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News To Move You Forward

Brought to you by Jill Schepler, Bob McManus & Angie Domine

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How to Unleash Your Creative Genius

“Creative types” are a myth. It’s not because they don’t exist. It’s because we’re all creative. Some of us simply lose touch with our creative sides along the way.

We don’t all have to be artists and writers, but there are benefits to taking up creative endeavors. They help us express ourselves, relieve stress and anxiety, and give us a sense of freedom.

If it’s been a long time since you’ve doodled, painted, or written freely, you simply need to spark your creativity. Here are four ways to do so.

Put your phone away. Boredom or free time is great for getting creative, but we’ve gotten so used to taking out our phones whenever we have a free second. Try a digital detox for a few hours or a few days and see what happens.

Listen to or watch something creative. A documentary about an artist or chef or a TED talk by a creator can be a great way to inspire your own creative thoughts.

Go outside. Head out into nature for a walk or jog, or just to sit and reflect. Natural beauty and wildlife can help lift a creative fog.

Just do it. Set aside some time and grab a notebook and a pen, or watercolors and a canvas. Then dive in. Don’t think about what you’re going to write, sketch, or paint; just start and see what happens.

If you practice these techniques, you might be surprised at the creative juices that start to flow!

Thinking of Buying a Home? Get My Free Guide



Buying a home is a complex process with many factors to consider.

Prepare for the decisions you’ll need to make along the way by requesting my free report, “10 Easy Steps to Buying a Home.”

Just call me at 715-387-1122 and I’ll send it right out to you.

6 Must-Haves to Set the Stage for a Quick Sale

Is your home ready to welcome potential buyers? To create the best appeal (and fetch the best price), it is helpful to stage your home.

Home staging refers to preparing your space to make it appealing to the highest number of buyers, with the goal of selling the home quickly and profitably.

While each house offers unique appeal, a few staging tips are helpful for nearly any home. To roll out the red carpet for your potential buyers, include the following must-have items.

Plants: Greenery makes a room feel warm and inviting. Use floor plants, tabletop plants or shelf plants to bring life to the corners of the room.

Candles: These provide a nice touch, but be sure to choose unscented or lightly scented. You don’t want to overwhelm visitors with an aroma or risk choosing a scent they don’t like.

Flowers: Add color and cheer to your yard and your interior with in-season blooms.

Throw pillows: Adding these to your beds, chairs and/or couches can provide a nice finishing touch to your décor that makes the space more appealing.

Towels: Coordinated linens in the bathroom create a clean, crisp, and luxurious atmosphere. Make sure towels are hung neatly and are in good condition. A brand-new hand towel can provide a nice touch.

Artwork: Neutral artwork on the walls is preferable to family portraits. Remember, the goal is to make your space appealing to as many buyers as possible. This means depersonalizing so they can envision *themselves* in your space instead of you.

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Top Design Trends for Today's Homes

Wondering what's hot and what's not for interior design? Whether you're hoping to create a buyer-friendly look as you prep your home for sale or simply want to stay on trend, these finishes will help you keep your surroundings looking sharp.

On the walls: Neutral is still in, but cold whites are fading away. Designers are reducing their use of these cold tones in favor of softer whites. These trending paint colors help make modern spaces feel warmer and more welcoming.

In the kitchen: Designers are moving away from all-white kitchens to add splashes of color. Deep blues, greys, and greens are growing in popularity for kitchen cabinet choices. All the cabinets don't have to be the same color, either. One hue may be chosen for top cabinetry and accented with another shade for bottom cabinets. Contrasting metals in the hardware and fixtures complete the trend.

Off the presses: Recent enhancements to printing processes and modern materials have increased the quality of faux finishes. This emerging technology is

allowing homeowners and designers to achieve the look of stone and other high-end finishes for flooring at a fraction of the cost and with easier installation. Choices such as marble and concrete will likely see a downturn as they are replaced by faux options.

From the outdoors: Homeowners are looking to connect with nature in their décor. Wood finishes are a top solution. Wood offers beauty and flexibility to apply to a variety of surroundings and suits a broad range of tastes. Designers can also incorporate this material to create a lighter and airier space, which is what many clients are seeking.

For the future: Builders and buyers are more environmentally aware than ever before. Current trends include eco-friendly materials and processes that reduce a home's carbon footprint. Contractors and homeowners are striving to make sustainable choices that have a positive long-term impact on the environment.

What do you think about these trends? Have your design preferences changed over time?

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

What if the seller doesn't accept my offer?

First, it's important to realize that this is common. In many cases, sellers don't accept the offer given to them by the potential buyer. Instead, they make a counter offer.

This is likely what will happen when you make an offer on a home. If this occurs, your offer has not been rejected. It has simply been countered. The seller will typically ask for a higher price than you originally offered and may request an alteration of other terms on the contract as well.

When a counter-offer is made, you will work with your real estate agent to review the offer and decide if you want to accept it or make another counter-offer.

It is normal for negotiations to go back and forth several times before all parties come to a final agreement on terms. This could happen in a matter of minutes, but it often takes up to several hours or days.

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