



# Crash Course in Creative Project Success

ten strategies to turn your dream into reality



by Jessica Fein



# introduction

“I don’t have enough time.”

“I can’t motivate myself to start.”

“I lose steam after a couple of days.”

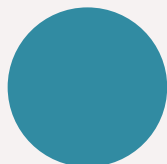
If any of this sounds familiar, you’re not alone. We’re all busy and overwhelmed and maybe even a bit intimidated about starting something new. But here’s the deal: It *can* be done with a few tweaks in mindset and habits.

I’ve always gotten energy from doing creative things, whether designing newsletters with PageMaker back in the day, writing essays or books, and most recently, starting a podcast.

And apparently, I’m not alone in feeling lifted when I’m doing something creative. Creativity is actually proven to reduce stress, decrease anxiety, increase motivation, and even help our immune system.

Sounds pretty great, right? But sometimes getting started and staying on track can feel daunting. That’s where this guide comes in. I hope it gives you the kick-start you’re looking for and maybe even a bit of inspiration. Whether you’re beginning a hobby or a side hustle, remember, the most important thing is getting started and having fun.

**Jessica Fein**





Creativity is  
intelligence  
having fun

Albert  
Einstein



# 1.

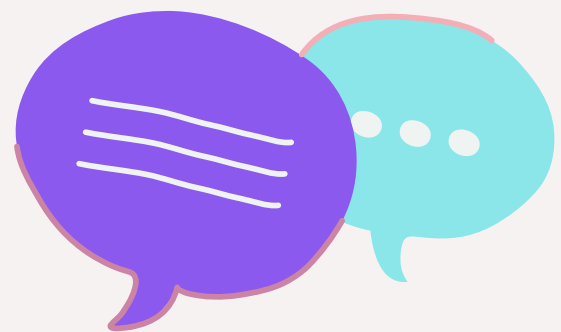
## Say it out loud.

There's a big difference between saying, "I want to do x," and saying, "I'm doing x." Give it a try. "I want to write a book," versus "I'm writing a book." Saying that you're doing the thing shifts your idea from theory to reality. In the best case scenario, you'll tell someone you trust and ask them to hold you accountable. But even if you just say it out loud to yourself, you're claiming the intention, enhancing your motivation, and taking the first step in turning your vision into action.

# 2.

## Act as if.

Acting "as if" is a great way to try on what it will feel like to be doing your thing. If you act as if you're a writer, for example, you might start listening to dialogue differently or carrying around a small notebook. If you act as if you're a photographer, you'll be more comfortable pulling out your camera when you see something that grabs your attention. You can feel your own energy and the energy around your change when you act as if.



# 3.

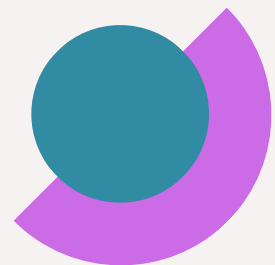
## Find time.

If you wait for perfect timing or a perfect idea, chances are you'll wait so long you'll forget why you're doing the thing in the first place. The time already exists, you're just using it for other things. Think about how you can use time differently. Wake up 15 minutes earlier. Track how much time you're spending on social media and use it for your project instead. Make use of your commute, or multitask while exercising. Trade "nights off" with a partner, where the other one handles all responsibilities and you get to work on your project.

# 4.

## Prioritize and schedule.

Make time for your project just like you make time for other important things in your life. Put it in the calendar, even if you can only allot 15-minute blocks. I like to tend to my project every day, even if only for a few minutes. Skipping a day usually turns into two, then a week, and then I've forgotten what I set out to do in the first place.





**5.**


## **Break it down.**

Want to write a book this year? How much do you need to write every day to make that happen? Schedule your daily or weekly goals in your calendar. Be ambitious but not at the cost of being realistic. Break it down into bite-size pieces so you don't get overwhelmed and give up.

**6.**

## **Toss out limiting beliefs.**

Worried you're not "creative enough" to spend time on a creative project? That's just an excuse. First, remember your work doesn't ever have to be seen by anybody else. Second, this isn't about being "good enough," it's about having fun, being inspired, and all the other goodness that comes from creative endeavors. Third, who gets to decide what's good enough? Also, the only way to get better is to actually do the thing you want to get better at.



# 7.

## Don't be shy.



Whatever you're thinking of doing, someone else is doing that thing, too. (If you're actually doing something that's never been done before, your creativity is off the charts, and you definitely don't need this guide.) Find someone whose done the thing you want to try, and reach out. You can also find somebody whose at the same stage as you and become accountability partners. Let social media be your matchmaker. Don't be shy; they'll be flattered.

# 8.

## Celebrate.

Celebrate small milestones along the way or even, as my friend Kelly taught me, inchstones. Wrote your first page? Sketched your first design? Time to celebrate. Trying something new can be scary, so give yourself grace and even a round of applause for jumping in.








**9.**

## **Start tomorrow.**

You've done enough for today by reading this guide. Now get out your calendar and block some time off tomorrow to get started. Not next week or next month. Tomorrow. Choose a time and write it down.



**10.**

## **Reward yourself.**

Reward yourself for doing the work. This is different from celebrating your inchstones It's about watching the show or getting the latte or taking a nap when you finish the work you scheduled for the day. Create your own incentives to stay on track.

**Nothing will change  
if nothing changes.**







# 50 creative project ideas

**WRITE** a blog, a poem, an essay, a book, a song, a comedy sketch, a cookbook, a children's book, a business plan. **BUILD** a birdhouse, a blanket ladder, a lap desk, a bench, a canoe. **DESIGN** a personal website, a family crest, a book cover, a brochure, an infographic, a t-shirt. **REDESIGN** a room. **FILM** a video, a movie, a cooking tutorial. **KNIT** a scarf, a blanket, a hat. **CREATE** digital artwork, a video montage. **BREW** beer, wine, cider. **PLANT** a dahlia garden, a vegetable garden, a succulent dish garden. **START** a podcast, **LEARN** a language, an instrument, how to sew, to code a video game. **PAINT** a picture, furniture, a room. **MAKE** jewelry, a mosaic, a collage, a scrapbook, a board game, a puzzle. **PLAY WITH CLAY**.