

# Building the Creativity Characteristic



## This characteristic helps you:

- feel more comfortable in situations of ambiguity and uncertainty
- entertain multiple perspectives
- enjoy playing with new, unfamiliar, or complex ideas
- open up new approaches to complex problems and imaginative ways to adapt to unfamiliar circumstances
- create breakthroughs by considering unusual possibilities

## You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:

- tend to see issues in absolute, “black and white” terms
- look for quick solutions even when change calls for innovation
- are uncomfortable with ambiguity, preferring clear-cut problems and solutions
- rarely feel playful and creative
- get stuck in trying the same ineffective approach over and over



## Stretching Your Thinking

One of the ways to increase your creativity is to move from “either/or” thinking, which tends to polarize ideas, to “both/and” thinking, which helps open up a range of options, connections, and possibilities. A simple exercise to practice this is to take a pair of seemingly opposing ideas and seek to value in both of them:

1. Pick a pair of words/ideas that seem to represent opposites of each other. As an example take, “Flexible” and “Structured.”
2. Take the first word (Flexible) and identify three positive things about that concept.
3. Take the second word (Structured) and identify three positive things about that concept.
4. Now go back to the first word and find three negatives/potential drawbacks about it. Do the same for the second word. Your answers might look like this:

	<i>Flexible</i>	<i>Structured</i>
Positive	Open Adaptable Fun	Stable Predictable Strong
Negative	Wishy-washy Unreliable Weak	Rigid Boring Limited

5. Now see if you can find a way to integrate the two concepts. Is there something that could be described by both words? Could you create an option that contains both sets of strengths while guarding against both sets of weaknesses?

## Try It Yourself

Pick a pair of concepts (*ideas: optimism/pessimism; generous/stingy; courageous/cautious*) and apply this process. This technique can be especially useful if you are in conflict with someone over two differing approaches to solving a problem.

### Micro-Practice: What can you do “in the moment”?

- ✓ Explore a situation by asking questions that you don’t know the answer to.
- ✓ Catch yourself when you use the word “but” and change it to “and.”
- ✓ Switch roles in an argument and try taking the other side.