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Nurturing Your Creativity: You Are Artists, First

First and foremost, salon professionals are creative individuals. We seek to become hair, nail or makeup artists because we love to be creative. However, the reality of our work is often more functional than inspired and we can sometimes fall into thinking that what we do is just a job. I believe to be truly creative, you need to feel the freedom and believe in yourself as an artist. To develop and maintain a creative frame of mind and to nurture the imaginative and exciting aspects of our daily routine takes a bit of work.

It's important to feed creativity both inside and outside the salon. For many, the mainstay of salon work is performing more mainstream colors and hair designs that don't typically evoke a feeling of creative accomplishment. To balance this, it's important to solicit clients who will allow you to perform more artistic services.

Also, it's important to constantly challenge your clients to be a bit more courageous and take risks with what they feel is a traditional representation of beauty. We often think that because a client comes in every two weeks to get their 6 natural to cover gray, this is the way it will always and should always be, but you will be surprised at what clients will do when you present them with a new and more creative style or color option.

But to truly exercise your creative muscles, it's important to immerse yourself in the process. A great friend of mine, Alan Papaleo, is not only an incredibly creative stylist but also a world-class painter – combining two great forms of artistry into one body of work. I see how seamlessly his creativity in the work he does on the canvas can translate and reappear in the innovative crafting he does in hair color and hair design.

Whether it is art, music, dance, or poetry, it's extremely helpful to nurture your creative soul with the productive activities that not only excite you, but also inspire and fulfill your daily routine. You can't help but become a more creative professional by immersing yourself in creativity. Another way of fostering creativity is to place yourself in a stimulating environment. In his new book, *Creativity Inc.*, Ed Catmull, President of Pixar and Disney Animation (obviously, widely accepted as a pretty creative guy), stresses the importance of creating an environment that evokes and supports creativity. He says to look at your personal workspace and think of what you might do to make it more playful, more colorful, more inspiring - more fun.