

What Works for You (Believing)

In this chapter "*What Works for You*", a songwriter once claimed that the key to her creative success lay in a cluttered, untouched room in an old office building where she had written all of her music. For thirty years, she refused to let it be cleaned, believing that the space itself held the essence of her inspiration. Whether it was the environment, the nostalgia, or simply the confidence her belief instilled, the ritual worked for her, reinforcing the idea that creative habits, no matter how unconventional, can be powerful tools.

Charles Dickens carried a compass everywhere to ensure that he always slept facing north, convinced that aligning with the Earth's natural energy currents enhanced his creativity. Dr. Seuss kept a hidden collection of eccentric hats behind a false door in his bookcase, selecting one before sitting down to write, as if the act of wearing something whimsical would unlock his imagination. These rituals, whether rooted in science, superstition, or personal conviction, illustrate how deeply artists rely on their unique creative triggers to bring their work to life.

The truth behind these stories is irrelevant; what matters is that these practices gave the artists confidence and a sense of control over their creative process. The mind is incredibly powerful, and if a particular habit or belief fosters inspiration, then it serves a valuable purpose, regardless of logic or reason. Creativity does not follow a strict formula, and every artist finds their own way—whether through structured discipline, spontaneous bursts of inspiration, or rituals that might seem unusual to outsiders.

Throughout history, artists have worked under vastly different conditions, thriving in environments of chaos, strict order, or somewhere in between. Some require absolute silence, while others need the hum of a bustling café or the comfort of a familiar space filled with sentimental objects. What works for one creator may be entirely ineffective for another, reinforcing the notion that there is no universal strategy for creative success.

Seeking advice from seasoned artists can be beneficial, offering insights into different ways of approaching the creative process. However, these recommendations should be viewed as suggestions rather than rigid prescriptions. What fuels one person's creativity may stifle another's, and attempting to conform to someone else's method can sometimes do more harm than good, preventing an artist from discovering their own rhythm.

Established artists often share what has worked for them, but their methods are deeply personal and shaped by their unique experiences. While their insights can be valuable, it is important to recognize that their approach is not the definitive way—it is simply *their* way. The creative journey is deeply individual, and each person must experiment, adapt, and refine their own techniques to unlock their full potential.

The key takeaway is that inspiration is a deeply personal and often unpredictable force, and the most effective creative habits are the ones that make an artist feel confident and connected to their work. Whether it's a quiet workspace, a particular time of day, or a quirky ritual, what matters most is that it cultivates a state of flow and motivation. By embracing personal creative triggers and remaining open to self-discovery, artists can build a process that feels natural, sustainable, and uniquely their own.

Ultimately, the pursuit of creativity is not about adhering to strict guidelines but about finding what genuinely works for you. There is no right or wrong way to create—only the methods that resonate with you and allow your best ideas to emerge. The challenge is not to fit into someone else's mold but to embrace the quirks, routines, and environments that unlock your creativity and make the process truly fulfilling.