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Methods for emulating truly creative people

Creative people may not be a breed apart, but they share certain characteristics, many of which we can all put to work.

To sharpen your creative skills, work on developing these traits:

- **Curiosity.** Well, that's obvious, isn't it? But it's often forgotten in the rush of daily routine. Teach yourself to ask "Why?" about the issues and problems (and solutions) you encounter.
- **Energy.** This doesn't mean rushing madly around chasing ideas. It does require you to put some effort into collecting facts and thinking about the problem you're trying to solve.
- **Concentration.** Just as important as energy is the ability to stop and focus on what's in front of you, tuning out distractions or irrelevant activities.
- **Connecting.** You've got to look for links between elements that don't appear related at first glance. Sometimes this means finding order in chaos; sometimes it means breaking down ideas to discover what they have in common.
- **Playfulness.** Your work is serious, but you need to be able to stand back and adopt a naïve, even childlike attitude toward the world around you. This helps you ask questions and find connections in things everyone else takes for granted.
- **Persistence.** Even the great geniuses of our time don't expect success overnight. Practice self-discipline, so you can stick to your idea until it's successful.