



Infusing Creativity into Teaching, Learning and Life

Website: AustinKleon.com

Twitter: [@AustinKleon](https://twitter.com/AustinKleon)

Weekly newsletter: austinkleon.com/newsletter

Books: [Newspaper Blackout](#), [Steal Like An Artist](#), [Show Your Work](#), [Keep Going](#)

A little bit about Austin

- ❑ An author, speaker, and artist from Austin, Texas. Has written several books about creativity and sharing your creativity with others.
- ❑ Makes art with words and books with pictures.

Why is creativity so important for learning?

- Creativity is taking something that's in front of you and turning it into something that wasn't there before.
 - It could be anything from reorganizing your living room to cooking a meal to creating a dress.
 - Keep the definition of creativity very simple so that it encompasses so many different ways to express your creativity.
 - Being creative isn't an identity, it's a way to express yourself. The world isn't broken into those who are creative and those who aren't.
- We are all born with the ability and the desire to be creative.
 - Children are natural learners and don't need to be told what to learn.
 - Over time activities are labeled and we are told that we are or aren't creative or artistic.
 - Artists who are stuck should spend some time with preschoolers to be inspired.

The analog/digital divide

- [Mitchel Resnick \(MIT Lifelong Kindergarten\)](#) says "All screen time is not created equal."

- People can be very creative on the screen.
- The quality of the screen time matters.
- It's a dance between the two.
 - The analog time or non-screen time is about resetting yourself and being rooted and undistracted.

How can perfectionism hurt creativity?

- Perfectionist tendencies come from the fear of being "not good enough".
- When you are expressing yourself creatively you have to be ok with being uncomfortable and not knowing what is going to happen or how it is going to come out.
- Creativity requires a certain amount of surrender and falling in love with the process.
- Timed exercises can be a great way to reset yourself and get out of the product based mindset.
 - Give yourself 20 minutes to create something and see what you get.
- "Waste" is the byproduct of the creative process. But when we are in an institutional setting waste is bad.
- Learning experiences that might look inefficient to an outside perspective are the ones that go deep.

Creativity in the classroom

- Creativity in math
 - Art and music are math. When you are making music you are doing the same sort of process as when you do math.
- We are a measuring culture and that can hurt creativity.
 - Manmade time measurements don't necessarily match the natural rhythms of life and learning.
 - Good teachers find a good balance between the natural timeline of a child's learning process and the timeline they are given.
- Schools are the results of the culture.
 - It is not unnatural for people to think that school is the only place that learning happens since that is what they see.
 - For thousands of years, we have tried to figure out the best way to educate our youth. It will always be a problem because the world is constantly changing.

Finding like-minded vs like-hearted people

- [Alan Jacobs](#) says “if you really want to explore ideas in an environment conducive to good thinking, you should consider hanging out with “people who are not so much like-minded as like-hearted,” people who are “temperamentally disposed to openness and have habits of listening.”
- Like-minded people like the same things that you do.
- Like-hearted people care about the same things you do and really care about you.
 - Austin’s blog post: [Like-minded vs Like Hearted](#)

What to do when things don’t go right

- Trying to support children as they get frustrated while going through the creative process can be difficult.
- When the friction is there and things aren’t working it’s ok to stop and walk away.
 - Have a snack
 - Read
 - Take a walk
 - Do a chore or different task
- Ideas or solutions can come to you when you take a break and get some distance.
- Teachers are so strapped for time and have a difficult time taking time for themselves but it can make a huge difference.

Copy, copy, copy

- In the classroom, try a visual game of telephone where you begin with a picture and by the end, you can see how creativity changes the end product.
 - Austin’s blog posts:
 - [A copy of a copy](#)
 - [Copying is how we learn](#)
- When you copy you have to form the words and letters and you actually retain some of it.
- Copying can be a great way to get started or loosen up.
 - Teachers do the same as they model themselves after veteran teachers and eventually change things to make it work for themselves.
- “If you copy from one person it’s plagiarism, if you copy from 100 it’s research.”

Related posts on the Ditch That Textbook blog:

- [Using Google Drawings to create blackout poetry in the classroom](#)
- [Remixing traditional lessons with tech: a framework you can use](#)

Resources:

- [The Nearsighted Monkey](#) is a website for and by the students in Lynda Barry's comics classes at the UW-Madison and elsewhere.
- [Lifelong Kindergarten](#) by Mitchel Resnick
- [How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds](#) by Alan Jacobs