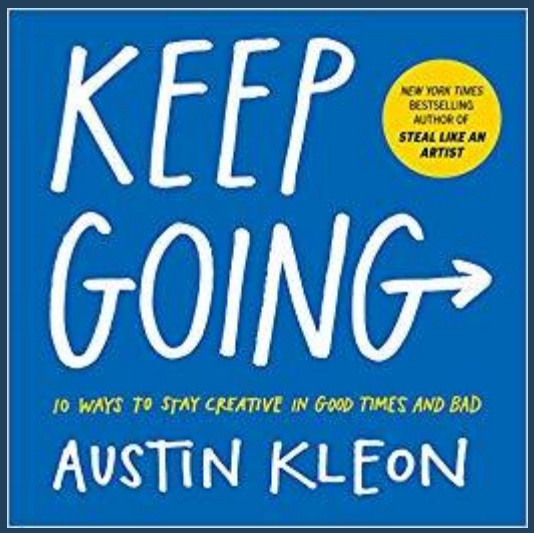


# Keep Going

**Keep Going: 10 Ways to Stay Creative in Good Times and Bad**
Year of publication: 2019
Author: Austin Kleon
224 pages
Link for purchase: https://amzn.to/2Jimfi7

Published in 2019, "Keep Going" is a work that reflects on what makes us creative and how to develop new ideas in good times and bad times.
Throughout its 201 pages, the book presents in a relaxed, easy-to-read language with cartoons and quotes, best practices for focusing on your personal development, with tactics for brainstorming and giving wings to creativity.
Throughout this summary, we will show you the best tips the author presents, showing how you can apply in your life and be more productive.

## Score

**9**

10 Aplicability
9 Inspiration
8 Innovation
9 Impact on results
8 Structure

## Main ideias of the book

- Each day is a new day, and we must create habits to make it productive;
- Having space where you can disconnect from the world favors your creativity;
- Attention turns the ordinary into the extraordinary;
- Sometimes changing your mind is good for your thinking;
- Many good ideas are lost in the past;
- Taking a walk and taking a nap makes your brain more creative;
- Your creativity has cycles.

## For whom is this book suitable?

According to Austin Kleon: "This book is a list of things that helped me. I originally wrote for writers and artists, but I believe the principles apply to everyone who tries to lead a productive and creative life, including entrepreneurs, teachers, students, retirees, and activists".

# Overview of the book

## Live one day at a time.

Have you heard of the movie “Groundhog Day”?
Considered a classic movie, this film tells the story of a journalist who gets caught in a spell of time and relives a bad day of his life repeatedly.
During this time, as he tries to break free of this problem, he becomes a better person, living each day at a time.
Austin Kleon begins his book with the example of this movie to show that if we want to be creative people, we need to understand that every day is a new day and that from the moment we wake up, we are starting from scratch.
That is, our problems yesterday cannot affect our performance today, just as today's problems cannot affect tomorrow.
This is precisely the question that moves the plot of "Groundhog Day":

*Answering these questions is the starting point for shaping your routine, and with it well defined you will have taken an important step toward being more creative.*

*"What would you do if you were stuck in one place and every day was exactly the same, and nothing you did before mattered?"*

The book states that we need to answer this question too, like the plot of the movie, carry on the plot of our lives.
Our creative life starts from scratch every day. We live in this loop where we think, develop and create something and then return to the starting point.
Therefore**, it is necessary to establish a daily routine, to create habits that will allow your creative development.**
Obviously, there will be good days when you will be inspired and bad days where the mind can't seem to get out of place. But the purpose of the routine is precisely to help you get through the bad days and get the best results from them.
Defining routine is an individual process that you must establish by looking at your days and trying to answer questions like these:

- How does your calendar work? What are your commitments?
- Do you have any free time?
- What can be removed from your calendar for having more time?
- Do you produce more during the day or at night?
- Do you have rituals, superstitions or methods that make you more creative?

Answering these questions is the starting point for shaping your routine, and with it well defined you will have taken an important step toward being more creative.
Finally, understand that your day is a blank page, over time you will fill in and by the end of the day, you will have completed your page.
It is up to you to decide whether to save what was filled or discard, because tomorrow a new list starts and, as the author says, only time will tell if what was done yesterday was worth it.

## Have your creative season.

*"Unplug yourself and in a few minutes it will all flow again."*

We started this overview bringing the concept of "Bliss Station" presented by the author.
In free translation, “bliss” means something like happiness, ecstasy, joy, which would make the term used close to “Season of Happiness”, but to better fit the subject we will use the term “Creative Season”.
So let's understand how to best build your creative season and contribute to great ideas?
We believe it is no mystery to anyone that in today's world we are bombarded daily by "tons" of information.
Just by opening our eyes in the morning our heads begin to absorb this immense amount of data, whether it be on a mobile phone, computer, television, through social networks, TV news or other media. Our brain is overwhelmed with the number of things that goes through it.
So to stay creative, you'll need to unplug.
, isolate yourself from the rest of the world, and focus on letting the creativity flow.
**This is the concept of the creative season. It is defining a place or time when you can rest your mind**
We emphasize that it is not necessary to be a place, it can also be a time when you can “clean the house”, activate your “airplane mode” and be disconnected to think more and better.
All this happens because the digital world has distanced us from three elements: loneliness, uncertainty, and boredom.
And as bad as these may sound, it's where our imagination can go to unimaginable places and our minds can come up with the best ideas.

## Pay attention and be extraordinary!

*“That's exactly what artists do: by paying attention to their world, they teach us to pay attention to ours.”*

Once upon a time, there was a nun who lived in Los Angeles, USA. Sister Mary, as she was known, taught at Immaculate Heart College and was interested in the art of artists like Andy Warhol.
So Sister Mary began taking pictures of advertisements and banners around the city and using this bible verse material with song verses to reflect on poverty, violence, and racism, and make art out of it.
As the book says, "Sister Mary met God in advertising." And that way she could do her art.
As we look at Sister Mary's story, we see that great artists find art and make creativity flow in the most unlikely places.
And that is the main learning of this chapter**. To be creative and have an extraordinary job**, and we are not just talking about art, but in all branches, **you don't have to have an extraordinary life.**
The tools necessary for the extraordinary are present in your daily life and you just need to pay attention to everything around you.
That's because that's how artists do it: they pay attention to their own world and, at the end of this creative process, make us pay attention to our world.

*Talking about looking for the dead refers to looking for their works and thoughts. Human beings have been roaming the planet Earth for thousands of years and their knowledge has been accumulated over the centuries.*

## Don't worry about changing your mind.

*"If you've never changed your mind about something, pinch yourself, because you could be dead."*

We live in a world where people are afraid to change their minds, as this may show a sign of weakness.
We notice a lot of this in the political class, where politicians avoid changing their minds so as not to appear weak to their opponents.
But creative people cannot be closed-minded to one goal and must be willing to change their mind if necessary. It's like the excerpt quoted at the beginning of this overview that says, in a comic tone, "If you've never changed your mind, you're probably dead."
So if you are strengthening an idea and have reached a dead-end where you can't go elsewhere, **don't be afraid to change your mind and take a new direction.**
Sometimes we need to take a few steps back to move on in the best way.

### Visiting the Past

Still talking about creative blocks, where the idea doesn't seem to get out of place and you can't stimulate your creativity, Austin Kleon brings a technique that can help you break this barrier: visit the past.
He says **that people are all worried about the future and what's new, so they come up with similar ideas.**
That said, Kleon suggests that you look for the dead since they have "a lot to say and are excellent listeners."
But how so?
Talking about looking for the dead refers to looking for their works and thoughts. Human beings have been roaming the planet Earth for thousands of years and their knowledge has been accumulated over the centuries.
The point raised by the author is precisely that, in the longing for new things, old things that are as useful as the new fall into oblivion.
So if you are having trouble carrying your idea forward**, don't hesitate to visit past thoughts and ideas through old books, for example.**

*“Tackling a book that's only 25 years old can be like opening a chest of buried treasures”;*

In conclusion, we end this topic with some tips on how to deal with when you can't get an idea:

1. Choose an idea you don't like; something that is done but that you believe can be “destroyed” and done better;
2. Find the opposite idea that everyone has forgotten or even used but has been set aside, and resurrect that idea.
3. This way you will have innovated just by visiting the past and thus improving the process.

## Fresh air to clarify ideas.

*"A walk is a magic cure for those who want to think clearly"*

Beethoven (composer), Bob Dylan (singer and songwriter), Charles Dickens (writer) and Ingmar Bergman (filmmaker) are some famous names who enjoyed walking and taking in the fresh air as ways to be more creative.
Many times, as we think of new ideas and innovations, our head becomes a whirlwind of ideas, both good and bad. This is where the fresh air comes in, to refresh the ideas and make the mind get some rest.
The author himself makes use of this habit and says that **his best ideas are the result of his morning walks with his wife and children.**
So to stimulate your brain and be more creative**, leave your home every day**, don't stay locked in your room, walk long distances, alone, with a friend or with a dog. We assure you that your ideas will flow naturally (and in the break, it is still possible to burn some calories).

## Other important tips.

Now for a quick summary of other important author tips:

### Go for the action!

Imagine a child drawing. When they draw, the pencil goes through the sheet, up, down, right and left, and we, as adults, look at that and think that drawing makes no sense at all.
As they finish drawing, we may ask what that is and we will probably hear an answer in the following style: "I drew a winged 8-legged dog defeating a horned atomic ant."
This may not make much sense to us, and the design may have nothing to do with what has been described, but this is because of children, however fertile in their imagination, do not think and plan on how the final design will look: they just draw and have fun every second of the process.
A creative process can be no different. You have to focus on making and developing your idea, you have to focus on action!
Do it as a child: have fun, play and so your idea will flow, as creativity tends to evolve and new ideas emerge while we are having fun.

### Get organized

The organization is essential. And we are talking about both physical and mental organization.
Let's do an exercise to visualize better. Remember the creative season? In it, you should keep only what will help to leverage your creativity.
For example, a messy environment with excess of unnecessary objects does not contribute to your productivity.
It is therefore important that you organize your physical space by having the necessary development tools at your disposal and getting rid of what you do not need.
Of course, each person has their own preferences, so understand your own and organize your space your way.
But we are not just talking about physical organization. Being mentally organized is also very important. We have already mentioned that taking a walk and getting some fresh air is good for that, but at this point, the author has another tactic: **taking a nap.**
Yes! Taking a nap helps you organize your brain and come back with more energy to be creative.

### Understand your cycles

During the year, a tree goes through four seasons and four stages in its development.
With creativity is not different. Our creative process goes through moments of flowering and times when the leaves will fall. Then you must understand your cycle, your patterns, and know what bad times are coming and what you need to be patient to move on until the spring of your creativity comes.

*The organization is essential. And we are talking about both physical and mental organization.*
*Let's do an exercise to visualize better*

## What other authors say about it?

Talking a little more about creativity, Ed Catmull, the author of "Creativity, Inc" advises: Always give people more preference than ideas, because creative people create good ideas, but good ideas can be destroyed by bad teams.

In the book "Atomic Habits", the author James Clear states that major changes are made by minor improvements. And when Austin Kleon talks about living one day at a time, creating habits and setting a routine, he talks about the big changes it will bring to your creative life.

# Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

Now that we have reached the end of this book, we have all the tips to stay creative by enjoying the good days and overcoming the bad days. And with the tips in hand, it's up to you to apply them.

And here are some tips:

- Live one day at a time, one challenge after another;
- Have your creative station where your imagination can be used to its fullest;
- Put your phone in airplane mode, being open-minded and uninterrupted is essential;
- Observe how children play and have fun, and adopt this method for yourself;
- Take a long walk;
- Be aware of what happens around you;
- Did you have a creative block? Do not be afraid to resort to the past.

By following these steps, we are sure that you will become an increasingly creative and innovative person.

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