



CHAPTER EIGHT

Directing & Strengthening Your Crayons

Coaching and Counseling for Creativeness

Based on the research of E. Paul Torrance, Ph.D., leader in the field of creativity, by the time we enter the fourth grade much of our natural creativeness has been quieted, squelched, dampened or destroyed. By the tenth grade our natural creative abilities have been lessened or quieted even more. And as adults most people deny having any creative skills unless they have artistic talents.

During the past forty years much research has proven that natural and additional creativeness can be re-developed, released, rediscovered, or created. The following are a few proven ways.

Black's Baker's Dozen of Creative Thinking Generating Tips

1. Challenge all assumptions. (**ass-u-me**)
2. Look for similarities in unrelated ideas, situations or events. (**relate**)

3. See the familiar in new strange ways. (**alter point of view**)
 4. See the strange as familiar. (**make connections**)
 5. Take risks periodically, or occasionally. (**break the mold**)
 6. Take advantage of chance: ideas, situations, mistakes, etc.
 7. Inter-relate ideas, situations, events. (**force fit different ideas**)
 8. Hitchhike, collect, borrow, steal, share, gather ideas from everywhere.
 9. Ask yourself what would other people do in this situation (living or dead, famous or not).
 10. Ask what would people in other occupations do with this problem?
 11. Imagine yourself as a child and take their perspective.
 12. Take different physical perspectives: high/low, close/far, inside/outside.
- + Read a chapter from a book on creative thinking and practice what it talks about.

By yourself you can continually expand your current level of creative thinking skills by practising each of these thirteen techniques.

The technique that Benjamin Franklin talked about in his autobiography about how he was able to improve his personality as a middle-aged man could be used to improve your current creativeness.

First type or write each of the previous thirteen tips on individual index cards.

- Second, shuffle them like playing cards.
- Third, draw one out randomly.
- Fourth, carry it around with you in your pocket, purse, daily schedule book or briefcase and look at it several times each day for a week.
- Fifth, once that week is over put that card away and choose another for the second week. Continue this until you have used all thirteen cards. When the thirteenth week is over, start over again.

As a supervisor, manager, leader or coach you can help the people that work with you or your students to expand, enrich and develop their creative thinking skills by challenging them to do these thirteen tips:

1. one a week for thirteen weeks
2. one each meeting
3. spend 1/2 hour to one hour a week applying one of them to their actual work.
4. teach them and ask them to teach someone else.
5. set up teams that try different ones of the 13 tips.
6. use your imagination

Now you say, “well that should help.” Hah! you ain’t seen nothing yet.

The following 144 ideas were developed for a series of articles on the development of creativity and creative thinking skills in the workplace. Each of these will also help you and your students or employees further develop their natural creativeness, no matter what they apply it to.

My challenge to you is to randomly pick a number from 1 to 144 and try it. then pick another, then another, and so on. After you have had a few days of success and perhaps a few

occasions of non-success or reluctance or resistance analyze your results.

If you experience more non-success than success. Stop for a week and start again. I guarantee, even the most resistant, low self-esteem person will begin to demonstrate more creativeness with this type of support and coaching if you will keep at it for 21 days to a month.

A Gross of Ideas for Developing Creativity

To become the best we can become we need to tap into our greatest natural resource—the natural **creativity** of all employees as individuals, as teams, as a total group. The following are a gross (**144**) of ideas for you to begin with. They are not meant to be solutions. They are meant to be ideas, solution starters, resolution generators.

Each day do one of these or start to do one of them. Each month check yourself on how you are doing: what worked, what needs to be improved or revised.

In other words: make your continual goal from today on to be more **CREATIVE** & develop more and more **CREATiveness**.

1. Ask each employee for 6 to 12 ideas before deciding together on what to do.
2. Hold a creative thinking lunch once a week with 3 to 5 different employees.
3. Experiment with some small projects, push for creativeness.
4. Examine every procedure and challenge them to see if they can be improved or eliminated.
5. Compliment all ideas.
6. Create an creative/innovative idea board in your department.

7. Communicate where ideas are in the continuum from conception to completion or hold or rationalization and replacement.
8. Involve employee in analysis stage of idea process before it is implemented or put aside for potential future use.
9. Keep score of number of ideas for your department. Reward your department for quantity and quality. Develop a “thermometer” for showing numbers of ideas.
10. Hold, “What are They Doing?” idea sessions.
11. Encourage employees to share and work on ideas with each other.
12. Give employees freedom to analyze and solve problems in their areas and reward or award them.
13. Devote time each month for 6 months to a year to promoting creative thinking in your department.
14. Ask What **might** it be? How **might** it work? How else **might** it work? **Not**...How does it work? What is it? Why aren't you doing it so & so?
15. Let people know it is okay to fail.
16. Set creative goals with your employees for the week, month, quarter.
17. If It Ain't Broke, BREAK IT. Test all current systems, work methods, products you use to discover if there are better ones.
18. Set aside time for creative and innovative thinking each week.
19. Work on helping each other (employees and managers) to become more open to creativeness.
20. Recognize differences in the ways your people create/innovate.
21. Encourage employees to try something new every day.

22. Match projects and tasks to interests of employees as much as you can each week.
23. Work on helping improve each person's self-confidence.
24. Involve employees in decision making and problem solving.
25. Involve the inexperienced in "idea generation" sessions.
26. Have employees work part of a shift in other departments once a month.
27. Ask employees for input on how to make their jobs more interesting and personally rewarding.
28. Always keep employees aware of what happens to their ideas.
29. Ask your manager to support the ideas of your people: morally, mentally, physically, emotionally, financially.
30. Provide each employee with at least one challenging assignment each week. Ask them for suggestions as to what to work on.
31. Focus on problems being challenges not problems.
32. Jointly read a book on creative thinking, one chapter each and talk about it for an hour each week until complete.
33. Ask creative people from the community to come in and talk to your employees.
34. Ask creative people from the community to come in and work along side of your employees.
35. Switch roles with one employee each week for 1/2 a day.
36. Ask your manager to work a 1/2 day somewhere in your department each month.
37. Encourage diversity in styles of work.

38. Do some creative things with employees after work.
39. Vary your management/leadership approach with employees.
40. Find new ways to use your resources.
41. Focus skills and abilities on goals not roles.
42. Teach and encourage employees to incubate on difficult problems.
43. Take time to ask a group of employees how would people in other departments solve this problem? How would people in another profession or occupation solve this problem?
44. Set continually higher standards with input from employees.
45. Focus on encouraging creativeness on all that you do.
46. Continually delegate more and more responsibility, authority and accountability, remembering you are always accountable.
47. Find out how your employees think they are creative.
48. Find out how what your employees do that they think is creative.
49. Actively seek out, develop and encourage each employee's special talents.
50. Set a vision for your department with your employees.
51. Keep examining the problem to discover if it is really the problem and not simply a symptom.
52. Pre-plan, pre-solve problems to minimize "fire-fighting" thinking.
53. Allow time for ideas to develop.
54. Store your ideas that don't reach solution.
55. Review periodically ideas that didn't become solutions.

56. Allow employees to more and more guide, direct, choose their own work.
57. Give people some time to think about future ideas, solutions, problems.
58. Let employees with special talents, skills, abilities serve as resources and trainers or mentors for other employees.
59. Make sure employees have ready access to resources.
60. Constantly work at “getting things out of the way”.
61. Constantly work at “getting information directly to employees.”
62. Allow time for free play, fun or use of the imagination.
63. Add humor to the job.
64. Work at helping your employees build trusting, supportive relationships among each other.
65. No longer accept negative comments about ideas.
66. Request and encourage positive, encouraging and/or supportive comments about all ideas (even silly, kidding ones).
67. Provide special space for “creative” thinking or work separate from the normal workplace.
68. Eliminate competition among and between employees.
69. Promote self-competition, goal setting and job planning.
70. Promote thought-out risk-taking.
71. Back, support your employees when things go wrong.
72. Always ask what might be beneficial about all ideas.
73. Talk about frustrations openly. Be honest about feelings & emotions.
74. Assign someone the role of “creative coach”, who’s job is to encourage, back, support creativeness in your department.

75. Assign the “creative coach” role to a separate person each month
76. Reward, award success.
77. Turn failures into wins.
78. Promote idea that there are no failures, simply nonsuccesses.
79. Promote idea that failures are successes at a lower than acceptable standard level.
80. Create an idea room, wall, bulletin board to post creative ideas from magazines, books, word-of-mouth.
81. Treat “non-successes” as points to begin learning.
82. Promote continual broad base learning.
83. Promote continual in-depth learning.
84. Never punish or criticize non-successes—instead improve them—get the team to “make them work” instead.
85. Let employees work on their personal ideas, favorite or pet deas without criticism or supervision.
86. Always use setbacks, incompletes, misfires, even mistakes as learning points or opportunities.
87. Champion ideas for your employees.
88. Meet with other division heads, directors, department heads, managers, supervisors once a month to share how you are using, encouraging and supporting creativity.
89. Retrain from using constructive criticism.
90. Instead of “constructive criticism”
 - a. ask employee to explain what happened
 - b. ask employee to explain what they felt went well
 - c. ask employee to suggest how they might produce a better result in the future.

- d. then ask employee to listen to your suggestion(s) if they still seem relevant and ask how they might implement or improve and implement them.
91. Encourage honesty, candor and frankness. Ask employees how you are doing once a month and what they suggest you improve.
92. Become aware of employee's fears; discuss them; and when you can try to help them deal with their fears, frustrations.
93. Share power and authority.
94. Become a resource and information source not a boss.
95. Work on continually becoming more and more loyal to your employees.
96. Give respect. Give respect. Give respect.
97. Treat all employees with dignity.
98. Be a real person with people.
99. Continually work on improving your listening with your employees.
100. Be firm and as fair as possible in all situations.
101. Work at helping employees resolve problems; as a resource person, conduit to other resources, BUT not an answer person.
102. Continually expand participation in your department among and by all employees: highly experienced to brand-new.
103. Keep no secrets if you can help it.
104. Share influence.
105. Go out of your way; do more than expected; surprise each employee regularly. If not once a month once every two months.

106. Encourage, develop and support all evidence of initiative.
107. Share, share, share information. Keep no one in the dark.
108. Continually find novel, unique, even creative ways to reward, award, recognize creative efforts and thinking, not simply solutions.
109. Evaluate people based upon their creative efforts and thinking related to job performance (what you expect and inspect you get).
110. Use time off or special project opportunities in place of money.
111. Get publicity for your employee's efforts, thinking and results.
112. Write letters of accommodation for employees efforts, thinking and results.
113. Ask your superiors to write letters of accommodation.
114. Hold appreciation days for individual creative efforts.
115. Hold appreciation days for group creative efforts.
116. Ask local newspapers to write articles about creative efforts of employees, individually or as a group.
117. Ask local television or radio stations to feature the creative efforts of employees, individually or as a group.
120. Publish creative efforts of employees, individually or as a group in government's newsletter or in-house newspaper.
121. Hold celebrations for creative solutions.
122. Hold "we almost made it" celebrations.
123. Connect up very creative people with very creative people from other departments—to get to know each other.

124. Team up very creative people from different departments to work on special projects.
125. Create a “brown bag” (lunch or dinner time) school for teaching creative thinking and problem solving.
126. Create a “trophy case” for creative solutions.
127. Create a “trophy case” for creative **potential** solutions.
128. Make a directory of all special talents of employees and share it with all employees.
129. Provide opportunities for employees to internally train other employees who want to expand their skills.
130. Bring in people from the community as resources.
131. Bring in retired people from the community as resources.
132. Provide on-the-job time for employees to become involved in volunteer efforts in the community.
133. Hold “What can we do with our unused materials” brainstorming sessions.
134. Help your employees fulfill their dreams on the job.
135. Make one of your daily goals to help your employees to become the best successes they can be.
136. Interview retired employees for ideas on how to creatively improve rules, procedures, work methods, material uses, planning, etc.
137. Hold periodic celebrations to honor retired employees.
138. Work on eliminating the “that’s not my job” thinking.
139. Have employees visit local businesses to see how they solve similar programs.
140. Match mentors and tutors to employees based upon their needs and future desires.
141. Have people do “creative thinking” checks on each other.

142. Request, recognize and recommend that employees always generate a dozen (12) alternative solutions, ideas, methods, approaches before they start to resolve a problem, challenge or opportunity.
143. Encourage executives and top management to come into your department informally to get to know your employees.
144. Start each day saying—How can I/we be more creative today?

Now with the 13 (Baker's Dozen) Tips and these 144 Ideas you can become the creative thinking coach for anyone or organization you work with.

What Results Can You Expect?

1. increased morale.
2. higher levels of confidence and self-esteem.
3. greater numbers of ideas.
4. less negative attitudes towards dealing with daily problems.
5. fewer problems.
6. finer solutions and more of them.
7. improved teamwork.
8. advanced productivity levels.
9. lower error rates and advanced quality levels.
10. superior customer service.
11. less turnover, absenteeism, lateness.
12. more and more fun.

Please write me about your results.

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