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## Why Creative Confidence is Important. And How to Recognise if You've Got it!

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0 Comments



*You get that perfectionism is the biggest stumbling block we face as creatives, right?*

But did you know that lack of self-confidence comes a close second?

This is a BIG problem because self-confidence is essential for real creativity. Reason? It allows us to boldly pursue our unique vision.

If we're not confident, we get stuck in a chicken and egg: Lack of confidence in our own vision causes us to imitate others; in turn, imitating others causes us to be even *less* confident in our personal vision.

You can easily see that this is a scenario that can't have a good outcome.

But how do you recognise whether you're creatively confident? And what can you do about it if it turns out you're not?

## How to Recognise if You're Creatively Confident

Creative confidence is not about being able to stroll into a room full of people and loudly proclaim that you're an artist. (Although being able to **own your status as an artist** is definitely something to aim for!)

Creative confidence is something more complex that manifests itself in a myriad behaviours. It forms the bedrock of a productive and successful creative life.

Here is a list of some of the most common behaviours of a confident creative. See which ones you identify with:

### 1. You have a solid skill-set and rarely switch media, techniques or subject matter

It's not that you never explore anything new in your work, but rather that you have a core thread of expression that manifests itself in everything you do.

When we're not creatively confident, it's amazing how often we switch to a different technique, medium or subject matter - somehow believing that next time will be easier. I certainly did this for many years!

### 2. You accept that 'mistakes' are part of the process

You recognise that as part of the creative process, you're going to have doubts, make false starts and sometimes critical errors, but you don't let this undermine your underlying sense of purpose.

I was in a class recently where the creative technique we were learning was new to everyone except the teacher.

I thoroughly enjoyed the class and embraced every titbit of knowledge that was passed on to me. What I produced in the class was the least of what I was there for. I was there to learn.

This wasn't the mindset of a lot of the other participants. (And once upon a time, it wouldn't have been mine.) They fretted over their mistakes, upset that they were unable to produce something perfect, and frequently apologising to the instructor when they forgot a step or made a mistake.

### 3. You love your process

Your process is how you get from a host of disparate parts to a coherent whole: From six tubes of paint, five pieces of rusty metal and four scraps of fabric, to a finished artwork; From snatches of overheard conversation and notes about locations to a 36 chapter novel.

Your process is part of your creative voice. It's that weird way that *you* like to do the things you do.

My Mum, for example, liked to paint standing up with her picture on a low coffee table beneath her. That would make me dizzy for sure, but that was part of *her* process.

Your process isn't found by endlessly looking at how other people do things. It's found by doing!

#### 4. You mentally separate creative and commercial success

There is a time for putting your work out into the world and letting it take its chance. Sometimes the outcome is rewarding and sometimes it's painful.

But you have to love your work while you make it.

And you have to make it without keeping one eye on the market or your work will be shallow.

Coupling your creative confidence with commercial success is a false sort of self-confidence because if your work stops selling, your confidence is gone. So where will you get the confidence to make any more?

#### 5. You regularly review your creative work

Regular reviews of your work help you grow as an artist.

They help you maintain an ongoing dialogue with your muse and ensure that you're heading true north towards your authentic needs and desires.

Reviews are a constructive assessment of your strengths and weaknesses so you can plan to improve your skills, challenge your comfort zones and work towards creative coherence.

#### 6. You're part of a supportive creative community

No-one understands the ups and downs of the creative life better than another creative. Sometimes just hearing someone say "Been there, got the tshirt," is enough to get us back on our feet again after a creative crisis.

A supportive community can do wonders for your creative confidence. That said, snarky, jealous and unnecessarily critical people will have the opposite effect.

#### 7. You learn creative skills outside your comfort zone

Stepping outside of your creative comfort zone and trying a new skill can have a positive impact on your creative confidence.

It doesn't matter what you do, as long as it's outside your usual area of focus.

This is creative cross-training. It helps you embrace new points of view and come up with fresh ideas.

(I'm obsessed lately with Japanese food and am learning to cook it. Can it be a coincidence that I've been experimenting with incorporating aspects of traditional Japanese art into my artist's books?)

#### 8. You build Keystone Habits

A Keystone Habit is one habit that has a knock-on effect on all your other habits.

*"Keystone habits start a process that, over time, transforms everything."*

*Charles Duhigg*

Contrary to what you might imagine, a Keystone Habit doesn't have to relate directly to your area of creative focus.

My Keystone Habit is regular journaling. When I write my journal daily — even if it's just to quickly outline what I hope to achieve

that day — I'm WAY more productive.

I focus much more on the really important stuff and less on ticking items off my to do list or clocking hours.

I identify potential roadblocks much more quickly, I'm less likely to mentally 'dodge' issues I need to wrangle with, and I'm more likely to keep up good habits.

So how did you do? Are you a confident creative?

If not, don't worry! The good news is that confidence can be cultivated.

As with most personal growth, the key to cultivating confidence begins with our mindset.

We begin by believing that confidence can be acquired and that - whatever our skill-set and strengths are now - they can be built on.

Once we set off with this positive mind-set, there are a host of ways we can increase our confidence.

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