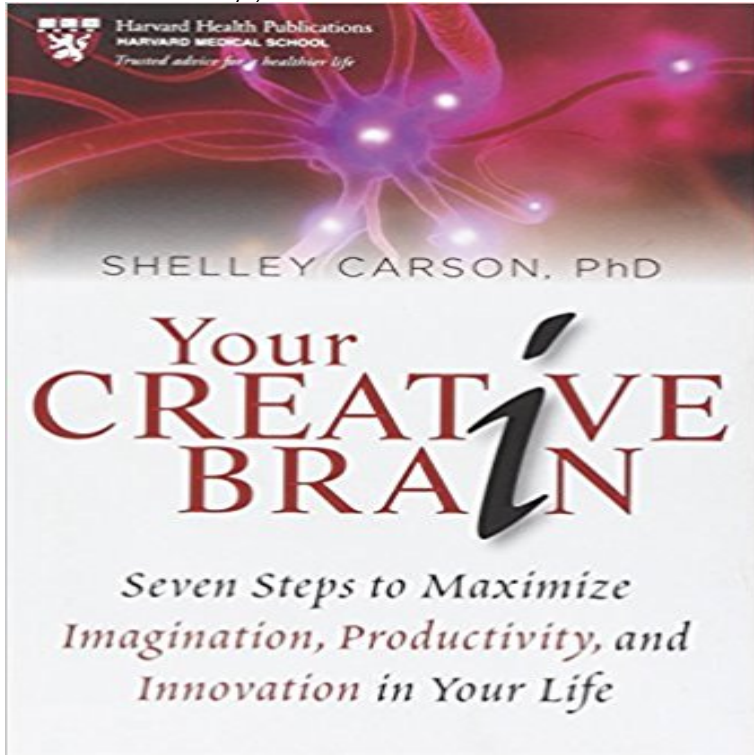


# Your Creative Brain: Seven Steps to Maximize Imagination, Productivity, and Innovation in Your Life



Filled with research-based techniques for expanding creativity and increasing productivity This provocative book reveals why sitting in front of a light box can increase your creativity more than listening to a Bach concerto as example. The author Shelley H. Carson, a Harvard psychologist, explains that creativity isnt something only scientists, investors, artists, writers, and musicians enjoy; in fact, all of us use our creative brains every day at home and at work. Each of us has the ability to increase our mental functioning and creativity by learning to move flexibly among several brain states. Explains seven brain states or brainsets and their functions as related to creativity, productivity, and innovation. These include Connect, Reason, Envision, Absorb, Transform, Evaluate, and Stream brainsets.

Provides quizzes, exercises, and self-tests to activate each of these seven brainsets to unlock our maximum creativity. This book is a Harvard Health Publication that offers helpful suggestions that can be applied in both your personal and professional life. Q&A with Author Shelley Carson

Author Shelley Carson What inspired you to devote much of your career to creativity? Since childhood, Ive always been fascinated by highly creative individuals, perhaps because my family has boasted its share of creative yet eccentric minds. Ive wanted to understand what makes such people tick ever since I can remember. My goal in conducting research on creativity and brain functions is to discover ways that everyone even those who do not consider themselves to be creative can access the creative abilities that are their birthright, and use them to enrich both their own lives and to benefit society. Why do you think many people are so timid about their creativity? By its definition, a creative act or idea requires that a person do or think something original - something hasnt been

done in quite this way before. By leaving the tried and true pathway of action or thought, the individual exposes herself to possible failure and ridicule. That exposure is very anxiety-provoking for many people. Highly creative people have figured out, however, that failure is a learning experience and, as such, is a necessary and expected part of future success. What is the CREATES model? The CREATES model is a conceptual lens for understanding the role of the brain in the creative process. Based on brain imaging and psychophysiological studies, the model suggests that there are different brain activation patterns for different aspects of the creative process. Right now the CREATES model identifies seven activation patterns (which I call brainsets) that appear to identify success at the various stages of generating, evaluating, elaborating, and implementing creativity. I consider the CREATES model to be a work in progress that will grow and change as we accumulate more information about our creative brains. What do you think are the greatest challenges for people who want to get more creative? Everyone has a built-in censoring system in their brains that filters thoughts, images, and memories, and stimuli from the outside world before they reach conscious awareness. Our censoring system keeps us focused on our current goals and on information that prior learning has taught us is appropriate. Learning to loosen up this mental filtering system to allow more novel ideas and stimuli into conscious awareness is one of the biggest challenges for people who don't think of themselves as creative. In *Your Creative Brain*, I provide a lot of information on how to loosen the censoring system so that ideas can flow more fluently. Does every brain really have the potential to be creative? Yes! While it's true that some brains are naturally more inclined toward creative ideation than others, all brains have a marvelous ability to continually change and develop. Research has shown that people who are naturally highly creative can switch

between various brain activation patterns more easily than those who are less naturally creative. However, this is a skill that can be practiced and learned. Although it may not make an Einstein out of everyone, practice and exercise can definitely make any brain more creative. What do you hope readers will get from Your Creative Brain? I hope that readers will realize how vitally important creativity is to all of our human endeavors and that being creative is not just for artists, musicians, and writers. I hope they will also practice some of the exercises in the book and see for themselves how much richer and more fulfilling their lives can be when they use the inherent innovative faculties of their creative brains. What do you hope to accomplish with the Creativity in Action project? For decades, the image of an illuminated lightbulb has been used to represent the concept of the creative idea. We instinctively equate creativity with light and know that creative ideas light up the world. My goal is to get project participants to light up the space around them with their ideas. When we see other peoples ideas, it often stimulates some of our own. This is the essence of a Golden Age everyones ideas are cross-fertilizing! I hope the Creativity in Action project is a going to be one example such cross-fertilization. If you could offer just one piece of advice to someone who wants to get more creative, what would it be? I hope its okay if I offer two pieces of advice that I will elaborate on in later posts on YourCreativeBlog. First, keep learning new things. Take courses, read widely, and learn how to play a new instrument or how to cook Tuscan food. Learn, learn, learn! Second, try not to judge the things youre learning. Keep an open mind. Everything you learn is a possible element that may make its way into some future creative idea that you cant even imagine today. And the more open-minded you remain about what you learn, the more likely you are to see how it can be combined with other information to form a novel and original product or idea.

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