



Inspired!: The Science of Creativity

Scientific American Editors

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Creativity was long thought to be a gift from the muses, a special quality of a select minority of people. Fortunately, more recent studies have debunked this belief and have shown promise for techniques to help us all boost our creative potential. Nature gives some people a genetic edge, but nurture has a large role in developing creative genius. In this eBook, we look at this difficult-to-define quality from all angles: where creativity comes from, lessons we can learn from creative geniuses and how to cultivate creativity. In "The Unleashed Mind," Shelley Carson writes that genetic variations may make some people more open to thoughts or ideas that get stuck in the average person's mental filters – and these variations may also explain why creative people exhibit eccentric behavior, or even suffer from mental illness. On the nurture side, Dean Keith Simonton illustrates in "The Science of Genius" that training and exposure to unfamiliar ideas and experiences play essential roles in shaping creativity. In "Your Fertile Brain at Work," Evangelia G. Chrysikou looks at how breaking down established ways of looking at the world and encouraging unconscious thought processes can increase creative potential. Several stories discuss the role of dreams and imagination, including "Answers While You Sleep," in which Deirdre Barrett writes that thinking of specific dilemmas before bed increases the chances of dreaming a solution. In "Let Creativity Soar," Scientific American Editor in Chief Mariette DiChristina and a panel of experts address other powerful techniques for cultivating creativity. We hope that these techniques, and this eBook as a whole, will help unleash your own creative self.

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