Creathon Booket

For exploring limiting beliefs through multimodal artistic expression

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CREATOSPHERE

ЦЕНТЪР ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ РЕСУРСИ



Creathon was born out of the idea of gathering young people who are creative or want to be more creative in their lives. The goal was to create a space for getting to know our limiting beliefs in creativity and expression, setting up little experiments, and then checking with reality, if our doubts and fears actually play out in real life, and in what way.

We did a wonderful 10-day youth exchange in April 2025 in Apriltsi, Bulgaria, gathering 24 young people from Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, and Lithuania, and this booklet is the result of our intentions, experimentations, and reflections afterwards.

Here you will find the breakdown of the elements of the methods we used, reasoning behind it, as well as snippets of impressions from the participants. At the end of each description, you will find useful tips on how to use our findings in your everyday life, or scripts for using those elements in your own workshop for your organization, friends, or community.



We hope that the booklet will be a useful and exciting journey through the experiences we had. We would love it if you reach out to us with any questions, impressions, or your own experiences following the Creathon methods!



Art, being creative, being expressive, is something we hold dear in our hearts. We believe that there is just so much beautiful human potential to live life authentically and openly, to tap into ideas and ways of connecting with others. And we acknowledge that even though the impulse might be there, it often stumbles upon some blocks, doubts, and fears that we learned throughout the years.



Whether in school, family, community, growing up, or adult experiences. We might have gathered beliefs about art itself, about ourselves as creatives, about the world in the context of our ideas, or about risks connected to expressing our creativity.



Those are limiting beliefs that might be something you tell yourself sometimes, or something you hear as opinions from others. And that's ok to have them, to experience them - they might try to protect you from something, and - possibly - not always do it in the best way.

They might have been useful at the time, and still might be, in some situations - but also might hold you back sometimes. What we want is to bring them to awareness, befriend them, listen to what they want to tell us, and have a conscious choice whether to follow them or not.



Here are some examples of beliefs that might sound familiar, whether they resonate with you or someone you know:

ART ITSELF

What do you believe about the Art itself? Is it necessary or obsolete? Is it subjective or objective? Is it serious or childish, or maybe both? Is it something that has power? Is it a luxury or a necessity?

ME AS A CREATIVE

When you think about your own creativity, what pops up? “I am not ready”, “My ideas are ground-breaking”, “I don’t have talents”, “I lack time and focus”, “I can invent something great one day”, “I have a lot of stories to tell”, “I don’t have good ideas”, and many, many others.

Connect to yourself, feel as if you were about to start a creative project. Are there any supportive or unsupportive thoughts coming up?

ME AND THE WORLD

When you meet the world, there is a response to be expected. What are your beliefs about your creativity in the context of the world? What do you think when you imagine others experiencing your expression? Examples of those might be “The world is not ready”, “People will not understand”, “I will be famous and recognized”, “No one will want to collaborate with me”, “My ideas are ahead of time”, “I can change the world for the better with my art”. Feel which ones are supportive, which ones are not.

CONSEQUENCES OF EXPRESSING

This is the most vulnerable topic. Stepping into the world and expressing yourself through art might be scary or uncomfortable, as we are showing a part of ourselves and what is important to us. Connect with the resistance with curiosity - what doubts about the consequences of expressing yourself are there? “People will criticize”, “My family will disapprove”, “I might offend someone”, “My friends will laugh at me”, “I will look sensitive”, “I will show my heart and someone can use it against me”... Or maybe on the other hand “Someone might find it helpful”, “I can make people feel understood”, “I might make a day brighter for one person”, “Someone might appreciate it”.

OVERALL METHOD

Why did we start with the beliefs?

It was our starting point because the whole method is based on getting to know ourselves and our internal world, designing little experiments, conducting them, and then checking what the results are in reality.

Beliefs -> Little experiments -> Reality check

BELIEFS

Let's single out one belief from the list we generated before, for example, "Others will not understand what I mean". By connecting to it, we might try to imagine what it supports and what it stifles. Beliefs are powerful creatures that can change the perception of the world, or the interpretation of reality - think about them as a filter that you have on. They can make you tuned in to seeing opportunities or threats, criticism or support.



And that's great. They are there for a reason, they came from somewhere, and they help our brain to predict what our actions might lead to. They might have been necessary at some point, and they might still be helpful - or their service might no longer be needed. In any way, we can approach them with curiosity, thankfulness for their service, and awareness that they are there.

LITTLE EXPERIMENTS

Coming back to our example "Others will not understand what I mean", we might design a little experiment to try out if this is relevant or not anymore, if it is confirmed by reality, if we keep it, or if it limits us. For this purpose, we might decide to step into the creative project with a little challenge for ourselves: "Present one idea that feels bold", "Contribute with an idea I find complex", "Explain my train of thought to others". A little challenge and commitment to the testing of the belief in reality.

A small step - for this one project, for this one team, for this one day.

Separating the work into little experiments is there to:

- Be able to observe with focus - we are changing a small element of our standard way of approaching, so the reflections can be clearer afterwards
- Not to jump into deep - we are not changing everything at the same time, stepping too far away from the comfort zone
- Have the ability to refocus - there is always the next day, next project, we can explore a different belief
- Commitment - it is easier to commit to a small change than to a whole revamp of a big part, and it is easier to stick to it

REALITY CHECK

By conducting our little experiment in the context of a creative project, we have material to reflect on. How did this one step into a new direction feel?

Was it how we expected it to be?

What did we hear or see in response from the others?

Where did it lead, what did it support or stifle in practice?

Did you manage to step into the experiment, or maybe it was too scary when it came to practice?





REALITY CHECK

REFLECTION ON A BIGGER SCALE

What does this experiment tell me about myself?

Do I want to explore it further, or focus on something else?

Of course, the experiment is just a one-time glimpse into reality. It has specific conditions, an atmosphere of Creathon around it, specific people, and a specific situation. It is not statistically significant enough to make up a new rule directly out of it... But it is a small nudge in a particular direction.





The whole method is designed for exploration. To have curiosity, awareness, courage, commitment, and self-reflection to get to know some aspect of ourselves in a slightly different light. As a project, Creathon ends, but we hope that it leaves the mindset of exactly those.

I realized that I have all the abilities, I just need to start doing, and it helped me a lot. basic understanding gave me Results (with a capital P) I also affirmed the idea that people's reaction to my art is a reaction to what my art reflected in them.

Choosing comfort over something new and unknown isnt always the best choice.

Well I've been really limiting myself art wise , and it's so destructive. I feel better and more healthy after trying stuff I was afraid of.

My limiting belief was that I wasn't good at creating art. Now I've learned that all art, good or bad, is still art. And I don't overthink making it perfect. I can create more freely.



DETAILS

So that's the method in short overview. Nothing ground-breaking - I recognize, I design a test, I check, I reflect. But alongside the method, we cared a lot about the conditions in Creathon, which would be the most supportive in conducting those short cycles of experiments. Those were:



1) Tone
- Experiment
- Space
- Personal example

2) Quick experimentations
- Limitations
- Mixing arts
- Mixing groups
- Temporariness

3) Intentions
- Small steps
- Commitment

4) Safety
- Group
- Reflection Groups
- Empathy buddy

TONE

Otherwise known as The Vibe. We knew that the overall atmosphere and tone of the youth exchange would be crucial to setting the mindset. The way we talk, communicate the tasks, how we interact, set up the space, behave... We set the example. And the example we wanted to set was:

EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH

In the entirety of Creathon, we tried to emphasize the curiosity - about ourselves, about others, about the creations, about the world. Curiosity, acceptance, honesty, and a pinch of ridiculousness. It is much easier to work on a serious challenge when we treat it with a good amount of lightness. We also wanted to give enough freedom to the participants to really create the ownership of the process.

SPACE

The space that we had, the beautiful Trinity House in Apriltsi, Bulgaria, was to be claimed by the participants and ourselves. And so the space slowly became decorated with the outcomes of our work, paintings, writing, and helpful flipcharts. We also left it open for creative use whenever anyone wanted to follow their idea - whether dancing, movement, leading a yoga workshop, painting, or writing by themselves, it was an open space for all.



PERSONAL EXAMPLE

It is helpful that we have this mindset of ridiculousness, playfulness, and openness in a way that comes naturally to the Creathon team. While having our professional and personal achievements, we needed to show how to step into the unknown, incompetent (yet!), playful, and just curious. Bordering on weird and quirky.

So this is where the idea of a new upcoming band, “The Nightmares” was born. Very much in line with the tone, before the first participants’ group performance, we decided to put on the worst musical performance ever, by the facilitators-made ragtag band. Picking up instruments none of us knew how to play, and trying to do something so bad that the bar afterwards couldn’t go lower.

Pfff, what an embarrassment! In the middle of the show, realizing that maybe it is actually not clear we are bad on purpose... Sitting on the stage in front of almost 30 participants, we just got to know the same day... Uff. Nothing can feel more embarrassing. But staying with that feeling.



QUICK EXPERIMENTATIONS

The method of Belief-Experiment-Reality had to be done in a context. The context we chose was small, quick-fire creative challenges in different arts. Something that was not possible from the get-go to be masterclass quality (oh, were we surprised by what the participants created!). Each day, or even a portion of the day, was connected to different art, so none of the participants had experience with all of the forms. Focus on the process, not on the output!

I try to do something creative everyday even if its just a little drawing.

I liked that every day we had different exercises and ways how to create and learn something new. Also I liked that it challenged me. I had to step out of my comfort zone. At first I was shocked that our daily program is so long but then I got used to it and enjoyed but then when the first part of project ended and we had more free time and had to come up with ideas for festival I was a bit confused. I was just used to all those exercises and suddenly we had to think of something by ourselves. ıoBut it made me learn how to adapt to new situation. Overall I realy enjoyed these 10 days!

The thing I liked the most were the artsy activities and how they allowed people to connect and build meaningful connections. It was beautiful to see how creativity became a bridge between strangers, turning the group into a supportive and open community. I also really liked the challenging energy of the project. It pushed me to step out of my comfort zone and helped me overcome some of my own internal limits. I believe that experience truly supported me in becoming a better version of myself.

I realised how my perfectionism is stopping me and sometimes when I have a certain idea I see how it could be done in the best way possible and that's the only way for me. Then when I know I'm unable to fulfill that, I tend to procrastinate. So being aware of that I started little by little to check of things that are done in another way than I imagined. I find more creative paths and solutions and that gives me freedom.

MIXING ARTS

We slid through the surface of many art forms, in order not to focus on any of them too much. We had quick poetry writing, film shooting, composing a song, making a stage performance, writing and telling fairytales, and painting... Each day consisted of a bigger group art form, which was the main stage for the Experiment.



I enjoyed being able to experience all sorts of art forms, to do things I never thought I would do.

I liked dipping my toes in various art forms and being able and free to explore in a safe space where I don't need to worry about people's opinions.

I liked the variety of activities that we had to participate in. It helped me learn how to express myself in different art forms.

MIXING GROUPS

Each day, we were also mixing groups, aiming for everyone to have the opportunity to work with everyone in the span of the Youth Exchange. This sets up the chance to do the Experiments in the context of new, different people each time, also enhancing the material for reflections on the Reality of the experimentation.

Since we had many workshops where we worked in groups, I think an important skill I acquired and will use in the future is to accept and respect the ideas, opinions and even the presence of the people I work with.

Group work!! I gave this a try at university and it wasn't as bad as I expected. Listening to others and trying to understand their thinking was very useful for my work.

I really enjoyed the creative experiments in groups that allowed to discover different forms of arts, and set personal intentions, breaking through internal blocks, especially filmmaking and creating a song. The collaborative aspect was also great, allowing to interact with different people every time.



LIMITATIONS

The creative tasks had limitations built into them. Most commonly, time constraints or material constraints make the conditions highly imperfect. Why? Having limitations takes the pressure off the performers, as you know from the start that it will not be (most probably) a masterpiece. There are always limitations that can be blamed, and if it is not perfect, you can as well just enjoy the process.

I don't wait anymore to feel motivated. I just do it now more consistently. And if I need a break I take a small one and then continue again...and meanwhile I picked up playing the ukulele.

"One of the most important things I learned was to enjoy the process of everything, without focusing too much on achieving a perfect result. That shift in perspective brought me a lot of freedom and joy.

TEMPORARINESS

Moving quickly between different forms and different tasks was designed to avoid getting too attached to one thing. Before it could be refined, it had to be done. Before it could be perfected, it already had to be forgotten as we moved on to the next thing. Sometimes we get stuck on one idea and creation, editing it, improving (or "improving"), waiting with it forever. To remove that block and overattachment, we just threw a lot, quickly, at the participants. A lot.



"I was reminded of the temporarity of what I'm able to create. And the way my skills develop over time and by only creating more I will see the progress. How to detach of the outcome and focus on the process, because that's where the learning and discovery comes."

I'm applying the part where we set our intentions/ experiments. It can be used in everyday occasions and allows me to look at things with another eye, to coordinate my learning process more intentionally. Setting challenges for myself with a clear mind what I'm trying to overcome with them is an exciting way to track and see my growth.

INTENTIONS

Intentionality is a much gentler way to guide your mind than expectations. We encouraged everyone to set intention with their experiments, inviting curiosity and commitment, instead of the strictness of expectations and requirements. We encourage pushing ourselves a step forward, but do not penalize ourselves if something goes the other way than expected.

I really much liked the structure of the program. That we had different working groups in the afternoon, focusing on different art forms where we had the room to experiment. The intetional exparimentation is something I'm taking out of this experience and will use more in my life as a motor to create.



SMALL STEPS

We encouraged no big declarations, like “I will be a leader from now on”, “I will be brave”, “I will show my heart”. Well, participants could choose whatever they like, just small steps are usually good, a gentle way to invite a new way of being - “I will present more ideas”, “I will do one brave action”, or “I will show a bit more of my heart today” takes down the pressure..

During the Creathon, I remembered to focus on my own path instead of measuring my worth by someone else’s standards.

To just simply do things and let my mind ease from the perfectionism.



COMMITMENT

We incorporated a ritual of Experiments. Each day after lunch, each participant was to come up with their personal Experiment for the day, a little step in an unfamiliar direction. They were to formulate them on paper, and as a form of commitment, present them to the camera. Making a big deal out of it? Of course. Being curious about your own beliefs and limitations is a big deal, and at the same time, it can be fun and light.

I gained a lot confidence, because I had to step out of my confort zone ofter. Sometimes it was a little hard and overwhelming, but I've learnt a lot with that.

I can do it if I set my mind to it.

I really liked when we wrote our intentions for today as a mental experiments. I want to continue doing it in my daily life, because I believe it helps me to deal with some stuff I would normally just ignore about myself.

When we wrote our intentions and showed to the camera. I learned that a simple determination can improvise the result.





SAFETY

Most important of all, the space needed to be safe. Yes, we are having fun creating, changing forms of art, yes, there is laughter. And yes, there is also intentionality, commitment to experimenting with playfulness.

But most importantly, there needs to be space where vulnerability is welcome and feels safe to open up - we are revealing our beliefs, whether limiting or supportive, they are an insight into our hearts and way of being.



I liked the community and the support we got from everyone.

In Creathon I felt very connected to the whole group. I felt very included.



GROUP

When selecting the participants who have applied, we spend a good amount of time and thought on trying to get to know if that particular person knows what they are signing up for. Not just to fill the group, but also to be aware that they will be companions of everyone else on this journey of self-exploration. We didn't look for artistic skills or experience, but for a feeling of openness, awareness, ability to empathize, and connect with others.



REFLECTION GROUP

As much as we were mixing the work groups each day, we formed stable reflection groups. A structure that was assisting the process of observation and integration throughout the whole Creathon, being a safe haven after the work had been done. We kept them stable, so the group process could be deepened throughout the 10 days. Each of them had the group leader assigned, so we were sure the process was also facilitated on this level.

I enjoyed being able to experience all sorts of art forms, to do things I never thought I would do - get out of my comfort zone. Besides this, having reflection groups was really enjoyable, because I felt heard, had an opportunity to learn from others, understand people around me better and form emotionally stronger connections.

"Sometimes I don't want to share that much in front of everybody. Only in the reflection group is enough for me personally."

Reflection group - even tho some days I felt down, some day I felt up, it always made me feel safe to talk with my group.



EMPATHY BUDDY

For more personal reflections and sharing, we wanted to ensure that each person had their assigned buddy. Another person from the group, outside of the reflection group, in order to develop a more personal connection throughout the Creathon. We kept reflections throughout the three forms:

- Individual Reflection in a notebook

- Empathy Buddy reflection

- Group Reflections

Each gives a different level of intimacy, vulnerability, and openness intended for participants.



The opportunity to connect deeply with others through creativity and personal growth. Exploring the topic of limiting beliefs in combination with artistic expression was both inspiring and transformative. It created a safe space for self-reflection, emotional expression, and open conversations.

THANK YOU!

There is always more to share, but those are the main elements of how we approached Creathon - a journey to explore limiting beliefs through art!

We hope that on those pages you have found food for thought, inspiration, and useful information. But we would be the most happy if, as a result of our sharing, you would make a little, tiny experiment in your daily life!