.

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The best way to get over creative block is to simply place some constraints on yourself.”

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He goes on to explain how having less, helps us:

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“One, getting really good at creative work requires a lot of time and attention, and

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that means cutting a lot of fluff out of your life so that you have that extra time and

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attention.

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And two, creativity in our work is often a matter of what we choose to leave out, rather

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than leave in — what is unspoken vs. spoken, what isn't shown vs. what is, etc.”

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Constraints are not the enemy.

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Many creatives understood that and went on to produce masterpieces because of constraints,

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not despite them.

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Dr. Seuss was challenged to write a children's book with only 50 words.

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The result was Green Eggs and Ham, which went on to sell over 200 million copies.

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Imposing simple constraints in our own lives can lead to well-designed and more effective

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lives as well.

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Creative thinking should be followed by creative doing.

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Give your idea, answer, or insight the opportunity to live outside of your imagination and notes.

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The more often you ship your ideas, the less it bothers you when it doesn't work out

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as planned and the more often you succeed.

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You are never more than one great idea away from achieving a major breakthrough.

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It's entirely possible that you have already had a breakthrough idea, but you won't see

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the breakthrough until you become a real artist... because, as Steve Jobs reminded us, real artists

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ship!

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Picasso painted over 20,000 works.

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Bach composed at least one work a week.

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Most of these works were garbage.

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No one on the street would have taken a second look at it.

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However, when you produce so much work, that one piece will inevitably stick.

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If only one idea for every ten that you come up with is good, all it means is that you

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should be working on a hundred ideas to come up with ten good ones.

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The same goes for all creative endeavors.

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It's widely assumed that there's a trade-off between quantity and quality.

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But quantity breeds quality.

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The act of creating something, no matter how bad it is, is practice for creating a better

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one.

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Just don't forget: "Creativity and the ability to innovate are like muscles — the

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more we use them, the stronger they get."

From The Art of Improvement

(*Auto-generated by YouTube.)