

TEN TIPS FOR CREATING WHEN YOU HAVE A DAY JOB

Zaaron Crosby

OVERVIEW

Whether you're a professional Artist trying to pay the bills or a person working in a career outside your creative passions, day jobs are part and parcel of most people's life experience but they needn't exist at the expense of a productive, meaningful life as a creative individual.

Creative work gives us insight and enriches our lives but it comes at a price. Creating can throw up all sorts of insecurities and anxieties which can lead to blocks and procrastination hindering our creative flow. Now add a 12-hour working day, which feels as though it's robbing you of your sanity and what little spare time you have.

Creating under these conditions with zero energy is near impossible. So what positive actions can we take to redress this balance, become more productive, create more meaningful work more regularly and maybe even start enjoying our days a little more?

Below are 10 ideas which you can commit to right now.

TIP ONE:

ESTABLISH CREATIVE RITUALS WHICH LEAD TO CREATIVE HABITS

Establishing an automatic but decisive pattern of behaviour at the beginning of your creative efforts is a great way to avoid the possibility of turning back or giving up. By making the start of creating automatic you replace doubt and fear with comfort and routine.

Get in the habit of creating. Some of the most successful creative individuals are the most productive. They simply create more often than most. Commit to “Create every day” and start developing your creative muscles. After a while you will establish creating as a habit ingrained into your DNA.

**TIP TWO:
BRING WORK CONCEPTS TO YOUR CREATIVE LIFE**

Our day jobs can teach us some valuable lessons about turning up and getting the job done. In our day jobs we are remunerated and set tasks and targets to achieve, we perform these tasks dutifully and in the majority of cases get the work done. How often can we say that about our art? When was the last time you spent every day painting, writing, rehearsing or otherwise engaged in your passions? Turn up daily and get your creative work done.

TIP THREE: GET UP EARLY

Starting your day an hour or two earlier is a fantastic way to get your creating done before your day jobs starts. It’s amazing how good you will feel knowing that you have honoured your art and your day can start with a blast of creativity. You will also take advantage of the creative benefits of dream state first thing in the morning.

One word of warning; working on your art first thing can sometimes make your day job seem dull and uninspiring. When you finish creating pat yourself on the back for a job well done and return to your day ready to experience the wonders of the world focused on being the best you can be.

TIP FOUR: BE HONEST

If you’re not creating regularly whilst maintaining a day job, then the odds are you won’t fair much better if you had all the hours of the day available. Life is always going to be busy. There are always going to be aspects of your life which seem to invade your creative time, space and energy but your job is to be honest and look deep into what’s holding you back. Work (and time) is often just an excuse for a lack of creative endeavour.

TIP FIVE:

UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF YOUR TIME AND HOW YOU USE IT

Your time outside your day job is incredibly valuable. Know where it goes and decide how you spend it. A useful tip is to break your day down into 100 points. Some of these points are spent sleeping (33), some are spent working (33) and others are spent creating (?). With 100 points to spend per day committing 4 points (1 hour) to watching TV means a compromise needs to be met. What are your priorities? Where are your points being invested?

TIP SIX: LUNCH TIME ADVENTURES

Everyone has at least 30 minutes for lunch, most have an hour. This is a perfect opportunity to visit an art gallery, research your next novel, contact a few agents or anything else which would support and/or develop your creative work.

TIP SEVEN: COMMUTE TIME

Most people spend at least 20 minutes commuting to work (I spend 1:30 daily). A good use of this time is listening to audio books or organizing your creative schedules / plans. I currently drive to work and can get through a book a week. If you take public transport, pen and paper are essential to catch those amazing ideas which come and go daily.

TIP EIGHT: STOP THE TV MADNESS

We sometimes find ourselves investing so much time on some very average programs under the guise of unwinding. Try turning off the TV for a week and invest the points in your art. It's amazing how much you can get done. If you use this time to write two pages of a book every day you will have a first draft completed within 6 months!

TIP NINE: WORK, ART BALANCE

You do not have two opposing lives in conflict; the office worker and the actor, the accountant and the painter; you have one life and the challenge to develop a healthy work, art balance. Try and focus on the positive aspects of your day job and use your creative nature to make your day more interesting and productive. Like most things in life, you get out what you put in. If you want your day job to be more meaningful then put more energy into doing it well, engage in the challenges that arise and improve your own situation through the creative gifts you possess. Try to avoid those negative thoughts which do not serve your situations. They will only develop into negative energy and resentment towards your day job. If all else fails find a new job! Maybe you could find something which is more in line with your art or supports your creative direction by providing flexibility around hours.

TIP TEN:

FIND MEANING IN YOUR ART AND PURPOSE IN YOUR DAY

A day job may not provide meaning but it does provide the means. Viewed as part of the creative process your day job can provide many opportunities to engage with people and find inspiration through life experience. Friedrich Nietzsche once said “He who has a why to live can bear almost any how”. The same could be said for working a day job, your art is your why and your day is the how.

We generally feel better about ourselves when we’re making a positive contribution to something beyond ourselves. To feel truly motivated towards our day jobs, we have to believe what we’re doing matters in someone sense. Purpose is a source of fuel not just for higher performance, but also for thinking more creatively about how to overcome obstacles and generate new solutions during our days.

Find meaning in your art and purpose in your day!

ABOUT ZAARON CROSBY

Zaaron Crosby is a Visual Artist interested in all aspects of creative expression, including painting, photography, sculpture and mixed medium. He has spent the past 15 years Career Coaching within the recruitment industry and is the owner and director of the online art gallery, Artless Impact, www.artlessimpact.com.au, which provides a medium for ethically minded people to purchase sustainable, ecologically sound, fair trade artworks.

Trained as a Creativity Coach, Zaaron runs the Creativity Coaching practice “think.feel.dream”, www.thinkfeeldream.com.au and is passionate about working with creative individuals and the creative process. His main work as a creativity coach is based around Artists with day jobs and people who work in a career outside their creative passions but still wish to pursue a productive creative life.

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