Pretending You’re Someone Else Can Make You More Creative
(reference: http://nymag.com)

One great irony about our collective obsession with creativity is that we tend to frame it in uncreative ways. That is to say, most of us marry creativity to our concept of self: we’re either “creative” people or we aren’t, without much of a middle ground. Pillay, a tech entrepreneur and Harvard professor, has spent a good chunk of his career subverting these ideas. Pillay believes that the key to unlocking your creative potential is to defy the clichéd advice that urges you to “believe in yourself.” In fact, you should do the exact opposite: believe you are someone else and suggest “Psychological Halloweenism”

In a recent column for Harvard Business Review, Pillay pointed to a 2016 study demonstrating the “stereotype effect,” or the impact of stereotypes on one’s behavior. The authors, education psychologists Denis Dumas and Kevin Dunbar, divided their college-student subjects into three categories, instructing the members of one group to think of themselves as “eccentric poets” and the members of another to imagine they were “rigid librarians”. The researchers then presented participants with ten ordinary objects, including a fork, a carrot, and a pair of pants, and asked them to come up with as many different uses as possible for each one. Those who were asked to imagine themselves as “eccentric poets” came up with the widest range of ideas for the objects, whereas those in the “rigid librarian” group had the fewest. Meanwhile, the researchers found only small differences in students’ creativity levels across academic majors — in fact, the physics majors inhabiting the personas of “eccentric poets” came up with more ideas than the art majors did. These results suggest that ________ is not an individual trait, but a “malleable product of context and perspective.” Everyone can be creative, as long as they feel like creative people.

1. Explains a meaning of “Psychological Halloweenism” with one example.
2. Infer the meaning of the underlined part.
3. Fill in the black in an one word from a paragraph.
4. Summary