

26 Jun 2017

# Seven books to unlock your creativity

In a changing world, success increasingly comes to those who can devise the most creative solutions to pressing problems. Here we profile seven books to help you reset your thinking, up your flow and tap into your inner creative.

By [Private View](#)

**History shows that the best way to produce ‘great’ rather than merely ‘good’ ideas in business is to proactively foster creative thinking.**

The good news is that, contrary to popular belief, creative thinking isn’t the exclusive preserve of an elite few – it’s within us all.

And being a ‘creative type’ is more likely to instil effective and happy patterns of thinking, which instils an environment for breeding innovation and success. If you’re in need of some inspiration, here’s a suggested reading list to unlock your inner creative.



## **Creativity: Flow and The Psychology of Discovery and Invention**

**Author:** Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

**What it will teach you:** How to become enjoyably immersed in your activities.

**Background:** If you’ve seen a master craftsman absorbed in his work, you’ve witnessed a ‘flow state’. Consciously or otherwise, everyone from artists to business people to scientists attempt to get into flow states to achieve breakthroughs in their endeavours. In this breakthrough book from 1996, Csikszentmihalyi suggests methods for facilitating more flow in your life.

**Classic quote:** “Be open to what the world is telling you. Life is nothing more than a stream of experiences – the more widely and deeply you swim in it, the richer your life will be.”

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## **Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration**

**Author:** Ed Catmull

**What it will teach you:** How creativity and commerce can intersect.

**Background:** Along with John Lasseter and Steve Jobs, Catmull founded Pixar in 1979. It was sold to Disney in 2006 for US\$7.4 billion. In a book that focuses on creativity in business and leadership, Catmull explains how he built a robust 'creative culture' at Pixar, one that allowed his staff to keep catching lightning in a bottle with hits such as *Finding Nemo* and *Toy Story*.

**Classic quote:** "Failure isn't a necessary evil. In fact, it isn't evil at all. It is a necessary consequence of doing something new."

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## **Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation**

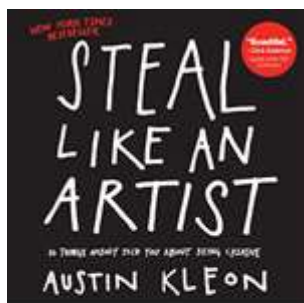
**Author:** Steven Johnson

**What it will teach you:** The seven key patterns that drive innovation.

**Background:** It's the single most popular question that's stumped many of the world's most exceptional creators: 'Where do you get your ideas from?' Author Johnson sets out to answer it by examining hundreds of world-changing innovations. He discovers, encouragingly, that 'genius ideas' are typically an exercise in crowdsourcing rather than the result of a single person receiving a flash of divine inspiration.

**Classic quote:** "Chance favors the connected mind."

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## **Steal Like an Artist: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative**

**Author:** Austin Kleon

**What it will teach you:** Not to be discouraged by the achievements of others.

**Background:** Kleon, a writer and artist, outlines the 10 things he wishes he'd known starting out. The key takeaway? Yes, it's all been done before but nobody has done it quite the way you will. So don't worry about not being an accomplished practitioner, just get started on whatever your passion may be: entrepreneurship, writing, designing or whatever it is you want. There's also some wise counsel

on how to 'steal' from your sources of inspiration in a fruitful and ethical manner.

**Classic quote:** "Write the book you want to read."

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## **The War of Art: Winning the Inner Creative Battle**

**Author:** Steven Pressfield

**What it will teach you:** How to slay the self-doubt dragon.

**Background:** Pressfield is an acclaimed and prolific novelist and screenwriter. Nonetheless, he remembers what it's like to feel like a fraud and to dread starting a creative endeavour. Drawing on self-help psychology, religious teachings and showbiz anecdotes, this book exhorts everyone to "overcome resistance" (like procrastinating, excuse-making or seeking distractions) and set about fulfilling their creative destiny.



**Classic quote:** "The most important thing about art is to work. Nothing else matters except sitting down every day and trying."

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## **Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All**

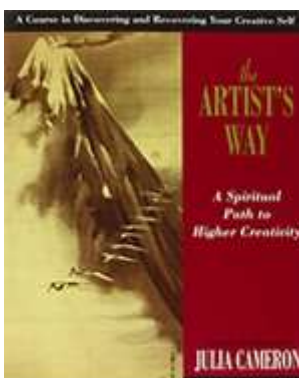
**Authors:** David and Tom Kelley

**What it will teach you:** That you're a 'creative type' even if you don't yet know it.

**Background:** The Kelley brothers, who own a globe-spanning design business and set up Stanford's innovation-promoting d.school, believe that everyone can be creative. Drawing on their work with Ivy League students and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, the Kelleys provide readers with a no-nonsense action plan for exploiting their creative powers.

**Classic quote:** "Like a muscle, your creative abilities will grow and strengthen with practice."

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## **The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity**

**Author:** Julia Cameron

**What it will teach you:** Concrete techniques to get your creative juices flowing.

**Background:** Cameron, a screenwriter once married to Martin Scorsese, wrote this classic creativity back in 1992. In it, she shares a 12-week program that promises to replace self-limiting behaviours

with bountiful creativity. Key practises include unloading your thoughts into a journal daily (the 'Morning Pages') and exposing yourself to imagination-firing experiences weekly (an 'Artist Date').

**Classic quote:** "Whether making art is your career or your hobby or your dream, it is not too late or too egotistical or too selfish or too silly to work on your creativity."

*This list has been compiled through references and other sources.*