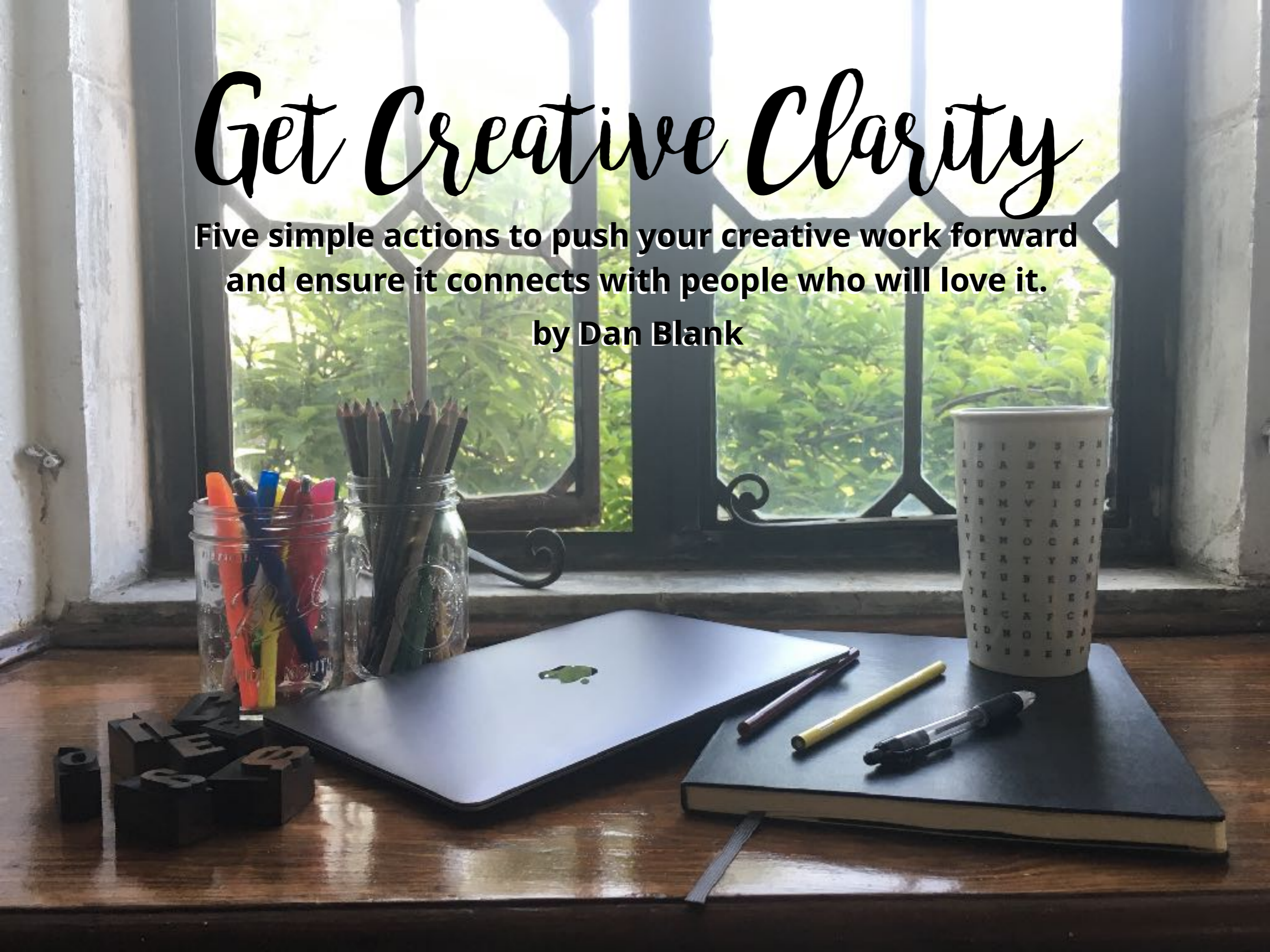


Get Creative Clarity

**Five simple actions to push your creative work forward
and ensure it connects with people who will love it.**

by Dan Blank



Thank you for showing up for your creative work. In this workbook, I am going to take you through five simple actions that will supercharge your creativity and ensure you give it the best chance to reach those who will love it.

Everything I share here is based on my work in the trenches with thousands of writers and artists. These are the actions professionals take to fill their lives with creative clarity.

Along the way, I invite you to share your progress with me as you work through these steps.

Let's get started...

-Dan



Step #1:

Give yourself
Permission to
Create



Give yourself permission to create.

This is the one that trips up writers and artists the most. You are so busy attending to your family, business, job, and other obligations, that you simply can't find time to create.

When you do, you look out in the world and wonder, "Why bother. Look how much awesome stuff is out there. Who am I to create? Who will even care?"

More often than not, we are our own worst enemies. There is no one out there trying to stop you from creating. That barrier comes from within you.

Give yourself permission to create. To know that:

- You have something unique worth sharing.
- A creative vision that someone else desperately needs.
- Creating is an act of generosity that makes you a better person and the world a better place.

Say "yes" to your craft. Allow yourself to be curious and explore your creative vision even if there are dishes that need to be done and emails that are unread. Turn the page and take the first step.

Take Action:

Identify the *minimum* you need to create each week in order to feel you are exploring your creative vision. The minimum number of words, brush strokes or notes played in order to say, "I am an artist."

On Monday, write down your "Minimum Creative Output" on a sheet of paper and place it where you can see it throughout the week.

On Sunday, assess your progress and celebrate your success. Don't judge quality. Instead, judge whether you gave yourself permission to create and did the minimum you needed to in order to say, "Yes, I did the work."

Step #2:

Establish a
Support
System



Establish a support system.

The surest way to ensure your creative work will fail is to pretend you can do it all on your own.

Successful writers and artists have a wide range of collaborators. These range from an informal network of colleagues who are accountability partners to formal relationships with editors, coaches, and publishers.

Amateurs hide their work, tell themselves that to keep it “pure”, they can’t involve others, and their work can’t be shared until it is “perfect.”

Release yourself from these constraints. They will only hold you back. Your creative work dies in isolation.

Instead, involve others in your creative vision. Take the step that every single professional does and share your goals, share your process, and accept that art is only complete when someone else experiences it. Involving others makes your work better and helps you grow as a creator.

Take Action:

Identify one person who can hold you accountable to your creative vision. Set up a call with them once per week to talk about your creative work, and theirs.

If you have no one, make it me. Put it in your calendar that once a week for the next month, you will email me and share what you have created that week and the biggest creative roadblock you are trying to work through that week.

This is my email: dan@wegrowmedia.com

Step #3:

Manage
Your
Attention



Manage your attention.

Those who create say “yes” to their creative work with vigor, and “no” to distractions that truly don’t matter.

Too many people spend their days in a mode of reaction instead of intention. They give away their creative energy freely to any headline, social media update, TV show, trend or email that begs for their attention. They always put the needs of others first, often at the expense of their own mental, physical and creative health.

Get clear about the biggest priorities in your life. Not just your creative priorities, but all priorities.

Then, double-down on them and jettison everything else. Warren Buffet describes it this way:

“The difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say no to almost everything.”

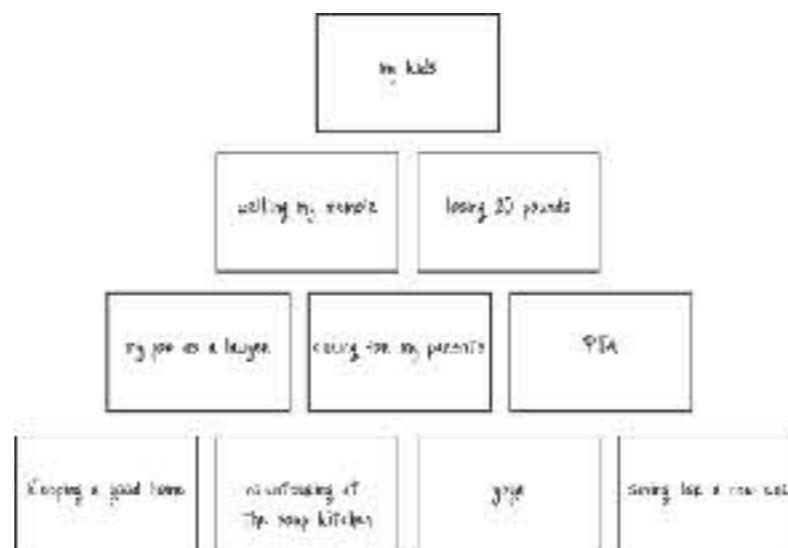
Say yes to what matters and no to everything else.

Take Action:

Get out a deck of index cards. On each card, write down one thing that matters deeply to you.

Then on the floor or a desk, try to create a pyramid with one item on the top, two in the next row, three in the next, and four in the final row.

At the top should be the thing that matters most to you in your life. In the next row should be the next two most important things:



Your attention is finite. The first step to manage your attention is to get radically clear about what matters most to you.

Step #4:

Fill your
Creative
Well



Fill your creative well.

Time and money are not your most precious resources. Your creative energy is.

Someone can have very little time and no money, and still create a masterpiece. Feeling deeply fulfilled in your creative work is not a game of quantity, but one of quality. Focus your creative energy on the depth of experience with your craft.

Stop worrying about managing your time. Stop obsessing over 'productivity hacks.' Instead, become a student of your own creative energy. This is the well you dip into each time you want to create. The source of your inspiration and your capacity to create even when life seems crowded and complicated is finite, and therefore, precious.

This is what allows someone to hone their craft, even amidst an otherwise busy life. This is what allows you to feel as though you are growing creatively, even if you are stressed about other things. This is what will turn a random day into a transcendent creative moment.

Take Action:

Do an Energy Audit. For a week, track and identify when you have creative energy.

1. Print out the chart on the following page.
2. Each day, note how much energy you had during each of the time periods.
3. Identify triggers that give you creative energy versus those that sap you of it.

At the end of the week, assess what you have learned and identify a single additional hour of creative time you can give yourself the following week. This hour should align with the times of day when you have the most creative energy.

If the specific times on the chart feel misaligned to your schedule, simply change them.

Energy Audit

| | 4-8am | 8am-Noon | Noon-4pm | 4-8pm | 8-12pm | 12-4am |
|-----------|-------|----------|----------|-------|--------|--------|
| Monday | | | | | | |
| Tuesday | | | | | | |
| Wednesday | | | | | | |
| Thursday | | | | | | |
| Friday | | | | | | |
| Saturday | | | | | | |
| Sunday | | | | | | |

Step #5:

Connect to
a Person Not
an Audience



Connect to a person, not an audience

If you can have a single conversation that connects your work with someone who appreciates it, you have cracked the code.

If you can do this once, you can do it twice. Fifty times. A hundred times.

In doing so, you are no longer guessing at what attracts people to your work. You now understand why they love your work — you understand this on a human level, not as some vague demographic.

When you know this, everything becomes clear.

You know where to show up online and off to meet these people. You know what questions to ask and what things to say. You know if you need to send a newsletter or start a blog. You know what to write in an email to get someone's attention, for them to see you as someone who "gets them" instead of someone spamming them.

Too many people desperate to build an audience begin with social media. Don't. Start with one human being. Reach out to them and ask a question.

Take Action:

Email one person asking a single question that relates to their interest in the type of work you create. But don't make it about your work specifically.

For instance, if you are a writer, identify someone else who writes books that are vaguely like yours and ask them what their biggest challenge is. Give them a chance to become a mentor by answering a simple question. Allow yourself to be vulnerable by saying you could really use their advice. Be generous by saying something nice about that person's work without promoting your own.

You can send this email to someone you know, or to someone you have never met. To a reader or a writer. An artist or musician. To a bookstore owner or someone who runs an event.

It all begins with you reaching out to someone and truly caring. Truly listening. They will tell you everything you need to know about what it means to connect with someone around your creative vision.

Then, repeat the process. Keep caring. Keep listening. Keep being generous.

How Can I Help?

Let me know if I can help you on your creative journey! Connect with me on social media:

<https://twitter.com/danblank>

<https://www.instagram.com/danblank/>

Thanks!

-Dan Blank

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