THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

CREATIVITY

The ability to combine ideas in new and unique ways to produce a result.



LEADERS ARE CLEAR THINKERS

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY CREATIVITY MATTERS

Creativity is one of the 25 core competencies that define a complete leader. As you grow this capability, you'll notice real shifts in how you lead yourself and influence others.

This guide is built for a 90-day journey. You'll explore the foundations, assess where you stand today, practice new behaviors, sidestep common traps, and track your progress, at your own pace or alongside a coach.

WHAT STRONG CREATIVITY LOOKS LIKE

- You can turn new ideas into useful, viable products, services, and practices
- You help your organization adapt as markets, technology, and competition shift
- You prove your value again and again by finding better approaches

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Creativity matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF CREATIVITY

THE DEFINITION

The ability to combine ideas in new and unique ways to produce a result.

Like any skill worth mastering, Creativity rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **Noticing patterns**

Seeing the unique variables, processes, systems, and relationships others miss. People who haven't developed this can't devise new approaches, because they don't see the connections.

2 **Suspending judgment**

Holding off on evaluation in the early stages of exploring possibilities, so ideas have room to form before they're filtered.

3 **A creative process**

Having specific, repeatable methods for creative thinking when a new challenge lands, rather than waiting for inspiration to strike.

REFLECT

Which element feels most familiar? Which one feels like a stretch right now?

SECTION 03

YOUR STARTING POINT

Before you move forward, take an honest look at where you are today. Read each statement and mark how often it's true of your leadership.

I enjoy brainstorming and thinking out of the box with others.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I find it easy to suspend judgment in the initial stages of exploring new possibilities.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I have specific processes for creative thinking when facing new challenges.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I have been part of, or led, a creative thinking session to develop something new in the past sixty days.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I notice patterns and connections between ideas that come from unrelated places.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I test new ideas against practical constraints before discarding or committing to them.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

REFLECT

Looking at your answers, where is your greatest opportunity for growth? What patterns do you notice?

SECTION 04

CREATIVITY IN PRACTICE

Competencies grow through deliberate practice. Work through the activities below in order, or choose the ones most relevant to your context.

ACTIVITY 01 60 min

Strategic Opportunities

Identify key strategic opportunities available to your organization, then decide which strategies would be most effective.

TRY IT

1. List your internal and external customers, and what each needs or requests from you.
2. Identify external trends shaping those needs, and what competitors are doing about them.
3. Determine what would make you stand out, then build action plans for all stakeholders.

ACTIVITY 02 40 min

Developing Solution Options

For a decision you need to make, define the problem carefully and generate several creative routes through it.

TRY IT

1. Write a careful, specific definition of the problem.
2. Determine whether a decision actually needs to be made.

3. Generate at least three genuinely different possible solutions.

ACTIVITY 03 40 min

Analyzing the Options

Creative ideas still have to survive contact with reality: test each option against practical constraints.

TRY IT

1. For each option, rate how easy it is to implement on a 1–5 scale.
2. Note the human resources needed, the timeline, and the cost.
3. List the outstanding questions and issues for each, then choose.

ACTIVITY 04 20 min

Challenge One Assumption

Don’t keep doing something because it has always been done that way.

TRY IT

1. Choose a process in your area that nobody questions anymore.
2. Write down the assumptions it rests on, and ask what else is possible.
3. Change one thing about it, or find a more efficient way to do it.

ACTIVITY 05 10 min

Carry a Notebook

Ideas arrive unannounced. Capture them or lose them. Capture them as they come and review your notes each day.

TRY IT

1. Carry a small notebook (or a notes app) everywhere for two weeks.
2. Write down every idea the moment it strikes, without judging it.
3. Review the list weekly and pick one idea to develop.

ACTIVITY 06 30 min

Exercise Your Brain

Brains, like bodies, need exercise. Reading widely and arguing well both give your thinking a workout. Set the time aside once a week.

TRY IT

1. Read as widely as you can, outside your field, not just inside it.
2. Talk with clever people, and let yourself disagree with them.
3. When you can’t think, go for a walk. A change of atmosphere shakes up your thinking.

SECTION 05

COMMON CREATIVITY TRAPS

As you practice, watch for these common pitfalls. Naming them now makes them easier to catch in the moment.

01 **Judging ideas too early**

Evaluating in the first minutes of a brainstorm kills the ideas that needed another minute. Separate generating from judging.

02 **Confusing creativity with innovation**

Creativity produces new ideas; innovation is generating and applying them. An idea that never ships isn't yet innovation.

03 **Waiting for inspiration**

Treating creativity as a mood rather than a process. Leaders who excel have specific methods they run when a challenge arrives.

04 **Creating in isolation**

Novel ideas get better in contact with other minds. If you never brainstorm with others, you're working with one perspective.

REFLECT

Which trap feels most familiar? How will you stay aware of it as you practice?

SECTION 06

YOUR 90-DAY PRACTICE

Lasting change comes from a few focused habits, practiced consistently and tracked honestly. Build your plan below, on your own or with your coach.

CHOOSE YOUR THREE HABITS

Based on everything above, which three habits will make the biggest difference in growing your Creativity over the next 90 days?

1

2

3

BUILD IN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY

Write questions you can answer each week to measure progress and surface obstacles. The best ones are answered with “yes,” “no,” or a number.

Q1

Q2

Q3

Accountability partner: who will you share these with?

Completion date: when will you evaluate & celebrate?

Measurements of success

How will you celebrate?

SECTION 07

GO DEEPER

Keep building your Creativity with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK	**The Complete Leader, Ch. 1.4: Creativity**	The full framework and examples behind creative leadership.
PODCAST	**The Complete Leader Podcast**	Episodes 1, 16, 38, 51, 90–92 & 118 explore creativity.
ONLINE	**Creativity competency library**	Videos, articles, and podcasts at TheCompleteLeader.org.

CAPTURE YOUR INSIGHTS

As you work through these resources, which ideas most apply to your own growth in Creativity?

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Creativity is an investment in yourself and everyone you lead. Return to this guide often: revisit the activities, reread the traps, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Every complete leader started exactly where you are now.