

Pursue a varied set of experiences

It comes up again and again from the best creative thinkers... Steve Jobs once said:

"Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new things"

So, if creativity is just connecting things, make sure you have a broader set of experiences to draw on than your competition!

Read The Guardian. Watch GB news. Find something to love about Trump because much of America still does. Go deep. Search the darkest depths of your soul, the depths that come at 3am on a sleepless night and look for God there. Look for God because 84 per cent of the world live by his rules in some way.

Sit on the back row of the bus and listen to what's playing on the speaker. Go to the opera. Stand at the top with the die-hard fans and watch their faces when the music lifts their soul between their ears. Beg, steal, smash your way into Glastonbury and witness the best of friends parting ways over Pet Shop Boys vs Kendrick Lamar and see how a tent-city the size of Bath can live with no crime and no single use plastic because they are high on music, high on life, and high on their own supply.

Follow Love Island like your life depends on it.

Get political. Get local. Get grassroots. Join Facebook groups about Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. Examine the minutiae of life that people really fucking care about.

Get so unpleasantly nosy about other people that your husband refuses to go for dinner with you because all you do is listen to other tables' conversations. Scroll too far on Reddit and keep going even when it's sketchy and you want to go back. Peer into the abyss on X.

Open up your fucking world because if your life is small your work will be too. Volunteer. Help. Mostly because that's what life is about, but also because you'll learn a lot. People in need are people indeed. Be there at the end of people's lives. Be the person that steps up for a friend who struggles with addiction if you want a masterclass in behaviour change. Know everyone. Bite down your angst and make your circle wide and weird. Have friends in high places and low places.

Embrace your sex. Follow OnlyFans makers. The world runs on sex. Or as Avenue Q puts it, "the internet is for porn". Embrace parenthood. Children are one of the few things people will die for. If you don't have kids, don't let your friends who do drift from your life. Read books that are not about advertising. And if you want to predict the future, go to a history lecture or set your WARC case study date filter to twenty years ago.

Buy stuff. Buy from new brands. Know the layout of all your local supermarkets like the back of your hand. Haunt the aisles. Know the price of everything. Walk up to salespeople and let them sell to you. Take the cold call. Open the door. Be an easy target. These sellers are strategists on speed.

Do the moderating yourself. Watch the group live. Get on the train to Sutton Coldfield. Don't wait for data. Sniff it out. Read the annual report. Read between the lines of the annual report. And like the best choreographers say, "now you know it, now forget it". Because if you try and move with your head stuffed full of all that data your body won't dance. And fuck me we need to dance. Let all this go from your head to your body and brief from the heart.

Call them shoppers. Call them consumers. Call them buyers. Call them people. Call them humans. I don't care. But whatever you do, seek them out - all of them. Find their voice and bring it into the room. It's never been harder to find. It's never been easier to find. It's our job. And it remains, as it always will, the future of planning.

<https://creative.salon/articles/features/future-of-planning-matt-waksman-ogilvy>

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