

SKILL Share.

Creative Breakthrough: 8 Exercises to Power Your
Creativity, Confidence & Career *with Danielle Krysa*

CLASS WORKBOOK



Exercise One: Use It or Lose It

Creativity is like training for a marathon. If you don't train every day, you won't be able to go the distance. Was there a path you always wished you'd gone down, but because of other pressures (family, money, time), you didn't use this natural gift? Maybe you feel like you've lost it, but you haven't! It's still in there, we just have to get it out.

1. Take the Quiz

Take some time to reflect, and then complete the quiz below:

1. When I was little, I wanted to be a _____ when I grew up.
2. My favorite toy was _____.
3. When I was a kid, I spent hours _____.
4. If I had all the time/money in the world now, I'd _____.

2. Use Your Gift

Find a way to use one of your natural gifts, whether that's starting a brand new project or just incorporating a fresh material into your process! You can use the space below to brainstorm:

Exercise Two: The Power of a Teacher

A teacher's words have power, whether for better or for worse. Reclaim these moments (good or bad) in your life, so that they're not just a seed planted by someone else, they're a seed being replanted by you right now.

1. Memory Bank

To start, list memorable moments you experienced during school—kindergarten till now! Do you remember a positive thing a teacher said? Something negative that stopped you? Write both below:

POSITIVE:

NEGATIVE:

2. Circle One

Circle the most powerful memory, good or bad.

3. Recreate to Reclaim

Now, recreate that project. If you were told your trees look like lollipops, create a drawing, collage or short story about trees that look like lollipops. Remember, it doesn't need to be perfect, this exercise is all about reclaiming your teacher's words in your own way. What will you make?

Exercise Three: Embrace Your Weirdness

Whether you're an artist or not, embrace your weirdness as your superpower! Don't try to be like everyone else, harness the thing that makes you different and run with it.

1. What's Your Weird?

Think about what makes you unique—maybe you're quiet and poetic, or maybe you're over the top and bedazzled. Whatever that thing is, describe it below in as much detail as possible:

2. Set a Challenge

What if you made art for fun, and no other reason? Set a challenge for yourself to fully embrace your weirdness without any expectations. Some ideas to consider:

- 30 day challenge — every day this month, create one simple piece in your medium of choice
- 30 minute challenge — set a timer for 30 minutes and see what you come up with
- Make a playlist — create a playlist that embodies your personal brand of “weird,” and then use it as the soundtrack to your creative practice
- Anything else that will get your uniqueness out of your head and onto the page!

Exercise Four: Make Some Rules

When you start a new project, the possibilities are endless. That can be super intimidating! Where should you start when you could very well start anywhere? Giving yourself some rules to follow—or boundaries to work within—works like a charm!

Create a project that follows one or both of the rules below.

1. Pick A Color

Choose one color, and then gather up all of your supplies in that shade (colored pencil, some tape, post-it notes, whatever). Now make something, anything, using only those supplies. Set a timer for 15–30 minutes—a time limit stops you from getting tripped up on perfection, and forces you to make a move.

2. Document Your Medicine Cabinet

Go into your bathroom and open a drawer or the medicine cabinet. Now document everything in there! You can draw, photograph, or paint each item. Make a little booklet or zine out of them, or do it in a great big poster format. The boundary of your sandbox is that drawer so there's no way you can stare at your blank sheet of paper and not know what to do...you have to draw some toothpaste and bandaids!

3. Make Your Own Rule

Now that you've practiced following someone else's rules, come up with your own. List a rule (or two) you'd like to try in a future project:

Exercise Five: Create a Visual Vocabulary

Go back through your memory banks, your associations with different colors and materials will of course be different than anyone else's. Why all of that navy blue? What's your deal with yellow? Why are there so many triangles all over your drawings?

You may already know what your visual vocabulary consists of and why—or you might not. Use this exercise to really stop and consciously think about all your instinctive choices.

1. List Your Vocabulary

Start by writing (or drawing) all of the motifs you use over and over again, in the left column below. Depending on your medium, these might consist of recurring colors, shapes, words, or subjects.

RECURRING MOTIFS:

WHAT I THINK OF:

2. Write Your Own Definitions

Ask yourself what each motif makes you think of, and list it in the right hand column. Don't worry about having deep thoughts, just look for quick connections. If you'd like to explore further, try painting a color coded chart, making a whole sketchbook that's dedicated to figuring this out, or whatever feels like a valuable tool for you to better understand your instinctive choices!

Exercise Six: Share Your Work

Not a lot can happen inside a vacuum long term. In other words, it can be insanely helpful to share with the *right* people!

1. Find Creative Allies

Write down the names of three people you trust and admire creatively:

NAME:

FEEDBACK:

2. Ask for Feedback

Now invite those people, one at a time, to meet (on Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, or in person) and tell them you'd like to get their feedback on your work. After what will hopefully be a truly interesting conversation, and before you say good-bye, ask them to write down three positive things about what you're working on. Write that list above and call on it when your inner critic is getting feisty. Words from these people, who you trust and admire, should hold much more weight than your inner critic's jabs.

3. Share Online

Finally, share online when you're ready! Start an Instagram account for your passion project, finally make that website, or share your work and exercises in the [Projects & Resources](#) tab of this class.

Exercise Seven: Give Yourself A Break

You don't have to only be doing creative work to consider yourself a creative person. Feeling uninspired? When you have fresh air, new surroundings, and an interesting adventure, there is not a lot of room for blocks.

1. Mode of Transport

Choose a mode of transportation—bike, train, foot, bus, car, roller skates, unicycle, it doesn't matter.

What do you choose? _____

2. Roll the Dice

Throw a die to determine how long you will stay on that mode of transportation. A 3 followed by a 2 means you stay on for 32 minutes. A 2 followed by a 4 means you stay on for 24 minutes. Ready? Go!

What numbers did you roll? _____

3. Get Going (Safely)

Ride for this amount of time, and then stop. This is where you can spend the next hour (as long as you feel safe). Explore. Observe. Collect. Walk around, watch, draw, talk, sing, listen, sit, take photos, record sounds—whatever takes your fancy. Just explore somewhere new. Really take notice. The idea is just to let something completely random perhaps lead you to something new. So grab a die, and get out there!

Exercise Eight: Creativity is A Job

Treat your creative practice like a job. It's not frivolous; it's important. Block off as many hours each week as can fit into your schedule, and then commit to being creative for that amount of time. No excuses. You show up on time for your desk job every day, and you need to show up on time for your creative life, too.

1. Make a Commitment

Do some math—how many hours per week can you commit to creative work? Maybe it's only 20 minutes, or maybe it's an entire afternoon every Sunday. Either way, figure it out and commit to that number.

I commit to spend _____ (minutes/hours) every week on my creative work.

2. Mark Your Calendar

Block out that amount of time for the upcoming week using the calendar below or your own calendar, planner, or datebook. The final and most important step? Keep the appointment with yourself!

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
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