

Everyday Creativity Exercise¹

Purpose: To help people recognize where and how they are creative in their everyday lives and then apply that way of thinking to their work.

Benefit: This exercise helps people realize that creativity manifests itself in many different ways, and it shows up in different ways across different people. It helps individuals to recognize their own modes and patterns of creativity, and can reveal opportunities to help them apply that creativity elsewhere. To the extent that everyone recognizes that they are creative, it increases the potential for far more powerful collective creativity.

Overview: The process can be done either with individuals or in a small group setting. Doing it in a group setting brings the advantage that people become aware that patterns of creativity differ between people. It is a three-step process that begins with activities at home.

Materials/Setup:

- Colored Index cards (or large sticky notes), markers, and table or wall space.

Facilitation Instructions:

1. Introduce the participants to the model of everyday creativity (pg. 2) and share with them the different modes of creativity. This informs individuals that creativity is multifaceted and usually brings with it the realization that they are, in fact, a creative person.
2. Card sorting exercise: Ask them to write descriptions on cards of how they are creative in their everyday lives (e.g., at home and in non-work related activities). For example, someone might be creative in how they make meals. Others might be creative in how they manage their finances. Sort the cards into the four modes of creativity: doing, adapting, making, and creating.
3. Ask them to comment on the results of the card sorting. For example:
 - *How and where is their everyday creativity manifested?*
 - *Do they consider themselves to be operating in the creative mode in any particular domain?*
4. Ask them to describe how they would change the arrangement of activity cards in the future. Are there certain modes of creativity that they desire more? Are there modes that they have too much? How could they extend the range of their creative activities by trying out different modes?
5. After they have had the opportunity to discover their pattern of everyday creativity at home, invite them to repeat this exercise with a focus on the tasks, activities, and experiences that make up their workdays.
6. Then ask them to compare the home and the work versions posing these questions:
 - *Do they exhibit more creativity at home or at work?*
 - *How can they apply the creativity that happens at home to their activities on the job?*

¹ Sanders, E. (2013). Creativity in Strategic Thinking. In H. Wolters, A. Grome, & R. Hinds (Eds.), *Exploring strategic thinking: Insights to assess, develop, and retain Army strategic thinkers*, pp. 150-172. Final Report. U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

Model for Everyday Creativity

(For more information on the Everyday Creativity Framework, see Sanders, 2013, p. 165)

