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My name is Milena Guzman and I graduated from the masters of art global marketing communications and advertising department at Emerson College in September 2012.

I would like to tell you a story, my story, about how I got back into my “creative self” and how I realized that, as with any other skill, it was my duty to strengthen and practice creativity every single day.

The biggest challenge was to step out of the box, to understand that throughout my entire previous working experience, and certainly the last five years of my life, I had let adulthood, social preconceptions and corporate policies step on my creative thinking skills and my artistic side that it is undoubtedly the most interesting quality of who I am and my secret weapon to life opportunities and what I’d like to call: “My Happiness Project.”

Taking the Creative Thinking and Problem Solving class was life awakening and a promise to myself I would foster my creativity in every single possible way and I would help others to discover theirs along my own personal journey. Morning Pages full of crazy ideas and Artist Dates are still in motion and I have discovered through those tools that if you set a plan, a routine, if you force yourself to see beyond the possible, to look further away from the obvious and take a little step every day to understand your creative self, that every day is an opportunity to learn, to discover, to meet new and interesting people,

to learn a new skill, to try a new dish, and more important, to understand who you are. Put those creative thinking skills in motion, to the benefit of your professional development, and at the end, to the benefit of having a more fulfilling life.

I do not have a job at the moment. Maybe I will when this book is published, but I am not afraid of unemployment anymore and as cheesy as it might sound it is all because of the tools I acquired from the Creative Thinking and Problem Solving class. The tools of the class have allowed me to rediscover my hobbies, to strengthen my painting and dancing skills. They have made me a daily walker and amateur photographer, and have reassured me that brand marketing and strategic planning is what I want to do in life. And those daily walks, and my “Happiness Project” have shaped my creativity skills and opened my eyes to a new set of abilities I thought I had lost, and they have opened myself to life. It is that simple, and it is that poetic, no matter your field of study. Creativity is a personal responsibility and it has to be taught, fostered and organized. Creativity is part of every single human being, but if you don’t try, if you don’t practice, if you don’t open yourself to it, you will be living in

the box for the rest of your life. I always thought that phrase was silly: “Think outside the box,” people would say... and it is true, but I would like to add: paint first your box and then write outside those ideas, projects, dreams, suggestions, skills, things to learn, books to read that belong outside, and let your creative journey start.

Since I graduated I have shaped my writing skills by writing cover letters even for those positions that do not require one. With my best friend, I used to do Friday Try Day to wander around our new city: Boston. I’ve painted mandalas again and even created a few on my own. I faced my main fear in life: being alone, and I travelled around Asia only with the company of myself. I have read twelve books and mastered the art of “Spanglish”: reading one book in Spanish first and the following in English so I don’t let my brain sleep. I have done flower arrangements, hand-painted dream boxes, paper flowers and I took a class with Jack Trout at Harvard. I remember presenting my project of “Who I am” in Vogel’s class—I made a puzzle I was so lost. Armed with some creativity tools I have managed to find the right pieces to my puzzle and set the path I want to walk for my career and life.



Key Insights

1. Make a plan that includes things you think you would never do or try. Try and do one each day and let yourself discover new skills, hobbies and preferences.
2. Keep learning. Creativity can be developed, and learning something every day helps a great deal: a new word, a new recipe, a new “fact,” anything.
3. Just like the normal function of thinking, the creative thinking/ideation is a process. Discover the process that works for you: mental maps, brainstorming, the dictionary, Post-its, etc. Create your own ideation process, then improve it or adjust it for your own needs and from your experience.