

Creative *and* Organized?  
by Helen Kornblum

Many of us wouldn't describe ourselves as being creative. The models that we have for the creative individual in our popular culture tend to be extremes. Scientists are absent-minded professors. Great artists starve in garrets, unable to earn a stable living. Writers are unconventional in their life style and work habits. We think that to be creative, we must throw off the trappings of conventional life and follow our dreams.

Some people blame the 9 to 5 job, household concerns, predictable schedules, and family obligations for eroding their creative edge because they have no time to develop their inner selves or unexpressed desires. They lack time, energy, and inspiration because a busy life demands so much from them. They think they have lost control and the opportunity to develop aspects of themselves that they have put on hold indefinitely.

In the absence of great natural gifts or independent wealth, how do we wrest our lives back under our control so we can nurture our own creativity? One solution is to look at your life with an organizer's perspective.

If you want to make changes, you need to analyze what you've been doing until now.

- \* What are your real priorities for your life?
- \* How are you spending your time?
- \* Who determines how you spend your time?
- \* What have you been doing that you don't really have to do?
- \* Who else can help you with some of the things that must be done?

Sometimes we block our creative instincts by force of habit, and sometimes, others' expectations cause us to lose sight of what we really want. Instead of stifling creative urges, we can reorganize priorities and activities to enhance our lives. We can be more creative once we understand how being organized enables us to use time differently.

Creative outlets vary. Do you want to take a class to start developing a particular talent? Do you want to start a hands-on learning project? Do you want to attend meetings of people engaged in a creative activity? Or do you simply want down time to sort out where and how you want to begin?

Time management doesn't mean scheduling more activity in the same amount of time. It means, first, knowing what's worth doing to reflect your priorities. And it means not doing certain activities that aren't necessary or can be delegated.

Controlling your life means changing the status quo. Indeed, it's a first and necessary step to respond to your creative instincts, no matter how grand or modest a scale they represent. You will exert more control by being more organized. That process begins with an honest assessment of how you want to develop yourself and the determination to do it!

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