

About this time of the year is when it happens. Your creativity begins to fade. But this may be when you need it the most. When it's time to start creating the 2010 yearbook. To start thinking about covers and endsheets and design.

## But it's not your fault.

This has been a long year and your creativity bucket may be a little empty after the great book you produced this year.

## We're here to help.

How about 22 great ways to be more creative.

### 1 Allow yourself to be crazy.

Try new things. Professional creatives don't hide from stuff you might think was nuts—they jump right in and try it.

### 2 Generate all the ideas you can.

Never stop at one idea just because it looks good at first. When you have a problem to solve, design or otherwise, generate at least 10 new ideas before deciding on one.

### 3 Don't force it.

This means that to get the best ideas you have to start thinking about them early. It is seldom easy to be creative fighting a deadline.

### 5 Don't just exercise your brain.

Stimulate your body, too! Stuck for an idea while you are sitting down? Stand up and move around. Stretch, get your blood flowing again.



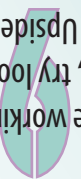
### 6 Laugh!

Read or listen to something funny. You won't believe how much your creativity grows when you are happier. It is very difficult to come up with good ideas when stressed and laughter is the solution.



### 7 Learn something new.

Just something small. Stop right now and find out how something works at [howstuffworks.com](http://howstuffworks.com).



### 8 Flip it over.

When you are working on something you don't like yet, try looking at it from a different angle. Upside down is a good one.

### 10 Combine ideas.

Have a hot idea that doesn't really work? Put it together with something that you would never imagine to work. Gutenberg (you may have studied him in history) put together the wine press and the coin punch to invent the printing press.

### 11 Change patterns.

Been trying not to make everything different and nothing the same? Try making two the same.



### 9 Start doing creative brain exercises.

For instance, right now see using the letters of your first name, think of a word beginning with each letter that describes a talent or gift you have.



### 13 Journal (or as we call it today...blog).

This may not help you to create the design you need right now but it will help you be more creative in life. Just the simple act of writing your life experiences and looking at them again in retrospect may make you see things differently.

### 13 Meditate

Seriously, take 20 minutes a day when you close your eyes and only think. No cell phone, no television, no iPod, nothing. Just you and the inside of your eyelids. It sounds scary but it really works. And don't get hung up trying to stop and write down every idea you get while you do it—they will come back to you if they are any good.

### 14 Just walk away.

Stuck for an idea? Go do something else for a little while. That doesn't mean to go and annoy others, it just means that you find another task to take your mind off the one you are stuck on at the present time. Set a time limit to do the new task and then return to your old one.

### 17 Learn these three great creative questions and use them often.

What if? What else? Why not? When you have an idea you like but not love, ask yourself one or all of those questions.

### 18 Take a mind vacation.

For five quick minutes think of three things you love to do that you can't do right now due to circumstances beyond your control (weather, location, school) and imagine yourself doing them. Use all your senses to enjoy them completely in your mind.

### 20 Look in unusual places.

Looking for a great headline? Try television. Looking for a new way to handle copy? Try a cereal box. Looking for a new way to design a page? Try a greeting card.

### 12 What else?

Take a simple object (a ruler, a pencil, a piece of candy, etc.) and brainstorm (either alone or with others) 26 things that it could be or do other than what it is or does. For example, a cup could be used as a table for mice.

### 14 Look at something in the opposite.

Find something right now you think is rather ugly. Stare at it until you can find at least one thing about it you think is beautiful. Do the same with your creative problem.

### 15 Simplify!

What can you take out of your current idea or design that will make it better? Sometimes less is more. What can you streamline? What can you combine to make your idea have one less part? When you subtract something you get a whole new thing—maybe a better one.

### 19 Study and adapt!

Go and grab a magazine and look at their design. What giant headline could you recreate in a smaller form to use in your yearbook? How can you take their superb layout that only has two photos in it and redo it so it has 10? How can you make their idea that looks great in full color, work on a black and white page? There is nothing wrong with adapting something and making it your own.

### 22 Do something!

Even if you don't like the results—do something. So many times we don't try something because we are afraid it will fail. Do you have any idea how many different filaments Edison used in the lightbulb before he got the right one? Failure is a good thing. It shows you what won't work but along the way you may find what does. If you do nothing because you are afraid you will fail, you will never get anywhere.

### 21 Be uncomfortable.

Decide that tomorrow you will do something that makes you feel uncomfortable. Maybe you'll speak up in every class you take. Or try using your non dominant hand to do everything. This can really show you another side of you.