

CREATIVITY

cre · a · tiv · i · ty

noun

the use of the imagination or original ideas,
especially in the production of an artistic work.

synonyms: inventiveness, imagination, innovation,
innovativeness, originality, individuality

A compilation of ten articles published in Pacific Rim Quilt Company's monthly e-Newsletters from August 2015 to May 2016. Because we sincerely believe creativity benefits you and the entire world we put these articles together in an easy to print and save format. Our continuing desire is to kick-start, or to stimulate, YOUR creative juices. Enjoy.

Copyright 2015-2016 Pacific Rim Quilt Company
www.prqc.com

This compilation, in its entirety, may be copied and shared with other individuals for personal, private, non-commercial purposes only. Permission IS NOT GRANTED for all or any portion of this compilation to be reproduced in printed or electronic format by other companies for any reason.

Over the next several months we plan to give you lots of suggestions for ways to kick-start, or to continue stimulating YOUR creative juices.

Part 1 - published August 2015.

DISCONTINUITY: Stimulate your creative juices

Discontinuity is good for creativity. The more often you experience something in the same way, the more predictable it becomes and the less you think about it. Habit, routine, cliché, stereotype. Mixing things up a bit makes your mind see things in new ways.

Introduce these interruptions into your routine and see if it sparks your creativity anew:

- Drive different routes to familiar places
- Listen to different radio stations
- Shop at different stores
- Make new friends
- Try new recipes
- Subscribe to a new genre of magazine



Use our [Facebook](#) page to share ways you vary your routine to stimulate creativity, or just add more joy to your life!



Part 2 - published September 2015.

KICK-START YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS: Move out of your Comfort Zone

Did you know that the creative process is often about moving out of your comfort zone into a place that feels strange, even scary? If we want to be more creative we need to be willing to become uncomfortable. Consider these two lists. One likely makes you comfortable, the other does not.



TRADITIONAL Synonyms:

- Accepted
- Accustomed
- Common
- Conventional
- Customary
- Habitual
- Prevailing
- Routine
- Standard
- Familiar

UNCONVENTIONAL Synonyms:

- Different
- Startling
- Strange
- Uncommon
- Exceptional
- Extraordinary
- Infrequent
- Odd
- Peculiar
- Rare
- Sporadic
- Unique
- Provocative

One list is not good and the other bad. There is no value judgment, just words.

Take the list that is uncomfortable for you and create something (anything) using those words in any way. How did that feel? Do you like what you created, drew, wrote, sang, stitched, or dreamed? Make something else. Do you like it? How did it feel?

Working in an uncomfortable area can open doors you did not even know were there. The longer you spend time there the more experienced you become with something new, expanding your creative repertoire.

Share your creations and thoughts with us on our [Facebook](#) page. We would love to see and hear how you are stretching your creative muscles!



Part 3 - published [October 2015](#).

CHARACTERISTICS OF CREATIVITY

What are the characteristics of *Creativity*?

- Imagination
- Expressiveness
- Originality
- Ability or power to create things
- Looking at the same thing(s) as everyone else and making something different
- Energy
- Passion mixed with courage

Some of you look at the list and say, "That's me!" Others can claim a few of the traits, and fewer still will find nothing in common with this list.

If you feel you have only a few or none of these traits, is all lost? What can you do if you want to be creative, but don't feel you have what it takes to pull it off? Or, you get close but never seem really successful?

We have given you some suggestions and things to try in the last two newsletters. Here are a few more suggestions:

- Don't follow the rules.
- Work and play as though there are no limits or boundaries.
- Be resourceful - use what you have at hand.
- Use familiar things in new ways.
- Do something you have been avoiding.
- Encourage others to try something new.
- Think of yourself as being creative! (As you think, so you are.)



We love that last one. Can it be as simple as thinking of yourself as being creative?! We think so! If you tell yourself you can't, you won't. If you tell yourself you can, you will.

Share your creations and thoughts with us on our [Facebook](#) page. What are you doing to help you be more creative? What have you created lately?



Part 4 - published November 2015.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS: Five Steps

Did you know there is actually a **Creative Process**? While people describe the steps differently, there actually are steps you can follow when you want to create something new or different.

Here are the steps:

1. **Motivation.** You have a fire in your belly. You really want to create something new or do something differently.
2. **Preparation.** Explore sources of new ideas, practice or learn new techniques. Gather your tools and materials.
3. **Incubation.** Ruminant. Mull the idea over. Look at it from different directions.
4. **Illumination.** Aha! Finally, a clear idea!
5. **Implementation.** Take action. Do it.



Over the next few months we will explore each of these steps, giving you more encouragement and ideas for following your creative bliss.

Let us hear from you! What is your creative process? Where do you get stuck when you are trying to create something new or different? How do you get un-stuck? Share with us on [Facebook](#), or send us an email.

If you have read our book [Design Your Personal Hawaiian Quilt](#), these steps will sound familiar. We discuss the **Creative Process** in Chapter 3.

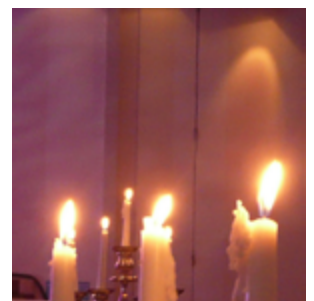


Part 5 - published December 2015.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS: Motivation and Preparation

Last month we listed five basic steps in the **Creative Process**. This month we talk more about the first two steps: Motivation and Preparation.

1. Motivation quite simply is the desire (fire) that moves us to take action. Sometimes this desire comes to us unbidden, by surprise when we feel, see or read something that sparks the desire in us to take action, to interpret this event, or immortalize these feelings in a creative way. Other times we yearn for something new, different, or exciting, so we seek a way to ignite a fire to satisfy the need. The desire for a pleasant reward can motivate us to take action as well.



A great quote: "If I create from the heart, nearly everything works; if from the head almost nothing" - Marc Chagall

Theories abound trying to define, classify and explain motivation. For now, let's just say someone is either motivated or not. If you are, you want to create. We guess that if you are reading our e-Newsletters you are motivated to create. Step 1 - *done!* If you are not feeling the spark of creativity then relax, breathe, listen. Let your heart speak to you.



2. Preparation begins with defining or visualizing what will satisfy your desire. This can be general: "I want to make a personal quilt for my spouse." Or, it can be very specific: "I want to design a Hawaiian quilt for my spouse using the monstera leaves and ferns from a photo we took in Hawaii." From there your preparation involves finding out more about what it is you want to do; learning new techniques or skills you think may be required; collecting your supplies; and preparing a workspace.

These steps are not necessarily sequential, nor are they 'one and done' activities. We often will circle through the steps multiple times while attempting to create something new. If your motivation is strong, your curiosity is high, or the reward is great, you will relish the process. Go ahead, start your prep!

By way of review here are steps 3-5. We will elaborate on these next month.

Incubation

Illumination

Implementation

Share with us on [Facebook](#), or send us an email: "What drives you to want to create?"

Express your creative vision using our book and DVD set as a guide: [Design Your Personal Hawaiian Quilt](#).



Part 6 - published January 2016.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS: Incubation, Illumination, Implementation

Creativity can seem elusive at times. If you find yourself struggling, it can be helpful to think of it as a process with specific steps. When you have some steps to follow it helps you navigate through what otherwise seems murky, confusing, or frustrating. Last month we began with the first two steps: 1) Motivation, and 2) Preparation. Let's now take a look at the next steps: 3) Incubation, 4) Illumination and 5) Implementation.

3. Incubation can be thought of as a current that runs silently in the background, just below the surface, from the moment of your first inspiration through the Preparation and beyond. What you may be searching for are more design ideas, or different processes to give form to your vision. You may find that looking at photos, watching how-to videos and practicing a number of different techniques while considering your idea will help to crystallize your thoughts. Ideas surface; you see images, colors or shapes from anywhere that spark new ideas; you imagine different ways of putting things together; consider different materials; play with outlandish or seemingly impossible ideas. All the while learning more and more about what you do and don't like as your vision becomes clearer, leading to the next step.

4. Illumination. This is the moment when you heave a sigh or shout "Aha!" Finally, your scattered thoughts take shape, your vision is not only clear but so too may be the path you will take to accomplish your vision. Now with a clear vision and plan you can move to the fifth step.



5. Implementation. This is the action step you have yearned for. This is when you move what is in your mind to what is in your hands. Now is when your ideas take physical form and you are creating! Yeah!

Remember, these steps are not necessarily sequential, nor are they 'one and done' activities. You may find yourself circling through the steps multiple times; steps may overlap; or you may find yourself doing the first 4 steps nearly all at once in a matter of moments or in just a few days, while at other times each step may take weeks or longer. There is no right or wrong. It is what it will be. If you are stuck review the steps, consider where you are in the process, what have you forgotten to do, what can you do again or more of, what is next?

Next month we'll consider the ambiance of creativity. Hhhmmm, wonder what that is...?



Part 7 - published February 2016.

THE AMBIENCE OF CREATIVITY

If you have been reading along with our articles the past several months you may have tried several of our suggestions for stimulating your creativity. We imagine some of you are feeling the joy of creating new things, while others of you may feel a bit stymied, or stuck. No matter where you find yourself right now, we have even more suggestions to kick-start, or to continue stimulating your creative juices.

Above all, you want to be relaxed when creating. This is best accomplished by orchestrating a suitable ambiance, mood, aura, or feeling in your creative space where your imagination is free to drift and explore. A place free of unwanted distractions, tension, fear, and frustration; full of energy, peace, and calm is your goal. The place itself is unimportant. It can be your studio, bedroom, living room, a park bench or your car. Consider all your senses. Fragrances, sounds, lighting, flavors and textures all contribute to an environment conducive to creating. Think flowers, incense, soft lighting, comfortable seating, tasty beverage, and soothing music. Preferably music without words, not even instrumentals of familiar songs. Words can be an unwanted distraction, constantly enticing you to sing along, rather than leading you to drift into unexplored territory.

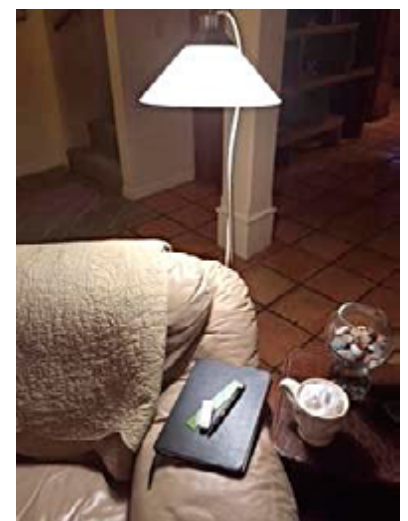
The place you want to find is in your heart. Creativity flows from your spirit not your brain. You might think of this as being in The Zone, being Centered, or Inspired.

Here are a few things you may want to try in order to get, or stay, in The Zone:

- Sit quietly for a few minutes and relax, perhaps meditate or pray.
- Read something inspirational.
- Look at beautiful pictures, especially of nature.
- Play soothing instrumental music.

Forcing something to happen creates stress. If you become frustrated, take a break and try one of these:

- Call a friend.
- Take a walk.
- Run that nagging errand.
- Look at more pictures.
- Change the music.
- Write down the stray thoughts that keep interrupting you.



But, get back at it soon. Don't let the break become a diversion. You don't want to lose momentum. Remind yourself that you can do this. You can be creative.

Share with us on [Facebook](#) what your creative space looks and feels like. What helps to get you in The Zone? Next month we'll explore Manipulation. Fun stuff!



Part 8 - published **March 2016**.

CREATIVE MANIPULATION

As we continue our Creativity series it occurred to me that you may think creativity is only valid, or necessary, when starting with a blank slate and creating something completely unique from scratch. *Au contraire*, you engage creativity every time you make a decision to go in a unique direction. Deciding on colors, choosing fabrics, placement of values...all are creative actions. So this month we will consider several ways to add your creative touch to any project through *manipulation*.

To manipulate is to adapt or change something to make it your own; your unique creation. Whether you start with a blank slate, a commercial pattern, or something else, trying these manipulation techniques could be the stepping stone, or spring board to move your creation from good to great.

Think of your design or project and consider these options / variations:

- Enlarge / magnify
- Reduce / minimize
- Adapt
- Duplicate
- Pair
- Reverse
- Combine
- Eliminate
- Rearrange
- Parody
- Fantasize
- Rotate
- Add / subtract / multiply / divide

Now think of your materials and consider these options / variations:

- Cut
- Pleat
- Tear
- Fold
- Patch
- Dye
- Bleach
- Wrinkle
- Press
- Fringe
- Paint
- Stitch
- Embellish

Scared? Then play with samples. Wondering what would happen if you used bleach to lighten a specific area? Then bleach scraps of the fabrics to see if that's the look you want. Practice new stitches on scraps until you are satisfied with the look. Take photographs, or make photocopies of your design and manipulate that to see what will happen. Trace your design on blank paper; photocopy the tracing multiple times; then use colored pencils to try out different color schemes; or use scissors to try different arrangements. Ask yourself "What if?" Then either make a sample or simulate it on paper before committing.

Stepping stones lead you down a path one step at a time; a spring board catapults you well beyond your starting position. Either way, you experience the joy of creation.

Do the unexpected! When everyone else zigs, you zag. Find *your* path!



Share with us on [Facebook](#) the creative changes you have made to your current projects. Next month we'll consider how to evaluate your creative ideas. Don't be nervous, I said evaluate, not criticize! And we will wrap up this series in May as we consider how to overcome obstacles.



Part 9 - published [April 2016](#).

IS THIS A GOOD IDEA? Evaluating your creative ideas

For the past several months I've been hoping to inspire you to stretch your creative muscles. By now I hope you have several creative ideas or designs swirling around. So, this month let's consider how to evaluate your creative ideas or designs. You might think I am going to tell you what a good idea looks like. But I can't do that, only you can determine that for yourself. Instead, here is a list of questions to answer and thoughts to consider that will help you look at your creative idea or design, to see it from various angles, and determine its value to you.

1. If it is still in my head: sketch it, write it down then look at it later. (Some people keep creative idea journals, others of us just have scraps of paper ...eh, everywhere!)
2. Does this make me (happy), (satisfied), (fulfilled)?
3. Is this a good or a great idea? Don't discard good ideas just because they may not be great.
4. What does my gut tell me?
5. Does this express my passion?
6. Does this fulfill my objective?
7. Will this be worth the effort?
8. Are there any drawbacks?
9. Is this interesting?
10. Is there something here I can build on to make it even better?
(Review the [Manipulation techniques](#) in Part 8 of this series.)
11. Is this doable?
12. Will this be fun for me to do?
13. If this fails, what's the worst that could happen?
14. If this fails, will I be able to salvage or build on part of it?
15. Is the timing right?
16. What assumptions am I making? Are they valid assumptions?
17. What unnecessary limitations am I imposing?
18. Have I been successful with anything like this in the past?
 - If not, what is different about this idea that will make it more successful?
 - If yes, is there a problem with this idea that I am blind to?
19. Is this too much like everything else I do to be really creative?
20. Am I afraid that because no one else has ever done this, I won't be able to either?
21. What is stopping me from moving forward?



After you have answered these questions for yourself, you might ask someone else to answer them so you can see your idea from another point of view. When you realize that everyone you ask to evaluate your work will look at it with different eyes, through a different lens or filter, you will see there is no right or wrong. There are preferences, opinions, likes and dislikes - but no absolutes.

Notice that many of these questions urge you to move forward, adapt, alter, expand, or change your original or current idea. Creativity implies a door that is wide open to possibilities. Don't corral your idea too quickly.

Keep your ideas swirling around in your imagination, keep making sketches, or making notes, don't be in a hurry, and enjoy the process. When you have multiple designs to consider choosing the one you like the best becomes easy.

So let go! Have fun! Stretch your creative muscles (of which you have many). If one idea doesn't turn out, try another, and another, and another. Who will be first to share their creative ideas on our [Facebook](#) page?

Next month, the last installment in the series, we will look at obstacles that block our creativity and how to move them out of the way.



Part 10 - published May 2016.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES: Let Loose! Soar...

For the past nine months we have considered Creativity from many different angles. Here are the general topics we have considered:

1. Discontinuity: Stimulate your creative juices
2. Kick-start your creative process: Move out of your Comfort Zone
3. Characteristics of Creativity
4. The Creative Process: Five Steps
5. The Creative Process: Motivation and Preparation
6. The Creative Process: Incubation, Illumination, Implementation
7. The Ambience of Creativity
8. Creative Manipulation
9. Evaluating your creative ideas
- And finally,
10. Overcoming Obstacles

To really take wing and fly creatively we need to be light and free; unburdened by obstacles that hold us down and prevent us from being as creative as we want to be. How do we get from where we are to where we want to be? What are some of those obstacles and how can you overcome them? Our goal now is to identify the things that hold you back and develop strategies to move you forward.

Mental barriers

- Victim of negative self-talk
- Harboring unrealistic expectations
- Unwilling to break out of familiar routines and habits; taking refuge in the safer status quo
- Fear of failure, discomfort, looking foolish, making mistakes, or being rejected
- Don't want to waste valuable materials and resources
- Beliefs about right vs. wrong and that play is frivolous



Strategies: Turns out our biggest obstacle is our own negative self-talk. Begin today to practice new responses to your mental barriers: Turn "I can't do that" into "I can't do that yet." Or try: "I've never done it before, but I can learn." Or, "If other normal people can do that, so can I." Remember when you tried something new once and it didn't work as you imagined, you didn't like the results. Did you say "I'll never do that again" and quit. Or did you tell yourself "It didn't work that time" and tried again after modifying some variables?

It's interesting that as we learn to tame our negative thinking, we suddenly find solutions to other obstacles and are set free to create.

Physical limitations

- Differing abilities
- Lack of skills
- Inadequate space

Strategies: Explore alternative ways of doing things. There is more than one way to do everything. Take classes, read books, watch videos, join or form a group of people with similar interests. Share creative space with a friend. Good organization is generally the best way to utilize small spaces and save time. Don't like to waste time searching for things? Then organize the clutter. Find creative energy in chaos? Then relax with your clutter. Do what suits you.

Time constraints

- Competing needs for our time and attention
- Don't want to waste time on things that are unsuccessful

Strategies: If having time to be creative on a regular basis makes you a happier person to be around then make time to create. The obvious is to prioritize what is most important to you. Less obvious, if you just can't find time to be artistically creative then do what needs to be done more creatively. Take pleasure in all the little things you do all day long that bring beauty and pleasure to you and those around you. Give yourself credit for all the creative things you do every day; don't beat yourself up over what you don't have time to do.

Financial restrictions

- Competing needs for limited financial resources
- Don't want to waste valuable materials or buy un-needed tools

Strategies: It doesn't take money to be creative. Consider that perhaps we are the most creative when we have the least. Trade, barter, share tools and materials with friends and family; shop for used tools, equipment, and materials. Creatively reuse and recycle.



10 more tips to overcome obstacles:

1. Make it fun. Be outrageous. Explore alternatives.
2. Be creative in every aspect of life. Avoid ruts and change-up routines.
3. Approach every obstacle as a creative problem-solving opportunity.
4. Put a fire in your belly. Have a passion, feel the urgency.
5. Put a lion in your heart. Have courage, believe in yourself.
6. Get going. Develop and hone your skills; put yourself in a position to win.
7. Get rid of excuses.
8. Turn the negative self-talk into positive affirmations. Convince yourself you are good.
9. Be persistent. See yourself as being creative. Believe yourself to be creative and you will be.
10. Talk to people you see as creative. Find out what and how they do what they do; how do they see themselves; what drives them to create?

A few great resources:

- You are never too old to play. Go play at Crayola.com. Start with these two pages: “[Importance of Creativity](#)” and “[52 Creative Weeks](#)”.
- Whether you want to design a Hawaiian quilt or not, get your hands on our book and DVD [Design Your Personal Hawaiian Quilt](#). Then, don’t just look at the pictures, but read it, and watch the DVD. Spend time with it; let the inspiration wash over and envelop you. Just immersing yourself in the creative process will take you places you could never have expected, imagined, or dreamed of.
- And finally, re-read this series of articles. You can find a complete compilation here, on our [How-To and Ideas](#) page.



Our wish for you is that you experience the sheer joy of being creative. Believe in yourself, take wings and fly. Soar high!

Remember, keep sharing photos and stories with us. We want to see what you are creating!

CREATIVITY

A compilation of ten articles published in Pacific Rim Quilt Company’s monthly e-Newsletters from August 2015 to May 2016. Because we sincerely believe creativity benefits you and the entire world we put these articles together in an easy to print and save format. Our continuing desire is to kick-start, or to stimulate, YOUR creative juices. Enjoy.

Copyright 2015-2016 Pacific Rim Quilt Company
www.prqc.com

This compilation, in its entirety, may be copied and shared with other individuals for personal, private, non-commercial purposes only. Permission IS NOT GRANTED for all or any portion of this compilation to be reproduced in printed or electronic format by other companies for any reason.