Creative Endeavors
Stoking your creative fire can improve your productivity and life satisfaction by sparking insights, forging synaptic connections, and infusing your life with new energy, meaning and joy. So give a little thought to the status of your current creative urges and expressions — and then get busy giving them a boost.

Skills and Know-How

1. I regularly pursue creative and personal projects (music, art, writing, crafts, gardening) purely for satisfaction and enjoyment.
2. I surround myself with creative inspiration by exposing myself to new sights, sounds, ideas and experiences on a regular basis.
3. I bring creativity to my work and to my relationships with others.
4. I’m open to doing things I’m not necessarily “good” at.
5. I meet regularly with like-minded creative people for support, camaraderie and inspiration.
6. I’m able to ignore the voice of my inner critic when necessary.
7. I appreciate the creative talents and contributions of others.
8. I know how to jog my creativity when I’m feeling stuck.
9. I feed my brain with a steady supply of open questions, unsolved puzzles and “never done this before” challenges.
10. I’m aware of the physical environments and periods of day in which I tend to be most creative.

Take-Action Tips
(on your own)

- Get with the program. Crack open The Creativity Book: A Year’s Worth of Inspiration and Guidance by Eric Maisel (Tarcher, 2000), which gives you insight, encouragement and a creativity-building process to follow. Or read How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci: Seven Steps to Genius Every Day by Michael J. Gelb (Dell, 1998).
- Open some creative space: Declutter a desk, table or workbench where you can make a creative mess without disrupting your daily activities, or hang a corkboard where you can arrange visually appealing images or items that inspire you.
- Use magazine clippings to create a collage of what you want your life to look like one year from now.

Sign Yourself Up
(workshops/seminars/programs)

- Take a class. Scan the offerings in a local community-ed catalog and circle anything that piques your interest: Always wanted to make jewelry? Speak Italian? Try welding? Go for it! No nearby community-ed center? Check local bulletin boards for offerings, or check out online resources like www.learnoutloud.com and www.edufire.com for at-home options.
- Find a support group. Networks of writers or artists often meet informally to offer each other support, feedback and camaraderie. Look for one in your area (MySpace, Yahoo! Groups and similar networking Web sites can help you find creativity-boosting groups), or start one of your own!

Hire Some Help
(trainer/coach/pro)

- Find a creativity coach. These motivational specialists can help you find inspiration, focus and direction for your creative dreams. Search for one in your area at www.creativitycoachingassociation.com/findcoach.
- Take a lesson: A single one-hour lesson or private consultation with an accomplished artist can deliver years’ worth of inspirational fuel. Short on cash? Consider trading skills (you help that oil painter with her tax return, she shows you how she layers a canvas to get that amazing shade of Prussian blue). Or simply ask someone for a little mentoring. You might be surprised by how many creative types are willing to share what they know.

I've got this mastered! Still working on it. Ready to make this a priority.

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