

HABITS  
OF HIGHLY  
CREATIVE  
PEOPLE

BRIKA

A WELL-CRAFTED LIFE



# CREATIVE TIPS

## *on*

STARTING A PROJECT  
ENJOYING THE PROCESS  
FINDING NEW IDEAS  
MAKING THE TIME  
TAKING A BREAK  
EXERCISING YOUR CREATIVITY  
FINDING INSPIRATION  
BELIEVING IN YOURSELF  
NOT BEING SO HARD ON YOURSELF  
ASKING OTHERS FOR HELP  
DISCOVERING WHAT WORKS FOR YOU  
DOING IT FOR YOU



*At BRIKA, our aim is to celebrate and elevate modern craft. Since launching in November 2012, we've created a community of more than 200 artisans, designers and authentic Makers, and promote their modern, beautiful + well-crafted goods at [brika.com](http://brika.com).*

We interview every Maker to learn about the process, motivation and challenges involved in creating a collection. Along the way, we've discovered their personal tips for tapping into creativity—from making time for a project to finding inspiration—and have compiled their best creative life hacks for you.

Whether you're a designer, a developer or a dreamer, this collection will help you kick-start your next creative project—giving you the motivation you need to carve out time and make things happen. Here's to a more inspired, creative & well-crafted year.

We hope you enjoy.

*Jen & Kena*

**P.S.** This handbook is interactive! Click on the images to learn more about each Maker's story & collection.



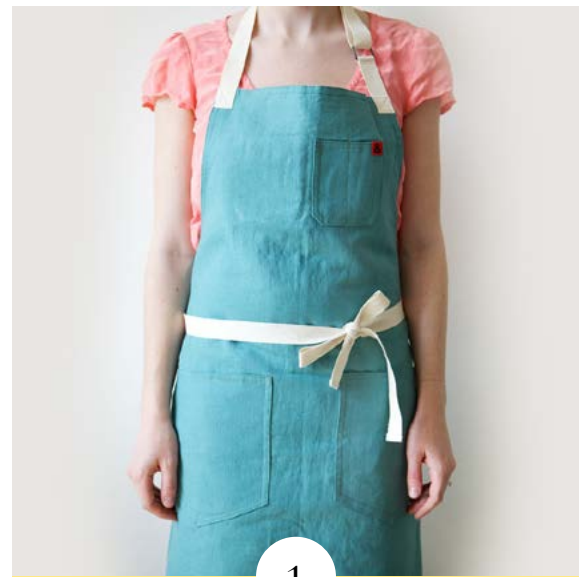


Ellen Bennett

HEDLEY & BENNETT  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

# *on* STARTING a PROJECT

Just start. Don't over analyze or over-think too much because you'll only create your own mental stops. Grab the first step and do it. Just do it. Don't be worried about "what could happen," focus on what is happening right now.



1

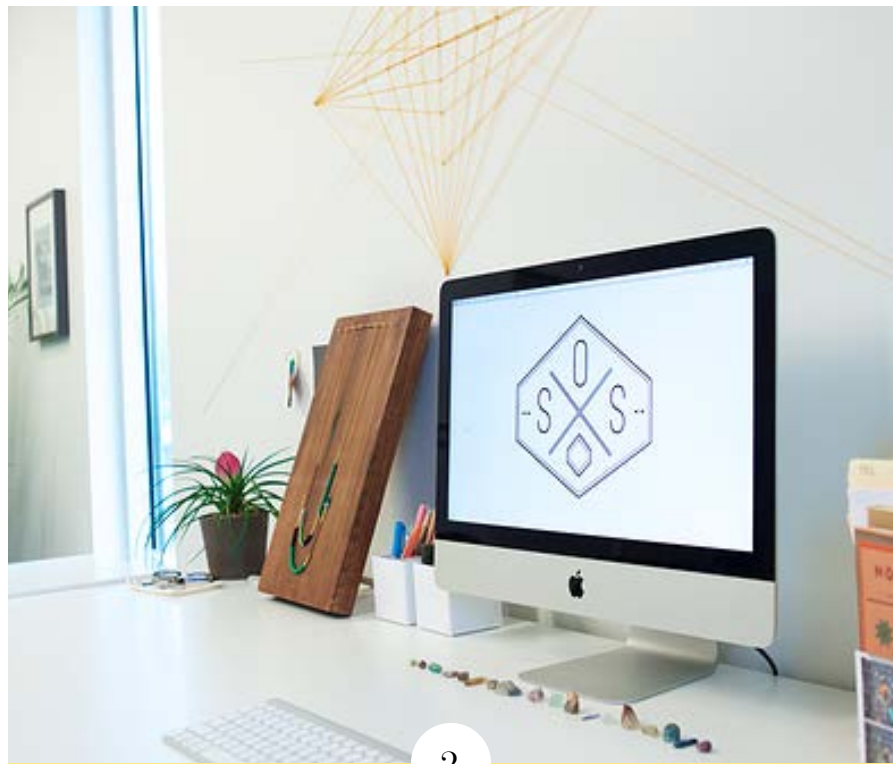
*Just start!*



## William Knopp + Jessica Tata

SON OF A SAILOR | AUSTIN, TEXAS

Beginning a project is often the hardest part. Our best advice is to gather your materials and just begin creating. You can always edit later, but getting your first ideas out in a tangible way makes room for the new ideas to rush in. Sketch. Make drafts. Experiment. Mess up. Waste materials. Have fun.



2

*Get your first ideas out in a tangible way (it makes room for new ones!)*



3

*Perfect your ideas through trial & error*



## Bethany Nelson

MILKHAUS DESIGN  
MADISON, WISCONSIN

I am a person who has a million ideas and sometimes it's hard to take an idea and start making for fear of it not being perfect. So, I would tell others to just start something. You'll figure it out as you go. Sometimes your perfect idea in your head may not result in a perfect product, but you'll find ways to make it perfect through trial and error.



Heather Albro  
THE BIRD'S WORD BOUTIQUE  
PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FLORIDA

# *on* ENJOYING *the* PROCESS



I think it's important to enjoy the process of your craft. Making jewelry is therapeutic for me and I truly enjoy every aspect of it. When I am enjoying the process, my designs are much better.

**BRIKA TIP:** Create a comfortable work environment.



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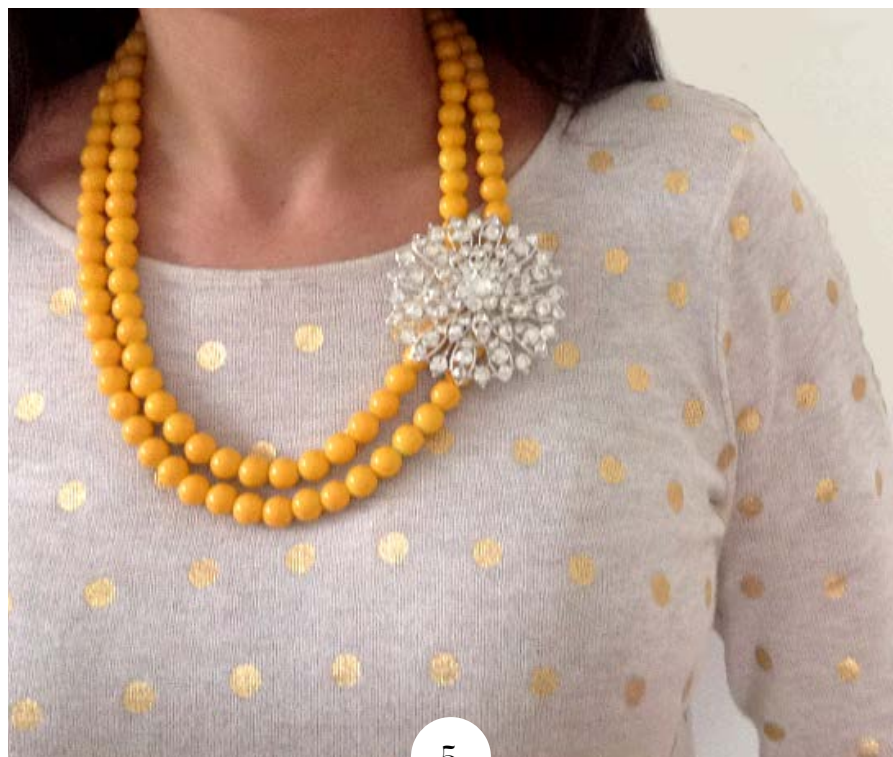
*Enjoy the process  
of your project*



## Annette Stepanian

CONFETTI BY ANNETTE  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

I believe that everyone is innately creative. Some people just exercise the creative muscle more than others... don't over-think or judge yourself during the process. There are no rules!



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*Don't over-think or judge your initial work*



6

*Make "creating" a priority in your schedule*



## Michelle Meronek

GOLDhearted JEWELRY  
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Be adamant about exploring your curiosities. It's understandably difficult to materialize every idea that arises, but write it down, execute a simplified version, and refine as you see necessary.

Creativity is an extension of your personality, so why minimize it to something you'll get to in your "free time"? Give it priority, and it will spill into and enhance so many other aspects of your life.

**BRIKA TIP:** Make concrete creative plans! Get a membership to an art gallery or plan an annual getaway.

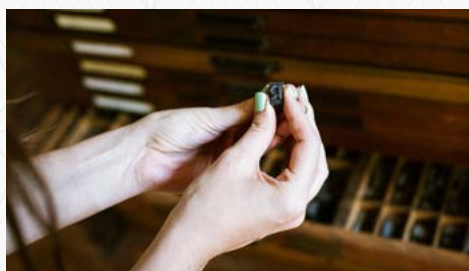


# Joel & Ashley

THIS PAPER SHIP  
SAXAPAHAW,  
NORTH CAROLINA



Allow yourself the time and space to play at the beginning. If it helps, see what the masters (experienced artists you admire) did to solve similar challenges. Brainstorm and allow your creativity to make connections. After the initial playtime, you can sharpen these connections and refine your ideas. Just stay loose! Tightness is the enemy of innovation!



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*Give yourself time to play at the beginning of a project*



Becky Hui Chan

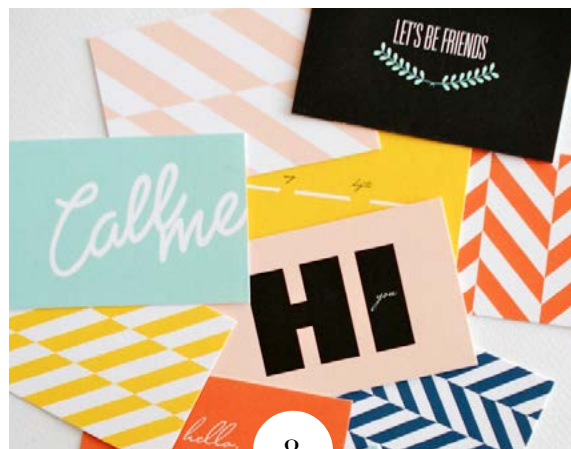
HONEY & BLOOM  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

# *on* FINDING NEW IDEAS

When you have an idea, write it down. Don't let any of them get away from you, whether they're good or not, they might come in handy or spark other ideas.

Nurture your creativity by making things happen.

**BRIKA TIP:** Always carry a notepad or use an app like Any.do or Evernote.



8

*Write down every idea—don't let any get away!*



## Jennifer Seymour

SEA & STONE  
SECHELT, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Get to work. Your next idea is contained in your last one. Go outside. Look down.

Notice how nature does it—how it arranges things. Look up. Do the same thing. Read a great book; something that challenges you. Look at the work of artists and designers you admire.



9

*Read a great book—something that challenges you*



10

*Build a reservoir of ideas + inspiration*



## Shannon Kehler

MOONLIGHT FOR VIOLET  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

I have a big mason jar of started projects; pieces that aren't taking shape as I envisioned them. Most of the time I'll get a really great new idea from a challenge that I'm faced with so I appreciate these little pieces of well-intentioned inspiration. I go back to a lot of them when the right component, color or design occurs to me.



Aymie Spitzer  
NEIGHBORWOODS  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

# *on* MAKING *the* TIME

Starting a project requires time and a lot of planning. Don't rush decisions because of a timeline. Take time to think about what you want and never diminish your personal standards of quality.

**BRIKA TIP:** Create a schedule, building in time for the unexpected.



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*Make a plan & stay true to your vision*



# Araya Jensen

WIND & WILLOW  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

I live by the words, “if there’s a will, there’s a way.” Make time for what you love and the inspiration will follow.

**BRIKA TIP:** Pick a set time each day (or week) to work on your project.



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*Make time for what you love*



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*Give yourself hours—not minutes—to create!*



# Amy Lowry

FIELD TRIP  
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

I find that having an extended block of time —i.e., 6-8 hours to do nothing but design can produce great results. Sometimes, the best way to get around a creative block is to step away from a design and return to it another day. Traveling works wonders too.



Shannon  
Kennedy

SASS & PERIL  
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA



Take the time and be patient. Research is key, then give the project time to develop. Walk away, come back to it, make revisions, and don't settle until you are confident in what you've produced.



*Walk away from a project, come back, & make revisions*



Cathy Terepocki

CATHY TEREPOCKI CERAMICS  
YARROW, BRITISH COLUMBIA

# *on* **TAKING** *a* **BREAK**



To get around creative blocks, I usually get out of the studio. Not only to look for those ‘found elements’ to bring to the work but because I always welcome a change of scenery. Traveling to a foreign city is the best-case scenario. In a pinch, I’ll just go for a good run or bike ride.



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*Ideally, traveling to a foreign city*



# Heather Dahl

DAHLHAUS ART STUDIO  
VANCOUVER,  
BRITISH COLUMBIA



Sometimes I'll take on a little painting project to give myself a break from ceramics; sometimes it's even sewing or baking. When I have the more mundane parts of my work to do, I'll turn on a podcast, or watch a documentary while I work, but usually it's in the quiet with my hands working that new ideas start to form.

**BRIKA TIP:** Have multiple outlets for your creativity.



*Work on multiple projects to avoid getting hung up on one*

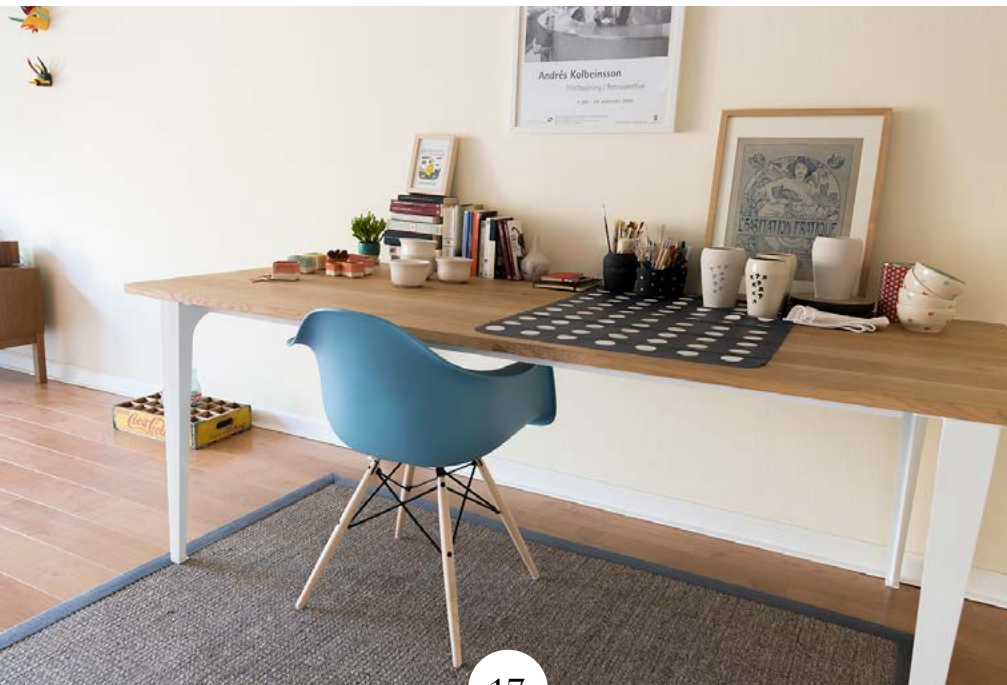


Rossella Manzini

ROSSLAB  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

# *on* EXERCISING *your* CREATIVITY

Don't just wait for ideas to come to you. Don't be afraid of change and keep experimenting; the best things usually come this way, in art, work, and life.



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*Keep experimenting; the best things come this way in art, work & life*





## Avril Loreti

AVRIL LORETI | TORONTO, ONTARIO

I make a commitment to draw for at least 15 minutes every day. Even if I'm uninspired or my sketches aren't going anywhere, I keep marker to paper and keep at it for at least 15 minutes. You never know what kind of seeds of design ideas will come out of a stack of unfinished drawings.



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*Work on your craft every day, even if it's only for 15 minutes*



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*Find a theme you like, and run with it*



## Molly Covert

RABBIT FOOT FERN  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

I usually start with a collage in my sketchbook. I find a theme I like and run with it. Start out with a bunch of ideas and then edit down to a few gems. Take time with your process and don't rush it.



Mary Young

MARYMADE  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

# *on* FINDING INSPIRATION



To stay creative I surround myself with creative things; art, music, clothing, film and so much more. When I'm lost and need to kick-start my creativity I leave my apartment and people-watch. Everyone is so unique and has something amazing to offer; I take what I see and translate it into my work.



20

*People-watch  
(everyone tells a story)*

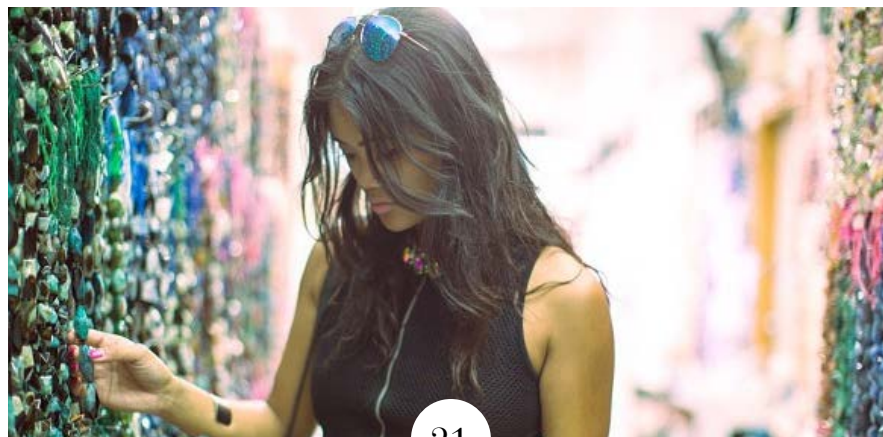


## Edi Canedo

CUCHARA  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

I throw on some really good music and it usually gets my brain juices going!

**BRIKA TIP:** Create the perfect playlist, so you're ready to go.



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*Throw on some energizing music & take a dance break*



22

*Create a visual board of things that inspire you*



## AnneMarie Minardi

ROVER, DOG ACCESSORIES  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

When I start creating new items for the company, I create a visual board with clippings of everything that is catching our attention for that season. When I hit a creative roadblock, I find it is best to clear my head by reading a good book or going for a long walk with the dog.



Kristen  
Ley

THIMBLEPRESS  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Make sure you are doing something you truly love; something that you are passionate about to the point of almost obsession. Take time for yourself, though; make sure to get out and explore the world around you. Being out and about in a different routine is, for me, the best thing to nurture my creativity.



*Try a different routine & change up your environment*



Mckenzie Santiago  
BROOKLYN GROOMING  
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

# *on* BELIEVING *in* YOURSELF



Just believe in yourself. So many people cave with fear and never really see through their goals; they are usually wildly talented too. My friend Lilli once said “talent is 90 percent drive” and that is something that really sticks with me. It’s also incredibly important to love what you are doing, otherwise there’s no point.



PHOTOS BY RIMA BRINDAMOUR FOR BKSTYLED

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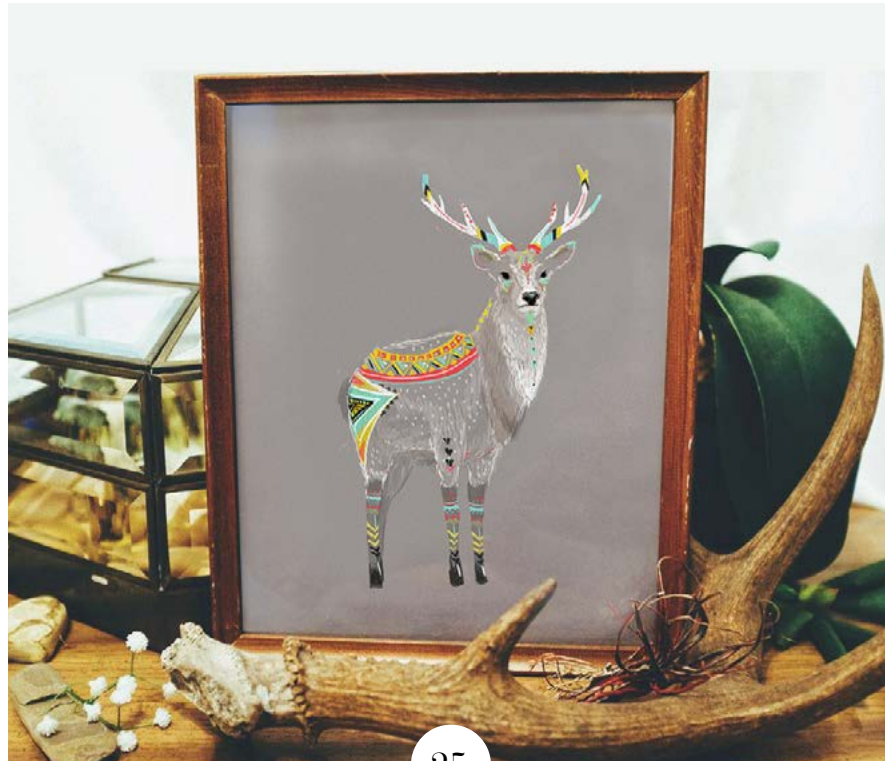
*Don't succumb to fear  
(talent is 90% drive)*



## Shawna X

MADE BY SHAWNA X  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Research (everything is so accessible these days), find the tools you need, and do it! Before I started this I was always a little shy due to logistics—but soon realized I learn so much while working through things.



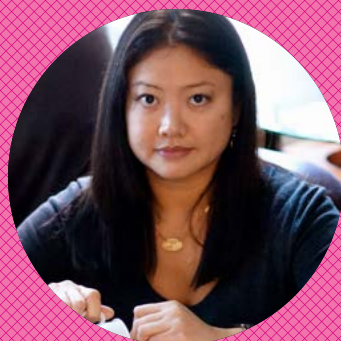
25

*Build confidence through research*



26

*Accept failure as part of the process*



## Lisa Kunizaki

CHAMBRE DE SUCRE  
MANHATTAN, NEW YORK

Accept failure as part of the process. Never limit yourself on where you can draw your inspiration from on a project. It's an ongoing, everyday process. Live it and love it.



Carrie Ng  
THE MADE & FOUND  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

# *on not being so* **HARD** *on YOURSELF*

If I'm having trouble coming up with ideas it's usually because I've put too much pressure on it, so the best thing to do is eat chocolate, wander around, meet friends (funny ones, not serious ones) and talk to people. Relax and get out of your head. I think the best ideas come when there is lightness and fun.



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*Relax and get  
out of your head*



Vanessa Marino  
& Regan Hayes

BLACKBIRD | TORONTO, ONTARIO

# *on* ASKING OTHERS *for* HELP



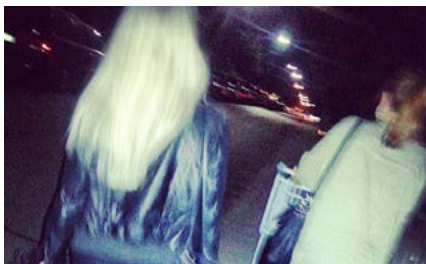
We depend on each other a lot to stay motivated and creative. After working together and being friends for so long, we have sort of developed this weird ability to be what the other is not. If one of us is concerned about something, the other is calm. If one is feeling uninspired, the other is dripping with ideas. We play off of each other and help each other. And when all else fails, we pour a glass of wine and laugh!

**BRIKA TIP:** Have a creative confidant to whom you can turn.



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*Bounce ideas off  
a trusted friend*





Katie Lime

MOIRA K. LIME JEWELRY  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



Don't be afraid to put yourself out there and ask other people what they think about your project. I learned in school that a little bit of constructive criticism can be very helpful. Also, don't be afraid to push yourself out of your comfort zone. If you don't try there's no opportunity to succeed.



*Push yourself out of your comfort zone*



Telle Lefler

IS WAS + WILL BE  
ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

# *on* **DISCOVERING** *what WORKS for YOU*



Everyone's creative process is different; stay true to your unique nature, and don't get wrapped up in how other people are making it happen. Follow your own path; do what works for you.



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*Don't get wrapped up in how other people are making it happen. Follow your own path*



Emily  
Reinhardt

THE OBJECT ENTHUSIAST  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA



Find what works for you! I'm at my most creative in the morning on a rainy day, with my favorite tea. That combination is what works for me, and I use those rainy mornings as my day to sit down and think of new ideas or really get inspired.

**BRIKA TIP:** Experiment with different work spaces & times.



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*Discover when & where you're most productive*

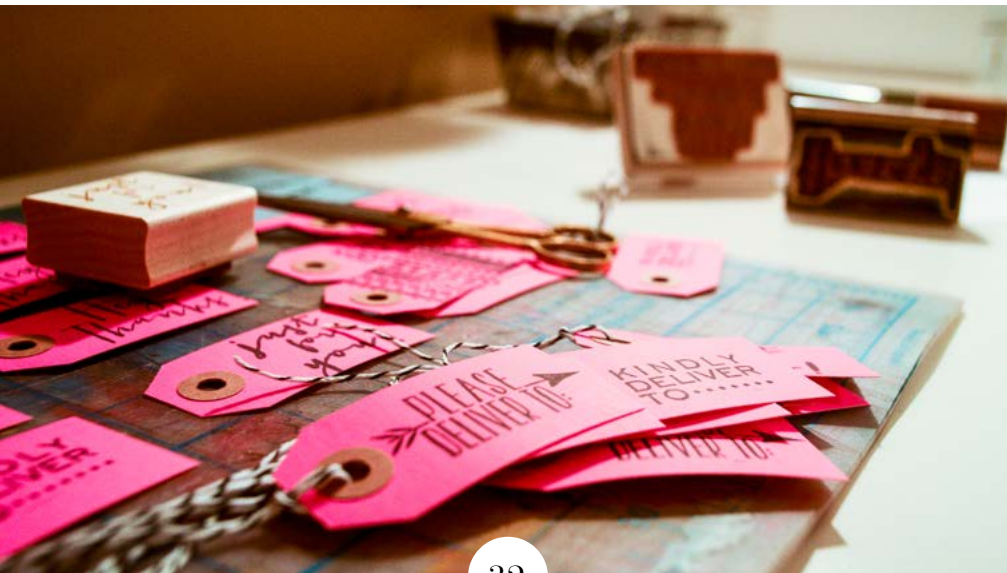


Brandy Schuman

A SENSIBLE HABIT  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

# *on* DOING *IT* for *YOU*

Don't work so hard that you forget to get out and experience things. Get off your computer and get out your paints, or pens, or whatever medium you love. Look around, touch and pick things up. Set aside time for creating, just for you.



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*Get off your computer and  
get out your paints, or pens, or  
whatever medium you love*



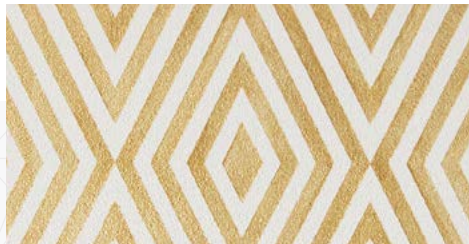


Rissa Sandman

THE COASTAL  
PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA



I started creating designs that I loved, and just hoped that other people would love them too. I didn't over-analyze them, and I didn't worry about them not being successful. If you're passionate about what you're doing, just design and create for yourself, and everything else will eventually fall into place.



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*Design and create for yourself, and everything else will eventually fall into place*

# 33 HABITS OF HIGHLY CREATIVE PEOPLE

*Here are the best life hacks for tapping into creativity  
—as shared by BRIKA designers, artisans and Makers.*

- 1 Just start something!
- 2 Get your first ideas out in a tangible way (it makes room for new ones!)
- 3 Perfect your ideas through trial and error
- 4 Enjoy the process of your project
- 5 Don't over-think or judge your initial work
- 6 Make "creating" a priority in your schedule
- 7 Give yourself time to play at the beginning of a project
- 8 Write down every idea; don't let any get away!
- 9 Read a great book —something that challenges you
- 10 Build a reservoir of ideas + inspiration either in digital or analog format
- 11 Make a plan & stay true to your creative vision
- 12 Make time for what you love
- 13 Give yourself hours —not minutes—to create!
- 14 Walk away from a project, come back & make revisions
- 15 Ideally, travel to a foreign city. In a pinch, a good run or bike ride will do
- 16 Work on multiple projects at once to avoid getting hung up on one project
- 17 Keep experimenting; the best things come this way in art, work & life
- 18 Commit! Work on your craft every day —even if it's only for 15 minutes
- 19 Find a theme you like and run with it. Then, edit it down to a few gems
- 20 People-watch (everyone tells a story)
- 21 Throw on some energizing music & take a dance break
- 22 Create a visual board of things that inspire you
- 23 Try a different routine
- 24 Don't succumb to fear (talent is 90% drive)
- 25 Build confidence through research
- 26 Accept failure as part of the process
- 27 Relax and get out of your head
- 28 Bounce ideas off a trusted friend
- 29 Push yourself out of your comfort zone
- 30 Don't get wrapped up in what other people are doing
- 31 Discover when and where you're most productive
- 32 Get off your computer & get out your paints, or pens, or whatever medium you love
- 33 Design and create for yourself, and everything else will fall into place.

# TEAM BRIKA ON CREATIVITY



Jen Lee Koss  
CO-FOUNDER &  
BUILDER OF BUSINESS

## *Get your brainstorm on.*

Bring out a fresh piece of paper, your favorite writing device and just let those ideas flow. Don't stop yourself or get too analytical. Make it a free form of expression. Once you've reached your max, sit back and take in what you've created. There are always amazing ideas in there, I swear! And best of all, come back to that document given time. New ones emerge out of nowhere!

## *UNPLUG once in a while.*

Your best ideas come while you're doing something other than staring at your phone or computer. **Don't multi-task.** Executing a beautiful idea takes focus and space. **Prioritize creative activities.** These days we let our inbox drive our day. Set aside dedicated time for your creative activities. **Change up your environment.** Work at the local library, a coffee shop or a shared workspace. To think outside of the box you need to be outside of the box! **Use tools that work for you.**

Your tools should support your creative habits. Find ones that work for you and use them religiously.



Kena  
Paranjape  
CO-FOUNDER &  
CRAFTER OF BRAND



**Steph  
Donnelly**  
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

To break up the day and find added inspiration, I recommend a good cup of coffee and a favorite song. They always help me organize my thoughts and focus on what I need to get done.



**Kimon  
Kaketsis**  
PHOTOGRAPHER

I take snaps with my iPhone and have a designated “inspiration album” that I refer to. As a photographer a visual diary is crucial for me to get around creative blocks.



**Maddie  
Leznoff**  
WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA  
COORDINATOR

Exercise. Nothing clears my head like putting on my headphones, going for a run, and zoning out for a while. I find I come back refreshed and with tons of new ideas.



**Lori  
Mastronardi**  
EDITOR

Always keep a notebook nearby. I find I have the best ideas right before bed, and the only way to remember them in the morning is to write them down (even if it’s in my phone!).



**Jen Solis**  
ASSISTANT  
MERCHANDISING  
MANAGER

I like to take a stroll and discover the many ins and outs of the city —there is always something new!



**Gavin  
Whyte**  
MERCHANDISING  
ASSISTANT

Looking at fashion magazines, especially fashion editorials. They’re so creative and it’s quite inspiring to see the ideas around them and how they evolved into imagery.



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