



The Mysterious Lack of Creativity

Unless you're an artist, you won't appreciate how little respect we have for creative people.

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“We don’t grow into creativity, we grow out of it. Or rather we get educated out of it. Schools kill creativity”— **Ken Robinson**

Hiding Creativity in Plain Sight

There are two ways to live: grow or don't grow. If you don't grow, then things don't change and you're surrounded by the same situations. This sounds boring, but it's what most of us aspire to: the good life, comfortable and secure.

If you grow, then you either have to find a path or make one. We ask, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” referring to a roster of prefabricated identities. It's only half a joke because we're all a little nervous about our future.

My client Joe is a spirit medium. He came to me with unremitting tinnitus. During our work, Joe

channeled his spirit guardian, or guardian angel, who said Joe's tinnitus was necessary to motivate him. Were it not for the tinnitus, Joe wouldn't be here.

Another client had an abusive childhood. There was a lot of trauma in their family history, yet my client still lives with the same parents who were abusive. Her father is now just annoying, and her mother complains about everything.

My client is bothered by their own negativity and low self-esteem, and wants to know how to be rid of it. I say, "Call out more negativity. Imagine all the worst and why. And then imagine all the things you want, and ask whether this would make things better?"

If you can't make things better, then make them worse. I said, "Use your imagination. Your imagination leads you." This client's negativity has resulted in her entering law school and establishing a new relationship.

"Great!" I say. What else can you accomplish by being negative? Perhaps you'll get beyond it. You don't need it." Sometimes the problem is the solution.

Where Can You Find Insight?

The difference between creativity and insight is that creativity fails 99% of the time, while insight is the 1% that succeeds. But you cannot have one without the other. Creativity is a struggle and it usually fails, but these failures are not optional. People can be taught to be insightful if they're first taught to be creative failures.

Today I was a guest on the Making Math Moments Matter podcast (<https://makemathmoments.com/podcast/>). This broadcast is for math teachers in Canada's compulsory education system. I have no more affection for compulsory education than I do for communist reeducation. I dislike teachers and anyone who tells me what to think, and I was expecting our interview might take a dark turn.

Kids hate math because it's made difficult, and it's irrelevant. Those forced to take high school math and like it, are sissies who live for the teacher's rewards. Perhaps one in a hundred glimpse math's potential, and that's no thanks to their teachers.

Math consists of four elements: measure, patterns, transformations, and equality. I have never seen a high school math course that teaches creative or useful math, and this is a crime. It is especially criminal because these four elements play a role in everything. It is more logical than our emotional mind, but, like Star Trek's emotionless Dr. Spock, it can play a powerful role.

Those who teach math as the solving of equations prove the theorem that those who don't know teach. Math is taught this way because no one in the school system really understands it. Certainly the math teachers don't.

Math teachers are as subjugated as their students. Like soldiers, they've been brainwashed to believe they're doing their best for their community. I agree with Making Math Moments Matter when they say, "Don't throw out the textbook!" That would be wasteful. They should be

recycled. Math teachers who can't recreate the curriculum from memory should be put out to pasture.

If art class was a paint by numbers curriculum, art classes would be just as bad. Luckily, it's not, and because it's not, creativity can seep in at the edges. The low value given to being creative is evidenced by the low priority given to art. There is no A in the Three R's.

If you'd like to explore a creative plan for yourself. Schedule a free call with me at:

<https://www.mindstrenghbalance.com/scheule15>

Learning Creativity

My law school client must fill her head with noise: social media, audiobooks (the same book, over and over), music, and news. She wonders how to find relief from her negativity, but there is no place in her mind for new ideas. Like a person with ear plugs, things need to get bad before she can hear them.

I tell her she needs space to think. I suspect there are thoughts she does not want to hear. She's lived a life where success was rewarded and failure punished, but creative solutions only come from learning, failing, and changing.

The painter Chuck Close said, "Amateurs wait for inspiration. The rest of us just get up and go to work." And the same is true of finding insight in any field. If you are going to be struck by inspiration, it will be after you have unsuccessfully struggled with the problem from many points of view. "The able mind is well prepared," said scientist Louis Pasteur.

My physics explores the foundations of quantum mechanics. We hear various spectacular stories of the strange microscopic world. They're largely nonsense and, if you read the history of the field, these "true stories" came and went every 10 years. The "truth" of quantum mechanics now seems to last 50 years. At the present time, the foundational ideas of the last century are being disproved, but as more people become invested in the old ideas, definitive experiments become harder to perform, and complex, abstract ideas become harder to understand, the field develops a protective membrane.

The time that's been invested for small returns creates the "sunk cost fallacy," where no one challenges the "fathers of the field." People refer to experiments that worked, not those that didn't, even though much of their success is due to luck (see "Thoughts about entanglement" by physicist Daniel Greenberger, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoEri8f5RAI>).

If we were serious about advancing thought, shepherding our ecology, and being rid of political psychopaths, then we would study unsolvable problems, not the "solutions" that created them.

Starting on the path to solutions is based on interest, experience, and a sense of personal value.

Start with a sense of ability that defies old structures. If students were taught about the problems we can't solve, and approaches that have, we would have young minds focusing on solution-finding, not resource extraction skills for yesterday's needs.

This Works for Psychology Too

The way you help people be more creative is to get them to stop being uncreative. Some think the old mindset can be fixed, and there is a place for that, but it's more to open people's eyes than change an ossified system.

There is no need to wait for the old system to reform. The rise of alternative forms of schooling, and the great relief students feel, show that the old structures will die out from the top down as people "just get up and go to work."

Confronting a crisis is one way to confront urgent needs, but solutions do not emerge overnight. Dreamwork, psychedelics, meditation, counseling, troubled relationships, and chronic health issues are indicators and pathways to explore changes of mind.

Some of these have debilitating effects. I urge caution and preparation before taking a challenging path. Dropping a can of paint on a canvas has opened new ways of seeing art. Dropping a metaphorical can of paint into your personal reality can be dangerous.



My law school client says he has trouble getting to sleep. I suggested she meditate for 10 minutes each day using the MUSE 2 neurofeedback headband (<https://www.alexfergus.com/blog/muse-2-review>). There are other devices that are more expensive but I cannot recommend them to someone who doesn't understand their benefits. Meditating for 10 minutes each day might do as much, but the headband offers a little feedback, a timer, and a routine.

I also told her to get a sketch pad and spend some time drawing pictures. She said, "I can't do that, I suck at art." "Perfect!" I responded. "Something you can fail at. The object isn't to produce good art, it's providing an avenue for thoughts and feelings. The more you feel to be a failure, the more you're getting to the problematic levels of your identity."

We have been taught to be technically uncreative and to fear our own psychological creativity. You start being more creative by not punishing creativity in childhood. Few of us are so lucky to have escaped that punishment. You start regaining your creativity by opening your schedule to do the unrewarded work you were taught to avoid. Make a commitment, take little steps, be patient, expect failure as you move through it.