

# Make it work – *CREATE*

July 2014 Newsletter



Imagine your most  
creative you

Waiting for the perfect  
opportunity? It may be now!

Helping your children  
become good citizens

e-Thoughts



There are times in life for doing the expected and other times for thinking outside the box. How do you do when it comes to making that leap out of the norm and coming up with something original? **More...**



Is there something exciting — but a little scary — you'd like to try? Are you waiting for everything to be “perfect” before you go for it? That may be a mistake... **More...**



Whatever their ages, your kids can start learning about how to be good citizens. As a parent, you can help teach them... **More...**



Summer is my favorite time of the year. Even though I live in the northeast, I'm not a skier or an ice skater. Autumn colors and spring blooms are lovely. But... **More...**

## Getting help

Confidential support, information and resource referrals are available for a variety of concerns — both work and personal. Call for assistance for you, your household members or your adult children under age 26, whether they live at home or not. Call or visit us online today!

# Imagine your most creative you

July 2014 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

There are times in life for doing the expected and other times for thinking outside the box. How do you do when it comes to making that leap out of the norm and coming up with something original?

- Do you tend to solve problems in ways that have worked before or are you eager to discover new solutions?
- Do you dislike or shy away from change? Or do you like dipping your toe—or even jumping right in—to try something new?
- When you run out of your own ideas, are you okay with asking others for theirs?

## What makes for creativity?

Creative people are often those who are okay with trying novel things. They accept or even embrace change. And they're excited — not threatened — about brainstorming with others for ideas and solutions.

## Why is creativity important?

If you're creative, you can imagine how to do things in more than one way. So if you find an obstacle in your path, you'll tend to find a way around it. Creative people innovate, invent and improve their own and others' lives.

## Boost your creativity starting now

Sure, there are real creative geniuses in the world. There are those who single themselves out as great thinkers, writers, artists, musicians, scientists, math scholars and more.

But we can't all be whiz kids. However, we can all nurture our creative sides. Here are practical ways to do that:

- **Daydream more often.** Remember when your teacher got angry because you weren't paying attention and your mind was "a million miles away"? Maybe you were on to something! Experts now say that daydreaming helps us be creative. Wandering minds can come up with some pretty great ideas.
- **Spend time offline.** Turn off your computer, smartphone and tablet for at least an hour each day and do something different. Read a magazine or book, go to a play or museum or spend time people-watching from a park bench. Foster creativity by opening yourself up to different types of activities.
- **Enjoy time alone.** Some people are afraid of being alone. Yet spending time alone gives you room to think, sort out your thoughts and feelings and make plans.
- **Be prepared to fail over and over.** And don't take it personally. Successful people keep trying...failing...learning from the failure...and trying again. Resilience is key to creativity. There are very few successes without lots of failures first.
- **Listen to other people's ideas.** You don't have to follow everyone else in what they say or do. But it pays to listen. You may learn tidbits you can put to use in your own way.

# Waiting for the perfect opportunity? It may be now!

July 2014 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

Is there something exciting — but a little scary — you’d like to try? Maybe you’re ready to go after a promotion, ask someone special out to dinner or move to a new area? Are you waiting for “the stars to align” before you go for it?

That may be a mistake. Sometimes the best time to take an important step is right now. Rather than wait, sometimes you need to create the right time to act.

## When is the time right?

If you want to try a new idea or take a chance, how can you tell if you should do it now or wait? Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself:

1. Are there good reasons to wait? (Can you list them?)
2. What needs to happen so I’ll feel I’m ready? (Be specific.)
3. What do I gain by waiting? What may I lose? (Try making a list for each.)
4. Is waiting something I do as a habit?
5. Am I waiting or just delaying?

Once you answer these questions, you’ll have a better idea of whether you’re “stuck” or whether there are good reasons to keep the brakes on.

## Here are some sound reasons to wait

We’ve all made decisions we regret. It’s part of life. Sometimes it makes you fearful about future decisions.

But there can also be good reasons to hold back. These could include times when:

- You need more information to move ahead with confidence
- You’ve been on the edge of making this change before but something has held you back — and that obstacle still exists now
- You haven’t fully considered the results of your decision and how you’ll deal with both the positive and negative possibilities
- You’re feeling undue pressure from other people

## Time to act?

It may never be the “perfect” time, but here are some clues it could be as good a time as ever:

- You’ve finished your research and feel certain about what you’re planning to do
- You’ve thought through the possible outcomes and you’re ready to handle whatever happens
- You’ve already tried other options and they didn’t work
- Your gut says “Go for it”

## Seize — or create — the opportunity

Once you’ve done your homework and you have a good reason, awareness and understanding of your big step, it may be time to count to ten and take the plunge.

# Helping your children become good citizens

July 2014 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

In July we celebrate Independence Day: a good time to think about how you can help your kids be good citizens.

Citizenship comes in all shapes and sizes, from town to country to the whole world. Whatever their ages, your kids can learn to be good citizens. As a parent, you can help teach them.

## What's a good citizen?

We all belong to many groups. We're part of families, neighborhoods, schools, teams, workplaces and more. The key to being a good citizen in each group is to contribute. That may mean being a leader, a member, a collaborator or playing other roles. Bringing our best to each of the parts we play makes us productive and valuable to our world.

## How do we teach our kids to be good citizens?

First and foremost, parents need to be good role models. They need to show how to play a part in society by giving of themselves and caring about others. Remember: With kids, it's what you do — not what you say — that matters most.

Second, parents can encourage certain values and behaviors. Read on to learn about these.

## What are some of the qualities of good citizens?

- **Good citizens are honest.** They're honest with themselves and with all those they come into contact with. This makes them people you can count on and trust.
- **Good citizens care.** They care how others feel. They're concerned with how their actions impact others.
- **Good citizens are respectful.** They respect rules and laws whether they're at school, playing sports or driving on the highway. They also respect themselves and steer clear of harmful activities.
- **Good citizens take responsibility.** They think about and own up to their actions. They're also ready to pitch in and help other people.
- **Good citizens are brave.** They do the right thing even when it's risky or unpopular. They might be afraid, but they still stand up for what they believe in.

## When do kids have a chance to be good citizens?

Every day! Whatever their age or grade, your kids are learning to be positive members of society. You can help them bring out their best in every arena.

# e-Thoughts

July 2014 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

*Our e-Thoughts feature provides close-up views on topics and areas of interest from everyday life.*

Summer is my favorite time of the year. Even though I live in the northeast, I'm not a skier or an ice skater. Autumn colors and spring blooms are lovely. But nothing holds a candle to the pleasures of summer for me.

Maybe it's an association from childhood. That's when summer meant freedom — and no homework for ten whole weeks (a lifetime in those days, right?)

Honestly, after the harsh 2014 winter, I'm more than happy to bask in the summer sun (wearing my sunblock, of course). I figure I've shoveled enough snow to last a lifetime.

## **What do I like best about summer?**

- Outdoor concerts
- Picnics

- Hiking
- The drama of thunderstorms (although my dog wouldn't agree with me on this!)
- Being a "beach bum" whenever possible
- Watching kids scream with delight as they run through lawn sprinklers
- Strolling in the warm evenings when the sun is down, it's still light outside and the crickets are chirping at full volume

If you live in the south or southwest, I know your summer temperatures can be "off the charts." But I hope you have special summer enjoyments too.

Most importantly — wherever you live — don't forget to make time to kick back and do some serious relaxing this summer. You've earned it!

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Monthly Newsletter — July 2014

*[Return to index page](#)*

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