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10 things you're doing that hurt creativity:

1. **Saying, "You're so creative!"**
   a. This says that creativity is something you have or you don't, but anyone can become creative with practice and the right mindset.
   b. Instead of saying "you're so creative," praise their specific creative actions.
2. **Giving projects with directions**
   a. Toys like LEGO sets teach kids to follow instructions, not create new inventions.
   b. Try giving kids activities without step-by-step directions so they can practice solving novel problems.
3. **Giving projects without constraints**
   a. Directions hurt creativity, but so do blank canvases.
   b. Find a balance between unstructured activities & projects with constraints so people feel both motivated and challenged.
4. **Not asking questions**
   a. When you don't ask questions, you signal that *what* people create matters more than *why* they made it.
   b. But creativity is about developing a point of view, not shapes & colors.
   c. Instead of saying "BRAVO!" ask them to walk you through their rationale.
5. **Not giving feedback**
   a. People can't progress without meaningful feedback--even in their creative work!
   b. After listening to their rationale, share your thoughts on what they did well & how they can improve.
   c. We do people no favors by keeping them from seeing how they can do better.
6. **Emphasizing results, not process**
   a. It's tempting to focus on *what* people create, but their creative process matters more.
   b. What were their steps?
   c. What assumptions did they make?
   d. Where did they draw inspiration from?
   e. Help people hone their process and it'll serve them for life.
7. **Motivating with rewards**
   a. Rewards grab attention, but only for a moment.
   b. For long-term creativity, people need intrinsic motivation: the personal passion to solve problems for their own sake, not to get something else.

8. **Surveilling people**
   a. If we hover over people, it's easy for them to slip into creating things to please us instead of trying new ways to handle a challenge.
   b. Let people breathe.
   c. Give them time and space to work in private so they can experiment and explore.
9. **Over-scheduling people**
   a. Our brains need lots of free time to process problems.
   b. That's why we have our best ideas in the shower.
   c. Our thoughts wander until a lightbulb goes off.
   d. Give people big blocks of time to keep their creative juices free & flowing.
10. **Saying "Well done!" after their 1st try**
    a. Instead say, "Great start!"
    b. Give them room to make improvements.