



Module #9 of 10—*Short Version*

UK Extension's
Universe of
Possibilities™

SKILLS FOR CREATING HAPPINESS AND BLESSING OTHERS

Unleashing Your Creativity

Without question, you are an enormously creative person! That creativity is always within you, and you must express it in order to experience the satisfaction and joy that is your birthright. To be creative means to be playful and to have fun and, in so doing, to successfully meet the often daunting challenges that life throws our way.

Terrorism, widespread public scandals, economic uncertainties, international conflicts, and a host of other problems have launched us into a turbulent, yet potential-filled 21st century. Our technological strides are mind-boggling, as are our planet-wide humanitarian and environmental dilemmas. No matter where we turn, we find ample challenges and opportunities—a world crying out for healing, unselfishness, and innovation. Collectively and individually, we all can make a difference. Has the full measure of our creativity ever been more needed?

A life brimming with creativity is no longer the luxury of a few; it's the duty and privilege of all of us. Fortunately, creativity is like the human heart. It lives in each of us and can pump new vitality into all that we do. The creative spirit sees what is good and what needs to be preserved; it notes what has potential and can be built upon and modified; and it knows when it's best to make a totally fresh start.

Target of Life. Look at the Target of Life symbol that appears at the upper left side of this page. Put yourself on the Target in the center of the heart. Notice that the heart of the Target is clear, unobstructed, full of light. From there, you see clearly and make choices that are good for you and those around you. You feel peaceful, energetic, creative. Your reflexes are sharp, your immune system strong. You stumble and fall less often, and you handle life's inevitable challenges with more confidence and skill. You are naturally more sensitive to others—more patient, generous, and understanding. The more deeply centered you are in the heart of the Target of Life, the more love you feel and share. You are at your best—physically, mentally, and spiritually.

However, when difficulties arise and things don't go your way, you're likely to be pulled off center into the darker areas of the Target. You say and do things you regret. Your immune system weakens and your productivity declines. You lose touch with what's really important to you. Unhealthy stress increases and your sensitivity toward others decreases. And the further away from the center you move, the worse it gets! You experience more heaviness and darkness, more fear and negativity. That's why it's so important to catch early signs of stress and to use all of your creativity to stay as centered as possible.



7 Core Principles



- 1 Though we express it in different ways and to varying degrees, creativity is a gift that has been given in abundance to each of us.
- 2 Continually remind yourself of this truth: You are a marvelously resourceful individual with unique perspectives and talents that are needed to create the best world possible for yourself and others.
- 3 Creativity thrives in an atmosphere of freedom, playfulness, trust, spontaneity, and enthusiasm.
- 4 When an innovative idea pops into your mind—and this happens much more often than you might realize—jot it down right away; give it your respectful attention, and instead of judging the idea, honor it and have fun with it.
- 5 Develop an eagle's eye for spotting and encouraging the creative tendencies of family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and community leaders.
- 6 When you are part of a relationship, organization, or community that confronts a significant difficulty, get together and enjoy an all-out brainstorming session, building on each other's ideas and generating as many imaginative solutions as possible.
- 7 Remember, the more centered you are on the Target of Life, the greater your well-being, the wiser your choices, and the more effective you are in everything you do.

You were born with great potential, and now you've grown into a wonderfully gifted adult! Don't let anyone convince you otherwise, including yourself. Regardless of age, circumstances, or mistakes that you've made, you have important talents to offer our world, which sorely needs your creativity.

Creativity is the power to bring something new and useful into existence. As human beings, we are made to solve problems and embrace fresh opportunities. Not only are we good at it, but in the act of creating we also experience great satisfaction and joy while learning and improving our lives.

Your thoughts shape your life. It is, therefore, critically important that you consistently think of yourself as a resourceful, innovative, creative

individual. Frequently say to yourself, "I am a creative person." By what you think and say, encourage the creative spirit in those around you. The infinite power of creativity lives in each of us. When we unite behind a common purpose, no obstacle is insurmountable. We can meet every challenge and bring to life our finest dreams.

Ask yourself: What promotes my creativity? And how can I lovingly encourage more creativity among my family, friends, and co-workers?

Creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes, and having fun.

Mary Lou Cook

◆ *Awakening the Spirit of Creativity* ◆

The spirit of creativity resides in abundance within each of us. While you might have unique and favorite ways of tapping into it, you might also find it helpful to draw from the following tips to awaken your own creative genius.

◆ **Watch and honor the creative process.**

Your every thought—for better or worse—is a powerful creative act. Each relationship is a creative dance. Tune into the fact that you are creating all the time and let this awareness guide you to make inspired choices.

◆ **Step out from the crowd.** Respect and learn from other viewpoints, but be your own person. Think originally, trust yourself, and let your brilliance shine. As psychologist Abraham Maslow advised, “Be independent of the good opinion of other people.”

◆ **Take time for silence and solitude.** We block imagination and innovation when our lives are too busy, too noisy, too filled with planning and analytic thinking. Make space in your life for peace, quiet, and solitude, and then listen receptively to the creative promptings within and around you.

◆ **Walk on the wild side.** Be daring; take risks; break the rules; be unpredictable. Let the “wild woman” or “wild man” within you come out and romp. Feel the raw energy and aliveness, and let it take you where it will. Of course, as you walk on the wild side, be true to your deepest self and kind to all those around you.

◆ **Seek inspiration from nature.** Whether you are searching for a solution to a particular problem or seeking a fresh outlook on life, try spending time quietly and receptively in the natural world. Watch closely and learn: The spirit of creativity frequently displays its secrets in the marvels of nature. If you truly are open, invaluable seeds of inspiration will enter your consciousness.

◆ **Sleep on it.** Before falling asleep at night, think of some challenge in your life and ask for assistance. Upon waking up, see if any fresh

feelings or new perspectives on the situation have emerged. Also, be open to your dreams and their symbolic messages.

◆ **Give up the need to look good.** Ask dumb questions. Say what you really think and feel. Do what brings you peace and helps others, even if it's unpopular. Forget about looking good and instead focus on being true to yourself and your heartfelt inner guidance.

◆ **Adopt a creative genius.** Select a historical figure or modern-day hero and adopt his or her spirit into the family of your beliefs, thoughts, and actions. Choose someone whom you deeply admire. It might be an expert in your given field who can serve as a mentor or someone such as Leonardo da Vinci, Mahatma Gandhi, Helen Keller, or Jesus Christ. Study your chosen genius and strive to make his or her best qualities your own. You can, of course, learn from more than one creative genius!

◆ **Be playful.** A vital part of creativity, playing around and having a good time can be serious business. A playful, imaginative mind and a receptive, loving heart give birth to all kinds of marvelous possibilities. Laugh and be silly. Imbue your work with inspired playfulness.

◆ **Tune in with the Divine.** If it is compatible with your spiritual beliefs, attune to “The Creator” through prayer and meditation. Invite a constant flow of divine guidance and inspiration into the temple of your creativity. Become a faith-filled instrument for the expression of Omnipresent Good in its myriad forms.

◆ **Sit at the feet of young children and wise elders.** The very young and very old see life from unique and fascinating vantage points. Seek the precious insight of young children and the wisdom-bestowing experience of elders.

DIFFICULTIES AWAKEN CREATIVITY

While enormous good takes place these days on Planet Earth, our well-being and progress are, at the same time, seriously threatened by one major crisis after another. In Chinese, the written character for crisis means both danger *and* opportunity. If we choose to remain positive and keenly alert amid the dangers, life-changing possibilities will emerge.

The two terrors that discourage originality and creative living are fear of public opinion and undue reverence for one's own consistency.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

On the international scene and in our family and personal affairs, the same principle holds: ***Powerful possibilities abound during times of difficulty and change.*** An essential aspect of creativity is learning to see well-disguised opportunities and then to pursue them intelligently. Difficulties prod us to explore new options that often bear fruit for ourselves and others. Of course,

abundant options for innovation also exist when life moves along more smoothly.

ROADBLOCKS TO CREATIVITY

When you are centered in the heart of the Target of Life, you are far less likely to experience internal roadblocks to your creativity and you are much better able to triumph over external obstacles that may arise. Creativity roadblocks to avoid include:

Thinking "I'm not very creative." Fear of criticism from others. "That's not my job." Stress. Laziness. "There's only one right way." Wasting time on nonessentials. "You have to follow the rules." Too much talk, too little doing. Self-criticism. Fear of failure. Too much seriousness. Resistance to change. Limiting beliefs. Worrying about who gets the credit. Lack of faith.

WE CAN TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

Without question, we have within us the creativity to transform our personal and global worlds. As the great apostle of peace Mahatma Gandhi put it, "The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems."



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10 Educational Modules

UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities™: Skills for Creating Happiness and Blessing Others is an educational series containing 10 modules. Each module is accompanied by a Macromedia Flash® movie, a PowerPoint® presentation, and other teaching tools. All these resources, along with a Facilitator's Guide, are available free-of-charge in camera-ready format at the following website: www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/possibilities.

1. **Your Vision Map**
2. **Making the Growth Choice**
3. **The Way of Peace**
4. **Heart Intelligence**
5. **The Freedom of Self-Discipline**



6. **Embracing This Present Moment**
7. **Accepting and Loving Your Body**
8. **Healthy Relationships**
9. **Unleashing Your Creativity**
10. **Gifts of Gratitude and Blessing**