



# CREATIVITY TIPS

From the Incubator

by Andrea Hylan

## Welcome to the Creativity Tips.

My name is Andrea Hylan. I am a writer, coach, and ancestral lineage healing practitioner. Also, the founder of Heal My Voice and The Incubator: An online co-working space for women cultural creatives.

The tips in this document were posted monthly in a FREE Facebook group called **The Incubator: A free creativity community**. You are receiving tips that were posted monthly from February – July 2024

The Facebook group is open to women and men. Every month, I post story narratives with quotes and reflective questions on the first seven days of the month. There is a silent writing space on Zoom for at least seven days each month. If you want to check it out, go to this page where you will find a link to the Facebook Group.

For current programs go to <https://andreahtylen.com/>

Annual Incubator Program for Women (October 1-February 28)

<https://andreahtylen.com/the-incubator/>

For information on the FREE Facebook page, prompts and monthly Zoom link:

<https://andreahtylen.com/the-incubator-a-free-creativity-community-sign-up/>

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## February 2024: Tips to Create an Environment for Writing and Creativity

Creating is not a linear process from start to finish. Ideas are birthed through conversations, dreams, and by reading or listening to other creations. Ideas are birthed by showing up to write and create on a regular basis and sitting with your art even when you are looking at a blank page or reading what you have already written.

The tips this month are about cultivating time and space and even an energy for creativity to blossom.

### Tips to create an environment and practice for writing and creativity.

Here is my list of 9 tips:

- **Write in the same place** and at the **same time** of day. This can be a desk or the kitchen table in your home, a table at the local coffee shop or in a library. Any time of day or night. Pick a place and time that works best for you for now. (It may change in the future.)
- **Music.** Choose one piece of music and play it right before you start to write. This activates a reflex that stimulates a flow of ideas and feelings. You hear the song; your body knows that this is when you write or create, and ideas start to flow.
- **Set a boundary:** Communicate with people you live with and let them know when you are going to write. Wear headphones. Put a sign on the door. Set a Timer.
- Take care of your **basic needs** before writing. Food, beverage, temperature of room, and a clean or messy space. Whatever works best for you.
- **Supplies:** What do you need? Computer, pens, pencils, internet, dictionary, phone.
- **ADD Your Tips Below:**

## **March Tip 2024: Observe Your Environment**

**There are two parts to this.**

1. Be a detective – record ideas, patterns, things that cross your path.
2. Be an explorer – look closer at the world around you.

### **This will:**

Awaken the creative muse.

Increase wonder and curiosity.

Expand your senses.

Create movement.

Show you patterns that will connect ideas.

Send a message to your creativity that you are listening.

### **Be a detective.**

- Carry a little notebook to record the inspirations that cross your path. This can fit in your purse or pocket. You can also use a phone to take photos or record voice memos or write in the notes app.
- Write or record anything that gets your attention. A book on a shelf, a bumper sticker, billboard, words spoken in a conversation by someone who passes you on the street (they are either on their phone or talking to someone or to themselves). A song that is playing in the grocery store, a food craving that reminds you of a memory, a tree with shapes that remind you of something: a shape of a heart, a dancing person, a sign of victory.
- Record words, colors, smells...whatever catches your attention. Write it down or speak it into a recording and then write it down.

### **Be an explorer.**

- Interact with your environment, the familiar and the unfamiliar.
- Touch and smell things. Spices in your cabinet, the surface of a table or chair. Craft materials. Yarn. buttons, fabric.
- Lay on the floor and look up at the ceiling.
- Look under a table or desk.
- Examine your hands and feet.
- Stare out the window and notice what catches your eye.
- Pour uncooked rice into a bowl and immerse your hands into the rice.

- Check out what is hidden – behind underneath, above, unexposed – curtains, doors, drawers.
- Make a list of familiar words and expand your vocabulary with a thesaurus.
- Describe your environment with new words.
- Go to a craft store or grocery store and touch things.

**Use your imagination to discover and explore!**

## April Creativity Tip 2024: Cultivate Dream Space

The creativity tips for this month include a variety of ways to tap into different dream states for creative inspiration. This is a practice for working with your subconscious mind and connecting with various parts of your mind, body, and spirit.

**There are different types of dream states. Three of them are listed three here:**

1. Sleeping
2. Daydreaming
3. Wandering

Before writing this tip, I had a dream that I was writing creativity tips about dreaming. I woke up with ideas that were flowing in my dream and quickly reached for my computer to type the ideas that helped me form what I'm sharing with you.

### **Sleeping:**

**Dream Incubation:** Before going to sleep, sit in silence and write down a clear question that can be answered with a yes or no. You can also ask more open-ended questions for inspiration, ideas and solutions or a new perspective. To begin, keep it simple.

**Record your dreams:** There are a few reasons I want to encourage you to write down your dreams. By acknowledging the dream, you send a signal to your subconscious that you want more of this kind of communication. Who you are communicating with is a matter of belief. Higher consciousness, Universal intelligence, God, Goddess, all that is, spirit, guides, ancient ancestors, land spirits. From my viewpoint, it is an unseen part of myself that I am acknowledging and asking for more communication in this way. It is a larger field of consciousness.

Writing down your dreams gives you data to review for self-exploration. Some people use a dedicated dream journal. I write dreams in my daily journal with the word DREAM: and then I write it all out in the same stream of consciousness.

**Dream interpretation** is about feelings and your connection to the symbols in the dream. What did you wake up feeling? What do the elements in the dream mean to you? A bowl of Cheerios can remind you of a childhood memory at the breakfast table or a jingle or a moment with children, or nieces or nephews. It might be connected to an art project you did on construction paper with glue and paint. You may have wanted Cheerios, and your family only had the generic brand. In your dream, it might signify

abundance or scarcity. Cheerios mean different things to different people. Tune in to your imagination. If Cheerios is something you dream about regularly, there may be something that your subconscious mind is communicating to you. It could become a simple code or connection, like dreaming about an animal, a place, a shape, or any situation.

By cultivating dream space, you can work out ideas to challenges, get in touch with desires and tap into creativity ideas. Reading the dream out loud can give you insights to redefine significant events.

**Do a dream exchange with a friend.** Meet on Zoom or in person. Set a timer for ten minutes. Share your dream. Ask your friend to highlight parts of the dream that stood out for them and if you were to reenter the dream, what are questions they would ask. Then, switch and listen to your friend's dream.

Writing and creativity ideas come through my dreams all the time. When I am focused on a particular writing project or even writing in my journal for five minutes every day, I wake up to words that form a talk, a blog post, or words for my book. If that happens to you, grab that journal, or pad of paper and write down what you remember. You will be rewarded with more!

### **Daydreaming:**

Daydreaming can happen spontaneously when you are listening to the radio, reading a book, cooking, doing dishes, or taking a shower.

### **Easy ways to engage with daydreaming:**

- Go for a walk and look at the world around you.
- Clear your mind and do a task in the house in silence.
- Go for a drive and sit in silence in the car.
- Lay down on your bed or the couch and look up at the ceiling.
- Doodle with colored pencils or pens.
- Notice your thoughts.

**An exercise: A reset practice.** Pause with a beverage, a pad of paper and set an intention that this is a time for daydreaming. Set a timer for 5 - 30 minutes. This is



support for your nervous system and a signal that when the time is over, you will be reminded by the timer.

Close your eyes and imagine that you are pulling all your energy into the present moment. Open your eyes and stare out the window. If a to-do list begins to appear in your mind, write it down and return to looking out the window.

### **Gather a group of people for intentional daydreaming.**

- All the focus will be on one person.
- The receiver chooses a focus and writes it down for their eyes only.
- It might be a question or a statement or an image.
- There can be a mantra like "I dream the answer for (person's name.)"
- Everyone can think the mantra silently.
- Set a timer and everyone focuses their attention on the receiver.

It can be helpful for everyone to close their eyes and hold an open space for ideas, images, and feelings to bubble up. If you would rather turn your focus to a pad of paper in front of you or keep a soft gaze by looking at the receiver, then do that.

- When the time is up, or along the way, write down images and words that came to you.
- Share them in the group and with the receiver.

### **Wandering:**

Set aside time to wander and expand the possibilities. A vital part of my day and week is to create open space to wander. Wandering is a practice like yoga, meditation, and writing. It involves wiping the slate clean. Sitting in silence. Listening for an inspiration. I ask the question: **What does my soul want to experience today?**

Sometimes wandering is a solitary practice, where I allow myself to be empty in the anticipation of what will cross my path that day. Meeting people along the way. Observing my surroundings. Taking inspired action. Sometimes wandering includes a dog or cat I am pet sitting or a day with one of my grandchildren. I surrender and follow their lead.

The fun thing about wandering is that you never know where it will lead. Sometimes I am inspired to nap or go to a movie or even create a newsletter or webpage for my business. Wandering is a practice of surrender and letting go of judgement. It opens me

to connect with desire and inspiration. It is a connection to body wisdom. And at the end of the period of wandering, there is clarity and inspiration.

**Set aside five minutes.** Wander through your home with no agenda. Notice what calls for your attention.

**Set aside an hour.** Before wandering, tune in to your desire. Where do you want to begin?

**Set aside a day.** Tune in to discover a starting point and go from there. It is okay to change your mind.

### **Examples:**

On one of my wanderings in Santa Monica a few years ago, I was inspired to walk 2.5 miles instead of taking the bus after a restorative yoga class. On my walk down Main Street, I found a wallet on the sidewalk. I looked around to see if someone was nearby or if this was a Candid Camera moment – a prank. I decided to take the wallet with me and try to find the owner. Two blocks later, I saw a group of people frantically looking through packages and around them on the sidewalk. I asked if they had lost a wallet. One of the men said yes. I said, is this it? A look of relief came over his face as he reached for it and said thank you. I told him where I found it and then I smiled and walked away. Wandering can lead to an experience and even a story for a blog post.

A blog post about wandering in New York City: Phase Transition: Make Space and Wander. [Click here.](#)

### **Resource:**

If you really want to dive into dreaming, this is a great book that explores setting up dream lab experiences that can amplify your dreaming experience: **The Dreamer's Way: Using Proactive Dreaming to Heal and Transform Your Life** by Rosemary Ellen Guiley, Ph.D.

**Or look at the library for books on dreaming.**

## May Creativity Tip 2024:

### Is it Writer's Block or Writer's Resistance?

One of the top reasons that people hire me to help them with starting or developing a writing project is because they feel blocked. What I've noticed is that most of them, in my opinion, are not blocked. They are in resistance. What they need is some structure, support, and tips on how to sit with the discomfort of empty space and allow room for their ideas to blossom and grow.

### **This is true with any creativity project and even in life.**

1. If you feel blocked with writing (or creativity in all forms), ask yourself about resistance. Ask yourself, *"What is my resistance to writing and creating?"* Then, wait and watch what happens over the next few days. The answer may appear in waves. Notice the thoughts or images that show you the resistance. Ask the question before you go to bed at night. Write it down in your journal or on a piece of paper. Let the answer stir and write down insights.

2. **Explore Conflicting Desires:** Notice where you have conflicting desires. There are only so many hours in a day, a week, a month. Are you carving out time to do the thing you say you want to do? Another twist of this is that I had a client last year who wanted to write a children's book and what was awakening was her love of photography. She focused on that and submitted a photo to an Audubon contest.

Reflect on how you want to spend your time and know that your interests may shift over time. The client's idea for a book is still there, bubbling in the background. Just recently, I pulled a book draft out of my vault of projects and there was new energy to write a book proposal and a goal to finish writing the book this year. I started teaching workshops around this topic seven years ago.

3. **Join different writer and creativity communities: In the Incubator: A free creativity community,** there are monthly story narratives with quotes and reflective questions. Join the silent writing and creativity space when that is offered for seven days each month. Men and women are welcome in that space. All creativity is welcome. Participants have worked on writing, art, and music in

the silent space. Just showing up can help you tap into the creative field within you.

**Women Writing for Change** is a Facebook group led by Gina Hogan Edwards. They have a monthly calendar with 12+ times for silent writing every month. This is free. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/WomenWritingForChange>

**The Brave Healer's Writing Circle:** <https://lauradifranco.com/writers-circle/>

**Hay House Writer's Community:** <https://www.hayhousewriterscommunity.com/>

If you are a writer, artist, musician, photographer and want inspiration for your creativity, I suggest looking on Meetup or Eventbrite for classes, exhibits and conversations over coffee – online and in person. Immerse yourself in the energy of creativity.

<https://www.meetup.com/home/>

<https://www.eventbrite.com/>

The key is to explore your resistance, listen to what it is telling you, decide what is most important to you in terms of your time and energy and to connect with communities that give you some structured time to focus on your creativity and be inspired by others.

## **June Creativity Tip: Structure and Flow**

Last month the creativity tip was focused on ways to move forward with your creativity projects by breaking free from resistance.

This month let's look at structure and flow. Both are important in creative self-expression because the creation and expression are a process. It is in the creating that the destination is realized.

### **Two categories of resistance that can show up here:**

**Procrastination:** Everything else in your life is more important than writing. Creativity may even feel frivolous or at the bottom of your to-do list. Every activity, work, relationship, obligation is more important. Everything on your to-do-list feels urgent or the circumstances aren't right. For example, you tell yourself that you are blocked because the desk is disorganized, the room needs to be cleaned or you don't have an hour to sit down and write. The needs of everyone else are more important than this creative thing you want to do. It isn't an income source and there isn't a productive measurement. You are chasing all kinds of things that distract you from writing.

**Perfectionism:** Thinking you need to take another course or training before you can write or take photos, write songs. Editing and correcting as you create instead of letting a messy first draft flow through your fingers. It is okay to create art that is never shown to anyone else or that never makes you any money. The power is in the process and how you connect with the experience of creating. The power is in how it feeds your spirit, soul, feelings and emotions.

To move forward with creating -writing, singing, dancing- look at where you can:

### **CREATE STRUCTURE.**

Structure can be a journal and a daily habit of writing something, even a list of tasks or a grocery list. Write anything. A feeling, a sensation in your body, a list of what you want to write about. The remnants of a dream.

Structure can be a table of contents for a book or a theme for a series of blogposts.

Structure can be a quote that stimulates a memory or experience. You could collect quotes in a word document and draw on them as inspiration for all forms of creativity.

Structure can be organizing supplies you need for painting, a musical instrument, and a way to record your music, a camera and. It can be a website, a blogsite, or a forum.

**Tip #1: Create structure.**

**Tip #2: Connect your writing and creativity with a habit that is already established.** If you start your day with a morning beverage or lighting a candle or incense add five minutes of writing ideas, doodling, daydreaming. Open a word document or a pad of paper and a pen and be with it. Some days words will flow and other days you sit with the blank page. You may have five minutes. That's enough to begin.

**Tip #3: Reflect on how you may be in a writing or creativity process that looks different from what you expected.** Reading books and articles, watching television and film, listening to music, going to art galleries, collecting ideas in a notebook are all part of the process of creativity. Reflect on the books, television, and films that you are attracted to. Is there a pattern? Is there a theme? Is there a feeling or an emotion that you are drawn to? How have the books, television, films, music, and art inspired something that you want to create or have created?

## **July Tip: Is it Writer's Block or Writer's Resistance? Part 2**

I define a block like this: You have a desire to write, and you feel you have no access to words or ideas. This is something that continues for longer than a day, a week, or a month. Something inside of you wants to write and you are connected to the topic. You cannot think of anything you want to write, and you feel blocked.

In May and June, I shared some ideas around how resistance to writing and creativity can show up.

### **Another way that resistance can show up is Expectations:**

You have an idea, maybe even a romantic idea of what writing and creating is supposed to look like. You think you are going to sit down, put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and the article or book just flows through in one sitting. You think you are going to pick up a paintbrush or a colored pencil or a guitar and the art is just going to flow through you. I mean, you have heard about people having downloads of writing a poem, a chapter, a blogpost, or a song in one sitting. So, where's your download?

A few ways to break through resistance and honor the process of creativity is to do research and hang out with creative people.

1. **Listen to writers talk about their process.** Hearing about the habits and process that other writer's go through will help you awaken to your own process. It can also normalize how, as much as we all love writing, it's hard. It's a practice and the only way through is to sit down with it and write.
2. **Listen to free writer bootcamps and summits from publishing houses and writing coaches.** I always learn something new when I listen to publishers and writing teachers, even though I've been writing and supporting writers for decades. Hearing the same ideas can stimulate breakthroughs. I was listening to the Hay House Free Writer's Bootcamp recently and a new idea for organizing my book was stimulated. The funny thing is that they were talking about social media which had nothing to do with my idea. There is something magical about being in an energetic field of creative people.
3. **Watch CBS Sunday morning or another art focused channel.** I love this show because the stories about artists, writers, and creativity in general, is woven into

every story. There was even a story one day about all of the 'sun' art that is sent into the show and the process of selecting the 'suns' for each episode.

4. **Watch documentaries that highlight an artist or creative process.** American Symphony is a documentary titled around Jon Batiste's creation of a piece of music for a symphony that was in process and then performed while his wife, Suleika Jaouad, a best-selling author, had another bout with cancer. The documentary was originally being filmed about the process of creating the symphony. When they found out about Suleika's cancer, they decided to film the totality of what was happening in their lives. It is a brilliant example of creating. It is never done in a box. It is created in relationship to every in and around you.
5. **Concerts and art are now on streaming services,** and this is another way to tune in for inspiration.



If you are interested in exploring more, I offer an annual Incubator program for women that runs from October 1 – February 28 every year. Enrollment is limited to 20 - 30 women. There is individual coaching, a monthly community call to check in and share in the group. I write story narratives with quotes and reflective questions for 100 days around a topic. Last year was called Flip the Script. The fall of 2024 is about Upleveling Archetypes. There is silent writing space on Zoom. I offer at least two office hours every month which is a drop in space to ask questions or just to chat with anyone who drops by, including me.

Women come to the Incubator when they are writing books, blogs, developing online programs, writing music, creating art, and exploring creativity.

Annual Incubator Program for Women (October 1-February 28)

<https://andreahtylen.com/the-incubator/>

Andrea Hylen believes in the power of creativity and the power of using our voices to usher in a new world. She is the founder of **Heal My Voice**, and **The Incubator: An online coworking space** for women with writing and creativity support and coaching, the author of “**Heal My Voice: An Evolutionary Woman’s Journey**” and 14 more books. She has worked with hundreds of women and men who have written stories of trauma, loss and grief to heal an old story, reclaim inner authority and step into greater leadership in their lives. She was trained and certified as an ancestral lineage healing practitioner in the Ancestral Medicine community of Daniel Foor.

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