

Enhancing my Creative potential

This is a follow up on the previous article on “thinking out of the box”. We now look at creativity from the individual point of view and how we can learn to be more creative.

Creativity is defined as ‘to cause something to come into being’ – something that is created where there was not a product or process before. We usually think of something ‘creative’ in terms of products, such as the Ipod or mobile phone.

On the other side of the coin is innovation, which means to ‘introduce something new, to make changes’. This is often regarded as less challenging and something we have experienced in our work such as those times when we improve on a process or system.

Both creativity and innovation are two sides of the same coin and that coin is the currency that buys successful outcomes. We create and innovate to improve and to achieve better results. That brings us to the question: can we be creative? Can we be more innovative? or Is creativity reserved only for those born with it?

We are all born with the potential to be creative. Remember the games we used to play when we were young? The games we used to create for ourselves when left on our own or with other kids? As we grow up, our creativity and innovativeness have been suppressed as we learn to conform to societal expectations.

An anonymous saying goes : *“Being creative is seeing the same thing as everybody else but thinking of something different”*- how could we achieve that? How could we think differently?

The first rule to nurture that potential is to believe that we have it – that we are creative. We need to constantly reaffirm to ourselves that we are creative and keep telling ourselves so.

This would be much easier if we surround ourselves with people who believe in us. Nothing wears us down more than to have negative people around us.

Be open to things that are different to what we are used to. Avoid being attached to our ideas and the way things have been done in the past. Each time we are faced with different methods or solutions, ask ourselves “Why Not?” We do not have to accept things just because it has been done that way in the past. “Why can’t we do it differently?” Be open to try new ways and new ideas. If we do not try, we will not be able to learn anything new. Clinging to what we already know only holds us back in our comfort zone.

Develop an interest in a variety of things, in activities which are different from our usual, in people who are from different walks of life. Variety helps us to be more open, to widen our knowledge, to think differently when we have seen things that are different. One of the key traits in creativity, is ‘being different’- to be different to the norm. We are often too conscious of falling in with the norm, not to bring attention to ourselves and we end up being lost in the crowd, being one of the many rather than being one who is different.

Reading books on creativity can be a great help in opening our minds and exposing ourselves to what is creativity and how creative people behave and think. This reading can be further supported by attending courses or workshops on creativity and learning creative techniques. Workshops exposes us to others who are different to us, who have different outlooks and experience. They also provide a safe environment for us work through creative techniques and to develop our potential.

Remember - each and everyone of us can be creative. It is not in-born – it can be learnt and developed. Creativity is a process. We start the process with the belief “I am creative”.

“Great is the human who has not lost his childlike heart” (a child like heart is a creative heart)
- *Mencius*